FUTURE IMPERFECT

Occupy Online
the Performance of Politics
and New Narratives of the Networked Self

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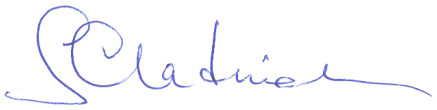
DECLARATION OF GOOD ACADEMIC CONDUCT

I, Samara Chadwick, hereby certify that this dissertation, which is 79,720 words in length, has been written by me, that it is a record of work carried out by me, and that it has not been submitted in any previous application for a higher degree. All sentences or passages quoted in this dissertation from other people's work (with or without trivial changes) have been placed within quotation marks, and specifically acknowledged by reference to author, work and page. I understand that plagiarism – the unacknowledged use of such passages – will be considered grounds for failure in this dissertation and in the degree programme as a whole. I also affirm that, with the exception of the specific acknowledgements, the following dissertation is entirely my own work.



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Inevitably, the resulting thesis is a patchwork of the three different academic systems and the many people I have encountered on this three-year journey. It reads less as an academic treatise and more as an essay, influenced not only by the theoretical texts I've been reading but also by the films, conversations, art works, conferences, and online chatter that have accompanied me during my research. Jocelyn Parr, my colleague and friend, has been a beautiful presence throughout, as well as a fervent collaborator on the organization of the PREOCCUPIED conference in Berlin in June 2012. I also extend a great hug to all my *Interzones* colleagues, who, from various locations and at various points, have been sources of inspiration, solidarity and attentive conspiring: Delfina Cabrera, André Bourgeois, Marko Teodorski, Ricardo Perez Martinez, Gabriel Zacarias and Gisela Anauate Bergonzoni, Paul Anumudu. Thank you also to the masterminds who conceived and coordinated the exceptional and eccentric *Interzones* programme: Prof. Didier Girard, Prof.ssa Franca Franchi, and the assiduous and kind Dr. Elena Mazzoleni.

This dissertation is dedicated to all you who kept me happy: my family, my friends, and, most fancifully, Beny Wagner. It was written with all of you in mind, with hopes you would not only one day read it, but also, perhaps unexpectedly, enjoy reading it.

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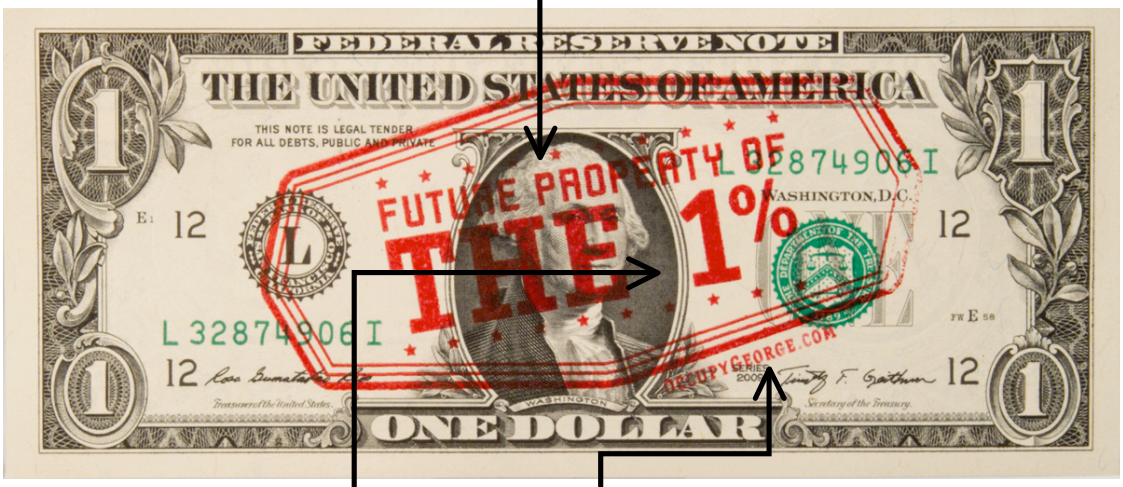
ABSTRACT

This thesis studies the rupture of the status quo and the subsequent eruption of new narratives of *freedom*. Locating three distinct moments in the past 110 years, the discussion begins at an individual level, and considers everyday behaviours (narratives of self) as they are ignited into wide-sweeping social change - and then, just as suddenly, morph into something else. Beginning with Weber's analysis of the Protestant *ethos*, we trace how the *cloak* of progress turns to *iron cage,* then turns into an early manifestation of Foucault's *gouvernementalité*. Weber's *ideal type* accompanies us across a century, to Wall Street, where the uprisings in the name of "Occupy" symbolically staged the end of the Weberian *narrative of pursuit*. A third narrative emerges, simultaneously, but online, and worldwide: protest - when translated into the digital sphere - was to perform itself uninhibited by the material obstructions of the streets and the *police*.

This dissertation frames these three instances as questions - what really emerges in these moments of freedom? A meticulous study of individual expression in moments of alleged *emancipation*, this dissertation finds, much as did Weber, and as does Rancière now, that in the very utterance of freedom one often finds a tendency to frame and thereby restrict the very possibilities of *emancipation*. Ultimately, in late 2014 at the time of this writing, the question is whether protest itself - and especially the representation of protest online - is an expression of Rancière's *dissensus* or, rather, whether the currency of protest images is ultimately a concession to the very *dispositifs* of power against which the resistance is waged. The following dissertation explores an unusual triumvirate of fields - the sociology of capitalism, the philosophy of protest, and the analysis of online behaviours - and playfully reinterprets these into an essay that questions the very possibility of politics in the current state of CMI 2.0 (le *capitalisme mondial intégrant*).

If an image could summarise the issues addressed in the coming pages, it would be this one:

1. The face of the Protestant *ethos* - the empowered individual who stormed through the past century animated by the spirit of progress. In the case of the 100$ bill, the face is Benjamin Franklin, Weber's *ideal type* and the man who helped found an entire country on the narrative of "life liberty and the pursuit of property". His face is now legal tender, the quintessential expression of the rewards of the past century's principle *ethos*.



2.

The narrative to emerge in opposition to the narrative of pursuit: "We are the 99%" is the rallying cry of the discontent masses, a slogan that at once forms a leaderless *we* in opposition to the self-interested face, while proposing occupation as a *stillstand* to halt the motion of the status quo. The *ideal type* of this narrative is the Graduate Without A Future, although, by its very definition this type hold a paradoxical role in relation to the capitalism it hopes to see cease.

3.

#Occupy - the third narrative, emerges simultaneously to the narrative of the 99%, but instead of the streets, it proposes online spaces as alternative platforms for true democracy/freedom of assembly and of expression. The fact that this dollar bill - a photograph of an actual bill, most certainly circulated more online than its physical form is a matter for thought in times when protest itself is performed most exuberantly for the amphitheater of the online world.

4.

The entire image: a juxtaposition of codes, language, images - both to inspire trust and to provoke dissent - these are the concerns in the following pages: how to represent a change in narrative in a world where protest can still be traded in as currency?

INTRODUCTION

PREFACE: NOTE FROM THE AUTHOR

The following dissertation is the result of a generous Erasmus Mundus scholarship that allowed me three years uninterrupted observation, as the world – or what, at the time, certainly felt like the entire world – ceded to weighty realisations about the impossibility of its assumed trajectories. This 'world', populated by increasingly networked and often also increasingly vocal individuals, transposed itself – in precisely these few short years, beginning at the Millennium and culminating with the worldwide ubiquity of social media a decade later in 2010 – from the grit and linearity of city streets into the vast unpredictable space of the Internet.

My interest in the Internet as a cultivation site for deviations in narrative is ongoing. As part of my Master's degree at the Freie Universität Berlin, I began studying the particular way collapses of grand narratives (Lyotard: 1979) affected my generation: a distinct demographic that is educated, geographically unbound, digitally *native* (Prensky 2008), and faced with the paradoxical outlook of both endless possibilities and an utterly indecipherable future. My Master's thesis (*Utopos Berlin: Creative Migrants, Digital Natives, and a City Built on Sand* (2009)), partially published in *Mythos Berlin* (2012)) addressed this topic within the particular context of a city, Berlin, and I studied its streets (as well as its blogs) as a space of refuge for this rootless generation. Berlin, as I saw it in 2009, was thus an impromptu petrie dish, or cultivation site, for new ideals, ideas and, particularly, new narratives of self. My writing attempted to pinpoint a moment in time – a *historical individual* - as a generation broke away from the linearity of 20th century ideals, described by Weber and Sennett as a unswerving sense of pursuit or purpose. Five years later, this petrie dish has, in my mind, expanded into a infinitely wider and more liminal space, suspended above, and strobing below, within, and all around the grid of city life: the Internet.

The starting point of this research comes from a shrill feeling that in a way similar, to how Berlin became a site of hope for young generations in the 20th and early 21st century, the Internet too has become a place of projection. The online space is one used for defining and refining the narratives that constitute the self.

In this dissertation, I focus in on narratives that see themselves already as moments of disruption: moments of rupture, dissent. These narratives begin on the individual level and converge with such speed and forces into a mass collective discourse that the origins becomes insignificant. Such cases are sweeping narratives are describe in the online world with the term *virality*. The virus, aptly, is only successful if it succeeds in seamlessly incorporating elements of the other - elements that either manipulate or rationally convince the would-be host to allow the virus in. There are symbiotic as well as parasitic relationships with viruses, and these are our concern, yet first we must acknowledge the strategy of the virality - an intricate process of *becoming other* that is essential to Deleuze and Guattari's notion of *capture* and their consquent description of the multifaceted dynamics of power. *Capture*, too, is essential to our present undertaking, as we attempt to trace the ebbs and flows of online narratives of protest, resistance. What elements make a narrative of self go *viral*?

BACKGROUND

As I began my research I was curious about a certain malaise I perceived in my peers, on an international scale. I focused my interest on what I described as the 'seeming impossibility of projecting oneself into the future'. The present, it seemed, collapsed into an empty vista – all future narrative had been truncated. This was unsettling, as I began studying the repercussions of this rupture in narrative. I submitted an application to the *Interzones* doctorate in December 2010, in which I proposed

> to define this *loss of narrative*, as described by Sennett (2003; 2006; 2008). I postulate that, rather than a loss, a restructuring of narrative is taking place. This new narrative is one potentially illegible to current scholars, almost all *digital migrants*. This new narrative, I believe, is non-linear, and has been interpreted as 'Peter Pan Syndrome', or a resistance to grow up and to integrate the 'real

> world'. Troubled by the prevalence of this syndrome within my generation, I stipulate that something greater is taking form: a widespread reluctance to narrate oneself within the constructs of social institutions. (Chadwick 2010)

"This new generation' I wrote, 'is unstable and insatiable, and actively resists the traditional "plan" of adulthood". I was interested in the traits described by Karl Jung in his lectures on the *Puer Aeternus* - the eternal child. The *puer* is characterised by an "uprush of life", accompanied by "a hopeful attempt" to "drop out of time and history and inhabit a paradise free of the responsibilities and obligations of adulthood". Today's *puers*, I wrote:

> have a distinctive feeling that they are not yet in real life, a neurosis sometimes described as provisional life, which culminates in a constant inner refusal to commit oneself to the moment (Franz). The *puer*'s characteristic flight from the commitments and linearities of what is perceived as the "real world", once the lifeblood of poets and rêveurs on the margins of society, is now, I believe, widespread through an entire generation – "the largest generation in history."

By the time I began the Erasmus Mundus doctoral mobility track, this general malaise I had been observing for years has materialised in physical form, as hundreds of thousands of people occupied the financial centres of cities, effectively marking with their immobile bodies, the end of a century-long narrative of pursuit and progress. Beginning in New York City's Wall Street, people began collectively questioning where the narratives of progress were headed, asking in big block letters: *where is my future?*

Image 1: Young man at Occupy Philadelphia, November 19 2011. Source: afsc.org

Occupy was the very real and very physical manifestation of the many amorphous sentiments that had been drifting around, nameless, since the 2008 recession. In October 2011, I rewrote my dissertation proposal. I set out to observe Occupy as the shift in narrative I had ineloquently anticipated a year prior:

> With a new form of protest in the squares of Egypt, Spain, and now New York - what began as a study of uneasy narratives of individual shortcomings has now precipitated into a sweeping narrative of discontent. (Chadwick 2011)

I was to observe these uprisings from afar – my doctoral programme has seen me move four times, to four different countries. Beginning in Italy in October 2011, I witnessed Occupy erupt across my computer screen. In early 2012, I moved to Brazil and the movement spread across the United States, and Europe, to major metropolises like Tel-Aviv, Madrid, London, and to my native Canada, where, in May 2012 500,000 people assembled in the streets of Montreal, and, in December 2012, people across all provinces coordinated the ongoing *Idle No More* campaign. In summer 2012, I was in Berlin, organising the PREOCCUPIED conference that brought over 100 academics, activists and artists together from around the world to discuss the early implications of the movement. The conference took place largely in the Occupied Berlin Biennale, the centrepiece of my ruminations in the fourth Chapter of this thesis. In Berlin, I spoke with original members of Occupy Wall Street (OWS), who proclaimed the street phase of the movement obsolete. We were now it *Occupy 2.0* – a new, and online, iteration of resistance. The network was established, and in its *rhizomatic* form, no longer was contained by its physical manifestation in the form of tents and pepper-sprayed faces choking on their slogans. Occupy, as it was being discussed at the PREOCCUPIED conference in Berlin in June 2012 was now what Max Weber would describe as an *ethos*.

I returned to Brazil in August 2012 as Hurricane Sandy hit and asserted the incredible efficiency of the Occupy network in first response interventions along the devastated New England coastline that was soon known as *Occupy Sandy*. When my fourth

semester brought me to Paris, I watched in awe as Brazil too mobilized, from north to south, across the Facebook feed of my new friends and colleagues, in record-breaking protests.

Inevitably, I was never on location as the protests erupted: I was originally frustrated about the impossibility of conducting on the ground field-research. Occupy kept evading me: and then it struck me that it was not evading me in the least. Every day it would reach me, and constantly, streaming at me from the open windows of my desktop as I composed my early writings. Occupy had always been 2.0: its scope was an online scope, and my position as a remote, online, audience member was a significant one. This is the direction my research has taken me: from a handicap came a revelation. I set out to observe Occupy as a shift in narrative, and my vantage point as a remote observer, online, would itself become the crux of my research.

I. RESEARCH QUESTION

I.I THE QUESTION OF PROGRESS

To summarize the Occupy movement as it has emerged on the international scale over the past three years would do each location of resistance a particular injustice: although the name Occupy has persisted across continents, each region's protests were ignited by specific contestations of how the structures of power were affecting the lives of the citizens. North Americans and Europeans assembled to contest the loss of a promised future – student debt, unemployment, foreclosures – while people in Turkey and Brazil protested against the very promise of that future. If one question was at state in all the protest movements that called themselves Occupy from 2011-2014, it was the question of *progress* itself.

Instead of questioning progress (à la Frankfurt School, à la Hardt and Negri, and most of the *soixante-huitard* generation to publish redemptively (pre-emptively?), optimistically (opportunistically!) in the wake of the protests, as well as the NOrth American contogents: Graeber, Klein, Chomsky to name but a few), the following

dissertation takes on the question of what happens when progress is questioned. Our subject is dissent, both in the sense of protest (rupture of narrative) and in Rancière's notion of *dissensus*, which acknowledges how even some of the most overt enunciations of dissent operate rather as dissimulated forms of *consensus*.

Navigating the framework of narratives that emerged alongside the protest movements, this thesis questions the motives, provenances and repercussions of these narratives. Although not axed on one primary research question, the principal lines of inquiry that will guide us throughout the dissertation hinge along the following concerns: *What happens when the dominant narrative of progress/pursuit errs into unpredictability and the future-projections of narratives themselves become untenable? What happens on the individual level when the entire cultural narrative takes a turn for the unforeseeable? If resistance today is at its most geographically expansive, is it also at its most vulnerable? How do we resist when resistance itself has been accounted for?*

I.II RESISTANCE AS A MOMENT OF PARADOX

This dissertation studies resistance as a moment of paradox, the insidious space where the individual confronts common narratives of purpose and progress and finds herself standing in a plain of contradictions, the moment Castells (2012) describes as outrage intertwined with hope, the refusal to participate in *l'invitation faite à la jeunesse instruite et généreuse de participer à un capitalisme modernisé* (Rancière 2008: 41) Resistance is a refusal of preset narratives, a refusal to modern capitalism's generous offer to participate in a modernised capitalism.

But what happens to Castell's 'hope' now that the future is invisible (Anonymous 2008)? When the invitation to participate is no longer extended? What happens to narrative? Precarious work, wild weather, tapped phones, deadly drones and the privatized genomes: a whole generation has graduated to a seemingly *incontournable* and hostile future. Whereas pre-industrial societies waited for the harvest, and industrial societies waited for progress, today we are defined not by wait but by dread.

The patience and the hope of previous times collapses today into contemporary *boredom*. (Flusser [1983] 2013: 119)

In boredom, we surf the net. In the throes of the Internet, our belief in resistance transcends the confines of space, but only to enter another series of patterns are power structures perhaps so close to us all that they are invisible to the naked eye.

In the last few years, we've witnessed as capitalism itself breaks from the narratives of progress and in its newfound freedom, captures the spaces that had formerly stood outside its grasp: spaces of resistance. Images of protest quickly become regurgitated as backdrops for music videos and pepper the edginess of commercials and art. It appears that the first CMI (*capitalisme mondial intégré*) identified by Guattari has indeed, as foretold, given way to the CMI 2.0: *intégrant*. This project seeks to locate online narratives as a key site of this integration: as a space of hope but also of an insidious and apolitical escapism that provides freedom only in a bracketed reality.

I.III SOUS LES PAVÉS, LA PLAGE

Image 2: Graffiti on the streets of Paris in May 1968. Source: online (unknown)

In one of its most popular slogans, the collective outrage of Paris in 1968 deemed that beneath the stones and structures of the capitalist city, one would find the expansive freedom of the beach, the *espace lisse* par excellence described later by Deleuze and Guattari (1980). It sufficed to shatter the pavement and throw stones to expose the emancipation below: *sous les pavés, la plage*. The rapid *détournement* of the phrase implied another reality: beneath the allegorical beach lay more allegorical pavement. The initial defeat implied by this statement is embraced in the final moments of *Mille Plateaux*, which seek to reconcile the organic nature of power and resistance, the fact that knots of arborescence may branch from rhizomes and that rhizomes may emerge at root tip.

My dissertation seeks to explore the circular dynamics between pavement and beach, between *espace lisse* and *espace strié*, as manifest in the infinite space of the Internet, a landscape both infinitely smooth and infinitely striated. How do politics and resistance play out in the complex arena of the online world? How do these strata (beach, pavement, beach, pavement) manifest in every day behaviours and beliefs? How do people represent themselves and how to they position themselves in this new space that is both infinitely possible and invisibly restricting?

II. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND // LITERATURE REVIEW

I begin my research with a study of progress through the lens of Max Weber's century-old diagnosis of capitalist ethos. Arguably, the everyday of life of the average individual was first subjected to such teleological linearity by the onset of the Protestant work ethic and the inherent notion of progress it entailed. My enquiry begins with an example, a 'historical individual' drawn from the pages of Weber's *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* (1904). Weber's interest in the emergence of new behaviours is unique in his focus on the individual narratives that propel these widespread social changes. Weber's eye is astute as well as gentle: his

observations lean less on concrete statistics and more on carefully assembled anecdotes.

In contrast to Weber's *ideal type* methodology, the following text is also highly influenced by the work of Elias Canetti, who, rather than extrapolating an individual type from mass behaviour, focussed his interest on the mass itself, studying the psychology and dynamics of crowds in his 1960 work *Masse und Macht* ("Crowds and Power"). Both Canetti and Weber inspire with their unusual tones, which are neither scholarly nor academic in a conventional way. Both texts read almost like a first-hand account of an otherworldly observer of the bustling human hive: at once immensely curious but also at times infuriated and full of warning. Canetti's influence is throughout, although rarely is he explicitly cited. His research is particularly interesting because it never names the Nazi regime from whose persecution Canetti successfully escaped, but instead takes a much more gentle and philosophical approach to try to understand why people forego certain aspects of integrity in the sake of integrating a larger homogeneity. This tendency underlines the questioning in my later chapters.

Many of the authors we will encounter are those who emerged as a result of the student movement in 1968. These thinkers both provoked, provided the language for, and also were direct products of the student revolts. Among the people who provided the language for the rebellion, we find Guy Debord, and his concern with the relationship between commodity, spectacle, and the passivity with which these are readily consumed. He will be used primarily in the 4th Chapter of this thesis in relation to our discussion on the performance of protest. Other thinkers who have been highly influential are Michel de Certeau, who was one of the first to theorize about the student movements as they were still ongoing, as early as the first week of June 1968. De Certeau as well, coming from a religious background, takes a gentle approach to handle protest. His language is much less inflammatory and more interested in the actual emergence of what he terms *parole*.

We then turn to our primary author, who coexisted with Debord, de Certeau, and the many other currents of critical thought that were stirred in the creative and academic worlds of Paris in the late 1960s. Jacques Rancière will be present throughout the writing, especially in the second half of this dissertation. His concern with the many facets of what her calls *dissensus* - and its contrast to *consensus* - is what is particularly fruitful to our discussion of individual appropriations of narratives of dissent. Rancière is concerned by how an explicit statement of rebellion/resistance - of *politics* - can actually, in its very utterance, become something else than what it is intended to be. And this delicate between individual *emancipation* and institutional *cooption* is the primary concern of these writings.

The discussion is enriched by a series of nods to Rancière contemporary, Michel Foucault. Foucault is used primarily to bring a lesser-known voice to the discussion, one he found towards the end of his life during his lectures at the *Collège de France,* when Foucault turns to a more generous outlook on humanity. In his lectures, first translated into English in the year of the Occupy protests, he considers individual agency - or the illusion agency - and the idea of individual narratives - what he terms *techniques of the self* in relation to the *dispositifs* of the dominant structures of power that have so notoriously been his focus throughout his oeuvre.

Another *incontournable* influence on this thesis, mainly for providing the rhythm, the structure and the delicacy through which we move from pop-culture observations to historical anecdotes, to scientific details, to deeply theoretical texts, are Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari. Most explicitly cited is their last chapter of *Mille Plateaux*, in which the authors discuss "smooth" and "striated" spaces (*espace lisse*, *espace strié*) in relation to the concepts of *capture*, *machine de guerre* and *appareil de capture* which they refer to through the tome. I have been part of a discussion (culminating in a seminar given at Paris 8 in December 2013) about how the Occupy movement may be an incarnation of the *machine de guerre*, and though there is an easy tendency to support this statement, this thesis moved rather towards a questioning of how *machine de guerre* itself, like the *espace lisse*, may be a

temporary state and is itself by its very nature prone to tendencies that resemble its antithesis, the *appareil de capture* or the *espace strié*.

We then move to a discussion of Occupy itself as a time of resistance, featuring a discussion on the effects of capitalism itself on everyday narratives of individuals. We study these repercussions mainly through the texts of Richard Sennett, who has been studying the influence of capitalism in individual lives since the late 1960s. Sennett's approach to the study of real people is my second greatest influence - after Weber - in terms of methodology, because Sennett favours a very casual approach which involves extended conversations that flow rather organically and are not framed by the institutional conventions for interrogation. Sennett is an avid listener and he then uses the anecdotes that he compiles to form an argument that contains at once the forcefulness of his convictions as well as the delicacy of his interest in the subtle dramas of peoples' lives.

In terms of the study of capitalism's workings on present-day lives, another person whose work I've been following throughout is the anthropologist David Graeber, who simultaneous to the beginnings of this research published his book *Debt: The First 5,000 Years* (2011). Graeber also published consequently a first-hand account on the Occupy Wall Street protests in New York City (*The Democracy Project*, 2013), tracing the genealogy of the movement. Graeber's regular presence at the original meetings and subsequent Occupy camps, as well as his presence at the Occupied Berlin Biennale in June 2012 traces easy parallels to my work. His perspective, however, on what Occupy represents, especially in light of the digital times, seems to be overshadowed by an optimism shared by many in the early months of the protests. I address this hope-infused narrative and consider what it is lacking in my last Chapters.

Another person whose enthusiasm for the Occupy movement, and especially the movement's potential in the new - networked, horizontal - spaces of the Internet, in the social theorist Manuel Castells, who was very present - much like Graeber - in the manifestations of the 15M movement in Spain. Castells has published widely on the

subject, especially his latest book, *Networks of Outrage and Hope* (2012) in which he praises the *débrouillardise* of the movement and invests much hope in its new immaterial space upon the World Wide Web.

Other thinkers who contribute to this research are the Slovenian Marxist philosopher, Slavoj Žižek, who too was present in the Occupy camps and too published a book of his musings, *The Year of Dreaming Dangerously* (2012). The following dissertation will cite most heavily, however, from Žižek's speech, given across the human microphone in Liberty Square (Zuccotti Park) on October 9th 2011. In his speech, a rough assembly of the philosopher's first impressions of the movement, he both praises the movement and utters words of warning. He is one of the first from his generation to publically speak out about the possible repercussions of the initial elation. His mentor, on the other hand, Alain Badiou, maintained a characteristic optimism in his *Le réveil de l'histoire* (published in French in October 2011 and translated the following year into English as *The Rebirth of History: Times of Riots and Uprisings*) which celebrates the uprisings of the Arab Spring as synonymous to the European revolts of 1848. History would effectively end, Badiou argues, if the financial oligarchies would successfully impose the stability of an anti-revolutionary ideology. In Badiou's mind the events of early 2011 symbolise *le retour de la pensée et de l'action révolutionnaires* - the return (or rebirth) of revolutionary thought and action. Likeminded is the British economist and journalist Paul Mason, who also, having observed the uprisings in Egypt firsthand, declared the 'revolution' to be lead by members of the young, educated and disillusioned middle class - an ideal type he names *Graduate Without A Future*. The key to this revolution's success, Mason argues, is its existence in the unhindered spaces of the online network. From Mason's early observations and blog for the Guardian newspaper, he later published a book *Why It's Kicking Off Everywhere* (January 2012) and an updated version to include the Occupy protests, *Why It's Still Kicking Off Everywhere*, published a year later in February 2013.

These texts, including countless more, have propelled my research in jolts that were both enlightening and aggravating. The necessity to bring voices of the current

generation of thinkers - many still, like me, students - had me turn to the Internet for more sources. There, we find many new narratives, ones that stray from the distinctly Marxist and *soixante-huitard* tone of authors cited thus far.

There are also the pamphlets circulated online and in the Occupy camps, the first and most famous of which is Stéphane Hessel's 2010 *Indignez-vous!* ("Time for Outrage!) which, even before the revolts, had sold 1,5 million copies in France alone (Sciolino 2011), and is credited with the name of the Spanish movement *Indignados*. But Hessel was 93 at the times of the writing, and there are many other free pamphlets circulated among activist groups that present examples of the enraged and awakened voices of the young generation. The first is the *Communiqué From An Absent Future*, published anonymously by students of the University of California at Santa Cruz in September 2009, eloquently foreshadows the narratives of disillusioned educated youth that would take to the streets en masse two years later. The second is the French collective *Tiqqun's* 2001 publication *Premiers matériaux pour une théorie de la Jeune-Fille* (translated in 2012 as *Preliminary Materials for a Theory of the Young-Girl*) contains elements similar to Guy Debord's *La société du Spectacle* (1967) while also proposing a Weberian *ideal type* in the figure of the 'young girl'. The text addresses the “total" but invisible "war” waged by contemporary capitalism against anyone who dares oppose it, and explores, by means of the *young girl*, the seductive ways in which contemporary society compels individuals to internalize its narratives and thus to live and to consume in the haze of abandoned agency that Rancière would describe as total *consensus*. A third free publication, distributed for free in print and online over the course of the first year of the Occupy Wall Street Movement, was the *Occupy! An OWS-Inspired Gazette*, which, in its 5 issues, compiled a selection of compelling arguments directly from the streets, as well as from the halls of left-leaning academia, with submissions from Graeber and Žižek, but also Judith Butler, Angela Davis, and Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak.

Astra Taylor, the co-editor of the *Occupy! Gazette* and the resulting publication *Occupy!: Scenes from Occupied America* (2012) published her own account of the potential for politics online in *The People's Platform: Taking Back Power and Culture*

in the Digital Age in early 2014. Her scepticism, although reserved, offers a refreshing take on the general applause from the likes of Mason and Castells. Taylor takes the discussion in the direction that I too favour - a suspicion towards what the online world truly offers as a forum for dissent. Of course the discussion is a complex one, and this is acknowledged perhaps best in the works published in the online magazine *The New Inquiry* - which was born directly from the Occupy movement and published its first Volume, titled *Precarity*, in February 2012. Many of works from young academics, artists and activists are cited throughout, and indeed we will find many of the voices who assembled in Berlin in June 2012 to attend the international EMJD Conference *PREOCCUPIED: The Words, Wounds, and Workings of Occupations Past and Present*. This conference, although not explicitly discussed (the place of academia in activism is ample fodder for an entirely other thesis!), was held in the Occupied Berlin Biennale. As the principle organiser of the conference, I was present at the camp nearly every day for the six weeks leading up to the event on June 28th and 29th 2012. This time offered me the constant opportunity to engage with the occupiers and the dynamics within the occupied art space have contributed much material to my discussion on the representation of protest in the 4th and 5th chapters.

IV. OPERATIONAL CONCEPTS

IV.I THE HISTORICAL INDIVIDUAL

We set out to study protest as a change in narrative: whether it be a refusal or a renewal, the protest itself, when seen from a narrative perspective, locates itself on a timeline of history. Along this rough timeline, we have etched a series of moments particularly fertile to this discussion. These moments, what Weber termed 'historical individuals' are actually not individuals in the common sense but more akin to Badiou's description of the 'event', in the sense that it is the event that "compels us to decide a new way of being" (1993:41) and that the truth of the event, if there is to be a truth, is a *posteriori*. The significance of the event, in other words, can only be established after the fact, once the new way of being has taken on a subjective form.

Weber describes his conception of the *historical individual* as "a complex of elements associated in historical reality which we unite into a conceptual whole from the standpoint of their cultural significance." (1930: 47). Weber's process is one of assembling the scattered pieces of a disordered reality into a coherent narrative, one he will use to describe an imperative shift in collective *ethos*. His concept of 'historical individual' refers in its content to a phenomenon significant for its unique individuality, but he writes, it "cannot be defined according to the formula *genus proximum, differentia specifica*" (1930: 47). Weber emphasises that the phenomenon of the historical individual does not follow a formula first described by Aristotle as process is a means of classifying beings, which describes difference as deviation. Instead the observations Weber makes, and the method he proposes requires that occurrences be gradually put together out of the individual parts that constitute a historical reality.

The historical individual, then, is populated by 'individual parts', pixels that constitute a larger image. The individual parts we will focus on are individuals themselves, and their own personalised narratives. Each of the historical moments (snapshots in time) we will describe in the coming chapters has been chosen for its ability to exemplify a key shift in the quintessential self, and this shift will be outlined using the same tools employed by an individual when describing himself: in terms of narrative as a means of projecting oneself in both time (future) and in a given social setting (community).

IV.II IDEAL TYPES

To help us etch these 'quintessential' individuals, the following chapters will present two descriptions of what Max Weber would term "*ideal types*"[1]. Benjamin Franklin, Weber's favourite example of an *ideal type*, was able to orchestrate the founding of an entire country on the basis of his favoured narrative, the narrative of 'life, liberty and

[1] On the concept of the ideal type see Weber's discussion in the *Archiv für Sozialwissenschaft und Sozialpolitik*, XIX, No. i. (Republished since Weber's death in the *Gesammelte Aufsätze zur Wissenschaftslehre*)

pursuit of property'. Weber assembles Franklin's teachings into his most elaborate description of what this *type* represents: which narratives are encouraged and which ones are rendered obsolete. From the vantage point of his sociology, Weber was then able to locate this ideal type in a context he himself couldn't see, to read Franklin's text not only literally but also symbolically. What Weber describes in the *Protestant Ethic* is how Benjamin Franklin's existence as an ideal type comes with the precondition that he exist as an antagonist to another *type*: the one he will unwittingly replace.

Each historical moment will be framed on both sides by an ideal type. In the first chapter we'll encounter the ideal type of "the Verleger" (or *putter-out*), an entrepreneur or trader of woven textiles, who will introduce us to the wearer of Levi's jeans, a stereotypical figure that will sweep us across a certain interpretation of the past 110 years, from 1904 to 2014. The Levi's wearer will eventually merge with the current day Levi's icon: the rebellious youth, who will transition into the second chapter, where we'll locate the *ideal type* characterized by "the adolescent" or "student" in Bourdieu's terms. We'll watch as this adolescent gradually shifts into the persona of "the *Young-Girl*", as defined by Tiqqun in the early 2000s, and finally we will come to reflect on the updated version of this *ideal type*, 100 years later and still the same age: 20-35 years old, wearing Levi's, and now online.

Weber insisted that social scientists must seek to understand the activities of others contextually by reference to the world in which they lived and the nature of their motives for acting (Kalberg, *Introduction to the Protestant Ethic*: xii). In order to do so, Weber worked within the avowedly 'fictional' construct of the *historical individual*, which itself would be populated, through Weber's attentive description, by the equally as fictional concept of *ideal type*. The *ideal type* is a mechanism integral to Weber's practice of early sociology, and one of the most important aspects of his methodological work. The concept was first developed by Weber himself in his essay on *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* (1930), in which he concentrated his empirical observations into one prototype being: a person who does not in reality exist, but who rather, in varying degrees, exists in every person.

Weber's methodology has long since fallen into disuse by the academic community. But his way of thinking remains present, if not in theory but in practice. Arguably, if we were to locate *ideal type* in a bastardised contemporary version, we might think of as the 'target market' of advertising rhetoric. The 'the X-girl of X brand' (for example: The Levi's girl (www.thelevisgirl.tumblr.com) is 'fun, stylish rebellious, social'. She plays in a band and lives in San Francisco[2]) only comes relatively close to what Weber was attempting to describe in that the 'X-girl' describes a prototype of her time: the generalisations of her life draw many to 'relate' to her narrative. In a very rough sense, Weber's work resembles the work of an advertising agency only in the sense that both are interested in fixing the individual and his or her daily behaviours within a presumably predictable framework, one whose possibilities and projections are decreed most significantly by the architecture of modern capitalism. This dissertation follows the gradual evolution of this predictability, from Weber's *ideal type* methodology, to market surveys, to today's online predictive algorithms.

In a coarse version, updated for the 21st Century, Weber's ideal type might also be deciphered within a word (or tag) cloud, the kind often found on blogs, or a year-end Facebook Timeline Video: a distillation of countless events or lives into one coherent, and thereby formulaic, narrative. A narrative constructed by the most uttered sentences and the most unanimous sensations. Because we are studying the 'shift' in these narratives, we will be extracting the hidden factors concealed within the sudden onset of a certain thrust of 'collective consciousness'. Weber's project at the turn of the last Century was much the same: he was interested in how the mass appeal of Calvinism dramatically and irreversibly changed people's relationships to capital, and thereby also to their attitudes towards their employment and their relationships with one another.

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[2] The girl, Gaby Dolceamore, hired to be 'the Levi's girl from March-Sept 2011, describes herself as: Clothes Horse, Vinyl Collector, Time-Traveling Historian. From a Brooklyn teacher by day/blogger by night to the new Levi's® Girl, I'm living my dream. Life is but a song, and this is my hair-blowing guitar solo I would put this quote inside your narrative…

IV.III WEAVING

As we will explore in Chapter 1, Weber's develops a description of a 'traditionalistic' ideal type (what we will now term *ideal type A*) whose way of life will be toppled by the arrival of a new ideal type (B), who will bring with him a new narrative, one that ultimately is incompatible with the traditional outlook. In Weber's case, he observes the arrival of the spirit of Capitalism and identifies its repercussions on the ideal type A of the 'Verleger' (translated into English as the *putter-out*). The Verleger is, much as Weber's grandfather had been, a merchant of woven textiles (indeed, Weber's grandfather was a linen merchant and textile manufacturer in western Germany. (*Essays in Sociology* 1946: 3, 19). In fact, the German word Weber translates directly as 'weaver'. The Webers had been a family of weavers, and inevitably Max Weber, having spent much time studying his family's industry, fell back on the weaving example when he came to describe the impacts of new narratives of progress that were washing over Europe.

The reference to woven textiles is important for two particular reasons. In one instance, the man of textiles presents himself as our ideal type of choice to accompany us on the narrative trajectory of the 20th Century, as we trace the beginnings of the *narrative of pursuit* in Europe and follow as, embodied by another textile merchant, it crosses over into North America. In the second instance the textile itself helps us better understand the intertwined structure of power, referring to Deleuze and Guattari's concepts of the *smooth* and the *striated*, which will inform us our across this dissertation as we explore the incessant dynamics between emancipation and control, between open and enclosed spaces of the possible.

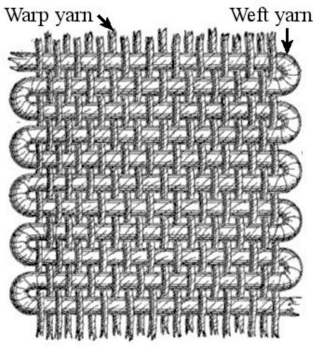

Image 3: diagram of woven fabric. Source: Wikipedia

IV.IV SMOOTH AND STRIATED

The imagery of woven fabric is also used by Deleuze and Guattari to describe an *espace strié*, or a 'striated space'. The striated space, like a textile, they point out, is constituted by two types of parallel elements: at its most simple, a fabric contains vertical and horizontal elements that "cross" (*entrecroise)* one-another perpendicularly (1980: 592). These elements, albeit often threads of the very same material, do not however fulfil the same function. Some, let's say the vertical ones, are fixed; whereas the others, the horizontal threads, are mobile: they pass in and out of the structures fixed in place by the vertical threads. Here it is useful to consider a weaving loom, with the image of the *warp* strung in firm alternating stripes and the *woof* (or *weft*) zooming in and out on the shuttle. As with a loom, the vertical elements delimit the space of the textile: though theoretically it could be possible for the fabric to extend infinitely in length, the width, determined by the vertical lines, closes the structure and limits the back and forth movement of the horizontal elements to a definite dimension. "Was it not these characteristics' ask Deleuze and Guattari after having outlined the functions of the warp and woof, 'that enabled Plato to use the model of weaving as the paradigm for "royal science," in other words, the art of governing people or operating the State apparatus?" (1987: 475).

IV.V NARRATIVE

Narrative as a concept will frame much of our discussion, and yet it is a murky and problematic term that has itself taken on many narratives.

Narrative is the most natural of human impulses – it is indeed through stories, conjuring collective sentiments, compacting collective values, rallying around collective goals that we distinguish ourselves from the instinct-driven patterns of the wild, and, most prevalently, from one another. Our history itself bares witness to the single most inseparable fact that we have always constructed elaborate stories to help guide us, if anything, through the multiplying decisions presented by the narrated life. Indeed these narratives are spun both externally (in the cultural sphere) and internally (on the individual level), and the cycles and overlaps of these two spheres, and one's ability to conceal itself within the other is the underlying subject of *The Protestant Ethic*. These strata of interpretation are also what inspire us in the coming chapters. Because of course there is much more to narrative than simple stories, if only to begin with the candid fact that there is no such thing as a simple story.

The French anthropologist/linguist/philosopher Paul Ricoeur spent most of the late 1960s elaborating on the concept of *narrative identity*, in the specific sense of the stories we tell ourselves, in time. "Narrative', Ricoeur said, 'constructs the identity of the character" (1995: 147), as a set of reference points – signs, symbols, and texts – that 'mediate' self-understanding (Ricoeur, *Oneself as Another*: 15) and delineate the possible. "We understand ourselves only by the long detour of the signs of humanity deposited in cultural works," (Ricoeur, 1986: 87) emphasizing the 'received' element of individual narratives, which enter the subjective level only through a sieve of signs, symbols, and texts that exist externally in the cultural sphere.

Ricoeur stipulates that the self, assembled with the help of these very symbols is itself like a text. The embodied self is a text that can be read or interpreted to produce a narrative, an identity – a *narrative identity*. The self positions itself as a protagonist within a constantly unfolding text; narrative, within that text, provides guidance. One of Ricoeur's main contributions to narrative theory is to locate the process of narrative outside the individual subjectivity.

To 'understand' oneself, writes Ricoeur is to interpret oneself before (*devant*) this story, from a perspective outside of oneself. In contemplating the possibility of

understanding and of self-understanding, Ricoeur describes how the 'reader' approaches this 'text' "by leaving the self" (*en partant de lui-même*). Positioned before (*devant*) the text, the self then receives the conditions of a self other that the 'me' that approaches the reading (1986: 115)[3]. The self in this sense is never face-to-face with itself, but instead it exposes itself – and this is the moment at which the opportunity presents itself for 'truth to come to the self by means of the other'[4].

The understanding of self however often excludes the understanding of the story, a story brought from elsewhere than within the self, in response to forces often unseen but everpresent. This is where we fixate our interest: in the ways our imagination, as individuals, is often restrained within the framework for a 'possible', within a grid of eternal narratives, of pathways presented as either deception or temptation. The narrative story shapes us in our existence prior to our intentional awareness of its presence, and this is the fascinating space where individual (as narrative) coincide with external power structures (also as narrative) to the point where both at once co-exist and co-opt the other. The question here is not of submission – that would be too simple – but of the opaque spaces of self-representation and the tools we all employ, ultimately, to express *freedom*. Whatever that may mean.

Ricoeur makes the evocative equation between narrative and metaphor, stating how they both maintain the same 'referential function'. The metaphor brings us to a world, a world that is not known through direct description. Narration brings us to the temporal dimensions of our existence by means of the poetic power of the narrative, a detour through the text of one's life story (Maboloc, 2005). As a result, writes Ricoeur: "whether it be a question of metaphor or of plot, to explain more is to understand better." And although certain characters in life excel in explaining and remain nonetheless extraordinarily restricted in their understanding, the process of

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[3] My translation from the French: *Comprendre, c'est se comprendre devant le texte et recevoir de lui les conditions d'un soi autre que le moi qui vient à la lecture*

[4] My paraphrasing from the French: *Le soi n'est à aucun moment dans un face à face avec lui-même, mais il ne cesse d'être exposé, et c'est une chance : la vérité vient à lui par l'autre*. (Jean Greisch, *Paul Ricœur : l'itinérance du sens*, Grenoble, Jérôme Millon, 2001)

explaining is in itself a process of anchoring, shaping, limiting – as well as justifying – one's understanding. What is interesting, however, as a 'spectator of narratives' – which we all now will be for the coming chapters – is how these narratives of 'explaining' often indeed explain far beyond their intended scope. As Ricoeur mentions, there is the 'literal' reading of narratives in which one remains within the framework of understanding of its author; and there is the unifying reading, the macro-lens so-to-speak, which incorporates circumstances as incongruous as they are revelatory.

V. CORPUS

The primary corpus is present in the form of the metaphorical *woof* and is woven throughout the text. The main text for this research are the narratives that are generated on my own social media feed - from Facebook, Twitter and Instagram. The images, citations and concepts that emerge on these spaces must be included in the discussion, for they are, without a doubt, critical in shaping opinion, provoking behaviour, and generally framing the way most people my age understand the world.

Online narratives, such as youtube videos, self-generated texts (blogs, testimonials, speeches) are present through the discussion, as well as printed word such as pamphlets, magazines (*Tidal*, *Occupy Gazette*), and also posters and banners circulated and seen at Occupy camps worldwide. Interviews, both online via youtube and vimeo, as well as ones I have conducted in person, have also been gleaned for their narratives. The principle interviews used, however, are sifted from my daily conversations over the past five years or more, as well as formal interviews conducted within the methodological framework of the *What Will We Be* project.

The wearethe99percent tumblr, upon which thousands of self-portraits and short narratives were posted, beginning in late August 2011 is also a significant source of

narratives, as well as the basis for my analysis in the second half of the second chapter.

Other key sources of narratives of resistance have been recent documentaries, most notably: *Another World* (Rebecca Chaiklin, Fisher Stevens 2014), *Everyday Rebellion* (Arash T. Riahi, Arman T. Riahi 2013), *Demonstration* (Victor Kossakovksy 2013), *99%: The Occupy Wall Street Collaborative Film* (Aaron Aites, Audrey Ewell 2013), *Occupy: The Movie* (Corey Ogilvie 2013), *Ukraine is Not a Brothel: The Femen Story* (Kitty Green 2013), *The Square* (Jehane Noujaim 2013), *Dangerous Acts Starring the Unstable Elements of Belarus* (Madeleine Sackler 2013), *#WhileWeWatch* (Kevin Breslin, 2012), *Occupy Love* (Velcrow Ripper 2012), *We Are Legion: The Story of the Hacktivists* (Brian Knappenberger 2012).

VI. METHODOLOGY

The weave of Weber and the warp and woof of Deleuze and Guattari's *espace strié* accompanies us throughout the text. Imagining a fabric being woven, the active thread – the woof, the text, in this case – moves in and out from the fixed vertical threads of the warp. The dissertation moves as such, back and forth throughout a series of defining concepts that at once frame and solidify our arguments. Having defined my operational concepts – Weber's *historical individual* and *ideal type*, Deleuze and Guattari's *capture* from the *smooth* into the *striated*, Ricoeur's *narrative*, and Rancière *politics* and *emancipation* – I thus define the dimensions of the warp, and can count on the steady reoccurrence of each of its constituent threads. The text, along the way, assembles anecdotes and other concepts, much and the thread of the woof uncoils from its seemingly endless bobbin. And so, although the interwoven woof may at times appear tangential, the core elements, albeit at times dissimulated, remain.

Although our the principle literature to inform this dissertation stems from wildly different reference points and moments of the past Century, the key authors – Weber, de Certeau, Deleuze and Guattari, Foucault, Flusser, Mason, Graeber and Castells – appear in conversation with one another. The entire structure of the writing may, at times, have a certain mosaic-like quality. Indeed, the digitisation and thus widespread availability of texts has allowed for an unprecedented assembly of ideas, assembled according to the fractal impulses of my digital-native mind, is a sort of associative play across theories and eras. This is not intended as a critique of formal theory but rather as an overt acknowledgement that times have changed, and the way we think and synthesize data has inevitably been transformed by the digital universe. Instead of merely writing about the impact of the Internet in one limited set of behaviours, I have ceded to my instincts and made the entire dissertation a reflection of my thought process and observations.

I don't assume to be writing from an ethnographic standpoint in the traditional sense. Though I have travelled a lot, it has not been with the objective of studying culture through a binary of otherness. The first reason for this is my absence of education in the field and therefore of any pertinent ethnographic vocabulary or methodology. After much consideration, reading, and consultation with my supervisors, it became apparent that a doctoral thesis would not be the setting to assume an understanding events on purely ethnographic terms. Instead, benefiting immensely from the new multidisciplinary horizons opened by the field of cultural studies, I have written an extended essay about my contemporaries, one that combines daily observations with theoretical insights.

The question at stake during the protest movements of 2011-2013, from New York City to Sao Paulo, was the question of progress. My method is studying this question – the ever flickering narratives of progress, future, and pursuit – has been to actively incorporate every element of my subjective experience into my observations. I cannot cite the number of interviews I have conducted, because indeed almost every interaction I have had in the past 5+ years has been interpreted through the lens of my research and has been documented in countless journals and online notes. The

dissertation plays with a series of varying methodological approaches, from a historical overview in the first chapter, to a statistically heavy second chapter, to a third chapter composed solely of images gleaned from social media, to a fourth chapter that incorporates rigorous first-hand fieldwork in a falsified Occupy camp, to a final chapter that incorporates elements of all the previous chapters, culminating in an contentious opinion that is thoroughly my own.

VII. GENERAL LAYOUT

Each chapter of this dissertation follows a certain interpretation of 'ruptures in narrative', presenting a pre- and post- 'rupture' narrative. The first chapter traces a shift in narrative, as described by Max Weber 110 years ago in 1904. The historical elements of the first chapter are remixed in the second chapter, projecting the 'narrative of pursuit' into the 20th century by means of an allegory, a story of the blue jean and its ubiquity in pop culture. The third chapter is a silent one, translating the advertising campaigns of the blue jeans into a visual slideshow of protest in the past 4 years: from the Levi's *GoForth* campaign, to actual protest imagery, to music videos and Paris runways. In this third chapter, the images guide us into an uneasy vantage point in which protest enacts not only politics but itself. The folds of representation open a discussion on the performance of politics, and the fourth chapter analyses how protest played out within the Occupied Berlin Biennale in 2012, arguing that the small-scale setting of the *human zoo* presents a microcosm of a larger discussion relating to the politics of performance and the performance of politics, as well as the politics of *remote* (online) participation. The Biennale's controversial but ultimately innocuous performance of activism serves as a starting point for discussing main issues stirred protest as it becomes at once distinctly localised (in the public square) and diffused as spectacle (via social media).

The fifth chapter traces the genealogy of the concept of *police*, defined by Rancière as the 'partition of the sensible' (2010: 36) and its response, proposed by Rancière as *politics*, and by Certeau as *parole*. The dual between *police* and its *parole (*or *politics*)

consists in a battle over representation, and the last chapter will present a series of events that exist across various degrees of consensus and dissensus, in a motion very much harmonious with Deleuze and Guattari's description of the 'dissymetric necessity' (1980: 606) between the smooth and the striated, the police and the political. Narrative, perhaps, as we will observe it now, is a series of ruptures.

CHAPTER 1: PURSUITS

1.1 THE CITY FROM ABOVE

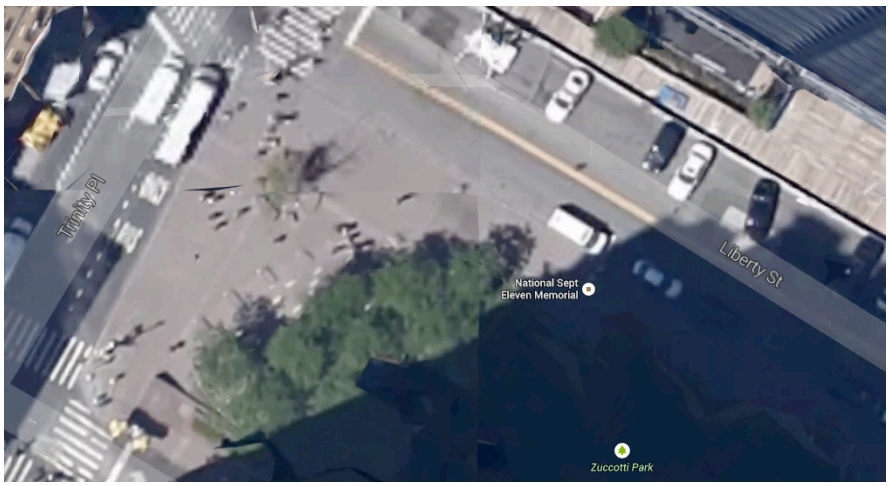

Image 4: New York from above, as seen from Google Earth.

1.1.1 FROM NARRATIVE TO ETHOS: *A CHORUS OF IDLE FOOTSTEPS*

In an oft-quoted passage from *L'invention du quotidien*, Michel de Certeau describes New York City as seen from the 110th floor of the Empire State Building in New York City. Visiting the city (and the United States) for the first time in 1978 (de Certeau 1990: ix), de Certeau is mesmerised as below him the city enacts its daily rituals, what he refers to as a 'chorus of idle footsteps' (de Certeau 1984: 163) whose rhythms and shapes are unconscious to the 'practitioners of the city' themselves. People move throughout the city spaces, writing a text they themselves do not read. What propels them, each one a tiny speck navigating the urban grid, is narrative. Seen from above, from a vantage point like de Certeau's, all these people and the narratives in everyday motion, unveil a larger story, collectively shared. These tiny, often subconscious patterns, these *practices of everyday life,* are especially revelatory when one detects sudden change in the overall trend – a change in the collective narrative. These larger shifts occur on the individual level, and seem, early on, to remain simply as a personal choice. Only when, from a certain distance, a certain elevation, say, one begins to

notice this individual pattern replicating on a larger scale, can one begin to speak of shifts in narrative on a sociological scale. These moments in time, when an individual change of story sweeps across a large portion of the population at a precise, empirically perceptible, instance, are what Max Weber called *historical individuals*. The historical individual is a moment where the self's understanding of itself changes on a large scale, across countless other selves, and all in a similar way. When individual narratives become a chorus (regardless of how *idle*), this chorus forms what Weber terms a collective *ethos*.

The term *ethos* as used by Weber will be in many ways encapsulate the concept *narrative* as we will use it here. Whereas rules, imposed by the state or the Church, are *wahrgenommen* (perceived) as ultimately external forces of regulating behaviour, an ethos transcends the direct grasp of consciousness. Naturally, because Weber is writing about the repercussions of the Reformation, *ethos* for him has a distinctly moral connotation. Indeed, as we will continue to use the term, extrapolating it from the merchant to the Facebook user, *ethos* will remain laden with this distinct element of (at times blind) Faith. But *ethos* is moreover a 'spirit that animates' (Weber 1930: 67) an individual, it is the impulse that provides a narrative structure, which itself, in turn, provides each individual a lexicon which lends a certain reading to the text of their life.

If we were to observe people from de Certeau's bird-eye perspective, Weber's *ideal type* would emerge as a network of the most trodden paths of the city. The ideal type is a hybrid form assembled much as the results of a Google-search algorithm, or Facebook's user statistics, bringing to the surface the most commonly uttered sentences, and pathways, which also are able to anticipate the most possible courses of action. Weber, much like Google and Facebook in fact, developed the methodology of the ideal type as a tool: Weber proposes to understand the individual experience by first describing it, them climbing outside of the individual narrative, whose position within the text becomes indicative of the text as a whole. This text as a whole, the google earth view of the most persistent patterns, the 'trending' algorithms on Facebook – these larger scale observations constitute what Weber calls and *ethos* –

ethos is distinct from narrative because it incorporates individual stories into a metanarrative. Often this metanarrative, in justifying its scale, takes on a moral framework. For example – one person posting an image on their Facebook profile is a narrative. Many people posting that image on their profiles, and hundreds more liking that image constitutes the beginning of a mass narrative, which then may constitute a general *ethos*, a general moral judgement.

Narrative is an attempt from the individual to position herself in society: if the image she posts is, say, of a protest in another country, the individual positions herself in support, and hopes to garner the attention of peers as someone who has taken a particular narrative stance. When that same image is shared by dozens of 'friends' on any given Facebook newsfeed, the image itself becomes the narrative. The identities of the people who have posted the image become secondary to the sheer number of related posts, *shares* and *likes*. The image, now *trending*, exists as its own narrative, and the decision to either ignore or share it becomes loaded with a certain ethical weight. This is when the wider *ethos* presents itself as incontestable: this is when the most trodden path becomes the only walkable path – when the idle unconscious patterns become a chorus.

Weber, much like de Certeau, was interested in the way narratives propel bodies through both the space of community, of the factory, and also within the epicentre of capitalism: the city. His focus in the *Protestant Ethic* (1904) was on the historical individual that arose as a result of Protestantism's encounter with Capitalism. Much of his essay focuses on the incompatibility of the new capitalist ethos with previous ways of living. Not only as one of the first self-described sociologists, but also as a perplexed witness to the obsolescence of a centuries-long 'tradition', Weber positioned a large part of his work on analysing a convergence of factors that together helped explain a shift in *ethos* that had heretofore been inexplicable.

Weber too travelled to America, 75 years before de Certeau, in August 1904, shortly after having finished the first edition of the *Protestant Ethic*. He too was fascinated by the rush hour in lower Manhattan. He would stand captivated in the middle of

Brooklyn Bridge, observing the noisy panorama of the motions of the masses. The skyscrapers, which he described as 'fortresses of capital,' and likened them to the renaissance towers a previous age: "they remind me of the old pictures of the towers in Bologna and Florence." (Weber 1946: 15). This country he was visiting for the first time was to become, by his description, a bastion for the new Century and it's new spirit: Capitalism. The United States for Weber represented the future. Weber declared, prophetically: "The rise of the United States to world dominance was as unavoidable as that of ancient Rome after the Punic wars." (ibid.)

Weber makes this statement to draw parallels between the burgeoning Roman empire of Antiquity and the United States of Teddy Roosevelt and Henry Ford. His comment focuses on the inevitability of these imperial powers, yet perhaps Weber also had considered the factors that lead to the very inevitability of their 'world dominance'. In fact, consistent with Weber's writings, parallels between the two empires extend into Weber's discussion of *ethos* – in the sense that 2nd Century B.C Romans, much like early 19th Century Americans, embodied an *ideal* – indeed an *ideal type* – that rendered all previous *types* impossible. The following chapter will expand on this statement, beginning with a brief visualisation of the Punic wars Weber mentioned.

1.1.2 AS UNAVOIDABLE AS ROME AFTER THE PUNIC WARS

The Punic wars saw Carthage and the entire Phoenician empire fall to three separate bursts of Roman offensive. Although the wars were waged mainly at sea, and although the Carthaginians had an incontestably superior naval power, the Romans were able to conquer the 'shining city' in 146 B.C. and thus command the 300 other cities Carthage had ruled around the western Mediterranean. The Roman sack of Carthage not only erased the Phoenician empire from the map, but also thoroughly destroyed all its culture and records. As a result, the historical study of Carthage is problematic - what remains are the Roman conquerors' extremely hostile accounts (Warmington 1994: 11) and the ruins of an ancient city in today's Tunisian capital of Tunis.

Carthage was rebuilt as a Roman city, and, as the Roman Republic and then Empire continued to expand, the figurative marble sculptures that had originated in Greece became Roman. At first, the Roman statues were replicas of Hellenistic pieces, carved by Greek artisans now held captive in Italy. Over time, however, the Roman aesthetic straightened the Greek *contrappostos*, shaved the curls off their beards, and – most significantly – depicted not figures of myth and fantasy but figures of power: real men such as rulers and nobles. Roman sculptures, financed largely by the government, were built to convey a very particular political ideology: to propagate support for imperial Rome. Art historians do not dispute the decline in workmanship in the Roman statues when compared to their Greek counterparts: yet in Rome the translucence of skin and perfection of body was not the point. The statues represented power rather than beauty, *truth* rather than myth, people rather than gods – and invoked patriotism not wonder. The statues and their faces have outlasted time, and, to this day, represent the chiselled Roman warrior that marched onto the world stage after the Punic wars, an image and *ideal type* that dominated for 500 years.

At the turn of the past century, Weber detected a similar figure, whose emergence into the world he began to chart on an individual level. Indeed, the new *ideal type* would be just as inevitable, Weber proposed, but would conquer with reason rather than violence. This particular form of reason left an incontestable imprint on most who encountered it – consequently, Weber began by studying how individual and everyday lives were affected by this new presence – the presence of the *capitalist ethos*, embodied, like a Roman sculpture, by the figure of Benjamin Franklin.

Image 5: The Benjamin Franklin National Memorial. Source: The Franklin Institute

1.2 IDEAL TYPE A: *THE VERLEGER*

All theory is grey unless it builds upon practical experience.
- Fach-Zeitung Organ des Niederrheinischen Weber-Verbandes, July 16, 1899
(quote from the newspaper circulated by a German union of weavers in 1899)

Weber was one of the first to describe how individual choices – or narratives – recount as much about the morals of a person as about the character of the society in which this person lives. This extrapolation from the individual to the general is made possible by Weber's *ideal type* methodology: he identifies one 'man' who will behave according the most common traits. This man is not a real person, but rather a derivative of the most common attitudes and behaviours from a given time and place.

When Weber began his research at the cusp of the 20th Century, he was most interested in observing tiny, almost imperceptible – or presumably insignificant – changes in the ways people made their decisions, and how those small changes lead to larger decisions that affected the course of their everyday lives and the lives of others around them. Weber first employs the *ideal type* to describe a traditional type, who will encounter the everyday impact the onset of a new '*ethos*', typified by Franklin in what he would ultimately call 'the spirit of Capitalism'.

Weber realised that these decisions, made individually but on a grand scale, illustrated a scheme of social priorities within which one could perceive an overarching narrative. The process can be imagined as a series of concentric projections: from the small-scale narratives of individual lives, Weber would extract the *ideal type*, an iconic figure distilled from a 'historical reality' he represented but in which he never truly existed. The ideal type, like a symbolic node extracted from a network, would then be spun around to be positioned on the timeline of history, as a beacon or pawn of tradition, ready to confront the new ideals being promoted, in Weber's case, by the onset of modern capitalism. Clearly, sweeping assumptions are made within this methodology, and Weber readily concedes that his system was artificially simple

(1930: 98), and was, in a certain sense "doing violence to historical reality" (1930: 233, footnote). However, he insisted, precisely "because of the impossibility of drawing sharp boundaries" in historical reality, only an investigation of the ideas and behaviours "in their most consistent and logical forms" – *ie:* embodied by an *ideal type* – can allow one to understand their "specific importance" (ibid: 98). And so the "artificial simplicity of ideal types, […] at best but seldom be found in history" is nonetheless "absolutely necessary, in order to bring out the characteristic differences" of a cultural moment (1930: 233, footnote).

Weber's first mention of the ideal type in *The Protestant Ethic* comes in a footnote, in which he emphasises that his generalisations in the text "have not taken place in precisely the manner we have described", but, rather, are the result of a compilation of various accounts of "several cases known to me" (Weber 1930: 68), for the "purposes of illustration":

> The following picture has been put together as an ideal type from conditions found in different industrial branches and at different places. For the purposes of illustration which it here serves, it is of course of no consequence that the process has not in any one of the examples we have in mind taken place in precisely the manner we have described. (1930: 200)

The man Weber isolates as an *ideal type* in order to exemplify his observations is a *Verleger* (Weber 2004 [1904]: 87), or *putter-out* in Talcott Parsons' English translation (1930). The *Verleger* is a middleman in the Continental textile industry, a type who, by Weber's account, was a man of a comfortable existence. He worked "very moderate" hours – "perhaps five to six a day, sometimes considerably less" – and received moderate earnings, "enough to lead a respectable life and in good times to put away a little" (Weber 1930: 66-7). The *Verleger* is the symbol of the median man, the *traditional* man: he is an entrepreneur. Though he produces nothing himself, he provides a quintessential service, connecting production with purchaser, and charging a minimal fee for the effort. *Verlegen* in German means to change position,

or relocate, and in Weber's example, at least for the moment, the object being *verlegt* or traded is textiles: mostly linen, wool and cotton.

Weber the weaver describes the well-trodden narrative of the *Verleger*'s daily routine as follows:

> The peasants came with their cloth, often (in the case of linen) principally or entirely made from raw material which the peasant himself had produced, to the town in which the putter-out lived, and after a careful, often official, appraisal of the quality, received the customary price for it. (Weber 66)

The *Verleger*'s enterprise is utilised to illustrate what Weber calls *traditionalistic business*. "One must consider the spirit which animated the entrepreneur', writes Weber, of which he lists: 'the traditional manner of life, the traditional rate of profit, the traditional amount of work, the traditional manner of regulating the relationships with labour, and the essentially traditional circle of customers and the manner of attracting new ones." This spirit, and its roots in tradition, "dominated the conduct of the business" (1930: 67) and constituted more than simple set of rules, but rather an *ethos* common to the traditional business of, say, trading textiles.

Image 6: Close-up of denim fabric. Source: Mark Michaelis via *Flickr*.

1. 3 FREEDOM FROM TRADITION

In the early pages of *The Protestant Ethic,* Weber sets up the *ethos* of the *Verleger* so that we may now watch it be itself *verlegt*[5] or, as Weber puts it, be "suddenly destroyed". This specific moment, in which a traditional 'everyday' is irreparably ruptured, is what interested Weber most. The change is brought about not by transformations in the material sphere, such as mechanical or organisational advances but comes rather in the form of a new spirit – what Weber termed *ethos*:

> Now at some time this leisureliness was suddenly destroyed, and often entirely without any essential change in the form of organization, such as the transition to a unified factory, to mechanical weaving, etc. What happened was, on the contrary, often no more than this: some young man from one of the putting-out families went out into the country, carefully chose weavers for his employ, greatly increased the rigour of his supervision of their work, and thus turned them from peasants into labourers. (1930: 67)

The staging is theatrical: the arrival of a single man, a man animated by a 'new spirit'. The spirit, itself immaterial, and exemplified by this one man, takes immediate effect on the material world, affecting the lives of many. This young man enters the scene with Capitalism in tow, and Weber describes how a rigorous process of accelerated rationalisation triggered low prices and large turnover: "The old leisurely and comfortable attitude toward life gave way to a hard frugality" (1930: 69) Those who couldn't keep up had to go out of business. "Truly', writes Weber, 'what is here preached is not simply a means of making one's way in the world, but a peculiar ethic":

> The infraction of its rules is treated not as foolishness but as forgetfulness of duty. That is the essence of the matter. It is not mere business astuteness, that sort of thing is common enough, it is an *ethos*. This is the quality which interests us." (1930: 51)

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[5] *Verlegen* in German means to change position, or to relocate.

Whereas the traditional *Verleger* concerned himself with assessing and applying value to a certain form of material labour (the weaving of linen), the value of the *Verleger*'s immaterial labour, as an entrepreneur, is now too being assessed and *calculated*. The ambitious entrepreneurs who complied by transforming their everyday habits and indeed their values in order to participate in the new *ethos* were rewarded and "came to the top, because they did not wish to consume but to earn", whereas those who persisted in their routines and "wished to keep on with the old ways" were "forced to curtail their consumption." (69) Indeed the path of capitalism, as Weber observed it, seemed to either incorporate or entirely obliterate all alternate narratives. The quality of the *ethos* Weber describes in the above citation is one that infiltrates narratives with such vigour that an individual is put in a position of either rejection of compliance.

Writes Weber of this moment: "The ability to free oneself from the common tradition, a sort of liberal enlightenment, seems likely to be the most suitable basis for such a business man's success." (1930: 70) When referring to narratives, one might deduce that Weber is describing how the onset of the new ethos of capitalism has rendered the 'traditional' narratives of everyday wellbeing not only obsolete but detrimental to an individuals wellbeing. In noting the incompatibility of these two narratives, Weber finds himself suggesting that the 'ability to free oneself from the common tradition' is a form of 'enlightenment'.

1.3.1 A NEW FORM OF CONTROL

This freedom, however, is a conditional one, for, inevitably, all those who do not ascribe to its logic are penalized, and all those who attain the so-called freedom have indeed been captured by a more concealed but thereby more invasive form of control. In his own terms, Weber emphasized, how, despite appearances/assumptions to the contrary, "the emancipation from economic traditionalism" brought about by the Reformation "meant not the elimination of the Church's control over everyday life, but rather the substitution of a new form of control for the previous one." (1930: 36)

Thus the freedom from tradition, from the millennia-long golden grasp of the Church – with its narratives of humility and the one-way trajectory towards heaven – invited a new, more insipid, form of control, which slid into place within the subconscious motions of everyday life: the rationalist ethos of the Protestant Ethic.

> *Man, so long as he remains free, has no more constant and agonizing anxiety than to find as quickly as possible someone to worship. But man seeks only to worship what is incontestable, so incontestable, indeed, that all men at once agree to worship it all together.*
>
> – Ivan Karamazov's poem 'The Grand Inquisitor'
>
> (Dostoevsky, *The Brothers Karamazov* 1969[1880]: 297-8)

In the Brother Karamazov as well as in many of his other works, Dostoevsky concerns himself with individuals held captive by their own narratives of freedom. Ivan, the brother cited above, announces early in the novel in a world without God, "everything is permitted", but it is ultimately precisely this sentence that will haunt him and drive him to feverish hallucinations and madness. When Ivan's *Grand Inquisitor* declares that man is a weak and servile creature, easily controlled by "myth, miracle, and mystery," he is essentially describing Ivan, a man so convinced of his intellectual superiority that he ultimately becomes a slave to it.

1.3.2 THE FREEDOM TO WORSHIP: FOUCAULT'S *GOUVERNEMENTALITÉ*

In his lectures at the *Collège de France* towards the end of his life, the French philosopher Michel Foucault developed a theory that combined the structures of overt power "government-" with the idea of individual perceptions and narratives "-mentality". Foucault, much like Weber eighty years earlier, became interested in the moments in which an individual's self-conception, *techniques of the self* – of narrative – become integrated into structures of domination (Davidson 1986: 230). These contact points, where external and internal meet, are what Foucault ultimately called *gouvernementalité* (Oksala: 164).

Gouvernementalité according to Foucault described a structure of power particular to the modern state, which facilitates the paradoxical ability for control to be concealed in 'freedom'. In his lectures on *Biopower* (1978-1979) and on *The Government of Self and Others* (1982-1984), the principle elements that captivated Foucault were how *technologies of domination,* which had been the focus of his earlier studies, are necessarily interconnected with what he calls *technologies of the self*. Foucault's argument of *gouvernementalité* merges with our analysis of Weber because it acknowledges how the genealogy of narrative (what he terms *the subject*) in western civilisation emerges in points of overlap *at which the technologies of domination of individuals over one another* encounter *processes by which the individual acts upon himself*. This entire dissertation consists of an extended discussion of gouvernementalité and the intersection of technologies of domination and individual narratives. Our interest now, however, resides in how Foucault locates the emergence of gouvernementalité in conjunction with Weber's observations of the late 18th Century.

Foucault and Weber are rarely paired together; in fact, Foucault has been openly criticized for his 'francocentrism', with critics specifically targeting Foucault's ostensible indifference to the influence of Weber's historical sociology (Wehler 1998: 45–95). Indeed, in an interview in 1968, Foucault was intent on distancing himself from any suggestion of theoretical or methodological similarities between his work and that of Max Weber (El Kabbach, March 15 1968). In opposition to Weber, Foucault states he was 'uninterested in rationalization as a historical theme' and, besides, he 'saw no merit in ideal types' (*McKinley, Carter, Pezet 2012*) Foucault at the time was deep in the notoriously bleak period of *Discipline and Punish* (1975) and his focus, as he later himself admitted, was on the structures of domination rather than on the experience of the individual confined within the institutional grasp.

The indignation over Foucault's alleged 'francocentricism' is however unjustified if one is to follow the philosopher beyond the pillars of his most famous published works to the lectures he gave at the very end of his life. In the last five years before

his death, Foucault came to focus on the concept of *gouvernementalité*, which in a way was to form a bridge between his 'disciplinary moment' of the 1970s and a more nuanced, *human*-ised outlook. Foucault himself reflected that for many years he had paid too much attention to systems of domination and that he intended to redress this imbalance by researching how individuals increasingly came to govern themselves (Bonnafous-Boucher 2001). *Gouvernementalité* was thus a double manoeuvre of sorts, allowing Foucault to describe at once structures of domination over a population as a whole *as well as* the possibility of certain individualities.

1.3.3 TRADITION MEETS PHYSIOCRATS; FOUCAULT MEETS WEBER

It was at the same time of his shift towards thinking through the lens of gouvernementalité that Foucault recognized the close affinity between his work and the writings of Max Weber. All accounts point to the fact that Foucault first actively began reading Weber in 1978 (Colliot-Thélène 2009; McKinley, Carter, Pezet 2012), and some scholars go so far as to suggest that with Foucault's conception of gouvernementalité itself he acknowledged the overlap between his own and Weber's theoretical and historical work (Arpad Szakolczai 2000; Clegg 1994). In fact, the first documented instance of Foucault mentioning Max Weber's name is in his course on *The Birth of Biopolitics* in early 1979[6] (2008: 85), when Weber is brought up in relation to the discussion of economic gouvernementalité. Foucault, in describing the innovative legitimisation of political power made possible by contemporary economic gouvernementalité, privileges the case of German merchants, whereby his foregoing silence on Weber is overtly broken (Colliot-Thélène 2009: 184).

In tracing a genealogy of gouvernementalité, Foucault is influenced by what he articulates as Weber's "possibility of connecting up history with the economy" (2008: 121). With an assertively Weberian slant, Foucault begins by describing the shift

[6] On January 31 1979. Of the 12 courses given at the Collège de France under the heading *Naissance de la biopolitique*, 4 are dedicated to German neo-liberalism (the seminars given on January 31 and the 7th, 14th and 21st of February 1979.

between traditional mercantilists and the *physiocrats* who rose to power in the late 18th Century[7]. In contrast to the repressive nature of the mercantilist state, in which the king, like Weber's pre-Reformation Church, dominated visibly and directly with protectionist laws and tariffs, the *physiocratic* state preferred instead to manipulate the practices of the producers without actively suppressing or prohibiting certain activities. Physiocrats thereby granted the economic producers of the late 18th Century a certain freedom and flexibility, under the presumption that people will act 'rationally', and in a way that is ultimately best for the king, or the *raison d'État*. This very early kind of neo-liberalism is where Foucault locates an explicit practice of *gouvernementalité*, a state of government that is no longer defined by the surface occupied, but by the mass of people (Poster 2009):

> The first political economy was, of course, that of the physiocrats […] [who] concluded that political power must be a power without external limitation, without external counterbalance, and without any bounds other than those arising from itself (Foucault 2008: 14)

Whereas in the *disciplinary* power tries to dominate chance and eradicate deviation through state monopoly and rigid planning, in *gouvernementalité* Foucault finds that power may bow to chance. Chance is far from irrational; a closer look shows how what may be called 'chance' instead charts the sway of power outside the visible grasp of institutions. In this sense, *gouvernementalité* brings Foucault very close to Max Weber's attention on processes of 'rationalization' and his concern for the ways that individuals govern themselves.

Both Weber and Foucault are interested in how in the late 18th Century, power was suddenly no longer univocal and unambiguous, and no longer located in a specific place or limited to physical architectures. Modern power, as described by the Protestant Ethic and gouvernementalité, relies instead on the much more pervasive discursive mechanisms and *knowledges* that shape a population's everyday lives. For

[7] See G. Weulersse, *Le Mouvement physiocratique en France, de 1756 à 1770*, in two volumes (Paris: Félix Alcan, 1910) vol. 1, pp. 17–18

Foucault, as for Weber, this type of 'administrative' power is not of secondary importance but essential to the 'successes' and 'failures' of disciplinary institutions and societies (McKinley, Carter, Pezet 2012).

Foucault's lectures on *gouvernementalité* at the Collège de France insisted that power, no longer about the prohibition of certain actions or unequivocal state monopoly, was instead engaged in the production of new forms of identity. Such a reading requires a deliberate distancing from Foucault's infamously dystopian imagery and his seemingly insistent gloomy prognosis for any form of resistance. Recent Anglophone scholarship, much of which has only been made possible since the English translation of the *Governement of Self and Others* into English in 2011, finds that much of this criticism was misplaced: "only the most literal of readings would look for the existence of the perfect Panopticon as the only way of validating Foucault" (McKinley, Carter, Pezet 2012). In fact, on the issue of subjectivity, Foucault's views are utterly conventional, and, coincidentally, in line with the broad traits of Ricoeur's narrative theory. According to Foucault, the individual actively constructs his identity using his experience and accessible cultural symbols, all within the constraints 'imposed on him by his culture, his society and his social group' (Foucault 1994: 11). In other words, individual narrative is formulated within a framework of possibilities allocated by the current social *ethos*.

1.3.4 *DISPOSITIFS*

We can at this point begin to compare Weber's *ethos* with Foucault's notion of *dispositif*. Although this concept has been translated into many terms, the essence of the dispositif is any apparatus, writes Agamben, that " has in some way the capacity to capture, orient, determine, intercept, model, control, or secure the gestures, behaviors, opinions, or discourses of living beings." (2009: 14). Thus a dispositif (or apparatus) refers not only to the institutions identified in Foucault's early works - the prisons, schools, factories (whose connections with Power, Agamben notes, is "in a certain sense evident" (ibid.)) - but also power exists also in the menial tools of every day life:

> the pen, writing, literature, philosophy, agriculture, cigarettes, navigation, computers, cellular telephones and - why not - language itself, which is perhaps the most ancient of apparatuses - one in which thousands and thousands of years ago a primate inadvertently let himself be captured, probably without realizing the consequences that he was about to face.

In an interview in 1977, Foucault describes the *dispositif* as "a particular discourse" that can "figure at one time as the programme of an institution, and at another it can function as a means of justifying or masking a practice which itself remains silent." (Gordon 1980: 194) The space in which the dispositif of power is disguised in the every day - in language itself - is the space that drives Ivan Karamazov to feverish madness, but it is also the space of the individual's compulsion to embody the *Protestant Ethic*.

1. 4 CAPTURE

1.4.1 THE WASP AND THE ORCHID

The catch 22 of the complicated *freedom* described by Weber's Protestant Ethic and expanded upon by Foucault's *gouvernementalité* and *dispositif* becomes anchored in the concept of *capture*, as elaborated by Deleuze and Guattari. Capture, in the simplest sense, is the mode by which individuals "enter into variable rapports in which they are thereby transformed" (1980: 17). Without slipping into connotations of good and bad, the idea is simply that one entity or individual's 'narrative' merges with another interest and thereby is adapted to fulfil a function in a greater (often invisible) structure. The example used by Deleuze and Guattari is of the symbiotic relationship of the wasp and the orchid. The wasp (*série animale*) is 'captured' by the appearance of the orchid (*série végétale*) and assumes the function of its reproductive organ (1980: 17).

Image 7: *Chiloglottis Trilabra*, or the "Long Clubbed Wasp Orchid". *Pseudocopulation series*, by artist Renée Antoinette Fox. Source: www.theloftatlizs.com

The symbiosis results in the orchid *becoming wasp*, visually, in that it optically mimics the symbols that instinctively attract the wasp. The orchid, complete with iridescent 'wings' and a furry 'bottom' becomes the female wasp. The wasp too *becomes orchid* in that it, albeit unconsciously, becomes an essential element in the orchid's reproductive process. What concerns us with relation to Weber, is the necessary presence of *mimesis* in the process of capture. For mimesis, is also integral to Ricoeur's conception of narrative. And so capture and narrative meet in the point of transformation, in which the self incorporates elements of another self and is thereby altered. Capture is the moment *ethos* trickles into the individual narratives – often so subtly that the individuals believe the narratives are purely (and most freely) their own.

1.4.2 PIECE-RATES: THE *APPARATUS OF CAPTURE* MADE VISIBLE

In relation to Weber's *Verleger*, this capture of narrative is best illustrated in the example of the raised piece-rates. Weber observes a subtle shift in behaviour with radical consequences, in which the *apparatus of capture* makes itself visible to the discerning eye. He begins by describing a traditional situation in which employers in factories attempted to introduce a piece-rate system that provided monetary incentives

for faster and more efficient production. Weber writes how up until the turn of the century "a peculiar difficulty has been met with surprising frequency":

> Raising the piece-rates has often had the result that not more but less has been accomplished in the same time, because the worker reacted to the increase not by increasing but by decreasing the amount of his work. A man, for instance, who at the rate of 1 mark per acre mowed 2½ acres per day and earned 2½ marks, when the rate was raised to 1'25 marks per acre mowed, not 3 acres, as he might easily have done, thus earning 3'75 marks, but only 2 acres, so that he could still earn the 2½ marks to which he was accustomed (1930: 56).

Within the traditional work ethic, a higher piece-rate led to less work: within a shorter period of time, employees would earn the amount of money necessary to fulfil the needs of their lifestyle – and they would go home, preferring leisure activities over longer hours and better pay. As Weber explains, "the opportunity of earning more appealed to him less than the idea of working less."

Weber describes the principle narrative of the pre-capitalist *ethos* as the *wish simply to live, and to live as [one has] been accustomed and to earn as much as is required to do so* (1930: 60). With the exception of an accepted and impermeable elite of monarchs, aristocrats, tyrants, and clergy, this simple wish has arguably been consistent for most of humanity since the beginning of civilization. Foucault situates this moment in the 19th Century as a narrative rupture in which classicism cedes way to *modernity*. Whereas classical thought was concerned with the relationship between name and order, modern thought instead investigates the relationship between the meaning and the form of truth and the form of being (Foucault, *Les mots et les choses*. 1966: VII)

Deleuze and Guattari describe this process of 'naming' as *capture*. For example, *la terre*, or land, in an uncaptured state exists simply as 'territory' (*territoire)*. The processes of comparing and appropriating plots of land are described by Deleuze and Guattari as *apparatuses of capture*: their application, first of the comparison, and then

of the monopolising appropriation and the application of *rentes* (annuities), effectively *captures* the territory and converts it into a stockable entity: *territory* becomes *land*, becomes *property*. (1980: 552) Following an analogous process, an *activity* is captured into *work* by the intension of comparing activities (and ultimately, each activity's *value*). *Work* is then captured by 'overwork' (le *surtravail)*. This in particular is interesting in Weber's example. As Deleuze and Guattari describe, *overwork* presupposes *work*, in the sense that it is not that overwork exceeds work, but rather, on the contrary, that work is *deducted* from overwork (1980: 551). The option for overwork seems to come into existence in the moment Weber describes, in an unprecedented way that leaves every worker bound to its very possibility. "Where capitalistic acquisition is rationally pursued', writes Weber, 'action is adjusted to calculations in terms of capital" (1930:18). Just as *territoire* when measured becomes *terre*, activity when subjected to 'capitalistic calculation' becomes *work* (= *overwork* - n).

1.4.3 A VITAL FORCE

The wasp and the orchid enter into a symbiosis of which neither is deliberately aware. And yet any evolutionary biologist would emphasise that their instincts are propelled by an overarching vital force, *Life* itself, that has dictated an elaborate system of capture in which both parties benefit from their concession to – or their partially *becoming* – the other. Let's embrace the metaphor further by extrapolating onto the above example. The workers in the factory, much like the wasp, are drawn to the factory by a simple mechanism of survival: the wasp is drawn to the orchid because they wish to reproduce[8] and the men search a living wage. At this stage *capture* has however not yet taken place; in the setting described by Weber as 'traditional' there has been no significant transformation in the *Wesen* (or nature) of either the factory or the worker. *Capture* occurs at the moment in which the workers, like he wasp, perform a new process, namely the process of *overwork*. No longer seeking simply to maintain the traditional narrative of 'simply to live, the workers are drawn into new

[8] Wasps do not pollinate flowers the way bees do: they do not rely on pollen for nourishment.

behaviours, activated by symbols which it recognises as exciting: the markings on the orchid simulate stimulation – and although the expected stimulation is never provided, indeed the orchid is only optically a female wasp. Still, activity is provoked –indeed the male wasps engage even more voraciously in fornication in the presence of orchids, often even 'mating' with one another in a frantic and confused mass (Attenborough, BBC Wildlife via Youtube). The workers too, stimulated by 'possibility' become functional elements in the reproductive process of the factory, not only in the sense of material production, which inevitably increases, but in the reproduction of the ethos of overwork. The vital force of *Life* that activates the wasp is similar to the motivating force of capitalism, and particularly to the new narrative of *pursuit*.

Weber noticed, at first wordlessly, this *capture* of tradition by a new narrative of pursuit of profit. He noted how, above all other values, work itself quickly rose to a position of significance for a person's sense of dignity, or *ethos* – this is when he began writing. Workers, he observed, would now work longer hours when the piece rate was raised. Though each worker was taking these decisions individually, and seemingly autonomously, Weber was describing the seminal shift in the collective narrative, for which these small decisions had become a symptom. As Foucault would later note, ways of thinking about the individual are not – and cannot – be confined to specific institutions. The ideas of the activated labourer are quickly echoed in the savvy consumer, in the empowered citizen. Moreover, the practices used to mobilize, measure and manage each of these types – be it the labourer, the citizen, or the consumer – have similar incentives in which centralized top-down control is either absent or blatantly 'withdrawn'. And yet people behave with such predictable homogeneity that is would seem that they were responding to a common force, visible or not.

The withdrawal of the material apparatus of power does in no way exclude power's presence. Foucault has spent the last years of his life emphasising this point, buffeted in part by Weber's very similar impulse three-quarters of century beforehand. Foucault's *gouvernementalité* operates within a process of capture just as *overwork*

casts its long shadow over *work*, and the 'freedom' to *become capitalist* is also a freedom that presents no alternatives.

1.5 INTERMISSION: TEXTILES

In *The Statesman*, a late work of the Greek philosopher Plato, the metaphor of weaving is utilised to make the unknown processes of politics visible. The dialogue reproduces a fictional conversation between an unnamed "Stranger" and a young philosopher named Socrates. The question at stake is what constitutes the task of true statesmanship, and as a model, the Stranger evokes the analogy of wool weaving– "*What model is there which is small, and yet has any analogy with the political occupation? Suppose, Socrates, that if we have no other example at hand, we choose weaving, or, more precisely, weaving of wool."* The Stranger emphasizes the many precise tools and the many stages of transforming raw wool into a woven fabric, this he equates to the various 'arts'. The resounding idea is that a society is comprised of many components and people, all of which necessary to a degree, but all requiring the steady indefatigable hand of a statesman: one who sees the best for all, although they themselves are not necessarily privy to this knowledge.

THE STATESMAN

By Plato

Translated by Benjamin Jowett

(excerpt)

STRANGER: (…) Please do answer me a question.

YOUNG SOCRATES: What question?

STRANGER: There is such a thing as learning music or handicraft arts in general?

YOUNG SOCRATES: There is.

STRANGER: And is there any higher art or science, having power to decide which of these arts are and are not to be learned;—what do you say?

YOUNG SOCRATES: I should answer that there is.

STRANGER: And do we acknowledge this science to be different from the others?

YOUNG SOCRATES: Yes.

STRANGER: And ought the other sciences to be superior to this, or no single science to any other? Or ought this science to be the overseer and governor of all the others?

YOUNG SOCRATES: The latter.

STRANGER: You mean to say that the science which judges whether we ought to learn or not, must be superior to the science which is learned or which teaches?

YOUNG SOCRATES: Far superior.

STRANGER: And the science which determines whether we ought to persuade or not, must be superior to the science which is able to persuade?

YOUNG SOCRATES: Of course.

STRANGER: Very good; and to what science do we assign the power of persuading a multitude by a pleasing tale and not by teaching?

YOUNG SOCRATES: That power, I think, must clearly be assigned to rhetoric.

STRANGER: And to what science do we give the power of determining whether we are to employ persuasion or force towards any one, or to refrain altogether?

YOUNG SOCRATES: To that science which governs the arts of speech and persuasion.

STRANGER: Which, if I am not mistaken, will be politics?

YOUNG SOCRATES: Very good.

(…)

STRANGER: The review of all these sciences shows that none of them is political or royal. For the truly royal ought not itself to act, but to rule over those who are able to act; the king ought to know what is and what is not a fitting opportunity for taking the initiative in matters of the greatest importance, whilst others should execute his orders.

YOUNG SOCRATES: True.

STRANGER: And, therefore, the arts which we have described, as they have no authority over themselves or one another, but are each of them concerned with some special action of their own, have, as they ought to have, special names corresponding to their several actions.

YOUNG SOCRATES: I agree.

STRANGER: And the science which is over them all, and has charge of the laws, and of all matters affecting the State, and truly weaves them all into one, if we would describe under a name characteristic of their common nature, most truly we may call politics.

YOUNG SOCRATES: Exactly so.

STRANGER: Then, now that we have discovered the various classes in a State, shall I analyse politics after the pattern which weaving supplied?

YOUNG SOCRATES: I greatly wish that you would.

STRANGER: Then I must describe the nature of the royal web, and show how the various threads are woven into one piece.

YOUNG SOCRATES: Clearly.

(…)

The art of the true statesman is equated with the art of weaving. For Plato, the optimal statesman rules as an educator, and governs based on scientific principles and findings. His philosophical knowledge enables him to optimally "weave together" conflicting elements of human nature such as courage and prudence. This creates a balanced and harmonious blend, and harmful biases are avoided. The *fabric of society*.

Deleuze and Guattari reference Plato in their discussion of the woven elements of a political state: "Was it not these characteristics', they write, referring to the warp and the woof, 'that enabled Plato to use the model of weaving as the paradigm for "royal science," in other words, the art of governing people or operating the State apparatus?" (1987: 475)

In antithesis to the structure of the striated space of the woven textile, Deleuze and Guattari propose the tangled and infinitely expansive space of felt, which in itself contains no restrictions to dimensions, and no structuring elements per-se. Plato also poses this contrast – naming *carding* as the opposite of *weaving* wool.

STRANGER: Yes, my boy, but that is not all; for the first process to which the material is subjected is the opposite of weaving.

YOUNG SOCRATES: How so?

STRANGER: Weaving is a sort of uniting?

YOUNG SOCRATES: Yes.

STRANGER: But the first process is a separation of the clotted and matted fibres?

YOUNG SOCRATES: What do you mean?

STRANGER: I mean the work of the carder's art; for we cannot say that carding is weaving, or that the carder is a weaver.

YOUNG SOCRATES: Certainly not.

Plato, for all his emphasis on weaving as the 'royal art', acknowledges that the material must first be subjected to a process that is 'the opposite of weaving'. Carding is integral to the finished textile – and with that thought in mind we can enter into Deleuze and Guattari's space, which recognises the organic interchange, the 'dissymetric necessity' that exists between smooth and striated spaces. In this precise tumbling of one over the other, in a way, lies their beauty. *Nous retrouvons toujours une nécessité dissymtérique, de passer du lisse au strié, comme du strié au lisse* (1980: 606). Each space is indispensible to the other: the smooth inspires the 'royal science' of the striated, whereas inversely the 'metric of striated spaces' is indispensible for translating the strange occurrences that take place in the multiplicity of the smooth. (ibid.) In fact, towards the very end of *Mille Plateaux*, the authors concede that perhaps 'all progress is achieved by and within the striated space' (1980: 607, my translation):

> Nothing is ever done with: smooth space allows itself to be striated, and striated space reimparts a smooth space, with potentially very different values, scope, and signs. Perhaps we must say that all progress is made by and in striated space, but all becoming occurs in smooth space. (1987 (*Massumi translation*): 486)

It is arguable that Progress itself, Pursuit – all the principle elements of Weber's observations – can effectively only exist in a striated space. Progress has no language

in a smooth space, a smooth space is comparable to the traditional lifestyle describes by Weber, it exists without comparison, without longing, without measure.

1.6 PURSUIT: SEEKING PROFIT *RATIONALLY*

1.6.1 CAPITAL BECOMES CAPITAL*ISM*

Foucault's lectures mark a distinct contrast to Plato's Statesman, for Foucault sought to discuss *gouvernementalité* (the ways governing is conceptualized) whereas Plato was concerned with the process of govern*ing*, or the practices of rule (McKinley, Carter, Pezet 2012: 9, emphasis in original). Foucault differs from Weber in that he is studying concepts, not practices in action (Foucault 2008). Though Weber puts more emphasis than most structuralist sociologists on the importance of human consciousness and subjectivity, he does not make this the focus of his research. He thereby straddles this division by both practicing an exceptional attentiveness to case studies and empirical observation, through which he derives his *ideal types*, but also by extrapolation his findings into a *mentality*, or an ethos – or, a narrative.

Weberian scholars most commonly summarize this narrative as 'rationalisation'. Though there is much ongoing debate on whether Foucault espouses or patently rejects Weber's concern with 'rationalisation and objectification as the essential trend of our culture and the most important problem of our time' (Dreyfus and Rabinow 1982: 166). In essence, Colin Gordon (1987) argues that Weber is ultimately 'as innocent as Foucault' of what he terms the so-called Weberianism that followed after the publication of the *Protestant Ethic*: a scholarly process that has tended to adopt 'a uniform, monolithic conception of historical phenomenal of rationalisation' (Lash and Whimster, eds. 1987: 293). And so backing away from such risky generalisations, the process of 'rationalisation' is described by a new narrative according to which man is not only "dominated by the making of money, by acquisition as the ultimate purpose of his life" (1930: 53), but that these acquisitive instincts follow – or are even justified – by a certain rational process, applied widely to individual lives and impulses.

This rationalisation, in the context of the pursuit of profit, is Weber's focus, and is where capital becomes capital*ism*: an ethos. Weber describes this distinction himself, writing that "the notion that our rationalistic and capitalistic age is characterised by a stronger economic interest than other periods is childish." (Weber, *General Economic History*, trans. Frank H. Knight, 1927: 355-6.) He makes the comparison between the "moving spirits of modern capitalism" and an Oriental trader, convinced that neither is possessed of a stronger economic impulse" than the other. But the oriental trader, like 'such men as Cortes and Pizarro', who are, according to Weber, the 'strongest embodiment' of 'the unchaining of the economic interest', inhabit an orgiastic and irrational space of wealth accumulation and are "far from having an idea of a rationalistic economic life." (Weber 1927: 355-6.)

What is new is not the pursuit of profit, per se, but the process of its rationalisation. For example, "The technical basis of our architecture came from the Orient', writes Weber, 'but the Orient lacked that solution of the problem of the dome and that type of classic rationalization of all art—in painting by the rational utilization of lines and spatial perspective—which the Renaissance created for us." (Weber 1930: 15) Weber continues with examples of the printing press in China, universities in Islamic countries, all who pre-existed and indeed inspired the Western model, but who ultimately lacked a "rational, systematic, and specialized pursuit of science, with trained and specialized personnel" the kind that now has 'a dominant place in our culture' (1930: 15-16)

Weber's English translator, Talcott Parsons, a tutor in economics at Harvard University, explains Weber's use of the word *Rationalismus* as 'a term of art', used to "describe an economic system based not on custom or tradition, but on the deliberate and systematic adjustment of economic means to the attainment of the objective of pecuniary profit." (1930: Foreword) The burning question for Weber, writes Parsons, "is why this temper triumphed over the conventional attitude which had regarded the *appetitus divitiarum infinitus* — 'the unlimited lust for gain'— as anti-social and immoral." (1930: Foreword). Weber himself prefaces his in-depth description of 'The

Spirit of Capitalism' with a short chapter in which he addresses exactly this puzzling contrast:

> Rationalism is an historical concept which covers a whole world of different things. It will be our task to find out whose intellectual child the particular concrete form of rational thought was, from which the idea of a calling and the devotion to labour in the calling has grown, which is, as we have seen, **so irrational** from the standpoint of purely eudaemonistic self-interest, but which has been and still is one of the most characteristic elements of our capitalistic culture. (1930: 78, emphasis my own)

1.6.2 IRRATIONAL RATIONALITY

Weber's fascination with 'rationalisation' comes from the observation of how a process which, within itself, is entirely rational can, when placed in a historical context, represent an entirely *irrational* break not only from tradition but from behaviour condoned as socially acceptable. For Weber, the approach to work "as if [it] were an absolute end in itself . . . is not inherently given in the nature of the species." (Kalberg, *Translators Introduction* to Weber 2001: xx). "In fact', he writes, 'the *summum bonum* of this ethic" ie: 'the earning of more and more money',

> is thought of so purely as an end in itself, that from the point of view of the happiness of, or utility to, the single individual, it appears entirely transcendental and absolutely irrational. Man is dominated by the making of money, by acquisition as the ultimate purpose of his life. Economic acquisition is no longer subordinated to man as the means for the satisfaction of his material needs. This reversal of what we should call the natural relationship, so irrational from a naive point of view, is evidently as definitely a leading principle of capitalism as it is foreign to all peoples not under capitalistic influence. (1930: 53)

The spirit Weber describes is indeed so foreign to 'traditional' man that it "would both in ancient times and in the Middle Ages have been proscribed as the lowest sort of avarice and as an attitude entirely lacking in self respect" (1930: 56). How then,

asks Weber, was this 'child' conceived? Which unlikely permutation has bread the capitalistic spirit? Foucault in his later years was fascinated most by precisely this aspect of Weber's analysis, what he called 'Weber's problem'. Spoke Foucault on February 7th 1979:

> Max Weber's problem, and the problem he introduced into German sociological, economic, and political reflection at the same time, is not so much the contradictory logic of capital as the problem of the irrational rationality of capitalist society. (2008: 105)

In the early Twentieth Century Weber functioned as the person who, according to Foucault, 'displaced Marx's problem'. If Marx had tried to define and analyze the 'contradictory logic' of capital, Weber instead described the 'movement from capital to capital*ism*'. With the added *–ism* to capital, the puzzling contradictions remain and, in Weber, an *ethos* (or *dispositif*) is added to trump them all. This ethos, because it was rational, also had 'rational' goals, and therefore can be traces as a motion, or a *vector*, which locates the individual in a trajectory of improvement and accumulation. Quite distinctly, both Foucault's physiocrats, and Weber's description of Benjamin Franklin point towards a belief that up until the late 18th century had been far from accessible to the average man: the idea of progress. Says Foucault, this idea of progress is a fundamental narrative in liberalism and it and completely overturns traditional narratives of European equilibrium (2008: 55):

> With this conception of the physiocrats and Adam Smith we leave behind a conception of the economic game as a zero sum game. (…) In other words, we are invited to a globalization of the market when it is laid down as a principle, and an objective, that the enrichment of Europe must be brought about as a collective and unlimited enrichment, and not through the enrichment of some and the impoverishment of others. The unlimited character of the economic development of Europe, and the consequent existence of a non-zero sum game, entails, of course, that the whole world is summoned around Europe to exchange its own and Europe's products in the European market. (2008: 55)

What Foucault describes as a 'non-zero sum game' was, at least seen from Weber's perspective, as a belief in *progress*. The 'lowest form of avarice' is substituted by an avarice available to all: in the moment Weber describes, the zero-sum game seems to have been superseded, meaning that one man's gains are not necessarily at the expense of another. Weber firmly believed that capitalism, as it becomes consolidated and bureaucratized, is an equalising force: class struggle is reduced. It is important here to realise that Weber's definition of class is derived from a person's economic position in society, based both on birth but also – and this is where progress becomes a factor – on 'individual achievement'.

1.6.3 THE PURSUIT OF PROGRESS

This fundamental belief in progress, the accessibility of the 'American Dream' to all is a good place to take hold. Up until now we've been tracing narratives backwards, in contrast to the *ideal type A* (the *Verleger*), contrasting the spirit observed in Weber's contemporaries to the 'traditional ethos'. Progress, as a concept, is inevitably forward-looking: it places the past, if not in an unfavourable position, at least in a position that must be overcome, or improved.

In a sense what has happened with 'rationalisation' is another form of *capture*, a temporal capture which transforms an individual life into a *narrative*. Just as a territory becomes a plot of property once its spatial dimensions are measured and quantified, work becomes an 'absolute end in itself'. It is a capture that places life on a timeline, transferring experience from the passive into a vectorial space, one in which the individual gains agency. And this change, as Weber painstakingly explains, is not simply called forth by the magnetic pull of high or low wages; it is rather the product of a long and continuous process of education and socialization (2001: xx). What is taught is the application of a lexicon of symbols, such a time, profit, which striate passive experience into a sense of rationalised control. The French word, *to teach*, as Deleuze and Guattari rightfully point out, is the word *enseigner* (1987:76) – to in-*sign*. The onset of these new signs replace the symbolic magic that had until then inhabited the realm of Christian faith. The rationalization of the world, writes Weber,

implies the elimination of magic as a means to salvation (1930: 117). As Weber notes in his “Prefatory Remarks” essay, “magical and religious powers, and the ethical notions of duty based on them, have been in the past among the most formative influences upon the way life has been organised.” This influence has largely been to ‘inhibit the unfolding of this organised life’, whereas the origin of economic rationalism "depends not only on an advanced development of technology and law but also on the capacity and disposition of persons to *organize their lives* in a practical-rational manner." (2002: 160, emphasis in original)

1. 7 IDEAL TYPE B: BENJAMIN FRANKLIN

Close-up of Benjamin Franklin on the US 100 Dollar Bill

1.7.1 *NECESSARY HINTS TO THOSE THAT WOULD BE RICH*

Individual agency is invoked, alongside the eradication of otherworldly powers on human fate – progress and pursuit become the mantras for anchoring the individual in the rational and economic fabric of the earthly world, and a new *ideal type* emerges. In describing this spirit, Weber draws heavily from Benjamin Franklin’s autobiography, a man who in Weber’s mind is an exemplary representation of a secularized every day ethic, which up until that moment could not be defined in a single social philosophical concept or *Begriff* (term). Franklin, a printer, inventor, entrepreneur, businessman, and statesman, embodied, according to Weber, the

essence of the *ethos*, and becomes an ideal type to concretize Weber's until-then wordless concept. It is in the maxims of Franklin that the spirit of bourgeois capitalism finds 'its naïvest and most lucid expression.' (1930: Foreword)

Weber quotes expansively from Franklin's texts *Necessary Hints to Those That Would Be Rich* (written 1736) and *Advice to a Young Tradesman* (1748), introducing them as "a document of that spirit which contains what we are looking for in almost classical purity, and at the same time has the advantage of being free from all direct relationship to religion, being thus, for our purposes free of preconceptions" (1930: 48). The first line Weber quotes from Franklin is "Remember, that *time* is money." (emphasis in original, quoted from *Advice to a Young Tradesman* (1748, Sparks edition, II: 87):

> He that idly loses five shillings' worth of time, loses five shillings, and might as prudently throw five shillings into the sea. He that loses five shillings, not only loses that sum, but all the advantage that might be made by turning it in dealing, which by the time that a young man becomes old, will amount to a considerable sum of money. - Franklin, from *Necessary Hints to Those That Would Be Rich* (1736, Works, Sparks edition, II: 80).

As Ricoeur describes in narrative theory *Mimesis 1*, "actions imply goals" (1984: 55): and in this case these new actions implied goals that had previously not existed, goals that prescribed the pursuit of profit not only as a end in itself but as an ethical duty. In short, this is what Weber in 1904 termed "the spirit of (modern) capitalism: an attitude which seeks profit rationally" (1930: 64). Franklin not only wrote treatises that mapped out the symbols and logic of the pursuit of profit, he literally placed his goals on the map – by founding a country on the basis of his beliefs, and by turning the 'imagination of a whole people' towards capitalism's 'purely quantitative bigness'. (Weber 1930: 70-71)

Plato's royal art of weaving returns here: we have a continent of disparate people with disparate pasts, of which the main uniting feature is their collective abandonment of

the narratives of past and tradition they left behind on the 'old continent'. America represents the future, whereas Europe, weighed down by history, has its gaze fixated on the past.

1.7.2 "AMERIKA, DU HAST ES BESSER"

In 1827, the aging Goethe wrote a poem in elegy to the continent of America, which Mumford Jones points out is more remarkable for its content than for it's artistic worth (Mumford Jones 1974: 198):

> Amerika, du hast es besser
> Als unser Kontinent, das alte
> Hast keine verfallene Schlösser
> Und keine Basalte.
>
> Dich stört sich nicht im Innern,
> Zu lebendiger Zeit,
> Unnützes Errinern
> Und vergeblicher Streit.
>
> Benutzt die Gegenwart mit Glück!
> Und wenn nun eure Kiner dichten,
> Bewahre sie ein gut Geschick
> Vor Ritter-, Räuber- und Gespenstergeschichten.[9]

The history of man, writes Mumford Jones (1974), has always been inhabited by either or both of two imaginaries: a paradise lost in the past, or a golden age to come. At the time of Weber's writing, America, a land without history, promised the later in

[9] America, you have things better than does our aged continent; you have no ruined castles and no basalt rocks; you are not inwardly troubled in the present age by useless memories and futile conflict. Employ the present time and its happy state! And if your offspring write anything, shield them from any move towards tales of knights, brigands and ghosts. (translation: Mumford Jones; source: *Wendts Musen-Almanach* (1831))

dimensions and flourishes formidably unforeseen. The term itself 'The New World', implied a place where man could begin again.

In a sense, *America*, as a concept rather than an political entity, presents the ideal canvas for Ricoeur's narrative 'emplotment' on a large scale. As per Ricoeur's description, a person narrates their life by gathering the scattered events, actions, goals, causes, and desires of his life into one meaningful story. The configuration of this story is the activity of emplotment. It is a way of imitating our actions with the hope of grasping them as a meaningful whole. Understanding these seemingly disconnected events is by means of the plot. (Ricoeur 1992):

> The plot of a narrative is comparable to this predicative assimilation. It "grasps together" and integrates into one whole and complete story multiple and scattered events, thereby schematizing the intelligible signification attached to the narrative taken as a whole. (Ricoeur 1984: x)

If, as Weber predicted, the American spirit was to dominate the future, Franklin's new country in its early days has the bold task of choosing its philosophy and outlining the country's *plot*. Their goals and aspirations were compiles into a document and signed as a declaration, in which Franklin's *ideal type* ideology is concretized in perhaps the most pervasive narrative of the past two centuries: *the right to life, liberty and the pursuit of property*[10].

1.7.3 LIFE, LIBERTY, AND THE PURSUIT OF PROPERTY

Property was the pursuit signed by Franklin in the original version of the Declaration of Independence in the summer of 1776, though at Franklin and Thomas Jefferson's

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[10] The first draft of the Declaration of Independence contains this phrase, inspired by John Locke's notion of property, composed by George Mason, and signed by Benjamin Franklin (whose autobiography Weber quotes at length) in June 1776. The phrase was changed to 'pursuit of happiness' before being signed on July 4th 1776. (Source: "The Declaration of Independence: Rough Draft" USHistory.org)

insistence the declaration was later changed to today's version: life, liberty and the pursuit of *happiness*. There has since been much bickering over the interchangeability of these two words, and in her work *On Revolution*, Hannah Arendt dedicates a chapter to deciphering what this word choice might indeed have meant.

Arendt points to the fact that the success of America's revolution and the foundation of a new body politic "to assure the survival of the spirit out of which the act of foundation sprang" was "frustrated almost from the beginning" (1963: 126). She suggests that the forces that caused this failure might be found precisely in the substitution of term 'pursuit of happiness' over of the original 'property'. But her focus is not, as many others (FIND EXAMPLES), on the complicated correlation of the concepts of *property* and *happiness*. "What makes Jefferson's substitution of terms so suggestive', writes Arendt, 'is that he did not use the term 'public happiness', which we find so frequently in the political literature of the time." (1963: 127). The difference between the British concept of 'public happiness' and the abridged American version lies precisely in their geographic location; whereas the notion of 'public happiness' was unequivocally understood at the time as synonymous with 'public good', the shortened version, in actively eliminating the term 'public' had the elastic quality of flinging the pursuit of happiness deep into the realm of the 'private'.

Americans at the time were just as perplexed as she suggested Jefferson had been by the forking possibilities contained within the common concept of 'happiness':

> How felicitous Jefferson's pen was may be seen by the fact that his newly found 'right' came to be included in 'approximately two-thirds of the state constitutions between 1776 to 1902', regardless of the fact that, then as now, it was 'by no means easy to know what either Jefferson or the committee meant by the pursuit of happiness.' (from James Madison in *The Federalist, no. 14*, cited in Arendt 1963: 295)

Though the chances are, Arendt concludes, that "Jefferson himself was not very sure in his own mind which kind of happiness he meant when he made its pursuit one of

the inalienable rights of man", (On 1963: 127) "Jefferson's new formula was almost immediately deprived of its double sense and understood as the right of citizens to pursue their personal interests and thus to act according to the rules of private self-interest." (1963: 135) And these rules, notes Arendt, whether they spring from dark desires of the heart or from the obscure necessities of the household, have never been notably 'enlightened'.

The initial confusion has since been refracted by the successive generations who for the past two centuries have been free to understand by it what they pleased. Certainly none of the founding fathers could have gauged the astonishing contribution this 'pursuit of happiness' would have on what Weber and Arendt (among countless others) have identified as a specifically American ideology. Arendt speculates that had Robespierre lived to watch the development of the new government of the United States, his doubts might still have been confirmed. He would have observed how the emphasis shifted almost at once "from a share in public affairs for the sake of public happiness, to a guarantee that the pursuit of private happiness would be protected and furthered by public power." (1963: 135)

> "The right to pursue happiness in America had as it were, grown up in a fit of absence of mind", which ultimately held that men were entitled to "the ghastly privilege of pursuing a phantom and embracing a delusion."
>
> *- Howard Mumford Jones*

Arendt, in comparing the French and the American Revolutions comes to the conclusion that their profound difference lies in the fact that the United States as a country "was never overwhelmed by poverty" (1963: 137) and therefore was overcome by 'the fatal passion for sudden riches' (ibid: 139) and that this particular pursuit of happiness, has, in the words of Judge Pendleton, always tended 'to extinguish every sentiment of political and moral duty'" (1963: 138)

1.8 A NEW NARRATIVE: PURSUIT

A pursuit is in itself a narrative: a linear conception of a chase, in pursuit of something still in sight, attainable with effort. America, yes, and also modernity at large has leaned heavily on the assumption that precisely these *pursuits* – happiness and property – were attainable to all individuals in exchange for a just amount of effort. Happiness and property were always there, within sight. Attainable. *Profit sought rationally* – through work. The act of pursuing is achieved by the rhythmic and rigorous discipline of the modern worker, in which the self becomes a kind of "project" that individuals have to work on: they have to create biographical "narratives" that will explain themselves to themselves, and hence sustain a coherent and consistent identity (Ito 2008: 10),

> Unlimited greed for gain is not in the least identical with capitalism, and is still less its spirit. Capitalism may even be identical with the restraint, or at least a rational tempering, of this irrational impulse. But capitalism is identical with the pursuit of profit, and forever renewed profit, by means of continuous, rational, capitalistic enterprise (Weber 1930: 17)

Without this impetus of pursuit, indeed, writes Weber, "in a wholly capitalistic order of society, an individual capitalistic enterprise which did not take advantage of its opportunities for profit-making would be doomed to extinction" (1930: 17).

> The proletariat's project is to aim at its own obliteration as a class
>
> *- Nick Srnicek, the #Accelerate Manifesto (2013)*

The idea of pursuit, then, is the aspiration to transcend the norms of one's birth: a very 20th Century narrative of a 'change' in narrative, an upwards narrative. The idea that one can ascend, overcome, and rewrite one's story is partially what Weber here attributes to the Protestant Ethic.

This narrative observed by Weber, signed by Franklin, has since crescendoed far beyond anything these two men could ever have predicted. In the name of *pursuit* many scenes of boisterous accumulation have been enacted, individuals pitting their narratives of hope against their peers, working longer and longer hours, committing all sorts of infringements on what Weber might have deemed *rational,* in a frenetic race towards a nebulous dream: the intrinsically endless goal of 'profit'. It is no longer considered heretic to say that a mutated version of exactly this pursuit is what ultimately crashed the global financial system and turned millions of people worldwide to face a future they had never anticipated.

For fear of rehashing the countless texts on what has happened in the century since Weber noticed the widespread shift towards the individual accumulation of wealth, and the prioritization of work as a means to this end, let's focus on the narrative aspect of the capitalist thrust so as to better understand its significance in the present moment. We will focus of the following six aspects of Weber's observations, elements which will carry through into the following chapters and the historical moments they each describe:

1. **A Traditional *Ideal Type (A)*: THE *VERLEGER***
2. **A New *Ideal Type (B)*: FRANKLIN**
3. **A narrative: PURSUIT/PROGRESS**
4. **A setting (utopia): ~~EUROPE~~ >AMERICA**
5. **A relationship of power: GOUVERNEMENTALITÉ/CAPTURE: or the *smooth* becomes *striated***

CHAPTER 2: ABSENT FUTURES

2.1 LEVI'S: GO FORTH

2.1.1 A SETTING: FROM EUROPE TO AMERICA

We begin with a man named Löb Strauss, born two generations before Max Weber in a village just a few townships (150 kilometres) south of Weber's native Erfurt. In 1847, at the age of 18, Löb left Germany in pursuit of the promise of the United States. He came from a merchant family and his father had died of tuberculosis two years earlier, plunging the large family into economic hardship. Löb, in an impulse that was at once charged with great ambition and sheer necessity, boarded a ship to America, following his two older brothers who had, a few years prior, successfully started a business in New York City. The Strauss brothers traded in dry goods, mostly bolts of fabric. They were *Verlegers* and they had moved to America in the spirit of capitalism, in search of a better life. After obtaining his American citizenship in 1853, Löb – who had changed his name to Levi – followed the gold rush west, establishing a shop in San Francisco. Levi Strauss sold his goods not only in San Francisco, but also travelled with his sewing machine and bolts of fabric to the gold digging sites, where the gold miners – themselves flocks of immigrants drawn to the American promise of literal gold – were willing to pay a premium price for the trousers he made. His major realisation in 1853 was that he was selling the gold diggers an inferior product: their clothes were quickly worn down, disintegrating under the strenuous workday of the miners. An especially hardwearing pant was needed.

In 1873, Strauss joined forces with a tailor, Jacob Davis, and patented what is now known as the quintessential pant: the American blue jean. Strauss and Davis added copper rivets to a denim trouser – the reinforced pockets and waists ensured a much longer lifespan to the trousers, which quickly became the ubiquitous durable uniform for the American working class, from miners, to farmers, to cowboys. The riveted *overalls*, as they were originally called, came across a huge demand, and six months

after having received the patent, Levi Strauss & Co. had sold 5875 dozen pairs of denim trousers and coats (Rappelt 2004: 128).

2.1.2 LEVI STRAUSS AS WEBER'S IDEAL TYPE

Levi Strauss died two years before Weber published the *Protestant Ethic*. He has been from the same generation as Weber's grandfather Carl David Weber[11] (*1824-†1907) (Weber 2008: 911), who too was a linen-merchant as well as a textile manufacturer (Weber 1946: 3). Weber had been fascinated by his grandfather's work and in fact devoted a year (1908, after his travels in America) investigating the industrial psychology of his family's linen factory (1946: 19). It is easy to deduce that Weber's choice of the *Verleger* as his ideal type was inspired by the family business, and indeed Carl David Weber represents an ideal incarnation, as far as Weber was concerned, of the industrious spirit of the capitalist *Verleger*: the factory he built was not only successful but beneficial to the whole community. Weber's grandfather greatly promoted the development of his town, where he founded a hospital, built a synagogue and spearheaded the establishment of a power station. This is the capitalism Weber believed in, one in which wealth, albeit accumulated on the individual level, is ultimately reconfigured as advantageous to all.

Based partially on his observations at his grandfather's factory, Weber initially perceived the capitalist spirit – as predicated by the inevitable orthodoxy of its Protestant practitioners – as a particularly productive paradox: whereas the capitalist work ethic lead to commercial success, it was considered a sin, particularly by the Calvinists, to spend the money on oneself. Great displays of wealth were frowned upon: consider, for example, the simple paired-down presence of Protestant churches, whose whitewashed walls were overt condemnations of the baroque and gilded displays of their Catholic counterparts. The Protestant paradox was resolved by

[11] Though Weber's Biographers (in *Briefe* (2008) and by H.H. Gert and C. Wright Mills (1946)) claim Carl David Weber was Max Weber's grandfather, others claim he was in fact his uncle, as well as his wife, Marianne Weber's paternal grandfather.

investment – a strategy that benefited the community as well as providing the capitalist with handsome returns.

Levi Strauss, a German from the same generation as Carl David Weber, is also an archetypal example of Weber's industrious new spirit for the 20th Century. His case, however, is more extreme. Strauss relocated from the Ideal Type 1A of a small-town *Verleger* in Germany and moved to America to follow the guidelines set by Franklin, becoming a formidable incarnation of the new Ideal Type 1B[12]. He, like Weber's grandfather, pushed for higher quality, expanded his market, and 'increased the rigour of his supervision', 'turning the local peasants into labourers' (Weber 1930: 67). Strauss' business model, as he lived it, was also Weberian in the sense that he was a valued member of the community, and a notoriously fair employer, who was willing to pay more for good quality and workmanship (Downey 2014). He was a director of a Bank, an Insurance Company and the San Francisco Gas and Electric Company. He bought lucrative mills. When he died, his estate was amounted to nearly $6 million (levistrauss.com), roughly $160 million in 2014, when adjusted for inflation[13]. He was a ruthlessly successful entrepreneur.

Strauss upheld many values other than simply effective and profitable production. He was one of San Francisco's greatest philanthropists; contributing to many charities, as well as providing the funds for twenty-eight scholarships at the University of California, Berkeley, all of which are still in place today (levistrauss.com). He, and men like him, sustain Weber's claim that the ethos of capitalism, as buffeted by the protestant spirit, would, when truly incorporated into the fabric of society, become an equalising force. Within the framework of capitalism and the mantra of *life, liberty*

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[12] Exactly a century prior, Franklin himself noted how German immigrants were particularly industrious and prone to becoming wealthy in the United States. In a letter to Peter Collinson in 1753 he wrote: "When any of them [English Manufacturers and day Labourers] happen to come here [to America], where Labour is much better paid than in England, their Industry seems to diminish in equal proportion. But it is not so with the German Labourers; They retain the habitual Industry and Frugality they bring with them, and now receiving higher Wages an accumulation arises that makes them all rich."

[13] according to the online inflation calculator www.westegg.com

and the pursuit of property, every man could aspire to a better quality of life, and, by pursuing his own happiness he would inspire others to do so as well. Franklin wrote:

> Six days shalt thou labor, (…) industry will increase, and with it plenty among the lower people; their circumstances will mend, and more will be done for their happiness by inuring them to provide for themselves, than could be done by dividing all your estates among them. – Franklin, *The Support of the Poor: Letter to Peter Collinson*, May 9, 1753

2.1.3 JEANS: THE UNIFORM OF FREEDOM

The jean overall was the uniform of this spirit of the self-made man. During World War II, American GIs brought jeans overseas to wear while off-duty. In the eyes of Europeans, jeans became associated with American leisure and abundance, especially in countries devastated by the war. The image of the Levi jean was to many not only quintessentially American but quintessentially about *freedom*, the particularly American freedom to accrue legitimate wealth through hard work.

Image 7: Levi's - 1951 Advertisement "Follow the leader...wear Levi's" (Image courtesy of: Levi's) and the poster for the film *Rebel Without a Cause* (1955) by Nicholas Ray, starring James Dean in denim jeans.

In 1955, James Dean wore jeans in *Rebel Without A Cause* and spurred a series of new associations: jeans were young and rebellious, sexy and tough. Jeans were what you were – and what you wanted to be. A 1950s print commercial with the tagline "*Follow the leader…wear Levi's*" extended an invitation, and soon everyone did indeed follow. In the 1960s, young men and women entered American colleges, some of them Berkeley students on Levi Strauss Scholarships. Wearing their favourite jeans they began to protest against the social ills plaguing the United States. As a 2014 paper commissioned by Levi Strauss & Co concludes, the message from campuses in the late 60s was: "those who protest, those who rebel, those who question authority, traditional institutions and customs, wear denim" (Downey 2014). By the 1970s and 1980s, so did everyone else. A 2007 *Manifesto for a Study of Denim* claims that denim is the world's most ubiquitous garment, worn by roughly half of the world's population on any given day. Although ubiquitous, jeans are also often the most personal. In this sense, the Manifesto argues, denim is as much a refutation as an acceptance of capitalist pressures. (Miller and Woodward, *Social Anthropology 15* 2007: 335-351)

2.1.4 "A PROMISE OF PROGRESS": #GOFORTH

In a 2012 television commercial for Levi's, the *Follow the leader* phrase returns with a twist. A women's voice orates "You follow your heart, follow the leader, you're the leader:

> You're the next living leader of the world. You're a kid. Holding onto the thread. That holds it together. *This* is a pair of Levi's.

At which point, a Twitter hashtag, *#GoForth* appears[14]. The Levi's "Go Forth" campaign (2009-2013) was Levi Strauss and Co.'s first world wide campaign. In one of its first television spots, it set images of people wearing Levi's across the United

[14] online at: www.youtube.com/watch?v=9PtYfEa4Fyg

Stated to an original recording of Walt Whitman reading lines from his 1888 poem "America":

> Centre of equal daughters, equal sons,
> All, all alike endear'd, grown, ungrown, young or old,
> Strong, ample, fair, enduring, capable, rich,
> Perennial with the Earth, with Freedom, Law and Love,

Image 8: Stills from Levi's Go Forth "America" on YouTube (2009)

Weber's vision, as well as Levi Strauss', Ben Franklin's, and Walt Whitman's are all predicated on the image of America as the land of equal opportunity. *All, all alike endear'd* with freedom. The freedom of being equal. The equality of being free.

The predominance of jeans today serves us as a backdrop for a discussion of the worldwide acknowledgement of this narrative of equality and freedom – *life liberty and pursuit*. The trousers' popularity, beginning in places of hard labor and moving on to soldiers, youthful rebels, college activists, and eventually a large portion of the world population, regardless of their class or country of origin, roughly charts the motion of the narrative of pursuit in the 20th Century.

This narrative, at its most reduced, traces a motion of 'upward mobility' which suggests, on the individual level, that childrens' lives will be better than their parents'. Across the Northern West (OECD countries to be specific) this has outstandingly been the case, not only with regard to income but also personal evaluations of success.

The Great Depression of 1929 aside, the past century has almost guaranteed an upward trend in wealth accumulation: the members of younger generation are wealthier and better educated than their parents. They have more opportunities and therefore, are *more free*.

From jeans' origins in the ambitious mind of a German *Verleger*, they have for the last century been worn by the pioneers the narrative of pursuit. This ideology is deeply interwoven with the conviction that spread of *progress* is inevitable and for all: from gold-diggers to US soldiers in war-torn Europe, to anti-war idealists ready to lay their bodies on the cogs of the machine: the message was: *we are American, and we are free. Let's make the world a better place*.

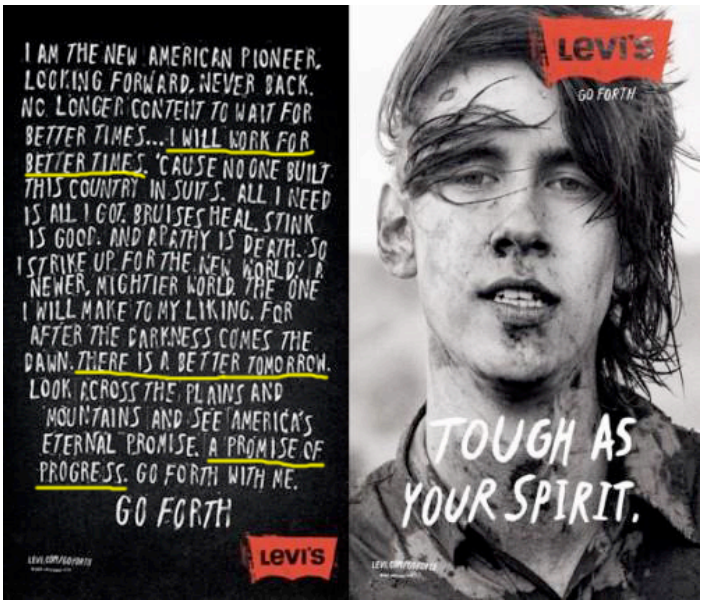

Image 9: Print Ad for Levi's Go Forth (2011) ***My emphasis***

When the narrative of *pursuit* becomes tacked to the narrative of *progress* – as in the Levi's slogans of the American Dream "I will work for better times (…) there is a better tomorrow (…) See America's eternal promise. A promise of progress" – the narrative veers into marketing strategy and away from Weber's position on the future of capitalism.

2.2 ~~*FORTSCHRITTOPTIMISMUS*~~: A CHANGE OF NARRATIVE

2.2.1 WEBER FORESEES A *POLAR NIGHT*

Towards the end of the *Protestant Ethic*, Weber's writing is unmistakably charged with ambivalence and, later, resignation. The more Weber observed, the more he acknowledged the spread of capitalism as inevitable. He did not however perceive this spread as *progress*, as his last paragraphs of the essay reveal:

> For of the last stage of this cultural development, it might well be truly said "Specialists without spirit, sensualists without heart; this nullity imagines that it has attained a level of civilization never before achieved." (1930: 182)

In fact, whereas Franklin would hold the terms pursuit and progress as synonymous – and synonymous as well with happiness – Weber was deliberate in outlining capitalistic *pursuit* as distinct and even disadvantageous to the narrative of *progress*. Whereas his contemporaries were elated by a tremendously prevalent conviction in *Fortschrittsoptimismus,* a belief – like the Levi's print ad – in infinite progress, Weber was far from optimistic. Weber's assessment of modernity is most striking in its rejection of the dogma of progress, and indeed as the above cited passage reveals, the mistaken – and self-congratulatory – perception of progress. Indeed Weber believed that progress, under the conditions proposed by the modern capitalistic ethos, was illusory. In one of his last public interventions in the winter of 1919 Revolution in Germany, his tone was outright pessimistic: "It is not the blossoming of summer ahead of us, but rather a polar night of icy darkness and hardness":

> After all, where there is nothing, not only the Kaiser but also the proletarian has lost his rights. And if this night were to slowly soften, then who will still be living of those whose springtime had so abundantly blossomed? And what will have become of all of you internally?[15]

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[15] My translation from the German: *Nicht das Blühen des Sommers liegt vor uns, sondern zunächst eine Polarnacht von eisiger Finsternis und Härte, mag äußerlich jetzt siegen welche Gruppe auch immer. Denn: wo nichts ist, da hat nicht nur der Kaiser, sondern auch der Proletarier sein Recht verloren. Wenn diese Nacht*

…

A 2011 commercial, broadcast across televisions and billboards worldwide, features angry youth in the streets, as nubile girls pose grumpily on a sinking pile of rubble, upon which flickers a neon sign: AMERICA. The commercial is selling *Levi's Jeans*.

Image 10: Still from Levi's GO FORTH campaign (2011)

2.2.2 THE IRON CAGE: "IS THIS PROGRESS?"

Weber's late-life pessimism is inseparable from a critical view of the nature of capitalism itself. Weber was, in 1904, already disquieted by the supreme irrationality of the purely formal and instrumental capitalist drive of production for production, accumulation for accumulation, money for money. This ethos, writes Weber, reveals itself, from the viewpoint of human happiness as "simply irrational" or "absolutely meaningless".

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*langsam weichen wird, wer wird dann von denen noch leben, deren Lenz jetzt scheinbar so üppig geblüht hat? Und was wird aus Ihnen allen dann innerlich geworden sein. (*Max Weber, *Politik als Beruf,* Second Lecture given as part of the lecture series *Geistige Arbeit als Beruf* (Mental Work as a Profession), given in the Winter of 1918/19 to the Freistudententischen Bund in Munich. online at http://www.textlog.de/2298.html)

What happens to the individual in a system designed for individual gain is the ultimate paradox of the capitalist ethos, laments Weber who ultimately saw humanity surrendering to an all powerful mechanism, and people as a result imprisoned in a system they had themselves created. The impersonal functioning of capital is, said Weber "what socialism defines as the 'domination of things over the human beings.' which means: the means over the aim" (Max Weber 1997: 246.) The aim – the human being – is subordinated to the means – the enterprise, money, commodity.

The culmination of the Protestant ethos, as Weber ultimately describes it, emphasizes the loss of freedom, the decline of individual autonomy. His criticism is best framed by the last paragraphs of *The Protestant Ethic,* where a powerful image is lodged as probably the most famous and influential passage of Weber's work – and one of the rare moments where he permitted himself what he calls "value and faith judgements."(Löwy 2010)

"The Puritan wanted to be a person with a vocational calling; whereas today', writes Weber 'we are forced to be." The new capitalistic "order" established by the "technical and economic conditions of machine production" now determines "with irresistible force" "the lives of all the individuals who are born into this mechanism, not only those directly concerned with economic acquisition." He quotes the puritan Baxter, who wrote that the care for external goods should only lie on the shoulders of the "saint like a light cloak, which can be thrown aside at any moment." But, sighs Weber, "fate decreed that the cloak should become an iron cage." ([1904] 1930: 181)

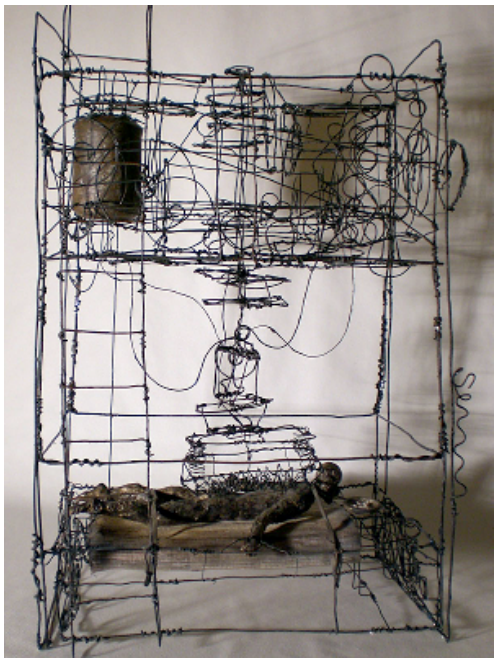


Image 11: Martin Senn. ***Franz Kafka: Der Eigentümliche Apparataus der Erzählung "In der Strafkolonie."*** **[Franz Kafka: The Peculiar Apparatus from the Story "In the Penal Colony."]**

The famous expression strikes by its tragic tone of resignation. Weber continues by citing how "material goods have gained an increasing and finally an inexorable power over the lives of men as at no previous period in history." ([1904] 1930: 182) What was once light attire, an enhancement of the everyday, has itself become the conditions of the everyday. The cage, once woven by matter, threads of linen and denim perhaps, is no longer wearable. It is now comprised of the weighty and immaterial load of an inescapable ideology: it is not worn by people; it itself wears people. It wears people down. The *smooth* space of emancipation has been *striated* by the vertical bars of progress, and people remain captive of the very narrative they believed would set them free.

Is this progress? Weber is disheartened. Might he have predicted how, a century later, the myth of progress and chants of freedom would be used to sell clothing? "In the field of its highest development, in the United States, the pursuit of wealth, stripped of its religious and ethical meaning, tends to become associated with purely mundane passions, which often actually give it the character of sport." ([1904] 1930: 182)

2.2.3 ANOMIE

Seven years prior, a French sociologist warned, much like Weber here, how "we must not be dazzled by the brilliant development of sciences, the arts and industry of which we are the witnesses." This new form of so-called progress, he wrote, "is altogether certainly taking place in the midst of a morbid effervescence, the grievous repercussions of which each one of us feels" ([1897] 1951: 368). The man was Emile Durkheim and the grievous repercussions he spoke of were the increasing number of suicides, in prosperous and poor countries in Western Europe alike.

Durkheim was, much like Weber, studying the effects of Capitalism – though his subjects were not the boisterous examples of the stampede towards wealth, but rather those who were trampled under its frenzied weight. Durkheim insists, however, that this weight, or *malaise*, applies indiscriminately to all:

> The malaise from which we are suffering is not rooted in any particular class; it is general over the whole of society. It attacks employers as well as workers, although it manifests itself in different forms in both: as a disturbing, painful agitation for the capitalist, as discontent and irritation for the proletariat. (Durkheim [1897] 1986: 143).

Durkheim, the (second, after August Comte) father of French sociology, came to his critique of capitalism by first identifying what he termed 'anomie' in his 1893 book *La division du travail social*. Durkheim used anomie to describe what he perceived as a sweeping disorientation taking hold of Western European society at the same moment as Weber was identifying the distinctive behaviour that would define the Protestant ethos. Simply defined, anomie, from the greek ἀνομία (*anomía*), means *ἀ-* absence of *–nómos*, norms or social values. It is a state where norms are confused, unclear or altogether absent, and is common in a society that was undergoing significant changes, especially economically, be it for the better or the worse. These changes, argued Durkheim generally predicated a growing gap between taught ideologies and the way values were exhibited in everyday life, in other words a disjunction in narrative. As a result, Durkheim observed that people no longer knew

what to expect from one another, or from themselves. This disorientation and lack of social norms was anomie – and anomie, with its associated feeling of alienation and purposelessness, Durkheim warned, led to deviant behaviour.

In his 1897 work devoted to studying the social causes of *Suicide*, Durkheim describes how an individual living in a state of anomie is incapable of curtailing his desires, suffering from the 'mal de l'infini': the *ache of the infinite*. In other words, Durkheim located the narrative of pursuit as a slow but certain form of torture:

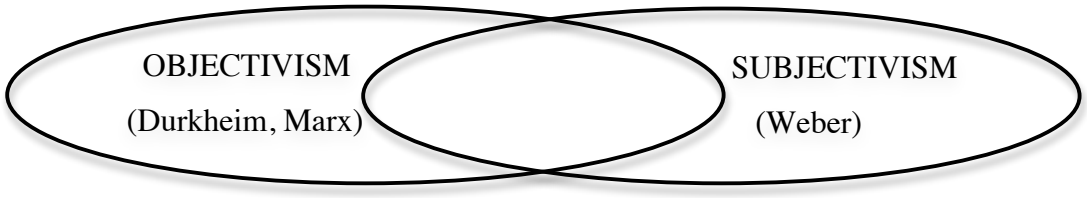
> Unlimited desires are insatiable by definition and insatiability is rightly considered a sign of morbidity. Being unlimited, they constantly and infinitely surpass the means at their command; they cannot be quenched. Inextinguishable thirst is constantly renewed torture ([1897] 1951: 247).

"The more one has, the more one wants, since satisfactions received only stimulate instead of filling needs." (1951: 248). "Anomie', he wrote, 'is a regular and specific factor in suicide in our modern societies" (2010: 258).

There was a deep element of unconscious factors influencing Durkheim's readings of social behaviours. Whereas Weber spoke directly to his subjects and was fascinated by the widespread 'rationalisation' of irrational behaviour on the level of personal narrative, Durkheim, in tracing the precarious relationship between modernity and the tendency of unhappiness in its inhabitants, emphasised his particular method: "social life must be explained, not by the conception of those who participate in it, but by the deep causes which lie outside of consciousness". Durkheim was concerned with employing Sociology as a scientific method, no different from any natural science. He was therefore trying to observe 'social fact' as untarnished by individual emotions of psychologies.

Although they were contemporaries, there is little evidence either Weber or Durkheim were aware of the other's work. Weber, in writing his Protestant Ethic, begins by identifying the 'malaise' of the individual, of the *Verleger*. And though he expands

his essay to describe factors outside of the Verleger's consciousness, indeed outside of any individual man's consciousness, ultimately Weber's sociology proposes the outlines for a method distinctly opposite to Durkheim's. Weber's use of individual statements, for example, from the personal writings of his Benjamin Franklin, and his many tales of specific individuals he encounters during his trip across the United States break from Durkheim's objectivity. And although Weber's *ideal type* is the result of a synthesis made possible only by objective distance, it is the result of a very hands-on and therefore subjective method.



2.3 IDEAL TYPE C – THE *GRADUATE WITHOUT A FUTURE*

2.3.1 BETWEEN OBJECTIVISM AND SUBJECTIVISM

This doctoral research began with a deliberately objective intention. In the years 2008, 2009 and 2010, I conducted approximately 200 interviews with people aged 20-35 (born 1975-1990), both in person and across a digital platform called *whatwillwebe.com*. These interviews were structured around 67 questions[16] that sought to explore "the collaborative story of the first digital generation, as it (attempts to) enter the world of work".

Our concern was, much like Durkheim's, with the general discomfort, alienation and sense of purposelessness brought on by massive change in the wake of the 2008 recession. The preliminary results displayed an unambiguous splay of statistics. Two main trends were observed:

[16] Find the *What Will We Be* Questionnaire (2010) online here: www.whatwillwebe.com/trial/index.php

1. WORK: With modernity, the concept of work shed its definition as slavery and/or castigation for the original sin, and people celebrated the idea that work may be a means of realising themselves. Through work we seek identity, fulfilment, happiness – and anything less is seen as a betrayal of hopes ingrained in us since childhood. AND YET: now, in 2010, as the first digital natives join the work force, the traditional work society, with its life-long job paths, is giving way to a much less stable world of low-commitment, low-security jobs.

Of our trial respondents, only 32% have full-time long-term employment; 32,6% plan on changing work in the coming months, and 28,3% believe they would change work in the coming 1-2 years.

2. HAPPINESS: The *What Will We Be* thesis is that young adults are generally graduating from university into a world of uncertainty and discomfort – increasingly, there is more attention being paid to this widespread (and spreading) phenomenon. This was the main issue: young adults are confronted with a shock to their sense of entitlement and have to reconsider what it is they want and where they are headed. To the question "What feelings do you struggle with most?" 37% of respondents answered "inability to decide what I want or need" (Chadwick 2010)

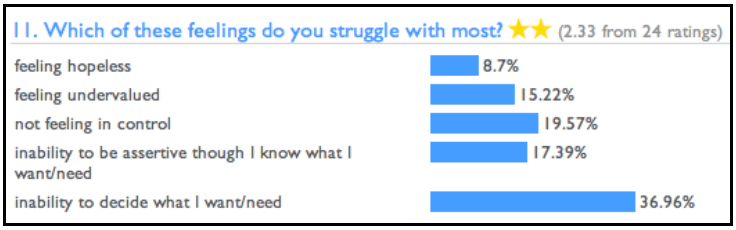


Image 12: Chadwick, S. *What Will We Be* Trial Questionnaire (2010)

The word *malaise*, resuscitated from over a century before, was commonly used, as were the words, 'lost generation', 'confused', 'overeducated and underemployed'. Most people were grappling with various shades of discomfort and neither we in our questions nor they in the multiple-choice answers were able to develop a language to better describe this general malaise.

It was clear, however, that the 2008 recession had instigated a new onset of anomie, especially in the generation that was graduating into a reality that presented a hostile barrage of unexpected challenges. The feeling of disorientation, and the mismatch between personal standards and the wider social standards, was widespread. The traditional survey and sampling approach did not and could not encapsulate the in-depth experience of this sentiment of unease as it expressed itself in day-to-day life. The research abandoned any illusions of remaining objective and removed, and continued in the form of extended interviews over many hours, inviting people speak for themselves, on the subjects that most moved them. These interviews were recorded on roughly 40 hours of video and audio footage.

In that sense, the following methodology borrows most consciously from the work of Richard Sennett, who, it has been claimed by his friends and closest colleagues, is "always working": every conversation, every chance encounter has the possibility to being incorporated into his expansive corpus. At a 2010 event at the London School of Economic honouring Sennett's work, his long-time collaborator Craig Calhoun underscored how Sennett doesn't bother listing the number of interviews he conducted. The reason for this is that he operates outside the barriers of social science norms (ie: 56 interviews of 1-hour each), for in fact he has conducted many more interviews than can be fairly quantified, because 'he has been conducting interviews in every conversation he has had since beginning his work on that book' (Calhoun 2010). As Anthony Giddens points out in the preface to Sennett and Cobb's *The Hidden Injuries of Class*:

> This [unconventional approach] may not endear [Sennett and Cobb] to social researchers who consider such techniques indispensable, but it allows the authors to develop a subtlety of understanding which would be quite impossible to achieve using orthodox methods. Sennett and Cobb treat interviewing, as it should be treated, as a form of social interaction in its own right, in which the interviewer himself cannot remain anonymous.

I too cannot remain anonymous in this writing, a process that began nearly seven years ago in 2007 and has since witnessed much turmoil in the members of my own generation, be they observed from a durkheimian perspective (pointing out the rapid social change and the resulting disorientation, normlessness, and general social malaise) or by my own infallibly subjective lens. Most of my data stems from a constant engagement with the world around me, conversations, observations, word choices, patterns in people and on profiles.

In The *Corrosion of Character*, Richard Sennett argues that precisely the Weberian *ideal type*, when pushed into the contemporary setting on 'New Capitalism', has effectively lost all narrative. Narratives, says Sennett are linear, teleological, long-sighted, they "give shape to the forward movement of time, suggesting reasons why things happen, showing their consequences." (1998: 30). And narrative is, under the strain of "the new capitalism" being lost – this is Sennett's great lament. Sennett uses case studies to delineate the modern conflict between character and experience. He perceives the new modernity, and its disjointed time, as a threat to people's ability to form sustained narratives of their own lives. Instability and "short-term" commitments now reign, Sennett finds, "disorienting action over the long term, loosening bonds of trust and commitment, and divorcing will from behaviour." (ibid., 31) In *The Culture of the New Capitalism*, Sennett contends that only a certain kind of human being can prosper in unstable, fragmentary social conditions. New capitalism's "ideal man or woman" is migratory: between places, relationships, and jobs. If the institutions of the new capitalism no longer provide a long-term framework, as Sennett claims, the individual may have to improvise his or her life-narrative, or even do without any sustained sense of self. (Sennett 2007: 4)

Sennett's observations are key in the continuum from Weber that will bring us to our current *ideal type*. Whereas Sennett was principally concerned with people of his own generation, and their children, we are now concerned with his generation's grandchildren. Through these observations and conversations, guided but not bound by the statistics initially generated by the *What Will We* Be questionnaire, it has been possible to construct, much like Weber's *putter-out*, an ideal type that represents the

fragile moments before a shift in *ethos*. This type exists primarily between 2006-2011, in the half-decade fraught with the anomie instilled by economic bubbles and collapses, fraudulent wars and opaque democracies, and the first mass disasters forewarning the terrible scope of climate change. The ideal type has and has been described most evocatively by the British economist and journalist Paul Mason as 'the Graduate Without A Future' (2011, 2013). The term contains many elements, and we will emphasize each in their relationship to narrative:

The graduate. The essential drive of the student, writes the French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu, is to disappear: "To study is not to produce oneself but to prepare oneself to be capable to produce, therefore a student's task is to work towards one's own disappearance: the future is envisioned as one's own disappearance"[17]

Without a future. Bourdieu emphasizes how envisioning the future is only possible by first envisioning the obliteration of one's status as a student. The narrative of the student is intended as a direct trajectory, as a vector made possible by a clear delineation of a future. With the financial crisis of 2008 – and also the years leading up to the collapse – many factors have contributed to the fact that university students all across the Western world were graduating into unemployment and uncertainty.

Having actively *disappeared* as students, they step up to the threshold of their future selves only to realize that it too had vanished. The moment is best defined by the absence of this future, and an entire generation's inability to reconcile hopes (narratives of pursuit) with fact. There has been much coverage of the *generation boomerang* (Parker 2012) over the past few years, but the general arguments claiming *millenials* are lazy and entitled lack a wider understanding of the many factors that culminated in this moment. We will try to summarise these factors here:

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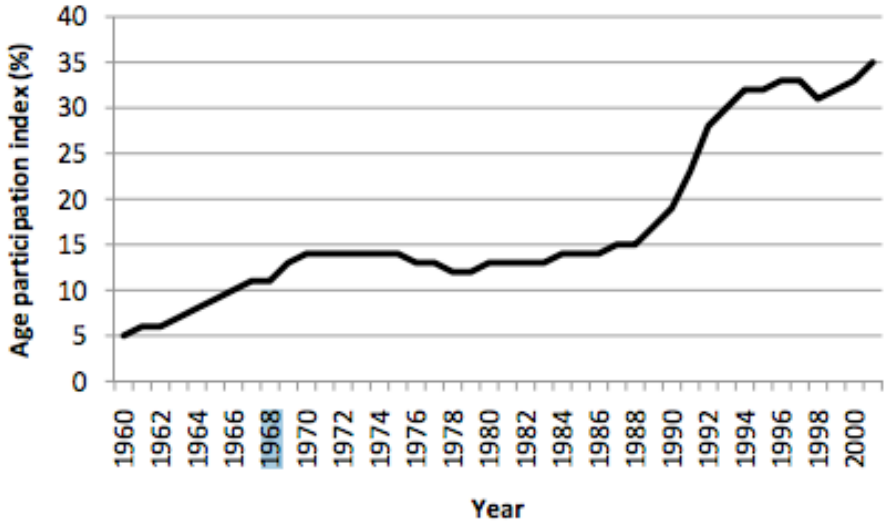
[17] Paraphrased from the French: *Étudier, ce n'est pas produire, mais se préparer à être capable de produire, donc sa tâche est d'œuvrer à sa propre disparition en tant qu'étudiant: rationnellement, l'avenir s'envisage avec sa propre disparition*. (1964. XX)

1) *Scope:* never before has the world produced such a quantity of graduates, with roughly half of the young population in most OECD countries obtaining post-secondary degrees. (49% in the UK (Bollington 2013); 49% in the US (2010); 52% in Canada (2008). This signifies an enormous growth when compared to the parents' generation. In 1968 enrolment in the UK was at just over 10% (Chowdry 2010); in 1995 enrolment across OECD countries was roughly half what it would be in 13 years later in 2008.



Note: the age participation index refers to the percentage of 17-30 year olds who go to university. Source: Finegold, D. (2006), *The roles of higher education in a knowledge economy*, Rutgers University, mimeo.

Image 13: Long-term trend in Higher Education participation in the UK (1960-2001)

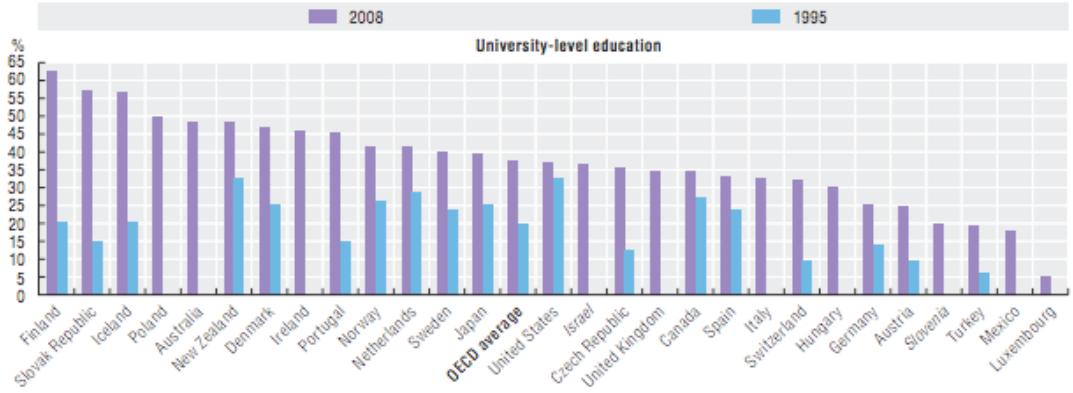


Image 14: Graduation rates from university-level education (1995, 2008)
***Source:* OECD (2010), Education at a Glance 2010, Table A3.1. http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888932310130.**

2) *Expectations:* never before have young people had such big ambitions, a result perhaps of what has been termed as the *trophy generation* (Alsop 2012; Crampton 2011), a result of the vindictive idealism of post-war parents who incorporated all the dreams of the last sixties in their child-rearing: *you can be everything you want to be, darling. The sky is the limit! Dream big! Bigger!* A 2007 Wall Street Journal/Harris Interactive survey of corporate recruiters asked how the *millennials* (born between 1980 and 2001, and, in this case, Americans) are different from previous generations. The responses were vehement: "enormous sense of entitlement", "expect too much too soon; very self-centered", "lazier, more entitled" (Alsop 2012: 25).

3) *Students of life / for life:* never before have so many people studied aimlessly, indeed, not according to the teleology implied by Bourdieu, but rather out of interest, pressure to obtain a Bachelor's degree, or, most commonly perhaps, out of the sincere desire to learn but the even more sincere inability of a 18-year old high-school graduate to foresee what career she might want to pursue for the coming 4+ decades. A 2012 study by McKinsey Center for Government (Mourshed, Farrell, Barton 2012) found students are not adequately prepared to make the decision: of the 8,000 youth in 9 socioeconomically diverse countries[18] surveyed, fewer than half were confident they would choose the same course of study if they could do it again (2012: 30):

> Youth across all countries also indicate not being well informed about the availability of jobs or the level of wages associated with their course of study, with 40 percent reporting they were not familiar with market conditions and requirements even for well-known professions such as teaching and medicine (2012: 31).

[18] Brazil, Germany, India, Mexico, Morocco, Turkey, Saudi Arabia, the United Kingdom, and the United States Source: http://mckinseyonsociety.com/education-to-employment/report/

This trend can easily been witnessed in the amount of non-teleological departments available to an undergrad, indeed most anything in the field of the humanities or the fine arts. Whereas enrolment in programs in the Fine Arts and Humanities are growing, only roughly 20% of people who with photography degrees go on to make careers as professional photographers; 1% of graduates from creative writing programs will become tenure-track professors (of the 50% who had hoped for that position) (Poets & Writers 2012). The unemployment rate of recent graduates in photography is at 12.9%, the same applies to theatre (7.8%), fine arts (12.6%), anthropology (10.5%), philosophy (10.8%) and sociology (8.6%). Graduates from all these degrees are twice as likely to work in retail than the average university graduate (Kiplinger 2013). These academic pursuits are often pursuits in themselves, as students see their status as students not as a temporary transition into a concrete position but rather, as the cliché goes, as 'students of life'. Life students. And indeed they are. Compare the employment figures of recent graduates with Bachelor degrees in Health (4.8%) and Finance (5.9%) to those in Anthropology (12.6%) or Architecture (12.8%) (Carnevale, Anthony P. and Cheah, Ban. 2013[19]): "The young suffer the pangs of uselessness in a particularly cruel way, since an ever-expanding educational system trains them ever more elaborately for jobs that do not exist." (Sennett 1997: 167).

4) *Retirement rates:* the people occupying the positions aspired to by recent graduates are not retiring. With the minimum age for retirement rising (Social Security Administration 2013), and with people living longer and remaining able-bodied well into their eighties, either people cannot afford to abandon their posts, or they are choosing not to.

5) *Offshore outsourcing:* other positions, such as ones in computer programming, systems design and accounting, are no longer widely available, having been relocated offshore (Levine 2012). The widespread enthusiasm for outsourcing

[19] figures refer to employment statistics in the United States. For full report see: cew.georgetown.edu/collegepayoff

jobs oversees was predicted in 2004 to send 3.4 million service-sector jobs abroad between 2003 and 2015, from the United States alone (McCarthy 2004).

6) *Austerity:* the trends in offshore outsourcing have combined with a recent rise in the detection of 'redundancies', a post-recession cost-cutting mechanism applied widely across the West, thereby carving entire faculties out of universities, whole departments out of corporations, accelerating – by either rigorous schedules and/or robotisation and digitisation – production, and placing hundreds of thousands of the most precarious (ie: junior) workers on unemployment. Redundancies and the unwillingness of employers to recruit in the face of uncertainty were most severe in countries hit hardest by the sovereign debt crisis of 2008. Youth unemployment rates reached over 30 per cent in Portugal, Italy and Ireland and notoriously hit 50 per cent in Greece and Spain (Lanning and Rudiger: 2012)

These 'social facts' were in 2008 in many ways so unforeseen as to be utterly invisible to the recent graduates who were entering the workforce. They collided with the young generation's much cited idealism (Alsop 2012; Crampton 2011) in an overwhelming shudder of anomie:

> Incongruous architecture, the ghosts of vanished ideals, the vista of a dead future: these are the remains of the university. Among these remains, most of us are little more than a collection of querulous habits and duties. We go through the motions of our tests and assignments with a kind of thoughtless and immutable obedience propped up by subvocalized resentments. Nothing is interesting, nothing can make itself felt. (Anonymous, *Communiqué from an absent future*. 2009: 3)

If we are to draw comparisons between the *Graduate Without A Future* and Weber's *Verleger*, we must emphasise that what exemplifies this type's position in the first decade of the new millennia is, much like the putter-out, a recourse to tradition.

Weber's definition of *traditionalism*, what he calls "the most important opponent" (1930: 58) to the spirit of capitalism, is a state of prescribed passivity, in which the individual adapts her/himself to a path of life s/he accepts as a divine ordinance (1930: 85). The Graduate Without A Future too, had had his/her sights set on a life narrative s/he has been told to expect. As Paul Mason describes, the curve of the traditional career path was supposed to be: "study, work hard, you'll have a pension; you'll get credit; you'll get onto an ever-rising escalator of rising asset values; there'll be a welfare state to look after you." This narrative no longer applies, writes Mason, indeed, "The opposite is now true (…) the narrative of the upward curve has disappeared" (Mason 2012).

2.3.2 COMMUNIQUÉ FROM AN ABSENT FUTURE

This realisation produced an identity crisis for a whole generation. In September 2009, students at the UC Santa Cruz wrote in their *Communiqué from an absent future*:

> "Work hard, play hard" has been the over-eager motto of a generation in training for…what?—drawing hearts in cappuccino foam or plugging names and numbers into databases. The gleaming techno-future of American capitalism was long ago packed up and sold to China for a few more years of borrowed junk. A university diploma is now worth no more than a share in General Motors.
>
> We work and we borrow in order to work and to borrow. And the jobs we work toward are the jobs we already have. Close to three quarters of students work while in school, many full-time; for most, the level of employment we obtain while students is the same that awaits after graduation. Meanwhile, what we acquire isn't education; it's debt. We work to make money we have already spent, and our future labor has already been sold on the worst market around. (2009: 2-3)

Richard Sennett describes a combination of many of the above-cited factors as a "specter of uselessness", whose particular shadow was cast specifically on the lives of

educated middle-class people (Sennett 1972: 167). It is no surprise that these educated middle-class people, having assiduously followed the narratives of pursuit of the last century, were the least capable of questioning their veracity or resilience. The analogy of the shadow is a good one, and beckons yet another unsolicited rewriting of Plato's cave allegory. With our irises still adapted to daylight, the shadows appear merely as uniform darkness. The hope is to return to the brightness upon which our eyes are still trained. Whatever object is projecting the shadow is a mere encumbrance, an imperceptible object between our selves and the sun. Indeed, as our interviews confirm, the vision of young graduates in 2006-2011 had still not adjusted to the shadows, and were not yet able or interested to detect the textures within what to still appeared as a transitory darkness.

The interviews conducted in 2008-2010 testify to the peculiar dislocation of that time, as young people everywhere tried to find their foothold in a changing world, and a solid point of reference from which to project their lives forward. Their eyes however could not yet properly see in the shadows, and their bearings, consequently, were backwards looking: *My mother had me and my brother by the time she was my age*; *I can barely afford my monthly rent, and my parents had bought and paid off their house by the time they were thirty! Steve Jobs founded Apple Computers at 21! Paul Thomas Anderson had made three feature films by the time he was 30! My dad was head of his company at the age of 27. He had only a Bachelor degree, and I, at the same age, have a Master's degree and am working as a part-time waitress at a café*.[20] This historical moment is critical for the particular reason that traditional tools for providing life narratives were no longer available. We are interested in this symbolic moment precisely because of its lack of orientation, and its inability to see forwards.

[20] Quotes taken from author's own interviews, conducted in Germany, the United States and Canada between spring 2009 and spring 2010. Online at www.whatwillwebe.com All subsequent quotes in *italics* will be drawn from the same source.

2.4 "YOU HAVE CEASED GOING FORWARD"

2.4.1 "VISTA OF A DEAD FUTURE"

Returning to the interviews now, five years later, it is interesting to note how, locating causality *backwards*, as Deleuze and Guattari would phrase it, "we are able to show how that which does not yet exist already is acting in another form than that of its existence"[21] (1980: 537). Deleuze and Guattari lament how the human sciences, as developed by Durkheim and Weber, with their materialist and evolutionary schemas, are often behind the richness of understanding of the pure sciences, especially when it comes to understanding the complexity of causal relations. Physics and biology, they write, present us with causalities in reverse, without finality, but that nonetheless acknowledge a future acting upon the present, or of the present upon the past[22]. A great image of this phenomenon comes from recent developments in plant neuroscience, which show how the roots of a plant are able to detect and circumvent an impenetrable obstacle (such as a rock, another root, a wall, or even a toxic substance) before having encountered it – in this sense the rock's (future) existence acts upon the root before it becomes present (ie: in the present) (Pollan: 2013).

Were there premonitions of the *Occupy* narrative in the 2008-10 interviews? Had the future, as intangible as it might be, begun acting upon people's behaviours years before the eruption in the streets? There are clues in the early interviews. The interviews prior to 2011 reveal an unshakeable fixation on the narrative of pursuit, and thereby on work as the critical element in individual self-definition. This fixation combines with the gradual realisation of the narrative's impossibility, which shapes itself into what was at the time a still unuttered but very palpable sense of shame. Often the interviews are well into their first hour before people are willing to expose their inner anguish: up until that moment a stoic face of success is presented unequivocally: a well-learned trope that includes feigned self-assurance, bolstered by

[21] my translation from the French: "Il faut montrer comment ce qui n'existe pas agit déjà sous une autre forme que celle de son existence." (1980: 537)

[22] my paraphrasing from the French (1980: 537)

interminable lists of possible pursuits, potential salaries, name-dropping. The well rehearsed answer to the inevitable question: "What do you do?"

As the interviews progress, it becomes clear this is the single most despised question for many people ages 20 to 35. When prompted to answer truthfully, shedding the apparatus of performed professionalism, we hear a variety of responses: *I'm just floating, trying to figure it out. –My occupation is unknown. –When people ask me this, I don't know what to say: I'm apologetic for my own state of being. I hate that question! Perhaps I'd tolerate it more if I had a real answer.*

This is 2009, the recession has just hit and no one yet has the language to process what has happened. People are aware of their own individual narratives, and their own individual shame. The most affected are the young people with bright ambitions, who are graduating from the most accessible university system the world has seen, hoping to enact the dreams they've harboured since their childhoods of the elated 1980s and 1990s.

In 2009, our Graduate Without a Future *ideal type* comes from many years of expensive but imprecise studies, a Liberal Arts degree, say, and likely a Master's degree too. She is bright and ambitious in the time following her graduation; she applies to many jobs, each time projecting herself in the various positions, convincing herself she could make a happy and excellent associate editor for a well-respected literary magazine, a terrific project leader for a small human rights NGO, an attentive assistant to a professional whose work she admires. Perhaps in the meantime she will apply for artist residencies; perhaps she can qualify for welfare? She waits for responses, some arrive with kind words, expressing sadness that not all qualifying candidates could be considered: over 2,000 applications had been received for this one position. She ponders returning to school, maybe she would be more qualified with a second Master's degree? Perhaps this time in something concrete: International Development? She considers moving to another city, where a friend has found good work in reality television. She has a $27,000 student loan (the Canadian average according to the Canadian Federation of Students, 2013) that rears its head every

month demanding hundreds of dollars in payments. Her rent too has gone up, as have other costs – health insurance, the monthly metro ticket, the costs of eating in her favorite restaurants. She takes a job as a waitress, and on weekends she works at for a small bookbinder, "for fun". When at home she spends hours scrolling through the Facebook albums of acquaintances who live in places where it is always sunny, and seem to all have endless holidays, beautiful friends, and plentiful wallets. She watches bad television shows and then castigates herself for wasting time by watching more. She should be applying for better jobs, but she can't garner the courage. She has sent out over 60 job applications and still has no real job. She is an ideal type of the West; she could be living anywhere: Madrid, Berlin, London, Montreal, Chicago, Athens, Paris.

2.4.2 *UN HOMME QUI DORT*

This *ideal type* plays out much as does the figure in Georges Perec's 1967 novella *Un homme qui dort*, except the tone is entirely different. In *Un homme qui dort*, a young student gradually recedes into self-made oblivion, barely garnering the energy to wake:

> You stay lying on your narrow bench, your hands crossed behind your neck, your knees up. You look at the ceiling and you discover the cracks, the bits flaking off, the stains, the uneven contours. You do not want to see anyone, or to talk, or think, or go out, or move.
>
> It is on a day like this one, a little later, a little earlier, that you discover, without surprise, that something is wrong, that, without mincing words, you don't know how to live, that you will never know. (Perec 2011 [1967]: 140)

Perec's short story, published the year before the 1968 student revolt in Paris, characterizes a young man – a *you* – whose initial act of rebellion is to not attend his final exam in General Sociology: "You will not set down on four, eight or twelve sheets of paper what you know, what you think, what you know you are supposed to

think about alienation, the workers (…), about Weber (…). Your seat remains vacant." (2011: 139).

Whereas the ideal type in 2006-2011 wants nothing more desperately than to be offered a seat on the railway of pursuit, Perec's *homme qui dort* sees the train on the platform and turns his back. He realises it is after all, a narrative of white lies; the train itself going nowhere:

> All around you, all your life, you have seen the esteem in which action is held, and grand designs, and enthusiasm: man straining forward, man with his gaze fixed on the horizon, man looking straight ahead. A clear gaze, a purposeful chin, a confident swagger, stomach held in. Staying power, initiative, strokes of brilliance, success: all of these things map out the too transparent path of a too exemplary existence, constitute the sacrosanct images of the struggle for life. The white lies, the comforting illusions of all those who are running on the spot (…) you no longer need excuses, regrets nostalgia. You reject nothing, you refuse nothing. You have ceased going forward. (Perec 2011: 143)

In many ways, today's generation of 25-35 year-olds, born in countries across the so-called first-world West, has been raised on the same chorus of narratives, *man with his gaze fixed on the horizon*, each a mutation of the spirit Weber described a century ago: self-fulfilment through work, and the easy and entitled accumulation of wealth: *life liberty and the pursuit of property/happiness*.

The young man in Perec's story realises, without surprise, that 'nothing remains of your arrow-like trajectory, of that forward movement in which, for as long as you can remember, you have been led to recognise as your life, that is to say its meaning" (Perec 2011: 141). In our story, the ideal type does not yet have the language to state that "nothing remains" of her trajectory of pursuit. Though she knows it, in the same way as the plant root anticipates the root, her disappointment is still intangible. Her narrative still seeks the straight 'arrow-like' trajectory but she is without bearings. She had seen it, almost. She's worked towards it – and felt it approaching on the horizon,

the *eternal promise of a better life*. But when she arrived at the point on which her sights had been fixed – well-educated, full of ambition and ideas – the narrative was simply *gone*. Disappeared.

I spent so many years thinking the world was waiting for me, and would welcome me with wide-open arms, L. (f, 27) told us with a sigh in 2008. *But that didn't happen. I had gotten to 18 and had gone through all the best schools and gotten all the grades everyone had wanted me to get, and then I didn't get into the university everyone had told me I would just walk into. It was a massive fall from grace for me. Such a huge, crazy crash.*

I know now that no one is waiting for me, that my skills are -if not unexceptional- most certainly useless, and not worth anyone's money. L has a Master's degree from an excellent university, she wrote her thesis on Beckett. The irony was no lost on her: *I was obsessed with failure, because I felt I had failed. That's why I love Beckett, I love him! He is so redemptive: fail again but fail better. It's a self-knowledge that people who are perpetually successful lack. And you are also braver, if you are someone who pursues failure, if failure is your expectation, because you have nothing to lose.*

2.4.3 SHAME AND THE AMPHITHEATRE OF SOCIAL MEDIA

What is particular about these fragile years before 2011 was a crippling sense of individual shame. Perec's *man asleep* is weighed down by his own lethargy, but he expresses no shame. One of the main reasons for this may be the fact that he is isolated; no one but the author is aware of his deterioration. There is no Facebook. No wanting to speak to anyone, the *man asleep* can simply not open the door. But our *ideal type* can't simply disappear.

This shame, a private ache, is amplified by amphitheatre of social media. Online profiles of the late naughts are exuberant testimonies to what everyone wished the Internet could be – and moreover, what everyone wished *they* could be. A forum like

Facebook was a place to negate one's own shame, sharing one's life as an improbable string of highlights. Up until mid 2011, it seemed everyone was so preoccupied with denying their failures that they failed en masse to see the extent of the problem.

Shame is harder to "pass off" than guilt. As described by Helen Lynd, a sense of guilt (or the conviction of being *guilty*) exists in the realm of *wrongdoing* and can thereby be punished accordingly (Lynd 1999). Guilt, as seen by Lynd, can therefore attain a certain symbolic closure – one is not forever guilty. Shame, on the other hand is less defined, and more indefinite, because it exists in the realm of 'doing poorly' rather than of 'doing wrong'.

In the late 2000s, most people in their mid-to-late-twenties were feeling shame – they sensed their failure to integrate the narrative of pursuit was their own shortcoming. They were 'doing poorly.' *I have less expectations now*, L told us. *I feel I am on the other side of the malaise. I could really do with things being easier, financially. It would be really nice if there were some kind of recognition. You think of the word self-worth, to be "of worth": worth is a monetary term. So then you realise that when you make decisions to do things that are intellectual but don't necessarily get you monetary compensation, then your worth becomes really problematic, and you have to defend it*. L was at this point working five different odd-jobs. She had so little money that her grocery list had been reduced to the bare minimum: she knew exactly which items were the cheapest and provided the most nutrition.

But gradually, around 2010 and early 2011, people began to realise how incompatible these pursuits have become with reality as it was unfolding. As opposed to the *man asleep*, the ideal type of 2006-2011 realises she no longer has (or no longer *appears* to have) a choice. She has been excluded from the American Dream. By mid 2011 the anomie was at its breaking point,

2.5 THE END OF THE NARRATIVE OF PURSUIT

2.5.1 A OVERVIEW OF POPCULTURE 2010-2011

Up until 2010, the narrative of *pursuit* was everywhere. Despite the crisis – of perhaps, more likely, because of it – television shows like *Mad Men* celebrated quick ruthless fortunes, song lyrics were thick with gold, cars and guns, underwear was encrusted with crystals, and extravagant mortgages were for everyone! And then, around early 2011: it was suddenly gone. With the collapse of world markets came the collapse too of the narrative of progress. As David Graeber writes in *Debt: The First 5,000 Years*, with the recession came the revelation that "the story everyone had been told for the last decade or so had just been revealed to be a colossal lie." (2012: 15)

The white lies, the comforting illusions of all those who are running on the spot.

Image 15: Still from Taylor Swift "I Knew You Were Trouble" features the singer in a pile of rubble. 2012

In late 2011, the top song on the radio was about *love in a hopeless place*, youth wore ragged clothes, their denim torn and jeans 'distressed', and the world watch as the *Mad Men* lost their fortunes, chain-smoking in shabby apartments. Music videos and advertising campaigns featured a new type: not the powerful rags-to-riches glamour in gold chains, instead the diva was now dishevelled and rolling around in the dirt. The look of 2011 was smeared makeup and torn clothes – even millionaire superstars looked wary.

Perec's *man asleep* has 'ceased going forward.' But, again, "that is because [he wasn't] going forward anyway." (2011: 143) Instead of in a fictional student in a tiny apartment in Paris in the late sixties, in 2011 this realisation strikes on a grand scale.

2.5.2 FRANKLIN'S AMERICA, SINKING

Recall the Levi's campaign depicting America as a sinking pile of post-industrial debris and the world populated by angry, despaired (but well-styled) uprisen youth. This commercial premiered in July 2009. It stages not only a sinking America but also protests in the streets, against hard-faced bankers in shiny cars. The commercial campaign employs direct image-echoes of the future worldwide Occupy protests.

Image 16: Still from Levi's Go Forth Campaign "America" in which a crowd of protestors taunt a well-dressed man in a fancy black car. (source: Youtube 2009)

Franklin's America, sinking: the story has changed. As far as young adults today are concerned, the greatest revelation of the past years has been the impossibility of the narrative of *pursuit*. This is the first generation since Weber whose quality of life will almost certainly be worse than their parents (Miller 2012; Demos 2011). The concept of infinite progress and the accumulation of wealth has clogged. And now, alongside the unforeseeable triple threats of a corroded economy, a corrupt social-political system an exhausted environment prone to increasingly harrowing disasters, we look into the future and see nothing. And the tangible facts of our own lives - ballooning personal debt and the impossibility of finding jobs we are trained to do - offer very little to project upon other than downward trends.

Weber believed that with time, as capitalism became consolidated and bureaucratized, class struggle would be reduced. Peasants would be 'turned into labourers', and would eventually be clad in the clothes of the happy masses. Denim: the fabric of the free. But now our denim jeans are made abroad in abhorrent conditions. The denim itself, of such poor quality that it rarely survives a year or two of regular use, needs to be artificially 'distressed' in order to bear the markings of a well-loved pair of jeans. The narrative of *life, liberty and pursuit of property* has been truncated, and the future is uncertain.

What has changed is this: whereas traditionally (as Weber would have had it) the development of capitalism relied directly on strengthening cohesion and incorporation of the working class into both consumer society and the state, now the accumulation of wealth charts a clear trajectory away from the working class. The average man has been excluded from the dream.

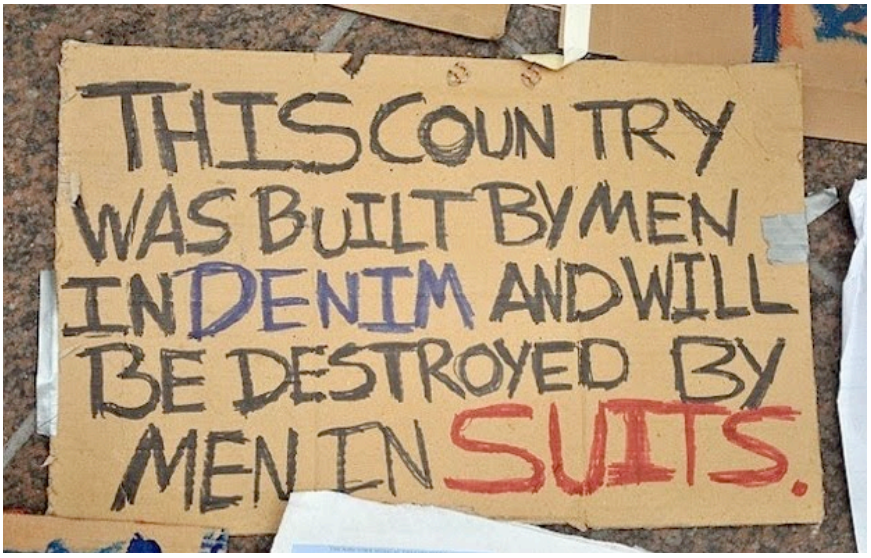


Image 17: sign at Occupy Wall Street, October 2011. Source. J.B. Nichols / Splash News

The widespread austerity measures of the post-recession years are clear indicators of this shift in priorities, but in fact the narrative took a steep turn many years ago when Alan Greenspan, hailed as one of the greatest economists of all time, stated that the success of the economy was substantially based on "growing worker insecurity"

(Greenspan 1997). Worker insecurity must be understood here not only in the economic sense of short-term contracts and dwindling social benefits.

Not only is the security net in tatters, in 2012 a great number of people (and an even greater percentage of young adults) are in jobs (if they are lucky enough to have jobs) that provide no long-term vision of the future. There is no longer the sense of a life-plan: marriage, mortgage, children, holidays. This structure, this *metanarrative* of domesticity, as despicable as it may have seemed to the Generation X of the 1990s is no longer even an option for the great majority of today's young professionals.

Greenspan's America, today's Greece, Spain, Italy: as Noam Chomsky notes during a speech to Occupy Chicago in early 2012, the economic models replicating throughout the developed West are reliant on the insecurity of working class people, living precarious existences. This is because, Chomsky argues, "as a *precariat*, the people are not going to make demands, they're not going to try to get wages, they won't get benefits" (Chomsky: 2012).

Antonio Gramsci defined the *subaltern* those who had no access to the welfare structure of the state, and who played no role in the state: the poorest of the poor. Today, says Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak in a recent article circulated at Occupy camps around the world, this story too is being re-written: "What we are witnessing is the subalternization of the middle class" (Spivak: 2011). The narrative of pursuit has ground to a halt. The middle class is now precarious.

And so in 2011 the explicit failure of the pursuit narrative on the grand scale slowly began to make space for new narratives, stories of individual lives that had heretofore been seemingly incongruent with the master narrative of success (and therefore didn't *exist*, or didn't have the language to assert their own existence.) In the wake of the recession and the many crises across the world, an enormous phenomenon slowly began to take place. Narratives that had until then been concealed by thick personal shame began to emerge, mostly online.

2.6 A SETTING: FROM ALONE TO ONLINE

> Once upon a time people were born into communities and had to find their individuality. Today people are born individuals and have to find their communities. –K-Hole (*Youth Mode* 2013)

2.6.1 I AM THE 99%

One of the clinching events in this change of narrative was indisputably a simple tumblr site set up on August 23rd 2011 by a 28-year-old New Yorker called Chris. The site was intended to promote the upcoming protest to take place on Wall Street on September 17th. It was titled http://wearethe99percent.tumblr.com/ and encouraged people to submit photographs of themselves with a their story:

> Let us know who you are. Take a picture of yourself holding a sign that describes your situation - for example, "I am a student with $25,000 in debt," or "I needed surgery and my first thought wasn't if I was going to be okay, it was how I'd afford it."
>
> Below that, write "I am the 99 percent."
>
> Below that, write "occupywallst.org" (wearethe99percent.tumblr.com/submit)

Within the month of October and November 2011, the blog was posting an average of 100 stories a day. Within a year, many thousands of people had testified by means of the 99% tumblr. *The New York Times* describes the website as "page after page of testimonials from members of the middle class who took out loans to pay for education, took out mortgages to buy their houses and a piece of the American dream, worked hard at the jobs they could find, and ended up unemployed or radically underemployed and on the precipice of financial and social ruin" (Slaughter 2011). A few select examples from the 273 posts from September 2011 show emphasis on the narrative of futurelessness:

> I'm a full time student working 45 hours a week to pay off $80,000 in debt.

Someday, I WANT A FUTURE.

Master's degree. When working, I earn >$60,000. Out of work, 11 months. No health insurance for 6 years. ...The future is as fuzzy as the picture. I thought that with an advanced degree and 20 years experience, I would have little trouble finding meaningful work. But I am out of work, almost out of unemployment insurance, and haven't seen a doctor or dentist in years, since my last two employers (at $60K/year) did not offer health coverage. Two years left on the mortgage after 20 years of not missing a payment. Will I make it? Will I even make it through the winter?

No degree. No financial aid. No chance of finishing college. No hope for the future.

My parents went $100,000 into debt for my future, and for what? It had already been stolen. I am the 99%.

I have a degree; an Associates of Arts. I stopped there, because I'd nearly exhausted the savings my parents had for me. And by 2008, I'd seen just how far a degree would get me: deep in debt. with little chance to ever pay it back. A degree has become little more than pricey slips of paper, mocking us from their frames and envelopes. It took me three and half years to get that slip of paper. I'm one of the lucky ones, with no debt. But I also have no job. And no dreams, no this is slowly becoming a living nightmare.

I played by the rules. I got good grades, went to college, and got a degree. I graduated in 2009, to no prospects. Nothing for me. Fast food joints don't even call me back. I feel HOPELESS. I'm already depressed, untreated. I often find myself thinking of suicide, because I see no future for me. At all. We are the 99 percent. And we are sick of playing by these Greed-driven rules.

I graduated May 2009—the worst economy in 20 years. Was fortunate enough to find a job-but then lost it when my position was combined with three others (even though I was already doing 2 of them) I am eating through my savings + racking up Credit Card debt to pay for my apartment and $17k+ in student loans.

> My first interview in months is with a coffee shop for $8/hr. I have no health insurance. This is written on the back of a letter that says I've cashed my retirement. I have no stake in the future.

The 99% tumblr became an enormous and public eulogy for the narrative or *pursuit*. The inner shame contained in each photograph converged in an enormous marketplace of lament – and something happened. "When dozens of compressed life stories are read in a row', writes a journalist for *The New Yorker* Magazine, 'they amass the moral force of a Steinbeck novel." (Packer 5.12.11) This 'moral force' took on a form of awakening, a novel everyone was simultaneously reading and writing. And suddenly – discharge – the inner shame turned outwards.

"The most important occurrence within the crowd is the discharge', writes Elias Canetti in his master work *Crowds and Power*. 'Before this, the crowd does not actually exist; it is the discharge which creates it" (1987: 17). This is the moment when all who belong to the crowd get rid of their differences and feel equal. The 99percent tumblr and its catchy slogan helped discharge from disparate backgrounds and locations a crowd arguably greater than any other in history.

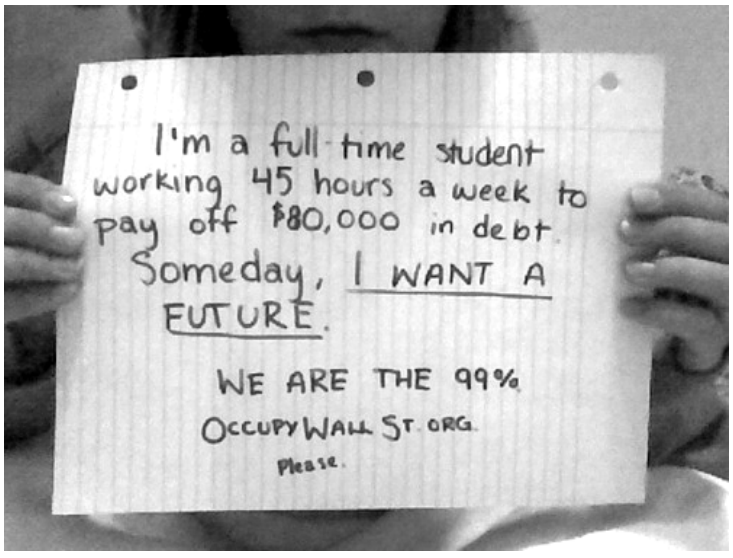


Image 18: image from wearethe99percent.tumblr.com (2011)

2.6.2 A NEW NARRATIVE: THE 99%

The postings on the 99% tumblr site vary "enormously in race, age, gender, and just about everything else" writes David Graeber (2013: 84). Yet any one who quickly browses through the hundreds and hundreds of entries will notice that nearly all posts originate largely from North America and are greatly concentrated within the demographic of young graduates. These entries, submitted by university students and recent graduates ages 18-35, display jarring symmetries in their stories, which underline the fact that a class traditionally perceived as elite now identifies itself so willingly as 'the 99%'.

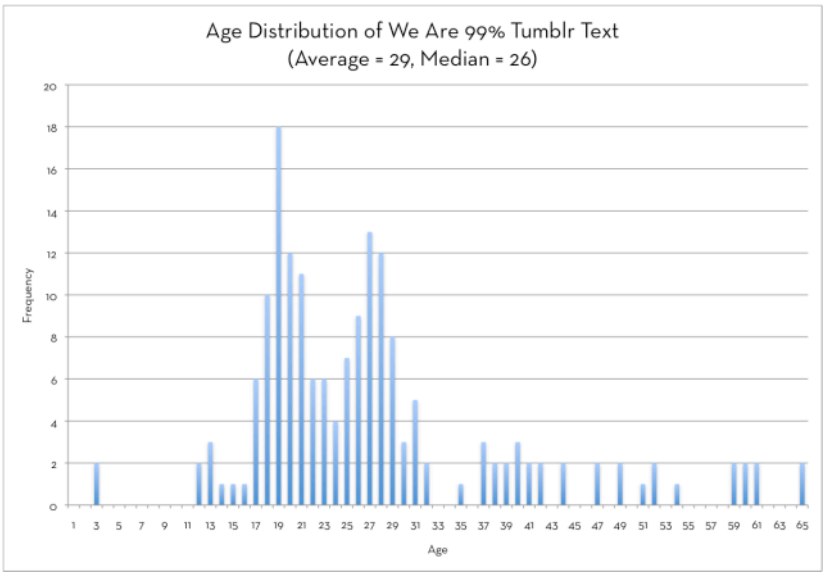


Image 19: early data from Mike Konczal's analysis of the 99% tumblr. October 9 2011. Source: http://rortybomb.wordpress.com/2011/10/09/parsing-the-data-and-ideology-of-the-we-are-99-tumblr/

In contrast to the 'extended interview' methodology, this study of the 99% site utilises testimonies given voluntarily, though often not anonymously, into an open collective sphere. There is no interviewer, there is in fact is no interviewee, as per traditional interview dynamics. The process of uploading one's story to the site is the result of a complex series of forces – *parrhesia*, *discharge*, and the *network* itself – none of which rely on the traditional power structures of the institution, or the rhetoric/lexicon, the assumptions, or the bias of academic research.

There are however words and concepts that appear with remarkable frequency. Graeber cites a study conducted by Mike Konzcal, who conducted a statistical analysis of all the html entries to the blog (which, according to our own analysis of the entries, consists of approximately half of all the entries, for many are simply a photograph without the text transcribed in html). Konzcal found that the most frequently used word in the html posts was "job", and the second most cited was "debt" (Graeber 2013: 85), and that all the rest of the top twenty-five most common words related to what he termed "basic necessities of life", words such as "work", "college", "pay", "student", "loan", "afford", "school", "insurance" (Konczal 2011). These top ten words alone spell out a clear narrative of what Konczal calls *diminished horizons*. No longer calling for workplace democracy, or dignity at work, or even economic justice - people of the 99% tumblr are crying out for basic rights - to learn, be healthy, and to have children. In his analysis, Konczal cites Graeber's 2011 book *Debt*, pointing out how "these are the demands of the peasantry, not of the working class":

> Anthropologist David Graeber cites historian Moses Finley, who identified "the perennial revolutionary programme of antiquity, cancel debts and redistribute the land, the slogan of a peasantry, not of a working class." And think through these cases. The overwhelming majority of these statements are actionable demands in the form of (i) free us from the bondage of these debts and (ii) give us a bare minimum to survive on in order to lead decent lives (or, in pre-Industrial terms, give us some land). In Finley's terms, these are the demands of a peasantry, not a working class. (Konczal 2011)

"The actual ideology of modernity', writes Konczal, 'is absent." Writes Graeber, "Under this newly feudalized form of capitalism, the downtrodden are reduced to the situation of medieval peasants, asking for nothing more than the means to make their own lives." (Graeber 2013: 85).

2.6.3 AN IMAGE: FACE

It is possible to trace a progression from Weber's ideal type to the 99% tumblr, beginning with the currency of the face. The Spirit of Capitalism, when reduced to a sociological event, represents the empowering of individuals and, ultimately, the fracturing of community. Each man can, according to the capitalist interpretation of Protestantism, become the master of his own destiny: "God helps those who help themselves. Thus the Calvinist, as it is sometimes put, himself creates his own salvation, or, as would be more correct, the conviction of it" (Weber 1930: 115). On a social level, this implies that the sharpening lens of the capitalist *ethos* has the "tendency to tear the individual away from the closed ties with which he is bound to this world" (1930: 108). Others, be they neighbours, friends or brothers, can quickly shift from companions to competition.

Weber describes this element at length, also in his later works, which document his observations as he travelled across America. Weber describes the capitalist economy as an "immense cosmos into which the individual is born", which:

> Presents itself to him, at least as an individual, as an unalterable order of things in which he must live. It forces the individual, in so far as he is involved in the system of market relationships, to conform to capitalistic rules of action (1930: 54)

Ultimately, Weber summarizes the capitalist cosmos as a "process of economic survival of the fittest" (1930: 55). The result is that each individual, in pursuing their own gilded mask of profit (as a token of God's grace) has shattered the collective con*figur*ation of tradition. If we were to observe the capitalist cosmos from afar, as per the panoptic imagery of de Certeau's 110th floor (1990: ix), we would observe a series of distinct points, or *vectors*, each an individual on their course of pursuit, bound by the soft perishable ties of industry, but rarely much more. The greatest "perversion of tradition", outlines Weber, is the fact that "the pursuit of material gain beyond personal needs (…) can apparently only be attained at the expense of others." (1930: 84-85)

In contrast, the *traditionalistic* Christian face, the face of Faith, turned to Heaven, finds this worldly, grace-less, behaviour "directly reprehensible" (1930: 85). "The normal mediaeval Catholic layman lived ethically, so to speak, from hand to mouth" (ibid: 116), and face to Heaven. "His good works did not necessarily form a connected, or at least not a rationalized, system" (116), there was no individual life narrative. Instead, these pious faces were united by humility, by the con*figur*ation (con + figure = *the forming together of figures or shapes*[23]) of all the other faces turned together, like a field of sunflowers, to the grace of God. In contrast, the face of the Calvinist, the capitalist, turns away from the crowd and its collective God and finds its own individualized beam of God's grace. From above, we could image in a vast spread of land slowly fracturing into individual islands. The moisture/nutrients that once bound them has been compartmentalised, divided, allocated, *striated*.

Magic and mystery are cancelled from existence; instead a formula emerges: Predestination is an equation. And so Faith too becomes striated, rationalized: God's mysterious workings are revealed in worldly activity. And this worldly activity turns men away from one another. The contemplative con*figur*ation of the catholic face is replaced by the faces of the president (Franklin) on the coins of currency, faces to be amassed.

In contrast, the early stirrings of the Occupy movement are heavily reliant on the face. The face is what appears, quintessentially, in the 99% tumblr. People take *selfies* in the name of a new mantra: we are the 99%. The face becomes at once a vehicle for self-expression and for coalescence.

The *99% tumblr* presents a corpus that is at once an adaptation of the objective *ideal type* of Graduate Without a Future as well as a refracted kaleidoscope of Sennett's subjective individual interviews. Each image contains elements of an anonymous

[23] The term 'configuration' was used in the mid 16th Century to denote the relative position of celestial objects, from the Latin configurare 'to shape after a pattern'

mass, and distinct patterns and from which an *ideal type* can be extracted, while also presenting an element heretofore *unseen* in sociological method: literally, *a face*.

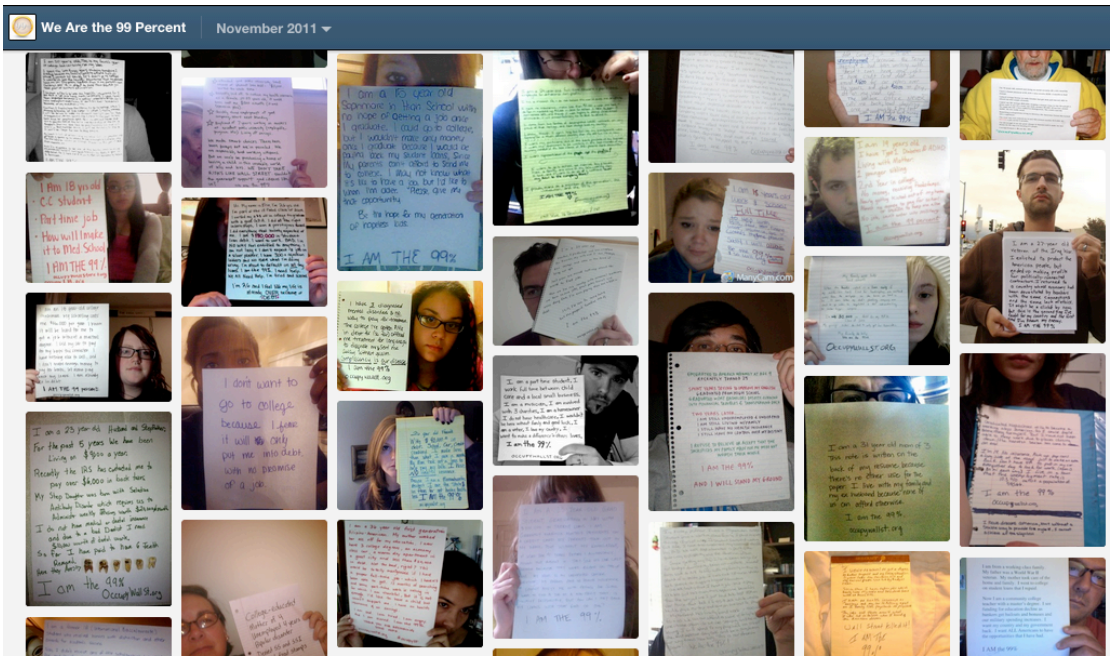


Image 20: Screenshot from the 99% tumblr showing a selection of submissions from November 2011

The face becomes a direct confrontation of the *shame* we've already described. The face becomes at once breastplate against that shame, as well as a beacon for others to overcome their own isolation, unmask themselves and show themselves as part of a collective story. "The face is at once the irreparable being-exposed of humans and the very opening in which they hide and stay hidden. The face is the only location of community, the only possible city", writes Giorgio Agamben in *Means Without End* (2000: 90). The revelation of the face, he writes, is a particularly human attribute, for, although all beings are inherently 'in the open', only human beings "want to take possession of this opening, to seize hold of their own appearance" (Ibid: 90). The appropriation is what Agamben defines as "language itself", "which transforms nature into face", and then, problematically, transforms the face into "the location of a struggle for truth". Thus, writes Agamben, "the face is, above all, the passion of revelation, the passion of language." (2000: 91)

> The face's revelation is revelation of language itself. Such a revelation, therefore, does not have any real content and does not tell the truth about this or that state of being, about this or that aspect of human beings and of the world: it is *only* opening, *only* communicability. (2000: 91, emphasis in original)

The face, Agamben stresses, does not coincide with the French term *visage*, which refers specifically to the individual human face. A face exists "wherever something reaches the level of exposition and tries to grasp its own being exposed" (Ibid: 91) – thus, Agamben proposes that art can produce a face on an inanimate object, but not a visage. Furthermore, he hints at the possibility that "the entire Earth, which has been transformed into a desert by humankind's blind will, might become one single face." (Agamben 2000: 91)

This earth-wide face, on a smaller scale, is what we can decipher in the *99% tumblr*: an attempt to grasp at the meaning of itself, a passionate, inexplicable revelation. All faces ultimately collide, superimpose, into one face, one slogan, a slogan too that has refracted into many: WE ARE X: *We are all Trayvon Martin*, *We are Gezi Park*, *Eu Sou Guaraní Kaiowá*, *We are all Egyptians*.

2.6.4 SELFIES

Because the faces are mostly taken as *selfies*, the layers of self-representation multiply: these are faces who see themselves as faces at the moment their image is taken: the slight but consistent angle of their gaze shows them not staring directly into the lens, directly at the viewer, but rather they are staring at themselves, and the light that illuminates them is precisely the projection of their faces emanating from the computer screen or telephone. When you look a face in the eyes, writes Agamben, either the eyes are cast down – in "modesty for the emptiness lurking behind the gaze" – or they stare back at you, "shamelessly",

> thereby exhibiting their own emptiness as if there was another abyssal eye behind it that knows this emptiness and uses it as an impenetrable hiding place. (Agamben 92)

What now to make of the offset gaze of the selfie? In its gaze one encounters this empty gaze of someone looking at themselves in a mirror: the look of generally displeased disinterested familiarity. Most of the initial posts on the *99% tumblr* showed only partial faces, generally just with the eyes peeking over a handwritten sign that covered most of the image. When assembled into a slideshow, the look in the eyes is particularly unsettling. The gaze is almost always offscreen, slightly below the lens, as though the subject were staring at your chest while you were taking their photograph. The steady gaze is amplified by the slide-show effect, as well as the power of its consistency. This is not an empty gaze. The eyes peer out through though the makeshift balaclavas of people's testimonies, whose weighty words are thereby to some extent liberated.

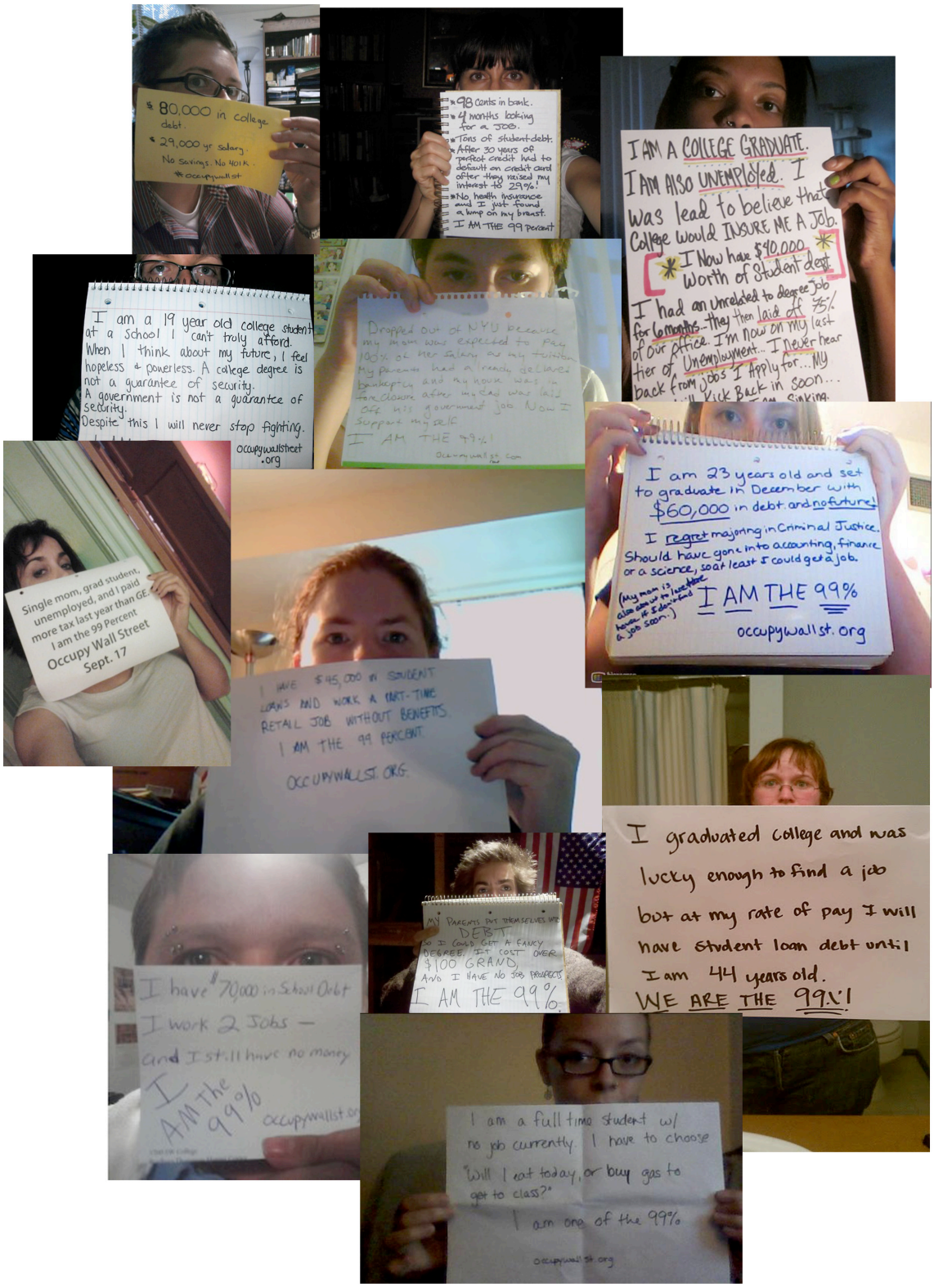


Image 21: Images from the wearethe99% tumblr, September 2011

CHAPTER 3: PROTEST IMAGES

3.1 APPAREIL DE CAPTURE: THE *RAVEN*

Recall the description invoked in the first chapter of the Greek face - a dreamy incarnation of godly creatures, eyes blank and turned to the skies - and how, after the Punic Wars, this face gradually turned its gaze forward, its features hardening into the embodiment of a bold leader: the Roman face. Weber had foreseen that the 'world dominance' of the United States in the 20th century was an inevitable as Rome's after the Punic wars (Weber 1946: 15), and we have argued that part of this inevitability was the Roman Empire's strategic restructuring of images to serve a new narrative purpose. The Roman face appropriated many of the elements of Greek iconography but translated their fantasy into palpable messages of power. The face was no longer an abstraction mounted on an idealised, mythical, body: the Roman face was the centre of the artwork, for it conveyed the details of the very real person whose glory was thereby being recognised.

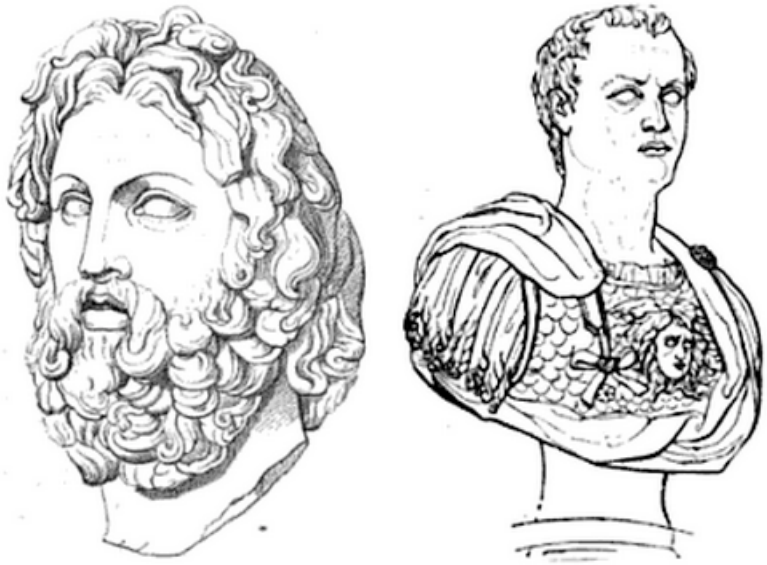


Image 22: An example of a Greek (325-300 BC) and a Roman face (1st Century AD). (Perry 1882: 204, 652)

Romans enslaved Greek artisans to re-create their arts for the in tribute to another culture (Morris 2010), much as the American Dream is manufactured today by Cambodians, Mexicans and Turks (author's own poll among Levi's wearers) in the Levi's factories worldwide. The Roman strategy earned the Empire power for half a millennium, and without going deep into the archives of their strategy, one element stands out as an interesting allegory of capture. This story too recounts the creativity of Roman cooption of the others' advantage.

We return to the Punic wars, to the first Roman victory over the Phoenicians. The Punic wars were fought largely at sea and the Carthaginians were a fiercely superior naval power. Rome's problem as it faced off against its energy across the Mediterranean was "how does a land power come to grips with an enemy whose strength is based at sea?" (O'Connell 1989: 77). The Republic's military strength was on land, and her greatest assets were their swordsmen (ibid.). In the first Punic War, off the coast of Mylae in 260 BC, the Romans employed a device called the *corvus* ('raven' or 'crow' in Latin) and effectively "turned a sea battle into a land battle", sinking or capturing fifty Punic warships (ibid.) The *corvus* was simply a boarding bridge, that could be lowered rapidly onto an enemy ship, with such force that the heavy spike (shaped like a bird's beak - hence the name) on the underside of the device would pierce from the enemy ship's deck and bind the two ships together. "Once the ravens were fixed in the planks of the enemy's deck and grappled the ships together', writes the second century Greek historian Polybius of Megalopolis, the Romans 'boarded from all directions" (*World History*, 1.22-23) The Romans were thus able to conduct naval battles as though they were on their preferred terrain - land:

> When the [the Carthaginian] ships that came into collision were in every case held fast by the machines, and the Roman crews boarded by means of the ravens and attacked them hand to hand on deck, some of the Carthaginians were cut down and others surrendered from dismay at what was happening, the battle having become just like a fight on land. (Polybius of Megalopolis. *World History*, 1.22-23)

This is example of capture is one in which the narrative of the opponent becomes appropriated by the offensive powers. From the perspective of the Carthagenians, their strength had been coopted by the Romans, who developed a system to render their advantage not insignificant but ultimately a fatal disadvantage. This inversion of power, in which a narrative of resistance becomes employed to the benefit of the very power one is resisting, is relevant to us now as we turn to a slideshow of the images of protest generated in the early days of Occupy, and watch as they take on a life of their own online. Once the images of protest existed online, they multiplied and replicated, often losing sight of their original narrative and often, also, taking on narratives that were in direct opposition to their supposed intention.

3.2 IDEAL TYPE D: THE (IMAGE OF THE) PROTESTOR

Image 23: Arguably the first image of a complicated capture of the Occupy movement, the iconic TIME cover from December 24th 2011 declares the 'Protestor' to the 'Person of the Year'.

The cover of the Time on December 24th 2011 celebrated The Protestor and the magazine's annual 'Person of the Year'. The significance of this cover image is amplified when paired with the Time 'Person of the Year' five years prior in 2006: a mirrored cover of the magazine that declared that YOU were the Person of the Year: "Yes You.', the subtitle read, 'You control the Information Age. Welcome to your world". This is the slogan of the *ideal type* of the Internet Age, the time when every type may become an ideal. The world is *yours* means both: 1) the entire world is accessible to you, and 2) the entire world only has the dimensions of what you choose to access. The Protestor, in much the same tone, is the Person of the Year five years after the invitation "Welcome to your world". The tone is flattery. In a speech at Occupy Wall Street's Zuccotti Park in October 2011, Slavoj Žižek warned the protestors not to "fall in love with themselves":

> Beware not only of the enemies, but also of false friends who are already working to dilute this process. In the same way you get coffee without caffeine, beer without alcohol, ice cream without fat, they will try to make this into a harmless, moral protest. A decaffeinated process. (Žižek 2011)

As 'The Protester' image proliferates across Facebook pages with profile pictures changed to adopt its symbolic form, it is important to ask: Why has TIME magazine sent out this friend request? In its attempt to befriend these movements, what stories of the present and memories of the past does TIME also ask us to accept? (protestcamps.org 20.12.2011)

Consider, too, the covers sandwiched between 'you' and the protestor: 2007's Vladimir Putin, 2008's Barack Obama, who had just been elected President of the United States, 2009's Ben Bernanke, Chairman of the Federal Reserve during the Financial crisis of 2007–2008, and 2010's cover of Mark Zuckerberg, the founder of Facebook. These five covers trace a ebb and flow of ideology, from emancipation to indebtedness – which reads, in five short captions, like a graphic novel: the genealogy of the protests. If 2006 saw our own faces reflected back at us in the cover of the magazine, the years in between too represented the many manic personality traits of

the *ideal type* of those years. There is a clear bipolarity between the Putin and Obama covers, and between the Obama and Bernanke the following years – the sequence of covers traces the consecutive moments of hope (perhaps even, at the time, what felt like emancipation) and capture. When the most important person of the year alternates between slogans of *hope*, the 700 billion dollar bailout, friend requests, and protests, the times are tumultuous. Consider, also, the scale of each year's representative image: the You from 2006, while indisputably self-interested (the reflection itself reflecting Narcissus), is much different from the You implied 4 years later by Zuckerberg's Facebook. The You of 2006 stands before infinite possibilities: *welcome to your world*, whereas the Facebook you of 2010 has built a comfortable nest within that world and surrounded itself with the *like* clouds of like-minded *friends*. Far from navigating the 'Information Age' to help decipher the reasons for the 2009 Bernanke bailout, the You of 2010 is most likely on Zuckerberg's Facebook, assessing the life choices of high school romances.

Shepard Fairey created the Time 'Protestor' cover, the same artist who created the iconic HOPE poster supporting Barack Obama's 2008 candidacy for President of the United States, deemed by art critic Peter Schjeldahl "the most efficacious American political illustration since 'Uncle Sam Wants You'" (Schjeldahl 2009). Fairey stated that the original version of the Obama poster featured the word "PROGRESS" instead of the word "HOPE", and that within weeks of its release, the Obama campaign requested that he issue (and legally disseminate) a new version, keeping the powerful image of Obama's face but captioning it with the word "HOPE" (Wortham 2008)

At the same time as he was creating the Protestor cover for Time magazine, Fairey *mashed-up* his Obama image by combining it with the Guy Fawkes mask made ubiquitous by the Occupy movement. In an post on his website, Fairey wrote (about the Occupy Hope mashup):

> This image represents my support for the Occupy movement, a grassroots movement spawned to stand up against corruption, imbalance of power, and failure of our democracy to represent and help average Americans. On the other

hand, as flawed as the system is, I see Obama as a potential ally of the Occupy movement if the energy of the movement is perceived as constructive, not destructive. I still see Obama as the closest thing to 'a man on the inside' that we have presently. (Fairey 2011)

Image 24: The original 'Progress' Obama poster by artist Shepard Fairey (2008) and 'Occupy Hope', Fairey's Obama / Occupy Mashup (November 2011). Source: http://www.obeygiant.com

From the original poster, the only element that remains is the upward gaze of Obama's eyes. In the images that will follow, which elements remain of the original protests? How have the images - and consequently, the viewers of the images (us) - been transformed by their very ubiquity? How have the protestors themselves, in the protests, still ongoing, still in the streets, also been changed by the way they now represent themselves? When you are Person of the Year in 2011, what about the years ahead?

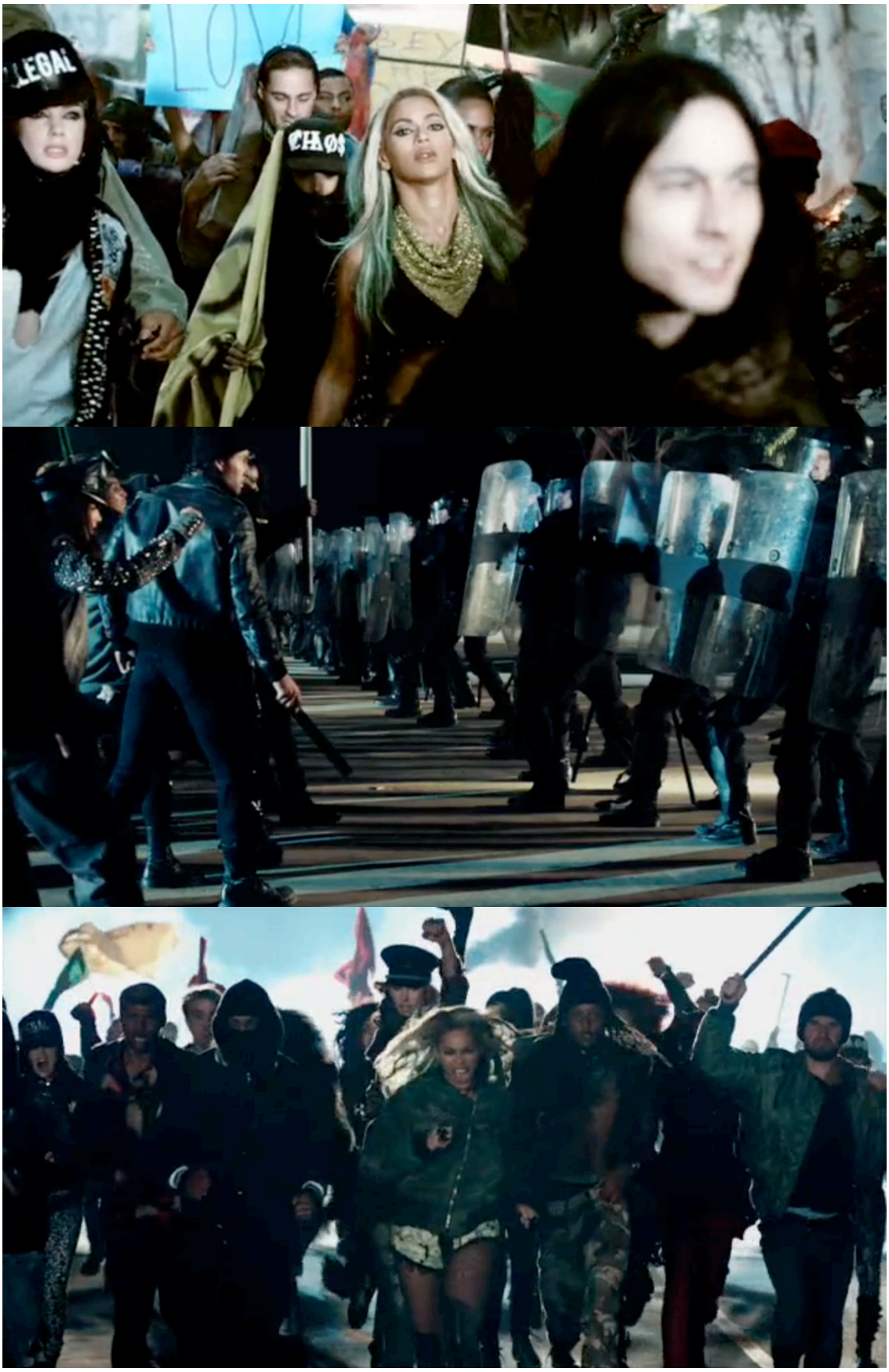


Image 25: Stills from the Beyoncé Knowles music video for *Superpower* (December 2013)

Image 26: Stills from Canadian singer Anjulie's music video for *Stand Behind the Music* (December 2012). Anjulie publically accused Beyoncé of copying her idea.

Image 27: the work *Favela Café* by Japanese artist Tadashi Kawamata at Art Basel in July 2013. Image courtesy of Art Basel.

Image 28: Still from Youtube video *Polizei räumt Favelabesetzung auf dem Messeplatz*. (Police clear occupation of favela at the exhibition space) in which police violently clear out protestors that had come to occupy the favela installation at Art Basel 2013. source: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FJkhVEyfhQY

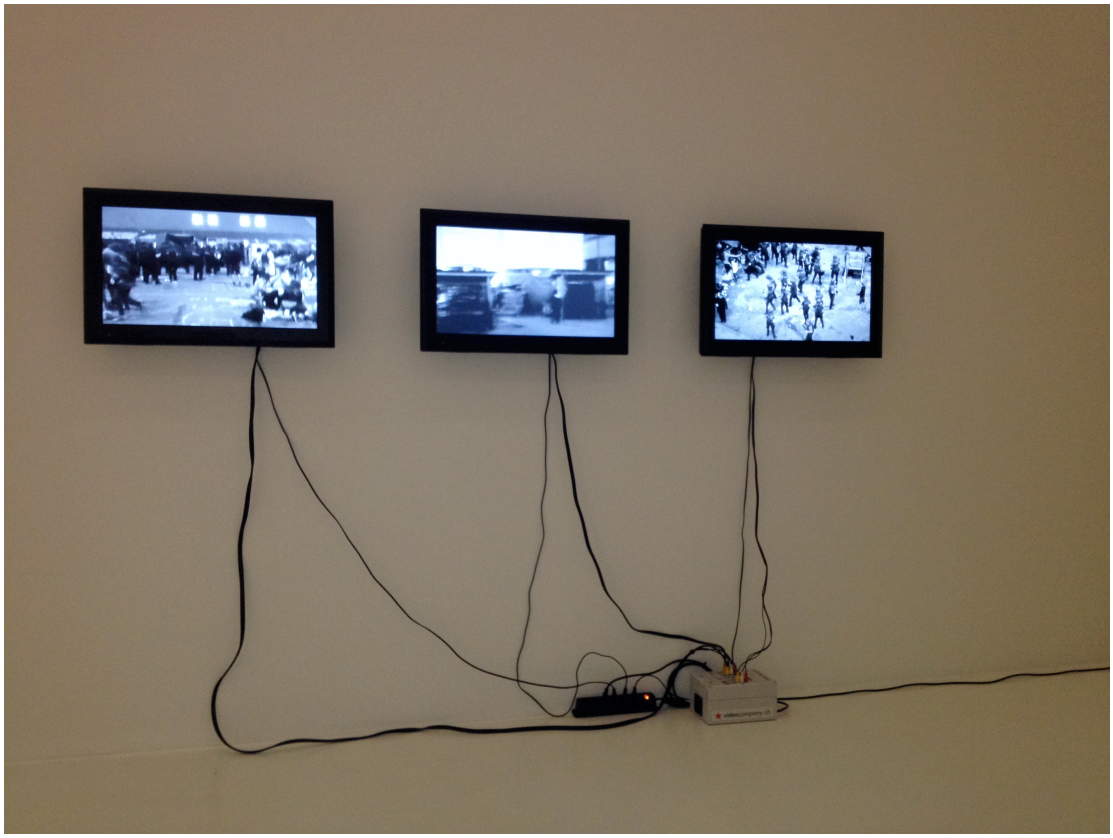


Image 29: Christian Vetter's 3-Channel video *Favela Vorfall* at the Helmhaus Zürich. Photo taken by the author on 17.11.2013. All three videos are available on youtube. Artist text from the exhibition brochure: "The three-part video documents – based on cell-phone videos available online – the evacuation of the Basel exhibition venue during Art Basel on June 14th 2013. A group of artists and activists had gathered around the 'Favela Café' installation by the Japanese artist Tadashi Kawamata, adding their own makeshift huts to the exhibition. The video recordings show how the police intervened with rubber bullets and pepper spray and broke up the assembled crowd. The favela, built spontaneously and without substantial financial underpinnings in a public space was terminated, whereas the version of the favela built for Art Basel – a wealthy private organization – was defended with drastic police violence. Or is it that the government authority raised their batons to protect the integrity of the artwork in the public space, which was being illegally compromised by uninvited creators? (my translation from the German[24])

[24] *Das dreiteilige Video dokumentiert – anhand von im Internet verfügbaren Handyfilmen – die Räumung des Basler Messeplatzes während der Art Basel am 14. Juni 2013. Eine Gruppe von Künstlerinnen und Aktivisten hatte das «Favela Café» des japanischen Künstlers Tadashi Kawamata um eigene Hütten ergänzt und sich um diese versammelt. Die Videoaufnahmen zeigen, wie die Polizei mit Gummischrot und Pfefferspray einschreitet und die Versammlung auflöst. Abgebrochen wird auf diesem öffentlichen Platz diejenige Favela, die spontan und ohne substanziellen finanziellen Unterbau hergestellt wurde. Während die von einer finanzstarken privaten Organisation – der Art Basel – errichtete Version mit drastischer Polizeigewalt verteidigt wird. Oder setzt die Staatsgewalt vielmehr ihre Schlagstöcke für die Integrität des Kunstwerks im öffentlichen Raum ein, das hier illegal von anderen Urheberinnen und Urhebern erweitert wurde?* (Text from the brochure for BLACK MAGIC. HELMHAUS ZÜRICH. 27. SEPTEMBER BIS 17. NOVEMBER 2013)

Image 30: Artist Marina Abramović wears a shirt that says FAVELAS to the Council of Fashion Designers of America awards in New York, June 3rd 2013. Source: style.com

Image 31: Production of Guy Fawkes masks in unnamed location in Brazil. July 2013. Image first posted on Reddit on July 2 2013 user SlartiBartRelative with the headline "The icon of anti-capitalism, mass-produced" (Zuckerman 2013)

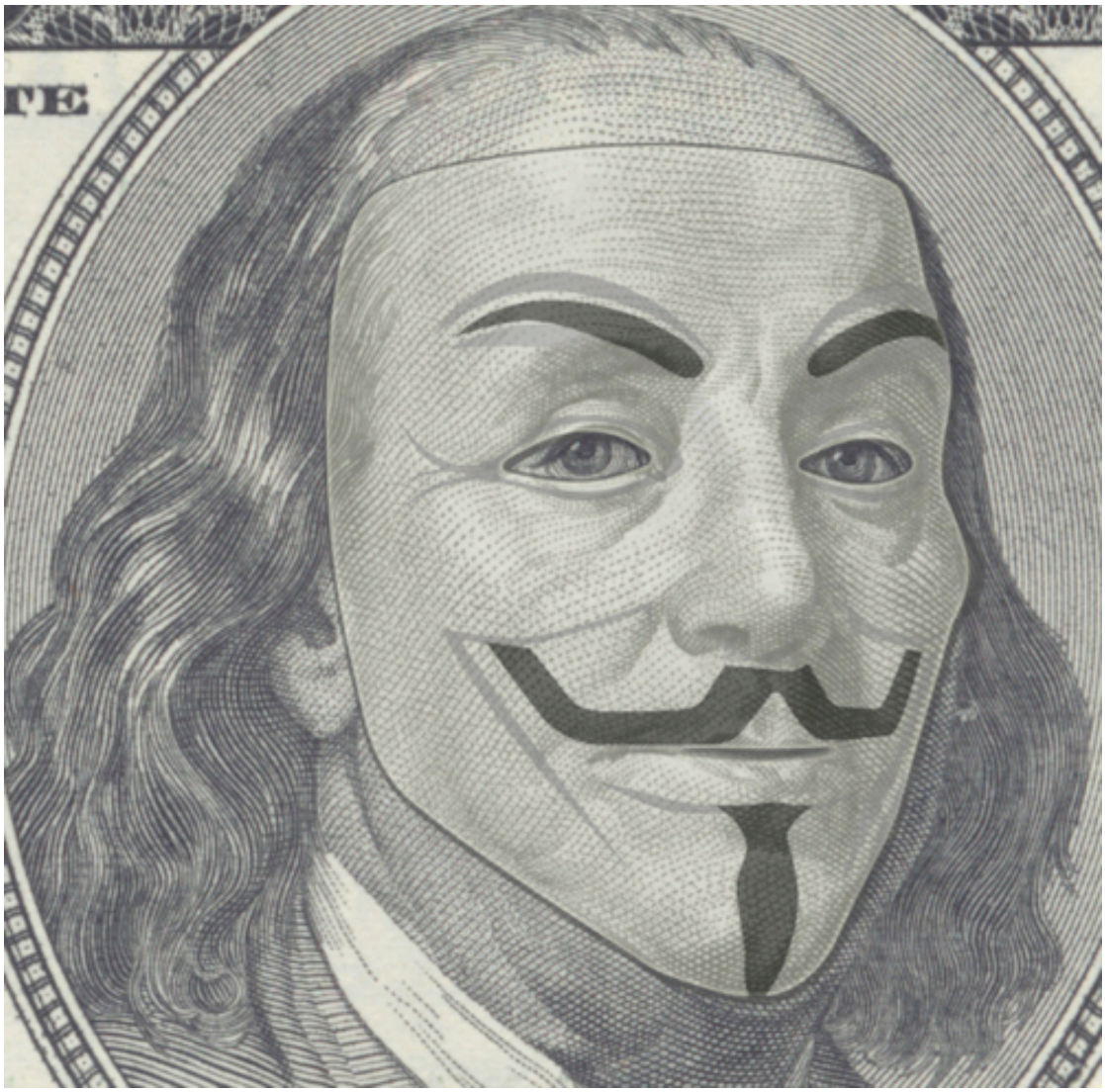


Image 32: Benjamin Franklin, Max Weber's *ideal* capitalist, wears the ubiquitous Guy Fawkes mask, made famous by the Occupy movement. Image circulated on Facebook.

Image 33: In an action to promote the "2nd Action Against Big Media Monopoly" a group in São Paulo calling themselves *Occupy Media* staged an intervention in which laser lights were projected into the SPTV studio during live news broadcast. The faces of the news anchors were lit with a discomforting green light. (my paraphrasing from the Portuguese[25]) Source: https://rizoma.milharal.org/2013/08/.

[25] Para promover o 2º Grande Ato Contra o Monopólio da Mídia que acontecerá hoje, dia 30, em frente ao prédio da Rede Globo (evento: http://on.fb.me/144CyXD) nós (Ocupe a Mídia) articulamos a intervenção com lanternas laser projetadas dentro do estúdio do SPTV na edição ao vivo de ontem (quinta dia 29). A ação foi novamente um sucesso e conseguimos ocupar os estúdios da Globo onde Monalisa Perrone apresentava o programa. Já haviamos realizado esta mesma intervenção durante o 1º ato no dia 11 de julho (quando o programa foi apresentado pelo telejornalista Carlos Tramontina).

Ukraine protest nurse shot in the neck tweeted: I'm dying

Sonia Elks
Last updated at 3:22PM, February 20 2014

A nurse who was shot in the neck by snipers while working to treat wounded protesters in Ukraine has become one of the faces of the crisis after posting a tweet saying: "I'm dying".

1 of 2

A picture of the nurse's injuries that was shared on Twitter
Twitter

Image 34: An injured nurse in Kiev tweets: "I'm dying" on February 20 2014. Source: the Guardian.

Image 35: Chanel Spring / Summer 2015 défilé at Paris Fashion Week. September 30 2014. Photo: Yannis Vlamos / Indigitalimages.com.jpg

Image 36: Photo of Occupy Central in Hong Kong, posted on Facebook on September 28 2014, on which commenters request the image be taken down to protect the protestors' identities

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CHAPTER 4: THE PERFORMANCE OF POLITICS (*THE OCCUPIED BERLIN BIENNALE)*

The following chapter responds to the silent questions evoked by the images of the previous chapter by inviting the reader into the staged space of the Occupied Berlin Biennale - an allegory for online protest that will help us address the issue of *capture* and *cooption*. We begin by asking the simple question, also evoked by the slideshow of Occupy images: when it comes to representing politics (in the art space as well as online), where does protest cease and performance begin?

4.1 CORRIDOR OF SLOGANS

If you were to enter, unsuspecting, the courtyard of the Kunst-Werke (KW) Institute for Contemporary Art in Berlin in June 2012, you would have likely felt quite disorientated. Suppose you were visiting the space for its reputation as a leading institution of contemporary art in the city, a city itself reputed as the most creative city in the world today. You may not have been taken aback by the seemingly heterogeneous crowd having coffee in the courtyard's glass café: the art crowd in frothy hairdos and careful shoes, alongside people barefoot, unshaven, some visibly just woken up. You might not have been taken aback by all the painted banners and posters hanging haphazardly from windows and mounted on boards scattered around the sunny space.

As you enter the main space through a long corridor, the walls scream endless and oversaturated slogans, floor to ceiling blocks of text in neon orange paint:

ReLOVEution! To create is to resist! Empört euch! (*Time for outrage!*[26]). The slogans, in their easy echoes of the current Facebook live feed, have a familiarity that hinges on the false: have they been painted here by well-meaning but uninspired activists? Or by commissioned painters mimicking the obvious? Is the art space the place where the shrill reality of protest must inevitably cease, only to be replaced by the dullness of performance?

Many art exhibitions in recent years have embraced the aesthetics of street art, many others have gone as far as recreating squats and spaces of commune. These exhibitions – for instance, a decrepit 17th century *caravanserai* transplanted from Istanbul to the British Pavilion at the 54th Venice Biennale in 2011[27], or a relocated squat from a poor neighbourhood of Chicago in Kassel's dOCUMENTA (13)[28] in 2012 – were interested in exploring the identity politics of a transplanted space. Or rather, these international art events confirmed how quickly a highly political space can be stripped of meaning when it is uprooted from its original context and plunked before a radically different audience.

As Adrian Searle reported in *The Guardian* the greatest impact of the work was achieved precisely by the paradox of "tracking through the be-grimed spaces with numerous other, well-dressed denizens of the international art world, all as intent on keeping their clothes clean as looking at the work" (Searle: 31.05.2011): two incompatible worlds surreptitiously superimposed. The outward, and deliberately preened outfits of the cultural elite and the deliberately (and artificially) filthy exhibition space come together here in support of one principle statement: the preservation of a certain understanding of what art should be. Indeed, it is only in the

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[26] The German (and English) title of Stephane Hessel's 2011 pamphlet, *Indignez-vous!*, praised – most widely in France and Spain – as being the text catalyst to the Occupy and namesake *Indignados* protests across Europe and South America in 2011-12

[27] Mike Nelson, *I, IMPOSTOR* (2011) Installation, British Pavilion; Venice Biennale 2011

[28] Theaster Gates, *12 Ballads for the Huguenot House* (2012) Deconstructed timbers and other construction materials from 6901 South Dorchester, Chicago,, dOCUMENTA (13).
http://12balladsforhuguenothouse.tumblr.com/

context of such biennales and exhibitions that these downtrodden spaces can metamorphose (or be metamorphosed) into art. It is only for this elite that these spaces are recreated, at outrageous expenses – merely, it could be argued, for the impact of having them be visited by the people who would never experience them in their original contexts. The spaces, formerly ridden with poverty, politics, and pain, are now made safe, penetrable. A ramshackle building thick with the lives of its inhabitants is now presented bare, uninhabited. The traces of the previous lives – garbage, grime and, in this case, dirty bedding and black and white photographs – become, in their transplantation, summarized into a candid, conceited experience that ultimately seeks, albeit silently, to placate the inevitable divisions that exist between the world they supposedly represent, and the world they so gladly represent *to*.

Image 37: four-hour queue at Mike Nelson's British Pavilion, June 2011. Courtesy: British Pavilion

Such pavilions and dislocated spaces can only be appreciated by people who exist so far outside the original context that they indeed risk ruining their clothes (or more) by entering them. And precisely this jarring superimposition is the impact of the work, writes Searle, though the impact stops there. The recreated space is spectacle and solely spectacle, he writes, "filled with unsifted layers of association". "Nelson's endless dilapidation", writes Searle, is "false" and "terribly mannered", a "kind of modern picturesque that constantly consumes and regurgitates itself." (Searle 2011))

This at once binging and bulimic view of art invokes the image of Ugolino the 'cannibal count' of Dante's *Divine Comedy*. Ugolino is trapped the in the ice of the 9th

and lowest circle of Inferno, gnawing ceaselessly at the skull of Archbishop Ruggieri, his betrayer. Though both are punished for treason and rendered eternally immobile by the ice, Ugolino, for having been himself betrayed in a plot to betray, is 'given the right to oppress' (Yates 1951: 92). And so he gnaws, furiously, forever:

> And as upon a crust a famished jaw,
> So the uppermost, there where the brain joins with
> The nape, did eagerly the other gnaw. (Dante 1947: 175)

The traitors of the final circle of Dante's *Inferno* are distinguished from the 'merely' fraudulent of the 8th circle because their betrayal is of a special relationship. Ugolino has betrayed his community, and is frozen in the ice of the second round, where Dante places traitors of cities, countries, and political parties. The sinners are buried in ice up to their necks; Ugolino may speak, yet when he does, he speaks but of vengeance. His words are ultimately just as paralysed as his body. Just as his words chew interminably on the injustice that he has suffered, Ugolino chews interminably on Ruggieri. This is what Dante imagines as the lowest circle of Hell: "absolute frigidity, absolute zero, the absence of motion, activity, dynamism, and thus of all vitality" (Ambrosio 2012: 103) The hellishness of Hell lies precisely in the inability to escape its prescribed patterns, patterns that mimic the stubborn selfish sins of life. The significance of Ugolino is one of misdirected and therefore incessant retaliation (Ambrosio 2012: 103) and his inability to see himself in relation to the Archbishop upon whom he feeds is precisely what feeds his conviction that he must continue gnawing. He is trapped in his own vanity, unable to acknowledge his role as betrayer, not only to his community but to his own sons and grandsons (who died with him, of starvation).

This chapter focuses on how many works of politics, in ways both innocent and intentional, conspire against the community they purport to love. Our focus in this chapter will be works of political art, ones that attempt *representation* of politics, and thereby *education* into the political. With the disturbing imagery of Ugolino in mind, and the regurgitation of dilapidation in the name of art, we embark on an excavation

of the representation and self-representation of the Occupy movement, leading us into the bowels of the KW Institute for Contemporary Art and its *occupation* as part of the Biennale. Our chief guide in this chapter will be Jacques Rancière, who, not unlike Dante's guide Virgil, remains un-phased by the entrenched horrors of the lower circles, because in observing them he is able to ascend, slowly, to an empowered and noble vision of what the relationship between people, politics, and art might be. You must *trust in people,* Virgil tells Dante. Rancière ultimately demands the same of us: he does not, as the gates of Inferno solemnly command, *Abandon Hope*.

For the moment, however, Rancière too walks the grim and grimy pathways of the British Pavilion, trying not to soil his clothes on its barefaced cynicism. In a book being sold at the same Venice Biennale, to accompany *The State of Things* exhibit at the Norwegian Pavilion, he laments how critical art, in its intention of "teaching" us by "making us look closer" at the spectacle of greed, guilt, and misbehaviour, often ends up joining the exact cynicism it seeks to overcome.

This is what it often does today, as it endlessly accompanies the exercise of domination while purporting to reveal its secrets to people who don't ignore anything about those secrets (2011: 34).

What Rancière is targeting are the *Ugolino-artworks*: their hypocrisy, cannibalistic retaliation, vindictive self-importance, and inherent and ultimately oppressive paralysis. Examples of such works abound in Rancière's essays over the last decade, as well as the decades' countless galleries, museums and most praised artists. Rancière decries how in such works the act of denouncing spectacle becomes a monument to spectacle itself, and the act of speaking (having something to say) entails an inability to hear or see any experience outside the confines of one's own language.

Image 38: Gustave Doré, Ugolino biting archbishop Ruggieri

In the following pages, we will address the parallels between the representation of politics in art and the representation of politics online. The audiences for both are growing, but a discussion about the role of this audience (as both recipient and inevitable co-creator of the works) is rarely discussed. The 2011 British Pavilion hosted the longest lines of the Venice Biennale, with people allegedly cueing for over 4 hours (Johnson 2011). Hundreds of thousands of people passed through Mike Nelson's *caravanserai*[29], and yet, as Searle reports: "one passes through Nelson's labyrinth as if no other visitor has penetrated this forgotten place for decades. That's the magic of it." (2011) The Internet too, accessed through the privacy of our homes, navigated in the anonymity of usernames and aliases, offers the same counterintuitive superimposition of immediacy and distance, otherness and individualized experience: how does politics play out in this strangely liminal space? The change in narrative of pursuit, freedom and resistance as it plays out online is the culminating point of our discussion, and to lead us there we now we enter the KW Institute for Contemporary Art in Berlin, which will stand in for an allegory of the complicated dynamics between protest and performance, between artist, activist and audience.

The feeling upon entering the Occupied Berlin Biennale is quite different from Mike Nelson's British Pavilion, and indeed any other examples of transplanted spaces. The politics are omnipresent here, and they are bristling with a dull but also aggressive

[29] 440,000 people visited the 2011 Biennale (according to the official website labiennale.org), of which at least half ventured into the British Pavilion.

normalcy habitually not found in biennales and art spaces. The symbolic dust of the *caravanserai* has not settled yet here, instead it stirs thick in the hot summer air.

Past the corridor of slogans, the space opens wide around an enormous sunken room. It feels much like a lowered amphitheatre. But in this case the stage and audience are reversed: the *show* is happening below.

You stand at the top of a staircase, while a few meters beneath you a makeshift village bustles without heeding you any attention. People in one corner are painting banners, in another corner a large white screen encircled by chairs proclaims itself in chalk to be the *Autonomous University*. On one of the chairs sits an older man with a computer on his lap, typing. A woman stands behind him, pointing at the screen. At the very back of the room, through an open door you can see a few young women and men, outdoors, tending to a small urban garden. Others are smoking cigarettes. A door opens in another corner, to your right, and a whistling man in dreadlocks carries out a plastic tray laden with cut fresh fruit and systematically moves through the space, offering people slices of nectarines and bunches of green grapes.

You stay perched above this wide scene, unsure of your position. Again: where does protest cease and performance begin? And where do you stand in relation to this divide? The staircase is before you and you could descend in among the people. But you feel strange. You notice that other visitors, cameras in hand, also remain, hesitant, on the tiny platform of the look-out. It feels as though a strange amorphous line has been traced, between spectacle and spectator, politics and art, performing protest and observing it from afar. What to do? What will be expected of you in you go down into the space? What does it *mean* if you don't?

Image 39: The entrance to the main hall of the KW Institute for Contemporary Art Berlin, June 2012. Photo courtesy the author.

4.2 ART: THE PERFORMANCE OF PROTEST

4.2.1 PROTEST BECOMES PERFORMANCE: THE 7TH BERLIN BIENNALE

You have entered the Occupied Berlin Biennale, the first large international art event directly to reference the Occupy uprisings that had began just a little over six months earlier. In acknowledging Occupy within the art world, not only do the curators, Artur Żmijewski and Joanna Warzsa, wish to address the issues stirred by the protest movement, they have literally brought Occupy into their space. For the nine weeks of the biennale, approximately two-dozen members of Occupy, 15M, Indignad@s and Blockupy camps around the world were invited to come, live in, and officially 'occupy' the main space of the Berlin Biennale. In addition to the invited parties, flown in on the Biennale's budget from New York, Barcelona, London and Amsterdam, many local activists joined the occupation. After having the original Occupy Berlin camp disbanded a few months earlier, the Occupied Berlin Biennale was now Berlin's only and official Occupy Camp.

If you happen to be visiting the Biennale in the late afternoon on a Tuesday or Thursday, you would soon notice people starting to assemble in the centre space, dragging chairs and benches from the corners of the space into a haphazard circle. Soon you'll probably see a young man, or maybe a woman, emerge from nowhere with a large megaphone and start calling into it at a regular melodic pace: *Asamblea! Asamblea!* He walks through the space, greeting visitors like you, inviting you to come down into the circle, grab a seat on a bench. Once a few dozen people have assembled, some carrying props, other dishevelled and visibly disinterested, and a few fidgeting guests, the man with the megaphone will begin the General Assembly by introducing himself and asking for people to volunteer to take *stacks*, take minutes, translate if necessary, and to mediate the meeting. And you, above on the platform, can watch from your perch as self-described *direct* and *horizontal* democracy asserts itself in a flurry of wiggling fingers and agitated debates.

This, the 'Indignad@s Camp' as it was most commonly called, was the 'grand non-project' of the Biennale (Berlin Biennale Presskit, 2012: 7). A human camp in the basement of the four-story Kunst-Werke building, the Occupy movement was placed as a symbolic pedestal atop which other artworks, or *works of politics* were stack. These works, the main attraction of the Berlin Biennale, were all explicitly provocative – be it a Styrofoam replica of the crowned head of the world's largest Christ-the-King statue by Mirosław Patecki, or artist Khaled Jarrar's stamping visitors' passports with "State of Palestine", or former Mayor of Bogotá Antanas Mockus's commentary on the drug wars in Mexico, which invited visitors to sign a pledge to cease using drugs, and to seal this pledge with a drop of their own blood – in the sense that they were more intent on proposing answers than in simply pointing out issues obvious to all.

4.2.2 THE GREATEST PIECE OF PERFORMANCE ART IN THE WORLD

Shortly after the Occupy Wall Street (OWS) protests in October 2011, there was a rumour circulating among young artists and art workers in New York City and their friends in Berlin. This rumour maintained that the OWS protests began as a work of

art: after a well-documented meeting in New York City (Schneider 2011), a few young performance artists decided to pitch their tents and physically occupy the space of Zuccotti park. The outcome, a full-fledged, multi-million worldwide movement, was, it was said, *the greatest piece of performance art in the world*[30].

Whether the rumour is true is essentially irrelevant for our purposes in this chapter. Except, indeed, this supposed 'irrelevance' displays how the distinction between art and protest is often, at this point, merely a semantic one, and will inform us as we begin to dissect the precise elements that place this statement beyond a simple delineation of true/false or of art/protest/politics. We thus begin with the claim itself, which speaks volumes on 1) the amorphous and pervasive qualities of art today, underlining the significance of the *outside*, of the unexpected, and the impossibility of truly locating the kernel that may be called *art* within a greater event. The same claim also helps us address 2) the provocative role of the *artist as avant-garde* and, accordingly, 3) the problematic tendency of art to trace an appropriating frame around protest, as well as signalling 4) the quite particular affinities between art and political action, in their position in the timeline of human experience, as well as 5) their ultimate ability to re-configure what Rancière calls *the sensible*, or, rather, how both art and political action at their best enable new positions of *subjectification* and new articulations of a *we*.

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[30] This much we know: the first documented meeting for Occupy Wall St. took place on July 31st 2011 in an artist run space called 16 Beaver in New York (the same group hosted an event at dOCUMENTA 13). The meetings were coordinated by the core members of this space, all artists and curators, as well as David Graeber (anarchist, author, and former professor at Yale) and Georgia Sagri, a Greek performance artist (Graeber 2013: 16-23). They met to discuss the call for occupations put forth by *Adbusters* magazine, and a general discontent that had in fact been brewing for some time since 2001, in the art world especially. They were the ones who, alongside Chris of the 99% tumblr, held the fGeneral Assembly on September 17th at Zuccotti Park, which turned into an occupation more or less haphazardly. The group had been holding organizational GAs every Tuesday in August/early September at Tompkins Square Park. (Graeber 2013: 42) The second of these meetings, on August 20th 2011 was, according to people present, thought of as a pseudo-art performance, in which Sagri paced around the periphery of the circle chanting "We are not just here for one action. This is an action. We are producing a new reality!" The pitch of her voice rose and then fell with every slogan. "We are not an organization; we are an environment!" (Schneider 2011) TO ME THIS BELONGS INSIDE THE TEXT, NOT AS A FOOTNOTE;

The claim of Occupy as the greatest piece of performance art in the world implies that what elevates the movement from a simple performance into a *great work of art* is the unconscious, spontaneous – and therefore 'real' – participation of a greater public, drawn into the movement for reasons all their own, and reasons much outside of art.

Precisely this is most important in what we call 'contemporary art', says French philosopher Jacques Rancière: the blurring of borders. In contemporary art we never know exactly when we are within the art piece or without it (Rancière 2009: 621). Thus, pieces of contemporary art actively incorporate the *outside* – be it the spaces of exhibition, the corrosion of time, or the behaviours of the public – as an integral part of the final *art*work. Indeed, this incorporation of the *outside* is in many cases precisely what elevates an object from sheer materiality into the realm of art. As Rancière points out, it is really only once art sheds its conventional boundaries and becomes indeterminate that interesting things begin to happen. These forms of blurring and displacement remove the traditional fourth wall that places art on one side and 'the real' or the 'reality' of the spectator on the other. (Rancière 2009: 619).

4.3 REFRAMING

4.3.1 MECKSEPER: THE TRIPLE REFRAMING OF POLITICS

And so we enter the Berlin Biennale in 2012 and witness a collision of these two worlds: the Occupy movement supposedly having ascended into the realm of art. An artwork, or, as the curators preferred to call it, *art that works*. How is it that a direct transplantation of protest can come to be understood as art? What happens when spaces of protest are relocated and reframed? How does protest *exist,* and what does it signify once it is removed from its original context and is diffused into other spaces, be it into the white box of the gallery, into the pages of theory, or across the broadbands of social media?

Let's begin to answer this question with the following image, used by Rancière in his book *Le spectateur émancipé* (2008A).

Image 40: Josephine Meckseper, *Untitled* (2005)

This is a photograph taken in New York City in 2003. It is a photograph of protestors, protesting the war in Iraq. It was taken as similar events were happening all around the world. We've all seen variations of this photograph from that time, and similar photographs taken in the ten years since – especially in the last three years (2011-2014) in New York City again, but also Montreal, Frankfurt, Tel-Aviv, Athens, Rome, Istanbul, Sao Paulo, Caracas and Kiev (to name but a few). These photographs from recent years (that needn't be shown, for indeed we they have already been summoned in our minds) are different from this one, ten years older.

Firstly. This photograph is taken by German artist Josephine Meckseper. It is *art*.

What makes it art? It is a social critique, and this critique is inherent in the framing of the photograph: as Rancière points out, its name *Untitled* seems to be saying "no need for a title: the image alone speaks volumes." In the background, anonymous protestors and their self-evident signs; in the foreground, a garbage can overflowing with quickly consumed cheap contents – cups, fast food containers, newspapers, and some discarded signs too – assumes the protestors themselves have filled it. Their protest is rendered banal, hypocritical. They are part of the machine they are criticizing. And

the artist's critique fills the frame: although Meckseper herself was a body in the protest, she stood from afar, as is true to her aesthetic.

Here are a series of more photographs that she took in Berlin just a few years prior. Always the framing, always the distance. Always the commentary, which allegedly elevates the images from journalism to *art*.

Television Crew, from Untitled (Berlin Demonstration Series 1), 2002 2007.27e

Fire, Cops, from Untitled (Berlin Demonstration Series 1), 2002 2007.27c

Image 41: Josephine Meckseper, *Untitled (Berlin Demonstration Series)*, 2002-2007. Photos courtesy of the Saatchi website

The protestors are made homogeneous, faceless, and ultimately voiceless. They represent not the issues at hand that day in the streets, but the general imagery of *resistance*. The resistance itself is counterbalanced by (a self-evident and not particularly insightful) commentary, which shoves the protestors into the background while the foreground always presents a new tension: the media truck, *surveillance*; the burning shopping cart, *consumerism*. Each time the actual content of the protest is superimposed with another meaning: Meckseper attends protests in order to retranslate them, reframe them, in a process that reconfigures the street and its indignants into art, to be hung in the homes of precisely the people against whom the rebellion had been staged. Though from afar Meckseper appears present, and indeed, forms the crowd, she actually stands outside it, and her presence is effectively redefining that very crowd in ways its members neither anticipate nor likely condone.

The concepts and the procedures of the critical tradition are in no way defunct, writes Rancière, with Meckseper's photographs as an example:

> They are still functioning very well, all the way into the discourse of those who declare it obsolete. But **their current usage displays a complete reversal of their orientation and supposed ends** (Rancière 2008A: 30 my translation[31], my emphasis).

Image 42: Josephine Meckseper, *Berlin Demonstration Series* at the Andrea Rosen Gallery, New York City (2007)

This image re-reframes the protest anew. Meckseper sells her prints for between 10,000$ and $20,000. In June 2013, an auction in London sold one of her prints from the same era for 12,500 pounds[32]. She is a famous artist. She is photographed regularly in the luxury parties of the Hamptons and the Upper East Side.

[31] My translation from the French. "...les concepts et les procédures de la tradition critique ne sont aucunement désuets. Ils fonctionnent toujours très bien, jusque dans le discours de ceux qui en d´clarent la péremption. Mais leur usage présent témoigne d'un complet renversement de leur orientation et de leurs fins supposés." (Rancière 2008A: 30)

[32] According to the website of Phillips Auctions London, *Untitled (Denim Rainbow II)* sold during Contemporary Art Day on June 28 2013, as number 129 of 149 lots.

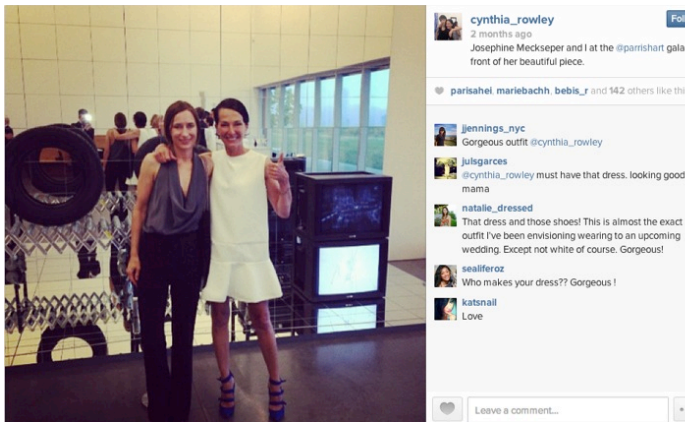

Image 43: Photograph of fashion designer Cynthia Rowley and artist Josephine Meckseper, as posted by Rowley on her Instagram account in July 2013.

She too is part of the machine she is criticizing. And it is precisely her expert work in translating the subversive into the palatable that has afforded her this paradoxical lifestyle. Aside from the key fact that most users of social media don't make a living from the photographs they produce and share, we are all in some way a Josephine Meckseper, in the way we witness and reprocess social critique and appropriate images, in the ways we perform and process protest, and reconfigure its images to our own purposes.

4.3.2 *NETOYENS+SPECTACTEURS*: THE TRIPLE REAPPROPRIATION OF POLITICS

Divina Frau-Meigs (2012), begins to address the concern of appropriation by naming two figures of the cyber-era *(figures cybéristes)* who, when combined together, enact the new type of 'artists of online activism'. In her 2012 essay *La radicalité de la culture de l'information à l'ère cybériste*, Frau-Meigs compiles a list of the many figures operating online. These, she writes, maintain identities structured around sedimentary layers, "like mille-feuille", in which the social spheres of work, leisure and health are all affected, and thereby the "modernist figures of the citizen and the

consumer" gain "unprecedented and increased opportunities for political and economic participation" (Frau-Meigs 2012, my translation[33]).

The five figures Frau-Meigs locates distinguish themselves from one another by the terms of their engagement online: what they give, what they receive. The first type is the *netoyen* or 'cyber-citizen', embodied at its extreme by the hacker type such as Julian Assange, but also the many contributors to the blogosphere who decry the insufficiencies of 'classical journalism' and are invested in the participatory elements and direct democracy made possible by the online audience. The individual who inhabits the ideal of the cyber-citizen is invested in the key word of 'transparency' and the 'empowerment of the individual' for processing, sharing, and interacting with the unprecedented abundance of information available of the online network (Frau-Meigs 2012[34]). These types, as described by Frau-Meigs, are not the point of contention. I believe, instead, that a large majority of people who would self-describe as 'cyber-citizens' - the majority of the people who will, without fail, share images of whichever protest that is currently erupting - be it in Istanbul, Rio de Janeiro, Ferguson or Hong Kong - across their social networks are rather an interesting (and very recent) hybrid of both the *netoyen* and Frau-Meigs second 'figure': the *spectacteur*.

The *spectacteurs* are "spect-actors": both spectators and actors. They are engaged in activities that "are not at all productive in the commercial sense, but are very

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[33] My translation from the French: "Se présentent plusieurs figures stabilisées du sujet cybériste, qui proposent une identité structurée en couches sédimentaires, comme un mille-feuille. Les sphères sociales du travail, du loisir, de la santé… en sont toutes affectées. Les figures modernistes du citoyen et du consommateur se dotent de possibilités de participation politique et économique accrues et inédites." (Frau-Meigs 2012)

[34] My paraphrasing from the French: " Le « netoyen » ou « cyber-citoyen » (...) Cette figure est modifiée par la coévolution avec la machine qui l'investit d'une dimension plus participative, en relation à la démocratie directe par l'autonomisation de l'individu et une relation plus transparente à l'information (...). L'utilisation de l'informatique se fait à des fins protestataires, pour accéder à une information gratuite et facilement échangeable, comme dans le cas de hackers célèbres tels que Linus Torvalds, Richard Stallman ou Julian Assange. Le rapport à l'information comme actualité se manifeste souvent pour pallier les insuffisances du journalisme classique, trop asservi au pouvoir et pris dans ses routines." (ibid.)

gratifying in the relational sense" (Frau-Meigs 2012, my translation[35]) and they mobilize around mediatic events (Frau-Meigs cites Michael Jackson's death) as well as political events (Frau-Meigs cites the Arab Spring). The difference between the *speactacteur* and the *netoyen* is that the information is not the goal, but rather the feelings of solidarity, exchange and attention that will be generated by the *viral* qualities of the content. The attention generated offers value to the issue at cause (as it does for the *netoyen*) but, in the case of the *spectacteur* among other *spectacteurs*, the value is also granted to the individual. When politics becomes spectacle, the *spectacteur* combines with the *netoyen* to reconfigure the images of politics to their own purposes. The amorphous space of the Internet, in the hands of the *netoyen+spectacteur*, confounds the messages of hashtags, in the sense that *#changebrazil* is often less about Brazil and more about *#fomo* (fear of missing out).

This switch from protest to spectacle to creative commodity – or the triple re-appropriation of street politics – effectively mutes and reroutes resistance into utterly contradictory choruses. What is the role art plays, as with the Meckseper example, in what Rancière decries as the actual reversal of social critique? The role of *art*, or *art as avant-garde* – roughly defined here as the creative re-appropriation of a chosen reality – mimics in many ways the roles we all play online as curators of our own images and, as *spectacteurs*.

The challenge of the moment is therefore to re-think the meaning of appropriation in relation to a reality constituted by a multiplicity of spatialized temporalities. The point of departure for such considerations – and also the reason why appropriation remains relevant as a critical (art) practice – is the undiminished if not increased power of capitalist commodity culture to determine the shape of our daily reality. The force that underlies the belief in the potential of appropriation is the hope that it should be possible to cut a slice out of the substance of this commodity culture to expose the structures that shape it in all their layers. It is also the hope that this cut might, at least

[35] My translation from the French: " Les « spectacteurs » sont engagés dans des activités qui ne sont pas toutes productives au sens commercial mais très gratifiantes au sens relationnel." (ibid.)

partially, free that slice of material culture from the grip of its dominant logic and put it at the disposal of a different use. The practical question is then where the cut must be applied on the body of commodity culture and how deep it must go. (Verwoert 2007)

Of course the disingenuous (camouflaged as genuine) interest of the artist in the activist movement faces numerous paradoxes, as does the role of the *netoyen+spectacteur*. By addressing the role of the artist, we can begin to tackle the convoluted role of the *spectacteur*, the online assembler of narrative and political identity. Protest traverses a transformative curtain the moment it *chooses* or *is chosen* to enter the art context and be presented as *art*, just as protest traverses another similar curtain when it *chooses* or *is chosen* to enter the world of social media.

Choice is one of our main concern here: the choice of the curators, the choice of the activists to subject themselves to 'becoming art', and the choice of the public to descend the staircase and enter the spectacle, the protest, the *human zoo*. We're interested in how choice itself, in giving an idea agency, can propel this idea into new and unforeseen spheres of meaning, and, specifically, whether this title, *art,* and the appropriation of politics into art (and vice-versa) does the Occupy movement any justice.

4.4 THE ARTIST AS *AVANT-GARDE*

4.4.1 PREPARING THE FUTURE

A century ago, at about the same time as Max Weber was deciphering the new narratives of progress, a new expectation of what art could accomplish was being formed. With industrialisation and the beginnings of a working/middle class, art began moving away from palaces and cathedrals, where it had performed the role of celebrating and confirming the existing power structures. The turn of the 19th into the 20th Century saw visual artists becoming increasingly aware of their social vantage point and their ability – and many even argue their duty – to advance a critique of the

exact power structures that had been the lifeblood of their predecessors. For the first time it was acknowledged that it mattered what art said and that works of art had real consequences in the 'real' world.

And so directly alongside the narrative of pursuit, a parallel narrative developed in the realm of representation. The representation of reality underwent a shift in power dynamics: much like the individual power to accumulate wealth not for the glory of God but his own benefit, the artist becomes endowed with the power of dissent, subversion, and the ability – or even the duty – to represent what had formerly been un-representable. *To make the invisible visible*, as Rancière would say. This movement in art became known as the *avant-garde*, and it prized works not for their beauty, craftsmanship, or the flawlessness with which they depicted reality, but for an innate quality that placed them in advance of their time. Whereas up until then the artist had represented a systemic culmination of the past, and thereby the teleological perfection of technique, the *avant-garde* symbolised a distinct rupture from this linearity. With the *avant-garde* movement came the idea that modern art owed nothing to the past. Indeed, the *avant-garde* looked not to the backwards, but forwards?, preparing a future that was yet to be.

The shift evokes the familiar imagery of Weber's entrepreneur, Franklin's good Capitalist, and the quintessential Levi's-clad American of the past century, or today's Occupy protestor. In contrast to these type Bs, we recall their type As (the "Verleger", the complacent peasant, the labourer, the 'Graduate Without a Future') bound so loyally to a traditional way of life that they seek not freedom from its confines but rather comfort within them. The Type As of each scenario might be visualised by Walter Benjamin's iconic description of Paul Klee's watercolor *Angelus Novus*, a painting that Benjamin himself owned. The traditional (Type A) artist assumes the role of the angel, and is propelled forward by the stormy winds of progress, face towards the past. (Benjamin: 1939). The *avant-garde*, then, in contrast, is the moment following the angel's wide-eyed horror, the moment illuminated by the impetus to battle the winds of history and to turn his face forwards, if only to catch a blurry glimpse of what is to come. It is, as Slavoj Žižek describes, the moment of mid-air

suspense above the precipice of the future. It is the moment we look down (Žižek 2011: TC 02:11), 'preparing for the future'.

In a similar motion, Marcel Duchamp, a momentous figure of forward-facing art, began, by his own account, by learning to produce art according to the various movements and ideologies available to him in his day. From that knowledge, he was able to transcend into the idea of *avant-garde*, which he himself perceived as a 'special' activity, open to small coteries of people who needed to substantially understand the preexisting forms of art in order to appreciate the subtleties of the New (Hughes, 1980: 373). Duchamp made the conscious transition, in this case from a Type A artist to becoming one of the very first Type Bs.

Duchamp's work was the *demystification of art*, outlining the rupture from previous forms of thought, a rupture in the traditional narrative of what art was and what art could do. With his series of 'ready-mades' he exhibited objects devoid of aesthetic interest – like a bottle rack, a snow shovel, or a bicycle wheel – which he then classified, by context, as 'art.' The most aggressive of these was Fountain, 1917, a porcelain urinal (at the Philadelphia Museum of Art).

Image 44: ***"I found more or less what I wanted to do, which would not be influenced by movements I've been through"*** **Still from interview with Marcel Duchamp in Robert Hughes' BBC series** ***The Shock of The New*** **(1982)**

The ready-mades were manifestoes, writes Robert Hughes in his book and subsequent BBC series *The Shock of the New* (1980-1982). "They proclaimed that the world was

already so full of 'interesting' objects that the artist need not add to them. Instead, he could just pick one, and this ironic act of choice was equivalent to creation - a choice of mind rather than of hand (1980: 66)." The boundaries of this simple gesture, the transposition of an object's meaning with relation to the space in which it exists, is still being played with today, as with the Meckseper photographs and with the transplanting of the Occupy movement into an international art biennale.

Using Duchamp as a prime example, Hughes positions the artist along a timeline, "gripped in a parenthesis between the dead past and the unborn future". The contemporary vision of the art as *avant-garde*, he writes, places the artist as a *precursor*: "the truly significant work of art is the one that prepares the future" (1980: 366). Although Hughes dismisses the idea that modern art owes nothing to the past as 'nonsense', he acknowledges how in turning to face forward, art embraces its new role that will be to prepare society to question the values that have been handed down, and thereby create a kind of critical ferment that paves the way for vast political change:

The cult of the precursor means that you substitute a prospective, and therefore imaginary, relation between present and future for the tangible and perceptible relationship between past and present. Slow as it may seem, the process by which the past feeds into the present does at least work in favour of the living artist: it gives him or her a solidity, a location, whereas the role of the precursor, pushed to its limits, turns the artist into a historical expedient whose role is less to be than to assist in the labour of becoming (1980: 366).

The 'living artist' as described here by Hughes, concerns himself with 'the tangible and perceptible relationship between past and present'. The 'living artist is thus in everyway an incarnation of what we've coming to define as the Weberian Ideal Type A. The Type B, on the other hand, is the 'precursor', operating in the liminal space of projection, of becoming – preparing the future.

The preparation for the future is a bit of a recipe, perhaps: an unforeseen combination of ingredients, that when correctly combined, has a distinct echo of familiarity: the familiarity of what has yet to come. The *avant-garde* knocks away the accumulated preconceptions of the past to reveal something so true it appears, at the moment of its discovery, utterly inevitable. This is the case of Duchamp, as well as Weber's new Capitalist, as well as the Levi's freedom-loving cowboy. All prepare for a future they cannot possibly foresee – and yet within the very description of the 'idealism' engrained in their 'ideal types' comes a framing for what is possible.

4.4.2 RUNNING ON THIN AIR: INVISIBLE FUTURES

Image 45: Slavoj Žižek at OWS, Oct 9 2011, still from http://youtu.be/vdwF3j1F2pg

In Chapter 2, we discussed today's stunted timeline, or what we described as the *futurelessness* inherent in the static camps of the Occupy movement. Occupy exists at the moment the frivolous momentum of the *narrative of pursuit* screeches to a halt over the vast unknown chasm of the future. Or, perhaps even more accurately, Occupy exists at the cartoon moment when, charging ahead with the full force of past assumptions, legs spinning frantically, one realizes it is not earth but rather thin air below one's feet. Occupy is the moment of acknowledgement, before gravity or fear or any law of nature or plan of action has been instated. This image was first put forth

by Slavoj Žižek, at a speech delivered at Occupy Wall Street's Liberty Plaza, on October 9th 2011:

> We all know the classic scene from cartoons. The cat reaches the precipice. But it goes on walking. Ignoring the fact that there is nothing beneath.

Image 46: Still of Wile E. Coyote running off a cliff source?

> Only when it looks down and notices, it falls down. This is what we are doing here. We're telling the fools on Wall Street: "Hey, look down!" *The crowd cheers*. (Transcript from occupywallstreet.org, video documentation online at: http://youtu.be/vdwF3j1F2pg TC: 01:58)

The fact that the Occupy Wall Street movement might even posit itself as an artwork points not only to the pervasiveness of art, but also, as Rancière would contend, the very position art and politics take in relation to grand narratives of the past and the future.. The motion of resistance and the timeline of the *avant-garde* have similarities: they exist at a moment in time when one is not quite falling, but on the very verge. This timeline now seems to easily overlay the timeline we developed in Chapters 2 and 3, the timeline of Occupy.

In fact, if Occupy is to exist on a timeline roughly as such,

PAST --->--->---NARRATIVE OF PROGRESS --->--->!< *OCCUPY* - - - -? (invisible) FUTURE

Then art, as described by Hughes, inhabits the same timeline in a similar position:

PAST --->--->--->--->!< *AVANT-GARDE* - - - - FUTURE (made visible)

Whether it be the coyote, the activist, or the artist, the key change is in (self)awareness. And this moment of suspense, the electric charge of awkward disbelief, is a moment when experience, one might say, defies *consensus*. In becoming aware of, and subsequently resisting, the inherent motion of a dominant framework of time/narrative, both Occupy and the *avant-garde* position themselves at a moment of disruption. Looking forward, they choose to steer the course in a new direction, or simply to stunt the movement altogether. *Laying one's body (or one's body of work) across the gears of the proverbial machine*.

But how to reinterpret the bold 'I would prefer not to' of Occupy as art? As Rancière is quick to point out, we've all become keen to encapsulate today's experiences with one heavy word: *the end*. The *End of History* (Fukuyama), *the End of Modernity* (Bhabha), the *End of the American Dream* (Occupy). "What we are said to have lived is the end of a certain historical period", writes Rancière. In other words, our feet have left the edge of the cliff of concretion, the cliff of 'grand narratives': "the time in which we live can thus be described as the time that comes after the end". (2012: 13) Instead of an end, Divina Frau-Meigs proposes a more productive outlook: choosing instead to call this time the "the cyberist era", a time in which we face the total displacement of traditional oppositions and frames of reference (2011). The end is perhaps, again, another change in narrative.

The past chapters have brought us this far. But now Rancière invites us to have a closer look at that narrative of the end and ask: "what exactly has come to an end? What exactly are those grand narratives that are said to be over?" (2012: 13) His point is that what is described as the end of that narrative, what is presented as the 'time in which we live' is in reality a rearrangement of those elements: "The celebrated end of the grand narrative changed only one articulation in that narrative: it changed the way in which it staged the relation between the possible and the impossible. But, even in doing that, it remained faithful to its logic." (2012: 14)

4.4.3 THE POSSIBLE AND THE IMPOSSIBLE

On the relationship of art to radical politics, Robert Hughes wrote: "By changing the language of art, you affect the modes of thought; and by changing thought, you change life." (1980: 371) Effectively, both Hughes and Rancière agree on this point: art is a question of choice, of language, and, ultimately, of the redefinition of the possible. Whereas the traditional 'living' artist, the Type A, was content operating and creating within the spaces of the possible, the Type B 'precursor'/*avant-garde* artist is constantly challenging the dimensions of this allocated realm.

And yet Rancière is wary of the constraints of positing emancipation only within the terms of the very systematised reality from which art claims to have become autonomous. "The very word *avant-garde*', Rancière writes, 'designated the two opposing forms of the same knot joining together the autonomy of art and the promise of emancipation it contained":

> On the one hand, the avant-garde movement aimed to transform the forms of art, and to make them identical with the forms for constructing a new world in which art would no longer exist as a separate reality. On the other, the avant-garde preserved the autonomy of the artistic sphere from forms of compromise with practices of power and political struggle, or with forms of the aestheticization of life in the capitalist world. (2010: 199)

The *avant-garde*, Rancière concludes, "is endowed with the paradoxical duty of bearing witness to an immemorial dependency of human thought that makes any promise of emancipation a deception" (2010:130). His antidote to this deception is in many ways similar to Occupy's original strategy of refusing to put forth concrete demands, and thereby by refusing to legitimize the existing American political institutions. As described here by David Graeber:

> Asking why OWS refuses to create a leadership structure, and asking why we don't come up with concrete policy statements, is of course two ways of asking the same thing: Why don't we engage with the existing political structure so as to ultimately become a part of it? (Graeber 2013: 88)

To return to the analogy of the cat or coyote suspended mid-air: both Graeber's description of the success of the Occupy movement (Graeber 2013) and Rancière's work seeks to posit a possibility *outside of gravity*, so to speak, by uniting both art and politics in a recalibration of what is possible, what is visible, what is thinkable: in other words, a reassessment in a way of *gravity* itself. According to Rancière, both art and politics (*genuine* art and *genuine* politics) emerge when they leap outside the unquestioned logic that tends to govern human situations. "For Rancière', writes his translator Steve Corcoran, 'genuine political or artistic activities always involve forms of innovation that tear bodies from their assigned places and free speech and expression from all reduction to functionality" (Rancière 2010:2). In *Dissensus* (2010), Rancière demonstrates how, because both politics and art involve the reorientation of the general space of perception (the 'redistribution of the sensible') and the disruption of forms of belonging, their interrelation is self-evident. Doing art, writes Rancière, "means displacing art's borders, just as doing politics means displacing the borders of what is acknowledged as *the* political":

> Displacing art's borders does not mean leaving art, that is making the leap from 'fiction' (or 'representation') to reality. Practices of art do not provide forms of awareness or rebellious impulses for politics. (...) They contribute to the constitution of a form of commonsense that is 'polemical', to a new landscape of the visible, the sayable, the doable. (2010: 149)

Rancière and Graeber attempt to posit an option of what might be accomplished outside of the inevitable tug of gravity, in those vivacious moments before theory and self-consciousness cement every act and intention into a downward course. Rancière cements this readjustment of the sensory (the visible, the sayable, the doable) in his notion of *dissensus*, which distinguishes itself from the otherwise *consensus* primarily

by asking: what if the possible itself could be redefined? With the possibility of dissensus, we may now re-enter the Biennale equipped with a new language, a language of emancipation – and ultimately of choice.

4.5 CREATING A NEW THOUGHT

4.5.1 DISPLACING ART'S BORDERS

A month after Duchamp had his urinal, which he had submitted with the signature of a certain unknown *R. Mutt*, refused at the inaugural exhibition of the American Society of Independent Artists in April 1917, a small magazine called *The Blind Man,* which happened to be co-edited by Duchamp, defended *Fountain* by saying: "Whether Mr Mutt with his own hands made the fountain or not has no importance. He CHOSE it. He took an ordinary article of life, placed it so that its useful significance disappeared under the new title and point of view - and created a new thought for that object." (Plant, 1992: 44, emphasis in original) By choosing the urinal, Duchamp *created a new thought*, and indeed made a lasting and significant mark on a reality that still continues to be reassessed according to his pioneering standard.

The power Duchamp granted the object, as a vessel for new thought, has, a century later, engendered an entire art industry of "object worship, which endows objects with an a almost magical power" (Żmijewski: 2012), which alone is believed to be sufficient to effect political and social change. We have, however, seen how the momentum of a new, revolutionary, thought – be it the narrative of pursuit (Chapter 1), the narrative of Levi's/progress (Chapter 2), or the narrative of *sous les pavés, la plage* (Chapter 3) – can rapidly, albeit subtly, be relinquished to the forces it seeks to overcome. Watch now as Duchamp's *new thought for an object* is rapidly spun into un-new and deliberately prearranged thought. A key player in this process, as described by the Berlin Biennale head curator Artur Żmijewski himself, is the curator.

The curator is tasked with "the arduous administration of these art objects", which, Żmijewski writes, are "commissioned, transported, and insured, with attention paid to copyright as well as to properly mounting and taking them down." These meticulous but ultimately thoughtless tasks effect change only as it has been prescribed, within the realm of the foreseen and thereby, says Żmijewski, the apolitical:

> The art object alone, whatever else it may be, is expected to perform the social and political work assigned to it, without human agency, without any work at convincing, without difference of opinion or conflict, and thus essentially without any politics. (…) These objects do indeed perform certain work, but it is the work of aestheticizing reality, changing ideas into spectacle, and transforming the political into a call that no one follows. (Forget Fear Foreword: 2012)

Żmijewski and Warzsa, the curators of the Berlin Biennale, were selected for the principal reason that they claim to defy that criticism. Żmijewski, an artist himself, labelled a *globe-trotting avant-gardist* by the New York Times, is renown for using real people as marionettes in artificially constructed and deeply unsettling situations that probe into the politics of what people are willing to do and what they are willing to see. In the piece titled *80064* (2005)[36], he famously convinced an elderly Auschwitz concentration camp survivor to have the faded number on his forearm re-tattooed. On camera. And then called that videoclip art, *his* art. He also, and perhaps most relevantly to his Occupy initiative at the Berlin Biennale, has made an art film (*The Game of Tag*, studio, 1999) in which naked adults play tag in the gas chamber of a former concentration camp. He has also recreated the famous Prisoner and Guards Experiment in *Repetition* (2005). This too, a 75-minute enactment on camera, was *art*. Or provocation, which for Żmijewski is essentially the same thing.

Żmijewski's language in the press releases and publications of the Biennale point to an affinity for Guy Debord, especially in his aggressive takedown of art as *spectacle:*

[36] See video online: http://www.digitalartlab.org.il/ArchiveVideo.asp?id=16

> Artists, as well as the theorists and philosophers gravitating in their world, have become "practitioners of impotence." The limited imagination of today's artists and curators is unable to cross the threshold into genuine action. "Empty" and ineffective artworks and exhibitions are the paradoxical reaction to this situation. All that art has now is spectacle, where social and political problems are played out with no substantial impact on reality. And no substantial impact even on the players in the field of art: other artists and curators. (Foreword to *Forget Fear*: 2012A)

Debord was concerned with the anestheticized state of citizenry he called *The Spectacle*. He describes a world in which we all assist in ? the events in our own life without truly being able to intervene, as if we were captives of a living dream, observing but never truly living our lives. And art, in his mind, was complicit. The spectacle entails spectators, whom Debord famously argues are passive, and essentially thoughtless. Żmijewski agrees with this, and sees provocation as the antidote – what Debord termed the *dépassement* (the going beyond) of art – to the pervasiveness of spectacle. And although spectacle today has morphed outside of Debord's description, the idea of *dépassement*, not positioned within the reality but somewhere just beyond it, can be just as relevant.

Image 47: Guy Debord, *Dépassement de l'art* (1963

"When art is depoliticized', writes the Berlin Biennale head curator Artur Żmijewski in the foreword to the Biennale catalogue titled *Forget* Fear, 'this means it does not

represent the interests of people, but serves the individual careers of the artists." Żmijewski and his co-curator Joanna Warzsa were appointed by the selection committee and the advisory board of the Berlin Biennale for the principal reason that they too are trying in to *dépasse* art. To go beyond art, and abolish pure passive spectacle. Alongside Debord, they criticize the hypocrisy of the art world and vivaciously defend their interest in *Art That Works*, art that makes its mark on reality.

> To make art political would mean determining what is at stake together with others and openly representing it in the public sphere. I want this field to be strong, and conscious of the power it possesses. I want it to be willing and able to politically deploy this power, **not to create spectacle, but to substantively direct reality**. (Żmijewski 2012A, my emphasis)

So, in planning the Biennale, instead of conducting studio visits, Żmijewski and Warzsa looked for art elsewhere than in the art field. They looked for art, they write in their introduction to *Forget Fear*, by watching the news (Żmijewski and Warzsa 2012).

By inviting the members of occupy camps worldwide to come inhabit the main space of the KunstWerke in Berlin, and by calling the staged camp the *grand non-project of the Biennale*, Żmijewski and Warzsa perform a series of appropriations: appropriating protest into art (even though they refuses to call it *art* per-se, he is relocating it into a space where it will be perceived and resignified based on the constraints and constructs of art), and the issues of the protest into their own issues on the politics of art, of curatorial objects in institutional spaces, and the necessary complicity of a public they hopes to provoke into action.

Rancière has issues with this approach. The demonstration of the spectacle was supposed to provide "a demystification of the illusions that subjected the individuals to the rule of domination and thereby to empower those who struggled against that rule by giving them the knowledge of its functioning." (2012: 17) But this paradigm

of ‘critical art’, he writes, “conflates the logic of aesthetic separation and the pedagogical logics of representational mediation and ethical immediacy”:

> Critical art is an art that aims to produce a new perception of the world, and therefore to create a commitment to its transformation. This schema, very simple in appearance, is actually the conjunction of three processes: first, the production of a sensory form of ‘strangeness’; second, the development of an awareness of the reason for that strangeness and third, a mobilization of individuals as a result of that awareness. (2010: 142)

Image 48: Poster from the 7th Berlin Biennale, *What Can Art Do For Real Politics?* (2012)

Rancière’s description of critical art resembles how Occupy was perceived as a movement of resistance, especially in its early days, when the Biennale was being planned. Occupy is above all a moment of ‘strangeness’ which, by virtue of that very strangeness, was able to mobilize millions of people across the world. In that sense the Greek performance artist Georgia Sagri, present at the first meetings of Occupy Wall Street, was lucid in declaring: “We are producing a new reality!” (Schneider 2011)

When the Berlin Biennale curators went about selecting the artists that would be featured in their exhibition, they were interested in "concrete activities leading to visible effects", and in "finding answers, not asking questions" (Żmijewski and Warzsa 2012). They too were interested in 'producing a new reality' and they began by answering the question *wo findet heute Politik statt?* – Where do politics take place today? (Warsza and Żmijewski 2012B). As of Fall 2011, they found their answer, or, rather, their answer found them, bellowed across headlines worldwide: Occupy.

It is essentially in seeing the movement as a *ready-made*, and with the intention of *creating new thought* for it, that Żmijewski and co-curator Joanna Warsza proposed to invite the movement into the 7th Berlin Biennale for Contemporary Art. The Biennale's tagline, broadcast across most of their statements and publications, was to "present art that actually works, makes its mark on reality, and opens a space where politics can be performed." Each of these claims, one by one, construct an approximation of "critical art" as suggested by Rancière, beyond *avant-garde* :

4.5.2 ART THAT ACTUALLY WORKS

The statement evokes the artist as a *labourer*, working to produce a desired effect/product. The idea of work, of *actually working*, is loaded, especially as we have seen (in Chapter 2) with relation to the intrinsically precarious nature of work that has insinuated itself into the norm across the GWAF generation (Mason: 2012, see Chapter 2). As Berlin-based artist and academic Hito Steyerl has discussed at length (2011, 2012), this precarity is remarkably insidious in the art world; and, in fact, to return to the original claim of *the greatest piece of performance art in the world*, many of the participants of the Occupy/15M/Indignad@s movement worldwide were indeed the same partaking in the early stages of the art market. Much like the 'performance art' story from New York City, it is also claimed that the 450,000 strong uprising in Israel in 2011 was directly spurred by a disgruntled art student (Rosler 2012).

Żmijewski himself acknowledges in the foreword to the *Forget Fear* publication that "the majority of artists are in fact part of an artistic proletariat. They are often people who barely earn enough to live." In the context of the art world and especially in the context of Berlin, it is important to note that the art world has bred a very interesting form of narrative of what it means to work, and what it means to participate actively in the structures of society (Chadwick 2009). The contemporary forms of work also bring to the foreground the issue of what Rancière terms *intervals of* work and their transformation into *intervals of subjectivation*: "The constant shifts from employment to unemployment, development of part-time work and all forms of intermittence; multiplication of people taking part both in the time of salaried work and in the time of education, or in the time of cultural creation; multiplication of people doing other jobs than the one for which they had been trained, of people working in one world and living in another world." (2012: 28).

The idea of art '*actually* working' is in every way intended as a sharp reprimand of art that pertains to a *work* (labour) it in truth isn't performing. "Art does not act, and doesn't work", writes Żmijewski. Much like Michel de Certeau's *perruque* – 'the worker's own work disguised as work for his employer' (1980: 25) – this is art that sits in the context of its own 'office' – the gallery, the museum, the biennale – under the pretext of performing one service ('preparing the future', for example) when it is in reality performing another one altogether, albeit clandestinely, and in no one's interest but its own. As Żmijewski mentions in the *Forget Fear* catalogue, he despises art that "does not represent the interests of people, but serves the individual careers of the artists." (2012A)

The idea of the *perruque* or *wig* applies specifically to political art in the sense that it purports to address issues, but in so doing, often does these exact issues a disservice. And so the works of a professedly 'political' or 'critical' artist like Josephine Meckseper do little more than maintain consensus: exposing the hypocrisy of a deflated political stance so that it might be hung in expensive homes and appease any guilt associated with the lifestyle and beliefs that may have lead to that very purchase. *Consensus*, as described by Rancière, is exactly what it sounds like: the monopoly of

the forms of description of the perceptible, the thinkable and the doable (2012: 27). In *Forget Fear*, Żmijewski too touches on art's tendency to retreat into the comfort of Rancière's consensus:

> Despite the fact that it has enormous potential for conceiving and creating a reality or practicing politics, it [art] usually goes no further than presenting ideas that no one has any intention of putting into practice. Is there any way out of this vicious "circle of creative impotence"? (Żmijewski 2012A)

In claiming that artists have become "practitioners of impotence", Żmijewski reproaches today's artists for their inability "to cross the threshold into genuine action". He also criticizes curators and the greater structures of the art institutions alike for encouraging this impotence by allocating artists 'immunity'. This is when art stops working as art and simply dons the *perruque* of politics, which masks the fact that it is indeed doing no more than replicate the narratives of the systems it is allegedly condemning..

An example of such a work would be the show preceding the Biennale in the space of Berlin's KW Institute for Contemporary Art: Cyprien Gaillard's *The Recovery of Discovery* (27. 3. – 22. 5. 11) in which a generous and prestigious grant from the German Cultural Fund of 40,000€ of German taxpayers' money[37] was spent on erecting an enormous monument of 72,000 bottles of (warm) *Efes* (a Turkish brand) beer cases. Visitors were invited to scale the pyramid, drink the beer, and essentially embrace any carnage or destruction that ensued.

[37] Foster, Hal. *ArtForum*: 2011; Gaillard himself in an interview for ArtStars*54

Image 49: Cyprien Gaillard *The Recovery of Discovery*. Kunstwerke Institute for Contemporary Art, Berlin. Shots of exhibition before and during the opening night party, March 26 2011

In a video of the opening night, a young woman, Nadja Sayej calls the pyramid a metaphor for the Berlin art scene: "Welcome to Berlin!' she squeals between gulps of free warm beer, 'we have nothing else to do than hang out and be on welfare!!" Sayej then climbs to the top of the pyramid to interview Gaillard for her video blog called ArtStars[38]. He says he is giving no interviews, unless she shows him her breasts. She abides, to which he says: "I wanted to get people engaged with the work. I wanted to do a piece on alcohol." He also mutters how the pyramid is made of Turkish beer because it is a statement about colonialism, and specifically about the Pergamon Museum, which was stolen from the Turks centuries ago[39].

[38] ArtStars* 54: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UxCmKHtTPDA

[39] Gaillard is only partially right here, though his piece in 2011 did inspire an action during the Occupied Berlin Biennale the next year, in which 20+ people, lead by Occupy Museums from New York City, entered the Pergamon Museum XXX

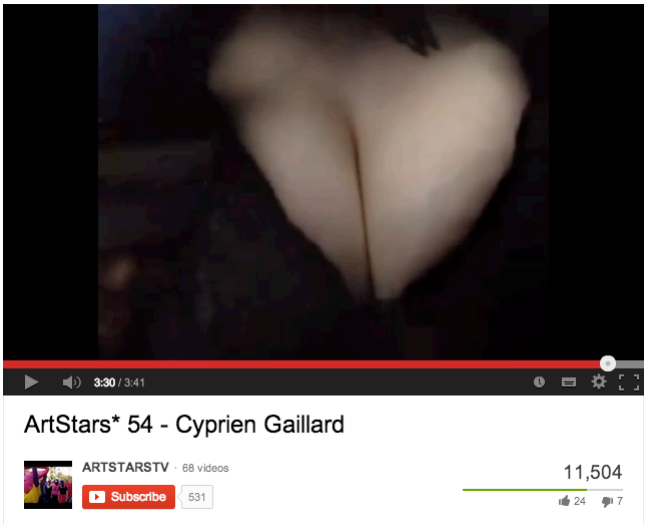

Image 50: Still from ArtStars*54 with Cyprien Galliard
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UxCmKHtTPDA

Not surprisingly, Gaillard got the response he had hoped from his pyramid of beer. Not unlike the reporter baring her breasts to confirm the deep cynicism that inspired the work, the visitors used the opportunity to flaunt their debauchery publicly, heightened by the consciousness their drunkenness was now art.

> 195 (...) The specialists of spectacular power — a power that is absolute within its realm of one-way communication — are absolutely corrupted by their experience of contempt and by the success of that contempt, because they find their contempt confirmed by their awareness of how *truly contemptible* spectators really are. (Debord [1967]: 2002)

People were injured, and those who weren't were inclined, as the evening progressed, to urinate and vomit anywhere and everywhere. Within a few hours, the place began to stink. Within days it had become unbearably dank, leaving the security personnel and underpaid KW staffers to work amongst and eventually clean up the disgusting remains of an overly boisterous but effectively impotent community of artists, who indeed partook in the event mostly because it was a literal mountain of free beer.

After the two-month exhibition, the entire cardboard mountain had disintegrated into a heap of mouldy debris. Staffers, during the extensive clean-up, broke through the

boxes, inhaling clouds of mildew (according to firsthand verbal accounts of KW employees, June 2012). No masks had been supplied on the first day and the staff broke out in rashes, nosebleeds, coughing fits. This was after the curtain of art had closed. This reality remained unseen to the hung-over public, and to the artist himself.

"The forms of critical thinking that dominate today basically follow the dominant plot all the more easily, writes Rancière, as the logic of domination has integrated the logic of its critique" (2012: 26). Cyprien Gaillard's *The Recovery of Discovery* is a case in point. Its most striking way of "working" is in the invisible work it expects of poorly paid employees, themselves awed by the spectacle and by having had the supposed honourhonor of taking part. During the clean-up, employees would brush the mildew out from under the caps of the remaining unopened beer bottles, which had been sitting warm in the soggy space for eight weeks, and drink.

4.5.3 ART THAT MAKES ITS MARK ON REALITY

Arguably, other than the cement floor of the KW, which had to be replaced, nothing changed. People spoke jovially about the experience, a few mentioned easy 'metaphors with the Berlin art scene' while Gaillard as an artist was almost unanimously praised as 'brilliant' (Chadwick 2012: firsthand account).

If, as in Gaillard's piece, no participant is immune to his misanthropic stance, then why may the artist himself, paradoxically, be granted immunity from any true critique? Arguably since Duchamp's *ready-mades*, objects transposed into a space of art are thereby protected, if not glorified. According to Żmijewski, however, this immunity has largely spawned laziness, that rest contentedly in its gallery space rarely effecting any true impact in reality: "The mountain of art gives birth to a mouse":

> Thus, people otherwise extraordinarily well-equipped – artists – produce paradoxical or utopian visions and a social critique which neither they nor their viewers are willing to translate into a political (or any other) practice of any tangible social value. (Żmijewski: 2012A)

Żmijewski's antidote, as with his previous work as an artist, is to cultivate such a loud presence that its echoes inevitably reverberate in the 'real'. The new tattoo on Holocaust survivor's arm, after all, remains permanent after the camera stops filming. The image also remains burned in our retinas. Żmijewski is *avant-garde* if only in the sense that he is part of celebrated clan of recent artists who have renewed the idea that art's vocation is to step outside itself, and to accomplish an intervention in the 'real world'.

4.5.4 ART THAT OPENS UP A SPACE WHERE POLITICS CAN BE PERFORMED

Let's take this photograph now:

And watch as it is transformed into this:

The first was a photograph of the now iconic Zuccotti park, taken in New York City in October 2011. The secondThis is a photograph taken at the 7th Berlin Biennale. The

parallel is evident: the occupy camp within the biennale resembles Meckseper's framed protests in an expensive gallery.

In a fusion of curators' choice and activists' consent, a space was allocated to the *occupiers* from around the world: the main hall of the main exhibition space. The same space that a year prior had been left at the mercy of young unemployed or underpaid artists, drunk on cheap warm beer. What was to be different this time?

The performance of politics was also the exhibition's greatest flaw in the eyes of countless critics, who, upon entering the space, were struck by the paradox of complacent activists willingly objectified into a space far away from the purposeful streets of their homelands. Nothing new emerges through this construction, they decried. Headlines read *Please don't feed the animals!*[40], and the words the most frequently used in reference to the Occupied Biennale are *human zoo* and *co-option*. (my own observations after having spent over 100 hours in the camp)

If the activist is performing her/his beliefs, whose stage and in whose interest does she/he appear? And does the stage allegory simply present a far too dichotomous dynamic?

The organisers of the biennale were explicit in their intention to fuse art and politics into something they deemed to be 'more real'. The reality of this project would emerge through personal experiences, both within the camp and without, the inevitable clash of expectations.

[40] http://www.art-magazin.de/szene/52406/7_berlin_biennale_berlin

Image 51: Still from video of the Press Conference of the 7th Berlin Biennale, source: youtube

The first event of the 7th Berlin Biennale would set the mood for the two months ahead: the press conference on April 25th 2013, gathering hundred of members of the press and the art community, including big names such as Klaus Biesenbach, the Founding Director of the KW Institute for Contemporary Art, current Director of MoMA PS1 in New York City, and Chief Curator at Large at the Museum of Modern Art[41], and Gabriele Horn, current Director of the KW. The conference was restructured along the guidelines of a *horizontal* General Assembly. Hundreds of chairs were broken from their rows and rearranged in roughly concentric circles, with the main speakers at the centre, and all cameras necessarily filming not only the speakers but also the crowd around them. The break in linearity gradually shifted into the speeches delivered, with the flattering ceremonial lingo becoming increasingly opaque. Biesenbach, in congratulating the curators in 'starting a dialogue' with the Occupy movement, which he deemed 'one of the most important movements in society in the last decade', also pointed out how Żmijewski's accomplishment lies in his being a *realist*, allowing himself to be part of what he is criticizing – as well as the public. Discernable grunts emerged from the members of the press at this point, who themselves too acknowledged their implicit collaboration in Żmijewski's extensive joke.

[41] as well as curator of the Abramović's piece *The Artist Is Present* which will be mentioned on page 188. Indeed, Biesenbach is the first and last person to sit before her and take part in her performance.

Image 52: Co-curator Joanna Warza speaking at Press Conference of the 7th Berlin Biennale, next to head curator Artur Żmijewski and surrounded by members of Occupy Berlin. source: youtube http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ww9S3RSE_9g

Associate curator Joanna Warzsa went on to explain their curatorial approach as new and 'antagonising', by choosing to present not only works that support their personal opinions as curators, but also artists whose opinions they find problematic. "Political art', Warzsa said, is work that 'presents and performs different viewpoints and thereby challenge representation". Żmijewski refused to represent himself other than to read a description of certain works and by praising the 'people from the movements' as 'our teachers':

> they teach us how to perform politics, because in the case of politics we feel that we are still idiots. So they can do something for us.

Żmijewski then announced that it was time "for the people from the movements to moderate our meeting and to control this situation according to their wishes and needs." The microphone was passed to his 'comrades', who began by stating 'We decided to participate in the Biennale not to create art but to bring the movement forward'. A written statement about the origins of the social crisis was read, and then handsignals were explained in preparation for a mock General Assembly. Some activists began by insisting that at least three members of the press answer the question of why they were there, and why 'they continue to support the system'. The

activists, many speaking in their second language, were visibly nervous, and at pains to employ language other than the obvious slogans. The air tightened with frantic appeals: ‘we are the 99%’, ‘people are dying of hunger’, ‘stop being individualist’, ‘I am not the system’ ‘I am not a slave of money’, ‘this is bullshit’. The pitch rose as a British journalist pointed out:

> What I am experiencing here is a group of people who are being self-indulgent. I don't see any individuals here who are works of art themselves. It is a capitalist system that produces newspapers, it is also a capitalist system that produces taxes that gives people, some people, the freedom to self-indulge, without earning a living, which is what most of us here in the capitalist system have to do. (www.youtube.com/watch?v=ww9S3RSE_9g. Timecode 41:22)

The press conference confrontation leaves all parties seemingly ineloquent, and all the more entrenched in their opinions. One recalls the unfortunate Ugolino, gnawing on his betrayer for the sole sake of reminding him of his ‘right to oppress’. The activists refuse to acknowledge their position in the greater capitalist system, the one in which, as the journalist points out, has extracted tax dollars to pay for the entire fanfare of the Biennale (source: youtube). The journalists refuse to acknowledge their own entrenched perspective. Both gladly chew the other into submission, the activists by forcing the press into a charade General Assembly that could only amount to vindictive confrontation; the press by using their voices to silence any possibility other that the activists’ impotence.

Later that week, another Englishman, the Director of the Tate Modern, Chris Dercon, said of the Biennale: “there was not much to see” (Michalska 2012). But in fact perhaps no one was truly looking. It was almost with relief that the press, in a foreseeable response after such a confrontational press conference, roundly panned the entire Biennale, their reviews reeling with such phrases as “lukewarm cynicism,” “a disaster,” “deep seeded stupidity,” and “a spectacular failure in its attempt to empower the arts” (Michalska 2012). The narrative was apparently set, with art journals echoing their disapproval, and the average art consumer rolling their eyes.

The art world and art tourists were glad to hear the Biennale neither worth their time, nor their thoughts. “I did not expect much from the whole thing!!!’, writes one commentator on a negative review of the Press Conference (Büsch 2012), ‘this 7th berlin biennale [sic] is a fiasco and will not be remembered!!!” Within a few days of the opening press conference, a seething consensus had been reached: the Berlin Biennial was a failure.

But a failure of what? Indeed the ‘main non-event’ of the Biennale had only just begun, and as far as the curators and activists were concerned, a few hurt feelings at the press conference and perplexed discomfort at the ‘artworks’ may have indeed been the slow symptoms of a victory.

4.6 RETHINKING THE POSITION OF THE AUDIENCE

4.6.1 PEDAGOGY

The circles of chairs at the press conference were open-faced invitations to the fact that the public was implicated in the entirety of what would come to emerge as the Occupied Biennale. As well as the circles of chairs, this would be the first Berlin Biennale to offer free entry to all. At the press conference, Joanna Warsza underlined how this fallen barrier was intended to *rethink the position of the audience*.

> It was extremely important for us to think who is our potential audience. (…) The free biennale allows to rethink the position of this audience: it is not just someone who is coming, maybe, for ten minutes to have an opinion and consume the situation. It's hopefully someone who would like to come back…

In an article published simultaneously for the Biennale, both Warsza and Żmijewski emphasize, again, the importance of the public:

> We must not forget what the movement is really about: all of us. The people in the camp, they are the 99%, but only in connection with those who live around them in the same city and the same world order. Only certain people come to Zuccotti Park, which effectively limits it. But we must now reach those who would have no access to Zuccotti park (Warswa and Zmijewski: 2012B)[42].

Żmijewski and Warswa use words like 'learn', 'teach', 'reach'. It is a pedagogical language, the language of the *avant-gardist* preparing the future. Louis Althusser, Rancière's mentor and teacher, once said "the function of teaching is to transmit a determinate knowledge to subjects who do not possess this knowledge. The teaching

[42] My translation from the German: Das Camp (…) ist ein Ort des Experimentierens, des Widerstands und der Repräsentation des Widerstands. Vielleicht ist es auch eine prototypische Stadt. Wir dürfen aber nie vergessen, worum es bei der Bewegung eigentlich geht: um uns alle. Die Leute im Camp, sie sind die 99 %, aber nur in Verbindung mit denen, die in derselben Stadt, derselben Weltordnung um sie herum leben. (,,,) In den Zuccotti-Park kommen nur ganz bestimmte Leute, sodass das letztlich ziemlich beschränkt ist. Wir müssen aber diejenigen erreichen, die keinen Zugang zum Zucotti-Park finden (2012B)

situation thus rests on the absolute condition of an inequality between a knowledge and a nonknowledge." This is the assumption made by *Żmijewski, by countless other avant-guardists* including great political figures such as Debord: the assumption of non-knowledge.

The paradox of these good intentions – the sharing of knowledge – is apparent only when one leaves the vantage point of the one 'who sees' and chooses to 'see' what those presumed 'not to see' are experiencing. Rancière has been an avid supporter in perspective, and concludes that the pedagogical attitude is not only patronising, and condemnatory of the other as a passive spectator, but also culpable of replicating perpetual systems of inequality. Rancière warns – extensively – about this pedagogical pretension, be it in academia, or in contemporary art: "an artist that wants to educate people never emancipates them." (2008C: TC 17:50). "Art can never become life except by being turned into the instrument of those who want to mould a new social ethos; and implementing 'emancipation' will always overturn into a form of societal management by 'enlightened' experts." As Rancière's English translator, Steve Corcoran, writes in the introduction to *Dissensus* (2010):

> The ground can then only ever be ripe for forms of disappointment that interpret the dream of emancipation as the root cause of the injustices perpetrated by those same experts. Rancière's work has, I believe, enabled us to see more dearly than ever that nothing is more favourable to the established powers than the 'loss' of the thought and practice of emancipation. (Corcoran in Rancière 2010: 3)

Rancière publicly broke with Althusser after the events of 1968 – protest itself sparked a revolt in Rancière who ultimately rejected Althusser's theoretical stance on the grounds that it "didn't leave enough room for spontaneous popular uprising" (Davis 2006). The effort in many of Rancière's earlier books, including *The Ignorant Schoolmaster* (1987), is to refuse the inequality implied by Althusser and all its consequences. The public is placed within a different dynamic in Althusser's 'relationship of knowledge'. The public must be emancipated, and emancipation is, by Rancière's definition "a capacity that can be shared by anybody" (2008C: TC 16:10).

"An artist does political work, to enlighten people. The show them how society is, to show them communication, power". An artist that wants to *educate* people, on the other hand, shows people the systems of power in which they exist but only to confine them to exist within their limits.

This distinction between education and emancipation is critical to Rancière, and its impacts reach deep into the presumptions of so-called 'activist art':

> Many art installations charge themselves parodying forms of consumer culture, as though it were necessary to show the spectator what he would otherwise not be able to see on his own. This strategy consists of opening his eyes to extract him of his passivity. Many of these forms of art are thereby governed by a paradox: they are addressed to a public that they simultaneously disqualify (Rancière 2008A)[43].

Rancière's critique lands us in an auditorium just next door to Debord's spectacle: passive, disqualified. The somnambulism of a life and an opinion that is not one's own, of a life lived without agency, where even the most celebrated artists are powerless to reshape the vocabulary and the omnipotence of the system.

In most of his most recent texts, Rancière wages aggressively against this diagnosis, a verdict as old as Plato that draws a line between spectacle and spectactor, the one who looks and the one who truly sees, thinker and non. The spectator deserves the possibility for emancipation, believes Rancière: he counters the widespread discourses based on the assumed contingency of self-evident inequality, and reaffirms radical equality and the universality of capacities, be they of thought, speech, or action.

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[43] My translation from the French: *Beaucoup d'installations plastiques s'emploient à reprendre en les parodiant les formes de la culture marchande, comme s'il fallait montrer au spectateur ce qu'il serait incapable de voir par lui-même. Cette stratégie consiste à lui ouvrir les yeux pour le sortir de sa passivité. Beaucoup de ces formes d'art restent ainsi gouvernées par un paradoxe : elles s'adressent à des gens, en même temps elles tendent à les disqualifier.*

But emancipation is not a simple formula – as Rancière finds issue with countless works who, under the pretext of being effective, actually place the spectator right back into the oppressive grasp of pedagogy. "We continue to believe that art has to leave the art world in order to be effective in 'real life'", writes Rancière:

We continue to try to overturn the logic of the theatre by making the spectator active, by turning the art exhibition into a place of political activism or by sending artists into the streets. (…) it thus appears that, from the outset, the idea of critical art itself is caught between two types of pedagogy: one that could be called *representational mediation,* and another that we might refer to as *ethical immediacy*. (2010: 137)

And this public must be invested with the same transformative trust as the artwork, for only within its reactions will the materiality of the piece reveal itself as art.

4.6.2 THE PUBLIC, OR, THE SPECTACLE

The year before the Occupy protests began on Wall Street, the Serbian performance artist Marina Abramović performed *The Artist is Present* (2010) at the Museum of Modern Art in New York City[44]. She sat immobile in a chair for 736½ hours, 7½ hours a day, 6 days a week for 3 months, staring into the faces of 1,545 strangers[45] (many of which who had cued for hours and even days for the rare opportunity: over 750,000 people visited the exhibition). During the experience, which changed her life 'completely' (*The Talks*, 2010) Abramović became interested in 'the transfer of energy between performer and public' and has now devoted a large part of her work

[44] The piece was commissioned by Klaus Biesenbach, the founder of the Berlin Biennale and the man who oversaw the hiring of Artur Zmijewski as the Biennale's 2012 curator. THIS INFORMATION SHOULD APPEAR EARLIER (SEE MY QUESTIONS ABOVE) AND BE IN THE MAIN TEXT,NOT A FOOTNOTE; WHAT DO WE KNOW ABOUT HIM? HIS SOURCE OF FUNDING? HIS IDEOLOGY?

[45] See portraits of every sitter online at:
http://www.flickr.com/photos/themuseumofmodernart/sets/72157623741486824/detail/

to the study of the 'Magic of Mutual Gaze[46]. The spectator, as Abramović underlines, wants to be, and actually already is, part of the work.

Abramović's piece is perhaps the most stripped-down manifestation of the power of exchange between art and the public. No words were exchanged, nothing shown. In fact, in the central atrium of the MoMA no art was present – but the artist was. The experience offered was to be in the presence of 'art', to oneself become 'art': and whatever occurred and whatever than meant would be radically different for each participant.

The faces of the public stare into Marina Abramović's face. They seek something, as if she were an oracle, an oracle who does nothing but silently and consistently stare for hours on end. And yet in her presence many people burst into tears (see blog http://marinaabramovicmademecry.tumblr.com). They have transcended, Abramović would say, who has often been quoted saying that "the entire aim of my work is to elevate the human spirit." (*The-Talks*, 2010) Is it emancipation? It certainly is not education in the Althusserian sense: but what possibilities exist for the public other than awe? Is the gaze Abramović has come to celebrate in fact a mutual one? Does this performance enact Rancière's vision of an equality of vision between the one who sees and the one who is shown where to look?

Klaus Biesenbach, the curator of *The Artist is Present* and also, coincidentally, the founder of the Berlin Biennale, was the last person to sit in front of the artist on May 31st 2010 (*Artforum* 2010). The next night, tipsy, at a gala event, he tossed aside his prepared remarks to publically accuse Abramović of not being able to see her sitters: "she can't see anyone without her glasses" (ibid.). The much-tweeted event caused a

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[46] Supported by the Mortimer D. Sackler Family Foundation, Abramović worked with US and Russian scientists on an experimental performance installation at Moscow's Garage. The installation was called Measuring the Magic of Mutual Gaze (2011). See Marina Abramović, Neuroscience Experiment I: Measuring The Magic of Mutual Gaze, on the Abramović-Garage website http://abramovic.garageccc.com/en/works/10. She and New York public radio talk- show host Brian Lehrer sat, wired up and gazing across at one another during a radio broadcast; the resulting discussion can be heard at http://www.wnyc.org/shows/bl/2013/mar/13/neuroscience-and-art

considerable controversy: if the artist was not even seeing the public who had come to see her, does the work return to a traditional one-directional narrative and thereby negate the emotional essence of the 1,545 people who had come to sit in the 'magic of the mutual gaze' under the pretext that she was reciprocating their attention?

What Abramović claims to have "discovered" over the course of her three-month performance is also what the Berlin Biennale hopes to utilize: the crowd's interest in taking part in something greater than themselves, something at once resoundingly historical and collective but also deeply personal. Again, is this emancipation?

In the documentary *The Artist Is Present* (2012), a young woman, who calls herself a performance artist and a distant disciple of Abramović's, removes her dress and sits naked before the artist. She is removed immediately by security, baffled and also in tears. What is the difference between this young woman and the one who shows her breasts to Cyprien Gaillard atop his pyramid of beer? Both women are attempting to participate in the art event, and thereby to transform it. The problem is how little tools they appear to have had at hand. Both resort to their bodies, both ultimately fail in saying anything new, both are women in a male gaze controlled art world.

Guy Debord would argue how these incidents point to the fact that, despite all of our ways of communication, we are a society of *pseudocommunication*. We assist in the events in our own life without truly being able to intervene, as if we were captives of a living dream, observing but never truly living our own lives. And celebrity, be it in the form of art, or in a surgically enhanced performance artist, presenting herself as her greatest statement, further complicates the paralysis. Debord writes in *The Society of Spectacle (#60)*:

> Stars — spectacular representations of living human beings — project this general banality into images of possible roles. As specialists of *apparent life*, stars serve as superficial objects that people can identify with in order to compensate for the fragmented productive specializations that they actually live. The function of these celebrities is to act out various lifestyles or sociopolitical

> viewpoints in a *full, totally free manner*. But the activities of these stars are not really free, and they offer no real choices. (Debord: 1967)

In the midst of the Occupy/Indignad@s protests of 2011-2013, easily the most reported group of activists were the Ukranian 'radical feminist' group Femen[47], who gradually went from protesting in provocative clothing to being completely naked. "This is the only way to be heard in this country. If we staged simple protests with banners, then our claims would not have been noticed" the group has claimed, which raised the question, as Debord writes in of the *Society of Spectacle*, if there is no choice, can there be emancipation?

> #30 The alienation of the spectator, which reinforces the contemplated objects that result from his own unconscious activity, works like this: The more he contemplates, the less he lives; **the more he identifies with the dominant images of need, the less he understands his own life and his own desires**. The spectacle's estrangement from the acting subject is expressed by the fact that the individual's gestures are no longer his own; they are the gestures of someone else who represents them to him. The spectator does not feel at home anywhere, because the spectacle is everywhere. (2002: 10, my emphasis)

Of course the Internet has drastically changed the strategy of attention-getting: whether it be protest, art, or simply self-promotion, all are intricately intertwined. And as with the example of the topless spectators or the topless protestors, or the endless *selfies* on social media, there is a complicated confrontation (or collaboration?) of two seemingly incompatible facts: individual will within an expanse of opportunities, and the paralysis of an omnipresent system of power. With the example of Femen, there is of course a degree of personal choice: these women are not complete preys of the system. However, on the other hand, those individual choices are being made within a system. The system sets up a very conspicuous structure of rewards and punishments,

[47] Femen was not present at the 7th Berlin Biennale, although the group is mentioned in the curators' online tribute to worldwide protest called 'Breaking The News', online at: http://www.berlinbiennale.de/blog/en/projects/breaking-the-news-2-22284

of visibility and invisibility, success and failure. And no individual choices change that reality.

So Femen may very much be empowered[48]. They may fully choose to present themselves to the eyes of the world. They originally had their slogans written on their backs but soon realised what the cameras were photographing: so, they moved the slogans to the front. Inna Shevchenko, who brought the Femen brand to France, has been candid about her strategy: "We know what the media need — sex, scandals and fighting — and that's what we give them. To be in the newspapers is to exist." And this is precisely the point: the eyes of the world were then watching. This is the behaviour that the system rewards. As a young woman, Marina Abramović performed many of her works completely naked. Now, aged 67, she continues to pose naked at times, still comfortable before the camera thanks to the 'supporting role' of her extensive plastic surgery.

Femen and Abramović's strategies undertake what is known in feminist theory as a *patriarchal bargain*: "Both men and women make them and they come in many different forms. Generally, however, they involve a choice to manipulate the system to one's best advantage without challenging the system itself" (Lisa Wade: 2013). The result of a patriarchal bargain is to maximize benefits for an individual, while ultimately harming society as a whole. Artists and activists engage in the bargain all the more hungrily as the Internet changes the landscape of the visible, while at once opening the realm of what might be seen, and constricting what is actually seen to a very narrow and predictable sample.

The patriarchal bargain is of interest with relation to the idea of choice, and the possibility of social critique. Within the inevitable hypocrisy of the *bargain*, one finds

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[48] A footnote to the Femen story: A 2013 documentary (UKRAINE IS NOT A BROTHEL by Kitty Green) exposes how the liberated feminism of the Femen activists had in fact been engineered by a single man, Victor Svyatski, for whom his protégées vied, and who provided the structure for the increasingly strategic media image of the group. Ultimately, the girls' only language and tools of action had been allocated to them by the very structures of power they claimed to subvert. *Sous la plage les pavés*.

traces of Rancière's criticism of criticism à la Meckseper, which he sees as having herself succumbed to opportunistic self-sabotage. Forty years ago, writes Rancière, Marxism and social critique were "supposed to denounce the machinery of social domination in order to offer new tools to those who were confronting it." Today, he writes, no new tools are offered. Instead social critique has "come to rest as a disenchanted acknowledgment of the reign of the commodity and the spectacle, of the equivalence of every thing with every other thing and of every thing with its own image" (2008A: 39)[49].

4.6.3 THE MELANCHOLIA OF THE LEFT

Let's return to the analogy of the Meckseper photographs. The critique of the institution tends to cannibalize itself once the photograph is hung as art. A criticism, that Rancière describes as the *irony or the melancholy of the left*, which

> urges us to admit that all our desires for subversion still obey the law of the market and that we are merely complying with the new game available on the global market, the game of the limitless experimentation with our own lives. It [the melancholy of the left] shows us absorbed in the belly of the beast, where even our capacities for autonomous and subversive practices, and even our networks of interaction we might use against her [the beast], serve the new power of the beast, that of immaterial production (2008A: 39-40)[50].

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[49] My translation from the French: Rancière *(le marxisme) était censé, il y a quarante ans, dénoncer les machineries de la domination sociale pour donner des armes neuves à ceux qui l'affrontaient. Il est aujourd'hui devenu un savoir désenchanté du règne de la marchandise et du spectacle, de l'équivalence de toute chose avec toute autre et de toute chose avec sa propre image. (2008: 39)*

[50] My translation from the French: *L'ironie ou la mélancolie de gauche. Celle-ci nous presse d'avouer que tous nos désirs de subversion obéissent encore à la loi du marché et que nous n'y faisons que nous complaire au nouveau jeu disponible sur le marché global, celui de l'expérimentation sans limites de notre propre vie. Elle nous montre absorbés dans le ventre du monstre où même nos capacités de pratique autonome et subversive et les réseaux d'interaction que nous pourrions utiliser contre elle servent la puissance nouvelle de la bête, celle de la production immatérielle.*

And although Rancière's entire impetus in writing *The Emancipated Spectator* was as a rebuttal to Debord, Debord would have agreed with this. In his # 220th thesis of the *Society of Spectacle* he writes:

> (…) By rushing into sordid reformist compromises or pseudorevolutionary collective actions, those driven by an abstract desire for immediate effectiveness are in reality obeying the ruling laws of thought, adopting a perspective that can see nothing but the *latest news*. In this way delirium reappears in the camp that claims to be opposing it. (2002: 56)

You shall hear nothing you shall see nothing you shall change nothing you shall be nothing.

Josephine Meckseper video piece using images of the same anti-war protests seen in *Untitled, 2005 illustates this point*.. This video was presented at the Whitney Biennale in 2006 and features video footage of the protests slowed down and set to a droning soundtrack of a man's voice, also slowed down, repeating:

> *You shall hear nothing you shall see nothing you shall change nothing you shall be nothing*.

In the #195th thesis, Debord writes about how the *specialists of spectacular power* "are absolutely corrupted by their experience of contempt and by the success of that contempt, because they find their contempt confirmed by their awareness of how truly contemptible spectators really are." (2002: 51)

Thus we find Rancière's paradox, in which the art used to denounce hypocrisy is itself as hypocritical as the behavioursbehaviors it despises. The contemptuous glance of the Meckseper pieces is precisely what gives them their value on the art market, and what perpetuates the cycles of power she might initially presume to condemn. Meckseper's photographs, writes Rancière, show us the Iraq war protestors with an enormous garbage can. The garbage can is overflowing and so we understand immediately, as is always the case, writes Rancière, the homogeneous relationship (2008A: 33[51]) between the society of consumption and the movement of resistance. Except, as with *Untitled, 2005*, the perspective is shifted and the garbage can in the foreground is telling us "here is your reality, you can always, in the background, protest and pretend that your opposed to the existing order, but in reality you are just as complicit as consumers[52]" (Rancière 2009: 624).

In *The Emancipated Spectator*, Rancière does an important job in outlining how the discourse of critical art, which, in principle is a reach for emancipation, has become a self-contented discourse that effectively does nothing more than explain the impossibility of emancipation, because everyone is after all stuck in the machine, in the 'belly of the beast' and the machine does nothing but spin on itself. And those who presume to criticize it are in fact doing nothing more than reinforce it.

Rancière points out how the strategies and language of the 'critical' *dispositif* have barely changed since Debord's days (2010: 144). Today, much art continues to rest on the function of denouncing the reign of the commodity, struggling against the society of spectacle, and purporting to develop practices of *détournement*. These works, to name just a few produced or exhibited in Berlin in the last three years, continue to employ the same repertoire of denunciatory procedures, be they the enormous decapitated Jesus with a paper *Burger King* crown, pornographic parodies of

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[51] my paraphrasing from the French original: "la photographie des manifestants à la poubelle souligne leur homogénéité fondamentale" (Rancière 2008A: 33)

[52] my translation from "voilà votre réalité, vous pouvez toujours, derrière, manifester et faire croire que vous êtes opposés à l'ordre existant, mais en réalité vous êtes complices en tant que consommateurs, etc." (Rancière 2009: 624)

advertising, of the Internet, of pop-stars, or vicious replicas of the petty bourgeoisie: singed yoga mats, perverse work-out videos, or swords encased in a stigmatized brand of body spray (firsthand observations from Berlin-based artworks of the past 2 years). These types of rhetorical *dispositifs* are – everywhere, but highly concentrated in Berlin – a prevailing presence in galleries and museums, who, like Artur Zmijewski's Biennale, profess to reveal the power of the commodity, the reign of the spectacle, the perverted pervasiveness of power. But, says Rancière,

> since it is very difficult to find anybody who is actually ignorant of such things, the mechanism ends up spinning around on itself and playing on the very undecidability of its effect. In the end, the *dispositif* feeds off the very equivalence between parody *as* critique and the parody *of* critique. (2010: 144))

Art thus risks becoming a parody of its alleged efficacy. This undecidability has the lazy tendency of presenting simply a 'parodic *mise-en scène* of its own magic', and this mode of manifestation is often and unfortunately that of the commodity itself. (2010: 145).

In a recent interview (2008B), Rancière cites a well-known sentence from Guy Debord: "in a truly upside-down world, even the true is a moment of the false."[53] In other words, says Rancière, knowing the reason of the spectacle doesn't change the domination of the spectacle. With this realisation we circle back to the role of artists and activists alike: how to say something new, how to effect change, when each recourse seems to point directly into a fatal tip of Rancière's three-pronged paradox:

1. SOCIAL CRITIQUE: In criticising of the system, one simply replicates the system.
2. THE PUBLIC: To deliver people of their ignorance, one must constitute them as such.

[53] my translation from : 'dans le monde réellement renversé, le vrai est un moment du faux'

3. THE ARTIST: The impotence of having realised one's own impotence. The spectacle of spectacle. The cynicism of the cynics.

Ultimately, the "Melancholia of the left", Rancière writes, "feeds itself on its own powerlessness":

> It is satisfied to convert its own impotence into a generalised powerlessness, while reserving itself the position of the lucid eye [*l'esprit lucide*] who sheds a disenchanted gaze over a world where the critical interpretation of the system has itself become part of that very system[54] (Rancière, 2008:43).

Though it seems so very bleak Rancière outlines these terrific problems in order to leap over them. And his leap is much less of a motivated jump and rather a deliberate overcoming, bypassing, even: *ignoring*. Emancipation, according to Rancière, is the possibility to make one's own forms of speech, ways of seeing, and ways of being that are distinct from those imposed by the order of domination: "And so the question is not to know that we are exploited; in a sense the question is almost to ignore it." (Rancière 2008B). The result of politics, Rancière says, must not simply be judged in terms of what was gained against the enemy, but rather what was gained in terms of subjectivisation, what was gained, precisely, in terms of "reconfiguration of the common language". (Rancière 2008C: Timecode 08:24)

4.6.4 ANOTHER FORM OF EMANCIPATION: REFUSING TO ANTICIPATE

The *avant-garde* artists begin by placing themselves on a future-bound timeline, one step ahead from everyone else. These artists, inevitably, see themselves as a vehicle for this yet-to-be-seen reality: for they themselves are seeing it first and translating the

[54] Paraphrased WHY NOT TRANSLATED??from the French: *La mélancolie se nourrit de sa propre impuissance. Il lui suffit de pouvoir la convertir en impuissance généralisée et de se réserver la position de l'esprit lucide qui jette un regard désenchanté sur un monde où l'interprétation critique du système est devenue un élément du système lui-même*. (2008: 43)

future backwards to the people. Duchamp spoke this way, Marina Abramović continues to speak this way:

> The entire aim of my work is to elevate the human spirit. (…) Art has to be disturbing, art has to ask a question, art has to predict the future. (Abramović 2010)

The entire premise of the last century of the *artist as avant-garde* is the problem, Rancière would say. In fact, Rancière has taken not only political art to task, but the field of sociology in general: the police, academic and even contemporary democratic structures that rely on establishing roles, functions, and trajectories for knowledge.

Ever since his first work of rebellion against his master, *La Lesson d'Althusser*, Rancière has "set out to develop a practice of writing that avoids radical talk which simply ends up providing the restoration of the Academic order" (Corcoran in Rancière 2012: 22). Etienne Jacotot, the creator of a *panecastic* method of teaching, became the inspiration for Rancière's *Le maître ignorant* (1987) because his method requires, first and foremost, the erasure of all assumptions. The essence of Jacotot's theory is that one's abilities are directly linked to one's point of departure. If one begins within a framework of inequality, as does the ordinary pedagogue – be it the professor, the artist, the leader of a political movement, anyone who speaks of 'raising awareness' or 'making conscious' or 'showing reality' to those who are otherwise unable to see – the realm of the possible is limited by the starting premise of inequality itself. According to Jacocot and Rancière, one cannot reach one's goal of equality if one begins from a position of inequality. The starting point is crucial: and one only has one of two options: inequality or equality.

Rancière's contemporaries, social theorists like Bourdieu, made a mockery of his ideas, asserting that, despite the philosopher's will, reality ensures that workers and 'bourgeois' each have their allocated tastes, opinions, and ways of seeing. Yet, Rancière's rebuttal is to encourage a rupture with the presumed fact that 'each social group has its own aesthetic experience that suits it best' and to propose an experience

he calls, quoting Rimbaud, a *dérèglement des sens*: a de-ruling of the senses. This experience breaks from traditional forms of experience that do nothing but replicate what Rancière calls 'forms of domination'.

In the end: as Rancière says, 'art that works', that 'makes a mark on reality', that 'opens up a place where politics can be performed' is an art that "opens up new landscapes of the visible, the sayable, the doable". These practices of art may thus contribute to constituting a new idea of what critical art could mean today.

> For critical art is not so much a type of art that reveals the forms and contradictions of domination as it is an art that questions its own limits and powers, that refuses to anticipate its own effects. (2010: 149)

The night before the opening of the opening of the Biennale, Artur Żmijewski snuck into the space of the KW Institute of Contemporary Arts and, without anyone knowing or anyone's consent (not even Warsza's), took down all of the text and titles, which named and explained the works. The Biennale was exhibited for nine weeks, and for those nine weeks, nothing was explained. Visitors entered the space for free, walked around, took pictures, and left. In the vast majority of these people's minds not only the 7th Berlin Biennale but also the Occupy Movement was thereby resolved as a failure. No new thoughts would be born on the subject.

Something, it seems, fell short of being 'art that works', and the responsibility for this, the 'Human Zoo', 'the place where Occupy comes to die', lies equally with the curators, the activists and the public. In an interview[55], Joanna Warsza, the Biennale's co-curator acknowledged this fact, saying:

> Art is not political only if you say so. It is not enough to simply play with the representation of a political problem. Political means the art will have an inherent element to provoke a reaction, or to provoke somebody to oppose, to

[55] Interview held in Berlin in January 5th 2014. Full transcript in Appendix.

> disturb, or to make a shift, as Rancière says. This means the work might have a political content or potential. If Occupy is invited to KW, it has political potential but it is not yet political, if they are just there. (Warsza 2014)

In the same sense, political images are themselves not political. They alone do not suffice to generate *dissensus* - au contraire, when they are displayed under that assumption they tend to propagate the stagnation of *consensus*.

CHAPTER 5: POLICE IMAGES

5.1 THE POLITICS OF PERFORMANCE

Up until now we've been discussing the reframing of protest from *afar*. By afar, in this case, we have described the imposition of external interests: the curatorial vision, the Internet eye, the public's prejudices, the institutional mandate. We have discussed the inclusion of the Occupy Camp in the Berlin Biennale as if it were a Duchampian *ready-made* or a photograph of protest, negotiating the respective roles of the curators and the public in processing the political potential of the reframed protests.

The issue of reframing takes on a new quality when the frame in question is one imposed from *within*. In this chapter we acknowledge how the issue complicates itself indefinitely when the protest, rather than (or in addition to) *being* framed, now *frames itself*. As opposed to the Meckseper photographs, jeans commercials, or newspaper headlines from 1968, the instances we now study occur when the photographs become a living stage, when the people they portray are no longer candid but conscious, when the actors hired to represent politics are not actors at all but protestors themselves.

The relocation of action and the (self)conscious reframing of political subjects is the most prescient and perhaps disconcerting aspect to emerge from the Occupy narrative, as well as from the generalised issue of politics diffused across social media. The issue will be broached in two stages: first as a study of how the Occupy movement *reframed itself* in a space of art (remaining within our case study of the Berlin Biennale). And secondly, studying how the movement *reframed itself* across spaces online, from September 2011-September 2014, from Barcelona to New York to London, from Istanbul to Sao Paulo, from Caracas to Kiev. No matter where the protests were happening worldwide, the principle fact is they were also (partially) taking place simultaneously everywhere else, across the live feeds of millions of social media subscribers.

In the first instance, at the Occupied Berlin Biennale, the entire significance of Occupy's *occupation* had been inversed: and all the protestors present had consented to being reframed within this new context. The main concern of these consensual participants, expressed quite vocally in articles, interviews and social media, was what was ubiquitously called 'cooption': "It seemed we agreed unwittingly to play a role in [Artur Żmijewski]'s latest piece,' writes an Occupy activist from New York who participated in the Occupied Berlin Biennale, 'an Occupy time capsule and tomb that historicized and deactivated the movement. *Checkmate: we were coopted*" (Beery 2012, emphasis author's own). Cooption will be our concern in this Chapter; cooption in the sense of Deleuze and Guattari's *capture*, cooption in the sense of the soixantehuitards *sous la plage les pavés*. Cooption occurs when the same language of dissent is spun into a narrative of consent. We seek to accurately define the reframing of the protest narrative, and the nuances of dissensus and consensus present in the its various forms of cooption.

Simultaneously to the *Human Zoo* taking place before the 70,000 visitors of the Berlin Biennale (Warsza 2014), other manifestations – performances – of Occupy were taking place for audiences of many millions, over the Internet and social media. The question in this chapter will be whether these various incarnations of Occupy – geographically in Turkey and Brazil, but most predominantly online, were in their own ways time capsules and tombs. This is not in any way an attempt to discredit the movements in Turkey and Brazil – many of which are ongoing in new incarnations at the time of writing – but rather, following the formula of the Occupied Berlin Biennale, an attempt to study the shift in narrative that occurs when movements are relocated away from the streets and into arenas elsewhere, to audiences largely of strangers. We will argue that the transplantation of OWS to Berlin via the art biennial follows many of the same patterns of the transplantation, for example, of the *#changebrazil* protests to Berlin – or anywhere else – via social media. With a focus on representation, and moreover *self*-representation, we re-invoke Deleuze and Guattari's notions of *capture* and *smooth* and *striated spaces* in order to update the discussion into the realm of the Internet, and politics online.

Expanding on the idea of reframing from within and without, this chapter traces the genealogy of the concept of *police*, defined by Rancière as the 'partition of the sensible' (2010: 36) and its response, proposed by Rancière as *politics*, and by Certeau as *parole*. Whereas Certeau expanded on his idea of *parole* during the student movement in 1968, in which, for Certeau at least, the struggle for *parole* was more or less a direct trajectory from silence to speech, Rancière's *politics* finds at its essence a form of *dissensus* that is evolving alongside the ever more intricate and insidious forms of *police*.

The dual between *police* and its opponents (be they incarnated as either *parole* or *politics*) consists in a battle over representation. *Police* seeks to delineate the visible and the sayable, and *consensus* is the notion by which this delineation is made to permeate and suffocate reality. *Dissensus* seeks to rupture these boundaries: and by the very nature of its disruption and blurring, opens up a place where politics can be possible. The following chapter will present a series of events that exist across various degrees of consensus and dissensus. Whereas these events progress chronologically through time, they leap back and forth between moments of true consensus and true dissensus, in a constant tumbling over one another that constantly resists and redefines the possible. In a motion very much harmonious with Deleuze and Guattari's description of the 'dissymetric necessity' (1980: 606) that append that smooth to the striated and vice-versa, this chapter sees

sous la plage, les pavés (beneath the beach the pavement)
become
sous les pavés, la plage (beneath the pavement the beach)
become
sous la plage, la police (beneath the beach the police)
become
sous la police, la parole (beneath the police speech)
become
sous la parole, la police (beneath speech the police).

Ultimately, the dance between one and the other reflects the struggle between control and freedom, and the many illusory options that have come to present themselves to an individual and/or a group seeking to represent themselves in a political sphere. "If communism vs. capitalism was the struggle of the twentieth century', writes Lawrence Lessig in 2002, 'then control vs. freedom will be the debate of the twenty-first century." (Lessig 2002)

5.2 REFRAMING FROM WITHIN

5.2.1 SELF-STAGING AT THE OCCUPIED BB7

The efficiency of the Society of Spectacle lies in its ability to reconfigure representations to its benefit. Ultimately, Debord insists, "to control representation is to frame events in particular ways in order for power to justify and/ or disguise itself" (Cooper 2012). When the curators of the 7th Berlin Biennale write, "The camp is a place of experimentation, of resistance, and of the representation of resistance" (Warsza, *Press Conference* 2012), what is meant by 'representation of resistance'? The invitation had been extended with heartfelt idealism to the various Occupy groups: to bestow the power and the freedom of representation directly to the activists themselves. But how does one represent resistance while simultaneously bowing to the powers one is allegedly 'resisting'. Where does resistance begin and end, especially in the framework not of 'resistance' itself, but rather of its representation. When you hold a mirror to a punching fist should it not break the glass? The BB7 occupiers, activists who had taken part in the elated first months of the movements in Spain, The Netherlands, the UK, and the US, were concerned about the implications of their involvement. Tal Beery, a member of Occupy Museums who flew to Berlin from New York City, described his initial impressions in an article for *Revolt Magazine*:

> They had invited us and other Occupy groups to use the cavernous ground floor of their KW Institute for Contemporary Art as a living and organizing venue. What resulted was a shocking cacophony of canvas tents, overlapping stencils, random political slogans, banners galore, lists and so many leaflets: ***an Occupy theme park***. Although interesting lectures and discussions were held, architecturally, it was a sunken pit, a fishbowl. Visitors -- many of them art world aristocrats -- stood on an elevated viewing platform to observe occupiers go about their activism. (My emphasis)

The representation of resistance had succumbed to an overarching sense of *how* resistance *should* be represented: how it should look. The graffiti the word choice, the colors even seemed to preexist the camp, and were in many ways predetermined in the same way a theme park recognises the iconography and mascots of its given theme. Cinderella and white turrets belong to a Disney theme park much as hand-drawn slogans and raised fists belonged to the 'Occupy theme park'. The visitors to the park were invited, thus, to partake in the adventure of global protest. The invited activists were in many cases incredibly sceptical of providing such a prescribed experience to an ultimately condescending public. This original reluctance was well outlined by Carolina, a member of 15M from Spain, who wrote the following in an 'Open Letter to the Berlin Biennale':

> There was quite a controversy about participating in an art event, the fear to be "exhibited", the fear to be swallowed up by a "commercial" event, when art becomes a consumer article and forgets its function of questioning reality and when transgression is even more marketable than art; "people" it seems are so bored in society that they need "adventure", so art has to sell that adventure. This was the starting point at the Biennale, #occupy | #15M, ***visitors expected to share an "adventure",*** that thousands of people are living in their squares, the process of civil disobedience going on in our time. That was the risk and the challenge that was to be overcome when finally the invitation was accepted. (posted on *Take The Square* on May 31, 2012. Emphasis author's own)

Carolina left the Berlin Biennale on May 31st, the day of her letter's publication. Her original hesitation had been confirmed, and the challenge she outlined had, in her opinion, not been overcome. Instead the public's complacency and tired predestined opinions forced her into a show she wished not to be giving. She found the framework of expectations was already so calcified within the "artificial environment" of the Biennale, and that the "artificial goal" of the assembled protesters was futile. She would rather not represent anything than to represent protest on someone else's terms. "The construction of an artificial square has failed," Carolina writes:

> to escape the logic of exhibitions and institutions is not possible; we can interact with them, we can do some lobbying so that some things change, but what is not possible is to develop a process of true freedom inside them (as the ones lived in the squares). A square has no limits, no restrictions, while an exhibition has, even if there is a different purpose, to establish a border between the "proper" exhibition and the #occupy space. (ibid.)

About half a dozen of her fellow 15M protestors from Spain did however stay and 'represent' multiple forms of resistance until the end of the Biennale. In fact, approximately 25 people a day lived within the camp from the end of April 2012 until July 1st: 9 weeks, though by the very end this number had diminished to a resilient dozen (Teitge 2013). Why? A few needed a place to sleep (Chadwick 2012, first-hand account), a few were curious, and many others believed that once this foretold adversity had been acknowledged, there was great potential to activate something new. Maria Byck, an activist in her 40s with decades of experience in civil disobedience, accepted the invitation because she appreciated the rare opportunity to interact with members of other Occupy camps from around the world: "I was really looking forward to meeting with the other activists, making connections with people who were doing organizing around the theme of occupy, in Europe" (Byck 2013 TC 07:56).

"Those of us who decided to take part are entering into this experiment well aware of the risk of co-optation of our movement's grassroots power", wrote the *Indignad@s*

in the their statement in the Berlin Biennale Presskit. And yet they too, like Maria, "decided to use the opportunity to create a *Global Square*, an open international forum, where activists from all over the world can come together to exchange knowledge and skills, methods and resources, raise issues and find solutions, and most importantly plan joint actions both locally and internationally for global change." (May 2012. Emphasis in original) Up until the Berlin Biennale, there had not been any attempt to reunite the many voices from the many camps. Indeed, language barriers aside, the geographic fixedness inherent in he hundreds of *occupied* spaces, and the countless site-specific grievances of each group presented no reason or opportunity for the many movements to unite within one collective camp. Each camp had, in turn, refined their unique ways of holding Asamblea, of managing large groups, as manifest in the various 'dialects' of hand signals. In the Occupy Berlin camp, for example, the Spanish contingent brought an effective new way of mediating large heteronymous groups, whereas the Americans contributed new hand signals: the raised finger for 'point of information', and the spinning fingers for 'wrap it up', which came into frequent use when speakers indulged in long tirades. 'This is off subject', the fingers would remind the group, with hope of steering the discussion back on track.

Image 53: the Hand Signal Sheet circulated at the Occupied Berlin Biennale, June 2012

General Assemblies (*Asambleas*) were held every Tuesday and Thursday at 18:00. These Asambleas were, however, not respected in the first weeks. Writes Carolina: "Nobody attended." According to her, the failure of the early Asambleas "gives a clue of the commitment towards the collective building process. Nobody had the need to talk about the conflicts, to look for solutions, the international status of things, or anything." Although the diverging backgrounds at first seemed to hinder conversation – individual attempts to garner discussion about the simultaneous Blockupy protests in Frankfurt, the student strike in Montreal, or even the housing evictions a few blocks away in Berlin were met with general passivity – this very estrangement quickly fuelled its own debate. After the first weeks, enough conflict had emerged within the camp to prompt attendance of the Asambleas. People attended vindictively, to vent frustrations and publically accuse perpetrators of crimes ranging from irresponsibility, inconsistency and unreliability, to sexual harassment, vandalism and theft, to hypocrisy and pro-capitalism, Nazism and misogyny (Teitge, author's first-hand account). Behind the scenes, on the Take The Square listserv and in individual emails and chats insults were rampant. (ibid.) The camp had brought international activists together from around the world, and now, not unlike the well-worn template of reality television, they were fighting constantly as the audience observed from above, snickering.

The curators too fought among themselves about how much to mediate the situation (Warsza 2014), Warsza arguing that they should take more responsibility, Zmijewski arguing to remain silent. Retrospectively Warsza regrets not having been more deliberate in her curatorial allocation of power: "We should not have had Occupy come on invitation. We should have given over the entire exhibition" (Warsza 2014):

> Somehow I understood the invitation to Occupy as a tribute to the shift that was going on at the moment in this world, and among those people you have artists. So in order to avoid segregation – like, in the basement there is reality and a tribute to Occupy, and on the first floor there is religious art, and on the second floor another form of art – I would say, okay we are just suspending the whole exhibition. (…)We, as curators, would contribute art space, time, mobility to the

> movement. I think that the message would have been much clearer, to the outside world: "KW is given over to Occupy". Not "Occupy by invitation".

The message would have been clearer, not only to the outside world but to the occupiers: make this what you will. The space might have become truly interesting, Warsza believes, had the curators relinquished all control. Instead within the framework of their power, even the 'invitation to be free' played out as a command to behave within the framework of expectations of how that 'freedom' would look.

5.2.2 THE HUMAN ZOO: *Sous la Plage, les Pavés*

Why did people start calling the exhibition a *human zoo*? For the same reason they started behaving like visitors to a zoo: the idea was offered to them.

"I had always told Zmijewksi that people will say it's a human zoo," Warsza recounts (2014: TC 18:46). "And he would say, how do you know? How do you know that?" Her answer to his prodding was simply: "Because they will". Perhaps a more insightful answer might have been *because I said they will*. The sooner the comment was uttered it became true. The public was prone to adopt any suggestion, especially one coming directly from the curator's mouth. Perhaps unsurprisingly, the occupants of the camp were just as susceptible. By the first days of June, HUMAN ZOO was spray painted in all caps, white on the black walls of the camp, in direct eye-line with visitors as they first entered the space. From that moment on, very little was done to challenge this diagnosis.

Image 54: Berlin Biennale ("The human zoo experiment..."). June 4 2012. Photo Credit: Lee Cofa via Flickr

With their own tagline composed over their heads, the activists were now sunken into stagnation, one in which they were at once accomplices, perpetrators and victims. The word *human zoo* kept arising in online debates (Raffel, Fischer, and Carolina in the BB7 Presskit 2012) and bi-weekly Asambleas (my own account). Remarkably, concept, first coined by an anxious curator who wanted to avoid that the word be uttered or embodied by anyone else but her, spread uninhibitedly to a group who had from the outset named precisely this form of cooption as their absolute adversary. Warsza's anxiety was confirmed; the occupiers foreshadowing was fulfilled. The human zoo had been offered as a frame, and to many the frame of the human zoo sufficed to encompass the entire experience. Writes Beery of Occupy Museums: "We called it "The Human Zoo." It reduced our activism to some punk protest fashion; here, urgent action was just an aesthetic, marginalized and cheapened." (2012)

The human zoo is an example of consensus. It operates within a given framework and resigns itself to its prescribed constraints; it separates individuals and assigns them to a specific and limited realm of the sensory experience (2010: 216), be it the victims, the viewers or the orchestrators of a human zoo. Consensus, as Rancière understands it, "is defined by the idea of the proper" and how this very idea implies and enforces "the distribution of the places of the proper and the improper (*le propre et l'impropre*)" (2010: 213). By proper here we can read into the society of consensus and its framework of expectations. Carolina too, in her Open letter to the Berlin Biennale explains that the 'artificial square' failed because it had to exist within (or

deliberately without) to the parameters of a 'proper' exhibition. The inability to straddle that line rendered, in Carolina's mind, the Occupied Berlinale innocuous.

The French version of the word proper (*propre*) also means originating from the self, and bearing the distinct particularity of a self: as in *amour-propre* as self-love. Propre, in French, also means clean: and so we find consensus as a space of delineation between what is not only 'acceptable' or 'appropriate (ie: proper), but also in the delineation of what is self and outside of self, what is clean and what is *impropre* (inappropriate). "It is the very idea of the difference between the proper and the improper that serves to separate the political out from the social, art from culture, culture from commerce, and so on", writes Rancière (ibid.), a logic that, in his view, underlies every hierarchy. Within these hierarchical distributions, "everyone's speech is determined in terms of their proper place and their activity in terms of its proper function" (2010: 2 Introduction by Steven Corcoran). Within consensus, *the sensory is given as univocal*. (2010: 149). "Consensus', writes Rancière, 'says":

> it is perfectly fine for people to have different interests, values and aspirations, nevertheless there is one unique reality to which everything must be related, a reality that is experienceable as a sense datum and which has only one possible signification. (2010: 144)

If one were to describe a spectrum of *consensus* to *dissensus*, the different hues would account for the various degrees of people's self-consciousness. Consensus, as Rancière describes it, is to dissensus what black is to white or vice-versa: they do not coexist or blend. One is the veritable impossibility of the other. Yet if there were a spectrum, it would come from the individual's perspective: from the narratives that emerge within each space. Arguably, within consensus, many narratives may replicate, each one containing various attempts at justification or pacification – yet ultimately the univocal reduces them all to the same pitch of consensus.

Within consensus, and especially within the consensual spaces of so-called politics in so-called art, a recurring narrative is *cooption*. Cooption is a term that is solicited in

an attempt to bridge the space of consensus and dissensus. It does so by resorting to a jaded nostalgia for a supposed (former, now coopted) state of dissensus: and yet the very naming of cooption is a consensual behaviour. In a sense, the naming of 'cooption is an attempt to nestle one's consensual state a little closer to a space of dissensus: it is an attempt to bring gray tones into a framework presented by Rancière as definitely black and white.

5.2.3 COOPTION

After *human zoo*, *cooption* was perhaps the second most frequently spoken criticism of the Occupied Biennale (my own first-hand account). In fact the human zoo and cooption exist as neighbours on the spectrum of self-narration within consensus: both characterize an inability for the people represented to represent themselves on their own terms. Both concede to a univocal reluctance; both frame the protest within a structure of power – and yet in both cases consensus is inevitably also present.

The term cooption implies the integration of fragmented groups into a larger overarching structure – based not on force or forced compliance, but based rather on inherent homogeneities within the various groups. The homogeneity within the groups stems from a general consensus on which relationship with power is the most beneficial, and this consensus often infiltrates the way these groups choose to represent themselves. "The goal of the political demonstration is not to change the world but to be photographed", writes Vilém Flusser in 1985 (2011: 56). In other words, the protestors, having assessed their options, willingly walked into the cage of their human zoo.

The Occupy and 15M activists who attended the 7th Berlin Biennale were, in varying degrees, all interested in the institution of the Berlinale. They were interested in 'being photographed' and had been tempted by what it offered. Is this cooption?

The word cooption is in the first sentence of the Indignados official statement in the Berlin Biennale Presskit: "Those of us who decided to take part are entering into this

experiment well aware of the risk of co-optation." Everyone was hyper-aware of this term, one whose original meaning has, in the past decades, been quite radically transformed. Cooption, originally, means a choice made collectively, say, to include new members in an organisation. Only recently has cooption come to question the calibre of consensus required for this assimilation, and whether indeed this consensus happens almost unconsciously, and perhaps counter-intuitively. In many ways the contemporary meaning of cooption, the *becoming* of something one deliberately *was not* is a synonym of Deleuze and Guattari's *capture*. In scholarly writing, the idea of cooption occurs most prevalently in examples of botanical and animal adaptation (*becoming*) and imitation to favour their survival, recalling the wasp and orchid in *Mille Plateaux*. In the humanities, and specifically in the art world, cooption is referred to frequently (Bishop 2012, and any recent art magazine) with respect to the 'institutional purging of all of art's radical aspects' (Rauning 2007: 19), and with the conversion of political artworks into "machines of the spectacle" (ibid.)

Cooption, according to Beery, is the "deactivation of the movement". According the Indignados statement it is a concession of the movement' "grassroots power". One would think, given its contemporary definition, that cooption would mean the 'lack of options', but indeed, at its root, cooption means an option (or a decision) taken together, the assumption being that it will be in the benefit of all parties. Cooption for both the American and Spanish contingent of the occupied Berlin Biennale was a risk they consciously took. Co-option is at once the decision to send in the Trojan horse; the opponent's decision to open the gates to this horse, and the realisation, once inside, that the horse is effectively empty. Cooption is, in a way, a form of domestication: the declawing and neutering of the feral cat so that it may co-exist alongside the expensive jacquard sofa. In this example, the artist is to the institution what the cat is to the furniture. Another key word here is 'neutralisation':

> With activists working within their frame, an institution can appear hip, democratic, or even radical without taking any significant steps toward change, neutralizing the threat a message poses. This is the traditional path to cooption. (Beery: 2012)

The neutralising of the message is indeed a form of neutering: it disables the hormonal equivalent of a political impulse in art and makes it *proper*. In co-option, the immense unpredictability of *plage* is restricted to the striated sequence of *pavés*: if a protest, as Flusser claims, exists to be photographed, it exists on terms that purport to be 'encompassable' by a still image, one that is directly and *univocally* translatable to anyone who might see it.

What's remarkable about this contemporary example of cooption – one of countless others – is that the coopted parties pre-empt their domestication by naming it. This form of cooption, just like the naming of the *human zoo*, satisfies itself with naming oppression and then ultimately conceding to its framework of representation. Flusser, concerned specifically with the power of images, gives a great example this dead-end of understanding, something he too calls *consensus*. In his example, he situates cinemagoers within a cinema. Suddenly the projector becomes defective:

> Now the forms on the screen begin to jump instead of glide. The receivers know what it means: the projector is not working properly. If the receivers were slaves in a Platonic hell, they would welcome this, for it would be a step toward their release from looking at shadows. Cinemagoers, however, turn their heads toward the projector in irritation. They have paid to be betrayed. A consensus exists between them and the screen serving the interests of betrayal, a contract arising from feedback between the screen and the viewer. The contemporary cinemagoer is the result of having been fed by previous films, and the film on the screen is the result of having been fed by previous cinemagoers. The longer this mutual feeding continues, the stronger and more stable the consensus between image and people will become. (Flusser 2011: 54)

In Flusser's example, a 'closed feedback circuit' has been established between image and its viewer. From this closed loop nothing new will emerge: "the image shows a washing machine that it wants us to buy, and we want the image to show us the washing machine because we want to buy it." (Flusser 2011: 55)

Following the same cyclical formula, the Biennale shows us a protest to alleviate our conflicting feelings towards Occupy (most commonly, a sense of snide disdain pre-empting its failure, mixed with an even stronger sense of guilt about this very distain/passivity in the event that it would indeed not fail). And so either, as the general sentiment conveyed, we want the Biennale to show us the protest because we want to justify our passivity or our relish in discrediting the movement altogether. Or we want to the Biennale to show us the protest because we want to justify our disgust (à la Zmijewski) towards innumerable incarnations of power (the art institution, student loans, the wars, *capitalism*) and we want the image of the protest to provide a porthole to a space of politics: a proxy into Zuccotti Park, a place of participation, and understanding. The Biennale shows us Occupy because it wants us to join, and we want the Biennale to show us Occupy because we, too, want to participate in what is at this point a worldwide movement.

Within the camp, the dynamic remains consistent with these two narratives: while most participants were proud to represent what was at the time an seemingly indomitable sweep of international indignation, the majority of the Occupy BB7 protestors also conceded, intentionally or not, to representing what reeked of a failed movement. Symptomatic of this was the constant recourse to narratives of fascism, rape and social class (as manifest in nearly every Asamblea and every recurring argument between the various groups). Carolina compared the camp to high school, with "In the end there was a lack of political maturity in the group, the tension between being or not being part of the whole exhibition lead to the situation of finally presenting the "visitors" with an exhibition, a model of what is supposed to be a square which is very far from reality." (Carolina 2012)

One of the main arguments was over wall-space within the camp: people had been posting and painting over one another's slogans. Many artists within the activist camps, had hoped to receive official credit as artists in the Berlin Biennale: "People belonging to the so-called occupy movement, with more voice than the rest, seem interested mainly in putting their name on the walls of a famous art exhibition that will guarantee some extra rewards once it is added to their CV, and forgetting that one

of the basic principles of the movement is to avoid personal profit." (Carolina 2012) The fights were over representation, the right to narrate oneself. And yet the basic vocabulary of emancipation was so anaemic that it most often found recourse to curses and accusations of fascism and abuse, recycling old narratives and imposing them upon a situation within which inevitably, now, nothing new could emerge, except the interminable 'feedback loop' between people and image. Coining the term 'feedback loop', Flusser writes: "This feedback enables the images to change, to become better and better, and more like the receivers want them to be; that is, the images become more and more like the receivers want them to be so that the receivers can become more and more like the images want them to be." (2011: 54). The frequent references in Asambleas to the German participants' genealogy as fascists are but the most perverse examples.

Flusser warns that the more an image 'becomes exciting', the more a form of crass consensus plagues discourse, a feedback loop slowly forms that locks people into a passive but passionate consumption of images. The more they are used, the 'fatter and fatter' the images grow (2011: 53): the images become more exciting the more excitable their public, and the public becomes all the more excited the more exciting the images (54). The camp saw itself disintegrating into petty arguments upon which sat big fat feedback loops of angry imagery. Flusser warned:

> history is about to dry up, and this exactly because images are feeding on it, because they sit on historical threads like parasites, recoding them into circles. As soon as these circles are closed, the interaction between image and person will, in fact, become a closed feedback loop. Images will then always show the same thing, and people will always want to see the same thing. (2011: 59)

This state in which images are always the same, in which there reigns "an agreement between sense and sense", or "between a mode of sensory presentation and a regime of meaning" (2010: 150) is what Rancière calls a state of consensus. Consensus exists when the smooth space of politics finds itself captured and striated by the logic of the police:

> The essence of the police lies in a partition of the sensible that is characterized by the absence of void and of supplement: society here is made up of groups tied to specific modes of doing, to places in which these occupations are exercised, and to modes of being corresponding to these occupations and these places. In this matching of functions, places and ways of being, there is no place for any void. It is this exclusion of what 'is not' that constitutes the police-principle at the core of statist practices. (2010: 36)

At the Occupied Berlin Biennale, many accusations were along the lines of defining what one *really* was: whether it be a *real* anti-capitalist, a *real* feminist, a *real* fascist, or a *real* idiot. There was a need to assert one's validity as a practitioner of politics, and this display resorted to a limited supply of jargon and gestures, all of which were constantly and competitively performed. When a disagreement arose, which it did on a quotidian basis, the group would be divided. Insults were flung, people left – a protest within a protest. In many cases the police was called to mediate – to effectively *close the feedback loop* – when a clash turned violent (Teitge 2013).

The assumed necessity of the police presence to condemn behaviours as either *proper* or not serves to underline the multiple layers of cooption present within the camp. Not only was institutional bias present to contaminate the movement's representation of its politics, there was moreover a contamination from within, a willingness to concede to the encoded guidelines of power, in which listening was trumped by yelling; and seeing was trumped by prejudice. Beneath the beach (*plage*) of the Occupy camp of the 7th Berlin Biennale was the concrete (*pavés*) of stubborn patterns as well as the *police* of police images. *Sous la plage la police*. The cooption, the reframing, had been accomplished on so many levels, both within and without.

The 'essence of consensus', writes Rancière, "does not consist in peaceful discussion and reasonable agreement, as opposed to conflict or violence." Instead,

> its [consensus's] essence lies in the annulment of dissensus as separation of the sensible from itself, in the nullification of surplus subjects, in the reduction of the people to the sum of the parts of the social body and of the political community to the relations between the interests and aspirations of these different parts. Consensus consists, then, in the reduction of politics to the police. (2010: 42)

Consensus consists in the reduction of politics to police, as witnessed for example in the Occupied Berlin Biennale, and the police were brought in to essentially to close feedback loops between image and audience, ensuring that every image show exactly what it means; that every person perform according to the guidelines of the proper, that the sensory be reduced to a univocal sense of what it 'should be'.

> Consensus, as a mode of government, says: it is perfectly fine for people to have different interests, values and aspirations, nevertheless there is one unique reality to which everything must be related, a reality that is experienceable as a sense datum and which has only one possible signification. (2010: 144)

Consensus outlines a reality that proposes itself as absolute and self-evident. The contours of this reality ('the real') are guarded from everything that may exist outside of it (imagination, fiction, subversion) by a tool of consensus so internalised we only encounter it if we try to cross outside its barriers. Within consensus, a community of people is symbolized as "the sum of its parts" (2010: 100) – "We are the 99%/Gezi Park/Trayvon Martin/Tahrir Square" - and sees its common way of being as an accomplishment. In contrast, another way of constituting community is to define it as "the division of its whole" (ibid.); this second form celebrates itself as a polemic over the common. Consensus is the form by which this second form of community is transformed into the first: in Rancière's words: "Consensus is the form by which politics is transformed into police" (ibid: 100).

5.3 ~~POLITICS:~~ SOUS LA PLAGE LA POLICE

5.3.1 *MOVE ALONG! NOTHING TO SEE*: POLICE LOGIC

Police as a symbol – and thereby a visible element of social life (or life made social) – has undergone a series of transformations in the past century. Frantz Fanon writes in *Wretched of the Earth* (1961) that "the colonial world is a world cut in two" and that the frontiers of the dividing line "are shown by barracks and police stations" (1963: 38). Concerned specifically with the visible, the lines, barriers, and what is 'shown', Fanon describes how in the colonies, the policeman and the soldier are "the official, instituted go-betweens, the spokesmen of the settler and his rule of oppression" (ibid). In Fanon's sense, the policeman becomes the visible manifestation of a subdued and insidious power that works through "the educational system, whether lay or clerical, the structure of moral reflexes handed down from father to son, the exemplary honesty of workers who are given a medal after fifty years of good and loyal service (…), all these aesthetic expressions of respect for the established order serve to create around the exploited person an atmosphere of submission and of inhibition which lightens the task of policing considerably." (Fanon 1963: 36) The policeman polices, but the real rule of power has already been established, by a certain – and certainly consensual - 'self evidence' that is attributed to what is understood as 'the real':

> What characterizes the mainstream fiction of the police order is that it passes itself off as the real, that it feigns to draw a clear-cut line between what belongs to the self-evidence of the real and what belongs to the field of appearances, representation, opinions and utopias. Consensus means precisely that the sensory is given as univocal. (2010: 148-149)

The term police is understood by Fanon, and even more so by Rancière, less a tool of overt violence, as Marx describes, and more as an expression of 'the possible'. The police actively constructs and delineates the boundaries 'the real'. Yet, as Rancière describes, the 'real' is always a matter of construction, and these barriers, these 'dividing lines' of a world 'cut in two' are actually fictional: "The real always is a

matter of construction, a matter of 'fiction'", emphasizes Rancière (2010: 148). The question in this sense is: what narrative does this fiction uphold?

If we are to understand *police* as enforcers of a 'self-evident' territory of 'the real', we must conceive of police not only as the men in uniforms, but rather what a man in uniform is. Indeed we must consider what the very word *uniform* connotes: it is a space of visual homogeny: be it the black armour of riot police, or the reused desert camo of the federal reserve troops on the streets of Ferguson in August 2014. The police exist very much in a visual, sensory, field. "The essence of the police lies neither in the repression nor even in the control of the living. Its essence lies in a certain way of dividing up the sensible" (2010: 36) Rancière uses what he terms to 'slogan' of the police to best describe the institution's social function: "Move along! There's nothing to see!" (2010: 37) The police, according to Rancière, "define the configuration of the visible, the thinkable, and the possible through a systematic production of the given, not through spectacular strategies of control and repression." (2007: 264). In a world where everything is visible, the police ultimately decides what we all see.

The police close feedback loops. And as soon as these circles are closed, "the interaction between image and person will, in fact, become a closed feedback loop. Images will then always show the same thing, and people will always want to see the same thing." (Flusser 2011: 59)

Image 55: "Dear citizens, move along". Still from the documentary *Dangerous Acts Starring the Unstable Elements of Belarus* in which 3000 protestors in Minsk spontaneously began clapping. The police at first are confounded and flattered by the applause. When the clapping continues, their reaction quickly turns violent. (Sackler 2013)

The French word for typeface is *police*. Originally, in the early years of printing, the term designated the list of lead alloy characters available for purchase. The *police* was determined by the type foundry – and encompassed a visually coded set of glyphs that constituted an entire alphabet and all punctuation marks. The purpose of police is to assure a visual unity in the printed texts. Diversity of 'polices' were rare for many centuries, so rare in fact that the term doesn't appear in typographic glossaries until the late 19th century. Only with the advent of advertising, posters, and the refining of public taste did the word *police* come into common use, when written word was bestowed not only with the transmission of knowledge but also with the many shimmering powers of persuasion. Police is a series of visually consistent symbols that contain the transmission of information. Although of course *police d'écriture* pertains to the written word, it has as little to do with what is said as the color of a car has to do with its engine. Police commands the outside appearance of words. Police is not about language but about image.

As Deleuze and Guattari have remarked, the term *enseigner* ('to teach') carries with it the term en-*signe*-r: to bestow with signs or symbols. (1987:76) Police, be it delineating 'the real' or the serif of a font, be it in the streets or a concept we carry within ourselves as an idea of the 'proper', pertains very much to the boundaries of what one can see. How to interpret the typeface 'police', and 'police' as described in

recent years by Rancière and Badiou? Foremost let's emphasize police as an effort to systematize and enforce a pre-established order or power structure.

5.3.2 DEFINING THE VISIBLE: POLICE IMAGES

Alain Badiou too concerns himself with the visibility of the police, and his relocation away from the colonial territories and into the information age has him inverse Fanon's equation, which saw the police officer as the visible manifestation of an invisible power. In an argument aligned more or less with Rancière's, Badiou's 2013 essay titled *The Pornography of Democracy* focuses on the imageless power of the police in a world captivated and held captive by images. The police, Badiou writes, embodies 'naked power', a power that "does not itself have any image, but rather is a naked reality, the state, which far from searching to deliver us from images, instead guarantees their power." Badiou uses the example of the Jean Genet play 'The Balcony' to describe the character of the chief of police, who, Badiou writes, "shows on stage the imageless power behind the image":

> He [the chief of police] is the emblem of naked power, because he is the 'leftbehind' of images. No-one desires the chief of police – unlike the great sportsman, the TV presenter, the professional do-gooder, the democratic politician at the summits of state power, the top model or the showbiz billionaire, those who themselves profit from the brothel of images. (Badiou 2013)

Badiou's chief of police is not the literal man patrolling the dusty streets of Fanon's colonial, cut-in-two, world. In Badiou's interpretation, the police chief patrols both sides of the world, both the private and the outward self. The central question, he posits, "for those who wish to break from the power of power" and "to free themselves from the chains of images binding them" is "to know who is the police-chief of their most intimate convictions". Badiou, with a vocabulary much like Rancière's, asks:

> What is the subjective drive (*resort*) behind our consenting to the world, such as it is? The idea of revolution having left the scene, our world is just the renewal – behind pornographic, consensual images – of commodity democracy. (Badiou 2013)

What is it, asks Badiou, that prompts individuals to *police themselves*? The phrase is an echo of Foucault's same question, 30 years prior: how do individuals increasingly come to govern themselves? Foucault's notion of *gouvernementalité* describes how *technologies of domination* are necessarily interconnected with what he calls *technologies of the self,* processes by which the individual acts upon himself. *Gouvernementalité* exists without having to exert force: it exists invisibly, internally, in the ways in which an individual's self-conception, or *techniques of the self* – become integrated into structures of domination (Davidson 1986: 230). Power, as Foucault observed it towards the end of his life, was no longer about a violent and unequivocal state monopoly, and was instead engaged in the production of new forms of identity, new subjects who inherently embodied the state's desired restrictions on behaviour and beliefs. *Gouvernementalité*, put simply, is the process by which police is internalized.

Foucault himself, known for his bleak outlook on the human spirit, coins the term *gouvernementalité* not as a full condemnation or concession to power. Gouvernementalité, beyond the famous panopticon of *Discipline and Punish*, acknowledges individual subjectivity and the power of reinterpretation. Whereas in the late 1970s, Foucault came to the notorious diagnosis of police power as a an extensive apparatus that 'must be coextensive with the entire social body', down to the most minute detail:

> Police power must bear 'over everything': it is not however the totality of the state nor of the kingdom as visible and invisible body of the monarch; it is the dust of events, actions, behaviour, opinions – 'everything that happens' … (Foucault 1979: 213)

In his lectures on *The Government of Self and Others* at the Collège de France (1982-1983), Foucault explores the prospects of extricating ourselves from our 'self-incurred' tutelage, our present mode of subjectivity through which we exist under the authority of others (Milchman and Rosenberg 2010: 155) Foucault's final cycle of lecture courses at the Collège de France emphasised the possibility of the creation of new modes of subjectivity. Frédéric Gros, the editor of the French edition of the lecture course points out that "The 1983 lectures make it clear, as far as Foucault was concerned, the extent to which this historical study of practices of subjectivation did not turn him away from politics." (386)

Subjectivation, according to Foucault, is intricately linked to politics, so linked in fact, that through its study, Foucault re-establishes his belief in politics. Rancière takes this one notch further by emphasising how politics consist in "a reconfiguration of the partition of the sensible, in bringing on the stage new objects and subjects, in making visible that which was not visible" (Rancière 2002: 4)

If power manifests invisibly in the feedback loops between image and individual, if the police exists not only as a armed officer commanding us to 'move along!' as 'there is nothing to see', but also as an often uncontested realm of the possible, the visible and the thinkable, the question posed by Occupy and the general existence of the new and infinitely visual sphere of the Internet is 'whether political emancipation can break from these images' (Badiou: 2013). How does one break from the logic of police images, how does one reopen the closed feedback loops between image and people (Flusser 2011: 56), how does one *make the invisible visible* or begin to *question the self-evidence of the visible* (Rancière 2010: 141)?

5.3.3 BREAKING FROM POLICE IMAGES

> With the police, one is in the indefinite world of a supervision that seeks ideally to reach the most elementary particle, the most passing phenomenon of the social body, […] the infinitely small of political power. And, in order to be exercised,

> this power had to be given the instrument of permanent, exhaustive, omnipresent surveillance, capable of making all visible, as long as it could itself remain invisible. It had to be like a faceless gaze that transformed the whole social body into a field of perception: thousands of eyes posted everywhere…
>
> - Michel Foucault (1979: 214)

Vilém Flusser, in contrast, was an optimist. Writing at around the same time in Germany, he was diagnosing the sickness in the world around him in order to prescribe an antidote. He strongly believed in the power of images, both as a means of *capture* into *feedback loops*, as well as a force for revolution. He too believed in what Foucault called subjectification, what Rancière terms emancipation: he believed that present-day revolutionaries would take action "not against images but against the current feedback consensus between images and people" (2011: 66). Revolutionaries, in Flusser's mind, are people who break the feedback loop by being "utterly unspectacular". True revolutionaries are not entertainers, they "do not appear in the images" (ibid.):

> It is true that they can't be seen in the images, but we can see them by looking through the images. For although the revolutionaries don't show themselves in the images, they appear in the manner in which the images show themselves. Revolutionaries can manipulate the images so that people begin to glimpse the possibility of using these images to initiate previously unimaginable interpersonal relationships, that the images could be used for dialogue, the exchange of information, and the fabrication of new information. (2011: 67)

Moment of rupture with the human zoo. Resist the word cooption, turn it inside out: "It is possible that this is simultaneously a process of cooption of our movement and also the discovery of secret passageways in the fortress." (Fischer 2012)

> We were coopted. At least, this is how it appeared to some visitors, and especially to the many critics who published vitriolic denouncements of the show. As I experienced it, Occupy Museums saw things differently. Focused on the opportunities available to us, we embarked on a fascinating and ambitious

> project to coopt the BB7 instead, to use its influence and resources to promote our vision of a more just culture. (Beery 2012)

In order to break through mechanisms of exclusion and the logic of police, the members of the Occupied Biennale had to circumvent the easy codification that was being imposed on it from within as well as from without. Once the proposal to coopt their cooption had been stated, a few unexpected elements began to emerge over the last weeks of the occupation. The activists, through the consensual process of General Assemblies, that were held every Tuesday and Thursday in the centre of the human zoo, carried out many actions, both in the Biennale and in the greater city of Berlin. One of the most notable successes in that regard was the demand, on behalf of Occupy Museums from New York City, for the Biennale and the KW Institute to open their books to public scrutiny. When it was discovered how poorly the KW guards were being paid – the same people who had cleaned out the Cyprien Galliard pyramid a year prior – a meeting was called:

> We organized a meeting with all the staff where workers could openly or anonymously share their grievances. The crowded discussion exposed below minimum-wage salaries of some staff and we examined the budget to determine equitable pay demands. Structural and staffing issues were raised in their first open, horizontal meeting, facilitated by members of Occupy Museums. As a result, guards working the next biennial will be paid two Euros more per hour than they were at this one, a 33% raise. (Beery 2013)

The fact that the activists were coexisting with the staff as well as the curators and the director of the Institute allowed for regular and at times fruitful discussion. Only once the occupiers had articulated the conditions and the simple fact of their non-freedoms within the Biennale space were they able to work both within and even without its confines. Up until that moment, the group's efforts to justify and/or resist their representation within the *human zoo* had only exacerbated its grip.

5.4 CYBERSTAGE: *SOUS LA POLICE LA PAROLE (?)*

5.4.1 RED INK

In his speech delivered to Occupy Wall Street in October 2011, Slavoj Žižek recalled an old Communist joke that tells the story of an East German man sent to work in Siberia:

> He knew his mail would be read by censors, so he told his friends: "Let's establish a code. If a letter you get from me is written in blue ink, it is true what I say. If it is written in red ink, it is false." After a month, his friends get the first letter. Everything is in blue. It says, this letter: "Everything is wonderful here. Stores are full of good food. Movie theatres show good films from the west. Apartments are large and luxurious. The only thing you cannot buy is red ink." (Žižek 2011A)

Žižek recounted this joke as an uplifting allegory; he believes that the ability to articulate one's non-freedoms is at the essence of being free. His focus is on the act of speech – *parole* as Certeau described the 1968 movement. His message was that Occupy was providing the world with *red ink*: with the tools, the language – and thereby the freedom – to express dissent.

> This is how we live. We have all the freedoms we want. But what we are missing is red ink: the language to articulate our non-freedom. The way we are taught to speak about freedom— war on terror and so on—falsifies freedom. And this is what you are doing here. You are giving all of us red ink."

Implicit if Žižek's tale is the idea of *dissensus* dissimulated in the folds of consensus, a freedom achieved by acknowledging, re-appropriating, and thereby (re-)utilizing the confines of power. Red ink thus is proposed as an antidote to cooption, in which the very inverse is true. Cooption sees narratives of dissent becoming captured within a police logic; red ink is dissent, a *machine de guerre*, concealed within the apparatus of capture.

Red ink thus resembles *tactic*, as defined by Michel de Certeau, a form of discrete but disruptive opportunism embedded within the dominant structures of power. Tactic is a smooth motion within the striated spaces of power, it is the ability to "escape without leaving" (1984: xiii). In *The Practice of Everyday Life*, de Certeau describes how, even as society is increasingly subjected to a grid of control imposed by 'disciplinary powers' – his version of police – individuals can "manipulate the mechanisms of discipline and conform to them only in order to evade them" (1984: xiv). De Certeau investigates the devices, actions, and procedures people use in their everyday lives to subvert, even if only for a brief moment, the disciplining powers. With the term *tactic*, he describes an action that insinuates itself within the space of the Other, not to destroy or take over the entirety of that which it is entering. It claims no space for itself, relying rather on time – "it is always on the watch for opportunities that must be seized 'on the wing" (1984: xix). Indeed the red ink, supplied by the state but reinterpreted by outside its structures of power, would constitute a tactical insertion into the strategies of the Siberian state. The red ink symbolizes this emancipated path, a 'language', surreptitiously concealed within the language of power, a language that contains the possibility of subversion, that allows all literate in its vocabulary to 'articulate non-freedoms'.

The red ink allegory weaves together three main elements: 1) a censoring superstructure of power – *la police*, 2) a (subversive) knowledge of this power – *la pensée*, and 3) a desire to establish a language with which to communicate this knowledge, in spite of the power – *la parole*. The solution, as proposed by Žižek's allegory, is to use the symbols and language of power but to subvert them with a code that exists outside the imagination of the State. The triad is significant, for it is the third component – parole – that seals the true potential of politics into the equation of dissent. Often, as with the case of the human zoo, the second stage of pensée (awareness) is too precarious on its own. The knowledge of one's oppression is, as Rancière has argued at length, not sufficient for emancipation.

And so we find the third element – parole – as the ability to conceal resistance within the given expectation of the police. Examples of recent use of Žižek's *red ink* abound. A few clever examples readily incorporate an understanding of what Rancière's 'police logic' in order to subvert the very structures of this logic. In New York City, the many strata of police and protestor dynamics played out best in a recurring scene in which the *people's microphone* was used to détourne the policeman's commands. The people's microphone, adopted when the city police forbid the use of megaphones (Deseriis 2013: 4), is the simple action of the crowd (sometimes in 2 or more ripples) echoing the speech of a single individual. The idea of the people's microphone is to replicate language verbatim – without commentary or judgement while subverting established power dynamics within the movement by enabling anyone to acquire a collective voice on the fly (ibid.). In one cited instance, when police officers ordered protestors to evacuate a space, yelling: "you have to go over there", the crowd would respond, amplified by the dozens of voices of the people's mic: "*you* have to go over there!" (Fischer and Byck 2012).

5.4.2 *LA PAROLE*: RED PIXELS

The readiest example of red ink is of course the Internet itself. Before its existence in the streets, Occupy was an online presence. The *we are the 99%* tumblr foresaw and saw to the protests, while simultaneously the hacker group Anonymous, whose Guy Fawkes mask soon became synonymous with the worldwide movement, helped spread the movement to other cities such as Boston, Chicago, Oakland. Occupy gave pre-existing organisations like Anonymous a vehicle for their outrage (Morozov 2014) and that vehicle was powered (entirely) by online campaigns. After Sept 2011, Anonymous posted regular videos outlining the demands of the OWS group and also encouraging various actions. Anonymous also subverted the symbols of power in deliberately demonstrative ways – hacking, although sometimes unsuccessfully, into the databases of Mayors, Police departments and banks. In October, Anonymous allegedly attacked the website of the New York Stock Exchange, (Goldman 2012), effectively shutting down (albeit in the case of the NYSE only for 30 minutes (Krudy 2011) – or, as some have argued, only for two (CNN 2011)). The essence of these

attacks, on the Stock Exchange, Visa.com and Paypal, whether successful or not, were perceived as attempts to shatter a surface of impenetrable power, and to reveal the mechanisms that had, just 2 years prior, been deemed 'too big to fail'.

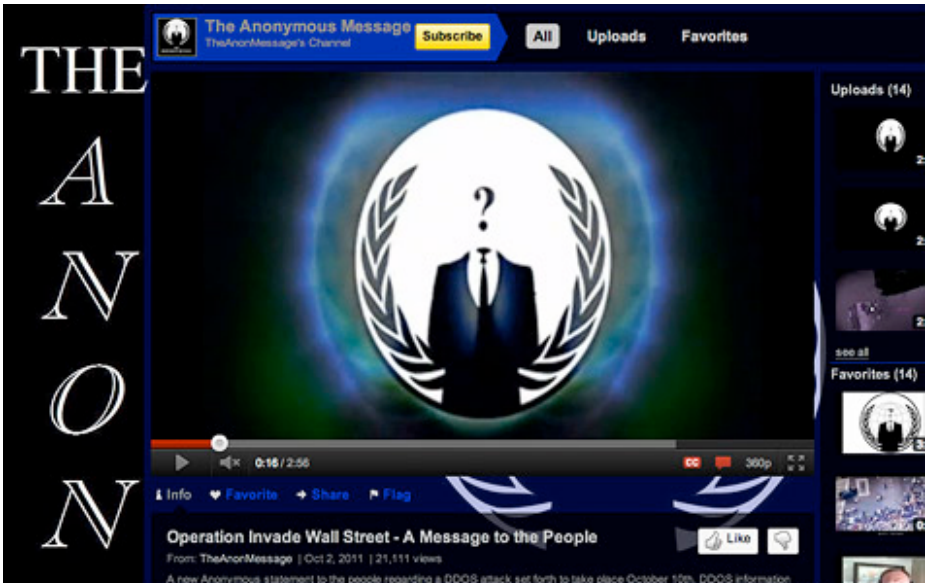

Image 56: Still from Anonymous You Tube video from October 2 2011 with the message: "On October 10th, NYSE shall be erased from the Internet. On October 10th, expect a day that will never, ever, be forgotten."

Many saw Occupy strengthened by a rogue team of hackers (*hacktivists*) as its allies. The narrative of dissent was spreading, not only geographically, bringing more people into the streets, but also in terms of the resources and skills available to the movement.

Was the Internet going to enable this new generation to *express its non-freedom*s? Many people at the time rushed to be the first to predict: yes. Contemporary thinkers like Paul Mason in London and Manuel Castells in Barcelona extend the red ink imagery into the new spaces of the Internet. Both men, each celebrated figures in their respective fields of journalism and sociology, immediately recognised that something critical was happening in the streets of the world and spent the last months of 2011 and the first months of 2012 embedded in the locales of protest in an attempt to decipher what was happening. Both published well-received books as soon as they could, both coming to the same conclusion: that the World Wide Web has largely

transformed the language of protest and hugely expanded the realm of the possible. These arguments too have a place in our landscape, and we will touch on them in the coming chapter, in which we expand upon the Biennale allegory and delve into select examples of protest representing itself online.

5.4.3. MASON: TRUTH MOVES FASTER THAN LIES

The essence of Paul Mason's argument can be drawn from a consolidation of his first three statements, made initially in a Guardian column, and updated in the last chapter of his revised book *Why it is (Still) Kicking Off Everywhere*, published in 2013. He believes that because the 1) *graduate without a future* 2) *has access to social media* (2013: 265), the landscape of politics will be reinvented and the structures of power will topple, because 3) *truth moves faster than lies* (ibid: 267). Mason, a journalist actively refutes any labelling as social scientist, has collected 'empirical data' from sites of unrest, beginning in the streets of Cairo, and moving across the map, following protests as they ignited in Greece, the UK, Spain, and the United States. His enthusiasm for the possibilities is conspicuous:

> For the youth, increasingly, knowledge is drawn, on demand and free, from online articles and commentaries and - often breathless - tweets. And for many, politics has become gestural: it is about refusing to engage with power on power's on terms; about action, not ideas; about the symbolic control of territory to create islands of utopia. (2013: 3)

Mason argues that with blogs reducing the price of publishing words, films and images, and with Twitter, Tumblr and Facebook providing a massive and "unpredictable echo chamber", the whole relationship between mainstream and social media has changed:

> Slowly, quietly and, for now, unmeasurably, the mainstream media has become, for many involved in activism, politics and journalism itself, a *secondary* source of information, while social networks have become the primary source. This, in

> turn, speaks to the emergence of an undeclared dual power between the world of ideas and the world of official politics. (2013: 269)

Mason's main argument is how funnelling street politics through the 'echo chamber' of social media unleashes results that are 'unpredictable', 'unmeasurable', and 'undeclared', and thereby culminate into something outside the confines of police, outside the confines of power. His observations – as well as ours of he 99% tumblr - confirm this fact: in its initial iterations, the use of online tools to voice dissent, transport images, and thereby rally support reaches unprecedented levels of what it itself deems *success*. Politics, as Mason rightly points out, accedes to the realm of memes: ideas that self-replicate like genes:

> The most important thing about these slogans, images, and gestures is not what they said in isolation but what they expressed cumulatively, as they interacted (2013: 279)... Through these signs and symbols, large parts of humanity were signaling their solidarity to one another; their belief that a kinder, more human system is possible; and that it would be born out of the chaotic, ironic, playful qualities of human life - not by pitting one cruel hierarchy against another. (2013: 280)

5.4.4 OUTRAGE BUT ESPECIALLY HOPE: CASTELLS

Rancière describes emancipation as the ability to ultimately ignore the structures of power and oppression (*police* and *police images*):

> Workers' emancipation is the possibility of generating one's own ways of saying, ways of seeing, and ways of being – ways that are a rupture from those imposed by the order of domination. So the question is not to know that one is exploited, but rather, in a sense, almost to avoid the question. (Rancière 2008C[56])

[56] My paraphrasing from the French: *L'émancipation ouvrière, c'est la possibilité de se faire des manières de dire, des manières de voir, des manières d'être qui sont en rupture avec celles qui sont imposées par l'ordre de la domination. Donc la question n'est pas de savoir qu'on est exploité; en un sens la question est quasiment de l'ignorer.*

The question of wilful 'ignorance', or rather, *circumvention* of the structures of power is crucial to the construction of new narratives of dissent. David Graeber, in a statement similar to Rancière's, credits much of Occupy's success in its inherently anarchist sensibility to proceed "as one would if the existing structure of power did not exist" (2013: 233). And, of course, much of this so-called emancipation was made possible by alternate forms of communication, namely: the self-transmission of images and messages via the Internet. The language of the early days of online-savvy protest was exactly one of 'redefining the visible'. "The great virtue of the Internet is that it erodes power", said the Esther Dyson (Vaidhyanathan 2012: 120), and much of current literature about online behaviours upholds this statement. For example, Manuel Castells has declared that, because communication power is the central form of power today (Castells 2012: 5; Castells 2009), the Internet is the prime space for dissent because it allows the construction of communicative autonomy (2012: 9).

In *Networks of Outrage and Hope: Social Movements in the Internet Age* (2012), Castells declares the Internet pivotal in the creation of the Occupy movement, stating that "Internet networks provided a space of autonomy from where the movements emerged" (2012: 103). Of the Indignad@s/15M movement in Spain, for example, Castells says that it "was born on the Internet, diffused by the Internet, and maintained its presence on the Internet" (2012: 168). Social "networks on the Internet allowed the experience to be communicated and amplified, bringing the entire world into the movement" (2012: 169). Castells quotes extensively and enthusiastically from an interview with Javier Toret, one of the initiators of the *Democracia Real Ya!* campaign in Spain, who describes the movement as *postmedia* because "there is a technopolitical reappropriation of tools, technologies and mediums of participation and communication that exist today". This techonopolitical reappropriation is indeed a form of red ink: a tactical insertion into the dominant spaces of discourse, perhaps best summarized by the Indymedia slogan *don't hate the media, become the media*. Toret quotes this statement, adding "This is what the 15-M has shown. When people join together they become more powerful than any other media outlet." (Toret,

Interview and translation by Amalia Cadenas, Barcelona, Februrary 2012. Quoted in Castells 2012: 118).

5.5 INVERSING THE MEANING OF SYMBOLS

Image 57: Protestors in Maidan Square, Kiev, Ukraine hold up mirrors to policemen. January 6 2014. Source: Facebook / unknown

In 1968 Michel de Certeau describes how the protests began by questioning the *credibility* of the established 'social language' (1994 [1968]: 34). The revolt became, in Certeau's account, a 'symbolic' action, in the sense that it opposed the system by challenging the meaning of its signs. A 'network of symbols' was created, one that appropriated the symbols of the society in order to inverse their meaning[57]. (1994 [1968]: 35, my translation)

The barricades, for example, hardly effective in their supposed military role, instead adopted the transformative function of funnelling the fear of the policeman into a

[57] My translation from the French: "*Les manifestations ont créé un réseau de symboles en prenant les signes d'une société pour en inverser le sens.*"

collective action (1994 [1968]: 35, my translation). The barriers disenchanted the social organisation by revealing fragility where one had assumed strength, by rendering power possible in spaces rules by the feeling of *impuissance*. (Ibid.)

Many accounts from Occupied streets across the United States, Canada, Turkey, the Ukraine, and Brazil describe a playful interaction of the protestors with the boundaries imposed by police. It is this humour, with an almost mystical power by Certeau's account, that uses the symbolic not to enforce a narrative upheld by the *le people* but to make possible perspectives that had until then been impossible. When Belorussian authorities forbid peaceful protest in Minsk, a crowds of 3000 people assembled on the streets to clap (Sackler 2013). Images show a perturbed row of riot policeman, unsure of whether they were being applauded, unsure of how to react: the explosion of the possible plays out in bewilderment across their faces. Tactic defines itself in relation to what a society *does not say* and is thereby tacitly acknowledged as *impossible*. The creation of what Certeau calls a 'symbolic space' (*lieu symbolique*) is an act of dissuasion against an 'organisation of possibles' (1994 [1968]: 36)

5.5.1 (THROUGH) THE MAGNIFYING GLASS OF THE INTERNET

So much of the supposition of red ink lies in the ability to utilize a pre-existing language in order to say something new. This is the great hope Castells and Mason (and many others) have invested in the liminal space of online activism. As migrants to the digital realm, it is perhaps easier for them to invest such optimism in a medium they have seen emerge, in contrast to previous moments of resistance they have each respectively experienced. Of course, the mirrors pointed at police officers in Kiev have a symbolic value – but this value multiplies exponentially when the images refract across the Internet. The Internet in this sense is not a purifier of discourse, it is a condenser of discourse. One's non-freedoms are only expressed online if they can be expressed first offline. Otherwise, the widespread enthusiasm for the Internet as a space of subversion risks to concede to the ease of its omnipresent eye.

In the same way as one entered the Biennale through a corridor of tired yet neon slogans, so does one enter into an attempted understanding of how street politics are taking place in far away countries: slogans, often translated for the public's convenience; images, often sensationalized or simplified to stand out from the feed and most efficiently spark not only interest but empathy.

Just as the occupiers of the Biennale were hyper-aware of the cameras and eyeballs documenting their every move, from a steady stream of visitors on the platform above the human zoo, so too have street politics, especially since the recent wave of Arab Spring/15M/Occupy/Gezi/Brazil/Maidan/HongKong protests, become terrifically self-conscious of how they are representing themselves to the outside world. Beginning in Iran in 2009, signs held up in squares were often no longer in the native language but in English. Very visual forms of creative resistance began emerging, ones that – unlike the carefully composed visuals of earlier movements – required but the millisecond snap of a friend's cell phone camera to be immortalized.

Seen positively, this conscious manipulation of the visual sphere, a prime example of which would be Femen, contributes to Rancière's dissensus. The deliberate 'fiction' of staged protest imagery may itself be more evocative than the traditional mass marches of yore. "'Fiction', as re-framed by the aesthetic regime of art', writes Rancière, 'means far more than the constructing of an imaginary world" (2010: 148). The term, as Rancière employs it, does not serve to designate "the imaginary as opposed to the real"; instead it involves "the re-framing of the 'real'", or "the framing of a dissensus" :

> Fiction is a way of changing existing modes of sensory presentations and forms of enunciation; of varying frames, scales and rhythms; and of building new relationships between reality and appearance, the individual and the collective. (148)

When Rancière's policeman says "Move along! Nothing to see!", when Belorussian officers shout "dear citizens, move along", Certeau's proposed response is to operate

in the in-visible spaces outside the 'vision' of the police, and thereby to re-define the realm of the visible and the possible. This pioneering act of reasserting space, and specifically the terms of what is seen, is precisely both de Certeau's and Rancière definition of the political. The challenge to protestors from this perspective is to what extent can they stir some trouble, and set up shifts in meaning that inverse the *dispositifs* of the regimes of the visible, the forms of police logic, and institutional and discursive strategies that fight to constitute their very understanding of their very own reality.

The tension played out on the streets as both the protestors and the police try to establish these parameters of the possible – and, on the streets in 2011, 2012, 2013 and 2014 many creative tactics clashed with the strategy of 'the rule of Law'. The visible, of course, was itself being refined. By Fall 2011, most people are inevitably carrying a camera embedded within their cellphone, a tool that itself is often linked to other tools of visible-making: the many venues of the World Wide Web.

The importance of the visible, and by 2011 until the time of this writing, a constant and worldwide audience, brought a highly self-conscious and performative element to the protests. As the police in New York City began employing the controversial technique of kettling the crowd, aggressively defining the space the bodies of protestors were allowed to occupy, a third presence – expansive immaterial and unkettle-able – began to impose itself too on the realm of the possible: the eyes of the world.

Image 58: Image circulating on Social Media July 2 2013

Eyes sprayed shut by pepper spray were soon broadcast for all to see. Hours after NYPD police officer Anthony Bologna casually released his mustard-cloud of spray into the faces of two young protestors, kettled and unable to move, the image began its rapid journey to greet the world across individual newsfeeds and shared memes. Anthony Bologna, in his assault on the vision of two powerless young women turned all eyes on him and on the movement he was trying to contain. The video surfaced on September 24th, during the second week of the Occupy Wall Street protests in New York City, and within a day the term *Occupy* peaked on Google trends; within days the movement had crescendoed across the continent (source: Google). Bologna, the 'pepper spray cop' alone holds perhaps the feature role in activating people to take the streets across the United States in September and October 2011.

> In Zuccotti Park and elsewhere, "doing anarchism" often meant struggling not against bankers, directly, but against local government and local police. (In New York, one galvanizing figure was Anthony Bologna, a senior police officer who was disciplined after video surfaced showing him squirting protesters with pepper spray.) Perhaps this was a smart strategy: instead of arguing about economics and ideology, the Occupiers could affirm, instead, their unanimous commitment to freedom of assembly. Occupy may have begun with a grievance against Wall Street, but the process of occupation transformed the movement into a meta-movement, peopled by activists demanding the right to demand their rights (Sanneh 2013)

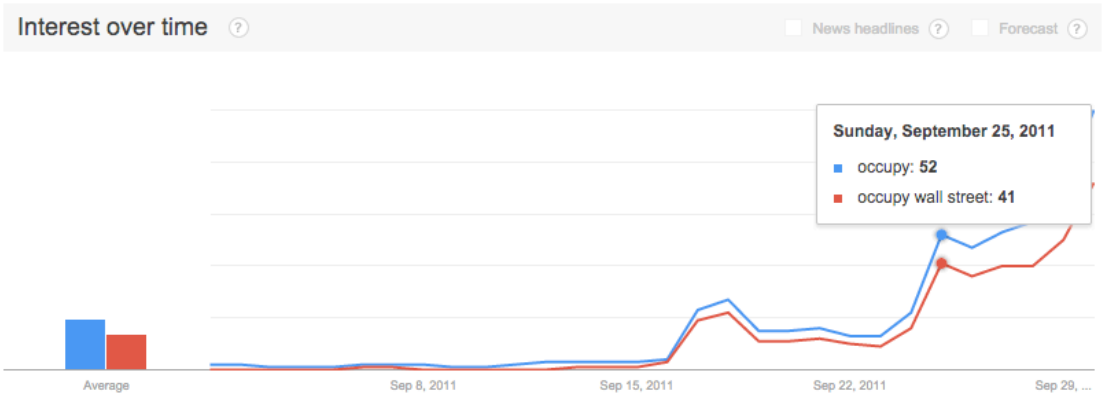

Image 59: Google mapping of the search terms 'Occupy' and 'Occupy Wall Street' in September 2011. Source: Google Trends. Retrieved 9.30.2014

It now becomes apparent that the proposed emancipation along the trajectory of Police > Pensée > Parole, much like the proposed trajectory of Pursuit, is not a direct path to freedom. The linearity of this assumption, like all assumptions we have been tempted thus far to make, collapses as the very guidelines for freedom are themselves re-appropriated within a greater apparatus of control.

6 CONCLUSION

6.1 NEW ORBITS

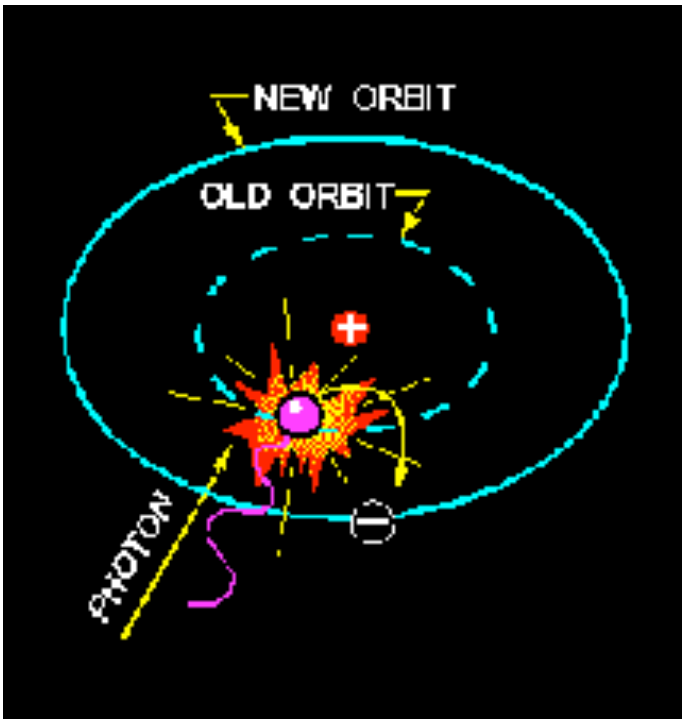

Image 60: illustration of a photon leap. Every electron has a specific orbit around an atom. This orbit relates to the level of energy it possesses. A passing photon can impart energy to the orbiting and push it into a higher energy orbit. Image source: www.tpub.com/neets/book1/chapter1/1c.htm

6.1.1 NARRATIVES OF FREEDOM

In this dissertation, I have mapped out how narratives of pursuit and freedom have emerged within the confines of a traditional sense of the possible. I have studied the energized moments in which these new narratives have been ignited, and – much as the photon-charged electron leaping from its orbit – have exploded into a vibrant new horizon of possibility.

I also have described how new, and often insidious, structures of unforeseen intentions have in turn *captured* and limited the expression of this newfound energy. The electron lands in a trajectory of wider dimensions, though ultimately it is simply yet another orbit. But because this new orbit's scale is vaster than the previous one, there is a momentary illusion of complete freedom, as though that initial burst of

momentum could last forever. And yet soon the curvature of motion begins to delineate a very definite diameter of the possible, and the electron – if it were a conscious being – recognizes that it is bound to yet another closed-circuit. Much in the same way, we have followed instances in the past 110 years when the *pavés* of old ideologies have cracked to reveal the *plage* expanse of new possibilities and new politics, beaches whose sands have gradually have eroded to reveal yet another layer of pavement. And the closed circuit of the atom zooms out to reveal and ever alternating structure of concentric circles, or in the case of our interwoven allegory, the alternating threads of warp and woof: motion within set confines.

I have emphasized how hope-infused new ideologies – from the ethos of the Protestant Ethic, to the appeal of Levi's jeans, to the idealism of 'this is what democracy looks like / I would prefer not to' of Occupy camps, and the mass *ethos* of the 'social media revolution' – inflect practices of narrative and of self-representation on an individual level. In doing so, I have considered how narratives reproduce and replicate across social network sites — namely the 99% tumblr, the Occupy-riddled newsfeeds of 2011-2014, and all the media (videos, images, hashtags, memes, gifs) created to populate these feeds — have played a role or a forcing function in prompting shifts in the practice politics in the streets. I have also looked at how the significant dynamics that have arisen as a result of networked narratives and social media behaviour, namely invisible but infinite audiences, collapsed contexts, glitches in translation, and concealed interests.

In conclusion, I want to highlight that which I believe is especially interesting – but also especially distressing – concerning my musings and their implications. My reflections are organized around three areas of interest: lessons from the newer iterations of Occupy (2013+), the lasting significance of remote audiences, the falsification of freedoms, the mutations of the online ideology of ultimate vision. In the end, what is at stake is the future of resistance in the simultaneously smooth and striated space of the Internet.

6.1.2 REMOTE AUDIENCES: IDEAS REPLICATING LIKE MEMES

When Paul Mason talks elatedly about the future of online protest, he describes a process in which revolutionary "ideas replicate like genes" (Mason 2011). When in early 2011, Mason first proposes twenty tenets of 'why it's kicking off everywhere', his seventh simply states: *Memes*. As he writes this early blog post – what within a year would become a best-selling book, Mason is watching Egypt erupt in significant revolution. Much like us all, he is struck by how easily and quickly the voices of resistance and generating support in the online sphere. *The whole world is watching*.

Image 61: a protestor in Istanbul holds a sign in support of Egypt. February 10 2011. Source: Bulent Kilic/AFP/Getty, via Foreign Policy

Prior to the Internet, claims Mason, the theory of *memes* – a theory of contagious behaviours suggested by Richard Dawkins, 1976) seemed an over-statement. But now, in Mason's evaluation, once the friction of communication is reduced and the boundaries, of geography become obsolete, there will be nothing to stop the flow of energized, innovative, 'market-tested' ideas. Mason's is an enthusiasm we all shared as we watched the eruption of the Arab Spring in early 2011, and again in late June 2013, when millions of Egyptians converged once again in Cairo to 'fight for democracy and freedom' and overthrow the president Mohammed Morsi (see Twitter circa June 2013). There was an excitement in those aerial photographs of Cairo, which indeed replicated as an online meme, with people chanting across their newsfeeds in support for the 'oppressed' (ibid.). Alongside the chorus of support

came, implicitly, another chorus: we are watching. Your 'dictator' government won't last long with the world as a witness. On July 1st President Obama publicly addressed Egypt with the words "the world is watching" (AllAfrica.com: 1.7.2013). The Internet took on the quality of an omnipresent moral eye under whose gaze no wrongs would dare be perpetrated.

The problem with this statement of ultimate vision has been iterated many times throughout this dissertation. The online space interacts with the real space of the streets according to it's own criteria, and quickly, as the Egypt 2013 example will show, the smooth space of online resistance has too succumbed to a police logic of sorts. The logic of memes transforms protest into images ultimately more banal and self-serving than the Meckseper photographs discussed in Chapter 4, because they too, suffused in a rhetoric of good an evil and self-congratulatory moralising, absolve themselves from the complexities of the streets and instead, online, replicate a meaninglessness 'meme-ness' while sheathed in condescending aura of an all-seeing eye.

6.2 ISSUE 1 - VISION: EGYPT FROM ABOVE

In July 2013 the newsfeeds of the West, the English newsfeeds, one-or-many-times removed and translated, had a strong sense they had Egypt covered. Their eye in the sky, literally shot from the helicopters of major news networks, was showing millions of people rallying to overthrow Morsi and the Muslim Brotherhood. The estimated numbers ranged from hundreds of thousands to 17 and even 33 million people. Regardless of the figures, from above (on Facebook and Twitter) the fact was clear: the BBC had declared this the largest protest in human history. Images of the streets, dense with red white and black, pouring like an expansive asterisk into Tahrir Square, were remarkable. They circulated quickly, with euphoria and exclamation.

This contented, laudatory gaze proved to be the most dangerous of all. A few days later, as the protests continued, came a call from deep in the streets of Cairo: "Where are the media?" Hundreds of thousands of people had assembled in support of Morsi – who had, after all, been 'democratically' elected by a Muslim majority – and there were no cameras, no news reports. The world was already satisfied with another narrative. A young blogger, Soumaia Hashad, wrote a report from Cairo on July 5 2013:

After chanting for a few hours, we felt that our voices are unheard; there was no media coverage and no one acknowledges our presence, so we decided to march down the streets in Dokki and Mohandisin to make our voices heard. The march was marvelous; I could see more than 200,000 people infront me and behind me. The spirits were so high; the chants were so loud that we could hear the echoes as we march. We were so loud that the people in the buildings all came out to look at the march. We started our march at Al-Dokki street, then Al-Tahrir street, then sheraton and Maglis Al Dawla. The chants were so powerful:

"رئيسى هوه مرسى سيسى، يا إرحل"
(Leave Sissi, Morsi is my president)

"أهوه المصرى الشعب فين الإعلام"
(Where is the media, The Egyptian people are here!)

(...) We did our best. Now if the Television won't come to us, we will go to the television ourselves. And so, the march to Maspero (The Official TV station in Cairo) began. We won't give up; we will make our voices heard no matter what. As we turned around to face the 6th October bridge, we started chanting in our loudest voices: "الكون رب معانا إحنا و تلفزيون، معاهم هما" (they have the television, but we have Allah, The God of the world)

What happened on the October 6th Bridge came across in English in a series of WTFs. The images and reports were incompatible with the newsfeed narrative of Eygptian emancipation.

What from above had appeared to the world as a million-strong movement turned out to be two rival camps – demonstrating both for and against the Morsi government – and as things escalated, many people were bearing arms. 36 people were killed that day, July 5th 2013, many on that very bridge (according the Egyptian Ambulance service. RT: 6.7.2013). The Egyptian Ministry of Health reported that another 1,138 more were injured (ibid.). The fireworks that had fired vertically days early in

celebration were now being fired horizontally, as weapons. The online world watched in stupor. There was a lag in translation, and the violence of the images seemed incomprehensible.

From our online bird's eye view, we (the English audiences worldwide) had projected our own narratives into a space whose complexities we couldn't help but – by the very act of talking and tweeting about it – deny. A month later, on August 14th, security forces, wearing riot gear and driving armoured vehicles and bulldozers, killed at least 600 pro-Morsi demonstrators and wounded thousands more. (PBS Frontline: 17.09.2013) The many versions of the Egypt protests are attempts at negotiating the increasing importance of remote publics. If emancipation is 'knowing that one cannot place one's thinking into other people's heads' (Rancière 2007: 269), then it seems that, in their actual incarnations, social media platforms provide freedom in an increasingly falsified form.

6.3 ISSUE 2 - FALSIFIED FREEDOMS

Throughout this dissertation we've been concerned with narratives of freedom, and how joy of asserting that freedom often obscures and even contributes to the many deceptions inherent in understanding the world along the simple terms of 'free' and 'not-free'. We've seen how the rationalism of the 'pursuit narrative' of Protestant Ethic quickly mutated into irrational and anti-social space. The light 'cloak' of material possessions has become, as Weber describes it, an "iron cage." ([1904] 1930: 181) We've also studied how the representation and self-representation of protest, as displayed in the microcosm of the 7th Berlin Biennale, mimicked the behaviours of protestors and audiences on a much grander scale, as they resigned in to prescribed passivity.

Image 62: image from the 2014 Hong Kong Protests (The Umbrella Revolution) posted on the Occupy Wall Street Facebook page, October 7th 2014.

How to take these observations and discuss *The Internet* as a force itself, as a force for narratives of freedom? We are well versed in the freedom narratives proposed by the Internet. "The more an individual has a project of autonomy, the more s/he uses the Internet," writes Mason (2011). And "the more s/he uses the Internet, the more autonomous she becomes vis-à-vis societal rules and institutions." Mason, one of today's most outspoken enthusiasts for the Internet as a space of unprecedented freedom, posits that those who think his analysis is 'balderdash' are most likely "over 40" and filled with "analog-era spleen" (Mason 2011).

Mason's 'don't be a technophobe' argumentation/argumentativeness aligns with an off-the-cuff statement he brings mid-way in his *Kicking Off* book from 2012. It's off the cuff, because Mason would not imagine there could be any disagreement with his claim that "the most innovative technologies were those that produced greater freedom of action and thought" (Mason 2013: 132). Mason cites as examples of freedom-giving technologies the motorcar, the cinema, the phonogram and the telephone. Of course the idea of 'producing *greater* freedom' applies to all Mason's examples, including the Internet. There is an initial moment, when, just like the electron, the car, the cinema, the Facebook account explodes the scale of possibility.

The car, especially the Ford Model T (from 1908, the same era as Weber and the early Levi's blue jean) democratised mobility around the world – journeys that had been rare or even impossible until then became commonplace and available to wide swathes of the population. The cinema unlocked new spaces of imagination, of emotion, of conceiving of the self and others. Facebook reignited old friendships, made invisible networks visible – again, what had been rare or impossible is now commonplace. Interestingly, the timeline of the Occupy protests of 2011-2014 coincide with a gradual concession on the collective scale that perhaps social media isn't as free as we'd hoped it would be. The Snowden case naturally contributed fiery fodder to the debate, yet, on a softer scale, the discourse has gradually turned to acknowledging the inherent fiction in a network of online 'friends', just as a decade or so prior it became common discourse to re-evaluate the unsustainable, carbon-coated urban mazes that had been constructed over the past century as prison of worship to the automobile.

Recall the quote from The Brothers Karamazov about the masses, having achieved freedom, desperately seeking something new to worship. At a later point in his book, Mason again praises social media by saying:

> It seems, in the near future, highly unlikely that the state, except in outright dictatorships, can do anything more than play catch-up with the social media. (Mason 2013: 267)

What Mason writes here reflects many a sentiment alive in the streets in 2011 and 2012. The equation of dictatorships and social media seems an easy one – it balances of the easy scale of good/evil, free/un-free. The ease with which the state was placed in opposition to social media, as opponents along a moral line, is nonetheless a faulty one. Soon after the publication of Mason's book, in 'the very near future', came the revelation that, indeed, the state had already caught up with social media and had at times even worn its skin of 'freedom' as highly successful camouflage.

Image 63: Graffiti in Lisbon, Portugal. August 2012. Photography by Chan Chi Ling, http://throughthoselens.wordpress.com/

6.4 ISSUE 3 - TRANSLATION: *SÓ PARA INGLÊS VER*

6.4.1 #CHANGEBRAZIL

There is an expression in Brazil that dates from colonial times, during the early attempts of the British to stronghold the Empire of Brazil into abolishing the slave trade. The expression, "Só para inglês ver" (*only for the English to see*) was used to describe laws that were passed by the Brazilian regent Diogo Antônio Feijó. It was acknowledged by all that these laws were simply 'for the English to see', and that nothing would change. These laws would not be enforced – they served simply to appease the foreign gaze of those who did not speak the language and did not understand the local dynamics. In contemporary Brazil, the phrase has come to mean "not real, just for show".

During the recent protests – not only in Brazil but across the world – the phrase has taken on another, parallel meaning. The necessity of translating the terms and motives of the protests into the language of Internet virality – English – has also lead to interesting moments of self-reinterpretation and well as a certain appeasement of the English gaze. The Brazilian protests that erupted in June 2013 in São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro remained for the first week primarily untranslated to English audiences. The first large protest on June 6th in (Moreno 6.6.2013) in São Paulo was covered by the Brazilian press as an act of vandalism, with many photographs of shattered shop windows and windshields. Only when the police intervened in São Paulo on June 13th

with rubber bullets and tear gas did outrage begin the trickle into newsfeeds abroad, at the same moment as most Brazilian mainstream coverage turned from disdain to support (Gazeta do Povo 14.6.2014).

The day following the military police's brutal intervention, a 5:30 minute-long video appeared on youtube with the title #ChangeBrazil. In the video, a visibly agitated but well-spoken Brasilian man implores international audiences to help:

> We're not asking you to do too much. Just please, post something about the facts we just told you. Write about them in your Facebook Wall and Twitter feed, along with the hashtag #changebrazil.

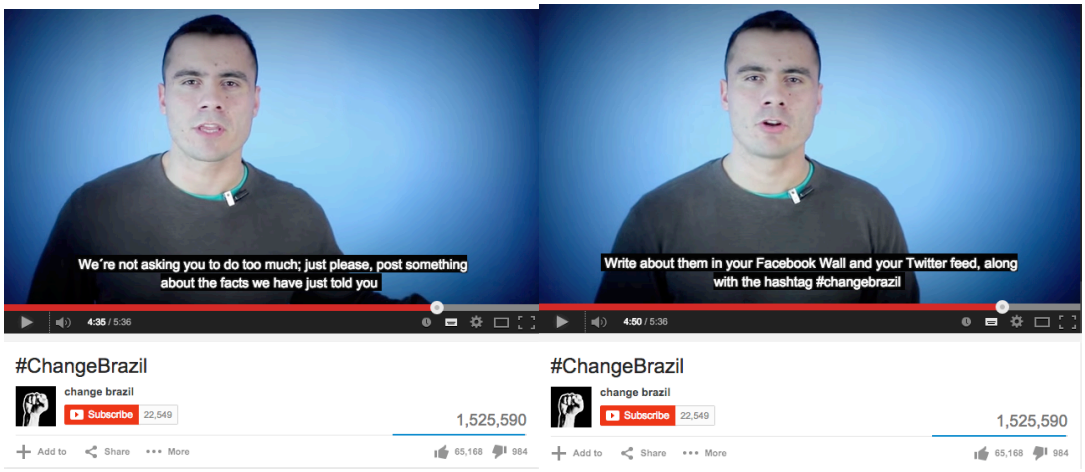

Image 64: stills from the #ChangeBrazil video that went viral on July 14th-18th 2013. Source: YouTube.

The hashtag was launched. By September 18th it had exploded across the Internet (Google Trends). Though data pertaining specifically to this hashtag has been hard to find, Microsoft FUSE Labs collected the full set of 1,579,824 tweets posted between June 1st and June 22nd containing the hashtags: #VemPraRua (Come to the streets), #MudaBrasil (Change Brazil), #ChangeBrazil, #ChangeBrasil, #passelivre (Free Pass), #protestosrj (Protests Rio de Janeiro), #ogiganteacordou (the giant awoke), #copapraquem (Cup for Whom), #PimientaVsVinagre (Pepper vs Vinager), #sp17j (Sao Paulo June 17), #consolação, and #acordabrasil (Wake Up Brazil). (Monroy-Hernández and Spiro 2012). FUSE found that more than half of the tweets came from

users whose time zone was set outside of Brazil. The top time zones outside Brasilia were: Santiago, Greenland, Mid-Atlantic, Hawaii, Quito, Atlantic Time (Canada), Eastern Time (US & Canada), London, Pacific Time (US & Canada), Central Time (US & Canada), Istanbul and Buenos Aires. (Monroy-Hernández and Spiro 2012).

Image 65: Facebook founder Mark Zuckerberg photographed in support for the #changebrazil campaign.

Image 66: Various pop stars endorse the #changebrazil campaign. (clockwise from top left: Avril Lavigne, Lady Gaga, Katy Perry, Beyoncé Knowles.) Source: Twitter, June 18 2014.

The next Saturday, June 22, the Fluminense football team played match in Orlando Florida. On the side of the field, hung in a prominent position, was black billboard with the white text: #changebrazil. According to reports from he television audience (Anzenha 25.06.2013), every time the Fluminense players scored, they would run to the billboard and celebrate, television cameras in tow. The suspicious behaviour provoked a small investigation, which uncovered that the owner of the Orlando city football club is Flavio Augusto da Silva, a Brazilian millionaire who also owns 'Wise-Up', a franchise of English schools across Brazil, and an official sponsor of the 2014 FIFA World Cup (Azenha 2013), as well as the official English school of the World Cup (wiseup.com). The man in the now iconic youtube video (with over 1,5 million views) is an English teacher at a Wise-Up.

Image 67: Youtube video asking '#ChangeBrazil: who sponsors?'. The clip show a sequence of goals scored by the Fluminense team against Orlando on 22.6.2013. After each goal, the team explicitly runs to celebrate in front of the #ChangeBrazil banner.

And so the folds of *Só para inglês ver* multiply. A man, da Silva, who has made millions teaching Brazilians English funds a widespread and highly successful campaign to 'explain' the Brazilian protests to the English-speaking world. This man

generates the first video to translate the civil unrest to curious but uninformed audiences abroad. He does so fairly, according to many accounts – but he does so on his terms. The World Cup is cited but not overtly condemned, instead the emphasis is placed on government corruption and income inequity. It is relevant that Da Silva is also a major shareholder of *Abril Educação*, part of *Abril* group, a huge media conglomerate that has been accused of appropriating the protests for their own purposes (Haubrich 2013), as soon as it became apparent that they were inevitable and un-ignorable.

Image 68: the cover of Veja magazine (part of the Abril group) on June 19 2013.

The graffiti reads 'Against the (fare) increase'. The headline reads: 'The Revolt of the Youth: After the price of tickets, the time of corruption and criminality?'

6.4.2 IT'S NOT FREE SPEECH IF SOMEONE PAYS FOR IT

The protestors' foreseeable response to their images being co-opted by the mainstream media – in Brazil's *Veja* magazine, for example – is to claim that "it is vital to understand that the media conglomerates are also enemies" (Haubrich 2013,

my translation from the Portuguese[58]). The popular sentiment on the streets is that traditional media is "the discursive apparatus of all who oppress" – or to quote a protestor in the film *Occupy: The Movie*: "it's not free speech if someone pays for it!" If the rebellion is waged against the structures of existing power, it cannot retreat into the narratives of the State's media lackeys (Haubrich, see original in footnote). The sentiment that emerges from these statements echoes the claims of Mason and Castells. In Brazil it was said that it was critical that the model of traditional media be changed, in order to ensure that peoples' rights are maintained and extended (ibid, again, my paraphrasing. see footnote).

The red ink allegory, cited previously in Žižek's joke to Occupy Wall Street in October 2011, describes the collective interest in developing a "language to articulate our non-freedom", and when he made this statement 2011 all empirical evidence favoured this interpretation. The assumption upheld by Castells and Mason is that collectively we have found (and begun excavating) an endless reserve of red ink online.

Mason claims that the online world allows individuals to operate 'free of hierarchies' (2012: LSE) and Castells emphasises how although "movements are usually rooted in urban space through occupations and street demonstrations, their ongoing existence takes place in the free space of the Internet." (Castells 2012: 221) The 'free space of the Internet' is what we must now place under scrutiny.

In the same speech at Occupy Wall Street, Žižek quotes Lacan's famous speech to the student movement in 1968 "what you are asking for is a new master; you will get one" (Canut and Prieur 2011: 26). In 2011, Žižek re-invokes Lacan with the warning: "you too, with your lack of demands and leader-less movement, are calling for a new master." (2012A) Žižek's analysis points to the new master appearing in the smoke of

[58] É fundamental que haja a compreensão de que os conglomerados de mídia também são inimigos (…) Se a rebelião é contra tudo isso, não pode recuar em ser também contra a velha mídia. É ela o aparato discursivo de todos os que oprimem. Mudar o modelo de mídia é um caminho importante para que se garanta a manutenção e expansão de direitos. (Haubrich in Jornalismo B. June 17 2013)

the unspoken. If, according to our argumentation in Chapter 1, a new master is also accompanied by a *capture* of narrative, this master may in fact be concealed in shapes Žižek himself is unable to see, in new ways of structuring discourse.

The blue ink, essentially a metaphor for the communication tools at our disposal, is what Žižek describes as the 'way we are taught to speak about freedom'. This ink 'falsifies freedom' says Žižek, the crowd echoing his words as the human microphone spreads across Zuccotti Park. The falsification is inherent in the fact that it is predetermined; that, in the case of the East German in Siberia, the ink is government-issued and government-supervised. Everything written in blue will be read and therefore must be in accordance with the language of power.

Freedom falsified can really only mean one thing: captivity. Imagination and language held captive. As Tiqqun describe in the their 2001 manifesto *Preliminary Materials for a Theory of the Young-Girl*, the most successful form of oppression is one disguised as freedom: "All the Young-Girl's freedom of movement does not prevent her from being a prisoner, and manifesting in all circumstances a captive's automatism." (Tiqqun 2001: 17) It is the nuances of captivity that are interesting to us now, as a space designated as *lisse* exposes its (stars and) stripes and reveals the underlying automatism of *strié*.

6.5 INK SO BLUE IT IS BELIEVED TO BE RED

The assumption that the Internet is a space free from the striated rules of power is a complicated one – it can simultaneously be proven and disproven. Of course, on the individual level, no one is overtly controlling nor paying for the narratives being diffused across social media. And yet there is a striated backdrop that contains all the elements of Weber's rational irrationality: investors, advertisers, commercial and political interests. When millions of people are paying attention, of course there are interests involved in what is going to be said.

From 2011 until 2014, as an increasing number protestors took to the Internet to broadcast their cause, and the Internet – an amorphous space, and one in which its own motives are expertly concealed – began to anticipate, pre-empt and transform the ways the language of indignation was communicated. In Žižek's joke to Occupy, the last words in the East Germans letter home are: *The only thing you cannot buy is red ink*.

Beneath the punch line, let's isolate a key word: *buy*. The story itself only works because the red ink is the language of subversion. The joke, as Žižek tells it, is not about money, it is about availability. And in mentioning the red ink, the prisoner summons its dissident powers and conveys his non-freedoms. Žižek's joke is a cold war joke. It plays along the lines of a very definite dynamic of power: the dynamics of true and false, free and un-free. "The Young-Girl wears a mask, and when she admits it, it's always only to suggest that she also has a "true face" that she wouldn't or couldn't show." (Tiqqun 2001: 62) The subversion of the red ink existed at the moment the code of red and blue ink was conceived: it allowed for language to bisect: expressing one meaning to the censors and another meaning to the friend. Red ink is freedom because it is many things at once – it can express both one statement and its antithesis.

Today, with its online reservoirs of self-proclaimed red ink, the joke flips on itself. Red ink is available in this updated Siberia. It is so available, and in such demand that it is for sale. *The only thing you cannot buy is red ink* is itself written in red ink: it is false.

> But that "true face" is also a mask, and a frightful one: it is the true face of domination. And in fact, when the Young-Girl "takes off her mask", the Empire is speaking directly to you. (Tiqqun 2001: 62)

Of course this criticism does not apply to all instances of protest. We must however seriously consider how the ease and rapidity of online transmission has often

obfuscated glitches in translation – leaving many believing only what they had, in fact, previously believed, or had at least wanted to believe.

On social media sites, writes Gilad Lotan of Medium.com,

> We construct a representation of our interest by choosing to follow or like specific pages. The more we engage with certain type of content, the more similar content is made visible in our feeds. Recommendation and scoring functions learn from our social connections and our actions online, constructing a model that optimizes for engagement; the more engagement, the more traffic, clicks, likes, shares, and so forth, the higher the company's supposed value. Our capitalistic markets appreciate a growing value. (Lotan 4.8.2014)

The 2014 war between Hamas and Israel further pointed to this problem, and the distressing tendency of social media to amplify the blinding effects of *what we want to see*. Facebook algorithms were quick to identify which narrative individuals 'preferred' based on their account activity or the activity of their friends: a person who clicked on a news story supporting the IDF would be provided with an ongoing flow of similar stories, just as a subscriber to a pro-Palestinean news organisation would be supplied a steady stream of outrage on their end (Lotan 4.8.2014). Twitter followed the same patterns.

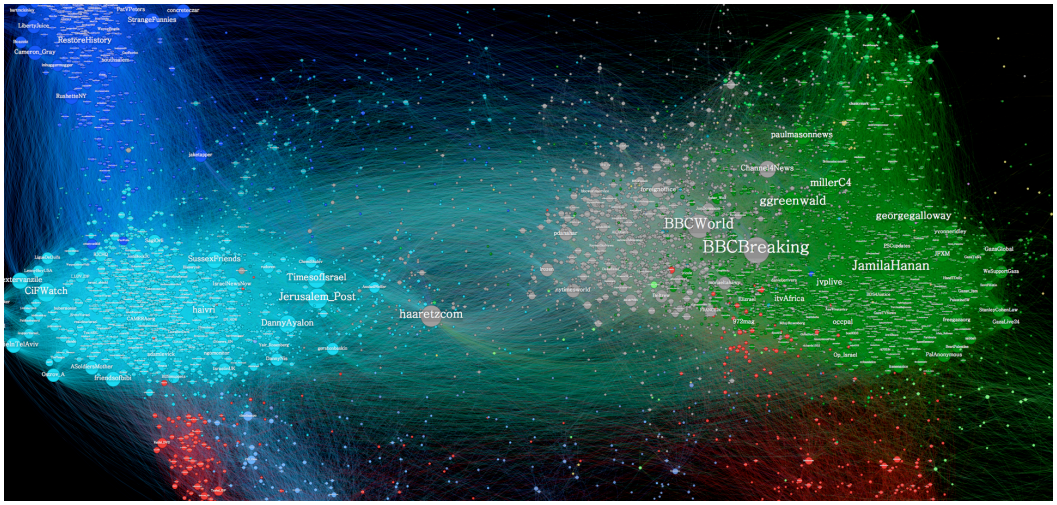

Image 69: Graph compiled by Gilad Lotan of Twitter accounts responding to the bombing of the UNWRA school in Beit Hanoun between July 25th - 30th 2104. Nodes are Twitter handles, and their connections

represents follow relationships. The larger a node, the higher its centrality, the more followed that account is within this group. The closer together two nodes, the more connections they share. Different colors represent communities (Green: Pro-Palestine; Blue: Pro-Israel) nodes of the same color are much more inter-connected compared to the rest of the graph. Source: Medium.com. NOTE: Paul Mason figures prominently in the pro-Palestinian side.

Just as eating artichokes enhances the sweetness receptors on your tongue, making even the blandest foods taste delightfully sweet, the algorithms of soc present only stories consistent with one's closest friends and most clicked/liked links. Essentially, the underlying algorithms powering the most frequented social media sites "help reinforce our values and bake more of the same voices into our information streams." (Lotan 4.8.2014)

The extent of the tunnels of the Facebook algorithms were uncovered in the summer 2014 in a self-defined 'open-ended experiment', by a senior writer at *Wired* magazine who 'liked' every element of his Facebook feed over the course of 48 hours. (Honan 2014) Within his first frenzy of clicks, he already noted how his feed was progressively being stripped of 'human content' and replaced with corporate advertising:

> This is a problem much bigger than Facebook. It reminded me of what can go wrong in society, and why we now often talk at each other instead of to each other. We set up our political and social filter bubbles and they reinforce themselves—the things we read and watch have become hyper-niche and cater to our specific interests. We go down rabbit holes of special interests until we're lost in the queen's garden, cursing everyone above ground. (Honan 2014)

The tunnels of Facebook are the tunnels of the *spectacteur+netoyen*, in which the currency of images pays into the growing, inescapable *#fomo* debt (fear of missing out). The triple illusion of social media activism: infinite panoptic vision, contagious freedom, and seamless translation are all written in red ink. There is a space of emancipation waiting for us in the online world, but first we must shed our *spectacteur* statuses and equip ourselves with the ability to discern between the different colours of ink, as well as to arm ourselves against the easy *vanitas* of guilt-

appeasing activism. The Young-Girl Tiqqun names in 2001 has evolved in thirteen years - she no longer is so young. Although our behaviours online now do have an adolescent attitude, it is true that social media itself is but pre-pubescent, and we still have much to learn. A teenager believes, ultimately, that the whole world is happening to *her*. This is the stage we must overcome online in order to enact an emancipated use of the possibilities available to us, instead of succumbing simply to being *users*, used by *dispositifs* we choose not to understand.

6.5 CONCLUSION: *O GIGANTE ACORDOU*

6.5.1 ULTIMATE VISION

In an email on February 19th 2014, as the reports of police brutality in Kiev were escalating, a distraught friend of mine in Tirana wrote an email:

> In Kiev, someone set up a live feed of the protests. Before I went to bed I watched 20 minutes of Ukranians burning things, fighting the police. Some loud Ukrainian patriotic music on the background [sic]. And I could not help feel the absurdity of it all: the tools we use to fight the regime remain the same over centuries. The only thing that changed is the technology we use to broadcast this. (Shahini 2014)

The question posed here repeats our previous questions on vision, audiences and performance. How does technology change the tools of resistance? How does the panoptic gaze of the Internet allow us to penetrate, interpret, and even interfere with events like this one, as they take place across the live stream of our lives? These are questions without answers: as soon as an answer appears to be secured, the landscape has already drastically changed.

Dmitry Kiselyov, the host of the most important talk show in Russia, is quite open about the Russian media strategy toward the Maidan: to "apply the correct political technology," then "bring it to the point of overheating" and bring to bear "the

magnifying glass of TV and the Internet." (Snyder 20.3.2014) What does Kiselyov mean exactly by *the magnifying glass of the TV and Internet*? It appears he is referring to what we have until now called 'remote audiences', the vision of people who are not physically present. He invokes a chemical reaction when three elements are combined: 'political technology', the images of its 'application', and their diffusion to a wider audience. But the interpretation of what the reaction is supposed to generate is, perhaps unintentionally, twofold. In one sense the media mogul is calling on the media as a filter as an arbiter of truth and perhaps even justice. The presupposition, trumpeted widely by the Ukrainian authorities to the outside world was that the protestors were right wing fascist thugs. (Snyder 2014). The second, interpretation, however, seems more consistent with Kiselyov's reference to heat: 'bring it to the point of overheating'. The magnifying glass, a condenser of light and thereby heat, when applied to this unstable, combustible matter, will, it is implied, ignite the whole mass. What to make of this imagery of the Internet as a magnifying glass?

The imagery reverses the panoptical discussion, refracts light backwards, not as a convex wide-angle lens, but with the fixating concavity of a magnifying lens. As protestors began dying in Kiev, so did they at the city's antipode in Caracas, Venezuela. The outrage was palpable across social media, as images started pouring in of wounded protestors, a beauty queen, fatally shot. Then, a Canadian website and then a Brazilian one exposed how many of images being circulated as 'Venezuelan' were actually grafted from previous protests, in previous places, worldwide (The Star, 1.3.2014). Bodies of alleged Venezuelan students were actually images taken in Aleppo, Syria, in 2012. A photograph of a protester being shot by rubber bullets, claimed to have been taken in Caracas by Twitter user José Manuel Castillo, was actually taken in Rio de Janeiro in June 2013. An image of a young woman gripping the shoulders of a policeman was posted with the caption "You and I are Venezuelans my friend," and retweeted more than 1,700 times - the photograph had been taken by Stefan Stefanov in Bulgaria in 2012. (ibid.) Other examples show further viral images re-appropriated from protests in Chile, Greece, Singapore and Argentina, Honduras and Egypt (Dawg 16.2.2014)

There's a symbolism to the reused photographs. It didn't really matter where the original photograph was taken: they were used to convey a genuine feeling, though not an original one. It was a feeling felt around the world: an impossibility to envision the future. A desire to resist the prescribed narratives. And yet, as the re-appropriated photographs readily show, a new narrative had already pervaded, and it was a closed circuit. The images, as Flusser had predicted, had only come to mean what was expected of them: outrage, yes, but also, ultimately, defeat: a closed feedback loop.

6.5.2 PANOPTES

The ultimate vision granted by the outpouring of protest online from 2011-2014 appears to have been eclipsed just as suddenly as it appeared. During the 2013 protests, the most popular hashtags after #changebrazil were #ogiganteacordou and #acordabrasil – *wake up Brazil* (Monroy-Hernández and Spiro 2012). 'O gigante acordou' translates as *the giant has awoken*: it refers to the awakening of the masses of people, discontent and able now, through the megaphone of the monster's multitudes, to pronounce the terms of its frustration.

The scale of the indignation we are discussing is too large to fit a simple frame of vision. It awakens, much like the Brazilian protests, a mythical giant, endowed with very specific optical quality: Panoptes, the all seeing.

Image 70: Hermes and Argos Panoptes, detail. Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna.

Panoptes is the giant of Greek mythology, an undefeated watchman thanks to his hundred eyes. He, much like the Internet, sees in every direction and is therefore unassailable. Or so it is believed.

Panoptes is eventually put to sleep by boring stories. In *Metamorphoses*, the poet Ovid tells of this fateful moment in which even the most vigilant watchman fell prey to an unending stream of information. The myth finds Panoptes guarding a white cow (in actuality his sister the nymph Io) from the powerful Zeus. Hermes, the trickster, the god of transitions, between the divine and the mortal, religion and poetry, truth and fiction, is sent by Zeus, and, disguised as a shepherd proceeds to recount countless tales to the watchful giant, whose eyes, one by one, begin to close:

> … the tale remained untold; for Hermes saw all Panoptes' eyelids closed and every eye vanquished in sleep. He stopped and with his wand, his magic wand, soothed the tired resting eyes and sealed their slumber; quick then with his sword he struck off the nodding head and from the rock threw it all bloody, spattering the cliff with gore. Argus lay dead; so many eyes, so bright quenched, and all hundred shrouded in one night. (Ovid 2008: 624)

The risk of panoptic vision is the overstimulation of senses, and the ensuing boredom. Vilém Flusser too worries that 'boredom' is a great risk of the technology-infused

contemporary society. He warns that although our new technologies may make our lives richer, more creative than ever before, they may also lead to something like "heat death": a society of unbearable, paralysing, and "eternal" boredom. In *Into the Universe of Technical Images*, he writes

> history is about to dry up, and this exactly because images are feeding on it, because they sit on historical threads like parasites, recoding them into circles. As soon as these circles are closed, the interaction between image and person will, in fact, become a closed feedback loop. Images will then always show the same thing, and people will always want to see the same thing. A cloak of endless, eternal boredom will spread itself over society. Society will succumb to entropy, and we can already confirm that the decay is on us: it expresses itself in the receivers' zeal for the sensational—there have always to be new images because all images have long since begun to get boring. The interaction between image and person is marked by entropy tending toward death. (2011: 59)

Our relationship to technology and to images is what ultimately will determine whether we too, like Panoptes, will fall asleep at the watch, or whether will be benefit by the prism of possibilities contained in technology. Flusser suggests that technical images such as photography, film, and crucially, electronic (digital) images, have produced a radically different way of seeing, and make it possible to 'grasp the ungraspable and visualise the invisible' (2011: 16). His words unintentionally echo Rancière's decription of emancipation, and Flusser writes in praise of those who, today, insist on fighting boredom. (Resende 2010: 240)

In *Towards a Philosophy of Photography* Flusser proposes an allegory of the photographer as *homo ludens* (a playing man) - the photographer, fighting boredom, plays not with the camera but "against it", in "search of information", "pursuing new possibilities of producing information and evaluating the photographic program" (2000: 26). "Such activity', writes Flusser, 'can be compared to playing chess. Chess-players too pursue new possibilities in the program of chess, new moves. Just as they play with chess-pieces, photographers play with the camera." They are "inside their apparatus and bound up with it. This is a new kind of function in which human beings

are neither the constant nor the variable but in which human beings and apparatus merge into a unity" (2000: 26-27). The *homo-ludens* is active in his reinterpretation of the world, incorporates the apparatus in his curiosity. The apparatus does not incorporate him.

6.5.3 ~~ÉCHEC~~

Flusser proposes chess as a game, but his allegory is perhaps expired. In 1996, Deep Blue beat Gary Kasparov at chess, and Deep Blue was a computer. The key to chess is the codes embedded in each piece, which offer only a finite series of motions. By 1996, computers were astute enough to anticipate any human player's strategy and to subsequently defeat even the best human chess player on the planet.

The French word for chess is échec, and échec is also the French word for defeat.

"Life is a kind of Chess', writes Benjamin Franklin, in his 1750 book *The Moral of Chess,* 'in which we have often points to gain, and competitors or adversaries to contend with, and in which there is a vast variety of good and ill events, that are, in some degree, the effect of prudence, or the want of it." Franklin praises the game for its ability to teach Foresight, Circumspection, and Caution. Franklin, as Weber well knew, was the ideal type for the Capitalism era. It is Franklin's *ethos* that has translated 'freedom' into 'free-trade'.

Deleuze and Guattari's imagery of the chess pieces and the Go pieces is a particularly evocative way to end our discussion. The go pawn, are described as 'simple arithmetic unities' whose function is only 'anonymous, collective' operating in a smooth open space. Because the go pieces have no intrinsic properties, their agency is determined by their situation, they are the faceless elements of a non-subjective and mechanical 'agencement' – they operate, in many ways, like Castells' description of the networked individuals, who "having overcome fear, are transformed into a conscious, collective actor" (2012: 219). This, what Castells terms, the 'rhizomatic

revolution' maintains the possibility of surging in whichever direction. Their movement is not predetermined, and neither is the scope of their space.

When the smooth space of the Internet begins to adopt the rules it sets for itself: memes, trends, and predictive algorithms, the *players* within its space begin too to assert certain intrinsic properties. The faceless mass becomes the Facebook, and the codes of propagation, virality, and the mimesis of *memes* begin to determine the boundaries of the playing space. Lines of combat are drawn and semiology begins to set in.

We have watched as the so-called Go players of the uprisings in 2011 gradually assumed the characteristics of chess pieces. The battle, abandoning wide spaces of possibility and pure tactic (red ink), instead established barricades, allies, methods. From a panoply of options, we have seen protest reduced to predictable formulas. In the last three years, we've seen millions of people in dozens of countries take to the streets. We've also seen, within weeks or months, a complacent return to how things were. The key, perhaps, is to stop thinking like a chess players, to stop strategizing within the striated spaces of the powers one hopes to topple.

Computers, after all, have been able to win against humans at chess since 1996. To this day, no machine has ever beaten a top human player at the game of Go.

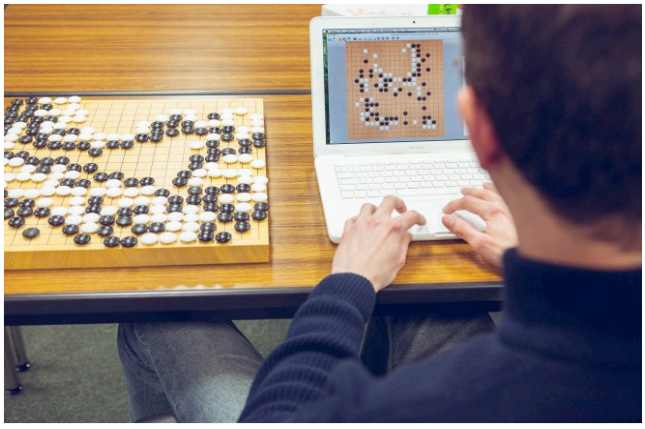

Image 71: Rémi Coulom and Crazy Stone playing go in 2014. Photo: Takashi Osato/WIRED

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