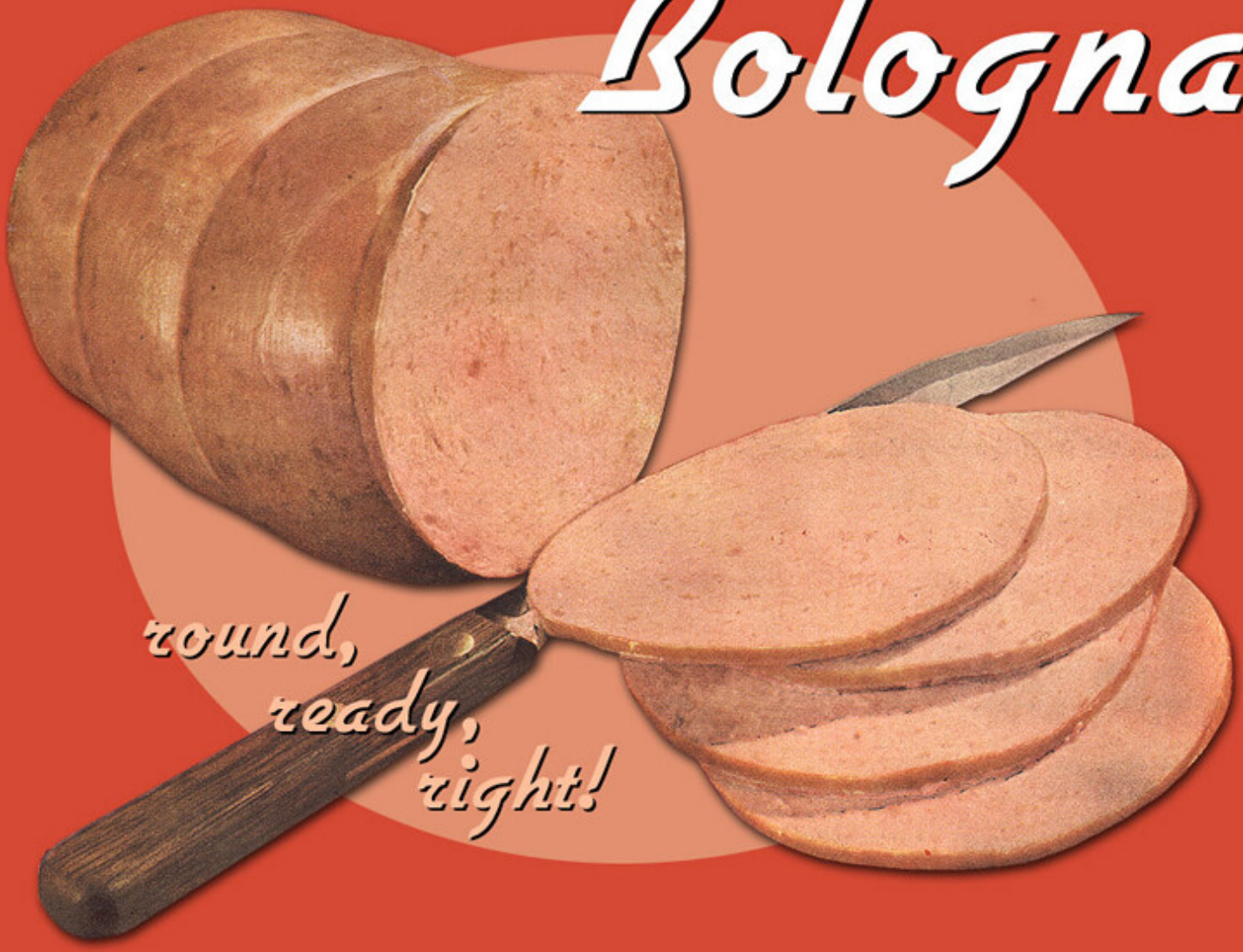
e-flux journal

Bologna



issue #14

03/2010

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

Editors
Julieta Aranda
Brian Kuan Wood
Anton Vidokle

Intern
Orit Gat

Copy Editor/Proofreader
Phillip Stephen Twilley

Graphic Design
Jeff Ramsey

Layout Generator
Adam Florin

PDF Design
Mengyi Qian

PDF Generator
Keyian Vafai

For further information, contact **journal@e-flux.com**

www.e-flux.com/journal

Irit Rogoff

“Education Actualized” – Editorial

This month, we are very glad to have our first guest-edited issue of e-flux journal *care of Irit Rogoff, whose activities we have followed with great interest over the years, drawn to her insights into the potentialities of education* unbounded *. Already a number of contributions to the journal in its first year (those of Tom Holert, Luis Camnitzer, and Dieter Lesage, in addition to Rogoff’s own immensely influential text, “Turning”) have surveyed current conditions and possible reformulations of educational structures. But at a time when even the status quo of many educational institutions is threatened by budget cuts, tuition hikes, and measures taken to standardize and regiment learning (see for instance the recent protests throughout the University of California system or the Bologna Process in general), and the art world increasingly seems to absorb an “educational turn” as a mannerist curiosity, it becomes all the more important to consider how forms of learning and exchange, of thinking and making, can take place within flexible, temporary, unstable configurations—which may or may not be educational or instructive—unrestricted by measurable outcomes or predetermined expectations.*

—Julieta Aranda, Brian Kuan Wood, Anton Vidokle

All around us we see a search for other languages and other modalities of knowledge production, a pursuit of other modes of entering the problematics of “education” that defy, in voice and in practice, the limitations being set up by the forces of bureaucratic pragmatism: a decade of increasing control and regulation, of market values imposed on an essential public right, and of middle-brow positivism privileged over any form of criticality—matched by a decade of unprecedented self-organization, of exceptionally creative modes of dissent, of criticality, and of individual ambitions that are challenging people to experiment with how they inhabit the field, how they inhabit knowledge.

Our notion of “Education Actualized” lies in the tension between these antagonistic spheres. If we think of actualization as the incarnation of an idea of “an education” within one particular educational system, we arrive at the duality we inhabit and work with. This issue is teeming with voices—angry and bewildered, critical and speculative, voices of ideas put to the test, producing fictions of impossible encounters—all efforts to grasp and locate, to actualize and inhabit this ongoing process in which we are all immersed.

You will see that almost every one of the contributions here reflects an unease and a recognition of the dangers and limitations wrought by attempts to regulate and homogenize a vast range of education cultures. The

marketing of education, which began in the U.S. and followed in Britain, has now taken hold on the European continent. The dangers inherent in education becoming a market economy geared towards profit and revenue, privileging a reductive notion of "outcomes," "transferable knowledges," and "entrepreneurship" are clear to all. But the emerging dominance of cognitive capitalism over European education systems and their inscription into capital economies of debt and credit, of self-support, of precarities for both students and professionals, is only one side of these developments. The other is the politicization of "education" to an extent we have not seen since the late 1960s.

Not only are students—whose access and conditions have worsened considerably—being treated as paying clients with no say or part in determining their own education, they are also increasingly organized in effective and insistent ways. 1 But many other spheres and strata of education have also been galvanized and linked up with the proliferation of self-organized structures that have emerged in the past decade of waning public-sphere culture and increasing privatization.

This issue of *e-flux journal* aims to bring together and extend a series of projects and interactions taking place between 2006 and the present that involved extensive investigations into "education" as a site of knowledge production, alternative modes of questioning, new vocabularies, analyses of the conditions of contemporary education, and negotiations between institutional and self-organized cultures. The voices that make up this issue have all been involved with related projects: A.C.A.D.E.M.Y was a series of exhibitions and publications (Hamburg, Antwerp, Eindhoven) that saw life over the course of 2006–2007; "Summit – Non Aligned Initiatives in Education Culture" was a large-scale meeting held at the HAU theatres in Berlin in 2007; in other formations and in other conjunctions we met and collaborated through the "Dictionary of War" project, the "Edu-factory," border academies, nomadic universities, committee meetings, conferences, discussions, and dinners. But, rather than document or build directly upon these activities, we wanted to bring about an "actualization" of these originary events—a constant process by which concepts acquire extensions and qualities.

This does not purport to be a representation of this vast field of thought, action, and agitation—the work collected here is in dialogue with many other exponents of this field, part of a network of shared concerns and open collaborations. This might help to explain what could appear to be a fairly arbitrary conjunction of people who do not belong to any particular organization, institution, or profession. Some of us are academics, some activists, and others are artists, curators, or publishers; everyone seems to be turning their hand to forms of activity and articulation outside their typical sphere of operations. Our contact with "education" as a political platform, a polemic, and the site of much of our work seems to have stretched us in unexpected directions, as can be seen through the actual writing that has been produced for this issue.

The focal point of the issue is the specter that haunts European higher education—the Bologna Accord on education, the so-called reforms of the system across the continent of Europe that aim to standardize it with comparable entry points, degrees, outcomes, credits, funding structures, criteria of excellence, and so forth. This has undoubtedly produced a very "Eurocentric" view of the map of education, but so great is the potential upheaval of "Bologna" that we decided to focus on this part of the world, but also to place it in dialogue with colleagues and collaborators in the U.S. There is equally a decisive "geopolitical" drive to Europe's education policy that fuses the former East and the former West into one knowledge tradition, thereby erasing decades of other models of knowledge in the East and producing an illusion of cohesion through knowledge economies and bureaucracies.

Our thanks to *e-flux journal* for giving us the space to elaborate the ideas included in this issue and for founding a platform hospitable to expanded discussions around creative practices. Our thanks to the Siemens Art Fund that initiated the A.C.A.D.E.M.Y project and to the Kulturstiftung des Bundes, Germany, that funded the "Summit" project, to Van Abbemuseum and MuHKA, which took part in extensive discussions and collaborated on these projects, and to the many other institutions, forums, and funders who have supported this work as it has progressed.

My thanks to Susanne Lang who took on co-editing this issue, to Ashley Whitfield who took on its production, and to the authors who rose to the challenge and explored the numerous facets of "education" as a vital, critical, and communal space.

—Irit Rogoff

X

Nora Sternfeld

Unglamorous Tasks: What Can Education Learn from its Political Traditions?

In the inaugural issue of *e-flux journal*, Irit Rogoff, under the deliberately ironic title "Turning," calls attention to the recent "educational turn in curating," thereby marking important shifts in the understanding of both practices: curating is no longer understood as the mere mounting of exhibitions; education is no longer understood as the transmission of existing values and acquirements.[1] Thus we are dealing with a turn in two arenas, the curatorial and the educational.

By saying this I want to emphasize that the important move in Rogoff's text does not consist in simply connecting the two, curating and educating—which would be a rather traditional enterprise, as the modern museum since the French Revolution has always seen itself as an educational institution. Traditionally, in addition to collecting, preserving, and researching, the tasks of representing and mediating were understood precisely as educational tasks of the museum. Moreover, the educational aspect of the museum—we owe these ideas to the reflexive turn of the New Museology—has first and foremost been a technique of power, aimed at absorbing and internalizing bourgeois values.[2] But I understand Rogoff's point to be a different one. For her, education is not about handing down existing national and bourgeois values, as Tony Bennett would have it, nor about the mere reproduction of knowledge, but about exploring the possibilities of an alternative production of knowledge that resists, supplements, thwarts, undercuts, or challenges traditional forms of knowledge.

In this text I want to examine the traditional tasks of education as well as the possibility of thinking about the educational as something that overcomes the function of *reproducing* knowledge and becomes something else—something unpredictable and open to the possibility of a knowledge production that, in tones strident or subtle, would work to challenge the apparatus of value-coding. Our challenge is to imagine a form of education that would demand learners take a political stand, but without anticipating what that stand should be and thus effecting closure (in other words, always leaving an open space for other possibilities). Such an undertaking may provide, as we will see in this brief argument, further insight into our educational and curatorial practices, which are often quite tedious and not always glamorous.

1. THE DIALECTIC OF TAKING SIDES—RETHINKING THE TRADITIONS OF POLITICAL EDUCATION

Politicization

In order to arrive at such a deconstructive concept of education I would like to begin with the histories of its politicization within twentieth-century modernity. In fact, the movement to politicize pedagogy started in the 1930s, when artists of the Left started to appropriate educational

techniques and turn them towards progressive tasks within their practice. Follow me to a theater in the Berlin of the Weimar Republic and a scene of Bertolt Brecht's play *The Mother*. Onstage is a teacher in the middle of his own bourgeois living room, standing before a blackboard.[3] A group of workers sits around a table, challenging the teacher in a debate about learning:

> TEACHER (*before a blackboard*): All right, you want to learn to read. I cannot understand why you need it, in your situation; you are also rather old. But I will try, just as a favor for Mrs. Vlassova. Have you all something to write with? All right then, I will now write three easy words here: "Branch, nest, fish." I repeat: "Branch, nest, fish." (*He writes.*)
>
> THE MOTHER (*who sits at the table with three others*): Must it really be "Branch, nest, fish"? Because we are old people we have to learn the words we need quickly!
>
> TEACHER (*smiles*): I beg your pardon; but the reason you may have for learning to read is a matter of total indifference.
>
> THE MOTHER: Why should it be? Tell me, for instance, how do you write the word "Worker"? That will be of interest to our Pavel Sostakovich.
>
> SOSTAKOVICH: Who needs to know how to write "Branch"?
>
> THE MOTHER: He is a metal worker.
>
> TEACHER: But you will need the letters in the word.
>
> WORKER: But the letters in the words "Class Struggle" are needed too!
>
> TEACHER: Possibly; but we must begin with the simplest things and not at once with the hardest! "Branch" is simple.
>
> SOSTAKOVICH: "Class Struggle" is much more simple.[4]

At the end of the scene the blackboard shows the words: "WORKERS. CLASS STRUGGLE. EXPLOITATION." In this way, the learning workers in Brecht's play have taught the teacher class struggle, while he has taught them to read.

The Mother had its premiere on January 15, 1932—the thirteenth anniversary of the death of Rosa Luxemburg—in the Komödienhaus am Schiffbauer Damm in Berlin. The scene addresses an elementary change in the understanding of education via its politicization. This change can be said to consist of the following four points:

The Mother, Bertolt Brecht after Maxim Gorki, Scene 6, Berliner Ensemble im Deutschen Theater, Berlin 1951. Photo: Abraham Pisarek.

Firstly, the understanding of learning as an end in itself is profoundly questioned. Brecht goes so far as to stage a situation in which the workers are completely hostile towards the rhetoric of the apparently self-serving form of education proclaimed by the teacher. They ask why should it be irrelevant, if education speaks about fish and nests or about class struggle? And even further: if the subject is irrelevant, then why not actually speak about class struggle? These questions show the limits of the disinterestedness that would characterize the logic of pedagogic examples. The workers in Brecht's play accordingly do not fall into the trap of the rhetoric of "disinterestedness" employed to exempt education from the value structure and interests of the bourgeoisie. They insist on an *interested* education—an education that addresses them as subjects.

Secondly, the scene of Brecht's described above stages a situation of learning that Jacques Rancière would describe as the "method of *stultification*." The teacher thinks that he knows exactly which examples are easy enough for a step-by-step acquisition of knowledge. In his book *The Ignorant Schoolmaster*, Rancière shows that common teaching methods reproduce an authoritarian distance between teachers and students that consists not only in the difference of knowledge but in the teacher's power to define distance.[5] He can lengthen or shorten this distance by introducing structures of power into the order of *explanation*. This tactic produces students whose knowledge always remains inferior to the teacher's, and reproduces the relations of superiority and inferiority that Rancière calls "the method of stultification." In his book—as an example of how this logic can be undermined—he presents the historical case of Joseph

Jacotot, a French teacher in the early nineteenth century, exiled to Belgium during the period of Restoration in France, who developed an unconventional method of teaching. When, as a Professor in Leuven, he had to teach French without being able to speak Dutch, he decided to use his own ignorance as a teaching method. Without any explanation, he made his students read a text along with its translation, setting up the two languages in a relationship to one another that was not directly explicatory, and removing himself from the center of the equation as the one who transmits knowledge. To his surprise, this worked very well. Rancière is interested in this idea of an emancipatory education based not on the teacher's knowledge, but on his deliberate ignorance and on the establishment of some notion of equality at the center of the educational process.

The workers in Brecht's scene are breaking the teacher's power to define; they are refusing the one-way logic of the educational relation. But in contrast to Rancière's ignorant schoolmaster, in Brecht's play the relation of the method of stultification is not subverted by a brave teacher, but thwarted by the workers themselves, who start to pool their learning. They know better than the teacher which steps are necessary for literacy.

Thirdly, Brecht inverts the relation of activity and passivity. The students are at least as actively involved as the teacher in defining the now mutual process of learning—what takes place is learning by teaching and teaching by learning. Brecht worked in the early 1930s in the context of his epic theater and his "learning plays" on techniques for inverting the classical assignments of activity and passivity, in both pedagogical and dramatic questions. He worked out some "epic" strategies in order to challenge theater in its educational capacity.

Fourthly, the aforementioned site of debate between the teacher and the students over teaching methods illustrates the conflict between depoliticized and politicized methods of education. The social dimension and power relations hidden in the seemingly disinterested space of bourgeois education come to light—conflict and dissent become the engine of learning. The scene ends with the famous song "Praise of Learning," sung on stage by the revolutionary workers:

> Study from bottom up,
> for you who will take the leadership,
> it is not too late!
> Study the ABC; it is not enough.
> but study it! Do not become discouraged,
> begin! You must know everything!
> You must prepare to take command, now!
>
> Study, man in exile!
> Study, man in the prison!
> Study, wife in your kitchen!
> Study, old-age pensioner!
> You must prepare to take command now!
> Locate yourself a school, homeless folk!
> Go search some knowledge, you who freeze!
> You who starve, reach for a book:
> it will be a weapon.
> You must prepare to take command now.
> Don't be afraid to question, comrades!
>
> Never believe on faith.
> see for yourself!
> What you yourself don't learn
> you don't know.
> Question the reckoning
> you yourself must pay it
> Set down your finger on each small item. asking:
> where do you get this?
> You must prepare to take command now![6]

In the Germany of the Weimar Republic both the intersection of education and society and efforts to overcome the distinction between an active production of knowledge and its passive reception were central to debates about the possibilities for a critical, revolutionary pedagogy. In 1929, the Marxist theorist and communist politician Edwin Hoernle published *Basic Questions about Proletarian Education*, a handbook for a revolutionary pedagogy.[7] The book proclaims the unity of politics, economy, and education, and offers a way of understanding education as an important step towards the transformation of society according to another, more just model. Hoernle proclaims that education remains a technique of power and part of the operations of hegemony as long as the marginalized are not fighting against it and organize, as part of an emergent new society, a new form of education. Walter Benjamin contributed a preface to the book, "A Communist Pedagogy," in which he writes:

> Education is a function of class struggle, but it is not only this. In terms of the communist creed, it represents the throughgoing exploitation of the social environment in the service of revolutionary goals. Since this environment is a matter not just of struggle but also of work, education is also a revolutionary education for work. Offering up a program for this, the book is at its best. … Only if man experiences changes of milieu in all their variety, and can mobilize his energies in the service of the working class again and again and in every new context, will he be capable of that universal readiness for action which the Communist program opposes to what Lenin called "the most repulsive feature of the old bourgeois society": its separation of theory and practice.[8]

The Complexity of Taking a Stand

Over the past twenty years critical pedagogy theorists including Peter McLaren, Henry A. Giroux, Ira Shor, and bell hooks have frequently referred to these debates of the early 1930s—especially to Brecht and to Antonio Gramsci—and actualized the historical model for a current politicization of education for contemporary neoliberal, postcolonial, and globalized migration societies. Another thinker on education who has been very important for their approach has been the Brazilian teacher, liberation theologian and education theorist Paulo Freire.

As a teacher fighting against illiteracy in Brazil, as a Marxist and liberation theologian, Paulo Freire developed the idea of a "pedagogy of the oppressed," in which a struggle for justice and equality within education is of central importance. He refers to a fundamental decision with regard to every educational project, of the need to take a stand, to introduce a set of beliefs and, rather than assuming their disinterested neutrality, consciously take them through the process of education. He locates this process as "tactically inside and strategically outside" the system.[9] So, according to Freire, there is no neutral education, it is always political, either in the sense of a consolidation of the existing circumstances or with respect to their change. Peter Mayo, writing about Gramsci and Freire, sums up this idea in form of a simple question: "On which side are we on, when we educate and teach, when we act?"—a question that always needs to be asked, but not necessarily answered.[10]

This apparently self-evident question of "taking sides," declaring which side we are on, certainly raises a number of further questions: How do we know that we are on the side of the oppressed? Are we always? Do we always want to be? Who are we when we are in the process of taking sides? Who is nevertheless excluded in this process? And the most classic question: How can we radically change the circumstances from the inside?

Thus, the very process of taking a stand and opting for one side grows more complicated. But in order to become complicated, the decision has to be taken in the first place. Only then do the contradictions that beset such a step (which to some extent already haunted Freire) become fully evident and thus active and productive. Because even when we have no foresight of what an education could be on a fundamental level and in the very middle of "the system," it is this very contradiction that could effect an opening to agency, a possible space for action. If we don't see power relations as unidimensional blocks, but as battlefields, then the place for learning and teaching can become an "embattled terrain." Education could then become a practice in which the sayable, thinkable, and doable could be negotiated, and, to quote Peter Mayo, "the dominant forms of thinking and acting can be challenged in the wide and amorphous areas of civil society."[11]

Throughout this historical trajectory, from communist pedagogy, the theatrical "teaching play," the liberation of youth and their political organization (Walter Benjamin, Bertolt Brecht, and Antonio Gramsci), by way of self-organization in schools and liberation pedagogy (Paulo Freire , but also Célestin Freinet), to critical, radical, and antiracist education (Henry A. Giroux, Ira Shor, and bell hooks), critical educational approaches have been concerned with working in a collective perspective to challenge the hegemonic canon. In this process, knowledge has been considered a weapon and education a form of organization and self-empowerment. Currently, these perspectives are being reread and subject to much criticism. Whereas Paulo Freire could still assume it was possible to work tactically within the institution and strategically outside it (with the goal of eliminating it), today, within globalized neoliberalism, we have to ask ourselves what that could mean under conditions in which we can no longer assume any form of "outside."

A Decided "Perhaps"

Some of the first principles of emancipatory educational thought, including its fundamental belief in the notion of "autonomous subjects" and "emancipation from immaturity," have been challenged by poststructuralist theory, according to which such concepts are as empty as the idea of being fully on the "good side" in the context of a debate or a struggle. Against this background, current educational theorists are trying to integrate poststructuralist concepts such as "event" and "experience" into the processes of education. With this, the "impossible" becomes as important and as active a category as the "possible," providing their discourse with a reflective edge lifting it beyond the pragmatic and functionalist implementation of an idea or a program. And there is always something unforeseeable in education, which cannot be planned: perhaps this is the reason why Sigmund Freud called education (together with politics and psychoanalysis) "an impossible task." It becomes especially impossible where education is poised to engage with social change, to consciously effect transformation in the direction of social change. Such a perspective encourages acceptance of a massive loss of control and of the risk of failure. For Jacques Derrida, the impossible is the condition of possibility of the possible. In the context of education this could suggest that there is a dimension of agency in its very uncontrollability. Because when there is only space for the necessary, change is impossible. Thus Derrida integrates the "perhaps" in his philosophical discourse:

> I will not say that this thought of the impossible possible, this other thinking of the possible is a thinking of necessity but rather, as I have also tried to demonstrate elsewhere, a thinking of the "perhaps" that Nietzsche speaks of and that philosophy has

> always tried to subjugate. There is no future and no relation to the coming of the event without experience of the "perhaps."[12]

The necessity of a taking a stance politically and the attendant impossibility of knowing whether we are intellectually on the right side has a way of producing a mode of impossibility that challenges education with a qualifying "perhaps," a temporal suspension that we have to assume, not as something arbitrary but as a constitutive component of the very act of making a decision.

What consequences might such a concept as the "decided perhaps" hold for education? Derrida himself puts it this way: "For if this impossible that I'm talking about were to arrive perhaps one day, I leave you to imagine the consequences. Take your time but be quick about it because you do not know what awaits you."[13]

Who is Turning?

Having gained a limited sense of the historicity of our question, let us now move into the present and turn towards current developments in the curatorial field. Still, the question remains the same: how can one conceive educational processes that take a position and address questions of agency while neither knowing nor wanting to pretend to know what is right and what the consequences of one's actions may be? Within the critical segment of the educational world, this question led to the articulation of many other questions such as: What is the critical potential and what are the complications and traps of educational practices that remain within existing power relationships? How can one negotiate from "inside" institutions with respect to changing them or changing one's own position or that of society? And what role can failure, an inevitable component, play in this?

Questions such as these have been raised in recent years from the perspective of a critical educational practice by numerous self-organized groups, as well as by teachers and mediators at various meetings, schools, universities, and exhibition institutions. Not infrequently, they took positions against the hegemonic "truths" of the field in question, organized themselves as best they could, and were sometimes more combative, more experimental, more reformist—and in almost all cases, quite marginalized.

In the thematic outline for a conference entitled "Cultures of the Curatorial," recently held in Leipzig, Beatrice von Bismarck describes "the curatorial" as "a cultural practice which goes decisively beyond the making of exhibitions," which has "a genuine method of generating, mediating, and reflecting experience and knowledge."[14] This shift from organizing exhibitions at the level of visible staging to the production of knowledge connects two areas that have traditionally been closely related in the history of the museum, but are nevertheless rather far apart in terms of their symbolic capital and attention to discourse: the curatorial and the educational.

Thus "the curatorial" relies to a certain extent on the logic of mere representation and gets involved in processes that it produces itself: so it is no longer about exhibitions as sites for setting up valuable objects and representing objective values, but rather as spaces for curatorial action in which unusual encounters and discourses become possible, in which the unplannable seems more important than, say, precise plans for exhibition and display.

How did it come to this? From the 1990s onward, there was a "reflexive turn" in exhibition theory, in which all the conditions of exhibiting and representing and the associated types of institutional logics have come under scrutiny. Following these more or less thorough self-critiques and analyses of the conditions of production, in recent years an advanced segment of the field has increasingly been raising the question of curatorial agency. Even as they presumed there to be no external standpoint for criticism, they nevertheless asked the question, "What is to be done?" The question underwent a variety of deconstructive turns, some involving transitions from curatorial work to education.

Looking at these shifts from the perspective of education, the point of intersection with the curatorial can be described somewhat differently: here, the encounter with a discourse from the advanced segment of the theory-heavy field of the art world is at once productive and surprising, capable of empowering educational discourse or throwing it off guard.

Thus, if we examine the conditions of the overlap with the educational that suddenly emerged in curatorial discourse, it becomes clear that the "educational turn in curating" functions as a turn exclusively for curators. It instrumentalizes "education" as a series of protocols, bypassing its complex internal struggles with notions of possibility and transformation.

Let's consider the unequal distribution of symbolic capital among curators and mediators in the art world. It can be described using a classical set of analyses from feminism: the powerful social differentiation between production and reproduction—in this case of knowledge. Thus the point here, once again, is to connect the question "Who is speaking?" with that of authorized authorship—"Who has the power to define?"—and to ask how the powerful distinction between the production and reproduction of knowledge can be radically broken down.

Now it appears that the concept of "the curatorial" may be leaving these problems far behind, since, after all, it understands education as simply part of the curatorial

production of knowledge. On the one hand, this connection represents an achievement, to the extent that the binary logics of representation and reception (between showing and viewing) and of production and reproduction of knowledge (between curating and mediating what is on view) are overcome. Nevertheless, it seems important to consider—in addition to the question of whom it benefits—what potential omissions can perhaps result from such a conflation of the educational and the curatorial. With the help of a few concepts, I would like to shed light on a rehabilitation of the various logics education itself employs—perhaps, in part, to make the contribution of the educational productive for the curatorial as well.

2. THE UNGLAMOROUS IN EDUCATION

In 1989, the volume *Remaking History* was published as part of the Dia Art Foundation's series "Discussions in Contemporary Culture." It discussed the question of how to address the canon in the field of art and exhibitions. In her now famous essay "Who Claims Alterity?" Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak refers back to the attribution of the "other speaker" and the "native informant" and rejects the Western need for another representation of the Other. She particularly warns against narrating the refusal of rights in a way that covers up counter-narratives and counter-representations. She mistrusts the power of institutions of representation and instead proposes working on an unglamorous pedagogy of the seminar room:

> In a sense our task is to make people ready to listen, and that is not determined by argument. Indirect and maddeningly slow, forever running the risk of demagogy and coercion mingled with the credulous vanity and class interest of teacher and student, it is still only institutionalized education in the human sciences that is a long-term and collective method for making people want to listen. As far as I can see, remaking (the discipline of) history has its only chance on this unglamorous and often tedious register. Therefore I propose the persistent establishment and re-establishment, the repeated consolidating in undoing, of a strategy of education and classroom pedagogy. . . . Such a strategy must speak from within the emancipatory master narratives even while taking a distance from them.[15]

Spivak consciously abandons both the field of representation and rapid changes in the speaker's position to instead make her way over the slow terrain of educational processes, where one should work on what can be heard, on changing what can be said, seen, and done. This seems to me to be an opportunity to address the canon without immediately closing the resulting openings, precisely because it is neither heroic nor glamorous.

Starting from Spivak's discussions, I would like to address here the educational aspects that are part of the experiences and practices of mediation work. I will do so using examples from the actual practice of trafo.K, an office for cultural mediation and education in Vienna, where Renate Höllwart, Elke Smodics, and I have for the past ten years worked on collaborative projects at the intersection between education and the production of knowledge.[16]

It is the "unglamorous," which I position as a counter to the trend towards the fashionable and representative in the curatorial, that the following approaches share.

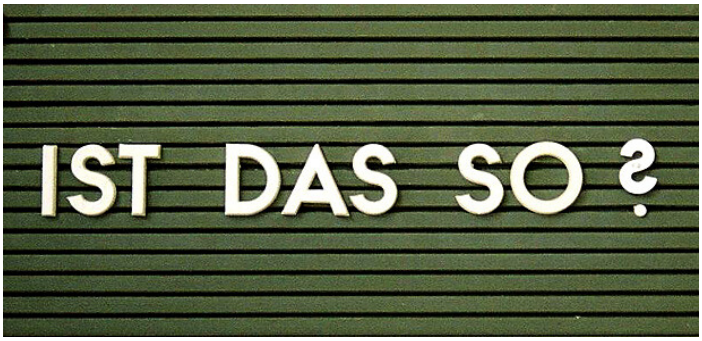


photo: trafo.K.

The Tedious

Schooling and education take place daily. Usually, they are not so interesting. In our projects, we repeatedly ask the question "Is that so?" in an effort to trigger a process of unlearning the things we take for granted, as well as those that our audience does. In the process, we create contexts and ask questions of ourselves, of the institutions in which and with which we work, and of society. Sometimes these questions do not seem very rebellious. Sometimes they provoke our audience, sometimes the institutions. They are not very spectacular, they do not always lead to images that can be shown, and often they are not sexy and need time to develop. We cannot even be sure of whether they really have a lasting effect. And yet it is precisely this tedious aspect of the educational that seems to reach the place of everyday life, where battles over understanding and hegemony take place just as much as they do in the spectacular.

The Disagreeable

In educational projects that cross social fields, for example, we respond to circumstances and create spaces

in which many things that we would rather not hear about are discussed. Far from creating spaces for disagreement, in Jacques Rancière's sense (as politics of dissent that are challenging the logics of power), we intend them primarily as spaces of non-unity, of the heterogeneity of views, positions, and approaches. It is a place where forms of taste, opinions, and worldviews that transgress an individual's habitual boundaries can encounter one another. Here people often say things that seem totally impossible to us. For example, we encounter racism, anti-Semitism, and sexism that are not legitimized by the attitudes of polite bourgeois society and that seem to scare us far more than long-standing racist, sexist, and anti-Semitic structures, which have become part of our habitual way of seeing ourselves. How can we deal with this? How can one reveal the structures of racism, heteronormativity, and social distinction within which these things can be said and, conversely, within which they seem unacceptable? We try to create a space in which it is possible to come to terms with these things together. There are several traps and types of failure we encounter. I will mention only two in the form of a paradox:

1. We sometimes use our bourgeois, authoritative right to speak from a position of power in order to prevent this sort of thing from legitimately becoming present in the room.

2. We sometimes allow something we deplore to stand in the room in order to prevent it from undermining the discussion we have managed to achieve, thereby performing a paradox inherent within educational practice.

This can be illustrated by the example of a wall of posters we developed with apprentices in a public space in front of the exhibition "Gastarbajteri" (Immigrant Labor) at the Wien Museum in 2004. Our discourse concerns the questions of the apprentices. Creating a common space for the un-learning of powerful foregone conclusions sometimes worked well, and sometimes not so well—we realized that the apprentices often did not agree with our position. We tried to discuss it in some moments and we silenced it in others. The work in the public space that we did together was a result of this process: on one hand it refers to an art discourse in the public space featuring critical reflections on Austrian racism and media; on the other hand it is a testimonial of the simultaneous, successful negotiations with our interlocutors in the group and a failure to arrive at an acceptable "position"; and the process as a whole runs the risk of a certain instrumentalization of these young people.

The Compromised

Both working with people who do not necessarily share our opinion and working with socially relevant themes often put us on uncertain ground. The important thing here seems to be to constantly come to terms with our own outside involvements. By doing so, our approaches, the research that results from collaborating with different parties, and their questions, constantly raise new questions. The tedious work consists in tolerating the fact that shared critical processes can never be brought to a conclusion.

The "Versteinerte Feindschaften" (Petrified Enmities) youth project organized by trafo.K (Renate Höllwart, Charlotte Martinz-Turek, and Claudia Ehgartner) together with the artists Alexander Jöchl and Hermann Lohninger and students from the Handelsakademie Lambach (Lambach Business Academy), as part of the 2003 Festival der Regionen (Festival of Regions), took a war memorial in Lambach, in Upper Austria, as the point of departure for grappling with the history of the place, its Nazi past, and current debates on coming to terms with the past and constructions of history. The project took as its theme hidden and open enmities and how they are inscribed in public spaces. The young participants developed, in cooperation with the artists, interventions in public space that offered alternative perspectives to official history.

A great deal of discussion took place over the course of the project, throughout which the young participants began to ask more questions, and in turn became increasingly critical. Nevertheless, some of their questions remained problematic. Some things they took away with them: in information sheets on the history of Nazi crimes, they reproduced the language by which a post-Nazi society preserves itself, in which its narratives of the death marches emphasized the Jewish capos rather than the Nazi criminals. We tried to reflect on these aspects of the project, and realized that regardless of the actual outcomes, it was the very ability to take part in such uncomfortable discussions—that is, through the process rather than the result—that underpinned the project.

To the extent that educational projects are always located in social circumstances, they are also determined by them. The goal is to create distance, attack the canon, the dominant school of thought, or history, but it can never succeed completely—these elements cannot be replaced, but they can be engaged with. This feeling is sometimes uncomfortably palpable. In a certain sense, the educational has a lot to do with being prepared to allow oneself to engage with the impossibility of remaining "clean" in the process of doing so (as if one was ever clean to begin with).

The Unsound

trafo.K was invited to do a site-specific education project at the Centre d'Art Contemporain, Genève. Together with the curators—the Swiss mediation collective microsillons—we decided to work with a group of thirty thirteen-year-old schoolchildren from the German school in Geneva. The opening was in November 2009; the

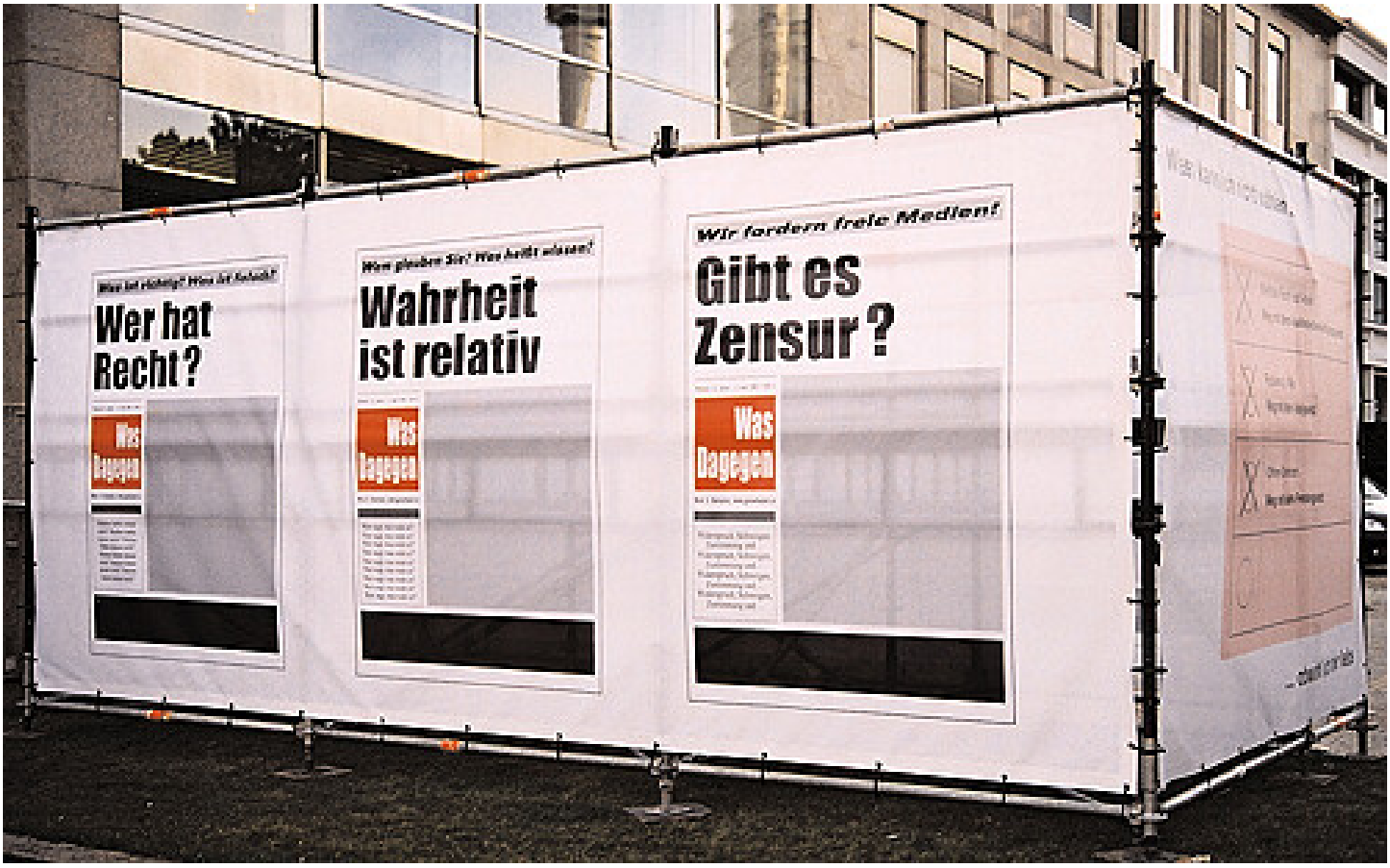


photo: trafo.K.

exhibition was extended and will continue to run until February 14, 2010. Whereas we represented an approach that was both open and conceptual, and wanted to treat the students as education experts in order to develop possible forms of action based on their perspectives, the students themselves preferred to tinker and build. We tried, as best we could, to bring the exhibition and its critical questions concerning education into our discussion. On the basis of our collaboration, the children developed various models based on exhibition works and themes. The results were neither very reflexive nor very conceptual. But they did suggest some imprecise and wild forms for addressing critical themes of the exhibition in sometimes open, sometimes uncritical ways. The pupils reacted to the artworks in the exhibition by rebuilding their ideas in their own way, and we called this a form of "wild translation."

When the project came to an end, we were left with a number of questions about the institution, about our position, and about the topics we discussed. So we decided to make the contradictions and our questions a crucial part of the project. We then reacted to the reaction of the pupils by asking questions as educators and mediators about the artworks and about the work of the pupils.

The Beside-the-Point and the Unpresentable

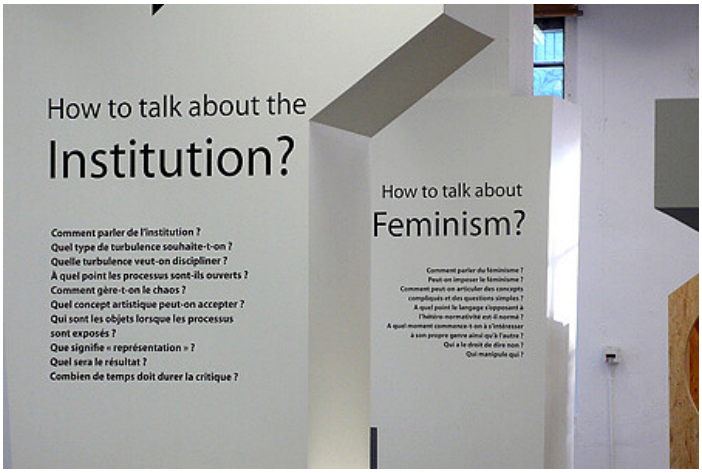
Projects are not always as focused and critical as we would like them to be. To some extent, they are open processes and the unexpected results they produce can be productive. These results are not always presentable and are sometimes embarrassing, often beside the point. Sometimes, however, just such results can lead to very interesting considerations, questions concerning foregone conclusions, reformulations, and spaces for action. Sometimes there is no result at all.

In choosing these examples, I have deliberately emphasized those small, tedious, unpresentable, and strenuous aspects of the educational, with which all mediators and educators are familiar, but which rarely find their way into their discussions and theory. They are probably not what people have in minde when they allude to the great collective possibilities of curatorial knowledge production. Just to be clear: these are not the goal, but just one part of educational processes. They should likewise not be understood as strategies—they are better described methodologically or politically. They are

photo: trafo.K.

reflections, tactics, and forms of dealing with conditions and contingencies.

I could indeed formulate a joint goal for educational and curatorial work: that it challenge the apparatus of value-coding with an eye to changing what can be seen, said, and done. How and when this can succeed is determined as much by the rules and exclusions specific to a field, by its traditions and rifts, as much as by contingencies and forms for dealing with them—and as they are not necessarily the same in both the educational and curatorial fields, it was my intention to discuss several of these approaches and tactics here. My interest is in the slow and tedious qualities, the traps and failures, the moments when nothing important occurs, not even for the production of knowledge. At this point, one could paraphrase Derrida: only if it is possible for nothing productive to occur can something productive occur. Perhaps the recent curatorial discourses that have begun to emphasize the productivity of knowledge can learn from the quiet, laborious, unpresentable processes of the educational.



trafo.K & Gabu Heindl, "Wild Translation." photo: trafo.K.

trafo.K & Gabu Heindl, "Wild Translation." photo: trafo.K.

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Translated from the German by Steven Lindberg

Nora Sternfeld is an art educator and curator. Part of **trafo.K, Office for Art Education and Critical Knowledge Production** and **Schnittpunkt, exhibition theory and practice**. She currently teaches at the Academy of Fine Arts in Vienna and is co-direcor of the ecm - educating/ curating/ managing – Masterprogramme for exhibition theory and practice at the University of Applied Arts Vienna.

1
Irit Rogoff, "Turning," *e-flux journal* , no. 0 (November 2008), https://www.e-flux.com/journal/00/68470/turning/ .

2
In this context see for example the work of Tony Bennett, Peter Vergo, or Douglas Crimp.

3
Photographs of the stage design of the Berliner Ensemble im Deutschen Theater in 1951 and the Komödienhaus am Schiffbauer Damm in 1932 can be found in Michael Schwaiger, *Bertolt Brecht und Erwin Piscator: Experimentelles Theater im Berlin der Zwanzigerjahre* (Vienna: Christian Brandstätter, 2004), 111.

4
Bertolt Brecht, *The Mother*, trans. Lee Baxandall (New York: Grove Press, 1994), 76–77.

5
Jacques Rancière, *The Ignorant Schoolmaster: Five Lessons in Intellectual Emancipation* , (Stanford University Press, 2008.)

6
Brecht, *The Mother*, 79.

7
Edwin Hoernle, *Grundfragen proletarischer Erziehung* , ed. Lutz von Werder (Frankfurt am Main: März, 1970).

8
Walter Benjamin, "A Communist Pedagogy," in *Walter Benjamin: Selected Writings* , vol. 2, 1927–1934, ed. Michael W. Jennings, Howard Eiland, and Gary Smith, trans. Rodney Livingstone et al. (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2005), 274.

9
Paulo Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (New York: Continuum, 1993), 90.

10
Mayo, *Politische Bildung*.

11
Mayo, *Politische Bildung*, 22.

12
Jacques Derrida, "The Future of the Profession or the Unconditional University," in *Deconstructing Derrida* , ed. Peter Pericles Trifonas and Michael A. Peters (London: Macmillan, 2005), 22.

13
Ibid., 24.

14
See http://www.kdk-leipzig.de/veranstaltungen.html?file=a/pdf/Conference%20Cultures%20of%20the%20Curatorial.pdf .

15
Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, "Who Claims Alterity?" in *Remaking History* , Discussions in Contemporary Culture 4, ed. Barbara Kruger and Phil Mariani (Seattle, WA: Bay Press, 1989), 200.

16
See trafo.K's Web site at http://www.trafo-k.at/ .

Adrian Rifkin

Artistic Education of the Public

> *Artistic education of the public.* If the same motif has not been treated in a hundred different ways by various masters, the public never learns to get beyond interest in the material alone; but once it has come to be familiar with the motif from numerous versions of it, and thus no longer feels the charm of novelty and anticipation, it will then be able to grasp and enjoy the nuances and subtle new inventions in the way it is treated.
>
> —Nietzsche, "From the Souls of Artists and Writers"

If what Nietzsche writes in *Human, All Too Human* has some value for us, maybe it's to do with how we can twist and pervert it slightly to ask a question about what we have been doing over the years—the years we all spent in art school. For if the artistic education of the public is an effect of art's own unfolding and infolding, of the repetitions that alone give rise to differences, it's not easy to come to grips with what exactly art education is, other than that it isn't artistic; or that the art student is not the public, or is from an element of the public whose artistic education has so completely failed that s/he wants only to engage in those repetitions that allow for these observations to be made. So over the years in art education—and this is its singularity—we've been repeating ourselves in a succession of new beginnings, or beginnings that we at least hope to be new, without ever hoping too much, beginnings that inevitably set out from something already well underway.

In some ways it is a terrible fate to be so cut off from the spectacle of art that you see it as your task to make it over the rough terrain into being seen—a task that requires all your judgment. It's a profession, but it is also a sentence—a sentence to engage in life with a certain seriousness, whether you feel that it is serious or not, because you engage in showing things and in a *making visible*. I don't know of any more serious seriousness, even when it skips and hops, or dances. If this is a responsibility, it really is an odd one, as it straddles a relation to the obvious—what is already there will in any event

be seen or felt or heard, and to the arcane. Whatever you do, even if it passes almost unnoticed, prepares for some adjustment of and in the world and the ways it will appear.

It's an alibi, also, if things are getting too hard, and this alibi becomes more evident when the economic structures of luxury—these consumers of art for artistic pleasure—are collapsing around us daily. Nietzsche again:

> To aspire to honour here means: "to make oneself superior and to wish this superiority to be publicly acknowledged." If the former is lacking and the latter nonetheless still demanded, one speaks of *vanity*. If the latter is lacking and its absence not regretted, one speaks of *pride*.[1]

All this is frightening enough; first you have an education that is, above all, not artistic. And then you have the art world—which is very often an artistic world—which demands both pride and vanity as attributes of what it recognizes as art, and of the person who makes it. Here is another question about how education unfolds in the peculiar relation between art and its publics. The tension between the idea that anyone can be an artist, and our knowing that only a few individuals wish to be one, is quite different from that between the idea that not everyone is prepared to see art and its place in the world, and our knowledge that so many are ready to declare themselves art lovers. For a start, art outlives art lovers, but artists do not—they are born together and die together. In this way, art and the artistic finally belong together, and it would be vain to think otherwise. Here, in the graduate exhibition, we—you—have ridden this vanity like a tiger in supposing that, despite all the odds against us, we can overcome everything that is artistic, and on top of that, we rode this tiger as if it were nothing more than a lightly tripping fairground animal.

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[1] Friedrich Nietzsche, "From the Souls of Artists and Writers," in *Human, All Too Human*, trans. and ed. R. J. Hollingdale (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 90.

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Adrian Rifkin is a Professor of Art Writing at the Goldsmiths University of London.

Fred Moten and Stefano Harney

Debt and Study

Debt and Credit

They say we have too much debt. We need better credit, more credit, less spending. They offer us credit repair, credit counseling, microcredit, personal financial planning. They promise to match credit and debt again, debt and credit. But our debts stay bad. We keep buying another song, another round. It is not credit that we seek, nor even debt, but bad debt—which is to say real debt, the debt that cannot be repaid, the debt at a distance, the debt without creditor, the black debt, the queer debt, the criminal debt. Excessive debt, incalculable debt, debt for no reason, debt broken from credit, debt as its own principle.

Credit is a means of privatization and debt a means of socialization. So long as debt and credit are paired in the monogamous violence of the home, the pension, the government, or the university, debt can only feed credit, debt can only desire credit. And credit can only expand by means of debt. But debt is social and credit is asocial. Debt is mutual. Credit runs only one way. Debt runs in every direction, scattering, escaping, seeking refuge. The debtor seeks refuge among other debtors, acquires debt from them, offers debt to them. The place of refuge is the place to which you can only owe more, because there is no creditor, no payment possible.

This refuge, this place of bad debt, is what we would call the fugitive public. Running through the public and the private, the state and the economy, the fugitive public can be identified by its bad debt—but only by its debtors. To creditors, it is just a place where something is wrong, though that something—the invaluable thing that has no value—is desired. Creditors seek to demolish that place, that project, in order to save those who live there from themselves and from their lives.

They research it, gather information on it, try to calculate it. They want to save it. They want to break its concentration and store the fragments in the bank. All of a sudden, the thing credit cannot know—the fugitive thing for which it gets no credit—is inescapable.

Once you start to see bad debt, you start to see it everywhere, hear it everywhere, feel it everywhere. This is the real crisis for credit, its real crisis of accumulation. Now debt begins to accumulate without it. That's what makes it so bad. We saw it yesterday in the way someone stepped, in the hips, a smile, the way the hand moved. We heard it in a break, a cut, a lilt, the way the words leapt. We felt it in the way someone saves the best part just for you, and then it's gone, given, a debt. They don't want nothing. You got to accept it, you got to accept that. You're in debt but you can't give credit because they won't hold it. Then the phone rings. It's the creditors. Credit keeps track. Debt forgets. You're not home, you're not you, you moved without leaving a forwarding address called refuge.

The student is not home, out of time, out of place, without credit, in bad debt. The student is a bad debtor threatened with credit. The student runs from credit. Credit pursues the student, offering to match credit for debt until enough debts and enough credits have piled up. But the student has a habit, a bad habit. She studies. She studies but she does not learn. If she learned, they could measure her progress, confirm her attributes, give her credit. But the student keeps studying, keeps planning to study, keeps running to study, keeps studying a plan, keeps building a debt. The student does not intend to pay.

Debt and Forgetting

Debt cannot be forgiven, it can only be forgotten and remembered. To forgive debt is to restore credit. It is restorative justice. Debt can be abandoned for bad debt, it can be forgotten, but it cannot be forgiven. Only creditors can forgive, and only debtors, bad debtors, can offer justice. Creditors forgive debt by offering credit, by offering more from the very source of the pain of debt, a pain for which there is only one source of justice: bad debt, forgetting, remembering again, remembering it cannot be paid, cannot be credited, stamped "received." There will be a celebration when the North spends its own money and is left with nothing, and spends again, on credit, on stolen cards, on account of a friend who knows he will never again see what he lent. There will be a celebration when the Global South does not get credit for discounted contributions to world civilization and commerce, but keeps its debts, changes them only for the debts of others, a swap between those who never intend to pay, who will never be allowed to pay, in a bar in Penang, in Port of Spain, in Bandung, where your credit is no good.

Credit can be restored, restructured, rehabilitated, but debt forgiven is always unjust, always unforgiven. Restored credit is restored justice and restorative justice is always the renewed reign of credit, a reign of terror, a hail of obligations to be met, measured, dispensed, endured. Justice is only possible where debt never obliges, never demands, never equals credit, payment, payback. Justice is possible only where it is never expected, in the refuge of bad debt, in the fugitive public of strangers and not of communities, of undercommons and not neighborhoods, among those who have been there all along from somewhere. To seek justice through restoration is to return debt to the balance sheet and the balance sheet never balances. It plunges toward risk, volatility, uncertainty, more credit chasing more debt, more debt shackled to more credit. To restore is to not conserve again. There is no refuge in restoration. Conservation is always new. It comes from the place we stopped on the run. It's made from the people who took us in. It's the space they say is wrong, the practice they say needs fixing, the homeless aneconomics of visiting.

Communities do not need to be restored. They need to be conserved, which is to say they need to be moved, hidden, restarted with the same joke, the same story, always somewhere other than where the long arm of the creditor seeks them—conserved from restoration, beyond justice, beyond law, in bad country, in bad debt. Communities are planned when they are least expected, planned when they don't follow the process, when they escape policy, evade governance, forget themselves, remember themselves, have no need of forgiveness. They are never wrong. They are not actually communities, but debtors at a distance—bad debtors, forgotten but never forgiven. Give credit where credit is due, and render unto bad debtors only debt, only that mutuality that tells you what you can't do. You can't pay me back, give me credit, get free of me, and I can't let you go when you're gone. If you want to do something, then forget this debt, and remember it later.

Debt at a distance is forgotten, and remembered again. Think of autonomia, its debt at a distance to the black radical tradition. In autonomia, in the militancy of post-workerism, there is no outside, refusal takes place inside and makes its break, its flight, its exodus from the inside. There is biopolitical production and there is empire. There is even what Franco "Bifo" Berardi calls "soul trouble." In other words, there is this debt at a distance to a global politics of blackness emerging out of slavery and colonialism, a black radical politics, a politics of debt without payment, without credit, without limit. This debt was built in a struggle with empire before empire, when power was not held by institutions or governments alone, where any owner or colonizer had the violent power of a ubiquitous state. This debt attached to those who, through dumb insolence or nocturnal planning, ran away without leaving, left without getting out. This debt was shared with anyone whose soul was sought for labor power, whose spirit was born marked with a price. And it is still shared, never credited and never abiding credit, a debt you play, a debt you walk, a debt you love. And without credit, this debt is infinitely complex. It does not resolve into profit, seized assets, or a balance in payment. The black radical tradition is a movement that works through this debt. The black radical tradition is debt work. It works in the bad debt of those in bad debt. It works intimately and at a distance until autonomia, for instance, remembers, and then forgets. The black radical tradition is debt unconsolidated.

Debt and Refuge

We went to the public hospital but it was private, and we went through the door marked "private" to the nurses' coffee room, and it was public. We went to the public university but it was private, and we went to the campus barbershop, and it was public. We went into the hospital, into the university, into the library, into the park. We were offered credit for our debt. We were granted citizenship. We were given the credit of the state, the right to render

private any public gone bad. Good citizens can match credit and debt. They get credit for knowing the difference, for knowing their place. Bad debt leads to bad publics, publics unmatched, unconsolidated, unprofitable. We were made honorary citizens. We honored our debt to the nation. We rated the service, assessed the cleanliness, paid our fees.

Then we went to the barbershop and they gave us a Christmas breakfast, and we went to the coffee room and got coffee and red pills. We were going to run away but we didn't have to. They ran. They ran across the state and across the economy, like a secret cut, a public outbreak, a fugitive fold. They ran but they didn't go anywhere. They stayed so we could stay. They saw our bad debt coming from a mile away. They showed us that this was the public, the real public, the fugitive public, and where to look for it. Look for it where they say the state doesn't work. Look for it where they say there is something wrong with that street. Look for it where new policies are to be introduced. Look for it where tougher measures are to be taken, belts are to be tightened, papers are to be served, neighborhoods are to be swept—anywhere bad debt elaborates itself. Anywhere you can sit still, conserve yourself, plan, spend a few minutes, a few days without hearing them say there is something wrong with you.

Debt and Governance

We hear them say that what's wrong with you is your bad debt. You're not working. You fail to pay your debt to society. You have no credit, but that is to be expected. You have bad credit, and that is fine. But bad debt is a problem—debt seeking only other debt, detached from creditors, fugitive from restructuring. Destructuring debt, now that's wrong. But even still, what's wrong with you can be fixed. First we give you a chance—that's called governance, a chance to be interested, or even disinterested. That's policy. Or if you are still wrong, still bad, we give you policy. Bad debt is senseless, which is to say it cannot be perceived by the senses of capital. But therapy is available. Governance wants to reconnect your debt to the outside world. You are on the spectrum, the capitalist spectrum of interests. You are the wrong end. Your bad debt looks unconnected, autistic, in its own world. But you can be developed. You can get credit after all. The key is to have interests. Tell us what you want. Tell us what you want and we can help you get it, on credit. We can lower the rate so you can take interest. We can raise the rate so you will pay attention. But we can't do it alone. Governance only works when you work, when you tell us what you want, when you invest your interests back in debt and credit. Governance is the therapy of your interests, and your interests will bring your credit back. You will have an investment, even in debt. And governance will gain new senses, new perceptions, new advances into the world of bad debt, new victories in the war on those without interests, those who will not speak for themselves, participate, identify their interests, invest, inform, demand credit.

Governance does not seek credit. It does not seek citizenship, although it is often understood to do so. Governance seeks debt, debt that will seek credit. Governance cannot not know what might be shared, what might be mutual, what might be common. Why award credit, why award citizenship? Only debt is productive, only debt makes credit possible, only debt allows credit to rule. Productivity always precedes rule, even if the students of governance do not understand this, and even if governance itself barely does. But rule does come, and today it is called policy, the reign of precarity. And who knows where it will hit you, some creditor walking by you on the street. You keep your eyes down but he makes policy anyway, smashes anything you have conserved, any bad debt you are smuggling. Your life reverts to vicious chance, to arbitrary violence, a new credit card, a new car loan, torn from those who hid you, ripped from those with whom you shared bad debt. They don't hear from you again.

Study and Planning

The student has no interests. The student's interests must be identified, declared, pursued, assessed, counseled, and credited. Debt produces interests. The student will be indebted. The student will be interested. Interest the students! The student can be calculated by her debts, can calculate her debts by her interests. She has credit in her sights, has graduation in her sights, has being a creditor, being invested in education, being a citizen in her sights. The student with interests can demand policies, can formulate policy, give herself credit, pursue bad debtors with good policy, sound policy, evidence-based policy. The student with credit can privatize her own university. The student can start her own NGO, invite others to identify their interests, put them on the table, join the global conversation, speak for themselves, get credit, manage debt. Governance is interest-bearing. Credit and debt. There is no other definition of good governance, no other interest. The public and private in harmony, in policy, in pursuit of bad debt, on the trail of fugitive publics, chasing evidence of refuge. The student graduates.

But not all of them. Some stay, committed to black study in the university's undercommon rooms. They study without end, plan without pause, rebel without policy, conserve without patrimony. They study in the university and the university forces them under, relegates them to the state of those without interests, without credit, without debt that bears interest, debt that earns credits. They never graduate. They just ain't ready. They're building something in there, something down there, a different kind of speculation, a speculation called "study," a debt speculation, a speculative mutuality. Mutual debt, unpayable debt, unbounded debt, unconsolidated debt,

debt to each other in a study group, to others in a nurses' room, to others in barbershops, to others in a squat, a dump, the woods, a bed, an embrace.

And in the undercommons of the university they meet to elaborate their debt without credit, their debt without number, without interest, without repayment. Here they meet those others who dwell in a different compulsion, in the same debt, a distance, forgetting, remembered again but only after. These other ones carry bags of newspaper clippings, or sit at the end of the bar, or stand at the stove cooking, or sit on a box at the newsstand, or speak through bars, or in tongues. These other ones have a passion for telling you what they have found, and they are surprised that you want to listen, even though they've been expecting you. Sometimes the story is not clear, or it starts in a whisper. It goes around again and again but listening—it is funny every time. This knowledge has been degraded, the research rejected. They can't get access to books, and no one will publish them. Policy has concluded they are conspiratorial, heretical, criminal, amateur. Policy says they can't handle debt and will never get credit. But if you listen to them, they will tell you: we will not handle credit, and we cannot handle debt, debt flows through us, and there's no time to tell you everything, so much bad debt, so much to forget and remember again. But if we listen to them, they will say, "Come, let's plan something together." And that's what we're going to do. We're telling all of you, but we're not telling anyone else.

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Stefano Harney is Chair in Strategy, Culture, and Society, and Deputy Director of the School of Business Management, Queen Mary, University of London.

Fred Moten is Associate Professor of English Arts and Sciences at Duke University works at the intersection of black studies, performance studies, poetry and critical theory.

Dietrich Lemke

Mourning Bologna

A Joyless Anniversary

The venerable old Italian university town of Bologna seems in danger of losing its long-established good name. The risk to the city's reputation, ironically enough, is due to developments in higher education, the very field in which its fame was established. In 1088, the first European university to be broadly independent of Church control was founded in Bologna, setting new standards in jurisprudential scholarship and, through its example, leading to the founding of other universities across the continent.

However, "Bologna" in contemporary European discussions of higher education now largely refers to what is known as the Bologna Process. The Process, begun just over a decade ago, is intended to reduce the traditional diversity of European universities, standardizing and unifying them along "American" lines.[1] This was to be done by unifying degrees, replacing them with the BA and the MA, and implementing the modularization of teaching, standardized testing, comparable outcomes, and other elements seemingly aimed at ensuring a unified field with greater mobility between countries and greater parity before funding agencies. The Process came to carry the name "Bologna" thanks to the city's hosting, in 1999, of a much-vaunted meeting of the education ministers of twenty-nine countries (not to mention their substantial retinues). The meeting launched a radical and still-ongoing process of transformation of Europe's universities and higher education institutions. The most extreme version of the Bologna Process is to be found in Germany—and thus for the countless critics of the process in Germany, the name "Bologna" has come to have highly negative connotations.

It all began quite simply: after a single-day session, the twenty-nine ministers published a declaration of intent—with sparse content and negligible legal effect—announcing that the creation of a common European educational area was vital to the promotion of geographical mobility, the common recognition of qualifications and, more generally, the economic development of the continent. Ten years and five biennial follow-up conferences later, the results of Germany's "Bologna" are announced on the Web site of the Federal Ministry of Education and Research:

> The Bologna Process was launched in 1999. It has contributed to the successful modernization of the German institutions of higher education. Germany and its European neighbours have set themselves the task of creating a European Higher Education Area by 2010 in order to succeed in the international competition for the best brains. In Germany, we have taken advantage of the biggest higher education reform for decades to improve the quality of study courses, to enhance employability and to reduce the length of studies.[2]

Underlining the ultimate justification for the process, the text's next paragraph affirms: "This means that we can make better use of the knowledge potential available."

While media rhetoric and government sources have trumpeted the supposed success of the process, more reflective souls may be struck by the very narrow definition of higher education as equipping citizens for the labor market. They may even ask who could or should profit from a more successful exploitation of this "knowledge potential."

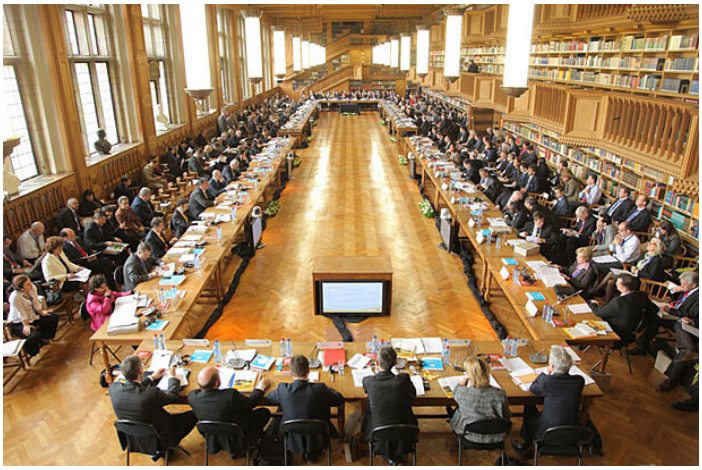
These celebratory responses might have continued indefinitely, had it not been for events immediately following the June 2009 tenth anniversary of the Bologna meeting. The week after the anniversary saw a week-long student strike in sixty cities across Germany, with very large numbers of university and high-school students joining protests against conditions they felt to be completely unacceptable. Put under pressure by the sudden shift in the media climate, now more amenable to critics of Bologna, public figures like Education Minister Annette Schavan were forced to admit that the Process has been marked by serious shortcomings and mistakes. However, the subsequent waning of public interest in the Bologna Process allowed those in charge to push the problems back out of sight.

It took more student strikes during the following winter semester—this time employing building occupations and demonstrations to gain media and public attention—to reexamine the failed reform process. At this point even President Horst Köhler himself felt obliged to denounce the disgraceful failures and deficiencies in German higher education and to demand improvements and new ideas for the future, rather than a continued sweeping-under-the-carpet. At long last, the education ministers of the various federal states, along with other relevant authorities, were forced to address the problems.

In the meantime, many higher education institutions made attempts to simplify the newly introduced bachelors' and masters' degrees that had replaced the much longer magister programs, making them more comprehensible and lightening the massive burden of tests and exams borne by students. However, none of these corrective measures do more than treat the symptoms of the Bologna illness. They all fail to address, and even fail to mention, the basic problem, namely Bologna's abandonment of what should be the central idea of higher education—the creation of graduates capable of critical thought and scholarly and scientific rigor.

The results of a much-heralded, politically high-powered "Education Summit" were just as bad. According to the politicians, the universities had simply failed in their implementation of Bologna, managing to make a stupid mess out of what they considered to have been a wonderful concept. Aside from this, the politicians' sole concern was to manipulate the figures to make it seem as if they had kept their past promises to increase funding.

Very simply, the politicians were just playing for time, clinging desperately to a visibly failed education reform package. This begs the obvious question: why do parties of all political colors stripes cling doggedly to Bologna? Ideology critique leads us to the obvious answer: the influence of interest groups that benefit, and want to continue to benefit, from the failed Bologna Process. The price for this is paid by the public; the burden is borne by those most directly affected by what is called the restructuring of higher education, but which may in truth be called its destruction.



The 6th Bologna Ministerial Conference took place in Leuven/Louvain-la-Neuve from 28-29 April 2009.

The Implementation Process

If we look more closely at Bologna's implementation, a pattern becomes clear. The original approach was in fact quite open. However, in the course of successive conferences, the process was defined more and more narrowly, the bachelor/master model became mandatory for all, and any room for national and regional variation was progressively eliminated, flattening out the diversity that had been the strength of Europe's education system. Since the Bologna conference itself had no legal force, its decisions have to be effected through national legislation. Thus the German federal government passed a new Education Framework Law in 2002 that allowed for the establishment of BA and MA structures in German higher education, a law which, despite its imperative rhetoric, was only an enabling mechanism and not a mandate.[3]

This meant there was no discussion—neither in state parliaments nor within the individual universities—of whether these radical changes actually made any sense. In this way, the BA/MA model and the new credit-point

system ECTS (also a product of Bologna) were introduced into German higher education by an edict from above, without the least consultation of those affected. There was of course some grumbling from university teachers, now de facto stripped of their autonomy, reduced to carrying out orders from on high. But in general, even substantial protest was simply ignored or fobbed off by those intent on pushing through the Bologna Process.

This was followed by a phase in which each faculty—under pressure from their administrations—was forced to radically restructure long- and carefully-established structures of study in their disciplines. In marathon meetings, these structures were hacked into new multifunctional (and polyvalent) modules. This concept of the "module"—originally derived from technology—refers to one element within a larger system, internally complex but capable of being replaced without requiring substantial change to the overall system. In the context of the reform of programs of study, the concept has a striking ambiguity: in "macro" terms it points to the dissolution of existing structures of meaning and coherence, and thus stands for contingency and arbitrariness; seen in terms of the internal "micro" structure of the module itself, the term stands rather for rigid and compulsory organization.

The supposed autonomy of modularized study units results in an exceptional increase in the number of courses offered, since any course designated as a "module" can now appear simultaneously in any number of programs, and thus can be statistically counted many times over. This is a highly desirable outcome for university administration, since it offers considerable savings, allowing them a cost-free way of improving their course-offering statistics. For those at the receiving end it means that courses are open to students from vastly differing programs, often from different branches of the university. The wildly diverse expectations and levels of previous exposure to the subject can present almost insoluble pedagogical problems for the teacher. This task is made no easier by the larger student numbers brought in by multiple listings in the course directory.

Increased attendance can be linked to another aspect of Bologna, namely the fundamentally control-oriented mentality that underlies it. This is exhibited in a basic distrust of students and an insistence on constant, and often unnecessary classroom attendance. The resulting overcrowding is intensified, finally, by the increase in actual course requirements for the new BA and MA courses. In this manner, overall standards in the universities are driven down in the direction of those prevailing in high schools. Autonomous study and independent thought are systemically hampered by the new modes of organization and the breadth of the prescribed curriculum renders impossible the kind of in-depth knowledge indispensable to scholarship.

Seen from the point of view of the internal structure of courses (or of other "study units"), modularization leads to standardization and to the breaking up of learning into bite-sized chunks, chunks then linked together in a system of incessant and immediate testing. Here, in the interest of a superficial and economistic notion of pedagogical efficiency, there is a return to a primitive pedagogy of outcome-based learning, a fallacy I thought had been overcome thirty years ago.[4] The prevailing desire to *control* educational outputs leads to the privileging of simplistic pedagogical aims. In principle, the application of learning-outcome theory could indeed have beneficial results, such as possible improvement in heuristic thought or the autonomous acquisition of important discipline-specific categories, instead of the endless production of ever more regulations.

This can be seen clearly in the implementation of the ECTS, the new Europe-wide credit-point system. Previously, the necessary scholarly achievements in any discipline were actually measured in graspable units, defined by classroom hours and requiring established proofs of achievement. Much has been made of the fact that the units of the new system would be calculated with a wider and more inclusive method, doing justice to the workload of students by taking into account preparation time, home reading, and so on. However, it can easily be shown that the figures on which the number of credit points per unit are based are simply plucked out of the air—I know of no colleagues who have ever undertaken a serious empirical calculation of student workload. Nonetheless these fictitious workload-point-system figures are the basis for very real disputes at the level of university planning committees.

Summary

It is now clear that Bologna's large-scale restructuring of the German higher education system has failed to achieve a single one of the objectives it announced. The dropout rate has not fallen and student mobility has not increased; in fact, the opposite is the case. As a rule, German universities do not now automatically recognize credits from other universities, since the absence of federal guidelines has led to such inconsistencies and arbitrariness in the new course structures.[5] Indeed, in many universities, students are strongly warned against trying to transfer before completing their BA. Moreover, foreign universities often do not recognize the three-year German BA as an adequate basis for graduate-level study, putting a further block to mobility for German students.

In point of fact, the introduction of the three-year BA is a good indicator of the real reason behind the federal states' energetic implementation of the Bologna reforms: Bologna allows for substantial reductions in state education costs. Statistics are improved, first, by simply declaring the three-year BA to be the standard university graduation

diploma, and its holders thus to be "qualified" in some sense, and second by strictly controlling the number of students admitted to master's-level study. In my view, completion of university studies with this version of a bachelor's degree can only be seen as a kind of officially certified dropping out.

In line with the prevailing neoliberal zeitgeist, government is here ultimately aiming to shift the costs of higher education onto students and outside interest groups—above all, onto industry and finance—whatever the cost to academic freedom and the integrity of research. This trend is confirmed by new management structures now being introduced in many institutions, which come without any form of democratic accountability. Frequently, these structures give a role to the representatives of business, who, of course, have their own views on the purpose of higher education. All this points to a general withdrawal of the state from its constitutionally mandated role in higher education and heralds the opening of education to the influence of the real powers in the land.

Thus, it can be safely predicted that recently announced improvements to the Bologna system will not aim to foster critical consciousness and thought. For the purposes of business, it is best that the intelligence of university graduates is carefully steered into well-demarcated areas of immediate market application. It is difficult to see business giving up its new leadership role in higher education without a fight.[6] In which case it is up to critical academics, dissenting students, and the first signs of resistance within the trade union movement to expose the true meanings of Bologna.[7]

X

Translated from the German

Dietrich Lemke was born in Stargard, Germany, in 1943. Until April 2008, he was Professor of Pedagogy in the Education School of Bielefeld University. He is the author of numerous scholarly books and articles, on topics ranging from the theology of Epicurus to educational and learning theory, as well as on the politics of higher education.

1
This is paradoxical, since in fact the American system is anything *but* unitary. It is marked, above all, by vast differences in quality between different higher education institutions.

2
German Federal Ministry of Education and Research, "Bologna Process," https://www.bmbf.de/bmbf/en/academia/the-bologna-process/the-bologna-process_node.html .

3
Since the federal education reforms of 2006, a legal framework at the federal level no longer exists, as all remaining responsibility for education has been transferred from the federal to the provincial level.

4
See my habilitation thesis: Dietrich Lemke, *Lernzielorientierter Unterricht – revidiert* (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 1981).

5
The reason for this absence is the federal reform mentioned in footnote 3.

6
The role of the Bertelsmann Foundation in achieving this new position of authority for business should not be underestimated. It can be shown that this foundation has had a substantial influence on the Bologna process in Germany, principally via the Centre for Higher Education Development, founded in 1994 by the University Rectors' Conference, which functioned as a "junior partner" of the Bertelsmann Foundation.

7
Thus, for example, a working group from the Hans Böckler Foundation recently published new "Guidelines for a Democratic and Social Higher Education." See "Leitbild für eine demokratische und soziale Hochschule" (February 8, 2010), http://www.nachdenkseiten.de/?p=4506#more-4506 .

Nicolas Siepen and Asa Sonjasdotter

Learning by Doing: Reflections on Setting Up a New Art Academy

Theorem 1 (Nicolas)

The most basic distinction between state-run art institutions and so-called "self-organized" structures in the cultural field concerns the distinction between ways of working within them; between pre-existing positions to be filled, and unstructured, continuously reinvented positions. Beyond having a strong division of labor—a characteristic of "real" state-run and more corporate private institutions—it is this distinction that shapes all the others, producing a basic duality between paid professionals who have access to large budgets and the "not yet professionalized" paying students. Thus payment and the labor involved in its earning—the existence of a budget that brings together notions of resources and needs, and the indirect funding of these via student fees—are the cornerstones that distinguish these two spheres.

It is for this reason that earlier thinkers like Godard and Guattari claimed that the institutional is the political, or that claims were made in the 1960s for recognizing other modes of labor—suggesting the TV viewer should also get paid for his "work" of consumption, for example. While they had institutions like the media in mind, the analogy between who gets paid and for what kind of labor remains: self-organized structures are fundamentally shaped by a lack of payment or budget, which means that—with regard to institutional power relations—the distinction between those who pay and those who get paid is largely dissolved; we face the free market alone—but together!

It then becomes complicated to speak about education in the context of self-organization because, as there is little clear hierarchy, self-organized structures transform everything that you have to learn and every educational moment into self-education, a characteristic that is less due to a basic fragmentation than to a productive lack. When state institutions "suffer" from being underfunded, it is linked to what they are allocated or to their management and profitability. Perversely, a self-organized institution's lack of funding is both its woe and its pride! In other words, when state institutions don't function, they shut down, while self-organized "institutions" thrive, precisely because they "don't function" (are not managed) to begin with.

People often organize their career prospects around a lack instead of a plenitude, mainly because they perceive a structural lack within institutions and their relation to the free market—in our case, the art market. In this sense, one could define self-organization as a social act of gathering "freely" around a lack of resources, gaining a distance from the logics of the market. The notion of "choice" within a free market system begins in the educational world of art academies, but is extended into the art world itself through the capacity to curate all forms of activity. The "real" world (museums, galleries, media, etc.) follows the same logic, maintaining this basic duality between paid, managed labor and economies of lack. The proximity

of self-organized initiatives to this duality is neither pure nor heroic. It comes in various combinations, necessarily mingled with the official framework of the *Institutional-curatorial-market-complex.*

A New Academy (Åsa)

The Academy of Contemporary Art in Tromsø opened in the fall of 2007. It is located in the Subarctic, in the North of Norway. The institution is not built upon neutral ground—there is a specific history, with specific political and cultural struggles, and from the beginning the establishment of this academy was driven by a hope that it would become an institutional and cultural resource for the region and also an instrument for diverse and sometimes conflicting interests. Many different concerns were voiced as the Art Academy in Tromsø formed, and this discussion is important. For whom and for what reason is this institution here? What is the purpose of this new academy, and how does it reflect upon already existing institutions? Why were these other institutions established and what was the political drive behind them? What are their roles now, and how do they influence the power dynamics within the field of art and within society at large?

The demand for an academy in North Norway was preceded by a long history weighed down by colonialism, regional marginalization, and class struggle. Politically, the history of the area is deep red, and it was no accident that the University of Tromsø was established in 1968. The decolonization process of the Sámi, the proximity to the Arctic and its newly actualized geopolitical tensions, and the knowledge that the state-owned oil industry brings wealth to the country—these are only some of the complex topics that charged the representational significance of this new academy in different ways and brought hopeful expectations from the region.

Theorem 2 (Nicolas)

One of my favorite phrases in Deleuze and Guattari's *Anti-Oedipus* is: "nothing operates the way it was designed." This insight matters when we think about how the logic of institutions and of self-organized praxis intermingle, how tight control and excessive management mix with the loose structures associated with self-organized initiatives. It's obvious that state-run art academies have ideals and goals, traditions and agendas, designed in advance and operationally regulated through a set of definitions of what art is and what art education should be. But these definitions are both vague and articulated differently from professor to professor, class to class. There is no fixed corpus of obligatory knowledge or technique that students must be grounded in, but an arbitrary chaos of possible directions. Aside from the regulatory procedures and routines, which shape the way the studies are formalized, this ideological framework or profile has a continuous impact on the fragile social and professional power relations between professor and student, which are embedded in this framework. Art education in Europe stages these power relations in a particular way because its presence is either downplayed, but nevertheless constitutes a powerful sphere of influence. For this reason, the "position" of the professor in art academies is often a strange combination of strength and the performance of an intentional weakness. Very often we still find the good old "master artist" model haunting the classes and big ateliers in the academies in Europe, combining authority with romance and reputation. But nowadays we see a considerable shift, not only because of the regulating impulse of the Bologna process but also because this model has become too narrow for the complexity of the art world. So this old model of art education (and art) was slowly unraveled by its own operations, because it could not sustain the multitude of possible articulations and models actually circulating out there in culture. Instead of going into the Louvre to study the "masters," students go on YouTube, which means that the "master" can be any Tom, Dick, or Harry—and that makes sense!

The stance taken by the Bologna Accord to regulate the arts towards a market-dominated concept of efficiency (whatever that might mean in such an individuated education in arts and the undefined, unstructured, arbitrary, and "useless" profession of artist), it reveals in both its functional and ideological limitations by reducing this contemporary multiplicity to a single role model defined by a market. The duality between artists who never sell any work but have a reputation and a cultural/critical standing, and artists who have great market value but no cultural standing or presence within international, critical circuits (such as Documenta and the like), cannot be grasped by the simpleminded structures of the Bologna process. Nor can these structures grasp the numerous mixed models between these two poles, models that are always somehow subservient to the ideological hegemony and the not-so-free forces of the "free" market. With the increasing power of the so-called secondary market (auctions, subsidiary activities, etc.), perhaps we might see a fundamental paradigm shift that will disperse the binary relations between the *market-art-value* and the *self-organized-cultural-political* to the extent that they detach themselves from defining each another by their opposition. Here there is a possibly interesting scenario in which the necessary "critical" stance of self-organization could be "liberated" from its yoke of having a necessarily negative relation to the market or the economies of spectacle, but could instead gain a semblance of autonomy, some common ground, and another relation to what constitutes reality. So no matter how much art education may be defined by utility, inutility, or efficacy, the old adage still holds sway: "Nothing operates the way it was designed!"

The Very Beginning (Åsa)

In 2005, the political situation in Norway made it possible for the left wing party (*Socialistisk Venstreparti*) to get enough votes for a parliamentary decision to form an academy in the North of Norway. The academy was to be organized under the Faculty of Fine Arts, first under Tromsø University College, which became part of Tromsø University in 2008. The Tromsø-born Sámi artist Geir Tore Holm, who has a deep knowledge of both the region and of international art, was appointed to create the foundation for the academy. Together with an advisory board, he prepared a profile for the academy and outlined the initial BA Program. The very fact that a profile was written importantly signals that the institution made an effort to articulate its approach and position themselves within what was understood as a politically and culturally differentiated landscape of art and education. The profile stressed mutuality between art / art education and the society at large by defining art practices as an intrinsic part of Northern Scandinavia as well as positioning social topics within art practices. Through the profile (some of the core notions of the which were cultural, social, and ethnic disparities, connections between nature and culture, the potential for a sustainable practice of art, local and regional conditions, the complexity of place, global orientation), the academy in Tromsø positioned particularities as key to its founding principles.[1]

This awareness of particularity is not meant to isolate the academy's activities solely within the local; on the contrary, it carries a potential for an informed and engaged participation within both local and international dialogue. By emphasizing particularity, the academy could make an interesting move away from a hierarchical organization and definition of its activities—away from not only geopolitical international/national/local hierarchies, but also from the very traditional, patriarchal ideology of the master artist and the master works as central references for art education within the Bachelor/Master class systems). This allowed it to move towards a specified, and therefore diversified relation to art, knowledge, and institutional positions. However, the contemporary art field does contain a very broad range of specific fields of knowledge and ideological positions, and no educational institution can (or should) cover it all.

Theorem 3 (Nicolas)

That same statement from *Anti Oedipus*: "nothing operates the way it was designed" holds equally for self-organization—but with another dynamic, since here the relation between education and production plays a different role than that of market logics. In recent years I have randomly and accidentally been increasingly drawn into engaging the "problematic" of education, and this randomness made me think about the role "education" has played in my artistic, social, and professional life in the past, when it played a role at all. It began in winter 2005 with the invitation of Jan Ritsema and Bojana Cvejić to join the organizing team for the newly founded Performing Arts Forum (PAF) in France, or, more accurately, to become involved.[2] Then, I was invited by Irit Rogoff, Florian Schneider, and Susanne Lang to take part in the organizing team for the conference SUMMIT non-aligned initiatives in education culture, which took place in May 2007 in HAU in Berlin, and which made the fairly risky effort of bringing together the self-organized activist and art institutional world under the umbrella of non-alignment—and it was pretty explosive![3] Third, I applied for a visual arts professorship at the university in Tromsø, where I have now worked for a year. (Last but not least, and maybe only indirectly relevant, I had a child who is now sixteen months old, and I did not think I had to entertain questions of education until I heard myself utter the word "no.") My invitation to contribute in PAF owed itself to friendship, as well as my part in b_books (a self-organized bookshop, publishing house, film production and meeting space in Berlin I have been part of for fourteen years now), and b_books had to do with my participation in the SUMMIT. And it wouldn't be completely misguided to suppose that, aside from my work as an artist, filmmaker, and writer, my connection to b_books played some part in my appointment as an art professor.[4] So b_books must be seen from the outset as a sort of qualification for education in theory or praxis. For this reason I began to reflect upon the possible connection between self-organized, collective, non-profit projects like b_books and the term "education." To be honest, I hadn't previously been interested at all in education—its German articulation as *Erziehung* or *Bildung*, with their heavy ideological baggage, were simply not related to how we saw our activities. It is equally clear that the unconscious concept and problem at the heart of these activist activities was and is, in fact, precisely one of education or self-education. This due to the fact that the lack of resources, time, and money that I discussed previously necessitate a production mode of collective improvisation and experimentation grounded in this very lack. And what is improvisation and experimentation if not a sort of permanent education and self-education—which subsequently became fashionable to critique as the flipside of the capitalist ideology and reality of "lifelong learning" as forms of obedience and self-exploitation. There is of course a whole history of didactic concepts of art and activism, and here one finds the background of the *Self-organized-politicized-experimental-complex*.

The Making (Åsa)

So how is the particularity of the academy in Tromsø to be carried out in reality? This was the question and task I found before me when starting as the first program leader.[5] I was already very interested in the circumstances I described above, and found them to be optimistic challenges. I also saw this situation as an opening and

important possibility, especially in light of the major decline of progressive institutions in Scandinavia during the last decade. There were some basic concerns regarding how the academy should function. These concerns were less a set of conditions than they were questions for continuous discussion. The open situation brought the unique possibility for all involved to consider basic questions of what art is about or could be about, and I wished to preserve this openness as a basis for discussions that would become part of the educational process. I also see this approach as a continuation of the vision for the academy's profile, or as my interpretation of how such visions could be carried out in reality: as a consideration of one's own subjective approach within a larger context, as a responsibility both for one's own interests as well as for those of a larger public. Practically, we started out by establishing a platform on which questions on all levels could be discussed between everyone involved. Every Monday morning, all staff and students met to go over topics that had come up during the week or were of more general character. These questions could range from basic practical issues such as disagreements over kitchen routines to more difficult questions on dynamics within the teaching structure or suggestions for external collaborations. Matters to be discussed in the Monday meetings would to be sent to the coordinator, who would then announce them in advance. The chair and secretary always rotated in order to prevent the meetings from being consistently influenced by a single person. The notes were posted on our intranet archive. Decisions were made within these meetings, so if you weren't there you didn't have your say. We alternated between consensus and majority decisions, depending on the character of the topic. After a while we also established sub-groups, "reference groups," in which various structural developments were discussed. These groups were organized around student and staff interests. It was not necessary to be part of such groups, and no student should feel any pressure to participate. With only thirteen students, it was also important that they be freed from the often-overwhelming situation of an academy in the making. In this way, we could combine broad and involved discussions on all the various aspects of this incredible and complex process. Conclusions amongst the reference groups were presented and discussed at the Monday meetings, and decisions were made when needed.

The meetings stirred important discussions on a variety of questions, both ideological and practical. Shared or separate study areas? The students agreed on a flexible solution in which it was possible to define individual or group workspaces. Open-source computers or Mac? We now have both, but if I could go back make the decision myself, we would have only open source. We have decided to collaborate with other institutions in Tromsø on more specialized workshops. For example, we decided to hold a silkscreening workshop in collaboration with an artist co-op, who kindly share their graphic print shop. We have been able to use the facilities of the neighboring theatre to produce advanced plastic castings and house the advanced plotter, which is also available to the whole university.

The discussions and solutions on practical and structural matters often touched upon basic questions concerning understandings and approaches to art, art production, and to the nature of an art academy. Since the students had only just begun their studies, it was not always easy for them to form their own opinion and act upon it at the same time: study, make art, and participate in the making of an academy. As one student cleverly articulated, "It's not that I don't want to have an opinion, but I need the whole picture before I can make a decision." This is of course true in many ways, but at the same time the picture is never so clearly defined, and is rather something that appears through such discussions and attempts. However, I shouldn't understate my influence on the discussions and decisions, not to mention that of the students' own knowledge and experiences. Since we belong to a state-organized university structure with many set conditions, there were of course limitations to how much we could radically re-imagine the structure. In addition, I was only responsible for the development of the educational program, not for the staff and budget. Our decisions functioned as formal suggestions before the faculty, and in practice they were for the most part accepted and implemented. The importance of our self-defined and self-organized decision-making process could be seen in how the development of the Academy's vision came through discussions. Our suggestions were formulated in a way that gave them authority within the formal decision-making process, and they were often the only suggestions available. In this sense, we placed ourselves in a pro-active position in relation to the university structure's own decision-making process. The fact that our proposals were for the most part carried out contributed immensely to the learning, since this was the only way of finding out whether or not we had taken the right decision. At the end of the day this also taught us the basic and important fact that institutional structures are always composed of people, and in this sense they can always be changed.

Theorem 4 (Nicolas)

In the last seventeen years I have been involved in several collective, self-organized productions such as the film projects *Ping Pong d'amour* and *A-clip*, the artist groups KlasseZwei and Bootlab, the aforementioned b_books and PAF, plus numerous occasional events. In all these projects "we" struggled with this unconscious reference to education or didactics. Of course there was initially the uneasy condemnation of the term "didactic" when it is combined with "art." Very often people would say to us that what "we" do is interesting and politically righteous, but the art itself is bad for being too "didactic"—the

ultimate proof that something is wrong with it: it's moralizing, troublemaking, perhaps elitist, and certainly formally bad and boring. Secondly, "we" indeed worked on a lot of projects that could be perceived as educational—informing the public and informing ourselves. But this educational aspect was not intended as such, but came as a symptom of a broader cultural praxis dedicated to questioning the very framework and structures of the work. This questioning in itself implies critique, and this critical distance is inevitably the site at which the didactic and the educational begin playing an involuntary role. The moment one steps out of conventional institutional frameworks and the logic of market relations—that is, through a productive illusion, as one can not really step out of it while within it, but can perhaps affect a step aside—then cultural production becomes an act of "resistance," and that mode of resistance becomes the artistic articulation. The price of this move aside is the complexity of relation to audience and distribution. While one can produce without resources still requires investment in order to find distribution and reception. So in a way this lack has to be compensated for with a didactic effort to legitimate the unconventional framework—the mode of distribution necessarily becomes a "creative" part of the production itself, and not just marketing. When the basic operation of the market is marketing—to connect the product and the consumer—the price you elect to pay for this distance from the market is a skewing of this very basic connection. And the effect of this dysfunction is an enforced exclusion from the fiscal cycle—very simple but effective. In a way, it becomes easy to find and organize a small public, but this public is more or less part of the production itself, and, as such, remains exclusive. One should not underestimate the value of this separatist quality, since the relation between a small public and the producers can be very empowering (especially before entering other arenas, and so forth), and it is not always necessary to have a big audience. Exclusiveness can be productive when the audience becomes *more part of the gang than an abstract public*.

The Interaction (Åsa)

Another important aspect of the Academy in Tromsø's development was its interaction with local and international contexts. During the preparation process, Geir Tore Holm held several open meetings for the local art scene. These meetings allowed for the city and the region to have a relationship with the Academy before it began. During our fragile beginnings, this was especially important for the students, whose many projects were generously supported outside the Academy walls (even to the extent that students sometimes felt pressure to live up to expectations they couldn't fulfill). We were invited to participate in several local and international projects and events, as well as a number of self-initiated collaborations.[6] In the beginning, this interaction functioned as a way for us—both as students/staff and as an institution—to learn more about possibilities, sharing resources, and fields of interest/conflict for future engagement. As a continuation of the activities outside the Academy, and as a way to respond to the projects, we held Open Classes each Thursday, in which different artists or other experts were invited to give presentations. We initiated a practice period in which second-year students were encouraged to intern with an artist, artist group, or other practitioner within the field of art.[7] We organized a format that alternated between having lecturers from the region and from other places, depending on the topic and expertise. And for new students, we arrange a study trip in the region around Tromsø and in Finnmark, where the majority of the population is Sámi. The tour includes visits to various sites such as carbon industry complexes, fish factories, reindeer herding families, and to key figures and institutions in the cultural field. These trips have proven to be important both for students who didn't know much about the area and the Sámi, but also for students from the area.[8] Many of the students have also initiated self-organized projects or collaborations with other institutions. Several of these initiatives have already become important voices in the community and elsewhere, as well as important dynamics for the Academy.[9]

This direct interplay with the local community and international practitioners in the context of study produced several important questions for the students: What is my role and who is my audience? Where do I want to participate? Why? What is the effect of my participation? What do I not want to engage with? What is my role and responsibility? Through these questions, the students have been able to make lasting experiences from direct encounters with agents and audiences. They have seldom found themselves in the role of cultural producers waiting for an invitation, but are more often engaged participants. Their projects have always been tutored, discussed in groups, and also later evaluated. It is through these interactions that the students have been guided and prepared before presenting their work in public.

Theorem 5 (Nicolas)

A big self-organized project about self-organization and self-education like PAF is also defined by this logic: it is driven by the desire to maintain a low-cost, self-generating project that is almost autodidactic in its nature, and that ensures a degree of independence, which is to say that it will come about with or without funding. The lack of funding means the lack of certain professionalized possibilities, which in turn means that the end result will lack a certain effectiveness in the conventional sense. And that suggests the necessity of a certain didacticism, as these terms need to be explained, negotiated, and mediated—re-inscribing it within an "educational" mode.

On the other hand, the lack of resources makes it impossible to just hire and pay experts or professionals to perform certain kinds of work. Instead, all the participants in PAF have to do everything themselves and constantly learn and share their skills. The development of this self-organized network and its structural advances are part of the goal of the project itself. Extension, flexibility, and renewal of this network become matters of its very sustainability because PAF's only source of income comes from the fees people pay for the rooms they stay in. The most stable and regular formats are the ten-day spring, summer, and winter academies: large gatherings of around sixty people from all over the world who themselves organize seminars, lectures, discussions, and performances. The rest of the year is open to all sorts of projects and working modalities. The content of these various educational, artistic, and theoretical activities represent a wide range of themes and interests from a variety of participants and groups. This mix provides a forum and an educational potential that makes it possible to call PAF a free academy, or a free made up of some "positions," collectivized private property, some division of labor, and an open development path, which together comprise a self-sustaining drive, fragile and stable at the same time. For me it was very interesting to compare my experiences with PAF and the academy "under construction" in Tromsø, since initially the institutional structures of the newly-founded art academy presented itself in a very pure form. Even the few new students where involved in the process of setting up its basic structural functions. In the beginning that gave the place a very chaotic charm, but it had the promise of slightly more order on the horizon to ensure some degree of continuity as the work progressed. While on some levels this might sound very similar to the experience of PAF, the difference between the state institution and the self-organized forum comes in the fact that the Tromsø academy cannot really be self-organized, and although self-organization—on the part of the students in particular—plays an important role, the fundamental distinction between professors and students can not and should not be abolished. A self-organized academy like PAF needs and provides only minimal institutional functions—it cannot and should not become an Institution as such. In each of these cases, a shift occurred between spheres; Asa Sonjasdotter in Tromsø was to shift an institutional framework towards a self-organized model and Jan Ritsemas' bold role at PAF was to connect self-organization with a large-scale and more sustainable structure. So far, I can say that I hope that both "institutions" can complement each other at the intersection of *self-organized and in dependent institutional frameworks*.

The Real and the Ideal (Åsa)

My aim was to organize a place for study in which students would be able to consider artistic practice broadly and bravely, and where they could build sustainable ways of working that would stay with them long after their studies conclude.

An art academy is not an ideal situation, but neither is life as a practicing artist, and it is precisely here that things becomes really interesting—in the meeting between simple, practical, pragmatic solutions and the complex, conflicting, or impossible ideas. In this way, the process of making of an academy created a situation in which these positions came together perfectly. Clever, pragmatic, often effortless solutions could open up really interesting dynamics just as our own shortcomings or larger institutional limitations could create an enormous frustration. The interesting combination between the need for practical solutions and the overwhelmingly open possibilities in the making of an academy formed a paradox that surely made us all hover between frustration and excitement. At the same time, this is a paradox that artistic practice can never escape, and also what makes it so urgent. While the unique opportunity to start something new was radical in itself, the chance to investigate the particularity of the site and turn it into an articulated position made sense in this specific place, but also as part of a broader dialogue on institutional positioning. The Academy of Contemporary Art in Tromsø is still incomplete, and will hopefully never be complete. When Nicolas Siepen was hired as our second professor at the beginning of 2009, the Academy had all three years of BA students in attendance for the first time. Even though the Academy is still very small (we have and will keep around thirty BA students altogether) there is now a more clear division of labor between administration, technicians, various ways of teaching, and the various interests and needs of the students. This makes it necessary for us to evaluate the experiences of our experimental beginning in order to develop them further. The discussions behind the joint writing of this text function as a part of this process. In the fall of 2009, the Academy transformed from being a program to an institution in its own right, which then gave us a stronger sense of independence. Curator Helga Marie Nordby is the new leader of our institute, and I am a teaching and researching professor. Nordby and other old and new staff members and students will continue to shape the Academy around their own their interests and concerns. We are already preparing for a masters program as well as a research program, with an even stronger focus on the political and ecological questions vital to the region as well as the international community. There is a great deal of specialized knowledge at many of Tromsø University's institutions, such as The Polar Research Centre and The Centre for Sámi Studies, but it is important that cultural practitioners also work within the collective memory of the area's residents. The Academy's profile the subject of constant debate—it is a means of discussing the positions and goals of this density of politics and imaginations known as an art academy.

X

Nicolas Siepen is a Berlin based artist, filmmaker and writer. As an art critic he has written for Springerin, Texte zur Kunst, Frakcija, FAZ and Starship. He is co-founder of the bookstore and publishing house b_books and member of the Performing Arts Forum (PAF) in France. Since January 2009 he has been Professor of visual arts at the Academy of Contemporary Arts in Tromsø Norway.

Åsa Sonjasdotter is a Swedish artist living and working in Tromsø, Norway and Berlin, Germany. For quite a while she has been analysing phenomenon in the world from what she calls a potato-perspective. Between 2007 and 2009 she took part in the construction of the new Academy of Contemporary Art in Tromsø, Norway, where she now works as a professor.

1
The Study Plan and the Profile text is to be found at http://uit.no/ansatte/organisasjon/artikkel?p_document_id=17120 .

2
See http://www.pa-f.net/.

3
See https://web.archive.org/web/20100213000544/http://summit.kein.org/ .

4
See http://www.bbooks.de/.

5
The first year's students were Geir Backe Altern, Anemarte Bjørnseth, Mathilda Carlid, Line Solberg Dolmen, Ingrid Forland, Heidi-Anett Haugen, Ane EleneJohansen, Espen Justdal, Ingeborg Annie Kristine Lindahl, Frank Ludvigsen, Vebjørn Møllberg, Margrethe Pettersen and Ida Walenius. Staff members were coordinator Irene Nordhaug Hansen, theory lecturer Tone Olaf Nielsen and lecturing artists Bodil Furu Geir and Tore Holm. In addition we had many visiting artists and other experts lecturing.

6
The were students invited as festival artists at the Riddu Riđđu International Indigenous Festival the summer of 2008. Together with the International Academy Of Art Palestine, we were invited to a workshop at Lofoten International Art Festival. Tromsø Kunstforening invited the students to use the building as they wanted for a weekend which resulted in the performance and exhibition project Home Alone (Hjemme Alene) Self initiated external collaborations were for example: An exhibition at Tromsø Public Library, screenings at the local non-profit cinema Verdensteatret, a project within the public space in collaboration with Tromsø Municipality's Department for Urban Planning, a seminar on Sámi Contemporary Art together with The Institute for Art History and Science at Tromsø University, a student exchange agreement with the Art Academy in Ramallah, Palestine (since Tromsø and Ghaza City are official Friendship Towns) and finally a collaboration on Sustainability and the Northern Scandinavia together with the academies in Umeå, Sweden and in Copenhagen, Denmark.

7
As for example curator Veronica Wiman at Yerba Buena Center for the Arts in San Francisco and at La Vida es un Teatro in Nashira, Colombia; Capacete Entertainment Residence Program in Sao Paolo, artist Mary Beth Edelson in New York, the art group Fallen Fruit in Los Angeles, Capricious Publishing House in New York, artist John Kørner in Copenhagen and many, many others.

8
We have for example collaborated with the university's Art History Department on a course in Sámi Contemporary Art. Duodji (Sámi craft) Master Jon Ole Andersen has given courses to students in his workshop in Karasjok. As part of our collaboration with the academies in Umeå and Copenhagen we have hosted a workshop on the 30-year memory of the for Sámi crucial Alta Case uprising.

9
Self-organized initiatives are for example; the experimental art-space Kurant, the fanzine Trusø, the film club Kuk og Parfyme, the exhibition place the Kiosk and the printed matter store Mondo Tromsø. Collaborations have been made with for example Feil Forlag, Galleri Nord Norge, the municipality of Tromsø etc.

Irit Rogoff

FREE

—Who wants to know? —I want to know. —What do you want to know? —I don't know!

At some point last year I proposed within my institution, Goldsmiths, University of London, that we develop a free academy adjacent to our institution and call it "Goldsmiths Free." The reactions to this proposal, when not amused smirks at the apparently adolescent nature of the proposal, were largely either puzzled—"What would we get out of it? Why would we want to do it?"—or horrified—"How would it finance itself?" No one asked what might be taught or discussed within it and how that might differ from the intellectual work that is done within our conventional fee-charging, degree-giving, research-driven institution. And that of course was the point, that it would be different, not just in terms of redefining the point of entry into the structure (free of fees and previous qualifications) or the modus operandi of the work (not degree-based, unexamined, not subject to the state's mechanisms of monitoring and assessment), but also that the actual knowledge would be differently situated within it. And that is what I want to think about here, about the difference in the knowledge itself, its nature, its status, and its affect.

The kind of knowledge that interested me in this proposal to the university was one that was not framed by disciplinary and thematic orders, a knowledge that would instead be presented in relation to an urgent issue, and not an issue as defined by knowledge conventions, but by the pressures and struggles of contemporaneity. When knowledge is unframed, it is less grounded genealogically and can navigate forwards rather than backwards. This kind of "unframed" knowledge obviously had a great deal to do with what I had acquired during my experiences in the art world, largely a set of permissions with regard to knowledge and a recognition of its performative faculties—that knowledge *does* rather than *is*. But the permissions I encountered in the art world came with their own set of limitations, a tendency to reduce the complex operations of speculation to either illustration or to a genre that would visually exemplify "study" or "research." Could there be, I wondered, another mode in which knowledge might be set free without having to perform such generic mannerisms, without becoming an aesthetic trope in the hands of curators hungry for the latest "turn"?

Heads will surely be shaken! The notion of "free" is currently so degraded in terms of the free market, the dubious proposals of the new "free" economy of the internet, and the historically false promises of individual freedom, that it may be difficult to see what it might have to offer beyond all these hollow slogans. Nevertheless, the

possibility of producing some interrogative proximity between "knowledge" and "free" seems both unavoidable and irresistible, particularly in view of the present struggles over the structures of education in Europe.

The actual drive towards knowledge and therefore towards some form of expansion and transformation seems far more important than simply a discussion of the categories it operates within. In order to attempt such a transition I need to think about several relevant questions:

1. First and foremost, what is knowledge when it is "free"?

2. Whether there are sites, such as the spaces of art, in which knowledge might be more "free" than in others?

3. What are the institutional implications of housing knowledge that is "free"?

4. What are the economies of "free" that might prove an alternative to the market- and outcome-based and comparison-driven economies of institutionally structured knowledge at present?

Evidently, en route I need to think about the struggles over education, its alternative sitings, the types of emergent economies that might have some purchase on its rethinking, and, finally, how "education" might be perceived as an alternative organizational mode, not of information, of formal knowledges and their concomitant marketing, but as other forms of coming together not predetermined by outcomes but by directions. Here I have in mind some process of "knowledge singularization," which I will discuss further below.

Obviously it is not the romance of liberation that I have in mind here in relation to "free." Knowledge cannot be "liberated," it is endlessly embedded in long lines of transformations that link in inexplicable ways to produce new conjunctions. Nor do I have in mind the romance of "avant-garde" knowledge, with its oppositional modes of "innovation" as departure and breach. Nor am I particularly interested in what has been termed "interdisciplinarity," which, with its intimations of movement and "sharing" between disciplines, de facto leaves intact those membranes of division and logics of separation and containment. Nor, finally, and I say this with some qualification, is my main aim here to undo the disciplinary and professional categories that have divided and isolated bodies of knowledge from one another in order to promote a heterogeneous field populated by "bodies" of knowledge akin to the marketing strategies that ensure choice and multiplicity and dignify the practices of epistemological segregation by producing endless new subcategories for inherited bodies of named and contained knowledge.

There is a vexed relation between freedom, individuality, and sovereignty that has a particular relevance for the arena being discussed here, as knowledge and education have a foothold both in processes of individuation and in processes of socialization. Hannah Arendt expressed this succinctly when she warned that

> Politically, this identification of freedom with sovereignty is perhaps the most pernicious and dangerous consequence of the philosophical equation of freedom and free will. For it leads either to a denial of human freedom—namely, if it is realized that whatever men may be, they are never sovereign—or to the insight that the freedom of one man, or a group, or a body politic, can only be purchased at the price of the freedom, i.e. the sovereignty, of all others. Within the conceptual framework of traditional philosophy, it is indeed very difficult to understand how freedom and non-sovereignty can exist together or, to put it another way, how freedom could have been given to men under the conditions of non-sovereignty.[1]

And in the final analysis it is my interest to get around both concepts, freedom and sovereignty, through the operations of "singularization." Perhaps it is knowledge de-individuated, de-radicalized in the conventional sense of the radical as breach, and yet operating within the circuits of singularity—of "the new relational mode of the subject"—that is preoccupying me in this instance.

And so, the task at hand seems to me to be not one of liberation from confinement, but rather one of *undoing the very possibilities of containment*.

While an unbounded circulation of capital, goods, information, hegemonic alliances, populist fears, newly globalized uniform standards of excellence, and so forth, are some of the hallmarks of the late neoliberal phase of capitalism, we nevertheless can not simply equate every form of the unbounded and judge them all as equally insidious. "Free" in relation to knowledge, it seems to me, has its power less in its expansion than in an ultimately centripetal movement, less in a process of penetrating and colonizing everywhere and everything in the relentless mode of capital, than in reaching unexpected entities and then drawing them back, mapping them onto the field of perception.

STRUGGLES

In spring and autumn of 2009 a series of prolonged strikes erupted across Austria and Germany, the two European countries whose indigenous education systems have been hardest hit by the reorganization of the Bologna Accord; smaller strikes also took place in France, Italy, and Belgium.[2] At the center of the students' protests were the massive cuts in education budgets across the board and

the revision of state budgets within the current economic climate, which made youth and the working class bear the burden of support for failing financial institutions.

The strikes were unified by common stands on three issues:

1. against fees for higher education

2. against the increasing limitation of access to selection in higher education

3. for re-democratization of the universities and re-inclusion of students in decision-making processes

Not only were these the largest and most organized strikes to have been held by school and university students since the 1980s, but they also included teachers, whose pay had been reduced and whose working hours had been extended, which, after considerable pressure from below, eventually moved the trade unions to take a position.

The concerns here were largely structural and procedural, and considering all that is at stake in these reorganizations of the education system, it is difficult to know what to privilege in our concern: the reformulation of institutions into regimented factories for packaged knowledge that can easily be placed within the marketplace; the processes of knowledge acquisition that are reduced to the management of formulaic outcomes that are comparable across cultures and contexts; "training" replacing "speculating"; the dictation of such shifts from above and without any substantive consultation or debate. All of these are significant steps away from criticality in spaces of education and towards the goal that all knowledge have immediate, transparent, predictable, and pragmatic application.

The long, substantive lines that connect these struggles to their predecessors over the past forty years or so, and which constitute "education" as both an ongoing political platform and the heart of many radical artistic practices, are extremely well articulated in a conversation between Marion von Osten and Eva Egermann, in which von Osten says of her projects such as "reformpause":

> Firstly, I tried to create a space to pause, to hold on for a moment, to take a breath and to think – to think about what kinds of change might be possible; about how and what we might wish to learn; and why that which we wished to learn might be needed. I guess, in this way, both Manoa Free University and "reformpause" shared similar goals – not simply to critique the ongoing educational reforms and thereby legitimize established structures, but rather to actively engage in thinking about alternate concepts and possible change.
>
> Secondly, there is a long history of student struggles and the question arises as to whether or not these are still relevant today and, if they are, how and why? The recent student struggles did not simply originate with the Bologna Declaration. The genealogy of various school and university protests and struggles over the past forty years demonstrates that we live in an era of educational reforms which, since the 1960s, have led to the construction of a new political subjectivity, the "knowledge worker." This is not just a phenomenon of the new millennium; furthermore, many artistic practices from the 1960s and 1970s relate to this re-ordering of knowledge within Western societies. This is one of the many reasons why we so readily relate to these practices, as exemplified by conceptualism and the various ways in which conceptual artists engaged with contemporary changes in the concepts of information and communication. [3]

All of this identifies hugely problematic and very urgent issues, but we cannot lose sight of the status of actual knowledge formations within these. When knowledge is not geared towards "production," it has the possibility of posing questions that combine the known and the imagined, the analytical and the experiential, and which keep stretching the terrain of knowledge so that it is always just beyond the border of what can be conceptualized.

These are questions in which the conditions of knowledge are always internal to the concepts it is entertaining, not as a context but as a limit to be tested. The entire critical epistemology developed by Foucault and by Derrida rested on questions that always contain a perception of their own impossibility, a consciousness of thinking as a process of unthinking something that is fully aware of its own status. The structural, the techniques, and the apparatuses, could never be separated from the critical interrogation of concepts. As Giorgio Agamben says of Foucault's concept of the apparatus:

> The proximity of this term to the theological *dispositio*, as well as to Foucault's apparatuses, is evident. What is common to all these terms is that they refer back to this *oikonomia*, that is, to a set of practices, bodies of knowledge, measures, and institutions that aim to manage, govern, control, and orient—in a way that purports to be useful—the behaviors, gestures, and thoughts of human beings.[4]

So the struggle facing education is precisely that of separating thought from its structures, a struggle constantly informed by tensions between thought

management and subjectification—the frictions by which we turn ourselves into subjects. As Foucault argued, this is the difference between the production of subjects in "power/knowledge" and those processes of self-formation in which the person is active. It would seem then that the struggle in education arises from tensions between conscious inscription into processes of self-formation and what Foucault, speaking of his concerns with scientific classification, articulated as the subsequent and necessary "insurrection of subjugated knowledges," in which constant new voices appear claiming themselves not as "identities," but as *events* within knowledge.[5] The argument that Isabelle Stengers makes about her own political formation has convinced me that this is a productive direction to follow in trying to map out knowledge as struggle:

> My own intellectual and political life has been marked by what I learned from the appearance of drugs users' groups claiming that they were "citizens like everyone else," and fighting against laws that were officially meant to "protect" them. The efficacy of this new collective voice, relegating to the past what had been the authorized, consensual expertise legitimating the "war on drugs," convinced me that such events were "political events" par excellence, producing—as, I discovered afterwards, Dewey had already emphasized—both new political struggle and new important knowledge. I even proposed that what we call democracy could be evaluated by its relation to those disrupting collective productions. A "true" democracy would demand the acceptance of the ongoing challenge of such disruptions—would not only accept them but also acknowledge those events as something it depended upon.[6]

Knowledge as disruption, knowledge as counter-subjugation, knowledge as constant exhortation to its own, often uncomfortable implications, are at the heart of "struggle." The battle over education as we are experiencing it now does not find its origin in the desire to suppress these but rather in efforts to regulate them so that they work in tandem with the economies of cognitive capitalism.

ECONOMIES

The economies of the world of knowledge have shifted quite dramatically over the past ten to fifteen years. What had been a fairly simple subsidy model, with states covering the basic expenses of teaching, subsidizing home schooling on a per capita basis (along with private entities incorporated in "not -for-profit" structures); research councils and foundations covering the support of research in the humanities and pure sciences; and industry supporting applied research, has changed quite dramatically, as have the traditional outlets for such knowledge: scholarly journals and books, exhibitions, science-based industry, the military, and public services such as agriculture and food production. Knowledge, at present, is not only enjoined to be "transferable" (to move easily between paradigms so that its potential impact will be transparent from the outset) and to invent new and ever expanding outlets for itself, it must also contend with the prevalent belief that it should be obliged not only to seek out alternative sources of funding but actually to produce these. By producing the need for a particular type of knowledge one is also setting up the means of its excavation or invention—this is therefore a "need-based" culture of knowledge that produces the support and the market through itself.

So, when I speak of a "free" academy, the question has to be posed: if it is to meet all the above requirements, namely, that it not be fee-charging, not produce applied research, not function within given fields of expertise, and not consider itself in terms of applied "outcomes," how *would* it be funded?

In terms of the internet, the economic model of "free" that has emerged over the past decade initially seemed to be an intensification or a contemporary perpetuation of what had been called by economists, the "cross-subsidy" model: you'd get one thing free if you bought another, or you'd get a product free only if you paid for a service. This primary model was then expanded by the possibilities of ever increasing access to the internet, married to constantly lowered costs in the realm of digital technologies.

A second trend is simply that anything that touches digital networks quickly feels the effect of falling costs. And so it goes, too, for everything from banking to gambling. The moment a company's primary expenses become things based in silicon, free becomes not just an option but also the inevitable destination.[7] The cost of actually circulating something within these economies becomes lower and lower, until cost is no longer the primary index of its value.

A third aspect of this emergent economic model is perhaps the one most relevant to this discussion of education. Here the emphasis is on a shift from an exclusive focus on buyers and sellers, producers and consumers, to a tripartite model, in which the third element that enters does so based on its interest in the exchange taking place between the first two elements—an interest to which it contributes financially. In the traditional media model, a publisher provides a product free (or nearly free) to consumers, and advertisers pay to ride along. Radio is "free to air," and so is much of television. Likewise, newspaper and magazine publishers don't charge readers anything close to the actual cost of creating, printing, and distributing their products. They're not selling papers and magazines to readers, they're

selling readers to advertisers. It's a three-way market.

In a sense, what the Web represents is the extension of the media business model to industries of all sorts. This is not simply the notion that advertising will pay for everything. There are dozens of ways that media companies make money around free content, from selling information about consumers to brand licensing, "value-added" subscriptions, and direct e-commerce. Now an entire ecosystem of Web companies is growing up around the same set of models. [8]

The question is whether this model of a "free" economy is relevant to my proposal for a free "academy," given that in an economic model the actual thing in circulation is not subject to much attention except as it appeals to a large public and their ostensible needs. *Does* this model have any potential for criticality or for an exchange that goes beyond consumption? Novelist, activist, and technology commentator Cory Doctorow claims that

> there's a pretty strong case to be made that "free" has some inherent antipathy to capitalism. That is, information that can be freely reproduced at no marginal cost may not want, need or benefit from markets as a way of organizing them. . . . Indeed, there's something eerily Marxist in this phenomenon, in that it mirrors Marx's prediction of capitalism's ability to create a surplus of capacity that can subsequently be freely shared without market forces' brutality.[9]

The appealing part of the economy of "free" for debates about education is its unpredictability in throwing up new spheres of interest and new congregations around them. It has some small potential for shifting the present fixation on the direct relation between fees, training, applied research, organization-as-management, predictable outputs and outcomes, and the immediate consumption of knowledge. This however seems a very narrow notion of criticality as it is limited to the production of a surplus within knowledge and fails to take on the problems of subjectification. And it is the agency of subjectification and its contradictory multiplicity that is at the heart of a preoccupation with knowledge in education, giving it its traction as it were, what Foucault called "the lived multiplicity of positionings." The internet-based model of "free" does break the direct relation between buyers and sellers, which in the current climate of debates about education, in the context of what Nick Dyer-Witheford has called "Academia Inc.," is certainly welcome. But it does not expand the trajectory of participation substantively, merely reducing the act of taking part in this economy of use and exchange. The need to think of a "market" for the disruption of paradigms emerges as an exercise in futility and as politically debilitating. To think again with Agamben:

> Contemporary societies therefore present themselves as inert bodies going through massive processes of desubjectification without acknowledging any real subjectification. Hence the eclipse of politics, which used to presuppose the existence of subjects and real identities (the workers' movement, the bourgeoisie, etc.), and the triumph of the oikonomia, that is to say, of a pure activity of government that aims at nothing other than its own replication.[10]

What then would be the sites of conscious subjectification within this amalgam of education and creative practices?

SITES

Over the past two decades we have seen a proliferation of self-organized structures that take the form, with regard to both their investigations and effects, of sites of learning.[11] These have, more than any other initiative, collapsed the divisions between sites of formal academic education and those of creative practice, display, performance, and activism. In these spaces the previously clear boundaries between universities, academies, museums, galleries, performance spaces, NGOs, and political organizations, lost much of their visibility and efficaciousness. Of course, virtually every European city still has at least one if not several vast "entertainment machine" institutions, traditional museums that see their task as one of inviting the populace to partake of "art" in the most conventional sense and perceive "research" to be largely about themselves (to consist, that is, in the seemingly endless conferences that are held each year on "the changing role of the museum"). These institutions however no longer define the parameters of the field and serve more as indices of consumption, market proximities, and scholastic inertia.

What does knowledge do when it circulates in other sites such as the art world?

As Eva Egermann says:

> Of course, the art field was seen as a place in which things could happen, a field of potential, a space of exchange between different models and concepts and, in the sense of learning and unlearning, a field of agency and transfer between different social and political fields and between different positions and subjectivities. In a way, the exhibition functioned as a pretext, a defined place for communication and action that would perhaps establish impulses for further transformations. So, the project functioned as an

> expanded field of practice from which to organize and network between many different groups, but also to question and experiment with methods of representation and distribution for collective artistic research. We wanted to disseminate our research for collective usage through various means, such as the study circle itself, a wiki, publications and readers and through the model of a free university.[12]

More than any other sphere, the spaces of contemporary art that open themselves to this kind of alternative activity of learning and knowledge production, and see in it not an occasional indulgence but their actual daily business, have become the sites of some of the most important redefinitions of knowledge that circulate today.

As sites, they have marked the shift from "Ivory Towers" of knowledge to spaces of *interlocution* **,** with in between a short phase as "laboratories." As a dialogical practice based on questioning, on agitating the edges of paradigms and on raising external points of view, interlocution takes knowledge back to a Socratic method but invests its operations with acknowledged stakes and interests, rather than being a set of formal proceedings. It gives a performative dimension to the belief argued earlier through the work of Foucault and Derrida, that knowledge always has at its edges the active process of its own limits and its own invalidation.

In setting up knowledge production within the spaces and sites of art, one also takes up a set of *permissions* that are on offer. Recognizing who is posing questions, where they are speaking from, and from where they know what they know, becomes central rather than, as is typical, marginal qualifications often relegated to footnotes. Permission is equally granted to start in the middle without having to rehearse the *telos* of an argument; to start from "right here and right now" and embed issues in a variety of contexts, expanding their urgency; to bring to these arguments a host of validations, interventions, asides, and exemplifications that are not recognized as directly related or as sustaining provable knowledge. And, perhaps most importantly, "the curatorial," not as a profession but as an organizing and assembling impulse, opens up a set of possibilities, mediations perhaps, to *formulate subjects* that may not be part of an agreed-upon canon of "subjects" worthy of investigation. So knowledge in the art world, through a set of permissions that do not recognize the academic conventions for how one arrives at a subject, can serve both the purposes of reframing and producing subjects in the world.

Finally, I would argue that knowledge in the art world has allowed us to come to terms with *partiality* – with the fact that our field of knowing is always partially comprehensible, the problems that populate it are partially visible, and our arguments are only partially inhabiting a recognizable logic. Under no illusions as to its comprehensiveness, knowledge as it is built up within the spaces of art makes relatively modest claims for plotting out the entirety of a problematic, accepting instead that it is entering in the middle and illuminating some limited aspects, all the while making clear its drives in doing so. [13]

And it is here, in these spaces, that one can ground the earlier argument that the task at hand in thinking through "free" is *not one of liberation from confinement*, but rather one of undoing the very possibilities of *containment*. It is necessary to understand that containment is not censure but rather half acknowledges acts of framing and territorializing.

VECTORS

In conjunction with the sites described above it is also direction and circulation that help in opening up "knowledge" to new perceptions of its mobility.

How can we think of "education" as circulations of knowledge and not as the top-down or down-up dynamics in which there is always a given, dominant direction for the movement of knowledge? The direction of the knowledge determines its mode of dissemination: if it is highly elevated and canonized then it is structured in a particular, hierarchical way, involving original texts and commentaries on them; if it is experiential then it takes the form of narrative and description in a more lateral form; and if it is empirical then the production of data categories, vertical and horizontal, would dominate its argument structures even when it is speculating on the very experience of excavating and structuring that knowledge.[14]

While thinking about this essay I happened to hear a segment of a radio program called *The Bottom Line*, a weekly BBC program about business entrepreneurs I had never encountered before. In it a businessman was talking about his training; Geoff Quinn the chief executive of clothing manufacturer T. M. Lewin said he had not had much education and went into clothing retailing at the age of sixteen, "but then I discovered the stock room—putting things in boxes, making lists, ordering the totality of the operation."[15] He spoke of the stockroom, with a certain sense of wonder, as the site in which everything came together, where the bits connected and made sense, less a repository than a launch pad for a sartorial world of possibilities. The idea that the "stockroom" could be an epiphany, could be someone's education, was intriguing and I tried to think it out a bit . . . part Foucauldian notion of scientific classification and part Simondon's pragmatic transductive thought about operations rather than meanings—the "stockroom" is clearly a perspective, an early recognition of the systemic and the interconnected, and a place from which to see the "big picture." While the "stockroom" may be a rich and pleasing metaphor, it is

also a vector, along which a huge range of manufacturing technologies, marketing strategies, and advertising campaigns meet up with labor histories and those of raw materials, with print technologies and internet disseminations, with the fantasmatic investments in clothes and their potential to renew us.

Therefore what if "education"—the complex means by which knowledges are disseminated and shared—could be thought of as a vector, as a quantity (force or velocity, for example), made up of both direction and magnitude? A powerful horizontality that looks at the sites of education as convergences of drives to knowledge that are in themselves knowledge? Not in the sense of formally inherited, archived, and transmitted knowledges but in the sense that ambition "knows" and curiosity "knows" and poverty "knows"—they are modes of knowing the world and their inclusion or their recognition as events of knowledge within the sites of education make up not the context of what goes on in the classroom or in the space of cultural gathering, but the content.

Keller Easterling in her exceptionally interesting book *Enduring Innocence* builds on Arjun Appadurai's notion of "imagined worlds" as "the multiple worlds that are constituted by the historically situated imaginations of persons and groups spread around the globe . . . these mixtures create variegated scapes described as "mediascapes and "ethnoscapes." Which, says Easterling, by "naturalizing the migration and negotiation of traveling cultural forms allows these thinkers [such as Appadurai] to avoid impossible constructs about an authentic locality."[16] From Easterling's work I have learned to understand such sites as located forms of "intelligence"—both information and stealth formation. To recognize the operations of "the network" in relation to structures of knowledge in which no linearity could exist and the direct relation between who is in the spaces of learning, the places to which they are connected, the technologies that close the gaps in those distances, the unexpected and unpredictable points of entry that they might have, the fantasy projections that might have brought them there—all agglomerate as sites of knowledge.

We might be able to look at these sites and spaces of education as ones in which long lines of mobility, curiosity, epistemic hegemony, colonial heritages, urban fantasies, projections of phantom professionalization, new technologies of both formal access and less formal communication, a mutual sharing of information, and modes of knowledge organization, all come together in a heady mix— *that* is the field of knowledge and from it we would need to go outwards to combine all of these as actual sites of knowledge and produce a vector.

Having tried to deconstruct as many discursive aspects of what "free" might mean in relation to knowledge, in relation to my hoped-for-academy, I think that what has come about is the understanding of "free" in a non-liberationist vein, away from the binaries of confinement and liberty, rather as the force and velocity by which knowledge and our imbrication in it, move along. That its comings-together are our comings-together and not points in a curriculum, rather along the lines of the operations of "singularity" that enact the relation of "the human to a specifiable horizon" through which meaning is derived, as Jean-Luc Nancy says.[17] Singularity provides us with another model of thinking relationality, not as external but as loyal to a logic of its own self-organization. Self-organization links outwardly not as identity, interest, or affiliation, but as a mode of coexistence in space. To think "knowledge" as the working of singularity is actually to decouple it from the operational demands put on it, to open it up to processes of multiplication and of links to alternate and unexpected entities, to animate it through something other than critique or defiance—perhaps as "free."

X

Irit Rogoff is a theorist, curator, and organizer who writes at the intersections of the critical, the political, and contemporary arts practices. Rogoff is a professor at Goldsmiths College, London University, in the department of Visual Cultures, which she founded in 2002.

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Von Osten and Egermann, "Twist and Shout."

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Geoff Quinn, interview by Evan Davis, *The Bottom Line*, BBC, February 18, 2010, available online at http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b00qps85#synopsis .

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Susanne Lang and Darius James

Magic Hat – Property of the People

What is a Political Education?

"Radical moments" such as the ones found here, fraught with social and historical contradictions stemming from opposing deeply held beliefs, reveal common conceptual bases previously invisible within the staging of their enmity or opposition. It is in this space that whole generations can rediscover the possibilities of Utopia and radical critique. What follows is an exploration of how different radical moments speak to one another across time, continents, and generations; and, as these moments bridge temporal gaps, of what meanings can be derived from their interaction.

It seems almost impossible to import any of the truths of these moments to a different reality. They lie too much in their own time, context, and specific situation. Yet it is crucial to grasp these moments and their political dimensions. Sometimes it is necessary to "unframe" them from their complex social histories and stare at the raw pieces that remain.

What story can this palimpsest tell us?

In the text that follows, we try to strip learning from the structures of education. It is impossible, of course, to do so completely, but the effort is all the same necessary if we are to explore the underlying processes by which we make something our own, wresting it back from its formal "framing" and allowing actual "learning" to take place. As the microcosm of the society it represents and reproduces, school is the first proposal for and the first hindrance to both understanding the world we live in and shaping the idea of the world we want to live in. In starting from this point, we found a chance to rewrite our political education.

***

Newhall Street School / September 1963

Dear Suzanne:

My teacher said we had to find a pen pal who live somewhere different and I picked your name from a hat. Suzanne. That's a pretty name. You live in East Germany. I hope you know American talk because I only know three words in German: "donka shern," "dumb cough" and "heil hitler." I am supposed to ask you a lot of questions about how it is to live where you live. I have to ask what food you eat. What clothes you wear. What your family look like. What they smell like and what jobs they got. What shows play on your television set. What kind of government you got. I'm supposed to ask all kinds of questions that's really not nobody's business. I hate it when strangers want to know all your business. So if you don't answer I understand. But once I get all the answers I am supposed to write a report about what I learn and read it in front of

the whole class.

When I told my teacher what country you from she say you live in one of them communism countries behind the iron curtain and I didn't even know you could make curtains out of iron. American curtains made out of cloth. She say *How communism get in my hat? Communism don't belong in my hat! Somebody in this school is a communism and put communism in my hat! They trying to poison me with that communism and I won't stand for it! I'm going to report them to the Red Squad and The House of UnAmerican Activities! Gunner Joe take care of them communism quick!*

She say communism really bad but she going to fix those sneaky communism. She point at me and say I was going to be patriotic American and fight communism telling you how good it is to live in democracy where everybody free and don't stand in line and call everybody comrag and wear car tires for shoes like you people do over there in that communism country. My teacher say my letters going make you free. I'll have you drinking Cocoa Cola and eating Wheaties in no time she say!

But before I save you from your communism ways and make you believe my right way of Christian American Democracy thinking it her duty to teach me about the evils of communism. So she make me watch movies call *Invasion, U.S.A.* and *Red Nightmare* and read *Captain American Capitalism* comic books and teach me why communism bad for American way of life.

Donka Shern,

Darius

Schwedt/Oder, 15. Oktober 1985

Hello Darius,

Thank you very much for your letter. My teacher asked me to join PenPal-Club but I am surprised somebody from USA writes to me. I hoped somebody from a brother country writes to me. But this is also interesting. My teacher told me that the government and the newspaper in USA always lies about our country. So I tell you the truth.

In PenPal-club we translate letters we get from our penpals. Our teacher helps translate. I learn english very new, but my teacher helps me.

My name is Susanne. I live in Schwedt/Oder with my parents and my little sister. Schwedt/Oder is situated on the river Oder, directly on the border to Poland. We live in an apartment in a new building. My grandfather build it. My father is a construction engineer. My mother is a construction engineer, too. My sister is five years old. She goes to Kindergarten. I bring her every morning, before I go to school. We don't have a dog. My grandmother has a dog and on the weekends I visit and play with the dog. In my free time, I like running and I also like to watch television and drink cola.

You should tell your teacher that in GDR we are not living in communism yet. We are living in socialism. But if we try very hard we will live in communism in the future. Your teacher sounds very mean and stupid. We have nice curtains made from dederon, not iron!

I am very happy in GDR. Everybody knows that only in socialism there is peace. We have peace and we are very happy about it. Not all children in the world can live in peace. My teacher told me afro-american children in USA are not happy. She told me the police hits them on the head and makes them cry, just because they are coming from Africa. Is that true? Please answer soon,

Susanne

ps: I don't know what you mean with the car tires shoes. I have very nice sandals. They are called "Jesus Slippers." My mom was standing in line a long time to get them for me. Do you also have such kind of shoes? Or do you have to wear car tires shoes? I send you a picture. Please send me pictures back.

Hamden, Connecticut / October 1963

Dear Comrag Suzanne:

Thank you for your letter. I like it very much. I thought when you say my government do not tell the truth about your country was interesting. Color people do get beat in the head with police sticks in my country when they are marching for their rights but little kids do not get beat up unless they are praying in church then they get blown up by the Klu Klux Klan! But you do not see little kids marching and singing because it is not safe. The police not only use sticks. They use dogs! And water hoses, too!

Your teacher told the truth. Down south white people do not believe color people are Americans like white people. It segregated down south. They like race prejudice down there. Color people can't use the same bathrooms or water fountains or restaurants or theaters as white people. There is one for white people. And one for color people. Big sign say FOR COLOR ONLY. But I live up north in Connecticut. It not segregated here. I go to school with white children. Everybody pee together. That don't fool me though. They still act funny around color people.

I told my teacher what you say that you not living in Communism but Socialism. I had to look that up first. It mean everybody share everything right? Everybody own everything together?

Boy! She got mad when I say that! Her face turn orange and she hollering you telling me communism lies and I was UnAmerican and Communism Dupe! I say I wasn't duping no communism nothing! How can I be duping communism when I see them scrunchy-face white folks beating up color people on tv every night?

She get real mad then and kicked me out and made me go to the principal office. The principal this other old scrunchy face white lady. She say I couldn't write no more letters because you communism. She don't want no color communism children in her school. Then she call my mother and told her I couldn't come back to school until I wrote a "satisfactory" essay explaining "Why I Love America."

When I got home, my mother beat my behind! She chase me all over the house! She say *Don't you know you can't tell white people the truth?!!* She say I can be all the communism I want but don't say nothing to no white folks about it because they just shoot me with a water hose or blow me up in church!!

After she finish beating my behind, she made me lie and write that essay and pretend I don't know white folks treat color people bad. Then she say forget that stupid old principal. I could still write you and be your friend if I want. Friendship got nothing to do with communism. So I going to call you Comrag like they do in communism country. I feel better after that because my mother took me out and bought me some of those Jesus shoes you wear instead of car tires. Now I look like a beatnik.

Your American friend,

Darius

Schwedt/Oder, 20. Dezember 1985

Hello Darius,

I am sorry for my tardy answer. Your teacher sounds really scary. I am very happy your mother allowed you to write more letters. If life is too dangerous for you in USA you can come and live here. We have peace and nobody has to be afraid here anymore.

You ask about socialism. In socialism we don't share everything. I don't share my dolls - I want to play with them myself. But all the tables in school and the chairs and all the things that are for the people are property of the people. They all have a sticker "property of the people" so everybody knows it belongs to the people and you can't take it home or destroy it.

Some information from your letter I didn't understand. Please explain:

Why do you say "color" people. What color do you mean? Do you mean they are black?

Why doesn't your government forbid Klu Klux Klan? And why they attack children?

My teacher and me were wondering. You write "I go to school with white children." Does that mean that white children are not color? And does that mean that you are color? And what color do you have?

Why in USA people still go to church? Do they not know that God does not exist? Here in GDR church is only to look at, like a museum. Everybody knows that people are responsible for people and not God can help them because he doesn't exist. Above the sky there is space and Juri Gagarin was flying there and checked if there is anybody living there. And he said that there was nobody, no God and nobody else. Didn't anybody tell you this?

Please write me back soon.

Your friend

Susanne

PS: What is a communism dupe? The dictionary don't know the word.

Hamden, Connecticut / January 1964

Dear Comrag Susanne:

Why I say color people? Color people come in different color that why!

My mother color eggnog freckle with nutmeg. My daddy Bosco color. Bosco a drink. It come in a bear. Bosco Bear. You squeeze Bosco Bear and chocolate come out. My daddy color Bosco Bear chocolate. My sister ginger bread color. I'm new penny color.

Some color people get mad you call them black. Make them think they back in the jungle with Tarzan. You got Tarzan over there? Tarzan white and swing through trees like a monkey. He beat on his chest like a gorilla too! And they say color people monkeys! *Hah!* Is white people color? Yeah. Sure. Why not? One color. *White.*

I got in trouble for drawing white people orange. The teacher say something wrong with my head so she send me to this special nurse. This special nurse call something I can't spell but she talk to people who got problems in the head. She ask why I draw white people orange. I say because you can't see white crayon on white paper so I use orange. What wrong with that? She look at me blink a couple times then send me back to class.

I ask my mother why the government don't just put the Klu Klux Klan in jail. She say they got Constitutional Rights. Government can't stop them because they got Constitutional Rights and Free Speech. I say of course speech free I never pay a nickel for a word of it in my life words cheaper than bubble gum but that still don't explain how come the government give the Klu Klux Klan Constitutional Rights and color people got no Constitutional Rights. She say color people do got Constitutional Rights because they American. Then I say why we marching and singing and asking for our Constitutional Rights all the time if we already got Constitutional Rights? Make no sense. She say not everybody want to do what the Constitution say. Oh is all I say.

My teacher say you trying to fool me into communism. That what dupe mean. Dupe is fool. Communism dupe is fool for communism. But I explain to my teacher you not communism. You still waiting for communism to come like people in my church waiting for Jesus. When Jesus come everything going to be peach pie. Everybody have wings. Same with communism. But that make no different to her. Communism. Socialism. It all the same. It don't help to say you got "Property of the People" stickers. She just get more mad and start taking about "private property" and "free market system" and turn orange. I know she lying. I got to pay every time I go to the market. Hostess Twinkies and Drake's Devil Dogs take a big bite out my weekly allowance.

What you mean Juri Gagarin flying in space and say ain't nobody up there? He blind? He look hard enough he see John Glenn. John Glenn first man in space. John Glenn flying around up there too! They can wave at each other from they rocket ships.

So how you know there no God? Who told you that? God everywhere. Even in Communism. God not made up like Santa Claus or the Tooth Fairy. I see God. I feel God. It happen every time I pray. Try it sometime.

Your American Friend,

Darius

PS-- I am very very very sad our president got shot and kill. How could this happen? This America! Somebody shot and kill President Kennedy! He was sitting in a car waving and smiling then BLAM!!! They took off all the cartoons on TV and talk about how President Kennedy got shot and kill all day and all night long. It was sad but real boring too. Worse I saw the man they say kill President Kennedy get shot on TV ! How he get kill with all those policeman around? I thought policeman supposed to protect you. That not supposed to happen. This America! It keep going on like this with no more cartoons and people get shot with policemen I'm going to move over there and live in "Property of the People" peace. Stay at your house. Eat all your sausage.

Schwedt/Oder, 3. February 1986

Hello Darius,

thank you very much for your letter. I understand now you are African American and I feel solidarity with your struggle for justice. We are comrades, like in the song we sing in school: "Black and White will change the world." In the song it says if you want to win you can't pray, because it doesn't help and will only confuse you so you don't know who is your enemy. We don't pray because we want to win.

Thank you for explaining the color-people. We say African American people, because you all came from Africa until the white people came and steal you and make you slaves. We learned that in school. But they didn't steal ALL people in Africa. There is still some living there. They are our comrades, too. Nelson Mandela is our friend. He is in prison all the time, because he is the leader of the color people in Africa. He is fighting for justice. The police in Africa is white people and hits pupils on the head and shoots them. We make demonstration and collect money to help the pupils in Africa and we send food because they are hungry. The white people in Africa are bad. I think the white people in Africa should go home. I like color people very much. I have a Negro-doll. It's my favorite doll and it was really hard to get.

I don't understand what you write about your government and the Constitutional Rights. What is that? Evil people that hurt other people should go to jail! We send bad people to jail, so the good people can live together in Peace. In Germany after the war there was many evil people. They were Hitlers friends. We send them all away.

One thing I didn't understand in your letter. Nobody shoot your President Ronald Reagen. My teacher told me that Kennedy is an old president from old times and he was shoot a long long time ago. Why are you writing about it now?

Please write back soon,

Susanne

Hamden, Connecticut / February 1964

Dear Comrag Suzanne:

Now I know your government lies. They tell BIG ones, too! My government lie about your government. Your government lie about my government. What that tell you? Governments lie. Communism. Democracy. It all the same. They LIE.

What kind of crazy people tell you President Kennedy an old time president from old times? *They* from old times! HE JUST DIE FOUR MONTHS AGO!!! Four months ago is no olden times. That CURRENT EVENTS!!! That mean your government don't even want you to know the right time.

You ask if it time for lunch. They tell you it time for Buck Rogers. The Twenty-fifth century. They probably got you thinking you live in a time not even happened yet. Or way done past happening. They can make up anything. Switch the newspapers around. Build statues of people who never was. Make movies and tv shows about things that never happened. They could have you living on a Hollywood movie set and you don't even know it. That what happened in those crazy communism take over America movies my teacher made me watch. In this one movie, communism built this small American town in communism country look like it belong on a Look magazine cover. This Look magazine cover town was used to train communism spies to act like Americans. They dress American. They walk American. They talk American. They was just like that movie with them string bean people, only communism. It was spooky.

These communism spies flew over to America in these crop duster planes, spraying sleeping powder over the whole country like it was a Poppy field in the Land of Oz, and the next thing you know, Dorothy, the Scarecrow, the Tin Man, the Cowardly Lion, and everybody else in America speaking Russian and clomping around in car tires. *Clop. Clop. Clop.*

Where your teachers think I live? *The Twilight Zone?* With Rod Serling's head spinning around?

And where you get that President Ronald Reagan stuff? He an actor who be selling Twenty Mule Team on TV. *Jimmy Cricket!* Lyndon Johnson president. He a nice white man from down south who like color people. He make sure color people vote. And that everybody in the country – color and white – can pee together at the lunch counter of their choice eating meatloaf sandwiches if they want to. He used to be vice president, not Ronald Reagan. Even though he like color people, white people still mad at him because of Vietnam.

Ronald Reagan president? That's the craziest thing I ever hear! Why anybody vote for somebody act like a monkey daddy? That all he good for. Selling soap and acting like a monkey daddy. *Bedtime for Bozo.* Americans not that stupid.

Your American Friend,

Darius

PS—You sure use a lot of big words in communism. I ask you what "solidarity" mean in my next letter. This Ronald Reagan Twilight Zone talk got me dizzy!

Schwedt/Oder, 10. Juni 1986

Hello Darius,

I had a long talk with my teacher and we discussed your case in class and in pioneers club. We agree that you have very strong counter-revolutionary tendencies. We understand that you are probably brainwashed by your government but we cannot accept that you keep lying and twisting the truth into bourgeois un-political things.

We know you have a very unfair position in your society and you come from an oppressed class. So we are with solidarity with you. But in order to break the chains under which you live, you need to become conscious first and face the fact your government is lying and mine is not. If you don't believe me, that means you are believing the counter-revolutionary propaganda.

I am sorry but in our Pioneers meeting we came to the conclusion that we should not write anymore, unless you first position yourself. That means you should say my government is right and yours is lying. Then we know you are a comrade and not a counter-revolutionary.

In solidarity,

Susanne

Hamden, Connecticut / July 1964

Dear X Comrag Susanne:

You bet your stinky communisms underwear I'm "counter revolutionary"! You communisms didn't give me no constitutional rights! I didn't get no try by jury of my pee! Constitutional Rights says I have to be try by my pee! I was railroaded by you communisms pioneer club kangaroo court! I want color people have the right to eat at a lunch COUNTER too! I'm a lunch counter revolutionary! You go try and eat a Woolworth lunch counter down south with your color Negro doll and see how fast them white folks chase you out with a water hose! You be a "counter revolutionary" real quick!

And I don't know all them big communism words you keep writing! What "bourgeois un-political things" mean? Those aren't kids words! Those are big people words! You one who brainwashed! You believe what big people say! You a big people dupe! I bet your teacher who is a big people told you I was "pressed glass"! I ain't no "pressed glass"! I'm made out of people just like you! I ain't your comrag no more but God loves you and I will still pray for you!

A Lunch Counter Revolutionary

Who Believe In God American!

Darius

Schwedt/Oder 10. Oktober 1989

Hello Darius,

I don't know if you remember me, I don't know if your address is still the same. I don't know if this letter will reach you and if you even want to talk to me again.

We were penpals in 4th grade, accidentally picked from your mad teacher. You told me that Kennedy was shot and I was all confused why you say such old stories. I told you that your president is Reagan and you got all angry at me. Now I realized that you wrote from a different time – you even had a different date on your letters. You were writing from the 60's and I am writing from the 80's. I still don't understand how this could happen, as if our letters were teleported through time, like in Star Trek. But so many strange things happen these days that I stopped wondering about how the impossible can happen, just because it does.

After you wrote your last letters we had many discussions with the teacher and the class and we discussed so much, that I didn't really know how I can be your friend and be a pioneer at the same time. I didn't know good enough english to tell you myself. And I didn't want to go to PenPals club anymore. Reading and translating other peoples letters all the time got really boring. I am in 8th grade now and my english is better. But I still need very much dictionary and many things are hard to say.

I was sad and angry because we fight about our governments and because you said my government was lying. But now something happens here that really make me wonder. And I don't know what to believe anymore.

It started in the summer. There was this protests in China, in Peking on the Tiananmen Square. I was watching television – both news channels: our channel and the western channel. And they were showing the same images of young people protesting. One channel says it is a revolution of the students for free speech and the other says it is a counter-revolutionary insurgence that must be defeated. And both channels speak in big words and I don't understand what is going on there. It just doesn't make any sense! One image was especially strange: There was one man, in front of a tank. And it seems like he wanted to dance with the tank – where ever the tank would go, he also goes, as if he wants to stop the tank, not let him pass. But obviously you cannot stop a tank as a single man. What is he doing there? Is he trying to overthrow the government? Is he fighting for free speech? So I thought: Well it's just like I'm used to: you take half of our news and half of the west news and then you just take the middle and know what was going on. But what is the middle between a fight for freedom of speech and a counter-revolutionary insurgence?

So I remembered you wrote that both our governments lie and they were only using big words that nobody understands. And I remembered I called you a counter-revolutionary and now I wonder what that means . . . So I started to think about you and wondered what happened to you. And may be you were right and may be our governments are lying to us. But if they do: What is the truth then?

That was only the beginning: the more the summer went on, the crazier it got. Our people even started running away to the West, sit in embassy's, sit in lagers, sit on the streets. It's many people every day. And I don't understand why they leave us? Of course there is problems, in every country there is problems. But you can't fix them if you run away and leave all your people behind?

Then I thought after the summer, when everybody is back to school, things will get normal again. But it seems it just gets crazier every day . . .

I will stop here my letter. I could continue with thousands of questions, but I don't even know if this letter reaches you and I have to run to track and field now.

I will be very happy to hear from you again,

Susanne

Hamden, Connecticut / 1968

Dear Comrade Susanne:

HOLY SHIT!!! I do remember you! We met in that crazy Mrs. Rattree's hat back in the fourth grade! You were my Socialist pen pal from behind the Iron Curtain! You live like twenty years in the future, something crazy like that, or so you claim! Anyway, like, f *ar out!* You called me a counter-revolutionary and said you couldn't be my friend until I was correct with my unjust social positions as a member of an oppressed class of people and prove I wasn't a spy! This pot must be really good! I can't believe I remembered everything all at once!

Your letter really hurt my feelings. When I read it, I felt just like the time Timmy told me I couldn't come over to his house and play any more because his mother said I was a nigger. She said niggers were dirty and he might get lice. Or worse. Except this time it wasn't because I was black. It was because your teacher said I was a counter-revolutionary and you couldn't write me no more. I thought our friendship had nothing to do with communism or democracy. I thought we liked each other. To me, it was like what my parents taught me about having a friend who was of a different race or religion. If you like them, they are your friend and you respect them for who they are. It don't

matter what race or religion or creed or what other people say.

But I'm still a Christian and believe in God so I forgive you.

I don't pledge allegiance to the flag anymore, though. I stopped in the sixth grade. America says its one thing but acts another. Its two-faced. That's not the America I grew up to believe in. This all happened around the same time my father moved out and left my mother. My mother drank a lot after that, too.

There were a lot of riots then. Black people rioting because they was just plain fed up with how bad white folks was treating them. There was riots in Watts. There was riots in Detroit. There were riots in Newark. We was shouting Black Power all across the country! Suddenly, I wasn't colored no more. I was BLACK! And proud of it! James Brown even made us dance to it! We don't take no junk off white people no more. We get up in they face. Tell them to take that junk back where they found it. White kids are scared of us more now than ever. They know if they talk smack we'll jack them up!

This is what happened . . .

There were Black people running around the country burning and looting and throwing Molotov cocktails like I said so my teacher thought it would be a good idea if the class had a debate about America's problem with the Negroes (or was that "Negro Problem"?). We split up into two teams. One side was the marching peaceful blacks and whites holding hands together and singing "We Shall Overcome" for civil rights types.

And then there was my side. We were all for burning and looting and throwing Molotov cocktails! The way we saw it marching and singing only got your butt beat by the cops. But if you burned, looted and threw Molotov cocktails for civil rights, you might get a brand new color TV out the deal!

We did a lot of preparation. We read newspapers. We checked out library books. Our teacher showed us a movie called "Our Negro Friends. And What To Do About Them." She even took the class on a field trip to the United Nations to see how other countries solve their problems with each other!

So, while I was studying up on civil rights, I found something even better than the "The Bill of Rights." It was called "The Declaration of Independence."

The Declaration of Independence says you have the right to overthrow the government if its not serving the needs of the people. And that was the last thing I needed to know. All the burning, looting and Molotov cocktail throwing black people was doing was just a response to "a long train of abuses."

I had all I needed for the debate. But then my mother told me something I didn't know. Do you remember I said my father left my mother around this time? And that she was drinking a lot? Well, I asked her about all the rioting and if we really did have the right to overthrow the government. It was a Friday night. The debate was on Monday. I had the whole weekend to get ready. My mother was real unhappy and drinking a lot. Something was really bothering her. I knew part of it was my father but I could see something else was bothering her, too. We were talking about the riots. And I asked her about overthrowing the government. She gave me this angry look and handed me a little book one of her patients gave her. I forgot to tell you my mother is a nurse and she works in a hospital for crazy people. The book was called "Concentration Camp, U.S.A." It was put out by the communist party. I still have it.

My mother told me what the government did to all the Japanese people living in the United States during World War II. She said the government put them in concentration camps. These were American citizens just like us she told me. And the government put them in concentration camps.

I got really scared. I could only think about how the Nazis sent all those people to concentration camps and put them in ovens. Did America do the same thing like the Nazis? Put people in concentration camps? I told my mother I didn't believe it. Well, believe it she said because it happened. And there was nothing to stop the government from doing the same thing to black people if we keep up all this rioting.

My mother pointed to pictures of the concentration camps in the book. That's when she told me about "The McCarren Act." She said it gave the government the power to declare martial law and imprison anyone who is a threat to the security of the United States. My mother was drunk walking around the kitchen. She asked me a lot of hard questions. They were about America and what it stood for. And white people. Can you really trust them she kept asking me. I didn't know the answer to her questions. And I was really scared. Would the United States government really put all the black people in a concentration camp and stick us in a oven?

I had nightmares all weekend. The American government kept climbing through my window and crawling from under my bed to take my family to a concentration camp where they were going to burn us up like the witch in Hansel and Gretel.

Monday morning finally came. It was the day of the debate but the teacher did something we didn't expect. She invited the school principal to be the judge. That kind of messed everything up because we were only allowed to call each other "Negroids" and "Caucasoids." We were like What the heck is that?!! Lizard people from outer space?!! But I didn't let her lizard words get in the way. I had all my

books and notes. I was ready. I said what I had to say.

The principal's face turned orange like it always did and asked Who told you that?!! I said I read it in a book. And pulled out "Concentration Camp, U.S.A." and let her look at it. She said that book was nothing but communist propaganda. And I said *Is it true or not? Did the government put Japanese people in concentration camps during World War II?*

She just turned a brighter color orange. *Yes, but that doesn't give you people the right to riot in the streets . . . .*

Yes it do! I said. That's when I opened up one of the other books I had and read:

> But when a long train of abuses and usurpations, pursuing invariably the same Object evinces a design to reduce them under absolute Despotism, it is their right, it is their duty, to throw off such Government" Declaration of Independence, July 4th 1776

All the kids on my team clapped even though they didn't really understand what I just said. They clapped because I trapped that old orange face principal. But we still didn't win. The principal said the Negroid people had to learn to respect private property and stop wasting the tax payers' money taking welfare before we would be respected as Americans. I felt like she just slapped me in the face. I stopped standing for the pledge of allegiance after that. You don't see me as an American. I don't see your flag. Now I'm down with the Black Panthers but I'll tell you about that next time.

Your American Comrade,

Darius

Schwedt/Oder, Dezember 1989

Hello Darius,

thank you very much for your letter.

What you say sounds right, except I'm not sure anymore if this still applies today. I thought that black people will never be free in the capitalist society, because the system itself is based on exploitation of the workers. In order to exploit the workers you need to break their unity. So you use their differences to make them fight each other. You treat one better and one worse so they will not unite. It's the same with woman and man. Woman gets less money, so the man think that they are better and stronger and won't help the woman. That's why you need to change the whole system to something else. (Except I don't know what would be an alternative. And I don't know if that is really true, too.)

I don't know much about the history of USA, but I think your angry orange teacher wins, since your president today is George Bush. And he is really serious conservative.

Darius, here everything is really really crazy. It gets crazier every day. In the beginning I was really shocked: there were all the demonstrations, there were all these refugees and then suddenly they opened the wall. That was already crazy, but then I saw the pictures on television how so many of our people (we are now called "Ossi," because we are now the East Germans and not GDR people anymore), were jamming up at those border crossings and were all going to the west, crying and celebrating and I didn't understand what they celebrated? They were saying how they are free now and I was really embarrassed by these people. One image was especially disturbed: Some truck pulled up and was throwing out bananas to those crazy screaming Ossi people. And they would actually stand there and scream and would ask for more bananas to throw at them. Like feeding monkeys. Like these people forgot dignity when crossing the border. I will never eat bananas again in my life! I can't understand how these people are part of our country.

All the demonstrations keep going on, everybody is demonstrating for or against something. Also in Schwedt the demonstrations have started. I went there to find out what's going on. Many people had candles, I guess because it's more romantic. They had a microphone where you could say what you want. I heard two speeches: One was complaining how the Germans in Schwedt have to wait to rent a new apartment while the Polish and Yugoslav Guest-Workers get apartments as soon as they arrive. The woman talking must have had never visited the home of a polish guest-worker, otherwise she wouldn't talk such nonsense. My classmate is from Poland and they live with three people in a very small 2-room flat. They are working for our country, they need a place to stay. And we don't offer them much. So this is why she wants to overthrow the government? The second person was complaining about the environment. He said the government is not taking any means to protect the environment. Factories produce too much bad waste and it pollutes the air. He is right. The air sometimes really stinks. But why to overthrow the government?

I was frustrated and went home. My mother was watching television and crying again. This sometimes happens, since the wall came down. She gets all scared and says our life will now be really tough and we will all be unemployed. And I keep telling her to stay calm and wait. But then she gives me this look, this "you don't know what you are talking about" look and I can see she is not believing me. She says we need to start saving money, for the times ahead. So we don't go out to eat anymore and

save money. But that's okay, if only she stops crying.

Also in school everything is crazy. Today our teacher from "Social Studies" came into our class. She was all serious, I think she was crying before. So many people cry these days. She told us she would not be our teacher anymore. She told us, what we've learned until now is not valid anymore. She can't tell us what is true today, but what she told us, doesn't apply anymore. Then our former sport-teacher took over. He is very young, I really like him a lot. He sits on benches and comes in with a sport suit and discusses the news with us all the time in class. How can she just say it's not valid anymore? Is it ALL not valid? Or only parts? But which parts are right and which parts are wrong?

Nobody knows what is going on anymore. Every Day there is a different news: Government resigned, new government, two days later: resigns again. Next day: old government is being imprisoned. It goes on and on and on. Then I realized how I even got used to it. I was watching the news, a new government is up again? Whatever, tell me something interesting. . . . . I started to stop watching the news, you can't keep up with it anyway. I rather watch "Happy Days" instead. They show it on one of the private channels from the west. I really like that show – you probably don't know it yet, but I really like Fonzie – he is sooo cool, he makes me laugh!

I wish so much I could travel with this letter to where you are and may be we could both join this Black Panthers that you are mentioning and may be we could make an actual change happening.

Please write back,

Susanne

X

Drawings in this article are by Destiny McKeever, an illustrator, sculptor, package designer, and special-effects artist based in Las Vegas, Nevada. Recently, she completed work supervised by movie effects-wizard Rick Baker on the Universal release "The Wolfman."

Darius James is an author and spoken-word artist. He has four published books ("Negrophobia"; "That's Blaxploitation!!!"; "Voodoo Stew"; and "Froggie Chocolate's Christmas Eve") and is currently developing with filmmaker Oliver Hardt a documentary titled "The United States of Hoodoo."

Susanne Lang is one of the organizers of the "Summit – non-aligned initiatives in education cultures." She works as an editor for a consumers rights web-portal, freelances in art and cultural productions. In these, she is trying to develop and advocate for open source online media, as for instance in the video-syndication network v2v.

Bernard Stiegler and Irit Rogoff

Transindividuation

This is a segment of conversation between the philosopher Bernard Stiegler and cultural theorist Irit Rogoff that took place on the occasion of Stiegler's lecture series, "Pharmaconomics" at Goldsmiths in February, March 2010, as part of his current professorial fellowship. In this segment, we touch on a couple of Stiegler's key terms in the development of his thought, such as "transindividuation," "transmission," and "long circuits." In his three-volume work *Technics and Time*, Stiegler has argued that "technics" (a constellation of models and discourses converging on information systems, codes, prostheses, machines, etc.) constitute what "is most properly to be thought as the key philosophical question of our time." As Andrés Vaccari states about *Technics and Time*:

> In the human sciences, culture and language have also been progressively engulfed by the universe of technics: the artificial realm of institutions, rituals, knowledges, symbol systems and practices that makes humans functional, speaking, meaning-making creatures; that is, what makes humans *human*. The essence of the human, it seems, is the technical; which is paradoxically the *other* of the human: the non-human, the manufactured, unnatural, artificial; the inhuman even.[1]

For Stiegler, the concept of "transindividuation" is one that does not rest with the individuated "I" or with the interindividuated "We," but is the process of co-individuation within a preindividuated milieu and in which both the "I" and the "We" are transformed through one another. Transindividuation, then, is the basis for all social transformation and is therefore a way of addressing what happens within education. Equally, terms such as "short-circuit" indicate a break or a departure in thought and "long circuit" that intimate a range of connectivities that allows for the passage of thought across time:

> The gigantic financial crisis sending tremors all over the world is the disastrous result of the hegemony of the short term of which the destruction of attention is at once effect and cause. ... marketing, from the emergence of the programme industries, transforms the psychotechniques of the self and of psychic individuation into industrial psychotechnologies of transindividuation, that is, into psychotechnologies threaded by networks, and as the organisation of an industrial reticulation of transindividuation that short-circuits traditional and institutional social networks.[2]

Another key term for Stiegler's thought is the notion of

"attention," which he greatly develops on from the work of the philosopher Gilbert Simondon, and which obviously has exceptional value when talking about the modalities and textures of educational processes.

> Attention is the reality of individuation in Gilbert Simondon's sense of the terms: insofar as it is always both psychical and collective. Attention, which is the mental faculty of concentrating on an object, that is, of giving oneself an object, is also the social faculty of taking care of this object – as of another, or as the representative of another, as the object of the other: attention is also the name of civility as it is founded on philia, that is, on socialised libidinal energy. This is why the destruction of attention is both the destruction of the psychical apparatus and the destruction of the social apparatus (formed by collective individuation) to the extent that the later constitutes of system of care, given that to pay attention is also to take care.[3]

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IR: I have several questions, but perhaps we can begin with some general thoughts not on what you think education is, but how you approach it. Because it seems important to open up education to a series of much larger entry points so it's not exclusively about classrooms or institutions of learning. So maybe if we start with the question of what you think possible entry points into education may be?

BS: In fact, I propose to speak about three levels of education. The first is education in the larger sense of transmission—inter-generational transmission—because, to my mind, this is the essence of education. What is education in this sense? Education is the relation between diverse generations, and contact is its mode of transmission. For example, an artist is capable of affecting, in and of themselves, a line of transmission from Paleolithic art through to contemporary art, and this transmission is a relationship to time, to human—I don't like the word "human," so perhaps we could say "mortal"—experience. These lines are within the artist, not made manifest by him or her, nor are they structures of representation, and they are put into effect through their practice, through the contact with them.

Initially, the most common, everyday experience of education is the relationship between parents and children, or we could say that the space of the family is the first space of education. And here we can already begin to identify problems, which are very close, very connected to problems that you can see at other levels and modalities of education, in schools and in museums and in other similar institutions. And so I would like to speak about those three levels; this "family" education; academic education, lets say; and "cultural" education, that of cultural institutions. And in these three different levels, you can encounter the same problems—problems of circuits, long and short. Today, the problem of education at the level of the family is the short-circuiting of the relationship between generations through the operations of the media. What is created between generations are in fact long circuits. What Freud or Groddeck call the "id" is an unconscious space of long circuits. These unconscious spaces link generations along very, very long spans of time. What is produced within these long circuits are the material of the dream, for example, which is at stake in Freud's interpretation of dreams, as well as clearly being the matter from which artists operate and produce. Joseph Beuys is extremely important for me because he was working on this question of long circuits aligning him in individuated ways with the past.

It is equally the problem of academic institutions, because when you are teaching geometry or geography in scholarly institutions, you are creating long circuits with very distant generations—creating a unity with the past that allows for creating a unity with the future. Religion, politics, even sports, and in fact everything that is a support in the human life is a support of those circuits. Those three modalities of transmission are extremely important for us because they are the main institutions of those transmissions. They are over determined by what I described as a "pharmacology" and what I describe as an "organology."[4] For example, in Husserl's last discourse about geometry, he says that it is impossible to access geometry without writing, and writing is a condition of the invention of geometry—and he says "invention," not discovery. He shows that in this type of education—which is typically the model of scholarly education—geometry is the matrix of scholarly education. That geometry exemplifies a theoretical, scholarly education, in which he states that there are technical conditions for accessing geometry.

For myself, at the "Institute for Research and Innovation" (IRI) and also at IRCAM (Institute for Acoustic and Musical Research and Coordination), both in the Pompidou Center, I try to develop what I call an "organologic" approach to the question of musical experience, not only for the musicians, but for the public. And why did I develop that? It was because I had a problem when I was director of IRCAM: the musicians, the composers, working in IRCAM had only a very limited public, a very small public. And the problem of this public was not its size, not an institutional consideration with the size of the public—the problem was that it was only a public of professionals.

IR: Not a general public.

BS: Not a general public, and not a public of amateurs. And it was really extremely problematic for me, politically problematic but also artistically and philosophically problematic. So I decided to try to understand how this

situation was possible. It was at this moment that I decided to rethink and reactivate the tradition of what in the field of musicology is called "organology," but I decided to propose what I call an expanded organology, that is, an organology that didn't study only instruments but also the conditions of music's reception by the public—for example with hi-fi apparatuses, the impact of radio networks, possibilities created by mp3 players, but also the structure of the architecture of the music halls, and so forth, and also software, because IRCAM was a research center in which software had a prominent conceptual place. I worked for one year with a musicologist around these questions—a young musicologist who was extremely interesting and a specialist on the work of Joseph Haydn, a composer with a politics as well as a policy regarding the public. For example, Haydn had created the concept of a society of concert music (Musikverein), and he imposed the repetition of newly composed pieces of music—the public had to stay and listen to the piece played three times.

IR: On the same occasion?

BS: On the same occasion, yes. And I discovered that in fact in the 1880s, the Paris Opera had an extremely interesting policy regarding the "public." When you were a member, you had a subscription to the opera, and you received the entire score of a new production before the performance. And you also received the transcription of the piece, an arrangement for piano and violin and voice as well as a commentary on the complexity of the score. And you had to prepare yourself before going to the concert hall. Why? In fact, at this time throughout the bourgeois families you had people with skills at playing the piano, the violin, or singing, and everyone was reading and writing music. Being capable of playing music was a condition for listening to music, because if you could not play, it was not possible to listen to this music. Because there were no hi-fi apparatuses, there was no radio or phonographs. So at the beginning of the twentieth century new apparatuses appeared that suddenly created a short-circuit in the skills—the musical skills of the public.

My own grandfather who died in 1935 was a worker who drove locomotives, but he was capable of reading music. But in my generation, our generation, reading music is exceptional, it's not common knowledge, so in fact I think that in the twentieth century you had an extremely important, instrumental shift, a transformation in education in which suddenly the skills of the "savoir faire"—of playing instruments and reading scores—were short-circuited, and suddenly the relationship between artworks and their publics was completely changed. It was a long process, but one that was greatly heightened with the coming of television, and I think that this evolution created a change—a very deep change in society and was creating what I call a short-circuiting of the possessive transindividuation.

Here I need to explain what I call transindividuation. My thought was much influenced by the philosophy of Gilbert Simondon, who was an important thinker of individuation. Simondon says that if you want to understand the individual, you need to inscribe the individual in a process of which he is only a phase. As such, the individual has no interests. The individual is only an aspect, or phase of a process, but the process is what is important. So what is this process? It is the process of individuation, that is of transformation, and for Simondon, everything is a caught up in and brought into a process of individuation. For example, the passages of life are a process of individuation, but "technics" are also processes of individuations.[5]

Now we ourselves, as humans, are a type of individuation that is very specific, as our individuation is not only a vital individuation, that is, an individuation of the living organism, of life, but an individuation of the psyche as well, so it is operating as both conscious and unconscious processes. And Simondon says that the individuation of the psyche is always already an individuation of a group of psyches, because a psyche is never alone. It always operates in relation to another psyche. At the limit itself, himself, or herself, a psyche in this situation is a very specific doubling of oneself in narcissism and a type of dialectical relationship to oneself. But this situation of dialogism in the psyche is an interiorization of a primordial situation in which, if you follow the arguments of Freud or Winnicott, you are in a dialectic relationship with other psyches, such as that of your mother or your father. This individuation, for example, is omnipresent and continuous. When you are reading a book, you individuate yourself by reading this book because reading a book is to be transformed by the book. If you are not transformed by the book, you are not reading the book—you believe that you are reading. You may believe that you are, but you are not.

IR: So reading a book is a short-circuit.

BS: It can be a short-circuit if you believe you are reading a book and you don't in fact read it. It is a long circuit if you individuate yourself by reading the book, if you are in the process of individuating yourself. Now the theory of Wolfgang Iser—the theorist of the school of Konstanz—is that a book is a process of individuation, a book doesn't exist as such. What exists as a book is the community of the reader. And this is extremely interesting. Because it says in fact that a book is a power of individuation, but not individuation as such. It is the circuit created, the long circuit created by the readers, which is the individuation of the book. And it is not only the case for the book. It is the case for every artwork or other forms of creative work in the humanities. Now, when you are individuating yourself with somebody—for example, we are now in discussion and in speaking, I am individuating myself. But in listening to me, you are individuating yourself through my discourse. You can individuate through my discourse by adherence with my discourse, but it's also equally possible

to individuate oneself by its contradiction, its negation.

A co-individuation is not the same as individuation, it is a process of individuation—for example in the dialogues of Plato, in which you have the presence of Socrates and Gorgias who are not in a position of individuating themselves. In the dialogues of Plato, the goal of the dialogues is nevertheless to reach a kind of agreement, even an agreement on disagreement if you can say, "we disagree on that," "we agree on things," "we disagree on that," it is a kind of disagreement. It is a disagreement with an agreement about the disagreement. Part of the belief in socialization was to stipulate that a "gentleman" is capable of arriving at an agreement about a disagreement while a "barbarian" is not capable, and that is important for our argument here. This process of co-individuation, when it produces a kind of convergence and agreement, transforms the process of trans-individuation. Why? Because if you have a discussion and a topic, in the discussion you have several positions expressed during the discussion, but you have a moment in which you have what Simondon calls a "meta-stabilization"—a kind of agreement that can become a rule. For example, if you are a geometer or a moviemaker, you will meta-stabilize something that will become the style of Euclid, or the style of Fellini, or the style of Godard, or the style of Expressionism in German cinema in the twenties, and so on and so forth. And this becomes a kind of cultural inheritance, which created in philosophy, for example, a new dialectic, or perhaps an "apodictic" (the branch of philosophy that analyzes influence) that will then be transmitted in the operations of a conventional "objective" education.

Now we come to the question of trans-individuation, which is a question of the creation of circuits. For example, what is a great artist? Or a great philosopher? But also a great architect? Or a great person? Somebody really specific, singular—somebody who is recognized as a singularity who has created a new type of circuit on which other people can come and continue the circuits. That's extremely important.

IR: So the value of something is actually the capacity for trans-individuation that determines entry and continuation of those circuits? Not the production of something unique, but of a circuit to which others can add themselves by building on it.

BS: Yes. Now the conditions of creating of circuits of trans-individuation are always organological—the creation of circuits themselves are always organological. For example, when you have a discussion between Socrates and Gorgias, this discussion is possible only because Socrates and Gorgias have learned how to write and to read. They have a common skill, a technical skill of reading and writing, which is the origin of the Polis, and without those skills it is impossible to have law, to have geometry, to have a philosophy, to have a relationship to Homer and to Sophocles, all of which define the approved and valued path for Greek civilization. And if you are in a shamanistic society, there is another organology, but you still have one. I just came back from Senegal, for example, and it is extremely clear when you practice ethnography in that context. You immediately have the role for technics when you open spaces for relationships between people that are in fact spaces for transindivduation. In fact, if you don't practice those technics, you can't enter in the circuits. It's not possible.

IR: Give me an example of how you are using technics in this argument?

BS: For example, the drinking of tea of tea in Senegal is a technic. In Senegal you have three times for drinking a tea. You have the first tea, which is "attaya," extremely strong, the second they call the tea of life, and it is sweet, and the third one, which is even sweeter, is the time of love. But you will never meet a Senegalese person drinking only the first one or only the third one.

IR: It is an integrated system.

BS: It is a ritual and you have a technic for producing this. This is a very common thing. In fact, religious practices are technical, what is at stake in what Foucault calls the "technology of the self" are, after all, all technics. For me writing books is a technic of the self, now music is a technic as well. In Africa music is particularly a technic—extremely important for creating a space or opening of trans-individuation.

Now why am I speaking about this question? There is a specific reason, an argument I am putting forward, which is that, in my point of view, the twentieth century began in the nineteenth century. There was a change, a very deep change, in the organology of transindividuation. Such was the text of Adorno and Horkheimer "The Culture Industry: Enlightenment as Mass Deception," in which suddenly—through what is currently called mass media: television, cinema, radio, now digital technology and networks as well—the development of a new organology was forged, which in turn creates a new organization of the circulation of the symbolic. Within this new mode of organization, suddenly the production of the symbolic becomes industrial, subject to industrial processes. Here you encounter the production of symbols on the one hand, and the consuming of such symbols on the other—an *aporia* because it is impossible to consume a symbol. The symbol is not an object of consumption; it is an object of exchange, of circulation, or of the creation of circuits of trans-individuation. So this situation suddenly produced what I call short-circuiting—of trans-individuation. And it is a very long story, it is not framed by a short historical period, but extends over a long time.

IR: This is akin to the situation at IRCAM, the original situation that you started working with.

BS: Yes, but for me, it is not only a situation for IRCAM as an institution—it is the situation for families now, for schools, for everything. Because, yes, it is true that I originally investigated musical questions through those topics, but later I opened this question, I proposed a more general theory of society today, of contemporary society, which is that we are in a society in which organology has become industrial. And that this industrial organization results in an organization through the production of consumers and producers.

IR: I want to go back for a moment to the original situation that you were describing about publics for music and the recognition that you were opening up a whole set of contemporary technologies that were part of a transmission of music and ability to read it through different languages, not by, let's say, reading scores, but by being able to be part of certain types of technologies. I want to ask you how you differentiate between that and a kind of populism that states that we have to get audiences by whatever means available to us. If audiences are responding, let's say, to new technologies in a way that they are not responding to old technologies, then that's how we'll work. I think that there's a difference between these two things. The latter is based on a kind of recognition of emergent demographics.

BS: Yes. The question is criticizing, being critical and producing critique. The ability to critique and the capacity to discern. These are the two questions. There is an extremely interesting sentence by the anthropologist André Leroi-Gourhan who says you need to participate at the level of feeling, of emotion, in order to exit something—not reject something, but engage with it emotionally. Why did he say something like that? He was a reader of Bergson, just like Simondon, and you know the problem for Bergson is what is called the "loop stimulus"—it is not a stimulus response, but is like Marcel Mauss, with the exchange of gifts. You can receive if you can give. If you can engage, you are also able to exit. If you are able to engage critically, then a process takes place that would otherwise remain static.

X

Irit Rogoff is a theorist, curator, and organizer who writes at the intersections of the critical, the political, and contemporary arts practices. Rogoff is a professor at Goldsmiths College, London University, in the department of Visual Cultures, which she founded in 2002.

Bernard Stiegler is a philosopher. Stiegler is the Director for cultural development at the Pompidou Centre, where he began the Institute of Research and Innovation (IRI) in 2006. He has been Director at the Collège international de philosophie, Director General at the Institut National de l'Audiovisuel (INA), and Director General at the Institut de Recherche et Coordination Acoustique/Musique (IRCAM). Stiegler is currently Professorial Fellow at the Centre for Cultural Studies, Goldsmiths, University of London.

1
See Andrés Vaccari, "Unweaving the Program: Stiegler and the Hegemony of Technics," https://web.archive.org/web/20101206102852/http://www.sciy.org/2010/02/07/unweaving-the-program-stiegler-and-the-hegemony-of-technics-by-andres-vaccari/ .

2
Bernard Stiegler, "Within the limits of capitalism, economizing means taking care," Ars Industrialis. See http://www.arsindustrialis.org/node/2922 .

3
Stiegler, "Within the limits of capitalism, economizing means taking care."

4
Stiegler's lecture series at Goldsmith's 4th, 11th, 25th February & 4th March 2010 focused on "pharmacology." His introduction to the series stated that he hoped to examine: - why the pharmacological situation in which we live, as technological beings, that is to say as non-beings, always becoming, needs an economy of this pharmacology: an economy which tend to optimise the curative effects of pharmaka and to reduce the toxicological ones; - why such a pharmacology can never purify the technical remedies of their poisoning side, whereas there is nothing human which is not technical Peven language, and then, thought. - I will try to show today why, if a pharmacology is a grammatology, it needs the development of a history of the supplement that gramma is, and not only a logic of this supplement. Of grammatology announced such a history, but in fact, this one never appeared. - We will see that this history of the supplement needs to develop the concept of a process of grammatisation, which is the process of production of all sorts of gramma which are pharmaka as well. A pharmacology is what prepare therapeutics, which is a historical form of adoption and of socialization of a pharmakon, or rather, and more precisely, of a system of pharmaka. This therapeutics, as an adoption of pharmaka forming on what was called in the classical age a political economy which is, then, an economy of the supplement studied with the concept of grammatisation: which is not simply a grammatology. Thus considered, the economy of the supplement is a kind of new critique of political economy as well as of libidinal economy.

5
Stiegler speaks of "technics" as essentially a form of memory constitutive of human temporality: "The technical object in its evolution is at once inorganic matter, inert, and organization of matter. The latter must operate according to the constraints to which organisms are submitted." Bernard Stiegler, *Technics and Time: The Fault of Epimetheus* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1998), 150.

Isabelle Bruno and Christopher Newfield

Can the Cognitariat Speak?

Isabelle Bruno is a French political scientist who has written on the range of mechanisms used by the European Union to regulate and redefine the public sector.[1] *Christopher Newfield is an American cultural studies scholar who has written about innovation and the fate of public higher education, including the "budget wars" over the arts and humanities.*[2] *They met as co-panelists at a conference in Toulouse in the fall of 2008. Organized by the association Sauvons la Recherche, the conference explored opposition and alternatives to the neoliberalization of higher education as envisioned by the Sarkozy government in France, influenced by British and American examples.*

What can the world's knowledge workers—the cognitariat—do about their current social and institutional predicaments? American management theorists like Peter Drucker have long argued that the knowledge workers would inherit the earth—or at least the economy.[3] *European critics of capitalism like Antonio Negri and André Gorz also noted the tendency of capitalism toward monopoly control of everything, knowledge included.*[4] *But they agreed with Drucker and Daniel H. Pink that the increasingly immaterial or cognitive status of worker know-how allowed it to belong to—and therefore be controlled by—its individual possessors.*[5] *The members of this cognitariat, for Drucker, Negri, and Gorz alike, are not therefore a new proletariat, but a new knowledge class with new strengths to bring to bear in ongoing conflicts with capitalism, which has itself been changed by the new ubiquity of knowledge.*[6]

What follows is a dialogue based on five hours of discussion between Bruno and Newfield one Saturday afternoon in Lille, in January 2010. The original discussion was conducted in French.

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Christopher Newfield: In my adult lifetime I've lived through a revolution—the business revolution, in which the codes of business judgment have presented themselves as universal knowledge. Lyotard was misread in the 1980s as defining the postmodern condition as the "end of master narratives." The opposite has happened: business became the global master narrative, the fountainhead of the transcultural "Lexus" refuting the situated knowledge of the "olive tree," to revert to the title of the *New York Times* columnist Thomas Friedman's 1990s business bestseller. Businessmen populate the boards of trustees of American universities and subject nonprofit activities like education to financialization and cost-cutting techniques, and give philanthropic dollars to fields most likely to offer economic returns on investment.

Little thought is given to the social and public value education creates that can't be captured through accounting. Even neoclassical economics has a word for public value that cannot be captured by a particular firm—"spillovers." But business does not have such a term, and in education, science, journalism, and art, public value is hard to talk about.

Isabelle, you analyze subtler modes of the "businessing" of everything. In your Toulouse talk, and in your book on the Lisbon process, you showed how the European Commission has developed a range of arcane techniques and strategies designed to make public systems serve the economy rather than society. Michel Foucault has described this as neoliberal governmentality (what had been referred to in Europe as "ordoliberalism"). Neoliberal governmentality made the European Union serve business first and the population second, and serve the population only in ways that were good for business. I was also struck by your manner. You really "belted it out," as we sometimes say of strong passages by our favorite singers. Later that day you were on French public radio, on France Inter's science show, "La tête au carré," with several "big heads," including the recent Nobelist in physics, Albert Fert, and you more than held your own, especially against Fert's "grand old man" complacency about the government's efforts to increase the share of research funding coming from industry. I thought of you as a fighter, perhaps even "competitive." Then when we met again at the biannual FOREDUC conference in Paris, organized by Carole Sigman and Annie Vinokur, you denounced competitiveness as the corrosive logic of the European Commission's administrative war on the public sector. What's your relation to competition?

Isabelle Bruno: On the personal level, competition just never motivated me. As I was growing up in the south of France I did very well in school—I never felt unsuccessful in relation to the French practice of public rankings of students. And yet there was nothing motivating about it. I gave up tennis because of that. It was fun to play but then at the end there were these competitions and they didn't inspire me, keeping score and that framework for playing. Competition didn't express what I liked about playing. I push myself quite a bit: I am very demanding towards myself. But competition never actually pushed me. One can demand a lot of oneself without needing to compare oneself to others to be sure to be better than them.

Neoliberalism is a philosophy—an anthropology—of human relations that makes competition the organizing principle of society. That would be fine for some sectors, obviously sports, maybe even the economy that surrounds large corporations. But what disturbs me now is the application of this anthropology of competition to all human activities. It's that totalitarian, that totalizing aspect that I critique. It denies autonomy to varying sectors of activity—education, the arts—by refusing to acknowledge that these sectors have their own principles of organization. Competition isn't the problem in itself. The problem is its claim to be the sole principle of society.

CN: A world divided into winners and losers seemed to me like something I had grown out of. I was an obsessive baseball fan between the ages of six and ten, and on some mornings would burst into tears when I discovered that the Los Angeles Dodgers had lost an important game. But then the world got bigger and I stopped caring. Now I think more about the psychological effects of contexts in which most people are losers. Competition is the cornerstone theory of neoclassical economics, and is a sacred principle in the U.S. Competition is equated with freedom—freedom to compete, no barriers to entry—and with quality, since competition among all parties is supposed to identify the winner and move resources towards that person or firm. In other words, competition showed in the 1980s that Dell Computer was a better third-party provider of cheap personal computers than Leading Edge, and the economy and society benefitted by showering resources on the better firm Dell.

In your work, Isabelle, you show the European Union taking the same neoclassical position on competition. Europe is supposedly too well protected, and its people are too protected to hustle like the Americans, the South Koreans, and the Chinese. So their economies will be richer and their societies more dynamic if they replace protection with open competition. That, in turn, if one follows Joseph Schumpeter's theory of "creative destruction," which all economic-policy people seem to, leads to higher rates of innovation, more wealth, perhaps even better art.

Leaving aside the theoretical problems with this model, which have been pointed out repeatedly, I have the same basic feeling about competition as you do—it's just not inspiring. It's also destructive, and thus it shouldn't structure everything in society. There is a major, undeclared culture war between those who think competition makes people smarter and stronger and fixes everything, and those who see it as often harmful. Solidarity is a real counterweight in France, but not in the English-speaking countries.

In my case, after age ten or so sports were largely replaced by novel-reading, where the distribution of joy and suffering involved collective relations and not just competition. The art world, the world in literature anyway, didn't seem organized around competition . . .

IB: What? The art world isn't competitive?

CN: No, it is, of course. It's full of competitive maniacs. But it's also collaborative. Creativity, I've always thought, works through collaboration more than through individual inspiration. The literature on creativity is full of stories of borrowing, stealing, swapping—with some competing, of course. But the spirit of competition cannot overwhelm

everything else. The breakthrough moments of sudden insight rest on long periods of preparation that always involve enormous amounts of collective work. If creativity depends on competition, it is because competition leads to some combination of adoption and exchange. Creativity depends on the *suspension* of defeat. People have to feel undefeated in order to try something new. You can't try something new if you are focused on defending yourself against others. In this way art is *not* like a market, which is full of competition and also imitation.

IB: What certainly is true is that elements in any domain that don't fit with markets are targeted for transformation by the privatizing impulses of the EU's "New Public Management." The EU's relation to knowledge is motivated by a sense that it could lose its competitive edge in the global economy, and its solution is to be more competitive. So the EU's vision of managing anything is to rate its competitiveness. They rate competitiveness by ranking every institution and function in relation to others. If you are ranked higher, you are by definition more competitive. In this model, value increases proportionately to competitiveness, and competitiveness can be measured objectively by ranking a university or gallery or anything else in relation to others. Germany wanted to improve the position of its universities in the Shanghai world rankings, and its education ministry not only equates rank with quality but also invites foreign students to identify the content of the right program for them by looking at rankings.[7]

CN: I like two other points you make in your paper. First, you say there's no evidence that the implementation of "competitiveness" by the European Community has actually done what it is assumed to do—improve educational quality, or EU productivity, or economic growth rates, or something else. And second, you say that the absence of real outcomes doesn't matter. The goal isn't to have economic or social benefits, but competitiveness. You describe competitiveness as a kind of existential state, a form of life. You describe the "neoliberal belief" as this: "every institution has as its ultimate end to become competitive, and can achieve this only by being exposed to competition."

IB: Europe as a "société de connaissance" is really Europe as a "société de concurrence"—research, teaching, innovation are all yoked together in the general pursuit of competitiveness.

CN: I often hope that the university can serve as a platform for enlightened opposition to various regressive trends. But I don't see that academia has or will resist competitiveness. For one thing, the whole atmosphere of knowledge crisis preserves the university's social importance. The premium on profitable knowledge links the university with CEOs and wealthy donors rather than with teachers' unions and government bureaucrats—a big step up Bourdieu's distinction ladder. And academia is hypercompetitive—reflexively, thoughtlessly competitive. It's run by people who generally won standardized test contests, and who have spent much of their lives competing for prizes and grant money. They pursue the most publications, the most patents, the most students. None of this has much to do with teaching and learning, with creating new knowledge in poetry or new storage devices for photovoltaic arrays. It is a mechanism for allocating resources, that's all.

IB: The issue isn't whether or not you get rid of competition—you can't. The issue is whether it becomes the overriding organizational principle, or whether it has to coexist with other practices and principles. New Public Management (NPM) tries to drive out other practices.

CN: Exactly. The problem comes when metrics is confused with universal knowledge. Like the Shanghai world university rankings that turned Germany's research university system—in the country that invented the research university—into a ranked-order competition for more funds on the margins. Or like the bibliometrics mania sweeping the UK, which means that researchers are now competing for the most citations of their publications. How do you actually improve your knowledge creation by doing this? Nobody knows, but that's beside the point. The point is to replace peer review with citation measurement. What do you think this does to autonomy?

IB: Its goal is to reduce autonomy. These forms of measurement let outsiders in official positions evaluate and come to conclusions about research and teaching performance without understanding the content of what is being taught or researched. That's when NPM metrics become governmentality.

CN: This is where I really become concerned. Academics are bureaucratized intellectuals: they work in hierarchies, have set positions in the structure, positions defined through required procedures, and elaborate, rule-bound protocols through which they relate to their colleagues. The individuals in this kind of system are easily manipulated by rules—do so much publishing in order to be promoted or, under the Research Assessment Exercise in the UK, to not lose money for your department. If each is also in a competitive rivalry with everyone else, there's little basis for opposition to the ground rules—which in any living system need constant revision. More importantly, there's less incentive to innovate, to *deviate*. In a competitive system, the easiest way to lose is to digress from the core assumptions—what Thomas Kuhn called the "paradigm" and what Chris Argyris called the "theories in use" that tell the system what ideas have value.[8] Competitive systems are just as likely to be closed as to be open—perhaps more likely to be closed. One major issue that is provoking increasingly widespread critique: it is almost impossible to get a scientific grant with a proposal that doesn't spell out in advance the discovery to which the research will lead.[9]

IB: On the other hand, there has been real resistance to ranking in the French higher education system. All sorts of faculty and researchers don't like it. They see ranking as leading to the loss of professional autonomy, which it is, a form of control administered by non-experts, by managers, by people who work in ministries and who impose these rules. These are norms for teaching and research that are not chosen. They install quantitative measures that override the standards of teaching and research created by the profession.

IB: It was the core issue. Sarkozy gave a major speech at the end of January 2009 in which he said that French knowledge producers were not globally competitive, that they were less efficient than their peers in England and Germany.[10] He mentioned the Shanghai rankings and France's near-absence from them. His solution was to eliminate France's national research organization and replace it with a granting agency, so that thousands of independent researchers would need to report to new units and compete for funds. There were many other changes designed to weaken the professional status of French academics. Sarkozy and his higher education minister, Valérie Pécresse, said that the problem was French research inefficiency, and that the solution was less autonomy for researchers. The means for achieving this end would be tighter output controls. Both the problem and the solution rested on the kind of quantitative data mining at the core of NPM and the EU's vision of the knowledge society.

CN: The national maps of strike activity were impressive: they occurred at some point in the majority of universities in every region of the country. I was in Lyon directing a study center for my University of California students, and those who went to Sciences Po—Lyon had no classes for seven weeks. The strike there was in fact led by that unit's conservative president, a Sarkozy supporter who was absolutely outraged at Sarkozy's attack on the quality of French knowledge creation. Still, I'm not sure how deep the opposition is to the managerial cure, to the external monitoring of quantitative output measures, like Frederick Taylor's "scientific management" developed a hundred years ago.

IB: The opposition has been met by the quiet suffocation of the Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique (National Center for Scientific Research, or CNRS) on the part of the ministry in Paris. They have the power to authorize positions, and as people retire or leave for other jobs, they aren't being replaced. There's the danger of a slow decline.

CN: You don't think the strikes gained something?

IB: We did a lot here in Lille. We left the university and went out into commercial streets to talk to people, to generate interest in the problems of higher education among the citizenry and in the media. It was inventive. We had "les rondes des obstinés."

CN: Yes, they were great. Some journalists looked at these circular parades of academics that went all day and all night, day after day, and asked "pourquoi vous tournez en ronde"—why do you go in a circle? No matter what happens I will always remember the obstinate perpetual circles.

IB: Yes. And yet the mobilization didn't have an effect on government policy.

CN: You think the strikes lost?

IB: Completely. We lost on all fronts. The unions don't want us to say this. They point out that it's not very motivating to say this. But I think it is more productive to admit we lost a battle in order to carry on the war.

CN: I keep seeing the sheer capacity to persist. When I see the photos of the rondes, I think of the Native Canadian sculptor Bill Reid's great piece *The Spirit of Haida Gwaii*, a boat in which all the creatures are competing for control. There is the myth-image of the Raven, who steers, and "although the boat appears to be heading in a purposeful direction, it can arrive anywhere the Raven's whim dictates."[11] The Obstinés in Reid's story are represented by the Ancient Reluctant Conscript. Reid explains:

> A culture will be remembered for its warriors, artists, heroes and heroines of all callings, but in order to survive it needs survivors. And here is our professional survivor, the Ancient Reluctant Conscript, present if seldom noticed in all the turbulent histories of men on earth. . . . It is also he who finally says, "Enough!" And after the rulers have disappeared into the morass of their own excesses, it is he who builds on the rubble and once more gets the whole thing going.[12]

Some parts of academia are convinced that they work hand-in-glove with society's rulers—especially in fields like law and biomedical research. But knowledge creators and teachers are generally more like Reid's Reluctant Conscripts, following orders while trying to be autonomous, and trying to teach autonomy. Their autonomy always matters, but every once in a while they can build something.

IB: We have a common situation all over Europe. The same counter-reforms are working in every country—this is how I analyze the effects of the Bologna and Lisbon processes coming together to tie knowledge to increased production. There are big national differences in the university systems, but the counter-reforms are the same, and they are provoking similar kinds of resistance.

CN: I think that's hopeful. I run a blog about the University of California crisis, and I discovered that folks at my school, the University of California, were thrilled to see expressions of solidarity coming from universities in Italy, Austria, and elsewhere.[13] Organizations like Edu-Factory are based at many universities in multiple countries.[14] There's much more common awareness and perhaps convergence in strategies than even five years ago.

IB: I don't know. I'm not very optimistic. It may be that we can push things in a good direction. But the opposing techniques of governance are very powerful, and they are pushing things in a bad direction.

CN: I was in Cairo earlier this month, and I read about these long periods in ancient Egyptian history between dynasties. Historians call them Intermediate Periods. They sometimes last hundreds of years. We are in an Intermediate Period.

IB: I don't think this makes any difference for resistance. Governmentality is constituted by resistance to it—one of Foucault's main insights.

CN: Agreed. I don't like resistance. It tires me. It assumes a very long path between seeing the problem and actually doing something effective—think about flowchart illustrations and the long plodding from one cloud to another. It's easy to sink into a cloud. Even worse is the lowering of expectations: resistance assumes the ongoing domination of the system one opposes, and it's easy to never get around to constructing the alternative system.

IB: You want a revolution?

CN: Not in the sense of armed confrontation with the state, but yes, in the sense of delegitimizing what U.S. rule rests on now, which is a dead debate between right and center. I want an end to weak "liberal" resistance to a clearly unsuccessful capitalist-managerial paradigm that is neither efficient nor humane, that is not developmental in the sense of serving mass public needs in a world where the choice between mass suffering and mass creativity now involves billions of people. This deadlock between an outdated liberalism and a mentally paralyzed but emotionally entrenched, Maginot-line type American conservatism has now lasted my entire adult life.

IB: To be on the left is always difficult. Deleuze said that to join the left is to join a minority—there is no way around this. It's not so different for the cognitariat, born into, and then having to work forever in, an environment it depends on but can't really control.

CN: If we think of the cognitariat as the artist, it's always been pretty bad. It got worse for the scientist too in the twentieth century—science now depends entirely on outside funding in large amounts, mostly coming from remote government agencies and corporations. The same thing has been happening to journalists, who watched their workplaces bought out by conglomerates with higher profit expectations while real journalism is largely migrating to the Internet. What about French social science?

IB: We have good research groups, and also a higher education sector that nearly everyone still sees as a public service.

CN: There's a stronger sense in France than in English-speaking countries that public services are the foundation of good or at least nondestructive societies—that you don't have civilization without them. But I find myself thinking about moving the practice of teaching outside universities. University overhead costs, especially for science, have become so high that the arts and humanities are getting pulled under in vain attempts to support the financing of high-end technology.

IB: There have been good models of this in France—Rancière's alternative pedagogy, the Freinet method that developed "student-centered" teaching after World War I, which was very early, and linked up with the work of John Dewey among others. Do these inform your thinking?[15]

CN: I think about an academy standing next to the state school.

IB: That would be interesting, and I think too about finding something outside the CNRS. But I started out in the managerial world of enterprise, working in an advertising firm before I went back to school, and seeing what the competitive working world was really like. The only good thing about that was the company's ability to support itself financially. But that's what you don't have very often with alternative schools. Now I benefit from my status as a public servant, and in the current context of indefinite precarity for intellectuals and artists I would think twice about abandoning that. I think this fear is also part of the current demobilization. If the counter-reforms are small enough, people will put up with them to keep their public sector status.

CN: France does have successful private schools.

IB: And with EU financing we have been able to mount critical projects—the EU helped support our critiques of benchmarking. But the ability to attract financing from a system that one denounces is limited. It's a contradictory position, and these allow niches to flourish, but obviously not anything more than a niche. There are big psychological difficulties in finding oneself with a project and lots of ideas but without clear financial means.

CN: I agree, but staying inside creates major psychological blowback too. As I mentioned, I've been struck by the silence of the cognitariat. It has sunk quietly.

The financialization of capitalism, the decline of the public sector and of the value of labor itself have splintered the cognitariat into a small group that works directly for political and business elites, and everybody else, who as you say are increasingly precarious and are also increasingly badly paid. The line runs between those who serve wealthy private institutions—patent attorneys who work for pharmaceutical companies, economists who work for major banks—and equally or better-educated people who work equally long hours in public service—history professors and firefighters alike—who have seen their status and pay stagnate for thirty years. I argued in one recent piece that we are seeing a return to the Three Estates that existed before the French Revolution—a tiny global elite, a Second Estate of its banker-lawyer-medical executive inner circle, and an enormous Third Estate that runs from doctors in general practice through nurses and teachers and on into blue-collar work and the informal sector.[16] Conditions vary greatly, but the structural position of insecurity and decreasing social rights is shared by the vast majority of a population that includes most of the cognitariat. And it has been largely silent for three decades.

IB: This isn't entirely true. There have been lots of researcher and teacher protests in France—almost every year, at various levels, and with real effects. Here we still see what things are supposed to look like. My ideal is to have public service funded by collective means. I grew up in a village where there was very little, but the schools were very good. They were well equipped academically. We had serious teachers, and lots of other activities—dancing, gardening, singing, traveling. I still have this image of the public school, based in a reality I experienced, in which there are sufficient means for teachers to institute their projects with plenty of autonomy. Teachers always take advantage of this kind of opportunity when available.

CN: So the cognitariat does speak, even within a regime in which they are ideal competitive subjects. It speaks through its work, and the everyday effort to make this work good. The cognitariat speaks through its instinct of workmanship, as Veblen called them, that it retains no matter what. For me, as an educator the craft involves the revelation of students' individuality, helping students initiate actual intellectual projects of their own. I'm totally opposed to the waste of talent in a mass world, which is the real crisis of humanity—the inability to use more than a fraction of our abilities—and the crisis of the global population as the planet cooks in its own juices. Craft for me is connected to a world without leaders—it's the creativity liberated by the decline of hierarchy.

IB: You're an anarchist?

CN: OK.

IB: It does respond to the problem of competition: everyone forced into the same mold.

CN: Yes, and I just think of the colossal waste of ability, craft, invention, creation. I'd be happy to start some kind of service to help students with their projects. Only a fraction of the college-age population in rich countries like the U.S. and France experience an iterative educational process in which they discover their own strongest interests and have the intensive personal feedback that allows them to master the necessary techniques and do something great. Universities rarely teach craft. Elite private universities like Princeton require junior papers and senior theses conducted on a tutorial system, but that's for the top 1% of any given national cohort. Why on earth do we think we can have a planet of six or seven billion people run by this 1%? It's a problem even for the middle-class. The vast majority—say 90–95% of college students in the U.S.—are examined and ranked, but are mostly on their own in terms of personal development.

The waste is the underdevelopment of craft ability in millions of college students every year—to say nothing of the rest of the planet's population. This is the challenge of the twenty-first century—to not exclude the poor parts of the world, which the elitisms of our rank-based, competitive educational systems are currently designed to do, quite explicitly: keep them out!

IB: You want to create a consultancy for student projects? You want to privatize student advising?

CN: No, it wouldn't privatize, the service would be complementary with the schools, and give poor kids the same kind of personal treatment that is now routine for the children of elites. Why not help them develop their own passions? It seems like a simple thing.

IB: What's your idea of utopia?

CN: Actually it's to be a novelist happily spending days by myself with my computer as an instrument of expression . . . I think what is missing is the realization of specific, situated experience, the making of interiority as rediscovered in the novel and then publicly forgotten by modernity, which rendered it as real as social facts, or as real as money. For me utopia is the craft process, and not the collective relations that bring it to bear, necessary though they are.

IB: We've both been talking about autonomy. When I talk about collective funding for education and research I'm talking about organizations that support it. Metrics and benchmarking are hostile to this autonomy within institutions.

CN: Yes, this is what the cognitariat really can speak about—the content of their work and the social structures that allow it to take place. You show that benchmarking blocks or fails to register the creation of self-organized

groups that have always generated avant-gardes in art and innovation in other fields. The cognitariat speaks about its craft, and now has to speak much more about its social conditions. Art worlds and universities that don't articulate and practice forms of social networks proper to their craft will get benchmarked into mediocrity.

X

Isabelle Bruno is a French political scientist who has written on the range of mechanisms used by the European Union to regulate and redefine the public sector.

Christopher Newfield teaches American Studies in the English Department at the University of California, Santa Barbara. His current research focuses on higher education history, funding, and policy, culture and innovation, and the relation between culture and economics.

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Florian Schneider

(Extended) Footnotes On Education

What follows is a series of loose considerations and fragmented thoughts relating to debates that have emerged over the past few years around the topic of education. On a rather abstract level, they are intended to reference discussions and struggles presently taking place in other fields; in another, more concrete sense, they might be of preliminary use in developing criteria for practical interventions in a situation widely perceived to be in crisis.

1. Learning

We learn nothing from those who say: "Do as I do." Our only teachers are those who tell us to "do with me," and are able to emit signs to be developed in heterogeneity rather than propose gestures for us to reproduce.[1]

In the preface to his first, seminal work *Difference and Repetition*, Gilles Deleuze articulates the challenges of pedagogy in a vivid, precise fashion. Deleuze claims that everything that teaches us something emits signs, and every act of learning is an interpretation of these signs or hieroglyphs. Using the example of learning how to swim, he points out that in practice we manage to deal with the challenge of keeping afloat only by grasping certain movements as signs. It is pointless to imitate the movements of the swimming instructor without understanding them as signs one has to decode and recompose in one's own struggle with the water.

Such repetition is no longer that of the Same, "but involves difference—from one wave and one gesture to another, and carries that difference through the repetitive space thereby constituted."[2] The potential of such an approach to teaching and learning is huge: as soon as a notion of learning is decoupled from the possession of knowledge, as soon as difference is liberated from identity, repetition from reproduction (or resistance from representation), we may encounter what is at stake in today's debate about education.

Rather than simply lament the decline of public institutions, the ongoing privatization of knowledge, and the resulting precariousness of access to education, we should challenge ourselves to learn how to respond to the current situation without drowning in it.

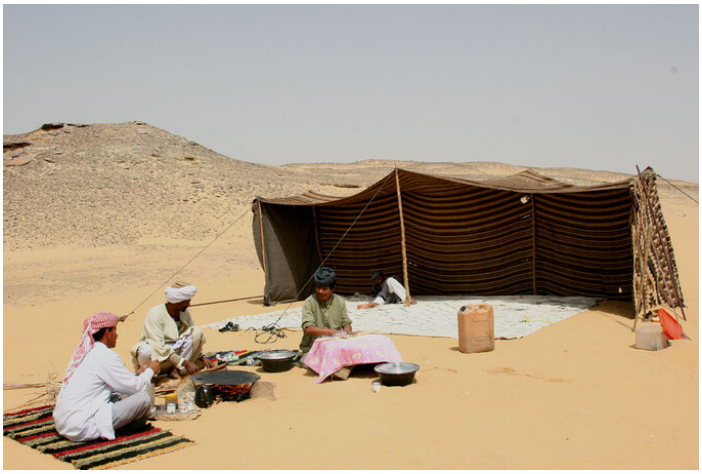
The discovery of possible points of resistance to these oncoming waves of privatization, appropriation, and commodification of knowledge has become urgent.

The system of public education is threatened by a crisis with multiple sources, a crisis that exceeds the limits of our imagination and is essentially beyond measure since what is put into question is the very idea of measurement and commensurability as such. It is a crisis of property, which has become increasingly "imaginary" in the sense that one can no longer be sure of whether or not it is real.

In an age of cognitive capitalism, however, the crisis presents itself with the very same rhetoric of quantitative measurement that was so recently implicated in the near-collapse of the financial system. Certain risks present themselves as perfectly measurable as long as they are systematically obscured; their impact becomes noticeable only when it is too late.

The problem is not just that of the inherent difficulty of assessing how critical the situation is, it is that we have reached an impasse, a failure to generate counter-concepts that could characterize a different proposal, an alternative to the existing order. We are faced with a systemic crisis of the imagination.

How can we envision, design, develop, and enjoy environments in which one learns "with" someone else instead of "from" or "about" others, as Deleuze suggested? How can we invent, create, and compose "spaces of encounter with signs" in which distinctive points "renew themselves in each other, and repetition takes shape while disguising itself?"[3] What would make these spaces different to the ones we have been forced to experience in the past?



2. Exodus

The emergence of the modern educational system in the Western world was characterized by public institutions aimed at regulating the movements of both individuals and the collective social body in order to produce well-disciplined, coherent subjects on a mass scale.

Through a system of spatial control, the reproduction of gestures was drilled over and over again; the disciples' proper internalization of these movements became the ruling principle of the passage from one disciplinary regime to the next. There was not a great deal to learn besides the fact that any kind of refusal of the discipline would lead to exclusion from one institution and referral to another.

It comes as no surprise that bodies of knowledge have been called "the disciplines." The disciplinary institutions have organized education as a process of subjectivation that re-affirms the existing order and distribution of power in an endless loop. From the moment Nietzsche realized that, for the first time in history, knowledge "wants to be more than a mere means," education has appeared as the arena of an inescapably circular relationship between the ways in which power can "produce knowledge, multiply discourse, induce pleasure, and generate power."[4]

At a certain moment such circularity became uncomfortable. In the course of the 1980s, in both Western and Eastern Europe, an exodus took place: large segments of a generation who would normally have formed the next progressive intellectual elite refused to participate in the system of higher education in universities and academies. Unlike previous generations—especially those associated with the protest year 1968—this generation did not consider the academic field (with its specific capacity to forgive the sins of one's youth) as a semi-public arena or training ground for social struggles or radical political agendas.

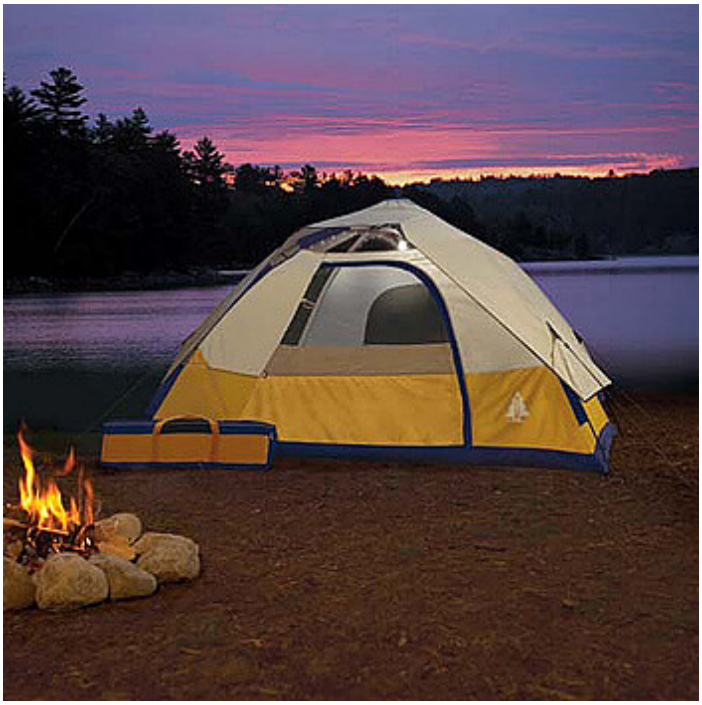
Those who realized that it had become pointless to reproduce the gestures of their masters did not only understand that there was nothing left to learn from, within, or against the institutions; they decided to take an interest in precisely the disciplining character of those institutions, the confinement of knowledge and subjectivities, the exclusion of differing and deviant forms of knowledge production.

As a result, learning could suddenly take place anywhere: in the streets, in bars or clubs, in self-organized seminars, in the office spaces of so-called social movements, in soccer stadiums, through subcultural fanzines, in squatted houses or even science shops ("Wissenschaftsläden" as they were called in German).

At the same time, the topic of learning became increasingly popular, addressing everyday practices of resistance which, back then, were ignored by the traditional system and entered the academy only after a significant delay—like poststructuralist French theory, cultural studies, or postcolonial theory. There was a plethora of unexpected places where one could learn anything and everything, at least until the mass exodus from the educational institutions caused those institutions to discover a new territory: the network.

3. The Education of a Self

Today's crisis of the educational system, with all its consequent phenomena, can also be understood as a result of the refusal to be subjugated by the command of an educational system that represents the fading



paradigm of industrial capitalism. Many of those who made careers have managed to inject the knowledge they accumulated in subcultures and social movements of the late 1970s and 1980s directly into the entrepreneurial experiments of a first wave of immaterial production by advertisement agencies, independent micro-enterprises and their cooperative networks, or new political conglomerations that popped up with the establishment of ecological networks and other social movements.

The advent of digital technologies and deregulated networks triggered a long-overdue process of deinstitutionalization and deregulation that from today's standpoint appears to be irreversible. This process was based on a fatal promise: self-organized access to knowledge, independent of any further mediation other than that of the medium itself.

Consequently, public institutions' state-approved monopoly over the manufacturing of knowledge gradually lost its function, its own existence rendered pointless or at least resistant to any kind of upgrade that would run the risk of radically putting their own functioning into question.

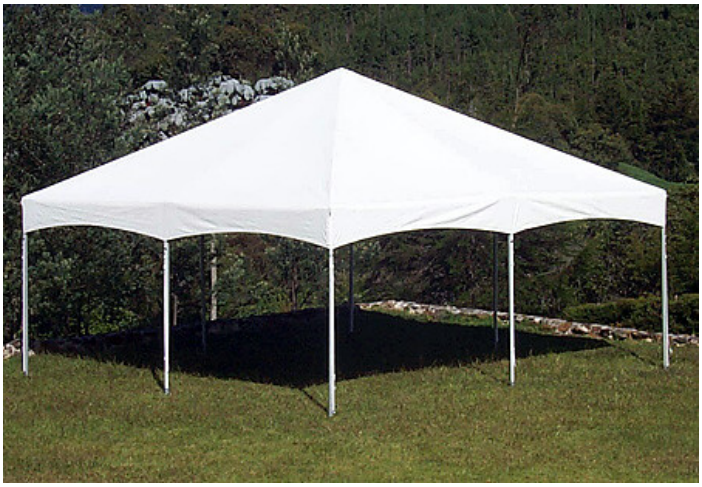
But the demise of public institutions laid the groundwork for turning education into a business, as Deleuze suspected early on:

In disciplinary societies you were always starting all over again (as you went from school to barracks, from barracks to factory), while in control societies you never finish anything . . . school is replaced by continuing education and exams by continuous assessment.[5]

All of a sudden, self-managed education is confronted with its caricature: the education of a self, subject to constant renegotiation and trading. The alleged rigidity of academic grading is replaced by all sorts of informal and proprietary codes ranging from corporate certificates to confirmations of internships. Above all, these codes stress the fact that one is not only responsible for oneself, for the evaluation of oneself, but also that the infinite process of self-examination is an end in itself.

As soon as learning becomes an exclusively private concern, the primary goal of what is by then a required self-education is to demonstrate and perform the permanent availability of the self in real time rather than just perform discipline in a system of spatial control. It becomes necessary to continuously perform "selves": not as mirror-images that reproduce the gestures of a master, but as self-managed profiles, animated images of a self that needs to be multiplied infinitely in order to satisfy the insatiable demand for omnipresence that renders possible the very idea of control.

Rather than being a re-appropriation of the means of education, the current proliferation of concepts of self-education points to a major shift in and a fundamental confusion about configurations of the "self" in prevailing social thought.



4. Institutions and Ekstitutions

Under the banner of "self-education," the effort, the costs, and the resources needed to perform an efficient system of control are outsourced to the individual. Obviously, this goes along very well with the praise of chivalries such as horizontalism, flat hierarchies, charity, and sharing. Teamwork and a flattering notion of "collaboration" have turned out to be key components of a renewed educational managerialism.

In a society of control, the postulate of lifelong learning challenges traditional views of radical, emancipatory

pedagogy in both institutional and non-institutional contexts. What was formerly known as "progressive" may all of a sudden and without warning turn out to be repressive, or indeed, vice-versa.

For this reason it is necessary to revaluate the concepts of both institutions and their opponents: networked environments, deinstitutionalized and deregulated spaces such as informal networks, free universities, open academies, squatted universities, night schools, or proto-academies.

In-stitutions insist: basically they insist on the inequality between those who know and those who do not know. But they also insist that the unequal who has become equal will himself then drive the system that produces inequality by reproducing the process of its diminution. Institutions are based on the concept of limiting the transmission of knowledge, of managing the delay, of postponing equality indefinitely for the sake of infinite progress.

Networked environments or what could be called "ekstitutions" are based on exactly the opposite principle: they promise to provide instant access to knowledge. Ek-stitutions exist: their main purpose is to come into being. They exist outside the institutional framework, and instead of infinite progress, they are based on a certain temporality.

What characterizes ekstitutions is their absolute indifference towards inequalities, since it does not matter at all who possesses knowledge and who does not. One can instantly get to know what one needs to know, even if only for a limited amount of time or from distinct places. This is the formula of the ekstitution's postulate of an equality that is essentially unfinished.

The challenge that ekstitutions permanently face is the question of organizing, while in institutional contexts the challenge is, on the contrary, the question of unorganizing. How can they become ever more flexible, lean, dynamic, efficient, and innovative? In contrast, ekstitutions struggle with the task of bare survival. What rules may be necessary in order to render possible the mere existence of an ekstitution?

Like it or not, these rules need to establish an exclusivity, something which is of vital importance; by its very nature, the institution has to be concerned with inclusion. It is supposed to be open to everybody who meets the standards set in advance, while in ekstitutions admission is subject to constant negotiation and renegotiation.

The obscurity and nebulosity in accessing ekstitutions from the outside relates, paradoxically, to their egalitarian ideology, once one reaches the inside. In institutions it is usually the other way around: no matter how difficult, they need to be generally accessible from the outside; inside, obscurity rules, barely concealed by hierarchies, formalities, representative procedures.

Ekstitutions have usually appeared as alternatives to institutions, or at least they have emerged in that order. There are of course numerous examples of ekstitutions that have first evolved and then been swallowed up by institutions. The opposite direction is still hard to even imagine, since an institution would rather cease to exist than abandon the pretense of its own infinitude.

It is crucial to acknowledge that institutions and ekstitutions cannot mix—there is no option of hybridity or of simultaneously being both, although this may very often be demanded by rather naıve third parties.

Today it seems that institutions and ekstitutions correspond to complementary rather than antagonistic modalities. What once appeared a challenge to the traditional educational framework, turns out in the current situation to be a correlate that compensates for the deficits of institutional frameworks that are gradually losing their conceits.

Probably the most underrated effect of the current crisis in education is a shift that has brought both institutions and ekstitutions much closer together. The privatization of learning has produced friction between these two different, once polarized, but now adjacent concepts.

Border economies have emerged, allowing an increased variety of actors to smoothly switch from the mode of institutions to that of ekstitutions and back—seemingly without compromise. They actually profit from the sharp boundaries between institutional frameworks and ekstitutional networks.

At the same time, new coalitions appear: in the past few years, waves of protest have emerged against cuts in public education, the rise of tuition fees, and staff layoffs. Rather than original propositions or sharp conclusions, these movements demonstrate a new desire for alliances across the boundaries of groups that are reduced to clienteles once education becomes a business. But there is also a manifest interest in what will appear beyond the institution and its diminishing privileges: precarious labor, lifelong apprenticeship, permanent self-monitoring and self-profiling, and so forth.

5. A New Division of Labor?

It is that friction zone, the wider or narrower grey area between institutions and ekstitutions, that matters strategically: here the fault lines of a new division of immaterial labor are currently taking shape.

Under the regime of Fordism, highly skilled, white-collar workers calculated the time necessary to perform a certain task on the assembly line, and low-skilled,

blue-collar workers repeated the gestures invented by their masters. The idea behind such a division of labor is usually described as an increase in efficiency: the production process is broken down into a series of steps that do not require any knowledge about the overall process; the result being a dramatic deskilling of labor, which then had to be concerned only with a specific task.

Costs were expected to decrease enormously with a systematic focus on precision, specialization, and, most importantly, the synchronization of the steps that had to be measured in time and compared against the output of others.

At first sight, it may appear as one of the paradoxes of the current debate about education that what is known as the "Bologna Process" attempts to introduce absolutely equivalent ideas of specialization, synchronization, and commensurability into a system of knowledge production that has traditionally been immune to the virtues of the standardized mass production of commodities.

It is even more surprising that these initiatives have arisen long after the Fordist model of the assembly line was surpassed by paradigms like "teamwork" that aim to encourage workers, reorganized in groups, to take overall responsibility and self-control their labor performance.

Material and immaterial production seem to have swapped some of their attributes: once considered un-commodifiable, knowledge has been turned into a standardized commodity form subject to the rudest forms of propertization, while industrial products arrive in ever more customized and singularized forms, pleasing the sophisticated desires of an increasingly differentiated customer base.

But the seemingly contradictory character of these intertwining processes may also indicate that there is another, greater shift taking place that concerns the social division of labor over and above the technical, perhaps indicating an entire reformulation and reconfiguration of the separation between manual and intellectual labor as such.

The key element of Frederick Taylor's "scientific management" was the expropriation from workers of any production-specific knowledge in order to make the best use of expensive machinery. Through an analysis of the relevant temporal sequences, the management was able to appropriate the competence of which it was formerly deprived, knowledge that high-skilled blue-collar workers were reluctant to share with their employers. "Scientific management" claimed to mathematically systematize the expropriated knowledge and return it to the workers as alienated forms of knowledge reduced to mathematical formulas for "sliding scales" that calculated respective time targets for the fragmented work.

The appropriation of workers' concrete experience and its abstraction as engineering science constituted a specific separation of manual and intellectual labor that seems constitutive for modern notions of science.

If we understand the situation today as the passage from a formal subsumption of immaterial labor under the rules of capital towards a real subsumption of the same, the historical analogies to Taylor's and Ford's intensification of the exploitation of the labor force are striking.

In the context of increased attention to the creative industries, the very idea of a systematic measurability of practices that were supposed to be essentially beyond measure has had to be sought, developed, and enforced at the core of knowledge production—in universities, design schools, and art academies. Such measurability does not emerge naturally, it cannot be discovered or researched. It needs to be implemented through the appropriation of a knowledge that has until recently been alien to capital.

At the end of the nineteenth century, the idea of measuring the labor power of a highly skilled proletarian worker would probably have appeared as absurd as if one were to consider the immaterial work of a computer programmer or professor at an art academy today. But as with the worker, capital will once again discard further ontological considerations and proceed to establish a system of temporal quantification for the sake of global exchangeability. The outcomes are foreseeable: a deskilling of the cognitive workforce through fragmentation and its resynchronization under the command of creative capital, as well as the alienation of living knowledge and its innovative potential.

The current crisis of the global financial system is only accelerating this process of expropriating specific knowledge. Budget cuts in public institutions, the privatization of the educational system, the precarization of (not only) immaterial work, and the excesses of imaginary property in general will create, on a wider scale, the experimental conditions for the technical elaboration of methods of measurement.

Finally, late capitalism can only survive a few more decades by way of an unseen intensification of exploitation in immaterial production. This would need to happen to at least the same extent as Fordism managed to reinvent itself against the growing self-confidence of proletarian workers.

6. The Virtual Studio

Historically, the workers' movement responded to the redesign of the factory as assembly line by reinventing the concept of the union. Rather than a lean and flexible militant network that had to struggle with persecution in the workplace and in political life (such as the "socialist

Qaddafi's tent.

laws" in the 1880s in Germany), the very idea of the union was redesigned as a hierarchical mass organization with a bureaucratic apparatus capable of accommodating the talented leaders of the movement, a majority of whom were not able to adapt to the changing conditions of a deskilled workplace.

Today's crisis may suggest a different response: in the tension between institutions and ekstitutions, new formats of organizing and unorganizing have to be invented, which—certainly not in the first place, but maybe in the long run—may lead to a reconceptualization of the idea of the "union" as a tactical and strategic alliance of very heterogeneous actors.

Neither self-institutionalization nor a further deregulation in networks remain as options. Instead, we need to ask how to reconnect actors who operate in a field characterized by an indispensable "nonalignment" towards both the privatization of knowledge as well as the fading power of public institutions. The outlines of such a project are beginning to show themselves, albeit still in very rudimentary forms; and of course they will be contested and subject to wild criticism from all parties involved and not involved. Nevertheless, there is an urgent need to develop experimental formats for generating findings that bring forward a process of "self-valorization" of knowledge that jumps across the pitfalls of the contemporary self.

Not as a conclusion, but rather as a very preliminary proposal, one of these formats thought to resist the sliding scales of neo-Taylorism in the creative industries could be entitled "virtual studio." In the first instance, the studio has striking associations with both the workplace in creative industries and the permanent need for self-organized studies.

A studio as such is configured as a working environment that is not confined to the individual but opens up to possible worlds, to a multitude of collaborations, in unforeseeable and unexpected ways. Such collaborations are not directed towards a notion of the "common": distinguished by logistics or infrastructure, studios can be used for very different purposes and by very different occupants; or the same occupants can constantly reconfigure a studio according to changing goals and needs.

A virtual studio is characterized by a setting that allows actors to switch their selves between varying coulisses, blue screens, and sceneries, actualizing experiences that are only virtually there. Everything is imaginary, but that does not lower the impact of what we perceive. On the contrary, it urges us to question and challenge the very notion of experience.

At the same time, any form of studio acts as a learning space that is neither public nor private. While remaining open to a varying degree it enables a specific focus on problems that are unresolved and may not be resolved easily. At a minimum it allows us to rediscover a notion of learning that is productive rather than reproductive, that is compositive rather than representational.

But the virtual studio is more than just a place. It needs to be understood as a "time-space," expressing the intrinsic connectedness of temporal and spatial relationships; very much like how in Mikhail Bakhtin's theory of literature the chronotope was "the place where the knots of narrative are tied and untied,"[6] the virtual studio is the place where organizing and unorganizing can happen simultaneously. It is a distinct point where time and space intersect and fuse, enabling a new engagement with reality.

Precisely in the context of resisting the forces currently let loose to measure, compare, and commodify networked knowledge and render it susceptible to new forms of imaginary property, the virtual studio insists on the distinctiveness of a specific spatial arrangement that is not reproducible as such.

Furthermore, this distinction is supported by the very notion of the "working" mode; it asserts the unfinished character of the studies undertaken, which culminates in an otherwise precluded appreciation for the aleatory essence of both working and studying.

Ultimately, one may be able to rediscover in studio-like configurations a Deleuzian notion of learning "with" instead of "from" or "about." Such a "with" reveals the truly collaborative character of working and learning. Collaborations resist any predefined notion of a common denominator, a common ground or a common goal, since they defy the technical division of labor that characterizes any form of cooperation in the last instance.

In that respect, collaborations are a practical way of reading the division of labor against the grain, and may turn out to be a way of swimming against the current of an enforced and blatantly absurd measurability of immaterial labor. Only in collaborative environments is it possible to embrace the infinitesimality of what is essentially beyond

measure. The outcome of a collaboration is rampant, unforeseeable, and always unexpected. Sometimes it may not turn out nicely, it may even be harsh, but one thing is for sure: it cannot be calculated, it has to be imagined.

X

Florian Schneider is a filmmaker, based in Munich. Over the past ten years he has been involved in a wide range of projects that deal with the implications of postmodern border regimes on both theoretical and practical level.

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