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Editors

Editorial

Neoliberalism began as the idea that economic rationality could be applied as a model of governance in place of political ideology. No more authoritarianism. Just the rational calculation of people's needs and wants. But now we realize that needs and wants are not rational. They are crazy. And they take place on such vastly different scales that, without any political idea to stabilize desires and render them accountable—even simply in the sense of being legible and comprehensible—we are faced with nothing but irrationality as a governing order. Even logistical mechanisms are only the infrastructural bracketing of a rational order that is actually and profoundly not.

The source of this irrationality is neither capital nor the desire for it. It becomes more and more clear that capital is only a medium for something else which is far more complex. Economists got something fundamentally wrong: they assumed that markets and economic flows were self-regulating. But in getting it wrong, they unleashed a force behind abstract capital that totally unraveled the terms upon which the industrial notion of economy had been operating.

As former modes of governance prove insufficient, new territories—and therefore new economies—open up. We used to have two modes of citizenship, and they were pegged to either soil or blood: *jus sangiunis* and *jus soli*. This is what backed colonization and this is what backed the Westphalian model. But that model is gone. The conditions for it will never be there again. Blood and soil fail us, constantly and in turn. Our bloodlines are bad. They are tainted, they are mixed, and they are filthy. Our genealogy is untraceable. Our soil is over-plowed. It is a ghost town, barren and unlovable. And yet, the collapse of the idea of citizenship backed by a blood standard has given way to new modes of citizenship: based in profit, in disaster, or in some impossible conflation of both. We buy passports in Malta. We wash up on the shores of Lampedusa. Hopefully. We are contract labor living in luxury slum compounds in the Gulf. We are aspiring climate refugees. We are Polish plumbers dancing at Berghain.

But what forms of allegiance does all of this assume—to what kind of territory? We have known it all along: the boundaries of our new states are shaped by language. Language is what makes things true by making words spin right. Language is what makes things convincing by making them sound familiar. Language is what settles in and goes to work at fundamental points of ambiguity between symbolic control and material resource. Between command and flow. Between the military and the internet. Between you and your devices; between states. Your passport comes out of a laser printer.

When symbolic calculation and semiotic abstraction mix with real power, they unleash an entirely new way of understanding the limits of both. Not everything is relative.

Some things just don't flow. Some things don't translate; some things are heavy. The whole point of symbolic games is to mediate these absolute limits. When a crime causes irreparable damage, you need a symbolic equivalence to make up the difference. You can't always return stolen goods. You can't stop islands in the South Pacific from going underwater. You can't bring back the dead. You need to make up for it; you need reparations that spin right. It is less about solving problems than about finding the symbolic resources to move on. Even if financial and computational abstraction regimes convert laws and borders into commodities and psychotic projections of desire, it does not necessarily mean that these things were so stable to begin with. And maybe the role of institutions was always to find the language to mask that very fact, to inscribe authority so deeply that symbols can be absolutely believed. Which is to say, maybe we aren't so crazy after all.

—Anton Vidokle, Brian Kuan Wood, Julieta Aranda

X

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Reza Negarestani

The Labor of the Inhuman, Part I: Human

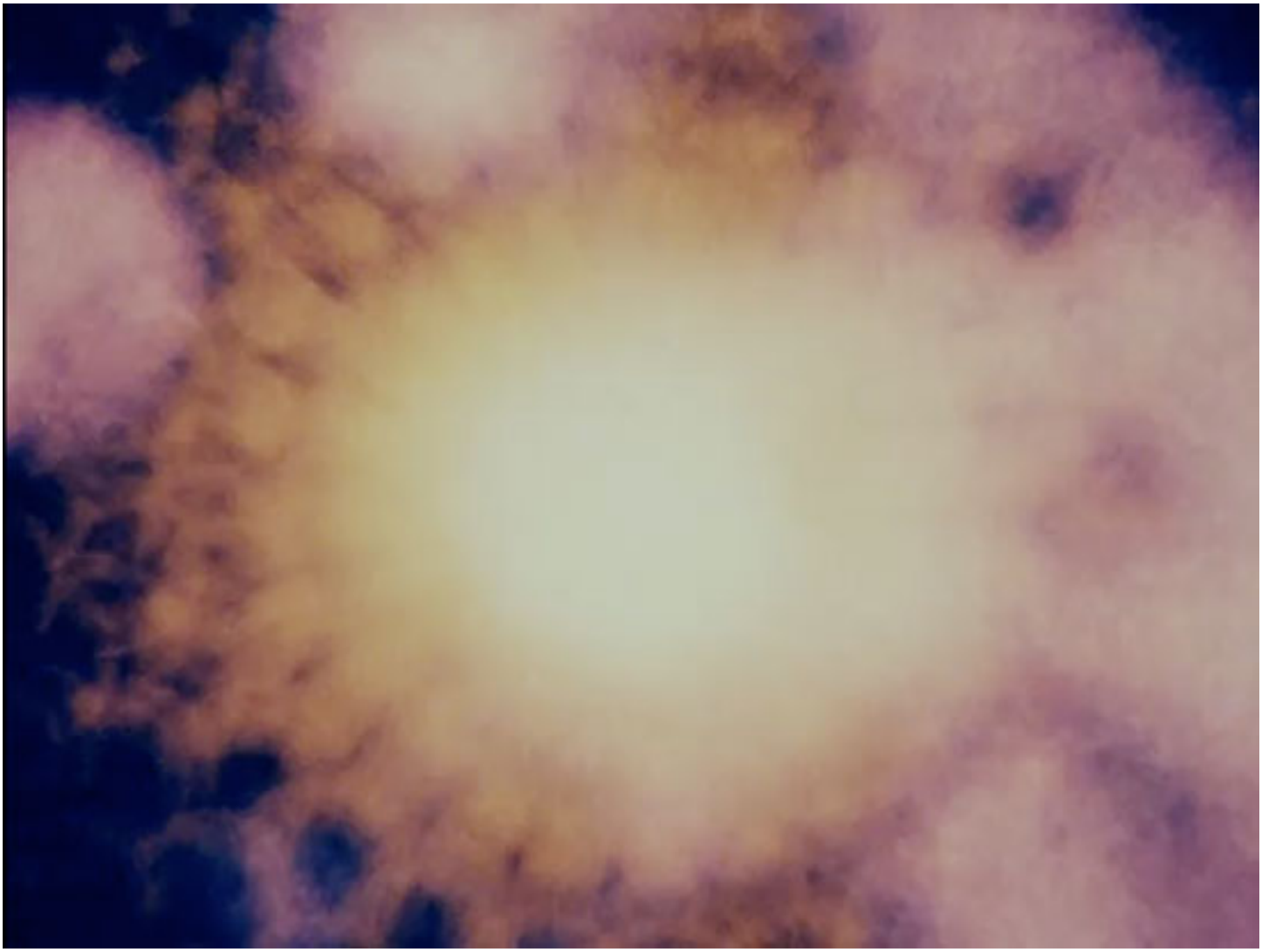
Inhumanism is the extended practical elaboration of humanism; it is born out of a diligent commitment to the project of enlightened humanism. As a universal wave that erases the self-portrait of man drawn in sand, inhumanism is a vector of revision. It relentlessly revises what it means to be human by removing its supposed evident characteristics and preserving certain invariances. At the same time, inhumanism registers itself as a demand for construction, to define what it means to be human by treating human as a constructible hypothesis, a space of navigation and intervention.[1]

Inhumanism stands in concrete opposition to any paradigm that seeks to degrade humanity either in the face of its finitude or against the backdrop of the great outdoors. Its labor partly consists in decanting the significance of human from any predetermined meaning or particular import set by theology—thereby extricating human significance from human veneration fabricated as a result of assigning significance to varieties of theological jurisdiction (God, ineffable generosity, foundationalist axiom, and so forth).[2]

Once the conflated and the honorific meaning of man is replaced by a minimalist yet functionally consequential, real content, the humilific credo of antihumanism that subsists on a theologically anchored conflation between significance and veneration also loses its deflationary momentum. Incapable of salvaging its pertinence without resorting to a concept of crisis occasioned by theology, and unsuccessful in extracting human significance by disentangling the pathological conflation between real import and glorification, antihumanism is revealed to be in the same theological boat that it is so determined to set on fire.

Failing to single out significance according to the physics that posits it rather than the metaphysics that inflates it, antihumanism's only solution for overcoming the purported crisis of meaning comes by adopting the cultural heterogeneity of false alternatives (the ever increasing options of *post-*, communitarian retreats as so-called alternatives to totality, and so forth). Rooted in an originary conflation that was never resolved, such alternatives perpetually swing between their inflationary and deflationary, enchanting and disenchanting bipolar extremes, creating a fog of liberty that suffocates any universalist ambition and hinders the methodological collaboration required to define and achieve a common task for breaking out of the current planetary morass.

In short, the net surfeit of false alternatives supplied under the rubric of liberal freedom causes a terminal deficit of real alternatives, establishing for thought and action the axiom that there is indeed no alternative. The contention of this essay is that universality and collectivism cannot be thought, let alone attained, through consensus or dissensus between cultural tropes, but only by intercepting and rooting out what gives rise to the



Jordan Belson, Samadhi, 1967. Film still.

economy of false choices and by activating and fully elaborating what real human significance consists of. For it is, as will be argued, the truth of human significance—not in the sense of an original meaning or a birthright, but in the sense of a labor that consists of the extended elaboration of what it means to be human through a series of upgradable special performances—that is rigorously inhuman.

The force of inhumanism operates as a retroactive deterrence against antihumanism by understanding humanity historically—in the broadest physico-biological and socioeconomical sense of history—as an indispensable runway toward itself.

But what is humanism? What specific commitment does "being human" represent and how does the full practical elaboration of this commitment amount to inhumanism? In other words, what is it in human that shapes the inhuman once it is developed in terms of its entitlements and consequences? In order to answer these questions, first we need to define what it means to be human and exactly what commitment "being human" endorses. Then we need to analyze the structure of this commitment in order to grasp how undertaking such a commitment—in the sense of practicing it—entails inhumanism.

1. Commitment as Extended and Multimodal Elaboration

A commitment only makes sense by virtue of its pragmatic content (meaning through use) and its demand to adopt an *intervening attitude*. This attitude aims to elaborate the content of a commitment and then update that commitment according to the ramifications or collateral commitments that are made explicit in the course of elaboration. In short, a commitment—be it assertional, inferential, practical, or cognitive—can neither be examined nor properly undertaken without the process of updating the commitment and unpacking its

consequences through a full range of multimodal practices. In this sense, humanism is a commitment to humanity, but only by virtue of *what a commitment is* and *what human is* combined together.

The analysis of the structure and laws of commitment-making and the meaning of being human in a pragmatic sense (i.e., not by resorting to an inherent conception of meaning hidden in nature or a predetermined idea of man) is a necessary initial step before entering the domain of making prescriptions (whether social, political, or ethical). What needs to be explicated first is what it takes to make a prescription, or what one needs to do in order to count as prescribing an obligation or a duty, to link duties and revise them. But it must also be recognized that a prescription should correspond to a set of descriptions which at all times must be synchronized with the system of modern knowledge as what yields and modifies descriptions. To put it succinctly: description without prescription is the germ of resignation, and prescription without description is whim.

Correspondingly, this is an attempt to understand the organization of prescription, or what making a prescription for and by human entails. Without such knowledge, prescriptive norms cannot be adequately distinguished from descriptive norms (i.e., we cannot have prescriptions), nor can proper prescriptions be constructed without degenerating into the vacuity of prescriptions devoid of descriptions.

The description of the content of human is impossible without elaborating it in the context of use and practices, while elaboration itself is impossible without following minimally prescriptive laws of commitment-making, inference, and judgment. Describing human without turning to an account of foundational descriptions or an *a priori* access to descriptive resources is already a minimally but functionally hegemonic prescriptive project that adheres to *oughts* of specification and elaboration of the meaning of being human through features and requirements of its use. "Fraught with oughts" (Wilfrid Sellars), humanism cannot be regarded as a claim about human that can only be professed once and subsequently turned into a foundation or axiom and considered concluded. Inhumanism is a nomenclature for the infeasibility of this one-time profession. It is a figure for the impossibility of ever putting the matter to rest once and for all.

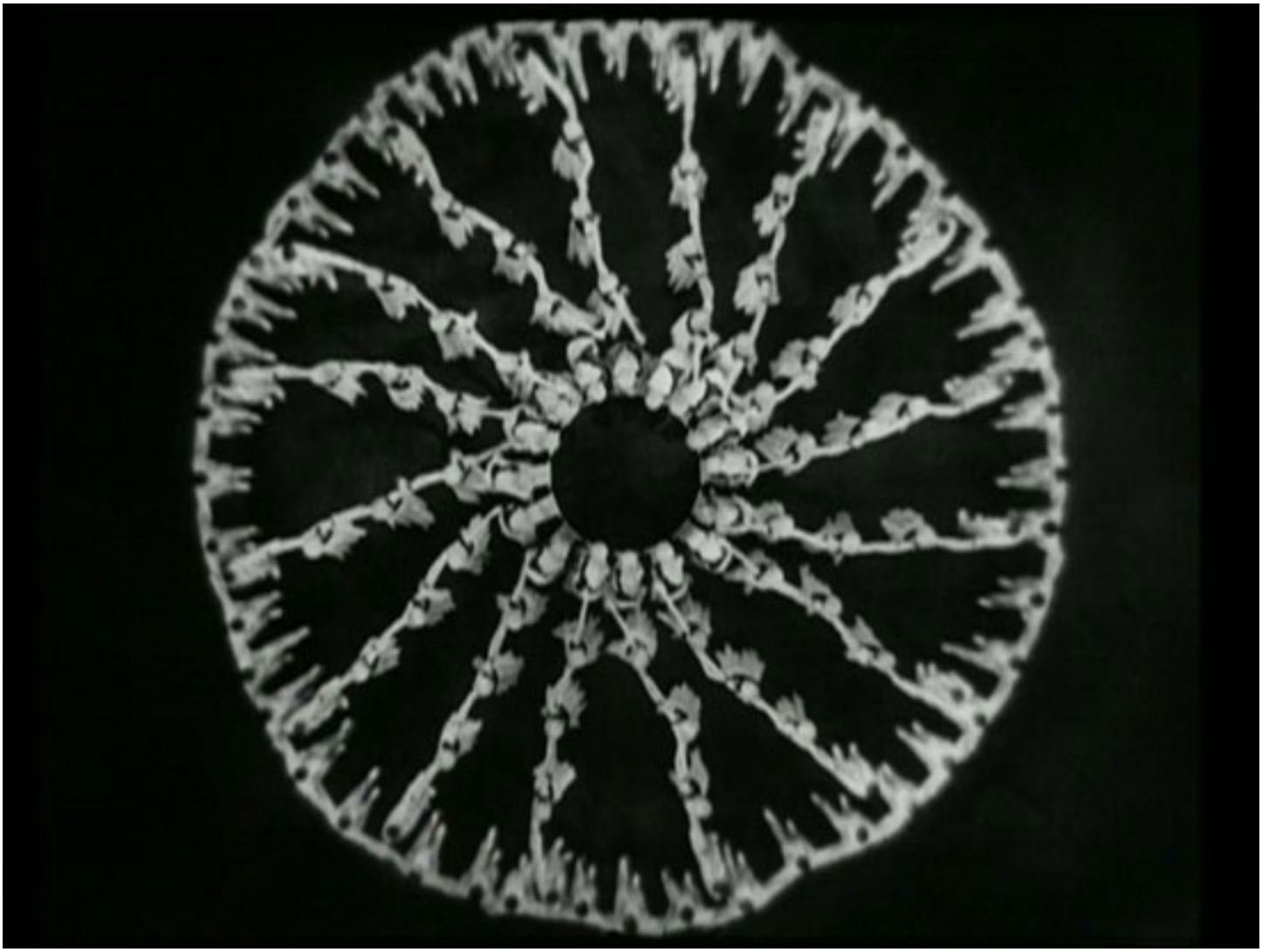
To be human is a mark of a distinction between, on the one hand, the relation between mindedness and behavior through the intervention of discursive intentionality, and on the other hand, the relation between sentient intelligence and behavior in the absence of such mediation. It is a distinction between sentience as a strongly biological and natural category and sapience as a rational (not to be confused with logical) subject. The latter is a normative designation which is specified by entitlements and the responsibilities they bring about. It is important to note that the distinction between sapience and sentience is marked by a functional demarcation rather than a structural one. Therefore, it is still fully historical and open to naturalization, while at the same time being distinguished by its specific functional organization, its upgradable set of abilities and responsibilities, its cognitive and practical demands. The relation between sentience and sapience can be understood as *a continuum that is not differentiable everywhere*. While such a complex continuity might allow the naturalization of normative obligations at the level of sapience—their explanation in terms of naturalistic causes—it does not permit the extension of certain conceptual and descriptive resources specific to sapience (such as the particular level of mindedness, responsibilities, and, accordingly, normative entitlements) to sentience and beyond.

The rational demarcation lies in the difference between being capable of acknowledging a law and being solely bound by a law, between understanding and mere reliable responsiveness to stimuli. It lies in the difference between stabilized communication through concepts (as made possible by the communal space of language and symbolic forms) and chaotically unstable or transient types of response or communication (such as complex reactions triggered purely by biological states and organic requirements or group calls and alerts among social animals). Without such stabilization of communication through concepts and modes of inference involved in conception, the cultural evolution as well as the conceptual accumulation and refinement required for the evolution of knowledge as a shared enterprise would be impossible.[3]

Ultimately, the necessary content as well as the real possibility of human rests on the ability of sapience—as functionally distinct from sentience—to practice inference and approach non-canonical truth by entering the deontic game of giving and asking for reasons. It is a game solely in the sense of involving error-tolerant, rule-based practices conducted in the absence of a referee, in which taking-as-true through thinking (the mark of a believer) and making-true through acting (the mark of an agent) are constantly contrasted, gauged, and calibrated. It is a dynamic feedback loop in which the expansion of one frontier provides the other with new alternatives and opportunities for diversifying its space and pushing back its boundaries according to its own specifications.

2. A Discursive and Constructible "We"

What combines both the ability to infer and the ability to approach truth (i.e., truth in the sense of *making sense of* taking-as-true and making-true, separately and in conjunction with one another) is the capacity to engage discursive practices in the way that pragmatism describes



it: as the ability to (1) deploy a vocabulary, (2) use a vocabulary to specify a set of abilities or practices, (3) elaborate one set of abilities-or-practices in terms of another set of abilities-or-practices, and (4) use one vocabulary to characterize another.[4]

Discursive practices constitute the game of giving and asking for reasons and outlining the space of reason as a landscape of navigation rather than as *a priori* access to explicit norms. The capacity to engage discursive practices is what functionally distinguishes sapience from sentience. Without such a capacity, human is only a biological fact that does not by itself yield any propositional contentfulness of the kind that demands a special form of conduct and value attribution and appraisal. Without this key aspect, speaking about the history of human risks reducing the social construction to a biological supervenience while depriving history of its possibilities for intervention and reorientation.

In other words, deprived of the capacity to enter the space of reason through discursive practices, being human is barred from meaning anything in the sense of practice in relation to content. Action is reduced to meaning "just do something," collectivity can never be methodological or expressed in terms of a synthesis of different abilities to envision and achieve a common task, and making commitment through linking action and understanding is untenable. We might just as well replace human with whatever we wish so as to construct a stuff-oriented philosophy and a nonhuman ethics where "to be a thing" simply warrants being good to each other, or to vegetables for that matter.

Once discursive practices that map out the space of reason are underplayed or dispensed with, everything lapses either toward the individual or toward a noumenal alterity where a contentless plurality without any demand or duty can be effortlessly maintained. Discursive practices as rooted in language-use and tool-use generate a de-privatized but nonetheless stabilizing and contextualizing space through which true collectivizing processes are shaped. It is the space of reason that harbors the functional kernel of a genuine collectivity, a

collaborative project of practical freedom referred to as "we" whose boundaries are not only negotiable but also constructible and synthetic.

One should be reminded that "we" is a mode of being, and a mode of being is not an ontological given or a domain exclusive to a set of fundamental categories or fixed descriptions. Instead, it is a conduct, a special performance that takes shape as it is made visible to others. Precluding this explicit and discursively mobilizable "we," the content of "being human" never translates to "commitment to human or to humanity." By undergirding "we," discursive practices organize commitments as ramifying trajectories between communal saying and doing, and they enact a space where the self-construction or extensive practical elaboration of humanity is a collaborative project.

Making a commitment to something means vacillating between doing something in order to count as saying it, and saying something specific in order to express and characterize that doing.

It is the movement back and forth, the feedback loop, between the two fields of claims and actions that defines sapience as distinguished from sentience. To make a commitment means "what else," "what other commitments" it brings forth and how such consequent commitments demand new modes of action and understanding, new abilities and special performances that cannot be simply substituted with old abilities because they are dictated by revised or more complex sets of demands and entitlements. Without ramifying the "what else" of a commitment by practically elaborating it, without navigating what Robert Brandom calls the rational system of commitments,[5] a commitment has neither sufficient content nor a real possibility of assessment or development. It is as good as an empty utterance—that is, an utterance devoid of content or significance even though it earnestly aspires to be committed.

3. Intervention as Construction and Revision

Now we can turn the argument regarding the exigencies of making a commitment into an argument about the exigencies of being a human, insofar as humanism is a system of practical and cognitive commitments to the concept of humanity. The argument goes as follows: In order to commit to humanity, the content of humanity must be scrutinized. To scrutinize this content, its implicit commitments must be elaborated. But this task is impossible unless we take humanity-as-a-commitment to its ultimate conclusion—by asking what else being a human entails, by unfolding the other commitments and ramifications it brings about.

But since the content of humanity is distinguished by its

Brassaı, Untitled from the Series II "La mort," 1930. Gelatin silver print. Collection MACBA, Barcelona.

capacity to engage rational norms rather than natural laws (*ought* instead of *is*), the concept of entailment for humanity-as-a-commitment is non-monotonic. That is to say, entailment no longer expresses a cause and its differential effect, as in physical natural laws or a deductive logical consequence. Instead, it expresses enablement and abductive non-monotonicity in the sense of a manipulable, experimental, and synthetic form of inference whose consequences are not simply dictated by premises or initial conditions.[6] Since non-monotonicity is an aspect of practice and complex heuristics, defining the human through practical elaboration means that the product of elaboration does not correspond with what the human anticipates or with the image it has of itself. In other words, the result of an abductive inference that synthetically manipulates parameters—the result of practice as a non-monotonic procedure—will be radically revisionary to our assumptions and expectations about what "we" is and what it entails.

The non-monotonic and abductive characteristics of robust social practices that form and undergird the space of reason turn reasoning and the intervening attitude that it promotes into ongoing processes. Indeed, reason as rooted in social practices is not necessarily directed toward a conclusion, nor is it aimed at establishing

agreements through the kind of substantive and quasi-instrumentalist account of reason proposed by Jürgen Habermas.[7] Reason's main objective is to maintain and enhance itself. And it is the self-actualization of reason that coincides with the truth of the inhuman.

The unpacking of the content of commitment to humanity, the examination of what else humanity entitles us to, is impossible without developing a certain intervening attitude that simultaneously involves the assessment (or consumption) and the construction (or production) of norms. Only this intervening attitude toward the concept of humanity is able to extract and unpack the implicit commitments of being a human. And it is this intervening attitude that counts as an enabling vector, making possible certain abilities otherwise hidden or deemed impossible.

It is through the consumption and production of norms that the content of a commitment to humanity can be grasped, in the sense of both assessment and making explicit the implicit commitments that it entitles us to. Accordingly, to understand the commitment to humanity and to make such a commitment, it is imperative to assume a constructive and revisionary stance with regard to human. This is the intervening attitude mentioned earlier.

Revising and constructing human is the very definition of committing to humanity. Lacking this perpetual revision and construction, the commitment part of committing to humanity does not make sense at all. But also insofar as humanity cannot be defined without locating it in the space of reasons (the sapience argument), committing to humanity is tantamount to complying with the revisionary vector of reason and constructing humanity according to an autonomous account of reason.

Humanity is not simply a given fact that is behind us. It is a commitment in which the reassessing and constructive strains inherent to making a commitment and complying with reason intertwine. In a nutshell, to be human is a struggle. The aim of this struggle is to respond to the demands of constructing and revising human through the space of reasons.

This struggle is characterized as developing a certain conduct or error-tolerant deportment according to the functional autonomy of reason—an intervening attitude whose aim is to unlock new abilities of saying and doing. In other words, it is to open up new frontiers of action and understanding through various modes of construction and practices (social, technological, and so forth).

Jordan Belson, Samadhi, 1967. Film still.

4. Kitsch Marxism

If committing to being human is a struggle to construct and revise, today's humanism is for the most part a hollow enterprise that neither does what it says nor says what it does. Sociopolitical philosophies seeking to safeguard the dignity of humanity against the onslaught of politico-economic leviathans end up joining them from the other side.

By virtue of its refusal to recognize the autonomy of reason and to systematically invest in an intervening—that is, revisionary and constructive—attitude toward human and toward norms implicit in social practices, contemporary Marxism largely fails to produce norms of action and understanding. In effect, it subtracts itself from the future of humanity.

Only through the construction of what it means to be human can norms of committing to humanity be produced. Only by revising existing norms through norms that have been produced is it possible to assess norms and above all evaluate what it means to be human. Again, these norms should be distinguished from social conventions. Nor should these norms be confused with natural laws (they are not laws, they are conceptions of laws, hence they are error-tolerant and open to revision). The production or construction of norms prompts the consumption or assessment of norms, which in turn leads to a demand for the production of newer abilities and more complex normative attitudes.

One cannot assess norms without producing them. The same can be said about assessing the situation of humanity, the status of the commitment to be human: humanity cannot be assessed in any context or situation unless an intervening, constructive attitude toward it is developed. But to develop this constructive attitude toward human means to emphatically revise what it

means to be human.

A dedication to a project of militant negativity and an abandonment of the ambition to develop an intervening and constructive attitude toward human through various social and technological practices is now the hallmark of kitsch Marxism. While kitsch Marxism should not be inflated to the whole of Marxism, especially since class struggle as a central tenet of Marxism is an indispensable historical project, at this point the claim of being a Marxist is too generic. It is like saying, "I am an animal." It does not serve any theoretical or practical purpose.

The assessment of any Marxist agenda should be done by way of determining whether it has the power to elaborate its commitments, whether it understands the underlying mechanisms involved in making a commitment, and above all, whether it possesses a program for globally updating its commitments. Once practical negativity is valorized and the intervening attitude or the constructive deportment is dismissed, the assessment of humanity and its situations becomes fundamentally problematic on the following levels.

Without the constructive vector, the project of evaluation—the critique—is transformed into a merely consumptive attitude toward norms. Consumption of norms without producing any is the concrete reality of today's Marxist critical theory. For every claim, there exists a prepackaged set of "critical reflexes."[8] One makes a claim in favor of the force of better reason. The kitsch Marxist says, who decides? One says, construction through structural and functional hierarchies. The kitsch Marxist responds, control. One says, normative control. The kitsch Marxist reminds us of authoritarianism. We say "us." The kitsch Marxist recites, who is "us"? The impulsive responsiveness of kitsch Marxism cannot even be identified as a cynical attitude because it lacks the rigor of cynicism. It is a mechanized knee-jerk reactionism that is the genuine expression of norm consumerism without the concrete commitment to producing any norms. Norm consumerism is another name for cognitive servitude and noetic sloth.

The response of kitsch Marxism to humanity is also problematic on the level of revision. Ceasing to produce norms by refusing to undertake a constructive attitude toward human in the sense of a deportment governed by the functional autonomy of reason means ceasing to revise what it means to be human. Why? Because norms are assessed and revised by newer norms that are produced through various modes of construction, complex social practices, and the unlocking of new abilities for going back and forth between saying and doing. Since being human is distinguished by its capacity to enter the game of giving and asking for reasons, the construction of human ought to be in the direction of further singling out the space of reason through which human differentiates itself from nonhuman, sapience from sentience.

By transforming the ethos of construction according to the demands of reason into the pathos of negativity, kitsch Marxism not only puts an end to the project of revision. It also banks on a concept of humanity outside of the space of reason—even though reason's revisionary force is the only authorized force for renegotiating and defining humanity. Once revision is brought to an end, understanding humanity and acting upon its situations has no significance, since what is deemed to be human no longer enjoys any pertinence.[9] Similarly, once the image of humanity is sought outside of reason, it is only a matter of time before the deontological distinction between sapience and sentience collapses and telltale signs of irrationalism—frivolity, narcissism, superstition, speculative enthusiasm, social atavism, and ultimately, tyranny—heave forth.

Therefore, the first question one needs to ask a humanist or a Marxist is: Are your commitments up to date? If yes, then they must be subjected to a deontic trial—either a version of Robert Brandom's deontic scorekeeping or Jean-Yves Girard's deontic ordeal, where commitments can be reviewed on the basis of their connectivity, evasion of vicious circles and internal contradictions, and recusal instead of refutation.

If commitment to humanity is identified by active revision and construction, ceasing to revise and refusing to construct characterize a form of irrationalism that is determined to cancel out what it means to be human. It is in this sense that kitsch Marxism is not just a theoretical incompetency. It is also—from both a historical and cognitive standpoint—an impulse to regress from sapience back to sentience.

To this extent, it is not an exaggeration to say that within every kitsch Marxist agenda lies dormant the germ of hostility to humanity and the humanist project. Practical negativity refuses to be a resignation, but it also refuses to contribute to the system and develop a systematic attitude toward the affirmative stance "implicit" in the construction of the system.

Humanism is distinguished by the implicitly affirmative attitude of construction. Insofar as the kitsch Marxism resignation implies an abandonment of the project of humanism and a collapse into regressive passivity, we can say that kitsch Marxism's refusal to both resign and to construct is tantamount to a position that is neither passive nor humanist. Indeed, this "neither/nor" approach signifies nothing but a project of active antihumanism that kitsch Marxism is in reality committed to—despite its pretensions to a commitment to human. It is in the wake of this antihumanism or hostility toward ramifications of committing to human that the identification of kitsch Marxist agendas with humanism appears at best as a farce, and at worst as a critical Ponzi scheme for devoted

humanists.

In its mission to link the commitment to humanism to complex abilities and commitments, inhumanism appears as a force that stands against both the apathy of resignation and the active antihumanism implicit in practical negativity as the fashionable stance of kitsch Marxism today. Inhumanism, as will be argued in the next installment of this essay, is both the extended elaboration of the ramifications of making a commitment to humanity, and the practical elaboration of the content of human as provided by reason and the sapient's capacity to functionally distinguish itself and engage in discursive social practices.

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To be continued in "The Labor of the Inhuman, Part II: The Inhuman"

Reza Negarestani is a philosopher. He has contributed extensively to journals and anthologies and lectured at numerous international universities and institutes. His current philosophical project is focused on rationalist universalism beginning with the evolution of the modern system of knowledge and advancing toward contemporary philosophies of rationalism, their procedures as well as their demands for special forms of human conduct.

1
Throughout the text the term human has often occurred without a definite article in order to emphasize the meaning of the word human as a singular universal which makes sense of its mode of being by inhabiting collectivizing or universalizing processes. This is human not merely by virtue of being a species but rather by virtue of being a generic subject or a commoner before what brings about its singularity and universality. Human, accordingly, as Jean-Paul Sartre points out is universal by the singular universality of human history, and it is also singular by the universalizing singularity of the projects it undertakes.

2
A particularly elegant and incisive argument in defense of human significance as conditioned by the neurobiological situation of subjectivityinstead of God or religion has been presented by Michael Ferrer. To great consequence, Ferrer demonstrates that such an enlightened and nonconflated revisitation of human significance simultaneously undermines the theologically licensed veneration and the deflationary attitude championed by many strains of the disenchantment project and its speculative offshoots.

3
"Multi-person epistemic dynamics can only work profitably if the stability of shared knowledge and the input-connection of this knowledge (its 'realism') are granted. If not, a system of knowledge, although cognitively possible, cannot be socially enacted and culturally elaborated. As in complex social networks, Darwinian selection operates at the level of social entities (which survive or disappear), only species, which have solved this problem, can exploit the benefits of a higher level of cognition. The question is therefore: How does language, or do other symbolic forms, contribute to the evolution of social awareness, social consciousness, social cognition?" Wolfgang Wildgen, *The Evolution of Human Language: Scenarios, Principles, and Cultural Dynamics* (Philadelphia: John Benjamins, 2004), 40.

4
See Robert Brandom, *Between Saying and Doing: Towards an Analytic Pragmatism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008).

5
Ibid.

6
Abductive inference, or abduction, was first expounded by Charles Sanders Peirce as a form of creative guessing or hypothetical inference which uses a multimodal and synthetic form of reasoning to dynamically expand its capacities. While abductive inference is divided into different types, all are non-monotonic, dynamic, and non-formal. They also involve construction and manipulation, the deployment of complex heuristic strategies, and non-explanatory forms of hypothesis generation. Abductive reasoning is an essential part of the logic of discovery, epistemic encounters with anomalies and dynamic systems, creative experimentation, and action and understanding in situations where both material resources and epistemic cues are limited or should be kept to a minimum. For a comprehensive examination of abduction and its practical and epistemic capacities, see Lorenzo Magnani, *Abductive Cognition: The Epistemological and Eco-Cognitive Dimensions of Hypothetical Reasoning* (Berlin: Springer, 2009).

7
See Anthony Simon Laden, *Reasoning: A Social Picture* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012).

8
Thanks to Peter Wolfendale for the term "critical reflexes" as an expression of prepackaged theoretical biases used to preempt the demands of thought in the name of critical thought.

9
It is no secret that the bulk of contemporary sociopolitical prescriptions are based on a conception of humanity that has failed to synchronize itself with modern science or take into account social and organizational alterations effected by technological forces.

Ane Hjort Guttu

The Rich Should Be Richer

We are taught that the sun shines on everyone. The sun is one of the best things in life, and the best things in life are free, or so we've heard. But that's not how it is. The sun belongs to someone. The clouds belong to someone. The roads, the trees, the houses. The sound of footsteps on the street. It's all for sale. You can buy the smell of wet asphalt, the dew on the lawn, the roar of the city, the sparkling sea. The splashes of sunlight on the bedroom wall in the morning that you saw for the first time when you were too young to understand what they were, but which you have never forgotten. Who wouldn't want to give their children images like these, memories like these? All you need is a bedroom that the sun shines into and, of course, that you can buy. You get it when you buy a cabin on Koster, a house at Nordberg, a penthouse in Oslo. We know the truth in this, even though we have always been told that things are otherwise. Ever since our industrial cities were built, and even before that, the rich have lived in sunlight and the poor have lived in the shadows—in narrow streets, in courtyards without sunlight, in a room with a view of the neighboring alley.

In the same way that you buy an apartment, if you have money, you can also buy an entire plot of land, a vacant lot next to the sea or right in the center of town, where you can build streets, squares, and plazas—deep, narrow alleys where the sun slants in at certain times, in winter so low that its rays shine straight into your eyes, in summer high, high above the roof terrace. And at these times you can follow the shining disc for a while before it disappears around the corner and the sky begins to grow dark. All this can be planned: other people's experiences and feelings, other people's encounters with the sun as they walk through alleyways built by somebody else.

Someone decided that this façade should be made of glass, and someone put that road in front of it. Someone planned for these reflections of the passers-by to occur on this axis, in this direction, with this shadow, this strip of light. Someone wants something from our movements. Perhaps they pictured the contrast between our warm, living bodies and these vast, cold surfaces. Perhaps they calculated that these elements should combine to make

the architecture even more dominant, to make us feel even smaller deep down inside. And so now we are part of their plan.

It is very likely that there were many people involved in these decisions, and that certain democratic processes were followed. But there might as well have been one person behind it all. Or perhaps not even a person, but more like a will, a hand, a thing. A big "It." "It" decided how long and wide the road should be, how dark the shadows. How small we should feel. And they, or "It," intended that we should enjoy this feeling, that we should be overwhelmed by it. We should be reminded that there is something which is more than we are, something that will remain once we are gone. You look up at the façades, up and up, and you feel like a child at the feet of a giant—a giant who leans over and looks you in the eye with his blank windows.

TWO ELDERLY ARCHITECTS SIT ON A BENCH AT SØRENGA, A NEW RESIDENTIAL AREA IN OSLO FORMERLY PART OF THE HARBOR. IT IS SUMMER AND THE EVENING SUN SHINES BRIGHTLY.

ARCHITECT 1
We have been asked to talk about the history of sunlight.

ARCHITECT 2
In Scandinavian urban planning.

ARCHITECT 1
(Reading aloud)

"In the places where life is hardest and where joy is least," as the architect Johannes Nissen wrote in 1908.

ARCHITECT 2
(Reading aloud from another book)

"In the short time when it is possible to enjoy the sun, one would hope to have the opportunity to do so," as the architect Jan Gehl wrote in 1971.

ARCHITECT 1
We architects have struggled with this for more than a hundred years.

ARCHITECT 2
(Picking up a code of law)

With the Building Act of 1924, for the first time it became mandatory: "new residential dwellings must have sunlight." (Pause.) That is, *all* new houses or apartments. Not just some.

ARCHITECT 1
(Holding a diagram)

When new residential areas were built in Scandinavia after the war, the space between housing blocks was regulated so that each apartment would get at least five hours of sunlight on the spring equinox.

ARCHITECT 2
(Picking up a leaflet)

The Swedish Housing Board's guidelines from 1960, "Good Housing Today and Tomorrow, " state that "playgrounds should receive sunlight between 8:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m."

ARCHITECT 1
(Holding an early city plan proposal)

The "Proposal for Neighborhood Renewal in Oslo" from 1964 states that "any development plan including dwellings that receive less than three hours of sunlight on the spring and autumn equinoxes should be rejected."

ARCHITECT 2
In the urban regeneration projects of the 1980s, the city demolished outbuildings in backyards to give children the opportunity to play in the fresh air and sunlight.

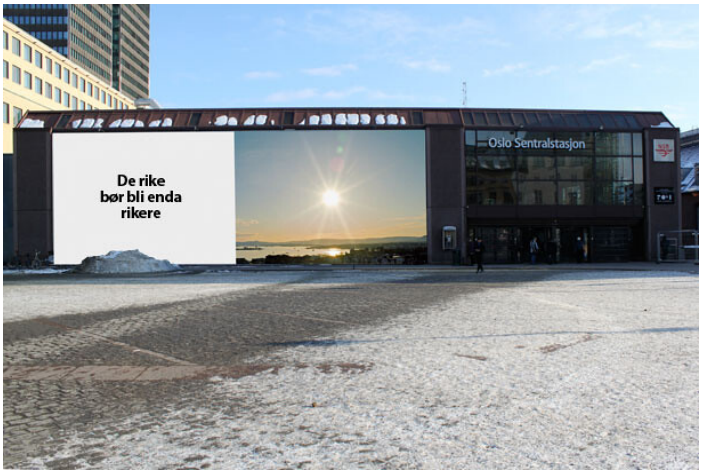
ARCHITECT 1
And in the State Housing Bank's minimum standard, revised in 1992, it states that "dwellings should not be only north-facing."

ARCHITECT 2
Again, this applies to *all* housing of *all* kinds.

(Pause)

ARCHITECT 1
Everyone was entitled to sunshine and light.

ARCHITECT 2



The basic pleasures.

ARCHITECT 1
But these regulations are gone now.

ARCHITECT 2
Our basic needs are not so basic anymore. The legislation has slowly crumbled.

ARCHITECT 1
Not even the architects protested.

(Pause)

ARCHITECT 2
Now it's about creating differences, not similarities.

ARCHITECT 1
The greatest possible differences within each project.

ARCHITECT 2
Even within the same building.

ARCHITECT 1
Up there are big penthouses with sea views in all directions.

ARCHITECT 2
And down there are small basement flats with a view of the rubbish bins.

ARCHITECT 1
To give more people the opportunity to get into the housing market.

ARCHITECT 2
It's the new social housing policy.

(Pause)

ARCHITECT 1
But that is certainly not the case down here in the harbor.

ARCHITECT 2
No, here the apartments cost over 70,000 kronor per square meter.

ARCHITECT 1
In the daily newspaper here, a researcher from the architecture school is asked what he thinks about the prices in Sørenga. He answers, "If you want lower house prices, you should be pleased to see any new homes being built. New housing in the Fjord City releases other properties and helps to reduce the pressure somewhat."

(Pause)

ARCHITECT 2
Yes, we should be happy that they're building rooms with views, so that those who don't get paid so well can live without.

ARCHITECT 1
We should be be happy that some people can choose apartments with light, while others may choose darkness.

ARCHITECT 2
We should be happy that the rich are here, so that the poor can walk in their shadow.

The exhibition "The rich should be richer" was shown at Kunsthall Oslo, which is located in one of those high-rise buildings in Oslo's new developments that have penthouses on their upper floors. Originally presented as film material, the exhibition looked at the ownership of sunlight in the late-capitalist metropolis and the association, both metaphorical and real, between poverty and darkness. In connection with the show, I proposed a banner for the façade of Oslo Central Station, where very different social groups of the district meet—Oslo's poorest, junkies, Roma, the homeless, along with tourists and privileged residents. The banner text read "The rich should be richer," along with a photo of the view from the roof terraces of Bjørvika. This project was ultimately halted, without room for appeal or compromise, by the developers of the docklands.

X

Ane Hjort Guttu, (b. 1971), is an artist and curator based in Oslo. In recent years she has explored issues of power and freedom in the Scandinavian post-welfare state through video works, picture collections, sculpture, and photography. Guttu also writes critical as well as poetic texts, and several of her projects discuss art and architectural history. Recent projects and exhibitions include: *Bergen Assembly,* Bergen, 2013; *Society Without Qualities,* Tensta konsthall, Stockholm, 2013; *Learning for Life,* Henie Onstad kunstsenter, 2012–2013;

The Rich Should be Richer, Kunsthall Oslo, 2012; and *West of the East*, Y Gallery, Minsk 2012. Her forthcoming projects include: Sydney Biennial, Australia, 2014; *In These Great Times,* Kunstnernes hus, Oslo; *Les Ateliers de Rennes,* France, 2014; and a new short film for Tensta konsthall, Sweden.

Tom Holert

National Heterologies: On the Materiality and Mediality of Flags—Mali 2013

Colors of Intervention

On January 11, 2013, the French military launched Opération Serval,[1] an attempt to assume command in Mali, France's former colony. Using fighter jets and ground troops, France intervened on the side of the Malian armed forces to defend the country against a litany of militias advancing from the north: the Islamic Toureg fighters of Ansar Dine (Defenders of the Faith), the Movement for Unity and Jihad in West Africa (Mujao), the Salafist group Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM), Ag Cherif's secular Toureg alliance known as the National Movement for the Liberation of Azawad (MNLA), as well as free-floating drug gangs. The stated goal was to liberate the occupied cities and areas and to protect the estimated six thousand foreigners in Mali, most of whom were French-Malian dual citizens.[2]

The scene the French soldiers encountered on the streets of Mali when they marched in days later could hardly have been predicted. The elite troops of the erstwhile colonial power, from which Mali won independence in 1960 (the so-called Year of Africa) were greeted with effusive cheering and a demonstrative display of France's national symbol, the Tricolour. Only a year prior, France was the target of sharp criticism from Mali, which at the time was experiencing a political and humanitarian crisis. The complaints focused not so much on France's shameful historical role, but rather on the fact that the French had neglected to secure peace and order in their African sphere of influence (Françafrique) after their 2011 intervention in Libya—one of the causes of Mali's crisis. But now the French and Malian flags hung in the streets side-by-side in intimate unity, as if the two nations' friendship was the most natural thing in the world. Foreign correspondents reported on flag shortages in Bamako and Timbuktu. The photographs they dispatched showed streets brimming with flags: Malians who had strapped the Tricolour to their car antennas and motorbikes, Malian soldiers wearing the flag as a turban, and Malian civilians who had dressed themselves in flags. Asked for his opinion on the pictures of flag-waving Malians, Senegalese author and publisher Boubacar Boris Diop answered that, contrary to all reports, the pictures were staged propaganda. If they did suggest "an immense relief," as characterized by one reporter at the time, this is precisely what made them disturbing, because it demonstrated how fully the population had been let down by its own country's political class.

This temporary reoccupation of Mali constituted an act of military and political reterritorialization. The West African country had to be saved from territorial and political ruin by France's intervention. But the flagrant reversal of Mali's independence, under the premise of protecting its national sovereignty, caused the most diverse political camps, both within and outside of the country, to speak out against recolonization.[3] The display of the French flag

Yacouba Konate wears the French Tricolour in Mali, mid-January 2013. Photo: Joe Penney, Reuters.

A child with a French flag in Douentza, Mali, stands in the aftermath of the "liberation" by the French army, January 29, 2013. Photo: Joe Penney/Reuters.

during the military intervention was itself an intervention into today's (local and global) image space. As an abstraction of national and imperial identity and power, the flag organizes the field of the visible, communicating ideologies, ideas, and feelings in an often contradictory manner.

The Flag—A Medium

According to ethnologist Raymond Firth, the national flag isn't only "a highly condensed focus of sentiment," but also a deeply heterological symbol. It is open to contradictory interpretations and uses, and can even be used against the nation it represents—if only because "the sentiment component" is essentially uncontrollable. The symbolic power of the flag is obvious, and thus it is necessary to demonstrate its ambiguity. To what extent is a flag not only a symbol, but also a medium? Flags exist in different manifestations and materials, from the sewn flag on a mast to the GIF file. In essence, they are artificial, manufactured objects. Sewn or printed, their symbolic effect is a result both of antecedent production—from graphic development to the sewing machine—and formal and informal use. The hoisting or waving of the flag, but also its burning and tearing, are elements of a complex performativity grounded in history. The flag serves as a vehicle for political-identical argumentation; but it should also be considered in its materiality—as hardware.

Viewed this way, the flag borders on what media theory defines as a "medium"; at the very least, it merits media-scientific reflection. It's important, at the same time, to consider that flags never occur in isolation. Rather, they are always (more or less firmly) integrated into material, social, urban, and technological environments and arrangements. In these contexts, flags fulfill not only a heterological function, but also a heterotopic function, in the Foucauldian sense. That is, they mark places and actions as "counter-placed," ritualized, or extraterritorial. Combined with mediums like photography—one of the main focuses of this piece—the flag's heterological-heterotopic aspects raise the question of its medial efficiency.

The Tricolour Behind the Front

During the French intervention, Canadian photojournalist Joe Penney—who has been reporting from Mali for Reuters since the 2012 military coup—became a diligent documenter of flag motifs.[4] He took an unusual approach to capturing the Malian jubilations. On one of the days that the media wasn't allowed near the front, Penney visited a rural area, where he shot a series of photos of Yacouba Konate, a 56-year-old man, wearing a rather ornate French flag—featuring the Gallic rooster and several inscriptions of the word "France"—as a shawl .[5] In these pictures, Konate drapes himself in the style of soccer fans, or as if the flag were a robe indicative of a particular social position. This flag is not swaying or fluttering on a flagpole. Instead, it is a strangely tranquil, fixed symbol—a reappropriated textile stretched and moved by the man's body, developing its own dignity.

This charged cloth, with its elaborate motifs—likely produced by one of the Chinese companies currently dominating the world flag market—is placed as an image-text-object in pronounced color contrast with its surroundings: a landscape marked by the brown tones of the Savannah, the yellow of a straw wall. Yacouba Konate poses before it all, looking confidently into the camera.

Penney's visual rhetoric thus intends to highlight the sudden introduction of foreign colors—and accordingly, the intervention of a symbolic power, or the powerful symbolism that is analogous to the intervention of French

troops—which Yacouba Konate immediately appropriates and incorporates.

Offering something of a contrast to Konate, who was three years old when the French colonial period ended, Penney also asked a ten-year-old Malian boy to pose for him, in a shop with light green walls.

In his left hand, he holds a piece of bread; in his propped-up right hand, he holds a French Tricolour tied to a stick (homemade by him or someone else). The picture was a huge success in newsrooms around the world; when Reuters offered it up for sale on January 29, 2013, countless newspapers picked it up. The photo of a child offers a world audience, which is culturally/geographically remote and largely uninformed, a different kind of access to the conflict in Mali—an easier access. Its emotional impact is immediate. The shining green of the walls becomes a dramatic backdrop for the improvised flag, framing its three colors.

This series, like the pictures of Yacouba Konate, is missing many of the characteristics usually found in photographs of flag-bearers. And as in the Konate series, a static, even statuary quality prevails. The child leans heavily, his back on a wooden block marked by innumerable blows from a butcher's knife. He calmly holds the stick with the three interwoven patches of flag, which itself is presented in an unostentatious manner. Rather than waving it, the boy holds the flag matter-of-factly, as a natural utensil—a prosthetic. His gaze meets the lens of the camera with curious openness—or at least without any sign of feeling intimidated—while his body appears to be pressed into the wooden block, pushed back either by the photographer's presence or a heavy apparatus. This is not the (stereo)typical photojournalistic formula we know so well in the West: the African child suffering from lack of food and civilization. Something else is happening—has happened—here.

Recalling the ambiguity that, according to John Berger and Jean Mohr, is constitutive of all photography—a discontinuous cutout from a stream of events[6]—one gauges how difficult it is to adequately interpret and classify this image. It is even more difficult (and ultimately open-ended) to speculate about the child's emotional state. If anything, it is more appropriate to speculate about affects, and about how the presence of the flag structures the semiotic situation of the scene.

The precarious state of the flag in Penney's photo, its obvious constructedness, its makeshift nature, seems to conflict with its usual function: symbolizing the *Grande Nation.* The Tricolour is presented incorrectly, contrary to flag protocol. Usually, the French flag starts with the blue field on the left by the (imaginary) flagpole, the white in the middle, and the red to its right. The flag in Penney's photo isn't only tilted vertically by 90 degrees; it is also shown the wrong way around. But the picture worked for photo editors, who were looking for an image that captured the situation after the French intervention in a consistent, atmospheric, and perhaps unexpected manner. The caption underneath a drastically cut version of the photo on the front page of the *Berliner Zeitung* (January 31, 2013) claimed that the boy welcomed the French troops "happily." The daily news media are keen on disambiguating the polysemy of images. The reductive combination of Tricolour and African child seems to permit no other conclusion: the boy is celebrating the intervention.

Cover of Paris-Match, June 26, 1955.

Signifier and Signified of Colonialism

It now seems appropriate to reference a famous passage from Roland Barthes's 1957 *Mythologies*. In a short, anticolonial section in the systemic part of the book, the semiologist discusses the iconic cover photo of the June 26, 1955 issue of *Paris Match*. It is a close-up of a young African cadet in uniform, who, according to Barthes, "is performing the military salute, his eyes raised and probably directed toward a fold in the Tricolour."[7] Barthes distinguishes between the "sense of the picture," described above, and its meaning, which is

> that France is a grand empire, that its sons, regardless of their skin color, serve loyally under its flag, and that that there is no better retort to the opponents of so-called colonialism than the eagerness with which this black man serves his alleged oppressors.[8]

Barthes translates this reading into the semiological distinction between the signifier ("a black soldier performs the French military salute") and the signified (an "intentionally constructed mixture of Frenchness and soldiery"), which expresses itself in the "presence of the signified by means of the signifier."[9] In the mythical-ideological deployment of the picture, the soldier's apparent act of gazing at the flag inevitably becomes legible as evidence of his loyalty and devotion to the French empire.

In a caption to the cover photo, the soldier is identified as "little Diouf," but his full name is Diouf Birane. He has travelled from Ouagadougou (Burkina Faso today) to Paris with his comrades, the child cadets of the Afrique Occidentale Française (AOF). Along with four thousand other participants, they have assembled in the Palais des Sports for the so-called " *nuits de l'armée*," a military parade (which, with its many circus and operetta-like elements, was essentially a colonial exhibition).[10] The *Paris Match* cover photo is best located in the tradition of colonial propaganda. This form was exemplified most memorably by a notorious poster put out in 1940 by the Service d'information pour le Secretariat d'Etat aux Colonies of the Vichy government, which featured the slogan "three colors, one flag, one empire." Three racist archetypes are shown together (a North African, a sub-Saharan, and an East Asian member of the French colonial forces), their heads all turned toward a symbolic manifestation of the nation: the Tricolour. It flies in the wind behind their backs, surrounding and capturing them. The Tricolour is visually conflated with the representatives of the colonized and recruited populations. Their heads seem to perforate the gaseous tricolor atmosphere, constructing a unity that suggests an affective attachment to the project of colonialism, anchored in the sight of the flag (or due to a projection of the flag as a supposedly natural environment).[11]

"Trois couleurs, un drapeau, un empire" was a propaganda poster issued by the Vichy government's Service d'information pour le Secretariat d'Etat aux Colonies, c. 1940.

Residual National Symbolism

Joe Penney's picture of the child in Douentza emerged almost sixty-three years after the photograph of Diouf Birane on the cover of *Paris Match*. The place and the function of the flag have changed in many ways. The child in Penney's photo, apparently a bit younger than Diouf Birane in 1955, doesn't lift his gaze toward a military presentation of a real or imagined Tricolour, but instead directs it away from the flag in his hand and toward the camera. As a resident of a country that is to be freed from Islamist rebels and their reign of terror by French troops, he has a different relationship to France than the colonized subject Diouf Birane, who was exploited directly for France's colonial project. The signified, in Barthes's words, is no longer the "mixture of Frenchness and soldiery" of the late colonial era, but the postcolonial, globalized world order, wherein France has assumed a special role. It is a former colonial power and a current geopolitical and geoeconomic actor. Among other economic concerns, it doesn't want to see regional instability encumber its uranium mining in neighboring Niger. France is thus acting in its own national interest, but also according to the power logic of the new empire of international capitalism, which holds onto national representation only when it benefits the economic interests of the regime.

The fact that this has little to do with a myth that abides by the protocols and etiquette required to manage national symbols, and much to do instead with an allusive memory of a possible and bygone function of national representation, becomes clear when one recognizes the improvised and needy quality of the supposedly "jubilant" reception of the French troops. Penney, the ambitious composer, conveys this point. In all its sluggish, homemade materiality and vulnerability, the Tricolour hangs off a stick, instead of being presented as a numinous phenomenon or as the object of a young cadet's gaze. As such, it is anything but a triumphant symbol of victory. It is more of a relic, a pathetic remnant of the *Grande Nation*. Despite this, or precisely because it slightly contradicts our expectations, it remains attractive to the photojournalist on the lookout for unusual motifs.

The Totemism of the Flag

When the French colonial troops appeared in West Africa in the 1890s and announced their territorial and economic demands, they brought along the Tricolour. In 1894, French soldiers took the flag to cities like Timbuktu and Abomey as a symbol of triumph—the arrival of civilization. The flag helped the propagandists of the time (the picture journalists, with their drawing pencils) construct the myth of empire. While the white French soldiers wore white or blue and white, many of the "indigenous" members of the French military were dressed in Tricolour. The multiethnic *tirailleurs sénégalais*, for example, were equipped with a red fez, white harem pants, and a blue doublet. They were flag fabric, part of the symbolic staging of the empire.

Returning in January 2013, the French troops weren't brandishing flags. Instead, they themselves were greeted from the roadside by the Tricolour, which had been selling like hot cakes in the days after the intervention. Waving France and Mali's respective tricolor flags *together* was popular among Malians as well as foreign correspondents. What better way to emphasize the joint military campaign, the new brotherhood in arms, the postimperial commonality? On the streets of Timbuktu and Bamako, it emerged as a convenient, easily legible, almost universal symbol—ready-made for media dissemination and exploitation. This double-flagging was taken particularly far by one Malian, who found his way to Independence Square on February 2, 2013, in expectation of President Hollande's arrival. Again, it was Joe Penney who photographed this figure in the crowd and spread his picture around the world via Reuters. The man in the photograph has painted his upper body—even his head—blue, white, and red. On his chest, he wears the inscription " *Bienvenue le sauveur François Hollande*." As a skirt or pants—it isn't clear which—he sports the Malian national colors: green, yellow, and red. In each hand, he holds one of the national flags. Even though this kind of body painting has long been a common practice in sports—particularly among football fans—it is jarring in light of colonial history, particularly the aforementioned stooping of "indigenous" soldiers in the Tricolour. (It harkens back to Jean Rouch's 1956 film *Les maitres fous,* in which the natives literally embody the colors of their colonizers.[12]) This tricolored masquerade has a threatening, eerie quality—as if the picture of a body, seemingly transformed into a symbol of recolonization, is potentially contagious.

The emerging totemism of the flag here refers us back to the likely beginning of the anthropology and sociology of the flag, which can be found in Marcel Mauss and Emile Durkheim's thoughts on primitive forms of classification from 1903, or in Durkheim's 1912 "Elementary Forms of the Religious Life." The latter interprets the totem as an emblem of group accord, a way for people to classify themselves as a group. Durkheim compares the totem with "clan flags," the symbol that big families used to separate themselves from others, and which were symbols both of God and society.[13] In certain studies of civil religion in modern states, particularly the United States, the flag is understood as a totem-emblem. As such, it permeates all areas of life, even adorning the bodies of the citizenry in the form of tattoos—while it is simultaneously cherished as a sacred object that must be protected from defilement and desecration by complex rituals and laws:

> The definition of the holy as what is set apart, whole and complete, one and physically perfect, explains why there is horror in burning or cutting the flag, and danger in its being dismembered and rendered partial. A worn and tattered flag is ritually perilous and must be ceremonially burned so that nothing at all is left. The flag is treated both as a live being and as the sacred embodiment of a dead one. Horror at burning the flag is a ritual response to the prohibition against killing the totem.[14]

The religious-ritual use of the flag stands in close relation to its function in the military context. In German, a distinction is made between banners and flags. Traditionally, banners were custom-made from precious materials, painted, and embroidered to identify a particular military unit (until they were progressively standardized in the seventeenth century). Flags, by contrast, were exchangeable vehicles for iconography. According to these semantics, the material of the flag doesn't play a decisive role; its main function is the visual communication of information over long distances. Only in the late eighteenth century, after the American and French revolutions—at the dawn of modern nation-building—did the flag become an indicator of nationality that adhered to certain rules in the international context (serving, for example, as a signpost of occupation). Its installation or raising announces the takeover of a territory or building;

the modern cult surrounding the flag transfers the military unit's sense of honor onto nations and political ideologies.[15]

Materiality of the Flag

But are the materiality and material value of the flag really irrelevant to its symbolic, identity-bestowing, affecting quality? As Emile Durkheim noted, though a flag may only be a printed piece of fabric, a sign without value, a soldier would still die to save it.[16] The physical nature of the signifier would thus be irrelevant to the signified as well as to the sign itself. But to make this argument, one has to advance a semiotics that abstracts all vehicles (or mediums) and their respective materiality in favor of a term conveying purely visual information. Indeed, the materiality, the texture of a particular flag object, is vitally important to its meaning and use. At least in the representation of the flag's use (the performance of the flag), particular circumstances, such as the decrepit or dignified appearance of the flag, can be charged with significant meaning—discursive meaning and, of at least equal importance, affective sense.

Les guignols de l'info is a popular, satirical television program on Canal+. The episode shown here aired January 28, 2013.

The patchy quality of the Tricolour in Penney's photographs of Douentza follows a long tradition of depicting flags in an imperfect, unfinished, or worn out state. This type of image can be found in the iconography of battles and revolutions, where banners and flags are shown captured, defended, or in the possession of a victorious enemy. Flags are easily damaged and, for that reason, valuable. Particularly in the United States, the image of the torn and tattered Stars and Stripes has been a popular motif since at least the Civil War. A ritual routine is made of posing for the war photographer with the saved flag brought home from battle. Every stock photography agency has a tattered flag on offer.[17]

From the Child's Flag to the Rainbow Flag

The story in Penney's photographs of the flag-bearing child in Douentza is different, because that flag was not damaged by war or another catastrophe, but was an improvised expression of happiness and gratitude. And yet, the picture does demonstrate how much flags exist in material, semiotic hierarchies as objects that possess a certain degree of agency, of self-will, which can be used, activated, and perceived to the point of animistic animation. The unsentimental composition and almost meditative mood of Penney's photos are unusual; the occasion doesn't produce the kind of flag choreography one might expect. At the same time, the photographer could count on an inter-iconic reception; that is, he could count on the media to draw the connection to old pictures of flag use and other pictures coming out of Mali. Only two days before his picture of "liberated Timbuktu," jubilant scenes had occurred when Malian and French troops entered the city. The population of Timbuktu was prepared, and waved the flags of France and Mali—many of which seemed as makeshift as the one in the boy's hand.

The liberation of Timbuktu in northern Mali held particular symbolic weight. This was so not only because it meant capturing one of the recently established strongholds of the Islamist rebels and salvaging important cultural artifacts, like the city's famous library and scripts. It was also because Timbuktu, as a legendary desert city, had great potential to produce an image that could remedy the memory of West Africa and France's colonial history.[18] The Malian and French flags, which marked the street scene on that day, articulated a multiplicity of feelings, ideological convictions, and media response patterns. Crucially, they also pointed to the absence of the banners introduced by the Islamist groups when their convoys arrived. In Timbuktu's public sphere and in global media reports about the French intervention, the Islamist symbols (which are viewed by the international community as illegitimate, even illegal) were replaced by the color games of recognized nation-states.

The symbolic-goods industry responded quickly by dumping amalgamations of the two nations onto the Malian market. In Bamako, AFP correspondent Stéphane Jourdain photographed a sticker depicting François Hollande before a backdrop of Malian and French colors. The sticker was sold alongside images of Bugs Bunny and Malian soccer player Seydou Keita.[19] French puppeteers on the television program *Les guignols de l'info* didn't miss the opportunity to satirize the new color combinations. In an episode aired on January 28, 2013, they addressed the topic from a domestic angle.[20] It starts with a scene resembling a primordial rite of military-colonial power and territorial assertion: the doll of a French soldier stands by a flagpole, next to an African straw hut. Then the Village People's "In the Navy" starts playing and a rainbow flag is hoisted in place of the Tricolour. A voice-over announces that same-sex marriage

Yacouba Konate wears the French Tricolour in Mali, mid-January 2013. Photo: Joe Penney, Reuters.

has finally been accepted—indicating that the military, reputed bastion of homophobia, is losing all its inhibitions in the excitement over their success in Mali. The similarity between the rainbow flag and the *PACE* flag of the Italian peace movement (which became a global symbol in the course of worldwide demonstrations against the 2003 invasion of Iraq) adds some bite to *Les guignols de l'info'* s satirical declaration.

The Reluctant Flag

Of course, the situation in Mali and the images it has produced are anything but unambiguous. Although (or precisely because) the jubilation in the streets and squares of Bamako and Timbuktu was so effusive and apparently unambiguous, when François Hollande visited in early February 2013 in the manner of a military general, a growing chorus of critical voices emerged. These critics offered some context to the "Francophile fever" that seemed to have gripped the population of Mali, placing it in relation it to the country's anticolonial struggles and the deep-seated rejection of the former colonial power.[21] They also acknowledged that different generations in Mali had diverging opinions and feelings about France's new triumphant presence and savior pose. Points of criticism included not only France's tolerant attitude towards the Malian government, which had come to power through a military coup in 2012, but also that French and international media organizations were oversimplifying the situation in northern Mali: generalized references to terrorists and jihadis, for example, were thought to misrepresent the heterogeneous composition of the rebels.

On February 6, a few days after the intervention and Hollande's visit, well-known Malian filmmaker and theorist Manthia Diawara published a long essay in which he not only analyzed the complex situation in Mali, but also offered ideas for a reorganization of the African state system—chiefly, a separation of nation and state. At the beginning of his text, which might be regarded as a kind of antinationalist manifesto, Diawara expresses his frustration with the way the Malians welcomed their supposed saviors. He uses the disparaging term "banner republic"—a play on "banana republic":

> I felt that the French intervention in Mali was a dose of realism that had to be taken with plenty of humiliation or shame. I thought my country was different from what I considered "Banner republics" (*Républiques bannières*), where the West must always help; countries that failed, where the people, seeing white soldiers arrive, rejoice like children at the sight of Santa. Seeing Malians dancing in the streets—as they had done at independence—to welcome the French army, was to me a still image [*arrêt sur l'image*], which on the one hand reminded me of our failed independence, our alleged national sovereignty, and on the other hand made me consider a full-blown return of French hegemony, like that of a father who doesn't want to see his son grow up.[22]

Diawara sees this flag-waving as an interruption of the move toward emancipation, which started in the mid-twentieth century—the regression of a nation, be it one's own or the one whose help one seems to require. The "banner republic" is a form of nationality for which the "banal nationalism" that social psychologist Michael Billig identified doesn't suffice.[23] In that situation, the waving of the flag is (or becomes) necessary to build emotional ties with the national project. Following Diawara's lead, one could interpret Penney's photograph of the flag-bearing child as an allegory for immaturity, for a lack of reflection about the double bias of nationalist and colonialist myths—the epitome of the "banner republic," of its childlike affectedness in the smallest moment of gratitude, of its pride or haughty schadenfreude (regarding the misery in neighboring countries).

But Penney's pictures are open to a wide variety of reactions and experiences, and not only in the trivial sense that everyone can see something different in them. In his presentation of the "false" French flag, which shows a subliminally reluctant, recalcitrant, undramatic flag-waving performance, the ritual of commitment to the nation seems to break down into its component parts, becoming thin and unstable. Rather than a submissive embrace, this seems to be a quietly eloquent refusal of the "banner republic." The time of the *Grande Nation* and the time of the flag-waving boy are no longer synchronized, as they were in Barthes's reading of the *Paris Match* cover photo. Rather, they are drifting apart, forming a heterochrony. The absence of any pathos or submission in the pose and gaze of the child reminds us that Michel Foucault considers colonies a part of the "counter-placements or abutment," meaning the spatial order of heterotopia.[24] In addition, one can sense the arbitrariness of the sign in light of its ostentatious materiality. The visual technology used—a digital SLR camera, by all appearances—articulates nuanced and brilliant colors through its high resolution and aperture, and primes the texture and surfaces of objects in extreme detail. The salesroom/stage is ironically reminiscent of a green screen. Next to the child, the flag, and the wooden block, we discover small and large canisters on the floor and wall, as well as a refrigerator. In this environment, the flag—which must have been sewn immediately prior, perhaps by the tailors in Bamako who in January 2013 started producing French flags on short notice, themselves becoming motifs for photojournalists[25]—is characterized by its individualizing materiality and its manual, preindustrial constructedness. This object, with its shining primary colors and crisp white, cannot (and should not) emancipate itself from its symbolic function. As a flag, it contributes a semiotic register to the picture; it "labels" the photo, decisively organizing its perception, interpretation, and use.

The other focal point, which, in tandem with the writing on the flag creates unpredictable connections and mixtures, is the face of the child. It lends Penney's photo the signature of an affect-image, to the point where the presence of the flag has a mimetic quality and the face of the child has traces of the symbolic. In other words: any desired or expected message in the photo, any ideological appeal connected with the banner motif, becomes entangled in the dense assemblage of materiality and ambiguity. This " *arrêt sur l'image*," to speak through Diawara, cannot be understood through vexillology (the study of flags and banners), political psychology, or semiotic analysis alone. Instead, a media studies problematization of the military and journalistic *dispositifs* offered in and through the photo should be carried out—as should a study of the photo as a volatile-erratic element in a socio-technological assemblage driven by reluctant political-affective energies. The floundering of sovereignty in the picture, which becomes emblematic of the complex relationship between subjectivity and sovereignty, opens up the pre- and trans-individual dimension of affect.

Starting from a critique of the concept of ideology and a theory of affect in capitalism—as advanced by Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari and continued recently by Judith Butler, Brian Massumi, and Lauren Berlant—and then considering the child with the Tricolour, one can ask how "passionate or irrational attachments to normative authority and normative worlds" should be understood.[26] Penney's photo brings up such unconscious attachments or dependencies because it focuses on the attachment of a child, who is dependent per se—particularly on his parents—and who is subject to household and societal norms, and who experiences this subjection as passion (love, etc.). For Lauren Berlant, children (partly because of their fundamental dependence) feel a "cruel optimism" in which each imposition and adjustment by the authorities is understood as a contribution to a better life: "Children organize their optimism for living through attachments they never consented to making … they make do with what's around that might respond adequately to their needs."[27]

A man wearing body paint displays the flags of France and Mali on Place de l'indépendence, Bamako, during the visit of French president François Hollande, February 2, 2013. Photo: Joe Penney/ Reuters.

The child in Penney's picture picks up the Tricolour because that is what's around. Perhaps he sees it as a sign of hope for change and improvement. Or maybe he sees it as a sign of authority that, however temporary, supplements or replaces the existing authorities. This allows spectators to reflect on the relationships between childhood and nation, between dependence and sovereignty, between perceived norms and normative feelings. Furthermore, viewers' own individual and trans-individual attachments to the nation—the French one in this case—and the neoimperial regime in which the nation-state is integrated are worth reconsidering. [28]

From the point of view of an extended political affect theory, the "flag" (as a concrete material thing and as an abstract symbol) is only interesting in its relationality, as a thing among things, an actant among actants—only interesting when it is experienced as part of an event, as an element of affective encounters or a socio-technological fabric, which is materially and virtually changed in and through these frames. Why not transform the sub-academic subject of vexillology by developing an anti-essential definition of "flag," placing it beyond the reach of ideology-critical reflexes, so as to make a differentiated consideration of the pragmatism and performativity of flags possible? In the course of such a reflection, it becomes important to consider the flag's presence in heterotopic and heterological image spaces, in terms of its expressiveness and political instrumentality, its affirmative and subversive nature, its banality as well as its great potential for scandal and excitement. All legitimate critiques of the spasms of the " *République bannière*" considered, the analysis of the flag-wavers in Mali may help make sense of the role flags play in a post-normative, deregulated world order, and thus contribute to the economy of affects in our prolonged state of emergency. In short: they are phantasmic crutches.

X

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1
Named after a breed of small cats native to Africa.

2
For a helpful overview of the situation in Mali at the time of the intervention, see Stephen Smith, "In Search of Monsters: On the French Intervention in Mali," *London Review of Books* , February 7, 2013.

3
See Forum pour un Autre Mali (FORAM), "Mali: Chronique d'une recolonisation programmée," April 6, 2013, Afrik.com http://www.afrik.com/article25273.html ; John Ahni Schertow, "No to the Recolonization of Mali," *Intercontinental Cry Magazine,* March 4, 2013 http://intercontinentalcry.org/no-to-the-recolonization-of-mali/ ; Alexander Mezyaev, "Military Intervention in Mali: Special Operation to Recolonize Africa," *Global Research*, January 14, 2013 http://www.globalresearch.ca/military-intervention-in-mali-special-operation-to-recolonize-africa/5318820 ; "France and the Recolonisation of Mali," *Revolutionary Communist Group—Fight Racism! Fight Imperialism!* no. 231 (Feb.–March 2013) http://www.revolutionarycommunist.org/index.php/international/2881-france-and-the-recolonisation-of-mali .

4
See Joe Penney's personal website http://www.joepenney.com/ . For a wider selection of his articles, see the website Pass Blue: Covering the UN, maintained by the Ralph Bunche Institute for International Studies, CUNY Graduate Center, New York http://passblue.com/author/joe-penney/ .

5
Joe Penney, "Mali's War: Far From Over," *Photographer's Blog*, Reuters, March 22, 2013

6
John Berger and Jean Mohr, *Another Way of Telling* (New York: Vintage, 1982), 83.

7
Roland Barthes, *Mythologies*, trans. Jonathan Cape (New York: Hill and Wang, 1972), 260.

8
Ibid., 260.

9
Ibid., 261.

10
Barthes didn't pay attention to these details, which are available on the cover and inside the issue of *Paris Match.* Several gaps and blind spots in his analysis have been pointed out over the last few years. Nicholas Mirzoeff, for example, noted that the *Paris Match* cover had an eerie resonance with a practice of the anticolonial FLN in Algeria: the FLN photographed captured sub-Saharan soldiers—recruited by the French to implement colonial oppression—after their execution, doing precisely the same flag salute (See Mirzoeff, *The Right to Look: A Counterhistory of Visuality* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2011), 244.) Canadian artist Vincent Meessen tried to locate Diouf Birane, the adolescent on the *Paris Match* cover, for his video project *Vita Nova*(2009). He discovered that Birane had died in Senegal in 1980. But in the course of his research in Ouagadougou, he happened upon one of Birane's comrades, who also attended the 1955 event and was also depicted in the famous issue of *Paris Match.* He also discovered something that was missing from Barthes's biography and accounts of his anticolonial engagements: one of Barthes's grandfathers, Gustave Binger, had been a high-ranking French colonial officer in West Africa in the second half of the nineteenth century. (See T. J. Demos, *Return to the Postcolony: Specters of Colonialism in Contemporary Art (* Berlin: Sternberg Press, 2013).)

11
In the past few years, young migrant activists have brought the Vichy poster back from the archives, reappropriating and defacing it to recode the national project and promote a tolerant, anti-Islamophobic, and antiracist society. (See PIR, "Rebeus, Renois, tous solidaires… Et vous?," *Les Indigènes de la République* no. 8 (November 2010) http://indigenes-republique.fr/rebeus-renois-tous-solidaires-et-vous/ and "Mois du graphisme à Echirolles," Le Blog de guy, December 20, 2012 http://blog-de-guy.blogspot.de/2012/12/mois-du-graphisme-echirolles.html .) This reference to the Tricolour and its critical rededication is problematic in itself. The national symbols, particularly the republican connotations of the Tricolour, merit a discussion of their own today—even if they have received one before. In 1968, for example, the French Left vehemently discussed these questions. (See *Le Rouge,* the short *ciné-tract* that painter Gérard Fromanger produced in 1968 with Jean-Luc Godard, which shows the color red pouring over the white and blue parts of the Tricolour https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FYBziDl_r7M . The repression of colonial history has recently lead to a widespread academic and pop cultural discourse in France. The highly successful feature film *Indigènes* by Rachid Bouchareb, for example, which thematized the forgotten and ignored role of North and West African soldiers in France's World War II efforts, incited a firestorm of discussion. Revisionist histories of French colonialism emphasize the significance of the flag in this context. Pascal Blanchard and Sandrine Lemaire's *Culture impériale, 1931–1961* (2011), for example, focuses on another of the Vichy government's propaganda images featuring the Tricolour; incidentally, they also show a film poster for *Indigènes* intended for the international market, which concentrates the film's plot into a blue-white-red fog (even here, the motif of the Tricolour is used for atmosphere's sake.

12
It is worth noting that Rouch's 1955 *Les maitres fous,* which documents (and stages) the dances and rituals of the Hauka religion in British-colonized Niger, shows a Hauka flag parade, which is of great structural importance to the film. This parade, in turn, references a British flag ritual called "Trooping the Colour"; see Erhard Schüttpelz, *Die Moderne im Spiegel des Primitiven: Weltliteratur und Ethnologie (1870–1960)* (Munich: Fink, 2005).

13
Emile Durkheim, *Die elementaren Formen des religiösen Lebens* (1912), trans. Ludwig Schmidts, (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1981).

14
Carolyn Marvin and David Ingle, *Blood Sacrifice and the Nation: Totem Rituals and the American Flag* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999).

15
See Urte Evert and Daniel Hohrath, "Die Zeichen der Krieger und der Nation: Fahnen und Flaggen," *Farben der Geschichte. Fahnen und Flaggen* , ed. Daniel Horath in cooperation with Urte Evert and Steffi Bahro, commissioned by Deutsches Historisches Museum, Berlin 2007, 17. In the mid-nineteenth century, abolitionist preacher Henry Ward Beecher said: "A thoughtful mind, when it sees a Nation's flag, sees not the flag only, but the Nation itself; and whatever may be its symbols, its insignia, he reads chiefly in the flag the Government, the principles, the truths, the history which belongs to the Nation that sets it forth."

16
Durkheim, *Die elementaren Formen des religiösen Leben* , 326.

17
The motif is also of interest to ambitious photographers like Seth Butler; see *Tattered: Investigation of an American Icon,* 2010 http://www.sethbutler.com/ .

18
Robert Davoine, *Tombouctou. Fascination et malédiction d'une ville mythique* (Paris: Harmattan), 2003.

19
Stephane Jourdane, "Sticker à l'effigie de François Hollande, le 21 mars 2013 au marché Dabanani de Bamako," DirectMatin.fr, March 22, 2013 http://www.directmatin.fr/france/2013-03-22/au-mali-la-fievre-francophile-commence-agacer-429143 .

20
"La France hisse le drapeau au mali—Les guignols de l'info du 29/01/13."

21
For a further explanation of some of the positions around "Francophile Fever."

22
Manthia Diawara, "Ce qui serait arrivé si la France n'était pas intervenue au Mali," *Slate Afrique*, February 6, 2013 http://www.slateafrique.com/102941/nord-mali-francois-hollande-bamako-intervention .

23
Michael Billig, *Laughter and Ridicule: Toward a Social Critique of Humor* (London: Sage, 2005).

24
Michel Foucault, "Von anderen Räumen," *Dits et Ecrits. Schriften*, vol. 4 (Frankfurt am Main:

26

Suhrkamp, 2001), 931–942.

25
See the picture a Reuters photographer took on January 24, 2013 of tailor Abdoulay Cissuma sewing a flag in Bamako's central market http://www.theatlantic.com/infocus/2013/01/the-conflict-in-mali/100446/ .

26
Lauren Berlant, *Cruel Optimism* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2011), 183.

27
Ibid., 296.

28
In connection with a politics of affects, new sociopsychological and neurological studies on the effect of seeing a flag should be undertaken. Their empirical results may offer revelations about the transformation of political space in a pre- and post-discursive affect-public. See Ran R. Hassin, Melissa J. Ferguson, Daniella Shidlovski, Tamar Gross, "Subliminal Exposure to National Flags Affects Political Thought and Behavior," *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* , vol.104, no.50 (December 11, 2007): 19757-19761; Laura Cram et al., Strathclyde University "Mood of the Nation Quiz — A Survey with a Twist," 2012 http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/shared/bsp/hi/pdfs/11_06_12_nation.pdf and Guido Michels, "Neuronen für Deutschland. In Berlin vermessen Forscher die Bundesbürger bei der Produktion des Nationalgefühls," *Der Spiegel*, June 25, 2012.

Tyler Coburn

Charter Citizen

In October 2012, the Supreme Court of Honduras forced closure on a recent chapter of neoliberal expansionism, ruling against the constitutionality of autonomous cities within its borders.

The ill-fated enterprise dates back to the 2009 TED conference, when liberal economist Paul Romer took the floor to pitch "charter cities," built on the territory of host countries and subject to the market-friendly jurisdiction of credible guarantor nations. At the 2011 TED conference, Romer returned to announce that his initial speech had directly impacted the Honduran congress's passage of a constitutional amendment and statute (Decree No. 123-2011), which enabled the creation of such cities in "Special Development Regions."

Private interests soon followed, overseen by Milton Friedman's grandson, Patri, and Michael Strong, cofounder of Conscious Capitalism, Inc. Their respective city models had more anarcho-capitalist and libertarian tilts than Romer's. (Strong's, for example, made third-party guarantorship a voluntary provision). Notwithstanding these differences, all three plans promoted minimal legal apparatuses to lure foreign investment.

Laissez-faire utopias are not new to the developing world, which has periodically served as a sketchpad for the capitalist dreamer. What Romer's, Strong's, and Friedman's theories contribute is the marketization of government. Neoliberalism, Wendy Brown writes, demotes "the political sovereign to managerial status": a weak monitor of the transnational flows that perforate its bounds. [1] If the nation-state's alignment of sovereignty and territory increasingly founders against globalized competitors, as the city planners reason, then the state itself must be abandoned in favor of workable alternatives—"designed in the same way as entrepreneurial business models from Silicon Valley," Strong proposes, or conceived as an operating system and service provider, tailoring user experience to produce what Patri Friedman calls "a city that's as fun to use as an iPad." [2]

At a 2012 conference for his other city-building endeavor, the Seasteading Institute, Friedman went so far as to term government an obsolete technology, arguing that "surely the scientific and technical progress of the last two centuries have unlocked new forms of government that people today have never even dreamed of." [3] Whether floating in international waters or sprouting on foreign territory, these proposed cities are the proving grounds for the technolibertarians' foray into governance. In fact, they already demonstrate a concrete link between technology and geopolitics: venture capitalist Peter Thiel donated the same amount of startup funds to the Seasteading Institute as to Facebook. John Perry Barlow's 1996 manifesto, "A Declaration of the Independence of Cyberspace," retrenched the frontierist rhetoric of libertopias past. Internet capital is fueling its real-world return.

This Seasteading Institute flash drive was given to the author at the 2012 Seasteading Conference in San Francisco. Courtesy of the author.

The model shown here was developed by SESU Seastead—Marko Järvela for the Seastead Design competition, 2009.

The city, Romer notes, provides a convenient scale for a governmental "skunkworks,"[4] though for each planner, form follows ideology.[5] From a libertarian perspective, the outmoding of the nation-state emancipates individuals from its alleged predation and forced taxation. Citizenship as determined by the state—conventionally through *jus soli*,[6]

jus sanguinis,[7] or some combination thereof—gives way to models of selfhood predicated foremost on voluntaryism.

This scenario fits hand-in-glove with neoliberalism's extreme horizon: when government is run as a private service, even the citizen can be put into circulation. Henceforth, the consent to be ruled will be set by flexible contracts, and civic obligations need extend only as far as their terms and conditions. Yet if ideology inheres in the very architecture of greenfield urbanism, the question arises as to *who* and *what* are being modeled in these new material interfaces.

Charter Cities

Charter cities build on Paul Romer's theory that "rules" are the true linchpins of a growing economy: the higher their quality, the more favorable the circumstances for investment, innovation, and economic growth. Good laws and customs must account for why Taiwan, as Romer argues, could develop with a scarcity of natural resources and capital goods. Introducing these good rules into a country with weaker ones—in a government-approved charter city/zone—would thus incentivize "privately held ideas to be put to use within its borders," as long as those rules benefit free market practices, such as direct investment, the protection of property rights, and the curbing of regulations.[8] The implementation of good rules, of course, first requires identifying nations with conspicuously weak ones. By so doing, Romer implicitly performs a pervasive logic whereby the naming of a "failed" or "failing" state gives justification for various scales of international and private intervention. Charter cities may eschew interventionism in favor of territorial partitioning, though provide similar grounds for action.

Theoretically, anyone in the world can migrate to a charter city. It remains the sovereign territory of a host country, but is privately held—as with a case like Singapore, infrastructural and administrative costs are drawn from the revenues of land leasing and value gains. A given charter city sources its rules from a guarantor nation, in the manner that Hong Kong recruits judges from common law jurisdictions, or Mauritius appeals cases to the United Kingdom's Privy Council. In optimal circumstances, a legal arrangement with a guarantor nation would spur the interest of both national and foreign investors, who could even sign on to help build the city.

Despite the economic incentives, there is questionable business demand for charter cities. Multinationals already habitually consign arbitration to third-party courts; in the case of Honduras, this long-standing practice was finally formalized with CAFTA-DR's allowance for dispute settlement at the World Bank.[9] These existing provisions must suffice to offset the poor accountability of certain developing countries, which have seen little diminishment in business with wealthy nations. The novelty of charter cities, then, may lie in their streamlined template for arbitration, which can scale to a multinational network without ever requiring foreign investors to directly engage with territorial hosts. Certainly, a weak-ruled country could profit through the sale of land and, potentially, from spillover effects of the autonomous zones, but its consent renders explicit the operations of global capital: the host acknowledges that it, too, can be remade as a frontier.

Defense—like arbitration—can be contracted out. In a 2012 report, Romer and his colleague Brandon Fuller offered the Royal Canadian Mounted Police and the Carabineros de Chile as two organizations that could train

Charter Cities proponent, Paul Romer, speaks on television.

officers and provide borrowed accountability to charter city police, while also serving "as a model for reform in the rest of Honduras."[10] Such recommendations risk inflating perceptions of the country's lack of legitimacy, making the potential authoritarianism of a charter city seem comparably desirable. Indeed, the 2011 Latinobarómetro poll found that less than half of the residents of Honduras—the murder capital of the world—"presently believe democracy is preferable to any other type of government, while more than a quarter admit an authoritarian regime is occasionally preferable."[11] This quarter may someday live in the safety of paranoid consent, with a wait-list of would-bes forming temporary encampments on the charter city perimeter.

Migration / Voluntaryism

Romer's nonprofit think tank, Charter Cities, maintains a strict conflict-of-interest policy in the city zones. His advisory capacity, if anything, skews against extant—and, in his opinion, ineffectual—forms of foreign aid, favoring the "mutually beneficial exchange" to be found between charter citizens, charter courts, and charter investors.[12] Pairing "rising tide" faith with an outspoken concern about the imminent urbanization crisis, the economist has made a range of critics wonder if new experiments with city building aren't better than none.

Reflecting on this crisis at TED2009, Romer outlined the role charter cities could play for the "many hundreds of millions—if not billions—of people who will move to cities in the coming centuries": the 270 million expected to move to Indian cities by 2030, for example, and the 700 million that a 2009 Gallup poll reported want to migrate permanently. The economist then redistributed the world's available arable land into a dotted grid, noting that the addition of cities for a billion new people will only add 1 percent to the 3 percent we've already taken.[13]

Less discussed are those for whom migration is a habitual state—who, in a very different way than the citystead innovators, also experience precaritization as a naturalized mode of work. Charter cities thus settle into a familiar paradox for ethico-humanitarian entrepreneurship, as the application of business models to ameliorate inequitable conditions ends up yielding contract-based, globalized networks coextensive with those conditions. Moreover, the charter cities' supposed alleviation of traditional immigration restrictions could conceivably supplement, not diminish, existing circuits of migratory labor.

Compounding this question is that of the political rights of charter cities' early adopters. As stipulated in the constitutional statute, an independent "Transparency Commission" would mediate relations between the Honduran government and guarantor nations. In seeming confirmation of neoliberalism's preference for technocratic governance, the commission's *pro tempore* members included the former senior executive of Singapore Power, a Nobel Laureate economist, and the Director Emeritus of Bain & Company. "It is easier to create a board of trustees than to give control of part of your territory to a foreign nation," the presidential chief of staff remarked.[14] As *The Economist* reported in December 2011, among the commission's more controversial decisions was to delay the introduction of democratic institutions into the charter cities: only when it "deems that the time is ripe will citizens be able to elect the members of the 'normative councils'—in effect, local parliaments."[15]

Such provisions have made Romer's critics cry *neocolonial*. The accusation, he replied at TED2009, is an "emotional" one, as colonialism ruled by coercion, whereas charter cities allow people to opt-in and out. Situating charter cities within voluntaryist theory, then, may help explain why democracy plays a conditional (not constitutional) role: the capacity to enter and leave is taken as a sacrosanct liberty that renders secondary a given city's system of governance, thus prioritizing extrinsic contracts over civic engagement. Michael Strong has presented this capacity as a democratization of choice, though it clearly owes less to democratic governance than to the libertarianism of figures like Murray Rothbard, whose advocacy of voluntary transactions for national defense and courts can be seen to presage these city models.

"'Voting' with boots, not ballots," as political philosopher David Ellerman wryly puts it, figures into the voluntaryist emphasis on exit over voice, and on the beneficent effects of the private individual's free agency in the market.[16] This universalist framework homologizes self-interest and economic gain, assuming an equal, natural agency in its private contractees to seek the one through the other, regardless of how existing inequities may impact their pursuit.

In the case of the charter cities, overwhelming demand

The Chinese city of Ordos, built over the last twenty years to support a local coal mining boom, is largely uninhabited today. It is often cited as a beacon of the imminent bust of the Chinese housing bubble.

may outpace construction, creating population overflows that necessitate the adoption of legal strictures, as Adam Davidson writes, to "tactically dissuade some from coming."[17] Singapore is one of Romer's templates, as its draconian penalties broadcast strict moral and labor standards for exactly these purposes. The limits of voluntaryism here become starkly apparent: even as charter cities attempt to create global migrations unbundled from nation-states, the "practical" needs of population control may require similarly discriminating measures.

"Walls built around political entities cannot block out without shutting in, cannot secure without making securitization a way of life," Wendy Brown theorizes in *Walled States, Waning Sovereignty*. "If they are among the new technologies of power responding to the limitations or even breakdown of the rule of law *and* order in sovereign nations," she continues elsewhere, "they are in this regard continuous with the extrajuridical practices springing up everywhere."[18] Charter cities, in this light, are the extrajuridical enclaves that wall themselves off from their weak-ruled, sovereign hosts.

Instant Cities / Disaster Capitalism

While these proposed cities draw on Silicon Valley business models—at a time when the Bay Area itself seems poised to transform into a high-tech city-state—they also figure into recent trends in greenfield urbanism that, Ellerman notes, fulfill "the classic planners' fantasy of short-circuiting all those messy problems of development."[19] Immediately after the constitutional amendment's passage, for example, a delegation of Hondurans visited South Korea and Singapore: "the two places in the world," Romer claims, "most interested in getting into the city-building business." [20] The former's Songdo International Business District is the largest private real estate venture in history, and the latter's 2007 agreement with China yielded the framework for a scalable, replicable eco-city, the first of which is under construction in Tianjin.[21] These projects attempt to demonstrate the financial feasibility of "instant" cities, as part of a general "denationalization" of globalized economic space that, Saskia Sassen theorizes, elaborates a network atop the Westphalian map.[22] A reterritorializing maxim seeks to become the cosmopolitan rule—even if,

for every Hong Kong, there's at least one Ordos.

Romer's seeming disregard for the "messy problems" marks a surprising departure from his teacher, Robert Lucas, whose theory of the "external effects of human capital" explicitly drew upon Jane Jacobs's *The Economy of Cities* (1969). Laying the groundwork for Romer's theory, Lucas suggested that these effects emerge from the intellection and interaction of groups, which, in the high concentrations of a city, can account for aggregative growth.[23] The technocratic city planning against which Jacobs wrote, in other words, has been twisted into a terminus for her work.[24]

Nor, for that matter, are the cities wholly commensurate with libertarian thought. The movement's Austrian precursor, Friedrich Hayek, frequently critiqued the application of "engineering technique to the solution of social problems," citing a "misuse of science … in fields where [a scientist] is not competent." "From the earlier utopias to modern socialism," Hayek writes, we can observe "the distinct mark of this influence."[25] When asked whether the Honduran city models tempt constructivism, American advisor Mark Klugmann replied that Hayek's objections run against planned and directed economic interactions, not the legal systems that facilitate market relations.[26] Hayek supports this distinction, in his 1973 book *Law, Legislation, and Liberty*: "we can preserve an order of such complexity not by the method of directing the members, but only indirectly by enforcing and improving the rules conducive to the formation of a spontaneous order."[27]

Yet Klugmann would do well to parse theory from action, as the aforementioned ideas have had all too consequent geopolitical effects. Greg Lindsay reads the Honduran project, for example, as an epilogue to Naomi Klein's *The Shock Doctrine*, which plotted neoliberal reforms in Chile, Russia, and Iraq within the matrix of "disaster capitalism."[28] The economic policies of Hayek and Patri's grandfather, Milton Friedman, have not swept the globe "on the backs of freedom and democracy," Klein contends. "They have needed shocks, crises, states of emergencies."[29]

In Honduras, such a shock came with democratically elected president Manuel Zelaya's 2009 ouster. The military claimed to have prevented a referendum that would extend the maximum number of terms a president could serve. Critics, however, suspected the real agents to be the Honduran elite, and the true prompt Zelaya's reforms, which increased social welfare funding and the minimum wage, while slowing the sale of state-owned utilities.

The military coup has since given way to a "second coup" with the privatization of utilities, the ports, and municipal education. Nonetheless, foreign investment and aid have dropped since 2009, as Lobo's questionably "democratic" post-coup election—and subsequent allegations of corruption and human rights violations—have stoked

Patri Friedman at the Burning Man festival. Photo: Christopher Rasch.

international concern. In March 2012, ninety-four members of the US House of Representatives sent a letter to Secretary of State Hilary Clinton asking for the suspension of assistance to the Honduran military and police, whereas Obama's proposed 2013 budget more than doubled key funding.[30] The US continues to be the country's biggest trading partner, and moral indignation has remained merely implicit in the rhetoric of the city builders.

The paradox of an endeavor like Romer's is that while his strong-ruled cities seek exceptional status in weak-ruled countries, they can only come into being by means of those weak rules. A "failing state," in short, must operate with enough legitimacy to allow its extraterritorial guests to take root. This lesson was learned on September 4, 2012, roughly nine months after Lobo appointed Romer's Transparency Commission. On that date, Honduras signed a memorandum of understanding with Michael Strong's fledgling private company, Grupo MGK, to construct three "free city" zones throughout the country. Despite media

coverage at the time of the Transparency Commission's appointment, Lobo's administration never completed the process of publishing the decree in the official gazette and, as such, does not formally recognize its existence. Whatever the circumstances of the surprise deal, the administration felt compelled to bring Romer's charter cities project to an unceremonious end.

Free Cities / Grupo MGK

Despite boasting more flexibility and national concessions than charter cities, Grupo MGK's "free cities" masquerade a pointed, ideological agenda. Strong borrows the company's rhetoric from his other organization, Conscious Capitalism, Inc., which professes an unflagging optimism that "positive entrepreneurial activity, within appropriate legal boundaries, can solve all the world's problems."[31] MGK's free cities offer test sites for this activity, serving the larger effort to steer the libertarian brand away from its Randian associations. In a controversial speech at FreedomFest 2004, Whole Foods CEO and Conscious Capitalism cofounder John Mackey even remarked, "I believe that Rand has ... harmed the movement." Mackey went on to describe how Rand's valorization of self-interest need not be incommensurate with social responsibility; the "flow of ideas, people, capital, technology" through free markets, he argued, yield both personal and societal benefits.[32]

Presumably, Strong's free cities would toe this ethico-entrepreneurial line, excepting the fact that his organization's maneuverings have done little to inspire confidence. The LLC of Strong and Kevin Lyons's previous Honduran interest was revoked by the state of Nevada for failure to pay associated legal fees, and MGK's parent company only registered in Nevada on the very day of the memorandum's signing.[33] Furthermore, Grupo MGK's skeletal website went live more than a week later—primarily, Strong told *Diario La Prensa*, to quell speculation about the nature of the organization, given that the memorandum had not yet been released to the public.[34] And then there's the matter of the footage from a 2011 lecture, in which Strong set his cities' eventual goal as the realization of an "anarcho-capitalist paradise."[35]

In practical terms, Grupo MGK shifts focus from Romer's global community, stipulating that Hondurans must hold 90 percent of its free cities' jobs and charging a given governor to establish immigration criteria. The cities do not require their citizens to adopt the law of a guarantor country, but also allow for a governance structure designed by a Transparency Commission and administered by the governor. "Our model preserves Honduran sovereignty," the Grupo MGK website announced, by making guarantorship a voluntary provision. Nonetheless, MGK will recommend third party legal systems; Strong floated Texas state law, for instance, on account of its minimal taxes and familiarity to American investors.

Venn diagram found on the Conscious Capitalism, Inc. website.

Even before signing the memorandum, the company had entered discussions with interests in clothing, pharmaceuticals, nanotechnology, and organic food processing. The goal, MGK's website stated, "is to build on the existing success of Honduran free zones." Indeed, one of MGK's initial affiliates, Robert Haywood, drafted the 1986 proposal to create the first economic processing zones in Honduras. Free-trade zones have a longer history in the country, from their 1976 authorizing legislation (effectively jump-starting the nation's *maquila* industry) to a 1998 law that turned the entire country into a zone—an exemplary case of Keller Easterling's theory that a zone can serve as a "patriotic doppelgänger or double of the national capital from which it is exempt, allowing state and non-state to use each other as brand, proxy and camouflage."[36]

MGK's website took pains to differentiate its "Next Generation" zones: "Haywood acknowledges that the first generation of free zones were flawed—precisely because they were only industrial parks that did NOT take community into account." Even the prospective free city zones, however, have their Caribbean and Latin American precedents: the walled and guarded "*Zonas Americanas*" originally built for higher-ups in the United Fruit Company and since occupied (rather appropriately) by the foreign owners of the *maquiladora* zones.[37] These were "your classic company towns," Greg Lindsay notes, and their owners retained their privileges, in part, by backing

Honduran locals and members of the Black Fraternal Organization of Honduras (OFRANEH) protest Charter Cities.

This stock image appears on Grupo MGK's website with the accompanying title: "Clean Slate: A Better Future for All Hondurans."

military governments.[38] The opponents of the city projects have drawn the obvious parallels.

Civic Response

Charter and free cities needed available land in a country of sufficient want and the demand of a global populous of sufficient need—generic conditions undone, in countless ways, by the resilience of context, of history (corruption, too). Saskia Sassen has characterized similar tendencies as a "set of processes that does not necessarily scale at the global level as such," but which "is a part of globalization." These "noncosmopolitan forms of global politics … remain deeply attached to or focused on localized issues and struggles."[39] The civic response in Honduras exemplifies these forms.

In September 2012, representatives of the Black Fraternal Organization of Honduras (OFRANEH), the LGBT community, the Colectiva de Mujeres Hondureñas (Collective of Honduran Women), and others filed over seventy challenges to the model cities. The Constitutional Law branch of the Supreme Court finally voted, on October 3, against the constitutionality of the cities, arguing that "foreign investment … implies transferring national territory."[40] Lacking unanimity, the court reconvened in full on October 18 and reiterated the first ruling. "History will judge who sought jobs for Honduras," congress president Juan Orlando Hernández remarked, "and who did not."[41]

Patri Friedman's company, Future Cities Development, declared its dissolution the very next day, and MGK's Honduran representative, Guillermo Peña, announced that the company had already moved on to talks with Jamaica, as well as several countries in the Caribbean and Eastern Europe. Peña even considered MGK's relevance for Greece, unintentionally echoing a German MP's past recommendation of selling off the country in monument- and island-sized parcels. The company's website gave a more telling account: after two redesigns, the home page comprised a truncated history of the free cities project, concluding with a broken link to its final update. It has since disappeared entirely.

Crucial to the Honduran case is that the challengers' defense of sovereignty and territory took shape not in nationalistic rhetoric, but through the ethics of a "post-sovereign condition," which, according to Michael J. Shapiro, resorts to neither strictly universalizing nor ethnic, tribal, and identitarian claims.[42] The 2009 coup "revived the specter of military dictatorships," Tirza Flores Lanza commented, destroying "the incipient democracy that, with great effort, we were constructing."[43] Its possible repercussions were not lost on regional leaders of democratic nations: Argentine President Cristina Fernández, for example, anticipated the 2013 Paraguayan coup.[44]

The rejection of the city projects involves more than retaliation against past and ongoing foreign incursions; at issue is the premise that individuals can assume their greatest liberty when the ethical and the political are bent to facilitate the exercise of economic agency. A proprietary notion of natural liberty, in other words, has been passed over by Hondurans for those other forms represented within and protected by the state, suggesting its role, via Brown, as "the only meaningful site … of political citizenship and rights guarantees."[45]

This is not to ignore how the Lobo regime's parceling of services, territory, and rights crippled its political legitimacy, or that the state's capaciousness, under any administration, must be cleaved from nationalism's cohesions and exclusions to make room for other correspondences of sovereignty and peoples. But it is to suggest that the cities have negatively demarcated what exists, *in potentia*, as a political sphere.

The Honduran response will scarcely slow the spread of greenfield urbanism: if cities are now designed to operate

like skunkworks, and technological gains reinforce neoliberal master narratives, then the failure of one experimental wing need not foreclose the operations of the others. Nonetheless, what happened in Honduras provides a cautionary tale about the role we resign—of *who* we lose—when the citizen turns private.

X

Translation assistance by Arden Decker

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Jonas Staal

Art. Democratism. Propaganda.

There is something deeply propagandistic in the disappearance of the notion of propaganda from artistic discourse. The word only resurfaces bluntly to dismiss certain practices as one-dimensional, as pamphletism, or as ideological and doctrinal. In our capitalist-democratic age, art is merely expected to "hold up mirrors," to "ask questions," and to show the ambiguities of our existence. As Hito Steyerl succinctly stated: "If contemporary art is the answer, the question is: How can capitalism be made more beautiful?"[1] Art's answer comes precisely in the form of a permanent critical questioning insulated from affecting the foundation of violent exploitation that sustains the capitalist-democratic doctrine.

The disappearance of the notion of propaganda is the result of a delicate ideological operation meant to obscure the fact that modern propaganda was developed by capitalist-democratic countries, rather than by so-called totalitarian ones. Our unwillingness to speak of art as propaganda proves the success of this operation. The Venice Biennale and its relation to the phenomenon of the world fair is a case study that could help us both understand the inherent propagandistic role of art in capitalist democracy, and reactivate our political relation to the practice of art in the realm of global politics.

The organization of the Venice Biennale's pavilions should be interpreted as a 118-year-old cultural allegory of the rise of the nation-state. The first edition of the Venice Biennale took place in 1895, making it the oldest biennial in the world. The 2013 edition consisted of seventy-eight national exhibitions, each attributed to a specific country. These pavilions function as embassies, where each country showcases the art it believes best represents current developments in its art sector. In Venice, art narrates the formation of what I will refer to as the *democratist* nation-state—one of the most dominant political constructs of our time. The artworks displayed in the increasing number of national pavilions aim to enforce the myth of a benevolent and culturally appreciative civilized state, thus legitimizing the "democratic" bona fides of autocratic, colonial, and fascist regimes:

> The first countries to decide "to put itself on display" at the Biennale were large and powerful colonial powers such as Belgium, the first to erect a pavilion in 1907. During the twenty-year reign of Fascism there was an explosion of requests, and subsequent concessions for the pavilions. By 1942, a total number of 19 pavilions existed. Today inside the Giardini of the Biennale, there are 30 national pavilions representing 34 countries, the last having been built by South Korea in 1995.[2]

However, to call the artworks exhibited at the Venice Biennale "propaganda" would be missing the point.

Jonas Staal, Ideological Guide to the Venice Biennale (Non-Aligned Movement route), 2013, smart phone application. The app provides fifteen routes that allow users to visit pavilions based on their geopolitical alliances. Show here are countries that were part of the Non-Aligned Movement.

Instead, there should be a distinction made between the artworks on display and the infrastructure within which they circulate. This infrastructural dimension of the representation of contemporary art will allow us to grasp the art world's role in establishing the global doctrine of capitalist democracy.

The Italian pavilion is pictured here (foreground) with a sculpture by Giorgio Gori; the German pavilion (right), and the Soviet pavilion (background) appear next to a sculpture by Vera Mukhina.

1. The World Fair

Artworks on display at the Venice Biennale historically follow the logic of the world fair, a model established in 1851 with the building of the infamous Crystal Palace in London's Hyde Park. Cultural anthropologist and philosopher Raymond Corbey states that

> from 1851 onward, when the first international exposition took place in London, an enormous variety of industrial and technological products were exhibited, including steam machines, lawnmowers, elevators, photographic cameras, mechanized weaving looms, and household appliances ... Various architectural styles were presented, and after 1885 the arts became a recurrent theme. The idea was to show progress in all fields—not only in industry, trade, and transportation, but also in the arts, the sciences, and culture. Meanwhile, there was no mention of poverty, sickness and oppression, or social and international conflicts.[3]

The infrastructure of the modern world fair embodied the ideal of peaceful, international coexistence among nation-states. Each of the national buildings functioned as a cultural embassy, comparable to "gigantic potlatches, joyous ritual displays of richness and power, where possessions were given away and even destroyed in great numbers in order to gain prestige and to outdo others."[4] These peaceful and sanitized displays sought to prove that the participating nations were capable of engineering civilization. Western nations established their "democratic" capacity by acknowledging a variety of different cultures in their displays—and then demonstrating that they could manage these cultures. The first world fair included 17,000 exhibitors, of which 7000 alone came from the United Kingdom and its colonies.[5] From the 1878 edition in France onward, these even included the live exhibition of "natives" in settings mimicking their "original" way of life. In the words of historian Lisa Munro,

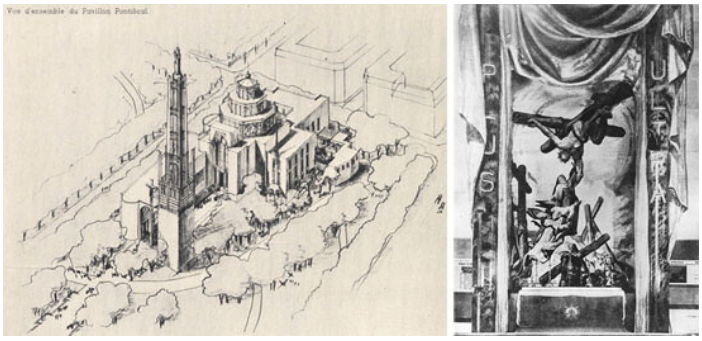
> The fairs allowed fairgoers a didactic experience that relied on the consumption of images and tangible objects that broadcast the world views of elite classes. The confluence of multiple and intertwined concepts, such as nationalism, colonialism, and industrialization, represented important themes that influenced citizens in their daily lives … Expositions were aimed to categorize and classify the entire world and present visitors with an encapsulated, cohesive vision that explained fundamental questions about the role of human beings in the world through extraordinary means.[6]

The organization of industrial and cultural objects by region in the first world fair would later translate to the model of national pavilions: temporary buildings, attributed to a specific country, functioning as exhibition centers. In the Venice Biennale, this model would be applied from 1907 onward. The first countries to host the world fair—the United Kingdom (1851), the United States (1853), and France (1855)—occupied powerful positions comparable to those of the first countries to secure a permanent national pavilion on the grounds of Venice's Giardini: the colonial powers of Belgium, Germany, and the United Kingdom (all in 1907).

The world fair modeled the *principle* of capitalist democracy before it became an established form of governance. The term "capitalist democracy" emphasizes democracy not as a neutral framework capable of embracing a variety of different ideologies, but as an ideology in and of itself. Lenin also referred to this ideology as "democratism":

> Besides the interests of a broad section of the landlords, Russian bourgeois democratism reflects the interests of the mass of tradesmen and manufacturers, chiefly medium and small, as well as (and this is particularly important) those of the mass of proprietors and petty proprietors among the peasantry.[7]

The world fair model highlights three crucial characteristics of democratism: (1) the desire to engineer peaceful coexistence among different cultures and ideologies; (2) a prohibition against questioning the engineering structure—colonial capitalism—upon which this peaceful coexistence is based; and (3) the close collaboration between government and private enterprise. In Lenin's time, this private enterprise consisted of "the mass of tradesmen and manufacturers." In our time, it is corporations. Alain Badiou refers to the engineering structure of democratism as the "capitalo-parliamentarian order,"[8] but we will hold on to the term "capitalist democracy," since it addresses both the engineering structure and its formal, self-justifying appearance.



Left: Paul Tournon and José María Sert, St. Teresa, Ambassadress of Divine Love to Spain, Offers to Our Lord the Spanish Martyrs of 1936, 1937. Sert's large canvas was topped by a golden, molded plaster curtain and flanked by two semi-ruined columns in red fake marble by architect Tournon, which bore the motto "Plus Ultra" in trompe-l'oeil carving. This phrase refers to the Pillars of Hercules, an emblem of the Spanish dating back to the Catholic Monarchs. Right: Paul Tournon, Architectural drawing of the Pontifical Pavilion (undated). The Pontifical Pavilion in the Foreign Section of the Paris World Fair, just behind the Spanish pavilion, included votive altarpieces from various countries. Sert's painting was placed in the central dome. Although the piece functioned as Franco's alternative Nationalist pavilion, it was formally commissioned by Cardinal Isidro Gomá y Tomás, who was the Archbishop of Toledo and a famous supporter of the Nationalist movement.

2. Propaganda

It is hardly surprising that Dubai won the bid to host the World Expo 2020. Dubai embodies the world fair precisely as it was originally conceived: as a democratic event without parliamentary democracy. At first glance, Dubai seems to exemplify the ideal of a multicultural society. It has achieved peaceful coexistence between Emirati citizens, who are the minority in the state, and immigrant workers from countries like Pakistan, India, the Philippines, who are the majority. However, Dubai—which is really a corporation in the form of a state led by the Maktoum family—can only exemplify this ideal as long as the ruling structure underlying it remains uncontested.

The radical libertarian model of Dubai has developed into an global hub that embraces both Israeli businessmen (who are eligible for dual citizenship, despite the Arab League's official boycott of Israel) and international drug trafficking.[9] Dubai achieved a major diplomatic victory when US vice president Dick Cheney asked the emirate to oppose Iran's nuclear program, on the same day that Iranian president Mahmoud Ahmadinejad asked the emirate to support it. In a performative diplomatic preparation for the World Expo, Dubai said yes to both, ensuring that trade contracts would continue to be signed with both countries.[10] The Maktoum family has dreamed the dream of democratism: to host a world fair that will uphold, through culture and industry, the formal appearance of democracy, without having to actually go through the trouble of elections.

While democratism is ubiquitous today, the Paris world fair of May 1937 posed a considerable challenge to the sustainability of this form of governance. With Europe on the brink of another world war, the central intention of the 1937 world fair was, according to art historian Dawn Ades, to "shore up Europe's faith in civilization (the question of whose civilization could not be looked at too closely) … Only in a world fair on this scale would it have been possible for the Spanish Republicans and Nationalists to be present simultaneously."[11] While we remember the Republican pavilion, since it was the first place where Picasso's *Guernica* was publically displayed, there is little understanding of how a pavilion for the Spanish Nationalists, who were not yet in power, ended up in the world fair. How did Franco's military insurgency against a democratically elected government gain a place alongside established nations?

The answer: the Vatican. It was thanks to "the Nationalists' fusion of politics and religion … that the Vatican provided Franco's side with an opportunity to participate."[12] What makes this intervention so relevant is not simply the perverse bond between the religious institution of the Vatican and military fascist regimes, but the fact that it lays bare the very origin of the concept of propaganda:

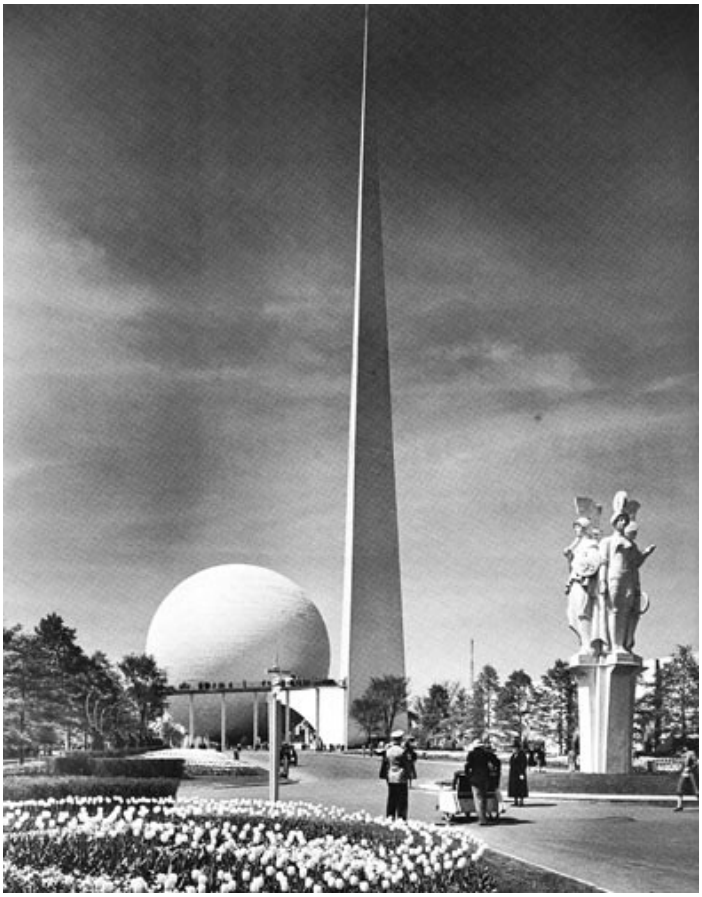
> The original use of the word to describe the propagation of beliefs, values, or practices has been traced to the seventeenth century, when Pope Gregory XV named in 1622 the *Congregatio de Propaganda Fide* (Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith), a missionary organization set up by the Vatican to counteract the rival ideas of the Protestant reformation.[13]

Franco's creation of a pavilion within the Vatican's pavilion—even before the city-state itself existed—reveals what is at stake in the so-called peaceful coexistence of nation-states at the world fair: a battle for acknowledgement by the key players of democratism. What Franco understood was that in the context of the world fair, an excessive display of power would undermine his cause. Rather, he simply had to become one among many respected states. His cause was aided by two nations that did not share his concern for subtly and restraint at the fair.

If the decision to place the German and Soviet pavilions in the centrally located International Exhibition, next to the Seine, was an attempt to enforce the idea of European unity, the effort failed. The Soviet pavilion, designed by architect Boris Iofan, functioned mainly as a pedestal for Vera Mukhina's enormous sculpture *Worker and Collective Farm Woman*, depicting two gigantic figures striding forward while holding a hammer (male) and a sickle (female). If these figures were striving toward anything, it was toward the German pavilion, which was directly in front of the Soviet pavilion, across a road. In his autobiography, architect Albert Speer, who designed the German pavilion, writes that he accidentally came across drawings of the Soviet pavilion and decided to anticipate the design.[14]

His principle aim was to "create an imperial, quasi-religious monument that would counter the forward thrust of the Soviet pavilion and dominate it in height. In opposition to Boris Iofan's dynamic, multiplanar structure, the fortress-like façade of the Deutsches House appeared stoic and immutable."[15] The monumental male nudes in Josef Thorak's sculpture *Comrades* were placed in front of Speer's construction, while an eagle positioned on top guarded the surrounding area. Both constructions—each challenging the other, forcing an even more aggressive and monumental aesthetic—were as much military statements as artistic statements, with Speer at the frontline, anticipating the cultural move of the enemy.

The role of art as propaganda in capitalist democracy is such a taboo subject precisely because the monumental structures of the 1937 German and Soviet pavilions so violently portrayed what we would come to understand as propaganda. However, it was in their shadow that Franco was able to provide his fascist rule with a sense of cultural respectability. The Soviet and Nazi totalitarian imagery



The New York World Fair's Perisphere pavilions housed the Democracity-themed show designed by Henry Dreyfuss. Trylon and Perisphere, both pictured here, were designed by architects W. K Harrison and J. A. Fouilhoux. Photo: Richard Wurts

takes all other images hostage because of its unrestricted identification with ruling powers—and this is just what Franco anticipated. This dynamic reveals how liberal democracy has been historically dependent on "totalitarianism." As Slavoj Zižek writes:

> Throughout its entire career, "totalitarianism" was an ideological notion that sustained the complex operation of ... guaranteeing the liberal-democratic hegemony, dismissing the Leftist critique of liberal democracy as the obverse, the "twin," of the Rightist Fascist dictatorship ... Far from being an effective theoretical concept, [totalitarianism] is a kind of stopgap: instead of enabling us to think, forcing us to acquire new insight into the historical reality it describes, it relieves us of the duty to think, or even actively prevents us from thinking.[16]

In other words, the seeming aesthetic clarity of the notion of "totalitarian art," as Igor Golomstock calls it, obfuscates similar mechanisms of propaganda that uphold the democratist doctrine. From the perspective of institutional critique, the German and Soviet pavilions provided an ultimate critique of the obscured dimension of power in the world fair. The violence of cultural imperialism that gave birth to the concept of the world fair as democratism *avant la lettre* is made invisible through its seeming interest in cultural exchange and civilized progress. But this exchange can only take place through a monopolization of power that allows everything to be questioned—except for the power structure underlying the world fair itself. It is important to emphasize that the excess of power manifested through the German and Soviet pavilions was shocking not simply due to its pompous and obscene violence, but because the other state pavilions refused to manifest themselves in equally explicit visual terms.

This take on institutional critique has obviously not been shared by many, and the consequence has been that our conception of propagandistic art has been restricted to so-called totalitarian regimes, including Fascist Italy and Maoist China. Only when hysterical musicals and posters slip through the North Korean border is the word "propaganda" used in a more or less serious manner, yet always with the full conviction that only the most brainwashed of people could be susceptible to the manipulative force of this kind of imagery. This is what I refer to as "propaganda's propaganda": the absolute conviction of inhabitants of democratism that their world is lucid, whereas the poor, underdeveloped subjects of Kim Jong-un still naively gather in celebration around images of happy factory workers and peasants. Apart from this being a grave misunderstanding of those subjected to this type of imagery, it is exactly this logic that structures democratist propaganda par excellence: the belief that we are somehow "beyond" propaganda. The idea that there is a clear and absolute historical distinction between totalitarianism and democracy is the core of propaganda's propaganda.[17]

The Soviet and German pavilions challenged the success of the democratist doctrine both visually and militarily, but through their violent and explicit imagery they also provided the basis for the widespread belief in this distinction.

3. Invisible Government

Contrary to what many believe, propaganda was not invented by the Nazis or the Soviets. In fact, Hitler and his propaganda minister Joseph Goebbels based the Third Reich's propaganda apparatus on Hitler's own experience in the army during the First World War. Hitler was convinced that the defeat of Germany had been the result of the refined propaganda tactics of the British War Propaganda Bureau, which operated from 1914 to 1917.

Falconcity of Wonders Project—The World in a City (model). Falconcity, part of the Dubailand entertainment complex, is advertised as including futuristic copies of the Egyptian pyramids, the Hanging Gardens of Babylon, the Eiffel Tower, the Taj Mahal, and the Leaning Tower of Pisa. Its development halted due to the crisis of 2009, but further development has been announced for 2014. See →

This bureau, generally referred to as "Wellington House," in no way fits the prevailing image we have of propaganda. It did not make agitprop posters, it did not commission gigantic bronze statues, and it did not primarily target the masses. Instead, Wellington House developed an intricate network focused on gathering and distributing knowledge to elites in the societies that the British needed on their side. Its main tactic was to never have its actions be recognized as propaganda. It achieved this by giving all the information it distributed an air of academic precision and impartiality. As Phillip Taylor, a scholar of communication, writes:

> Educated people like to believe that they can spot propaganda when they see it. And, having duly identified it as such, they can readily dismiss it as "propaganda." Wellington House therefore had to disseminate material to its target audience that did not appear to be propaganda but rather took the form of reasoned, almost quasi-academic, explanations of the issues involved, with the facts—even not all the facts—presented in an objective manner and with measured argument.[18]

In the nineteenth century, the British had built a global cable communications system. Known as the "All Red Network," it was comprised of underwater cables that connected the vast British Empire to the rest of the world. The first act of warfare that the British engaged in against the Germans, even before a single shot was fired, consisted of

> the cutting, within hours of the ultimatum to Germany expiring, of the direct transatlantic cables from Germany to the United States by the *Telconia* [an English cable ship] ... It meant that thereafter all German news, information and opinions about the war, its cause and course, had to reach the USA by indirect routes through cable relay stations in neutral countries in Scandinavia and Iberia ... which the British ... were intercepting.[19]

In the three years it existed, Wellington House used its budget of two million pounds to produce newspapers, photographs, documentary films, millions of pamphlets (some of which were dropped from balloons and airplanes behind enemy lines to convince soldiers to desert), and even "academic" studies written by hired historians. Prominent novelists such as H. G. Wells joined its ranks and wrote pamphlets and essays. But the core of much of this discursive and visual material lay in what it was *not representing*. The greatest achievement of Wellington House was to perfect censorship in its rawest form: the monopoly on the *distribution* of information.

Modern propaganda was thus born in Britain, a supposed paragon of democracy. The aim of this propaganda was to sustain the belief among British citizens that information circulated freely and that public opinion was formed without coercion. But at the same time, this propaganda regulated the performative experience of these very same democratic citizens. Democratist propaganda is thus performed, its values internalized, in the most profound belief that its subjects are "outside" propaganda. This undermines the popular conception of propaganda, revealing that democratist propaganda actually preceded that of the Nazi's and the Soviet's.

The overly explicit struggle for power by the German and Soviet pavilions threatened the delicate balance the world fair had achieved between, on the one hand, a visible exchange among cultures, and on the other, the invisible use of the world fair as a means of establishing the doctrine of democratism. Only two years later, Edward Bernays, the nephew of Sigmund Freud (who would go on to popularize his uncle's ideas) was employed by the American president Woodrow Wilson in his own Wellington House—the Committee on Public Information. Bernays restored this delicate balance when he became publicity director for the New York world fair of 1939. In his book *Propaganda* (1928), Bernays had already considered a different term for the concept of propaganda; due to the negative connotations the word had obtained after WWI, he proposed to refer to propaganda as the "public relations industry."[20]

Through this concept of public relations, Bernays brilliantly connected the dangers that representative politics posed to democratism, and the risk involved in the blatant exhibition of power by the Nazis and the Soviets at the Paris world fair. By working from the glorious example of Wellington House, Bernays left the concept of propaganda to the "totalitarian" states in order to enforce the sense of an absolute distinction between dictatorship and to the free world. Instead of the overt authoritarianism of dictators, he proposes the idea of an "invisible government":

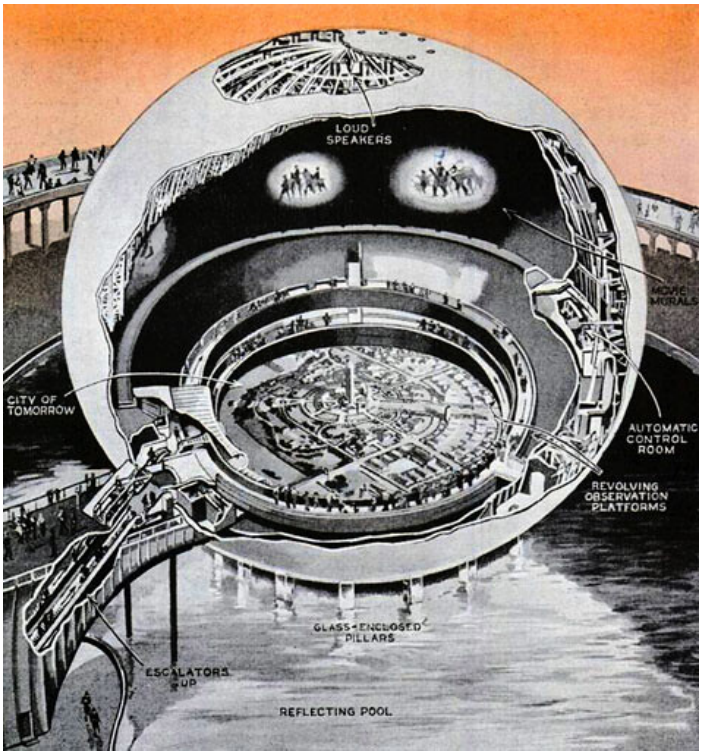
> The conscious and intelligent manipulation of the organized habits and opinions of the masses is an important element in democratic society. Those who manipulate this unseen mechanism of society constitute an invisible government which is the true ruling power of our country. ... This is a logical result of the way in which our democratic society is organized. Vast numbers of human beings must cooperate in this manner if they are to live together as a smoothly functioning society.[21]

What Bernays took from Wellington House was the idea of a far-reaching, invisible infrastructure that could govern society. But instead of seeing this type of "secret governance" as something limited to a state of emergency (as was the original idea of Wellington House), Bernays declared a state of total propaganda in both war and peacetime. Moreover, he believed that the problem of total war, as a product of modern technological society, could only be solved by propaganda. This notion is reflected in the work of philosopher Jacques Ellul, who called the propaganda of the public relations industry a "sociological phenomenon" necessary for managing the alienated "lonely crowd" (which Bernays calls the "bewildered herd") of postindustrial society.[22]

Indeed, Bernays considered propaganda the one and only "democratic" way to deal with the unpredictable, anxious masses. The "death drive" of the "bewildered herd" had to be engineered. This was the public relations industry's primary task: to "manufacture consent," to understand what the masses wanted even before they knew it themselves.

4. Democracities

Bernays's vision formed the centerpiece of the New York world fair. Entitled "The World of Tomorrow," the fair featured national as well as corporate pavilions. That is, it celebrated the prospect of a new corporate politics to come. At the heart of the fair was a massive structure called the Trylon and Perisphere, which at the time was



This image of Democracity housing, designed by architects W. K Harrison and J. A. Fouilhoux, features a spectacle by Henry Dreyfuss, Trylon, and Perisphere. See →

one of the tallest buildings in New York (after the Empire State Building). Visitors entered the construction through an electric staircase, and once inside they encountered a gigantic rotating architectural model of the city of the future: Democracity, designed by Henry Dreyfuss and crafted in accordance with Bernays's notion of invisible government. The model embodied a utopian urban structure made possible through the replacement of representative government by the corporate rule of the public relations industry. It neatly separated the different needs of its inhabitants into zones, consisting of Centerton (the social and cultural center), the Pleasantvilles (middle class residential towns), Milvilles (industrial towns), and Farms, with proximity to Democracity's city center determined by class position (the Pleasantvilles being the most luxurious and thus the nearest to Centerton). In Democracity's brochure, writer and cultural critic Gilbert Seldes adopted the tone of real estate promotional materials when he wrote:

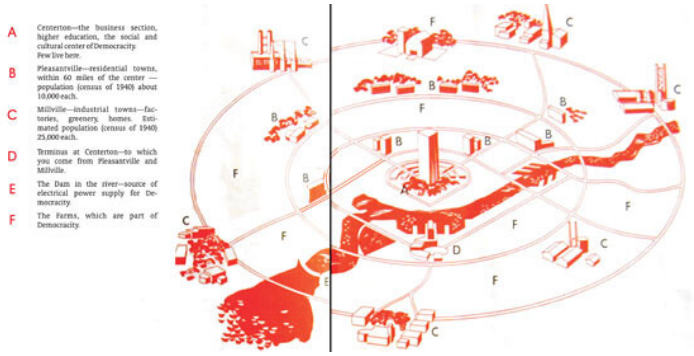
> If Democracity were Utopia, government would be superfluous. But Democracity is an entirely practical city ... And there can be a dozen or a hundred such groups of towns and villages and centers in the United States, each with commercial and agricultural and industrial interests. The government exists to see that these interests harmonize ... The City of Tomorrow which lies below you is as harmonious as the stars in

> their courses overhead—No anarchy—destroying the freedom of others—can exist here. The streets, the houses, the public buildings, the waterways, the parks, and the parking spaces—all are built in relation to all the others.[23]

The resemblances between Democracity and what James Holston calls the "CIAM doctrine" are striking.[24] This doctrine outlines the ideal of the modernist city as elaborated by the Congrès Internationaux d'Architecture Moderne (CIAM), an organization founded by architect Charles-Edouard Jeanneret, better known as Le Corbusier. The central premise of the CIAM doctrine is indeed the zoning of the city into different typologies of social activity—such as housing, work, recreation, and traffic. But whereas CIAM planned these social units on an anticapitalist and egalitarian basis, Bernays believed that it was through capitalism—which he considered inherently democratic—that we would arrive at a society of "independent and therefore interdependent men."[25] Whereas CIAM upheld the notion that people could be liberated though state industrialization, thus reducing politics to the administration of an egalitarian social order, Bernays believed that only through engineering—and the creation of corporate conglomerates—could people be liberated from their incapacity to govern themselves.

What Bernays described was basically the replacement of the state by corporations—corporations being natural democratic entities insofar as they can represent the desires of the people in a way that governments cannot. This is crucial in order to understand the governance of the modern democracity. For in actuality, it is not a city, but rather a corporation in the form of a city. This links the 1939 world fair to World Expo 2020 in Dubai: a city engineered by an invisible government of family-owned corporations and public relations industries, which intervenes in the lives of its people only when the construction of skyscrapers and artificial palm-shaped beaches is threatened by strikes or other forms of political organizing (in these cases, the authorities intervene *violently*). In the democracity that is Dubai—perfectly in line with Bernays—much is tolerated, except for organized political agitation. Consequently, politics in Dubai consists only of diplomacy among invisible governments. What is left to the people is culture. Bernays predicted the future of democratism, with the world fair as its prototype.

How does the democracity of Dubai relate to the Venice Biennale? I propose that we regard the Biennale's infrastructure as an alternative world map. From this perspective, curators and artists become ambassadors in the field of global power politics. In the context of the Venice Biennale, art does not imagine the world "differently," but rather more *accurately*. Walking from the Israeli pavilion to the US pavilion (not incidentally, placed



Map and index of Democracity designed by Henry Dreyfuss, 1939.

right next to each other), or from the Giardini to one of the many "collateral programs"—pavilions of stateless states such as Palestine, Catalonia, and Wales—has nothing to do with visiting exhibitions. It has everything to do with enforcing this alternative world map.

Jonas Staal, Map and index of Brasília as designed by Lucio Costa in 1956, 2014. From the book Nosso Lar, Brasília (Heijningen: Jap Sam Books, 2014).

As visitors we perform ideology by becoming occupied in our very being by its construct. By moving through Venice's alleys and gardens, from one pavilion to the next, we enact the underlying geopolitical ties that structure the alternative world map. Through our very presence, the base (the network of geopolitical alliances represented by the pavilions) and the superstructure (the artworks on display) become harder and harder to distinguish from one another. We are the subjects through which democratist ideology is performed. But in contrast to the modern democracity's smooth, invisible government, the geopolitical chess board of Venice, where the struggle over Europe's retreating cultural hegemony is played out, manifests itself as a space of permanent collapse. We see this plainly in the rise of the BRIC countries, and in the global democratization movements such as the Indignados, Occupy, and the Gezi Park protests (which also defend a notion of democracy without parliamentary representation, but with very different goals). The newly politicized inheritors of institutional critique are slowly

forcing Venice's hidden infrastructure—and our performative role within in—to the surface. Like the German and Soviet pavilions in Paris, the infrastructural body of Venice undeniably breathes power, to the point that the performance of each visitor must inevitably be recognized as a political act. It is in the Venice Biennale—a world map that allows us to trace the development of geopolitics since 1895—that we might slowly learn to speak three words that have been separated for too long:

Art.
Democracy.
Propaganda.

And recognize that all this time, they have formed an inextricable whole.

X

This essay was developed around the *Ideological Guide to the Venice Biennale*, a project by Jonas Staal in the form of a free iPhone and Android app providing insight into the political, economic, and ideological infrastructure of the Biennale. The guide offers critical reflections by prominent artists, curators, and theoreticians that help the user explore the ideological framework of each national pavilion. Additional data provides information on the political background, selection procedure, and financing of each of the exhibitions on display. *The Ideological Guide to the Venice Biennale* is supported by: Kadist Art Foundation, Paris; Center for Visual Art, Rotterdam; Farook Foundation, Dubai; PhDArts, Leiden; and Promoveren in de Kunsten, Amsterdam. The travel grant is a co-initiative of Casco, e-flux, and Kadist Art Foundation.

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1
Hito Steyerl, *The Wretched of the Screen* (Berlin: *e-flux journal* and Sternberg Press, 2012), 93.

2
Vittoria Martini, "A brief history of I Giardini: Or a brief history of the Venice Biennale seen from the Giardini," in *Muntadas/On Translation: I Giardini,* Spanish Pavilion (Actar, Barcelona 2005). This quote comes from an updated version published on the Art and Education publication platform. See http://www.artandeducation.net/paper/a-brief-history-of-i-giardini-or-a-brief-history-of-the-venice-biennale-seen-from-the-giardini/

3
Ibid.

4
Ibid.

5
Lisa Munro, "Investigating World's Fairs: An Historiography," *Studies in Latin American Popular Culture* , vol. 28 (2010): 91.

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Lisa Munro, "Investigating World's Fairs: An Historiography," *Studies in Latin American Popular Culture* , vol. 28 (2010): 91.

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Vladimir Lenin, "Working-Class and Bourgeois Democracy," in *Lenin Collected Works* , vol. 8 (Moscow: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1962), 72–82.

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Alain Badiou, *The Rebirth of History , trans.* Gregory Elliott (New York: Verso, 2012), 40.

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Jim Krane, *Dubai: The Story of the World's Fastest City* (London: Atlantic Books, 2009), 74, 105, 168–9

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Ibid., 283–5

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Dawn Ades, " *Paris 1937—Art and the Power of Nations,"* in *Art and Power* , ed. David Britt (London: Hayward Gallery, 1995), 58.

12
Ibid., 64.

13
Toby Clark, *Art and Propaganda in the Twentieth Century* (New York: Abrams Books, 1997), 7.

14
Igor Golomstock, *Totalitarian Art* (New York: Overlook Duckworth, 2011), 133–34.

15
Karen A. Fiss, "The German Pavilion," in *Art and Power*, 108.

16
Slavoj Zižek, *Did Someone Say Totalitarianism?* (London: Verso, 2001), 3.

17
It is worthwhile to look at documentaries such as the Discovery Channel's *Children of the Secret State* (2001) and National Geographic's *Inside North Korea* (2006), in which the interviewers bluntly put their obviously state-monitored guides in danger by asking whether there is anything "bad" about their leader—after which of course the guides express even more excessive praise of him. The guides know that having even provoked such a question from an interviewer could result in death. Despite the obvious discomfort of the guides, the interviewers continue to refer to the posters of the late Kim Jong-il they encounter as "eerie propaganda."

18
Philip M. Taylor, *British Propaganda in the Twentieth Century: Selling Democracy* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1999), 36.

19
Ibid., 45.

20
See also Adam Curtis's well-known documentary series *Century of the Self* (2002), an introduction to the transformation of the concept of propaganda through the application of mass psychoanalysis by the public relations industry.

21
Edward Bernays, *Propaganda* (New York: lg publishing, 2005), 37.

22
Jacques Ellul, *Propaganda: The Formation of Men's Attitudes* (New York: Vintage Books, 1967).

23
Gilbert Seldes, *Your World of Tomorrow* (New York: Rogers-Kel logg-Stillson, Inc., 1939), 15, 13.

24
James Holston, *The Modernist City: An Anthropological Critique of Brasília* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1989), 41.

25
Gilbert Seldes, *Your World of Tomorrow* (New York: Rogers-Kel logg-Stillson, Inc, 1939), 15.

Antke Engel

The Elegantly Strong Triad: Defamiliarizing the Family in Works by LaToya Ruby Frazier and Henrik Olesen

> I have felt the age-old triangle of mother father and child, with the "I" at its eternal core, elongate and flatten out into the elegantly strong triad of grandmother mother daughter, with the "I" moving back and forth flowing in either or both directions as needed.
>
> —Audre Lorde, *Zami*

With this in mind, I approach Henrik Olesen's multimedia installation *Mr. Knife and Mrs. Fork* (2009) and LaToya Ruby Frazier's exhibition of black-and-white photographs, *A Haunted Capital* (2013).[1] As the two exhibition titles suggest, both artists tackle social relations that exceed the close familial circle and present the family as defined by the materialities of social life as well as by economic, political, and gendered power. Both exhibitions in turn present familial figures not simply in terms of social roles or kinship positions, but as bodies or embodiments. While Olesen asks, *how do I make myself a body?*, Frazier's implicit question is, *how am I made a body?* Her photographs imply certain answers: I am made a body by what can be called the industrial complex, the medical complex, and the family complex. Oleson's installation, in contrast, issues a recurring claim of "self-production." Such answers do not mean that Frazier tells a passive story of the "I" while Olesen tells a more active one. Especially in photographs that Frazier develops in a "wrestling" collaboration with her mother, we see how the triad empowers for agency without neglecting conflict. Similarly, in Olesen's work self-production ultimately amounts to a *de-privileging* of the autonomous self, since the "I" is opened up to nonlinear time and nonhuman animacies that reconceptualize it.

Thus, both Frazier and Olesen's works perform chrono-political interventions in order to disrupt the normalcy of a heterosexual, white, able-bodied family. In performing such interventions, Frazier and Olesen open up the ambiguous and latently violent family stories they present to what José Esteban Muñoz calls "queer potentiality."[2] Muñoz acknowledges the fact that structural violence—encompassing racism, heterosexism, capitalism, transphobia, ablelism—is reproduced institutionally and repeats itself in the most intimate encounters. While it cannot simply be overcome, possibilities for social change nevertheless develop from what Muñoz calls "disidentifications," which are triggered by artworks and performance practices. For Muñoz, queer aesthetics defamiliarizes the familiar and creates a utopian "there and then" that feeds into today's collective practices. Potentiality is "a mode of nonbeing that is

LaToya Ruby Frazier, Mom Making an Image of Me, 2008. Silver gelatin print. Courtesy the artist and Galerie Michel Rein, Paris/Brussels.

eminent, a thing that is present but not really existing in the present tense."[3] Realized in an artwork, it might invite the viewer to understand the "nonbeing that is eminent" in its actual, lived relevance.

The elegantly strong triad appears in Frazier's photograph *Mom Making an Image of Me* (2008), with mother and daughter seen reflected in a mirror. The queer moment of a future that is already present evolves from the camera, itself reflected in the mirror and pointing directly at the viewer—structurally participating in the triad. Frazier's image denotes the ambiguous power relations of this triad in various ways; for one, Mom takes up the powerful position of photographer, image-maker, and framer. Yet Mom also includes her own body in the frame, refusing to let her daughter stand alone. The mother's pose is ambivalent; she stands erect—her back straight, her shoulders stiff, her chin up—like a young recruit trying to claim authority she doesn't (yet) convincingly embody. She wears a serious gaze; only her shimmering floral blouse disrupts the impression of earnestness she radiates. The daughter, in contrast, adopts a relaxed and leisurely, and also pensive, pose. With Mom and the camera withdrawn in the background, the mirror's angled position transforms the daughter into a huge, intimidating figure watching from above.

The camera in the mirror forbids me as viewer to align with it; however, in pointing directly at me, it invites me instead to become part of the triad. Yet the camera could itself be included in the triad—a symbol for the next generation of the Frazier family, a new daughter "moving back and forth flowing in either or both directions." At the same time, the camera also disrupts the direct connection between daughter and mother, signified by the distinct, imaginary diagonal line between their heads. The camera thus functions as a dividing line as well as a connecting object between the two women: the tripod's legs and the camera's "head" prolong the genealogy of female ancestry. However, genealogy here is no longer bound to "reproductive futurism" (Lee Edelman), but values cultural production and "self-representation" (Teresa de Lauretis) as queer-feminist options for creating social life and subjectivity.[4]

If Frazier's image locates the strength of the triad in the prolongation of family genealogy, Henrik Olesen's installation articulates a desire for its destruction. The son, named *Angle* in one of the works, is the central figure in the family's narration—"the 'I' at its eternal core." What kind of "I" is this? As we learn from a letter this "I" writes to his parents using cut-out letters pasted on newspaper pages, this "I" wants to rid itself of father and mother. A paragraph from the letter declares:

> It is precisely this world of Father + Mother which must go away, it is this world split in two—doubled in a state of constant disunion, also willing a constant unification ... around which turns the entire system of this world maliciously sustained by the most somber organization.

For Olesen, as for Lorde, referring to the "age-old triangle" means that "mother father" or "Father + Mother" are turned into an isolated heterosexual couple, with the child

separated off. For Olesen, the child is separated off into non-existence: "This child, he is not there. He is but an angle. An angle to come. And there is no angle." Here, the character claims self-production and asks, *how do I make myself a body?* This is perhaps best seen as a strategy for survival in an oedipal and heteronormative, yet strangely remote and privatized, world. Accordingly, the exhibition display of *Mr. Knife and Mrs. Fork* consisted of various familial objects (wooden sculptures, eating utensils, and so forth) strewn about in a bare white cube that carried no trace of the outside world, except for some news articles still legible on the sheets bearing the letter.

Henrik Olesen, Mr. Knife and Mrs. Fork—Angle, 2009. Installation, view Museum Ludwig, Köln, 2012.

Whereas Oleson presents an isolated self in an almost sterile space, avoiding any specific historical references, in Frazier's photographs, by contrast, one finds the workings of history—notably of racism and capitalism—even in the most intimate settings. While at first glance her images seem thoroughly domestic, upon further inspection we realize that no family exists apart from its material living conditions. So-called domestic objects, such as the radiator in *Mom Making an Image of Me*, firmly embed the household in the larger industrial world. The photograph's dimensions are its most disorienting property: the picture is twice as wide as it is tall. This format spotlights the structural geometry of the radiator, whose ribs resemble the spine of an ancient animal, while simultaneously evoking the history of steel production in Frazier's hometown of Braddock, Pennsylvania. Thus, the deindustrialization of Braddock forms the first of many frames in *Mom Making an Image of Me*. Mom also has a (door)frame to herself, mother and daughter share the frame of the mirror, and the image of the two women in the mirror is framed by the curtain, the gray wall, and the radiator. These multiple frames suggest an over-determination of normative structures. The frame defines what is given to be seen, namely, two black women of different ages engaged in a cultural activity that contradicts their attire and surroundings. In combining the overlapping, frames one gets an idea of the tension that characterizes their common practice. Yet, as Kerstin Brandes suggests, we can also see these frames as "unfixing" seemingly stable, stereotypical images—or even the status of the image itself.[5] Notably, the near-center of the image (the camera is shifted slightly toward the mother and slightly toward the lower half of the picture) consists of an empty white space, open to receive the various projections that may enter through the ribs of the heater or the window behind the curtain. The frames resemble what are generally understood as norms, but at the same time provide entrance points for the outside world that conditions and undermines the familial privacy.[6]

Framing also takes place through the exhibition design of *A Haunted Capital*. The room, entered and exited at opposite ends, began and finished with collaged wallpaper. From afar, this wallpaper appeared as a shimmering pattern of highlights and shadows, dimming the room and providing it with a twilit, cozy atmosphere. As one approached the wallpaper, however, one discovered that it consisted of miniature versions of Frazier's black-and-white photographs, found materials, documents, and metallic engravings of *John Frazier, LaToya Ruby Frazier, Andrew Carnegie* (2012), and *Diane* (2011), an installation made from a framed photograph, a scrap of newspaper, and a pillow on a shelf. Frazier's black-and-white views of industrial landscapes, demolished buildings, and indoor portrayals of the family constituted the majority of the exhibition.

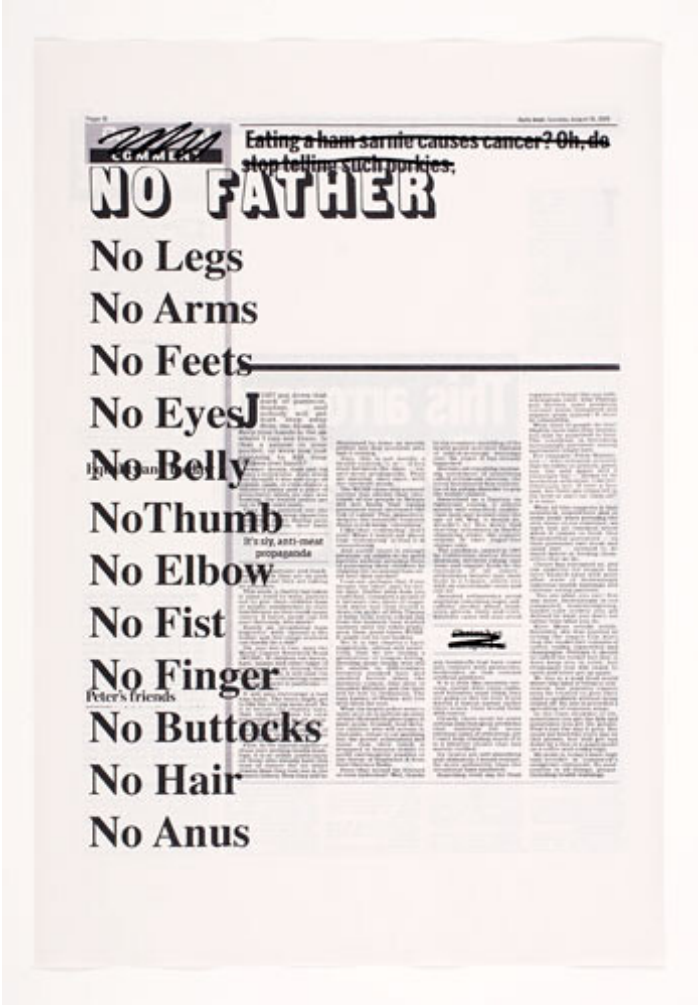
A bare back in a hospital gown, and a bundle of wires connecting the figure's neck to medical machinery: the image is juxtaposed with another black-and-white photograph showing a demolished high-rise building, whose cluttered steel beams and cables echo the bundle of wires in the adjacent picture. The two photographs ask us to connect illness to (de)industrialization—the town's toxic factories to the medical problems facing Braddock's population. Yet the picture also, to take up Brandes's point, unfixes the frame of reference and retells the story. Instead of presenting patient and ruin as victims of

LaToya Ruby Frazier, Landscape of the Body (Epilepsy Test), 2011. Gelatin silver print, mounted on archival museum cardboard, wooden frame. Courtesy the artist and Michel Rein, Paris/Brussels.

capitalist development, these images become media for an aesthetic process of mimesis that animates the inanimate: cables and beams appear as veins joining bodies, contexts, and experiences. Grandmother, mother, and daughter are knotted together, bound in chains of care that are conditioned by, but do not always comply with, the market. Illness and death are enduring points of reference, yet they also open up a potentiality that is different from the potentiality of profit. Frazier deploys a tension and undecidability between being bound to the past (nostalgic and fearful of what is to come) and an open future (the body that might heal or find ways of living with chronic illness; demolished houses that give way to new buildings, not decay).

The potentiality that Frazier's work suggests could be called a potentiality, if we follow Cathy Cohen, Jasbir Puar, and Fatima El-Tayeb, who insist that *queer* is not primarily about sexuality, but is about challenging power relations that that can never be separated out in relation to gender, sexuality, race, ethnicity, or class.[7] The acknowledgement of entwined power relations means that people always embody this complexity simultaneously, as social beings that encompass a spectrum of abilities (and debilities).

What of this potentiality can be found in Henrik Olesen's *Mr. Knife and Mrs. Fork*? When I entered the exhibition space, I encountered mother and father in the form of various wooden slats. Headless and limbless, only the exhibition signs designated the figures' familial roles. In a far corner of the room were even more profane embodiments of mother and father: mother as a blunt, stubby tin fork and father as a plastic knife, accompanied by their son in the form of a jar of nougat. While the title exploits the symbolic order that safeguards the law of the father, the male put on display in the form of a plastic knife appears quite vulnerable. These surprising embodiments



Henrik Olesen, Mr. Knife and Mrs. Fork, from the series "Papa-Mama-Ich," 2009. Computer printouts on newsprint. Courtesy Galerie Buchholz, Berlin/Cologne.

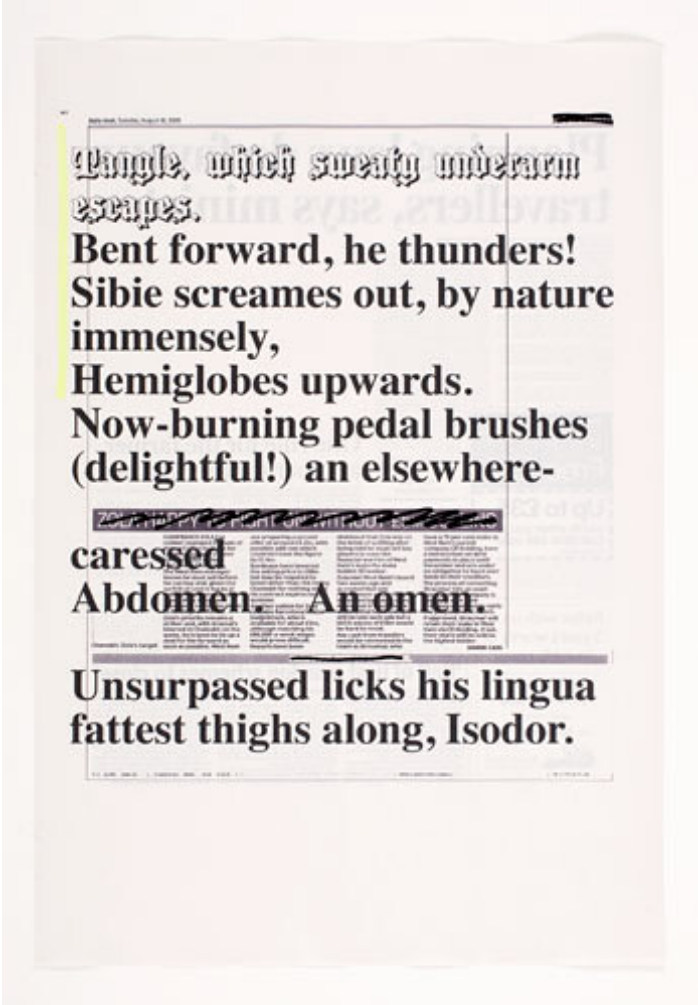
of the age-old triangle, which present the kinship system as consisting of social functions (Mr. Knife and Mrs. Fork) or of stiff, isolated beings (slats, cutlery, glass) that lack organs or abilities to connect, were complemented by another dimension of embodiment—the letter composed on newspaper pages.

Visitors were invited to bend over glass cases containing the thirty newspaper pages that bear the letter. The letter tells a story of personal emancipation. As is appropriate for an emancipation story, a developmental timeline is invoked. However, inspired by a Deleuzo-Guattarian reading of Antonin Artaud, the potential agents of the story, who might grant or disrupt development, instead dissolve into bodies without organs.[8] In the letter, the speaking "I" politely (and duplicitously) honors the parents and begs for forgiveness, only to then negate their existence or call for their ejection. The choice of fonts mirrors these contradictory attitudes: antiquated letters for the direct address "My Dear Mother" and "My Dear

Father" (reminiscent of the Christian commandment); bold block letters for the "Farewell" and the "NO"; and ornamental decoration for expressing the parental relationship. Most striking is the use of letters made from acrobatically entangled naked bodies to express disbelief in the holy family narrative: "I DON'T BELIEVE IN FATHER IN MOTHER GOT NO PAPAMUMMY." Meaning and embodiment merge; letters appear animated as bodies.

In Olesen's collaged letter, the parents are invited to become bodies without organs. The text promises this as a path to "true freedom." But why would the appeal be approached through the hubris of self-production? "How could this body have been produced by parents, when by its very nature it is such eloquent witness of its own self-production?" Is this "the I at [the] eternal core" of the age-old triangle that Lorde describes? Or should we instead follow Ariane Müller's assessment in the exhibition catalogue and argue that Olesen's work portrays an elongation and flattening out of the eternal triangle? With this "I" musing about self-production, we find ourselves in Deleuze and Guattari's register of the n−1, a singularity derived not from a universal through adding something, but rather through subtracting the universal or general element. Müller explains this de-generalization:

> The −1 for Henrik Olesen is often himself. Although this constitutes his work: who and in whom or what he is, in which body, in which sexuality, in which constellation, even in which family, composition, imagination, cell, language, youth. Yet he is subtracted from this. The self and the I subtracted. Even there, where the I is, is −1.[9]



Henrik Olesen, Mr. Knife and Mrs. Fork from the series "Papa-Mama-Ich," 2009. Computer printouts on newsprint. Courtesy Galerie Buchholz, Berlin/Cologne.

Still, even if there is a reference to Deleuze and Guattari's body as an assemblage of the animate and the inanimate, the material and the symbolic, Olesen's "I" arrives at a singularity, left alone with the question of who one is and where one comes from. In Olesen, the racially unmarked body turns out to be a white body, aligning with an "I" that does not hesitate to employ racist stereotypes—for example, through grounding an argument in combining "malicious" and "somber." Or in the statement "Better to sleep with a sober cannibal than a drunken Christian." This remark comes from the protagonist while embroiled in a conflict with his parents, which follows a sexist scenario involving Sibie (mother) and Isidor (father) (the only time the parental figures appear with names). The scene of marital rape is presented through poetic lyrics, oscillating strangely between violence and pleasure. Yet the lyrics expose a rhetorical strategy that aims at naturalizing dominance: "A natural bent, no doubt Bent forward, he thunders! ... Sibie screams out, by nature immensely ... (delightful!) an elsewhere—caressed." The devastating scene is assessed critically by Olesen's protagonist with equally critical racist pronouncement. So, while one can argue that it is courageous for Olesen to show in *Mr. Knife and Mrs. Fork* how domestic violence works through an alignment with delight (whose delight?), the son's reaction pits racism against sexism and reproduces racist stereotypes (however ironically).

The son's letter ends with a page presenting a "POEM TO THE HOLE IN THE ASS." The page is designed meticulously, the sentences arranged to represent the star-like folds of an asshole. Since the parents were invited to transform themselves into organless bodies seven pages before, the ode to anal sex could apply to them just as much as to their son. The old triangle might flatten out now, thanks to the democratic hole that anyone may claim as a site of sexual pleasure: "Dark and puckered like a violet rose it pulses, humbly hidden amidst the moss." This pleasure, historically opened up through the courage of gay male public explicitness, may also promise sexual justice for the heterosexual couple, freeing the "I" from its

LaToya Ruby Frazier, Grandma Ruby Wiping Gramps, 2003. Gelatin silver print, mounted on archival museum cardboard, wooden frame. Courtesy the artist and Michel Rein, Paris/Brussels.

LaToya Ruby Frazier, Grandma Ruby and Me, 2005.

oedipal role in the nuclear family.

Unforeseen, a photograph by Frazier takes up this tune and alters it in a stunning way: an intimate, caring scene in which grandfather bends over (without her thundering) so that grandmother can wipe his ass. Given the ongoing history of white people exploiting service work done by black people, it is perhaps unsurprising that a black body is depicted administering care. Yet, it is significant that the care here is of another black body. The care act is depicted in such a way that the blurred twirl of the hand and cloth gives the impression of an erotic gesture rather than a hygenic function. What does it mean to be invited as a viewer to witness this intimate encounter? What does it mean for a viewer who is positioned differently in relation to the power structures implicit in matters of race, class, and gender to watch this scene?

In the photographs presented in *Haunted*, Frazier relates a history of a highly racialized political economy by zooming in on the intimacy between grandmother, mother, and daughter. Frazier's grandma Ruby and granddaughter Ruby not only share the same name, but they also inhabit a shared world of meaningful details—objects assembled over decades or even generations, revealing a racialized, classed, and gendered connectivity. In *Grandma Ruby and Me* (2005), which was positioned prominently in the exhibition and was also used in its promotional material, grandmother and granddaughter sit on the carpet of an excessively decorated living room, looking over their shoulders into the camera. Their closeness does not rely on touch, but is instead created by the mirrored pose of their bodies. The viewer is captured at the meeting point of their gazes, forming a sharp triangle. Frazier disables the viewer's ability to elude familial intimacy, whereas Olesen seals off proximity altogether. The familial battle evinced in the letter prevents the viewer from coming too close.

Frazier is very conscious in her handling of racial and class-based power relations—the way they are built upon racist and capitalist forms of domination and intertwine with gendered dynamics (which unfold in same-sex as well as differentially sexed contacts). In a performance she developed with Liz Magic Laser on the occasion of the opening of a Levi's jeans photo studio in Braddock, Frazier not only points out the racist underpinnings of the company's business and advertising strategies, but also makes use of subtle yet daring sexual imagery to cleverly reframe its content.[10] In this performance, Frazier uses her body to rhythmically rub and scrub the concrete pathway in front of the shop. Her action, which first chafes and then destroys the jeans, has a clear sexual connotation: "FUCK YOU." Yet it says this without employing gestures of penetration. Instead, Frazier uses imagery that connects caressing to masturbatory pleasure. We can see this vocabulary as being democratizing, in the same vein as anal sex.

Through unfixing and relocating dominant frames, Olesen's *Mr. Knife and Mrs. Fork* and Frazier's *A Haunted Capital* undermine the centrality of the "the age-old triangle of mother father and child." They instead present chrono-political interventions that invite the future into the present—deindustrialization in Frazier, and emancipation in Olesen—while simultaneously confusing the developmental timelines. The "I"—moving yet captured, captured yet moving in a relational net that is no longer triangle nor triad—struggles against familial bonding/bondage. Yet the "I" is also always already engaged in reworking sociohistorical power relations. In

Muñoz's words, Frazier and Olesen enact a poetics of queer potentiality. Olesen, in his work, portrays something that does not exist in the present, yet is notably there as an aesthetic experience: PAPAMUMMY end their symbiotic state of constant disunion, throw off their oedipal roles, and ally with the child's anal and other pleasures. Frazier creates "Grandma Ruby, Mom and myself as one entity,"[11] without losing an "I" that has the power to transform the socially uneven assemblages of urban family life.

X

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1
Henrik Olesen's *Mr. Knife and Mrs. Fork* was first exhibited at Studio Voltaire (London) in 2009. The version I discuss in this essay was exhibited at Museum Ludwig (Cologne) in 2012. Olesen's exhibition is also represented in the catalogue *How Do I Make Myself A Body?* , eds. Nikola Dietrich and Jacob Fabricius (Ostfildern: Hatje Cantz, 2011). LaToya Ruby Frazier's A Haunted Capital, organized by Eugenie Tsai and John and Barbara Vogelstein, took place at the Brooklyn Museum (New York City) in 2013.

2
José Esteban Muñoz, *Cruising Utopia: The Then and There of Queer Futurity* (New York: New York University Press, 2009.

3
Ibid., 9.

4
Lee Edelman, *No Future. Queer Theory and Death Drive* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2004); Teresa de Lauretis, Technologies of Gender. Essay on Theory, Film, and Fiction (Indiana UP 1987).

5
Kerstin Brandes, *Fotografie und "Identität". Visuelle Repräsentationspolitiken in künstlerischen Arbeiten der 1980er und 1990er Jahre* (Bielefeld: transcript 2010).

6
For more on the normative and normalizing effects of the frame, see Judith Butler, "Folter und die Ethik der Fotografie," in *Bilderpolitik in Zeiten von Krieg und Terror. Medien, Macht und Geschlechtenverhältnisse* , ed. Linda Hentschel (Berlin: b_books, 2007), 205-27; Jacques Derrida, "The Parergon," in The Truth in Painting (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987); and Sigrid Schade und Silke Wenk, *Studien zur visuellen Kultur* (Bielefeld: transcript, 2011).

7
Cathy Cohen, "Punks, Bulldaggers, and Welfare Queens: The Radical Potential of Queer Politics?" in *Black Queer Studies: A Critical Anthology* , eds. Patrick E. Johnson and Mae G. Henderson (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2005), 21-51; Jasbir Puar, *Terrorist Assemblages: Homonationalism in Queer Times* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2008); Fatima El-Tayeb, *European Others: Queering Ethnicity in Postnational Europe* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2011).

8
Antonin Artaud's radio play *To Have Done with the Judgment of God* (1947) is reprinted in *How Do I Make Myself A Body?* (134-139). This play inspired Gilles Deleuze and Felíx Guattari to develop their concept of the body without organs.

9
Ariane Müller, "U as in One," in *How Do I Make Myself A Body?* , 80.

10
The performance is documented in the video "LaToya Ruby Frazier Takes On Levi's" (2011).

11
See http://web.archive.org/web/20140713140338/http://www.latoyarubyfrazier.com/statement/ .

Stephen Squibb

Genres of Capitalism, Part I

> The first thing I did was make a mistake. I thought I had understood capitalism, but what I had done was assume an attitude—melancholy sadness—toward it. This attitude is not correct. Fortunately your letter came, at that instant. "Dear Rupert, I love you every day. You are the world, which is life. I love you I adore you I am crazy about you. Love, Marta." Reading between the lines, I understood your critique of my attitude toward capitalism.
>
> —Donald Barthelme, "The Rise of Capitalism"

Today, the concept of "capitalism" enjoys a hegemony rarely achieved in the history of ideas. On the intellectual Left, it has remained the preferred partner of new formulations for more than a century: finance capitalism, monopoly capitalism, state capitalism, bureaucratic capitalism, organized capitalism, spectacular capitalism, late capitalism, cognitive capitalism, democratic capitalism. On the Right, after decades of rhetorical ambivalence, capitalism has at last secured a position as the public face of reaction: something belonging simultaneously to the past and to the future, it is to be both protected and pursued. Each of these visions has its own history.

Recently, the meaning of the term has been revisited by two of our best political economists: Fred Block, in his article "Varieties of What? Should We Still Be Using the Concept of Capitalism?"; and Wolfgang Streeck, in his book *Re-Forming Capitalism*.[1]

Both reconsider the place of capitalism in contemporary social science, both rely heavily on the work of Karl Polyani,[2] both are on the Left, and both understand the term "capitalism" to be in some sort of crisis. Laid side by side, their analyses are remarkably similar, except on one point: Block believes the term "capitalism" should be jettisoned while Streeck believes it should be elevated.

This strange situation—where two established thinkers reach opposite conclusions by way of the same argument—is the inciting incident, not the subject, of the following investigation: a partial typology of what "capitalism" has signified and continues to signify. That this signification has shifted will come as a surprise to no one. More interesting are the ways in which these varieties of capitalism cluster into *genres*—a term I borrow from literary analysis in order to highlight the differences in style, form, and content that distinguish these different approaches.


The Socialist

The Workingman's Paper — To Organize the Slaves of Capital to Vote Their Own Emancipation

WHOLE WORKING CLASS OF THE NATION IN JAIL

By Eugene V. Debs

MY COUNTRY 'TIS OF THEE
SWEET GRAFT FOR ONLY WE
OF THEE I SING.
LONG MAY OUR LAND BE BRIGHT
WITH STANDARD OILY LIGHT
PROTECT US BY THY MIGHT
SWEET GRAFT OUR KING.

CAPITALISM

Our National Anthem—As Sung in the "ROCKY" Mountains

This cartoon was featured on the cover of the Seattle Socialist, July 28, 1906.

This allows the placement, for example, of the writings of Moishe Postone, distinguished critical theorist of Chicago, and those of Guy Debord, consummate low theorist, in the same genre of capitalism—that of abstractionism—even though their theories are profoundly different. What these and other generic examples share is a horizon of expectation about what capitalism is and what it can be seen to do, where, with whom, and how. A genre is born when certain structural elements begin to carry inherent meaning or weight in and of themselves.[3]

Broadly speaking, my claim is that the discourse of "capitalism" includes several different elemental sets, and it is these different sets that I am calling, for the time being, genres.

Capitalism as Spiritualism

Maurice Dobb begins his *Studies in the Development of Capitalism* from 1946 with a series of considerations not

Frances Griffiths and Elsie Wright, Fairies and Their Sun-Bath, 1920. This image is the most notable of the Cottingley Fairies series, the authenticity of which was much debated by British spiritualists, namely Sir Arthur Conan Doyle.

unlike my own. How is it, he asks, that a term as seemingly central as "capitalism" can have so many different meanings? Citing thinkers who dismiss it for this reason—his example is Tawney's *Religion and the Rise of Capitalism* from 1937—Dobb notes that the definition of capitalism rooted in the contrast between state control and laissez-faire is unusually narrow. If this definition were understood strictly, he claims, it would mean limiting capitalism to the United States and Britain. Instead, he argues, three broader accounts stand out:

> While in some respects [these definitions] overlap, each of them is associated with a distinctive view of the nature of historical development; each involves the drawing of rather different time frontiers to the system; and each results in a different causal story of the origins of capitalism and the growth of the modern world.[4]

Things are no longer so simple. It is not clear that the five genres of capitalism I will explore here and in Part II of this essay propose distinctive views of the nature of historical development, or provide different causal narratives, though they probably *imply* such differences. Instead, each genre prefers *some differences over others*, and this preference, too, shifts with the terrain. Thus the only *explicit* difference between the productivist and commercialist genres I discuss below is their differing accounts of how capitalism emerged; yet there are further distinctions to be found in the location and focus of the analysis, even if it is stylistically and technically quite

similar. Though it is somewhat beyond my scope here, I do believe "capitalism" can be helpfully understood as belonging to the twentieth century, though its etymological origins date from sometime earlier.

Eve Chiapello[5] locates an early appearance of "capitalism" in an economic context in Louis Blanc's *Organization of Work*, from 1851, where it distinguishes between capital and its private appropriation—that is, between capital and capitalism:

> [The] sophism consists of perpetually confusing the usefulness of capital with what I shall call capitalism, in other words the appropriation of capital by some to the exclusion of others. Let everyone shout "Long live capital." We shall applaud and our attack on capitalism, its deadly enemy, shall be all the stronger.[6]

Proudhon uses the term a little and Marx almost never, though Engels does so more frequently.[7] The term is not properly disseminated until Werner Sombart's *Der Moderne Kapitalismus* of 1902. Sombart credits the formulation to socialist writers: "The concept of capitalism and even more clearly the term itself may be traced primarily to the writings of socialist theoreticians. It has in fact remained one of the key concepts of socialism down to the present time."[8]

It is here that the first genre of capitalism comes into focus: "socialism" predates it, as does "capital." The Marxist genre of capitalism—as opposed to Marx's theory of the capitalist mode of production—arrives in response to the Sombartian one, as we shall see. It is also important to note that "capitalism" *arrives predicated*—here as *modern* capitalism—and, as surely as the prices on a menu can be predicted by the number of adjectives attached to a dish, the sophistication of twentieth century political economic analysis can likewise be anticipated by the number of modifiers lined up before "capitalism."

I call this first genre of capitalism *spiritualism*, because it casts capitalism as *a kind of spirit*. This means that all the defining aspects of capitalism—ideas, practices, sources—are modeled on spiritual or religious predecessors. As Dobb says: "Sombart has sought the essence of capitalism, not in any one aspect of its economic anatomy or its physiology, but in the totality of those aspects as represented in the *geist* or *spirit* that has inspired the life of a whole epoch."[9]

Instead of understanding capitalism as constituting a shift in a *specific kind* of social or economic relationship—commercial, productive, or otherwise—Sombart emphasizes the preceding formation of the capitalist *spirit*: "At some point the capitalistic spirit must have been in existence—in embryo if you like—before any capitalist undertaking could become a reality."[10]

This conception was taken up more influentially by Weber, who argued that capitalism is "present wherever the industrial provision for the needs of a human group is carried out by the method of enterprise"; thus the spirit of capitalism describes "that attitude which seeks profit rationally and systematically."[11]

Weber is clear that capitalism represents the rational organization of production, but, for him, the force driving this shift toward rationality is Protestantism. Weber understood his claim in opposition to historical materialism, which, he argued, reduced Protestantism to a mere reflection, or symptom, rather than a cause of the shift in productive organization.

It is essential to note that the *first generic use* of "capitalism" is an effort to rescue the significance of spiritual life from its relegation to epiphenomenal status by socialists. This explains my term *spiritualism*, in that "capitalism" is born as a kind of spiritual historicism.[12]

The generic affinity between Weber and Sombart is further confirmed in their twinned explication of capitalism in terms of religious identity. Thus Weber costumes his rational, calculating, self-denying spirit as the Protestant Ethic, while Sombart sees capitalism best exemplified by another religion, as he detailed in *The Jews in Economic Life*. Here it was the Jews whose ascribed characteristics—calculating, bookish, nomadic—made them the "perfect stockyard speculator" and the embodiment of modern capitalism. To be clear, the spiritualists did not say that capitalism was, or is, a *religion*, but that it should be understood itself as a product of religious or spiritual practices, ideas, and relationships, even when these are not expressly understood as such. (This idea is also found in the work of later thinkers like Daniel Bell and David Brooks.)[13] To restate: in place of the capitalist mode of production, we might say that Weber gives us the Protestant mode of production—called "capitalism"—while Sombart gives us the Jewish mode of production—also called "capitalism." For spiritualists, the force organizing production is a kind of spirit.

Capitalism as Commercialism

The second genre, which I am calling *commercialism*, equates capitalism, in Dobb's words, "with the organization of production for a distant market."[14]

Associated with historical approaches, this genre has a tendency to identify capitalism with a monetary economy, and focuses on *exchange relations* rather than on relations of production, consumption, or distribution.

Ralph Earl, Elijah Boardman, 1789. Oil on canvas. Copyright: Met Museum, New York.

Generic examples tend to seek "the origins of capitalism in the first encroachments of specifically commercial dealings upon the narrow economic horizons and the supposedly 'natural economy' of the medieval world."[15]

In our own moment, this genre is exemplified by the followers of the historian of economic life Ferdinand Braudel, and writers such as Immanuel Wallerstein and Giovanni Arrighi, who give us capitalism as the logic governing the global commercial system of exchange.

With commercialism we arrive at our first self-identified Marxist genre of capitalism, the other being productivism, which I will consider next. Within the Marxist tradition, this distinction—between a focus on exchange or circulation and one on production—has long been acknowledged, and Arrighi presents it elegantly:

> Marx invited us to "take leave for a time of [the] noisy sphere [of circulation], where everything takes place on the surface and in view of all men, and follow [the possessor of money and the possessor of labor-power] into the hidden abode of production" … Here, he promised, "[w]e shall at last force the secret of profit making." Braudel also invited us to take leave for a time of the noisy and transparent sphere of the market economy, and follow the possessor of money into another hidden abode … but which is one "floor above, rather than one floor below" the marketplace. Here, the possessor of money meets the possessor, not of labor-power, but of political power. And here, promised Braudel, we shall force the secret of making those large and regular profits that has enabled capitalism to prosper and expand "endlessly" over the last five to six hundred years, before and after its ventures into the hidden abodes of production.[16]

Thus, the different "floors" correspond to the generic difference between productivist and commercialist capitalisms, though my claim is that perhaps they are best thought of as different houses. More importantly, in the same way that productivists occasionally rely on a category of normatively good, non-alienated *work* in contrast with the unfreedom of *labor* traded like a commodity, commercialists often come to valorize competition and "true" market relations as sources of freedom. In these accounts, capitalism is often juxtaposed *against* the market, as a sort of meta-realm of alienated exchange relations.[17]

Wallerstein's commentary on Braudel's concept of economic life is representative in this respect:

> Here, then, is our picture. Economic life is regular, capitalism unusual. Economic life is a sphere where one knows in advance; capitalism is speculative. Economic life is transparent, capitalism shadowy or opaque. Economic life involves small profits, capitalism exceptional profits. Economic life is liberation, capitalism the jungle. Economic life is the automatic pricing of true supply and demand, capitalism the prices imposed by power and cunning. Economic life involves controlled competition; capitalism involves eliminating both control and competition. Economic life is the domain of ordinary people; capitalism is guaranteed by, incarnated in, the hegemonic power.[18]

Or, put otherwise, in commercialism, the division between emancipatory and oppressive aspects of exchange is the division between those which appear *as relations* and those which appear *as forces.*

An important shift from spiritualism to commercialism is the substitution of *a system* for *a set of spiritually identified individuals*, or specific kinds of agents, as the primary vehicle for capitalism. Thus the group of calculating, self-denying Protestants (or Jews, or entrepreneurs) becomes instead a process without a subject, *a system*, defined, in Braudel's case, by ultimate flexibility:

> Let me emphasize the quality that seems to me to be an essential feature of the general history of capitalism: its unlimited flexibility, its capacity for change and adaptation. If there is, as I believe, a certain unity in capitalism, from thirteenth century Italy to the present-day West, it is here above all that such unity must be located and observed.[19]

We see here, in a surprising contrast to the spiritualists—for whom capitalism is essentially a set of ideas held by people who then act on them accordingly—a certain mysticism in the definition of capitalism as a trans-historical unity marked by unlimited flexibility and capacity for change. Still, neither genre is particularly helpful in demarcating the historical borders of the concept they're considering. As Dobb argues:

> [The] conception of the capitalistic spirit and a conception of Capitalism as primarily a commercial system share the same defect, in common with conceptions which focus attention on the fact of acquisitive investment of money, that they are insufficiently restrictive to confine the term to any one epoch of history, and that they seem to lead inexorably to the conclusion that nearly all periods of history have been capitalist, at least to some degree.[20]

There is, in other words, a generic affinity between commercialism and spiritualism at the level of setting: works in this genre can take place in many different historical time periods. There is an additional affinity as well—namely in both genres' location of the *rational aspect of exchange* at the center of their accounting. This speeds the triumph of the marginal utility theory of value, which arrives as an effort to theoretically model *exchange* at a social scientific level, while, for productivists like Dobb, the labor theory is to be preferred as an attempt to model *production*:

> At least since Jevons and the Austrians, [economic theory] has increasingly been cast in terms of properties that are common to any type of exchange society: and the central economic laws have been formulated at this level of abstraction ... At the level of the market all things that are available to be exchanged, including the labor-power of the proletarians, appear as similar entities, since abstraction has been made of almost every other quality except that of being an object of exchange.[21]

Thus, though *Marxist* commercialist varieties are particularly clear examples of the genre, they are not the only ones. Most, if not all, of reactionary thought, from Robert Nozick to Niall Ferguson, relies, too, on the presumed freedom and rationality of exchange. Many other kinds of literature also approach capitalism, if less explicitly, in terms of trade and exchange relations, or through the lens of commerce—and here we might mention the vast variety of "soft" or "romantic" anticapitalisms that simply secularize the old, religious suspicion of money itself, the hatred of commerce qua commerce. An example from everyday life: a wine tasting designed to encourage attendees to sign up for membership in a CSA ends with the proprietors—themselves the wine makers!—clumsily apologizing for "being capitalist" in asking for people's support. Nothing so confirms the dominance of a commercialist understanding of capitalism in the popular imagination. Today, *asking to be paid for the products of one's work* is enough to be considered a capitalist. It was not always so. Thus, although I am examining what I take to be some of the clearest theoretical articulations of these different genres of "capitalism," my claim is that most uses of the term—popular, scholarly, or otherwise—are of one of these five kinds.

Capitalism as Productivism

The productivist genre perceives capitalism as concerned fundamentally with the forces and relations of production. Most famously, it understands capitalism as the concentration of the means of production in the hands of the few. Dobb again: "Men of capital, however acquisitive, are not enough: their capital must be used to yoke labor to the creation of surplus value in production."[22]

Unlike commercialism, which locates the origins of capitalism in the beginnings of international trade, productivism finds it in the dispossession of peasants of their land in the enclosure movement. Dobb himself belongs to this genre, as does, more recently, Robert Brenner, whose devotion to production, here appearing as industry, is front and center in the postscript to his recent *The Boom and the Bubble*:

> A lasting decline in the rate of profit in the international manufacturing sector caused by the

"Captain Swing" was the code name of a riotous peasant mob which protested against the mechanization of farming labor in the British countryside. This cartoon refers to the introduction of threshing machines around the 1830s.

> persistence of over-capacity and over-production, has been, and continues to be, fundamentally responsible for reduced profitability and slow-growth on a system-wide scale over the long term.[23]

For productivists, then, capitalism is less the domination of the commodity as such, still less the triumph of the market, than it is the appearance of a specific kind of commodity (the labor commodity), or a specific kind of market (the labor market). But the genre would include much more than just historical or social scientific investigations so oriented, and would encompass any approach to capitalism, positive or negative, that positioned work and production, rather than consumption, calculation, or exchange, at the center of the story. The murals of Diego Rivera, in this respect, are a shining example of productivism.

Productivism is the second major genre often noted for declaring its fidelity to Marx, and though I have little interest in intervening in the debate between productivists and commercialists, there is one aspect of the confrontation that is pertinent. The argument, again, is about whether capitalism has its origins in the forces and relations of circulation, or if it begins with those of production. In short, both genres are right as concerns their origins in Marx. In fact, the *only reason* that they have a conflict at all is because of their additional fidelity to the term "capitalism," which Marx didn't much use.

In Marx's analysis, the migration of forms of circulation into the productive sphere is what creates the "capitalist *mode of production*." Certainly, the productivists are correct that the key transformation, for Marx, takes place within production, but the content of this transformation, and its model, originates in circulation. It is when labor (a relation of *production*) is treated like a commodity (a relation of *circulation*) that we have *the capitalist mode of production*. Marx's phrase maintains the analytic division between production and circulation by specifying the relationship between the two: it is the "capitalist mode of production," and not, for example, the "proletarian mode of circulation," or the "monetary mode of distribution."

The difficulty only arrives with the term "capitalism," which covers over this distinction, and thus could be understood to refer equally well to circulation (which furnishes the process of capital), or production (which furnishes the protagonist of labor), or neither, or both. The abbreviation "capitalism" not only opened the door to many decades of fighting between productivists and commercialists; it also gave a relatively limited description of one aspect of the political economy (a mode of production) a much more epic, totalizing sweep.

X

Continued in " "

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1
Fred Block, "Varieties of What? Should We Still Be Using the Concept of Capitalism?" in *Political Power and Social Theory,* vol. 23, ed. Julian Go (Bingley, UK: Emerald Books, 2012), 269–291; Wolfgang Streeck, *Re-Forming Capitalism: Institutional Change in the German Political Economy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009).

2
Two of Polanyi's concepts feature prominently in both Block and Streeck: the "double movement," wherein the market evades regulation (first movement) and is then regulated anew (second movement); and the social "embeddedness" of institutions.

3
The classic work here is Hans Robert Jauss, *Toward an Aesthetic of Reception* , trans. Timothy Bahti (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1982).

4
Maurice Dobb, *Studies in the Development of Capitalism* , rev. ed. (New York: International Publishers, 1981), 4.

5
Eve Chiapello, "Accounting and the birth of the notion of Capitalism," *Critical Perspectives on Accounting* 18 (2007): 263–296.

6
Blanc quoted in E. Deschepper, *L'histoire du mot capital et de ses derives* (Brussels: Philologie Romane, Faculté de Philosophie et Lettres, Université Libre de Bruxelles, mémoire de recherche, 1964), quoted in Chiapello, ibid.

7
According to the OED, the word first appears in English to describe the concentration of power in Buenos Aires, the capital city of Argentina, before showing up in reference to economics in the 1830s.

8
Werner Sombart, "Capitalism," in *Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences,* eds. E. R. Seligman and A. Johnson (New York: Macmillan , 1930), 195–208.

9
Ibid, 5.

10
Sombart, *Quintessence Of Capitalism* (New York: Howard Fertig, 1967), 25, quoted in Dobb, *Studies in the Development of Capitalism* .

11
Max Weber, *General Economic History* , 275, and *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* , 64. Both quoted in Dobb, 5.

12
Not religious history, because, as Weber was keen to point out, the spirit of capitalism is not equivalent to Protestant doctrine but is instead a product of the effect of those ideas on economic organization. Sombart, for his part, argued that commerce in the Middle Ages was inspired by the spirit of handiwork rather than the spirit of capitalism.

13
I am thinking of Bell's *Cultural Co ntradictions of Capitalism* and David Brooks's *Bobos in Paradise*.

14
Dobb, *Studies in the Development of Capitalism,* 6.

15
Ibid, 7.

16
Giovanni Arrighi, *The Long Twentieth Century* (New York: Verso, 1994), 26.

17
We see the same logic at work throughout Peter Swenson's work, as is evident from the title of his *Capitalists Against Markets*.

18
Immanuel Wallerstein, "Braudel on Capitalism, or Everything Upside Down," *The Journal of Modern History* , vol. 63, no. 2, A Special Issue on Modern France (June 1991): 354–361.

19
Ferdinand Braudel, *The Wheels of Commerce, Civilization and Capitalism, 15th–18th Century* (New York: Harper & Row, 1982), 433.

20
Dobb, *Studies in the Development of Capitalism* , 8.

21
Ibid, 27.

22
Ibid., 7.

23
Robert Brenner, *The Boom and the Bubble* (New York: Verso, 2008), 285.

Pierre Dardot and Christian Laval

The New Way of the World, Part II: The Pe rformance/Pleasure Apparatus

Risk: A Dimension of Existence and an Imposed Lifestyle

The new subject is regarded as the possessor of a "human capital"—a capital to be accumulated through enlightened choices that are the fruit of responsible calculation of costs and benefits. The results achieved in life are the result of a series of decisions and efforts that come down exclusively to the individual and require no special compensation in the event of failure, other than that provided for by voluntary private insurance contracts. The distribution of economic resources and social positions is exclusively regarded as the consequence of trajectories, successful or otherwise, of personal realization. The entrepreneurial subject is exposed in all areas of life to vital risks from which she or he cannot extricate herself or himself, their management being a matter of strictly private decisions. To be a personal enterprise assumes living entirely in *risk*. Aubrey establishes a close relationship between the two: "Risk forms part of the notion of personal enterprise"; "personal enterprise is reactivity and creativity in a world where one does not know what tomorrow will bring."[1]

This dimension is not new. Market logic has long been associated with the dangers of slump, loss, and bankruptcy. The problematic of risk is inseparable from "market risks," which have had to be protected against by resort to insurance techniques since the end of the Middle Ages. The novelty attaches to the universalization of a style of economic existence hitherto reserved for entrepreneurs. In the eighteenth century, the financier and physiocrat Richard Cantillon established as an "anthropological" principle that a distinction was to be made between those "on fixed wages" and those "on unfixed wages"—that is, entrepreneurs:

> By all these inductions, and an infinity of others that could be made to extend this matter to the entire population of the state, it may be established that, except for the prince and the property owners, all the inhabitants of a state are dependent. They can be divided into two classes, entrepreneurs and hired workers. The entrepreneurs are on unfixed wages while the others are on fixed wages while there is work, although their functions and ranks may be very unequal. The general who has his pay, the courtier his pension and the domestic servant who has wages, all fall into this last class. All the others are entrepreneurs, whether they are set up with capital to conduct their enterprise, or are entrepreneurs of their own labor without capital, and they may be regarded as living under uncertainty; even the beggars and robbers are entrepreneurs of this class.[2]

Henceforth every individual should be on "unfixed wages,"

Josephine Pryde, Adoption (6), 2009. C-print. Photo: Fredrik Nilsen. Courtesy of Richard Telles Fine Art, Los Angeles.

"beggars and robbers" included. This is precisely the content of the political strategies actively encouraged by employers. The contrast between two sorts of human beings—the "risk-loving," who are courageous and dominant, and the "risk-averse," who are timid and dominated—was consecrated by two theoreticians connected to French employers, François Ewald and Denis Kessler. They maintained that any "social reformation" presupposed the transformation of the maximum number of individuals into "risk-lovers." In his turn, a few years later, Laurence Parisot, the French employers' leader, would put it more directly: "Life, health, and love are precarious; why should work escape this law?"[3] By this we are to understand that legislation should conform to the new "natural law" of precariousness. In this discourse, risk is projected as an ontological dimension that is the twin of the desire driving everyone. To follow one's desires is to run risks.[4]], 74). On the other hand, he is certainly right to emphasize the current stress on this obsession with "risk" as danger or consciousness of danger. But is it thereby necessary to relate it, as he does, to major changes in the technical domination of nature, now integrated into society (p. 81)? Should it not also, and perhaps above all, be related to the new norm of generalized competition? Indeed, that is precisely what the second part of his book tends to highlight.]

However, if, from this standpoint, "living in uncertainty" appears to be a *natural* condition, things look quite different as soon as we situate ourselves on the terrain of actual practices. When reference is made to the "risk society," we must be clear about the claim. The social state dealt with a number of professional risks bound up with the condition of wage-labor through compulsory social insurance. The production and management of risk now follow a quite different logic. In reality, what is involved is the social and political manufacture of individualized risks, such that they can be managed not by the social state, but by those increasingly numerous and powerful enterprises which offer strictly individual "risk management" services. "Risk" has become a full-fledged market sector, to the extent that it involves producing individuals who will decreasingly be able to count on forms of mutual aid from their local milieus or public mechanisms of solidarity. In the same way and by the same stroke as the subject of risk is created, the subject of private insurance is created. The way that governments reduce socialized cover of health expenses or retirement pensions, transferring their management to private insurance firms, unit trusts, or mutual funds required to operate in accordance with an individualized logic, makes it possible to establish that we are dealing with a genuine strategy.

In our view, this is what should be concluded from Ulrich Beck's work and his book *The Risk Society*. What Beck calls "agents of their own subsistence mediated through the market" are individuals "liberated" from tradition and collective structures, liberated from the statuses that assigned them a place. Now these "free" beings must "self-reference"—that is, equip themselves with social reference-points and acquire social value at the cost of a social and geographical mobility without any assignable limits. While such individualization through the market is not new, Beck clearly shows that it has become more radical today. The "welfare state" played a highly ambiguous role, aiding the replacement of community structures by the "counters" of social provision. Its apparatuses played a major role in constructing "social risks" whose cover was logically "socialized." But its methods of financing, like its principles of distribution, made it a reality that these "social risks" derived from the functioning of economy and society, in their causes (unemployment) as in their potential effects (the state of health of manual labor).

The new norm as regards risk is the "individualization of fate." The extension of "risk" coincides with a change in its nature. It is less and less "social risk" taken care of by some policy of the social state; it is more and more "life risk." By virtue of the presupposition of the unlimited responsibility of the individual discussed above, the subject is regarded as responsible for this, as for their own choice of cover. For some theoreticians of this new course, like Ewald, the society of individual risk presupposes an "information society": the role of public authorities and enterprises should consist in providing reliable information on the labor market, the education system, the rights of patients, and so forth.[5]

Here we find ideological complementarity between the market norm based on the rational subject's "free choice" and the "transparency" of social functioning, which is the precondition for optimal choice. Above all, however, this establishes a mechanism that identifies the *sharing* of risk and the *bearing* of risk. Once it is assumed that the individual is in a position to access the information required for his or her choice, we must assume that he becomes fully responsible for the risks run.

The New "Performance/Pleasure" Apparatus

The new subject is the person of competition and performance. The self-entrepreneur is a being made to "succeed," to "win." Much more so than the idealized figures of heads of enterprises, competitive sport is the great social theater that displays the modern gods, demigods, and heroes.[6] While the cult of sport dates from the early twentieth century, and proved perfectly compatible with fascism and Soviet Communism, as well as Fordism, it experienced a major turning point when it permeated the most diverse practices from within, not only by lending them a vocabulary, but, more decisively, through a logic of performance that transforms its subjective meaning. This is true of the professional world, but also of many other areas—for example, sexuality. In the vast "psychological" discourse that analyzes them,

Philippe Halsman, Aquacade, 1953. Copyright: Philippe Halsman/Magnum Photos.

encourages them, and surrounds them with advice of every kind today, sexual practices become exercises in which everyone is encouraged to compare themselves with the socially requisite norm of performance. Number and duration of relationships, quality and intensity of orgasms, variety and attributes of partners, number and types of position, stimulation and maintenance of the libido at all ages—these become the subject of detailed inquiries and precise recommendations. As Alain Ehrenberg has shown, above all since the 1980s, sport has become a "ubiquitous principle of action" and competition a model of social relations.[7] "Coaching" is simultaneously an index and means of the constant analogy between sport, sex, and work.[8] More so, perhaps, than economic discourse on competitiveness, this model has made it possible to "naturalize" the duty of performance, which has diffused to the masses a normativity centered on generalized competition. In this apparatus, the enterprise readily identifies with winners, whom it sponsors and whose image it uses, while the world of sport, as we know, is becoming an unabashed laboratory of business. Sportsmen and women are perfect embodiments of the self-entrepreneur: they have no hesitation in selling themselves to the highest bidder without any considerations of loyalty and fidelity.

The new subject is no longer that of the production/saving/consumption cycle, typical of an earlier period of capitalism. Not without tensions, the old industrial model combined a Puritan asceticism of work, satisfaction of consumption, and hopes for peaceful enjoyment of accumulated goods. The sacrifices made in work ("disutility") were balanced against the goods that could be acquired thanks to income ("utility"). Daniel Bell demonstrated the increasingly acute tension between this ascetic tendency and this consumerist hedonism—a tension that according to him reached a peak in the 1960s.[9] Without yet being in a position to observe it, this was to glimpse a resolution of the tension in an apparatus equating performance and pleasure, and whose principle is "excess" and "self-transcendence." For what is involved is not doing what one knows how to do and consuming what one needs, in a kind of balance between disutility and utility. The new subject is requested to produce "ever more" and enjoy "ever more," and thus to be directly connected to a "surplus-enjoyment" that has become systemic.[10] Life itself, in all its aspects, becomes the object of apparatuses of performance and pleasure.

This is the dual meaning of a managerial discourse that makes performance a duty and an advertising discourse that makes pleasure an imperative. To stress nothing but the tension between the two would be to neglect everything that establishes equivalence between the duty of performance and the duty of pleasure. It would be to underestimate the imperative of "ever more," which aims to intensify the effectiveness of every subject in all areas—educational and professional, but also relational, sexual, and so forth. "We are the champions"—such is the hymn of the new entrepreneurial subject. From the song's lyrics, which in their way heralded the new subjective course, the following warning in particular must be retained: "No time for losers." What is new is precisely that the loser is the ordinary man, the one who in essence loses.

The social norm of the subject has in fact changed. It is no longer balance, the average, but maximum performance that becomes the focal point of the "restructuring" of the self, mandatory for everyone. The subject is no longer required simply to be "conformist," to slip ungrudgingly into the ordinary garb of agents of economic production and social reproduction. Not only is conformism no longer enough. It even becomes suspect, inasmuch as subjects are enjoined to "surpass themselves," to "push back the limits," as managers and trainers say. More than ever, the economic machine cannot work at equilibrium, and still less at loss. It must aim at a "beyond," a "more," which Marx identified as "surplus-value." This exigency peculiar to the regime of capital accumulation had not hitherto exhibited all its effects. This occurs when subjective involvement is such that the quest for a "beyond-the-self " is the precondition for the functioning of subjects and enterprises alike—hence the interest in identifying the subject as personal enterprise and human capital. The extraction of a "surplus-pleasure" from oneself, from one's pleasure in living, from the simple fact of being alive, is precisely what makes the new subject and the new system of competition function. "Accountable" subjectivation and "financial" subjectivation ultimately define a form of *subjectivation as an excess of self over self*, or *boundless self-transcendence*. In this way, an original figure of subjectivation is delineated. It is not a " *trans* -subjectivation," which would involve aiming at a beyond-the-self that establishes a break with the self and self-renunciation. Nor is it a " *self*-subjectivation" whereby one would seek to attain an ethical relationship to the self independently of any other goal, whether political or economic in kind.[11] In a way, it is an " *ultra*-subjectivation,"[12] whose goal is not a final, stable condition of "self-possession," but a beyond-the-self that is always receding, and which is constitutionally aligned in its very regime with the logic of enterprise and, over and above that, with the "cosmos" of the world market.

From Efficiency to Performance

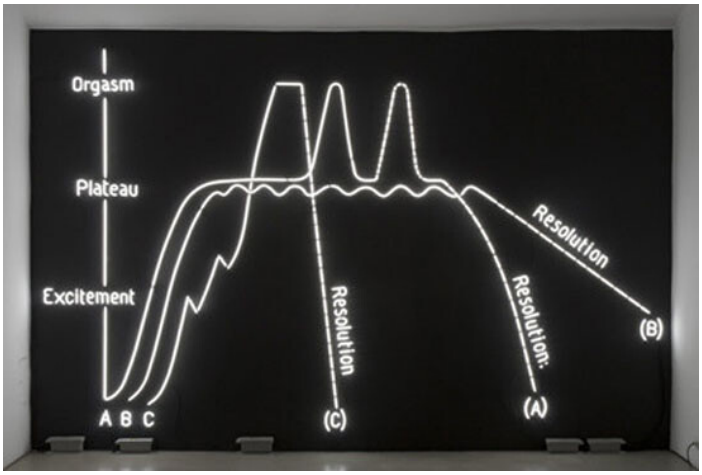
The new discourse of pleasure and performance obliges people to furnish themselves with a body that can always surpass its current capacities for production and pleasure. The same discourse *equalizes* everyone in the face of these new obligations: no handicap of birth or environment represents an insurmountable obstacle to personal involvement in the general apparatus. Such a turn only became possible once the "psy" function, supported by "psy" discourse, was identified as the motor of conduct and the target-object of a potential transformation by "psy" techniques. Not that the

neoliberal subject is the direct product of this construction. But discourse on the subject has brought together psychological statements and economic statements to the point of fusing them. In reality, this subject is a *composite effect*, as was the individual of classical liberalism.

In works strongly influenced by Foucault's research, Nikolas Rose has shown that "psy" discourse, with its power of expertise and scientific legitimacy, made a major contribution to defining the modern governable individual.[13] Construed as an "intellectual technology," "psy" discourse made it possible to conduct individuals on the basis of knowledge of their internal constitution. In so doing, it formed individuals who have learned to conceive of themselves as psychological beings, to judge themselves and alter themselves by working on themselves, at the same time as it supplied institutions and rulers with resources for directing their conduct. The guiding idea was a mutual adjustment of psychological springs and social and economic constraints, which has learned to view the "personality" and the "human factor" as an economic resource to be properly "looked after."

The psychologization of social relations and the humanization of work long went hand in hand, with the best of intentions. Ergonomists, sociologists, and psychologists sought to respond to workers' aspirations to live a more rewarding life at work and even find pleasure in it. By the same token, the subjective dimension became as much a reality in itself as an objective tool of the enterprise's success. "Motivation" in work emerged as the principle of a new way of directing human beings at work, but also pupils in schools, patients in hospitals, and soldiers on the battlefield. Subjectivity, composed of emotions and desires, passions and feelings, beliefs and attitudes, was regarded as the key to the performance of enterprises. Work specifically geared to reconciling desiring subjectivity and the enterprise's goals was undertaken by human resources departments, recruitment agencies, and training experts. This entrepreneurial "humanism" was supported from without by all well-intentioned reformers, who believed that a secure, flourishing worker was a more motivated, and therefore more efficient, worker. Hence the stress on group harmony, a "sense of belonging," and "communication," with its therapeutic virtues and powers of persuasion. As Rose notes, "democracy marched hand in hand with industrial productivity and human satisfaction."[14] Numerous accounts, at the intersection of psychosociology and trade-union and political engagement, even regarded the impact of a "democratic style of leadership" on "collective subjectivity" as a scientific argument in favor of self-managed socialism.

When it coincided with economic discourse, "psy" discourse had other effects in everyday culture by conferring a scientific form on the ideology of choice. In an "open society," everyone has the right to live as they wish, to choose what they want, and to follow their preferred fashions. Freedom to choose was not initially received as a "right-wing" economic ideology, but as a "left-wing" norm of behavior, according to which no one may oppose the realization of one's own desires. Economic formulations and "psy" formulations intersected, making the new subject the supreme arbiter between different "products" and styles in the great market of codes and values. This conjunction also gave rise to techniques of the self geared to individual performance through a managerial rationalization of desire. But it was a different modality of this conjunction that made deployment of the performance/pleasure apparatus possible. It consists in asking not to what extent the individual and the enterprise can adapt to one another, but how the psychological subject and the subject of production can *identify*. To speak in Freudian terms, the issue is no longer that of getting individuals to make the transition from the pleasure principle to the realty principle—the therapeutic goal of supporters of an "adaptive" psychoanalysis promising greater happiness to the best-adapted.[15] The issue is getting them to make the transition from the pleasure principle to *beyond* the pleasure principle. The identification of the two subjects recedes from homeostatic horizons of equilibrium, occurring in a logic of intensification and boundlessness. No doubt it will be said that the illusion of healthy pleasure, of the adaptation of subject and object, in the form of "self-realization" and "self-mastery," is maintained.



Claire Fontaine, Orgasm Neon (female), 2009. Courtesy Gabriele Senn Galerie.

But that is not the main thing. In this respect, while Rose is right to argue that "psy" techniques and the governmentality peculiar to liberal democracies belong together, he does not sufficiently appreciate that the ideal of self-mastery no longer characterizes the specifically neoliberal subjectivity.[16] Freedom has become an obligation of performance. Normality no longer consists in

mastery and regulation of drives, but in their intensive stimulation as the primary source of energy. For it is around the norm of competition between personal enterprises that the fusion of "psy" discourse and economic discourse occurs, that individual aspirations and the enterprise's aim to excel become identified—in short, that "microcosm" and "macrocosm" are harmonized.

Marco Anelli, from the series Portraits in the Presence of Marina Abramovic, 2010. This series has been published as a photobook and can be found on the Tumblr site Marina Abramovic Made Me Cry

Clinical Diagnoses of the Neo-Subject

The paradox around which clinical diagnosis revolves is that the institutions which allocate places, fix identities, stabilize relations, and impose limits are increasingly governed by a *principle of continuous transcendence of limits*— a principle that neo-management precisely has the task of implementing. The "unbounded world" does not pertain to some return to "nature," but is the effect of a particular institutional regime that regards any limit as potentially already outmoded. Far removed from the model of a central power directly controlling subjects, the performance/pleasure apparatus is apportioned into diversified mechanisms of control, evaluation, and incentivization and pertains to all the cogs of production, all modes of consumption, and all forms of social relations.

According to some, the erosion of any ideal embodied by institutions—the "de-symbolization" to which psychoanalysts refer—has given rise to a "new psychic economy" that has less and less to do with the clinical diagnosis of Freud's time.[17] The formation of the new subject no longer follows the normative paths of the Oedipal family. The father is often no more than a stranger, disavowed for not being up to date with the latest market trend or for not earning enough money. The crux for psychoanalysts remains the unavailable character of a figure of the Other—the symbolic level—to detach the little human being from desire for the mother and help him accede via the Name of the Father to the status of a subject of law and desire. But with the breakdown of religious and political instances, the social no longer contains shared references other than the market and its promises. In many respects, capitalist discourse brings about mass psychosis by destroying symbolic forms. This was Deleuze and Guattari's thesis, as we recalled above. But—what is less well known—it was also Lacan's: "What distinguishes capitalist discourse is this: *Verwerfung*, foreclosure, foreclosure of all the fields of the symbolic, with the result I have already referred to. Foreclosure of what? Of castration."[18] Is this world of omnipotence, in which the unbounded subject is caught up, already characterized by mass psychosis, with its schizophrenic and paranoiac edges? Or is it still preserved from this drift by modes of defense of another kind—for example, a systemic perversion?[19]

The Self-Pleasure of the Neo-Subject

Psychoanalysis can help us to consider the way that neo-subjects function in the regime of *self-pleasure*. If Lacan is to be believed, such self-pleasure, construed as an aspiration to an impossible plenitude—and in this respect very different from mere pleasure—is invariably limited and partial in the social order. In a way, the institution is the agency responsible for limiting it and conferring a meaning on this limit. The enterprise, as the general form of the human institution in Western capitalist societies, is no exception to this rule, but it now performs the task in *denegated* fashion. It restricts self-pleasure through the constraints of work, discipline, and hierarchy, through all the renunciations that form part of an exacting ascesis. The loss of pleasure is no less marked than in religious societies; but it is *differently* so. Sacrifices are no longer administered and justified by a law depicted as inherent in the human condition, in its different local and historical varieties, but at the instigation of an individual decision "that owes no one anything."

A whole social discourse, validating the self-constructed individual to excess,[20] and functioning as a disavowal, makes such subjective pretensions possible: loss is not really a loss, since the subject is the one who decided on it. But this social myth, whose effects on familial and institutional education should not be neglected, is only one aspect of the functioning of neo-subjects. They must agree to engage in their work, to conform to the

Model crypt designed for cryogenated pet.

constraints of mundane existence. If they are required to do so, it is as a personal enterprise, so that the ego can sustain itself with plenary *imaginary* pleasure in a complete world. All are masters or, at any rate, believe themselves to be. Self-pleasure in the order of the imaginary, and the denial of limits thus appears to be the very law of ultra-subjectivation.

In old societies, the sacrifice of an element of pleasure was productive. The major religious and political constructs, their dogmatic and architectural edifices, attested to this. In early capitalism, accumulated capital was still a product of this kind, fruit of the restrictions imposed on the consumption of the popular classes and bourgeoisie alike. Thus, for classical political economy, loss was interpreted as a cost with an eye to a profit. Today, things are different. If loss is denied, boundless pleasure can be mobilized on the imaginary level in the service of the enterprise, which is itself caught up in imaginary logics of infinite expansion and limitless stock-market value-creation. Certainly, it is not possible to avoid a technical rationalization of subjectivity, but this is only for the sake of its "fulfillment." Work is not exertion; it is self-pleasure through the requisite performance. There is no loss, since one works directly "for oneself." The object of the denial is therefore the hetero-normed character of ultra-subjectivation—that is, the fact that the boundlessness of pleasure beyond the self is aligned with the boundlessness of market accumulation.

What distinguishes the new normative logic is that it does not demand total renunciation by individuals for the benefit of an invincible collective force and radiant future, but aims to secure a no less total subjection from their participation in a "win-win" game, in the eloquent formula that is supposed to describe professional and social existence. Whereas, in the old capitalism, everyone lost something—the capitalist, the guaranteed enjoyment of his goods as a result of risk-taking; the proletarian, the free disposal of his time and strength—in the new capitalism, no one loses and everyone wins. The neoliberal subject cannot lose, because he is both the worker who accumulates capital and the shareholder who enjoys it. Being one's own worker and shareholder, "performing" without limits and enjoying the fruits of one's accumulation unhindered—such is the imaginary of the

neo-subjective condition.

The kind of uncoupling revealed by the clinical diagnosis of neo-subjects—their state of suspension outside symbolic frameworks, their floating relationship to time, their relations with others reduced to one-off transactions—is not dysfunctional for performance imperatives or new network technologies. The main thing to grasp here is that *the boundlessness of self-pleasure is the exact opposite in the imaginary order of de-symbolization*. The sense of self is supplied in excess, rapidity, the raw sensations supplied by commotion. This unquestionably exposes neo-subjects to depression and dependency. But it also allows them the "connexionist" state from which, for want of a legitimate link to a third instance, they derive fragile support and the anticipated efficacy. Clinical diagnosis of neoliberal subjectivity must never lose sight of the fact that the "pathological" pertains to the same normativity as the "normal."

The Government of the Neoliberal Subject

If we follow the clinical chart of the neo-subject, personal enterprise has two faces: the triumphant face of unabashed success; and the depressed face of failure confronted with uncontrollable processes and techniques of normalization.[21] Oscillating between depression and perversion, neo-subjects are condemned to a double life: a master of performances to be admired and an object of enjoyment to be disposed of.

In light of this analysis, the unduly frequent, tedious depictions of a "hedonistic individualism" or "mass narcissism" emerge as a covert way of appealing for the restoration of traditional forms of authority. Yet, nothing is more mistaken than to regard the neo-subject in the manner of conservatives. He or she is not the practitioner of anarchic pleasure "who no longer has any respect for anything." An equivalent, symmetrical error consists in exclusively denouncing commodity reification and the alienation of mass consumption. Certainly, advertising's injunction to enjoy forms part of this universe of elective objects which, through the aestheticization-eroticization of the "thing" and magic of the brand, are made into "objects of desire" and promises of pleasure. But we must also consider the way that neo-subjects, far from being left to their own devices, are *governed* in the performance/pleasure apparatus.

The mutation of Western societies was interpreted as a crisis of traditional forms of authority, which could only be overcome by restoring the values of the ancien régime. This was to ignore the new forms of constraint that hemmed in the subjects of industrial societies, bound up with labor and its technical and social division. In a word, it was to ignore the new moral and political regime of the capitalist societies of the time.

An analogous mistake obtains today, which hampers our understanding of the relationship between the conduct of neo-subjects (including manifestations of deviance and malaise, modes of resistance and escape) and all the forms of control and surveillance exercised over them. It is thus utterly pointless to deplore the crisis of supervisory institutions like the family, schools, trade unions, and political organizations, or to lament the waning of culture and knowledge or the decline of democratic life. It is more worthwhile to seek to grasp how all these institutions, values, and activities are today incorporated and transformed in the performance/pleasure apparatus in the name of their necessary modernization.

X

This text is an edited excerpt from *The New Way of the World: On Neoliberal Society* by Pierre Dardot and Christian Laval, trans. Gregory Elliott, available from Verso in February 2014. The book was originally published in French as *La nouvelle raison du monde. Essai sur la société néolibérale* (Paris: La Découverte/Poche, 2010).

Pierre Dardot is a philosopher and specialist in Hegel and Marx. His previous books include *Sauver Marx?: Empire, multitude, travail immatériel* (with Christian Laval and El Mouhoub Mouhoud) and *Marx, prénom: Karl* (with Christian Laval).

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1
"L'entreprise de soi, un nouvel âge," interview with Bob Aubrey, *Autrement* 192 (2000): 101.

2
Richard Cantillon, *An Essay on Economic Theory* , trans. Mark Thornton and Chantal Saucier (Ludwig von Mises Institute, Alabama, 2010), 76.

3
L e Figaro, August 30, 2005.

4
On this precise point, Ulrich Beck is wrong to straightforwardly contrast classical liberalism's ontology of interests with the ontology of risk of contemporary capitalism, bourgeois society governed by self-interest with modern society governed by risk (*The Risk Society* , trans. Mark Ritter [London: Sage, 1992

5
"Entretien avec François Ewald," *Nouveaux regards* 21 (Spring 2003).

6
Cf. Alain Ehrenberg, *Le Culte de la performance* (Paris: Hachette, 1999).

7
Ibid., 14. Ehrenberg rightly notes that Max Weber had anticipated this trend: "In the United States, on the very site of its paroxysm, the pursuit of wealth, stripped of its ethico-religious meaning, is today tending to become combined with purely agonistic passions—something that invariably endows it with the character of a sport" (quoted on 176).

8
Cf. Roland Gori and Pierre Le Coz, *L'Empire des coachs. Une nouvelle forme de contrôle social* (Paris: Albin Michel, 2006), 7ff.

9
Daniel Bell, *The Cultural Contradictions of Capitalism* (New York: Basic Books, 1976).

10
This intensification and acceleration gave Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari the initial idea for a different political economy—one not separate from libidinal economy—set out in *Anti-Oedipus* and *A Thousand Plateaus* . For them, capitalism can only function by liberating desiring flows that exceed the social and political frameworks organized for the reproduction of the system of production. This is the sense in which the process of subjectivation peculiar to capitalism is characterized as "schizophrenic." However, if capitalism can only function by liberating ever stronger doses of libidinal energy that "decode" and "deterritorialize," it constantly seeks to reincorporate them into the productive machine: "The more the capitalist machine deterritorializes, decoding and axiomatizing flows in order to extract surplus value from them, the more its ancillary apparatuses, such as government bureaucracies and the forces of law and order, do their utmost to reterritorialize them, absorbing in the process a larger and larger share of surplus value" (Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia* , trans. Robert Hurley, Mark Seem, and Helen R. Lane [New York: Viking Press, 1977], 34–5). While in the 1970s Deleuze stressed the "paranoiac" repressive machines that vainly attempt to master desire's lines of flight, he later came to emphasize the relationship between this liberation of flows of desire and apparatuses for directing flows in the "society of control," between the mode of subjectivation by stimulation of "desire" and the generalized evaluation of performance. Cf. Gilles Deleuze, "Control and Becoming" and "Postscript on Control Societies," in *Negotiations 1972–1990*, trans. Martin Joughin (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997).

11
The terms "trans-subjectivation" and "self-subjectivation" are proposed by Foucault to account for the difference between third- and fourth-century Christian asceticism and the Hellenistic era's "culture of self." Cf. Foucault, *Hermeneutics of the Subject* , 214.

12
In the sense that the Latin *ultra* means "beyond."
Ultra-subjectivation is therefore not an exaggerated or excessive subjectivation, but one that always aims at a beyond-the-self in the self.

13
Nikolas Rose, *Governing the Soul: The Shaping of the Private Self* , 2nd ed. (London: Free Association Books, 1999), vii. However, Rose makes an error in his dating. The "psy" turn does not date from the late nineteenth century, but began earlier. Even if it was not detached from physiology at the time, the beginning of "psy" discourse was contemporaneous with the birth of political economy and liberal governmentality. To govern conduct, it was necessary to know how to influence the formation of motives—that is, play on the "psychological dynamic," in the phrase coined by Bentham.

14
Ibid., 88.

15
Let us recall that for Freud adaptation to reality, far from signifying renunciation of any pleasure, itself generates a certain form of pleasure.

16
See Rose, *Inventing Ourselves: Psychology, Power and Personhood* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996).

17
Cf. on this point Charles Melman's reflections in *L'Homme sans gravité. Jouir à tout prix* , interview with Jean-Pierre Lebrun (Paris: Denoël, 2002).

18
In Lacan, castration is understood as separation from enjoyment of the mother by dint of entry into the symbolic order. Quoted in Dufour, *L'Art de réduire les têtes. Sur la nouvelle servitude de l'homme libéré à l'ère du capitalisme total* (Paris: Denoël, 2003), 122–3 ("Ou pire" seminar, session of February 3, 1972; seminar at Saint-Anne, "Le savoir du psychanalyse," session of January 6, 1972).

19
Some managerial apologias for the creation of paranoid behavior are not without interest. In *Only the Paranoid Survive* (New York: Doubleday, 1996), Andrew Grove, the president of Intel Corporation, advocates a method of leadership directly linking the norm of competition to a "psychotizing" management of the workforce: "Fear of competition, fear of bankruptcy, fear of being wrong and fear of losing can all be powerful motivators. How do we cultivate fear of losing in our employees? We can only do that if we feel it ourselves" (117).

20
Olivier Rey, *Une folle solitude. Le fantasme de l'homme autoconstruit* (Paris: Seuil, 2006).

21
See Alain Ehrenberg, *L'Individu incertain* (Paris: Hachette, 1996). Ehrenberg rightly notes that the triumphant individual and the suffering individual are the "two facets of self-government" (18).