# EVASIONS OF POWER

## On the Architecture of Adjustment

**Edited by Katherine Carl, Aaron Levy, and Srdjan Jovanovic Weiss**

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# On the Architecture of Adjustment

Edited by
Katherine Carl, Aaron Levy, and Srdjan Jovanovic Weiss

Contributions by
Carlos Basualdo, Lindsay Bremner, Eduardo Cadava,
Katherine Carl, Teddy Cruz, Keller Easterling, Anselm Franke,
Deborah Gans, Liam Gillick, Jeanne van Heeswijk, Manuel Herz,
David Kazanjian, Dennis Kaspori, Sean Kelley, Sanjay Krishnan,
Laura Kurgan, Aaron Levy, Catherine Liu, Jill Magid,
Detlef Mertins, Markus Miessen, John Palmesino,
Nebojsa Seric Shoba, Taryn Simon, Samuel Weber,
Srdjan Jovanovic Weiss, Eyal Weizman

For Detlef Mertins (1954-2011)
*In memoriam*

**About the cover image**

In 2005, a helicopter belonging to the army of the former Yugoslavia carried an unlikely object: a small Serbian Orthodox Church, built in metal at a harbor shipyard in Montenegro. The church was manufactured, pre-assembled, and welded in painted steel in the form of a small chapel with a single nave and a miniature dome. After a short helicopter ride, the metal church was delivered to its destination: a mountain site marking a disputed border claimed by both Serbian Orthodox and Montenegrin Orthodox religious aspirations. Ordered, manufactured, and delivered to this remote site in haste, the miniature church was quickly sanctified by a Serbian Orthodox priest waiting for the metallic church to arrive. Photo by Savo Kovacevic, Podgorica, Montenegro.

Evasions of Power: On the Architecture of Adjustment contributes to ongoing discourses about human rights, geopolitical conflict, and territorial sovereignty, with contributions from an array of practitioners from fields including art, literature, philosophy, architecture, and urban studies. Exploring overlooked urban zones, state borders, enclaves, and extra-territorial sites throughout the world, contributors probe contemporary perspectives on power and its evasions.

# Foreword
## Detlef Mertins

Founded by Benjamin Franklin, the academic mission at the University of Pennsylvania has long been focused on the integration of knowledge across disciplines as a necessary condition for both innovation and social engagement, locally and globally. Convergence is especially central to the discipline of architecture, a social art that relies on integrating across many fields not only to sustain our ways of occupying and shaping the physical environment, but (more importantly) to change them–to create new knowledge, skills and modes of practice capable of addressing the challenges of our time. *Evasions of Power* is exemplary of the kind of collaboration needed today to expand architecture's understanding of the world and the political roles it plays, and to broaden the horizons of its engagement and contribution. The conference, and now book, reaches far beyond the traditional boundaries of our discipline and beyond the usual expectations for our role. It brings together a rich and diverse group of researchers and practitioners who have had precisely this impulse for some time, and helps make their work more visible. And it brings this emerging discourse into our school, galvanizing our explorations of architecture's complicity with power and its capacity to sponsor alternatives. It makes it harder for us to evade the powers we have to imagine and effect change.

I want to recognize the tireless efforts of the organizers in making *Evasions* happen–Srdjan Jovanovic Weiss, Aaron Levy, and Katherine Carl–who each work at the intersections of architecture, art, urbanism, cultural theory, and politics. Their coming together for this project marked the first major collaboration between the Department of Architecture and the Slought Foundation, which quickly expanded to include Eyal Weizman's Centre for Research Architecture at Goldsmiths College, London, and our sister departments at Penn in Art History and English.  To everyone involved, our warmest thanks. It has been a great privilege for our Department of Architecture to have co-hosted such an expansive endeavor.

# Towards a Politics of Singularity
## Samuel Weber

**I. The Politics of Protection**

0.

Walter Benjamin once wrote that the problem with hypotheses was the temptation "to place them at the beginning" and that it was this temptation that constituted "the abyss of all philosophizing."[1] He formulated this not as a declaration, but as a question, as a kind of suspicion. Hypotheses, and in particular suspicious ones, can be and surely are a powerful force producing thought. They can also be fatal to it when they are either ignored or, what often amounts to the same, when they are "placed at the beginning" in the sense of a foundation upon which one can construct, or a cause that simply has to unfold itself. In another sense, however, they can serve as the beginning of thinking as long as they are recognized for what they are: responses to questions that have yet to be asked, but whose validity and relevance have also yet to be demonstrated. From such a demonstration one has the right to expect two things at least: first, a certain coherence of argumentation; and second, a certain ability to cast light on phenomena that are familiar but as such far from being understood: *bekannt* but not *erkannt,* as Hegel put it.

It is in this spirit that I want to share with you what are nothing more, or less, than a series of suspicions, concerning the role of something called "protection" in recent and not so recent political and intellectual life. Here, then, are some suspicions, or conjectures, on the role of "protection" in politics, meaning both in its *theory* and in those *practices* that may be associated with it.

1.

Because I am going to be discussing primarily recent or contemporary authors–Freud, Benjamin, and Derrida–I want to begin with an extremely brief excursion into what has well been called the foundations of modern political thought, in order to demonstrate how the problems addressed by the contemporary authors draw their importance precisely by being situated in a long, very long tradition.

1651: England is in the midst of civil war. Cromwell has defeated the Royalists and is preparing himself to assume the title, the "Great Protector." Thomas Hobbes begins the concluding paragraph of his treatise, *Leviathan, of The Matter, Forme, & Power of a Common-Wealth Ecclesiasticall and Civill* with the following resumé of the work:

> And thus I have brought to an end my Discourse of Civil and Ecclesiastical Government, occasioned by the disorders of the present time, without partiality, without application, and without other design than to set before men's eyes the mutual relation between *protection and obedience*; of which the condition of human nature, and the laws divine, (both natural and positive) require an inviolable observation. And though in the revolution of states, there can be no very good constellation for truths of this nature to be born under, (as having angry aspect from the dissolvers of an old government, and seeing but the backs of them that erect a new;) yet I cannot think it will be condemned at this time, either by the public judge of doctrine, or by any that desire the continuance of public peace.[2]

In thus emphasizing the object of his treatise as being nothing other than setting "before man's eyes the mutual relation between protection and obedience," Hobbes closes the circle of the work that began with the following determination of the Leviathan:

> Nature (the art whereby God hath made and governs the world) is by the *art* of man, as in many other things, so in this also imitated, that it can make an artificial animal. […] *Art* goes yet further, imitating that rational and most excellent work of nature, *man.* For

by art is created that great LEVIATHAN called a COMMONWEALTH, or STATE, (in Latin, CIVITAS) which is but an artificial man; though of greater stature and strength than the natural, *for whose protection and defence it was intended*; and in which, the *sovereignty* is an artificial *soul,* as giving life and motion to the whole body […] (7)

The *raison d'être* of the State *qua* Leviathan is thus none other than to provide the "protection and defence" of natural man, whose fallen and sinful body is vulnerable in a way that the body politic of the Leviathan is not. Which is, of course, not to say that the body politic itself is invulnerable; writing at the time of the English Civil Wars Hobbes could hardly have thought that. Rather, the principle of "protection" informs both the goal of the body politic as well as its own operations: it must protect itself in order to protect its members. And it must afford protection if it is to expect obedience from its members in exchange. The principle of sovereignty thus depends entirely on the ability of the sovereign to protect itself no less than its constituents.

In what does the protection consist? What is to be protected from what? There are of course multiple answers and aspects to this question. But already from the initial sentences of the *Leviathan* it is clear that what ultimately has to be protected by the Leviathan is life and livelihood: above all that of the Leviathan itself, since only as long as it thrives can the lives of its individual members be assured.

It is Hobbes' conception of the Leviathan as an artificial living body, constructed to complement and palliate the vulnerabilities of actual living bodies, that determines its governing principle–that of *sovereignty*. The principle of life, as Hobbes defines it, is that of immanence: "Life is but a motion of limbs, the beginning whereof is in some principal part within," he writes. If it is to be a living body, the body politic must also have its principle of motion "within" itself. Sovereignty is thus determined by Hobbes as "an artificial soul" capable of "giving life and motion to the whole body." The "whole body" here of course is that of the body politic, which includes

its various elements, human and non-human "magistrates, and other officers of judicature and execution" which Hobbes compares to the "joints" of the artificial body, wealth and riches: its strength, *salus populi* (the people's safety), its business, and finally, "pacts and covenants" said to resemble "that *fiat*" by which God let there be light–and created the world. (7)

But the basic "pact and covenant" is that which proposes to assure the *salus populi* in exchange for the obedience of that *populus* to its laws and decrees. It is not insignificant that this covenant is likened to the divine *fiat*, "by which God let there be light–and created the world." For the exchange of obedience for protection is a direct result of the Christian interpretation of the fall of man. Hobbes quotes Paul (I. Cor. 15. 21, 22): "For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive." (ch. 38, p. 298 [239]). In the interval between the departure of Christ and the Second Coming, it is the artificial body politic of the Leviathan that must assure the *salus populi* through "its power of life and death." (38, 1/p. 297 /238)  It is this that justifies and maintains the obligation of subjects to obey the sovereign. If the latter fails in its mission to protect, the contract ceases to exist:

> The obligation of subjects to the sovereign, is understood to last as long, and no longer, than the power lasteth, by which he is able to protect them. For the right men have by nature to protect themselves, when none else can protect them, can by no covenant be relinquished. The sovereignty is the soul of the commonwealth; which once departed from the body, the members do no more receive their motions from it. The end of obedience is protection [...] And though sovereignty, in the intention of them that make it, be immortal; yet is it in its own nature, not only subject to violent death, by foreign war; but also through the ignorance, and passions of men, it hath in it, from the very institution, many seeds of a natural mortality, by intestine discord. (II. 21, p. 147 [114])

The pages and pages devoted by Hobbes to combating the confusion of

the Kingdom of God, in which there would be eternal life, "with the present Church or multitude of Christian men now living, or that being dead, are to rise again at the last day." (IV.44.4, p. 404 [334])—these pages are necessary not simply because of the religious conflicts being fought out in his time between Catholicism and Protestantism, between Church and State, but also because the justification of the sovereign State is informed by a notion of "protection" modeled upon Christian redemption and salvation–even if, and this is the crux, access to that redemption is no longer direct in a world that has been both visited and forsaken by God in the form of his "son," Jesus the Christ. What is left behind is the promise of a salvation that in the meanwhile takes the form of public safety, whose protection is the task and mission of the State as Leviathan.

Politics in this perspective is thus dependent upon a function of protection that is intrinsically paradoxical, if not aporetic. For the State that is entrusted with the protection of its subjects must itself be protected–it must protect itself, qua State, in order to fulfill its function of protecting its subjects. It must safeguard the Christian promise of salvation not directly, through ecclesiastical means, but indirectly, through the assurance of public safety and security, which in turn presupposes its ability to protect itself. Self-protection thus becomes the first and foremost task of the state, and of the politics that is informed by it.

But if the obedience required by the State depends upon its ability to protect those who are to obey, and if the model of such protection is based on the Christian promise of redemption, the question arises of how those who are to obey can decide whether or not the contract is being fulfilled, whether or not they are being afforded the protection they require. Without providing an answer, Hobbes describes the problem as the impossible task of construing infinity:

> Whatsoever we imagine is *finite*. Therefore there is no idea, no conception of anything we call *infinite*. No man can have in his mind an image of infinite magnitude; nor conceive infinite swiftness, infinite time, or infinite force, or infinite power. When we

say any thing is infinite, we signify only, that we are not able to conceive the ends, and bounds of the things named; having no conception of the thing, but of our own inability. And therefore the name of God is used, (not to make us conceive him; (for he is incomprehensible; and his greatness, and power are unconceivable;) but that we may honour him. […] No man can conceive anything, but he must conceive it in some place; and endued with some determinate magnitude; and which may be divided in parts; nor that any thing is all in this place, and all in another place at the same time; nor that two, or more things can be in one, and the same place at once. […] (3.12, p. 19)

It should be noted in passing–we may have occasion to return to it–that Hobbes conceives thinking as the production of images, on the basis of what he calls the "senses," and in particular, on the basis of what is interpreted as the *visual perception of objects as forms or figures,* which is to say, as located "in some place; and endued with some determinate magnitude" and consequently, as excluding the possibility of existing in more than "one, and the same place at once." From this it results that whatever legitimacy that can be accorded sovereign states will have to be grounded in an experience or consciousness informed by what I will call *unitary localizability*: a single body in a single place at *one and the same place and time.*

This suggests how the "self" that must be protected at all costs by the Leviathan has to be conceived: as a single body occupying a single place at one and the same time. The singularity of the body thus localized individualizes the self, makes it this self and not another. However, since neither time nor place stand still since the Adamitic fall and expulsion from the Garden of Eden, the self cannot simply rely on its bodily localization to assure its ability to be–which is to say, to *stay*–one and the same. It is only as the external but indispensable vessel of the soul that it can assure this function. The political correlative of this is the relation between State and Territory: the latter must be contiguous in order for its soul, the Leviathan, to have a self to protect. But the stability of that contiguity is determined by what it excludes as well as what it includes. By what it excludes as other

States ruling over other territories, and by the terms of the pact or covenant by which its subjects exchange obedience for protection.

But this structural instability, this permanent state of urgency is in fact a state of emergency in the most literal sense, since it derives from the *emergence* of the Leviathan itself. The latter is constituted through the decision of a multitude of individuals, living on a common, contiguous territory, to constitute a state in order to better protect themselves. They give up whatever powers they have and invest them in this new, artificial being, the Leviathan. This creates however a fundamental contradiction: the multitude becomes a "people," that is a political body, only by abandoning its prerogatives qua individuals to the sovereign State. But in thus creating the State that is designed to protect them, they tend to abolish themselves as an independent political entity, as a people.  As the French political theorist, Gérard Mairet, puts it in his introduction to the French translation of the Leviathan:

> The unity of a people thus created does not have its center in this same people, like the circle in geometry, because the center of gravity of the unity of a people is exterior to itself: it is the sovereign designated by the people. At the very instant when the individuals speak, they cease to be individuals in a multitude, and form a people; but this people in turn, at the moment when the sovereign is instituted, disappears *qua people*. The people finds the center of its being outside of itself (in the sovereign). It exists only as a linguistic fiction, without reality since its corporeality is entirely incarnated in the sovereign.[3]

Although Hobbes does not make explicit the paradox of a people dissolving itself at the moment that it incarnates itself in the Leviathan, the effects of this problematic incarnation emerge in the following passage:

> This done, the multitude so united in one person, is called a COMMONWEALTH, in Latin CIVITAS. This is the generation of that great LEVIATHAN, or rather (to speak more reverently) of that *Mortal God,* to which we owe under the *Immortal God,* our peace

and defence. For by this authority, given him by every particular man in the commonwealth, he hath the use of so much power and strength conferred on him, that *by terror thereof,* he is able to conform the wills of them all, to peace at home, and mutual aid against enemies abroad. And in him consisteth the essence of the commonwealth; which (to define it,) is *one person, of whose acts a great multitude, by mutual covenants one with another, have made themselves every one the author, to the end he may use the strength and means of them all, as he shall think expedient, for their peace and common defense.* (Ch. 18, 2.13, p. 114)

Since all the "power and strength" of the assembled individuals has been transferred to the Leviathan, the result of that transfer is the simultaneous institution and dissolution of the very self–that of the "people"—that the Leviathan is created to protect. As a result, the "terror" through which the State is able to "conform the wills of them all, to peace at home and mutual aid against enemies abroad," becomes a means not only of defending the body politic but also of constantly reconstituting it, or rather, of repeating its auto-constitution which converges with its auto-dissolution. It is like a pilot light that in being lit constantly goes out. It is in the blinking light of terror that the Mortal God pursues its ever-problematic mission of self-protection.

**II.**

If one compares the early "deconstructive" texts of Derrida with those written in the last fifteen years of his life, one can discover first an underlying consistency, and second, within it a significant shift. The consistency can be described as a focus upon the problem of identity and identification, as epitomized in the concepts of the self, the I and the subject. The shift takes place in the way the deconstruction of these categories is construed. In one of his earliest and ground-breaking texts, *Speech and Phenomena,* Derrida demonstrates how the Husserl of the *Logical Investigations* seeks to map out a sphere in which thinking, equated with self-consciousness, can constitute itself without getting caught in the "external" and indeterminable relativity of linguistic signification. The crux of Husserl's demonstration reposes on the notion of self-perception: the speaking subject hears-and-understands-itself

(*sich vernimmt*) without having to depend essentially upon a system of signification that inevitably introduces distance and indeterminability in its operation. The key term used by Husserl in this context, and which Derrida highlights, is that of *Selbstaffizierung,* auto-affection:

> The operation of "hearing oneself speak" is an auto-affection of a unique kind. On the one hand, it operates within the medium of universality; what appears as signified therein must be idealities that are *idealiter* indefinitely repeatable or transmissible as the same. On the other hand, the subject can hear or speak to itself and be affected by the signifier it produces, without passing through an external detour, the world, the sphere of what is not "his own." Every other form of auto-affection must either pass through what is outside the sphere of "ownness" or forego any claim to universality. When I see myself, either because I gaze upon a limited region of my body or because it is reflected in a mirror, what is outside the sphere of "my own" has already entered the field of this auto-affection, with the result that it is no longer pure. In the experience of touching and being touched, the same thing happens. In both cases, the surface of my body, as something external, must begin by being exposed in the world.[4]

The concept of auto-affection is, so Derrida argues in this early text, never "pure" in the way Husserl would have it: as "affection" it always involves an opening, an "exposure in the world" and to the outside, to what is alien and unappropriable. Husserlian Phenomenology, as a "metaphysics" of "presence," is also "a philosophy of life," which is to say, a philosophy that insists on the immanence and integrity of life, in regard to which "death is recognized as but an empirical and extrinsic signification, a worldly accident." (10)

The Husserlian effort to construct a notion of "auto-affection" that would be "pure"—i.e. purified of all constitutive relation to the external and the alien–is thus already, implicitly, interpreted by Derrida as a defensive effort to protect the notion of a "self" that could "express" itself without losing itself in a process of signification that is irreducibly heterogeneous. Derrida's demonstration, which we cannot elaborate here, consists in

displaying that the very process of repetition that Husserl invokes to distinguish "ideality"—that which stays the same over time and space–from empiricity harbors within itself an irreducible dimension of difference as well as sameness, and that these two cannot be radically disassociated from one another. This "primordial structure of repetition that […] govern[s] all acts of signification"—which will later be designated as "iterability" by Derrida–is here mobilized to reveal that there can be no representation that is simply expressive, in the sense of establishing an uninterrupted continuum between the consciousness of a speaking subject and his speech. As a function of repetition or iteration, all "ideality" is always in advance composed of sameness and difference, and thus is never simply self-identical or "ideal." Or, as Derrida puts it:

> Auto-affection is not a modality of experience that characterizes a being that would already be itself (*autos*). It produces sameness as self-relation within self-difference; it produces sameness as the nonidentical. (82)

Derridean deconstruction thus has as its initial object the "self," the "*autos*" of auto-affection, of *Selbstaffizierung* or self-presence. *Speech and Phenomenon* concludes with the following words:

> Contrary to what phenomenology–which is always phenomenology of perception–has tried to make us believe, contrary to what our desire cannot fail to be tempted into believing, *the thing itself* always escapes.
> Contrary to the assurance that Husserl gives us […] "the look" cannot "abide." (104–my italics–SW)

In the over 40 years that Derrida wrote and published, a primary focus of his attention remained the "self," and its inevitable but futile efforts to "assure" itself of its identity in a self-identical world, a world of "things in themselves." A necessary correlative of this project was that of exploring the various ways in which "our desire cannot fail to be tempted into believing" that such is the case–that we inhabit a world of "things in themselves" in which "the look" might be able to "abide." And the

mechanism that drew his attention again and again, in demonstrating both why such desire had to be continually reassured and also could never be satisfied with any assurance, remained the same: the "repetitive structure" of all signification, of all marking and demarcation, of all identification and hence, of all identity–but which, as irreducibly heterogeneous, inevitably came to mark with a sameness that is never simply identical. The very existence, in English, of the word "selfsame" bears witness to this sameness that is never simply self-identical.

So much then for the continuity to which I have referred. The shift with which I am concerned emerges during the last decade of his writing, beginning (to my knowledge at least) in 1993 with *Specters of Marx,* and elaborated and transformed in books such as *Politics of Friendship* (1994), *Faith and Knowledge* (1996) and culminating no doubt in *Rogues* (Fr: 2003). It is marked by the introduction of a term that resembles the earlier one I have been discussing sufficiently to make its divergence from it all the more worth reflecting upon: the term, *autoimmunity*. In place of the earlier "affection," the notion of self is now linked to that of "immunity." The context of the two terms explains the shift, at least in part. Here, three points can be noted.

1.
*First*, the titles of the books mentioned all deal either directly or indirectly, not exclusively or primarily, with philosophy, but with politics (this fact becomes even more evident if we add another text in which Derrida elaborates the notion of autoimmunity, the interview given shortly after September 11, 2001, to the Italian writer, Giovanna Boradorri, published some years later in English under the title–surely not from Derrida–*Philosophy in a Time of Terror*). The only partial exception is the book *Faith and Knowledge*, which, as its subtitle indicates, is concerned with *The Two Sources of "Religion" at the Limits of Reason Alone*. But Derrida's discussion of "religion" clearly places it in a context that is political–both geopolitical and in its own, quite distinctive way, "biopolitical."

2.

This word, biopolitical, which Derrida does not use, brings us to the *second* aspect of the shift I am describing. The term "autoimmune" comes from the life-sciences, and in particular from medicine, not philosophy. It thus suggests a shift, from the discourse of philosophy to that of the life sciences. To determine just what may be new, here, in Derrida's work, is complex, since as we have just seen, deconstruction constituted itself in an encounter with what Derrida, in *Speech and Phenomenon* describes as a "philosophy of life." (SP, 10)  In this respect, the question of "life" was already at the heart of Derrida's earliest writings. The "metaphysics of presence" thereby appears as a defensive effort to offer "assurances" to a desire all too ready to accept the same no matter what cost: assurance that life could be construed as pure immanence, as life present to itself, and that death could consequently be seen as its external and extraneous other. Life was thus to be considered as the "norm," and death as the exception. But in his reading of Husserl, Derrida demonstrated that the very arguments that sought to purify "auto-affection" from all constitutive relation to alterity also irrevocably estranged it from the self-identity of an "I," whose ideal "significance" (*Bedeutung*) had to be universally intelligible in the absence of the singular entity uttering it and designated by that utterance. This might thus enable the mark "I" to outlive the presence of its original author or referent, but it did not establish the domain of pure interiority, of pure self-affection that was required to establish a transcendental, i.e. lasting process of thought. This suggests one aspect of the shift in question, namely from the singularity of the "I" to the generality of a self whose identity could now be construed of as being species-specific rather than tied to individuals. This search for a self-contained and meaning-ful *norm* thus shifts from the effort to describe the auto-affection of an individuated, albeit also transcendental consciousness, to a discourse centered on the generality of living species, also known as the "life sciences."

At the same time, however, Derrida, in adopting the term "auto-immunity" clearly seeks to detach it from the biomedical normality that construes it as

an essentially *pathological* process. For Derrida, *auto-immunity* does not designate an illness that more or less accidentally befalls an intrinsically healthy organism, no more than "auto-affection," in its "impure," and differential dimension, could be construed (I repeat here the passage quoted previously) as

> a modality of experience that characterizes a being that would already be itself (*autos*). It produces sameness as self-relation within self-difference; it produces sameness as the nonidentical. (82)

And yet this passage also suggests the considerable distance that separates the term *auto-affection* from its successor in Derrida's later work. For whereas auto-affection could be said to "produce sameness as the nonidentical," *auto-immunity* seems much more sinister: in seeking to protect the organism, it attacks and destroys it. Or rather, in the singular interpretation given the term by Derrida, it attacks and destroys *itself:* namely, the protective defenses of the system. The mechanisms and processes that seek to protect a living system against threats from without, attacks its own defenses thus rendering the organism all the more vulnerable to destruction.

Or–and this complicates the process–rendering it more open to transformation. And it is this that enables Michael Naas, in an extremely helpful and comprehensive discussion of the concept, to suggest that the term functions as "the last iteration of what Derrida called for more than forty years *deconstruction*."[5]  Auto-immunity is thus both suicidal and self-transformative. Or rather, it *is* suicidal, and it *can be–but is not necessarily*–transformative. This, at least is what emerges from several–although not all–of its formulations in the writings of Derrida, and perhaps most clearly in one of, if not the earliest of its articulations. In *Specters of Marx,* Derrida uses the term to describe an attitude shared by both Marx and the object of his scathing critique in the *German Ideology*, Max Stirner:

Both of them love life, which is always the case but never goes without saying for finite beings: they know that life does not go without death, and that death is not beyond, outside of life, unless one inscribes the beyond in the inside, in the essence of the living. They both share, apparently like you and me, an unconditional preference for the living body. But precisely because of that, they wage an endless war against whatever represents it, whatever is not the body but belongs to it, returns to it: prosthesis and delegation, repetition, difference. The living ego is autoimmune, which is what they do not want to know. To protect its life, to constitute itself as unique living ego, to relate, as the same, to itself, it is necessarily led to welcome the other within (so many figures of death: difference of the technical apparatus, iterability, non-uniqueness, prosthesis, synthetic image, simulacrum, all of which begins with language, before language), it must therefore take the immune defenses apparently meant for the non-ego, the enemy, the opposite, the adversary and direct them at once *for itself and against itself.*[6]

In order to protect itself, the "living ego" must not just defend against what it considers to be foreign–it must also "welcome the other within" in the different forms of technical protheses, substitutes, supplements and simulacra of all sorts, and also language and its antecedents. This dependence on the foreign, ego-alien, complicates the task of the immune system. If it protects by attacking only those elements that it considers alien to its body, then it runs the risk of impoverishing, weakening and ultimately destroying that body. And thus, it can come to do what for many years medical science considered exclusively as an abnormal and pathological process,[7] namely, attack itself, which is to say, attack its ability to attack antigens. To fulfill its mission of protection, it must turn against the system of protection itself, against itself. Autoimmunity thus emerges as the aporetic norm of the singular living being: it can only survive by protecting against its own protection.

The passage from *Specters of Marx* links autoimmunity to *life in the singular,* which is to say, to the individual body and to the first person singular, the ego or I. But it is only in *Faith and Knowledge,* that the political

potential of autoimmunity begins to emerge with clarity:

> Community as com-mon autoimmunity. No community, which would not cultivate its own autoimmunity, a principle of sacrificial self-destruction ruining the principle of self-protection (the preserving of the integrity of the self), and this in view of some sort of invisible and spectral sur-vival. This self-contesting attestation keeps the autoimmune community alive, which is to say, open to something other and more than itself: the other, the future, death, freedom, the coming or the love of the other, the space and time of a spectralizing messianicity beyond all messianism.[8]

"Community," political and otherwise, thus is the product not just of "the principle of self-protection" seeking to preserve "the integrity of the self"— the self as integral and integrating–but of the protection that protects against protection, in the sense of excluding or neutralizing what is held to be alien and extraneous. The latter includes "space and time of a spectralizing messianicity," as well as "the future, death, freedom" and "the coming or love of the other."

In order for a community to survive–and a community that does not have a certain duration is not a community–it must protect not just against its own system of protection, but it must protect against the prevailing actualization of that system as a unified self. In short, it must protect against the principle of sovereignty, which, since Bodin and Hobbes, has served as the defining principle of the State and, in the period of liberal individualism, also increasingly of its individual members, qua Egos.

For Derrida, one of the privileged if infinitely problematic sites from where this link between Ego and State can and should be pursued–although this has not yet been developed very far–is Psychoanalysis. That this has not happened, despite an auspicious beginning in the work of Freud, is due not simply to external resistances, but also to internal ones. In a long interview with Derrida, the French historian of Psychoanalysis, Elisabeth Roudinesco, asks him if the resistance of universities to Freud and his

followers is not the result of "fear of the unconscious."[9] Derrida's reply probably surprised her:

> A "subject," no matter of what kind (whether individual, citizen, or state) constitutes and institutes itself only out of such "fear," and therefore it always has the force or *the protective form* of a dam or a barrier (*un barrage*). It interrupts the force that it then stores and channels. For despite their differences, which are never to be forgotten, our European societies always stand under the aegis of something like *an* ethical, legal and political "system," *an* idea of the Good, of Right and of the Commonwealth [*cite*]. […] What I in abbreviated form here call a "system" and an "idea" must be *protected* against that which might threaten it from psychoanalysis–which nevertheless arose in Europe and in the person of Freud continued to be thoroughly informed by a European model of culture, of civilization and of progress.

> This "system" and this "idea" are designed above all to resist whatever is felt to be a threat. For the "logic of the unconscious"[10] remains incompatible with that which determines the identity of ethics, of the political and of the juridical not only conceptually, but no less in its institutions and consequently in the experiences of human beings. (290)

Psychoanalysis thus challenges, for Derrida, not simply an established discipline or series of disciplines: psychology, medicine etc.—but rather an entire "system" of Western culture and civilization, in its "ethical, legal and political" dimensions. But this is a challenge that has not simply been rejected by those institutions, but also–and this is perhaps more serious–been largely ignored in everyday life, and this not just *outside* of the psychoanalytical institutions:

> If psychoanalysis were to be taken seriously, really, practically, there would result an earthquake that is difficult to imagine. Something indescribable. Even for psychoanalysts. (290)

This unimaginable "earthquake" that is scrupulously ignored by both institutions and individuals is nevertheless in full swing, but so deeply embedded in everyday experience that it is difficult to discern and easy to overlook:

> In the meanwhile this seismic threat plays itself out within ourselves, within each single individual. In our lives, as we know only too well […] we generally act as though psychoanalysis had never existed. Even those who, like ourselves, are convinced of the inescapable necessity of the psychoanalytical *revolution*, or at least of its *questions,* still act in their lives, in their ordinary language, in their social experience as though nothing had happened [...] In an entire realm of our lives we act as though we still believed, at bottom, in the sovereign authority of the I, of consciousness etc., and employ the language of this "autonomy." We know, to be sure, that we speak several languages at once. But that makes almost no difference, either in our souls or our bodies, whether the body of each individual, the body of society, the body of the nation, or the body of the discursive and juridical-political apparatus. (291)

The "questions" of psychoanalysis thus cut across and link the realms of what is usually separated as "individual" and "collective," "personal" and "institutional" experience, and its cut goes to the root of the modern notions of subjectivity as autonomous. Instead, the subject, "no matter of what kind: individual, collective or institutional […] constitutes itself only out of fear," as an instance of protection. Protection therefore, like auto-affection and auto-immunity, is not something that befalls a subject already constituted as self-consciousness. Rather, self-consciousness constitutes itself as identical in, through and *as* that response to danger that we call *fear*. And this, Derrida asserts, is as true on the institutional and political level as it is on that of individual experience.

This is why the notion of "sovereignty" becomes for Derrida not simply a political notion, but more generally one that sustains–and is sustained by–the modern notion of an autonomous self. In a keynote speech held in the summer of 2000 before an international meeting of psychoanalysts in Paris, Derrida situates the link between individual, collective and

categorical "sovereignty" by relating it to what he designates as a "metaphysics of sovereignty" in an age of "globalization":

> The world, the world-wide process of globalization, with all of its consequences–political, social, economic, legal, technical-scientific etc.—resists without a doubt psychoanalysis. [...] It mobilizes against it not only a model of positive science, which can be positivist, cognitivist, physicalist, psycho-pharmalogical, genetic, but also at times a hermeneutics that becomes spiritualist, religious or simplistically philosophical; in this mobilization participate institutions, concepts and archaic ethical, legal or political practices that are informed by a distinct logic, namely by a certain metaphysics of *sovereignty* (autonomy and omnipotence of the subject–whether individual or statist–freedom, egological will, conscious intentionality, or, if you prefer, the ego, ideal-ego, super-ego, etc). The first gesture of psychoanalysis will (have to) be to provide an account of the unavoidability [of this mobilization], although at the same time it will have to aim at deconstructing its genealogy–which also traverses a cruel murder.

The concluding allusion to the "cruel murder" recalls how, in both Totem and Taboo and in *The Man Moses and Monotheistic Religion*, Freud links the process of civilization to the murder of the founding figure, be it the Primal Father in the speculative Primal Horde, or be it Moses as the Egyptian, that is alien, founder of the Jewish people. However skeptical he remains as to the historical accuracy of such speculations, Derrida insists on their symbolic significance as reminders of the violence required by all institutionalization, whether individual (of the ego) or collective (of the state or nation). The notion of indivisible sovereignty, with its powers over the life and death of its subjects, is here characterized as a power of *mobilization,* setting into motion for the purpose of affirming the Self–and consequently of resisting that aspect of psychoanalysis that calls into question the Self and its autonomy. The "metaphysics of sovereignty" defends its system against the challenges of a psychoanalysis that however is also part of it, and that therefore acts in a similar manner. The resistance, once again, comes not just from without but as always, also from within:

> For this resistance is also a resistance against itself. There is something wrong [*il y a un mal*], at any rate *an autoimmunizing function* within psychoanalysis as everywhere else, a rejection of itself, a resistance against itself, against its own principle, against its *own principle of protection*. (20)

If such an "autoimmunizing function" is as inevitable as it is ubiquitous, the question then becomes that of distinguishing between its different directions and effects. It can either insist on preserving and protecting what cannot simply be protected: the given, actual self-identity of the institution or the individual. Or it can offer an opportunity to transform that self-identity by no longer simply protecting it, as it was, but opening it to a transformation, to the heterogeneity that it has always contained, but also sought to reduce and dissimulate.

This is why Derrida includes the "metapsychological" concepts of psychoanalysis, including, as we have seen, the triad of ego, superego, and id in the list of concepts belonging to the "metaphysics of sovereignty." And why his interest in psychoanalysis has always been situated on its margins: either there where Freud disrupts his previous system deliberately, as in *Beyond the Pleasure Principle,* or there where he allows himself to be drawn into areas that are difficult to integrate in the existing psychoanalytic conceptuality, as in his famous essay on *The Uncanny.*

That essay has often been read–perhaps first by Hélène Cixous–as itself being "uncanny." Freud claims that he has long since ceased to have any direct experience of the "uncanny," and therefore has to resort to literary examples, whereas, as Ernest Jones, his biographer, long ago noted, he interrupted writing the essay precisely until he reached the age of 63, because he was afraid of dying at the same age as his father. In the text, Freud gives as an example of an "uncanny" belief in numbers, the number 62–but without of course acknowledging that the significance it had had for himself and the writing of the text. But there is a more systemic explanation for Freud's uncanny excursion into the uncanny, a realm he seeks to appropriate for his psychoanalytic system. At the time he is writing the

essay, he is in the process of rethinking the entire basis of the system, associated with the so-called "pleasure principle." Part of that system was the tenet that anxiety is the general class to which "the uncanny" in part belongs (but does not exhaust). Under the aegis of the "pleasure principle," anxiety was seamlessly integrated into the Freudian system as the result or effect of repression, itself explained as a result of the pleasure principle. A representation came to be associated with displeasure, and was therefore repressed, banished from consciousness and replaced by a substitute-formation, by another "idea." When the substitute-idea lost its power to keep the repressed, unpleasant representation from becoming conscious, there occurred a "return of the repressed," which—so this "first" psychoanalytic theory of anxiety–brought with it the experience of the "uncanny"—that which had long been familiar but precisely because of its familiarity could not be integrated into the "household" of self-consciousness.

However already in that essay, Freud had to acknowledge that this explanation fell short of being satisfactory, since not every "return of the repressed" produced anxiety, and not every anxiety could be equated with "the uncanny." A few years later, after discarding the "pleasure principle" due to his discovery of the "repetition compulsion" and the "death drive," Freud also reversed his first theory of anxiety into a second one. According to this theory, most fully elaborated in the 1926 essay, "Inhibition, Symptom and Anxiety," anxiety was no longer the effect of repression but its cause. And this inversion did more than just operate an exchange of places between anxiety and repression. For in placing anxiety at the origin of repression, Freud acknowledged, at least implicitly, that his psychoanalytic system was incapable of providing an adequate causal explanation of psychic structure. For anxiety, as he emphasized in the 1926 text, presupposes something like an Ego or a proto-Ego, which therefore has to be reckoned with from the beginning, as it were, even before the Ego can fully constitute itself. The Ego, for Freud, is on the one hand not given from the start–it has to be developed, and a certain form of repression is required for its development. But at the same time, if anxiety functions as

the cause of repression, then the Ego has to be somewhere in the wings, inasmuch as anxiety is defined by Freud as the "reaction of the Ego to danger." "Danger," Freud explains, is a relational concept: it is always a danger *for* or *to* something else. In this case, the danger involved has to be defined in terms of the disruption that it can bring to the psychic instance or agency–the Ego–that seeks to establish a certain degree of unity and coordination among the differing components of the psyche, between "id" (or "it") and super-ego. Now the Ego, as Freud describes it, is not there from the beginning: it is formed through a gradual process that Freud describes in a late, unfinished essay, his last attempt to provide a synoptical overview of his entire system, *Outline of Psychoanalysis*:

> Under the influence of the surrounding real external world, a part of the Id (It) undergoes a particular development. Originally equipped as an exterior surface with organs for the reception of stimuli and with an apparatus for *protection against stimuli* [*mit den Organen zur Reizaufnahme und den Einrichtungen zum Reizschutz*], a particular organization emerges that from now on will mediate between It and external world. This realm of psychic life we assign the name, *I* [or Ego].[11]

This passage, written in 1939, takes up almost literally an earlier description written some 20 years earlier in *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* (1920), but with a significant shift. In the earlier text, which for the first time places the development of a "protective shield" (*Reizschutz*) at the core of psychic formation, described not the development of the I (Ego) but rather that of "consciousness." At first, however, Freud describes the process as though it concerned the development of an organic system per se, not a psychic one:

> This little fragment of living substance is suspended in the middle of an external world charged with the most powerful energies, and it would be killed by the stimulation emanating from these if it were not provided with a protective shield against stimuli. It acquires the shield in this way: its outermost surface ceases to have the structure proper to living matter, becomes to some degree

inorganic and thenceforward functions as a special envelope or membrane resistant to stimuli. […] By its death, the outer layer has saved all the deeper ones from a similar fate–unless, that is to say, stimuli reach it that are so strong that they break through the protective shield. *Protection against* stimuli is an almost more important function for the living organism than *reception of* stimuli.[12]

Even before he arrives at the description of the "death-drive," a certain "death"—that of the surface "membrane"—becomes the condition of survival for the organism, and as we shall see, also for the psyche–and ultimately for the Ego. Only such a "death"—the transformation of organic to inorganic matter–creates that "protective shield" that is necessary if the organism is to survive. In a certain sense, then, "trauma"—the breaking-through of the protective shield–is the condition against which the organism, consciousness and the Ego will have to defend and protect itself: not just at the origin, but constantly thereafter as well. Everything then depends on just how this process of protection is to be construed.

In *Beyond the Pleasure Principle,* Freud throws out a number of suggestive speculations, without being able to develop any of them. The first describes the process of defense and protection as a kind of sampling that implies both being able to localize the "direction and nature of the external stimuli" (53) and also then being able to organize it in a way that diminishes its traumatic potential. This involves the development of what might be called "attention," although Freud does not–later, in "Inhibitions, Symptoms and Anxiety", he will however call attention to a related defensive process, which he calls "isolation" and which involves separating the potentially dangerous stimulus or representation from its ramifications and connections to other things. Since the danger comes not from individual sources but rather from their cumulative and disintegrative connections, such "isolation" is as if not more effective than "repression" in the traditional sense. It is, Freud notes, also very difficult to identify–one could also say, to "isolate"—since it overlaps with what is the core of so-called "normal" thought processes, namely what is called "concentration." When therefore

in *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* Freud emphasizes both the spatial and temporal aspects of the "sampling" of potentially threatening stimuli–and he even goes so far as to speculate that the "Kantian theorem that time and space are 'necessary forms of thought'" (Kant of course speaks of *Anschauung*, intuition, literally: "looking-at", rather than of "thought" in general)—what he is actually describing is the use of spatial-temporal coordinates to *locate* and thus partially to neutralize the potential threat to consciousness, the ego and indeed to life itself.

To understand wherein this threat, this danger against which the Ego defends through both through its "protective shield" and through anxiety, as a "signal" of a potential "danger," requires interpretation. Freud himself tends to formulate the threat in terms of an excess of energy, a quantitative amount of energy that cannot be absorbed by the system–organic or psychic–that it "threatens." But given that the two "systems" concerned are first of all, consciousness, and second of all, the Ego, we can reformulate the nature of the threat involved: the quantitative excess that threatens the Ego and Consciousness is one that cannot be *integrated* into the systems concerned. What is at stake is an irreducible multiplicity or differentiality that as such threatens the *unity of consciousness and of the Ego.* Indeed, it is not consciousness as such that is threatened–and indeed, consciousness as such is, as Freud recognizes again and again, a far more mysterious and enigmatic entity than is commonly realized–but rather the *unity of a consciousness that therefore must be understood as self-consciousness.* It is the unity of a consciousness that seeks to repeat itself as one and the same, despite the irreducible differences involved in all repetition. Hence, the "demonic" quality of the "repetition compulsion" that Freud acknowledges in *Beyond the Pleasure Principle:* it is demonic, but also fascinating, precisely insofar as it entails a repetition that does not come full circle, that produces the "same" but without resolving it in the unity of a "self." It is this that makes it demonic, but also automatic: a repetition that produces the "same" as the "nonidentical," to recall the formulation of Derrida. It entails "sameness without self" if by self is understood self-identity.

The protective defense against this "danger" always involves the effort to reduce multiplicity to unity, difference to identity, sameness to self. And since the "danger" comes not simply from "without" but also from "within"—since the "protective shield" is required in order to establish the very difference between outside and inside, and therefore continues to impinge upon the inside that depends upon it, i.e. upon the outside–one, if not the preferred mechanism for protecting against internal difference is what Freud calls "projection,"

> the tendency to treat them [stimuli] as though they were acting, not from the inside, but from the outside, so that it may be possible to bring the shield against stimuli into operation as a means of defence against them. This is the origin of *projection,* which is destined to play such a large part in the causation of pathological processes. (Beyond, 56)

Earlier on in *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* Freud introduces a distinction that is by no means specific to the discourse of Psychoanalysis, but that can be extremely illuminating in the context of this discussion of *protection through projection*: that between "fear," "anxiety," and "fright" or "terror" [*Schreck*]:

> "Anxiety" describes a particular state of expecting the danger of preparing for it even though it may be an unknown one. "Fear" requires a definite object of which to be afraid. "Fright" [or Terror] however is the name we give to the state a person gets into when he has run into danger without being prepared for it: it emphasizes the factor of surprise. I do not believe that anxiety can produce a traumatic neurosis. There is something about anxiety that protects its subject against fright and so against fright-neuroses. (30)

If we take this description together with Freud's speculation about how a certain "sampling" can function as a protective measure, by determining the "direction" in which the danger comes, we see how time and space can be mobilized and perhaps even constructed as a framework in which such protection can be construed: time and space are "forms" in which a

potential danger can be located as an object of "*Anschauung*," to recall the Kantian term, in which space and time are defined as "forms" of "outer" and "inner *Anschauung*" respectively. We see here how misleading the consecrated English translation of *Anschauung* as "intuition" can be: for what is at stake in this context at least is the possibility of literally being "looked *at*," and thereby localized, identified and potentially at least assimilated and brought under control. This in turn presupposes a certain distance, *through* which one can look "at" something, envisage or imagine it. What ultimately has to be "protected" then is the distance that separates the perceiver from the perceived, subject from object–separates but also joins through the supposed homogeneity of the space "in between."

The three interrelated terms, *fear, anxiety and terror* (my translation for *Schreck*), are thus all part of a single process: that of responding to and protecting against an unassimilable alterity or difference, that per se cannot be unified or reduced to the self-same. "Anxiety" thus mediates between the relative stability of fear, and the relative instability of terror or fright: it involves, as Freud stresses, a certain "preparedness," (*Angstbereitschaft*), which in turn is directed as much to the future as to the past. To the past, since it cannot imagine or envisage the danger without recurring to memory and reproducing analogous situations; and to the future, since precisely the danger is always yet to come. The child's game of throwing the spool out of the playpen and then hauling it back, accompanied by the sounds, oooo—aaa, which Freud translates as "fort-da": gone-there, indicates how certain repetitive gestures can be used to mimic the "preparedness" that is required to protect the Ego from future losses and threats. But qua repetition, what returns as "there" is never simply "here"—it returns as the "same" perhaps, but never simply as the self-same, never a simple unity. What returns can therefore be designated as the after-effect of the "singular," which is a differential and relational notion that can be experienced only in its disappearance, only in its "traces" as the early Derrida might have said. The "singular" in this sense is very different from the "individual," if we take this term literally. For the "singular" is always divided in and of itself, always separated from the self-same, and it is this

that constitutes both its uniqueness and also its inaccessibility. We can never experience the singular in and of itself, directly, but only in what remains, what is "there" but never simply "here": the resource of the German "da", which is not simply "dort" (the equivalent of "there" as opposed to "here"). What is "da" is both here and there, and thus never simply in one place at a time: a body, perhaps, but not in the sense defined by Hobbes, taking up a definition that goes back to Aristotle, as that which can only be in one place at one time and can also never share that place with anything else.

It is this definition of bodies and places, based on a certain notion of identity as isolation, that Benjamin, following Freud (but unaware of his thoughts on "isolation") picks up in his study of Baudelaire and relates, as did Freud before him, to memory. Or rather, to different sorts of memory: to that which is presupposed by "*Erlebnis*," by a so-called "lived experience" that seeks to protect itself by putting experiences temporally in their proper places, by isolating them–and *Erfahrung,* which, although Benjamin does not stress this, is constructed on the verb, *fahren,* to travel or traverse, and thus entails movement and alteration.

> Perhaps the special achievement of shock defense is the way it assigns content an exact place in time [*eine exakte Zeitstelle*] in consciousness, at the cost of the integrity of the content. That would be the greatest achievement of reflection. It would make the incident into an *Erlebnis*–a lived experience. If it is omitted, what would ensue is the joyful [*freudige*] or (mostly) unpleasant terror [*Schreck*] that according to Freud sanctions the failure to defend against shock.[13]

It should be noted that Benjamin, via a word-play on the name of Freud (=freudig: joyful), opens up what Freud himself does not easily acknowledge, although he is later obliged to concede that non-integrated "tensions" can indeed be a source of pleasure and not merely pain.[14] In short, for Benjamin the unitary perspective of self-consciousness and of the ego do not constitute the court of last resort. It is significant that his notion

of an "experience" that cannot simply be reduced to a notion of "life" based on the unity of self-consciousness–*Erlebnis*–is made in the context of a discussion of poetry, that of Baudelaire, or literature more generally, that of Proust for instance. The latter provides Benjamin a model of "awakening" in which the unity of the body and the unity of consciousness are dislocated simultaneously, when Marcel recalls via the experience of individual bodily members, no longer integrated into the body as an organic whole, container of an equally unified self. Instead of the self-contained body, it is the non-integrated relations of individual bodily members to singular contexts that constitutes the "experience" as one of irreducible alterity:

> *Un homme qui dort tient en cercle autour de lui le fil des heures, l'ordre des années et des mondes. Il les consulte d'instinct en s'éveillant et y lit en une seconde le point de la terre qu'il occupe, le temps qui s'est écoulé jusqu'à son réveil; mais leurs rangs peuvent se mêler, se rompre. Que vers le matin, après quelque insomnie, le sommeil le prenne en train de lire, dans une posture trop différente de celle où il dort habituellement, il suffit de son bras soulevé pour arrêter et faire reculer le soleil, et à la première minute de son réveil, il ne saura plus l'heure, il estimera qu'il vient ä peine de se coucher. Que s'il s'assoupit dans une position encore plus déplacée et divergente, par exemple après dîner assis dans un fauteuil, alors le bouleversement sera complet dans les mondes désorbités, le fauteuil magique le fera voyager a toute vitesse dans le temps et dans l'espace, et au moment d'ouvrir les paupières, il se croira couche quelques mois plus tôt dans une autre contrée.* (5)

> (A man asleep holds in a circle around him the thread of hours, the order of years and of worlds. He consults them instinctively in waking up, and reads there in a second the point of the earth that he occupies, the time that has passed before his wakening; but their ranks can become mixed, break apart. If towards morning, after a night of insomnia, sleep overtakes him as he is reading, *in a posture too different from that in which he habitually sleeps,* and all that is necessary is for him to raise his arm to stop the sun and make it go backwards, and at the first minute of his wakening, he will no longer know the time, and will think that he has just gone to

bed. And if he falls asleep in a position even more displaced and divergent, for example after dinner seated in an arm-chair, the transformation will be complete in worlds out of orbit, the magic armchair causing him to travel at great speed in time and in space, until at the moment of opening his eyes, he will believe that he fell asleep several months earlier in another country.)

Benjamin, who refers to Proust but does not cite this passage, surely had it and others in mind when he made his distinction between *Erlebnis* and *Erfahrung,* between "lived experience" and "experience" that is not simply "lived," if by lived is meant, as it usually is, that which is reducible to the specious unity of self-consciousness. Instead, the dislocation of the body into singular members and nonunifiable experiences traversing multiple places at one and the same time, dislocates that one and the same and opens it to an experience of events that are as singular as they are finite. Or rather, *indefinite*: the never entirely definable singularity of events that are "one" but never simply the "same."

Thus, the sovereignty of the subject is dislocated by an experience of the indefinite singularity of events that inevitably entails both pain and pleasure, fright and joy. By a "motion of limbs" that, as we remember, was Hobbes' definition of life. But it is a life that cannot be assimilated or reduced to the unity of a "whole body," the correlative of that wholeness of the body politic without which sovereignty, as indivisible, cannot be conceived.

That Benjamin turns to literature and poetry, that of Baudelaire and Proust, to find instances of that experience of singularity that is neither simply protective nor projective, that does not turn anxiety into a "signal," as Freud puts it, through which to "prepare" for an assimilation of what is to come. That anxiety, and even terror–can be a source of "pleasure" if not of joy, is an experience that increasingly informs politics today. But whether that pleasure can be acknowledged without being entirely assimilated–whether in short not just a poetics, but a politics of singularity can come to replace the politics of the sovereign self, remains an open question.

Notes

1. Walter Benjamin, *Gesammelte Schriften*, II/1, 141.
2. Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), 475. My italics–SW.
3. Gérard Mariet, introduction to *Léviathan*, by Thomas Hobbes (Paris: Gallimard, 2000), 42.
4. Jacques Derrida, *Speech and Phenomenon*, trans. David B. Allison (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1973), 78-79.
5. Michael Nass, "'One Nation...Indivisible': Jacques Derrida on the Autoimmunity of Democracy and the Sovereignty of God," *Research in Phenomenology* 36:1 (2006): 15.
6. Jacques Derrida, *Specters of Marx*, trans. Peggy Kamuf (New York: Routledge, 1994), 141.
7. In the past few decades this attitude has changed radically in the life-sciences, which has recognized the usefulness and necessity of attenuating immunological reactions in order to "protect" the system–as in the case of organ transplants, the most obvious example of the dependency of the "self" upon "others" in order to survive.
8. Jacques Derrida, "Faith and Knowledge: The Two Sources of 'Religion' at the Limits of Reason Alone," in *Jacques Derrida, Acts of Religion*, ed. Gil Anidjar (New York: Routledge, 2002), 87.
9. Jacques Derrida and Elisabeth Roudinesco, *For What Tomorrow...*, trans. Jeff Fort (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2004), page numbers refer to the French edition, Flammarion, 2003.
10. Derrida puts this (Lacanian) phrase in quotes to signal that it is not one that he endorses, but rather questions throughout this interview and elsewhere, since in his eyes, psychoanalysis does not merely establish another form of "logic," even one of the Unconscious.
11. Sigmund Freud, *Abriß der Psychoanalyse* GS XVII, 79. My translation and emphasis–SW.
12. Sigmund Freud, *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* (New York: Bantam Books, 1972), 52-3.
13. Walter Benjamin, *Gesammelte Schriften* I.2, 615; SW 4, 319. Translated modified–SW.
14. In "The Economic Problem of Masochism," Freud comes to the belated realization that there are certain "tensions" that can be pleasurable, and certain relaxations that can be painful, of which sexual experience is the most obvious instance. From this he concludes that the equation of tension with displeasure, at the basis of the "pleasure principle," cannot be sustained, and that instead of an absolute increase or decrease in tension, it may be questions of "rhythm" that are more relevant to the discrimination of pleasure and displeasure.

# Evasive Beginnings
Aaron Levy

In the process of organizing the *Evasions of Power* conference in 2006 and 2007 with Srdjan Jovanovic Weiss and Katherine Carl, and this publication in the years that followed, questions have presented themselves that became of central concern to my own work as a curator, as well as those institutions and cultural actors with whom I engage more generally. Foremost among these, what might the cultural communities that I am part of aspire to evade, through what practices, and ultimately towards what end, given the complexity of the contemporary socio-political landscape?

I employ the term "evasive" here because a perennial concern of the politics and theory that surrounds the artistic avant-garde has always been the question of power, and what needs to be expanded upon is power as it can be challenged and in turn deployed. Our proximity to, but also our increasing distance from, historical practices from the 1960s and 1970s can guide us in this regard. However, I am interested in getting at another modality than a strictly oppositional stance by cataloging and collecting under the concept of "evasion" other possibilities for practice.[1] Throughout, a persistent question for me is what a practice of evasion can lead to in my work and the work of those around me.

The degree of compromise that is inherent in how contemporary practitioners act upon these questions, in contrast to previous generations that imagined themselves uncompromised, is of particular interest. Insofar as we are always caught up in a web of social and institutional relations, I thus join reflections and analysis of key matters concerning implication and curatorial responsibility in this introduction. I attempt to do so performatively, writing from the inside and from the perspective of one who is himself implicated by the ideas under discussion.[2]

Throughout this essay, I employ words such as "entanglement," which I understand as the condition of being deeply involved with a complicated situation, be it legal, political, cultural, or personal. Entanglement is a term that is at once open and broad enough to encompass different valences and degrees of involvement. Its meaning lies between compromise, which is not necessarily concerned with ethics, and complicity, which is heavily concerned with ethics. By employing terms such as this one, I propose a new way of thinking about the topic, one that acknowledges how a topic such as implication cannot be addressed neatly or at once, and that views the possibility of ever fully disclosing one's entanglements with skepticism insofar as one is in some sense always entangled.

The messy reality of compromise is the subject of Eduardo Cadava's essay "The Promise of Emancipation," one of the many contributions by artists, architects, and scholars especially commissioned for this publication. Cadava explores Ralph Waldo Emerson's considerations of what is possible for those who are committed to social vanguardism yet anticipate the inevitability of political complicity.[3] Cadava suggests that the desire to "evade" power itself belongs to power, and in fact only extends and reinforces it; "one of power's most powerful signatures, its most effective means of installing and continuing its reign," he argues, is its very desire to "disguise or hide itself, dissimulate its force or presence." That evasiveness is complicit with that which it seeks to evade invites us to reconsider avenues for contemporary practice. And it calls for another approach–one that this publication seeks to explore by introducing alternative models that reflect the diversity of perspectives on this topic.

A perennial concern of the politics and theory that surrounds the artistic avant-garde is the question of power and how it can be alternately evaded and employed. I am interested in re-examining this concern in the context of the *Evasions of Power* project, by asking whether we can ever depart from the existing social system or the relations of power in which we always are implicated, or even from the forms or practices that always are more or less in place. But who or what are we aspiring to evade–ourselves,

our colleagues, or the institutional landscape in general? Perhaps our most serious responsibility is that of beginning to acknowledge our own entanglements. And yet, while it would be satisfying to identify particular entanglements as dangerous to the integrity of our pursuits, so that we may seek to at least diminish them and choose the lesser evil, this desire overlooks the fundamental consequence of being entangled in that we can no longer demarcate or separate what is dangerous from what is reassuring. This is perhaps one way to interpret Michel Foucault's argument in the Methods section of the *History of Sexuality* and elsewhere that power must be understood as capillary, which is to say that there is in fact no single external position from which it is possible to act evasively.

Another way to approach this issue is to address the concept of integrity. Typically, integrity is defined as a condition of immunity wherein one resists becoming compromised by power. With this publication, I am interested in complicating this definition by arguing that integrity can only be understood as a relation to power that acknowledges the inevitability of compromise. This realization generates fear in me about the loss of clarity and the lack of absolute outcomes that is profoundly unsettling, but it is also a source of fascination. Indeed, the process of perpetually "crossing the line" and no longer knowing where to situate one's practice politically serves as the generative principle for the *Evasions of Power* project.

In seeking to understand the concept of implication, one must nevertheless see how far the concept can be taken, both as a curator and scholar. In Sarah Nuttall's recent book *Entanglements*, which explores narratives of becoming in post-apartheid South African literature, she argues that entanglement is fundamentally a social relationship, a "condition of being twisted together or entwined, involved with." Insofar as it takes form by complicating or overcoming comfortable distinctions or borders, it implies a "human foldedness" and "speaks to an intimacy gained, even if it was resisted, or ignored or uninvited."[4] It is interesting to consider the political ramifications of this sense of intimacy and the spatial dimension of folding people and ideas in this manner.

For instance, what happens to cultural vanguardism when it becomes intimately folded or intertwined with the state, as in many biennales and related acts of "cultural diplomacy," and how does that impact cultural display? In other words, to what degree can one in fact turn state machinery into an evasive or subversive tool? It is not entirely clear that one can maintain one's self-definition as culturally vanguard in the process, insofar as one who is entangled cannot claim a transcendental perspective or critical point of view. Thus entanglement represents perhaps the greatest of risks, but this is the very risk of reform, and there is no reform that doesn't pass through this risk. To understand the concept at all, and to acknowledge one's complicity, one has to enter into a situation of intimacy in which one can no longer step outside to figure out one's trajectory or perspective with any certainty. And yet, is there any alternative? It is in this sense that the *Evasions of Power* project highlights the inevitable struggle (and inevitable failure) to acknowledge and understand one's implication.

Insofar as one is always compromised in this manner, understanding what constitutes a radical position becomes increasingly hard to decipher. A somewhat extreme example is that of a curator acting as the cultural proxy for a nation-state, such as when I co-curated *Into the Open* for the US Pavilion at the Venice Biennale for Architecture in 2008, or when I traveled to Lahore, Pakistan to engage and work with artists, students, and scholars as a United States Cultural Envoy in 2010.[5] Regardless of how I structured my practice, I remained a representative of a nation-state at war, and was intimately caught up in the symbolic power that acts of representation and cultural dialogue entail. Regardless of state ideology or political leadership (i.e. whether the president was George Bush or Barack Obama), the general question remains as to how a cultural envoy representing state ideology can ever fully challenge the status that being a state envoy entails. But what, precisely, does it mean to be a cultural envoy, a term which seemingly joins cultural representation and the representation of state ideology through diplomacy? And to what degree does a cultural envoy necessarily or blindly reproduce state ideology? In fact, is this ideology ever presented to the public in a fixed and monolithic way, or does

it more customarily take the form of multifaceted, changing, and at times contradictory approaches?

My unspoken aspiration in co-curating *Into the Open* was to at least complicate matters, by taking advantage of the state's desire to disengage from cultural production and rely entirely upon the private sector. Today the private sector in the United States paradoxically has come to assume responsibility for those services once provided for by the public sector, which range from welfare to food and security and even incarceration. We can add to this list cultural diplomacy itself, which in the United States is reliant on the private sector to produce the very cultural offerings discussed in these pages. But to what degree is national representation supposed to be reliant on entrepreneurship and self-interest, and to what degree is it precisely the responsibility of governmental organizations?[6] Is it ever possible to reach a point of compromise in such circumstances, wherein one is only partially implicated and thus subverting the supposedly reactionary positions of the state?

Paradoxically, in the case of *Into the Open* a certain intimacy with the ambitions of the state to encourage private sector participation enabled me to espouse positions of critique and creativity. In this sense, perhaps creativity was made possible only on account of my own political compromises. *Into the Open* ran the risk, however, of aspiring to uphold competing ideologies at the same time, and thus idealized the freedom to act unencumbered that is, perhaps, a peculiarly American fantasy. Can a scholar or curator ever truly avoid taking a stand by positioning oneself in multiple locations or orienting oneself in multiple directions? In other words, to what degree is a project's openness to multiple readings or interpretations, which often is understood to be a positively egalitarian attribute, in fact suggest a certain feebleness or inability to declare a single position and take sides?[7]

If this publication explores questions concerning political and cultural entanglement, it does so with the understanding that entanglement is a

peculiar and somewhat problematic thing to seek out. The very aspiration to cross borders and embody a vanguard condition of evasiveness is a contradiction, for one who is implicated can never be entirely certain that he or she is either in the vanguard or even subversive. Moreover, the process entails, at its simplest, placing oneself in the metaphorical position of sleeping with one's enemies. Working from the understanding that the very idea of purity is a construct, I am interested in practices where one finds oneself becoming something altogether different. It is precisely in these moments of entanglement that we can begin to comprehend politics, because politics is a process that unfolds only in situations of compromise, rather than in those when one has a simple choice. This conceptualization is beautifully developed by Nuttall, who argues that confronting one's own complicity often involves acknowledging the deceptions that have been told to the self and to others, if only in order to become something, someone different. It is in this sense that evasiveness is frequently revealed to be a process of becoming, a transformative experience in which one becomes someone one was not in the beginning.

Cadava reminds us in his contribution to this volume that political action must be thought in relation to this condition of not knowing what one's efforts will accomplish in the future, but also of being open to the ordeal of undecidability and discomfort that being entangled embodies–a process that cannot be measured and whose outcome cannot be calculated in advance, and which necessitates negotiating under the shadow of complicity. Implication entails, in other words, a sense of being in the thick of things, without clear beginning or end. As Cadava concludes, to be implicated is to be "unable to stand secure in the finality of a single gesture." Only by accepting this lack of finality and closure can we properly understand the concept in the first place.

One of the central themes of this publication is that our identities are inextricably bound up with and entangled with those of others, particularly when we collaborate with others. I am thus indebted to my dear colleagues, mentors, and friends Srdjan Jovanovic Weiss and Katherine Carl, with whom it has always been a pleasure to undertake the many

intellectual and logistical journeys required to bring this project to reality. I also thank the many contributors who have so generously shared their work and thought with us in this volume.

Notes

1. Further compounding this predicament, I am worried that the left has often relied on political discourses that reproduce the aggressiveness it should instead resist, as the Italian philosopher Rosi Braidotti has recently argued (see "The Politics of Peace," in *Perpetual Peace* (Philadelphia: Slought Foundation and Syracuse University Humanities Center), 2011. I feel that there is an ambiguity concerning how to speak about activism and responsibly enact change which is further exacerbated when we undertake inter-cultural collaborations, where the concept of "culture" itself is not immediately translatable across such different social and political contexts.
2. Such questions have frequently been explored by scholars in business ethics, urban planning, anthropology, history, sociology, and literary studies, although always briefly and in passing, rather than as a structuring concept in their work, and without acknowledgment of the author's own implications, as I have sought to do here.
3. Eduardo Cadava, "The Politics of Emancipation" in *Evasions of Power*, ed. Katherine Carl, Aaron Levy, and Srdjan Jovanovic Weiss (Philadelphia: Slought Publications, 2011).
4. Sarah Nuttall, *Entanglements: Literary and Cultural Reflections on Post-Apartheid* (Johannesburg: Witwatersrand University Press, 2009), 58.
5. For more on the exhibition *Into the Open*, which I co-curated with William Menking and Andy Sturm, and which was co-conceived with Deborah Gans and Teddy Cruz, see http://intotheopen.org.
6. The very title of *Into the Open* was intended to prompt a series of related questions: what does "openness" mean today, and to what degree does "openness" imply freedom? Is the sense of freedom that the private sector is associated with in fact an ideological construct of a state apparatus that seeks to relinquish responsibility? What might happen if the public sector were to assume responsibility for this sense of freedom?
7. And yet, it is important to recall that the reason some projects get realized and others do not is not always reflective of ideology. It can also reflect pragmatic, circumstantial, or even idiosyncratic circumstances. That is to say, bureaucracy is often but not always ideologically driven, and representing two different ideological positions, while awkward for cultural practitioners, is not all that unusual for career diplomats–in fact, they perpetually find themselves having to do so with each political election. Martin Rauchbauer, in conversation with the author, at the Austrian Cultural Forum, February 24, 2010.

# Breaking the Image, Expanding the Narrative
Anselm Franke

*Breaking the Narrative, Expanding the Image* is the programmatic subtitle of a book published by Californian video artist Doug Aitken, a former director of video clips, whose immersive and multi-channel video landscapes have been touring the world's museum, and recently the MoMA's entire façade. The book includes interviews with contemporary artists and pioneers of experimental film and video art. The book's framing narrative and its model of history amount, by and large, to an aesthetic progress in the shape of an increasing expansion of art into the infinite and subjective world of possibilities of moving images, away from the limitations, disciplinary strictures, and restrictions of linear narration and the narrative genres. The hypothesis which I will begin to develop in the following pages is that this form of historiography, in the sense of a progress that opens up ever more possibilities and freedoms, is problematic; that the space of possibilities of moving images it evokes, and with it the academy's entire rhetoric of possibility, have effectively "shifted," and become structurally indistinguishable from commercial worlds of imagery and the media's landscapes of information. The sphere of images presents configurations of control (and precisely non-infinite possibilities) that are manifest in a globalized regime of visibility, and whose effectiveness consists precisely in occupying and neutralizing the imaginative capacity in such a way that it cannot by itself register the inversion or shift of the rhetoric of possibility. That is to say, under today's conditions, *everything should* really *always be possible,* yet no language is available to analyze and externalize the fact that much remains nonetheless, or precisely because of these circumstances, *impossible*.

As recent popular sociological studies[1] have shown, so-called artistic critique (which demands freedom, autonomy, and creativity against a capitalism organized by Fordism and disciplinary structures) has been, if not positively turned on its head, then at least long ago been incorporated

by capitalism, rendering it a central motor of capitalist development. Yet if it had been truly turned on its head, as some maintain, that would mean that, as in the perversion of language under totalitarian regimes, unfreedom would have been created in the name of freedom, and heteronomy in the name of autonomy. Yet that is not quite the point. For freedom, creativity, and autonomy have indubitably increased in many areas and are parts of a lived praxis. If there is nonetheless legitimate doubt regarding this freedom, this autonomy, and this creativity, that has to do not with their inversion into their contraries but rather with the general conditions or backdrop before which this freedom is taking place, that is, with the position of freedom and with its meaning. This shift of backdrop will be my subject here. Freedom has, in this perspective, been neither turned on its head nor realized in an "originary" sense: rather, freedom no longer means the same thing–the entire perspective of the concept itself has shifted together with the backdrop and the general conditions under which freedom takes place. That may initially seem an entirely ordinary process; after all, the denotation of many concepts changes. But in this special case, the adaptation or reconception of the concept seems difficult, if not impossible. That is to say, the concept, and hence the idea, of freedom at present withstands conceptual reconstruction, similar to the way political concepts such as emancipation do. The shifting of the background of freedom means that freedom can no longer be thought without its background, which latter at the same time runs counter to the content of the concept of freedom, de facto reducing it *ad absurdum*. As an economic force of production, it is enclosed in a frame, and this enclosure stands in open contradiction to the originary meaning of freedom as it is still expressed in the artistic critique I initially mentioned. It stands in such contradiction not in the ideological sense according to which freedom and economy would be fundamentally irreconcilable, but rather because the exploitation of the creative forces of production eludes these forces themselves, that is, escapes the subject's control. The subject is thus deprived, at a decisive point, of its sovereignty, and absent such sovereignty, freedom remains without social efficacy. Before we return to the problem of sovereignty, a connection between the development of artistic critique and the space of

art–the real as much as the symbolic space–suggests itself. This space of art in a double sense has become, with the incorporation of artistic critique into the heart of capitalism, a paradigm for what I called above a backdrop or general conditions. The space of art makes art possible. It is an ultimate space of possibility, a space of freedom, of autonomy and creativity. At the same time, it comprises the possibilities it opens up, and in a certain respect neutralizes them by conferring upon them a special character: that of art. An expression in the space of art–and this is the central difference–has no immediate consequences whatsoever. That is also precisely the basis of its legal status. The freedom of the space of art becomes a sort of trial run of freedom, one that is proven in the aesthetic experience. Yet does not this status of being a trial run also describe the form of freedom generally exercised today insofar as freedom happens, as it were, "parenthetically," enclosed by a neutralizing frame? In comparison to earlier times, we are certainly surrounded by considerably more creative, self-determined, and free subjects. Yet is not this freedom neutralized, in a manner extraordinarily similar to the status of art, by the framework, the backdrop before which it takes place? The space of art, one might say, has immigrated into society. The art in it is the creativity of subjects made productive, and an expression of their freedom. The difference remains obvious: the space of art is a model space, and as such a self-referential and self-reflexive space. The subject, by contrast, is real only when its actions have effects or consequences. And that is precisely the problem when the space of art becomes a model for society, subsuming creative expression under its system: the creativity and freedom of the subject demands to be consequential. Freedom's neutralization and symbolic relativization reduces it *ad absurdum*. The inability to produce effects is for the subject tantamount to the loss of sovereignty, if not of reality. Yet it is precisely this central difference between the space of art and society that is abrogated by the success of artistic critique.

Yet the abrogation of this distinction is anticipated in the imagination, the imaginative capacity. For the imagination is the subject's model space. Only there can the subject imagine something, or conceive a world, without

immediate consequences. Conversely, the imagination is also the "reality" of the space of art. It is the field where a difference has always already held sway. As a cultural laboratory of trial runs and innovations, the imagination is the connecting link between society and the space of art. The space of art, as a space of possibility, thus represents a pure form of the imagination as a space of possibility. The so-called critical potential of the space of art consists in its ability to present *something else* to the imagination.

The notion of the imagination as a space of possibility–a space of freedom–is defined by the same idea that also constitutes the concept of freedom, unreconstructed to this day, as asserted by artistic critique. From this perspective, the imagination is not properly speaking a space of possibility but rather the idea (or auratic phantasm) of such a space. Everything but freedom prevails in the imagination. For one cannot simply imagine everything to be *different*, just as the difference produced by the space of art only appears to be neutral. The imagination is not just a White Cube that could be populated *ad libitum* with *something else*; rather, it is what holds the world together. It is, as it were, the imagistic glue between disparate elements and impressions.[2]

The imagination is the ability to create connections. The *other* that we incessantly encounter, in the form of new impressions of the world, calls the imagination into action, which assigns it its place in the symbolic order. In its unconditional affiliation with the symbolic order, the imagination is fundamentally bound to social scripts that are of decisive importance to cognition. That is to say, the imagination itself plays a mediating role between the collective and the individual. This idea is expressed by the notion of "social imaginaries." In this sense, the imaginary is comparable to a map consisting of social scripts.[3]

The latter are structural principles, so to speak, of general conditions and of the social organizational backdrop. This step is of decisive importance: it means to regard the imagination not as an individual and isolated space,

as expressed by the image of the White Cube, but as that which organizes the social backdrop. Since this backdrop almost always appears in everyday life as "given," in its naturalized and virtually non-negotiable form, the labor of the imagination generally also takes place in the unconscious. It becomes active only during an obvious shift of the backdrop. A classic case of such an obvious shift of the backdrop takes place, for instance, in traveling, something that, as one says, mobilizes the imagination.

The idea of the imagination as a space of freedom is a phantasm whose power remains undiminished to this day. In reality, it does not describe a space of freedom; it has not even a notion of what that might be. It is a compensatory space filled with phantasms of freedom that are the symptoms of real unfreedom. It is in this sense conceived as a space in which everything becomes possible in thinking that is impossible in reality. This notion of the *freedom of the imagination* functions *as* the negation of unfreedom, as a compensatory phantasm.

The problem of the two, then, presents as a problem of synthesis or of double negation; as a question, that is, as to the possibility of producing *something else* that draws not merely on the negation of what exists but transcends the opposition itself. The core terms and discursive weapons of artistic critique–though conceived as essentially real–are in reality completely bound to this gesture of rejection, for their entire imaginary content is negation. If the compensatory phantasmatic spaces of freedom and of the imagination are such obstinate conceptions, the underlying problem is that the opposition on which they are based has itself dissolved. The concept feeds on a phantom tension. The shift of the concept does not appear in the concept itself. The concept produces a "scene" of freedom, yet it cannot indicate that the scenery has changed; that the play, indeed, is a different one. The form of unfreedom *against* which freedom constitutes itself no longer exists; at least no longer in the form that is so central for the conceptual content of the notion of freedom. This is what capitalism's "embrace of artistic critique" amounts to. Artistic critique's victory was too fast. Yet what is this unfreedom, now a phantom, whose negation

constitutes the content of freedom and of the imagination's space of possibility? It is the phantom of the disciplinary society and its mechanisms of drilling and curtailing in manifold ways the individual, which the concept of freedom cannot cease to challenge. A concept of freedom obtained from negation is tied to the conspicuity of unfreedom as well as to the immediate experience and evidence of curtailment and drill. With the transition from a society of discipline to a so-called society of control, in which the disciplinary functions have been introjected, this conspicuity of unfreedom is no longer present. No one can state any longer why he or she is not free; everyone is to blame for their own unfreedom. Here, again, the abovementioned effect emerges: the effect of the disappearance of backdrop and general conditions in favor of a vague space of possibility in which the phantasmatic possibility of freedom replaces freedom itself.

If we attempt to restore to the disciplinary society, now a phantom, its body–that is, to reconnect it to the form of appearance of what it once was–we rediscover it inside the subject's core. Self-determination and discipline now *are* the form of freedom, autonomy, and creativity as they are practiced. That is to say, what was once unfreedom is today the core of freedom; of a freedom that is at once an imperative: you must be free! The autonomous and creative subject has thus become the stage for an incessantly repeated scene from the drama of negation: self-invention is staged as a comedy of liberation from a regime that no longer exists but is maintained by the hollowed act of negation. This resilient negation is, properly speaking, the mobilized subject's force of production. "Resistance against the dominant order is futile!" thus becomes "Resistance is productive!" The negation produces a tension that is discharged in a self-engendering synthetic act of permanent reinvention–one could also call it the production of a "minimum difference." This tension is resolved in a synthetic act that quite literally invents "a world." Synthesis and the minimum difference are active products of the imagination. One might thus rephrase the imperative, adapting it further, as an interiorized "Manage your resource, negation, which produces difference!" The imagination, then, consists in the labor of balancing this difference, and this attempt at

balancing *is* precisely the productive act. In this sense, immaterial labor is the labor of the imagination. Just as the imperative of the society of discipline was expressed in the institutionalization of any and all forms of negation, it is now the commandment of self-management. The consequences of shift are immense, for it is an inversion of the inside to the outside, with far-reaching consequences for our understanding of the subject and the individual. The consequences of bad self-management are obvious. During the days of the disciplinary society, humans had to be drilled in order to make them capable of being members of a society that needed to guard its borders, constantly threatened by disorder (though in reality it was about the assertion of a specific form of sovereignty). There, terror is fundamental to the becoming of humans. The synthesis of the world is realized in the drilled bodies. The symptom of this drill was the neurosis, as the revolt of desire against prohibition. In the age of disciplinarity, the imagination is always already a pathological fantasy. Today, the consequence of the bad management of negation is the slide into depression, a special form of neutralized negativity.

While the fight for freedom was, in the past, a matter of getting out of the institutions,[4] we find ourselves in the paradoxical situation today of constantly seeking to gain entry to something within which we have long been, and yet to which we have to obtain ever-renewed admission. This fact is expressed in that labor of self-engendering, pseudo-immanent synthesis in which everyone is the psychological conditioner of his or her own world. Does not this describe the psychopathological dimension of the declaration: There is no more outside? For with the withdrawal of backdrop or frame, the existence of an outside too is negated: the foreground "masks" the background, thus producing a certain reality effect, which also means that the reality of the subject is fetishistically dependent on its own image. This "false" synthesis (the image of a synthesis) and its superficial reality effect indeed resemble the commodity fetish: the effect of the fetish is an objectivation that amounts to a blinding. The ostensible independence of the object from the viewer is what endows this very object (or, here, the objectivized imagination) with powers and a life of its own, "animating" it.

The anthropologist Michael Taussig has described this effect as the "phantom objectivity" of capitalist culture, which always presents backdrop and general conditions as "naturally given" by covering up their "social constructedness," that is, their emergence and the immediate conditions of their production. Freedom becomes a phantom of freedom at the moment when it no longer addresses, negotiates, and offers for debate its own origins and conditions. The concept of freedom itself is caught in a phantom opposition (freedom vs. unfreedom), the repeated and pathological attempts at whose resolution (in ever new world-syntheses) become the actual force of production. In this phantom constellation, there really is no longer an outside insofar as the outside produced, at any moment, by the synthetic labor of the imagination withdraws together with the backdrop and the framework, as the truly productive categories. An outside is conceivable only as a dialectical tension, that is, as a tension between the present and the absent, and in the form of a dialectical consciousness of the production of the outside. It must be realized that the actual production of an outside, when it is successful–for instance, in the form of a new language of corporeality that actually evades the society of discipline–immediately conjures up the latter's old institutions, which literally *re-enclose* this outside. The outside thus appears as a phantom outside in two different forms: as the imagined outside, it is the motor of the expansive phantasmatic freedom, which manifests itself in the rhetoric of "everything is possible." And in the form of an enclosed outside, an invisibility, one of whose manifestations is the clinical impossibility of the synthetic act of self-engendering. Strictly speaking, it has to be said that the last "real" outside (the one that is engendered by escapism) was completely abolished geographically when the last island was mapped, and that every outside since then has been an immanent outside, an enclosed outside. The exterior and interior exiles are virtually indistinguishable from interior and exterior asylums. They are thus a strictly pathological state of exception–an anomaly. There is no longer an outside, of the kind the ideologists of dropping out and the hippies' back-to-nature fantasies hallucinated. Rather, these fantasies must themselves be regarded as symptoms, as phantasmatic liberties in the sense described above. They

represent compensatory spaces in which it is not freedom but its impossibility that articulates itself. Movies such as *The Beach* (2000), moreover, offer excellent illustrations that out there, in the outside, there's always already someone there, and in most cases, that someone is a warlord or a guerilla fighter. It is not far thence to lawlessness, which is, and this too has been much discussed, the paradigmatic form of the enclosed outside.

The displacement of the distinction between inside and outside into the productive subject's labor itself only appears to be in contradiction with this observation. The subject is a border patrol and producer who has always already been governed by the fear that he might stand on the wrong side of the border. The fear of falling outward into a nonexistent outside is what organizes the interiorized disciplinary institution. By contrast, to be inside means to be in the picture, in the know. The productive subject's gainful employment consists in earning a spot in the symbolic order.

Everyone knows that madness is an exclusionary dislocation from the symbolic order–that is, a dislocation in the signifying relation, of the border between inside and outside and between real and imaginary. The madman, then, is mad only because the synthesis he performs cannot be synchronized with that of society, and he cannot transcend it. Hence, he cannot attain the negation of negation, and this is what deprives him of his sovereignty and consigns him to pathology: the impossibility of a self-produced inclusion. Madness, just like Utopia, is thus a question of the imagination and of the possibility of a world-engendering synthesis. Synthesis is today a question of energy. "Wanting to get into the picture," in which we have always already been included, is immediately tied up with access to the synthetic energies of the social imaginary. The individual's capacity is limited. Synthesis is usually social synthesis, and the energy for syntheses is a social energy. The deployment of individual forces of production obstructs the access to collectivization, to a collective time–for that is precisely the meaning of synchronization.

The psychopathological equivalent of the enclosed outside, the "false synthesis," is depression. Depression is described as a "false unity with the world" because the sense of unity or connection with the world felt in depression is accompanied by the inability to touch the world or the things in it, or to construct an animating tension based on difference with them–or in fact to enter into any meaningful interrelation with them, and to act. For it is precisely this false unity that systematically poisons the atmosphere within. If one assumes that the co-optation of artistic critique by capitalism is accompanied by the subject's introjection of the previously disciplinary principles of government, the questions that artistic critique raises today are not merely questions of psychopathology, but generally concern a healthy subject's normal functioning. Alain Ehrenberg describes depression as a "discontinuation of that 'normal' function," as the burden of the permanent labor-negation-difference-synthesis under which the individual collapses.[5]

Ehrenberg's undertaking, important for the present context, is to place depression in a historical context. He describes how, around 1970, depression supplanted neurosis as the psychopathological condition of the masses and the disease of civilization, at the moment when capitalism began to respond to social critique's equally urgent demands (of social equality) by adopting principles of artistic critique, which it slowly but inexorably made its own. Ehrenberg equally describes the historical transition of this period against the backdrop of disciplinary society. Artistic critique, which leads to today's subject, with its special aesthetic consciousness, emerges precisely as the negation of the disciplinary regime. Ehrenberg historicizes the connection between social form, configuration of subjectivity, and psychopathology: the society of discipline governs the subject by virtue of the duality of "permitted" vs. "prohibited," whose immediate effect is neurosis.  He calls this neurosis a "narrative" illness, one that tells stories and returns to imaginary scenes. The broken narrative is a forced synthesis of the world that conflicts with the needs of the subject, a conflict that is in turn expressed in the neurosis. His characterization of this illness as "narrative" offers interesting crosslinks: were not the cultural rebellions and aesthetic innovations especially of the

period of upheaval, the 1960s and 1970s, largely directed against the narrative aesthetic regimes and the disciplinary order, with its social conventions, mirrored in them? Were not the most significant innovations in theory directed against the modernistically unified, decontextualized, and sovereign subject; and (in parallel with the process of decolonialization) against the narratives of development as well as, later, quite generally against the "grand narratives"? Yet one must recall also the obverse side of narrative: the imaginary script, which can also be described as a possibility of development, as a possible becoming-other, or as desire. Moreover, one must acknowledge the narrative (in this case, history) as the fundamental condition of continuity, and hence of any form of legitimate claim. The "narrative" illness of the neurosis thus stands in close interrelation to the "talking cure," and to the decisive step Freud took when he moved away from the "visual theater" of hysteria and toward narration as a therapeutic principle. For is not psychotherapy precisely concerned with imaginative work on narration, that is, about the reconstruction of lost continuities, the reinstatement of lost sovereignty, and the reconnection of broken narratives? Ehrenberg describes the transition from the "narrative" neurosis to depression using dualities that are characteristic of the respective principle of government: from "prohibited / permitted" to "possible / impossible." This transition only too obviously redoubles the introjection described in the beginning of this essay: under this regime (which we might call the regime of possibility), everything is a matter of the subject's capacity. We have already designated this capacity, which now weighs down on the subject as the creative imperative, as the imaginary-synthetic capacity.

This central synthetic capacity of the subject, as well as the illness of the inability of false synthesis and depression, are accompanied by a special visual regime that I will here call, with Doug Aitken, the "expanded image," which supplants the narrative regime and represents, as a "globalized image theater," the equivalent to the visual scenery of hysteria. It is of central importance in this context that the concept of the "globalized image" brings the imagination and visibility together. It is the defining characteristic

of the "expanded image," which comprises the entire sphere of visibility as the sphere of imagination. Anything is conceivable in it only when it can also be rendered visible, that is, when it can be traduced into phantom objectivity. Since everything is in principle conceivable in the regime of possibility, everything is forced into visibility, yet not mobilized in the sense of innumerable metaphors and metamorphoses but, on the contrary, arrested. Any possibility of a re-animation of freedom, then, is tied primarily to a perception of this inversion: possibility as impossibility, mobility as immobility. Where imagination and possibility are being suggested, what is really at issue is a gentle, framing, enclosing control whose violent and disciplinary side is left to the subject. The point, then, is to escape this blinding without falling into its dialectical negation. To disengage the space of freedom from the arbitrary rhetoric of possibility, and to speak instead a language of pathology. The latter is to be understood as a "wild" language, one that holds a mirror up to the false synthesis of freedom's phantom scenery. It is a language that discerns the impossibility in the promise of possibility. The dimension of freedom that opens up in this form of dialectical consciousness shows that any synthesis, any "world" produces an outside, a non-synthesizable remainder and a multiplicity of possible, yet in no way arbitrary, counter-narratives of production that haunts even the most suggestive, even the most perfectly constructed image-world.

What does this mean for the most recent revision of the concept of relationality based on aesthetic experiences in art? Relationality is conceivable only as a reciprocal and mutual process—as a "dialogical imagination" (Bakthin) and constantly moving result of a balance of power between subjectivation and objectivation. Yet what is such "dialogue" other than the negotiation of its terms and conditions, its own frame? A dialogue whose conditions are non-negotiable is not relational: all possible interrelations in it are already prescribed and enclosed as though in a script. Nothing then remains but the immersive image of a dialogue, the execution of a script whose transformative potential has been neutralized–an inconsequential dialogue. Yet this is precisely the situation the global regime of visibility engenders everywhere. This regime is

manifest in a "clinical" form, for instance, in the global expansion of CCTV-surveilled zones of security-visibility; that is, it serves to control mobility in a state that is always already critical ("mobility" denoting here any form of motion, as change of position and as allegory for a "becoming-other"). Doug Aitken's book misses this dimension at the decisive point: the "marketing" of possibility as the poetry of possibility remains unaffected, a poetry whose reflective dimensions, as far as they are present, may comprise the techniques of imag[in]eering but not the conditions under which one will be able to exit an image-world after an immersion in it; let alone to transform it, that is, make its frame subject to debate. Aitken's book, with its programmatically articulate subtitle, overlooks the fact that it is today no longer the narrative mode that serves, repressively, as the limit of possibility, but precisely this dimension of the world of imagery. The *image* of possibility renders the *other history* impossible. And history is the fundamental condition and the social background that determines the meaning of any image. As a "broken narrative," it neutralizes the meaning of any image in favor of a phantom effect of unalterable reality. My intention in the present text was to retrace the foundations of this reversal–the migration of the ideas that still determined the beginnings of experimental film and non-linear video art–in connection with a discussion of the problem of "freedom" in the context of the fate of so-called "artistic critique," whose programmatic counter-suggestion to Doug Aitken's slogan is: *Break the Image, Expand the Narrative.*

Notes

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1. Luc Boltanski and Eve Chiapello, *Der Neue Geist des Kapitalismus* (Konstanz: UVK, 2006).
2. Immanuel Kant, *Kritik der reinen Vernunft* (Paderborn: Voltmedia, 2005).
3. Cornelius Castoriadis, *The Imaginary Institutions of Society* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1995) and Charles Taylor, *Modern Social Imaginaries* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2004).
4. Ulrich Gutmair, "Kalt da draußen, bunt hier drin," netzeitung.de, October 31, 2006, http://www.netzeitung.de/voiceofgermany/449816.html.
5. Alain Ehrenberg, *Das Erschöpfte Selbst: Depression und Gesellschaft in der Gegenwart* (Campus Verlag: Frankfurt am Main, 2004).

# Beyond Dialectics of Adjustment and Freedom
Katherine Carl

Abrupt transition of cities has produced new responses by individuals to their changing spatial circumstances. Many contemporary artists who have experienced such shifts over the past ten to twenty years express in their art the spatial, civic, and psychological implications of geographies undergoing transition. These personal navigations of the spatialization of power produce imagery from the experience of encounter of the constant dynamism of individual psychology with geography, itself in continual motion.

Contemporary artists including Ursula Biemann, Danica Dakic, Isaac Julien, Kristina Leko, Ksenija Turcic, and the project *Salon de Fleurus* offer approaches to the public sphere as a transubjective spatialization of psychological space. Bracha Lichtenberg Ettinger's psychoanalytic theory of "trans-subjective matrixial borderspace" can be employed usefully in tandem with these artistic practices. She emphasizes relations constructed out of benevolent differentiation, as she views Freud's "'feeling of oceanic immersion in the world' not as fusion or undifferentiation but as borderlinking-in-differentiation in a compassionate resonance chamber."[1] In a different tone, Manuel DeLanda's assemblage theory of networks can extend these artistic and psychoanalytic intersections to the scale of social space. He stresses the construction of subjectivity in social terms by asserting that "the subject emerges as relations of exteriority are established among the contents of experience."[2]

Ksenija Turcic relentlessly plumbs the geography of emotional interiors demonstrating how this terrain is negotiated in outward expression. In her video installation *Circle* (2003), pairs of people are shown interacting for a few moments; they may share a laugh, argue harshly, or embrace rapturously. To introduce each new pair and their particular situation, the men and women's expressive movements carry vastly more meaning than

any dialogue could. As the video evolves, individuals from a previous pair turn up in a new relationship, confounding any attempt on the part of the viewer to attach permanence to the identity of the character, let alone to identify to which relationship he or she "belongs."

Ksenija Turcic's art embodies what Immanuel Kant termed "unsocial sociability"—a separation combined with union. His notion evokes, as Julia Kristeva puts it, "at the same time our tendency to create societies and the constant resistance we put up against them by threatening to split away."[3] She tries a different approach in the video installation *I Love Myself* (2003). Turcic herself kneels in front of the camera, takes in a deep breath, and pleadingly intones over and over "I love myself," attempting to convince herself of this even more than the viewer. She has not necessarily given up on external relations, but first must pause to acknowledge the foreign terrains within herself. Turcic's investigation of the continuous recalibration of subjectivity resonates with Bracha Lichtenberg Ettinger's notion that in matrixial borderspace, distance-in-proximity is continuously reattuned.[4] Matrixial borderspace has a feminine dimension based on prebirth intimate sharing. "Subjectivity here is an encounter between I and uncognized yet intimate non-I neither rejected nor assimilated…A transgressive psychic position in which the co-emergence and co-fading is prior to the I versus others, a different passageway to others and to knowledge arises–suitable for transformative links that are not frozen into objects."[5]

Turcic's oeuvre focuses precisely on this unresolvable ambiguity of human interaction. "In the matrixial borderspace, there is never One-split subject nor its total want-in-being, but rather marginal and migratory severality"[6] according to Ettinger. It provides for "An immense invisible transmissivity."[7] Turcic uninhibitedly investigates both the intense freedoms and the devastating possibilities of this specific type of border-linking.

While Turcic navigates the matrixial borderspace of personal relations, Ursula Biemann is concerned with personal circumstances in the political instability of territories. Her *Black Sea Files* (2003-4) documents in ten

videos her extensive research on the transition of the Southern Caucasus and Caspian basin as corporations are transforming the region by building pipelines and transportation networks to extract crude oil from the region.

Biemann recorded video file #4, titled *Displacement*, in a Kurdish neighborhood on the outskirts of Ankara, Turkey. Approximately 1000 Kurds there made a living from gathering and recycling paper, glass, and plastic, despite ongoing harassment from city officials to get them to vacate the land. One morning, city bulldozers invaded; *Displacement* records the Kurds' defiance of the invasion. They burned their painstakingly gathered recyclables rather than surrender them to the authorities. As Biemann points out in her written log accompanying the video, "as an act of resistance, the Kurds set the garbage on fire because, for them, paper is as valuable a resource as oil is for others. File #4 is a record of people's displacement, their urban struggle, their loss of land. It is at the same time a reflection on the practice and conditions of image making in the drama of the moment when a thousand citizens lose their existence in front of our eyes."[8] In *Displacement*, the confrontation is juxtaposed with a quiet image of Biemann in her studio, as she struggled with what it meant to gather these images. "I vacillated between feeling the urgency of documenting the conspicuous injustice inherent in the violent act of eviction and the reluctance of representing human crisis as a spectacle."[9]

The Kurds experienced the destruction of their system of associations as a result of their physical expulsion from their territory by the authorities. As DeLanda states, "Any process which takes the subject back to the state it had prior to the creation of fixed associations between ideas…can destabilize personal identity."[10] In a different way, Biemann's witness of and participation in the situation has also had a destabilizing or deterritorializing effect on her identity. She questions her role as an artist and human subject. This awareness arising from destabilization is an example of the creative potential and ethical responsibilities of the fragile matrixial borderspace described by Ettinger. "Metamorphosis is the ensemble of transmission and reattunment by which I and non-I co-emerge, co-change

and co-fade within a shareable web. Copoiesis (departing from Varela's notion of autopoiesis) is the aesthetical and ethical creative potentiality of a metramorphic weaving in subjectivizing matrixial moments."[11]

Kristina Leko's large-scale multi-media artwork *Cheese and Cream* (2002-3) embodies this ethical attention. Because of war and economic and political transition in the Western Balkans, hundreds of thousands of persons have relocated within the Western Balkans and emigrated to Europe and the United States. At the same time, the population faces changing geographical and economic borders, and furthermore they face changes instituted in anticipation of membership of the European Union, still some years in the future.

Kristina Leko has been buying cheese and cream for many years at Dolac market in the heart of Zagreb and through her chats with the milkmaids learned about the hardships they face as Croatia plans to enter the European Union in coming years. If they are forced to abide by European Union standards for the production and sale of dairy products, these women will not be able to afford to continue the businesses that they have built up over their whole life. Leko interviewed 448 milkmaids and produced photographs, video, and audio statements, and she gathered statistics about their trade through a questionnaire. Her "declaration on milkmaids" asks that the milkmaids be protected as a form of cultural heritage so they can continue to be part of the traditional Zagreb marketplace. The project raises a critical point about determining what should be categorized business and what is the domain of cultural heritage in a post-socialist country transitioning to a market economy.

In addition to complicating the issues of physical and economic mobility, the project also provides a compelling twist on Kant's notion of hospitality. This is the "right of a stranger not to be treated as an enemy when he arrives in the land of another,"[12] which grew out of his thought that humans share the earth, so hospitality is the natural state. The corollary to this is that the acknowledgement of difference is inscribed at the very heart of the

universal republic; thus Kant advocated co-existence. Leko proclaims that the milkmaids's customs should not be treated by their new "host" (the EU) as enemy and alien outright.

Another artwork that is deeply concerned with this twist of ideology relevant to cultural heritage is the anonymous *Salon de Fleurus*. This long-term installation for over ten years in a small private interior in New York's Soho presents the collection of Gertrude Stein's and Alice B. Toklas's salon in Paris from the 1930s. Upon visiting the Salon, after being welcomed by the knowledgeable doorman, the viewer can enjoy the Picassos, Matisses, and Braques in the ambience of another place and time. This displaced collection of treasures created by a group of anonymous artists point to a permanent instability in any attempts to construct a solid European identity. The artworks that have become emblems of European modernism were collected by the American ex-patriate Gertrude Stein. In turn, works by these artists became the focus of Alfred Barr's construction of the new Museum of Modern Art's collection in New York, thus defining what canonical modern art would become. Modern art became re-inscribed as American as the next generation of the Abstract Expressionists were all creating and exhibiting in New York. This can be compared to today's situation of expanding Europe.

All of the history of the collection of the Museum of Modern Art can be learned by talking with the doorman at *Salon de Fleurus*, who himself is an exile and a former artist. On a visit to the Salon, after investigating the walls crowded with masterworks and the nooks and crannies filled with small artifacts, the visitor can settle into an overstuffed chair, listen to victrola music and enjoy intimate salon style conversation on a wide range of topics. Manuel DeLanda discusses stability and instability of conversation, following from Erving Goffmann, in relation to building assemblages of interpersonal relations. Conversation adds layers of identity to persons, and it can be said, to whole situations, ideologies, and preconceived notions. The persona one projects in encounters with others is an image that is not an expression of who they are, but who they want to

be.[13] Equilibrium is the goal. The material aspect is co-presence, which affects this equilibrium. Furthermore, "a conversation may be said to be territorialized by behavioural processes defining its borders in space and in time."[14]

As the doorman Goran Djordjevic tells visitors, the Salon is always changing, sometimes noticeably, other times unnoticeably. *Salon de Fleurus* experiments with the territorializing capabilities of the conversation, encouraging the creation of a new intellectual, spatial and visual terrain at every single visit. On the equilibrium of the conversation, DeLanda further notes that "any event that destabilizes the conversation or blurs its boundaries may be considered deterritorializing."[15] Non-sequitors and inappropriate comments jar the equilibrium and cohesion of the assemblage being built from the conversation. A small but telling example of this once occurred on a visit to the Salon when suddenly the scratchy victrola music stopped with the noticeable click of a tape recorder button. This sound was quite out of sync with the 1930's surroundings, and as the doorman turned over the cassette he kindly explained it was simply a little "glitch in the system."

Just as jarring are the images of Isaac Julien's multi-screen film installation *Western Union: Small Boats* (2007). The stream of one lush and gorgeously choreographed mise-en-scene after another belies the hopeful and tragic stories of the thousands who journey illegally from North Africa to Sicily in desperate attempts to emigrate to Europe. The piece consists of a series of non-linear vignettes. For example, a continuous shot of shattered small wooden boats heaped one upon the next and the next appears unending. Under the blazing sun, two men on the water in a small craft gradually begin to doze lazily. Grand staircases and vast ornate rooms of a Baroque Sicilian interior suffused with tones of gold and brown become the host setting for interludes of soulful dance executed with crisp intensity. Dancer's taut bodies roll down the stairs in harrowing supine curves and are carried by their peers with strength and delicacy. Shocking blue engulfs the screen as two men deep underwater flail and struggle

tumultuously, having lost all direction. Driven towards a specific territorial destination, they drown in a sea that is endless and deterritorialized. The natural "territory" swallows up any human demarcation. Small waves lapping at the edge of smooth sands of an outstretched beach foreground the silhouettes of the dancers descending a ridge to discover clothes washed up at the ocean side from nature's and politics' brave victims.

Here "smooth" and "striated" space in Deleuze and Guattari's terms are utterly mixed up. The civilized and the savage become confused. The gorgeous and horrific coincide. This is not a case of aestheticization of violence but a dramatization of the co-existence and intermingling of erudition and inhumanity in life. The Baroque interior conjures up an excess of geography, as socially-constructed culture, in contrast to the perceived naturalness of power structures and policies. Julia Kristeva has pointed out that "the foreigner is a Baroque person" because her speech is "deprived of any support in outside reality, since the foreigner is precisely kept out of it."[16] The double, the projection outside of oneself, is a Baroque excess that the subject cannot hold.

For Freud, the double is an encounter with death and draws a parallel between being buried alive and a feeling of uncanniness that recalls the intra-uterine experience.[19] In Julien's film, the migrants flounder amidst the immensity of the sea. Ettinger's theory of matrixial borderspace is instead a space of co-emergence, that has a healing power, but because of the "transgression of individual boundaries is also potentially traumatizing."[20] Therefore it calls for the "awakening of a specific ethical attention, responsibility and extension."[21]

All of the artists considered here are persistently preoccupied with this ethical dimension of art. For her recent multimedia work *El Dorado* (2007) created for Documenta 12, Danica Dakic invited local teenage immigrants as her artistic collaborators and took the wallpaper museum in Kassel as her locale for an audio installation and performance. Every centimeter of the insular rooms of the wallpaper museum are adorned with sumptuous

papers in all conceivable styles, many displaying landscapes from all corners of the world. These unnatural scenes of nature seem to be brimming with stories of past eras. Dakic animates these latent tales of exoticism, empire, and domestication through an audio collage of animal calls coupled with voices of the teens through various languages, singing, and often times what may be indistinguishable babble to a foreigner.

Dakic creates a "cosmopolitical" conversation in Kristeva's terms, taking the co-existence of difference at the core of human existence as a moral imperative connected to human rights.[22] The audio work plays out the imagined conversations across lands and histories but are connected in reality to the voices of the local participants in conversation with her and amongst themselves forming a longer-lasting social entity. In the companion video piece, the teenagers become the protagonists as they speak and run animatedly through the forests, streams, mountains, monoliths and patterns of the wallpaper landscapes–creating the image of geography as something mobile.

Concurrently, in human development personal identity loses stability and becomes deterritorialized by the augmentation of capabilities and the acquisition of new skills such as learning a new language or incorporating new cultural forms into one's identity.[23] The ability to create and incorporate change in accordance with outside circumstances is part of the basic makeup of the human brain. However this cognitive reality is all too often overridden in contemporary global politics by irrational emotion and hatred. Through their responses to recent abrupt transition in their home and adopted cities, these artists' work spells out implications of matrixial borderspace by creating space psychologically and socially through augmenting capabilities and deterritorializing personality to positive effect through expansive co-emergence.

Notes

1. Bracha L. Ettinger, "Matrixial Trans-Subjectivity," *Theory, Culture & Society* 23 2-3 (2006): 220.
2. Manuel DeLanda, *A New Philosophy of Society: Assemblage Theory and Social Complexity* (New York: Contiuum, 2006), 47.
3. Julia Kristeva, *Strangers to Ourselves*, trans. Leon S. Roudiez (New York: Columbia University Press, 1991), 170.
4. Ettinger, "Matrixial Trans-Subjectivity," 220.
5. Ibid., 218.
6. Bracha L. Ettinger, "Trans-Subjective Transferential Borderspace," in *A Shock to Thought: Expression After Deleuze and Guattari*, ed. Brian Massumi (New York: Routledge, 2002), 233.
7. Ettinger, "Matrixial Trans-Subjectivity," 221.
8. Ursula Biemann, "Black Sea Files," in *B-Zone: Becoming Europe and Beyond*, ed. Anselm Franke (Berlin: KW Institute for Contemporary Art, Barcelona: Actar, 2005), 57.
9. Biemann, 57.
10. DeLanda, 50.
11. Ettinger, "Matrixial Trans-Subjectivity," 219.
12. Kristeva, p. 172, fn. 4 p. 212.
13. DeLanda, 53.
14. Ibid., 54.
15. Ibid., 54-55.
16. Kristeva, 21.
17. Ibid., 183-4.
18. Ibid., 185.
19. Ibid., 185.
20. Ettinger, "Matrixial Trans-Subjectivity," 219.
21. Ibid., 219.
22. Kristeva, 173.
23. DeLanda, 50. Psychologist Erik Erikson's work on teens is most notable in this regard. See his essay "Identity and Uprootedness in our Time," in *Insight and Responsibility: Lectures on the Ethical Implications of Psychoanalytic Insight* (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., Inc., 1964).


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Kristeva, J. (1991). *Strangers to Ourselves.* New York (New York): Columbia Univ. Press.

# The Promise of Emancipation
## Eduardo Cadava

*Men make their own history, but they do not make it as they please; they do not make it under self-selected circumstances, but under circumstances existing already, given and transmitted from the past. The tradition of all dead generations weighs like a nightmare on the brains of the living.  And just as they seem to be occupied with revolutionizing themselves and things, creating something that did not exist before, precisely in such epochs of revolutionary crisis they anxiously conjure up the spirits of the past to their service, borrowing from them names, battle slogans, and costumes in order to present this new scene in world history in time-honored disguise and borrowed language.*

*-Karl Marx*

*So deep is the foundation of the existing social system, that it leaves no one out of it.  We may be partial, but Fate is not.  All men have their root in it.  You who quarrel with the arrangements of society, and are willing to embroil all, and risk the indisputable good that exists, for the chance of better, live, move, and have your being in this, and your deeds contradict your words every day.  For as you cannot jump from the ground without using the resistance of the ground, nor put out the boat to sea, without shoving from the shore, nor attain liberty without rejecting obligation, so you are under the necessity of using the Actual order of things, in order to disuse it; to live by it, whilst you wish to take away its life.*

*-Ralph Waldo Emerson*

*If I do not say what ought to be done, it is not because I believe there is nothing to be done.  Quite on the contrary, I think there are a thousand things to be done, to be invented, to be forged, by those who, recognizing the relations of power in which they are implicated,*

*have decided to resist or escape them. From this point of view, my entire research rests upon the postulate of an absolute optimism. I do not undertake my analyses to say: look how things are, you are all trapped. I do not say such things except insofar as I consider this to permit some transformation of things. Everything I do, I do in order that it may be of use.*

　　　　　*-Michel Foucault*

*The self forms itself, but it forms itself within a set of formative practices that are characterized as modes of subjectivations. That the range of its possible forms is delimited in advance by such modes of subjectivation does not mean that the self fails to form itself, that the self is fully formed. On the contrary, it is compelled to form itself, but to form itself within forms that are already more or less in operation and underway. Or, one might say, it is compelled to form itself within practices that are more or less in place. But if that self-forming is done in disobedience to the principles by which one is formed, then virtue becomes the practice by which the self forms itself in de-subjugation, which is to say that it risks its deformation as a subject, occupying that ontologically insecure position which poses the question anew: who will be a subject here, and what will count as a life, a moment of ethical questioning which requires that we break the habits of judgment in favor of a riskier practice that seeks to yield artistry from constraint.*

　　　　　*-Judith Butler[1]*

I begin with this series of citations to raise a set of questions about the title that Katherine Carl, Aaron Levy, and Srdjan Jovanovic Weiss have given to this volume: *Evasions of Power* (and not only to suggest my own inscription within the various traditions of writing that I have inherited or to anticipate "my" responses to these questions by evoking the language of others). How is it possible, for example, to escape the nightmarish power of

tradition or the fact that we always use a language that is never simply ours, that we follow a kind of script whenever we act? Can we really depart from the "existing social system" or from "the relations of power" in which we always are implicated, or even from the "forms" or "practices" that always are "more or less in place"? What would it mean to evade power, to skirt it, to get around it, to escape its force or vigilance? Why must such efforts at evasion remain plural, unable to stand secure in the finality of a single gesture? Why must they be multiplied and repeated? In what way is such multiplication and repetition even required in the very effort to overcome what we call "power," and how does this fact imply the inevitability of a return, of a complicity that nevertheless forms the precarious condition of all activist reform? Is it the case that what is at stake, considering the double genitive that helps construct this title, is not simply the possibility of avoiding power, of stepping away from it, but also the necessity of registering the many ways in which such evasions themselves belong to power, extend or reinforce it, are perhaps even required by it, especially when it wishes to disguise or hide itself, dissimulate its force or presence? Is it possible that the very "evasion of power" is one of power's most powerful signatures, its most effective means of installing and continuing its reign, or does the "evasion of power" suggest that power bears within it its own evasion and destruction?

There would be many ways to approach these questions, but, for me, the best way is always a circuitous one, an indirect one–perhaps even a way similar to the circuitous and indirect one that I have taken by beginning with this set of citations–since it is only in this way that we perhaps can begin to follow the innumerable, diverse, and heterogeneous networks of forces that enable, facilitate, and even interrupt power. If Michel Foucault was right to declare that "power is everywhere"—a claim he later qualified–the issue of evading power, and in multiple ways, is linked essentially to the conditions and possibility of transformation, social change, and even emancipation. In what follows, I would like to move through a series of reflections on how we might think these conditions and this possibility, and how we might think them, in particular, in relation to the emancipatory potential of literature. I

wish to begin again, then–because this is often my preferred beginning–by suggesting a constellation of contexts in which these questions might be thought, a constellation organized around, among others, the names "Walter Benjamin," "Karl Marx," and "Ralph Waldo Emerson."

1.

In the notes for his essay "Theses on the Concept of History"—in a passage that evokes a statement from Marx's 1850 *Class Struggles in France*–Benjamin offers us a rather remarkable figure for revolution. In his words, "Marx says revolutions are the locomotives of world history. But perhaps it is completely otherwise. Perhaps revolutions are, in the train of traveling generations, the reach for the emergency brake."[2] Revolutionary progress here is not a linear, irresistible process–one that enables and moves the history of the world–but rather the interruption of this catastrophe-bound trajectory. Nevertheless, it should go without saying that it is enormously difficult to call forth a historical act that would take the form of a "reach for the emergency brake"—a moment aligned in Benjamin's thinking with involuntary memory, the general strike, and the intervention of the messiah. Even though there is no single key to Benjamin's politics, no single politics in his work, I would like to suggest–in order to begin to delineate the impossible conditions of this revolutionary arrest–that, if we take the idea of messianism as a means of entering Benjamin's sense of history and politics, we perhaps can approach several of his most important and far-reaching statements on what it might mean to experience or enact not simply a historico-political act, but a revolutionary one.

The first thing to say here is that Benjamin's messianism names a structure of experience that cannot be reduced to any kind of religious messianism, or to any known utopianism. This is why, as Jacques Derrida and Werner Hamacher have suggested, Benjamin could be said to renounce messianism in the name of the messianic.[3] Indeed, in Benjamin, the "messianic" refers, at every moment, to the coming of an indeterminate, unpredictable, and irreducibly heterogeneous event. Nothing is more

"present" than the waiting for the messianic and, since what is to come is absolutely heterogeneous to knowledge and perception (otherwise it already would have arrived), this waiting is without any determinable expectation. Telling us that we cannot calculate everything, that the future can neither be predicted nor programmed, it suggests that this limit to calculability or knowledge is also the condition of any praxis, decision, action, and responsibility. This waiting for the event therefore is linked to a promise and a demand that urgently call for a revolutionary commitment to interrupt the course of history.

This is why, we could say, the messianic bears constant reference to the experience of an emancipatory promise–but a promise that, always remaining open and unfulfilled, always promises what cannot be promised, and therefore what interrupts every promise. That the messianic promises a futurity that is always open to something else means that we must resist the desire to predict or organize the future. "Whoever wants to know how a 'redeemed humanity' would be constituted," Benjamin warns us, "under which conditions it would be constituted, and when one can count on it, poses questions to which there is no answer." We might recall here, as Benjamin does, Marx's claim in an 1869 letter to Edward Beesly that "whoever drafts programs for the future is a reactionary."[4] This claim can be made because, if the opening of the future promised by the messianic were the act of a knowing subject, the future would be knowable, realizable, and therefore not the future, but rather its destruction and erasure.

Referring both to what is not yet and to what can never be present, the messianic can be said to correspond to a longing for a future that would not simply be the repetition of the past, that would, for the first time, expose the past to a time that would be irreducible to the time of labor and capital. A strong Marxism would be the articulation of this Benjaminian promise, but I will return to this in a moment.

2.

For now, I want to reiterate that Benjamin's thought of historical and political action takes its point of departure from his conviction that neither the past, the present, nor the future can ever be known in their entirety, and with any certainty. This is why, among other things, it is impossible to guarantee that this or that act will not blindly reinforce what we believe goes in the direction of the worst. This inability to be fully awake to history becomes linked to an experience of what Ernst Bloch called "the darkness of the lived moment,"[5] that structure of our historical existence that prevents us from ever being contemporaneous with the present. This means that all political action must be thought in relation to this darkness, blindness, and uncertainty, in relation, that is, to what Benjamin often calls "danger." It is because there can be no awakening, no enlightenment that is not also touched by darkness, that, again, political action and responsibility are to be thought in relation to a world in which we are never fully conscious of the situation to which we wish to respond, never fully in control of our actions and their consequences. This is why, for Benjamin, the identification between emancipation and enlightenment can never be secured. This means that the promise of emancipation–the promise of all revolutionary action–is always haunted by the uncertainty of its realization, an uncertainty that is linked to the fact that there can be no political act that can foresee its consequences, that can know its outcome in advance. This is why, for Benjamin, history comes without guarantees, without an end to struggle, and without an end to the indeterminacy from which any act must emerge.

In each instance, what Benjamin emphasizes are the danger, blindness, uncertainty, and incalculability that structure our existence. It is true that these features of existence perhaps suggest the difficulty of articulating a clear direction for politics, ethics, or responsibility. But I would argue that, if our ethico-political responsibilities seek to minimize such dangers, such uncertainties and moments of non-knowledge (in order to grant us the illusion of security or to affirm the correctness of our convictions), then they run the risk of becoming something other than political, ethical, and

responsible. In other words, if every form of political responsibility must respond to what is before us, then it would be irresponsible to turn away from the difficulties, dangers, and indeterminacies that form the conditions of our historico-political existence–the conditions, that is, within which any decision, action, or judgment always must be made. This is why what Benjaminian danger names, if it names anything with any degree of specificity, is the urgency of our having to respond, to act, and to decide, without knowing how to do so. This also is why he so often warns us of the danger of identifying emancipation with any kind of "solar clarity." Indeed, if the present announces itself as "the midday of history," this solar moment is always darkened by a "cloud of unknowing" that threatens and ruins the clarity of any political gesture.

If Benjamin's entire corpus therefore can be read as an effort to inaugurate and enact a history that does not offer itself to sight, that begins in an acknowledgment of the lived moment's darkness, it is not surprising that his most famous figure for historical movement and responsibility–the angel of history that presides over his reflections on history–is pushed by the storm of progress toward a future into which it cannot see, to which its back is turned, and therefore bears witness only to the catastrophe left in its wake.[6] The angel's muteness and blindness together suggest that the agency of historical meaning is something that must be thought away from consciousness, intentionality, and subjectivity. Unable to gaze into the future, it can neither intervene in its direction nor redeem the past at which it stares (and may not even see). It is this lack of control–a consequence of the structure of passivity that defines our relation to historico-political action (a passivity associated with our inability to sever our relation to the movement of history, and to everything that prevents us from stalling and seizing the present, and therefore a passivity that is related to the citational structure of our acts, thoughts, and language)—that makes the future unpredictable and our decisions and actions a matter of risk and danger.

What the angel of history tells us–despite its muteness–is that political action and responsibility cannot be thought in terms of any knowing,

intentional, strategic, and calculated intervention: they must instead be conceived in relation to the revolutionary chance offered to us by a world open to its own uncertainties, and to a future that can never be anticipated or controlled. In other words–and here I am simply following what already has been elaborated by Derrida and others–political responsibility can only take place in a space that exceeds what can be known or calculated in advance.[7] It is only when we cannot know what must be done, when knowledge is not and cannot be determining, that a political act is possible as such. This does not mean that political responsibility can forego calculation, intention, or strategy altogether, but rather that these are inseparable from an experience of blindness, non-knowledge, and indetermination. This is why responsibility must be thought, as Benjamin puts it, citing Engels, "beyond the field of thought"—or, as Celan would have it, "beyond the concepts of my wakeful thinking."[8] But this also is why it always takes place in the context of danger and risk.

3.

That such danger and risk form the structural conditions of any activist reform can be gathered from Benjamin's thoughts on technology. As he repeatedly tells us, there is nothing that is not touched by technology–nothing that is beyond or outside it. This means that there can be no thought of the political in his work–no thought of what political praxis might be–that is not also a thought of technology (of its effects, its dominance, its relation to every aspect of our existence), and that does not pass through technology in order to resist it. If the incursion of technology into our everyday existence defines what Ernst Jünger calls "a space of absolute danger"[9] (and here we should remember that technology for Benjamin includes not only technology as we generally understand it but also all the various techniques of language, memory, and perception with which we seek to order the world), it is because the ubiquity of technology has become the measure of our "humanity," the medium of a process of technologization, homogenization, commodification, and violence that threatens to erase, among other things, the singularity and effectivity of political action. This is why, in his theses on history, Benjamin specifies the

moment of danger as the moment when the oppressed classes sense that a "conformism" is about to overpower them–when they run the risk, that is, of becoming an instrument of their oppressors, without knowing it.

This risk of "conformism" attains its momentum from a politico-economic hegemony that–with unprecedented forms and speeds, and with the support of several discursive, and often transnational modes of persuasion and domination–increasingly gains its force through techno-mediatic means. These media technologies, mobilized in conflictual and highly differentiated contexts, shape and threaten all the forms of democracy that today seem so fragile and contradictory. This is why so much recent critical work (including that of Jacques Derrida, Avital Ronell, Samuel Weber, Bernard Stiegler, and Jean-Luc Nancy),[10] often taking its point of departure from Benjamin's reflections on the relations between technology and politics, has insisted that politics can only be thought in terms of the media without which it could never take place–has even insisted that it is beginning from these media that we must seek to think an opening to another history or politics, that is, the conditions for evading power, technological or otherwise. We just need to recall the media spectacles of the "Gulf War" or the current "war on terrorism" to register what Benjamin understood as the danger of aestheticizing politics, to witness the differential mobilization of tele-technologies in the name of this or that political position (none of which is ever simply "one"). That the same tele-technologies can be used to support or challenge different political agendas means that we live–perhaps more than ever, given the virtualization of space and time these technologies imply–in a world in which we can no longer distinguish identities and events from their representation, bodies and psyches from apparatuses, actuality from its simulacra, life from death, "real" time from "recorded" time, privacy from public space, and democracy from its several others. This means that the political consequences of these tele-technologies cannot be analyzed or challenged without taking into account an entire network of what Derrida has called "spectral effects"—including the new speeds according to which simulacra of all sorts appear (prosthetic images, virtual events, and so forth), the ghostly

effects of cyberspace and new modes of surveillance, and the structures of hauntedness that support strategies of control, manipulation, and discipline of all kinds (military, penal, medical, economic, educational, etc.).

Benjamin's analyses of the mediatic phantasmagoria that supported National Socialism remain significant here (provided that we avoid facile parallels, and that we transform and adapt these phantasmagoria in relation to the new forms, speeds, and effects of today's media technologies). In both instances, what is at stake is the possibility of diagnosing the ways in which politics and technology are joined together by apparatuses that–no matter how complex and differentiated they may be–reinforce each other at every moment in order to establish, strengthen, and maintain a particular political hegemony. As Benjamin suggests in his artwork essay, this process of reinforcement takes place through what we call (still, and perhaps too easily) "the media"—understood in its broadest, most inclusive, and most pervasive sense. Indeed, it is because of this pervasiveness–because the political effects of the technical media are becoming worldwide–that some measure of complicity with the most dangerous of these effects is always possible, if not inevitable, no matter what we might try to do. If we are to lessen the chances that we will simply repeat and reinforce the worst elements of the mediatic apparatuses whose effects we wish to change, then we must try to understand the history and genealogy of these media–how they emerged, how they have been used, how they might be turned, here and there, toward revolutionary rather than reactionary ends. If this history is not taken into account, we run the risk of aligning ourselves, without our knowing it, with the very politico-technological consequences we seek to oppose. This is why so many of Benjamin's efforts are directed toward exposing the conflictual genealogies of techno-mediatic modes of reproduction and, in particular, toward the interruption of the values that support such reproduction: among so many others, presence, transmission, progress, calculability, and, perhaps most importantly, instrumentality. We might even say that, especially in regard to the latter (which he associates with technical, bourgeois subjectivity), Benjamin seeks at every moment to call forth and enact a non-

instrumental, *performative* conception of language and the media–to set in motion, that is, a series of concepts that would be *useless* to the mediations of the media (in the same way that, in his artwork essay, he seeks to mobilize a series of concepts that could remain useless to fascism). This is why his obsession with emergent or nearly obsolescent technologies remains a permanent feature of his writings. It is there, in the transitional moment between the life and death of a technical medium, that he discovers the revolutionary chance of historico-political transformation.

If this transformation can never be programmed or guaranteed, however, it is because, at every moment, we must use a mediatic technics against the technics of the media. Indeed, it is because we have to use these technics that we always risk reinforcing–being appropriated by–the very techno-mediatic apparatuses and effects we wish to change. This appropriation can happen because, as Benjamin so often reminds us, repetition belongs to the conditions of all possible futures. This is a point that Emerson already had made as early as 1841 in his "Lecture on the Times," even if in another idiom. As he puts it, "So deep is the foundation of the existing social system, that it leaves no one out of it. We may be partial, but Fate is not. All men have their root in it. You who quarrel with the arrangements of society, and are willing to embroil all, and risk the indisputable good that exists, for the chance of better, live, move, and have your being in this, and your deeds contradict your words every day. For as you cannot jump from the ground without using the resistance of the ground, nor put out the boat to sea, without shoving from the shore, nor attain liberty without rejecting obligation, so you are under the necessity of using the Actual order of things, in order to disuse it; to live by it, whilst you wish to take away its life."[11] If the risk of using features of the very system we wish to oppose cannot be avoided, it is because it belongs to the possibility of transformation in general. This is why, given that we can never entirely escape the realm of technology (that we must even "use" it to resist it), our political responsibility cannot lie in the denial of our complicity with technology, in the claim that our thoughts or actions are not touched by it. It must instead begin in our acknowledgment of this complicity: in our effort

to measure, under the shadow of this complicity, the extent to which a particular media technics remains linked to what it seeks to question–and then to respond accordingly.  It is because everything is touched by the technical media that we must make several complex gestures to signal that, despite this contact or complicity, we are acting in this way because we believe this action is in this instance more likely than another one to accomplish what we want–to interrupt the identities, calculability, instrumentality, and modes of transmission without which technics could never secure its future.  These gestures are not pragmatic resolutions to given situations, but rather strategic evaluations that, in the face of uncertainty, nevertheless attempt to respond to the contradictory and invasive system we seek to unsettle at any given moment.  This means that our most urgent and serious responsibility is perhaps that of trying to evaluate which is the least dangerous of these forms of complicity–and to do so even as we know that this effort can never escape the danger we seek to overcome.  It is because whatever we do will remain insufficient that we remain in danger, and that we must renew our efforts endlessly: there would in fact be no danger if it were not able to persist, to remain, and to haunt our every move.  Perhaps danger is even what grants us our right to politics and political action, what opens the possibility of historical and perhaps even revolutionary action.

4.

In order to reinforce this point, I wish to turn here to Marx's effort to imagine the possibility of a historical event that could interrupt history.  In Marx, this event–a moment of transformation, change, and perhaps even revolution–is also linked to the experience of an emancipatory promise, but a promise that cannot be attached to a single agent, and largely because, like Benjamin and Emerson, Marx also believes that our acts are never simply our own.  To say this, however, is to say that this promise implies agencies that are not reducible to individual human will, but instead linked to unforeseeably mediated exchanges and relations, to collectivities that are never self-identical to themselves, and to other forms of materiality, including history, language, memory, and representation, that mediate and

dictate our acts.  This is why, in a rather remarkable formulation, Emerson warns us that "Tis fine to speculate and elect our course, if we must accept an irresistible dictation." (W, VI, 3)

Indeed, it is precisely because our actions are never simply ours, that Marx and Benjamin ask us to turn ourselves over to the future without certainty and without knowledge.  This is also why, in his efforts to realize the promise of a democracy and communism which, for the first time, would inaugurate a new world history of liberation, justice, and equality, Marx turns to literature.  In this, he anticipates Benjamin's own insistence on the relation between literature and politics.  As Benjamin asserts in "The Author as Producer," "The politically correct tendency includes a literary tendency. And I would add straightaway: this literary tendency, which is implicitly or explicitly contained in *every* correct political tendency of a work, alone constitutes the quality of that work.  The correct political tendency of a work thus includes its literary quality because it includes its literary *tendency*."[12] Suggesting that only works that are literary in the strongest sense can be politically activist and progressive (because, among other things, they unsettle the more usual meanings of "progress" and indeed of "literature" itself), Benjamin follows Marx in remarkably strict terms.

But what is literature in Marx?  How does it become a means for him to analyze the spectral, phantasmatic, hallucinatory logic of capital?  How is it an essential part of whatever he means by politics, history, economics, law, and so forth?  How is it related to the possibility of historico-political action, and of revolution in general?  I cannot address all these questions here, but perhaps I at least can indicate why they remain so unavoidable–especially if we are to understand what we have inherited from Marx, what he has given us, and what he continues to give us–by beginning at the beginning, or at least with one of the earliest beginnings we have from Marx's corpus: a letter that Marx writes to his father on November 10, 1837.

In this letter, Marx tells his father that he has reached a turning point in his

life–a moment that marks a kind of frontier, a moment of transition and transformation, perhaps even a moment of revolution. "At such moments," he writes, "a person becomes lyrical, for every metamorphosis is partly a swan song, partly the overture to a great new poem." "We should like to erect a memorial to what we have once lived through," he goes on to say, "in order that this experience may regain in our emotions the place it has lost in our actions."[13] As we discover in reading the rest of the letter, what Marx supposedly has lived through, what he has worked through, is his desire to write literature. His letter is meant to give his father an account of his decision to leave literature behind to pursue his studies in law, philosophy, history, and economics. He offers his father a genealogy of this decision, of this turn of mind, by giving him, in chronological order, a list of several of the books he has read since beginning his studies in Berlin. He admits that, on first arriving at school, he was attracted to lyric poetry. He sought "the dances of the Muses and the music of the Satyrs" ("LF," 17), he tells his father, and, in his writing, he wished to find a language that would enable him to realize what he calls a "poetic fire" (11). He describes his early literary efforts–an unfinished novel, begun in 1835 and entitled *Scorpion and Felix*, a book of poems written in 1836, entitled *Book of Love* and dedicated to Jenny, a collection of poems entitled *Wild Songs*, written in 1837 and dedicated to his father, and his unfinished tragic drama, *Oulanem*–but adds that, little by little, the range and demands of his studies encouraged him to view these writings as an accompaniment to his other studies. The conflicting demands of his classes, in other words–perhaps an early version of what he later would understand as class conflict–lead him to rethink his relation to literature. Tracing this shift in his thinking in relation to the several books he was reading–texts by Aristotle, Tacitus, Ovid, Kant, Schelling, Fichte, Lessing, Winckelmann, Feuerbach, and others–he recalls that the symptoms of his growing conflict included not only a turn away from the world but also–and this in response to his withdrawal–a prolonged illness that eventually was only cured by his rereading of Hegel. On recovering, he immediately burned most of his poems and stories, imagining, as he puts it, that in this way he could give them up completely.

Throughout the letter, this withdrawal from literature is reinforced by his growing sense that his aspirations as a writer will remain unfulfilled. As he tells his father, in relation to *Oulanem*, "these last verses are the only ones in which suddenly, as if by a magic touch–a touch that was at first a shattering blow–I saw the kingdom of poetry glittering before my eyes like a vision of faraway fairy palaces, and then all my creations collapsed into dust" (17). Nevertheless, if these lines suggest that his literary creations will never occupy the kingdom of poetry–if his literary writings are reduced to dust in the face of the splendor of true poetry, or if, as he puts it elsewhere in the letter, instead of arriving at "true form," he was only able to construct a "writing desk with drawers which [he] later filled with sand" (15)—they also do not prohibit his return to poetry, since his magical encounter with poetry only shatters him "at first." Reading his letter closely, and paying attention to its highly literary and rhetorical features, we might even say that Marx's return to poetry occurs in the very letter that–itself a kind of "swan song" or farewell to poetry–declares his departure from it. Not only can we say that the letter is very lyrical–a statement that he authorizes since, as he already has said, a certain lyricism belongs to every moment of metamorphosis and transformation–but the entire staging of the letter could be said to be "literary." In order to mark this moment of transition–from literature to law, philosophy, history, and economics, from one Marx to another–Marx even announces that "a curtain had fallen" (18).

Beginning to close and dim its lights, the theater in which Marx earlier had pursued his literary interests announces a death here. A certain Marx deliberately seeks to come to an end and another Marx calls forth his survival, beyond this death, as a kind of ghost. This ghostly appearance is confirmed by the context in which Marx writes to his father. In a brief postscript to his letter, Marx apologizes to his father for the unintelligibility of his handwriting–something that he attributes to the fact that he is writing the letter in the dark, that it is now four in the morning and his candle has long since burned out. He confesses to his father that his eyes are dim, that he barely can see anything at all, that he is very unsettled and restless, and, finally, that he finds himself surrounded by "agitated specters"

(21)—specters that have arrived with the encroaching darkness but that, symptomatically, also belong to the anxiety and difficulties of his decision to leave literature behind. Writing under the diminishing light of a candle, amidst the flickering of shadows across his room and pages, Marx experiences the solitude of a darkness that is filled with specters. Writing through the shifting and flickering shadows produced by the melting candle, he writes in a space that, following Mallarmé, we might call the very medium of poetry. These shifting shadows allegorize the uncertainty with which he has sought to leave literature and signal, as the medium of literary work, the metamorphosis within which, as Marx puts it, the "overture to a great new poem" might be written (10). If Marx's letter seeks to suggest that he has decided to depart from literature, it leaves open the possibility that he will pursue poetry through other means. We might even say that this "great new poem," this other kind of poetry, will be written and rewritten in all his work to come. Erecting a memorial to his past, and, in particular, to his literary past, Marx wishes to preserve this past, to speak from the depth of this past, even as the future of his words and actions may mobilize it in other directions. What I wish to suggest is that Marx was never able to leave literature behind. He perhaps was even least able to leave it behind when he felt obliged, here and there, to renounce it. If Marx's letter comes to us in the form of a memorial to literature, then, it also anticipates all the memorials to literature to come. Taken together, these memorials constitute the entirety of Marx's corpus. There is in fact no moment in Marx that is not touched by literature, and this is perhaps especially the case when he mourns it. If he persistently returns to literature throughout his writings, it may even be because he mourns it.

To think about Marx's relation to literature–and to suggest that he always was before literature–would oblige us to account for several Marxes: 1) the Marx who is obsessed with literature as we generally understand it, who everywhere evokes the literature of classical antiquity, the literature of the middle ages to the age of Goethe, and the writings of Dante, Cervantes, Shakespeare, Defoe, Balzac, to name only a few of his favorite references; 2) the Marx without whom we would be unable to comprehend literature–the Marx whose name always has been associated with the analysis of literature, not only in his own persistent references and readings but also in the work to which his name and texts are put in the writings that Trotsky, Lenin, Adorno, Benjamin, Sartre, and so many others, devoted to literature; 3) the Marx who so often used literature to analyze historico-political life–who used Balzac to analyze and condemn royalist politics, who mobilized Shakespeare's *Timon of Athens* or Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe* to speak of economic processes that otherwise would remain obscure, and who used Cervantes' *Don Quixote* to criticize the young Hegelians; 4) the Marx who, despite his recourse to literature, nevertheless tells us that literature as such does not exist, since it is inscribed within, and indissociable from, an unevenly determined system of socio-historical and political practices and relations of production–the Marx, in other words, whose materialist analyses renounce the notion of the literary work (of a work, that is, that would be solely literary), even as he helps us understand how something like an institution of literature emerges, historically, politically, and ideologically; and 5) the Marx who mourns literature, even as he writes it–who perhaps returns to literature most when he tells us it can never exist by itself, when he demonstrates that it is an essential element of every mode of representation (including art, architecture, music, history, and so forth), every technical media, every technique of language.

To clarify what I am saying here–to give a specific example of the way in which Marx mobilizes literature in the name of politics, history, or emancipation–I would like to pause for a moment with the Marx who, in *The German Ideology*, and in a remarkably textured mode of deployment, would use Schiller, Goethe, Heine, and especially Cervantes' *Don Quixote* as a kind of frame for criticizing the young Hegelians, Ludwig Feuerbach, Bruno Bauer, and Max Stirner, that is to say–and to refer to the most critical of these–the Marx who evokes the *Quixote* in order to appropriate, resituate, and then release its critical potential vis-à-vis these three figures.

Although critics from Lukács to Jameson frequently have suggested that Marxist histories of modern literature might begin with *Don Quixote* and the

groundwork of novelistic realism, with the exception of five pages in Robert Kaufman's essay, "Red Kant," no one has elaborated and analyzed the role of Cervantes' novel in *The German Ideology* (and largely because, when we read the text, we mostly have focused on the section on Feuerbach).[14] This is why it perhaps is useful here to give a brief sense of the extraordinary way in which Marx and Engels perform, within the movement of their writing, what they wish us to understand.  In *The German Ideology*, they seek to challenge the rhetoric and claims of German leftwing political philosophy, and they do so by inhabiting and displacing this same rhetoric. The text begins with their suggestion, amidst internal debates in left German politics, that the Young Hegelians have worked to turn the revolutionary movements (to which the Young Hegelians presumably belong) away from "the materialist conception of history": they have worked to minimize the importance of the mode of production in the name of a critical consciousness that, for them, understands ideas to be the primary motor of history.  Because of this, Marx and Engels argue, these young Hegelian ideologists–and they refer particularly to Feuerbach, Bauer, and Stirner–in spite of their allegedly "world-shattering" phrases, betray their political and philosophical conservatism.  "The Hegelian philosophy of history is the last consequence…of all this German historiography," they write, "for which it is not a question of real, nor even of political, interests, but of pure thoughts, which must therefore appear to Saint Bruno as a series of 'thoughts' that devour one another and are finally swallowed up in 'self-consciousness'; and even more consistently the course of history must appear to Saint Max Stirner, who knows not a thing about real history, as a 'tale of knights, robbers, and ghosts.'"[15]

Marx and Engels further their criticism in *The German Ideology*'s second section, entitled "The Leipzig Council" because of the fact that Bauer's and Stirner's recent books were published in Leipzig.  The entire section seeks to reinforce Marx and Engels' sense that these two writers are uninterested–and to the detriment of their thought and their politics–in the processes of material life.  It opens with an evocation of Wilhelm von Kaulbach's famous painting, "The Battle of the Huns."  Based on the battle

fought by the Huns and the Romans at Châlons in 451, Kaulbach depicts the ghosts of fallen warriors fighting in the air above the battleground. Taking his point of departure from the painting, Marx writes: "the spirits of the slain, whose fury is not appeased even in death, raise a hue and cry, which sounds like the thunder of battles and war-cries, the clatter of swords, shields, and iron wagons.  But it is not a battle over earthly things. The holy war is being waged not over protective tariffs, the constitution, potato blight, banking affairs and railways, but in the name of the most sacred interests of the spirit, in the name of 'substance,' 'self-consciousness,' 'criticism,' the 'unique,' and the 'true man.'  We are attending a Council of Church Fathers" (94).  Marx then goes on to introduce us to the members of the Council.  "Here, first of all, is Saint Bruno," he writes, "his head is crowned with a halo of 'pure criticism' and, full of contempt for the world, he wraps himself in his 'self-consciousness.'…He is the 'Napoleon' of the spirit, in spirit he is 'Napoleon.'…Opposite him stands Saint Max…he is…simultaneously Sancho Panza and Don Quixote" (94-5).

As this passage indicates, Marx and Engels introduce and deploy a series of ironic and sarcastic nicknames, metaphors, and allegories for Bauer and Stirner, and they do so in relation to two highly literary and critical conceits, each of which help frame their criticisms.  The first, "The Leipzig Council," is, in Kaufman's words, "a burlesque of both the Old and the New Testaments, with the Young Hegelians (called 'Saint Bruno' and 'Saint Max') brought under charges in Marx and Engels' parody of the Inquisition."[16] The second, reinforcing the first, entails the relentless, digressive, and critical use of *Don Quixote*.  Citing long passages from Bauer and Stirner in their polemical critique of the two Hegelians–not unlike Derrida's strategy in his now infamous, critical responses to John Searle in *Limited Inc.*—Marx and Engels inscribe these two figures into their own *Quixote*, alternately associating them with Sancho Panza and Don Quixote, and sometimes with both simultaneously.  For the sake of time, I will simply cite three examples of the way this rewriting works, but it is pervasive throughout the text: first, a passage in which Marx and Engels accuse Saint

Max of producing a historiography of illusory ideas, a history of spirits and ghosts. They write: "since Saint Max shares the belief of all critical, speculative, modern philosophers that thoughts, which have become independent, objectified thoughts–ghosts–have ruled the world and continue to rule it, and that all history until now has been the history of theology, nothing could be easier for him than to transform history into a history of ghosts. Sancho's history of ghosts, therefore, rests on the speculative philosophers' traditional belief in ghosts" (GI, 160). Second, a longer passage that more explicitly interweaves Stirner's and Bauer's texts with that of Cervantes. "The struggle over 'man,'" Marx and Engels tell us, "is the fulfillment of the word, as written in the twenty-first chapter of Cervantes, which deals with 'the high adventure and rich prize of Mambrino's helmet.' Our Sancho, who in everything imitates his former lord and present servant, 'has sworn to win Mambrino's helmet'—man–for himself. After having, during his various 'campaigns' (Marx and Engels use the German word "Auszüge" here, which can mean departures or campaigns, but also extracts or abstracts) sought in vain to find the longed-for helmet among the ancients and moderns, liberals and communists, 'he caught sight of a man on a horse carrying something on his head which shone like gold.'…Meanwhile, at a gentle trot there approaches Bruno, the holy barber, on his small ass, criticism, with his barber's basin on his head; Saint Sancho sets on him lance in hand, Saint Bruno jumps from his ass, drops the basin (which is why we saw him here at the Council without the basin) and rushes off across country, 'for he is the critic himself'" (238-39). And, third, a passage in which Marx and Engels suggest that Stirner's argument often is supported by a series of appositions which have no clear relation with one another: "Against these painstaking distinctions and petty questions there stands out in strong relief the indifference of our Sancho for whom it is all the same and who ignores all actual, practical and conceptual differences. In general, we can already say now that his ability to distinguish is far inferior to his ability not to distinguish, to regard all cats as black in the darkness of the holy, and to reduce everything to anything–an art which finds its adequate expression in the use of the apposition. Embrace your 'ass,' Sancho, you have found him again here. He gallops

merrily to meet you, taking no notice of the kicks he has been given, and greets you with this ringing voice. Kneel before him, embrace his neck and fulfill the calling laid down for you by Cervantes in chapter 30. The apposition is Saint Sancho's ass, his logical and historical locomotive, the driving force of 'the book,' reduced to its briefest and simplest expression'" (274).

When we register what Marx and Engels accomplish here with their wild Quixote, we might wonder, along with Kaufman, if Borges' Pierre Menard "secretly traces his ancestry to this remarkable text of historical materialism."[17] Making Cervantes' *Quixote* an essential part of their analysis of ideology and of the theory of the mode of production, Marx and Engels present a theory of the novel, but one in which there seems to be no clear distinction between fiction and philosophy, between fiction and political analysis. The character Don Quixote's (and this means also Bauer's and Stirner's) fidelity to an outmoded "history" (to an abstract, idealist political philosophy) effectively condemns him (and them) to live a fiction, and ultimately to understand neither history nor fiction, and certainly not the essential intimacy that history and fiction share with one another. But here, Cervantesque literary realism transforms fiction into a means for delineating, however aporetically, the complicated, modern negotiation with historical and material reality. As Marx well knew, *Don Quixote* is one of the great meditations on the relations between fiction and reality, ideas and materiality, ideology and modes of production. It is no accident, then, that Marx turns to Cervantes here, since, like Marx and Engels, Cervantes also proceeds in his novel through a series of literary discussions, critical commentaries, and philological debates that, despite their seeming randomness, converge around a series of reflections on the meaning, interpretation, and materiality of words.

Within the joint analyses presented by Marx and Engels, the displacements, misunderstandings, and interruptions of meaning that occur between Sancho and Quixote become a lens through which to read the displacements and misunderstandings that characterize Bauer's and

Stirner's philosophico-political writings.  The play of names and nicknames that Marx and Engels circulate within their parodic and sarcastic argument–and that indeed belong to it–also has its precedents in the plurality of masks, names, and pseudonyms behind which Cervantes often presented himself, and the novel itself evokes the modern world that these two communists have inherited and which they seek to analyze against Bauer and Stirner: a world that bore the traces of imperialism and colonialism, immigration and migration, poverty and the unequal distribution of wealth and power, death and depopulation, and the vicissitudes of the transition from feudal economies to capitalism, a world that confronted its myths with its realities, a world that, cut off from its realities, preferred to dream.[18]  If Quixote dreams through the lens of chivalric romances, however, Marx analyzes the romances and delusions of the Young Hegelians through the critical eye of this picaresque, and in Marx's view, communist novel.  That the novel retains its political valence even today is confirmed by Subcomandante Marcos, in an interview he gave Gabriel García Márquez in 2001.  Reinforcing Marx's own canon of political literature, he notes that "*Don Quixote* is the best book out there on political theory, followed by *Hamlet*, and *Macbeth*.  There is no better way to understand the tragedy and the comedy of the Mexican political system than *Hamlet*, *Macbeth*, and *Don Quixote*."[19]

Following Marx's complication of the relations among literature, history, and politics, I would say that Marx's interest in literature is perhaps all the more legible when he no longer speaks of what we call novels, poetry, fiction, and fables, but rather when he instead refers to the illusions, hallucinations, phantasms, virtualities, and simulacra that increasingly compose our everyday existence–and this is why his writings remain so essential and urgent for us.  Whether he is describing and analyzing history in terms of generic differences like tragedy and farce, whether he is speaking of the apparitional character of money or ideology, the spectral character of the commodity and exchange-value, a social revolution that can only draw its poetry from the future, the phantasmatic relation between things that characterizes the social relations between men, the ideological or

imaginary relationship between individuals and their real conditions of existence, the misty realm of religion, the theatricality of a Napoleon or of political representation in general, he touches on the realm of literature, on the phantasmagorical and imaginary world that we associate with literature.  We could even say that what makes literature literature–its capacity to engage and produce illusionary, imaginary, phantasmatic relations, its capacity to invent–is at the same time what prevents it from remaining simply literature, what makes it historical and political.

5.

A politics of discourse and writing is evidently implied here, but one in which the certainty of knowledge is dissolved and transformed into literature.  It would not be an exaggeration to say that, for Maurice Blanchot, communism is a community of literature, a relation without relation that takes its point of departure from the activity of writing.  What must be understood by this, however, can be aligned, as Jean-Luc Nancy has demonstrated in *The Inoperative Community*, neither with the idea of "communism" nor with the idea of "literature" as we generally understand them.  At the same time, this "literary communism" bears witness to what communism and communists, on the one hand, and literature and writers on the other, have meant for some time now.  In Nancy's words, "[l]iterary communism does not determine any particular mode of sociality, and it does not found a politics–but it does define at least a limit at which all politics ends and begins, a limit that resists any definition or program."[20]  This limit names without naming the relation between literature and politics, between literature and history.

Blanchot confirms this point in an extraordinary passage from his 1948 essay, "Literature and the Right to Death."  Registering the inescapable relation between revolution and literature, a relation that emerges when, as he puts it, a writer encounters those "decisive moments in history when everything seems put in question, when law, faith, the state, the world above, the world of the past–everything sinks effortlessly, without work, into nothingness," he writes: "the man knows he has not stepped out of history,

but history is now the void, the void in the process of realization; it is absolute freedom which has become an event.  Such periods are given the name Revolution.  At this moment, freedom aspires to be realized in the immediate form of everything is possible, everything can be done.  A fabulous moment–and no one who has experienced it can completely recover from it, since he has experienced history as his own history and his own freedom as universal freedom.  These moments are, in fact, fabulous moments: in them, fable speaks; in them, the speech of fable becomes action.  That the writer should be tempted by them is completely appropriate.  Revolutionary action is in every respect analogous to action as embodied in literature: the passage from nothing to everything, the affirmation of the absolute as event and of every event as absolute.  Revolutionary action explodes with the same force and the same facility as the writer who has only to set down a few words side by side in order to change the world....The writer sees himself in the revolution.  It attracts him because it is the time during which literature becomes history....Any writer who is not induced by the very fact of writing to think, 'I am the revolution, only freedom allows me to write,' is not really writing."[21]

There can be no revolution, Blanchot suggests, without literature, without fables that become action, that make history.  This does not mean that acts of revolution–the various acts of writing, violence, killing, and fighting that usually announce the event of revolution–are only words, but rather that they have to come with words: they require the acts of persuasion, the arguments, debates, commands, and rules that are at once the force, provocation, and effects of revolution, the acts of language and representation without which no politics would be necessary or possible.  This is simply to say what we perhaps have always known: political struggle is staged along the surface of representation.  When Marx writes *The Eighteenth Brumaire*, for example, he insists, he demonstrates, that representation must be taken seriously because what it performs and enables is inseparable from what the world will be.  Emphasizing the materiality and force of ideological concepts, he suggests that what happened in France between 1848 and 1851 involved, among other things,

several discursive practices that, declaring their independence from physical life-processes, nevertheless entered into the processes of real life.  This is why, he notes, "so long as the *name* of freedom was respected and only its actual realization prevented, of course in a legal way, the constitutional existence of liberty remained intact, inviolate, however mortal the blows dealt to its existence in *actual life*."[22]  Italicizing "name" and "actual life," he seeks not only to emphasize the contrast in *German Ideology* between material reality and what is declared and imagined–a contrast he also seeks to complicate–but also to suggest that names and words play an essential role in what we call "actual life."  In other words, although, in its most immediate context, Marx's assertion criticizes any language that would sever itself from reality, in the larger context of *The Eighteenth Brumaire* as a whole, such assertions are an essential element of the reality lived by France and its citizens.  Drawing much of his power from the effect of his name, for example, Napoleon III consolidated his position by making other names and words change the world, even when they could not describe it.  This is why, Marx explains, if Napoleon's rise was enabled by the force of illusion, the history of humanity was altered by "a shadow with no substance behind it."  In the wording of Sandy Petrey, "the specter of revolution becomes matter by virtue of the passionate forcefulness it instills in the praxis of those it terrifies.  Marx's identification of men and events as shadows without bodies in no way revokes the Marxist imperative to explain the world men and events produce.  All that changes is the form this explanation must take."[23]  As Marx explains, the Second Empire does not represent the small holding of 1851 but rather that of many decades earlier, when peasants had just been freed from feudal obligations and were not yet subjugated to capitalist debt.  This is why what Napoleon III represents is not the peasantry as it exists in "actual life," in the material and social practices of everyday life, but rather as it imagines itself, nostalgically and in its mind.  In other words, the ideology of Napoleon III expresses the fantasies of a different ideology rather than the concrete reality of economic existence.  "One sees," Marx writes, that "all 'Napoleonic ideas' are ideas of the undeveloped small holding in the freshness of youth; for the small holding that has outlived its day they are

an absurdity.  They are only the hallucinations of its death struggle, words that are transformed into phrases, spirits transformed into ghosts" (EB, 130).  This passage from the end of *The Eighteenth Brumaire* echoes the book's earlier invocation of the dead generations whose traditions weigh "like a nightmare on the brain of the living" (15) and suggests the weight of such nightmares.  "When hallucinations are successfully represented," Petrey explains, "they become a dictatorship.  Although created in direct contradiction to all discernible contours of material reality, the Second Empire became an overpowering material reality….The complex, contradictory view of representation in *The Eighteenth Brumaire* is that the class interests represented by Napoleon III have the status of material reality even though no such material reality stands prior to the representation that constitutes the very interests it signifies."[24]  In this, Marx points to the materiality of language, a materiality that also bears the traces of the past–the dead generations to which he notoriously refers.

In the famous opening of *The Eighteenth Brumaire*, Marx specifies when and how these dead generations may come to life.  There, he writes (in the passage that I have used as one of my epigraphs): "Men make their own history, but they do not make it just as they please; they do not make it under circumstances chosen by themselves, but under circumstances directly encountered, given and transmitted from the past.  The tradition of all the dead generations weighs like a nightmare on the brain of the living.  And just when they seem engaged in revolutionizing themselves and things, in creating something that has never yet existed, precisely in such periods of revolutionary crisis they anxiously conjure up the spirits of the past to their service and borrow from them names, battle cries, and costumes in order to present the new scene of world history in this time-honored disguise and this borrowed language" (15).  Marx's French illustrations are the bourgeois revolution that began in 1789, with its recourse to Rome; the proletarian revolt of 1848, with its use of 1789; and the Napoleonic revolution of 1851, with its repetition of the First Empire.  If history repeats itself, however, we know that, for Marx–and here he repeats and transforms Hegel–historical repetition is understood in relation to a

difference in genres.  As he puts it, "Hegel remarks somewhere that all facts and personages of great importance in world history occur, as it were, twice.  He forgot to add: the first time as tragedy, the second as farce" (15).  Bruce Mazlish has noted that Marx was not alone in seeing farce in the events following the revolutions of 1848.  Proudhoun, whose account of the *coup d'etat* Marx criticizes in his 1869 preface, makes a similar point when he writes in a letter of February 25, 1848: "drunk on historical novels, we have given a repeat performance of the 10th of August and the 29th of July.  Without noticing it, we have all become characters from some farce."[25]  But it is Engels, Mazlish shows, who may have provided the source for the opening of *The Eighteenth Brumaire* in a letter to Marx dated December 3, 1851.  There, Engels writes: "It really seems as if old Hegel in his grave were acting as World Spirit and directing history, ordaining most conscientiously that it should all be unrolled twice over, once as a great tragedy and once as a wretched farce."[26]  "Part of the supposed intelligibility of Engels's reversal of Hegel," Martin Harries notes, "lies in the assumption that, despite his predilection for inversion, Marx retains a traditional generic hierarchy, where debased farce is the unequal partner to grand tragedy.  The assumption is questionable.  Part of the work of *The Eighteenth Brumaire* is the disruption of forms of play.  Farce and the play of allusion become strategies of historical analysis.  Marx not only revises Hegel in his opening, but he simultaneously borrows from and alters Engels's suggestive passage."[27]  From its opening characterization of history as tragedy and farce–and this has been noted often–Marx's representation of Napoleon III relies heavily on the language of drama and theatrics.  Marx uses theatrical language to suggest the role that dramatic representation plays within the domains of history and politics.  It is in fact because Napoleon III understood this performative character of representation, Marx argues, that he became Napoleon III: "an old crafty roué, he [Bonaparte] conceives the historical life of the nation and their performances of state as comedy in the most vulgar sense, as a masquerade where the grand costumes, words and postures merely serve to mask the pettiest knavery….The adventurer, who took the comedy as plain comedy, was bound to win" (EB, 75-76).  If Bonaparte analyzes "the

historical life of the nation" as a form of theater, however, he seems to forget to distance himself from the role he plays: "Only when he has eliminated his solemn opponent," Marx writes, "when he himself now takes the imperial role seriously and under the Napoleonic mask imagines that he is the real Napoleon, does he become the victim of his own conception of the world, the serious buffoon who no longer takes world history for a comedy but his comedy for world history" (76). As Harries notes, in reference to this passage, "Bonaparte becomes subject to an ideology he has earlier recognized as false and has manipulated as the public representative of an entirely different 'secret society.' It is when Bonaparte, wearing the Napoleonic mask, 'imagines he is the real Napoleon,' that he becomes 'the victim of his own conception of the world,' farcical repetition rather than original author."[28] What is emphasized in both instances, however, is the essential role of representation within material history and politics, within the moment of revolution, whether tragedy or farce. According to Marx, the workers' liberation also will depend on the literary representation of something that does not yet exist: "the social revolution of the nineteenth century cannot draw its poetry from the past, but only from the future" (18). The resources for revolution come, not from the present, but from the future. Rather than ignoring the present in the name of the past, as bourgeois revolutionaries do, the true revolutionaries should ignore what is in the name of the future. However different these two revolutions may be, they both seek to enact and perform a reality that is also a fiction. Like the class interests of the peasantry, the class liberation of the proletariat in *The Eighteenth Brumaire* is to be constituted, if it is constituted at all, by the act that represents it. As in the letter with which I began, the moment of transformation, the moment of change, comes with literature.

But, if there can be no revolution without literature, without fables that become action, that make history, then, at the same time, there can be no literature without revolution–no literature that does not in principle give us the power to say everything, to break free of the rules, to displace them, and thereby to institute and invent. As Marx would have it, it is impossible

not to refer to the possibility of freedom, a freedom beyond the collective determination of necessity, in which surplus work would no longer be exploitive work, but rather art and invention. From Sade's declared interest in "saying everything"[29] to Trotsky's "everything is permitted in art"[30] to Blanchot's "everything must be said. The first freedom is the freedom to say everything"[31] to Roque Dalton's "ah, poetry of today, with you it is possible to say everything"[32] (here I refer to the El Salvadorian poet and revolutionary) to Derrida's claim that literature is a "*fictive institution* which in principle allows one to say everything,"[33] literature names the event of absolute freedom. This is why, just as fabulous and precarious as the state it would threaten–it, too, is without guarantee, since everything is put in question–the revolution to which Blanchot refers names a moment of invention. No revolution without literature, then, also means no revolution without invention–and what is invented each time is literature, but literature as Marx understands it–which is to say: literature as what appears only in its disappearance, as what is never identical to itself, as what, never stepping out of history, engages changing historical and political relations, processes of transformation, and does so within a language that works to change further the shifting domains of history and politics, a language in whose movement the traces of the historical and the political are inscribed. As Blanchot would have it, "the work disappears, but the fact of disappearing remains and appears as the essential thing, the movement which allows the work to be realized as it enters the stream of history, to be realized as it disappears" (RD, 28). What is needed is a form of communism that would enable literature to remain faithful to itself, but to "itself" as what is never simply "itself." This is why, he goes on to explain, "it is easy to understand why men who have committed themselves to a party, who have made a decision, distrust writers who share their views; because these writers also committed themselves to literature, and in the final analysis literature, by its very activity, denies the substance of what it represents" (30).

What is at stake for Blanchot is not simply the exigency of a literary experience of revolution but also a reconceptualization of both literature

and revolution. As he notes in the first few sentences of "Literature and the Right to Death," "literature begins when literature becomes a question" (RD, 21), that is to say, when the language of a work becomes literature in a question about language itself. If literature seeks to transform language, however, it does so–as both Blanchot and Marx tell us–in order to change much more than language, in order to transform the relations in which we live. Its transformative language not only opens onto the history inscribed within it but also works to engage already-changing historical and political relations. "Literature is not nothing," Blanchot writes, "people who are contemptuous of literature are mistaken in thinking they are condemning it by saying it is nothing. 'All that is only literature.' This is how people create an opposition between action, which is a concrete initiative in the world, and the written word, which is supposed to be a passive expression on the surface of the world; people who are in favor of action reject literature, which does not act, and those in search of passion become writers so as not to act. But this is to condemn and to love in an abusive way. If we see work as the force of history, the force that transforms man while it transforms the world, then a writer's activity must be recognized as the highest form of work" (33).

Dalton reiterates this point in one of his last epigrammatic poems, entitled "Poetic Art" and written just shortly before he was killed in 1974. Addressing poetry itself, he writes: "Poetry / forgive me for helping you understand that you are not made of words alone."[34] Writing in the aftermath of de-Stalinization, the Cuban Revolution, and the new international left of the 1960s, Dalton's strategy for using language involves his consistent effort to refer to history, but to a history that–as in Blanchot–comes in the form of writing. He warns us to remain as vigilant as possible to a language that performs its historical and political work through the mobilization of figures whose movement and multiple significations refer to both the linguistic past sealed within them and the unpredictability of a future that could alter, and thereby create, the meaning of our historical existence. That there can be no language that does not refer to history and no history that does not refer to language means that

the task of reading historically (that is to say, politically) involves tracing not only the manner in which a text shares its language with other language (how it is situated within a particular or general historico-political context, how it is inscribed within a chain of works), but also what remains idiomatic in the text (how it confirms this context even as it betrays it, even betrays it in order to respect it). This is the task in which Dalton asks us to engage when, revising Marx's assertion that religion is the opium of the masses, he writes, speaking of Macao and its slave trade (although he also might have spoken of Latin America): "Not always. Because, for example, in Macao, opium is the opium of the people."[35] Throughout his writing, Dalton never retreats from what are, for him, the "undetermined and undecided" linguistic (and hence materialistic) conditions of political action. As he notes in a poem entitled "Tavern," and written in Prague between 1966 and 1967: "THERE'S THE PROBLEM OF SYNTAX, / YOU HAVE TO TAKE A STAND."[36] Along with Blanchot and Marx, Dalton asks us to turn ourselves over to the future–without certainty of determination, without knowledge. That political action owes its possibility to the ordeal of undecidability–what Dalton here calls the problem of syntax–which always will remain its condition may confirm Bataille's sense that "literature cannot assume the task of directing collective necessity,"[37] but at the same time it perhaps offers the only possibility for a politics that wishes to remain open to the future, that wishes to undo or evade power.

Such a politics would ask us to measure up to what nothing in the world can measure, no law, no prediction, no calculation–absolute freedom or justice. It would ask us to invent and create the world anew (without a determinate reference to a determined yesterday or tomorrow), to simultaneously affirm and denounce the world as it is–an always changing network of unforeseeably mediated processes that prevent us from ever knowing in advance what we should do, but also compel us to do nothing less than to make a world. But what would it mean to make a world? What would it mean to inaugurate a world in which displacements, racisms, nationalisms, class ideologies, sexisms, and economic oppressions of all kinds would no longer exist.

We can never know what will become of our world. But we can act in relation to this uncertainty by inventing a world, a world that would no longer merely subject us, a world that, instead of simply dreaming of it, we might seek to make. Invention is always without model or guarantee, but where certainties break down, we perhaps can gather a strength that no certainty can meet. This is why, with Marx, Benjamin, and Emerson, I would suggest that we make literature, since, as we know, even a communist society would be unable to do without it. Let us make literature, then. Literature that mourns itself, but which, in mourning itself, comes to itself as what is never simply itself, as what, coming in the form of sheer differentiation, may one day enable us to attest to our futurity. This is what the writings of these three figures mean for us today: the possibility of a future, but a future that, coming as literature, promises us a world different from the one in which we presently find ourselves, promises a world that would not simply be a repetition of the past–a world that, because it would always remain open, is still to come. What these writings offer us is an understanding, however incomplete it may be, of the difficult conditions and necessity of evading power, since they know that power can never be entirely evaded, even though it is evaded at every given moment, and partly because this evasion belongs to the very movement of power itself.

It is this difficult necessity that is delineated by Emerson in his 1841 essay, "Man the Reformer" (even if in a different tone or diction), and I wish to close these reflections by giving my language over to him, and to his modest suggestion of what is possible for those of us committed to reform, political or otherwise, for those of us who, registering the near inevitability of political complicity, nevertheless wish to diminish it by trying to set "one stone aright every day." He writes:

> It cannot be wondered at, that this general inquest into abuses should arise in the bosom of society, when one considers the practical impediments that stand in the way of virtuous young men. The young man, on entering life, finds the way to lucrative employments blocked with abuses. The ways of trade are grown selfish to the borders of

theft, and supple to the borders (if not beyond the borders) of fraud. The employments of commerce are not intrinsically unfit for a man, or less genial to his faculties, but these are now in their general course so vitiated by derelictions and abuses at which all connive, that it requires more vigor and resources than can be expected of every young man, to right himself in them; he is lost in them; he cannot move hand or foot in them. Has he genius and virtue? the less does he find them fit for him to grow in, and if he would thrive in them, he must sacrifice all the brilliant dreams of boyhood and youth as dreams; he must forget the prayers of his childhood; and must take on him the harness of routine and obsequiousness. If not so minded, nothing is left him but to begin the world anew, as he does who puts the spade into the ground for food. We are all implicated, of course, in this charge; it is only necessary to ask a few questions as to the progress of the articles of commerce from the fields where they grew, to our houses, to become aware that we eat and drink and wear perjury and fraud in a hundred commodities. How many articles of daily consumption are furnished us from the West Indies; yet it is said, that, in the Spanish islands, the venality of the officers of the government has passed into usage, and that no article passes into our ships which has not been fraudulently cheapened. In the Spanish islands, every agent or factor of the Americans, unless he be a consul, has taken oath that he is a Catholic, or has caused a priest to make that declaration for him. The abolitionist has shown us our dreadful debt to the southern negro. In the island of Cuba, in addition to the ordinary abominations of slavery, it appears, only men are bought for the plantations, and one dies in ten every year, of these miserable bachelors, to yield us sugar….[But] I do not wish to be absurd and pedantic in reform. I do not wish to push my criticism on the state of things around me to that extravagant mark, that shall compel me to suicide, or to an absolute isolation from the advantages of civil society. If we suddenly plant our foot, and say, – I will neither eat nor drink nor wear nor touch any food or fabric which I do not know to be innocent, or deal with any person whose whole manner of life is not clear and

rational, we shall stand still.  Whose is so? Not mine; not thine; not his. But I think we must clear ourselves each one by the interrogation, whether we have earned our bread to-day by the hearty contribution of our energies to the common benefit? and we must not cease to *tend* to the correction of these flagrant wrongs, by laying one stone aright every day. (W, I, 232-33)

Notes

1. For my epigraphs, see Karl Marx, *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte* (New York: International Publishers, 1998), 15; Ralph Waldo Emerson, "Lecture on the Times," in *The Complete Works of Ralph Waldo Emerson*, Vol. 1, Centenary Edition, ed. Edward Waldo Emerson (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1903-4), 304-5; Michel Foucault, *Dits et Écrits 1954-1988*, Vol. II, 1976-1988, ed. Daniel Defert and François Ewald (Paris: Gallimard, 2001), 911-2; and Judith Butler, "What is Critique," in *The Judith Butler Reader*, ed. Sarah Salih (Oxford: Wile-Blackwell, 2004), 321.

2. See Walter Benjamin, *Gesammelte Schriften*, Vol. 1, ed. Rolf Tiedemann and Hermann Schweppenhäuser (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp Verlag, 1972), 1232.

3. See especially Jacque Derrida, *Specters of Marx: The State of the Debt, The Work of Mourning, and the New International* (New York: Routledge, 2006), and Werner Hamacher, "Lingua Amissa:
The Messianism of Commodity-Language," trans. Kelly Barry, in *Ghostly Demarcations: A Symposium on Jacques Derrida's 'Specters of Marx'*, ed. Michael Sprinker (New York: Verso, 1999), 168-212.

4. Cited in Werner Hamacher, "Afformative, Strike: Benjamin's 'Critique of Violence,'" trans. Dana Hollander, in *Walter Benjamin's Philosophy: Destruction and Experience*, ed. Andrew Benjamin (London: Routledge, 1993), 120.

5. Ernst Bloch, *The Spirit of Utopia*, trans. Anthony A. Nassar (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2000), 201.

6 For a reading of Walter Benjamin's angel of history that resonates with my argument here–and that touches on the relations among Marx, Benjamin, and Derrida–see Wendy Brown, "FUTURES Specters and Angels: Benjamin and Derrida" in *Politics Out of History* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2001), 138-173

7. There would be innumerable places to go for this argument in Derrida, but perhaps the most significant instances can be found in "Afterword: Toward an Ethic of Discussion," trans. Samuel Weber, in *Limited Inc.*, ed. Gerald Graff (Evanston, Illinois: Northwestern University Press, 1988), 111-154; "Force of Law: 'The Mystical Foundation of Authority,'" trans. Mary Quaintance, *Cardozo Law Review: Deconstruction and the Possibility of Justice*, 11:5-6 (1990): 920- 1045; "Mochlos, or The Conflict of the Faculties," trans. Richard Rand and Amy Wigant, in *Logomachia*, ed. Richard Rand (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1992), 1-34.

8. Paul Celan, *Collected Prose*, trans. Rosemarie Waldrop (Manchester: Carcanet Press, 1986), 6.

9. Ernst Jünger, "On Danger," *New German Critique*, 59 (Spring-Summer 1993): 30.

10. See, among others, Jacques Derrida and Bernard Stiegler, *Echographies of Television: Filmed Interviews*, trans. Jennifer Bajorek (Cambridge, UK: Polity Press, 2002); Avital Ronell, *The Telephone Book: Technology, Schizophrenia, Electric Speech* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1991); Max Weber, *Mass Mediauras: Form, Technics, Media* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1996); and Jean-Luc Nancy, "War, Right, Sovereignty–Techne," in *Being Singular Plural*, trans. Robert D. Richardson and Anne E. O'Byrne (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2000), 101-144.

11. See Emerson, "Lecture on the Times," 304-5.  All future references to Emerson's

writings are to this edition and will be cited by volume, number, and page.

12. See Walter Benjamin, "The Author as Producer," in *Walter Benjamin: Selected Writings, Vol. 2, Part 2, 1931-1934*, ed. Michael W. Jennings, et al. (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2005), 768.

13. Karl Marx, "Letter From Marx to His Father," in *Karl Marx Frederick Engels: Collected Works, Vol. 1, Karl Marx: 1835-43* (New York: International Publishers, 1975), 10. Subsequent references to this letter are to this edition and will be cited parenthetically within my essay by "LF"and page number.

14. See Robert Kaufman, "Red Kant, or the Persistence of the Third 'Critique' in Adorno and Jameson," in *Critical Inquiry*, Vol. 26, No. 4 (Summer 2000): 682-724.

15. See Karl Marx, "The German Ideology", in *Karl Marx Frederick Engels: Collected Works, Vol. 5, Marx and Engels: 1845-47* (New York: International Publishers, 1976): 55. Further references to this book are to this volume and edition and will be inserted parenthetically within my essay by "GI" and page number.

16. Kaufman, "Red Kant," 697.

17. Ibid., 699.

18. Although the critical literature on Cervantes' novel is vast, I have found Maria Antonia Garces, *Cervantes in Algiers: A Captive's Tale* (Nashville, TN: Vanderbilt University, 2005) and Jacques Lezra, *Unspeakable Subjects: The Genealogy of the Event in Early Modern Europe* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1997) to be very resonant with some of the issues with which I am concerned here.

19. Subcomandante Marcos, "The Punch Card and the Hourglass: Interview by García Márque and Roberto Pombo," in *New Left Review* 9 (May-June 2001). See: http://www.newleftreview.org/A2322.

20. Jean-Luc Nancy, *The Inoperative Community*, trans. Peter T. Connor (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1991), 80.

21. Maurice Blanchot, "Literature and the Right to Death," in *The Gaze of Orpheus, and Other Literary Essays*, trans. Lydia Davis, ed. P. Adams Sitney (Barrytown, NY: Station Hill Press, 1981), 38, 40. Subsequent references to this essay are to this edition and will be cited parenthetically within my essay as "RD" and page number.

22. Karl Marx, *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte*, 31. Further references to this text are to this edition and will be placed parenthetically in my essay as "EB" and page number.

23. See Sandy Petrey, ""The Reality of Representation: Between Marx and Balzac," in *Literature and Social Practice*, ed. Philippe Desan, et. al. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1989), 76.

24. Ibid., 81, 83.

25. See Pierre Joseph Proudhon, *Selected Writings*, trans. Elizabeth Fraser (New York: Anchor, 1969), 154.

26. Cited in Bruce Mazlish, "The Tragic Farce of Marx, Hegel, and Engels: A Note," in *History and Theory*, 11:3 (1972),336.

27. See Martin Harries, *Scare Quotes From Shakespeare: Marx, Keynes, and the Language of Reenchantment* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2000), 62-63.

28. Ibid., 70.

29. See Marquise de Sade, *Justine, Philosophy in the Bedroom, and Other Writings*, trans.

Richard Seaver and Austryn Wainhouse (New York: Grove Press, 1965), 329.

30. Cited in Maurice Blanchot, "'There could be no question of ending well,'" in *The Book to Come*, trans. Charlotte Mandell (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2002), 29.

31. Maurice See Blanchot, "Insurrection, the Madness of Writing," in *The Infinite Conversation*, trans. Susan Hanson (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1993), 220.

32. Roque Dalton, "Tavern and Other Places," in *Small Hours of the Night: Selected Poems of Roque Dalton*, trans. Jonathan Cohen, et. al., ed. Hardie St. Martin (Willimantic, CT: Curbstone Press, 1996), xxi.

33. See Jacques Derrida, "'This Strange Institution Called Literature': An Interview with Jacques Derrida," in *Acts of Literature*, ed. Derek Attridge (New York: Routledge, 1992), 36.

34. Roque Dalton, "Poetic Art," cited in Claribel Alegría, "Roque Dalton: Poet and Revolutionary," in *Small Hours of the Night*, xvii.

35. Roque Dalton, "Revisionism." (see: http://www.poetrybay.com/winter2003/dracut.html).

36. Roque Dalton, "Tavern (Conversatorio)," in *Small Hours of the Night*, 163.

37. Cited in Jean-Luc Nancy, *The Inoperative Community*, 71.

# Petrodollar Caprice
## Keller Easterling

The majority of the world's petrodollars often remain invisible or unaccounted for, only registering briefly, if at all, in offshore locations. Petrodollars are always on vacation and always away from their mail. Able to materialize and dematerialize with the ease of offshore holdings, many elite corporate organizations consider themselves heir to the same privilege and liquidity that petrodollars enjoy. They need to get away and relax.

Operating in a frictionless realm of exemption, many newly coined corporate enclaves find relaxation in zone variants such as Special Economic Zones (SEZs), Free Trade Zones (FTZs) or Export Processing Zones (EPZs). If it is the corporation's legal duty to banish any obstacle to profit, the zone is the perfect legal habitat of the corporation.  It is the spatial organ of corporate externalizing–a mechanism of political quarantine designed for corporate protection. The zone is also a primary aggregate unit of many new forms of the contemporary global city, offering a "clean slate," "one-stop" entry into the economy of a foreign country.  Most banish the negotiations concerning labor, human rights or environment. Most also launder the temporary contents, labor conditions and real estate opportunities of their warehouses, campuses and parks. Many of the new legal hybrids of zone, oscillating between visibility and invisibility, identity and anonymity, have neither been mapped nor analyzed for their disposition–their patency, exclusivity, aggression, resilience or violence.

More and more programs and spatial products thrive in legal lacunae and political quarantine, enjoying the insulation and lubrication of tax exemptions, foreign ownership of property, streamlined customs and deregulation of labor or environmental regulations. The zone aspires to lawlessness, but in the legal tradition of exception, it is a mongrel form that adopts looser and more cunning behaviors than those associated with an

are not only vessels of organizational parameters, but also a medium of the many puffy fairy tales of belief that accompany power. Breeding more promiscuously with other "parks" or enclave formats, the zone now merges with tourist compounds, knowledge villages, IT campuses, museums and universities that complement the corporate headquarters or offshore facility.

Indeed, assuming an ethereal aura and an overlay of fantasy, many corporate enclaves have merged with the resort. If corporations are often only vessels for liberated money, they can easily be maintained outside of the work-week environment. While corporate headquarters in national capitals and financial capitals portray a glamorous business-like atmosphere, the office park has recently begun to project the image not of a Hilton hotel or a colonial club but rather a fantasy island of a kingdom of unencumbered wealth. For instance, King Abdullah Economic City, a production of the UAE's Emaar developers on the Red Sea near Jeddah, offers a full complement of cultural, educational, business and residential programs together with resort functions. Fly-throughs with swelling traditional music render the city as a shimmering, golden man-made island filled with traditional Islamic palaces and programmed with leisure space. Even more extreme are those enclaves that directly merge with the offshore island shelter. Off the coast of Iran, Kish Free Zone similarly attracts business to the island of Kish notorious for its relaxed religious standards. Here, there is not only a loosening of headscarves and a greater opportunity for socializing between men and women, but the standard set of exemptions to which the corporation has grown accustomed. Nearby fantasy hotels like the Dariush Grand Hotel recreate the grandeur of Persian palaces with peristyle halls, gigantic cast stone sphinxes and ornate *bas reliefs* depicting ancient scenes.

From their position of relaxation, petrodollars fund a special sort of extrastatecraft. Kingdoms reawakened by oil after the great centuries of national history are less concerned with the well-rehearsed techniques of national sovereignties such as war, suffrage, diplomacy or franchise. Yet, in oil regions or anywhere else in the world, the nation state is not losing

ground to transnational forces. Rather the two work in *tandem* to determine the most advantageous ways to release, launder or shelter power. For instance, corporate powers seek out deregulated, extra-jurisdictional spaces (SEZs, FTZs, EPZs etc.) while also massaging legislation in the various nation states they occupy (NAFTA). The stances of any one nation or corporate consortium are therefore often duplicitous or discrepant reflections of divided loyalties between national and international concerns or citizens and shareholders. Temporary conviction and duplicity are crucial to political agility.

The symbolic capital that architects provide in the form of cosmopolitan identities, selective historical traditions, signature skyscrapers or architourism lends a camouflage of gravitas to the temporary intentions of extrastatecraft. Real estate operators like Emaar move between zones to provide the spatial environments and amenities that corporate "families" recognize as home. They establish mobile embassies within networks of legal habitats that can be recreated anywhere in the world. In their cast concrete palaces or mirror tiled office buildings, architecture is the casino within which to store and flip petrodollars. Yet architecture also helps the largest conglomerates that appear hat-in-hand in the media wanting the world to get to know them and support their work as they develop alternative energies and more resilient crops that might alleviate poverty. They ask for loyalty–a loyalty beyond brand recognition and closer to a form of patriotism for non-national sovereignty. While the free zone often uses business instruments for self-governance in lieu of the tools of a citizenry, it also sometimes borrows the tools of participatory democracies in service of business. Gazprom City, in St. Petersburg, the proposed architectural outcropping of the Gazprom oil network has asked the world to vote on an architectural monument from a slate of options designed by famous architects. Moreover, King Abdullah Economic City is symbolic capital of the state and a monument to its "wise leadership."

The merger of petrodollars with an ancient *entrepôt* like, for instance, Dubai conflates evasive funds with an urban tradition that cares more about the

movement rather than the stability and retention of goods. Mobile contractors, services and labor reduce the likelihood of accountability. In this way, the poverty of cheap labor or the corrupt origins of goods can be managed or laundered without the chaos of informal economies. Labor exploitation, for instance, is transparent, stabilized within the law and handled by commercial contractors rather than government agencies. The migrating worker, like the tourist, is the ideal quasi-citizen who after depositing money or effort leaves without further requirements of the state. Other corporate consortia also serve as parastate function. Enjoying quasi-diplomatic immunities, corporations may provide to nations the temporary support and expertise for transportation and communication infrastructure or relationships with IMF and the World Bank. Indeed petrodollars together with networks of construction companies and infrastructure specialists like Bouyges, Bin Laden, Mitsubishi, Kawasaki or Siemens are delivering some of the world's most sophisticated rail and transit even to the Gulf region–the epicenter of oil.

Unencumbered wealth prefers non-state violence. Total War arguments lend to the state and its military a great deal of agency. They are also good camouflage for massively capitalized corporate conglomerates that avoid war because it is bad for business. Intractably passive and oblivious to consequences, they can then be indirectly involved with non-state violence that is harder to trace.  For instance, one of the UAE's stated goals is to partner with Africa on several initiatives. Yet, in the case of the Alsunut development in Khartoum, it seems that the UAE does not intend to share its techniques for distributing oil wealth, or, at least, not with non-Arab populations.  Development expertise from Abu Dhabi and Dubai is helping Alsunut Development Company Ltd. in building Almogran, which includes 1,660 acres of skyscrapers and residential properties. The new corporate compound only underlines the extreme discrepancies in Sudan between northern oil wealth and the exploitation of oil resources in the mostly non-Arab south. Indeed, the overt, even hyperbolic, expressions of oil money are among the chief tools for instigating war and exacerbating violence in the south. The Middle East real estate casino has yet more material, but

leverages no assets for another race and culture.

The caprice, the relaxed extrastatecraft, of petrodollars creates political phantoms–events that fall outside the logics of the state or sentiments that are not easily taxonomized or moralized by the left or the right. An unofficial transnational polity operates by the rules native to discrepant or duplicitous territory. It is the *stray* details that may actually cause a cessation of violence, a shift in sentiment or a turn in economic fortunes unpredicted by political orthodoxies. Most urgent then for architecture is not the righteous consolidation of a singular position but rather the proliferation of many tools of spatial manipulation**.** Perhaps the prevailing logics of this duplicity prompt *impure* political struggles. While constancy and forthright intentions may evaporate in such environments, unusual architectural levers or toggles may be part of an indirect political ricochet.

# Reading Globalization from the Margin
## Sanjay Krishnan

*The concept of globalization–a progressive increase in the scale of social processes from a local or regional to a world level–became fashionable because a variety of disciplines came to realize that the study of the village, province, nation-state or regional bloc of human communities was inadequate to capture causation even within the 'fragment.' Economists concluded that international flows of capital were becoming so massive that no single government could control them. Anthropologists realized that even small and apparently isolated communities were now directly linked to each other and to the wider society through television, the mobile telephone, the internet and population movements.*[1]

For social scientists, globalization denotes an empirical process.[2] The "global" in global history is thought to refer, in transparent or self-evident fashion, to events taking place in the world–the integration of local economies into a single, worldwide market–that require an adequate description. Debates about "globalization" have accordingly centered on disagreements over whether the term denotes European capital accumulation worldwide beginning in the sixteenth or eighteenth centuries, or if it refers specifically to the "deterritorializing" power of metropolitan finance capital enabled by novel forms of electronic communication and data processing in the late twentieth century. In everyday as much as scholarly usage a "global" viewpoint signifies a representation that is true because it is comprehensive. The lens or frame through which things are brought into view is for practical purposes made invisible and the contingencies of perspective are presumed transcended.

The prevailing definition of the global–a comprehension of the world as a single, bounded and interconnected entity developing in common time and space–

finds its most elaborate and systematic expression in knowledge production initiated during the era of European territorial and commercial imperialism. The institutionalization in imperialism of this powerful and indispensable mode of thematizing the world has resulted in the naturalization of this perspective as "correct" seeing: the global as perspective secures for itself the reifications of the global as thing. The "global" therefore does not point to the world as such but at the conditions and effects attendant upon institutionally validated modes of making legible within a single frame the diverse terrains and peoples of the world.

The purpose of this essay is to redefine the global as a peculiar way of making the world visible and legible that is as useful as it is dangerous. To this end, I study the global as an instituted perspective that brings objects into view and makes them available for and as truth. In this light, the global ceases to operate as a merely descriptive term and assumes an interventionary or productive force. Such an approach serves to denaturalize the epistemic conformism that informs many empiricist discussions of globalization.[3] In this way, the representational structures through which the world is objectively given for sight and everyday actions are in turn grasped as irreducibly part of the weave they purport to set before and describe.

If the global generates "reality effects" that have profound material consequences, the task of reading in a globalizing age is to learn to usefully displace and reconstellate this reflex through its engagement with the uneven and heterogeneous contexts of the world. For this reason I cannot agree with the claim that "the central problem of today's global interactions is the tension between cultural homogenization and cultural heterogenization."[4] It is rather that the global defines the terms in which historical narratives and institutionally validated political agency are shaped. Inasmuch as critics and boosters of capitalist globalization do not examine the terms in which the world is made available as an object for description and analysis, they replicate the presuppositions by which are occluded or suppressed perspectives that cannot find institutional validation

within the framework established by the global. The global mode of thematization is by definition adequate and comprehensive, and its successful performance is the condition of possibility of agency in the South as much as in the North. Historical agents so defined may therefore conceive their own liberation or emancipation in terms that challenge Eurocentric ideology whilst reproducing dominant ways of seeing and saying. What is at issue here is a trained reflex in which knowledge is produced and sight naturalized. Undoing this conformism is the central challenge of political and cultural studies in a globalizing age.

I first offer a quick review of ideologically different statements that are unified in their tacit adoption of the global mode of thematization. In the wake of the massive capital flight and currency devaluations in 1997 that came to be known as the Asian financial crisis, Mahathir bin Mohamad, then Prime Minister of Malaysia, gave a speech at a World Bank meeting in Hong Kong in which he denounced the conspiracy of western financial speculators who had in his view engineered the crisis for their selfish gain. Invoking anti-colonial rhetoric that may have struck some of the international bankers present as incongruous coming from the political leader of a country whose elite had benefited so handsomely from Cold War geopolitics, Mahathir also claimed that international markets were a cover for powerful countries of the developed North to keep the developing South in its position of economic dependency and political subservience. Mahathir's speech reflected the pain of the innocent postcolonial nation that had tried to play by the rules of global capitalism only to discover too late that the system is rigged. It was a felicitous performance for various reasons.

Even as Mahathir started and ended his speech with a declaration of faith in the global capitalist system whose Northern representatives had actively conspired against Malaysia and fellow countries of the South–Mexico, Thailand, Russia, South Korea, Indonesia, to name a few–he mocked the pretense that fairness is possible in the current order. The speech was at once sincere and cynical, sophisticated and simpleminded. Mahathir

presented himself as the outsider who, in claiming not to comprehend the rules of the game, was the only one who described the system as it actually worked:

> And we are told that we are not worldly if we do not appreciate the workings of the international financial market. Great countries tell us that we must accept being impoverished because that is what international finance is all about. Obviously we are not sophisticated enough to accept losing money so that the manipulators become richer.[5]

It is the outraged postcolonial who naively insists that the powerful play by the rules of their making even as his rhetoric suggests that his nation cannot afford to walk away from a game that is neither transparent nor equitable, and that the likelihood of the global elite reforming a financial order instituted for their own enrichment is remote.

In the age of neoliberal globalization, this is the language of postcolonial resistance. Mahathir effectively conceded the fact that no nation-state can afford to place itself outside the order of global capitalism. It is in this context that Mahathir imposed capital controls designed to halt the financial speculation that had wrought such havoc on the Malaysian economy. In the wake of the stabilized currency that followed his intervention, and the general impression that Malaysia had avoided the socially disastrous consequences suffered by countries (Indonesia and Thailand, for example) that submitted to austerity measures, Mahathir seemed to have got the better of the analysts who grimly predicted that Malaysia had become a pariah for international capital.[6]

The relative success of Mahathir's protectionist measures gave him the last word–for the moment–in the fight against unjust but powerful institutions like the International Monetary Fund as well as the western media. Such an evaluation draws on the metaphor of a competitive game in which the mode of thematization and desire of all the players were the same.[7]

Mahathir's rhetorical gambit of not understanding how the world is run is obviously belied by the fact that he poses and argues over the issues in the same way as his putative adversaries. Dissent is informed by an underlying consensus about what is given for evaluation. Without judgment we may say that the global is imagined through an epistemic conformity that belies the ideological disagreements between Mahathir and members of the audience like James Wolfensohn, then President of the World Bank. Such consonance is the condition of what counts as thought in the historical relay between a colonial domination and postcolonial "growth."

Such perspectival conformity also resonates with influential "revisionist" or anti-Eurocentric global histories published in recent years. Thus, notwithstanding Andre Gunder Frank's valuable critique in *ReOrient: Global Economy in the Asian Age* of histories that assume western historical exceptionalism, his own work is informed by a conventional understanding of historical process.[8] Crudely put, he criticizes European-centered narratives of progress so as to install "Asia" as the new hero in place of the old one. In Frank's account of globalization, the global economy did not begin in Europe; rather, European merchants were latecomers who tapped into an already existing "world system" centered on China and India. More significantly, he assimilates this center to the institutions peculiar to market economies of the present day. He thus uses a strategy similar to those adopted by critics of Eurocentrism in the age of globalization:

> The implications of this book are that the "Rise" of East Asia need come as no surprise just because it does not fit into the Western scheme of things. This book suggests a rather different scheme of things instead, into which the contemporary and possible future events in East Asia, and maybe also elsewhere in Asia, can and do fit. This is a global economic development scheme of things, in which Asia, and especially East Asia, was already dominant and remained so until–in historical terms–very recently, that is, less than two centuries ago. Only then, for reasons to be explored below, did Asian economies lose their positions of predominance

in the world economy, while that position came to be occupied by the West–apparently only temporarily.[9]

Eurocentrism is legitimized by reversal here. The substitution of historical protagonists confirms that the same mode of evaluation is in place. Unlike Frank, R. Bin Wong's more circumspect *China Transformed: Historical Change and the Limits of European Experience* does not seek to dethrone Europe and place Asia at the center. Wong reveals instead the underlying values that organize his factual claims. He assumes that human beings everywhere desire the material and socio-economic arrangements found in the metropolitan centers of the North and South:

> While the world remains unevenly developed economically, it is generally agreed that the expansion of material wealth has been largely a positive development. Most criticisms of materialist excess and anxieties over ecological balances take for granted certain advantages of an industrialized economic system even as they lament and rail against features they find problematic or dangerous. General agreement about the direction of economic change and its basic advantages confirms that at least in this realm people across cultures associate quality of life with material security and abundance. The multiple dynamics of economic change since industrialization all point in a single direction of increased productivity and greater material wealth. This is a shared condition of modernity. The situation in politics is different.[10]

History may not culminate in liberal democracy, but the pragmatist definition of economic "growth" holds sway as the end-all of human possibility. In the current world order, this mainstream view is tacitly endorsed as the definition of progress as much by the elite of the South as by the elite of the North.[11] In Wong's necessitarian view of historical development we discern an instance of "myth" in the sense described by Roland Barthes, precisely not in the received sense that it is false, but as the unthematized point of departure for the production of truth effects. Occluded are the perspectives of those subaltern

groups or the many who are excluded from the upward mobility that supposedly follows from "growth" – that must be inducted into such normalized sight. Wong's assertions give us an idea of the ways in which the mode of thematization also finds normative elaboration, which undergirds the writings of sober academics as well as zealous popularizers like the American journalist Thomas Friedman. As reflected in the epigraph, which is drawn from an essay by C. A. Bayly, what is presented as an "adequate" methodological frame can be more appropriately described as a pre-comprehended one. It is in this sense that anti-Eurocentric positions such as Frank's and Wong's reveal the deeper affinity to the epistemic if not the ideological presuppositions that inform such thinking. It points to the unthematized assumptions by which truth is made possible, even in "oppositional" or revisionist discourse.

Edward Said's *Orientalism* and the influence of postcolonial studies in Anglophone academia have had an analogous impact on the way conventional historians and social scientists who seek to creatively incorporate "difference" or "hybridity" into what remains an inflexible mode of narrativization and way of seeing. Explicitly distancing himself from Immanuel Wallerstein's "Eurocentrism," Bayly draws on the Arjun Appadurai essay cited above to theoretically underpin his empirical claim that the premodern global economy was not simply a European imposition but was "cannibalized" at every turn by a "wider range of agents" such as local, non-European merchants.[12] His aim is to "show that the [non-European] agents of archaic [i.e. proto-capitalist] globalization could become active forces in the expansion of the Euro-American-dominated world economy and even survive and transcend it…"[13]

The focus here is on trade routes and trade diasporas as the intermediary through which the transition is effected. Once again, what drives this historical account is a perspective that takes for granted capitalist teleology. In such accounts of the global economy a univocal vision purports to be more "inclusive"; in this spirit, the invocation of  hybridity and centrifugal movements reflects a desire to confer, within this frame, "agency" upon the natives.

The legitimation of capitalist teleology by means of anti-Eurocentrism has found a home in other influential places. In a World Bank Report entitled *The East Asian Miracle* this tendency is more sharply brought into view:

> How much of East Asia's success is due to geography, common cultural characteristics, and historical accident? Certainly some–but definitely not all. Ready access to common sea lanes and relative geographical proximity are the most obvious shared characteristics of the successful Asian economies. East Asian economies have clearly benefited from the kind of informal economic linkages geographic proximity encourages, including trade and investment flows. For example, throughout Southeast Asia, ethnic Chinese drawing on a common cultural heritage have been active in trade and investments. Intraregional economic relationships date back many centuries to China's relation with the kingdoms that became Cambodia, Japan, Korea, Laos, Myanmar and Viet Nam.

> In South and Southeast Asia, Muslim traders sailed from India to Java, landing to trade at points in between, for several hundred years before the arrival of European ships. Thus tribute missions and traditional trade networks, reinforced in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries by surges of emigration, have fostered elements of a common trading culture, including two lingua francas, Malay and Hokein [sic] Chinese, that remain important in the region today.

> In our own century, key Asian ports were integrated into the emerging world economic system as the result of European military and trade expansion.[14]

This Asia-centric perspective tacitly supposes a general "East Asian" identity secured by geography and kinship networks even as it elides the role played by European imperialism and Cold War geopolitics–relegated to a single

mention of "European ships" – in the emergence of market societies in the region.[15] An alternative narrative of the emergence of capitalism in the region is implied in the claim that indigenous trading networks and political institutions yielded a natural and unforced transition in the twentieth century, when Asian ports were gradually "integrated" into the capitalist world economy. Whereas in the bad past of modernization theory Asians had to be inducted into capitalist values and habits for their own good, in the happier era of neoliberal globalization Asians are discovered to have always had a propensity for capitalism. In the new dispensation, the trope of transition reflexively used by social scientists is replaced by a concept-metaphor closer to metamorphosis. Asian cultural forms and indigenous structures are taken as evidence that pre-capitalist networks could be easily integrated with the "world economic systems" of the twentieth century. The writers suggest that the integration of these economies has less to do with European colonial capitalism than with kinship, geography and informal trading practices. Given that the "Asian Century" is apparently set to rival, if not unseat, western world-historical dominance, and in particular the "American Century," it is critical to focus on the global (as) perspective not simply as a tool of European imperialism but as it enacts a powerful style of representation that can be reproduced in ever-changing ways in diverse places. The usurpation of Euro-American dominance by "Asia" may not be cause for celebration if given modes of thematizing and representing remain in place. By extension, the laudable desire for an inclusive multiculturalism based upon a proliferation of "hybrid" identities and sites of contestation replete with "intersecting histories" and "discrepant detours and returns" must needs engage the perspectivization within whose frame historical meaning and political agency are conditioned.[16] I am engaged less by the global viewed through polyvocal or heteroglossic lenses than the need to solicit the episteme and reflexes by which institutionally validated action dissimulates a particular way of bringing the world into view, not least in the inquiring subject. What is at stake is *how* value is given in the ways that historical agents are trained to see and think, and how political or economic policies in particular and material interventions in general take place in the world as an effect of this seeing and thinking.

Hence the study of the specific ways that value is produced is the first step in making available how texts can be activated in new ways.

Here the work of Partha Chatterjee, Dipesh Chakrabarty and Janet Abu-Lughod suggest lessons on and limitations to engaging alternative ways of thinking about the global as a mode of thematization. In his profoundly suggestive *Nationalist Thought in the Colonial World: A Derivative Discourse*, Partha Chatterjee attends to the ways in which an elite anticolonial nationalism in India framed its political aspirations within the ideological and conceptual frameworks of an established colonial "thematic" of universal progress, an approach that resonates with my approach in this essay.[17] Having said that, in his attempt to elaborate this insight on the more comprehensive order of "an [anticolonial] nationalist imagination in Asia and Africa," Chatterjee makes, on the one hand, the nineteenth century elite Bengali nationalists' deliberate "construct" of an inner "domain marked by cultural difference" distinct from the universalizing claims of colonial capitalism serve as a strategic template for all anticolonial nationalisms. On the other, he phenomenalizes this fiction by deliberately taking it for a fact by the end of the book, where he declares that "community" (itself a term of modern social science) "cannot be appropriated within the narrative of capital."[18]

The tension I am pointing to in Chatterjee's work can be put in these terms: having demonstrated so effectively that elite nationalist historical representations are instituted, he posits, without mediation, an alternative site of cultural difference that sidesteps altogether the fact that such sites cannot be accessed save in the terms of the conventions of knowledge production. In related fashion, when Dipesh Chakrabarty observes that "the dominance of "Europe" as the subject of all histories is a part of a much more profound theoretical condition under which historical knowledge is produced in the third world," he teaches us that history writing participates in the reality it claims merely to describe. In the same spirit, however, Chakrabarty curiously proceeds to outline a picture of an "autonomous" India untainted by her encounter with the same Western episteme that he

relies on *both* to make his critique of "Europe" and to flesh out this vision of extra-discursive space "autonomous" of Europe. The recognition of the matter of representation is suppressed at the moment its efficacy is precisely marked. Formally speaking, Chakrabarty's argument mirrors the representational strategy of the "Europe" it seeks to "provincialize."

Abu-Lughod is most explicit in drawing attention to the fact that history is *written*, and that its truths are instituted. The historian, in Abu-Lughod's view, cannot afford to practice her craft as if descriptions are "isomorphic with 'objective reality.'"[19] In practice, if not theory, historical explanation is "foreordained" by the putative outcome or identity of the object of narration (or, as she puts it in an approving aside on Freud's methodological candor, diagnosis always precedes etiology). Like Chakrabarty and Chatterjee, Abu-Lughod notes how the conventions governing historical narrative, like the adequational presuppositions that often inform the use of language in history writing, need to be supplemented by a greater attention to the way this world is brought into view.

Having reflected on the conventions of historiography that imply a grasp of the rhetorical (or "performative") dimension of such narratives, Abu-Lughod nevertheless resolves the problem posed by histories that presuppose European exceptionalism by offering to tell a different story, one centered not on "why the West rose," but "why the East fell": that is, the modern West's success was made possible by its parasitic relation with a sophisticated, polycentric world-system of trade and commerce in the non-European world that had long been in existence before the first voyages of Spanish or Portuguese "discovery."[20] The story she tells is both rich and fascinating; it is a valuable enterprise, not least because no counter-hegemonic effort can be done with alternative historical narratives that claim to adequate reality as well, if not better, than the received truths they contest. But given that these writers reveal an acute awareness of the strategies, frames and codes through which truth is instituted and interpreted, it is curious that in their practice they rarely attend to the way in which their alternative accounts of truth are themselves mediated

techniques for the production of truth effects, and cannot stand exclusively as transparent media for the transmission of alternative narratives.

All these writers are united by a common desire to produce an alternative "picture." Even as I remain sympathetic to and draw upon their richly varied narratives, my aim in this essay is to suggest how reading can transform the practice of the investigating subject, particularly as such practice might productively interrupt or supplement the inevitable (and necessary) projects of producing alternative or counter-hegemonic narratives. In the accounts of non-Europe as the origin or distant begetter of modern capitalism (Frank and Abu-Lughod), and from evidence of its cross-culturally collaborative character across time (Bayly, Mazlish) to arguments for widespread "local" or community-based forms of recalcitrance to the homogenizing effects of colonial capitalism and neocolonial globalization (Chatterjee, Chakrabarty), what we have are diverse and overlapping discursive attempts at intervening in and recoding "the present."[21] In purporting to describe truth, they also seek to train us to produce truth in new ways. Because these recodings or styles of training adopt the convention of subject-object model of cognition, they are obliged to assert their claims in the language of objectivity.

This seems especially salient at a time when some of the "anti-Eurocentric" work I have been discussing shows signs of a susceptibility to being redeployed in the language of "alternative modernities."[22] In my view, the assertion of difference on the basis of a phenomenalized "local" or "national" identity may not be the most effective means to resisting the homogenizing effects of a corporate globalization if the latter can, as in the putative case of an earlier colonial epoch described by Chatterjee, be peremptorily banished from an "inner" or "spiritual" domain by the elite representatives of a native "community" that nonetheless strives to conform to the capitalist status quo in "public." Not so long ago a conservative version of this discourse may have been enunciated in the guise of "Asian values." It is of course true that this discourse was mobilized by political elites in Southeast Asia, most notably Lee Kuan Yew, who sought to

legitimize the authoritarianism of the postcolonial Singaporean state by relying upon an Orientalist version of an essentially docile Asian "culture" as the fundamental reason for the capitalist "rise of East Asia." Mahathir bin Mohamad wove into such valuations the rhetoric of anticolonial nationalist resistance, charging that any questioning of such authoritarianism by the Western media was little more than a neocolonial conspiracy to hobble the capitalist progress of the newly independent nation. In contrast, the "postcolonial" discourses of cultural difference have been mobilized in the interest of demonstrating how the historically produced figure of "community" can form the basis of a popular resistance to and critique of the homogenizing forces of the postcolonial state as well as global capitalism.[23] Just as I do not claim an identity of interests between these two discourses, but am noting only the diverse utterances by which claims of cultural difference may be discontinuously mobilized, my aim here is to explore how these apparently counterhegemonic engagements with the global may make themselves available for critical practices of reconstellation that attend to the mixed and interruptive ways of value coding through which the world is made legible, as much for thought as action.

For the formerly colonized subject as much as the colonizer, the proper or adequate analysis of the world is without ideological content: it is a "correct" way of seeing that has to be learned and practiced as a matter of course. It is worth reflecting on how this mode of thematization "holds" across such differences of historical and ideological assignment. Value making or coding is expressed in how seeing takes place (and not in *what* is seen). The task of producing different or alternative narratives can in this sense join hands with the practical task of reworking or displacing the production of narrative and perspectives in ways that repeatedly undo, displace and reconstellate this "global" sight. The necessary game of making one's past legible through knowledge production must remain alert to the novel mutations of postcolonial self-consolidation, especially in view of what such instituted perspectives, produced within a set of formal and thematic protocols they do not control, may exclude or assimilate into the

terms of the "alternative" image. Such precaution is advisable if the making of new narratives in the era of globalization is not ultimately to serve the interests of power, but also to acknowledge a prior unevenness and irreducible difference in the world before which all subjectal representations conjure. In this way the global is not simply the means by which the world is reduced to an object for comprehensive knowledge or domination, but also serves as a poor name for a configuring act that is irreducibly other to that which it objectifies. Such objectification is the currency in which we must traffic to orient ourselves as political agents, but a theoretical practice emerges in training oneself into cautiously interrupting and opening, in different contexts, what we necessarily (mis)take for descriptions of reality.

As producers of knowledge, we are operated by the narratives we produce and the lines of seeing and saying they make available. Coded in the necessary terms of representation, the global names the sheer unevenness and heterogeneity in the world. Language can give an intuition of this unevenness, chiefly as it displaces or recasts it from the terms of an indispensable "picture" into that of a practice that grapples with and turns from within the forms through which the world is brought into view. Here we draw on the matter of representation to see how the world is coded, not simply to provide a better or alternative "picture," but to see what interruptive strategies it may enable.

A study of the relation between styles of seeing and valuing is offered in Martin Heidegger's essay, "The Age of the World Picture." Heidegger examines the unthematized but operative presuppositions informing acts of modern knowledge production.[24] What interests him are the "given" operations through which individuals come to naturalize their representations of the world. No age in history, least of all that epoch beginning in the sixteenth century, is exempt from this rule. Heidegger argues that "procedure" in scientific research

> does not just mean methodology, how things are done. For every procedure requires, in advance, an open region within which it

operates. But precisely the opening up of such a region constitutes the fundamental occurrence in research. This is accomplished through the projection, in which some region of (for example) natural beings, of a ground plan (*Grundriss*) of natural processes. Such a projection maps out in advance the way in which the procedure of knowing is to bind itself to the region that is opened up. This commitment (*Bindung*) is the rigor of research (59; 71).

In the representational form underpinned by such calculation the world is defined in advance as the "always-already-known." Truth appears as an effect of this framing. Heidegger argues that the region to be known is, as it were, rendered visible in the terms made available or given by this prior comprehension, which is a kind of template or ground-plan [*Grundriss*]: "Every natural event must be viewed in such a way that it fits into this ground-plan of nature. Only within the perspective [*Gesichtskreis*] of this ground-plan does a natural event become visible [*sichtbar*] as such. The ground-plan of nature is secured in place in that physical research, in each step of investigation, is obligated [*bindet*] to it in advance" (60).

Although these involved or embedded conditions presuppose and make possible all description, objective description requires that such conditions be dissimulated. This dissimulation is then effectively taken for the condition of correct or adequate representation. Hence the comprehensive representational power of the global derives from the fundamental conceit that it transcends perspective. Heidegger notes that modern representation is informed by a peculiar version of this metaphysics, in which the world is grasped as a picture, that is, as something set before or against the observer. The capacity to represent (in this manner) is what defines the subject of history:

> In distinction from the Greek apprehension, modern representing, whose signification is first expressed by the word *repraesentatio*, means something quite different. Representation [*Vor-stellen*] here

means: to bring the present-at-hand before one as something standing over-and-against, to relate it to oneself, the representer, and in this relation to force it back on oneself as the norm-giving domain [*das Vorhandene als ein Entgegenstehendes vor sich bringen, auf sich, den Vorstellenden zu, beziehen und in diesen Bezug zu sich als den maßgebenden Bereich zurückzwingen*]. Where this happens man "puts himself in the picture" concerning beings. When, however, in this way, he does this, he places himself in the scene; in, that is, the sphere of what is generally and publicly represented. And what goes along with this is that man sets himself forth as the scene in which, henceforth, beings must set-themselves-before, present themselves–be, that is to say, in the picture. Man becomes the representative [*Repräsentant*] of beings in the sense of the objective. (AWP 69; ZW 84).

As a result of becoming the subject of history, man becomes subject *to* the mode of making available the world as picture. The discourse on globalization remains operated by this modality of representation as truth, which is a general condition of modern knowledge production.

We can draw on Heidegger's essay to imagine ourselves into what such a subject, not yet properly inducted in the correct way of representing truth, had to learn for him- or herself. This is necessarily a fictional, as distinct from an empirically retrievable, scenario because no archive gives access to the way the global was imagined prior to its institution as the naturalized frame of adequate description. This exercise does not only illuminate how we might think about the past; it may also shed light on a way of productively making strange or unfamiliar our naturalized sight.

Conventionally regarded as an apology for British imperialism, Abdullah bin Abdul Kadir Munshi's *Hikayat Abdullah* (1849) seeks to persuade native readers that it is good and necessary for them to be inducted into the representational structures introduced and deployed by the colonial master in the Malay archipelago.[25] The *Hikayat* is a prose narrative that combines aspects of autobiography, history, journalism and moral and spiritual reflection. In it Abdullah seeks to wean the natives from older ways of sense-making and being in the world in order to empower them as historical and political agents in the new regime.[26] Although Abdullah offers detailed descriptions of European science and technology, my interest is less in the content of the *Hikayat* than the style of representation Abdullah tries to reproduce.[27] We might say that it is not enough merely to describe the scientific order–there exist local accounts of European technology before Abdullah–but to describe it in a manner commensurate with the way of seeing inaugurated by the era of modern knowledge production. The representational structure of Abdullah's text strives toward conformity with the modalities of a scientific discourse whose object is, to draw on Heidegger, brought forth and set before "over-and-against" the representer, who is in turn constituted as the subject (and measure- or norm-giving center) by means of the capacity to represent in such a manner.[28]

Abdullah's writings take shape against the backdrop of European conquest, social fragmentation and economic upheaval. Born in 1797 to a family of Arab-Tamil traders resident in Melaka[29]–itself an old Malay port and seat of the Melaka Sultanate that had fallen to the Portuguese in 1511–Abdullah was a translator, language teacher and scribe who was employed by British East India Company officials based in Melaka and Singapore. As an adult he moved to Singapore, where he served as a language teacher to numerous European merchants and travelers, and as a go-between in commercial transactions. Working with Christian missionaries, he also translated the New Testament into Malay and operated a printing press in Melaka. Abdullah was at other times employed as a small trader who, despite his close connections with some British officials, seems never to have turned his capital to very great profit. He was neither a member of the native elite nor does he appear to have had intimate knowledge of the Malayan hinterland and its peoples.

When the Netherlands fell to Napoleon's forces, Britain preemptively seized

control of Dutch Melaka in 1795 to prevent the French from establishing a foothold in the Malay archipelago. Rival European imperial ambitions had to be checked, not least because the India-China trade (which was a vital source of revenue for the East India Company) and British possessions on the Coromandel coast of India all depended on safe passage through the Melaka Straits.[30] The ascendancy of British power in the Malay archipelago brought to a decisive end the pre-colonial non-European trading networks of the region, going back at least six centuries, that brought traders from the Arab world, China, India and the Malay archipelago to ports like Melaka and Batavia. As a result of the changed circumstances, once prosperous native-run ports such as Aceh and Riau were reduced to colonial outposts by the late nineteenth century.[31] Abdullah's writings need to be read in the light of these realignments.

Britain's victory over France in 1815 led to an intensified search in the archipelago for a naval base and port of reshipment on the India-China route. This port would also serve as a center of distribution for the valuable goods and markets of the East Indian archipelago.[32] However, these objectives were complicated by Britain's desire to prop up the Dutch (a weakened imperial power that no longer posed a threat to the British) as a buffer against any revival of French power in the region. To achieve this end, the Anglo-Dutch treaty of 1824 divided the Malay archipelago into "spheres" of Dutch and British influence, barbarously segregating at one stroke the culture and history of the region and paving the way, in the period of decolonization that followed the Second World War, for the creation of separate successor states called Malaysia, Singapore and Indonesia.

Abdullah's own background testifies in part to the complex histories of settlement in the archipelago well before the arrival of the British. His great-grandfather was a Yemeni trader and religious teacher who traveled to Nagore in South India, where he married and settled down with a local woman. The four sons the couple had all moved to various parts of the Malay archipelago in the course of the eighteenth century. Abdullah's

father, Abdul Kadir, was himself the son of a trader who had worked for the Dutch in Melaka. He rose to the rank of a middling official in the Melaka port and he also served as an emissary for the Dutch in their dealings with local rulers. Although this meant that Abdul Kadir was proficient in the courtly Malay required for correspondence with the native courts, Abdullah also informs us that his father's native tongue was Tamil, and not Malay or Arabic. Abdullah himself grew up speaking Tamil to his mother and grandmother, both of whom appear to have been of Indian extraction. And he also came of age in the colonial port city of Melaka, populated by other "creolized" Tamils, Chinese, Gujaratis, Arabs, Malays, Bugis, Javanese and other peoples of the archipelago, as well as Dutch and Englishmen. With this "picture" in mind, let us return to the issue of perspective as it is broached in Abdullah's text. Working as a scribe for the colonial official Stamford Raffles, Abdullah is shown a letter from the King of Siam to the British colonial authority in the Malayan peninsula. One of the edges of the page on which the letter is written, however, appears "deliberately torn." Raffles declares that the damaged letter is evidence of a calculated insult on the part of the king. Abdullah reports Raffles' words: "In his pride and arrogance and stupidity the King of Siam thinks that his own kingdom is the whole world and that other countries are merely as the small piece of paper he has torn off" (Hill 185). The King of Siam, Raffles says, is like the boy who turned blind shortly after seeing only one thing in his life, a cockerel. When told of anything new, he insists on comparing it to the cockerel:

'If the King of Siam had regarded other matters [*memandang perkara lain*] he could have compared them to himself [*bolehlah dibandingkannja dengan dia*]. That is the way of the King of Siam, because he has never regarded [*memandang*] other countries and other kingdoms and their huge fighting forces he thinks that his country is the only country and his kingdom the only kingdom in the world [*disangkannja negerinja itulah sahadja dunia ini dan keradjaannja itulah sahadja dalam dunia ini*], like the blind person who had seen only a cockerel. If he were to see countries as large as England and other great powers and realize how enormous

they are, how wealthy, how populous, how powerful their armies, then at last he would understand that his own country is a small spot on the roundness of the world [*baharulah ia mengetahui negerinja itu seperti suatu noktah djuga dalam bulat dunia ini*]' (238; 186). [33]

Abdullah has not himself "seen other countries and other kingdoms," but he offers Raffles' mode of perspectivizing as the preferred alternative to that of the Siamese king, who is unable to comprehend his country as one among many equivalent countries that can be compared as objects. This is indicated by Abdullah's use of different words–*lihat* (to see) and *pandang* (to regard or view) – in the passage above. Abdullah uses the first word to suggest a literal seeing (the cockerel is seen [*dilihat*] by the boy before he goes blind) and the second to suggest an abstract sort of sight, as in the King of Siam's failure to take into consideration, or bring into view [*dipandangnja*], the situation in other countries. The movement from a literal to abstract seeing (*lihat* to *pandang*) is Abdullah's way of enacting the changed form of valuation, naturalizing an unfamiliar way of seeing by coding it as "the seen." This new way of seeing is possible only if the King had learned to compare (*dibandingkannja*) his country in terms of a universal metric that men like Raffles possess and to which Abdullah aspires.[34]

In this light it is a secondary concern that Raffles's enthusiasm for territorial expansion in the archipelago may trouble a regional hegemon like Siam. Abdullah is struck by the power of the British mode of perspectivizing to comprehend–in both senses of the word–the benighted viewpoint of the Siamese king. Scholar-officials such as Raffles were capable of producing analyses of remarkable subtlety and discrimination. In this light, Raffles's *History of Java*, a history written to serve the geopolitical interests of an expanding Britain, would display sympathetic analysis and detailed knowledge of the natives, as produced in the mode of the colony-as-picture. Colonial knowledge production obviously does not lend itself to caricature in such instances. Here, at the level of a more familiar "content,"

is Raffles justifying his decision to ignore the commands of his superiors by establishing a trading post in Singapore, and why the Company cannot afford to give in to the demands of the infuriated Dutch. Practically speaking, the following names the basis of British involvement in the Malay archipelago:

> By a statement I forwarded to the Court of Directors in February [1821] it was shown that during the first two years and a half of this establishment no less than two thousand eight hundred and eighty-nine vessels entered and cleared from the Port… It appeared also that the value of merchandise in native vessels arrived and cleared amounted about five millions of dollars during the same period and in ships not less than three millions, giving a total amount of about eight millions as the capital payment.[35]

Modeling his writing on the representational modalities of a colonial order intent on establishing a global civil society founded in imperial trade and commerce, Abdullah's narrative attempts to demonstrate the intrinsically truthful nature of this seeing or to justify the worldviews it serves. He seeks to produce what Marx calls, in the domain of representation, a "universal equivalent," a standard by which the objects of the world can be secured by a single style of depiction, just as in the realm of exchange commensuration can be secured in advanced societies through a unique commodity: the money form.[36] Such an equivalent would serve both as template or frame for exchange and commensuration and as a merely neutral form or media for the expression of value.

> The specific kind of commodity with whose natural form the equivalent form is socially interwoven now becomes the money commodity, or serves as money. It becomes in its specific social function, and consequently its social monopoly, to play the part of the universal equivalent within the world of commodities.[37]

The *Hikayat Abdullah* aims at a systematic account of the Malay language and a narrative of history whose representational structure is informed by a

mode of seeing and saying that reflexively operates within the universal value form. Abdullah's work attempts to outline for his readers this manner of making visible and legible entities as well as the condition of truth-production. At the request of an English missionary and his wife in Melaka who are bemused by their Chinese servant's claim that her son was attacked by a demon, Abdullah produces a long list of spirits, demons and ghosts, having in no uncertain terms declared such notions falsehoods (*bohong*) passed from generation to generation that reflect the ignorance and gullibility (*bodoh dan sia-sia*) of the common people. When Abdullah tells his reader that he chuckled and "explained clearly" (*ku-artikanlah…dengan terangnja akan segala nama-nama hantu* [134]) to the Milnes the meaning of words like *djinn* and *afrit*, he performs a distinct function for his implied audience. He suggests that a native can become the figure to whom Europeans turn to for enlightenment because he has mastered this mode of representation, not because he is merely a native informant.

But even as he lists the different types of demons and spirits, it is significant that his description shifts from the form of universal equivalence in terms of which he claims to name and classify these objects. The metropolitan reader, much like the missionary Milne, is unable to grasp the principle by which he classifies and describes. Milne seems as astonished by this as he is by the diverse names of ghosts and spirits that Abdullah carefully lists:[38]

> 'Their number I am unable to say. Their full nature I cannot explain. But I will mention them briefly: devils (*hantu shaitan*), familiar spirits (*penanggalan*), vampires, birthspirits (*pelesit*), jinns, ghost-crickets, were-tigers, mummies (*hantu bungkus*), spirit birds, ogres and giants, the rice planting old lady (*nenek kebayan*), apparitions, jumping fiends, ghosts of the murdered, birds of ill-omen, elementals, disease-bringing ghosts, scavenging ghosts, *afrit*, imps…There are also many occult arts the details of which I cannot remember, such as magic formulae to bring courage and

subdue enemies, love philters, invulnerability, divination, sorcery, rendering a person invisible, for blunting the weapons of one's enemies, or for casting spells on them'…Then I drew a picture of a woman, only her head and neck with entrails trailing behind….I said, 'Sir, listen to the story of the birth-spirit…' (134-5; 115-6)

Abdullah's list extends over several pages of the *Hikayat*. There are accounts–or digressions–of how spirits are trapped for daily use, how the spirits who possess individuals can be made to confess who sent them, even details about how long it can take a person to die who has been possessed (136; 117). It is less significant that Abdullah declares all this to be falsehoods propagated by ignorant or backward people, for his substantive claims are undermined by his way of seeing.

Marx's aim in the first chapter of *Capital* is to establish a metric of commensuration between commodities. He does so through the concept of value, which is calculated on the basis of labor power. Marx is trying to open up a new way of seeing; he asks how thinking about value-coding can enable the worker to imagine herself as the agent, not a victim, of capital. But although labor-power forms the key to grasping value, Marx notes that in different historical formations value can take on other forms of appearance. In advanced capitalism, where the self-regulating market and "free labor" are the norm, the money form expresses the general equivalence through which emancipation can be thought. Whereas in less materially advanced societies, where value is coded in the form of barter, or the "total or expanded form of value," the money form gives way to an interminable series of metonymic exchanges. In such contexts, expressions of value are embedded in and mixed up with social practices that involve extra-economic coercion, as in tribute. This is Marx:

> "Firstly, the relative expression of the value of the commodity is never complete, because the series of its representations never comes to an end. The chain, of which each equation of value is a link, is liable at any moment to be lengthened by a newly created

commodity, which will provide the material for a fresh expression of value. Secondly, it is a motley mosaic of disparate and unconnected expressions of value. And lastly, if, as must be the case, the relative value of each commodity is expressed in this expanded form, it follows that the relative form of value of each commodity is an endless series of expressions of value which are all different from the relative form of value of every other commodity."[39]

What matters for our discussion is that unlike the universal equivalent represented by the money form, Abdullah's style of description begins to resemble that "defective" realm of "constant connections" to which Marx gives the name "total or expanded form of value."  Here commensuration takes place in an endless metonymic process, without a unifying metric or center:

> The value of a commodity, the linen for example, is now expressed in terms of innumerable other members of the world of commodities. Every other physical commodity now becomes a mirror of the linen's value.[40]

Value is coded so as to appear as "a particular equivalent form alongside many others" whose series is by definition incomplete because it "never comes to an end." This form of value prior to the institutionalization of the capitalist mode of production proper can be expressed as  "$z$ commodity A = $u$ commodity B or $v$ commodity C = $w$ commodity D or $x$ commodity E = etc."[41]

The formal disjunction in Abdullah's text offers insights into a distinct but sympathetic way of reading his text, whose conduct (as opposed to its thematics) encourages us to study the global in terms of how the universal equivalent and the total or expanded form of value at once interfere with and supplement each other. Excepting the colonial officials who are educated within its terms (and whom Abdullah seeks to emulate), it is not

easy to produce the global as a self-evident "thing" or as shorthand for universal and comprehensive sight. Far from being assimilable to a naturalized discourse of "transition," however, Abdullah's uneven competence shows *how* the global is being coded; it is not naturalized.[42] The global is "defamiliarized" in Abdullah's earnest effort to reproduce its mode of thematization.[43] Hence the global viewed as an effect of mixed and uneven modes of value coding simultaneously invites us to consider both the way it is set up and how, in specific contexts, these flowing and overlapping vectors might be open to being turned or displaced. Such movements should not be too hastily assimilated either to the language of necessitarian progress or into a prehistory of alternative modernities.

Using Marx's language, value is differently coded in the total or expanded and the universal equivalent forms. These two ways of coding value are in an overlapping and interruptive relationship in the context of colonial capitalism. In both forms, value can serve as a general if inadequate name for the variable and unstable "currencies" that establish the possibility of "exchange, communication, sociality itself."[44] In the colony, as elsewhere, value coding names the distinct and often heterogeneous ways–on all sides–in which such interaction finds expression as the colonial institution seeks to draw native institutions into the orbit of capital accumulation. Read alongside Heidegger, Marx's account enables us to see how Abdullah's work brings this contested terrain into view in an uneven manner. The colonial space is viewed less as an empirical object in this reading than as a patchwork of mutual interruptions of value coding. The texture of the *Hikayat Abdullah* registers how the imperial institution pulls into the orbit of the universal equivalent the material relations of the less advanced society *even as* it draws on forms of "tribute" and local institutional forms to achieve its "improving" ends.[45]

This mutually interruptive coding of value is at work in the scene where Abdullah speaks of all the hard work he has undertaken to educate himself. Education is something that is "more" (*lebih*), a kind of surplus that raises him above the ordinary, but it is also something in excess of itself in that it

is the condition for the creation of more value (*kelebihan*). What is striking here is that this notion of "more-ness," or a value-creating value is coded in the idioms of everyday Malay. Abdullah implies that the difficult religious and moral education that he underwent in childhood accounts for his receptivity to the utilitarian and pragmatic values disseminated by the colonial institution:

> But I will not elaborate further the things that I suffered on account of my studies, like an *aur* stem rubbed the wrong way. My body became thin, my face sunken with the strain of thinking. I was anxious because I had not yet succeeded, I was ashamed at the prospect of being scolded. But I realize now that however high the price I paid for my knowledge, at that price I can sell it (*Adapun sebab itulah bagaimana kubeli mahal demikianlah hendak kudjual pun mahal*). If I had picked up my knowledge as I went along, merely copying and listening, so far from people wishing to buy it I would be quite prepared to give it away free for the asking. It is well known to you, honored sirs who are reading this *hikayat*, that anything cheap must be faulty: and anything expensive must be in some way greater than itself (*Dan tiap-tiap benda jang mahal itu dapat-tiada adalah djuga sesuatu kelebihannja*). Is not the precious diamond but a stone? Why is it held in such high regard by everyone? Is it not because of its light? (32; 49).

The surplus made available through the concept of *kelebihan* (more-ness) is itself derived from the schemata made available in part within a form of education coded by *agama*, a word that is translated as "religion." The teachings of his grandmother, father and uncles, and then itinerant religious teachers enable Abdullah to gain this "surplus."

It is in this context that the relation with the modern conceptions of economic profit introduced by the colonial capitalist order is activated in an original way in the *Hikayat*. Abdullah does not seamlessly reproduce the discourse of the universal equivalent, which is his stated aim. Let us

instead say that he broaches the universal equivalent through the total or expanded form of value.[46] This notion of something that is greater than itself, which produces an excess, or gives more value–*adalah djuga sesuatu kelebihannja* has all these connotations–can be read alongside and against Marx's account of the exceptional character of labor power, which is the only commodity capable of creating "more value" (*Mehrwert*: usually translated as "surplus value," that excess produced by the worker's labor power which is withheld by the capitalist so that capital accumulation can take place).

If Marx studies *Mehrwert* on the rational and abstract register of the economic, in which the quantitative reduction supposes a calculus in which the agendas of production and exchange for the market are "disembedded" from immediate social requirements, Abdullah's use of *kelebihan* partakes of the endless connections in which the universal equivalent is read off the pre-existing script of the total or expanded form of value.[47] This is the condition in which the economic cannot yet be thought distinct from the social categories out of which surplus, in all its confusing expressions, is manifested. Abdullah shows that these forms are, to draw on Marx's description, a "motley mosaic"; they do not cohere into a single, unified, metric of representation and as such are not set up for the actuation of a global perspective. The total or expanded form of value is a disparate and heterogeneous chain of equivalents: *kelebihan* or surplus in this "defective" sense interferes with the *Mehrwert* by which Marx denotes the "surplus value" of capitalist extraction.[48] In Marx, however, the quantitative reduction is absolute: the concept of surplus is grasped within the category of "free" labor and therefore altogether separated from the extra-economic forms of coercion associated with "custom." Abdullah's use of *kelebihan*, on the other hand, brings into view a simultaneously antagonistic and complementary relation between the two, suggesting in the process the productive interplay of what Gayatri Spivak terms "epistemic violence."[49]

Nowhere does Abdullah attempt to reconcile this earlier training to the global perspective, but its importance to his formation and his deployment

of the global cannot be doubted. In his themes he keeps separate the two domains even though in its rhetorical conduct his text performs an undoing of this opposition. What I suggest therefore ironically parallels Abdullah's effort: if he strains (with uncertain success) to induct himself and his readers into a superior style or reflex of seeing and being in the world, my aim–with a set of obstacles different from those faced by Abdullah–is to ask what in that text brings into play other mixed or uneven perspectives that are suppressed in the process of producing the "correct" representational form. In this way, the global can be activated by means of the discontinuous and never-ending series of negotiations between the universal equivalent and the total or expanded forms of value. We must not therefore regard the former as a placeholder for the "modern" and the latter "premodern," but instead see the two as at once constitutively hybrid (or mixed) forms and as they occupy a mutually supplementing (if unequal) relation to one another within colonial capitalism. No longer deployed solely as a perspective-transcending perspective which is then productively (mis)taken for an empirical process or object, the global can be read: it invites a critical practice that attends to the strategic and situated possibilities of worldly making and remaking.

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The *Hikayat Abdullah* activates the global in its mutually interruptive aspects through a case of "amok." Abdullah tells this story in the manner of a reporter–he seeks to provide a realistic and objective account of events–but he aims also to draw historical and political lessons from this account. The incident centers on an Arab trader who stabbed a British official. It occurs in 1823, four years after the establishment of a trading post on the island of Singapore, at a time of especially tense relations between the Malay rulers and the British.[50] What is interesting about Abdullah's presentation of the story is his attempt, first, to imply a connection between an isolated case of assault to the broader political struggles between the British and the Malays, and, second, to turn the overreaction of the British into an occasion for colonial pedagogy. In this

episode the interaction between the universal equivalent and the total or expanded forms of value can be studied through the different valences of a Malay word, *amuk*.

Abdullah tells how the British Resident and court magistrate in Singapore Colonel Farquhar jails one Sayid Yasin, a respectable and well-known trader from the Northern Malay state of Pahang, for his failure to provide a guarantor who will stand surety for his debt of four hundred dollars to one Pangeran Sharif. (The details of the case are hazy, but here is a brief outline: the Pangeran may have been a personal friend of Colonel Farquhar, and Pangeran Sharif and Sayid Yasin also appear to have known each other. Abdullah himself tells the reader later that he knew Sayid Yasin and had on several occasions discussed the lawsuit with the latter.[51]) Later on the same day after his sentencing, Sayid Yasin gets permission from Mr. Bernard, the court clerk, to leave the jailhouse on the pretext of appealing to the Pangeran, his creditor, to allow payment to be delayed. But his real intention, Abdullah tells the reader, is to murder the Pangeran. When the Pangeran sees the Sayid approaching his house brandishing a knife, he slips out the back and runs to Farquhar's residence for help. Presumably a friend of the man in whose favor he had ruled earlier that day, Farquhar takes two Indian sepoys and a young lieutenant named Davies with him to arrest Sayid Yasin. Abdullah's "eyewitness" account of this story starts here. When he runs into Farquhar, the latter tells Abdullah to stay with him because the streets are unsafe.

In Hill's translation of the *Hikayat Abdullah*, Farquhar substantiates this assertion by referring to "someone who has run *amok* in Pengeran Sharif's house." Significantly, however, the Malay original implies only that someone is being violent in Pangeran Sharif's house: "*ada orang mengamuk dirumah Pangeran Sjarif*" (214; 170).[52] Whereas in Malay the word *amuk* refers to a planned attack or violent behavior, *amuck* conforms to that word's transvaluation through the prose of colonial counter-insurgency.[53] The strongest evidence of this transvaluation is that *amuk* is not so much translated as replaced by an English phrase "run amok." The Malay word is

already brought into view through the lens of the colonial state apparatus: it *appears* in the transcoded form of "amuck," appearing within the forms of native violence coded by the colonial institution (the naturalization of this history of violence conditions the *Oxford English Dictionary Online*'s primary definition of *amuk*: "a violent Malay").

I follow Hill's scrupulous translation here because the definition he relies on offers an insight into the way other ways of seeing can be inadvertently suppressed or occluded, despite best intentions. My argument will be that literary or cultural study in the age of globalization must attend to this tendency within itself, not least because the language of universal equivalence is an indispensable condition of agency. We are operated by or spoken (for) through language in ways that fall before or beneath what we intend to say. The representation of truth as adequation is itself produced by and generative of "truth effects" that are not true or false in any obvious sense. For it is in his *inaccuracy* that the translator Hill, not the 'original' Abdullah, catches at the "truth" of the event: what is at stake in Abdullah's account–his definition of truth–is how it is necessarily perceived within the colonial frame of reference. But whereas Abdullah reveals his imperfect fluency in this mode of thematization–he only knows *amuk*, and cannot do amuck–we, his readers, naturalized as subjects of the global perspective, may find in such lapses a way to defamiliarize "plain sight."

In the context of colonial aggrandizement in the Malay Archipelago, there are good historical reasons that a term the natives use to denote violence is appropriated in the master's voice. It is Hill, who, mistranslating, catches at the transvaluations involved in colonial rule and thereby "corrects" Abdullah. The error sublates the original, drawing it away from the diverse and confused meanings of the Malay word to freeze it as an act of mindless or frenzied violence (in this case directed against the ruling authority). Even if Farquhar had used the *Malay* word in his exchange with Abdullah, the transcoding is underway, for such an utterance was necessarily produced within the discursive attempt to render native violence legible to the colonial state. Abdullah's repetition of the same

word, drawn as it is from a different historical texture that does not frame *amuk* from the perspective of native revolts or violence in the context of colonial expansion and conquest, necessarily fails to grasp the terms of this shift. Insignificant as the case may seem, it hints at similar forms of displacement and reconstellation in the colonial context through which the native is coaxed into new ways of thinking and being in the world.

I want to attend to the limits or failures of the global perspective in order to facilitate the process of connecting otherwise with elements that are already imbricated with the universal equivalent. If Abdullah's perspective is the one effaced by the translation, I note that this effacement cannot be separated from his own attempts at producing the global perspective. When Farquhar arrives at the Pangeran's house and searches its surrounding undergrowth, the concealed fugitive suddenly reaches out and stabs him. As the Sayid then tries to escape, he is cut down by the young lieutenant Davies and the two sepoys. News of the attack on Farquhar spreads, and "all the white men came and stabbed and hacked [*menikam dan mentjentjang*] at the corpse of Sayid Yasin until it was so crushed as to be unrecognizable [*sehingga hantjurlah, tiada berketahuan rupa lagi*]" (216;172). Raffles rushes to the scene, under the impression that this is an attempted assassination of a British official by a native.[54] By the time Raffles arrives, the corpse is so disfigured by the enraged Europeans that it is impossible for him to ascertain the identity of Farquhar's attacker. In the chaos and commotion of the hour, the British suspect a conspiracy. Given the tense relations between the British and Malay authorities, and the impossibility of identifying the assailant, the Europeans begin to wonder if the attack had been orchestrated by the Malay elite as a challenge to the authority of the British. Abdullah hints that suspicion falls on the Temenggong Abdul Rahman of Johor, who resides in Singapore. There is now an extraordinary turn of events as the Indian sepoys are instructed to train their guns and cannons at the Malay ruler's residence. An especially agitated young captain by the name of Davies, we are told by Abdullah, runs back and forth, repeatedly requesting permission from Raffles to begin bombarding the residence of the Temenggong. Raffles hesitates; eventually

the corpse is identified and the mystery around the stabbing is cleared up.

Despite the lack of evidence, Raffles chooses to treat the stabbing as an act of a political insurgent. In public, he willfully construes Sayid Yasin's actions as if he were one of the followers of the Sultan who has been causing the Company so much trouble. Raffles makes an example of Sayid Yasin's corpse by putting it humiliatingly on publicly display. A frame is built that night and

> [Four] slaves [*hamba*] of the (East India) Company came carrying ropes with which they tied up Sayid Yasin's body by the legs. They dragged it to the middle of the open space in the town where there was a guard posted, and hurled it [*dicampakkannja*] on the ground (Hill 173).

Abdullah does not speculate over whether Raffles' decision to display the dead man's body was an attempt to intimidate the native population. He makes no mention of the feelings of shock and outrage among the Malays at the British treatment of this respectable trader's body.[55] He does not describe the effect that the gruesome spectacle of a mutilated corpse at the center of the colonial town, decomposing in the tropical sun, would have had on the locals. He barely hints at the symbolic gains the Johor rulers made from the widespread perception of British injustice, or that the Sultan increased his prestige amongst the locals by retrieving the Sayid's corpse and burying it with great ceremony. Abdullah also leaves out as irrelevant the fact that the Sayid's burial site became a place of pilgrimage for local Malays.[56] (These lacunae are made up for in the smugly ironic record of the incident kept by a contemporary British expatriate):

> [Sayid Yasin's] body was then buried at Tanjong Pagar, where the results of the proceedings was (which Sir Stamford [Raffles] did not anticipate) that it became a place of pilgrimage, and Syed Yassin was considered a great saint, because the holy Syed had only killed a Fakir [an Indian sepoy] and wounded a Nazarene [Colonel Farquhar].[57]

Abdullah deliberately suppresses the details of the ensuing tension between the British and the Malays, or that the Sayid is viewed as a martyr by the populace.

Believing correctly that such valuations are irrelevant to the mode of thematization necessary for empowerment, Abdullah moves towards the broader lessons that the native rulers must draw from this episode. The ideological issue–support for or opposition to British rule–is a secondary concern here. Abdullah foreshadows the pragmatic language of a particular nationalist imagination in Malaya for there is in him an urgent desire to have the benighted masses grasp that they too must internalize the values of the British if they are to have any chance of success in the new historical order. In turn, it can be said that although later generations of elite anticolonial Malay nationalists criticize Abdullah's uncritical support for the colonial master, they readily concede that Abdullah aimed at empowering the natives by inducting them into the symbolic order of colonialism.

Abdullah necessarily ignores the complexity of the uneven social terrain upon which the Sayid's death is read: it is, after all, irrelevant to the production of a truth that will have purchase in the culture of imperialism. This is also the culture that the postcolonial subject will be trained to internalize as the language of his or her "arrival." In this light, Abdullah is producing neither history nor propaganda, only a way of seeing that encompasses both history and propaganda. In his account, the colonial master's disastrous handling of the Sayid Yasin case is turned into a lesson on the merciful nature of colonial justice. When the Europeans and Malay rulers are assembled the day after the assault on Sayid Yasin, Abdullah stages this public exchange for the benefit of his readers. Although the passage tacitly exposes the cynicism of Raffles's attempt to use the dead Sayid as an excuse to illegally proclaim the East India Company the rightful authority in Singapore, this is not what exercises Abdullah:

> When they were assembled Mr. Raffles took the chair and said, 'Your Highness the Sultan and Tengku Temenggong, what is the

practice [*adat*] under the laws of the Malay peoples [*undang-undang orang Melaju*] if a commoner [*seorang ra'yat*] thus commits treason [*mendurhaka*] against his ruler [*radjanja*] in this manner?'[58] The Sultan replied, 'Sir, Malay custom [*adat Melaju*] would require that he and his family and relations all be killed, the pillars and roof of his house overturned and thrown into the sea.' When he heard the sultan's words Mr. Raffles replied, 'Such punishment is not just [*Itu hukum bukannja adil*]. Whosoever commits an offence deserves to be punished [*dihukumkan*]. But why should his wife and children, who are entirely innocent, also be put to death?…That is the custom of the white man [*Demikianlah adat orang putih*].' (219; 174)

A crisis of colonial authority turned to British advantage is now further transformed into a lesson on proportionate and just punishment: Raffles as company functionary turned ruler (*raja*) tasked with establishing civil society in another benighted corner of the globe. Whether or not Abdullah grasps the justification for or basis of such "enlightened" thought, he offers us an insight into how the colonial legal order was being translated for the natives. He describes how the British draw on the Malay terms *rakyat*, *derhaka*, *adil*, *adat* (the people, treason, justice, custom) and recode them in the language of universal equivalence and "improvement."

But a different, if defective, excess is generated by the figure of the Sayid's corpse. A rival coding takes place here. The colonial authority's attempt to introduce civil society through "rule of law" is recoded as "martyrdom" by the outraged populace.[59] And because the supernatural power generated by such an act remains in force, the death of the Sayid produces a shrine which is daily visited by supplicants. The Sayid as *keramat* (holy man or saint) is absorbed into the supernatural world of *djinn* and *afrit* that seems so much a part of the natives' everyday world (that Abdullah categorically dismisses in a passage I discuss above). Nonetheless, what is exposed are the overlapping forms of "surplus" generated by this crossing of the "universal equivalent" with the "defective" forms of value coding.

Abdullah does not explore the interaction between these two forms of value coding. He opts instead for a reading in which the universal equivalent subsumes the total or expanded form of value so as to make available objective and empirical description. In doing so, he turns away from the diverse ways in which the universal equivalent and the total or expanded forms overlap with and interrupt one another. Caught as it is in the binary opposition between "truth" and "falsehood," his text forecloses the possibility of creatively engaging with other styles of reading and mixed valuation. Instead the reader is treated to a narrative of how a dynamic modernity orders a static pre-modernity. The foreclosures of his text make it impossible to elaborate upon how the *keramat* may have served also suggested ways of revaluing the global equivalence that open it to interruption and displacement.

In this light, reading may also be said to engage perspectives that interrupt, not reject, the univocal character of the global perspective. It is in this spirit that I have sought to examine an early and an uneven attempt to instantiate the global perspective that we–in the metropolitan North and South–take for granted today. The challenge was to see how this text might defamiliarize the terms in which sight is "given," allowing us to examine the unthematized reflexes through which representation is effected. What is at stake is less a new set of truth claims or an alternative explanation to rival those posited by social scientists than making global representation respond to perspectives effaced in the constitution of the normative. Starting with a desire to defamiliarize the perspectives we (are trained to) take for granted in this regard, we open ourselves to practices and strategies of producing the global as a series of situated interruptions.

Notes

I would like to thank Christopher Bush and Colleen Lye for their astute comments and criticisms.

1. C. A. Bayly, "'Archaic' and 'Modern' Globalization in the Eurasian and African Arena," in *Globalization in World History*, ed. A. G. Hopkins (London, 2001), 48-49.
2. For a sampling of approaches that conceive of globalization as an "objective, empirical process" (Jan Niederveen Pieterse, *Globalization and Culture* (New York: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2003), 16), see Arjun Appadurai, "Disjuncture and Difference in the Global Cultural Economy," in *Modernity at Large* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press,1996), 27-47; Jan Niederveen Pieterse, *Globalization and Culture* (New York: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2003; Jürgen Osterhammel and Niels P. Petersson, *Globalization: a short history* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005); Jan Aart Scholte, *Globalization: An Introduction* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2000).
3. This conformism is, for instance, suggested by the general supposition that "global history" serves to explain in necessitarian fashion "the history of [capitalist] globalization." Bruce Mazlish, "Global History and World History," in *Global History Reader*, ed. Bruce Mazlish and Akira Iriye (New York: Routledge, 2005), 18-19.
4. Appadurai, "Disjuncture and Difference in the Global Cultural Economy," 32. Appadurai, who is exercised by this tension, the point is that agency is imagined discursively and subjectively within the template given by the global perspective. The problem is epistemic, not empirical. Appadurai's proliferation of examples from around the world only engages the empirical phenomenon: it does not show how the global is a univocal template in which the agents all over the world have to imagine themselves. Moreover, his empiricism tacitly serves to reinforce the very mode of perspectivizing that needs to be put in question. Thus when Appadurai claims that "the complexity of the current global economy has to do with certain fundamental disjunctures between economy, culture and politics that we have only begun to theorize," he confirms the epistemic conformism by which the global perspective is conflated with seeing as such.
5. Mahathir bin Mohamad, "Asian Economies: Challenges and Opportunities," speech given at the Annual Seminar of the World Bank in Hong Kong, September 20, 1997.
6. For an assessment of the impact of capital controls, see Sook Ching Wong, Jomo Kwame Sundaram, Kok Fay Chin, *Malaysian Bailouts? Capital Controls, Restructuring and Recovery* (Singapore: Singapore University Press, 2005), 23-56.
7. "This authority also involves the rules and processes of appropriation of discourse: for in our societies (and no doubt in many others) the property of discourse–in the sense of the right to speak, ability to understand, licit and immediate access to the corpus of already formulated statements, and the capacity to invest this discourse in decisions, institutions, or practices–is in fact confined (sometimes with the addition of legal sanctions) to a particular group of individuals" (Michel Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge* (London: Tavistovk Productions, 1972), 68).
8. Andre Gunder Frank, *ReOrient: Global Economy in the Asian Age* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998).
9. Frank, ReOrient, 7.

10. Bin Wong, *China Transformed: Historical Change and the Limits of European Experience* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1993), 281.
11. Partha Chatterjee notes the origins of such thinking in anti-colonial nationalism. "The claims of western civilization were the most powerful in the material sphere. Science, technology, rational forms of economic organization, modern methods of statecraft–these had given the European countries the strength to subjugate the non-European peoples and to impose their dominance over the whole world. To overcome this domination, the colonized people had to learn those superior techniques of organizing material life and incorporate them within their own cultures." Partha Chatterjee, *The Nation and its Fragments* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993), 119-20.
12. "Cannibalization" is a word that Bayly gets from Arjun Appadurai's essay, "Disjuncture and Difference in the Global Economy."
13. C. A. Bayly, "'Archaic' and 'Modern' Globalization," 48.
14. The World Bank, *The East Asian Miracle: Economic Growth and Public Policy* (New York: World Bank, 1993), 79-80.
15. For a more cautious assessment of the Asian "miracle," see Benedict Anderson, "From Miracle to Crash," *London Review of Books* 20:8 (1998): 3-7. Marking the context of post-War decolonization of the former European colonies, and communism's appeal to the masses, Anderson notes the political conditions in which "growth" was encouraged: "To shore up the line of teetering dominoes, Washington made every effort to create loyal, capitalistically prosperous, authoritarian and anti-Communist regimes [in this region] - typically, but not invariably, dominated by the military." Elsewhere Anderson insightfully criticizes the unreflective use of categories like "kinship" because it does not depict "historical subjectivities, [but] actually represents a certain contemporary vision of cosmopolitanism based on a quasi-planetary dispersion of bounded entities. Wherever the 'Chinese' happened to end up–Jamaica, Hungary or South Africa–they remain countable Chinese, and it matters very little if they also happen to be citizens of those nation-states." Benedict Anderson, "Nationalism, Identity, and the Logic of Seriality," in *The Specter of Comparisons* (London: Verso,1998), 45. This way of counting, institutionalized by "imperial state machineries," continues to dominate the thinking of identitarian diasporics abroad, ethnic nationalists at "home," not to mention authors of World Bank Reports.
16. James Clifford, "Traveling Cultures," in *Routes: Travel and Translation in the Late Twentieth Century* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1997), 30. I distinguish my style of reading from that elaborated in this valuable essay, where the many examples of "constructed and disputed historicities, sites of displacement, interference, and interaction" do not address the global perspective by which Clifford brings these diverse figures into view. Rather than argue that there are many points of view in the world and that they contaminate and pluralize one another indifferently, my point is that we need examine and criticize the fact that the global frames the discursive terms and material conditions within which thoughts and actions can be validated, not least because–and Clifford's essay shows how powerful counter-hegemonic metropolitan work is also operated by this reflex–it is the naturalized perspective through which even "resistance" is configured by producers of modern knowledge. To the extent that polyphonic discourses can obscure such frames, this unacknowledged perspective must be repeatedly undermined and displaced in the specific senses I discuss above, not proliferated endlessly via "hybrid" subjects trained to "pluralize"

the global. The problem with this approach is that metropolitan subjects continue to absorb "difference" in the name of some new mutation of "global" sympathy or solidarity (that is in practice the exclusive prerogative of the metropolitan subject). By contrast, the critical practice I advocate–based on a deliberate, repeated interruption of metropolitan perspectives–can be combined with learning how to read other languages as possessing texture (in the same sense that textual productions in the English language never simply produce information). Learning to move between these two modes of interruption and new kinds of historical and linguistic engagement, the global perspective is opened to new rules of reading.

17. Chatterjee takes language to communicate a set of truths: "Gandhi does not even think within the thematic of nationalism. He seldom writes or speaks in terms of the conceptual frameworks or modes of reasoning and inference adopted by the nationalists of his day, and quite emphatically rejects their rationalism, scientism and historicism…He does not feel it necessary to even attempt a historical demonstration of the possibilities he is trying to point out. Indeed, he objects that the historical mode of reasoning is quite unsuitable, indeed irrelevant, for his purpose." See Partha Chatterjee, *Nationalist Thought and the Colonial World: A Derivative Discourse?* (London: Zed Books for the United Nations University, 1986), 93. There is no question that Chatterjee's use of Gandhi to serve historical allegory ("the moment of maneuver") is extraordinarily rich. However, the very strengths of this approach simultaneously make it impossible to read Gandhi's text as instituting a strategic or self-conscious staging of anti-Enlightenment thought, itself an instantiation of a canny opening up or displacement of the "thematic" from within, rather than the embodiment of an invariant position enunciated from outside the thematic.

18. Chatterjee, *The Nation and its Fragments*. The quotations are drawn from pages 5, 75, 236 respectively.

19. Janet Abu-Lughod, "On the Remaking of History: How to Reinvent the Past," *Remaking History*, ed. Barbara Kruger and Phil Mariani (Seattle: The New Press,1989), 112.

20. Abu-Lughod, "On the Remaking of History," 116. Abu-Lughod acknowledges the issue of representation when she notes, without resolving the problem, that "The usual approach [of historians] is to examine *ex post facto* the outcome–that is, the economic and politicalhegemony of the West in modern times–and then to reason backwards, to rationalize why this supremacy had to be. I want to avoid this. It is not that I do not recognize that the outcome determines the narrative constructed to 'lead inexorably' to it. This indeed is the real methodological problem of historiography….If this is indeed correct, then beginning with a different outcome at a different moment in time will lead to a different account of the sequence and a different set of items to be explained…While my story is no more true (nor more false) than the conventional one, it does illuminate areas and issues that the story of Europe's hegemony conceals." See Janet Abu-Lughod, *Before European Hegemony: The World System A.D. 1250-1350* (New York: OUP Inc.,1989), 12-13.

21. Gayatri Spivak, "Subaltern Studies: Deconstructing Historiography" *The Spivak Reader*, ed. Donna Landry and Gerald Maclean (New York: Routledge, 1996), 206-8.

22. See, among others, Dilip Paramesh Gaonkar ed., *Alternative Modernities* (Durham: Duke University Press Books 2001).

23. For the latter, see the suggestive and thought-provoking discussion of Partha Chatterjee, *Politics of the Governed* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002).

Examples of the former can be found in Kishore Mahbubani, *Can Asians Think?* (Singapore: Times Editions, 2000). See also Garry Rodan and Kevin Hewison, "A 'clash of cultures' or the convergence of political ideology?" in *Pathways to Asia: the politics of engagement*, ed. Richard Robison (St. Leonards: Allen and Unwin, 1996), 29-55.

24. Martin Heidegger, "Age of the World Picture," in *Off the Beaten Track*, ed. and trans. Julian Young and Kenneth Haynes (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 60. Hereafter "AWP." A translation of "Die Zeit des Weltbildes," *Holzwege*, ed. Vittorio Klostermann (Frankurt: Kostermann, 1952). Hereafter "ZW."

25. Abdullah bin Abdul Kadir Munshi, *Hikajat Abdullah* (1849), ed. Datoek Besar and R. Roolvink (Jakarta: Djambatan 1953). For the most reliable English translation, see *Hikayat Abdullah*, trans. A. H. Hill (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1970). I have at times modified Hill's translation. Quotations from this work will be followed by page citations from the English and Malay editions.

26. Abdullah is generally regarded as one of the most important writers in the canon of Malay letters, his *hikayat* (prose narrative) is a pioneering example of the modern vernacular. But he has been criticized by anti-colonial nationalists for his wide-eyed admiration for the British and for his harsh criticisms of the Malays. Amin Sweeney has asserted that Abdullah had no intention of "reforming" the Malays because he makes no attempt to "establish common ground" with them, and, because he lacked "Malay humility," his text would have had a "jarring effect" on native readers. My aim is to focus on how the formal conduct of Abdullah's text communicates a mode of thematization, a style of depiction. To that extent, the *Hikayat* must be read as an experimental work (whether or not this was its author's intention). It enacts a new kind of seeing. Anthropological facts are of secondary concern here since I do not think that writers or texts ought to be evaluated on how completely they conform to social scientific definitions of their "culture." See Amin Sweeney, *Reputations Live On: An Early Malay Autobiography* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1980), 17.

27. At the level of content, Abdullah repeatedly uses the word "*heran*" (wonder or astonishment) to signal the beginning of a passage outlining a specific aspect of European scientific and technological production. Also at the level of content, he follows his colonial masters, who posit this mode of thematization as "true" and others as "false" or born of ignorance and superstition. He communicates the shock and awe he felt at seeing the British warship *Sesostris* in Singapore (the *Sesostris was* on its way to bombard Canton during the First Opium War). Abdullah writes that his body shook with astonishment at the sight of the ship (*makapenuhlah sendi anggotaku dengan heran*) (401; 297). Overwhelmed by the experience, he wrote a book describing his emotions and feelings (*perasaanku*) that followed what he witnessed aboard the ship. This book was published, Abdullah tells us, by Alfred North in Singapore, who "included in it some extra pages on the uses of steam and about steam engines, and so forth" (401; 297).

28. This epistemic shift is often discussed as an instance of progress. Abdullah is the first "modern" Malay-language writer because his writing abides by the conventions of narrative realism. (See A. H. Hill's Introduction to the *Hikayat Abdullah*.) Here is Alfred North, an American missionary and mentor of Abdullah: "I suggested to [Abdullah] that he might compose a work of deep interest, such as had never been thought of by any Malay…I told him that I had never found any thing in the Malay language except silly tales, useful indeed

as showing how words are used, but containing nothing calculated to improve the minds of the people; and it was a sad error into which they had fallen in supposing every day occurrences, and all manner of things about them, too vulgar to be subjects of grave composition; nay, that unless they could be convinced of their error, they could never go forward a single step in civilization. I then gave him a list of topics on which it would be proper to enlarge a little, in writing a memoir of himself…" (Alfred North, letter attached to the 1843 ms. of the *Hikayat Abdullah*).

29. "Melaka" is sometimes spelled "Malacca" in this chapter. The inconsistencies in the spelling of some Malay words–hikayat / hikajat; rosak / rusak; jalan; djalan etc. – are all also an unavoidable feature of this chapter given the variant spellings of Malay words over time. Where I refer to or use Malay words, I have adhered to the convention followed in the Malaysian dictionary, *Kamus Dewan*.

30. Michael Duffy, "Worldwide War and British Expansion: 1793-1815," *Oxford History of the British Empire, Volume II*, ed. P. J. Marshall (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), 184-207.

31. For a discussion of the importance of port cities to the consolidation of European imperialism in Asia, see Kenneth McPherson, "Port Cities as Nodal Points of Change," in *Modernity and Culture: From the Mediterranean to the Indian Ocean*, C. A. Bayly and Leila Tarazi Fawaz eds. (New York: Columbia University Press, 2005), 75-95.

32. A graphic picture of the atmosphere of geopolitical calculation, intrigue and destabilization of hostile native rulers is captured in the instructions received by Stamford Raffles from Governor-General Hastings on November 28 1818. Quoted in C. E. Wurtzburg, *Raffles of the Eastern Isles* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1954), 461-7.

33. The context for this judgment is the Siamese king's apparently insulting reply to the friendly overtures of the East India Company. Here, as elsewhere in this essay, I have modified Hill's translation where necessary.

34. In his discussion of King Mongkut's (Rama IV) reign, Thongchai Winichakul makes a related point when he imagines the ambivalent desire generated by the prospect of a cartographized Siam as one among many other countries. "As for the Siamese elite, having witnessed envoys from so many distant countries and having had knowledge about them for some time, particularly having seenthose countries on maps, could they resist imagining or desiring to have Siam beon a map just as those civilized countries were? Siam was out there, to be included on the globe. Yet it was to a considerable extent terra incognitain mapping terms, even to the Siamese elite. It was there; but it had yet to be fully recognized and accounted for." Thongchai Winichakul, *Siam Mapped: A History of the Geo-Body of the Nation* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1994), 116.

35. Letter to William Marsden, January 21 1822. Quoted in Wurtzburg, *Raffles of the Eastern Isles*, 620.

36. Karl Marx, *Capital, volume 1*., trans. Ben Fowkes (New York: Vintage, 1976), 138-177.

37. Marx, *Capital*, 1:162.

38. It is instructive to contrast Abdullah's interminable list with the translator Hill's nicely schematized footnote to these pages of the *Hikayat*: "Abdullah's list of the terms used in the very extensive demonology of Malaya requires a word of introduction. Historians recognize three phases in the cultural development of the Malay people: (1) the period of primitive paganism, of beliefs in the spirits of the sea, mountains, trees, etc. (2) the period of Indian

influence, which introduced the mythology of the Hindus, (3) the period of Islamic influence which added *jinns*, whose existence the Koran admits, the four Archangels and various prophets. But at best this is a definitive classification of cultural influences that became interwoven" (Hill, *Hikayat Abdullah*, 114).

39. Marx, *Capital*, 1:156.

40. Ibid., 1:155.

41. Ibid., 1:154.

42. The peculiar effect is linked to the author's lack of facility with the terms of the universal equivalent. For instance, Abdullah's text lacks the sophistication of some reform-minded contemporaries in Bengal. See, for instance, Chatterjee's discussion of Keshabchandra Sen (*The Nation and its Fragments*, 38-42). In these terms, Abdullah can also be contrasted with the early twentieth century anticolonial leader, Haji Misbach, who is discussed in Benedict Anderson, *Specter of Comparisons*, 31. For this reason I am not entirely persuaded by A. C. Milner's description of Abdullah as "liberal" reformer. See A. C. Milner, *The Invention of Politics in Colonial Malaya* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 33-58.

43. "The Formalists [analyzed]…the tendency of literary works to defamiliarize experience by working on and transforming the adjacent ideological and cultural forms within which reality is dominantly experienced. To study the phenomenon of literariness is to study the relationship between the series of texts designated as 'literary' and those 'non-literary' (but linguistic) cultural forms which literary texts transform by 'making strange' the terms of seeing proposed in them. Whether or not a given text can be said to embody the attribute of defamiliarization thus depends not on its *intrinsic* properties in isolation but on the *relationship* which those properties establish with other cultural and ideological forms." Tony Bennett, *Formalism and Marxism* (London: Routledge, 2003), 40-41.

44. Gayatri Spivak, "In a Word: Interview," Outside in the Teaching Machine (New York: Routledge, 1993), 12. What follows relies greatly on Spivak's discussion of value-coding.

45. For a discussion of how programs of modernization and reform in the colonies were underpinned by new forms of imperial despotism, see C. A. Bayly, *Imperial Meridian: The British Empire and the World,1780-1830* (London: Longman, 1989), 8, 193-216.

46. Needless to say, this distinction is itself a heuristic device to help grasp the unevenness in which such an encounter took place, far from serving empirical explanation, my aim is to defamiliarize the standard metropolitan accounts in which such encounters are coded in the conformist language of subsumption or "transition." A rhetorical reading requires that we avoid the historically tendentious narratives in which texture is effaced.

47. The terms "embedded economy" and "self-regulating market" are drawn from Karl Polanyi, *The Great Transformation: The Political and Economic Origins of Our Time* (Boston: Beacon Books, 1944).

48. Spivak argues that whereas it is possible for capital to be represented as the "mysterious reproduction of money" in advanced capitalist societies, "[I]n the case of foreign trade... such passages in Marx as foreign trade cheapens …the necessary means of subsistence into which variable capital [labor power] is converted," and "the use of slaves and coolies, etc.," allows us to supplement Marx's analysis bysuggesting that, especially in that branch of foreign trade which is "colonial trade," one of the reasons why the "money-form" as an explanatory model is particularly misleading is because, relative to the social

productivity of "the privileged country," the "total or expanded form of value" is still operative in the colonies...[T]his form, comprised of "chain[s]... [or] endless series...of disparate and unconnected expressions of value," is particularly rich for the analysis of expressions of the value form in appearances other than economic" Gayatri Spivak, *Critique of Postcolonial Reason* (Cambridge Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1999), 100-1. The embedded quotations are drawn from Marx, *Capital, Vol. 3*, trans. David Fernbach (New York: Penguin Books, 1981), 345-6.

49. Spivak, *Critique of Postcolonial Reason*, 205.

50. According to the treaties signed between the British could claim no right to territory, they were subject to the sovereign authority of the Sultan Husain and were only granted the right to establish a trading factory on the island. C. M. Turnbull offers an account of the various treaties in *A History of Singapore* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989). The tensions centered on the British attempt from the revenues and the day-to-day control of the newly established port and town.

51. There is already a texture that is glossed over: in Abdullah's report of this story: the Pangeran uses the word "*sengadja*" to assert that the Sayid has the funds but is deliberately withholding payment. This suggests the possibility of the personal relationship between the two men, and the Pangeran is using the colonial state to do his will. The Sayid refers to himself as a foreigner ("*anak dagang*") who is from the interior. Farquhar may well have been manipulated by his personal friendship with the Pangeran. We discover later that when the Pangeran sends for help, it is quite unusually, the magistrate Farquhar (and not the chief of police, Andrews) who comes to the Pangeran's aid. There is much more to this story than meets the eye, obviously. We have no choice but to confine ourselves to the "truth" of this story as it is portrayed in various accounts drawn from the colonial archive and, of course, in Abdullah's "eyewitness" account.

52. The connotations of wanton or indiscriminate violence are not apparent in Abdullah's uses of the word. Elsewhere in the text, "*Maka ber-djenis-djenis chabar jang kudengar, ada setengah orang berkata, 'Lagi dua hari orang hulu hendak turun mengamok ke Melaka'*" (I heard various news, with some of the people saying, "In two days the people from the interior will attack Malacca") (345-6); "*Orang Tjina mengamuk!*" (The Chinese are attacking!) *Hikajat Abdullah*, 383.

53. For a discussion of the lexicographic recoding of *amuk* by the colonial institution, see my "Opium and Empire: the Transports of Thomas de Quincey," *Boundary 2* 33:2 (2006): 222-27.

54. The urgent and overwhelming nature of Raffles' response suggests perhaps a fear that the E.I.C.'s already legally dubious claim to Singapore would be further undermined by any native unrest. This explains why even after it becomes clear that the Sayid has nothing to do with native opposition to the British presence, Raffles chooses to make an example of the Sayid by having his corpse displayed publicly and branding him a traitor and a rebel when he meets the Sultan.

55. In the words of a Dutch observer, "[A]ll the natives adopted a threatening attitude and awakened considerable fear amongst the citizens. All of them, garrison, civilians, settlers and traders, as well as the Chinese who took the side of the Europeans were night and day under arms...since this upset there has been no very great sense of security amongst the merchants of Singapore" (H. Eric Miller, "Letters of Colonel Nahuijs," *Journal of the Malayan Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society* 19:2 (1941): 195).

56. The Sayid's burial ground became a shrine (*keramat*). For a discussion of *keramat* in the Malay archipelago, see the articles collected in Henri Chambert-Loir and Anthony Reid eds., *The Potent Dead: Ancestors, Saints and Heroes in Contemporary Indonesia* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii, 2002). Also see Sumit Mandal, "Popular Sites of Prayer, transnational migration, and cultural diversity: Exploring the significance of *keramat* in Southeast Asia" (paper presented at the Workshop on Transnational Religion, Migration and Diversity, Social Science Research Council Workshop, Kuala Lumpur, December 2-4 2004).

57. C. B. Buckley, *An Anecdotal History of Old Times in Singapore, 1819-1867* (Singapore: Oxford University Press, 1984), 100. Buckley fails to note however that such sentiments, if they existed, may have been informed by the official positions of both the "Hindoo" and the "Nazarene" (Christian), both of whom would have been viewed as representatives of an alien and oppressive colonial power. Racial or religious feelings need not have been dominant.

58. The word for treason against the ruler, *menderhaka*, is a term derived from the Sanskrit, that harks back, according to some historians, to inscriptions of the Srivijayan empire. Barbara Andaya and Leonard Andaya, *History of Malaysia* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1982), 27.

59. Here the total or expanded form of value intersects with the universal equivalent. Although discontinuous, the figure of the dead Sayid as martyr resonates for the colonial recoding of *amuk* as amuck, which had long been used by the Portuguese, Dutch and British to code native "resistance" since the seventeenth century. For evidence of amuck as a terms charged with political, that is anticolonial valency, see the entry on *amuk* in Henry Yule and A. C. Burnell eds., *Hobson-Jobson: A Glossary of Anglo-Indian Phrases of Kindred Terms, Etymological, Historical, Geographical, and Discursive* (London: J. Murray, 1903).

# (Re)flexion: Genocide in Ruins
## David Kazanjian

In recent years the term "genocide" has been used more and more persistently as a powerful instrument in the realm of geo-politics. Indeed, it seems to have passed into the troublesome field of common sense. Which is not to say that everyone knows exactly what "genocide" means. Rather, it is to say that many believe they no longer need to think about what "genocide" means because they assume its meaning has become self-evident. As a result, we are confronted with something akin to what Louis Althusser, writing in 1946, called "the International of Decent Feelings": a consensus among certain post-war intellectuals that one "can avert the fatality of war by conducting an international moral campaign."[1] According to Althusser, these intellectuals claimed that Europeans could put the catastrophe of World War II to rest and prevent similar catastrophes in the future simply by acknowledging their allied humanity. Foreshadowing what would later become his influential critique of humanism, Althusser examined the peculiar form this acknowledgment took:

> We must ask ourselves what this alliance really signifies. For we are confronted with a phenomenon that is international in scope, and with a diffuse ideology which, though it has not yet been precisely defined, is capable of assuming a certain organizational form: it is said that Camus envisages creating protest groups bent on denouncing crimes against humanity before the conscience of the world, while the "Human Front" is contemplating the use of cinema or radio to induce humanity to abandon war. One senses, in these attempts, a mentality in search of itself, an intention eager to embody itself in concrete form, an ideology seeking to define itself, entrench itself, and also furnish itself with means of action. If this mentality is international, and in the process of taking institutional form, then a new "International" is in the making. There is perhaps something to be gained from trying to discover what it conceals.[2]

For Althusser, this "new 'International'" concealed the socio-historical complexity of catastrophic events beneath a politics of moral outrage proclaimed in the name of an abstract humanity held together by a generalized fear about the death of the human.[3] By the end of "The International of Decent Feelings," this critique itself gives way to the twenty-eight year old Althusser's own, Marxist-Christian notion of humanity.[4] However, we need not rush as quickly as the young Althusser into the comforts of such a humanity. Let us rather consider what and how "genocide"—sustained by its own International of Decent Feelings—conceals.

Armenian diasporic politics long ago settled into an entrenched, institutionalized form of Althusser's "new International." As such, it offers a foundational instance of the current, much more widespread politics of genocide, which global powers–especially the U.S.—regularly and cynically instrumentalize. All too often, critiques of such politics are prohibited by nationalist and/or humanist investments, themselves animated by the fear that any critique will aid and abet the revisionists, deniers, and–in the case of ongoing campaigns of mass violence–the executioners, who themselves still operate vigorously within the framework of what Marc Nichanian has called the genocidal will.[5] However, a number of us working on the fringes of the Armenian diaspora have rejected this prohibition on critique in the hope of generating a certain active, radical, de-institutionalized internationalism: a politics of mourning that rejects both the genocidal will and the international of decent feelings, and whose relationship to the past is intimately open to self-estrangement and the future.[6] In the spirit of this ongoing struggle, I want to show how "genocide," from the moment of its coinage in the 1940s by Raphael Lemkin, risks entombing the human in the name of civilized man. I then suggest that Atom Egoyan's 1993 film *Calendar* offers us a reflection on the inevitable ruins of this tomb. Finally, I argue that a short, experimental film by Tina Bastajian called *Pinched Cheeks and Slurs in a Language that Avoids Her* (1995) emerges from these ruins, offering us a glimpse of an other humanity, unconcealed.

**Tomb**

The modern conception of genocide was defined and promulgated by Raphael Lemkin.[7] A Jewish refugee from Poland and a legal scholar specializing in international criminal law, Lemkin eventually emigrated to the U.S. in 1941 and became an advisor to the U.S. war department. Yet his influential 1940s writings on, and activism against, genocide were preceded by a now forgotten, failed effort that nonetheless still structures the very concept of genocide. Responding in part to the relatively recent massacres of the Armenians, Lemkin first tried to make mass violence subject to international law with his 1933 Madrid Proposal, which defined what he called "two new international crimes": the offense of "barbarism," or the attempted extermination of "a racial, religious or social collectivity," and the offense of "vandalism," or the attempted destruction of such a collectivity's "cultural or artistic works."[8] After this proposal failed to gain international support, he coined a new word, "genocide," that would gather these two offenses into one crime for international courts to prosecute.[9] As he put it in publications from 1944 and 1945:

> The crime of the Reich in wantonly and deliberately wiping out whole peoples is not utterly new in the world. It is only new in the civilized world as we have come to think of it. It is so new in the traditions of civilized man that he has no name for it. It is for this reason that I took the liberty of inventing the word, "genocide"…It required a long period of evolution in civilized society to mark the way from wars of extermination, which occurred in ancient times and in the Middle Ages, to the conception of wars as being essentially limited to activities against armies and states. In the present war, however, genocide is widely practiced by the German occupant…[10]

In Lemkin's foundational conception, "genocide" names the crime of being both a barbarian and a vandal. This crime steps outside "the traditions of civilized man" in a way so unprecedented that "civilized man" "has no name for it." A certain historical narrative thus underwrites Lemkin's coinage:

between the wars of extermination "in ancient times and in the Middle Ages" and the crimes of Nazi Germany, he suggests, "civilized society" was characterized by a civil warfare "essentially limited to activities against armies and states." One might even say that, for Lemkin, European civility was defined by the restraint it had long shown in matters of war.

Lemkin's stunning failure to name the centuries-long, catastrophic violence of European colonialism and slavery–which in fact characterized his "long period of evolution in civilized society"—is immensely paradoxical and productive. By naming genocide's un-nameability, Lemkin renders European civility as a traditional norm and genocide as both a pre-modern characteristic and a recent aberration; yet that utterance itself un-names Europe's long tradition of catastrophic global violence. In turn, catastrophic violence is made foreign to "civilized man" by a silence that casts enslaved and colonized peoples outside "the civilized world." Cast out of civility as such, the enslaved and the colonized are implicitly linked with the uncivilized barbarism and vandalism that characterize Lemkin's pre-modern Europe, on the one hand, and his aberrant Nazism, on the other. Although Lemkin claims that the ancient and medieval worlds practiced a kind of violence–barbarism and vandalism–unheard of in the modern, civilized world until its resurrection under Nazism, rather it is Lemkin's presumptive opposition between civility and barbarism/vandalism that resurrects the ancient world. The word "barbarism" is Greek in origin, from *barbaros*, itself an onomatopoetic word that referred to anyone who was non-Greek and spoke a non-Greek language; apparently the utterance "bar-bar" figured the sound of non-Greek to the ancient Greeks. The word "vandalism," in turn, stems from the Latin word *Vandalus*, the name of one of the so-called Eastern Germanic peoples who began to press upon the borders of the Roman Empire in the third century, entering the Roman Empire in earnest by the fifth century and even sacking Rome in 455. Silently embedded within the neologism "genocide," these ancient distinctions give Lemkin's coinage more than a descriptive efficacy. They turn the very utterance "genocide" into a performative that crafts the barbarian and the vandal in order to cast them out from, and thus to craft,

the civilized. The very distinction between the civilized and the barbaric or vandalistic is an effect of Lemkin's utterance "genocide," although he would have us believe that genocide simply describes what is essentially an empirical distinction between the civilized and the uncivilized. Crucially, "genocide" must continually reiterate itself in order to sustain a separation between what are intimately intertwined figures, the civilized and the barbarian or vandal. The civilized needs the barbarian and the vandal; the former exists only to the extent that it continually invokes and casts out the latter.

As a performative that invokes and casts out the barbarian and the vandal in the process of crafting the civilized, "genocide" effectively reproduces the logic of another figure from the ancient world, that of the *metoikos*, the resident free non-citizen, literally one who is "after or beyond the household" (*meta + oikos*). The *oikos* referred to the hearth, the place of welcoming and hospitality, even the domain of necessity as Hannah Arendt suggested in *The Human Condition*. Neither part of the state/*polis* as a citizen would be, nor a member of the household/*oikos* as a woman or a servant would be, the *metoikos* occupied a hyperbolic state of being, altogether beyond the *oikos/polis* distinction and the primary organization of life, in a kind of no man's and no woman's land. It is this resident-beyond that Lemkin's modern crime of genocide at once references and performs: not an inhuman violence unseen since ancient times, as Lemkin would have us believe, but rather a modern articulation of the ancient notion of the alien in the midst. To the extent that Lemkin's civility is gendered–he writes of the destruction of "civilized man" and his culture–it would seem that the casting out of barbarians and vandals from both the *polis* and the *oikos* also helps to structure and sustain the gendered division of these realms.[11]

Sophocles' *Antigone*–a text long central to Western conceptions of law, mourning, kinship, and the *polis/oikos* distinction–offers us an influential elaboration of, and challenge to, the logic of *metoikos*. In the play Creon, the king of Thebes, issues "a proclamation… forbidd[ing] the city to dignify [his

nephew Polynices] with burial, [to] mourn him at all" (l. 227-228), because Polynices had chosen to fight and die on behalf of Argos against Thebes.[12] But Polynices' sister Antigone defies her uncle Creon and insists on burying her brother. What is more, she defends her act in the face of Creon. To punish Antigone, Creon orders that she be entombed alive. Says Creon, "Take her away, quickly!/ Wall her up in the tomb, you have your orders./ Abandon her there, alone, and let her choose—/ death or a buried life with a good roof for shelter./ As for myself, my hands are clean. This young girl—/ dead or alive, she will be stripped of her rights,/ her stranger's rights [*metoikias*], here in the world above" (l. 971-977). Already *metoikos* by virtue of her defiant act of mourning, Antigone has even her status as a resident alien revoked by Creon's sentence of entombment. As Antigone herself decries her fate: "unmourned by friends and forced by such crude laws/ I go to my rockbound prison, strange new tomb—/always a stranger [*metoikos*], O dear god,/ I have no home on earth and none below,/ not with the living, not with the breathless dead" (l. 937-942); "Such, such were my parents, and I their wretched child./ I go to them now, cursed, unwed, to share their home—/ I am a stranger [*metoikos*]! O dear brother, doomed/ in your marriage–your marriage murders mine,/ your dying drags me down to death alive! (l. 954-958). Describing her entombment as something like, or even beyond, that of the *metoikos* makes Antigone a stranger to the living and the dead–a stranger to the human itself, as Judith Butler has suggested so powerfully.[13] Cast outside the city and the hearth, strange and homeless, ordered to live an inhuman life, entombed Antigone is meant to give meaning to the state and the home by serving as their ongoing limit. In his enforced prohibition on mourning, then, Creon insists on the state's power to define what counts as the human. Mourning becomes an instrument of the state, subject to its normative juridical power.

I will return toward the end of this paper to Antigone's estrangement from the human. At this point, however, I want to suggest that in Lemkin's texts the term "genocide" functions as a prohibition akin to Creon's law. That is, while "genocide" claims simply to prosecute barbarism and vandalism, like Creon it rather at once defines and delimits the human, rendering and civilizing the human by rendering and entombing the inhuman. Lemkin's

coinage of "genocide" thus does not simply name a new, modern crime; it invents a modern, gendered European civility alongside a pre-modern and non-European barbarism and vandalism. That invention is a condition of possibility for, and an enduring characteristic of, the concept of genocide. When we utter "genocide" today, then, even when we do so with the most decent of feelings for human suffering, we do not simply name a horrific crime. We also risk giving that crime a specific kind of horror: namely, a horror that is essentially cast out from our most intimate space of being and assigned a radical alterity, but whose casting out must be continually performed, making the horror repeatedly and paradoxically part of and external to our selves.

It is this casting out–this creation and entombment of the inhuman in the name of a selfsame, righteous humanity–that so often characterizes the politics of "genocide." We could call this politics the work of "genocide," over and against the work of mourning. That is, if the work of mourning describes an ongoing and improvisational relationship with catastrophic loss, a relationship that remains open to the new meanings such loss can generate, then the work of "genocide" offers an incessant and repetitive calculation of catastrophe, a calculation that stipulates catastrophe's singular and unchanging significance.[14]

Placed beyond the limits of Creon's institutionalized humanity, Antigone goes to her "strange new tomb" defiant, refusing Creon's prohibitions. But her defiance also takes the form of a series of unanswered questions. Consider one of her last utterances: "What law, you ask, do I satisfy with what I say…What law of the mighty gods have I transgressed?/ Why look to the heavens any more, tormented as I am?/ Whom to call, what comrades now?" (l. 999-1000; l. 1013-1015). Antigone questions the basis of Creon's authority, the ground of her own act of mourning, and the foundations of her kin and community. Unanswered, her questions echo from the "rocky vault," breaking its seal, threatening to reduce it to ruins. They thus prompt a series of questions for Armenian diasporic culture today. Can one evade "genocide's" powerful politics? Can one interrupt the

work of "genocide," and break open the Armenian Genocide's entombment? What forms would this evasion take, what spaces might it open up? How might Armenian diasporic culture act and speak in the wake of unmourned, catastrophic violence, about today and for a politics of the future, in the spirit of the work of mourning?

Raphael Lemkin claimed that there was "no name" for the kind of crime the Reich committed, which led him to coin the word "genocide." However, it would be more precise to say that there was no *one* name; that is, there was no juridically generalizable, universalizable name. Prior to Lemkin's coinage, there had long been many Armenian names for what would come to be called, in Lemkin's wake, the Armenian Genocide. As Marc Nichanian explains, Armenians who bore witness to the mass violence of the Ottoman state through 1915 used such names as *Yeghern*, *Medz Yeghern*, *Darakrutiun*, *Aksor*, *Chart*, and–in the stunning example of Zabel Essayan's still neglected account of the 1909 mass killing of Armenians in Cilicia, *Among the Ruins* (1911)—*Aghed*, Catastrophe.[15] Why, then, are such names effectively inadequate for Lemkin, who in many of his writings takes the Armenians as an exemplary case of genocide, a kind of *arche*-genocide? It is not because they fail to name catastrophic violence, for they name such violence repeatedly and diversely. Rather, they fail to offer the juridical logic of "genocide," in which a singular, aggrieved plaintiff makes a claim against a singular, accused defendant. That is, these many Armenian names fail to create the barbarian and the vandal, to entomb them as the inhuman, and to craft the human as a universal, "civilized man" whose grievances can be pursued within the formal and abstract terms of international law.

In a sense, then, returning to this plethora of names–before "genocide," if you will–leaves the catastrophic violence we mourn without a singular, literal referent. This return, in effect, leaves the genocidal tomb in ruins.

**Ruins**
Ruins proliferate in contemporary Armenian diasporic culture–ruined churches, ruined houses, ruined fortresses–as if to figure an ongoing if often unsatisfactory encounter with Essayan's *Among the Ruins*, which Nichanian has called "a book of mourning, written against the interdiction of mourning."[16] Most often, these ruins come to figure the tragic loss of cultural greatness, something akin to Lemkin's vandalism. However, Atom Egoyan's 1993 film *Calendar* offers just a hint of a counter-intuitive understanding of the ruin.

In a meticulous but fractured narrative style, *Calendar* depicts the entangled lives of three characters, called by the credits the Photographer, the Translator, and the Driver. The Canadian-Armenian Photographer (played by Egoyan himself) and Translator (played by Egoyan's wife Arsinée Khanjian) are married, and travel to Armenia so that the Photographer can shoot a series of twelve stills of ancient churches and fortresses to be used for a calendar–one of those ubiquitous, static signs of national pride tacked on the walls of so many diasporan households. While in Armenia, they hire the Driver (played by Ashot Adamian), who is an Armenian citizen, as a guide. During their travels, the Translator (who speaks Armenian and English) and the Driver (who speaks only Armenian) fall in love, while the Photographer (who speaks only English) becomes increasingly estranged and embittered. Leaving his wife in Armenia with the Driver, the Photographer returns to Canada, where he proceeds to live and relive his traumatic experience of estrangement and alienation by hiring nine escorts of different ethnicities to have scripted dinner dates with him in his house. During each of the nine dates–one per month from March to November–the escort is apparently instructed to leave the table after the last of the wine has been poured, make a phone call, and pretend to flirt with someone in another language while the Photographer listens and reflects upon his trip to Armenia and the affair between his wife and the Driver. From these reflections, we learn that while in Armenia, the photographer became estranged from what he thought was his language, his culture, his place: "…being here has made me from somewhere else," he explains at one point. As Anahid Kassabian and I have argued at length elsewhere, *Calendar* traces the obsessive, masculinist manner in which nationalism asserts itself in the diaspora, as well as the potential fragility of that assertion.[17] Here, I would

like to invoke *Calendar's* ever so tentative exposure of the vertiginous freedom that opens up–beyond *Calendar* itself–when that assertion crumbles.

Toward the end of the film, the photographer reflects on his alienation from what he thought was his homeland, the state of Armenia. In one of the last sequences, we are presented with six quick shots: 1) a grainy video image, tinted blue and shot by the Photographer, of the Translator singing a song in Armenian and sitting with the Driver at a kitchen table in an apartment in Yerevan; 2) a stationary shot of a church and a fortress on a hill of grass and flowers, to be used for one of the calendar stills; 3) a shot of one of the Photographer's dates talking on the phone, with that very calendar still of the church and the fortress in the background, intercut with 4) a shot of the Photographer thinking to himself while his date talks on the phone; 5) once again the grainy, blue-tinted video image of the Translator and the Driver singing at the kitchen table, followed by 6) a stationary shot of the fortress by itself, which overexposes to white. Over all these shots, the photographer intones: "A church and a fortress. A fortress in ruins. All that's meant to protect us is bound to fall apart. Bound to become contrived, useless, and absurd. All that's meant to protect is bound to isolate, and all that's meant to isolate is bound to hurt."[18]

Within the terms of *Calendar*, ruins provoke a melancholy life. Released from the protection of nationalist imagery, barred from the naturalized narrative of glorious origins, unable to instrumentalize the past for the familiar diasporic politics of "Recognition, Restoration, Reparation" (to quote from the hit Armenian Genocide song "P.L.U.C.K." by L.A. alt metal band System of a Down), the Photographer is lost in absurdity, isolated and wounded. This sequence's final overexposure to white figures a kind of featureless, blinding oblivion within which further representation can find no immediate purchase.

In its final scenes, *Calendar* does allow us to glimpse something beyond this melancholic oblivion. The Photographer is ultimately released from his obsession with the traumatic trip to Armenia when he interrupts the script of

his ninth date and begins to talk more spontaneously with the final escort about memories and ideas that have nothing to do with the trip. Yet the film still leaves us trapped with the Photographer in the midst of a certain heteronormative desire. He is finally able to desire the desire of the other in his spontaneous interaction with his final escort, but we still learn little of her outside the role the Photographer has scripted for her. Consequently, the film never releases her from the escort service's gendered circuit of monetary exchange, and she remains an instrument for the Photographer's self-discovery. Indeed, she is taken for granted as a kind of reproductive labor. It is, after all, during the ninth date of the ninth month, in the midst of a miscommunication in which the final escort says "I can see it [an Egyptian heritage] in you" but the Photographer hears her say "I *conceive* in you," that the Photographer is released from his trauma. He is felicitously conceived and reborn, the film suggests.[19] *Calendar* may have moved us from a melancholy nationalism, but it guides us toward a persistent gender melancholia.[20]

However, *Calendar's* overexposure to white need not leave us here. Eduardo Cadava has urged us to read Walter Benjamin's mediations on history and photography–themselves written in the midst of the catastrophe of European fascism–as an embrace of the power of the ruin.[21] History and photography both offer "words of light": stories meant to illuminate a truth about the past and images of the real reproduced by a technology of light. Yet for Benjamin, these "words of light" offer neither "a sudden clarity that grants knowledge security" nor a melancholic despair in the face of fragmentation and opacity.[22] Indeed, fascism is characterized by the hyperbolic attachment to an ideology of realism, whereas "many forms of pragmatism, positivism, and historicism"[23] are characterized by the manic search for, and inevitable despair in the wake of, realism's impossibility. Rather, these "words of light" figure the sudden and incomplete flashes in which history is apprehended and images are arrested, punctuated by the pulses of darkness that set off instances of illumination. The stories history tells and the images photography yields are thus gathered from, and always intimately related to, fragments and ruins. Those stories and images

bring life to death: "For Benjamin, history happens when something becomes present in passing away, when something lives in its death."[24] Benjamin sees revolutionary potential in a criticism, an aesthetics, and a historical materialism that remain attentive to the ruin even as they seek the illumination of meaning.

In the spirit of such "words of light," as well as the defiant and persistent questions that echo from Antigone's tomb, let me suggest that *Calendar's* overexposure to white can spark questions *Calendar* itself seems unable to ask, stories it seems unable to tell, images it seems unable to show. Ruins are oddly liminal forms, collapsed somewhere between the structure's imagined, original condition and its idealized, excessively pristine restoration. They interrupt the narcissistic echo of the original in the rebuilt, they strip the tain of the mirror that promises to reflect same to same. To those who sound dissonant in this echo, those who never find themselves reflected in the nationalist spectacle, ruins might just signal an opening, a collapsed "rockbound prison" from which an other life might escape.

### (Re)flexion

In 1995, Los Angeles filmmaker Tina Bastajian wrote and directed a ten minute film from which such life escapes: *Pinched Cheeks and Slurs in a Language that Avoids Her*. The film opens–as if picking up from *Calendar's* overexposure to white–with a white screen that dissolves into a mise-en-scène that mimics early twentieth-century avant-garde photographer Florence Henri's "Self-Portrait, 1928" (see facing page). We see Henri's vertical, rectangular mirror propped up on a white table against a white wall, yet emptied of Henri's central signifiers: there is no self to portray, and there are no silver balls to reflect. We immediately hear a young woman speaking a few simple words in Armenian, and soon see reflected in the mirror an olive-skinned girl in a red dress, white headband, and white patent leather cowboy boots skipping across the floor behind the table. The voice-over quickly interrupts her own, childlike Armenian with the exasperated and slightly Boston-accented English phrase: "aaaoh, I, I can't remember." A black woman in a white headband and scarf and a black

sweater then appears seated at the table, where Henri is depicted in "Self-Portrait, 1928." Throughout the rest of the film, one hears in the background a nearly indistinct chatter of many voices.

During the first half of the film, in the mirror the girl and the woman silently act out a story, set under "a hazy 1970 Sunday sky," about a gathering of Armenians after church, a story told in great detail by the voice-over from the perspective of the girl. The girl's story tells of her mix of estrangement and inclusion at the Sunday gathering:

I'm the droopy brown eyed girl off to the side, waiting for a moment of belonging. So as usual I choose to go inside to help the old ladies serve lunch after church. Stale Havana cigars linger, while adult conversations avoid me. I pass bald men with ears full of grey hairs and older ladies slumped over with black dresses. They squeeze and then twist my eight-year-old cheeks between their fingers. They tease me in a language I do not feel comfortable to answer back to. I learn to pretend to understand because I get fingers shaken at me when I do not know this ancient language, Armenian [0:53-1:45]…I escape to the kitchen, to where it is safe, to where the aunties make the coffee. This is magical coffee. It's dark and thick and when you finish drinking it you turn the cup upside down and later pictures and stories appear inside. Ladies tell stories of the future, like secrets. [2:08-2:30]

The voice-over also speaks of how the adult Armenians greet the woman, who attends the Sunday gathering, with time-worn Armenian racism, figured by the film's background chatter:

Now no one has time to pinch my cheeks. I hear words collecting around the table. The adults' whispering grows louder. I wonder what the excitement is. I hear certain words and phrases. Something is happening. I feel the room separate. They are

talking about someone. These words are not good, and are not mine. What they say is not new to me. I have heard this before. Are they talking about me? Maybe they see my stained dress. No, they talk about a woman, a visitor, someone new, an *odar*, other, they say, not an Armenian. Maybe they are telling secrets. No, 'cause they are talking too loud. [2:50-3:38]…Words shift the room around, and I stand next to this woman. No one sees me. I see too much. Words come in our direction, and I overhear them talk about the woman near me. I stand apart from mouths that slant slurs. That she doesn't belong here. Noses turn up at her. "Why is she here" they say over again. "Black. *Seva mort* [literally: of black skin]. Who has brought this black woman here?" [3:51-4:43]

Linking these two voice-over sequences is an interaction between the girl and the woman at the table. In the mirror, we see the girl serve coffee to the woman, and we hear the voice-over explain: "We smile at each other different and alike. She speaks to me in our language and I can understand her. She is my mother tongue and she doesn't pinch cheeks" [3:38-3:50].

During the second half of the film, the woman at the table describes in Armenian to someone out of the frame of the mirror–perhaps the girl–how to make Armenian coffee and how to read your destiny from the grounds that gather in the cup. After the woman has finished, she stands up and walks out of the frame of the mirror, and the voice-over concludes: "The ancient language slides swiftly off her tongue, floods the walls of their hollow ears with her language they call their own" [9:28-9:36].

Like Henri's "Self-Portrait, 1928," *Pinched Cheeks* thematizes the power of framing over the image and the story; the girl and the woman at the table reframe the culture and language the Armenian adults at the Sunday gathering desperately claim as their own, as if enacting the magic of the coffee as it makes "pictures and stories appear inside" its cup. However, whereas Henri ironized the phallic power of the apparatus by embodying the Modern Woman of the 1920s with a pose that some have called

androgynous, the woman at the table in *Pinched Cheeks* presents a different challenge to race, gender, and sexuality norms so crucial to Armenian diasporic nationalism.[25] This challenge comes into relief every time I see the film screened in the U.S. Invariably, a viewer who performs his or her Armenian identity with an apparently high degree of comfort and confidence will ask incredulously how the woman at the table seemed to speak Armenian so well, as if the character's speech were somehow unfit or unnatural. I have heard more than one viewer insist that the filmmaker must have dubbed the voice onto the character. This aphasia in the face of J. Khorozian's performance marks a set of uneven but interlinked foreclosures that structure normative Armenian diasporic subjectivities.

The film itself explicitly thematizes the systematic and violent way the Armenians at the gathering foreclose the articulation, embodied by the woman at the table, of "Armenian" and "black": as the girl recounts, "Words come in our direction, and I overhear them talk about the woman near me. I stand apart from mouths that slant slurs. That she doesn't belong here. Noses turn up at her. 'Why is she here' they say over again. 'Black. *Seva mort*. Who has brought this black woman here?'" This last question is never answered by the film. *Pinched Cheeks* offers nothing by way of a biographical narrative of the woman, nor anything like a positivist account of how Armenians were declared "white by law" in two forgotten U.S. federal courts cases from 1910 and 1925.[26] Even descriptions of the film often reflect an ambivalence about the woman's identity, alternately naming her "a black Armenian woman," "an African woman who…was in fact half Armenian," and "part Ethiopian, part Armenian," while the filmmaker has mentioned that J. Khorozian grew up in Beirut.[27] Recalling Cadava's reading of Benjamin, *Pinched Cheeks* does not offer us "a sudden clarity that grants knowledge security." Rather, the racist foreclosure described by the voice-over and the background voices collides with the identificatory encounter between the girl and the woman at the table, itself described by the voice-over and re-enacted in the mirror.

Although the woman at the table is played by a gay man, J. Khorozian, the

film does not offer quite the same self-consciousness about gender and sexuality as it does about race, for the narrative never explicitly thematizes drag or queerness or trans people.[28] This diegetical reticence about J. Khorozian's queer performance situates gender and sexuality on the margins of *Pinched Cheeks'* more central concerns. Visually, however, we could say that these exegetical margins assert themselves in the scenes of the girl performing her girlness in front of and behind the woman at the table: throughout the first half of the film, the girl skips and twirls across the room, smoothes her hair with a headband, and has her cheek pinched by a hand that reaches into the frame of the mirror's image. These scenes implicitly echo a trope of many trans narratives, linking a gendered childhood to a trans adulthood in a way that raises questions about how gendered and sexed identities are secured.[29] Interpreted through this trope, the personal pronoun of the film's title–*Pinched Cheeks and Slurs in a Language that Avoids Her*–can no longer be taken for granted. Who is this "her"? And what does her "her-ness" consist in? The film holds back from these questions, as the woman and the girl are condensed into the pronoun's singularity, such that *Pinched Cheeks and Slurs in a Language that Avoids Her* might itself be said to avoid "her."[30]

When the girl withdraws kinship from the gathered Armenian aunties and uncles and redirects it toward the woman, then, she offers us an ambivalent identification, one at once subversive of and implicated in the norms of the Armenian diaspora: "She is my mother tongue and she doesn't pinch cheeks." "The ancient language slides swiftly off her tongue, floods the walls of their hollow ears with her language they call their own." When the girl assigns the woman the position of "my mother tongue," does this transaction rework the raced, sexed, and gendered norms of diasporic nationalism, or does that reworking falter, sliding too swiftly into the familiar figure of the nurturing mother country, linking "she" and "her" too smoothly, even drawing comfort from a dynamic Toni Morrison calls American-Africanism?[31]

I want to suggest that the film's uneven nexus of race, gender, and

sexuality makes these questions undecidable, and it is this undecidability that allows us to see and hear *Pinched Cheeks* among the ruins of Armenian diasporic culture. *Pinched Cheeks* offers something other than a late twentieth-century Armenian "version" of Henri's ironic play, or what László Moholy-Nagy, drawing on Hermann von Helmholtz, called the "The New Vision."[32] For it is not so much irony as catachresis–the figure without an adequate literal referent–that Bastajian's film sets in motion. Judith Butler has suggested that by the end of *Antigone*, Antigone herself has become catachrestical, something like an other humanity without a stable referent, a beyond-the-human that paradoxically lays claim to a certain humanity, an undecidability that looks toward unfounded futures:

> [Antigone] is not of the human but speaks in its language. Prohibited from action, she nevertheless acts, and her act is hardly a simple assimilation to an existing norm. And in acting, as one who has no right to act, she upsets the vocabulary of kinship that is a precondition of the human, implicitly raising the question for us of what those preconditions really must be. She speaks within the language of entitlement from which she is excluded, participating in the language of the claim with which no final identification is possible. If she is human, then the human has entered into catachresis: we no longer know its proper usage. And to the extent that she occupies the language that can never belong to her, she functions as a chiasm within the vocabulary of political norms. If kinship is the precondition of the human, then Antigone is the occasion for a new field of the human, achieved through political catachresis, the one that happens when the less than human speaks as human, when gender is displaced, and kinship founders on its own founding laws. She acts, she speaks, she becomes one for whom the speech act is a fatal crime, but this fatality exceeds her life and enters the discourse of intelligibility as its own promising fatality, the social form of its aberrant, unprecedented future.[33]

From within the tomb, Antigone offers an excess or a remainder–full of questions, without an adequate literal referent or determinate political aim–beyond the sentence Creon thought he had decreed. From the remains of Antigone's tomb, among the ruins of *Calendar's* churches and fortresses, *Pinched Cheeks* enters into such catachresis.

The figure of catachresis saturates *Pinched Cheeks*. As I have mentioned above, the film offers no recognizably stable identity referent for the woman at the table–no plot or narrative account of her origins, no third person history of black or queer Armenians, no confessional autobiography. The characters are always only presented as images reflected in the mirror, which keeps the viewer from indulging in even the filmic fantasy of directly seeing the bodies to which those images might refer. What is more, those images constantly move across and fade in and out of the mirror, appearing and disappearing in different positions while the mise-en-scène remains stable and unchanged. The constant background voices are disembodied and often unintelligible. In turn, the girl's life is unmoored, as she stands "off to the side, waiting for a moment of belonging," out of place in her "stained dress," uncomfortable with "this ancient language, Armenian" to the point of pretending to understand. When the adults at the gathering aim their words at the woman, "no one sees" the girl even as she stands next to the woman.

Consequently, when these catachrestical subjects interact, their interaction is effective but without ground. Their common act ("we smile at each other") is uncommon ("both different and alike"). When the woman speaks in "our language," which is also "her language they call their own," we no longer know precisely to whom "our" refers. The "mother tongue" the woman "is" presents a sudden kinship of the moment, forged in the flash of a smile and the exchange of narrative, altogether unlike the girl's labored, alienated kinship with the aunties and uncles who "pinch cheeks" at one moment and disparage the raced *odar* with "mouths that slant slurs" the next. And yet, this sudden kinship is not utterly delinked from the aunties and uncles' norms, for its lexicon is also their lexicon. "The ancient

language" that is "her language" is neither nostalgically original nor statically restored, neither Creon's *polis* "free of defilement" nor *Calendar's* church and fortress stills. But nor is this "ancient language" simply in ruins. Rather, it "slides swiftly off her tongue" and "floods the walls of their hollow ears"—in motion, actively changing shape and form.

What has happened to "genocide" in Bastajian's film? Utterly unspoken, it seems to have been forgotten, even carelessly left behind. And yet if "genocide" does not simply stipulate and condemn the inhuman, but rather crafts a normative distinction between humanity and barbarism, a distinction that re-animates the logic of the *metoikos*, then *Pinched Cheeks* actively shatters that distinction. As the girl meets the woman on the outskirts of a domestic gathering, having escaped the familiar confines of aunties and uncles gathered after church under a hazy Sunday sky–or rather as that meeting is reflected to us, framed and performed without adequate reference to its origin, its very reiteration wresting iteration from repetition–the possibility of an other kinship emerges, a diasporic possibility whose inadequate referent lies in its catastrophic genealogy. We could call this the work of mourning, over and against the work of "genocide."

*Pinched Cheeks and Slurs in a Language that Avoids Her* reflects not what we Armenians are, but what we might become. It does not return to us what we know or what we want to know, but rather turns us away from where we were going. Its images bend without shattering into ruins and without snapping back into shape. It flexes us. (Re)flexion without return.

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1. Louis Althusser, "The International of Decent Feelings," in *The Spectre of Hegel: Early Writings* (London: Verso, 1997), 22.
2. Ibid., 22-23.
3. "This 'International' of humane protest against destiny rests on a growing awareness that humanity is threatened, and has become, in the face of the threat, a kind of *'proletariat' of terror*. Whereas the labouring proletariat is defined by sociological, economic, and historical conditions, this latter-day 'proletariat' would seem to be defined by a psychological state: intimidation and fear. And, just as there is proletarian equality in the poverty and alienation of the workers, so too this *implicit proletariat* is said to experience equality, but in death and suffering…We have only one recourse left, they bluntly tell us, in the face of catastrophe: an holy alliance against destiny. *Let men learn, if there is still time, that the proletariat of class struggle can only divide them, and that they are already united unawares in the proletariat of fear or the bomb, of terror and death, in the proletariat of the human condition," Ibid., 23-4.*
4. "The proletariat of fear is a myth, but a myth that exists, and it is particularly important that it be exposed as such by Christians. For, as Christians, we believe that there is a human condition; in other words, we believe in the equality of all men before God, and his Judgement, *but we do not want the Judgment of God to be spirited away before our very eyes; nor do we want to see non-Christians and, occasionally, Christians as well, commit the sacrilege of taking the atomic bomb for the will of God, equality before death for equality before God…and the tortures of the concentration camps for the Last Judgement," Ibid., 27.*
5. On this thematic, see Marc Nichanian, *La Perversion Historiographique: une réflexion arménienne* (Paris: Editions Lignes et Manifestes, 2006); Marc Nichanian, *Writers of Disaster, Armenian Literature in the Twentieth Century, Vol. 1, The National Revolution* (Princeton: Gomidas Institute, 2002); Marc Nichanian, "Catastrophic Mourning," trans. Jeff Fort, in *Loss: The Politics of Mourning*, eds. David L. Eng and David Kazanjian (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003), 99-124; David Kazanjian and Marc Nichanian, "Between Genocide and Catastrophe," in *Loss*, 125-147.
6. I am thinking, for instance, of the "Blind Dates: Armenian and Turkish Artists in Dialogue" series organized by Neery Melkonian and Defne Ayas in New York, starting in 2007; and the March 2008 conference at Columbia University, "Speaking Beyond Living Room Walls: The Armenian Diaspora and Its Discontents," also organized by Melkonian. My work with Anahid

Kassabian, cited below, has also been in this spirit. Marc Nichanian's work, cited above, has greatly influenced all these efforts, despite Nichanian's own skepticism about any "politics of the future" (see Kazanjian and Nichanian, "Between Genocide and Catastrophe," 145-147).

7. Lemkin has recently received some attention in the public policy work of Samantha Powers. See *"A Power from Hell:" America and the Age of Genocide* (New York: Basic Books, 2002).

8. Raphael Lemkin, "Acts Constituting a General (Transnational) Danger Considered as Offences against the Law of Nations," trans. Jim Fussell, www.preventgenocide.org/lemkin/madrid1933-english.htm. Originally published in French as "Les actes constituant un danger general (interétatique) consideres comme delites des droit des gen," Expilications additionelles au Rapport spécial présenté à la V-me Conférence pour l'Unification du Droit Penal à Madrid (14-2 O.X. 1933) Librarie de la cour d'appel ed de l'order de advocates (Paris: A. Pedone, 13 Rue Soufflot, 1933), and in German as "Akte der Barbarei und des Vandalismus als delicta juris gentium," Anwaltsblatt Internationales, 19.6 (Vienna, Nov. 1933), 117-19.

9. Raphael Lemkin, "Genocide as a Crime under International Law," *American Journal of International Law*, 41:1 (1947): 146.

10. Raphael Lemkin, "Genocide–A Modern Crime," *Free World* 4 (1945): 39-45 and *Axis Rule in Occupied Europe: Laws of Occupation, Analysis of Government, Proposals for Redress* (Washington, D.C.: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 1944), 69-95.

11. Thanks to Emma Bianchi for discussing the metoikos with me.

12. All citations to Antigone refer to Sophocles, *The Three Theban Plays: Antigone, Oedipus the King, Oedipus at Colonus*, trans. Robert Fagles (New York: Penguin Classics, 1984).

13. Judith Butler, *Antigone's Claim* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002).

14. As Anahid Kassabian and I have argued elsewhere, this work of "genocide" drives the relentless heteronormativity of Armenian diasporic nationalism. See Anahid Kassabian and David Kazanjian, "From Somewhere Else: Egoyan's Calendar, Freud's Rat Man, and Armenian Diasporic Nationalism," *Third Text* 19:2 (2005): 125-44; "Melancholic Memories and Manic Politics: Feminism, Documentary, and the Armenian Diaspora," *Feminism and Documentary*, eds. Diane Waldman and Janet Walker (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1999), 202-223; "'You Have to Want to Be Armenian Here:' Nationalisms, Sexualities, and the Problem of Armenian Diasporic Identity," *Armenian Forum* 1 (1998): 19-36; and "Naming the Armenian Genocide: The Quest for Truth and a Search for Possibilities," *Space and Place, Theories of Identity and Location*, eds. Erica Carter, James Donald and Judith Squires (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1993), 33- 55.

15. Kazanjian and Nichanian, "Between Genocide and Catastrophe," 127.

16. Nichanian, "Catastrophic Mourning," 101.

17. Kassabian and Kazanjian, "From Somewhere Else."

18. On the DVD edition, see chapter 11, 53:44-55:14.

19. For a more extended reading of this scene, see Kassabian and Kazanjian, "From Somewhere Else," 136-141.

20. On gender melancholia, see Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (New York: Routledge, 1990), esp. 57-72, and *The Psychic Life of Power* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1997), 132-166.

21. Eduardo Cadava, "Words of Light: Theses on the Photography of History," *Diacritics*

22:3-4 (1992): 85-114; Cadava, Words of Light: Theses on the Photography of History (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997); and Cadava, "Irreversible Ruins," http://www.cepagallery.org/exhibitions/ruinsinreverse/frameset.html. See also Jacques Derrida's mediations on the ruin in *Memoirs of the Blind* (Chicago: Universityof Chicago Press, 1993).

22. Cadava, "Words of Light," 87.

23. Ibid., 85.

24. Ibid., 110.

25. On Henri and the Modern Woman, see Whitney Chadwick and Tirza True Latimer, eds. *The Modern Woman Revisited: Paris Between the Wars* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2003); Mary Louise Roberts, "Civilization without Sexes:" *Reconstructing Gender in Postwar France, 1917-1927* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994) and *Disruptive Acts: The New Woman in Fin-de-Siècle France* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002). See also Emily Apter, review of *Disruptive Acts: The New Woman in Fin-de-Siècle France* by Mary Louise Roberts and *The Modern Woman Revisited: Paris Between the Wars* edited by Whitney Chadwick and Tirza True Latimer, *South Central Review*, 22:3 (2005): 133-9.

26. The cases are In re Halladjian, 174 F. 834 (C.C.D.Mass. 1909) and United States v. Cartozian, 296 F. 173 (S.D.Cal. 1925). See Ian F. Haney López, *White by Law: The Legal Construction of Race* (New York: NYU Press, 1996), 67-72, 99, 130-31, 205, 207.

27. Personal communication. For the descriptions, see http://www.armenianfilmfestival.org/AFF2004_schedule.html, http://armenianstudies.csufresno.edu/hye_sharzhoom/vol21/may70/film.htm, and a flier in the author's possession.

28. I am especially grateful to Tina Bastajian for discussing J. Khorozian's performance with me.

29. Thanks to Heather Love for suggesting this point to me, and for bringing my attention to Jackie Kay's novel *Trumpet* (New York: Vintage, 1998). This passage–which describes a picture of Joss Moody, the novel's central trans character, when he was a child named Josephine Moore–resonates powerfully with the more suppressed narrative of gender and sexuality in *Pinched Cheeks*: "What happened to Josephine Moore? Look at this photograph. There she is, bright as a button, chocolate brown eyes. The picture is grainy and if it had sound it would crackle and spit. There she is…She is wearing a pleated skirt. Her knees are bare, but she has on white ankle socks. A white blouse. No matter how long you stare at the photograph, the clothes she is wearing will not change. They are locked in their own time, with their own stitches. But every time you look at the little girl's face, you will see something different in it" (254).

30. I am most grateful to Sarah Dowling for suggesting a reading of the title of Bastajian's film that helped me immensely.

31. Toni Morrison, *Playing in the Dark: Whiteness in the Literary Imagination* (New York: Vintage, 1993).

32. Rosalind Krauss, "Jump over the Bauhaus," *October* 15 (1980): 102-110. Krauss refers to *Lazlo Moholy-Nagy, Painting, Photography, Film* (Boston: The MIT Press, 1969).

33. Butler, *Antigone's Claim*, 82.

# Neutrality: modalities of control, balance and stabilization.
## John Palmesino

One can not testify an event during its perception.

The necessary delay between the optical, the visual, the retinal and the cortical impressions, the evaluation and interpretation of the image and its public witnessing are the base of the wrought relation between knowledge production and visual representation and architectural construction. It is in that moment, that intersection between individual cerebral activities and their public recounting, between individuality and communality; it is in that rapid delay, in that gap between our embodied experiences and their analysis that we find many of the clues about the difficult relation we maintain with the space we operate in. It is in the difficulties of testimony that the multiple relational and often confrontational ways we stay together reveal how the grounds we inhabit are as unstable as our polities.

The contemporary territory does not follow in its evolution a linear movement, where the succession of elements is distinct and causes clearly identifiable in their nature. The transformations that mark it are directed towards distant and concurrent goals, promoted by a multitude of actors. For this plural nature, the contemporary territories have a dynamic and shifting behaviour, marked by colonial, ethnic, racial, gendered, political, social, military, technological, cultural confrontations. The material configurations of our societies and territories, together with their interconnections, are becoming more and more complex.

Neutrality can be understood as a modality of transformation and control of contemporary space: international, local, urban, humanitarian, political, conflictual, economical, financial, military, institutional, natural, global, individual.

An architectural and urban analysis of the modalities adopted to outplay, moderate and contain conflictual situations, can reveal a set of specific configurations of the always mutable relations between polity and space. Neutrality can be used as a probe for exploring the transformation processes of the contemporary human environment, its states of operation, and the many society-space relations.

As we take a further step into the shards of contemporaneity, uncertainty appears to be a ground condition in human activities. If modernity mastered the construction of differentiated scenarios and the evaluation of risk assessment and control, today the very rapid growth of expert and sectorial rationalities and the innumerous visions they project on the contemporary territory creates a condition difficult to manage and even discern.

### A World Without Borders?
Two points seem to be particularly interesting when we think of neutrality as a means to manage these transitions, as a dispositif of change of the contemporary space, tuned to balance the conflictual forces that flare up in almost every human settlement. First of all, in constructing an overview of contemporary human settlements, we are thinking of a world without borders, a world whose parts have become increasingly plugged into each other, and which today is completely cordless at every turn, in which we have migrations of an endless kind almost at every point of the world. The second point is that the implementation of this borderless world is accompanied by an intermingled and entangled overlapping of logistic supply networks.  Wherever these transitions are occurring, new principles have been theorized to examine the nature of globalization and envisage modalities of intervention.

It is notable that many of these attempts pose decidability and hierarchy at the forefront of their constructs and maintain a dichotomy between local and global, based on the persistence of the model of the state as the primary structure of the relation of collectivities to their space of reference. In other words, these attempts continue to see that relation as being regulated by territorially based juridical formations, clearly compartmented and separated by borders and frontiers: a system of coherent continuity of interlocking surfaces.

It is between these structures that we tend to continue to see the organization of our conflicts and separations, marked by the attempt to assign a place to the other, hence to the similar. By fastening the borders to the notion of center, and to the social formations and institutions that populate it, we are not only continuing to think of the city as the modern structure of fordist organization through hierarchical stratification, we are at the same time continuing to assign to the (centre of) city the role of dissemination and decision. This way of intending the contemporary city allows to situate them and to think them in relation to an elsewhere, to globalisation. It allows to think of the city by its distance to this elsewhere.

Today, not to have a position, not to have a policy, not to stand for something, not to take part, not to participate, to be a-political is becoming more and more a difficult, contrasted, almost immoral condition. Yet these difficulties and contrasts, are also an entry point to the unveiling of the comeback of the physical condition, of the materic body of our contemporary territories. Entering the contemporary condition seemed in the last decade a drift towards a common vanishing point, where cities, territories, matter, nature would have become virtual, interchangeable, generic: the set of ephemeral activities. What has happened? Conflicts and terrorism are scattered throughout the world, entrapped in the meanders of the physicality of their scenarios. Nature is making its energetic return, polities struggle to manage change, social and technical infrastructures face conditions that present similarity in their strengths and vulnerabilities. Reality is back in all its material thrust.

### Neutralisations and Blockades
How is the city of the 21st century shaping its structures in relation to these forces? How are they managed and balanced? Neutrality is a specific way of organizing matter in space in order to create an operational zone where

to manage conflicts, contradictions, diversities. An operational zone clearly demarked by borders, by control devices, by separation and exclusion of conflicts. Neutrality is a modality of creating a counterpart to the hierarchical understanding of geo-politics, of identity, of war, of the nuances of peace and internationalism in the wake of globalization. An attempt to turn our gaze towards reality, away from our theories.

Neutrality is stated as a junction between a purely pragmatic attitude and a universal aspiration for peace. To be neutral, in a certain sense and under certain circumstances, can be understood as the ultimate contemporary political and powerful condition. A condition that engages individuals with the spatial organization of our institutions, our nations, our differences, our wars.

The difficulties of neutrality today are both structural and operative, and they are rooted in the dual distinction between friend and enemy. The possibility of a prevailing neutralization of a conflict is inexorably interwoven with one rule (even an ostensibly fair one) making its ways through the divisions: a victory of one particular stand over the others.

**Cities and trade: the co-evolution of neutrality and natural law**
In the EPFL labs at the edge of of the city of Lausanne, Switzerland a series of large scale models are used to simulate the diffusion of fog and mist in the alpine environment, explored in its polytechnic dimensions. The fog model is next to other models used to study the dynamics of river floods, high altitude erosion and permafrost, avalanche kinetics, etc.

The constant attempt to control and modulate the risks of inhabiting the alpine environment are of course at the centre of the specific Swiss territorial culture, where alpine passes have to be maintained, bridges protected, open connections guaranteed.

The constant attention towards the threat of nature comes along with the construction of a rigorous drive towards containment and reduction. To

reduce risks and set everything in its proper place: a sort of anti-urban care for things which is an aspect of Switzerland that seems to be geared towards the outplay of conflicts, and almost paradoxically towards not participating, in a constant balance of forces.

Switzerland is neutral in the way that it is a space for discussions between differences, where conflicts and wars can be discussed and mediated. It is and can remain neutral as long as its territory is immaculate and maintained outside the conflict. As long as it stays elsewhere. As long as it is not present. The particular institutional structure of Switzerland, built up from the smallest communities with a delegation of power towards the upper levels of the confederation, could also be understood in this sense.

To maintain this extraterritorial status, Switzerland has to preserve clear, stable and defined borders. It has to be outside the conflict.

The discourse on neutrality stems from that on *ius gentium*, on the law of foreigners, as one of the substantial prerequisites for neutrality is its binding force on all nations. The development of the European State-system in the early modernity is tightly connected to the rise of the debates on the theory of citizenship, *ius gentium* and natural law. The construction of the European modern system, and its preeminently urban character, can see no scission between the rise of trade, commerce and mercantilism and the development of the notion of neutrality. This is developed in straight relation to the possibility of free trade throughout Europe. The necessity of a guarantee on the economical exchanges, the protection from the risks of *del credere* from the rising absolute powers of monarchs in the post-Westphalia Europe has been crucial to the development of the mercantile republican cities in Europe, from Venice, Florence and Genoa, to Geneva, Gent, Antwerp, Amsterdam, the Hansa, and later London.

We tend to think of the relation between an organized system of citizenship and its territory as an homogeneous and constant one, where vast portions of space are hierarchically structured by sovereignty through a set of stable

conjunctions, largely based on the model of the nation and of the state. This vision is widely connected to the development of the war rules by the trade communities of the Hansa, of Venice, Antwerp, Amsterdam, and London. It was the great commercial communities, which were first able to insist on some sort of regulation of the usages of war for their own protection. While the right of war was simply equivalent to the right of brute force, with no possibility of a community to maintain what it couldn't protect from the strongest, the introduction of laws of neutrality have brought a *prima facie* right to go on trading between neutrals, in spite of war, without molestation.

Yet the development of such a system of free commerce entails a spatial construction of the European state-system as a departure from the Balance of powers of interlocked spatially continuous territories, towards a spatial organization of Europe arranged around the establishment of routes, protection of passages, and management of ports. The rising European bourgeois city, which developed around the strongholds of castles, around the walls of monasteries and convents, was basically a conglomerate of open and closed spaces, with an almost constant reconfiguration of the notion of locus. The city was not only the seat of the commercial activities and of power, it was a machinery that envisaged a new notion of time and space. The merchant time is a time of the future, with appointments to be kept, credits to be cast into the coming years, predictions to be made, provisions to be maintained.  It is also a city where new habits are explored. The development of the debate on the neutrality of free trade is also linked to that on public morality and ethics, and from there to the development by Adam Smith of economy. What is the role of luxury? What that of greed?

The invention, construction and maintenance throughout the decades and centuries of the main trade routes across Europe through the Alps was amongst the many modalities by which Switzerland managed to carve out a stable space between conflicting neighbours, empires and states.

The construction of the so-called "Devil's Bridge" over the Schöllenen Gorge in the Alpine massif of the St. Gotthard sparked the intensification of the commerces between the Mediterranean cities and the urban markets along the North Sea and the Baltic. With a small bridge launched over the heights of a remote precipice in the central Alps, in the eleventh century the entire European continent took a lap towards a future of wealth, power and domination.

The development of the European trade cities is tightly interwoven with the colonial expansion and establishment of new trade zones across the seas from the seventeenth century. The expansion of the network of relations of European cities to the colonial outposts was accompanied by revisions, adjustments and amendments to the notion of citizenship: to what measure can individual merchants (or the independent companies of the VOC and the HEIC) be considered outside the excercise of national law and sovereignty?

**UNAMI, UNOGBIS, UNOWA, UNPOS, UNSCO, UNTOP, MINURSO, UNUB, UNMOGIP, UNOMIG, UNOCI, UNMIS, UNMIL, UNMIK, UNMEE, UNIFIL, UNFICYP, UNAMSIL**

These are the code-names of the deployment of the large UN international humanitarian missions, with its interconnected enclaves and buffer zones. Many of these enclaves not only host the logistics for the local activities: they become nodes of a global network of supply for other missions.

An example of this is the Green Line that runs from west to east in Cyprus, cutting in two the city of Nicosia. Cyprus, in the eastern Mediterranean, is an island that is part of the European Union, but while the sovereignty of the Republic of Cyprus is over the entire islands, its Government reaches out only over the southern half of the island. In the north is the unrecognized government of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus. In between is the Green Line, a buffer zone managed by the UN, which is a long and narrow strip of territory that crosses the entire island. The Green

Line is not so much a line as a territory in itself, comprising logistical centres, checkpoints, airports, compounds, storage spaces, barracks and some ruins of tourist resorts built on the coast in the late 1960s and 1970s. The ruins are actually a city in itself, the abandoned sea-front of Famagusta, from where the Greek population escaped when the Turkish army occupied the northern part of the island.

The Green Line and the multi-national military that accompanies it are not only geared to the stabilization of the conflict between the Greek and the Turkish, they are the base of operation for the UN in the whole of the Middle East. It is the base where the UN officials retreated after the attacks on the Baghdad headquarters. It is where the European and American ex-pats were evacuated during the Israeli war in Lebanon in the summer of 2006. At the same time, it is today becoming a normalised daily frontier passage between the North and the South, and along it a population of Turkish immigrants, Turkish locals, Cypriot Greeks, Russians, British, Palestinians, Germans, Americans, Copts, Lebanese, Armenians, Israeli, Kurds etc. exchange in a multi-faceted economy which is largely informal. The North of Nicosia is being largely re-built with US Aid funds, while the EU is investing in the South. The North is booming with second-houses and tourist resorts, together with a large new population arriving from Turkey. The number of new constructions on the island is unprecedented, and it is not by accident that the Kofi Annan plan for re-unification of the island was crashed in the South on real-estate property grounds, with vast claims for the northern houses that were fled in 1972. Cyprus is today probably the most radical experiment of post-national management of territory, with a multitude of stake-holders that operate according to de-localized rules. The Green Line can be interpreted as an island within the island, as a difference amongst differences, *inter alia*.

Here neutrality is not a new area marked by borders that have replaced previous ones, its power does not rely on the overtake and overthrow of territories, fields and resources. It is the constant interplay between existing forces, inhabiting as it were the liminal and mutating sets of relations between them.

How is the city of the twenty-first century shaping its structures in relation to these forces? How are they managed and balanced? Neutrality is a specific way of organizing matter in space in order to create an operational zone where to manage conflicts, contradictions, and diversities. An operational zone clearly demarcated by borders, by control devices, by separation and exclusion of conflicts. Neutrality is a modality of creating a counterpart to the hierarchical understanding of geo-politics, of identity, of war, of the nuances of peace and internationalism in the wake of globalization. An attempt to turn our gaze towards reality, away from our theories. It is stated as a purely pragmatic attitude.

To be neutral, in a certain sense and under certain circumstances, can be understood as the ultimate contemporary political and powerful condition. A condition that engages individuals with the spatial organization of our institutions, our societies, our nations, our differences, and our wars.

# The Western Sahara and its Refugee Camps
Manuel Herz

**The World's Last Colony**

The map "The World in 1945" published by the United Nations' cartography department shows the status of the world's countries with a wide array of colors at the time just after World War II: Independent and self governing nations are colored in blue. Red, purple and different shades of green are used to denote dependencies and colonial conditions. Thus codified, the world of 1945 has the appearance of a patch of colorful confetti. "The World Today," a map representing the same kind of relationships for today's times, has turned almost entirely blue. Only one single red spot, indicating a dependent state, is remaining in the very center of the map: Western Sahara (apart from small island states such as Guam or New Caledonia) is the only non-self-governing country in the world. The world's last remaining colony.

Western Sahara is located at the very western point of Africa, where the Sahara meets the Atlantic Ocean. Without a single river, no arable land, no permanent crops, few areas of pasture and temperatures well in excess of 50° Celsius (125° Fahrenheit) during summer, it is one of the most inhospitable places for settlement. Due to the lack of arable land, the Sahrawi population developed a rich nomadic culture with camel meat being their "staple food." The country is rich in raw materials, such as phosphate, and has substantial fishing waters off its coastline. More recently, speculations about oil reserves located off its coast have made the complicated and tragic political situation of the country even more conflictual.

Formerly a Spanish colony until 1975, the country was invaded from the north by Morocco and from the south by Mauretania when Franco pulled his troops out of the country as one of the last major political initiatives before his death. The Polisario, an independence movement of the local

Sahrawi population fighting against the Spanish oppressors, launched a guerrilla war against the two new occupying forces and managed to oust Mauretania from Western Saharan territory. No sooner got but lost, Morocco immediately expanded its area of occupation to the territories relinquished by Mauretania and was thus holding more than two thirds of the Western Sahara by 1979.

A large part of the local Sahrawi population had by that time fled to neighboring Algeria and established four refugee camps in the very remote region near Tindouf. In an act of pure violence through planning, and probably one of the most extreme manifestations of architecture the world has seen, Morocco built an almost 3,000 km long berm through the middle of the desert, cutting through the complete length of the Western Sahara, and separating the occupied western part of the country from fragmented pieces on the eastern side of the berm.

### The Camps
The early refugees fleeing across the border to Algeria first established the settlement *Rabouni*, which later developed into their administrative center. In the following years four refugee camps were constructed in the area that today are housing approximately 40,000 refugees each: *El Aiun*, *Awserd*, *Smara* and *Dakhla*, named after the four main towns in their former home country. Each camp has a center where offices of the mayor and public services for the whole camp are located. Nearby is the commercial area, with clay huts selling foodstuff, clothing, mechanical tools and mobile phones. Even though they are well stocked, few customers frequent the little shops as much of the merchandise is simply too expensive for most inhabitants of the camp. A constant flow of ancient Land Rovers passes over the dirt roads of the camp and a wild ensemble of garages and repair shops, petrol stations (plastic pipes connected to barrels of petrol suspended in high air) and even a car wash (in the middle of the desert!!!!) give testimony to a mobile and motorized community.

The residential areas are located around the administrative and commercial

parts of each camp. Refugee families usually live in a small cluster of clay huts and tents. The huts are self-constructed from bricks made of the clayish sand that exists in the area. Ever so often, these huts are destroyed in one of the frequent sand storms that sweep over the desert. The camps are only loosely built up, and occupy a large area, fizzling out towards the periphery, with single huts strewn over the desert floor in the distance.

### Replacing a country
If counted together the four refugee camps, with their approximately 170,000 inhabitants represent the largest "urban" settlement within the whole Sahara. The camps, named after the four largest cities that had were left behind and are now occupied by the Moroccans, have an ambiguous relationship to the concepts of home and urbanity. Even though the camps are meant to forge a collective memory through the use of the abandoned cities' names, these names were designated more or less randomly to the four camps and have no relationship to the actual origin of the refugees living there. The fact that the Sahrawi population has been living mostly nomadic lives and virtually all of the commemorated cities are of Spanish (i.e. colonial) foundation makes this constructed lineage even more doubtful.

As much as the expulsion from their home country represents a tragedy of historical dimension that hardly anyone takes notice of, the "urbanization" of the Sahrawi people has offered opportunities previously unavailable. Due to available infrastructure such as schools and hospitals, the literacy rate has risen to a level only seen in countries of the western world, far surpassing other North African nations. Life expectancy is above average and even though being located in one of the most removed areas, the availability of communication infrastructure (most families own TVs, radios and mobile phones) has given the refugees a possibility of global connections.

Four camps have become a surrogate of a whole country. Having existed for almost 35 years in one of the most inhospitable places on the earth, the Sahrawi refugee camps in the western tip of southern Algeria represent all

the dilemmas of architecture of humanitarian action. The camps offer an area of temporary protection and safety in times of tragic loss, but are also enabling a transformation and emancipation of the general society. An interim-solution is turned into architectural language and instrumentalized, by holding on to construction methods such as clay huts or tents, even after having lived in the camps for almost two generations in order to signify the "temporariness" of the condition. Finally, the relative well being of the Sahrawi population in the camps makes a political solution for the occupied homeland ever more unlikely.

# The Future of Evasion
## Srdjan Jovanovic Weiss

A friend sent me a photograph (p. 199), which was taken by someone in
Kalesija, a town in the Tuzla canton within the Federation of Bosnia and
Herzegovina. It depicts the corner of a building whose exterior has been
renovated and painted in a vivid, optimistic color–somewhere between
peach and orange. A sharply defined area has been omitted from the new
renovation; it appears to be the facade of a single apartment. On the old
concrete walls that are not covered with the new paint, one can still spot
traces of decay. On closer inspection, one can also see what appear to be
bullet marks dispersed across the raw surface, as if the building had been
randomly fired upon. A large satellite dish–the largest of the many in the
image–sits on the balcony of the apartment. The perfect outline of the
unrenovated area suggests that it is the result of purposeful neglect.

I sent this image to various friends and colleagues, as well as to blogs and
social networking sites without much description other than a caption
reading "wonderful neglect" and a note stating where it was taken. The
responses were surprisingly diverse. On one end of the spectrum, the
image was read as a symbol of civil disobedience–resistance to a
renovation that in its collective character too strongly echoed an older
ethos of socialist solidarity. At the other extreme were pragmatic
interpretations that understood the gesture as a strictly financial one. This
was best summarized in the wry note from a colleague who wondered if
the owner had spent all his money on the satellite dish on his terrace
instead.

Since I first circulated the image, I have learned more about the
circumstances surrounding the renovation. As it turns out, the unrenovated
section is one of the two areas left out. The two areas mark the facade
belonging to two distinct apartments that reportedly did not contribute
money to the reconstruction of the entire building. At least one of the

owners lives abroad. In the summer of 2007, the municipality of Kalesija decided to paint this particular building, together with a few others, in order to make the town "better and more beautiful." However, despite its good intentions, the city did not have sufficient funds to pay for the entire project and the owners of the individual apartments were also asked to contribute toward the restoration, in the way a coop or condominium fee increase would be used in a U.S. context to fund general work on a building.

It is not possible to know with certainty the motivations of the owners who rebuffed the city's request, but their refusal does open a space for speculation, particularly given the complex social dynamics of the area. Before the war, Kalesija was predominantly Bosnian muslim (today known as Bosniak), with a small Serbian minority. On 2 May 1992, during the early stages of the Bosnian war, the Bosnian Serbian army overran the town and started to displace the muslims. Only twenty days later, the Bosnian forces reclaimed the city. Many of the Serbs who originally lived in Kalesija fled. Today, the town is ninety-nine percent Bosniak. The years following the 1995 Dayton Accords, which ended the war in Bosnia, saw concerted efforts toward urban renewal across the country. In Tuzla, the government plan of 2000 for the return of displaced populations noted that residents who had fled had started to return in significant numbers by 1998, though they largely consisted of Bosniaks from other parts of Bosnia as well as abroad. The return of Serbs to towns like Kalesija was reported as minimal, but significant enough to inspire the government to further encourage Serbs to return with a scheme for better financial aid.

In larger Bosnian towns, such as Mostar and Sarajevo, the urban renewal took the form of conventional reconstruction of buildings, and sometimes entire areas, that had been shelled during the war. Though included in many international preservation lists and often used as case studies in design and preservation curriculums in North American universities, such cities have nevertheless had difficulties securing long-term international aid. The iconic parts of Mostar, like the Old Bridge, were only finally reconstructed through a complex partnership between UNESCO, the World

Bank, and local government. Meanwhile, the status of Sarajevo's 1997 application to the World Heritage List as a "unique symbol of universal multiculture" is still listed as "tentative" on the UNESCO's website.

The situation is different in towns like Kalesija. There, individual initiatives are more typical, with citizens organizing themselves to repair their architectural surroundings. The social conditions have also given rise to self-styled developers who transform property formerly controlled by the socialist government–successfully adapting, say, collective housing into condominiums–while making their fortunes. And then there are the chronically under-funded municipal authorities, as was the case with the building in question.

It's entirely possible that the two owners refused to participate in the renovation simply because of their financial situations–the fact that at least one of them lives abroad, however, to some extent undermines this mundane reading. A more critical interpretation, however, might ask questions about the politics of refusal in the post-war era of abrupt democratization.

For some who witnessed the destruction of the town during the war, the bullet holes are not simply an eyesore to be covered up, but a testament to the suffering of the entire population. If, however, the decision to keep the bullet holes visible is motivated by a desire to assign blame–we may not know whether the damage was caused by the initial Serbian offensive or the Bosniak counterattack, but perhaps the owners do–then the testimony of the building points away from a generalized sense of grief and toward a continuation of the war by other, symbolic, means.

The value of speculation like this lies less in the particular case of one apartment building in a Bosniak town than in the larger questions about the future of neglect as a strategy within democratic values and systems. Is negligence a tool that can operate with a force equal to that of urban reconstruction? Is refusing to renovate as powerful a statement as

renovating? And in a larger sense, if there is not enough money to upgrade a particular building or an element of municipal infrastructure, should citizens be allowed to refuse when asked to contribute? And if they do contribute, should they have a voice in how their money is used, and in the way participation is managed and directed?

The owners of the two unrenovated apartments in Kalesija answered these questions with their inactions. What is striking is the precision and respect with which the town officials marked out the owners' dissent. The perfectly delineated edge marking the boundary between what personal property is renovated and what is not speaks to the new ability to refuse the image of reconstruction. It is an inspiring precedent that suggests a future for neglect as a tool for integrated exceptionality.

# Transcript of an Acceptance Speech
Catherine Liu

*Catherine Liu was the recipient of Slought Foundation's 2006 Award for Rogue Thought. The award recognizes theorists of exceptional creative and intellectual integrity, whose work is still not altogether accepted as conventional scholarship or research.*

"This award is a theoretical, theatrical and critical intervention in the giving and receiving of awards, and in the production of prestige and distinction. It is in this sense that I accept it. This award urges us to engage in an examination of the set up of the award–the theater and history of the production of distinction, the history of prize giving and institution building and its relationship to the psychic economy of everyday cultural and intellectual work. To accept an award for Rogue Thought means we have to go negative, at least provisionally, on the entire institution and history of this tool of bourgeois cultural hegemony. The improvisational, theoretical, and performative aspects of this award occasion an unflinching look at the recent proliferation of awards and prizes. The cultural economy of prestige has never been so active: what it produces may be nothing more than generalized acceptance of not the singular award or prize, but the culture industry of prestige and distinction. The extraction of this tacit and unconsciously given consensus may in fact be what gives us greatest cause for worry–but more than that, for anxiety, because the whole system is infantilizing to the extreme, and when we give so much power of judgment away, this does have worrying consequences for those who are supposed to be transmitting to a new generation the power of critical thinking.

The cultural hegemony of neo-liberalism has promulgated a principle of generalized and ubiquitous competition–just as citizens in the polis are reduced to competing interests, the global economy is flattened out as a

field of open markets on which various national economies must struggle to remain "competitive." The cultural, aesthetic and intellectual fields are to be apprehended by a series of competitions–into which we are all recruited, whether we like it or not.

The extent to which the regime of judgment has been unhappily internalized by even the most accomplished thinkers is made manifest in a really disturbing conversation with a friend of mine who in commiserating with me about some professional contretemps told me that "you're almost important enough" and that once I did become "important enough" I might be freed from the constraints against which we all chafe. I realized that he completely identified with the judgment of some fantasy at the center of the profession. Some Politburo of academia that meted out judgments–and ratings, like consumer reports or the US and News World Report University rankings was how we measured our relative importance. When I pointed this out to him, he was apologetic, but now he won't talk to me anymore. I don't take this as an insult. I have tried to form some dissenting idea of what I judge as important, and color me silly, call me arrogant, but I think I'm quite important enough. I have to believe that, and it may be a delusion, but I also count those whom I read and care about as important, always important enough. I am enough of a Nietzschean and a non-Christian that I abjure the false humility and modesty of professional decorum. What I would rather see is a radical democratization of importance, and of its judgment. I have tried to remain true to the seditious power of critical theory and the autonomy of thinking. I have tried to remain true to the unconscious, to literature, to theory, to the Utopic aspirations of revolt and anarchy. In the spirit of the perpetual, self-renewing power of criticism, I think we have to be vigilant in examination of our relationship to institutionality. And not in the name of a simple anti-institutionality, but in the name of both theory and history. I have not been pious to identity politics, to deconstruction, to psychoanalysis. What I loved about theory as I encountered it, was its bracing anti-humanism, its anti-disciplinarity, its liberatory, impious relation to the cultural, political and aesthetic field.

One of Slought's intentions was to allow us to reflect on the function and the concept of the award upon the occasion of the publication of Jim English's extraordinary book–*The Economy of Prestige*. As English has deftly demonstrated in this book, cultural/intellectual awards now more than ever circulate as lubricants for the flow of capital between various metropolitan centers that aspire to new forms of cultural legitimacy if not supremacy. This often takes place in lieu of political consensus: English complicates matters by insisting that the award is not simply a marker of market success, but operates as a para-economy of prestige that can increase sales, especially of serious literary books, but does not make them competitive with best-sellers for all that. What he points out that I find most striking is the problematic selection of selectors, the formation of juries and groups that pick the "prize-winner"–this process all by itself is about the accumulation and control of cultural capital and credit and implies a form of allegedly democratic decision making that is anything but transparent in its enfranchisement of a select group of deciders.

To refuse the award would have been much simpler for me, but to answer Slought's challenge meant more work, but also for me, it meant confronting a psychic structure that I would have preferred to leave alone. In accepting this award, I must sacrifice something in return, a fantasy, defensive perhaps, that I am invisible to the regime of judgment, that I remain for better or worse not seen, by what hippies used to call–the "Establishment." We don't use that word anymore, it seems like a naïve reification of the powers that be, but my fantasy is hardly mature in its articulation. The acceptance of an award extracts a sacrifice, a payment in turn. But I am more assured about this particular kind of price to pay for the prize when I see that Slought itself struggles with the forces of academic legitimization–it is reassuringly self-critical in the most positive of ways. Nevertheless, the psychic economy of the prize itself is paranoid: it exposes a raw nerve in me. They're giving me an award because I want one!

Prizes are one of the most powerful cultural weapons forged by the nineteenth century bourgeoisie intent on legitimating its own consolidation

of economic and political power. The explosive economic power of the new class was converted to the power of cultural consecration and conservation: we can say that this class was concerned with salving its bad conscience with the emollients of cultural recognition. In our day, with the simultaneous rise of new nationalisms, especially on the Pacific Rim and in the former Eastern bloc and the ideology of free markets and globalization, award and prize culture has proven especially useful to governments and multinational corporations intent on cementing a sense of their own cultural progressiveness. To be a debunker of prizes, however, as one who claims to be beyond prizes, is to claim some superiority to industrially produced prestige. English's book explains why a simple critique of the prize is insufficient. English points out that the critique of prizes and awards is a part of a game—it is a game that has proven both serious and deadly in its creation of new forms of cultural prestige, distinction and hierarchy.

So to accept this award, in insisting upon its acceptance, I also give up any claim to that principle of the "aristocrat" or the "avant-garde," and I enter into the circulation of prestige. Prestige itself, as a word, is highly ambiguous. It is highly problematic both philologically and theoretically. Prestige shares the same root as prestidigitate: prestige implies deception, trickery, blinding and binding bedazzlement. The "prestigious" institution is always already trying to pull one over on us. In a sense, we are all willing to be deceived. An instability or reversibility as to its judgment of value (is it negative or positive?), brings it into family resemblance with another word that has survived too much scrutiny, and is no longer really of use to us—the uncanny. Prestige is an effect—an illusion. Preastrigium: a delusion to dazzle the eyes: prestige meant according to the sixteenth century Littré "deceits and impostures." Today, industrially produced prestige is part and parcel of an entire culture industry of reputation-enhancing prizes. The destruction of cultural hierarchy promised by popular culture's and postmodernity's mixing of high and low was hailed as inherently emancipatory for the people: it has produced not a field of freedom as much as a culture that is less and less resistant to the powerful and inevitable logic of the commodity. Culture reified as an object of

administration and industry has proven instrumental in destroying the last vestiges of any modernist illusions or delusions about the utopia of aesthetic autonomy.

The United States represents a very special case in the history of prestige production and cultural legitimization. Daniel Boorstin called the award ceremony a "pseudo-event." Like Dwight Macdonald, Clement Greenberg, and other mid-century American critics of twentieth century culture, he has had to wear the scarlet "E" of elitist. To believe that critique can wither our enjoyment of the culture of prizes, awards and medals is to overestimate the power of the mind over the power of industry. Leftist scholars of mid-century found themselves in an uneasy familial relationship with the genteel reformers of the turn of the century—they too condemned the bread and circuses of early twentieth century mass and popular culture and believed in cultural distinctions. Prizes have become part of the new bread and circuses. Engagement in the business of prestige production makes us all distant relatives of P.T. Barnum as the inventor of publicity.

I do think that in order to escape the "pseudo-ness" of the event, we have to mobilize our forces of analysis and critique, at the same time that we have to overcome our phobic reaction to both the pleasure and ignominy of prize winning and giving, and denounce the fundamental exploitation of psychic life in the massive movement to institutionalize all forms of intellectual and aesthetic recognition.

There is a problem with prize culture: English has aptly demonstrated that it is plagued with scandal, with lack of transparency, with slavish imitation. She who receives prizes tends to receive more prizes: it should be noted that the list of the biggest prize winners at the end of the book tend to the less fair sex. But rather than make what must be called a vulgar feminist demand for absolute equity—as if prizes could be improved if they were more "egalitarian" in their distribution between sexes, races or countries, we have to take a different tack—to see that what they do is consume our desire for cultural and political order by converting capital into tools and

institutions of cultural distinction and selection. The process of this kind of money laundering took place early on at the height of industrial capitalism's development when Henry Tate endowed the Tate Gallery with his collection and his fortune, made in the sugar cane fields of the British West Indies. The sweet harvest of subtropical toil survives today not as cultural elitism–for that would be too Victorian, but as a kind of neo-populist hipsterism–this is the true invention of the late twentieth century. Cultural distinction no longer seems so condescending to the masses: rather it courts "interactivity" and "participation"–distinction seems produced by plebiscite and referendum rather than snobby tastemakers. The ruined power station on the Thames converted into theatrical space for the exhibition of contemporary art, the Tate Modern is a spectacular example of this new development in taste culture. As government defunding of the arts was imposed by both Ronald Reagan and Margaret Thatcher during a period of massive market liberalization and corporate consolidation of power, the arts have had to find different ways of making private contributions attractive: the sponsorship of prizes is one strategy of creating cultural legitimacy around a brand–take for example the Absolut Vodka campaign of the 1980s and the Gordon Gin sponsored Turner Prize.

One does not need to go so far as London to find that prizes have become a permanent fixture in the synergistic relationship between private cultural funding and the emergence of prize culture. Prizes are popular, but the prizes that are purely commercially driven–such as the Grammies to reward the most popular albums of the year–are easier to dismiss. Their prestidigitations are so obvious that little prestige is produced at all–blinding bling is perhaps a bit easier to take than the muted forms of will to power embodied by the discretion of the Nobel or the Macarthur. English shows that the Grammys have systematically rewarded the highest sales, offering no significant deviation in judgment from market valuation.

The more culturally and intellectually ambitious the prize, the more psychological its power. In fact, the recognition bestowed by these prizes, precisely because they appear the result of autonomous, sovereign

judgment of a panel of irreproachable judges is all the more powerful, especially for those of us who are used to purely symbolic, that is fantastic, forms of remuneration.

If critique of prizes–the kind that denounce them for false judgment is part of the "game" as English suggests, its inadequacy also demonstrates the powerlessness of individual protest, whether by winners or losers about the rules of the game. There is a massive failure of dissent with regard to the prize, a silent tacit acceptance of what English calls the sportification of aesthetics. Competition is taken as the very norm of our existence: you win some, you lose some. In an age when so much lip service is given to diversity, the symbolic politics of globalization demands a conformity and silent consensus to a regime of judgment in which everyone of us is at times complicit. The secret prize, or a private ritual of consecration is not the answer: the very nature of the prize has to do with the collective, festive occasion, the celebration with others of the unity of the world. In that case then, in the face of the uselessness of the consecration of private prizes, I want to ask why have we not invented other forms of recognition? Why have we accepted without question forms of distinction that emanate from a usurping hegemony? Why do we contribute to the reproduction of thoughtlessness in our bland acceptance of judgments of quality?

I am angry about the state of intellectual and cultural conformity and inhibition: I idealized the academic world as a place of freedom in thinking. So perhaps what I wanted from this profession is the Utopia of collective non-instrumentality. Theory represented one mode of work that seemed to be the most radical in its interventions–in its tactical anti-institutionality, in its call for new forms of impersonal solidarity. Theory as we know it as a collective set of investments has fallen on hard times for reasons I'm not going to go into here. But I want to revive the power of critical theory to recirculate that which is roguish about thinking itself.

Prize and Brand are the reified forms of quality control: shortcuts to the troubling question of one's value in a world where credit is given even

when it is not due. To have even entered into this profession and to fulfill its requirements was from the first moment to live beyond my means. The irrationality of the choice made it seem sovereign. I still hope to extract from my work and the exchanges it makes possible an incalculable return. I am afraid, however, that this kind of idealism has been its own trap. Even as the actual prize and its value is never made commensurable, so the rewards of our line of work rely on a metaphysics of satisfaction even as the new economy hammers home over and over again how little we can reckon on the individual redemption of any amount of labor. It has been proven that workers are made poorer by the financialization of everyday life, so all academic work is impoverished by our psychic investments in the economies of prestige.

Even though I feel disciplined by this prize, I want to thank Slought for granting me the occasion to be authentically grateful. I want to thank Slought for recognizing my work and allowing me to go negative on the institutionalization of recognition at the same time. For this I am deeply, dumbly grateful. Slought has gotten me closer to one of my most troubling ideas – "gratitude for ingrates," a book I hope to write one day. Thanks to all the rogues, before and after me who are thinking and ranging still. Finally, thank you to Peter and Leo for loving and sustaining the rogue within."

*Friday, December 29, 2006*
*Philadelphia*

# An Artist of Speech
Carlos Basualdo

During the early 90s, a diverse group of artists working in different cultural contexts turned their attention to actions that, considered from today's perspective, seemed to have had the effect of placing communicative language at the centre of contemporary art production. These artists, from Ben Kinmont to Thomas Hirschhorn, from Laboratorio Nomade to Raqs Media Collective, used and continue to use language as a tool for individual expression and interpersonal communication. The emphasis is rarely on the structural aspects of language; it is less a question of interrogating its materiality–as in early Conceptual Art–and more of its effects. These artists' activities have been described from the point of view of their expected results (as in the discussion concerning "experimental communities"), of their internal dynamics ("relational aesthetics"), or with reference to their possible genealogy in art historical terms (a history of "participatory" art).[1] In fact, these practices stem from an active reinterpretation of the work of certain key figures of the 60s and 70s, such as Joseph Beuys, Gordon Matta-Clark and Hélio Oiticica, which has been filtered through the identity politics debates of the past twenty years, with their insistence on activism and, in general, communicative forms of action.

In many ways, Jeanne van Heeswijk's projects epitomize this tendency. Since 1993 van Heeswijk has developed a surprisingly consistent body of work characterized by her constant challenging of the traditional notion of the artist and her deep trust in the expressive and communicative possibilities of language. She has organised conversations, exhibitions, lectures and publications; managed an improvised hotel room (*Hotel New York P.S.1*, 1998-1999/2000-2001); served as a museum guard (*Acte de Presence–Sans Valeur*, 2000) and educator (*An Sich*, 2000); ignited a collective process by which an entire neighborhood attempted to memorialize itself in the face of its imminent demise (*Het Dwaalicht* [*Will o' the Wisp*], 2004-2005); and even formally analyzed her own activities and

the structure of her collaborative practice work through maps and tri-dimensional graphics (*Works 1993-2004, Typologies and Capacities*, 2004). Looking at the information carefully compiled in this publication, it is easy to conclude that van Heeswijk has been consistent in her refusal to subordinate her activities to any teleological goal besides that of interrogating the role of communicative language in the process of agency formation. In this context, "communicative language" should be understood as language used by one person with the intention to communicate information, intentions and emotions to another person or group. It has a predominantly expressive function, as it allows the individual to exercise his or her agency while also addressing a recipient. It thus contains both the affirmation of a singularity and the promise of a potential community. This language is not a passive vehicle for the exchange of information but an active tool that fashions subjectivity. By talking to other people, the participants in van Heeswijk's projects recognise themselves and the others that they address. Far from making objects that could enter into the system of financial exchange that characterizes the art market, or constructing narratives intended to criticise the institutional setting in which her work takes place, or actions endowed with a presumed compensatory function in relation to certain socio-political conditions, van Heeswijk has insisted on making language a tool for the fashioning of the self–a vehicle for individual and collective empowerment–and has placed language at the core of her conception of art.

In doing this, van Heeswijk has unintentionally intersected a number of discourses that, in the past decade, have mapped the transformation of labour through an analysis originally based on a cluster of small companies in the north of Italy. These studies, conducted by sociologists and theorists working in collaboration, point to the progressive centrality of language in the processes of material and economic production. For theorists like Paolo Virno and Maurizio Lazzarato,[2] material production seems to be progressively organized around language, so that it is the capacity for personal expression and interpersonal exchange that appears to be increasingly at stake in the current stage of capital accumulation. Work,

then, would be increasingly less connected to physical labor and more to language and communication. Artists like van Heeswijk make us believe that this transformation has been somehow echoed in recent artistic production.

To say that an artist works with language as an expressive and communicative tool is equivalent to saying that her work is characterized by its lack of specificity, as no specific skill seems to be needed for the use of language–apart from the condition of being human. Indeed, several of van Heeswijk's actions betray this splendid indeterminacy, which at times overlaps with the precise hesitations of poetic language but can also fall into the banality of daily speech. The further away from a clear and precise goal her projects steer, the closer van Heeswijk seems to be to the underlying impulse that seemingly animates her work. Van Heeswijk's recurrent fascination with personal narratives could be understood as an attraction to those forms of utterance in which meaning is not subordinated to anything but the expression of a subjectivity that does not exist independently from that expression, or from the interlocutors to whom it is addressed. In other words, it is mostly the expressive quality of language that seems to interest van Heeswijk. The desire to liberate those acts of speech from any specific determination is evident in works like Het avondeten, in which van Heeswijk staged a series of conversations at her home in Rotterdam with individual artists whose work she admired. But it is also present in later, more complex projects such as *NEsTWORK*, 1996, a series of interdisciplinary conversations reportedly about the city of Rotterdam organized by van Heeswijk in conjunction with the first European Biennial, Manifesta, which took place in that city. One of van Heeswijk's most poignant projects in this respect was *Acte de Presence–Sans Valeur*, realised in the context of an exhibition organised by the Museum of Modern Art in Ljubljana as an interrogation on notions of value in modern and contemporary art. Van Heeswijk worked as a museum guard for two months so she could talk to the audience about the exhibition's theme in their own language, which she studied during the project. Through her presence in the galleries, and her periodic attempts to engage the spectators in conversation, she expressed

her faith in interpersonal exchange and understanding. At the same time, van Heeswijk's desire to address her audience in a language that she had not completely mastered showed clearly the purely expressive qualities of language. Her sometimes painful efforts drew attention to language as both an unflinching affirmation of singularity and a powerful call for a potential community.

To a large degree, this book testifies to the extent to which van Heeswijk has resisted the tendency to make an instrumental use of communicative language, and thus provide her actions with a clearly recognizable utility and an easily describable goal. The identification of her activities with the notion of "art" rests on the assumption that it is indeed possible to maintain language's independence from instrumental use. Her work would succeed if it managed to make the connection between art and communicative language seem effortless, naturalizing it. But this becomes increasingly difficult when the work involves the participation of a large number of people, and in a way it can be said that some of van Heeswijk's more ambitions undertakings, such as *De Strip* and *Face Your World*, have been both successful and problematic in terms of their possible manifestations as forms of social engineering. *De Strip*, which took place over two years, from 2002 to 2004, in the borough of Westwijk in Vlaardingen, Holland, consisted of the creation of semi-permanent "spaces for cultural production"[3] in collaboration with a large number of cultural institutions. *Face Your World* involved the production of software intended to be used by children to enable them to participate collectively in the design of their urban environment–the second and more complex stage of this project included the participation of SKOR, a Dutch foundation for art and public space, as well as support from the Amsterdam Fund for the Art. These two highly complex and successful endeavours had to navigate the tensions that emerged between van Heeswijk's desire to place non-quantifiable agency formation at the centre of their development and the production of measurable results demanded by the sponsoring institutions.

Liberated from the learning requirements associated with the acquisition of

a skill and its progressive development, van Heeswijk's work has evolved instead in the direction of a growing complexity in terms of the number of actors and actions involved in her projects. This has made their realization more dependent upon the support of institutions, which is itself tied to specific rationales and predetermined objectives. Traditional art frees itself from utility by entering a parallel economy that sustains it. The latter is partly fuelled by the desire to obtain individual prestige through collecting and the growing profitability associated with the art market. When artistic labor is refashioned as the exercise of communicative language, its sustainability becomes permanently in question. The challenge for van Heeswijk is to resist the tendency to reformulate her work in an instrumental manner while advancing it and being able to continue to explore its possible implications. Undoubtedly, this publication is an important step in that direction, as it compiles information that by its very nature is fragile and could easily be forgotten. It also provides a platform from which van Heeswijk's actions can be, in a manner of speaking, contemplated, carefully considered and discussed. This book constitutes a public archive, which although subjectively gathered by the artist–and as such not distant from her intentions and perspective–allows for analysis of and further elaboration on her work. In the context of van Heeswijk's work, this publication serves as a survey or retrospective exhibition, curiously inscribing the appreciation of her projects in the traditional patterns devoted to other, more traditional artistic practices. The fact that it is "art" that allows her to experience and experiment with communicative language testifies to the seemingly inexhaustible richness that modernity has assigned to it.

Notes

1 See Nicholas Bourriaud, *Relational Aesthetics*, Les presse du réel, 1998; Claire Bishop (editor), Participation, MIT Press, 2006; Carlos Basualdo and Reinaldo Laddaga, "Rules of Engagement: Art and Experimental Communities", *Artforum*, March 2004, pp. 166-70.
2 See Paolo Virno, *A Grammar of the Multitude: For an Analysis of Contemporary Forms of Life*, Semiotext(e), 2004. Maurizio Lazzarato, *Lavoro immateriale e soggetivitá*, Ombre corte, Verona, 1997.
3 As written in the project description for De Strip.

# A Blue House
## Jeanne van Heeswijk and Dennis Kaspori

In 1996, the Amsterdam City Council decided to proceed with the development of the residential district IJburg that is seen as an alternative to the city centre and surrounding areas. The district is being created on a cluster of artificial, manmade islands and the project is set for completion in 2012 where it will be providing 18,000 dwellings for 45,000 residents. The residential dwellings are primarily being constructed in a block layout, each composed of a mix of owner-occupied dwellings and social-sector rental housing in the proportion of 80 to 20 that are all situated around a communal courtyard or garden. IJburg must also provide employment opportunities for 12,000 people.

Besides housing, schools and shops, plans include construction of sports facilities, restaurants, a beach, a cemetery and a single tramline. The amount of planning is intense, and the future of IJburg's development is charted out for the next twenty years, calculated around the increasing amounts of people that will come to live there and building services for them when certain population metrics are met. As is also typical of new habitats in general, the entire IJburg project has been devised in the conference room and on the drawing board. In this process, nothing has been left to chance. The percentage of elderly, young families, and children was very precisely planned, leaving no space for any deviant form of inhabitation. And also as the majority of expansion districts of the last decade IJburg was planned according to doctrines of segregation. True urban qualities, histories and encounters however cannot be planned on the drawing board and are mainly based on the possibility of encounter, on the existence of a public domain. That is exactly what is at stake in the new (sub)urban extensions.

We opted for a blue townhouse in the developing IJburg area to be bought out of the market and make it public space again in order to create an

experimental form of historiography that simultaneously documents and produces everyday life in new urban areas. Block 35 in which the Blue House is situated has a four-sided "block" of houses, with a shared inner courtyard. Each side of the block housed a different level of occupant. One side is social housing, one side is homeowners, and one side is apartments–both market rate and social housing. The Blue House, a single three story-house is in the middle of the shared courtyard and was designed as a "city" mansion.

The Blue House attempts to transforms the property back into what it naturally should have been shared and public space. Through the temporary residencies of partnering artists and architects combined with initiatives from the local residents, The Blue House established a place for ongoing projects and research, temporary meetings and intensive dialogues. These temporary residents have been given the assignment of actively entering into dialogue with one another, with their co-inhabitants in IJburg, and with the public. The aim is to establish links between the world within (their world) and outside (IJburg in development and the rest of the world), and thus become co-authors of IJburg's genesis and evolutionary history, which also includes the cultural history of a community.

Conducting research, producing works of art, films and publications, and holding presentations and other activities will create in and around the house a new public infrastructure. By describing and simultaneously intervening in everyday life in this area, the Blue House facilitates the acceleration and intensification of the process of developing a cultural history. The Blue House acts as the uninvited guest that tries to actively engage with a community that comes into being. As such The Blue House serves as the site for the unplanned, the yet to be desired, and a place for diversity to occur. When people move into such an overregulated place and try to make it their own, when they try to establish a habitat, they immediately run into impossibilities. The Blue House is a place that offers the opportunity to express these frictions, to match local desires with external imagination and to intervene in these processes of "accustomization." On an island that has become almost fully privatized, it is one of the few public places that can give voice to the struggles of a community that comes into being.
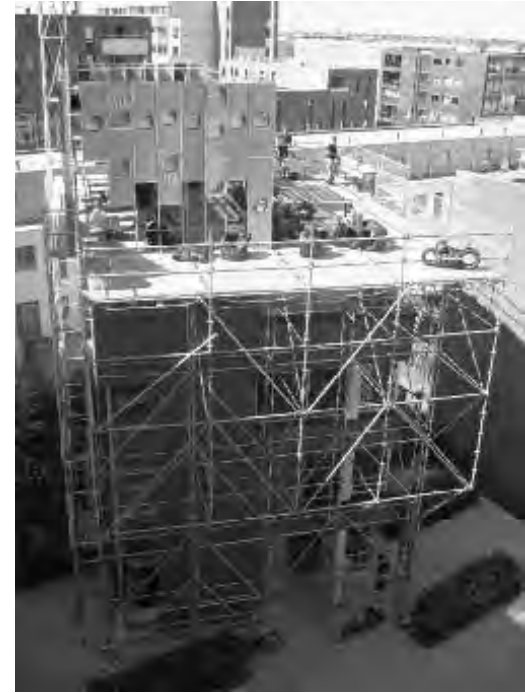


**Het Blauwe Huis**
Jeanne van Heeswijk ism Dennis Kaspori
Amsterdam, IJburg (2005-2009)
Foto: Ramón Mosterd
www.blauwehuis.org

*Opening of Sustainable Skybox met Recycloop (2012 Architecten) on Hervé Paraponaris art construction Pump Up The Blue. During 6 months in and around this temporary artwork, performances, presentations and exhibitions took place. Pump Up The Blue was one of the activities of Het Blauwe Huis, a place for the unplanned on IJburg, Amsterdam.*
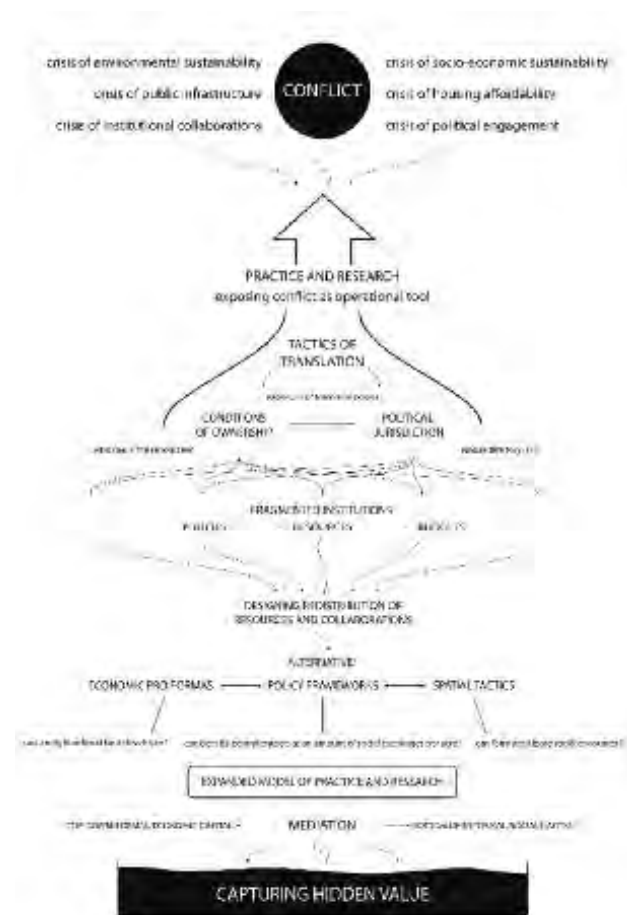
# Where is Architectural Practice?
Teddy Cruz

1.

The transformation of our practice in recent years, in terms of our own interests, motivations, and procedures, has been inspired by a feeling of powerlessness, as our institutions of architectural representation and display have lost their socio-political relevance and advocacy. We have been increasingly disappointed by the futility of our design fields in the context of pressing socio-political realities worldwide, as conditions of conflict re-define the territory and practice of intervention. It has been unsettling to witness some of the most "cutting edge" practices of architecture rush unconditionally to China and The Arab Emirates to build their dream castles, and in the process reduce themselves to mere caricatures of change, by camouflaging gentrification with a massive hyper aesthetic and formalist project. We hope that in the context of this euphoria for the "Dubais" of the world, and the limitless horizon of possibilities for architecture that these centers of economic power provide, that practice can also be inspired by a sense of dissatisfaction, and a feeling of "pessimistic optimism," that can provoke us, head on, to also address the sites of conflict that define and will continue to define the cities in the twenty-first century.

2.

While international development in major urban centers has defined the economic and political recipes through which architectural practice decorates, new and experimental practices of intervention and collaboration will emerge from zones of conflict and from the margins. It is in the periphery where conditions of social emergency are transforming our ways of thinking about urban matters, and matters of concern about the city. The radicalization of the local in order to generate new readings of the global will transform the neighborhood–not the city–into the urban laboratory of our time. In this context, the task of architectural practice should not only be to reveal ignored socio-political and economic territorial histories and injustice within our currently ideologically polarized world, but also to generate new forms of sociability and activism.

3.

The future of architectural practice depends on the re-definition of the formal and the social, and the economic and the political, and also understanding that environmental degradation is a direct result of social and political degradation. No advances in urban planning can be made without redefining what we mean by infrastructure, density, mixed use, and affordability. No advances in housing design, for example, can be made without advances in housing policy and economic subsidies. As architects, we can be responsible for imagining counter spatial procedures, political and economic structures that can produce new modes of sociability and encounter. Without altering the backward exclusionary policies constructing the territory–the socio-political ground, our profession will continue to be subordinated to the visionless environments defined by the bottom-line urbanism of the developer's spreadsheet.

4.

We are interested in a practice of intervention that engages spatial, territorial, and environmental conditions across critical thresholds, including global border zones of local sectors of conflict, that have been generated by discriminatory politics of zoning and economic development in the contemporary city. This suggests operational urban practices that encroach into the privatization of public domain and infrastructure, the rigidity of institutional thinking, and the current obsession with an ownership society. This also opens the idea that architects, besides being designers of form, can be designers of political process, economic pro-forma and collaboration across institutions and jurisdictions.

5.

Architecture practice needs to engage the re-organization of systems of urban development, challenging the political and economic frameworks that are only benefiting homogenous large-scale interventions managed by private mega-block development. Instead, we believe the future is small, and this implies the dismantling of the LARGE by pixilating it with micro: an urbanism of retrofit. No intervention into public domain can begin without

first exposing political jurisdiction and conditions of ownership. Clearly, this points out the pressing need for architectural practice to re-engage the invisible forces and vectors of power that shape the territory. This is the main topic of conversation and exchange that needs to take place across disciplines, but not from the isolation of the classroom or the design studio.

6.

In my studio we move from these broad conceptual meditations into the specificity of the San Diego-Tijuana border, where our practice is located. Here, we oscillate back and forth between two radically different ways of constructing city. At no other international juncture in the world one can find some of the wealthiest real estate as the one found in the edges of San Diego's sprawl, barely twenty minutes away from some of the poorest settlements in Latin America, manifested by the many slums that dot the new periphery of Tijuana. These two different types of suburbia are emblematic of the incremental division of the contemporary city and the territory between enclaves of mega-wealth and the rings of poverty that surround them. We are interested in processes of mediation that can produce critical interfaces between and across these opposites, exposing conflict as an operational device to transform architectural practice. The critical observation of this locality transforms this border region into our laboratory from which to reflect on the current politics of migration, labour and surveillance, the tensions between sprawl and density, formal and informal urbanisms, and wealth and poverty–all of which incrementally characterize the contemporary city everywhere.

# Invisible Architecture
## Lindsay Bremner

**Project 1**



The Walter Sisulu Memorial Square of Dedication (formerly Freedom Square),
built between 2002 and 2004 as a result of an international competition in 2001.

Freedom Square in Kliptown was the site of the 1955 signing of the African National Congress' liberation manifesto, the Freedom Charter, a document which outlined 10 freedoms for which liberation would be fought.

The winning scheme by StudioMAS Architects and Urban Designers (above) saw the translation of the populist democracy envisioned by the Freedom Charter as an opportunity to rework the whole of Soweto into a significant ensemble, locating Freedom Square at the heart of the nation's political imaginary. The part of the scheme that has been built invests resources into a monumental urban square as a stage for annual celebration, transforming political struggle into political spectacle. It blatantly isolates itself from the poverty and lack of resources around it, locating itself instead in a spectacular geography of provincial tourist destinations and national politics rather than the near space of local conditions.

**Project 2**



The Rebuilding of the Sans Souci Cinema, a project I have been working on with a young Johannesburg-based practice, 26'10 south Architects.

Kliptown, the context of Freedom Square, is and has always been a neglected, leftover space, outside the jurisdiction of any one authority; it is a locale of teeming, undisciplined practices and trajectories, a collection of "surplus" people living in a leftover space.

In this space, one of the few cinemas operating in Soweto throughout the apartheid years burnt down and was scavenged for scrap metal in 1995. In about 2000, I began working with a local community group on a project to rebuild the cinema, their first developmental priority.

In the context of fragile economic networks and making do, the questions we began the project with were how the "idea" of the cinema (leisure, pleasure, escape, romance) associated with the ruin could be given new meaning over time, and secondly what were the minimum infrastructural interventions we needed to make to support this.

We have embarked on a series of events in the ruin–a dance event by Swiss artists Anna Geering and Jo Dunkel, a dance performance by Congolese artist Androa Mindre Colo, and more recently, a series of film screenings, which are now favorites of local children and have a small following of artists and architects from further afield. These are rebuilding the cinema in the imagination, identifying the ruin with possible futures.

Infrastructurally, we asked how the ways in which Kliptown residents imaginatively improvise and transform space could become a strategy for design–use of easily available materials, reverse transfer of technologies, agility, and open-endedness. We did not think about a finished piece of infrastructure, but rather an ongoing, incremental program-driven development that builds networks and social relations at the same time as it builds buildings.

# Epistemological Attack

Eyal Weizman in conversation with
Srdjan Jovanovic Weiss

Inhabiting the cut
A lightweight modular
facade uniforms the
surfaces cut with the
de-parcelization,
making the resulting
volumes usable.

Supporting structure

Windows' frames

Facade panels in
microperforated plate

c 21

c 18

c 35

c 17

c 34

c 20

c 16

c 5

c 14

c 15

c 6

c 33

c 23

c 26

c 4

c 12

c 11

c 13

c 7

c 3

c 32

c 29

c 25

c 10

c 9

c 2

c 31

c 28

c 24
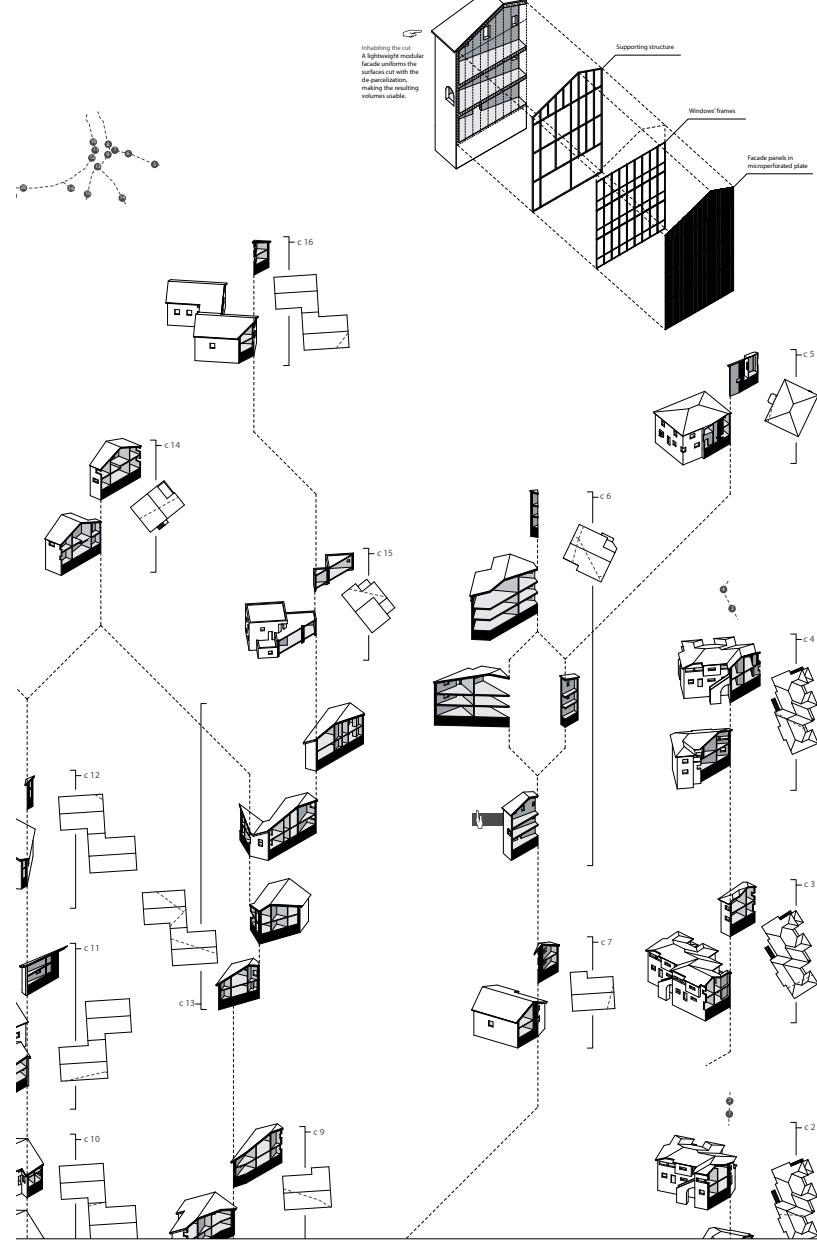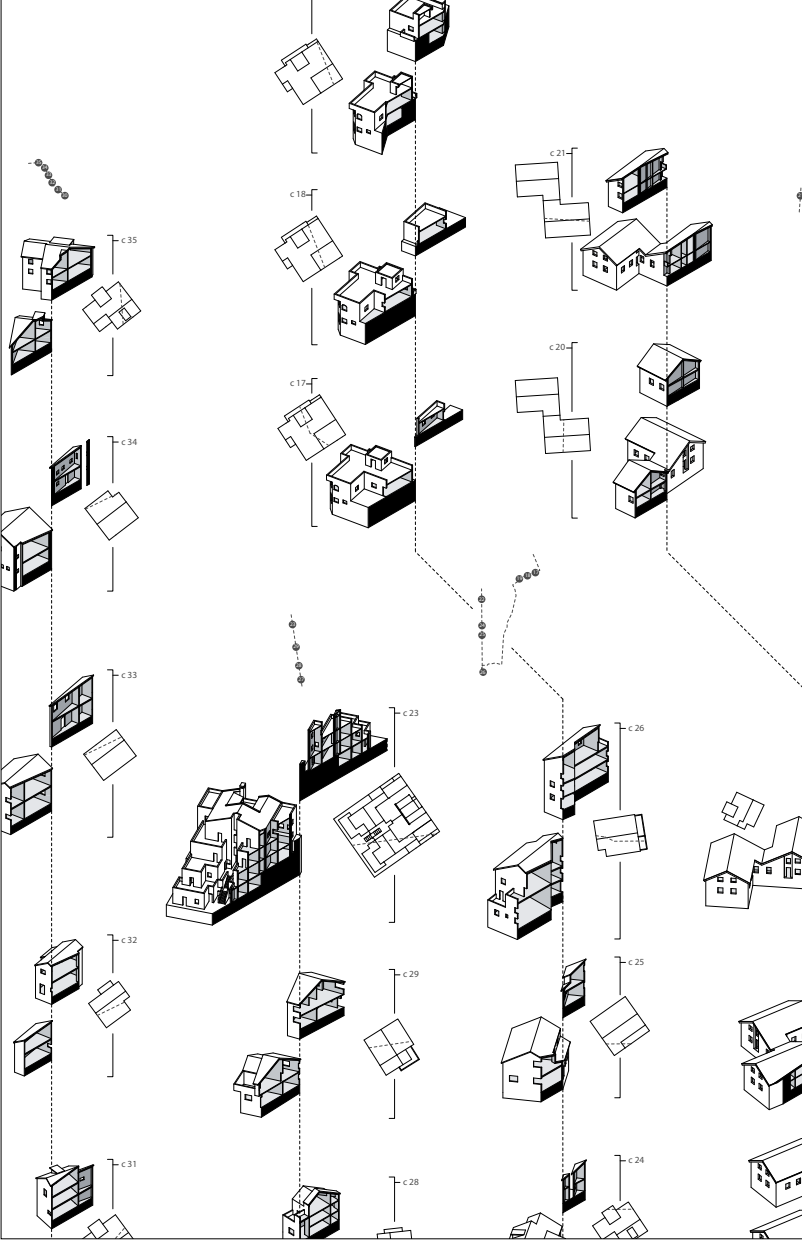
**Srdjan Jovanovic Weiss:** Eyal, I am interested in the evasive aspects of contemporary spatial practice–primarily the potential to advance knowledge and engage in practices of spatial power. You are teaching a seminar on strategy and tactics at the Center for Research Architecture at Goldsmiths, which you also direct. Do you think that we are at the point of possibly elevating certain evasive practices in arranging space to a genre or architectural strategy?

**Eyal Weizman:** Yes, we study and analyze a host of military and revolutionary techniques, from medieval through nomadic warfare to the [electronic] intifada, and the way such strategies are in fact spatial practices and forms of geo-power that use, enact, read, and subvert the order of space. We assume of course that conflict requires both a close understanding of the spatial dimension of force and of other systems of control. Under the category of strategy we also deal with a certain set of interrelated questions that increasingly become important to me: these are concerned with activist strategies that mobilize aesthetic and spatial practices.

What I am interested in, beyond the knowledge production aspect of "research," is the intersection of certain aesthetic/spatial and political techniques. As we move from situations of relative obscurity [such as forms of oppression and domination that we "exposed"] to near complete exposure and the over-saturation of images, we should never take for granted that knowledge–our visuals, moving or textual research, witnessing, exposure, etc…–would be transferred [via outrage] into action.

The problem for us critically engaged in war and conflict is that there is an assumption that if we exposed the level of atrocity and violence, bring it into heightened visibility, there would be an equally forceful, responsible, political public reaction that transfered outrage into a political action directed at stopping atrocities. But what if outrage itself becomes part of the logic of the application of power here?

"Political affect" requires the mobilizing of passion for action…and this is beyond the actions of exposure, indignation and denunciation. In this sense, I like the work of Thomas Keenan that demands more attention to such actions as "framing," "script," and "narrative" as possible tools of political action.

So your question is of course an interrelated question of both spatial activism and spatial representation and in response I have tried to shift some modes of work. On the one hand, I have been experimenting with different *genres* of writing beyond the spatial-documentary form of previous work. My book–on the political dilemma of the "lesser evil"–is of a genre closer to that of fiction or drama than to documentary research. So it's no longer "research" in the sense of a gathering/organizing of information, but rather a certain aesthetic practice, or aesthetic tactic.

On the other hand I am starting to engage with more traditional architectural strategies. In the summer of 2007, I co-founded an architectural practice in Beit Sahour which is a town next to Bethlehem/Palestine. My partner in the practice is Palestinian architect Sandi Hilal and her [life] partner Alessandro Petti–both of who are also architects and writers. Our aim is to extend the analytical reach of spatial investigations and engage with the spatial realities of the conflict in a propositional manner. We have launched a project concerned with the reuse, re-inhabitation of recycling of the architecture of Israel's occupation at the moment this architecture is unplugged from the military/political power that charged it. The project includes multiple ways of architectural intervention and activism. We have established an office where we produce drawings and models. But we have also set up collaborations with NGOs and institutions in Palestine, and set up some academic programs with local students in universities. So this project seeks to use architecture as a form of tactical intervention in a political process. But also we have learned that an architectural proposal generates a certain type of debate and allows us to gather a different kind of data that was simply not available before. We may like to return to this issue later.
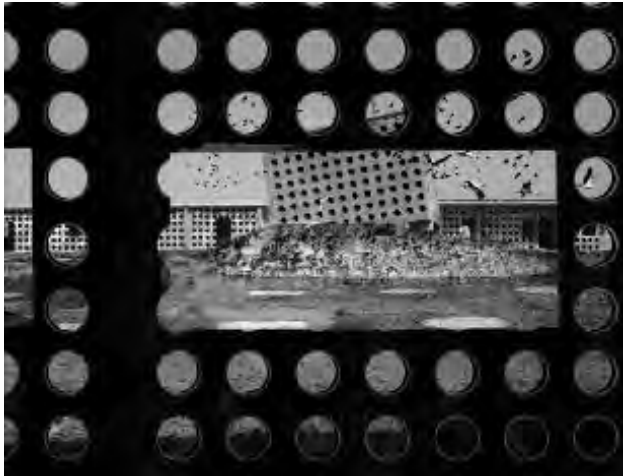
**Decolonizing Architecture**
Eyal Weizman

**Weiss:** Your book *Hollow Land*, about contemporary territorial politics in Israel and Palestine, results from a long effort at establishing research as a practice. In fact, you are in large part responsible for re-introducing the very practice of research as a work of architecture and geo-politics. Can you tell me what this practice consists of, and how you see it now?

**Weizman:** Yes, the book is a result of a long period of research undertaken through a number of ad hoc collaborations. It was an attempt to entangle my work simultaneously in various organizational frameworks. Amongst my various forms of involvement within this conflict, a set of particular projects afforded different points of view and provided many of the human connections and source material for this book. These included: a work I carried out with the human rights organization, B'Tselem, a period of involvement with the Palestinian Ministry of Planning in Ramallah, a series of publications and exhibitions I co-curated under the title "territories," and extensive filmed and recorded interviews undertaken with the military theorists of the IDF. I mention these in order to acknowledge the diverse means through which the perspectives and analysis within this book have been put together.

I sometimes acted as an architect in a more traditional sense of making plans, for the Palestinian Ministry of Planning, for example. Working this way allowed me to access certain information that would not have been otherwise available. Being an architect can become as a very useful camouflage. There are two practices–architecture in the traditional sense covering for an architectural/political research. The covered practice is more elusive. So I guess that this form of practice tries to extend rather than only question the role of the architect. I realise that the title "architect" still carries a currency that although often unjustifiable, can still help infiltrate institutions of various sorts and engage in various different ways. One can engage in political action as an "architect," or in various form of activism; do cartography, spatial analysis or human rights work; curate or write; supposedly from within the domain of architecture, which is why I think it could still be tactically considered a form of camouflage, though maybe not for long.

But in the sense of your question, I think that in this book-project I tried to use practice to induce new information/knowledge to reveal itself, or in fact to create it, which means practice in the field is what provokes the subject of research and analysis to emerge. In fact, I don't believe you'll get very far if you try to research–let's say urban politics in a particular city or a zone of conflict–by measuring and analyzing reality rather than being a player in it. The former is a passive research that relies on existing information text and image that could be harvested from the surface of the city and the situation. I believe that by making [sometimes provocative] interventions a system may reveal itself in one of its various manifestations.

**Weiss:** You actively promote the boundary between what has today became known as two separate practices–research and design–and the mediums that embody the two in one medium. Your graduation project at the Architectural Association (AA) in London has been published as a book–*Yellow Rhythms*–by 010 in Rotterdam, a year after your graduation–and is a demonstration about this principle. What was the book about?

**Weizman:** This book was indeed the beginning of my investigation of politics, flow and formative urban forces. It was produced as a "diploma work" with Dip 10 at the AA.  Dip 10 was for a long time the only place at the AA that was engaging certain socio-political aspects of urbanism and had a strong situationist tradition of drifting détournement and direct action to complement its design strategies. Students engaged more in organizing events and drawing up scenarios than formal design methods.

The project speculated on how a physical intervention–a giant cross Thames roundabout replacing London's biggest and most congested traffic intersection, Vauxhall Cross, would operate as a physical laboratory for various urban dynamics–political and financial–in turn-of-millennium London.



**Thames Roundabout**
Eyal Weizman

It proposed a narrative, "an urban fantasy." I think the fact that the project was narrative-based (as a series of architectural drawings, texts, and images) was the reason that it got published. It was also an experimentation with a method that runs through my later work–a rather rigid narrative device composed like the rhythm of the traffic light. There were "green chapters" dealing with movement and flow, "red chapters" dealing with "practices" of waiting and wasted time, and "yellow chapters" about moments of transition. These alternated in rapid succession. Each of these episodes was either about urban life, political measures or financial strategies, and were set against the architectural/urban proposal for a system of flows. The proposed roundabout made clear that if the rhythm of the traffic lights stands for a system of successive incidents, the transformation of the site into a roundabout suggests continuous flow capable of liberating and utilizing these urban forces. The book ends therefore by suggesting a strategic proposal in which the inner area of the roundabout becomes a certain laboratory for urban futures. This designation of a zone as an extraterritorial laboratory has obviously returned in my later work on the "archipelagos" of politics of spaces in the West Bank and the claim that the West Bank now functions as a certain laboratory for a new emergent global order.

**Weiss:** In *Hollow Land*, on the other hand, you analyze the territorial conundrum endlessly unfolding in Israeli politics. This analysis is strictly spatial and architectural, and the absence of design proposals is vivid. Can you explain what aspects of the knowledge brought about by the book are preventing, or sparing, the readers from design proposals? Did you think of "sneaking" in a design proposal through the book?

**Weizman:** I think that if one takes research as applied research, as generating a tools for design, one would end up frustrated. Either the research suffers a reduction or the design will. Urban or territorial research has its own logic, and is too rich for what design might use; building is too complicated a practice to be reduced to a product of knowledge constructs. Research and design are in a relation of excess to each other. There is too

much of each when they intersect, and they can intersect in rather reductive manner. But design and research intersect at the moment of commitment, sensibilities, and intentions.

I felt it better to leave the book as a form of documentary practice that poses its own political and territorial demands. At some situations I think that the best thing that an architect could do is to write a book. But as I mentioned before, there is at least one chapter that lays the ground for the design practice I now undertake–namely the reuse of settlements/colonies as the infrastructure for Palestinian public spaces. How can we use the architecture of Israel's occupation at the moment it may be abandoned by the occupiers? This project made me start looking at the occupation as a coming archaeology. I think that some more evacuations are unavoidable, whatever government sits in Israel. This is perhaps because of the transformation of control from geo-power to other forms of domination, electronic and aerial–such as those that have replaced the ground occupation of Gaza with other mechanisms.

**Weiss:** You mentioned that you are working on the architectural proposal for a settlement in Palestine. Can you tell me what this is about and where are you at? Does it have the traditional, or activist, unsolicited approach?

**Weizman:** The project is looking at the "future archaeology" of Israel's occupation, it is a set of proposals on how to recycle the spaces to be abandoned by Israeli occupation. Whatever trajectory the conflict over Palestine may take, the possibility of further partial–or complete–evacuation of Israeli colonies and military bases must be considered. So in our office we think that zones of Palestine that have or will be liberated from direct Israeli presence might provide us with a crucial laboratory to study the multiple ways in which we could imagine the reuse, re-inhabitation, or recycling of the architecture of Israel's colonization [both within and outside of the 1967 borders] at the moment this architecture is unplugged from the military/political power that charged it. It is dealing with a reality whose conditions of emergence have not yet articulated themselves. We seek to
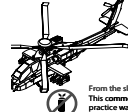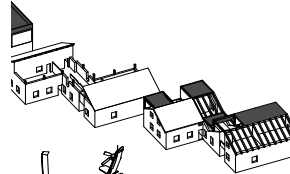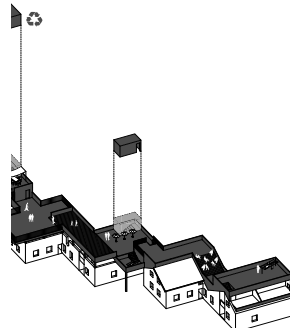
# Un-Homing
## Eyal Weizman
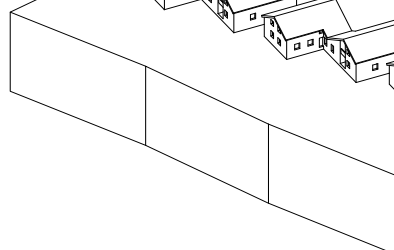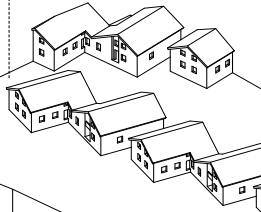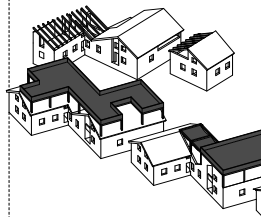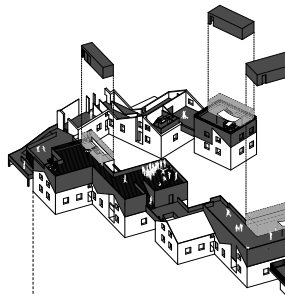
To avoid **the damages** that the wind can cause to the structures, the planks of the flat roof are conveniently spaced out.
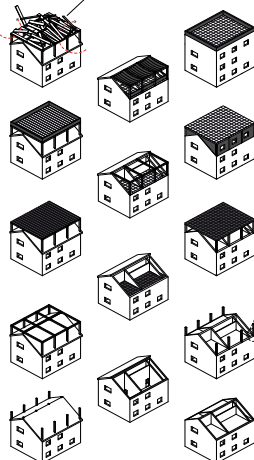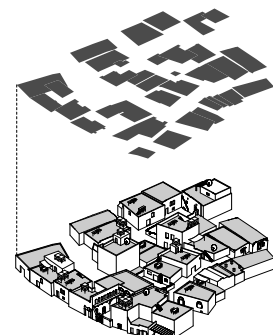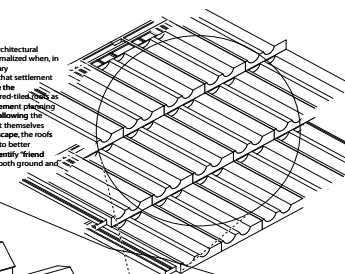


Some of the architectural **solutions** proposed **contemplate** the removal of the covering layer and **the opening of new open-air spaces.** Others – through **the vertical extension of the structural frame** – foresee the **addition of a new floor** that acts

both as terrace and new roof. Besides, this second intervention can comprise the realisation of a **wall plug** in the lateral sides, in order to create new rooms in the interior of the building.

0  2      10      20 m

**Arab roofs**
For more than 8 months a year, when the weather permits, roofs **are used** by the majority of Palestinians as an essential part of the home. They have a **multifunctional use,** transforming its use **flexibly; from a dining room** to **a study room,** from a playground for

children to a bedroom during **the night.** In old Palestinian cities, roofs are usually connected to one another **allowing for circulation on a second spatial layer of the city.**

**From the sky**
This **common** architectural practice was formalized when, in 1980s, **the military recommended** that settlement **councils impose** the construction of red-tiled roofs as part of **the settlement planning** by law. **Besides allowing the** settlers **to orient** themselves within **the landscape,** the roofs **aid the military to better navigate and identify** "friend from foe", from both ground and air.

| 3000 | 2000 | 1000 | 500 | 250 | > 250 |

**Declivity**
The **typological differentiation in pitch inclination** essentially derives from the load of **snow precipitation.**
In the West Bank there's a dry **temperated weather – with a hot summer** – that doesn't justify the use of **pitched** roofs. **Another** parameter that has to be taken in **consideration** to determine the inclination of a pitched roof is the material used for the covering layer. **The Siena-tiling** roof is the most common system in Israeli **settlements.**

25%

35%

50%

use this project to articulate the spatial dimension of a process of decolonization. The problem is that the condition–the starting minimum conditions–that would make this project possible are really far from ideal. Any expected re-territorialization of power relations would in the near future come only through a certain very compromised political process by which the Palestinians are forced into partial agreement. So this project engages a less than ideal world. Its starting point is not a resolution of the conflict. Rather it is mobilizing architecture as a tactical tool within the unfolding struggle for Palestine. It seeks to employ tactical physical interventions to open a possible horizon for further transformations. It is important that our architectural proposals are seen in this light as stages in a process of gradual decolonization, rather than as stabilizing interventions.

**Weiss:** How do you present the proposal for the reuse of Palestinian settlement?

**Weizman:** This relates to the history of processes of decolonization in the second part of the previous century across the world, and the way these events re-spatialized politics. The handing over of colonial buildings and infrastructure has historically been a cultural, political, but also practical problem. As far as we have analyzed it, it was always torn between two contradictory desires: destruction and re-use, or anarchy and government. The popular impulse for destruction seeks to spatially articulate "liberation" from an architecture understood as a political straitjacket, an instrument of domination and control. If architecture is a weapon in a military arsenal that implements the power relations of colonialist ideologies, then architecture must burn. But the impulse of destruction is also romantic, it imagines time could run backwards, and development could be reversed into virgin nature, a tabula rasa, on which a set of new beginnings could be articulated.  Most often of course destruction generates desolation and environmental damage that may last for decades. The other impulse, of course, is to impose political continuity and order under a new system of government. It is thus not surprising that post-colonial governments tended to reuse the infrastructure set up by colonial regimes for their own

emergent practical needs of administration.

In the context of present day Palestine, reusing the evacuated structures of Israel's domination in the same way as the occupiers did–the settlements as Palestinian suburbs and the military bases for Palestine security needs–would mean reproducing their inherent alienation and violence. The settlement's system of fences and surveillance technologies would thus enable their seamless transformation into gated communities for the Palestinian elite.

So, the starting point of our investigation is a certain strategy of subversion–which speculates on the use of colonial architecture for purposes other than those they were designed to perform. For this reason, the project seeks to spatialize a set of possible collective functions into the abandoned military structures and the repetitive evacuated houses. It speculates upon what new institutions and activities can model the evacuated space and what physical transformations these spaces require...to a certain extent we try to suggest ways of departure from processes of decolonization and models of third versus first, and old versus new, worlds.

Because the reuse of the colonial architecture is a general cultural/political issue, we do not seek to present a single, unified architectural solution, but rather "fragments of possibility." Also because the number of typologies in settlements and military bases are limited–variations on the single-family dwelling in settlements and concrete prefabricated barracks in military bases. These "fragments of possibility" constitute a semi-generic approach that could be modified to be applied in other areas evacuated.

In this sense, the project also assumes that a viable approach to the issue of their appropriation is to be found not only in the professional language of architecture and planning, but rather in inaugurating an "arena of speculation" that incorporates varied cultural and political perspectives through the participation of a multiplicity of individuals and organizations.

This time we have shunned collaborating with the Palestinian government, and in this sense it is evasive.

But we realize that bringing a model to these meetings opens up new ways of speaking about possible futures. Discussions in Palestine could be ideological in a rather abstract way of talking merely about rights and ideals. We talk about these, but the architectural models we place on the table at the beginning of a meeting give it form and allow a new line of investigation and communication.

**Weiss:** Do you mean literal, architectural models? How do they function within the discussion?

**Weizman:** Whenever we presented and discussed our models with resident groups, NGOs and other stake holders, the initial reaction of our discussants was a smile or a certain laugher. We feared we were ridiculed. Are our plans so far fetched and ridiculous within this environment of permanent impossibility? It is also true that models are reduced worlds "under control" and that they often make people smile. It is a strange to imagine the transformation of Israeli settlements, especially when they are still inhabited, but we would like to interpret the smile as a reaction to an aesthetic affect, an opening of the imagination to a different future.

Also the reaction in Israel has been very strong–predictably. People are still living in these settlements of course, and realizing that somebody else is already planning their afterlives has an effect. I would have very much liked to imagine what would have been the British reaction to such proposals for the reuse of colonial structures, if presented during the decolonization struggle.

**Weiss:** On the other hand, recently, you have first participated and then resigned from the project in Ordos, Inner Mongolia. Was there no maneuver space for a creative evasion?





**Eyal Weizman**
Ordos competition entry, 200?

**Weizman:** The context of this commission has been publicized, so to repeat the basics only: a new model settlement is being planned in the northern Chinese province next to Mongolia. The Chinese artist Ai Weiwei, and his design firm FAKE design, were commissioned to produce a master plan for 100 private villas. Jacques Herzog picked one hundred architects from a network of younger architects that he knew personally or knew about their work.

**Weiss:** You worked with your former partner Rafi Segal, submitted a conceptual proposal, and then decided that to leave the project. What was the concept of your proposal, and can you give an explanation for your resignation?

**Weizman:** This project seemed to me, and I think to others of our friends that took part, simultaneously like a trap and an opportunity. I entered it out of immense curiosity, and left when the engagement I sought to practice collapsed. The development of the project we were asked to participate in was, so it seemed to me, the extreme but logical culmination of several of the intersecting dynamics that drove the urbanism of yesterdays' real-estate bubble: rapid development nourished by abundant cheap labor, themed enclaves (here the theme was apparently "design from around the world"), and the use of extravagant architectural form for location-branding and for soliciting investment and tourism.

Not all architectural commissions demand the same intensity of critical engagement. But I felt some urgency because I thought that there was an opportunity to change things. The challenge, as I understood it, was to find ways to use the potentially innovative aspect of the project–the furious energy of an architectural collective haphazardly put together. I wanted to question, and perhaps transform, the retrograde urban frame into which it was squeezed. And this in the one of the places in the world where this type of engagement should matter most.

If architects bothered by these kinds of developments are serious about engaging such projects in a transformative manner, we need to be willing to act simultaneously (and topologically, perhaps) within and outside our building plots, by folding one site/approach into another. This means, on the simplest level, delivering an architectural response that challenges the brief (and in Ordos I thought I saw inspiring examples of this from some colleagues and friends), while also insisting on framing the surrounding urban conditions–in our case, for example, on the neighborhood being open and accessible. The problem is in restricting the architect's play to one of the fields only. In Ordos I felt that it was frankly unnecessary. After all, we were still walking on sands, and the neighborhood didn't yet exist! The best of critical responses articulated here solely through architectural design could too easily be subsumed under the name of vague notions of "encounter" and "diversity."

Until I withdrew from the project, I attempted to engage it in this interwoven manner. It didn't succeed, and maybe because of the clumsiness of my attempt. But if anything could be possibly learned from this failure, it is a realization that attempts at critical engagement are forever without guarantees.

The building Rafi Segal and I proposed for the first stage sought to deal with the challenges of access and excess. In the context of the neighborhood's condition of over-exposure and hyper-visibility, it offered a space of radical interiority. The building internalized its open spaces and set up an introverted retreat that folded all views inward, thus offering no complicated formal image–in fact, only "fortified" blind walls–to the outside. We also offered the clients an almost impossible challenge: responding to the building's location on the perimeter of the neighborhood, we cut a diagonal pathway through its built mass, understanding it as a potential for a public path. Simultaneously, we raised issues of access and segregation with the clients, organizers, and other participants. Beyond all the other socio-political problems of segregation, I thought it was nonsense to build a neighborhood that showcases contemporary design, and then cut it off.

The two approaches were interconnected and intertwined, attempting to articulate similar concerns in different manners and in different "languages." The danger with this form of engagement is that when one trajectory reaches an impasse the other also tends to collapse. I withdrew from a project when I realized that the urban issues raised (by colleagues and myself) were dealt with only through a certain "relaxation" of building regulations on the plots, and with assurances that we were afforded "complete freedom" to design our individual villas. This does not fit my understanding of engagement, and perhaps it was a personal reaction based upon the extremes of my past experience. I stand behind my decision, but I still respect the ways other architects chose to deal and engage this situation differently.

**Weiss:** Once you mentioned in your work that you feel somewhat flattered when compared to army generals. Could this be a genre?

**Weizman:** I don't remember saying that, but it's possible. This goes back to one of the starting points of this conversation–that of action research, or the "in-citatory research" we were talking about.  I think this notion is what may connect the various projects–and again, some of them might appear to you much more immediately political and perhaps more "combative" or "militant" than others. There's a commitment to understanding forms of theory and research as political acts and ways of space-making in their own right. For me, zones of conflict are interesting because they enable formative forces to reveal themselves in a more diagrammatic, albeit complex, form. In this sense, conflict is important–not in the fetishiation of violence, or the righteousness of certainty of victims and perpetrators–but as something that gives form, enables organizations, and mobilizes knowledge. All urban acts are conflictual to a certain extent.

In other words, by setting dormant situations in motion, you provoke the system to reveal its inner organizations and by doing so you produce knowledge. This completely inverts the concept of research and practice. If you once thought research was a prerequisite of practice and that you needed to know in order to act–well, it's the reverse here: you act in order to know. That's the essence of such research. The philosopher Brian Massumi called this kind of action "in-citatory." It captures the nature of how we see–artistic, architectural and cultural–practice as the production of knowledge.

# Repositioning in Place
## Deborah Gans

In January 2005, Pratt Institute and the New Jersey Institute of Technology received a Housing and Urban Development Community Outreach Partnership Grant (HUD COPC) to work with a local partner, the Association of Community Organizations for Reform Now (ACORN) Housing in New Orleans. Together we conceptualized a model for rebuilding along Lake Pontchartrain that would also address the larger problem of low-lying suburban coastal areas bound to be affected by global warming. What follows is the description of our design process, as it engaged multiple socio-economic and political landscapes.

The political dimension of the design of New Orleans as a whole is nowhere more evident or intense than in New Orleans East, in the intrinsic conflict between the sustenance of the community and the sustainable landscape. Because of its low-lying elevation, the extensive damage of Katrina, and subsequent evacuation, this area of New Orleans is seen as a potential future wetlands, one that requires that its 6000 houses be razed. The assumption is that the population will remain diasporic and that, if it does return, it will move to other neighborhoods in the city. However, the impression given by the media that the area is abandoned is incorrect. The tactical holding of every block with houses in some degree of renovation has occurred. To simply level this area, which is no lower in elevation than the other suburban developments including "whiter" Jefferson Parish, therefore takes on political connotations of ethnic cleansing.

We believe that this territorial conflict emerges in part from the facts of the aftermath of the storm, but also from habitual design thinking that relies on totalizing gestures and infrastructure for controlling the environment on the one hand, and on individual self-determination for structuring the political process on the other. In New Orleans East over the past two years, the catastrophic situation has rendered this dialectical approach to planning ineffective, with the shrill cry for wholesale erasure of a neighborhood presented as ecology confronting the wholesale immobility of individuals presented as community. In this milieu we have sought new approaches, beginning with the engagement of the individual resident, but leveled at the surgical scale of the block and an assembly of blocks–which we call the Model Block. While the model could benefit a range of income groups, it is focused on the lower income populations who often inhabit low-lying areas, which are less desirable because of their vulnerable or marginal conditions. Our approach accepts the existing suburban settlement pattern composed of individual properties as the morphological unit whose incremental adaptation to new environmental and social factors when multiplied can come to have the impact of a master plan in the performance of the neighborhood. Our methodologies and programs therefore engage different scales of time as well as territory. They consider planning as a phased event that accumulates and takes on different problems over longer periods.

**Step 1: The Quick Hit: The Brochure**
The situation on the ground in the winter of 2005 was of spontaneous individual action within a landscape of civic inactivity. It disallowed the use of even traditional community-based planning processes. The community was largely displaced. Individual returnees had taken tactical hold of their properties, but were rebuilding with old and flood-prone practices. The scattered site development secured the block but reduced the possibility for alternative settlement patterns and land use, as well as general reinvention. We needed to act fast–faster than architects and planners usually work–and so we came up with a first propositional tactic, the brochure. The brochure is the alternative to the very thick book: immediate, distributable, short term. We began with brochures addressed to those in the midst of rebuilding: local services, directions for cleaning and demolition, and lists of environmentally sound and flood-resistant building materials and methods. The "Retrofitting the Rancher" posters went beyond home improvement to visualize the environmental transformation of a neighborhood through devices that could be implemented within individual property, such as attic areas of refuge, off-the-grid solar roofs, cisterns, green walls, porches for shade and ventilation. The students illustrated these devices on actual homes in the neighborhood so that the residents could imagine such transformations concretely and aspire to them. At a city wide rebuilding fair

that spring, residents did indeed stroll by the exhibited boards, recognize their neighbor's homes and addresses and begin a community outreach effort right then and there.

The strategy of our brochures was to engage the individual homeowner as the key to the amelioration of large territories over time. Project Backyard proposed new landscape practices, such as contouring of swales and specific plantings, which, while executed within the individual lot, could have a large-scale environmental impact over time. According to the United States Department of Agriculture National Resource Conservation Service, the massing of multiple small plots of modified wetland can be an effective device of water management–perhaps as a major marsh. "Many" is the alternative to "Extra Large." While we did not propose this strategy as the single answer to the problems of suburban resettlement, it represented our initial methodology and larger intent, which was to undo the over-determined relation between cause and effect, between an environmental problem and a social price to be paid.

### Step 2: Repeat/Return: Search and Survey
We returned repeatedly to the neighborhoods known as Pines Village/Plum Orchard, or colloquially as "The Goose", which is  a stronghold of ACORN's membership.  Our informal presence provided the best possibility for community outreach as we amassed detailed documentation of the condition of 6000 houses, trolled the streets, and put up brochures. To find the diasporic, we used the national structures of ACORN HOUSING, which had offices in Houston and a long phone list. A group of planning students looked for local residents at the Camp Renaissance refugee center outside of Baton Rouge and recorded interviews of their experiences and their aspirations for life after the storm. These documentation processes were intended as immediate and short-term resources to accelerate community organization and rebuilding; but they also produced an oral history of the storm over a period of a year.

### Step 3: The Periodic Network
Our efforts eventually produced a small (12-40 count), stable core of neighbors willing to meet and take part in the more traditionally formatted, community-based organization process including visioning sessions, for which we produced several planning handbooks modeled on the documents that New York New Visions used after 9/11. The establishment of community organization within New Orleans East was critical in that the official planning processes–The Urban Land Institute Plan (ULI), succeeded by the Lambert Plan, succeeded by Bring New Orleans Back (BNOB), succeeded by United New Orleans Plan (UNOP)–all called for the determination of the city footprint by the strength of community self-assertion, such that silence equaled elimination.  For example, the BNOB process required that 50% declare they would return in order for the community to stake its claim to its future.  To germinate community organizations in a bedroom suburb was to allow for its immediate short-term survival and also to supply a previously nonexistent structure for implementing environmental strategies and fielding larger environmental aspirations over time.

Some flooded neighborhoods of New Orleans East had already self-organized successfully.  The Vietnamese population of Village de l'Est, which has strong connections to a watery landscape reminiscent of their homeland where they fish the lake for a living and plant gardens by the bayou with rice and vegetables, had been undeterred by the flooding of their homes and returned en masse with plans for a new town center replete with traditional Vietnamese water gardens, housing for the elderly, and a community/evacuation center.  They had undone the paralyzing conflict of ecology and community by discovering the root question of what it means to be safe.  Their answer included scenarios more complex and less draconian than shrinking the city to high ground, scenarios in which safe havens included new (or perhaps old) ways of living with water, climate and landscape, of living in one's house, and of evacuating it.  This was our intent and approach as well.

Unlike Village de l'Est, however, Plum Orchard/Pines Village is a third generation suburban settlement without the single galvanizing church or linguistic bonds of the Vietnamese. It is in some regards merely typical–but its very typicality also signals its importance as a place. This kind of suburbanization within wetlands is pervasive, the result of post-war officially sanctioned, privately financed development in many regions of the United States at a time when the popular mindset was that technology could triumph over natural conditions and that government was the conceptual center of this technocratic power.

The kind of social organization that we discovered in New Orleans East was very particular, as it was composed of family networks with a complex reach over large terrains, multiple generations and long periods of time. Portrayed in the news as an arriviste landscape, too new, and too remote to belong to the "real" New Orleans, "the East," just over the Industrial Canal, had deep claims to its New Orleanian paternity. It was old enough to produce the same kind of genealogy found on high ground. A resident described his house as "My mother's; where she was born, though her parents were from the Lower Ninth where we still own a house that was her great grandmother's." His genealogy moved the neighborhood seamlessly from the older city across the rift of the Industrial Canal and the Chef Menteur border to the south and back again. This family network had sustained the social and economic landscape of New Orleans East in the absence of the state not just since the catastrophe, but also historically, as cousins provided apartments, jobs and in loco parentis services as well as the role of good neighbor. The potential for cooperation among these "more than neighbors", in terms of shared property, pooled amenities and the management of its collective landscape, was unusual. The Alexander Family became our first community group, interested in swales and wetlands, new plantings, better sidewalks, rental units and parks. Here was a planning tool we had not imagined that can be leveraged for the future of the larger city of New Orleans if not exported to other suburban environments.

**Step 4: The Three or More Rule**
To move back on to an empty block in New Orleans East is to make oneself vulnerable to crime in the short term and water in the long term. The destruction of the landscape has given new laws of order to the concept of the block. In its most succinct form, the Model Block argues that no individual should reclaim a territory alone, that a neighborhood is the smallest viable unit socially, economically, and physically, and that the smallest division of such a neighborhood is a housing cluster. The housing cluster is at least the sustainable renovation of three or more preexisting contiguous houses, and at best the rebuilding of such a swathe at maximum density with a range of aspirational features such as off-the-grid power and drainage. It affords the opportunity to improve conditions that are a matter of private property but that function civically in aggregation –such as sidewalks and swales, driveways and even accessibility ramps for an aging population. Responding to the community's expressed dissatisfaction with the debased condition of the street and its drainage, our designs suggest clusters that incorporate existing homes within improved sites as well as new units and potential groupings.

**Step 5: Multiplicity: Prefabrication of the New Unit**
New Orleans is a testing ground for a future kind of prefabrication, in part because the present dearth of local labor and concomitant inflated construction costs demand an alternative construction method, in part because the economy demands a price point that prefabrication has historically promised, and in part because the great need suggests a scale of delivery that is truly a matter of mass production. More profoundly, New Orleans is a testing ground in that it asserts complex site demands on a form of housing that by definition can go anywhere because it is the same everywhere. In fact, the most common prefabricated house form in America–the lightly framed ranch house set slab-on-grade–was to blame for most of the water damage in the first place. This forensic analysis points to the need for the assimilation of the pre-fab to terrain, by raising the box to Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) flood heights, but also by renegotiating its relationship to the ground and the environment

in general. Stepped houses, ramped houses, and raised houses that bow to the street through porches, are all emergent arrangements poised to replace the rancher in their relation to ground.  Courtyard, high sheds with clerestories, and loft arrangements take their cues from water, wind, and sun. These house plans that we produced for the neighborhood address the cultural tension between the rancher's post-war suburban life style and the unassailable local logic of the shot gun house. For example, in the sheared and attenuated "mother-in-law house," an attached efficiency unit low to the ground that can also serve as a store combines with a magisterial three bedroom "adjusted" enfilade above. The typical long and narrow New Orleans lot that generated the shot gun house is fortuitously close to the "wide load" dimension of a truck chassie that determines the width of a prefabricated dwelling of about 16 feet, 8 inches, so the plans that work for New Orleans work for prefabrication as a matter of course.

**Step 6: The Planning Unit of Proper Size**
The Model Block extends the logic of the cluster to its natural perimeter. The intent of this block is that it function as a basic planning unit, meaning that it have some degree of infrastructural autonomy both socially and physically. Our ongoing analysis of the neighborhood and its reach identified social networks, transportation, the identities of the ten and five minute walk, the natural drainage patterns in relation to the existing sewer systems and pumps, the location of nearest schools and playgrounds, markets and churches.  It emerged that in the locale of our specific site of Plum Orchard our "model block of proper size" conformed to a set of pre-existing natural borders: two raised highways: I-10 and Chef Menteur, a commercial artery built on a former natural levee of the Mississippi; Dwyer Road loaded with major drainage infrastructure; and a green space at the center of  the convent of the Sisters of the Holy Name.  In total, the model block covers just over 100 acres and pre-Katrina hosted 750 households.

**Step 7: Field Conditions**
In elevation, the model block varies from 2 feet above sea level at Chef Menteur to over 6 feet below at Dwyer Road, which we understand as a

single field with a shifting relation to water. In New Orleans, all coexist on a single floodplain and yet every inch counts. Given the foundational significance of Base Flood Elevation (BFE) to all aspects of life–from house insurance to zoning, to yard mowing, we designed the field as a series of sectional layers struck in coordination with those elevations. At a field condition of 0-0 BFE, for example, the model block is a continuous landscape punctuated by piles, porches, stairs, and water management tactics like swales, drywells, ponds, and streets.

The infrastructural grids of the neighborhood, streets, power, and water, are understood as continuous with and embedded in the field of BFE 0-0. Some streets become "soft" or porous. Cul-de-sacs at the end of the east-west cross streets are captured as landscape and returned to the field as amenity and utility: playgrounds, community gardens, recycling depot, flood control. The cross streets are strategically planted like Dutch "woonerfs" to slow traffic and expand their use as public space. The middle cross street is fully pedestrian and lined with community services–laundry corner store, playground, mailbox/fax station to serve as a neighborhood social hub. Together, the cross streets serve as a water detention system through the construction of stone lined collection basins beneath them that then connect to the existing storm sewer network that runs along the harder paved north-south through streets. Prior to an event, the channels would be pumped out into the sewer system to receive the storm. In sum, the water retention system could accommodate the entirety of a ten year storm.

A  matrix developed by a  landscape studio at City College as an adjunct to the grant describes the field from low to high ground in terms of both water and terrain: wetland, marsh and upland, salt brackish and fresh, to recommend a planting program that would eventually allow the entire site to function as an integrated ecosystem. Soil contamination that resulted from Katrina but also from previous storm deposits is a part of the grant study.  The range of pollutants found within various layers demands an array of approaches from capping to sunflower planting. The total matrix

describes the essence of the approach to the model neighborhood as a fine grain of sectional difference that creates a linked array of physical and cultural landscapes: wetland and raised cottage, Creole cottage and marsh, upland and shotgun.

One last dimension of the field is that of historical time. Toward high ground, many of the older pre-Katrina structures remain and will be restored, while the incrementally increasing devastation down slope suggests increasingly radical futures. In the middle of the site, pertaining to the mix of restored homes and empty lots, an even greater housing density than before the flood is possible. Development can maintain the historical economic and social structure of the area where single family and two family home were mixed with small enclaves of rental housing that served extended family networks. At the bottom of the site, the devastation suggests that the lower level return it to its original condition as wetland.

### Step 7: Nesting: Physical and Financial
The next set of design proposals nests the model block within the larger systems of New Orleans, as is required for its economic as well as physical well being. An NJIT infrastructure studio primarily focusing on the relationship between flood control, storm water management and restoration ecology considered these infrastructures in both their normal operation modes and under emergency conditions. The studio calculated that comprehensive plantings could manage 300 thousand gallons by collecting and slowly moving rainwater. This is the first and perhaps most crucial 3 percent of a ten year storm because it expands the margin of safety of the neighborhood in time. With the planned regional Southeast Louisiana Project (SELA), improvements to both the neighborhood Dwyer Road Pumping Station and its tributary sub-surface canals, the system will store and pump 8.2 million gallons of water. A ten year storm will deposit an additional 7 million gallons and flood Dwyer Road to a depth of approximately 2 feet, but well below the current FEMA flood elevations. A 100 year storm will deposit an additional 23 million gallons, bringing the depth to approximately five feet. Therefore, the Neighborhood will continue to flood, but barring levee breaches, the

neighborhood can be pumped out within a day and the community can live with the water.

Examining the connection of the model block to the city in terms of daily life, the strengthening of the commercial artery of Chef Menteur with a public transportation system is advocated, as it was in the ULI plan. The infrastructure studio argued for bus rapid transit (BRT) rather than light rail as cheaper to build and better performing. A designated right-of-way for BRT can also serve as a bus-only evacuation route for residents who do not own cars and as the trunk to a bicycle greenway network throughout the neighborhood.

The scale of the existing transportation infrastructure that borders the site–especially if enhanced with BRT and greenways as suggested–allows for a much greater density of both residential and commercial use than exists presently. The testing of these development possibilities was the subject of a Pratt graduate planning studio. The housing research addressed affordable residential development from the standpoints of economic resources, social resistance and political dynamics. It analyzed housing need, market demand and constraint (interest rate, term, principal, payments, net present value, internal rate of return, etc), in order to assess the viability of our potential residential development projects. It assessed risks and trade-offs surrounding affordability, finance, design, environment, and managerial issues in order to create financial pro-formas for housing development. The final comprehensive "housing development plan" concludes that in order to finance the desired collective features of the model block from cul-de-sac playgrounds to solar power, a multi-family development is required. This multi-family housing would have the added benefits of creating a larger market for commercial and institutional uses and also supporting a diverse community of the elderly, the single and the young who had been served before the flood by the familial networks of rented flats and multi-generational homes. Reinforcing the strategy of the model block plan, the logical site for this development is Chef Menteur, the road along the natural high ridge, the preexisting commercial corridor and the block boundary that connects it to the city at large. A subsequent architecture studio developed the design of that mixed use housing.

**Step 8: Implementation and Conclusion**

The model block is an imagined settlement pattern of open space, land use, amenities and social/physical infrastructures. It sets out an understanding of higher and lower ground, vacant and settled territory, brownfield and clean sites that the residents can use to make informed decisions in the short and long term, and at the individual and collective scale. Its first and most immediate role is a nuanced description of the life in this terrain that expands choice beyond the dialectic of unthinking return or wholesale erasure. Having vetted the proposals with the community at a series of weekend "church" meetings, we have also worked toward their implementation. The street guidelines have been incorporated by the official planners of the district, St Martin Brown & Associates, into their recommendations for a large area of New Orleans East. One member of the socially pivotal Alexander Family will build the first prefabricated courtyard houses, and other residents have approached ACORN about rebuilding homes in the model block area. The community group of the larger catchment area of Pines Village is in avid support of the collective features of the block–after school playgrounds, corner stores, cul-de-sacs, and Living Room Streets–and is working to implement them on their own.

The project has a continuing afterlife in the design of housing for 225 small adjudicated properties partially within the model block site, though primarily in the lower ninth ward, for which ACORN is the developer and Darchitects and Gansstudio are the architects. The task is to design individual houses rather than the field in which they sit. And while these houses are often close, they are not clustered. Moreover, they will be financed and sold individually, without the benefit of a traditional subdivision development or of family networks. However, having conceptualized the code of the model block, we are attempting to implant it in the project on a more ad hoc basis by channeling which sites sell first (preferably contiguous and on higher elevation), and by investing the architecture with the latent potential for clusters and field conditions.

The question of what exactly this rebuilt neighborhood of over 200 houses

will look like is the question of what it means to be safe. It is the question posed by the academic portion of this study that we can still pose to our clients, the returning refugees, in order to develop scenarios more complex and less Draconian than shrinking the city to high ground–scenarios in which safe haven includes new ways of living with climate and landscape, of living in one's house, and of evacuating it. Giorgio Agamben has theorized that "genuinely political phenomena and paradigms are experienced in places which are not normally considered political, or only marginally so. And it is the refugee, formerly regarded as a marginal figure who has become the decisive factor of the modern nation-state, by breaking the nexus between human being and citizen." We have concluded similarly that it is the refugee of New Orleans who has become the decisive factor, and the marginal sites of New Orleans East and the Lower Ninth Ward that have become the decisive places. These citizens bent on return are breaking the overdetermined logic of political and physical safety. Our proposal is an attempt to help them re-form their physical and socio-political lives in order that they sustain one another.

# The Pattern: Million Dollar Blocks
Laura Kurgan

Since 2005, the Spatial Information Design Lab has been investigating the geography of incarceration in the contemporary United States. Building on work already done jointly by the Council of State Governments, the JFA Institute, and the Justice Mapping Center, the lab's mapping project seeks to help advocates and government officials focus attention on the conditions and needs of urban spaces which show high rates of incarceration. Rather than focus only on the punishment and rehabilitation of individuals, the research identifies particular places and emerging strategies for investing public resources in order to address the urban conditions from which prisoners come and to which most of them return.

The lab's recent research concentrates on Phoenix, Wichita, New Orleans, and New York City. The individuals, geographies, demographics, and contexts vary significantly from city to city. But when they are considered as urban spaces, the neighborhoods with very high rates of incarceration in these four cities demonstrate some striking similarities.

## Making Maps with Data

Spatial information design is a name for ways of working with the vast quantity of statistical and other data available about the contemporary city. By reorganizing tabular data using visualization techniques, and by locating the data geographically, we try to correlate disparate items of information, picturing the patterns and networks they create. Picturing data on a map can open new spaces for action, and options for intervention. The often-unseen shapes and forms of life in our everyday spaces become visible.

The maps we have developed over the course of this project–in which information about people is correlated and aligned with the geography of the city–suggest the existence of a specific urban phenomenon which has emerged over the last 40 years. By identifying a recurring spatial phenomenon that is linked to a social and political one, the maps indicate that the problems of mass incarceration demand more than criminal justice strategies alone.

## From Crime Maps to Geographies of Incarceration

Crime maps are common devices for policy makers and urban police forces pursuing tactical approaches to fighting crime. The places where crimes are committed cluster in so-called "hotspots" at which resources can be targeted.

The geography of incarceration differs considerably from that of crime. When data about the residences of those admitted to prison are mapped, different patterns and concentrations emerge. These maps help us envision ways in which the design of the built environment (the places where we live, work, play) might interact with governance (expressions of collective, public obligations) to produce different patterns in our cities.

## Million Dollar Blocks

Prison admissions maps show us that a disproportionate number of the upwards of two million people in U.S. prisons and jails come from very few neighborhoods in the country's biggest cities. In many places, the concentration is so dense that states are spending in excess of a million dollars a year to incarcerate the residents of a single city block. We have called these "million dollar blocks."

## Infrastructure and Exostructure

Prisons are part of urban infrastructure–like streets, utilities, communications networks, parks, hospitals, and schools–but they are unusual in that they are not often situated physically within the cities they serve. In fact, prisons are frequently the most significant government institution in certain neighborhoods, even though they are located hundreds of miles away. We have proposed to call this an urban "exostructure."

## Reentry and Reincarceration

Instead of focusing on the 2,245,189 people who were being housed in Federal or State prisons and in local jails as of June 2006, policymakers are increasingly looking at the 650,000 people who return home from prison each year. 95% of people sent to prison are eventually released, and mapping studies of parole suggest that most of them return to the

communities from which they came. As a rule, though, they do not remain there. Nationally, more than half of those who return home are readmitted to prison within three years of their release. This cyclical structure–something like a permanent migratory pattern in and out of our nation's largest cities–is also a spatial one, and recognizing the pattern of million-dollar blocks offers new opportunities to challenge it.

## Justice Reinvestment

States confronting an unrelenting increase in prison populations typically respond in one of two ways: build more prisons, in the vain hope that demand will abate, or release prisoners indiscriminately without a long-range plan.

Our research has focused on a third model, known as Justice Reinvestment, in which public officials identify ways to reduce the growth of the prison population and reinvest those savings to improve conditions in those parts of the city to which most prisoners return.

## Beyond Criminal Justice

The Vera Institute of Justice has reported that "the most sophisticated analyses generally agree that increased incarceration rates have some effect on reducing crime," accounting for perhaps 25% of the drop in crime during the 1990s. But, they continue, "analysts are nearly unanimous in their conclusion that continued growth in incarceration will prevent considerably fewer, if any, crimes than past increases did and will cost taxpayers substantially more to achieve."

If that is an invitation to rethink the crime-fighting strategy that emphasizes incarceration, then we need to start thinking about the cities–and parts of cities–where the formerly-incarcerated live.

Pockets of poverty and racial isolation continue to prevail in identifiable city neighborhoods across the country. Each city is different, has different populations, densities, and urban forms of inhabitation and growth. Likewise, the built environment of class and race looks different in each

city. Whatever the differences, though, when we examine not only who America incarcerates but also where they come from, some important similarities emerge.

Prisons are not just a matter of criminal justice in the sense of individual punishments for specific crimes. They have social and political significance as well, which becomes clear when information about individuals is gathered into data and then correlated with demographic, economic and physical landscapes. The inmates in American jails and prisons are, as is well known, overwhelmingly people of color and people living in poverty. According to the Bureau of Justice Statistics, "at year end 2005 there were 3,145 black male sentenced prison inmates per 100,000 black males in the United States, compared to 1,244 Hispanic male inmates per 100,000 Hispanic males and 471 white male inmates per 100,000 white males." What is less well known, though, is that neighborhoods they come from and to which they return are also overwhelmingly populated by people who are largely poor, black, and Hispanic.

As Sudhir Venkatesh has written: "Researchers have identified communities disproportionately impacted by reentry; they have studied barriers to resource provision and social inclusion of individuals with criminal records; and, they have worked with advocates to design policies and programs that help reduce recidivism. However, there has been considerably less interest among researchers for a systematic analysis of the initial post-release time period.... There has been even less research on the spatial component–the geographic concentration of formerly incarcerated individuals, and the availability of resources in certain areas."

The research and the maps presented here now give a statistically-rich picture of the phenomenon Venkatesh describes: "central city neighborhoods and inner suburban ring communities–where much of urban poverty is situated–are playing host to the majority of inmates leaving jails, prisons, and detention centers." In addition, we can say with a high degree of confidence that those neighborhoods are overwhelmingly populated by people living below the poverty line and people of color. This multiple or

overlapping clustering phenomenon–released inmates are concentrated in a few places, and those are the same places where poor people are clustered and where people of color live most densely–is one of the major findings of our research.

This introduction of a geographic or spatial dimension in the analysis of mass incarceration is important because it identifies sites for intervention, location-based spaces and institutions–parks, churches, community groups and centers, schools, businesses, local officials, unused buildings, discrete environmental conditions–which might otherwise be overlooked when the focus remains at the individual or the municipal level.

**Aggregations, Percentages, Densities and Means**
There is no such thing as raw data. Data can be represented and visualized in many different ways. We have aggregated data about people into block-groups or census blocks to visualize a spatial pattern.

Intensity Maps: The darker the black area on the map, the higher the percentage in that block group of a certain population (i.e. people living in poverty, people of color, or incarcerated people who reported a home address there prior to incarceration).

Density Maps: In order to illustrate how prison admissions, poverty, and race are spatially distributed at the scale of a city, the data have been translated into density surfaces representing the highest spatial concentrations of poverty, people of color and those admitted to prison. The areas where all three concentrations are present exemplify the most extreme conditions, and in each city we have selected one block to demonstrate that condition.

Land Use Map (a Single City Block): That extreme block exemplifying these concentrations is then represented at a smaller scale. At this scale our fundamental research question becomes clear: if there is indeed a pattern of social isolation, does the built environment reveal a pattern of physical isolation as well?

We have relied here on the conventions of urban description in order to construct portraits to accompany the demographic ones highlighted by the contour maps. Using information that is publicly accessible in urban databases, we have described each of these single city blocks in terms of land use, building footprints, and aerial photographs.

**A Pattern?**
Our research focused on defining the patterns that link poverty, racial segregation, and incarceration, and on investigating whether their repeated coincidence takes on identifiable spatial forms. Rates of crime and incarceration vary significantly among states, so we selected four states to represent a sampling of extreme and average cases: Arizona has the highest number of crimes per capita, Louisiana has the highest incarceration rate, Kansas has average rates of both, and New York has an average incarceration rate and a low crime rate. By analyzing criminal justice data for these states' biggest cities–Phoenix, New Orleans, Wichita and New York City–all with some of the highest incarceration rates in their states, the urban patterns of mass incarceration begin to emerge.

Although crime and incarceration rates, geographies, demographics, and contexts vary significantly from city to city, neighborhoods with very high rates of incarceration in all four cities demonstrate striking similarities.

The maps and aerial photographs on the following pages zoom in on blocks in each city where high incarceration rates and expenditures overlap with concentrations of people of color and those living in poverty. The images show that the neighborhoods that feature this geographic convergence also share a number of physical characteristics and spatial forms:  elevated highways, industrial areas, large swaths of vacant land, public housing and degraded environmental conditions. In short, the areas of the city with the most obvious disinvestment in public infrastructure are also the areas of the city most reliant on the exostructure of prisons, and their specific spatial conditions follow remarkably parallel patterns of disinvestment.

**Phoenix, Arizona**

Phoenix is the biggest city in Arizona with a population of roughly 1.4 million. In 2004, it cost nearly $300 million to incarcerate 4,060 of its residents. Sixty-two percent of those incarcerated were likely released within one to three years. Of the people admitted to prison from Phoenix, ten percent were residents of, and most likely returned home to, Central City, even though it housed only five percent of Phoenix's total population.
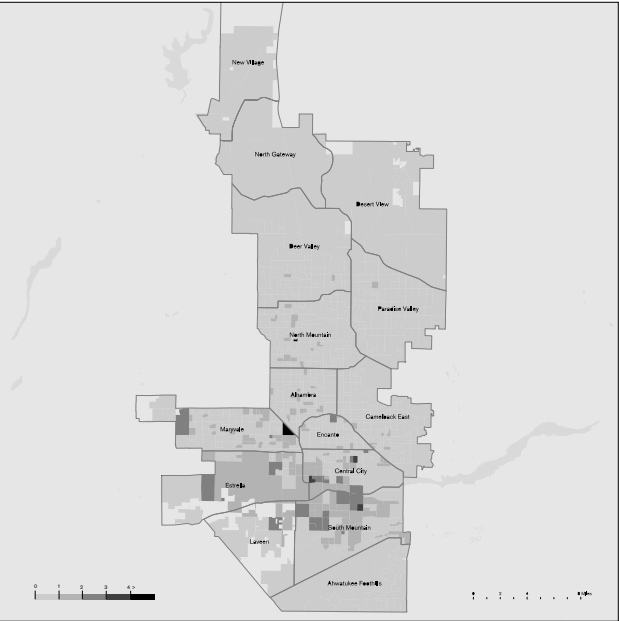


Percent adults admitted to prison, 2003
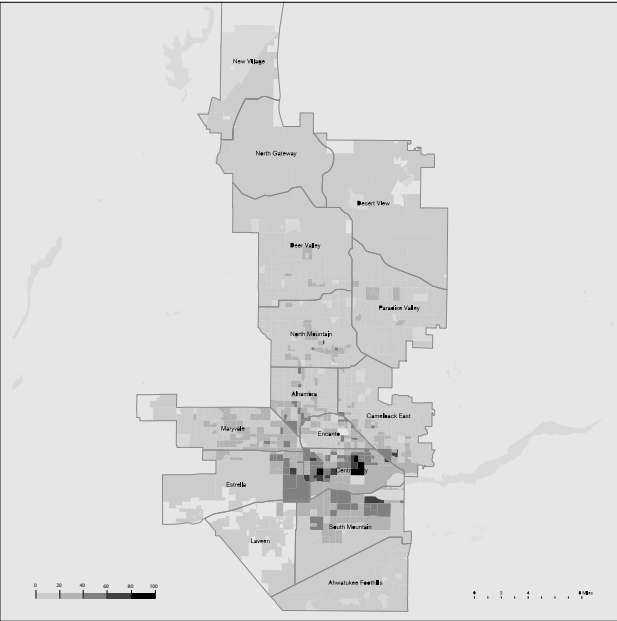


Percent persons below poverty line, 2000

The selected area, referred to as Central City South, is situated to the southwest of Phoenix's downtown core and is characterized by industrial uses, public housing and vacant land. It currently falls within the boundaries of a large city planning and revitalization initiative.

The selected block is part of Census tract 1148 in the Center City Planning District, which showed a high concentration of incarcerated people in 2004. Of the 3,216 people living there in 2000, 77 percent identified themselves as Hispanic or Latino/a, and 53 percent were living in poverty.
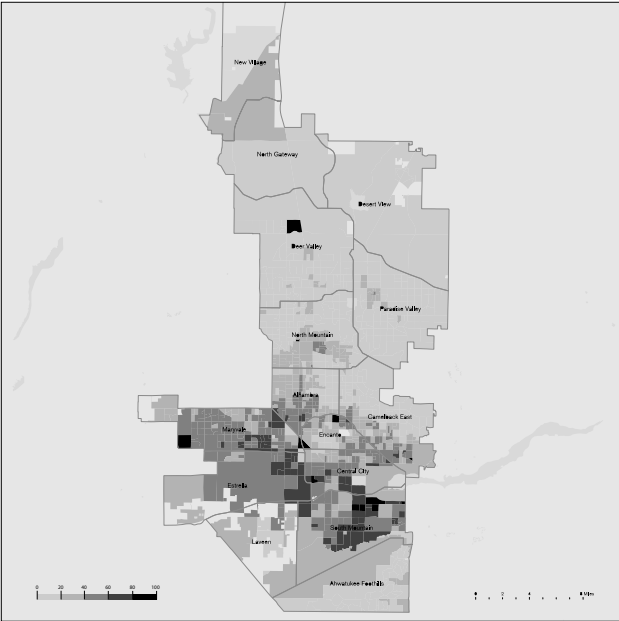


Percent persons of color, 2000
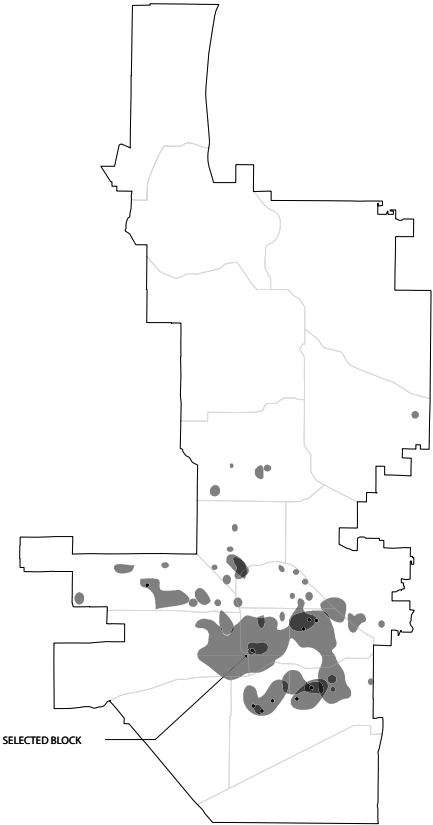


Highest densities of people of color, people living in poverty and people in prison in Phoenix (overlapping gray surfaces). Top ten prison expenditure blocks (black dots). Percent persons of color, 2000

The block is located adjacent to the Maricopa Freeway, an interstate highway built in 1960, which is elevated 30 feet above street level. The nearby Matthew Henson Public Housing Community was demolished in 2004, and a Hope VI mixed-income housing development is underway to replace it.

The block is made up of single-family detached houses known as the new Homes, although at 30 to 50 years old, they now qualify as some of the oldest housing stock in Phoenix, and have deteriorated significantly.
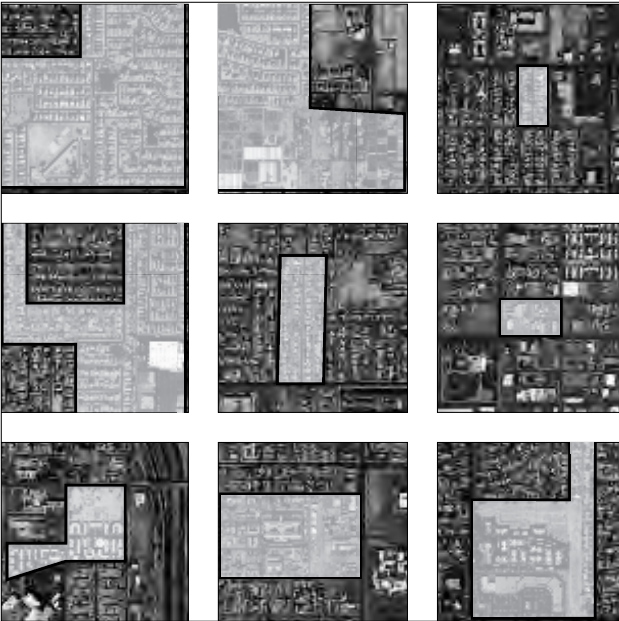
A neglected cemetery and vacant residences at the east end of the block represent the general pattern of disinvestment here. Despite these conditions, the new Homes are still considered to be the best non-subsidized housing in the area.

The block's population is made up of African-American, Latino/a, and Native American people. Senior citizens are a significant presence, as is a large number of people living in extreme poverty.



Top prison expenditure blocks



Selected high prison expenditure block

## New Orleans, Louisiana

In New Orleans Parish, which prior to Hurricane Katrina had a population of 485,000, it cost roughly $42 million to incarcerate 1,432 people in 2003. Seventy-one percent of those incarcerated in 2003 were likely released within one to three years (although the disruptions associated with the hurricane in 2005 make this estimate somewhat uncertain). Of the people admitted to prison that year from New Orleans, fifteen percent were residents of, and likely returned home to, Planning District 2, which housed only ten percent of New Orleans' total population.
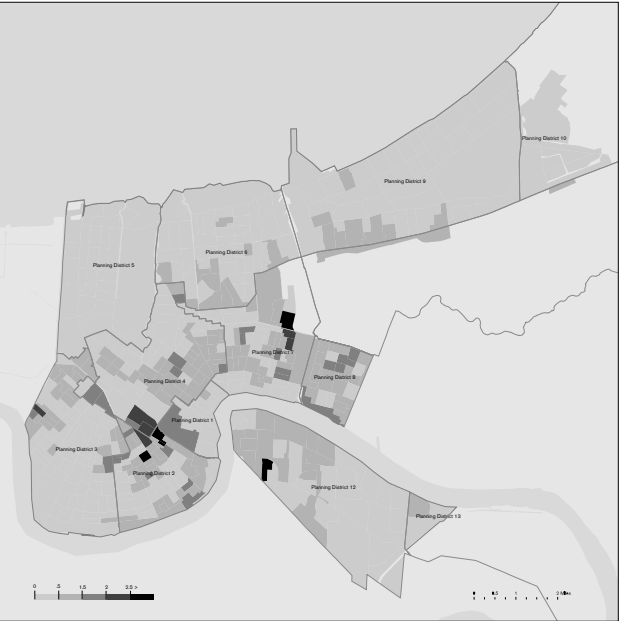


Percent adults admitted to prison, 2003



Percent persons below poverty line, 2000

This block is at the intersection of Planning Districts 2 and 4, and also at the intersection of Central City and B.W. Cooper neighborhoods, both of which housed high concentrations of incarcerated people in 2003. It lies within Census Tract 69, which counted 4,361 people living there in 2000. Ninety-eight percent of them identified as black or African-American, sixty-nine percent were living below the poverty line, and fifty-eight percent had no high school education.
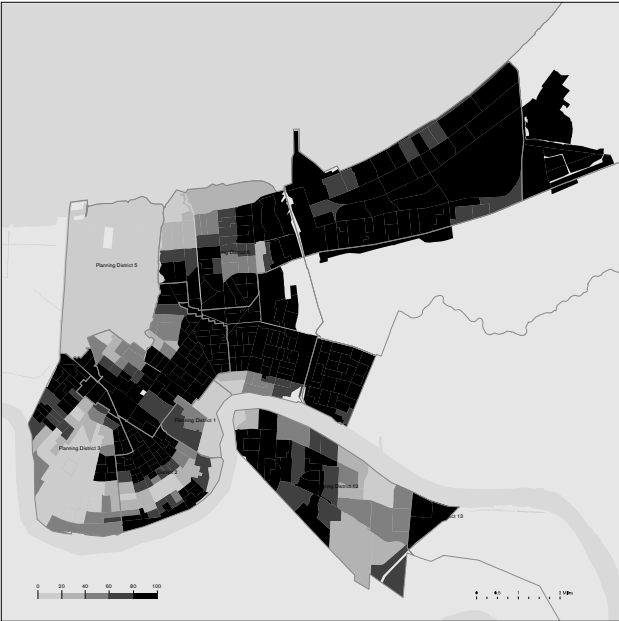


Percent persons of color, 2000
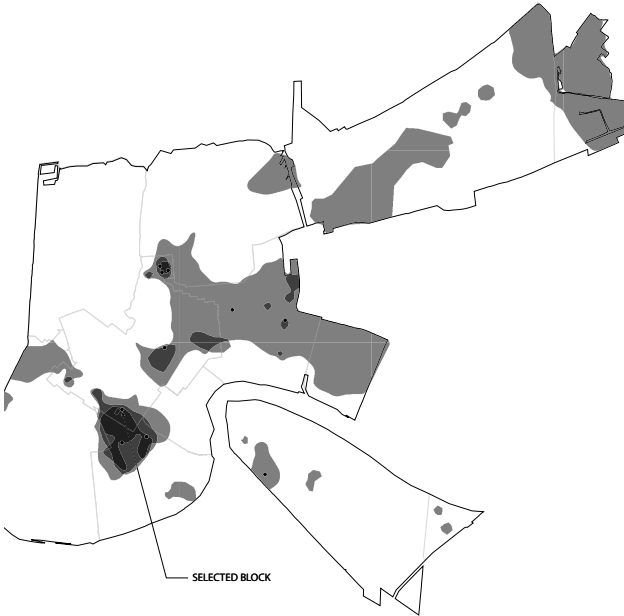


Highest densities of people of color, people living in poverty and people in prison in New Orleans (overlapping gray surfaces). Top ten prison expenditure blocks (black dots). Percent persons of color, 2000

The block itself is known as Calliope, thanks to the 600-unit public housing project of that name built on the block in 1942. In 1954, 860 new units were added to the complex. In 1993 a Hope VI plan was proposed to downsize the project, demolish 337 units, and transform it into mixed-income housing, but it was not realized.
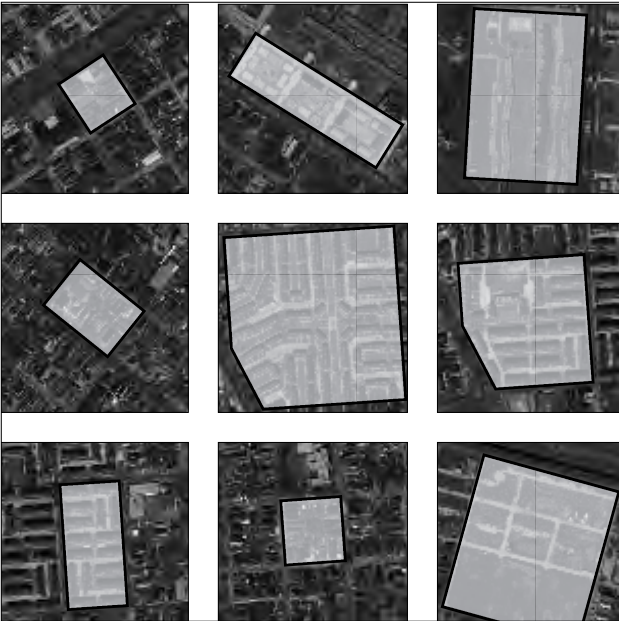
The area is dominated by Interstate 10 and the contiguous Superdome, a 72,000-seat sports facility, both built in 1975. These structures separate it from the adjoining neighborhoods of Treme and Lafitte to the east. These neighborhoods, along with Central City to the west, were historically centers of African-American heritage and business in the city. Today, B.W. Cooper is linked as a neighborhood with Center City through the Hoffman Triangle, one of the low-lying areas of Planning District 2 neglected prior to Hurricane Katrina.



Top prison expenditure blocks
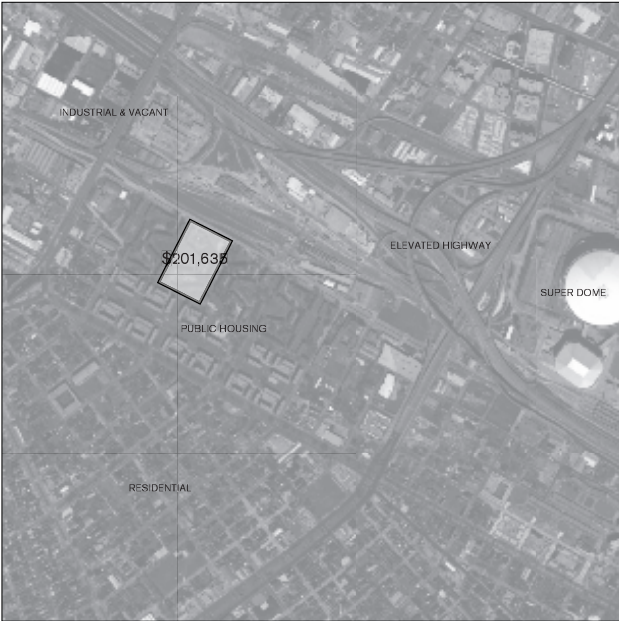


Selected high prison expenditure block

**Wichita, Kansas**

In Wichita, the biggest city in Kansas with a population of 350,000, it cost about $29 million to incarcerate 1,420 residents in 2004. Sixty-eight percent of the people incarcerated were likely released within one to three years. Of the people admitted to prison from Wichita, thirty-two percent were residents of, and most likely returned home to, Council District 1, which housed only sixteen percent of Wichita's total population.
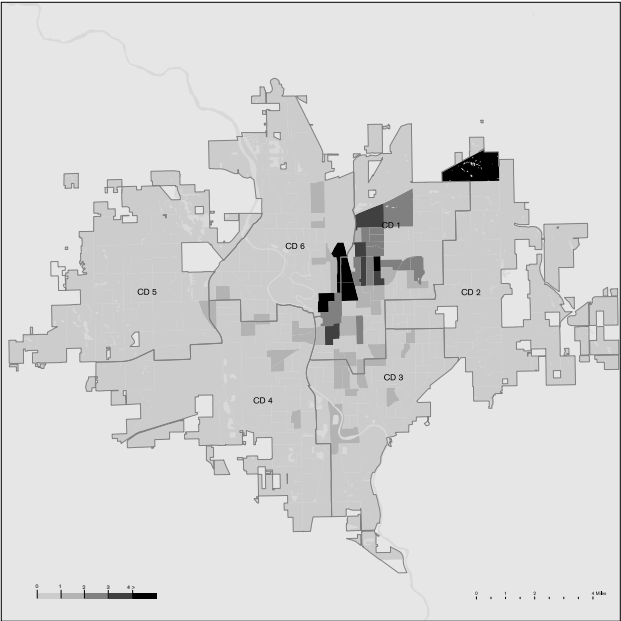


Percent adults admitted to prison, 2004
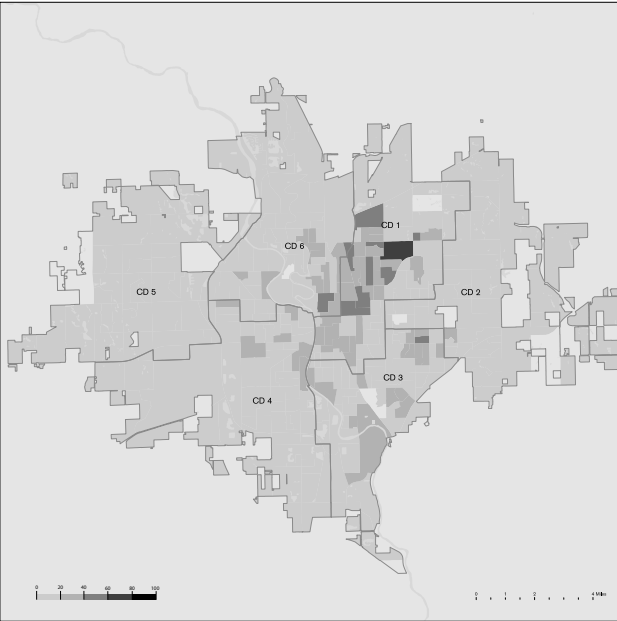


Percent persons below poverty line, 2000

The selected area contains scattered residential vacancies to the north, south and west, and considerable vacant commercial and residential land, all indicative of general disinvestment is the area. The I-135 Freeway, known as the Canal Route, carries 95,500 vehicles a day in and out of Wichita's core, and links with three other major highways. Directly to the east of I-135 is industrial land made up of rail lines, a drainage canal, and several large facilities, including the El Paso-Derby Refinery, scheduled to be demolished.
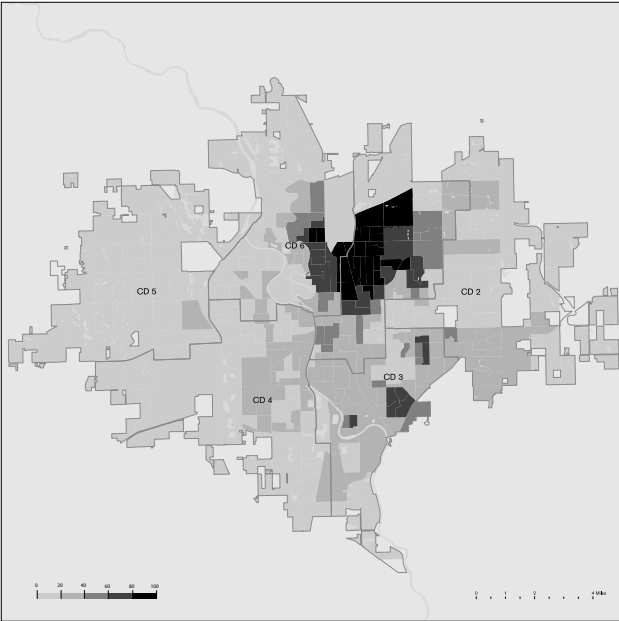


Percent persons of color, 2000
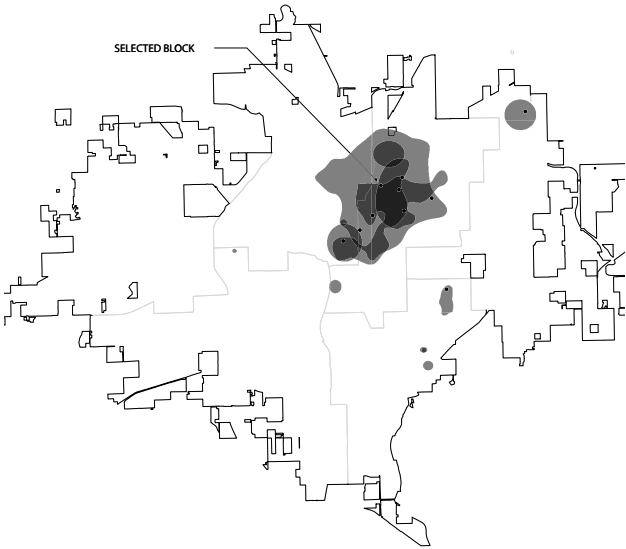


Highest densities of people of color, people living in poverty and people in prison in Wichita (overlapping gray surfaces). Top ten prison expenditure blocks (black dots). Percent persons of color, 2000

This block is part of Council District 1, which was home to a high percentage of incarcerated people in 2004. It is within Census Tract 7, which counted 3,365 residents in 2000, 90 percent of whom identified as black or African-American and 28 percent of whom were living in poverty. The block is located within the Power neighborhood, two blocks east of the Interstate 135 interchange and the 21st Street exit ramp. It is characterized by detached single-family residences. It lies directly to the south of the Heartspring Campus, and within the 29th and Grove contaminated groundwater plume.
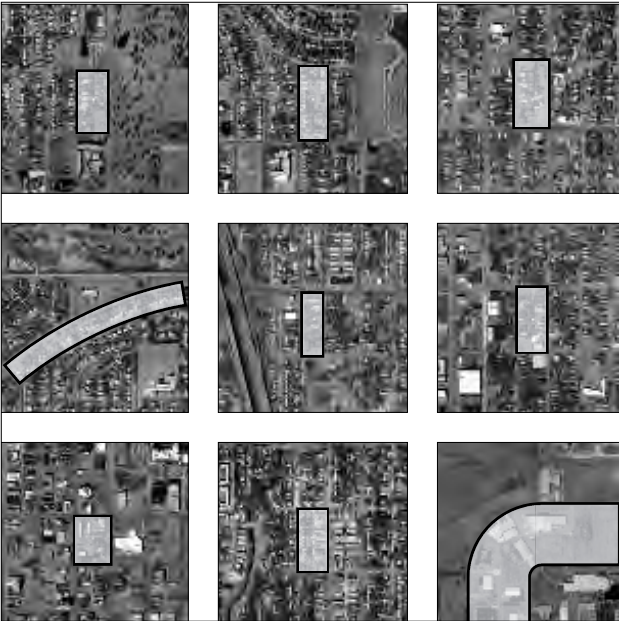


Top prison expenditure blocks



Selected high prison expenditure block

**New York, New York**

In New York City, with a population of just under eight million people in five boroughs, it cost $1.1 billion to incarcerate more than 13,200 residents in 2003. Fifty-five percent of people incarcerated from that year were likely released within one to four years. The Bronx constituted 16.5 percent of New York City's total population and 28 percent of its prison admissions in 2003. It cost roughly $228 million that year to incarcerate 3,423 of its residents. Of the people admitted to prison from the Bronx, eleven percent were residents of, and most likely returned home to, Community District 1, which housed only six percent of the total population in the Bronx.



Percent adults admitted to prison, 2003



Percent persons below poverty line, 2000

This block is part of Census Tract 230, in Community District 1 in the South Bronx, which counted 5,109 residents in 2000. Seventy-nine percent of those residents identified themselves as Hispanic or Latino/a, and 47 percent were living in poverty. The block is located just north of the Major Deegan Expressway, a section of Interstate 87 that divides the mixed-use blocks of Mott Haven from the more industrial neighborhood of Port Morris to the south. It includes four of the nine 16-story buildings in the Mill Brook Houses, a New York City Housing Authority development completed in 1959. The 12-acre Mill Brook complex, with 3,001 residents in 1,251 apartments, is a typical public housing superblock.



Percent persons of color, 2000



SELECTED BLOCK

Highest densities of people of color, people living in poverty and people in prison in New York (overlapping gray surfaces). Top ten prison expenditure blocks (black dots). Percent persons of color, 2000

The neighborhood, known as Mott Haven, is characterized by large-scale transportation infrastructure that connects the South Bronx to the rest of the city via the Triborough Bridge. While the area to the south of the highways is largely industrial, the area to the north is marked by six-story residential buildings interspersed with four public housing projects varying in height from 8 to 16 stories, and some industrial facilities. The highways, together with truck routes, waste transfer stations and a sewage treatment plant, have been implicated in studies on air pollutant exposures that may be linked to very high asthma hospitalization rates for children in the borough.
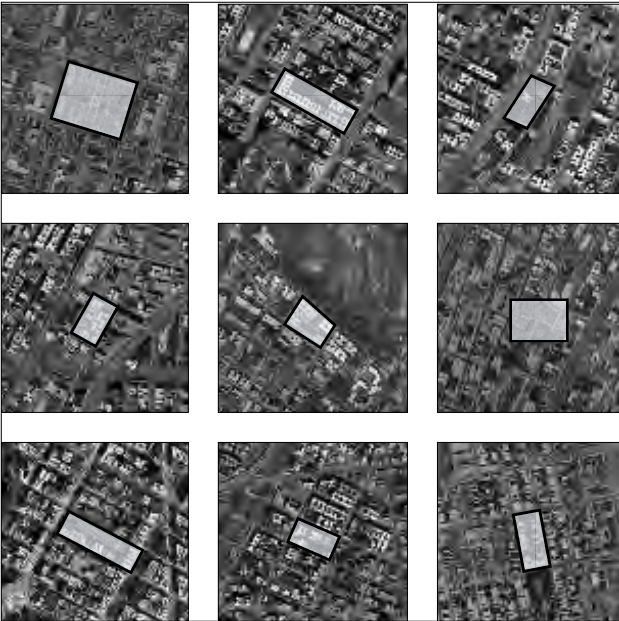
## A Provocation

The geography exposed by these maps forms a provocation to designers, planners, politicians and policymakers. How might strategies for reinvestment targeting the highest incarceration neighborhoods in these four cities, and many others like them, be employed to shift the landscape of mass incarceration in the United States?



Top prison expenditure blocks



Selected high prison expenditure block

# Becoming Tarden
## Jill Magid

Yvon Lambert Gallery
550 West 21st Street
New York, NY 10011 USA

August 16, 2009

Drs. J.C. Goet
Deputy Director-General
The General Intelligence and Security Service (AIVD)
Postbus 20010
2500 EA The Hague, The Netherlands

Dear Drs. J.C. Goet,

On September 12th my exhibition "Authority To Remove" opens at the Tate Modern in London. In your letter dated July 17, 2009, you suggested that I "present the manuscript as a visual work of art in a one-time-only exhibition, after which it would become the property of the Dutch government and would be stripped of all sensitive information and not be published."

This is that one-time-only exhibition.

I am presenting the book debound. I cut the joints along its shoulders and pulled the body from its spine, and laid it under glass.

You may take the body of the book. I will keep the prologue and the epilogue, with the phrases from the former that you censored, amended or removed. These parts support the body, before and after my commission, and do not include my words.

The book, Becoming Tarden, is a memoir of our involvement. I had dreams of publishing it as my first novel. You are its only reader. Sense it. Strip it. Hold it in your holding and seal it under glass. I comply.

Your Author,

Jill Magid

Enclosure: Tate Authority to Remove Threat from Site Form

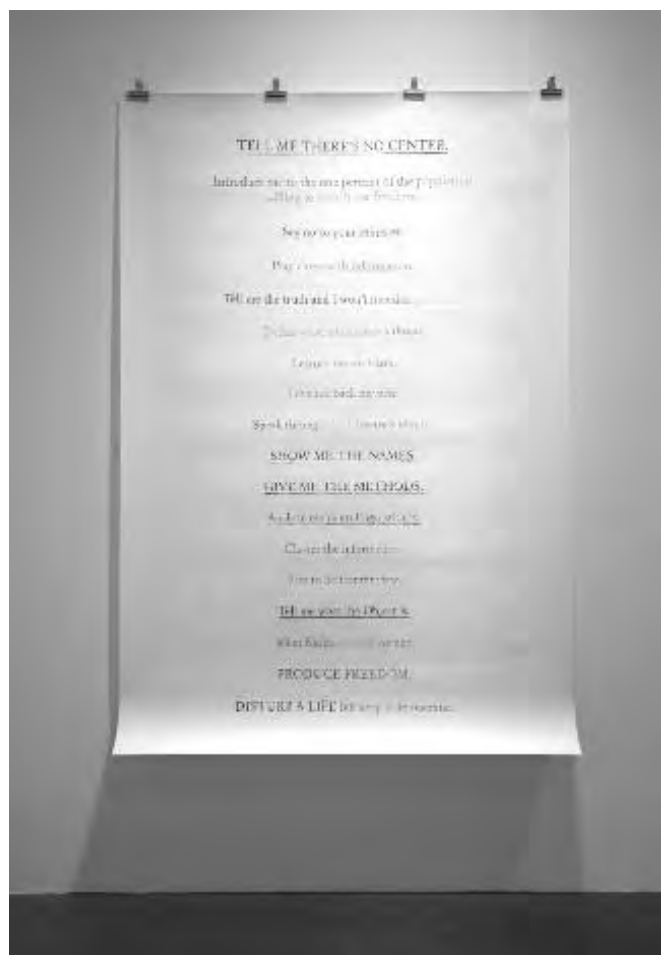Artist correspondence with Theo Bot, Director, AIVD, August 2009

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*Authority to Remove*, Tate Modern, London, January 2009 (Installation view)

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Confiscation of *Becoming Tarden* from Tate Modern, January 2010

*The Directives* page 6, 2009, ball point pen on paper, 80 x 60 1/2 in (203.2 x 153.7 cm)



*The Directives* page 7, 2009, ball point pen on paper, 80 x 60 1/2 in (203.2 x 153.7 cm)
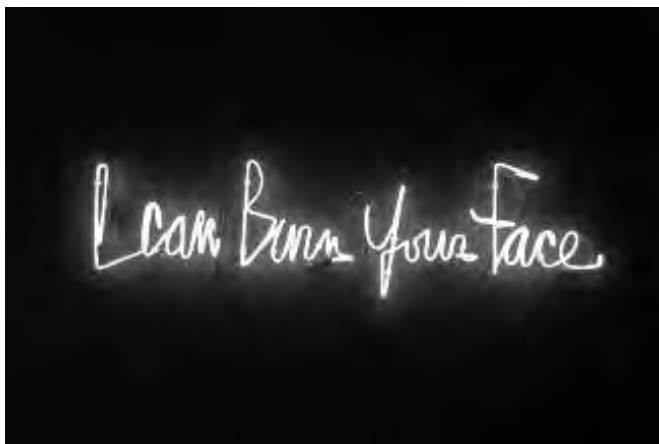
*Becoming Tarden*, 2009, c-print, 11 3/4 x 17 1/2 in (29.8 x 44.5 cm)



*Hacked Novel*, 2009, book, plus 3 documents, 8 1/2 x 6 3/4 x 1 in (21.6 x 17.1 x 2.5 cm)



*I Can Burn Your Face*, 2008, neon, 12 x 38 inches (30.5 x 96.5 cm)



*Becoming Tarden*, 2009

**The Dilemma of Instrumentalization**
Liam Gillick in conversation
with Markus Miessen
Photographs by Taryn Simon

**Taryn Simon**

*Cryopreservation Unit, Cryonics Institute, Clinton Township, Michigan, 2007*

Chromogenic color print

37 1/4 x 44 1/2 inches, (94.6 x 113 cm)

*This cryopreservation unit holds the bodies of Rhea and Elaine Ettinger, the mother and first wife of cryonics pioneer, Robert Ettinger. Robert, author of* The Prospect of Immortality *and* Man into Superman *is still alive.*

*The Cryonics Institute offers cryostasis (freezing) services for individuals and pets upon death. Cryostasis is practiced with the hope that lives will ultimately be extended through future developments in science, technology, and medicine. When, and if, these developments occur, Institute members hope to awake to an extended life in good health, free from disease or the aging process. Cryostasis must begin immediately upon legal death. A person or pet is infused with ice-preventive substances and quickly cooled to a temperature where physical decay virtually stops. The Cryonics Institute charges $28,000 for cryostasis if it is planned well in advance of legal death and $35,000 on shorter notice.*

**Markus Miessen:** Power has many meanings associated with it. Power is often confused with force. It can be understood as motive power, which moves something forward, statistical power, which describes the probability that a test will reject a false null hypothesis, power as the ability to make choices and influence outcomes, power held by a person or group in a country's political system, the ability of nation states to influence or control other states; it can be understood as purchasing power in the sense of the amount of goods and services a given amount of money can buy, or the ability to set the price of a sold good–in the case of monopoly power. The conference *Evasions of Power* explored the relations between architecture, literature and geo-politics, attempting to get a closer understanding about the consequences and implications of spatial practices today. Both of your particular modes of research and practice are arguably dealing with issues of power, enclaves, and extra-territorial sites throughout the world. Generally speaking, is it possible to evade power?

**Liam Gillick:** Contemporary structures with an interest in growth and development work hard to disguise their power with elaborate veils. These veils themselves become the phantoms and shadows of power-structures, revealed to us in a series of codes and behaviours. Not being a pacifist, I am not necessarily against the notion of manipulating power towards positive ends. I think that it is sometimes necessary to harness power in order to change things. It is impossible to evade power. One can be a victim of it or take a series of critical positions in relation to it. An evasion of the implications and structural applications of power merely allows repressive forms to take control. This does not mean, however, that one has to mimic known power structures in order to critique them.

**Miessen:** Are there forms of institutionality that allow for a practice that does not only superimpose power but also shares it?

**Gillick:** There are no forms of institutionality that allow for this. If there were, they would not be institutional in form or manner. There are various flows within the culture that attempt to formulate new ways to negotiate
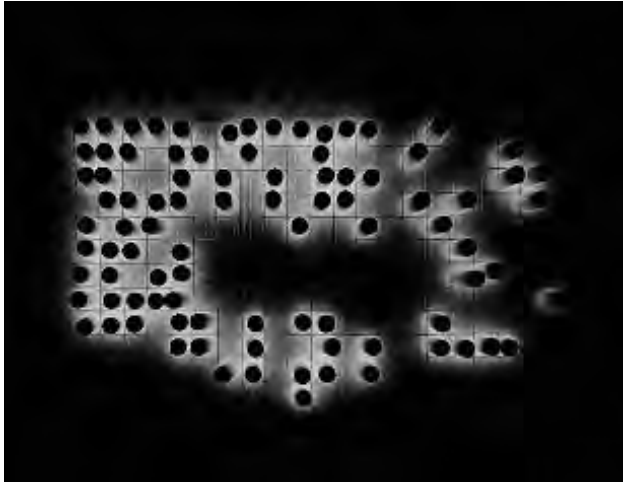
**Taryn Simon**

*Nuclear Waste Encapsulation and Storage Facility, Cherenkov Radiation, Hanford Site, U.S.*
*Department of Energy, Southeastern Washington State, 2007*

Chromogenic color print
37 1/4 x 44 1/2 inches, (94.6 x 113 cm)

*Submerged in a pool of water at Hanford Site are 1,936 stainless-steel nuclear-waste capsules*
*containing cesium and strontium. Combined, they contain over 120 million curies of radioactivity. It is*
*estimated to be the most curies under one roof in the United States. The blue glow is created by the*
*Cherenkov Effect which describes the electromagnetic radiation emitted when a charged particle, giving*
*off energy, moves faster than light through a transparent medium. The temperatures of the capsules are*
*as high as 330 degrees Fahrenheit. The pool of water serves as a shield against radiation; a human*
*standing one foot from an unshielded capsule would receive a lethal dose of radiation in less than 10*
*seconds. Hanford is among the most contaminated sites in the United States.*

power structures. These can be improvised or take a horizontal form for a while, but in a Lacanian sense there is often a self-institutionalizing that takes place after a while, especially within alternative forms of practice that attempt to institutionalize open exchange.

**Miessen:** Liam, you have been heavily involved with *unitednationsplaza* in Berlin. Could you explain in which way you believe that such a model of institution or institutional critique fosters an alternative to dominant models of power?

**Gillick:** It did not attempt to create veils over the power structures that were established. *unitednationsplaza* actually took many cues from old forms of information dissemination. Most of the presentations were precise and had a speaker or speakers and an audience or group of listeners who may or may not participate at some level. The project was self-conscious in the sense that it did not attempt to pretend that there were no hierarchical structures in operation. The power-structure was clear and the doors were open. The functional aspect of *unitednationsplaza* was rooted in the fact that it was a neo-pedagogical structure that did not attempt to blur relationships or disguise the didactic element of the project. The project itself was the focus and the centre of thinking and not a secondary component of an art project. What it did was to create a real model of power rather than to rely on artificial veils that might carry instrumentalized versions of non-discourse. This does not necessarily mean it was successful. But the main protagonists, myself included, were determined to place themselves in front of people and make their ideas open to scrutiny. The project was not self-referential but self-revealing.

**Miessen:** It seems to me that one of the crucial issues that are at stake in a conversation like this is the question of the position from which one is talking. There seems to be, in my mind at least, a recent romanticization about bottom up processes. What happens if the one "in power" provides models for change?

**Taryn Simon**
*Playboy, Braille Edition, Playboy Enterprises, Inc. New York, New York, 2007*
Chromogenic color print
37 1/4 x 44 1/2 inches, (94.6 x 113 cm)

*The National Library Service for the Blind and Physically Handicapped (NLS), a division of the U.S. Library of Congress, provides a free national library program of Braille and recorded materials for blind and physically handicapped persons. Magazines included in the NLS's programs are selected on the basis of demonstrated reader interest. This includes the publishing and distribution of a Braille edition of Playboy.*

*Approximately 10 million American adults read Playboy every month, with 3 million obtaining it through paid circulation. It has included articles by writers such as Norman Mailer, Vladimir Nabokov, Philip Roth, Joyce Carol Oates, and Kurt Vonnegut and conducted interviews with Salvador Dali, Jean-Paul Sartre, and Malcolm X.*

**Gillick:** I agree. There are many revolutionary models that give us a perfect image of the idea of a small group or individual offering a new model of society. The notion of becoming organized or nominating someone or some group to speak for others is a perfectly reasonable procedure towards imagining a better situation. In fact it is arguable that merely waiting for a spontaneous shift among a large group will never lead to anything. The problem is that this set of truisms works the same way whether one is thinking about the left or the right in political terms. It is true that the left is more committed to open democratic procedures but this fact does not render the left more impotent nor does it mean that bottom up processes are merely a romantic fantasy. The point is to create real exchanges of ideas and create a situation where it is possible to formulate structures that offer alternatives and participatory potential for the multiple publics that operate within developed societies.

**Miessen:** Is democracy always desirable?

**Gillick:** Yes, yet with the proviso that it will tend to create the problems described by Chantal Mouffe. The tension between liberalism and democracy has been eloquently expressed and agonized over within her writing. The European project is torn between liberalism and democracy. Democracy as an abstraction is dysfunctional without broader debates about how it is applied, gauged and critiqued.

**Miessen:** Can language become a mode of evading power?

**Gillick:** Absolutely. A sophisticated intellectual discourse should have a problematization of the dominant language at the heart of its analysis. Language carries traces of power at all times. Critical language contains traces of critique at all times. We have seen that even the most repressive forces in the culture have become elegant semioticians. This means that the implication of the question is not merely applicable to whoever we might be imagining to be the "correct thinking" people, but it used by repressive forces to create endless synonyms for control and non-control.

**Taryn Simon**
*The Central Intelligence Agency, Art, CIA Original Headquarters Building, Langley, Virginia, 2007*
Chromogenic color print
37 1/4 x 44 1/2 inches, (94.6 x 113 cm)

*The Fine Arts Commission of the CIA is responsible for acquiring art to display in the Agency's buildings. Among the Commission's curated art are two pieces (pictured) by Thomas Downing, on long-term loan from the Vincent Melzac Collection. Downing was a member of the Washington Color School, a group of post-World War II painters whose influence helped to establish the city as a center for arts and culture. Vincent Melzac was a private collector of abstract art and the Administrative Director of the Corcoran Gallery of Art, Washington D.C.'s premier art museum.*

*Since its founding in 1947, the Agency has participated in both covert and public cultural diplomacy efforts throughout the world. It is speculated that some of the CIA's involvement in the arts was designed to counter Soviet Communism by helping to popularize what it considered pro-American thought and aesthetic sensibilities. Such involvement has raised historical questions about certain art forms or styles that may have elicited the interest of the Agency, including Abstract Expressionism.*

**Miessen:** Is there power in dilettantism, in the role of the one waiting to be instructed?

**Gillick:** If one accepts that such strategies are only productive in the extremely short term and extremely long term. In the short term, as we have learnt from queer theory, feminism and other forms of social reassessment, rejecting the terms of engagement that underscore the dominant culture can produce levels of refusal to acknowledge the power structures that effect us all. Contrary and dismissive languages create discourses that cannot be assessed or controlled. However, these strategies work in a direct and engaged way with the present for the most part. Yet such strategies also have a long-term effect in relation to style, social behaviour, and boundary pushing, which tend to become mainstream over time. It is the space between the immediate sense of refusal and the long-term effects of social shift that I am generally interested in and is the area dominated by government, bureaucracy, and straight white men.

**Miessen:** If one is looking at the slightly contested forms and understanding of participation today, one immediately gets frustrated about the romantic conception and nostalgic implications of the term. What are the modes of participation that are still operational, rather than a mode of outsourcing responsibility?

**Gillick:** One danger here is connected to the problem of instrumentalization. Most dominant power structures today claim to be committed to participation and transparency, certainly within an Anglo-Saxon context. As a result, any sense of participation–or attempt to create it–have to be super-self-conscious about being co-opted by more insidious structures. Yet, it is still reasonable to argue strongly in favour of participation, assuming that it is combined with a series of critical reflections.

**Miessen:** The role of the uninvited outsider seems to be very interesting. One could argue that actually it is no longer the one who participates in a

**Taryn Simon**
*U.S. Customs and Border Protection, Contraband Room, John F. Kennedy International Airport,*
*Queens, New York, 2007*
Chromogenic color print
37 1/4 x 44 1/2 inches, (94.6 x 113 cm)

*African cane rats infested with maggots, African yams (dioscorea), Andean potatoes, Bangladeshi*
*cucurbit plants, bush meat, cherimoya fruit, curry leaves (murraya), dried orange peels, fresh eggs,*
*giant African snail, impala skull cap, jackfruit seeds, June plum, kola nuts, mango, okra, passion fruit,*
*pig nose, pig mouths, pork, raw poultry (chicken), South American pig head, South American tree*
*tomatoes, South Asian lime infected with citrus canker, sugar cane (poaceae), uncooked meats,*
*unidentified sub tropical plant in soil.*

*All items in the photograph were seized from the baggage of passengers arriving in the U.S. at JFK*
*Terminal 4 from abroad over a 48-hour period. All seized items are identified, dissected, and then either*
*ground up or incinerated. JFK processes more international passengers than any other airport in the*
*United States.*

given structure or system that has been set up by others, but the practitioner that breaks into alien–and possibly not-yet-known or established–fields of knowledge.  Not in a romantic way–not in the sense of a participatory democracy that postulates an idea of inclusion and invitation of the entire social body–but in terms of production. Taryn Simon's work in that respect is super interesting, as a practice of "entering."

On another note, I am wondering whether naivety, in its most positive terms–as "not-knowing", as one driven by relentless curiosity–produces a productive, opportunistic means of rupture in often very static systems?

**Gillick:** This is not something I can comment on. It is a kind of Wittgensteinian dilemma. If one knew how to not-know one would know what could be known and therefore know what cannot be known. Actually, worse it is a kind of Donald Rumsfeld-ism. The known knowns and the known unknowns…

**Miessen:** Is there a quality or an advantage to "not knowing"?

**Gillick:** It is a permanent state and a dysfunctional paradox. Not knowing is fetishised by those who claim to "believe" in some higher power. Faith is an extreme form of not knowing. Therefore arguing in favour of not knowing falls into the trap of a quasi-religious thinking.

**Miessen:** Within the constraints of your practice, do you understand yourself as an outsider, or as someone who directly operates from within a given system?

**Gillick:** Operating from within a system, but not one that is given, but rather one that requires analysis and critical self-consciousness.

**Miessen:** When you produce, is there a particular audience that you have in mind or are you attempting to produce new audiences in the sense of alternative formation of receivers that–without your work–would not exist?

**Taryn Simon**

*White Tiger (Kenny), Selective Inbreeding, Turpentine Creek Wildlife Refuge and Foundation, Eureka*
*Springs, Arkansas, 2007*
Chromogenic color print
37 1/4 x 44 1/2 inches, (94.6 x 113 cm)

*In the United States, all living white tigers are the result of selective inbreeding to artificially create the*
*genetic conditions that lead to white fur, ice-blue eyes and a pink nose. Kenny was born to a breeder in*
*Bentonville, Arkansas on February 3, 1999. As a result of inbreeding, Kenny is mentally retarded and*
*has significant physical limitations. Due to his deep-set nose, he has difficulty breathing and closing his*
*jaw, his teeth are severely malformed and he limps from abnormal bone structure in his forearms. The*
*three other tigers in Kenny's litter are not considered to be quality white tigers as they are yellow-*
*coated, cross-eyed, and knock-kneed.*

**Gillick:** There are many publics. I don't think about audience, as that implies a performative aspect. I acknowledge the multiple publics for cultural practice and I think this problem or question is also a crucial one for the curators and others that I work with. Consequently, this discussion never happens alone.

**Miessen:** How do you communicate your work other than through conventional channels such as galleries, shows, and publications?

**Gillick:** In dialogue. In lecture form. In argument. Via teaching. In bars. In silence. By thinking.

**Miessen:** What role does emotion play in your practice?

**Gillick:** It is sublimated.

**Miessen:** Would you call yourself romantic?

**Gillick:** Never.

**Miessen:** The autonomy of the art world, by definition, means that things always happen in a very privileged and introverted, often apolitical, environment. This autonomy, on the other hand, is its potential: a test-ground without direct consequences.

**Gillick:** I do not agree with any of the statement in your question.

**Miessen:** I am wondering whether you think that rather than being a test-ground of sorts, it is an environment that produces direct results?

**Gillick:** It really depends what a direct result might be and how we might measure it. I am sure that art has potential. I am not sure that we should only talk about it in terms of the "laboratory" or "test ground" but actually attempt to imagine that it is doing something precise and contingent simultaneously.

**Miessen:** Do you understand your practice as one that has or might produce global repercussions?

**Gillick:** Yes, but only in the sense that any act has a potential repercussion.

**Miessen:** As to the notion of opposition, there is always the question as to what degree one should go "with it" or "against it." Do you ever feel like there is a certain expectation directed towards yourself as to what to produce?

**Gillick:** People often ask me directly for a specific action, thing or text. I am not necessarily against this. The idea of a unique context-free semi-autonomous producer does not appeal to me.

**Miessen:** Has critique ever turned against you in terms of direct censorship?

**Gillick:** Yes.

**Miessen:** Of what kind?

**Gillick:** The suppression of information that is necessary to understand an art work. This has happened at least twice in specific situation where the overtly political basis of a work is omitted from the published material distributed by an institution and substituted with generalized statements about the form of the work.

**Miessen:** Is there still potential for opposition or is it a nostalgic mode of operation that has been superseded by more productive means of involvement? Often, opposition to something produces the exact opposite of what the core of opposition intended.

**Gillick:** I agree with the general aspect of this question/statement.

However I think that there are moments where precise direct action are necessary.

**Miessen:** Can conflict become somewhat operational?

**Gillick:** My Irish ancestry proves it.

**Miessen:** Do you consider Gramsci's slow march through the institutions as a still valid thesis?

**Gillick:** No.

# Inappropriate Adjustments
Nebojsa Seric Shoba

This is a scale model of the trenches I tried to dig during the time when I was drafted into the war in Bosnia. As a soldier, I began to dig the trenches in the shape of Piet Mondrian's painting *Broadway Boogie Woogie*. Unfortunately I was immediately arrested by security officers as I was digging these trenches. I did not succeed in explaining to the officers that this act of digging was actually an art project made on the front lines. This project reconstructs my memory of those years, and the actual battlefield where I happened to be–because I couldn't choose not to be there.



After the war, I started messing around and doing all different kinds of things. This is merely a plastic tree among the "real" trees. The title is just "Forever young," which is really kind of a strange thing to be.

This is one of my first exhibitions after the war in a gallery. The only way to access this place was by going down the stairs from the entrance. I removed the stairs so that no audience could access the entire space of the gallery. They became totally alienated from the space, which became some kind of an object of desire.

I did a project for Manifesta in Luxemburg in 1998. In the middle of a huge space, I mounted a glass bar with just one golden-plated door-handle.

This is a project I did in 1999. There was a discussion about post-war Bosnia and what the Bosnian government flag was supposed to mean for Bosnian citizens… On the national day of Bosnia, I designed a transparent plastic flag and mounted it in the center of the town.  There could be no disagreement about what the flag could mean if nobody could identify national symbols. But all the flags I made disappeared overnight due to corrupt local politicians who decided to take them away.  It is interesting that people really liked them.  I believe the transparent flag was really representing the people's opinion at the time and their own emotions.



For seven or eight years I've been taking pictures of battlefields all over the world. I started with Israel.  Now there is a forest, but it was actually a battlefield.  This place was an incredible example of suffering. And suddenly now you have this beautiful little town, where everything is so cute and nice.

This photograph is from Mostar, in Bosnia. It is an example of how everything there is, in a way, divided. It is also a way to present the nature of the Bosnian condition. At the same time, we are in the European context but we are not in Europe. We are just next door, living in the same building, so to speak, but one that is totally disturbing the other.

This is a piece about power that I did in 2000. The buttons on the remote represent the various choices we have for engaging in society, economy, religion, politics and philosophy. But we have no reason to believe that pressing any of these buttons will actually work.

I am really obsessed with pictures of kids who are politically engaged. Some happen to be the children of political candidates. The way we raise our kids will determine their future. The way we raise our kids, after all, is how our world will be shaped.

I think of the eagle as some kind of governmental symbol. I don't know how many countries have an eagle in their flags or in their symbols. The idea of peace is always grabbed by an aggressive power. This work is supposed to appear fascist, it is not supposed to be a symbol of peace.

What is tragedy? Tragedy is really hard to describe, actually. On the left side you have a famous Roman sculpture, I think from the 4th or 5th century, of a dying soldier who is pushing himself off the ground. On the other side, you have the exact same scene, except that the figure is a sportsman. On television, sport is the only possible tragedy. Everything else is just news.



This is the machete I made in the shape of Manhattan. It is just a normal machete. It is not supposed to be anything special. It is a machete I am going to use in my garden.

# The Ruin Isn't What it Used to Be

Sean Kelley

People routinely say that Eastern State Penitentiary–an abandoned prison turned historic site in Philadelphia–is one of the most evocative places they have visited.

The building embodied a revolutionary idea: that prisoners could be reformed through strict isolation. It is the world's first true "Penitentiary," a prison designed to inspire penitence, or true regret, in the hearts of inmates.  The building had running water and central heat before the White House, and more than three hundred prisons on five continents are modeled after Eastern State Penitentiary.

The prison remained in use for 142 years. When it finally closed, in 1971, it was already ancient. (At least by American standards.)



From 1971 until the early 1990s, the complex of buildings was almost totally abandoned.  Vandals smashed toilets, roofs leaked, and skylights collapsed under their own weight.

We opened the building for tours in 1994.  The site was in a profound state of architectural ruin.  We chose to accept the ruinous state of the building.  After all, even a fully restored prison would lack its most defining characteristic: men and women held against their will.  Are those stories easier or more difficult to evoke in a ruin? We believe that the site is more powerful, more evocative, in its current photogenic state of *stabilized ruin*.



But this is where things get complicated.  We say we want to keep the building in a state of stabilized ruin, but do we really?  Is it even possible?  How do you bring 100,000 visitors through a ruin?

And what are visitors supposed to take away from their visits?  What messages are implied by today's landscape of ruin, restoration, artifacts, signage and, let's face it, crude visitor amenities?



Parts of the building are, indeed, still ruinous.  We often leave debris, shattered furniture, and broken windows as they are.  A quick Google image search will find hundreds of Eastern State photos, all taken in the last year or two, that make the building appear completely, totally abandoned.



But we have to add things to the environment.   We added this handicapped-accessible ramp in 2002.  We modeled the look of the ramp after the stairs, doors and fencing added to Eastern State in its last years.  These latest additions were metal, bulky, and ugly.  We chose not to coat the steel on our ramp, so it would rust over time.  It now looks like it's been there for fifty years.  We assume that visitors will understand that a wheelchair ramp is a modern addition.

Here's a fence, added around the same time. Would you guess it's new? We hope so. Maybe the wheels would tip you off.

Everything we add can be removed without altering the building. There are exceptions, of course, but the rule generally holds. Almost everything is reversible.



The other year we restored some benches, and purchased a few new free-standing benches as well. We looked for materials that wouldn't be jarring, with lines that imitated the lines of the original benches. They still look too new to us. We've discussed using sandpaper to dull their shine.



Even our ticketing desk is designed to evoke the feeling of the place. The staff stands above the arriving visitor, looking down. Built out of plate steel and expanded metal, the designer called it "The Two-Ton Monster" as he assembled it. Then one day he realized that it might actually weigh more. The lights mimic the desk lamps that officers had on their cellblock desks in the 1950s and 1960s.

Is this theater? Are we manipulating visitors' emotions? Perhaps. We hope that the effect is subtle, and that visitors know, for the most part, what we've added and what's original. Someone did once ask if the ticketing desk was a prison artifact. But I think that's rare.

Yes, we make visitors sign waivers to enter.



When we first opened the baseball diamond to the public, we debated if we should even cut the grass. The argument to cut the grass won out (I was an advocate), and today the grass is neatly trimmed several times a month. There are even a few picnic tables.

I argued that the unkempt grass would simply be an aesthetic choice. Although the uncut grass looked great against the crumbling building, it made it more difficult for visitors to imagine the prison when it was running. Tens of thousands of visitors a year cross that ball field. Were we going to pretend the site is completely overgrown?

We cut the grass for the same two reasons we occasionally sweep the main corridors through which visitors walk: it's a simple way to help people



imagine the active prison, and not doing so would, eventually, make a visit to the site pretty obnoxious.

We face a whole new set of challenges when we stabilize or preserve the building's historic fabric. This set of corridors, where Cellblocks 2, 10 and 11 merge, had been altered extensively over the building's history. What

remained was a roof that could no longer shed water, and was in immanent danger of collapse. This ceiling and roof of this entire area had to be removed and replaced, from scratch.

We debated what the ceiling should look like when we replaced it. We could easily have crackle-coated the surface (we run a huge haunted house, after all, but more on that later), and made it look old again.

But we thought that here, visitors had no real chance to understand that they were looking at a restored surface. We didn't want to cross over into creating a completely false environment. We believe that the prison's authenticity is one of its primary strengths. So we let the ceiling look new.

I think we made the right decision. I also hate this area now. It's just too new looking. It distracts visitors. At least the new skylight is leaking, damaging the new plaster. So there is hope….



The Cellblock 2/10/11 roof repair led to another hard choice. Our old, rusting guard tower was staining the new metal roof below. The rust running off the tower was corrosive, and had to be kept off the new roof.

We had two choices: clear-coat the tower, inhibiting the rust while keeping the appearance of rust, or give it a fresh coat of paint. We chose, again, to be honest, and return the tower to its original (quite ugly) color.



Visitors also encounter signage throughout the building. There are currently more than fifty signs, most showing historic photos and including a paragraph or two of text. Fifty signs may sound like a lot, but in a building this size it's surprising how few there are.

The audio tour is narrated by former officers and inmates, where possible. Sometimes it was not possible to get an "alumnus," as we sometimes call them, to narrate a stop. In these cases someone on our staff today narrates the stop. Every person whose voice appears on the audio tour is also pictured on the signage.

This leads to odd collections of photos on the signs, sometimes mixing young tour guides' faces with inmates who are long dead (but recorded years ago). I think Slought's Aaron Levy finds the little photos jarring. "I even saw one of *you!*" he said to me in the cellblocks one day.



Many of our visitors want to hear about ghost sightings. So yes, we did include one sign, tucked away, that addresses peoples' interest. It makes no claim that the prison is haunted. Not that this sign embarrasses me. I'm just saying.

There is also a sign that addresses movies filmed at Eastern State.

But I think the majority of our programming is pretty substantial. We may have a sign about ghost sightings, but we also have two signs about issues of sexuality within the prison (both nineteenth and twentieth century issues, which were quite different). There are about thirty prison museums in the country, and, to my knowledge, we are the only to address this topic.

The signs are marked as "parental discussion advised," which is a sure way to get kids to seek them out.



Our main audio tour is no joke. It addresses issues of race and segregation, and spends quite a bit of time addressing early 19th century prison reform movements and details of the architectural innovation that helped make Eastern State so noteworthy.

Being an audio tour, it's hard to illustrate here. I hope you'll experience it at the site.

This photo is staged, of course. (The sweet looking woman is my mother.) Real visitors taking the audio tour are usually pretty stone-faced, which turns out to be a good thing. Exit surveys tell us that they generally find the tour thought provoking and memorable.

We still haven't gotten quite used to meeting groups of visitors walking in absolute silence through the building. It can be a bit creepy.

Visitors also find artists' installations around the site. This is Nick Cassway's *Portraits of Inmates in the Death Row Population Sentenced as Juveniles* (2001-2003). Cassway stenciled the portraits onto plate steel, and then let the steel rust over several tour seasons. He coated each plate, halting the rusting process, as the states executed their inmates.

The U.S. Supreme Court declared the policy of execution for prisoners convicted of crimes committed while under eighteen unconstitutional in 2003.



Here's one of Linda Brenner's *Ghost Cats*. The plaster cats memorialize a colony of strays that lived in the building during its period of abandonment in the 1970s, 1980s, and early 1990s. A volunteer named Dan McCloud fed the cats three times a week for 28 years.

We neutered the cats when we opened for historic tours, and the last cat died the same year that Dan did. The cats are plaster, and are designed to age. We lose a few each year. The prisoners, the cats, Dan, museum administrators; none of us will be here forever.

We print a brochure with the location of all 29 cats (there used to be 39).

Artist William Cromar has recreated a Guantanamo Bay chain link cell inside one of Eastern State's heavy stone cells. The effect is like a ship in a bottle.

The two plastic buckets are for fresh water and human waste. There's even a Koran suspended in a surgical mask, just like the cells in Cuba. The arrow on the concrete points to Mecca.

Our signs simply explain the contents of the cell.



Ilan Sandler replaced the doors in Cellblock 10, using text from conversations he'd had with his parents. (The original cell doors were long ago stolen.) Recordings of his parents' heartbeats played throughout the cellblock. He made the recordings as his parents discussed the murder of Ilan's sister Simone, strangled in Toronto in 1995. The title, *Arrest*, refers both to his family's desire for relief from the experience, and Simone's unsolved murder.

We get very few artists' proposals expressing the need for prisons or the impact of violence and crime. I wish more artists found this an interesting subject, just to balance out the other work on the property. Ilan's piece surprised us with its lack of anger. It was mostly an expression of confusion and pain.

This piece was on exhibit from 2001 to 2004. It was one of our most powerful installations.
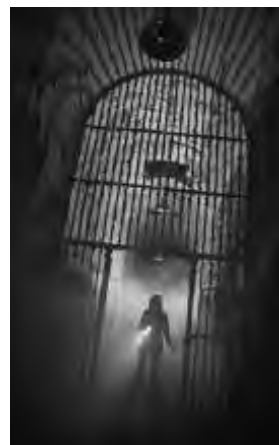


All this is funded, largely, by a haunted house we run every fall called "Terror Behind the Walls." It provides about 60% of our annual operating income.

We do try to keep some of our historic site mission in mind as we design the event each year (we're probably the only haunted house in America without an execution scene), but in reality we do spend a lot of time turning our National Historic Landmark into a haunted house. In the fall, historic site visitors sometimes see innocuous Halloween stuff around, mostly gates and tents. We think it's not that distracting.

Sometimes when I say I work at Eastern State, people say "Oh, that haunted house?" That happened for the first time a few years ago. I die a little inside each time I hear that….

The building isn't a ruin.  It's not abandoned.  With nearly 150,000 visitors in 2006, we can hardly even say it's off the beaten track.

I used to worry about an outside force (the City, for instance, which owns the property) destroying the evocative, thought-provoking potential of Eastern State.  The potential for a schlocky tourist attraction is just so great.

But I now worry more about selling the place out from the inside.  You would think the success of the Halloween event would free us to make principled decisions during the rest of the year.  And to a degree it does.  But the lure of audience and revenue is strong.  More people visit for the haunted house each season than for the historic tours, after all.  All of us on the board and staff struggle with this.  The decisions are somewhat arbitrary.
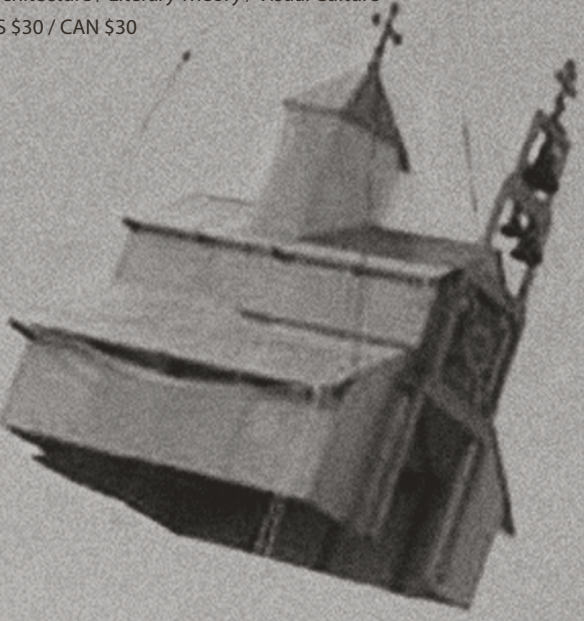
For now, I'm actually quite proud of our Substantial/Sensational balance.  You'll have to judge for yourselves.

Katherine Carl is the James Gallery Curator and Deputy Director of the Center for the Humanities at The Graduate Center at the City University of New York.  She is co-founder of the School of Missing Studies, and former curator of contemporary art at The Drawing Center.  She recently completed a doctoral dissertation on conceptual art of the 1960s and 1970s in Yugoslavia.

Aaron Levy is the Executive Director and Chief Curator of Slought Foundation, and a lecturer in the Department of English at the University of Pennsylvania.  Publications include *Architecture on Display,* a living history of the Venice Architecture Biennale (Architectural Association, 2010). He recently submitted a doctoral dissertation at the University of Leeds exploring complicity and the cultural politics of display.

Srdjan Jovanovic Weiss is a Serbian-born architect and theorist. He is an Assistant Professor at Tyler School of Art, Architecture Department, Temple University, principal of Normal Architecture Office (NAO), and a co-founder of the School of Missing Studies.  He is currently completing a PhD dissertation on the Architecture of Balkanization at Goldsmiths College, University of London.

**Evasions of Power: On the Architecture of Adjustment** contributes to ongoing discourses about human rights, geopolitical conflict, and territorial sovereignty, with contributions from an array of practitioners from fields including art, literature, philosophy, architecture, and urban studies. Exploring overlooked urban zones, state borders, enclaves, and extra- territorial sites throughout the world, contributors probe contemporary perspectives on power and its evasions.

*Contributions by Carlos Basualdo, Lindsay Bremner, Eduardo Cadava, Katherine Carl, Teddy Cruz, Keller Easterling, Anselm Franke, Deborah Gans, Liam Gillick, Jeanne van Heeswijk, Manuel Herz, David Kazanjian, Dennis Kaspori, Sean Kelley, Sanjay Krishnan, Laura Kurgan, Aaron Levy, Catherine Liu, Jill Magid, Detlef Mertins, Markus Miessen, John Palmesino, Nebojsa Seric Shoba, Taryn Simon, Samuel Weber, Srdjan Jovanovic Weiss, and Eyal Weizman*

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*Image: The military of the former Yugoslavia install a shrine on a hilltop on behalf of the Serbian Orthodox Church (Montenegro , 2005).*