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NEW MEDIA, NEW PUBLICS?

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New Media, New Publics?

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Wenner-Gren Symposium Supplement 15

Leslie C. Aiello

Figure 1. Participants in the symposium "New Media, New Publics?" *Front row, from left*: Laurie Obbink (Wenner-Gren), Joe Masco, Daniel Salas (Wenner-Gren), Gabriella Coleman, Rosalind Morris, Mary Murrell, Maria José de Abreu (organizer), Patsy Spyer, Kajri Jain, Winnie Won Yin Wong, Rosa Norton. *Second row, from left*: Chris Kelty, Rebecca Stein, Charles Hirschkind (organizer), Zeynep Gürsel, Sha Xin Wei, Martin Zillinger, Alex Dent, Carlo Caduff (organizer), Leslie Aiello (Wenner-Gren). A color version of this figure is available online.

New Media, New Publics? was the 151st symposium in the Wenner-Gren series and is the fifteenth open-access supplement of the Foundation's journal, *Current Anthropology*. The symposium was organized by Charles Hirschkind (University

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of California, Berkeley), Maria José de Abreu (Columbia University), and Carlo Caduff (Kings College London) and was held March 13–19, 2015, at Tivoli Palácio de Seteais in Sintra, Portugal (fig. 1).

Technological advancements falling under the category of "new media" are pervasive in modern society around the world, and it is rare to see particularly young people on the streets without a smart phone in hand. New media is changing the way

people engage with each other as well as the conditions of social and societal mobilization. Connectivity and interactivity also are related to issues of surveillance, data and mega-data mining, and targeted marketing, and these issues raise the important question of what is public and private in society today.

New Media, New Publics? brought together 18 anthropologists from around the world to engage with these topics and more. The organizers stress that their aim was to move past debates "commonly invoked by the pundits of new media and their fetishistic focus on new technology" (Hirschkind, de Abreu, and Caduff 2017). Rather, the papers in this issue emphasize the ethnography of new media and specifically the relationships between new media and public life in specific places and at specific times. New media is broadly defined, and this accounts for contributions as seemingly disparate as massive roadside monuments of mostly Hindu deities in India (Jain 2017), Internet policy and law in Brazil (Dent 2017), social mobilization in the aftermath of the deadly attacks on the satirical journal *Charlie Hebdo* (Gürsel 2017), hacker culture and politics (Coleman 2017), and libraries, books, and mass digitalization (Murrell 2017). This makes for a rich collection of work that challenges preconceived ideas of "new media" and the many ways it impacts modern life.

The question of privacy is a major concern, and woven through all of the papers are the dichotomies of identity and anonymity, freedoms and control, and the public and private. As the organizers emphasize "the very impulse to surrender nearly everything for public viewing is increasingly engineered into digital infrastructures" (Hirschkind, de Abreu, and Caduff 2017). Our personal lives are becoming more and more public, and mega-data are intruding into our individual worlds. The question of privacy has received considerable anthropological attention, and this collection of papers continues the conversation begun in the Wenner-Gren Symposium *The Life and Death of the Secret* (Manderson et al. 2015). This prior symposium focused more on privacy and secrecy in the museum and medical spheres and less on the forms of new media that have made privacy such a focus of attention. However, together these two symposia and their resulting papers provide a comprehensive examination of some of the vexing issues facing modern society and the complex interrelationships between the rapidly changing media landscapes and the publics engaged with this ongoing revolution.

These two symposia complement other recent Wenner-Gren symposia that have taken up a variety of issues facing the modern world. These include plagues and mass epidemics (Herring and Swedlund 2010), new medical practices that change concepts of the human potential (Taussig, Hoeyer, and Helmreich

2013), economic crises and the economy (Narotzky and Besnier 2014), and poverty in urban environments (Das and Randeria 2015). They also resonate with other symposia on ethics (Meskell and Pels 2005) and the necessity for anthropologists to engage with the public outside of the academy (e.g., Low and Merry 2010; Welker, Partridge, and Hardin 2011). This is a welcome trend emphasizing anthropology's relevance to modern life.

Wenner-Gren symposia provide a unique opportunity for invited scholars to meet for intensive discussion of "big" issues in anthropology. Symposia are partnerships between the Foundation and the academic organizers, and we are always looking for new and important ideas from all branches of anthropology for future symposia and eventual *CA* publication. Please contact us with your proposals. Information about the Wenner-Gren Foundation, the symposium program, and what constitutes a good symposium topic can be found on the Foundation's website (http://wennergren.org/programs/international -symposia).

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New Media, New Publics?

An Introduction to Supplement 15

by Charles Hirschkind, Maria José A. de Abreu, and Carlo Caduff

In this special issue, we examine how publics are brought into being through historically specific media practices. We treat the question of new media as an invitation to explore changing conditions of communication across a number of ethnographic locations. We argue that these changing conditions have challenged our capacity to understand the nature of publics. It is important to emphasize that none of the contributors perceives new media as a coherent object of attention that can easily be isolated as an entity; nor do the contributors locate its novelty in its digital format. Instead, they examine modes of mediation that entail the technological but are not reducible to it. This approach allows anthropologists to keep the referent of new media open and remain attentive to emerging forms of public life that are working outside of or adjacent to the logics of both the digital and the technological. Our hope is that this collection of essays contributes to an anthropological understanding of media that illuminates important aspects of the political economic present, attends to the erosion and reanimation of anonymity in public life, and captures dynamics of staging, projection, and response within and across ethnographic sites.

In the opening scenes of *Fahrenheit 451*, firefighters raid a private home in search of books to burn. They are trainees whose search concentrates on the hiding places favored by those who illegally keep books in the interior of electric devices like lamps or heaters. In a scene of the film, a firefighter takes off the screen of a TV set and finds in its hollow space a stack of books. Instead of drawing our attention to the technological apparatus of the television we are directed to another medium: the book.

Made in 1966, two years after the publication of *Understanding Media*, Truffaut's filmic adaptation of Bradbury's book (Bradbury 1953) visually recasts McLuhan's famous dictum that one medium's content is always another medium (McLuhan 1964). It does so, however, by burrowing out the television medium of its content. Perhaps by remediating into film a book about books, Truffaut really believed that, despite its greater combustibility, film would survive and help preserve the book as an object under threat, not unlike microphotography did in the past to counter the perishability of paper.

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What we are told in the film, however, is that the prime reason why books must be burned has to do with the effects they produce on the reading public. "Books disturb people. They make them anti-social," says Montag, the film's main character. The view of the authorities, we learn, is that books unnecessarily deepen and complexify the emotional and intellectual life of their readers, creating an obstacle to the light cheeriness and shallow conversation that make social happiness possible. Moreover, as fire chief Captain Beatty asserts, books are unfit to accommodate the rhythms brought by new media. The new technology in question is interactive television, a device that extends across much of the interior wall space within the home. Instead of the encumbering depths of human experience encountered in the book, television captivates its audience with banal, mind-numbing programs engineered to engender and protect the shallow psychology on which both happiness and social harmony depend.

Surveillance is omnipresent in Truffaut's imagined future. Throughout the entire film, a dim spotlight illuminates the center of the screen, framing the action's capture by media and signaling the presence of an invisible gaze originating at the same location occupied by the film's spectator. Within this panoptic dystopia, speech rarely retains a content beyond its merely phatic function, its telegraphic economy and predictability (its digital simplicity, we might say) mirroring the operations of the technological media that condition and produce it. Truffaut's dystopian view about the forms of interactivity engendered within this techno-mediatic milieu are dramatized in the title sequence scenes where the highly mechanical male voice reciting the credits overlaps with the camera's abrupt zooming in to the TV antennas that sit atop the roofs. Here

mechanized, authoritarian speech telescopes down its essential aspect, the material conditions of its broadcast, represented in the antennas.

Despite its hierarchical model of communication, the themes and anxieties that traverse *Fahrenheit 451* are strikingly contemporary with our own techno-mediatic moment: the fascination with new forms of interactive media, the threat of displacement of one medium by another, tensions between progress and preservation, the specter of mass surveillance and authoritarian rule lurking behind the seductive surface of new technologies, and the ever-present fear of losing touch with ourselves and others. In light of this continuity of experience across more than five decades, scholars increasingly wonder what is "new" in new media. How can this elusive category be circumscribed? While many scholars have taken up the problem of definition, we believe that the analytical force of the category "new media" lies precisely in its resilience and seduction, less in the answers it may offer than the questions it enables us to pose anew regarding our political economic present.

Under the Spell

Listening to the latest pronouncements of the prophets of technological revolution, it seems that we are on the verge of a new age. The epochal transformation that is presumably unfolding today corresponds with the rise of new media and the connectivity and interactivity it is making possible. The benefits that the technological infrastructure of communication promises to provide us are vast: more equality, freedom and democracy, better education, a radical extension and enrichment of our social relationships, an intensification and proliferation of our pleasures. Today, "hundreds of millions of people are, each minute, creating and consuming an untold amount of digital content" (Schmidt and Cohen 2014:3). The exceptional speed of transmission and the unprecedented scale of circulation are driving "one of the most exciting social, cultural, and political transformations in history" (Schmidt and Cohen 2014:4).

The breathless optimism animating this type of new media discourse can sustain quite contradictory perceptions about the achievements that media portend. What some endorse passionately as an opportunity to empower consumers and bring competition to the market, others promote as a unique possibility to end poverty and reboot democracy. Ruminations about Facebook and Twitter revolutions cast corporate websites as platforms for progressive politics (Gerbaudo 2012:2). It is the almost unlimited faith in the power of modern technology that enables new media discourse to reconcile such diverse views.

At the heart of this discourse is an enduring fascination with technology, envisioned as an autonomous source of social, cultural, and political change. As the primary cipher by which the progressive movement of modernity is measured and celebrated, technology is invested with extraordinary powers to solve the problems that afflict societies (Larkin 2008; Mrázek 2002; Nye 1994). As such, it is made to embody the utopian dreams that undergird the teleology of modernity. This fascination for the

technological occurs in tandem with a radical overvaluation, or misrecognition, of its consequences, evident in an overemphasis on technological solutions, and a concomitant neglect of the political and economic determinants of social problems. Yet, despite, or perhaps because of, its frequent failure to perform the role of magic bullet assigned to it, technology remains a persistent object of investment.

Today, new media bears the promise of universal political enfranchisement in the form of "access," the term by which projects of democratic inclusion are being reimagined and reengineered (Hansen 2004; Kelty 2017; Logan 2010). Political and economic divides are increasingly recast as digital divides. Humanitarian efforts to diminish the entrenched inequalities between North and South find new optimism in the project of extending the infrastructure of digital technology around the globe. Access to the latest media technologies is assumed to determine whether one is an agent of history or a silent passenger, and thus, whether one is living in the present or the past (Mattelart 2010; Mazzarella 2010*a*; Strassler 2010).

Sutured to a liberal democratic imaginary, the notion of new media performs an ideological function deeply informed by the concepts of civil society and the public sphere. Indeed, contrasting usage of the closely linked terms "social media" and "new media" parallels distinctions associated with these two concepts. On the one hand, social media, like civil society, articulates a domain of social engagement outside the sphere of state power, a space idealized as a site of human agency and emancipation, grounded in relationships of unfettered, unregulated social and economic exchange. As in the capitalist market from which it derives, value here is understood to be determined on the basis of practices of free exchange. On the other hand, new media gives shape to a public sphere where citizens may encounter one another in abstraction from the conditions of differential wealth and power that divide them, and may, through their discursive interactions within this arena, exercise political agency. New media holds out the promise of a revolution that will allow people to be directly involved in the institutions that shape the conditions of their lives, to realize the potential that old media failed to achieve (Aouragh 2011; Coleman 2010; Gitelman 2006).

Passing beyond equally simplistic condemnations and celebrations in our explorations, we refused the temptation to come up with an answer and assume a stable referent for the entity called "new media." Instead, we approached the new as a form of expectation oriented toward the future, as an everreceding horizon of what is to come. We concluded that it is important, both analytically and politically, for any anthropological account to read the "new" in new media not in a sequential sense but in a structural one. The future orientation that is so characteristic for the speculative economy of technological modernity creates the endless frontier that is driving consumer capitalism today. Much like the consuming subject who strains toward, without ever arriving at, a state of full satisfaction, so the lure of the new lies in its constant deferral into the future. The promise of the new, therefore, hinges less

on the possibility of its arrival than, paradoxically, on its capacity to withdraw, less on a stage or point in time than a structural movement that keeps alive the desire for the new itself.

This desire for the new is of course itself highly mediated. The new is grounded in the conditions of the present that assign it such a status (Caduff 2015). This means that the new is not only that which is staged as new but also the very apparatus through which such staging occurs. It is a mode of engagement with time itself through the medium of the new. It suggests a scene of potentiality, a place for projection and response that can extend in multiple directions. For example, when we refer to a particular technology as new, its newness may actually imply different orientations to time. Television (particularly news broadcasting) is a medium that potentializes the present around indeterminate futures (de Abreu 2013; Doanne 1990). This stands in contrast to the *noeme* that Roland Barthes associated with photography's temporal quality of pastness, or film with its forward motion (Barthes 1981). Thus, the question of the new is not simply a historical one (When was a technology new?) (Benjamin 1969). The question of the new is a question about forms of mediation and how these forms themselves structure orientations in time.

Additionally, the newness of new media emerges from the open and unpredictable nature of media processes and the ability of these processes to interact and interrupt each other. The experience of newness is an experience of instability and interference. This means that the question of new media centers not on technological things that can be isolated as distinct entities but on relationships among media practices and processes of mediation.

Accordingly, the new media stories that readers will encounter in this issue are neither stories about laptops, tablets, and smartphones nor tales from Facebook, Twitter, and Flickr. Our aim is to reach beyond concerns commonly invoked by the pundits of new media and their fetishistic focus on new technology. Indeed, our considerations of the semiotic specificities traversing older and newer media only confirmed the unproductive nature of such a divide. As McLuhan noted, "a new medium is never an addition to an old one, nor does it leave the old one in peace" (McLuhan 1964:174). Depriving the new of its sequential sense allows us to undercut the exceptional status of the present, and thus avoid the perception of new media as singularly powerful technologies of social, cultural, and political transformation. Instead, the contributors to this special issue concentrate on interactions and interruptions that mark moments of public life in specific places at specific times.

In their essays, Kajri Jain, Patricia Spyer, and Martin Zillinger investigate relationships among media that have made processes of mediation a focus of public life itself. In her account of monumental roadside statues, Kajri Jain explores the way in which agonistic media have emerged over the past two decades in India (Jain 2017). What the massive monuments of mostly Hindu deities reveal are social antagonisms, which they expose and intensify. Drawing on historical and ethnographic

research, Jain traces the emergence of a public that relies on religious patronage, paternalist projects of development, and populist politics. Tracing the proliferation of monumental statues across India's network of highways, she calls our attention to the interplay between these two forms, how, for example, gigantic religious icons are painted with the same color as modern cars, in ways that aesthetically as well as historically suggest a circuit between the old and the new, the static and the mobile, a circuit that is generating its own turbulences.

In her essay on the aesthetic of the cut and the accident, Patricia Spyer engages two media forms (Spyer 2017). The first media form is the Muslim VCD circulated in wartime Maluku, Indonesia, the second the Muslim Power mural. If the former's narrative unfolds through interruption and discontinuity, enabled technically by means of jump-cuts and close-ups, the latter, by contrast, aspires to permanence and continuity. Spyer goes on to suggest that there is a relation between those two economies of the aesthetic whereby the cut in the former contrasts with the desired wholeness and integrity of the latter. But despite such differences on a formal level, both aesthetic regimes integrate a constitutive indeterminacy as part and parcel of what Spyer calls "an accidental public." Both Jain and Spyer affirm the notion that any medium is at once a site in its own right, as well as a complex of agonistic relationships with other processes of mediation that prevents the substitution of one medium by another.

In Martin Zillinger's essay we find a similar tension between expansion and containment (Zillinger 2017). In Zillinger's study the competition is between trance entrepreneurs in Morocco who seek to generate publicity while circumscribing it within the bounds of morally and politically acceptable arenas that define a public in local terms. The bodily movements of the entranced are deeply shaped by the audio and visual media that are deployed in spiritual music performances. Zillinger then shows how ritual reliability can be maintained across multiple sites through the capacity of technology to adjust to local contingencies. This means that media do not simply frame rituals of trance, but they play an integral role in the production of transitions—and of transgressions—between different spheres of ritual practice. Together these three essays examine publics that replicate certain forms of the bourgeois public sphere but also depart from it. They suggest that the changing conditions of communication are challenging our capacity to understand the nature of publics.

From Publics to Publicness

The enthusiasm with which scholars turned to publics two decades ago, a turn often associated with the event of the publication in English of Jürgen Habermas's *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere* (Habermas 1989), has been superseded by a certain nervousness and skepticism over the adequacy of the notion to the contemporary political and mediatic moment. This discomfort is registered in the increasing recourse to a variety of concepts that serve to reframe questions

previously explored through the lens of the public: networks, crowds, swarms, infrastructure, the multitude (Borch 2006; Hardt and Negri 2004; Larkin 2013; Law and Hassard 1999; Mazzarella 2010*b*; van Dijk 1999).

One explanation for this loss of faith in both the liberatory and explanatory power of the concept of the public owes to a heightened anxiety regarding the central dichotomies of liberal political thought: identity and anonymity, freedom and control, and most dramatically, public and private. While a tension and instability between these binary terms is hardly novel, and indeed may be seen as an essential feature of liberal governance, the current insecurity and volatility of the boundaries and practices authorized by these notions has rendered them a particularly productive site for contemporary liberal inquiry, evident in the proliferation of scholarly and popular discourses on the dissolution of private life. These discourses also highlight how the contemporary compulsion to capture and disseminate on social media every aspect of personal life has made it increasingly difficult to recognize and sustain those features of self and society that cannot be accommodated within the formats and protocols of such media (Ravetto-Biagioli 2013). The very impulse to surrender nearly everything for public viewing is increasingly engineered into digital infrastructures. Our cell phones, for example, are jammed with an increasing number of applications, all of which encourage and facilitate the choice to publicly disseminate every personal impression, encounter, and event through the latest social media channels (Wasik 2015).

Second, the felt erosion of prior logics of public and private is being further propelled by the fact that the digital technologies upon which many everyday activities increasingly depend collect and archive untold quantities of information about us and make it available to interested parties, whether corporate or state. Through tracking and data-mining software found throughout the devices we use, we involuntarily transmit a record of ourselves to unknown individual, commercial, and governmental interests, including whom and when we call, what online content we view, where we travel, what we buy, where we stay, and so on. Such practices of data collection make personal preferences, desires, habits, patterns of attention, uptake, and response visible to others and, hence, further undermine the possibility of claiming a space of immunity from the illumination of publicity. We seem increasingly caught in forms of communication that encourage us to digitally surrender ever more dimensions of what we may consider to be our personal lives. The electronic footprints left by our fashion whims, political solidarities, hobbies, medical worries, and sexual appetites illuminate our lives in ways that destabilize prior organizations of visibility and obscurity upon which key dimensions of our subjectivity relied. The information gathered on our personal passions, desires, and interests by corporations are recursively deployed to structure and modify the online environments we inhabit, so as to better anticipate our proclivities in a manner conducive to increased profit taking by corporations. The search engines that we have at hand seem to already know what we wish to know. The dream of personalized advertisement is not to transform our proclivities but to capture our preferences, anticipate our desires, and present us with a perfect profile of ourselves. Thus, the indetermination, unpredictability, and openness we value in public interaction is felt to be increasingly circumscribed by norms emanating from the algorithms of corporate strategists.

As many authors have emphasized, the public and the private are not stable sociological or political domains; these terms operate as flexible evaluative grid (Agamben 2015; Cody 2011; Gal 2002; Meyer and Moors 2006; Povinelli 2006). The analytical and rhetorical labor that these terms perform is always relative to the ethnographic contexts in which they are deployed as ideological frame to assign value to specific objects and practices. This is not to say, of course, that contemporary forms of data collection do not pose a threat to key dimensions of a liberal political order but only that such a threat cannot be analyzed in terms of a dissolution of a clear and stable boundary between public and private.

Third, as the National Security Agency documents published by Edward Snowden dramatically brought to light, digital technologies have enabled an expansion and intensification of practices of state surveillance centered on the collection of the electronic metadata generated in every digitally mediated act we undertake. In the so-called War on Terror, every person is now a potential suspect who is automatically subjected to secret surveillance programs with potentially unlimited reach. Enabled by the latest data-mining software programs, governments around the globe scan and analyze vast databases assembled from computer, cell phone, and credit card use, allowing state intelligence agencies to create complex maps of our social connections, political or religious affiliations, travel, employment, and other aspects of personal life.

In addition, states are increasingly involved in new forms of online intervention beyond surveillance. While state practices of regulating and censoring web-based content are the most overt forms of this intervention, state intelligence agencies are also involved in a wide range of digital activities, among them the creation of fake online persona aimed at shaping online conversation; developing hacking capabilities that allow access to, or the subversion of, corporate or state institutional targets; and the mass dissemination of state propaganda within social media channels.

Critical accounts of surveillance typically insist on the value of privacy. Yet privacy is not a remedy; it is the instrument that enables security concerns to expand to ever more domains of our personal life (Lippert and Walby 2013). Exemplary is the growing wariness around exposure to electronic surveillance and control that has become a concern of ordinary citizens who are worried about possible intrusions into their privacy. Technologies of electronic evasion and content deletion are now marketed as indispensable instruments of citizenly prudence, similar to home insurance and investment diversification. More and more people today seek out ways to cover their tracks, to disguise their online presence, both through such technological

means as encryption software and by attempting to ensure that their digital selves remain as incoherent and indecipherable as possible across the diverse channels of communication they use. The amorphous threat against which we are encouraged to protect ourselves seems to embrace everything from corporate spies, to independent data thieves, to the state itself. The global market for security solutions is expanding exponentially. Such solutions regulate, and thus enable, the circulation of information. What these solutions offer to the concerned citizen is a form of strangerhood, enabled by the same technologies that are threatening to abolish it. Once celebrated as an instrument of our unbridled mobility across the digital frontier, the avatar has now become the cage that may well entrap us.

And yet, it is worth remembering here that the avatar has always been bound up with the development and expansion of new technologies of information gathering and archive creation, its promise of anonymity always conditioned by expanding possibilities for identifying, knowing, and serving its users. From this perspective, contemporary anxieties around the avatar might be understood less as a symptom of a disappearing anonymity than as cipher of the rapidly shifting and unpredictable balance between visibility and obscurity within today's media ecology.

Michael Warner noted that the concern with personal freedom encourages people to "identify both themselves and their politics with privacy" (Warner 2005):193. This identification with privacy has resulted in a growing demand for personal security. The purpose of security, as a political necessity and technological challenge, is to create a "private public sphere" (Warner 2005). And that, it seems, is exactly what social media offer: the fantasy of a space of communication made up of private public spheres where one can enjoy the freedom of sharing snippets of one's life with friends and followers. Those who engage in practices of public "life streaming" do not necessarily think of themselves as speaking to strangers. What they typically imagine as address amounts to a "post-public sphere public" (Berlant 2011:223).

Rosalind Morris suggests that the current conditions require us to think "publicness beyond the public sphere, in the non-spaces of a networked world" (Morris 2013:100). What Morris foregrounds is a type of speech that operates independent of the social imaginary of the classic public sphere. This form of speech does not address strangers, nor does it require the speaker to assume the disembodied identity of a public subject. As Morris notes, social media "enable communication without relation, connection without mediation" (Morris 2013:106). The practice of posting makes it possible for people to publish updates on their personal and professional lives. The subject engaged in such a form of publicness "does not speak as appears to be speaking," the visibility of the speech trumping, if not outright eclipsing, the content of what is said (Morris 2013). Sustained by a sensory epistemology privileging the visual over the verbal register, contemporary digital forums foster practices of self-presentation and self-revelation bereft of the dialectics of representation and transfiguration that se-

cured the agency and coherence of earlier political mobilizations. As a consequence, mass mobilizations today, often established through such practices as crowdsourcing or viral text messaging, spring to life with little relation between participants other than the collective recitation of the rally slogans that brought them out to begin with.

This compulsion to make oneself visible within social media supports a withering of the dialogic forms of engagement, a shift to an ideology of publicity that emphasizes connectivity and circulation over relationality and response. Digital platforms invite people to show up, to visibly present themselves within spaces geared more toward exhibition and exposure than representation and transfiguration, and with little incentive to open oneself up to the uncertainties and contingencies of reciprocal relations.

The social aspect of social media is primarily defined in relation to icons of human interaction and intimacy, like "friends," "followers," "contacts," or "users" (Barker 2008; Chesher 2015). Whereas readers of Baudrillard would see this form of technological sociability as little more than simulacrum, others more inspired by Kittler's materialist thinking would reject at the outset any association of technology with a form of sociality (Lovink 2012). For many observers, however, particularly in the aftermath of the Arab Spring, the promise of social media lies in its capacity to facilitate collective organization, civic engagement, and political action. Online movements deploy communication technologies for fundraising, lobbying, rallying, campaigning, and community building. But to what extent has this explosion of publicness brought (new) publics into being?

Rebecca Stein and Joseph Masco examine this question carefully in their contributions (Masco 2017; Stein 2017). Stein focuses on the Israeli army and looks at the ways in which it increasingly deploys digital cameras as public relations technologies to counter international reporting about its military operations in the occupied territories. The challenge for human rights organizations that work in and on the same terrain is to reveal what the army's combat camera obscures. Significantly, both sides share an overreliance on and an overinvestment in the visual. The power of the image to uncover the truth is typically taken for granted. But the saturation of the visual field by networked technologies and the overwhelming stimulation of the senses have created a new opacity and contributed to a growing numbness. As Stein argues, the new photographic devices fail to do their work; they fail to deliver on their communicative promise. Paradoxically, the demand for more cameras goes along with a demand for less seeing. Visibility has become a fetish disabling the political (Dean 2002).

Similarly, Masco emphasizes that today's media refrain of constant crisis has lost its ability to motivate people and galvanize effective political action (Masco 2017). Focusing on two of the most important existential dangers of our time, nuclear extinction and climate change, Masco suggests that the inability to address these threats signals a new modality of governmentality that can accommodate failure without generating a demand for fundamental structural change. In America's me-

dia cultures, the language of crisis has become "a means of stabilizing an existing condition rather than minimizing forms of violence." Together, Stein's and Masco's contributions highlight the pressure of public communication to constantly renew the sense of the new by virtue of an endless stream of information that only intensifies the growing saturation, obsolescence, and numbness that increasingly characterize contemporary media cultures.

The speed and scale of much of today's media work against processes of collective self-formation that undergirded a modernist political imaginary and that contributed to the transformation of the space of public existence, the constitution of a shared perspective among strangers, and the honing of aptitudes and affective attachments that inform and empower modernist political projects. Today's techno-mediatic conditions tend to undermine the conditions of intersubjective engagement needed to engender these forms of collective action and appraisal. While this in itself is not new and indeed has been noted by many theorists of capitalism (see, among others, Crary 2013), contemporary media environments intensify this process in the types of communication and interaction they mediate.

Politics and the Political

Any engagement with the question of new media must include the politics of media systems but also the mediation of the political as such (Hirschkind and Larkin 2008; Hull 2012; Rafael 2003; Spadola 2013). Within the democratic tradition that so powerfully defines and circumscribes the contemporary scope of our political imagination, the political potential of new media is often seen to pivot on the question of participation: that is, on the extent to which people are directly involved in the institutions that shape the conditions of their own existence. Often obscured in this view, however, is the fact that what gets refracted as direct is both determined by and contingent upon the structures that mediate and condition it.

A key aim in Chris Kelty's contribution is to show how the current trend to think about participation as primarily a technological matter, a feature of our devices that is either working or not, impoverishes a much deeper tradition of thought built on this concept (Kelty 2017). As Kelty reminds us, participation is densely woven into styles of political argument, legitimating discourses, and forms of identity. In his essay, participation appears as a midlevel concept, one that operates in the interstices between political philosophy and administrative science, keeping a foot in each. From political philosophy, it draws sustenance from ideas about the conditions of human flourishing; from administration, it remains attentive to the practicalities of efficiency, control, and productivity. In this sense, it is entrusted to mediate and resolve the irresolvable oppositions of liberal society, between administration and freedom, bureaucracy and justice. It allows people to hold together aspirations from both these domains, a condition that makes it invaluable to modern society. Kelty notes that the solutions achieved by participation will always be close to their points of application

and perhaps, to some extent, always temporary as conditions change.

Even though technologies of tracing are threatening the strangerhood constitutive of publics, forms of anonymity have at the same time become an important force deploying those very techno-mediatic means. What is at stake here is how the erosion of one conception of strangerhood seems to reanimate new logics and practices of reinstating anonymity at the heart of public life. As Gabriella Coleman (2017) suggests in her essay on hacker politics, this anonymity is not given; it must be achieved by virtue of an entire social, cultural, political, and technological education. Coleman's focus is on the Anonymous movement and its politics of protest and direct action. The essay traces the more general practical and historical conditions that shape hacker politics and that inform the political conditions of the heterogeneous activities they pursue. In her account, Coleman highlights the craftiness of hacking as a practice and suggests that it involves an ability to act with some degree of secrecy to evade detection from those who might impede one's agency.

Politically motivated hacker groups rely on electronic skills and technical knowledge to engage in spontaneous forms of protest that support the freedom of the Internet. Coleman argues that hacker activism, despite a strong antiregulatory stance, is not reducible to a purely liberal political project. Hackers constitute what Kelty terms a "recursive public," a public concerned "with the material and practical maintenance and modification of the technical, legal, practical, and conceptual means of its own existence as a public" (Kelty 2008). The type of activism that Anonymous pursues is driven by the desire of actors to make everything public, except their own identity. The social here is faceless, as though exposing the phantasmatic nature of the very infrastructures through which it operates. Paradoxically, the masking of identity makes identification possible: the term "anonymous" operates as a floating signifier; "it comes to signify a new and much expanded kind of anonymity that can potentially include everyone and anyone" (Ravetto-Biagioli 2013:180). Contemporary political activism seems to thrive on substitutability as its intrinsic populist potential; it hinges on potential belonging and, moreover, turns that potential into its very constitutive feature.

In view of these modalities of potential belonging, we think it important to reassess the nature of anonymity. Conventionally, anonymity suggests that the source of a message is unclear or unknown. In the case of confidentiality, the identity of the source is actively protected from public exposure. Attempts to preserve anonymity are paradoxically premised on technologies that enable the capturing and tracing of messages back to their sources. In a certain sense, the history of anonymity is thus always also a history of its disabling tools. For instance, the development of the telephone network in the early twentieth century produced the sense of a person who could hide behind the medium while speaking from an inaccessible beyond (Ronell 1989). What was identifiable was the origin of the call, not the person calling. Similarly, radio broadcasting emerged

in a climate of strict laws against "unintended messages," a notion that was linked with nineteenth-century concerns about the ability of radio to promote radical political agendas. The ostensible aim of radio legislation was to protect innocent listeners from dangerous messages that were "not in the public interest." This emphasis on regulation and control reveals the enormous preoccupation at the time with techniques of accountability in defining the status of subjects, including anonymous subjects. Thus, in the early days of the American radio the motivation behind the broadcasting of messages itself was archived as a backup resource in case the intention behind the message was lost or became unclear. The motivation behind a message was part of its meaning. This practice emerged in response to a rising number of legal cases related to the circulation of images and messages thought to be harmful to public decency. Implied in this normative space wherein messages were allowed to circulate was a growing awareness about the nonlinear nature of mass communication. Moreover, this form of communication was never just *with* publics; it was itself formative *of* publics.

To this day, the right to remain anonymous is legally sanctioned as long as one's actions do not injure the very legal order through which such sanctioning is made possible. This order assumes as unquestionable the notion that communication must be controlled. Anonymity is thus inextricably linked with regimes of regulation and, most of all, with the recognition of the self as a legal entity subject to the law.

Both James Siegel and Michael Warner, in their distinct projects, observe how mass media have created the conditions of possibility for people to hear or see what was not addressed to them in particular (Siegel 1997; Warner 2005). For Siegel, mass media have become the stage for scenes of unintended overhearing: public communication opens speech up to a multiplicity of potential receivers—not just those who are addressed but also those who might overhear what someone said (see also Barker 2008; Berlant 2011:227; Morris 2017). For Warner, this multiplicity beyond the intended receiver of a message is itself intrinsic to the notion of the public. To be part of a public is to be subsumed under the logic of substitution; one can always overhear something else and become part of a discussion somewhere else. In fact, the notion of the public implies this very idea of an elsewhere. Warner's emphasis on the public as a sign of the elsewhere is quite distinct from dyadic speech models, which assume predefined producers and predefined receivers of messages caught in a circuit of communication. The question here is no longer simply who speaks but through what media speaking is possible. If speech itself is always potentially anonymous, it is not because we do not know who speaks but because speech itself has become orphaned, severed from both producer and receiver.

The displacement of authorial subjectivity into the spaces of technological mediated dissemination relegates all messages, at least potentially, to the status of anonymity. In doing so, however, it simultaneously transforms what we conventionally mean by anonymity. The notion of the unintentional is crucial here, but it operates under a different logic than the one predicated on conventional understandings of authorial subjectivity, of propriety, and of the subject in general (Asad 2008; Rose 1993). Rather than being signified in relation to an origin or a destination, anonymity has become the very expression of circulation. Anonymity is that which takes place when words, sounds, and images find themselves in transmission, suspended between origin and destination. As a number of contributions to this issue demonstrate, such anonymity appears today under a variety of social, cultural, political, and economic conditions.

In Winnie Wong's account of Shenzhen, a Special Economic Zone at the forefront of the Chinese economic miracle, fears, fictions, and fakes share an analogous structure around which anxieties concerning the relation between the true and the false escalate (Wong 2017). Rumor seems to be the very foundation of this highly stratified metropolis animated by ever-shifting political boundaries, global economic forces, and volatile social transactions. As scholars noted, the force of rumor dispenses with the author as an anchor of communication. Rumor's performative power derives from the absence of the author as stable point of reference (Bhabha 1994; Das 1998; Guha 1983; Rudé 1959). Its efficacy emerges out of its ability to maintain the indeterminacy of the source, which facilitates its errant spread. Circulation becomes the defining nature of speech without signature. Wong argues that locating rumor in a city like Shenzhen is essential to understanding the kind of transformations that are possible in contemporary China.

Wong reveals the most prominent and preferred spaces of rumor within the larger political economic structure of the region. Such spaces can even generate exportable rumor, much like the fake commodities that enter other equally porous borders, such as the triple border between Brazil, Argentina, and Paraguay that Alexander Dent examines in his essay (Dent 2017). As Dent notes, location is itself a highly porous notion, not unlike the digital environments that promise "to obliterate the customary limitations of here and now." In Brazil and Argentina, a certain class of commodities is labeled as distinctively "Paraguayan," a term used in order to denounce the quality of things that look hopelessly imitative and that, in fact, seem to be increasingly everywhere. Despite the fact that most of these "Paraguayan" goods are actually from China, it is the term "Paraguay" that has come to signal "an anxiety about a particular experience with respect to how technology and mediation, unchecked, can threaten the realness of things."

In Rosalind Morris's contribution the overhearing of speech triggers wider reflections on the nature of mediation, circulation, and anonymity (Morris 2017). Many media scholars have emphasized how the idea of transparency evokes the fantasy of a form of communication without mediation (Boyer 2012; Eisenlohr 2011; Meyer 2011; Naas 2012Sanchez 2008; Schulz 2006). Media scholars Jay Bolter and Richard Grusin note that new media technologies appear to offer a transparent interface, a medium that "erases itself, so that the user is no longer

aware of confronting a medium, but instead stands in an immediate relationship to the contents of that medium" (Bolter and Grusin 2000:24). In her essay, Morris takes issue with this ideology of technology by exposing the political force of the fantasy. Morris examines a series of communication failures that characterize the heterogeneous public spheres of contemporary South Africa, demonstrating how the function of mediation has itself emerged as an object "not of deliberation but of an agonistic exchange about the very possibility of exchange."

Orphan, Speak

In Foucault's essay "What Is an Author?" the Beckettian theme "Does it matter who is speaking?" appears as a form of indifference charged with ethical potential (Foucault 1998). Yet speech that belongs to no one in particular can also come with the injunction to be spoken by everyone. In a recent essay, Didier Fassin described how defenders of free speech in France denounced citizens who refused to subscribe to the ubiquitous "Je suis Charlie" slogan (Fassin 2015). The political rally that was organized in France in the aftermath of the Charlie Hebdo attacks and that was supposed to demonstrate national unity is at the center of Zeynep Gürsel's essay (2017). Focusing on the photographic representation of the rally, Gürsel examines the work that the crowd shot is doing when it is put into digital circulation. She describes how the changing conditions of news making have affected processes of authorship and authorization. In the attempt of "not missing anything," international newsroom agencies no longer rely on the ability of professional photojournalists to take pictures but on the images that are already circulating in public on digital platforms. The aesthetic value of a good image stems not from its aesthetic properties but, rather, from the fact that it circulates well. Its effective spread is what turns it into news.

The crowd shots at the center of Gürsel's essay show heads of state marching in front of the crowd. The irony of these images is not their fake nature, nor is it related to the fact that the same photographers who made the images exposed their deceit. Rather, the irony is that this artificially headed crowd appears in France, the land of beheadings, and of Foucault. In Foucault, the severing of the king's head in the French Revolution represents the end of sovereignty as a model of power. The beheading thus postulates the end of the sovereign as origin of power. Henceforth, power becomes anonymous. It is everywhere—in circulation, so to speak. This is the kind of power that the heads of state are trying to capture by entering the space of circulation and assuming the characteristics of the crowd itself.

While the focus on circulation allows one to problematize the excessive investment in authorship and intentionality found within Western thought, discussions about responsibility and accountability have not received adequate attention (Berlant 2011; Butler 2005; Gaonkar and Povinelli 2003). Today, in our techno-mediatic milieu, information stored in books appears

as inaccessible because it is presumably imprisoned in a material form that slows circulation down (Lee and LiPuma 2002). In her essay, Mary Murrell explores attempts to improve the book's capacity for circulation (Murrell 2017). Mass-digitalization projects aspire to liberate information from the constraints of its material form. Animated by understandings of the digital as medium of eternal preservation, these projects come with the promise of building future libraries with limitless capacity for storing information. As Derrida emphasized, every archive, including the digital archive, finds itself under the compulsion to expand the current collection and assemble ever more documents (Derrida 1996). Its orientation is toward the future. The morally charged metaphor of the "orphan" plays an enabling role in this context: "the orphan is a book that runs the risk of not being digitized and thus left out of digital libraries, and, indeed, the future" (from an earlier version of Murrell 2017).

Contemporary digitalization projects trigger shifts in the overall structural politics of archives, libraries, museums, and bookstores. As Murrell suggests, the digitalization of the book entails an entire social, cultural, political, and economic infrastructure, contributing to the formation of new practices of reading among publics. It is a process that involves massive legal battles around the rights that will enable the book to be (un)available online. Yet, the very attempt to rescue books from oblivion, she explains, risks subjecting such works to the status of the web, where everything ends up being a kind of orphan. Hence the metaphor of "stewardship," adopted by engineers and entrepreneurs to convey the idea of a responsibility toward the medium itself. The steward takes care of the orphaned book without assuming the accountability of the author who conceived its content.

Digital media offer an unprecedented opportunity for the recirculation of older content. As Gürsel's and Murrell's contributions indicate, this is a techno-mediatic milieu in which content no longer simply exists in order to be circulated, but where it is the evidence of circulation itself that endows content with value. As the mechanisms of circulation and citation become ever more powerful, the value of content increasingly depends on its "citability" (Weber 1998). Citability, the capacity to circulate, becomes a mark of the thing that matters in the world and, hence, evidence and indicator of value. At the same time, the spectacular automaticity of the software for the tracing and tracking of circulation obscures the politics of distinction involved in the process of defining relevance and significance in the first place.

* * *

When Montag, at the conclusion of *Fahrenheit 451*, finally discovers the secret society of people who dedicate themselves to preserving through memory books that are threatened with extinction, he finds them living far beyond the city, in an Edenic forest, the natural home of the literate human soul. Only here, far from the techno-mediatic dystopia of the city, can the dream of reconciling nature and society, life and

thought, be achieved. This is a paradise of communication without mediation. Having witnessed the death of his substitute on television, Montag is told by one of the Book People how each in the community has perfected a method of recalling word-by-word the books they have read; how they are part of a secret network of people spread across the country who share bits and pieces of different books stored within their memories. The displaced, desocialized context in which they find themselves, combined with the bodily intensity of their routines of recitation and memorization, effaces the defining features of their own individuality. Author and reader meet within the same person, who identifies with the book she reads. Montag, we learn, will become the "Book of Ecclesiastes." Not unlike the digital dream of a quasi-spiritual, dematerialized medium, here the redemptive force of the book is realized by its volatilization, its total absorption by human life itself. Medium and message coincide without remainder, because people themselves—as walking books—become the circulatory form that anchors humanity in its true essence. The tension between circulation and capture reaches its apotheosis in a form of life that oscillates between absolutes of mediation and self-presence and seemingly overcomes them. Here, Truffaut appears as a contemporary of the current technomediatic moment. For, indeed, at the heart of this milieu is a desire for an object that will overcome all differences, tensions, and contradictions. New media technologies are supposed to achieve this through connectivity, though in this technological dreamworld of contact and connection, the hierarchies and inequalities of the social world remain largely unchanged. It is our hope that the essays collected here will contribute to a social history of such new media dreams.

Acknowledgments

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Gods in the Time of Automobility

by Kajri Jain

Alongside an explosion in print, televisual, and digital media, India's late twentieth-century economic reforms produced an unexpected new genre: monumental statues, mostly Hindu deities built in cement, now steadily proliferating across India and its diaspora. How do we think about the newness of such a form given, on one hand, the genealogy of its publicness in late colonial religio-cultural nationalism, debates on electoral representation, and a particular form of politico-devotional public designated as *sārvajanik* and, on the other, its coemergence with the reconfigurations of space, time, and affect unleashed by the booming postliberalization automobile and construction industries? The newness of "new media" and of the publics they engender is still too often unwittingly framed within the much-critiqued modernist narratives of linear progress and evolutionary succession. In this paper, however, I attempt to address the layered temporalities and spatialities at work here that simultaneously remediate and initiate circuits with "older" forms of iconopraxis, sociality, territoriality, and distributions of the sensible. In doing so I propose a processual view of media/objects that disaggregates them into assemblages of multiple processes unfolding stochastically and at varying speeds, drawing their force from potentially vastly different yet intercalated "moments."

Introduction: New Old Media, Old New Media

Alongside an explosion in print, televisual, cellular, and digital media, India's late twentieth-century economic reforms produced an unexpected new genre: monumental statues, mostly (but not all) Hindu deities, upward of 60 feet tall, steadily proliferating across India and its diaspora since the early 1990s (figs. 1, 2). How might we think about the newness of such a form, indeed a new medium, where religious icons as channels of communication with the divine now address an expansive public beyond that of statues sequestered in temples? What do we make of its remediation of popular painted icons circulating digitally and in print as well as of much earlier colossal rock-cut statues such as the second- and sixth-century CE Buddhas of the Swat Valley and Bamiyan, or the medieval Jain statues of Karnataka and Madhya Pradesh, now reappearing as freestanding figures in stone and concrete? Why does such a resolutely material, physical, immovable form (re)emerge at this moment of accelerating circulation, virtuality, and mass mediation, and what might it tell us about the constitution of political and devotional—politico-devotional—publics?

Clearly the specificities of new media must be thought of in relation to the sensory/aesthetic, social, and political ecologies in which they emerge and are mobilized: this is what ethnography can do. But the question of newness here raises the question of oldness, or rather of temporality, demanding a layered historical approach to the moments, speeds, and scales at which processes and ways of knowing or experiencing them emerge, unfold, and converge, including the very salience of novelty, speed, and scale as elements of the affective field. The language of historical "changes" and "shifts" elides the inertia and subtle mutations of older forms and processes, and hence the circuits and turbulences between newer and older forms, or remobilizations and resignifications beyond remediation per se. The new does not necessarily make what preexists it old or obsolete, though it can make it anew; emergence can coexist with and morph the persistence and duration of objects and technologies or media as well as of forms of power and sociality.

In this essay I seek to disentangle the idea of newness in "new media" from the much-critiqued modernist narratives of linear progress and evolutionary succession in whose terms it is still too often unwittingly framed—or rather to provincialize this as just one of the temporalities at work when thinking about what enables newness to emerge and what the newness of the new makes possible. It brings together "new materialist" concerns with becoming and emergence—or becoming otherwise, whose processual approaches to temporality primarily draw on Bergson and Deleuze (see Hodges 2008; West-Pavlov 2013)—and postcolonial concerns with historical difference (Chakrabarty 2000) and with the heterogeneous temporalities of uneven development (Harootunian 2015). These approaches to temporality invite a disaggregation of putatively discrete objects or events into assemblages of processes, unfolding stochastically and at varying speeds, that—as I aim to illustrate here—draw their force from potentially vastly different "moments." Here objects-events belong both to the moment and space of these processes' convergence and to multiple other space-times

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Taking a processual view of media, objects, or genres and their emergence is useful in at least three ways. For one, it breaches the art-historical impasse between a formalism that engages with the qualities of the object as encountered in the phenomenological present and a contextualism that privileges the singular moment, location, and human agent(s) of a work's production. Second, it refutes the secular-modernist relegation of religion to the past, which all too often causes religion to drop out of media/communication studies–oriented accounts of contemporary media and urbanism, clearly a handicap to understanding their political dimensions (a counter-example is Stolow 2013; this has also not been an issue in anthropology, as other papers in this special issue of *Current Anthropology* attest). Third, it promises a richer anthropological analysis of how the very discourse of "new media" becomes productive in rendering these media efficacious (although this is not addressed here, because religious icons are not generally seen as "new media").

At stake here is what counts as contemporary. Keeping one eye on "old" media amid the excitement over "new media"—primarily understood as digital technologies (with their mass address, virtuality, and seemingly sudden, radical transformations in the modi operandi of publics)—provides a more accurate sense of how the whole range of existing media and cultural forms are enmeshed with the way publics constitute themselves and the things they worry about. These include the exploitation of labor and dispossession of land, both occurring on a massive scale in old and reconfigured forms. They also include the recalcitrant yet also protean forms and genres—that is, aesthetics—of social distinction, hierarchy, and exclusion based on race, class, gender, caste, religion, sexual orientation, etc., as well as of the means, such as democracy, of making these otherwise. Despite our exhaustion with identity politics, these concerns show no sign of getting old.

Figure 1. Hanuman sculpture (101 feet) by sculptor Matu Ram Verma, inaugurated in 2002 at the Shri Adhya Katyani Shakti Peeth Mandir (Chhatarpur Mandir), Delhi, 2007. The cars in the temple parking lot in the foreground are a Tata Indica and two Marutis (Maruti is also a name for Hanuman). A color version of this figure is available online.

(in the Deleuzian-Bergsonian concept of *la durée*, as in the anthropological conception of Nancy Munn, space and time cannot be thought apart; see Hodges 2008).[1] This indivisibility of object-event and process, of space and time, troubles the distinctions between objects, media, and experience or the space-time of encounters (and hence, arguably, between art history, media studies, and anthropology): objects endure, unfold, change, signify or "communicate," and cohere via experience; media are not simply channels through which messages travel through space but have object-like efficacy; experience is profoundly mediated and formed through encounters with objects-events.

The *Sārvajanik*: Old New Public, New Old Public

My attunement to temporal layering comes from an ongoing engagement with the image cultures of modern Hinduism. Religion—surely the primary site of image production until mass entertainment, advertising, and pornography—has been hugely prolific and innovative in its embrace of new techniques and media. In India, devotion and mythology have been central to the uptake of new media: woodblocks, reverse glass painting, oil painting, chromolithography, offset printing, cinema, cassettes, television, video, animation, animatronics, IMAX, vinyl banners, 3-D printing; circulating deities and mantras thrive on Facebook and WhatsApp. Crucially, however, remediation and mass reproduction have done nothing to challenge the power and value of temple icons sequestered in their *sancta sanctorum*. On the contrary, as I will argue, the continuing importance of religious patronage and merit for social status generates productive exchanges or circuits between cult value and what I call "iconic exhibition value" (Jain 2015): between ritual sanctification and sequestration on one hand and public,

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1. In many ways this echoes George Kubler's formulation of art-historical objects in terms of a "formal sequence" that "in cross section . . . shows a network, a mesh, or a cluster of subordinate traits; and in long section . . . has a fiber-like structure of temporal stages" (Kubler 1962: 37–38), although the linearity in the idea of the "sequence" does not capture the more rhizomatic circuitry I propose here.

Figure 2. Standing Shiva (80 feet) by Matu Ram Verma, inaugurated in 1994 at the Birla Kanan opposite the international airport on National Highway 4 between Delhi and Gurgaon. Photographed in 2007, when the models of Nandi and Shiva's family in the middle ground were being turned into larger statues along with 15- to 30-foot Radha-Krishna and Ram-Sita statues. A color version of this figure is available online.

often spectacular, visibility and access on the other, all under the umbrella of "religion."[2] This publicness must be understood literally as potentially visible or available to all, often in outdoor spaces. Here the newness of new forms enables an expansion of the possibilities for religious patronage and populist iconopraxis beyond temples and Brahminical priestly control while their layered temporality means that this happens without dispensing with priestly legitimation and authority.[3] So, far from

2. Walter Benjamin's (1992) distinction between cult value and exhibition value needs revision wherever "fine" art's exhibition value and its status as an index of social distinction have had a different history and salience than in bourgeois Europe and North America (including within Europe and North America). It is worth noting, however, that even in the European context, Benjamin saw an "oscillation" between these two poles.

3. For Michael Meister (2007), "iconopraxis" supplements art history's methods of iconography and iconology with attention to performative contexts. He too eschews "canonical linearity" for a recognition of "layered traditions" and "anti-canons."

undermining the salience of religious authority, value, and systems of patronage, iconic exhibition value expands these systems by enabling access to more players (as is the case, arguably, for artistic mass reproduction and the expansion of bourgeois power under capitalism, *pace* Benjamin 1992).

In the period I am dealing with (ca. 1870 to the present), "new" media have been central to anticolonial mobilization and ongoing claims on democratic representation, constituting political publics by mobilizing myth, religion, and the performative and formal vocabularies of iconopraxis. These resources are reshaped by new expressive means as well as by the representational demands of democracy in a political field riven by multiple identitarian claims. Nonetheless, this reshaping is accompanied by a discourse of adherence to canonical requirements and/or to historical precedents. Also, as will become clear, it can reinstate an entrenched aesthetics of social distinction: aesthetics not as fine art but, following Rancière (2004), as a broader distribution of the sensible, an ordering of the sensorium—and hence of the political regime—in which certain people and not others qualify to be seen, heard, touched, and

smelled, thereby upholding the status quo. Restrictions on access to space are a key element of this distribution, particularly the devotional space that was denied for centuries to Dalits—once called untouchables—by banning them from temples and "public" spaces.

I propose here that these remediations of religious images and spaces in India have generated a particular form of publicness where the very newness of new media has enabled materializations of and responses to political claims that till then had no idiom—no medium—for expression within the existing distribution of the sensible. This formation emerged at a particular late colonial moment and was originally explicitly geared to political participation and self-identified as *sārvajanik* (*sarva* [all], *jan* [people]). But unlike the term "public," which is both an adjective and a noun that denotes an object of political identification, the adjectival *sārvajanik* has functioned more as an occasional heuristic for a normative sociospatial configuration than as an affectively significant rallying point or to describe a collective political actor (although, as we will see, it does eventually become this with the more recent noun form *sarvajan*). Indeed, I would suggest that the hegemonic naturalization of its forms rapidly obviated the need for the category (which also explains the absence of scholarly attention to it); however, it counts as a public precisely because its hegemonic attempts to suture often deeply antagonistic constituencies were also what made these antagonisms evident and palpable.[4] It is in this heuristic mode, then, that I want to explore the contested modalities of publicness the *sārvajanik* has materialized for varying political constituencies at different moments.[5]

Like the bourgeois-liberal public sphere, the *sārvajanik* arena has claimed universality and open-endedness even as participation was premised on exclusionary conditions. However, unlike the former, it emerged under a colonial regime where the state, market, and public were effectively one: the colonial state

existed for trade, and the colonial market and the colonial public shared the same basic unit of liberal ideology, the bourgeois individual. For the colonized, then (with all the variegations within this category), the putative separation between these three domains had little actual salience even as it provided a template for conceiving democratic participation. So *sārvajanik* publics are best understood as assemblages both generated by and departing from this colonial formation, adopting certain protocols of the bourgeois public sphere (such as rational-critical debate in print) in relation to the colonial and then the postindependence state but also dealing in legitimacy gained from religious patronage, paternalist projects of social reform, and populist political mobilizations as well as certain affects and objects-bodies-events (notably icons and devotional bodies). Participation in the *sārvajanik* has strategically both invoked the normative ideals of the Habermasian public sphere and departed from them: it slips between devotional and secular idioms; it is predicated more on collective affect and belonging than on a liberal notion of individual subjecthood; and it is enacted through embodied, spatialized spectacles of self-presencing, often organized around a powerful or charismatic central figure, as much as through reasoned debate.[6]

The *sārvajanik*'s raison d'être has not been to exert pressure on the state from the (socially authorized, property-owning) outside as much as to enact the recognition and inclusion that provide access to social/economic, divine, and state power by blurring the boundaries between these arenas. The salient distinctions for the *sārvajanik* are not between state versus nonstate forces or between private as domestic versus public as stranger sociable but between inclusion versus exclusion from intercalated state and nonstate networks of power as well as between spatial, territorial inclusions versus exclusions.[7] So it shares some features of a counterpublic (Warner 2002) but is even less reducible to the subaltern or popular. While the *sārvajanik* is a space of what Michael Warner calls "poetic world-making"—that is, it imagines and attempts to realize a world, which is why and how it mobilizes new aesthetic forms—it has ultimately sought an ever more capacious consensus within existing modes of hegemony (specifically those of caste Hinduism). In this sense it is like the multicultural public underpinned by (neo)liberalism. It has therefore given rise to its own

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4. Antagonism is key to the role of media in the public as a site of emergence. As Oliver Marchart puts it, deploying Ernesto Laclau on the antagonistic constitution of the social, "The public sphere must not be conceptualized as a container within which particular debates may or may not occur; on the contrary, it is the form antagonism finds within a determinate institutional formation. Media, as a part of such formation, do not generate a public space—except in those instances when they are touched by the mediality of antagonism" (Marchart 2011:78). Here Marchart makes a distinction between "media" (the ritualized, hegemonic, consensual arena of media technologies, apparatuses, institutions, policies, etc.) and "mediality" as "the political within communication" that speaks to the capacities of media to constitute subjects and identities as well as to point to the limits of the constitution of the community. "Mediality" can therefore be seen as akin to, in Rancière's terms, the capacity of media to lend themselves to dissensus (i.e., politics) or the redistribution of the sensible.

5. I thank the editors for helping me to specify this move. Thanks also to Francis Cody for pushing me to think about the *sārvajanik* and for his generative work on publics (Cody 2011, 2015).

6. These features appear, often in a more binary either/or (rather than both/and) form, in the scholarship on Indian publics (e.g., Cody 2015; Freitag 1991; Kaur 2003; Madan 2013), which sometimes mentions the *sārvajanik* when invoking religious publics against Habermas's Eurocentrism but does not dwell on it. Omvedt (2013) highlights its use by Dalit activist Jotirao (Jyotirao) Phule (1827–1890) to invoke a truly inclusive public. However, it is more heuristically useful to see Phule's reformulation as a counterpublic explicitly positioned against the Poona Sārvajanik Sabha's exclusionary version (made hegemonic by the Ganapati festival).

7. This resonates with Chris Berry's (2010) framing of "public space" as avoiding the "ideological lure" of the state/nonstate binary inherent in the notion of the public sphere and acknowledging nonstate sites of power.

counter-*sārvajanik* publics—nested or second-order counter-publics—as with the Dalit assertions in the following account. With increasing social, economic, and physical mobility and new technologies, the *sārvajanik* formation has expanded its scale of address and forms of participation, giving a greater range of social actors ways of accessing religious and political patronage.

The following account traces these expanding contours of the *sārvajanik* through three layered "new media" moments, roughly 50 years apart, that unleashed the processes—the formation of contexts of patronage, modes of engagement, and image-making techniques—that converged in and continue in various ways to animate or mobilize the otherwise physically immobile late twentieth-century monumental statues. These moments are the emergence of the vernacular culture industries and *sārvajanik* publics in the colonial 1870s–1880s alongside the legal construction of a distinct arena of vernacular capitalism, the formulation of an explicitly enumerative and commensurative representational imaginary of a plural polity in debates on "native" electoral representation in the 1930s, and the development of the automobile industry as a spearhead of economic reforms from the mid- to late 1980s.

First Moment: Vernacular Capitalism, Neighborhood Festivals, Devotional Expansion

A major theme in Indian media studies has been the informality and piracy characterizing India's mediascape from the "long" 1980s onward with the loosening grip of the Nehruvian state after the Emergency, the rise of Hindu nationalism, economic liberalization, and an uncontrollable urban boom (Liang 2005; Sundaram 2010). I would argue, however, that this putative "informality" as a defining characteristic not just of media but also of the vernacular business ethos in which they are embedded dates back a century earlier, to a domain of "custom" or "culture," whose own codes and canons had an uneasy legal and epistemological relationship to the colonial and then the secular postindependence state (again with parallels to the productive frictions between "culture" and liberalism in multiculturalism). This deeper genealogy illuminates not only the form and character of media technologies—their speed of proliferation, organizational flexibility and informality, spatial fluidity, and rampant piracy—but also how these features have mobilized certain *kinds* of content and practices, notably those associated with religion and other avenues for generating merit, resource networks, and social mobility and power.

The postliberalization monumental icons and the religious theme parks they are often situated in emerged in part, like the calendar art and film industries, from an arena of "vernacular capitalism" (Birla 2009; Jain 2007). Ritu Birla describes how British colonial law in India, specifically the Indian Companies Act of 1882, placed domestic family-based firms under Hindu and Muslim personal law rather than corporate law. In doing so it effectively institutionalized a zone of difference specified not in terms of "economy" but of "custom," a precursor of the

more capacious term "culture."[8] It thereby designated as separate and preexisting what was in fact an integral, coeval, and protean element of the colonial economy—a constitutive outside—enabling the perpetuation of local structures of exploitation. This institutionalized a coexistence (albeit via a frictional legal interface) between the state's market governance based on corporate law and formal banking and the business ethos of the bazaar, characterized by its own credit systems and fluid exchanges—or rather unstable discursive and operational distinctions—between commerce, kinship, religion, and social power.[9]

Here—as elsewhere—a trader's or entrepreneur's creditworthiness was embedded in relationships of trust fostered by family and caste alliances, religious merit, and social standing.[10] The status acquired through social gifting and tribute in these networks also enabled caste mobility and the negotiation of relative autonomy from sovereign power to assert local dominance (Birla 2009:25; Hansen 2005). New media technologies made religious patronage and social networking available at a range of scales, hence their eager embrace by this context of production and circulation.[11] Since the late nineteenth century, the means of acquiring merit and status have included—among other things and with varying potency—patronage of temples and *dharamshala*s (pilgrim guest houses), sponsoring icons for annual festivals, displaying and worshipping printed icons, and, with affordable printing, gifting these as calendars to annually lubricate social-cum-commercial networks (Jain 2007).

Icons and mythological or religious themes rerendered using the illusionist techniques of neoclassical academic oil painting

8. Birla does not historicize the use of the term "culture" in colonial discourse, taking it as given even as she problematizes its constitution vis-à-vis "economy." It would be useful to map the broadening connotations of "culture" from specifically elite culture to civilization to "custom" (e.g., via E. B. Tylor's *Primitive Culture*, which appeared in 1871).

9. One site of friction was the colonial state's attempt to separate the charitable and religious aspects of vernacular gifting, mapping these onto public and private interest (Birla 2009). Birla notes that the categories of public and private arose in late nineteenth-century commercial and financial law with the notion of "general public utility," which remains the criterion for the legitimacy of charitable works.

10. Capital's entanglement with kin and community networks, territorial dominance, social power, and status shored up by religiosity and philanthropy is not specific to the Indian, Asian, or postcolonial context. What has marked the Indian case, though, is colonial law's explicit naming and framing of this in terms of cultural exceptionalism as the "Hindu/Muslim Undivided Family": familial/private, patriarchal, and religious.

11. However, religious merit, social networks, and territorial control cannot be reduced to primarily economic or political interest. These are powerful ends in themselves, and the distinctions between them are provisional and circumstantial. Yet such reductions do have discursive salience, as with the tension between concepts emphasizing charitable giving's noninstrumental nature (*dana*, *zakat*) and the framing of religious patronage as serving political or economic ends, where informants described temple or statue building as money laundering or "land grabs." This echoes similar frictions in colonial law (see n. 9 above).

were reproduced as chromolithographic prints from around 1878 (Jain 2007; Pinney 2004). These prints were mobilized in an anticolonial nationalist movement developing in a milieu of public debate on social and religious reforms. Particularly influential as producers, distributors, and consumers of printed images were the northern and western Vaishnava (Vishnu-worshipping) mercantile castes. In their hands the prints became vehicles of Sanātan (orthodox, icon-worshipping, and antireformist) Hindu hegemony even as they expanded the arena of iconopraxis beyond temples and paved the way for universal access to icons with high-volume offset printing around the 1960s, enabling even the poorest to find printed deities to worship (e.g., on discarded packaging). In this hegemonic regime the nation is often sacralized in recognizably Hindu terms, or communities other than caste Hindus are allegorically vilified (e.g., the cow-slaying demon of Kaliyug in late nineteenth-century Cow Protection Movement prints signifying those who eat beef).

The realist devotional icons in these prints—endlessly plagiarized, adapted, and recycled in print, on the Internet, and elsewhere—provide one source or template for the later monumental statues and for the publicness of their address; several informants used such images from the Internet as references. Another source is the processional deities in *sārvajanik* public festivals such as Durga Puja and Ganapati Utsav, which also emerged in the late nineteenth century. These annual festivals, stretching over several days, involve installing and worshipping large, lavishly decorated temporary statues, typically in neighborhood parks, climaxing with huge processions to immerse them in a body of water. The shrines (known as *mandals* in the west and *pandāls* in the east), featuring annual innovation and topical commentary, started attracting visitors from beyond the neighborhood, combining devotion with aesthetic appreciation and the fascination of spectacle; they are now sites of artistic competitions and corporate sponsorship. The new monumental statues can be seen as permanent and more spectacular—but less topical—forms of festival shrines. These forms are directly linked: South India's most prolific sculptor in this genre, Kashinath, has a background in temple architecture and sculpting Ganapati idols for the festival in his birthplace Shimoga (fig. 3). Durga Puja craftsmen from Bengal created the clay and fiberglass molds used in gigantic Shiva and Sakyamuni projects in Sikkim.

The immensely popular Ganapati festival in its current form was initiated in 1893 by the Poona Sārvajanik Sabha, a political association established in 1870 for "representing the wants and wishes of the inhabitants of the Deccan, being appointed on a popular elective system under rules framed for the purpose" (Chiplonkar 1888, title page). A precursor of the Indian National Congress, it sought equal political and social status for Indians and British subjects. It was dominated by the upwardly mobile Chitpavan Brahmins, who had used the English language to secure positions in government and education; its proceedings were published in a quarterly English-language journal. It was therefore accused of representing Brahmin interests

Figure 3. Clay Ganapati icon by sculptor Kashinath being driven in procession on Ganapati Utsav, Shimoga, Karnataka, 1995. Photograph courtesy K. Sridhar. A color version of this figure is available online.

and not being truly *sārvajanik*, particularly by the anticaste activist Jotirao Phule (Omvedt 2013:130–131). Initially led by moderates, it was taken over by the Hindu hardliner Tilak in 1895 after his success with the Ganapati Utsav. The term *sārvajanik* came to be used by local festival *mandals* (organizing bodies) to signify the Utsav's participatory, inclusive nature, while the Bengali *sarbojanin* was adopted around 1910 for public Durga Pujas (Guha Thakurta 2015). What made these festivals *sārvajanik* was the participation of people other than elite landowners, princes, and wealthy merchants in creating, installing, and worshipping idols in publicly accessible spaces.

The Ganapati festival's political mobilization worked—as it still does—in three ways. First, it constituted an affective public through devotionally charged community participation, repeated ritual reenactment, and the spectacle of the people presenting themselves as one. Second, it was a site for *mandal* functionaries to consolidate local power and patronage networks, initiating a spatial logic of protoelectoral populist representation mediated by popularly nominated rather than hereditary leaders (Kaur 2003). This echoed and anticipated other

circuits between public spectacle and individual social mobility via grassroots political mobilization and/or local-level development or welfare projects. These circuits include the cinema fan associations linked with party political organization in south India (Gerritsen 2012; Pandian 1992; Srinivas 2009) and the recent monumental statue sites pitched as tourism development. Third, festivals enact a physical assertion of territorial claims both by occupying specific neighborhood spaces and through the noisy immersion processions, often provoking antagonism by passing through non-Hindu localities. In this latter capacity the exteriorized *sārvajanik* space, like the literate *sārvajanik* of the Sabha, has enacted exclusion and antagonism as well as inclusion and expansion.

To sum up, this moment saw the legal codification of Hindu and Muslim "religion, law and custom," including the conduct of business, as arenas of cultural exception. This initiated a state-sanctioned pervasion of religion in "native" public life and economy, including vernacular print media (later playing out as a postindependence "split public"; Rajagopal 2001). Conversely, religion, now freighted with the identitarian burden of representation, took on a drive to publicness that generated new forms of iconopraxis such as worshipping and gifting printed icons or instituting public festivals. Prints adorned domestic and commercial interiors while festivals were conducted outdoors, but both extended the icon's address beyond temples and elite homes. Further, participation in both was pertinent not only to audiences at the point of "reception" but also to the "back end": as sites of production and circulation (prints and calendars) or organization (*mandals*), they provided upwardly mobile caste Hindu groups and local "big men" with new forms of access to religious merit and social networks. Last, the performance of territorial access and control was key to the festival form's uptake. Here the constitution of a *sārvajanik* public in its visibility to itself did not unfold in the simultaneity of "homogeneous, empty time" (as with Benedict Anderson's print capitalism) but in the repeated, cyclical assertion of embodied control over public space—again, setting a template for monumental statues as nodes in spatial networks, particularly during annual festivals. The force of this assertion over space derived, I would suggest, from the centrality of the denial of access to space in the performative vocabularies of caste and gender hierarchy.

Second Moment: Democratic Commensuration, the *Sārvajanik* Temple, Quantification

So far I have focused on new forms of Hindu icons and iconopraxis. However, the Ganapati festival both imitated and competed with the Muharram processions in which Hindus had also participated (Kaur 2003:20; Masselos 1991). The Imperial Durbars in Delhi, modeled on Mughal Durbars, also used processions as a theater of politics, and there was surely an escalating mimetic relay between nationalist deployments of public festivals in the 1890s and the 1903 Durbar's transformation into a far more public spectacle than the 1877 Durbar

(though this was also consistent with the "exhibitionary order" of colonialism at the turn of the century and the increasing use of photography and film; Codell 2012; Fraser 1903; Mitchell 1989). With anticaste and temple entry movements from the turn of the century, Dalits too would adopt this form, with Chamars in Kanpur organizing Ravidas processions from 1936 (Jaoul 2006:184).

This, then, is another aspect of the newness of new media: in a situation where competing identities are taking shape in a matrix of mutual recognition, comparison, and claims to equality, the mimetic adoption of common idioms that depart from canonical iconographies allows new visual forms to take on a commensurative force. In colonial India this dovetailed with the enumerative and taxonomic operations of census taking and ethnographic photography that rendered India legible for the exercise of colonial biopower (Dirks 2001).[12] Bazaar prints clearly illustrate this mimetic commensuration. Artists adapted Western naturalist techniques to a range of Hindu, Muslim, Sikh, Christian, Dalit, and other themes, producing images printed with the same format and finish and for the same price but in varying numbers for each constituency, with some represented more frequently than others.[13] Often these appeared together in publishers' catalogs or retailers' stacks, like a miniparliament. Processions and festivals mapped this comparability onto territorial claims, which, as the prospect of democratic representation loomed in the 1930s, also took a quantitative turn. Crucially, this commensuration of images through public visual forms meant that as objects they now embodied not just the deities they represented but also specific communities, so an attack on an icon was construed as an attack on the community. The territorial claims actualized by processions and clashes over their routes, and later by the installation and desecration of public icons (particularly of statues of the hugely influential Dalit leader Ambedkar), further concretized this embodiment of communities by images.

As with calendar prints, the cyclical, expansive form of the festival enabled constant innovation and the fractal proliferation of identities. By the 1920s, neighborhood Ganapati Utsav *mandals* started to differentiate, particularly as non-Brahmin movements gained impetus and sought their own configurations of the *sārvajanik* space. This process was hijacked by the moment that led to the Partition and consolidated the plural polity of protodemocratic India into the broad taxonomy of the postindependence Nehruvian state: "Hindu, Muslim, Sikh, *Isai* [Christian]" (as Raj Kapoor sang in the film *Chhalia*, 1960, with no mention of Dalits). This was the period of heated negotiations over electoral reservations for minorities in the All Parties Conference of 1928 and the Round Table Conferences

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12. However, this taxonomic operation also backfired, according to Sudipta Kaviraj (1992), by providing unity and salience to "fuzzy" communities, leading to a demand for democratic representation; enumerated for the census, they wanted to "count" in the electoral scheme.

13. This formal commensuration is a crucial element of mass reproduction that does not feature in Walter Benjamin's (1992) account.

of 1930–1932. The central epistemological operation here was to map identities onto numbers, with repercussions for the visualization of the emergent nation. This would ultimately feed into the logic by which the height of the new gigantic statues set up their patrons—many of them very powerful politicians—to shore up their "vote banks" through quantitative competition (thus in 2010 prime minister Modi, then chief minister of Gujarat, initiated a project for the tallest statue in the world: a figure of Gujarati nationalist leader Sardar Patel twice the height of the Statue of Liberty). While Hindu-hegemonic projects have most glaringly adopted a majoritarian Hindu nationalist, primarily anti-Muslim politics of *ex*clusion, it is often overlooked that the Poona Pact of 1932 also crystallized a politics of hegemonic *in*clusion, as B. R. Ambedkar was forced to withdraw his demand for a separate electorate for "untouchables" when Gandhi went on a hunger strike insisting that they be counted as Hindus. This push to inclusion dovetailed with the need to amass the community in the face of electoral divisions given the colonial layering of religious particularity onto representative democracy via "custom."[14]

This "Hindu" electoral consolidation found permanent expression in another new form, this time in architecture, using the new medium of concrete: the modern temple form that has been called the *sārvajanik mandir* (temple), of which Delhi's Lakshminarayan temple or Birla Mandir is an early instance (Mittal 1989; fig. 4). Its foundation stone was laid in 1933, just a year after the Poona Pact, by the Hindu nationalist leader M. M. Malaviya; a sign at the entrance describes it as a *sārvajanik* space.[15] If, as with earlier forms of the *sārvajanik*, its inclusivity was built on a Hindu-hegemonic Sanātani foundation, this sign now sought to specify "all Hindus" even more expansively as including "Sanatanists, Aryasamajists [anti-icon reformists], Buddhists, Jains and Sikhs etc." Dalits are not mentioned separately here, though Gandhi inaugurated the temple in 1939 on condition that it admit all castes; 1939 was also the year of the path-breaking Madras Temple Entry Ordinance giving Dalits the right to enter temples. However, one of the external walls of the temple still bears a plaque that politely declares, in Hindi, "Apart from residents of foreign lands such as Europe, America, Africa etc. and Indians of special repute (famous), local Muslims and Christians wishing to enter the

Figure 4. Visitors in the grounds of Delhi's Lakshminarayan Temple (Birla Mandir), 2012. The obelisk celebrates Hindu kings who defended their religion. A color version of this figure is available online.

temple need not take the trouble of entering without the permission of temple officials."[16]

The signs at the Birla Mandir encapsulate the tensions at the heart of the *sārvajanik*. Its publicness is clearly defined against Muslims and Christians, while the resistance to incorporating Dalits is more fraught and unfolds in another register. The pressure to dominate electoral representation meant that Dalits had to count as Hindus, but the prospect of a shared space and sensorium clearly evoked intense anxiety writ large in the many signs attempting to control the public through a discourse of hygiene and civility. Here the terms of caste discrimination and its obsession with ritual pollution and bodily fluids map onto those of colonial biopolitics. The one sign mentioning "Harijans" (Gandhi's term for Dalits) specifies that they may enter the temple "subject to the prescribed conditions of cleanliness, full faith and sincere devotion," while beggars and those with infectious diseases "are not allowed in or near" it. Signs at the garden entrance strictly prohibit "spitting, bathing, washing,

14. Gandhi's position is not reducible to this logic, however. Recognizing the canker of caste embedded in his utopian *archê*, Ramrajya (*hamara kalank* [our stain]), Gandhi sought to resignify the "we" as a whole so as to keep it intact. That is, he sought to purify the polity through a moral and ethical project of reform rather than heed Ambedkar's dissensual demand for political recognition of "untouchables" as equal but different.

15. The sign reads, "All persons erecting places of public worship [*sārvajanik mandir*] should likewise inscribe Ved mantras, Upnishadas [*sic*], Shlokas, Bhajans and Artistic life pictures . . . to improve the religious life of the Aryadharmi Hindus (including Sanatanists, Aryasamajists, Buddhists, Jains and Sikhs etc.) and to develop among them a spirit of fellow feeling and close cooperation which may in turn lead to consolidation and mutual service."

16. My translation. Temple officials insist that this injunction is never enforced at the Birla Mandir, although it still is enforced at Madurai's Meenakshi temple, which allowed Dalits entry in the same year.

cooking, passing of urine and disfiguring walls" and entering with "unclean or dirty" clothes (a pleonasm worth analyzing). Elsewhere visitors are enjoined to behave in a "civilized" manner.

A key site of control here, and a key innovation in temple architecture, is the Birla Mandir's outdoor space: extensive landscaped grounds intended for "organization, worship, meditation, festivals and fairs."[17] Providing a space for "organization" speaks to the politicized origins of the temple, while the attunement to festivals and exhibitionary spaces may relate to the newly public (*sarbajonin*) form of Calcutta's Durga Puja, as its primary patrons—the Birlas, still one of India's leading business families—were based in Calcutta.[18] The Birlas, more than any other vernacular capitalist family firm emerging in the late colonial period, deeply influenced the forms of contemporary Hinduism.[19] Among their pan-Indian institutional initiatives are a number of temples (seventeen at last count) and a range of philanthropic and educational organizations. The Birlas are central to the history of monumental statues as patrons not just of the Delhi temple but also of a Ramayana-based theme park built in 1987 in their hometown Pilani and a much-copied gigantic Shiva in Delhi in 1994 (fig. 2). Tying these three projects together are the innovative uses of landscaping and of cement, one of the products on which the Birlas built their business empire.[20] Concrete and brick were used in the Birla Mandir as part of the architect Sris Chandra Chatterjee's program for a "Modern Indian Architecture," a vision that advocated the revival of traditional building techniques as well as the use of modern methods when appropriate. Unusually, but consistent with its all-inclusive Hinduism, the temple features not one but three *shikhara*s (spires) over three *sancta sanctorum*, the tallest rising 165 feet. Chatterjee described this in terms of the "epical music of the sky-scraping sikhara"; here, as with the later gigantic statues, height was where the "Indian" met the "Modern" (Chatterjee 1942:83).[21]

The innovative architectural forms of the Birla Mandir were closely connected with the political programs of its patrons and founders: the orthodox Malaviya as well as the reformist Gandhi. By the early twentieth century, the ritual forms of Hinduism were also additively morphing and expanding through neospiritual movements such as those of Vivekananda and Sri Aurobindo. Like the *sārvajanik*, such movements typically adopted a discourse of universalism that was nonetheless Hindu and sought noncanonical, often spectacular forms for their institutions. Hindu majoritarianism and neospiritualism came together in another pioneering patron of large concrete icons: the Chinmaya Mission, founded in 1953 by Shri Chinmaya (later a cofounder of the right-wing cultural organization the Vishwa Hindu Parishad). The Mission's worldwide centers claim to "provide to individuals from any background the wisdom of Vedanta"; its motto is "To give maximum happiness to maximum people for maximum time." In 1980 it commissioned Kashinath to make a 25-foot cement Hanuman at its ashram in Sidhbhari, followed in 1989 by a 45-foot Ganapati near Kolar, then a 75-foot one in 2002 near Kolhapur. Other early patrons of Kashinath's statues have a similar neospiritualist bent, such as the Bangalore businessman Ravi Melwani, whose Disneyesque Kemp Fort department store features 8-foot teddy bears and other animals in front of a 65-foot seated Shiva built in 1995 to support his charitable foundation. Advertised as a "temple of faith where dreams come true" with the motto "believe and achieve," its novel ritual features include a sacrificial fire for "Letters to God" as well as exhibitionary elements such as dioramas of the 12 *jyotirlinga*s (powerful Shiva shrines spread across India) in the space inside the statue.[22]

Reemerging in these imaginative neospiritual forms is an invocation of numbers and quantities: the Birla Mandir's "sky-scraping *sikhara*" is echoed in the growing heights of statues, the mantra of the "maximum," the replication in miniature of quantified and hence delimited auratic shrines (as if to say "we have them all"). This recourse to quantification as part of the discourse of media efficacy constitutes a new (though again, additional rather than substitutive) mode of legitimation for neospiritual movements whose expansive, universalist, often global aspirations have meant a relative delinking from local, auratic, and canonical forms of ritual authority.[23] Here

17. This appears on a sign at the garden entrance, which also says, "Note: During the celebration of fairs and festivals only Hindu shops, seesaws merry-go-round and swinging apparatus etc. etc. will be permitted in the premises of the garden."

18. The Birlas, Marwari "trader-industrialists" from Pilani in Rajasthan, had initially moved to Calcutta and Bombay as middlemen and speculators in the colonial economy.

19. The oldest brother, J. K. Birla, an orthodox Sanatanist, provided most of the funding for the Birla Mandir. The third, G. D. Birla, close to Gandhi and the most publicly influential, became the first president of Gandhi's Harijan Sevak Sangh, formed after the Poona Pact. G. D. Birla's son B. K. Birla commissioned an early monumental Shiva statue.

20. Sculptors and patrons generally use the term "cement," although "concrete" is the more technically accurate term for the main mass of a building or a statue for which cement is mixed with aggregate. Surface detailing of architecture and statues is done with cement and water sometimes mixed with fine stone dust.

21. Chatterjee also wrote ecstatically of the view from New York's Empire State Building, for 40 years the world's tallest skyscraper (Chatterjee 1949:116).

22. Concrete construction (particularly of seated statues) generates an internal space; this is typically put to exhibitionary use for dioramas, narrative murals, paintings, photographs, or relics.

23. Ted Porter (1995), writing in the context of Western Europe and the United States after the French Revolution, describes how what he calls the "trust in numbers" and the recourse to quantitative objectification more generally came to characterize bureaucratic governmentality. This process both parallels and feeds into the forms adopted by the inclusive neospiritual institutions described here. It arises from the conditions of distrust arising from the breakdown of old hierarchies and forms of social authority, "intimate knowledge and personal trust." It is also "a technology of distance," enabling translation over otherwise disparate regimes of intelligibility (Porter 1995:ix).

the authority/aura of enumeration, institutionalized via governmentality, shores up religious authority and legitimacy at new sites that cannot make cultic claims of the usual sort (the miraculous appearance of an icon or lingam, association with a powerful holy figure, or a mythological narrative). Another instance here is the International Society for Krishna Consciousness (ISKCON, or the Hare Krishnas), whose mammoth temple in Bangalore requires visitors to repeat the same mantra on each of 108 steps just to get in (108 is a numerologically auspicious number, also favored for the height of statues). Similarly, by 2013 the doubly honorific Sri Sri Ravi Shankar's spiritual organization the Art of Living had set 10 Guinness World Records (an Indian obsession that warrants further investigation) for its "mega-events," including the world's largest vegetarian buffet.

The drive to quantification characterizing new religious forms is another aspect of the processes of inclusion and expansion of the *sārvajanik* public set in train by the 1930s moment of democratic enumeration described above. This was exacerbated by the technocratic discourse pervading India from the mid-1980s, heralding economic reforms and participation in "globalization." But economic reforms also introduced a range of technologies and media that enabled new forms of circuitry between spaces, scales, and temporalities, illuminating how the relationship between innovative religious forms and auratic cultic icons—and, indeed, between religiosity and secularization—does not follow an either/or, then/now logic of linear succession but is a matter of additive layering and interaction (including interaction with the discourse of linear succession).

Third Moment: Concrete, Automobility, Territoriality, Scaling

Cement was a major part of the Birlas' portfolio by 1987, when they commissioned sculptor Maturam Varma to make life-size concrete dioramas of scenes from the Ramayana in a park in their home town, Pilani. The abundance of cement, and the indulgence of Maturam's employer at a Birla school (consistent with the paternalist ethos of the Hindu Undivided Family firm), emboldened him to make a 21-foot Hanuman statue for the park (Rathore 2004). This led to an 80-foot Shiva statue at the Birla Kanan (*kanan* [garden]) on the (then) outskirts of New Delhi (figs. 2, 5). In one sense the Birla Kanan is an even more *sārvajanik* space than the Birla Mandir: its Shiva has no priest but a lingam that anyone can worship; prerecorded hymns are piped over speakers for morning and evening prayers. As B. K. Birla put it, "Let the people come with their sentiments . . . no need to offer *prasad*."[24] But this *sārvajanik* inclusivity is also consistent with the Birla

Figure 5. Two options for iconopraxis at the entrance to the Birla Kanan, Delhi, 2012: drive-by devotion (the Shiva statue is visible from the highway) or ritual offerings of *prasad* (for sale in the foreground). A color version of this figure is available online.

Mandir's repudiation of Dalit claims to be counted in their own right.

The 1970s onward saw a growing wave of Dalit political assertions, including the rise of the Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP), which formed a coalition government in the state of Uttar Pradesh in 1993 under Kumari Mayawati's leadership (*bahujan* [majority], as opposed to a *sārvajanik*-as-universal that disavows its majoritarianism).[25] A key element of this politicization was placing statues of Ambedkar, Buddha, and other Dalit icons—mostly small, many of cement—in public spaces where they were increasingly subject to desecration, thereby becoming sacralized (Taussig 1999) and hence commensurate with Hindu idols despite Ambedkar's own fervent injunc-

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24. Author interview with B. K. Birla, December 24, 2007. People do make offerings at the *shivling* below the statue; stalls at the entrance sell flowers, incense, and (on Mondays) plastic pouches of milk.

25. These assertions included the Dalit Panther movement in the 1970s and 1980s, the formation of the Backward and Minority Communities Employees Federation in 1971, the 1977–1979 Marathwada University name change agitation, the founding of the BSP in 1983, and the conflagrations following the 1989 attempt to implement the Mandal Commission Report recommending educational and employment reservations for Dalits and others.

tions against this. In the process, these Ambedkars and Buddhas both normalized the permanence of public icons (unlike the temporary festival *murti*s) and reasserted their political efficacy. Similarly, they normalized the use of concrete as a medium for icon making, albeit one that is relatively short-lived (perhaps a couple of hundred years) compared with the canonical granite and hard metals of consecrated temple icons meant to last for eternity. Sculptors and priests admit to the inferior temporality of this medium but nonetheless find it useful—again, in addition to more traditional methods. Here a simultaneously literal and metaphorical layering characterizes the gigantic concrete Hindu statues, for a shiny coating of metallic paint often masks the lesser temporality of their cement surfaces.

These monumental statues can therefore be read as a mimetic but massive counterappropriation of the public icon form in response to Dalit political claims to space and representation. There is no direct, demonstrable link here as there is between giant statues and festival *murti*s; this unfolds at the level of genre, the field of possibilities of a medium where the introduction of new elements is subject to acceptance or rejection by its audience. Here the counter-*sārvajanik* Ambedkar and Buddha statues opened up new possibilities for public icons and their political as well as "religious" efficacy.

Similarly hard to demonstrate as causal links, but operating in multiple registers are the connections between big statues and the boom in automobile production and use in India, an assemblage most strikingly encapsulated in the fact that the shiny coating that makes gigantic concrete icons appear metallic is automotive paint. In 1983 Maruti Udyog Limited, a joint venture of the Government of India and the Suzuki Motor Corporation, started producing the Maruti, an affordable "middle-class" car, at Gurgaon near Delhi (fig. 1). Fewer than 45,000 cars had been sold in the previous decade (when the largest car manufacturer was the Birlas' Hindustan Motors); by 2011 Maruti Suzuki, now one of many manufacturers, was selling about 100,000 cars a month. By 2013 India was the world's sixth-largest motor vehicle producer. Maruti was part of a technological upheaval generated by the easing of import restrictions in the late 1970s, including the growth of cassette and video production, the pan-national expansion of state-run TV broadcasting and the introduction of color TV (both in 1982), and the rapid development and penetration of telephony following the 1984 establishment of the Centre for Development of Telematics. So in India, television, telephony, and automobility effectively arrived at the same time and were rapidly followed by digital information networks.[26] While these technologies

fostered the imaginary of a "global" nation, they also enhanced subnational territorial mobility and networks. More people could now imagine themselves and operate not just in a range of locations but also at a range of scales, as members of multiple social networks and publics and at varying degrees of separation: face to face, stranger sociable, and others in between.

Over the ensuing decades these affects of scaling converged with the visual regime of what I call the "territorial spectacle" (Jain 2015), which accompanies an ideology of globalization predicated on the uncertainty of the promise of development: the (real or imagined) hypermobility of capital, the projected bonanza of its capture, and the risk of its flight (Ong 2011:209). It entails a hyperawareness of commensurability (notably via credit ratings) and competing others, all trying to be "on the map," all vying to attract capital as it whizzes around the globe, all wanting to get it, literally, to "land" (thus, e.g., the intense competition between cities to host the Olympic Games). This is a scaled-up, global version of the *sārvajanik* as a spatialized site of competing claims for access to resources: those of the state conjoined with capital as the state (re)morphs into capital's manager and policeman, as it was for colonialism. Here again, nation, state, and market join forces, now under the sign of "development"; in this sense the *sārvajanik* as a colonial form illuminates "neoliberal" forms of publicness beyond the particularity of India. However the language of scaling up and down is too simple to describe the reconfiguration of scales by the increasing role of public-private partnerships at a range of levels of the state, from municipal or federal units to regional and national (see Swyngedouw 2004). This generates more ways to access power, capital, resources, and infrastructures and to convert between their various forms, enabling capitalists, politicians, and local big men/women (or some combination thereof) to assert dominance and creditworthiness through boosterism and patronage at certain scales to manoeuvre for dominance at others.

Giant statues—again, a phenomenon not at all confined to India—feature in this regime as lodestones for development, as demonstrable evidence of it, and as talismans legitimizing if not sanctifying it. In them the global regime of the territorial spectacle maps onto the *sārvajanik* through the expansive economies of icon worship and religious patronage in the merit and status projects of vernacular-cum-global capitalism; the scalar and commensurative logics of representative democracy; and the visual-kinesthetic, material, spatial, social, and temporal regimes of automobility, central to modernities everywhere and arguably the single most powerful source of transformation unleashed by India's economic liberalization. To this extent the seemingly static, monolithic statues are as much sites of circu-

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26. Could we treat automobility as a medium among other media, affecting the formation and actualization of publics and the political? On one hand, this would foreground the centrality of space to media framed as material conduits for information, sensations, or forces whose efficacy inheres in relays between cognitive and affective processes between sensing, reasoning, and meaning making. On the other, to the extent that media

are themselves agents of transformation, automobility has been a significant force in configuring time, space, and experience (as I outline here in the Indian case). But this again raises the question of what is ultimately special or distinctive about "the media" as opposed to any other body, object, sign, or system that transmits and generates meanings and forces (we could ask a similar question of "infrastructure").

lation, movement, and transformation as the cars and highways that surround them: assemblages that are shot through with the dynamism of all these layered processes, making further links with other systems and processes, new and old.

Thus, the postreform automobile boom also has to be understood alongside a boom in construction, primarily in concrete, as space on the urban peripheries is made accessible by cars and available through the dispossession of agricultural land. A range of periurban institutional spaces has mushroomed, including new temples, neospiritual and wellness complexes, wedding "palaces," and theme parks, many featuring giant statues. Housing developers use statues to attract buyers, warding off the malign spirits frequenting forests and uninhabited—or dispossessed—spaces: Hanumans and Ganapatis on the outskirts of Bangalore, Shivas and Sai Babas in fast-growing central Indian towns such as Jabalpur, Sagar, and coal-rich Shahdol. The space along highways is reconfigured by a visual regime of drive-by viewing geared to large-scale images seen from a distance and at high speeds, the regime that produced billboards and roadside attractions in the United States (Paul Bunyan, the Long Island Duck, Las Vegas). Two of the earliest statues appeared along commuter arteries linking Delhi to the industrial/technical hub of Gurgaon, home of the Maruti and its ancillaries: a 14-foot granite Mahavira, installed in 1985 on a hillock visible from the Mehrauli-Gurgaon Road; and the 1994 Birla Kanan Shiva on National Highway 8 facing Delhi's airport (figs. 2, 5). Ravi Melwani's 1995 Kemp Fort Shiva is on Bangalore's old airport road; R. N. Shetty's 123-foot Shiva at Murudeshwara (2002; fig. 6) is visible from the NH17 coastal highway and from the Konkan Railway. The 2009 "Mangal Murti Morya" Ganapati at Talegaon (with India's second largest General Motors plant) overlooks the Mumbai-Pune Expressway and NH4. It was built by the Birlas, who have a boarding school and a hospital there; the title "Morya" is a localizing gesture echoing the Marathi processional chant at Ganapati Utsav. Again, layering and circuits are at work.

These statues are not just glimpsed from the highway but are also destinations where the times and spaces of leisure and recreation combine with those of pilgrimage and devotion, catering to the domestic tourism booming due to automobility and postreform consumerism's intensification of spatiotemporal distinctions between work and leisure. Religion and charity are just one aspect of these complexes, which are also variously framed as tourism-based infrastructure development, identity or "vote bank" politics, cultural heritage, even environmentalism. This combination of religious patronage with secular capacities makes them popular boosterist and vote bank projects for politicians. A spate of such projects featured in India's 2014 national election campaigns: the Congress Party's Kamal Nath, then cabinet minister for commerce and industry, inaugurated a 101-foot Hanuman in his constituency Chhindwara; Akhilesh Yadav, chief minister of Uttar Pradesh, laid the foundation stone for a 200-foot Maitreya in Kushinagar; Tamil Nadu chief minister Jayalalithaa announced a "mega statue" of Tamil Thai (Mother Tamil); the Maharashtra government re-
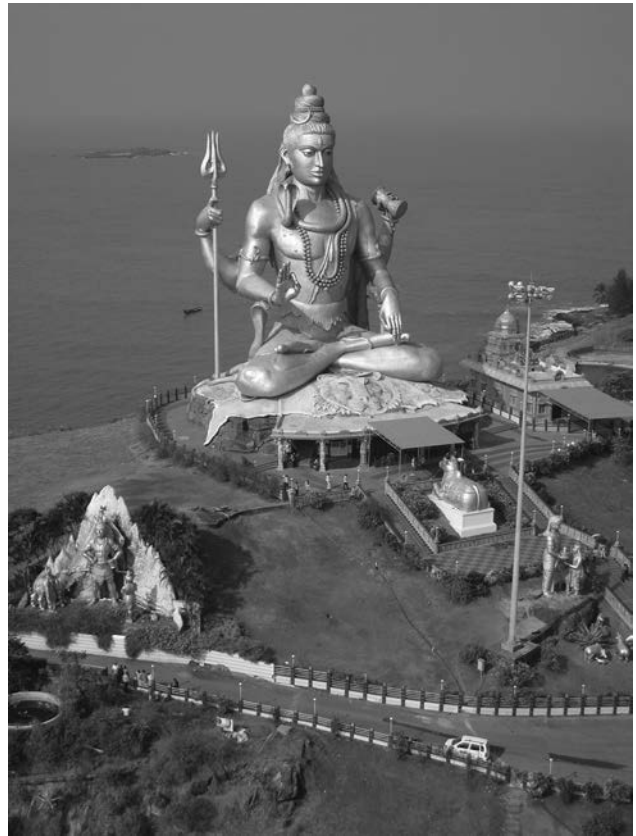
Figure 6. Seated Shiva (123 feet) by Kashinath at Murudeshwara, Karnataka, inaugurated in 2002. Photographed in 2012 from the 249-foot concrete *gopuram* (temple tower) added to the original Shiva temple. The structure below the statue houses a lingam at which worshippers can anoint themselves for a nominal fee and a diorama show narrating the story of the powerful lingam in the old temple. A color version of this figure is available online.

vived plans for a 300-foot (now 190-foot) monument to the Maratha king Shivaji in Mumbai.

Again there is a mimetic relay at work here between these projects and Uttar Pradesh leader Mayawati's controversial Dalit monuments, particularly her Ambedkar memorial in Lucknow (Jain 2014). Started in 1995 when she first became chief minister of Uttar Pradesh, its area expanded fivefold and the budget ballooned after the BSP won a majority in the 2007 Uttar Pradesh elections. This victory followed their tactical change in seeking an alliance with upper castes and Muslims, addressing not just the *bahujan* (the Dalit majority) but also the *sarvajan* (everyone). This won Mayawati that election, but the attempt to put a Dalit version of the *sarvajan* into a spatialized architectural form generated intense criticism from right and left alike, including a Public Interest Litigation alleging misuse of public funds. Clearly, reappropriating the *sarvajan* from the terms of Hindu inclusivity by giving permanent form to a Dalit claim to speak in the name of "all the people" was unacceptable. Perhaps this is why, despite the controversy, other politicians took up the form of spectacular iconic mon-

uments with such gusto as another mimetic, counterappropriative addition to the political vocabulary.

Despite their secular aspects, such projects often maintain links with—and hence maintain—auratic sources of power, confounding any sequential narrative of progress or transformation from the religious to the secular. Sikkim's chief minister Pawan Chamling funded two statues facing off from two hilltops overlooking his constituency, Namchi: a 135-foot Guru Rimpoche (Padmasambhava), completed in 2004, and a 108-foot Shiva at the 2011 "Char Dham pilgrimage-cum-cultural complex." The complex is a one-stop Shiva shop with minireplicas of India's four major Shiva pilgrimage sites (Char Dham) manned by priests and available for worship. The ritual legitimacy of these replicas of powerful temples was established through the site's inauguration by the Shankaracharya of Dwarka (one of the Char Dham); the Dalai Lama laid the Guru Rimpoche's foundation stone. This legitimation shored up Chamling's standing with his Hindu and Buddhist voters both through his gesture of recognition and through his economic initiative to develop tourism.

There are other circuits between giant statues and auratic sites. Spatially, the new Big Shivas are incorporated into existing Shiva pilgrimage routes in both the south and north, including the recently booming annual Kanwariya pilgrimage to Haridwar, with Delhi's Birla Kanan featuring as an important stop. Patronage effects a similar intertwining: for instance, the T-Series music recording baron and film producer Gulshan Kumar built Big Shivas at his studio in Noida near Delhi and at Dwarka Dham. This circuitry continued in the musical pilgrimage videos in which Kumar frequently appeared in devotional mode and in the 24-hour *langar* (public kitchen) he funded for pilgrims at the Vaishno Devi shrine. Kumar, who started as a roadside juice vendor, gained social mobility and legitimation through such spectacularized devotion (as with art collecting elsewhere).

Similarly, Bangalore-based construction, manufacturing, hospitality, power, and auto sales baron R. N. Shetty (RNS), from a modest farming family, built a 123-foot Shiva and a 249-foot cement *gopuram* (temple spire) while renovating an old temple with a powerful *atmalinga* in his tiny coastal home town (fig. 6). In the process he established control over the temple, the beachfront, and the town itself, studded with RNS hotels, guest houses, schools, a nursing college, and an RNS Maruti showroom. His nearby golf resort and private beach provides hospitality to his Bangalore golfing buddies: judges, politicians, industrialists. Again, a series of circuits is at work here. One is between the old temple's cult value and the "iconic exhibition value" of the spectacular concrete *gopuram* and the gigantic Shiva (whose interior features dioramas narrating the myth of the old temple's *atmalinga* as well as a lingam available for direct public worship). The circuit between tourism-led development and religious legitimation creates a spatial circuit between Shetty's urban corporate projects and his status and merit projects in the hinterland: the capital accrued at one site, at one scale, enables projects at others and vice versa. All this

unfolds via circuits between public welfare, religious patronage, and the private capital of the family firm.

Automobility's mediation of space and time has created *sārvajanik* spaces on steroids, rendering the nation one big *sārvajanik* space. The location, size, and potentially universal visibility of giant statues obviate the issue of caste- or religion-based access; they offer a panoply of innovative forms of ritual participation. Yet their address to particular constituencies, primarily Hindu, stages an exclusion that is not just performed annually, as with community festivals, but permanently dispersed over the space of the nation and its diaspora, enacting antagonism through the enclosure, conversion, and resignification of land and by dominating the visual landscape. They are even more explicitly political at the "back end" than festivals and calendars, enabling a host of new actors to participate in religious-cum-developmental patronage and gain social or political status to match their economic wealth or access to resources. Here they mediate between an abstract, large-scale, anonymous public and the more intimate and interpersonal yet also extensive networks of local dominance where access to development is a matter of patronage, gifts, and favors.

In this upscaling of the *sārvajanik*, new actors entering the fray already command some political or economic means, but statues and monuments can be relatively cheap and quick to build; hence their popularity. Meanwhile, the "older" forms are also upscaling in their own ways: Ganapati Utsav and Durga Puja are booming under corporate sponsorship, new temple building continues apace, and old temples are renovating and expanding. The term *sārvajanik*, however, fell into disuse after independence, perhaps because the new republic was supposed to be just that. While it still appears in the names of a few educational and charitable trusts, its most common current usage is in signs for *sārvajanik suvidhayein*: public conveniences, or toilets.

This is somehow appropriate, for it signals the greatest impediment to constituting a *sarvajan*: the perception of Dalits as ritually polluted (and the reluctance of others to clean toilets—so these *suvidhayein* are far from "convenient"). This recalcitrance is what still makes the *sārvajanik* useful in thinking about the public. My heuristic focus on the *sārvajanik* illuminates how the newness of new media at each of the above three moments has held out the promise of material forms that enact equality but that is repeatedly harnessed to a protean politics of access to the twinned goods of resources and status, unfolding through mimetic relays in a competitive plural polity. Key to this politics is the spectacle of control over sacralized space, as are the bodies that move through it, ultimately because these are key to the performance of social hierarchy. The news media remind us every day of how this performance unfolds and is contested not just through the now old "new" media described above but through even older media: killings, blindings, rapes, burnings, desecrations, speeches, songs, processions, massed bodies. New media emerge into milieux dealing with very old problems—not least the problems that caused Buddhism and Jainism to emerge in the first place and to build their now ancient gigantic statues.

Acknowledgments

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Reel Accidents

Screening the *Ummah* under Siege in Wartime Maluku

by Patricia Spyer

In this paper I focus on the Muslim video compact discs (VCDs) that circulated in wartime Maluku during the religiously inflected conflict that wracked these eastern Indonesian islands in the early 2000s. Characterized by an aesthetics of seriality and repetition, scenes of urban warfare and rampant destruction serve as backdrop for close-ups of the vulnerable Muslim body rent asunder by Christian aggression. Unfolding as repeated rupture across the VCD's frames, such films visualize the *ummah* as a body in parts rather than a coherent unity. Of particular concern is the VCD's mode of interpellation, the aesthetic of accident that violently undermines any narrative framing, and the relation between postnarrative appeal and public making. Within a wider media ecology, Malukan "Muslim Power" murals featuring Sunni and Shia big men from different times and places appear to counter the VCDs' visions of the *ummah* in shreds with the strong image of a transnational, transhistorical *ummah*. Yet such murals also echo the VCDs' indeterminacy and displays of vulnerability as they also aim to contain them through the defensive lineup of Muslim strongmen. While ethnographically focused on Indonesia, the argument has implications for understanding the appeal of Muslim genres of mediated spectacular violence elsewhere and more broadly.

Two screens, two scenes. The first is a series of close-ups, jerky camera movements, zoom-ins and zoom-outs that magnify and amplify—frame after frame—slashed gaping body parts, amputated limbs, and oozing wounds in an aesthetics of repetition and reenactment characteristic of the Muslim video compact discs (VCDs) that were produced and circulated in Indonesia in the early 2000s. The second is the "Muslim Power" murals found in the wartime and postwar streets of the North Malukan sultanates of Ternate and Tidore at the eastern end of the archipelago—lineups of Muslim strongmen featuring such historical heavyweights as Indonesia's first president and revolutionary leader, Sukarno; the Tidoran eighteenth-century anticolonial hero Prince Nuku; and the Indonesian protest singer Iwan Fals, emblematic of the student-led Reformasi (Reform) movement that in May 1998, amid mass protests in the capital Jakarta and other cities, brought the country's long-standing authoritarian leader Suharto down. Besides these local heroes standing in for epochal moments in the nation's colonial and postcolonial past, the murals featured both Sunni and Shia big men from beyond Indonesia—Muammar Qaddafi, Osama Bin Laden, Ahmadinijad, and a figure that might be the Shia Ali.[1] If the videos characteristically unfold in the form of repeated rupture across the VCDs' distinct frames, undermining any attempt to recuperate what is seen on-screen for a

narrative end, the murals appear to represent the former's antidote in the strong, secure image of a transnational and transhistorical *ummah* that stretches across space and endures through time.

Considered within a period of less than a decade, from July 2001 immediately before 9/11 until approximately 8 years thereafter, the two genres formed part of an evolving Indonesian media ecology that was characteristic of the reform era. This time saw an expansion into Maluku specifically of new media forms and technologies in the context of the violence that broke out in the provincial capital of Ambon in early 1998 and spread from there to the neighboring islands. It also saw the emergence of new forms of publicity and public making more generally across the country after Suharto. The events leading up to his momentous step down after 32 years of hardhanded rule and its immediate aftermath went together not only with televised images of mass demonstrations against Suharto's New Order regime but with the explosion of competing forms of public spectacle and theatricality within a veritable "contest of visibility" played out in city streets around the country and on television, the Internet, and in the VCD genre (Paramaditha 2014; Spyer 2016). Although the liberalization of media was already underway in Indonesia in the 1990s, the conflicts of the late 1990s and early 2000s in Maluku gave added impetus to the visualization, witnessing, and propaganda value of violence as framed by either side in the re-

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1. On the celebrated historical figure Nuku, see Muridan Satrio Widjojo's excellent PhD dissertation (Widjojo 2007). See also Katoppo (1984).

ligiously inflected war. Besides the emergence of new media genres, forms of dissemination, and the battles waged for attention in public space, the intimate relationship between religion and politics that was a mainstay of governmentality under Suharto is another aspect of the uncertain, volatile conditions that gave rise to the Muslim VCDs and, somewhat later, the power murals.

An Aesthetic of Accident

In some respects the violence that broke out in North Maluku in late December 1999 received less attention than the conflict that began almost a year earlier in the Central Malukan capital of Ambon.[2] Much of the violence in North Maluku was carried out in remote areas where media coverage was limited; coming also as the second time around, as it were, this conflict was deemed less newsworthy than the still ongoing one in Ambon City and its surroundings. In other respects, the violence of North Maluku was pivotal because of the particular brutality of the attacks on several mosques and the sheer numbers of Muslims killed within and in the ensuing violence—500 dead and 10,000 refugees, according to the International Crisis Group (International Crisis Group 2002), and as many as 2,800 killed according to some Muslim sources (Azca 2011). Equally important, the news of the massacre spread rapidly via print media and, crucially, a video recorded by a medical emergency team (MER-C) that arrived in the attack's immediate aftermath and that circulated to stunning effect for more than a year thereafter. Itself a response to the destruction of Ambon's Silo Church, a historical Christian landmark, only a few days before on December 26, 1999, but also, at this time, during the fasting month of Ramadan, the massacre provoked a mass meeting on January 7, 2000, in Jakarta's Independence Square. This highly mediatized gathering was attended by nationally important Muslim leaders and resulted in a call for jihad in Maluku.[3]

The deployment of nonlocal Muslim fighters to Ambon began several months later, in April and May of 2000, especially members of the so-called Laskar Jihad, although other Islamist networks commonly called Laskar Mujahidin also sent militias to the area (albeit in much smaller numbers and with much less publicity). Notwithstanding the spectacular and, indeed, important symbolic effect on Muslims and Christians alike of the arrival and presence of these jihadists in Maluku, it is worth noting that the majority did not in fact fight but focused their activism on nonparamilitary issues such as medical assistance; *da'wa*, or proselytizing; and education (Azca

2011:61, 180). It is important to note that these jihad groups, in particular the Laskar Jihad, were homegrown, national movements that first targeted Maluku because of the perceived threat of "Christianization" there and then spread to Poso on Sulawesi island to Maluku's immediate west. In important respects, including the extent and brutality of the violence deployed, these Indonesian jihad movements are quite different from those that emerged in the Middle East around 9/11 or more recently. Indeed, the founder of the Laskar Jihad, Jafar Umar Thalib, of Hadrami-Arab and Madurese descent, explicitly distanced himself from Osama Bin Laden in interviews, among other reasons because of the latter's understanding of Islam (Hefner 2003 [1999]:194).

Writing of the religious violence that took place in the area of Poso, Dave McRae describes how "the violence created a group of angry young Muslim men who had seen family members killed or their houses destroyed, and who later recalled that their only thought after this period of conflict was of how they could take revenge. News of the violence, including gruesome photos of the remains of murder victims, also drew in *mujahidin* from other parts of the country, who trained and fought with local Muslim men" (McRae in Azca 2011:7). Similarly, former jihadists spoke of how they were "moved to join jihad after hearing the stories of Muslim persecution by Christians" or, more precisely, by "moral shock . . . a visceral, bodily feeling, on a par with vertigo or nausea" from which "strong emotions . . . flow" (Jasper in Azca 2011:173). Further endorsement of such feelings came in the form of fatwas issued by neo-Salafi clerics from the Middle East, such as, not negligibly, the fatwa of a Yemenese cleric justifying jihad in Maluku, an example of the common Indonesian tendency to seek authorization from Islamic clerics beyond their own country in the religion's traditional heartland (Azca 2011:168, 173–175).[4]

While the number of Muslims bent on revenge because their families had suffered directly at the hands of Christians was relatively limited, the "moral shock" among Indonesian Muslims triggered by the December 1999 attacks in North Maluku, including the large majority who did not join or maybe even support the jihad, was widespread in Indonesia.[5] Yet while the sense of Muslim victimization was shared by many Indonesians and taken up by several nationally prominent politicians,

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2. On this conflict, see especially Duncan (2013) and van Klinken (2007).

3. Calls for jihad had actually come earlier as it became clear that Christian Malukans had the upper hand during the conflict's first year. Before early 2000, however, mainstream Muslims had prevailed, calling for the resolution of the conflict through appeal to the rule of law and nationalist principles. See Hefner (2003 [1999]:169).

4. Not only was the leader of the Laskar Jihad, Jafar Umar Thalib, himself an Arab of Hadrami descent but also, in general, Indonesian jihadis have always looked to Arabs for religious guidance; see International Crisis Group (2011). Indonesians tend to see Islam in the Middle Eastern heartland as somehow more authoritative or even authentic, as evidenced, e.g., by the artist Pirous's concern regarding the precise rendition of Qur'anic calligraphy in his work or the symbolic weight of al Azhar and Cairo in the Indonesian box office hit *Ayat-Ayat Cinta*. See George (2009), Huda (forthcoming), and Paramaditha (2014).

5. Based on my experiences working with Christians in Ambon, it is clear that Muslims and Christians alike understood revenge as a justification for participation in warfare. As such, it was inevitably invoked on those rare occasions when a woman took up arms to join in the fighting.

the way in which the media depicted the violence—whether through photographs, stories, rumors, or VCDs—and how that articulated with social action and subsequent events remains an open question that I explore further below. While I argue that the response to the Muslim VCDs tended to be visceral and what they show was commonly taken uncritically as mere expositions of the "truth," no direct, unmediated connection between watching the VCDs and engaging in activities glossed as jihad or otherwise can be assumed. In contrast to connections that are often made between the circulation of particular media forms—especially those glossed as social media—and activism or celebratory pronouncements of alleged Internet or social media revolutions, I explore here the ways in which the Muslim VCDs work but also work *on* those who engage them—specifically with respect to their myriad, often unremarkable and oblique but still important effects.

Among Indonesian Muslims, similar to what is often claimed for Muslims elsewhere, one aspect of the pervasive sense of injury is conveyed by the well-known Prophet's saying that the Muslim community is united like a body: "if one part of the body hurts, the rest of the body will also suffer" (Azca 2011:88; Mahmood 2009). It is this sensibility that would explain why "news of the Tobelo massacre of late December 1999, or Poso, Central Sulawesi, in May 2000 created 'moral shocks' sparking *outrage* towards Christians, a strong sense of *solidarity*, and *compassion* to help and defend Muslim fellows in those areas of religious conflict" (Azca 2011:88, italics in original). "All these emotions," Azca concludes, "eventually led to the rise of jihad movements" (Azca 2011:88). This embodied sense of unity appeared to be an important part of the experience of those on jihad as well. A former Laskar Jihad member recalled how the most meaningful experience for him was "when we were gathered together . . . learning religion together. I had the feeling that our *ukhuwah Islamiyah* (Islamic solidarity) was very strong . . . yes, we felt like we were becoming a single body" (Azca 2011:145). Another who took part in the fighting spoke of praying together on the battlefield where "there was only a thin line between life and death if we were attacked. . . . Because death felt so close, so we were suggested to pray frequently to God" (Azca 2011:185).

On August 11, 2001, I watched several of the Muslim VCDs in the home of an *ustad* in the Protestant-dominated city of Manado, North Sulawesi, where numerous Christian refugees, especially from North Maluku, had recently fled and where only a month before the VCDs had been banned as "provocative." The viewing situation was especially charged for several reasons. First, it had taken considerable effort to get hold of the VCDs because of the ban on their circulation but also because several days before, an article had appeared condemning them in the *Manado Pos*, a local newspaper. This meant that when my husband and I went looking for the VCDs in the company of the *ustad* and another Muslim engaged as a teacher on an Indonesian summer language program in Manado, our search was thwarted at every step. Even when the teacher hung back with us at the request of the *ustad*, who feared that he might be

mistaken for a policeman because of the cap he wore, no one at Manado's Market 45 admitted to either having or having access to the forbidden VCDs.

Significantly, it was only when we stopped in front of a mosque to allow the ustad to attend the late afternoon prayers that our luck turned. Among those exiting the mosque following the prayer was one of the ustad's students, whom he hailed and introduced to us, vouching for our decency and discretion and urging his student to help us obtain any of the banned VCDs. Upon returning to our hotel some hours later, we found a brown envelope awaiting us with a VCD titled *Maluku Utara (Halmahera) Berduka* (North Maluku [Halmahera] Suffers), produced by the Bandung-based Muslim NGO Dompet Sosial Ummul Quro, a copy of the jihadi magazine *Sabili*, and two books by Rustam Kastor, a former brigadier general of the Indonesian army and a key spokesperson on conspiracy theories regarding Maluku's so-called Christianization (Kastor 2000*a*, 2000*b*).[6]

Encouraged by this cache, we set out again the following day with the ustad by car, accompanied by several of his students. With my husband and me crouching in the rear, the route we followed for several hours around the city and its outskirts traced a loose, shadowy infrastructure connecting mosques, schools, meeting places of Muslim prayer groups, and an imam's office where the banned VCDs and related materials might be found (Spyer 2002).[7] Guided by the students' tentative topography comprising institutions known to propagate a more radical Muslim politics or to house a VCD player or to contacts who might lead us to the banned VCDs, the search had a pronounced hit-or-miss character. In the end it resulted in only a handful of VCDs, the majority copies of the one we had obtained before.

By the time we convened at the ustad's home, the VCD viewing had already been postponed once. When we gathered the first time to watch them, the language program teacher mentioned above had naively invited two Protestant ministers along who had happened to hear me speak on a local radio station about my research on the role of media in Indonesia after Suharto and expressed a desire to meet me. Along with this deferral, the illicit status of the VCDs in the traditional Christian stronghold of Manado, the secrecy and intimacy

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6. See Rustam Kastor (2000*a*, 2000*b*). See also "The Ideology of Laskar Jihad," app. 10, in Baker (2002), which includes a speech titled "Facing Christianization in Indonesia" (Baker 2002:158–166) that was written by the Laskar Jihad founder, Ustadz Jafar Umar Thalib, and delivered at a Tabligh Akbar in Riau on August 12, 2000.

7. Religious outreach from which potential recruits for jihad have been drawn in Indonesia since the early 2000s occurs via mosque-based study groups, schools, and other institutions that host lectures and meetings and, more recently, prisons. While radical books generally do not sell well in Indonesia, where the vast majority of the population of 240 million practices a moderate version of Islam, radical ideologies of organizations such as Jemaah Islamiyah spread via such locations. See International Crisis Group (2011) and Gelling (2009).

surrounding the viewing in this particular city, and the fact that at least one of the VCDs had been obtained from an imam's office further enhanced the power of the event. All of those sprawled on the ustad's living room floor that day—besides me, only men, although the ustad's wife and several other women drifted in and out of the room—objected to the description of the VCDs in a leading local newspaper as provocative. Instead, they insisted on the VCDs' truth value as simply a demonstration that what was seen on-screen "should never happen again."[8] As elsewhere, the veracity of these films publicizing Muslim victimization and martyrdom never became a topic of discussion. Rather than being granted any epistemological status, such VCDs are understood as an ethical fact with the spectacle of martyrdom serving as its own proof (Devji 2005:102).[9] This is one important aspect of the way in which the VCDs commonly work and affect those who watch them.

While the videos we watched that day and others I saw later differ in some respects, what we witnessed on-screen disclosed a common aesthetic—call it an aesthetic of the wound or perhaps more precisely, since agentively, an aesthetic of "the coup" in the sense of a severe blow but also "shock," or more cinematographically, "cut." Put otherwise, at issue here is an aesthetic that is both accident and affect at one and the same time, shot through with intensity, indeterminacy, and potentiality. In what follows, I detail the ways in which the VCDs both work and work *on* Muslim viewers, paying special attention to three dimensions that account for their specific effects or what I call coup, cut, and wound. Although these interrelated dimensions overlap and reinforce each other, they are not homologous or reducible to each other. The phrase "aesthetic of accident" designates the three dimensions of coup, cut, and wound as I suggest they commonly work together and on viewers of the Muslim VCDs.

I take the French term *coup* from Michel de Certeau, who uses it to describe what he calls an artful ploy, something that transgresses and disrupts the space in which it moves, making way in so doing for something radically different (de Certeau 1984:79; cf. Spyer 2000:184). In de Certeau's terms, this kind of break or interruption "*makes* a hit (*coup*)" far more than it simply describes one; its force lies in the effect of seeming to elude or, as the case may be, violently break with and into present circumstances (de Certeau 1984:79). In so doing, this disruption and interruption enables and quite literally opens the way for the creation of a fictional space—a space, as it were, of "once upon a time there was . . ." or an important change of scene (de Certeau 1984:79).

What happens, however, when the "hit" or interruption is not singular, introducing a new scene and allowing it to unfold, but occurs repeatedly—coup after coup, blow after blow, frame after frame, shock upon shock upon shock? This, I propose, is what constitutes part of the aesthetic and therein, too, the force of the Muslim VCDs. In contrast to de Certeau's proposition, the "artful ploy" here does not resolve itself readily into narrative but rather resists such, interrupting time and again, both visually and viscerally, any attempt to constitute or resolve itself into narrative form even across the temporal unfolding of the videos themselves. Rather than an image of the Muslim community extending itself as a unified body without interruption from Morocco to China, these VCDs stage the *ummah* in shreds, wounded, humiliated, vulnerable, rent asunder, and in ruins as they also reveal how the affective potency of the *ummah* both relies on and is brought out most forcefully by accident. Although I am interested here specifically in the reception of these VCDs among Indonesian Muslims in the cities of Manado, Ambon, and the North Malukan sultanates in the early 2000s, it is worth noting that a key dimension of the injury felt by many Muslims regarding the Danish cartoons published by the daily newspaper *Jyllands-Posten* in late September 2005 was not because of "any moral interdiction (thou shalt not make images of Muhammed)" but was due to a "structure of affect, a habitus [so that one] feels wounded"; furthermore, "this wound requires moral action," an action that is not "juridical or that of street protest" but rather "internal to the structure of affect" that "predisposes one to experience an act as a violation in the first place" (Mahmood 2009:849; cf. Keane 2009).[10]

Apart from the resistance to narrative recuperation issuing from the successive "coups" characteristic of the VCD genre, another effect is produced by the camera and editing. Nathaniel Dorsky has written about the possibility of a "devotional cinema" that would be indebted to the camera work and crafting of temporality within a given film. In his view, two kinds of time need to be operative to instill a sensation of devotion in viewers: while relative time describes the film's progression from the first to the last shot, absolute time designates time's existence in the context of newness or the eternal now (Dorsky 2005:32–38). Exemplary in this regard is Carl Theodor Dreyer's 1928 *The Passion of Joan of Arc*, where "each shot, while part of the progression of the narrative's temporality, is nevertheless absolutely present as deep, vertical newness. The photography doesn't *observe*, it *is*. The cuts . . . spark with urgency" (Dorsky 2005:35). Or, to recall de Certeau, the cuts *make* a hit (*coup*) far more than they simply describe one (de Certeau 1984). Seen in this light, the force and effect of Indonesia's jihad VCDs would also reside in the urgency and repetitive "newness" with which they present themselves cinematographically whereby the possibility of recuperation is not only suspended but exceeds the order of representation.

Similar to the understanding of "new" in "new media" proposed by the editors of this special issue of *Current Anthropology* in their introduction (Hirschkind, de Abreu, and Caduff 2017), the "newness" I identify here is "a structural movement

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8. Field notes, Manado, August 11, 2001.

9. See the excellent ethnography by Hirschkind (2006), in which the relationship between ethical self-improvement, cassette sermons, and forms of embodied reception is central.

10. See Flood (2013) for a nuanced history of European accusations of Muslim iconoclasm and—equally important—iconophilia.

that keeps alive"—and continually reasserts—"the desire for the new itself." As a result, the cuts characteristic of this particular "devotional cinema" remain literally uncontained insofar as they occur at the level of the coup but also of cinematographic form or the particular cuts and pans deployed about which I will have more to say below. But the special effects of this VCD genre also work at the level of content, or what is shown on-screen, as wounded Muslim bodies and gaping wounds bleed frame after frame into each other—making it impossible for the latter to contain the former.

But what, more concretely, did we witness that day in August 2001, and what kind of import should we give to that witnessing? Undoubtedly the most wrenching scenes for the audience of primarily young men that early afternoon in the ustad's living room—students of an Islamic university where I had given a talk earlier that day and a few others connected to the ustad and the source of the banned VCDs—were those scenes that had been captured on camera by the MER-C medical emergency team in the days following the massacre in the Tobelo mosque. Pans and close-ups of the damaged mosque interior move across or alternately linger over the charred bodies and body parts littering the mosque floor, picking up fragments of brightly colored clothing or other recognizable traces of the life that had once been there. Especially difficult to watch seemed the footage of bodies and bodily remains lifted up by a tractor fork and dumped into a mass grave outside the mosque as Indonesian soldiers stood by and watched.

Notably, this is the first of two mosque scenes in the Halmahera VCD. It is a vision of the *ummah* rent violently apart in which the steady low pan of the camera works as a kind of accounting or taking stock of the material traces of the invisible crowd that in the minds of the faithful constitute the dead (Canetti 2000:42–47). In so doing, this opening scene of the VCD recalls Elias Canetti's proposition that religions may very well begin with the invisible crowds of the dead—or, by the same token, devils or saints—imagined as large, concentrated hosts. Here, however, such hosts are in disarray, bereft of concentration and focus. To be sure, the Halmahera VCD, like others among the more professional of the genre, aims to suture these violent scenes within a narrative of Muslim victimization and the need to "return Maluku" to Muslim hands. This is why the VCD's visualization of the *ummah* blown asunder is countered by a second image of a mosque interior toward the end of the VCD where the aim appears to be that of gathering the *ummah* into some kind of purposeful Muslim public bound for jihad in Halmahera, as I describe below. Equally important in this regard is the *nasyid* sound track of the VCD that serves as a rallying cry for jihad and, as such, responds to but also presumably works against and helps to mute the repetitive image of broken Muslim bodies.[11]

But like spectators coming unwittingly on the scene of an accident or even rubberneckers mesmerized by a car crash, the affective charge of this VCD genre appears to reside especially in the obsessive return to the "wound," the continual reiteration and rupture of the coup, the renewed experience of shock and repetitive reenactment of disaster that constitutes trauma or the Greek original for "wound"—in the sense, perhaps, even of an "accident" that cannot be assimilated by a subject or subjected within the work of narrating a self (cf. Malabou 2012). This impression was borne out by the conversation following the VCD viewing in the ustad's home that focused almost exclusively on the scene of devastation in the Tobelo mosque, the violence perpetrated against Muslims, and the dishonor done to their corpses. It is also supported by the animated discourse about the VCDs of the early 2000s—among Muslims in Manado, Ambon, Ternate, and Tidore but also by the mainstream press, which drew out specifically, as in the article in the *Manado Pos* mentioned before, the graphic, "provocative" scenes characteristic of the genre. In sum, the aesthetic of accident comprises the distinct if interrelated dimensions of the coup, the cut, and the wound, with the latter residing both in the insistent visual pileup of wounds and wounded bodies on-screen but also in the sense of "accident" developed here. "Accident" emerges then not only from what is seen on-screen—not the least from the violent displacement of the distinct frames of these VCDs one after another—but the sense of "accident" exceeds representation, opening out onto a relationality in which "corporeal images" meet embodied viewers (Jain 2007; MacDougal 2005).

An Indonesian Landscape of the Jihad

Other forces that, importantly, inflect cultural and political processes and dispositions that are more specific to Indonesia as well as Maluku also nourish the sense of "accident" and what might be called the "repetition compulsion" of this and similar VCDs and are also operative (Freud 1987). Crucial among such forces is the spectacle of martyrdom and jihad landscapes experienced by most Muslims today visually—including those in the ustad's living room that early afternoon in August 2001 (Devji 2005:93).

> Unlike Christian martyrdom which also involves the idea of witnessing, *shahadat* involves . . . not only people, but animals, buildings and other inanimate objects . . . [which] may participate in the rites of martyrdom, including those who witness the rites of martyrdom without themselves being killed. . . . *Shahadat* is a fundamentally social and therefore inclusive act, the pity and compassion it excites among witnesses forming part of its classical as much as its contempo-

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11. *Nasyid*, from the Arabic *nashid* for "chants," is a form of sung poetry that is traditionally performed a cappella or accompanied by percussion instruments. As an explicitly religious and ethical form of music it

has been associated with the Palestinian Intifada, the Egyptian Da'wa movement, and with jihad in Indonesia as jihad *nasyid*. See Barendregt (2006, 2008) on the way Muslim celebrity boy bands in Malaysia and Indonesia began to popularize the *nasyid* genre in the 1990s.

rary definition. Because martyrdom in Islam is thus connected to seeing in a much more general as well as much more specific sense than in Christianity, it is capable of cohabiting in productive ways with the global practices of news reportage. (Devji 2005:94–95)

It is also capable of cohabiting more intimately with "gruesome photos of the remains of murder victims" disseminated in local and national print and electronic media across Indonesia or images brought home, literally and metaphorically, to Manado, Ambon, Jakarta, and Ternate via, say, Australian news channels, to the successive shocks and *coups* delivered by the Muslim VCDs (McRae in Azca 2011:7).

It is important to note that for those Muslims watching the jihad VCDs in Manado, other more nationally specific religio-political conditions, forms of visual discipline, and genealogies of exposure to violence helped to "bring home" and thicken the mediated witnessing of martyrdom, the aesthetic of accident, and embodied attitudes toward images that suffused the experience of watching the VCDs. One of the young men that day, significantly perhaps the only one who said he planned to join the MER-C medical emergency team, described the effect of the film as like that of the *azan*, or Muslim call to prayer, because it quickened the spirit, but also as a religious form of summoning as "shock therapy."[12] Invoked by Suharto to describe the strategic deployment of the public display of corpses of alleged criminals summarily executed in the mid-1980s during the so-called government sponsored "mysterious killings," "shock therapy" in the authoritarian leader's own words, "was done so that the general public would understand that there was still someone capable of taking action to tackle the problem of criminality" (Suharto in Robinson 2001:227–228).[13] More generally under his regime, the forced witnessing of violence was a strategic pedagogical instrument regularly enforced on citizens, from schoolchildren and families watching national television in their homes to the alleged rebel populations of Aceh and Papua, through a range of media—film, school textbooks, monuments, exposed corpses, or severed heads on stakes.

A central ritual of national citizenship was the annual screening in schools and on national television of the *Pengkhianatan G30S/PKI* (September 30, 1965, movement/communist treason) film allegedly documenting the New Order state's origin and its raison d'être in the repression of an alleged communist-backed coup. For all Indonesians, not just children, the cine-

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12. Field notes, Manado, August 11, 2001.

13. On the logic of "shock therapy," see Joshua Barker (1998) and James T. Siegel (1998). For an overview of work on violence in Indonesia during the Suharto era and its immediate aftermath, see Spyer (2014). Karen Strassler (2010:218) notes how activist students in Yogyakarta spoke of how they used photographs that they had taken of demonstrations against the Suharto regime as "shock therapy" to change the thinking of their more complacent fellow students. See Emilio Spadola (2014) on how the mass mediation of calls to prayer have transformed understandings of religion and authority in urban Morocco.

matic master narrative, reiterated through countless other media, established "the framework for legitimate public fantasy and discussion for a considerable part of the New Order period and may be understood as much as a source as a product of state terrorism" (Heryanto 2006:14, 16). It is worth emphasizing that in addition to the forced witnessing imposed by the former regime, the New Order's terror, more generally, may be understood as a "contributing force" in the many interreligious and interethnic conflicts in Indonesia during the late 1990s and early 2000s, including those of North and Central Maluku (Heryanto 2006:14, 16). Another aggravating factor was the close connection forged between religion and politics under Suharto. A key aspect of this governmentality was the requisite adherence of all Indonesians, enshrined on the citizen's identity card, to one of the five "world religions" recognized by the regime. By extension, those Indonesians classified as "not yet having" a religion were denied full citizenship and state recognition (Spyer 1996). Helping to sediment the aesthetic of accident that I describe for the VCDs, in other words, is not only an embodied religious disposition but also a history of shock as a politically charged affect deployed regularly through diverse media by the Suharto regime. Seen in light of this particular political theology, it should perhaps not surprise that for the young man who appeared even more struck than the others upon viewing the VCDs, the "call" to prayer and Suharto's "shock therapy" came to him folded into each other as a singular powerful summoning of the subject. This summoning was not only both auditory and visual but also instantiated the particular New Order political theology that for purposes of governmentality collapsed proper religious belonging, national citizenship, and terror into each other.

In addition to these different mutually enforcing genealogies, some of the radical Muslim groups emergent at the time, especially the Laskar Jihad, carved out a distinct place for themselves through their own brand of spectacular violence and public theatricality that circulated both on- and off-screen. The public emergence of the organization was itself staged as a spectacle, "a flamboyant display of might on April 6th 2000" as some 10,000 Laskar Jihad members demonstrated before the Presidential Palace, an image that became "etched in the minds of the Indonesian body politic" (Baker 2002:22). Different from Manado, a common sight in the Central Javanese city of Yogyakarta in the early 2000s, was the figure of the Laskar Jihad warrior, bearded and turbaned in a long tunic and cropped pants, standing under traffic lights and at the intersections of major thoroughfares where they hawked the organization's daily pamphlet, *Maluku Hari Ini* (*Maluku Today*), and solicited support for jihad in Maluku. As part of this aggressive publicity and visibility, collection boxes with the Laskar Jihad logo were placed in restaurants, *warung* (roadside stalls), and small shops. Newsagents selling Laskar Jihad media displayed large stickers with bold print, "*Salafy* Ada di Sini" (*Salafy* sold here), *Salafy* being one of the half dozen or so media organs of Forum Kommunikas Ahlus Sunnah Wal Jama'ah (Baker 2002:34). On the Laskar Jihad website, commer-

cials continually popped up advertising new magazine editions (Baker 2002:34). Their covers characteristically bore images that indexed not only the threat of violence but often the "coup" itself—a fist, a hand clasping a sword, a bullet casting its shadow on a banner displayed on the organization's website that read in English "Victory or Martyrdom. Jihad in Ambon" (Baker 2002:34). During these years, Laskar Jihad members trafficked openly in jihad VCDs and print media on the large passenger boats heading to Ambon from the western parts of the archipelago while the organization's logo, calligraphy, and characteristic images covered guardhouse walls, clinics, and other buildings in the Muslim-dominated areas of the Central Malukan capital from mid-2000 on.[14]

Folded into each other across the VCDs' distinct frames are multiple mediated interpellations: that of the religious subject; that of the Muslim witness to VCD martyrdom and, by extension, interpellation *as* martyr; that of the spectacle of violence imposed on citizen-subjects by Suharto along with the identification between citizenship and proper religious belonging; that of contemporary jihad's spectacular violence and the successive ruptures and shocks of the coup, or the aesthetic of accident described before. It is worth noting that besides the continual reenactment of accident on-screen, the videos themselves were repeatedly watched during the war. In Ambon I was told that at a customer's request, VCD shops would compile a disc comprising favorite attacks, jihad scenes, and the like for personal consumption.[15] Without so much as a gesture to an encompassing narrative, such VCDs would presumably have only reinforced the sense of the blow-by-blow aesthetics that I propose characterizes the genre more generally. Apart from the different kinds of interpellation at work in the VCDs, the viewing situation in the ustad's home—as I said, predominantly male and shot through with male Muslim camaraderie and sociability—resonated in many respects with what I have been told of similar viewings in mosques elsewhere (Farish Noor, personal communication).

Before considering this multilayered call in relation to the accidental public it summons, I turn first to the mosque scene presented as an alternative to the *ummah* visualized in ruins at the opening of the Halmahera VCD. To judge from the response to this and the other VCDs on the part of those in the ustad's home but also to other viewings of such VCDs that I took part in or heard about during the uncertain years of the early 2000s, the effect on many Muslim audiences in Indonesia was affectively powerful and visceral—for one viewer at least, as I mentioned above, as unnerving and violent as Suharto's shock therapy. Made for propaganda purposes and to raise funds for jihad, the image of the devastated Tobelo mosque

necessarily produced a second image of a mosque with a gathering of jihad warriors about to embark for Halmahera Island to wrest it back from Christians for Muslims. If in the first mosque scene the camera pans slowly across bits of clothing, body parts, and other signs of damage and disarray, in the second the camera circles repeatedly around a visually heterogeneous gathering of jihadists, contouring them, in so doing, into an accidental Muslim public of sorts. Visibly, at least, as I have written elsewhere, this public is an ad hoc collection of eclectic affinities. While everyone present, primarily men but also a few women, is dressed more or less in white, some appear orthodox and sober, others inscribed from head to waist with *ajimat* (magical charms dating to the Crusades), some wear Saudi-style dress, others are wrapped in Palestinian headscarves, and still others exhibit jihad–Central Javanese Yogyakartan style. Several carry Philippine Moro-type machetes, others have bows and arrows or spears, some have AK-47s, and a few even wield plastic guns, perhaps for their effect on unsuspecting audiences (Spyer 2006:206).

As the camera moves around the crowd, the voice of a man disciplines the gathering into a Muslim public by reciting the rules pertaining to those who embark on jihad—"no stealing, no felling of trees, no raping of women," he intones. In contrast to the camera's focus on the gathering, it passes only once over the man who embodies authority so that the voice of the law appears to the viewer as disembodied, coming from nowhere yet hovering close to the crowd. Working like the *acousmêtre* of cinematic fame, this voice bereft of a visible representation of its source seems to have a power that is not limited or circumscribed (Chion 1999:232–227). And while the movement of the camera collaborates with the law in crafting the visually disorderly crowd into a pious Muslim public, the form of disciplining performed by the camera and that of the law are hardly the same. While the authoritative voice of the law enumerating jihad's observances exemplifies discipline tout court, being backed by both tradition and institutions, the VCD's visuals, for all their punch, or, for that matter, the *nasyid* sound track, are more akin to what Hirschkind in his work on Islamic cassette sermon listening has called "undisciplined disciplines"(Hirschkind 2006:83).[16] This is because the ways in which the VCDs circulate or may even be "homemade" in Malukan video stores opens interpretation to potentially numerous "lay" viewers (Eickelman and Anderson 2003 [1999]:xiv). But also because the more relaxed, distracted engagement that these media in principle at least allow for—together with their more "popular," less "systematic," and less formalized qualities—means that they make possible forms of engagement that differ considerably from their more codified, "properly" religious counterparts.

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14. On the stylistics and spectacular violence of the Laskar Jihad, see Jacqui Baker (2002).

15. Although he focuses primarily on the development of the regional popular music industry of West Sumatra, Suryadi (2014) offers useful information about the emergence of the "grassroots" VCD genre more generally.

16. Specifically, Hirschkind (2006:83) proposes that "such undisciplined disciplines play a far more pervasive role in shaping traditions, both religious and secular, than their more 'serious' (rigorous and systematic) counterparts."

Let us now fast-forward some 7 years to consider another response to the perceived threat to the integrity of the *ummah*: the Muslim Power murals that were thrown up in and around the old North Malukan sultanate towns in the wake of 9/11. Significant perhaps in their scarcity, I came across three works in all in Ternate and Tidore—a billboard titled "Saddam Is Hero of the World," showing Saddam Hussein as an Arab horseman pursuing a tiny, terrified George Bush with beads of sweat flying from his brow; a "Moslem Power" mural; and another lineup of Muslim strongmen that, while not captioned "Moslem Power" like the other, corresponds to what I see as a genre insofar as its serial form also mimics the picture galleries of Muslim religious leaders that I often saw in Ternatan businesses and homes (figs. 1, 2).[17] While only two of the three murals explicitly feature George Bush, the "invisible" backdrop common to all these productions dating from the time after 9/11 is the war in Iraq, the larger "War on Terror," and the sense of the *ummah* under siege (Appadurai 1997). Indeed, this invisible backdrop was brought forcefully into view by the spontaneous performance of a man who made a gesture of punching George Bush's portrait and then raised his thumb in approval of Ahmadinejad's as I photographed the Tidoran Muslim Power mural in the summer of 2008 (fig. 3).

Like their much more numerous Christian counterparts in Ambon, the Muslim Power murals remediate print media in their depiction of Muslim big men like Osama Bin Laden—in the case of the Ternatan mural I was told that whereas the men who produced the mural were by no means jihadists or even hard-line Muslims (*garis keras*), the models of the portraits were photographic originals from the Laskar Jihad magazine *Sabili* or from *Hidayatullah*, the publication of another Indonesian neo-Salafy organization that originated in Balikpapan, East Kalimantan. For the depictions of the eighteenth-century Prince Nuku of Tidore, Che Guevara, and George W. Bush, the men presumably relied on other sources. With the aim of cleaning and beautifying the entrance to their neighborhood immediately before the Idul Fitri holiday that concludes the fasting month of Ramadan, members of the "youth of the Gipsy Gang" (*pemuda Gang Gipsy*) gathered the funds for the mural and put it in place during a week in November 2003.[18] Sociologically, in other words, there is a considerable gap between those who draw on jihadi media as models of

Muslim Power and those who undertake jihad in whatever form. Reality is commonly a great deal messier than is often alleged to be the case. This example also underscores how misleading it can be to assume any unmediated connection between specific media forms and their effects with respect to social activism of any kind.

Much like their Christian counterparts in Ambon, the murals often served as spontaneous outdoor photographic studios where young men and couples attired in their Ramadan best posed demurely in front of the Muslim Power gallery (Spyer 2016). This is another social practice that suggests how complex the relationship is between the monumental images of Muslim strongmen and the social life they lead more generally. What strikes one especially about the photographs in which the murals serve as backdrops is just how much the defensive wall of Muslim power and strident stance of the big men is depleted by the gatherings of friends and couples who stand before them. In this respect it is instructive to position the Muslim Power murals within a chronology of Muslim backdrops from photographic studios in Central Java where families have traditionally gone for a group photograph on the holiday that concludes Ramadan when they all come together. If the backdrops once depicted identifiable Indonesian mosques, such as Yogyakarta's Kauman mosque, these had given way by the 1980s to more generic mosque backdrops "suggesting the growing importance in late New Order Indonesia of identification with a transnational Islamic community" (Strassler 2010:94–95). Similarly, the Muslim Power murals made in the years following the attacks of 9/11 and the launching of the "War on Terror" exhibit a highly complicated sense of territoriality in the way they relinquish the clear coordinates of any specifiable spacetime insofar as the mural collects big men from different times and places and includes Shia alongside Sunni men. At the same time, notwithstanding the more domesticated group portraits staged in front of the murals, the murals themselves emphasize what holds the *ummah* together: a defensive lineup of Muslim strongmen or a monumental public image of Muslim Power.

Nor should it surprise us that one of the murals explicitly represents the presence of mediation itself. Note how this mural from Ternate foregrounds mediation—the sprocket border that separates one portrait from the next, suggesting an analog film reel (fig. 4). If the conception of the *ummah* in Indonesia was already becoming more transnational in the 1980s, this has only increased over the years. Additionally, the *ummah* has itself also become more salient as a conception in peoples' lives. Importantly, this is a result of the proliferation of media forms and communication technologies—satellite television and the Internet but also image technologies such as the VCD—that promote a heightened sense of belonging to a global community of believers or a greater *ummah* consciousness (Lim 2008:178). But among the young Ternatan and Tidoren men who made the murals, a strong sense of being distanced and at a remove from Muslim power may also have been it work. This sense would have informed their desire to erect a defensive wall of powerful Muslim big men but also

Figure 1. Billboard of Saddam Hussein pursuing George Bush, Ternate, 2006. Photo by Patricia Spyer. A color version of this figure is available online.

their awareness of a highly mediated relationship to such embodiments of power.

If we turn again to the Ternatan mural, we can see how it frames what in principle is a limitless series of an *ummah* composed of Muslim strongmen. Unlike a community constituted through mediation by a transcendent authority for which the problem then becomes how to ensure connection and communication with such beyond—such as, I have argued elsewhere, was the crisis for Christians in Ambon— a community constituted by a logic of seriality must find a means to delimit its reach (Spyer 2008). If, minimally, the verbal profession of faith makes one a Muslim, the mural must solve the problem of delimiting the community of Muslim Power through alternative visual means. And it does. At either end of the lineup of Muslim heroes, including such historical and political biggies as Sukarno, Ahmadinijad, Khomeini, and Qaddafi, is a significant other. At one extreme, in both senses of the word, a mutually enhancing pair evokes evil and irreconcilable alterity—George Bush with a raised finger reinforced by Hitler at his side—at the other, Ernesto Che Guevara brandishing a pistol. As elsewhere, Che in Indonesia is a symbol of youth culture and rebellion, linked locally, like the singer Iwan Fals, to Reformasi and the powers that brought Suharto down. In the defensive wall of Muslim Power, a collection of "fully formed

corporal entities, each of which represents the capacity to serve as [a unifier,] a container or representative of political force," the mural appears to offer an artistic solution to the *ummah*'s vulnerability and fragmentation.[19] Yet at the same time it publicizes this same lack of integrity in the open Muslim Power series sprayed on these North Malukan walls. Seen from this perspective, the mural both echoes the indeterminacy and potentiality of the VCD as it also aims to channel and contain it through the visual cordon sanitaire made up of Muslim strongmen. This, incidentally, underscores the added value, as others have insisted before me, of considering multiple media and their myriad if often entangled effects in tandem, an approach condensed in the notion of a media ecology (Pinney 1997; fig. 5). And if in considering this media ecology I have chosen to foreground the relation between the VCDs and the Power Murals, other media that form part of this ecology also passed the review, however briefly. These include neo-Salafy print media such as the magazine *Sabili* and the books of Rustam

19. I owe this observation to Joshua Barker's insightful discussion of my contribution to the American Association of Anthropology's "Accidental Politics" panel (see n. 17).

Figure 2. "Power Moslem" mural, Ternate, 2003. Reproduced with permission of Aki Saleh. Photo by Aki Saleh. A color version of this figure is available online.

Kastor that, if you recall, arrived at my Manado hotel together with the jihadi VCDs.

An Accidental Public

Let me conclude with a few observations regarding what might be at stake in the *reel accidents* that are the subject of this essay. While some scholars of contemporary Islam emphasize such emergent features as the "adventurous use of history" and concomitant "breakdown of Islamic authority through the dispersal and recycling of its historical representations," the precedence of religiosity over religion, the privileging of more direct, personal, and emotional forms of engagement, and the conception of the religious community "not as an already existing body"—the *ummah*—"but as a reconstructed community of the 'chosen'" that to a large extent is territorially unmoored, living both in and apart from society, such observations by and large have only faint echoes in these eastern parts of Indonesia (Devji 2005:49, 51; Roy 2006:130). As Magnus Marsden cautions in his ethnography of "living Islam" in Chitral on Pakistan's northwest frontier, one has to be wary of seeing "local Islam as inherently vulnerable to global trends and forces in contemporary Islam" (Marsden 2006:9). Or for that matter, too, of imagining a violent terrorist behind every display of Muslim power.

In Maluku, as in Indonesia more generally, some decidedly more local political and historical factors are salient. Briefly, these include the fraught relationship between Islam and the Indonesian state since independence from the Dutch colonizers, the pervasive sense in Indonesia following Suharto's 1998 resignation of a "looseness at the center" amid a slew of unfolding crises, the refiguring generally of the close relationship between religion and politics forged under the New Order, and the uncertainties for Muslims regarding their place in the Indonesian Republic from 2001 on with the retrenchment of secular and Christian forces in the seats of state power in Jakarta (Kusno 2010:36–38; Sidel 2006:12).

The thick, layered appeal of the "accident" that aims to interpellate viewers does so through an affirmation of materiality and corporeality, through "a basic entanglement of bodily processes and technologies of reproduction and visualization, reproduction and mimesis, that is not simply reducible to, or contained by, the order of representation" (Selzer 1998:36). This appeal necessarily emerges within and is productive of the sense of rupture, fragmentation, "looseness at the center," and the like that are also constitutive of Islamism and jihad in Indonesia today or what one might call an "accidental public"—less a public as we have known it but a public of today— ad hoc and contingent; built on immediacy, intensity, indeterminacy, and excess; called into being in part by the VCDs

Figure 3. Man pretending to punch George Bush, Tidore, 2008. Photo by Patricia Spyer. A color version of this figure is available online.

discussed here—frame after frame, shock after shock, blow after blow.[20]

Recall that much like the *azan*, or Muslim call to prayer, akin for some Indonesians to Suharto's "shock therapy," the VCD elicits a powerful, often visceral response. In this respect, the particular call resembles—if perhaps only superficially—the "incredibly shrinking soundbite" that, along with other criteria, is a prerequisite for social media activism to permeate the media network (Lim 2013). Research in Indonesia has shown that the success of social media activism there, presumably with some relevance elsewhere, depends on a constellation of several factors (Lim 2013). In particular, those issues most likely to go viral and to translate into forms of civic activism encapsulate simple or simplified narratives, are linked to low-risk activities, are congruent with dominant metanarratives, and are uncontested by powerful competing narratives that dominate mainstream media (Lim 2013)—a nursing mother of two complains in a private e-mail to family and friends about the poor service she received at a hospital and is subsequently jailed for several weeks, found guilty of defaming her doctors, and fined and sentenced to 6 months in prison; a 15-year-old boy accidentally "steals" a pair of sandals left by a policeman outside a mosque during prayer time, is tracked down, and is severely beaten. These protests materialized online but also in public space as mass spectacle and as spectacle for the masses—the coins amassed to pay Prita Mulyasari's fine, in the first instance, and a sea of sandals, in the second. In the "Sandal Scandal," waves of insult, religious piety, and poverty were rolled into one as people left hundreds of cheap flip-flops and sandals in front of police stations around the country.[21] Telescoped into increasingly diminished sound bites, codified and branded through potent images and telltale slogans, these are incidents for which, extending the metaphor somewhat, "no caption is needed" (Harriman and Lucaites 2007).

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20. An earlier version of this paper—written for an American Anthropological Association panel titled "Accidental Politics" in 2012—developed the argument especially in relationship to the questions raised by the organizers. Although my own use of the term "accidental public" since differs from that of Rao (2007), who limits it to the ephemeral public brought together as bystanders of the Bomb, her excellent discussion of the Bombay Black Friday bombing was helpful. By contrast, accidental public here foregrounds not only the landscape of the jihad as a scene of "accident" but the mediated aesthetics of coup, trauma, and "accident" that constitutes the core of the Muslim VCDs. On publics in relationship to images, see also Spyer and Steedly (2013:28–33).

21. CNN called Prita an "accidental hero"; see http://edition.cnn.com /2009/WORLD/asiapcf/12/22/indonesia.prita/ (accessed January 9, 2015).
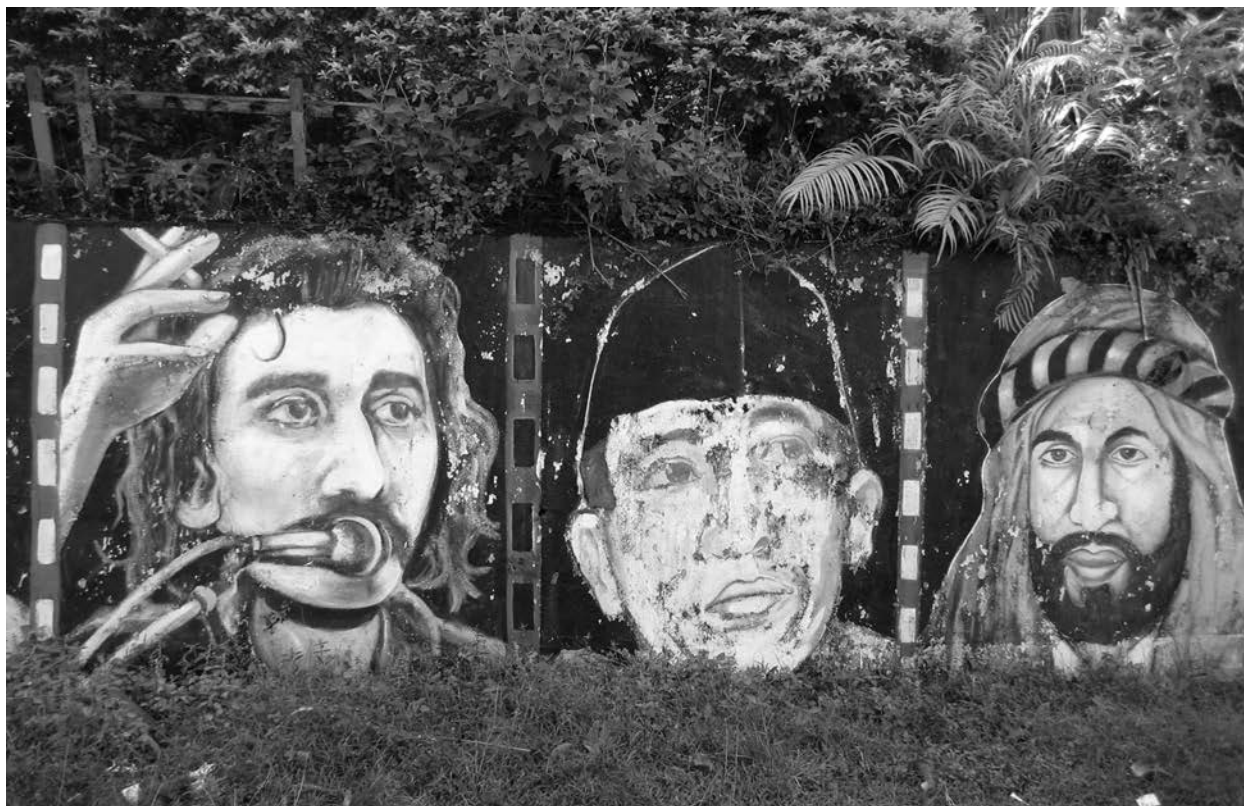
Figure 4. Section of a mural with sprocket borders between portraits, Tidore, 2008. Photo by Patricia Spyer. A color version of this figure is available online.

Lest I be misunderstood, I am not suggesting that these examples operate according to the same bodily, affective, blow-by-blow appeal as the Muslim VCDs, although both tend to provoke some kind of rapid response and engagement. What I would like to draw attention to instead, by way of conclusion, is how in both instances narrative is either elided or increasingly bypassed as complex political and ethical concerns are brushed aside in favor of a call tout court, be it via the heavy blow of the *coup* or the "lite," highly reduced, shrunken sound bite. If this is the case, then what are the implications for understanding the effects of media forms like the VCDs and Muslim Power murals, specifically, in terms of how such effects may or may not articulate with social activism? To know that something like the VCDs circulate is not to know, after all, whether and how they work or become efficacious. As with the Sandal Scandal, other factors besides an immediate, affective, and visceral response need to be there. Those that come to mind include "mobilizational infrastructures" or networked institutions, associations, and forms of sociality (Sidel 2015)—but also with respect to the Muslim VCDs the small contingent of men motivated by revenge—aiming to profit from circumstances or radicalized in other ways who can take the lead (McRae 2013). Add to this the sense fostered by the spread of media technologies, the booming national industry in "Islamic

film" (*film islami*), and the growing awareness among Indonesian Muslims of being part of a larger *ummah* (Huda, forthcoming). By the same token, part of the efficacy of the already charged images of the VCDs and, to a lesser extent, the murals is predicated on viewers' awareness that others—here other Muslims—are seeing what they see.[22] Admittedly, in all of this, the effects of the aesthetic of accident are the most elusive and difficult to grasp, or the question of how images, whether still or moving, *move* those who engage them (Spyer and Steedly 2013). What I hope to have shown is that no matter how powerful, affective, and visceral the response to the Muslim VCDs might be, there is no unmediated connection between viewing them and any social action or activism. Instead, I see the effects of such media as part of inchoate structures of feeling in formation that may or may not congeal but only do so within the right constellation when they come to operate alongside other multiply mediated historical and political conditions and the aspirations, contingencies, and uncertainties of the everyday. If the Muslim VCDs and power

22. This is what Kajri Jain (2007:271–274) calls transitive or triangulated public discourse as part of the transsubjective realm where the subject's experience is constitutively caught up with that of others.

Figure 5. "Muslim Power" mural with Che Guevara, Tidore, 2008. Photo by Patricia Spyer. A color version of this figure is available online.

murals also evidence, equally if differently, the increasing mutual constitution of the digital and daily life, they intimate then the ways in which inchoate structures of feeling in formation are increasingly shot through and indebted to the media that shape our current epoch and our collective and individual experience in Indonesia as elsewhere.

Acknowledgments

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Graduated Publics

Mediating Trance in the Age of Technical Reproduction

by Martin Zillinger

The notion of a "public sphere" has been widely discussed in the anthropology of Islam and, as elsewhere, criticized for its normative assumptions. Focusing on how actors redefine the scope of their actions in (media) networks of Moroccan trance brotherhoods, in this paper I explore how adepts and skeptics of trance relate to and compete with each other in generating, negotiating, and shunning publicity for their practices and "issues of concern." In order to take media practices that aim to "make things public" as a point of departure, attention is drawn to "ritual boundary objects" that help to mediate between different viewpoints and enable ritual cooperation across sites. Without such boundary objects, the use of new media and the collapse of carefully distinguished spheres of action are likely to lead to scandals and the violent drawing of boundaries. I argue for a concept of "graduated publics" that makes it possible to rethink Eurocentric imaginaries of unified public or counterpublic spheres and challenges their binary conceptions of public and private realms. The focus on situated mediation practices makes it possible to zoom in on the modalities and materialities of circulation and uptake that expand or delimit publicity for different "issues" in different locales.

The notion of a "public sphere" has been widely discussed in the anthropology of Islam (Eisenstadt, Hoexter, and Levtzion 2002; Schulze 2000) and, as elsewhere, criticized for its normative assumptions, which presuppose self-reflexive moral subjects engaging in rational debates (e.g., Eickelman and Salvatore 2004; Jurkiewicz 2011). Not least, anthropologists have transferred the Habermasian concept of a public sphere to societies worldwide, if not without critique (see Gal and Woolard 2001). The English translation of Habermas's *Öffentlichkeit* as "public sphere" has delimited its meaning to (spatialized) public spheres and (unified collective) publics that come with particular imaginaries of the social (cf. Mah 2000; Warner 2002). The German term *Öffentlichkeit* has connotations of publicness (as opposed to not public) or publicity (as to make public) that are better equipped to capture the very media practices (of reading and writing, visiting theaters, or playing music) that brought together actors across status and gender and triggered the transformation processes Habermas describes (Bosse 2015).[1] Along these lines, the variety of (media) practices that "make things public" (Latour 2005*a*; Laurier and Philo 2007) seems the key to illuminate alternative notions of public and publicness in different places and at different historical junctures.

For the Islamic world, fine-grained analyses of Islamic scholarship and jurisprudence have advanced our understanding of relational notions of "public" and "private" (Alshech 2004; Mottahedeh and Stilt 2003) that are linked to different configurations of behavior in domestic, semi-public and public spaces (cf. also Asad 2003). Wary of universalizing distinctive historical developments in Europe, scholars have taught us that the discursive and social practices in the Islamic world cannot be translated into neatly separated and unified public and private spheres. But even if the existence of a public sphere may be a matter of ideology, it nonetheless has relevance for arguments about the social world once the social imaginary of a public sphere has been established and related notions of separated public and private realms come into play (see Gal 2002).

In his analysis of competing calls of Islam in the massmediated society of Morocco, Emilio Spadola recently noted that the new means of technological mediation have advanced different imaginations of a unified and transparent public sphere

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1. It is worth noting that in his binary conception of the bourgeois public vis-à-vis the monarchic state, Habermas failed to take into account the various differences in rank and status and the *petites sociétés* that made up the "premodern societies" of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The *privati* (as opposed to the *publici*, who claimed a share in political power) were far from being equal or united in the discussion of public affairs. Important for our discussion here is that they differentiated carefully between those things and procedures that were allowed to go public and those that were not (Bosse 2015; Koselleck 1959).

in Morocco and the Arab world (Spadola 2014). Postcolonial nation-states have claimed public spheres in order to bolster the power of the state vis-à-vis the various associations, factions, and "circles of affiliation" (Rosen 2002:15) that have formed and reformed political constellations "on every level from the court to the camp," as Clifford Geertz emphasized for Morocco (Geertz 1973:274, cf. 2004). The claims of nationalists have been contested by Muslim reformers who draw on a long tradition of debates among Islamic revival movements (al ṣaḥwa al-Islāmiyya) about the "common good" (al-maṣlaḥa al-ʿāmma) as a means to imagine a Muslim public across national borders. Often this imagination is articulated in the call for ethical self-cultivation, dissociating political subjects from the legally sanctioned and authoritatively controlled public spheres of nation-states (Hirschkind 2006).

According to the influential work of Michael Warner, publics relate strangers by means of circulating discourse (Warner 2002). As Charles Hirschkind noted, the fiction of a purely self-organizing discourse makes the ideal of a public autonomous and sovereign vis-à-vis the state but produces a structural blindness to its material conditions (Hirschkind 2006:106). Hirschkind's analysis of circulating cassette sermons among adherents of an Egyptian dawa' movement and Schulz's explorations of listening practices among followers of a Sufi movement in West Africa (Schulz 2012) shed light on situated media practices that associate men and women by offering spaces for the exchange of opinion by producing shared sensory experiences and by engaging them in practices that transform the lives they mediate (cf. Warner 2002:57). The notion of an Islamic counter-public helps to define these scenes of association and to take into account a differential sense of belonging that tends to locate participants as a social entity (cf. Warner 2002:106).

More importantly, the ethnographic exploration of such mediation practices calls into question the "gratuitous assumption that communication is a matter of transmission of discourse" (McLuhan 1954:6). In a mostly forgotten intervention, McLuhan stressed a threefold dimension of the "'mass' dimension [of the media]." As he writes, it "may refer to a collective effort in the use of the medium, to larger audiences or to instantaneity of reception" (McLuhan 1954:6). His emphasis on the "collective effort in the use of the medium" seems to foreground what Birgit Meyer and Annelies Moors later called "a shift from a presentist focus on the mass media and their reception as such to a focus on broader, historical processes of communication, affirming existing links and creating new ones between people and expressive forms" (Meyer and Moors 2006:7). Their call to take "practices of mediation" instead of mass media as a point of departure for inquiry stresses an "aspect of communication" that, according to McLuhan, is better grasped "as participation in a common situation" and renders "the form of communication as the basic art situation . . . more significant than the information or idea 'transmitted'" (McLuhan 1954, cited in Schüttpelz 2014:6). The focus on mediation practices and the "form of communication as basic art situation" helps to zoom in on the modalities and materialities of circulation and up-

take that expand or delimit publicity for different "issues" in different locales.

As the editors of this special issue of Current Anthropology emphasize in the introduction (Hirschkind, de Abreu, and Caduff 2017), new media have made it increasingly difficult to claim "a space of immunity from the illumination of publicity" and have triggered anxieties about the uncontrolled circulation of images, ideas, and practices. Trance mediation in Morocco is an interesting case in point. Trance has an ambivalent place in contemporary Morocco. It has become a marker of Moroccan festive culture and is staged as national folklore (see Zillinger 2009) while at the same time it is increasingly marginalized as a religious practice in mainstream Muslim discourse and denounced as superstitious. As Spadola rightly points out, the publicness that forms around the ritual mediation of trance is perceived as a threat to the national public sphere because it questions self-awareness and transparent subjectivity as a condition of modern belonging (Spadola 2014:23). On the other hand, it is important to note that claims to a national public sphere and the promotion of a common good are perceived as highly ambiguous in Morocco. More often than not, such claims are perceived as serving personal interests and concealing the workings of networks and circles of affiliation that form around the royal house and organize public affairs for the benefit of few. In this context of "public distrust" (Giordano 2004), public claiming of trance—as a controversial medium of social relations, a disputed transmitter of divine grace, or a cure and contested object of national pride—needs to negotiate the various classifications of and competing claims on trance by generating multiple forms of address and networks of cooperation. To this purpose trance mediation has to be graduated: at times it is elaborated and worked on secretly, hidden from the attention of a wider public; at times it is negotiated within the "ritual intimacy" shared by fellow acolytes of a certain cult; and at other times it is celebrated in the streets or staged for the broadest audience possible.[2] Always, however, trance is about

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2. Here I refer to the notion of cultural intimacy of Herzfeld, who refers to "those aspects of a cultural identity that are considered a source of external embarrassment but which nevertheless provide insiders with their assurance of common sociality" (Herzfeld 1997:3). While it is true that trance is a textbook example of Herzfeld's concept of cultural intimacy, it is crucial to take into account that this intimacy is generated and negotiated ritually. Shryock identifies the zone of intimacy as the "shadow zone" between the public and private and argues that it is here that the "explicitly public is made" (Shryock 2004:3). I understand his critique of the universalizing distinction between public and private as resembling the one I make in this paper. Shryock rightly stresses that Herzfeld's notion of intimacy "renders essential the presence of an outside observer" and links this outside to global stages and mass-mediated politics of representation (Shryock 2004:10–11), a perspective I try to supplement by zooming in on the mediation work on site and in situ that makes scaling and graduating publics an achievement of the actors themselves. The preoccupation with mass mediation and the legacy of critical theory in the field of media anthropology has tended to obscure that it is the actors who define relative scale (for this point, see Latour 2005b:184).

making things public, and it is becoming an issue that sparks publics of different scale into being.[3]

Because new media have become ubiquitous in trance rituals, the carefully graduated spheres of trance are reshaped (see Behrend, Dreschke, and Zillinger 2015). The use of technical media renders recordings of ritual practices accessible beyond the confines of the ritual setting (Zillinger 2014) and enables ritual cooperation through time and space (Zillinger 2015). It thereby redefines the scale and scope of trance and is likely to cause controversies. As a result, the technical mediation of trance becomes an issue itself—an object of controversies that creates new publicity and new "scenes of association" (Warner 2002:57) and, as I will argue below, that may be taken up by different groups in their struggle to represent the public in Morocco.

In what follows, I argue that the notion of graduated publicness captures best the constantly changing mediation practices that constitute, negotiate, and shape the *Öffentlichkeit* of trance under the condition of the contemporary technologization of religious practice in Morocco. Following trance adepts and their techniques in graduating their ritual practices' publicness, three "levels" or "stages" of ritual mediation come to the fore: (i) rituals that shun bystanders not connected to the ritual mediation work and that ban technical media altogether; (ii) rituals that are open to a limited public but remain indoors and are characterized by the "ritual intimacy" of a night-long gathering and restricted media use and circulation; and (iii) rituals that are geared toward generating the broadest possible public and are exposed to or even seek unrestricted media uptake. In order to engage successfully in scaling the publicness of trance and to expand its publicity, the adepts need to render the ritual mediation work plastic enough to adapt to local needs and the constraints of the several actors involved yet robust enough to be recognizable across sites.[4] A failure to do so is likely to lead to scandals and at times violent redrawing of boundaries between different public realms of and various claims to trance. Instances of both success and failure in making trance public, its promotion, and its denouncement I analyze in this paper to enable a tentative theoretical approach to new media and "graduated publics."

Ritual Cycles of Publicness

Trance rituals convene acolytes and visitors alike; they are "indexical occasions" (Werbner 1977:xxv) during which social relations are displayed, fostered, and negotiated. Trance rituals aim at producing what Fritz Kramer called the ritual evocation of "inner images" that manifest in the body movements of the entranced. These "practices of imagination" (Kramer 2005) relate the visible to the invisible realm and make subjective and collective states observable and reportable in the ongoing me-

diation work of the ritual. Trance, therefore, is about making things public—be it subjective states of possession and crises, the collective states of being moved by sacred experiences, or simply social relations.

To successfully conduct a trance ritual in Morocco, ritual experts and religious confraternities are invited. They constitute, shape, and graduate the publicness of trance in relation to the ritual spaces that are generated and addressed in accordance with calendrical variations of the Islamic year but also with the recurring demands of possessing spirits and fellow acolytes of trance. Besides the Gnāwa (Kapchan 2007; Welte 1990), the trance brotherhoods (*ṭuruq*, sing. *ṭariqa*) of the 'Isāwa and Ḥamadša are the most popular in Morocco to treat spirit possession. At the time of the Prophet's birthday (*al-mīlūd an-nabawi*), they convene at the sanctuaries of their founding saints in and around Meknes and dance, march, and run great distances to celebrate their saints' festivals (*mūssim*) and perform trance in the streets (see Crapanzano 1973; Leistle 2007; Nabti 2010; Spadola 2014; Zillinger 2013). This one time of the year they mingle with the masses in the streets, and their body techniques and religious practices may become part of state-sanctioned celebrations for the broadest possible public, including tourists, returning migrants, or Moroccan elites from Rabat and Casablanca.[5] Domestic rituals, too, create a sense of publicness. Divine and demonic powers and their effect on persons are recognized in public procedures and enacted and communicated among ritual experts, patients, and bystanders (cf. Lévi-Strauss 1958). Usually these rituals start in the streets and continue indoors with invited guests or acquaintances from the neighborhood. While not all parts of these domestic rituals are meant to be witnessed by unrelated "outsiders" (Herzfeld 1997; Shryock 2004), there are certain rituals that demand a secretive setting. During the veneration of Jewish or Christian Sabbath spirits, for example, cameras are shunned and attendants are carefully selected. Deemed religiously forbidden (*haram*) in public discourse, the possessed patients invite a ritual expert, most likely a *šuwāf* (seer), and other supplicants from their intimate (trance) networks who are in need of regular treatment.

The publicness of trance is thus carefully graduated. The ritual practices and their publics continue to shape and be shaped by media technologies, which have been undergoing major changes during the last decades. Since the 1980s, many of these groups have commissioned local video studios to record their rituals. These video films have increasingly been later digitalized and sold or circulated on visual CDs and DVDs. Since 2008, cell-phone recordings became ubiquitous during rituals. Recordings have been circulated on YouTube, Facebook, and more recently Skype, and other instant message devices have been used to perform media rituals that integrate

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3. Here I refer to the felicitous formulation of Marres (2005).

4. As I lay out in more detail below, this formulation is taken from Star and Griesemer (1989).

5. Visitors to Meknes may number up to 300,000 persons during this time.

acolytes and clients over distance. Nevertheless, the attitude toward media representation is marked by ambiguity and ranges between fascination and refusal. People are fascinated to see what remains beyond conscious experience during possession but are uneasy about the circulation of images that might unfold a life of their own and raise uncontrollable public attention.

The Ḥamadša and Their Ritual Mediation Work Revisited

In his famous study of the Ḥamadša, Vincent Crapanzano describes weekly ritual performances of trance brotherhoods in public (Crapanzano 1973). Some 30 years later, trance seemed to be a matter "out of place" in the streets of Meknes. When I came to central Morocco to study these confraternities, my interlocutors referred me to television to get to know the activities of the Sufi orders of the ʿIsāwa and Ḥamadša.[6] I was also sent to folklore festivals, such as the Gnāwa Festival in Essaouira, and finally to family celebrations where young men performed the tunes and rhythms of the brotherhoods, often at transnationally celebrated weddings. To be sure, the brotherhoods continue to cover a wide range of practices that are commonly described as "Sufism": from singing and reciting religious poems that praise God, the Prophet, and the saints through collective *dikr*, that is, the intonation of God's sacred name accompanied by breathing and body techniques to ecstatic fervor during which the practitioners experience divine or demonic power that may culminate in practices such as ritual self-mutilation. Their rituals and ceremonies bring about the *ḥāl*, collective or individual trance or trancelike experiences, by which *baraka*, the blessing of the founding saint, is evoked and transmitted. But *ǧedba*, the wild possession trance, is usually confined to domestic spaces nowadays whereas in public people seek the collective experience of religious passion, an experience of being moved by the ritual in an atmosphere that has increasingly become a token of Moroccan culture at home and abroad.

The success of an expert on spirit possession depends on the resources he or she can generate by enrolling partners for ritual cooperation (cf. Lambek 2010:26), and spirit mediums are increasingly extending their activities into the space of transnational migration and to global arenas of "sacred music." Powerful ritual entrepreneurs combine various ritual functions; they preside over one or several confraternities and cooperate with various actors who may demand and shape the groups' activities, be they state functionaries, tourists, hotel owners, wedding experts, musicians, Qur'anic healers, dancers, or patients. More often than not they are multiply possessed themselves and perform as seers and healers.

To be successful, they not only need to make the repertoire of ritual practice available for all practical purposes but also they have to be able to extend and limit publicity in accordance with the particular ritual settings. Publicness in Morocco in general is graduated and may consist of and depend on certain spaces that are secret, closed off, and protected from exposure (cf. Koselleck 1959). To reach out to new audiences and enroll clients from different locales and backgrounds, ritual entrepreneurs need to develop skills to open or delimit the three related but carefully graduated realms of ritual practice geared toward hidden, intimate (i.e., semipublic), or fully public social spaces.

Processing the Trading Zone of Trance

During my fieldwork, Tami was perhaps the most powerful ritual entrepreneur in Meknes. His success was based on his ability to continuously extend his influence both as a seer and as an entrepreneur of Morocco's festive culture. In the month of Šaʿbān (during which the *ǧinn*, the possessing spirits, are particularly active), I met him arranging and directing one possession ritual after the next. I found him in the following month at McDonald's, where he performed with a brotherhood at a children's party on the occasion of the *līlat al qadr*, which marks the holiest day of the month of Ramadan. He was busy arranging weddings and state-sponsored folklore festivals throughout the year, but he also toured Morocco time and again as a seer and arranged healing rituals for upper-class Moroccans. Clients from one setting were invited to the other so that his clientele continuously grew. Possessed patients from abroad called him in times of crises and had him perform a ritual for them; sometimes he fetched them directly from the airport and accompanied them to sacred shrines. To have the necessary assistants at hand, different kinds of brotherhoods signed contracts with his "association for spiritual music." Under threat of penalty, these contracts obliged them to work for him on demand. Some rituals he arranged specifically for the camera. He stored these recordings in what I propose to call his personal trance media archive and used them as a resource from which he could borrow whatever trance format he needed. In this way, he was able to meet specific demands and operate in different settings. He would choose different films for, say, an anthropologist, a functionary of a Moroccan TV station, or someone who wanted to hire a brotherhood for a wedding.

Technical media were used in all of these activities. Clients from abroad who financed healing rituals used their mobile phones, and most recently Skype, to take part in the ritual setting. Tami, in turn, addressed them during the ritual via video camera and later sent them a copy of the event. In this way, the ritual treatment was extended to the point in time when the client would watch in Europe the recording of the ritual. "He

will weep in front of the TV screen," Tami explained to me, "and will fall in trance," and he meant that his patient would be swept away by the emotions triggered by the ritual.[7] The recordings also served to demonstrate that money sent for ritual purposes was used properly. Most importantly, visual CD copies of trance rituals were circulated among migrants and members of the ritual networks, fostering social relations and integrating people into a transnational ritual space (see Zillinger (2014).

Parties taking part in his activities had different understandings of what a trance ritual was about, and they pursued different goals by entering into ritual cooperation. Neither Tami nor anyone else involved could rely on a straightforward consensus on the meaning of "proper ritual" imposed by "tradition" or "cosmology." Some might have sought what Herzfeld aptly called the "cultural intimacy" of these rituals (Herzfeld 1997) and perhaps wished to reactivate social relationships.[8] Others worked as assistants to make a living, and again others experienced a crisis and demanded ritual treatment. Paradoxically, Tami proved to be the right expert one hires or follows for every purpose by extending his activities to all of these settings. Precisely by translating among diverse viewpoints, he established himself as a "gatekeeper" (Callon 1986) with ritual authority and was able to extend and stabilize the ritual spaces across different sites. His rituals had to become "issues of concerns" that satisfied the requirements of all participants and thus linked the hidden, intimate, and most public spaces of trance. To this end, he prefabricated the ritual sequences of his *līlat* (literally, nights [sing. *līla*]) in such a way that they were conducive to his mediation work and became "media issues" in extending sociotechnical networks.[9]

As an example, I will take a ritual, a *līla*, he organized for several clients at once: a client who has long lived in southern

Spain and has now returned to Morocco; a family from northern Morocco who sought ritual treatment for their daughter; and a *negafa*, a female caterer for wedding ceremonies, who lived in southern France and was about to become a seer herself. In addition, there were men and women who worked for Tami in the kitchen and helped with the general preparation. They took on numerous tasks in the course of the ritual and were usually possessed themselves. Additional adepts of the brotherhoods were invited. For them, the ritual was an opportunity to placate their demons and prevent sickness. Their aim was to help finance the ritual, and their dancing in trance was conducive to the overall course of the *līla*. Some upper-class Moroccans who recently resettled in Meknes came to experience "authentic" Moroccan culture; a young woman brought her fiancé from Spain to show him "extraordinary Moroccan performances"; migrants from Germany visited but left before the possession trance started; and last but not least, an anthropologist stayed all night for "participant observation." As usual, a professional cameraman recorded the ritual. Later, Tami distributed copies of the film to the clients who had financed the event.

Ritual Boundary Objects

With migration and the proliferation of technical media, the diversity of actors taking part in Moroccan trance rituals has increased, and the publicness of trance has become an issue of constant concern for the ritual entrepreneurs but also for adepts and skeptics of trance. For Tami and other ritual entrepreneurs to be successful, they had to translate their activities from one setting to the next, and to do so, they had to take the variety of settings, actors, and interests into account. Successful graduation and scaling of trance relied on the mediation work by which trance could be performed, staged, and practiced for different publics.

I propose that we can understand the ritual mediation of publicness best by following James Griesemer and Susan Leigh Star in exploring the creation and maintenance of ritual "boundary objects." Scrutinizing the practices and artifacts used to establish the mediation work between different sites and actors brings the crafting and graduating of publics into focus. It is by accomplishing cooperation with the help of arrangements and objects "people [with divergent viewpoints] act toward and with" (Star 2010:637) that publicness is achieved, extended, or contained, making publicness a concern and an achievement of the actors themselves. Boundary objects, Griesemer and Star write, have to be "plastic enough to adapt to local needs and the constraints of several parties . . . yet robust enough to maintain a common identity across sites. They are weakly structured in common use, and become strongly structured in individual-site use" (Star and Griesemer 1989:393). Tami had developed different ritual techniques that ensured ritual reliability across time, space, and local contingencies. Following Susan Leigh Star, we can identify four methods and formats of mediation that enabled Tami to rec-

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7. This is a sign of the ritual's efficacy; for a more detailed analysis, see Zillinger (2015).

8. See n. 2.

9. Compare Emilio Spadola's exploration of middle-class Moroccans' and nationalists' embracing of trance as "national culture" since the Casablanca attacks of 2003 (Spadola 2015). His fine-grained analysis of the cultural politics of trance invites comparison with the work of Laurel Kendall on Korean shamans, whom the national government declared "heritage transmitters" (Kendall 2015:128). My suggestion to explore trance as a "trading zone" generating different publics and linking status groups and interests expands and complicates his perceptive analysis of trance as "rites of reception." The practices and arrangements that enable trance adepts to tack back and forth between locally specific and a most general use of trance rites in Morocco question not only a clear-cut distinction between "private" and "public" trance forms but also shed light on the techniques and technologies of the adepts themselves to summon actors and powers in their rituals—a capacity that becomes most obvious in the case of ritual entrepreneurship as documented in Spadola's but also in Deborah Kapchan's ethnography (Kapchan 2007). Compare also the fascinating article on the trading zone of trance between French magicians and Algerian 'Isāwa in the nineteenth century by Graham Jones (Jones 2010).

oncile diverse claims and viewpoints in his trance rituals.[10] These consisted of (i) producing artifacts and ritual actions that can take on an encyclopedic character ("repositories"), (ii) ensuring the exemplary quality of the ritual sequences and spirit mediums ("ideal types"), (iii) generating coincident boundaries for diverse interests, and (iv) developing "standardized forms." Tami's broad knowledge and abilities to shape the social, material, and discursive practices of trance for different settings, needs, and expectations helped to create ritual boundary objects for cooperation across social worlds. This enabled him to up- and downscale trance mediation and to create and relate different public realms. It is worth exploring these four categories of boundary objects in more detail.

Let us first look at "repositories," of which the trance media archive is the most obvious example (fig. 1). These piles of documents paralleled not only the encyclopedic character of Tami's rituals. In his career, Tami had mastered multiple forms of possession and worked with most, if not all, popular brotherhoods that treated spirit possession. He stored each recorded ritual in this archive, testifying to his potency as a ritual entrepreneur and verifying his capabilities to clients, patients, competitors, and not least himself. Ritual knowledge and ritual techniques were made available beyond the narrow confines of the event and became "transportable practices" (Csordas 2007). These videos served to professionalize his activities by enabling him to critically examine his performance and observe himself in states of trance. As already mentioned, Tami used these (increasingly digital) archives as a reservoir of practices that could be adapted to the needs and claims of clients. For this reason, he also reconstructed rituals that have fallen out of use and was proud to have thereby established advantages over competitors. In short, these archives administered and produced mediated publics for his ritual activities.

The archives and the association for spiritual music helped him to build a reservoir of practices that could be crafted as "ideal types" and adapted to different contexts. Tami designed ritual sequences in a way that made them recognizable to all visitors of the ritual and, above all, adaptable to different contexts. To give but one example, every ǧinn inhabits a certain ritual space that has to be worked on in specific ways (cf. Welte 1990). Tami designed each of these sequences visually, acoustically, and sensually with the aid of objects, music, and incense. The spirit mediums were dressed in costumes and provided with imaginative paraphernalia. Each spirit was rendered recognizable in an exciting and pleasurable way, but its specific character as a possessing spirit remained vague (e.g., the female demon ʿAiša Qandiša might appear as ʿAiša Dǧuǧīa

Figure 1. Boundary object repository. Trance media archives. Video still from Anja Dreschke and Martin Zillinger. A color version of this figure is available online.

[attached to the Ḥamadša saint Sidi Aḥmed Dǧuǧi], ʿAiša baḥria [the mother of the sea], or ʿAiša Sudānīa, and so on; fig. 2) and could be read differently by different actors with different knowledge of and interest in spirit possession.

To address the ǧinn and the attendees alike, the ritual space was decorated with colorful cloth, and aestheticized symbols of Moroccan culture were chosen for display and served to create "coincident boundaries." For example, Tami hired a young man in the costume of a grāb, a water vendor in colorful clothes and a folkloristic symbol of Moroccan culture, who pours out juice instead of passing a bottle of tap water around. The food is extravagant, and visitors of his trance rituals commented often on the display of "good taste." Strategies to culturalize and aestheticize the trance practices are important elements to adapt the rituals to diverse settings. A common style thereby frames otherwise specific sequences that are elaborated differently in different settings and for different publics. But the variations leave untouched an "underdetermined core" of the rituals: the ritual evocation and transmission of baraka. This transmission may take place during folkloristic events at McDonald's as well as during healing rituals: baraka needs to circulate. Changing his clothes time and again, Tami emphasized the several ritual functions he embodies: as entrepreneur (wearing European clothing with a huge belt displaying the word "Boss"), as ritual clown, as seer, and as traditional Moroccan Sufi (wearing a ǧillāba).

Tami integrated several trance practices in "standardized ways" into the course of a ritual. Starting with the spectacular ritual head slashing of the western (rural) branches of the Ḥamadša, he continued with the western (rural) ʿIsāwa and fell into the trance of a lion, tearing apart a sheep with his hands (cf. Zillinger 2010). He continued by pacing the different ritual spaces of named spirits and served the specific needs of participants by combining musical elements taken from the traditions of the Gnāwa, ʿIsāwa, and Ḥamadša. The different parts of such a modularized ritual were interrupted by chanting and dancing known from the urban traditions of these brotherhoods, evoking the atmosphere of festive occasions such as weddings and other rites of passage. As mentioned above, the

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10. This is not meant to be an exclusive list (see Star 2010:603) but depends on the form of mediation that takes place and the forms of cooperation that are enabled. For the comparative analysis of "new media and new publics," the focus on boundary objects, which enable cooperation between different social worlds, draws attention to the sociomaterial media practices that constitute media networks of cooperation, their infrastructures, and their publics in situ.

Figure 2. Ideal types. The scene of the demoness *Lala Malika* is made recognizable, joyful, and memorable during a *līla* of Tami. Photo by Martin Zillinger. A color version of this figure is available online.

demonic spaces were clearly demarcated. Tami performed songs that praised the specific demons and were easy to sing along with. An audio recording could be purchased after the ritual so that the songs could become part of quotidian consumer behavior.

Infrastructuring Trance

What made Tami such a successful ritual entrepreneur was his capacity to create common situations for actors with different understandings of what a trance ritual is about. To this end, his rituals invoked a sense of pleasure and beauty. The creation of ritual boundary objects linked the graduated spheres of publicness—hidden, intimate, and public in its broadest sense—that characterize trance rituals and, I propose, in extension, "the public sphere" in Morocco. His mediumship is based on his bringing together and literally embodying the different spheres of publicness in his multiple possessions and ritual abilities.[11] His success is based on his capacities to externalize and administer the various aspects of his possession and ritual techniques to craft these "altered states of consciousness" for himself and others by producing images of trance

that could be circulated, transforming ritual cooperation into contract-based employment or by standardizing his ritual activities to create transportable practices (fig. 3).[12]

Reducing these activities to commodification alone misses the point; rather, Tami was engaging in what one could call the infrastructuring of trance.[13] He generated social and technical arrangements that folded specific practices into organizational chains and standardized procedures that help to achieve and could be applied for different publics of trance. Infrastructures, Bowker noted, can best be described by the "appropriately ambiguous term" of "mediation" (Bowker et al. 2010). Working in the "between" enables infrastructures to translate actions, meaning, and values from one setting to the next. By keeping trance flexible and an underdetermined object by means of which people acted and cooperated, Tami generated multiple

11. Not unlike Park's (1928) "Marginal Man."

12. As should be clear by now, the graduation of publicness is an issue during the course of a ritual, too. Some scenes tend to be regarded as more sensitive to exposure than others, and some trance adepts may demand that the cameraman shut off the camera during their trance dance altogether. For a more detailed discussion of the *l'horreur du noir* of the lion spirits already discussed by René Brunel, see Zillinger (2013).

13. For recent work on infrastructure in anthropology, see Larkin (2013) and Howe et al. (2015).

Figure 3. Producing images of trance. A woman in the trance of the lion is filmed by a cameraman. Note the towel wrapped around the camera because lion spirits detest and may attack anything "black," in particular, cameras. Photo by Martin Zillinger. A color version of this figure is available online.

forms of address and networks of cooperation. He was able to negotiate among varying modes of understanding, evaluating, and enacting trance by tacking back and forth between its vague and locally specific, situated use (see Star 2010). By enabling cooperation without consensus on the nature and purpose of trance and by maintaining its heterogeneity, he translated among differentiated ways to make trance public and between different public realms that trance generates. However, without crafting arrangements that can link different spheres of ritual publics, a scandalization of trance is likely to occur.

Scandalizing Trance

In November 2007, a visitor filmed a ritual festivity with his cell phone in the small city of Ksar al-Kbir. Four days later, film clips with the title "Wedding [*uors*] Ksar al-Kbir" were uploaded to YouTube that showed a man in women's garments preparing himself for a ritual and dancing to popular music.[14] Other film clips showed young men in a separate room consuming alcohol and dancing with seductive body movements.

The circulation of these images on the web triggered not only heated discussions on homosexuality, proper government, and Islamic values in Morocco and beyond but also demonstrations in the streets and violent attacks on those who were held responsible.

The ritual transgression of gender roles during trance nights is a public secret in Morocco, and the host of the ritual—his family belongs to Tami's clientele—was well known in the city for performing orgiastic Gnāwa rituals (cf. Tel Quel 2007). It is important to note that the marriage of a possessed person to a *ǧinn* is a frequent phenomenon in Morocco (cf. Crapanzano 1980). Seers in particular often dress as brides when they approach the shrine of a certain spirit or engage in sacrifices to ensure a benevolent relationship with their tutelary spirit.

The video clip showed ritual preparations, which are part of both trance nights and weddings. The adept is shown drinking a glass of milk and eating dates while a *sheikha*, a female singer, praises the paramount rank of the Prophet by reciting a well-known religious formula that marks the gathering as a social festivity.[15] Later, a man recognizable as a seer (*šuwāf*) enters

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14. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=srzu8Q2tJq4 and https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=p5LN48AeYYk.

15. A praise indispensable for Moroccan festive culture is "slā u slām ʿalā rassul allah, la ǧāh illa ǧāh sidna Muḥammad, allah mʿa al-ǧāh alʿali."

the picture, and together the festive assembly follows Gnāwa musicians with a sacrificial ox through the streets, obviously heading to a house commonly rented out for festive occasions (thus performing a ritual *daḫla* and opening the ritual to the outside, a sequence that communicates the ritual to the neighborhood). The house of the Prophet (*dar an-nabī*) is commonly invoked during ritual gatherings, relating the assembled kin or the ritual community to the sacrosanct social order, which is mediated through the various saint shrines and circles of affiliation that form around them. All of the depicted elements—milk, dates, and the praises of the Prophet—mark ordinary rites of passage in Morocco and accompany Moroccan Muslims throughout their lives (fig. 4).[16]

Making public the commitment of a possessed person to a *ğinniya* during a ritual reframes deviant social and religious behavior. Calling on the Prophet and reciting the Qur'an subjugates demonic powers to the divine blessing force (*baraka*) that governs all aspects of life. Making public individual failings to live up to commonly accepted norms and communicating one's state of possession is ambiguous, however. As Talal Asad reminds us, "for the community what matters is the Muslim subject's social practices." And he quotes the Islamist lawyer al-ʿAwwa discussing accusations of apostasy (*ridda*) in Egypt: "Every human being [may] embrace whatever ideas and doctrines he wishes . . . [but] it is a different thing to seduce others into accepting commitments that are contrary to the moral order" (Asad 2008:591–592). Possession rituals are dangerous in this regard because the mingling of possessed and nonpossessed men and women, the music, and the overall *ḥāl* (atmosphere, also trance state) of a ritual may incite people to open themselves up to the powers of *ğinn*, good-and-evil spirits that may take possession of a person and distract him or her from social and religious obligations. But within the limits of the ritual time space, these dangers can be contained: ritual techniques reintegrate the patient into the social body through dancing and breathing together in time and by spending a night together in ritual intimacy. The transgression of norms is legitimated by invoking God, the Prophet, and the Qur'an at the beginning, between the different sequences, and at the end of the ritual gathering.

Things are different, though, once the ritual conversion of gender roles leaves the time space of the ritual and is exposed to the broadest possible public. By uploading the film clip of the ritual in Ksar al-Kbir to the Internet and by turning the

Figure 4. A possessed man dressed as a bride during the ritual in Ksar al-Kbir. Video still from YouTube (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=srzu8Q2tJq4). A color version of this figure is available online.

ritual performance into an image, the ritual conversion of gender roles became circulatable and was finally addressed by a campaign organized by the local Islamist party. Without arrangements that ensured the heterogeneous reading of the event as culture, tradition, or local possession ritual and by decontextualizing the actions from the "interactive public" produced by and assembled in the intimate setting of the ritual, the local opposition was able to take over and—to take up McLuhan once more—create a different "form of communication as the basic art situation" to instantiate a controversy on its own terms. The film clip was discussed as an issue of moral values and linked to the propagation of a hetero-normative public order; in short, it was used by different actors to convene as the public in concern of an endangered common good. The crowds poured into the streets of Ksar al-Kbir demonstrating for "the holiness of Islamic values" and finally attacked the houses of the host of the ritual and of other participants (fig. 5).[17]

Very soon thereafter the event was described as a Moroccan revolution on YouTube and was used to threaten the royal house and "the homosexuals in Rabat," the seat of government, for allowing "European perversion" in Morocco. At the same time, a discussion was triggered on YouTube about homosexuality in Islamic countries, thereby reducing different viewpoints on trance to the discussion of Islamic values and Islamic "modernity" in general. A counternarrative was established by gay rights activists from the United States who presented the film clip as a romantic love story of a young and happy individualist in Morocco who came under pressure from archaic

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16. Hammoudi's remark on the relationship between house and sanctuary is important here because possession rituals are always linked to a certain *walī allah* (saint). They are situated in a Moroccan "territory of grace" (Horden and Purcell 2000) administered by the royal house and ultimately refer to the Prophet: "The relationship between house and sanctuary represents an affinity in the meaning: sacred like it and, in theory, inviolable. The sanctuary contains the social group and its values. The house shelters the honor and harmony of the domestic group, whose foundation rests on the same values that the sanctuary embodies and guarantees" (Hammoudi 1993:151).

17. Later some participants were sentenced to several months in prison for "unnatural behavior"; as we will see, the main protagonist was additionally fined for trafficking alcohol.

Figure 5. Protesters attacking the house of the ritual host in Ksar al-Kbir. Video still from YouTube (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=srzu8Q2tJq4). A color version of this figure is available online.

religious forces.[18] During a public hearing in the Moroccan Parliament, the interior minister of Morocco finally tried to calm the situation by insisting on the ritual quality of the events. The man depicted in a woman's clothing, he said, had had a vision in which a woman spirit asked him to dress like her and provide a sacrifice to the local saint.

A Question of Scale

Publics are realized through active uptake (Warner 2002). A crucial element in making a denunciation public is the degree to which the case is presented as being collectively or individually important. As Luc Boltanski argued in his study on public denunciation, a vocabulary of size is used to express struggles for support during public controversies. Some par-

ties may strive to extend them while others seek to cut them down to size and deflate them (Boltanski 2012:170). Boltanski's approach can help to overcome conceptions of normative public spheres structured around conceptions of the common good by drawing attention to the different interests and "orders of justification" that come to the fore and clash during disputes. In the course of the "affair," conceptions of a social reality that are taken for granted are shattered, precisely, I argue, by demanding consensus on what is otherwise crafted "plastically enough" to adapt to different viewpoints and thus enable cooperation without consensus. By constructing a coherent version of "what is at stake," actors claim the generalizability of their views and thereby try to legitimate the normative quality of and publicity for their standpoints (see also Boltanski and Thévenaut 2006). In this process, opponents test and contest how categories are assigned to people, signs, and things and try to enroll allies for their particular position and conceptions of social order.

For the evolving public dispute in Ksar el-Kbir and on the Internet, the extensive coverage by newspapers and, later, Moroccan Television (2M) was important, but so were the ac-

18. A small series of five polemic film clips was uploaded under the title "Homosexuality in Morocco and in Islam." The authorship and intention of these postings remain somewhat unclear. See https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oxlbRPdj4AY.

tors in Ksar al-Kbir who actively enrolled allies for producing a local, and in due course, national crisis.[19] On November 21, a petition was submitted to the district attorney (*procureur général*) demanding an investigation of a homosexual wedding in Ksar al-Kbir. The event took place, the authors remarked (already testing the capacities for generalizations by invoking an issue of national importance), on the day of the Feast of National Independence (Fête de l'indépendance).[20] The document was signed by three political parties: the moderate Islamist political party Justice and Development (hizb al-3adala ua al-tanmiya), the rather small Party of the Civilizational Alternative (al badil al hadari), and the popular "Islamist" mass movement Justice and Charity ('adl wal-ihsan).[21] In addition, the local section of the Moroccan Human Rights Association, as well as some minor local associations, signed the letter.[22] By securing the support of these organizations, the denunciation brought together large-scale collective bodies and their representatives to back up the claim that they were referring to an issue of general concern and to justify the appeal to the judgment of public opinion.

Mobilizing the followers of these organizations and "people of good will," the demonstrations in the streets took off, it seems, after the Friday prayers in the mosques. A few thousand people marched to the shops and houses of alleged participants in the event, and some of these places were attacked and plundered.[23] In one of the video clips documenting the events on YouTube, one could read the following headlines added to the moving images.

Many of the protesters were deeply hurt; the elderly in particular could not keep back their tears. At the same time, all shops closed down. The demonstrators shouted the slogans ['*ibārāt*], "This is an '*ār* [a metaphysically sanctioned conditional curse], this is an '*ār*, Ksar al-Kbir is in danger [*ḥaṭar*]. As-šuwād [the 'perverts']—there they are [*ha huma*]—*al meḥzen, fin huwa* [where is the government]?"[24]

The arriving police did not interfere directly but took several people whose houses and shops were attacked under protective custody. Later, five defendants were sentenced to several months in prison, found guilty of violating article 489 of Morocco's penal code, which criminalizes "lewd or unnatural acts with an individual of the same sex" (Human Rights Watch 2007).[25] In addition, the host of the ritual was convicted of the unauthorized sale of alcohol.[26]

Quite clearly, during this incident, the heterogeneity of viewpoints ceased to enable "cooperation without consensus" and became confrontational. The upscaling of the event's significance from the interactive ritual public to the concern of "everyone" translated trance into the arena of modernist struggles to control a public sphere and to define a common good. To this end, the vagueness and plasticity of trance, which spark different publics into being (by inciting public comments and discussions as well as interaction) and which enable actors from different social worlds to cooperate, were reduced to a juridical issue. Evaluating trance solely against the background of a hetero-normative public order and advancing an exclusive reading and standardized interpretation of liminal transgression helped the various actors oppose the government's claim to control and guarantee a national public sphere. Not unlike nationalist discourses on trance during Morocco's struggle for independence (cf. Hammoudi 1997; Spadola 2008), the "affair" of Ksar el-Kbir produced trance as a modern public's "other" and "elsewhere."

The Public Hearing in Parliament

Shortly after the event, the Justice and Development Party (Parti de la justice et du développement [PJD]) initiated a public hearing of the minister of the interior in Parliament. A television station covered the event, and part of this clip was uploaded to YouTube.[27] The speeches of the minister and the representative of the PJD are interesting in order to track how the different parties tried to establish or deny an issue of con-

19. I thank Mahmoud El Qamch, Cologne, for his assistance in transcribing the diverse media coverage analyzed in this paper.

20. In addition, by invoking the "feast of independence," the denouncers represent themselves as acting as part of the long struggle of nationalists to "curtail the influence of the brotherhoods, which were suspected of betraying the national course" (Hammoudi 1997:18; and see the historical analysis of the various interrelations between the new national movement and the local systems of *zāwiyas* under the French protectorate in Geertz 1979:162–164).

21. Hizb al-3adala ua al-tanmiya is by now the ruling party in the Moroccan Parliament. 'Adl wal-ihsan is said to have several million followers in Morocco. Sheikh Yassine, the founder of this extraparliamentary movement, was a sharp critic of the Moroccan monarchy until his death in 2012. Tozy (1999) and others rightly argued that this movement combines local Sufi practices with reformist Islamic thought.

22. It should be noted that in May of the same year, five members, i.e., the whole section of the local Human Rights Association, were sentenced to 3–4 years in prison for violating "sacred values" during a public demonstration (Tel Quel 2007). Later, the representative of the association defended himself on the public TV channel 2M, claiming that he intended to calm the situation. He, too, joined the demonstrations in the street. Compare the report on the event in the state-controlled TV channel 2M 2007 and that of journal Tel Quel 2007. The government dissolved the party of the civilizational alternative a year later for alleged terrorist activities.

23. Numbers differ; Tel Quel estimates roughly one thousand participants.

24. An '*ār*, a "conditional curse" (Westermarck 1926), is issued for the purpose of receiving a gift or having a sanction applied; it is backed up and strengthened by the threat of a metaphysical sanction if the denunciation or plea is not heeded by the person or party addressed.

25. All these verdicts were delivered by the court of first instance after bringing in lawyers from outside Ksar al-Kbir to defend the accused.

26. Invoking the common prejudice among the upper classes that trance adepts are "drunkards" (cf. the famous *qaṣīda Human* in local *melḥūn* poetry; Zillinger 2013).

27. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nyZcgf4mAno.

cern in the first place. One of the main tasks of the participating actors in a public denunciation is the testing/identification of their own position in a system of relations that is instituted by the denunciation. Boltanski identifies four actors as "(1) the one who denounces (denouncer), (2) the one in favor of whom the denunciation is carried out (victim), (3) the one to the detriment of whom it is directed (persecutor), (4) the one to whom it is addressed (judge)" (Boltanski 2012:178). Following Callon (1986), he uses a single term to designate all beings that intervene in a situation as being symmetrical—be they individuals, collectivities, or bodies "where the referent is problematic," such as "men of good will" (Boltanski 2012:178).

The minister begins by undermining the position of the denouncer cum victim (1/2) and claims that everyone should be concerned about an issue that threatens the public order in the first place. Also, the general public is called on as judge and persecutor (3/4), thus conflating all positions in the system of relations that institute a public denunciation in the first place. He continues by deflating the incident to a rumor with no public significance and tries to put the ritual into perspective by claiming its "normality."

> The [common] interest [in this case] proves that everyone is concerned about and seeks to protect our inherited values and our civilization. . . . As you know the case has already been treated at court . . . but let me mention that, despite all rumors, the incident was a private festivity that included the customs and rituals of the Gnāwa. *An incident like this is quite normal and not exclusively confined to a certain group or walk of life* [ʿādī wa maʾlūf wa laysa ḥikran ʿalā fiʾatin ʾaw wasaṭin dūna ʾāḫar].[28]

The producer of the YouTube video emphasized this last sentence by putting it on screen in writing—as a statement that seemingly contradicted the minister's argument about size. But by classifying trance as an ordinary, private festivity, the minister tried to deny its relevance for the public order. By pointing out that trance is practiced by people from all walks of life, he stated "what everyone knows" in Morocco—that trance rituals are performed by adepts coming from the shanty towns, the *villes nouvelles*, and the royal palace alike.[29] The minister then proceeded to delegitimize the denouncer by accusing him of pursuing an individual claim and emphasized that the existing institutions take care of any general interest. He claimed that the legislator is well equipped to intervene any time and that it is unnecessary for a single party to step up and use a particular event for its individual interests.

> The legislator [alqaḍāʾ] intervenes if there is any proof that our common ethic and our religious values [al-qiyam ʾar-

rūḥiyah wa ad-dīniyah] are violated. . . . Despite all rumors, there were no external appearances [mazāhir ḫāriǧiyah] that this was a homosexual wedding [ʿurs šāḏ]. . . . The respect for the values of society [ʾiḥtirām al-qiyam al-muǧtamaʿiyah] is the responsibility of the government, which strives to secure the moral comfort of its citizens [al-ʾamn al-ʾaḫlāqī lil-mowāṭin]. . . . It is therefore good that everyone cooperates to prevent such immoral phenomena from occurring. . . . No single party should function as legislator alone or should profit from such an event politically (ʾistiǧlāl ʾal-qaḍiyah siyāsiyan), [no one should] use media and the press or [political] parties to organize demonstrations in front of schools, etc., in order to influence public opinion [ar-raʾy al-ʿām] or the legislator. No one should exaggerate [events like this] to attain goals that are not related to the defense of religious values and that do not serve the benefit of the people.[30]

In turn, the representative of the PJD praised "the inhabitants of the city of Ksar al-Kbir for their efforts to protect their social values [al-qiyam al-moǧtamaʿiyah] and to fight all kinds of deviances [kul aškāl al-ʾinḥirāf]" and resist the efforts of the minister to downscale the importance of the event to a private trance ritual.

> Be assured that there is enough evidence [of our claims]. One cannot give credence to the things you said, since there are the images [to prove the contrary]. If you watch the video that is at your disposal, it is proven that there were homosexual festivities [ḥafalāt šāḏah] in Ksar al-Kbir. And I am puzzled to hear that these groups celebrate these festivities often? Where were the police when they did? . . . The police only acted after the demonstrations took place, and we can prove with documents and photos that some policemen were even present at this evening themselves![31]

In short, the ritual recording triggered a scandal first of local then of national importance by enrolling actors of various scales. Finally, the Moroccan government successfully contained the public unrest by downscaling the importance of the event to a private event of sorcery (aš-šaʿwaḏa) held for the sake of a possessed patient and attended by the wife of the accused, family members, and a few other visitors and with no public relevance whatsoever.[32]

"Sorcery" is an ambiguous term in contemporary Morocco, where nationalists and members of the new middle class distance themselves from practices that are perceived as preventing self-awareness and the development of a responsible subject. Like *siḥr*, *aš-šaʿwaḏa* threatens to cause a person "to lose his way" by tying him or her to other persons and otherworldly powers, creating relations that Islamic reformers oppose as *širk billah*, as attempts to participate in the indivisible

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28. See n. 27.

29. While the king, as "Commander of the Faithful" would certainly not fall into trance, his, say, aunt or cousins certainly do (Zillinger 2013). It is part of the royal policy to have trance brotherhoods working at the palace and to choose confraternities for public performances to represent the royal house in public and during celebrations of "Moroccan culture."

30. See n. 27.

31. See n. 27.

32. The minister speaks of "a few women and children" to downscale the significance further and counter the impression of a homosexual party.

power of God over man.[33] Islamic reform movements have promoted Qur'anic healing as a permissible alternative to local possession rites in Morocco and beyond, replacing the creation of ritual "working relationships" with *ǧinn* by Qur'anic exorcism. However, as Westermarck (1926:i) has already reported, every man is perceived as being tied to a powerful agent, be it a master (*šaiḫ*), a saint (*wālī*), or a demon (*ǧinn*). Sorcery is an ever-present resource that is performed secretly but helps to shape one's affiliation and positioning in public. While it contradicts binary conceptions of public and private realms, it is perceived as relating hidden, semipublic, and public spaces of actions and as being part and parcel of the ways people test and contest circles of affiliation, if in dangerous ways. By recoding this event as private, the minister refers to the possibility of tolerating what is known and denounced as heterodox practice of sorcery in Islamic societies. Far from invoking a modernist public/private binary—in which the private is the ultimate source of the civic order—he invokes the use of sorcery as a resource that remains beyond modernist notions of the common good and thus out of reach of their respective claims.

Conclusion

The scandalization of trance through its mediatization and circulation illustrates the necessity for "things" to be actively taken up in order to become issues of concern. The upscaling of the referent thus sparks a public into being while downscaling issues to singular events makes it illegitimate to address them as a matter of public concern.[34] The government was able to successfully contain the event even though the "denouncer" used several institutional resources to delocalize and circulate the respective claims and successfully enrolled allies to establish the reality of the denunciation by creating a "common situation."[35] What is puzzling in this example is the rather paradoxical intervention by the minister of the interior,

who claims to represent "the public" by preventing a certain matter from becoming an issue of public concern in the first place. One could argue, as journalists from the "French-minded" journal Tel Quel and a representative of a local NGO did, that the minister should redraw the boundaries between the private and the public domain.[36] Their plea for an "urgent discussion" of the boundaries between public and private realms in Morocco (Tel Quel 2007) corresponds to both a European conception of the public and its double in emerging forms of an "objectified Islam" (Eickelman and Piscatori 1996) with its conception of the common good. However, this view is contrary to the one advanced by the minister, who reestablished the public order by referring to practices and conceptions of publicness "everyone knows," which are highly contextualized.

Tami's example in the first half of the paper introduced the cascades of publics that characterize "publicness" in Morocco. To be sure, Tami is an exceptionally powerful and skillful ritual entrepreneur who has built up a unique repertoire of trance. But his success builds on his capacities to shape the passages between different publics and ritual spaces—and to do so in both directions by making trance public, translating public concerns into the intimate and hidden spaces of his ritual work, and properly delimiting ritual spaces. As much as it would be inappropriate for an acolyte of the 'Isāwa to fall into a deep trance during a children's party at McDonald's and engage in some kind of self-mutilation, it is nevertheless important to invoke the *ḥāl* (state of trance) as an atmosphere of religious passion at McDonald's that could be translated into *ǧedba* (wild trance) in the intimate spaces of domestic rituals. In contrast to the Islamic reformers' claim and attempt to establish a public issue during the affair of Ksar al-Kbir, the public concern consisted in the adequate scaling of publicness of trance rather than in advancing a universal conception of the common good and a unified public sphere. The minister successfully "reinstalled" the series of mediations between the different public realms, between practices performed behind closed doors, other practices performed in the semipublic of a ritual, and finally those practices that are meant to be public.

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33. Compare Pandolfo's beautiful treatment of "fitna" in Pandolfo (1997:156–162), which I discuss in greater detail in Zillinger (2013:60–62).

34. See n. 3.

35. Boltanski refers to Lacan to explore how the objectivity of a claim—or the institutional validation of a claim to truth—is enacted: "[An] appeal to public opinion—that is, an appeal for the unconditional and undifferentiated support of all the others, whoever they are, close or distant, known or unknown—becomes one of the only ways to reestablish objectivity, or what some would call reality. 'Are you with me?' Jacques Lacan used to ask his students (Lacan 1988, 104). 'If you are with me, we will be able to go a long way. The question is not so much one of knowing up to what point one should go, the question is more one of knowing if one will be followed. In fact that is an element which allows one to discriminate what one may call reality' (ibid., 274)" (Boltanski 2012:255). It is interesting to compare the case of Ksar al-Kbir to the Danish cartoon controversy, whose trajectories were analyzed in detail by Jeanne Favret-Saada (Favret-Saada 2007; and see the discussion of Asad, Butler, and Mahmood 2013 as well as the debate in Favret-Saada 2015). The small group of local imams in Denmark suc-

cessfully enrolled (first and foremost) the Egyptian ambassador, and later other nongovernmental and governmental institutions, to initiate a long chain of operations and a series of mediations that established the case of blasphemy as a case of common concern.

36. "Maintenant, il est temps d'ouvrir le(s) débat(s): qu'est-ce qui est public et qu'est-ce qui est privé? Est-ce qu'on devrait rester passifs et attendre que des gardiens de la morale violent nos maisons et écoutent à la porte de nos chambres à coucher? N'est-il pas temps que les Marocains jouissent de l'un des droits fondamentaux qui consiste à disposer librement de son corps? Quels sont le rôle exact et la vocation des associations de défense des droits de l'homme? Comment arrêter le déferlement des écrits et des prêches incitant à la haine et à la violence? Les (bonnes) questions de Mme Rouissi méritent des réponses claires, tranchées. Et un débat public et serein. Ça urge." (Tel Quel 2007; cf. https://www.telquel-online.com).

The attempts to deflate the issue by advancing a classification that locates the issue in the intimate space of a ritual—as a vision—refers to a notion of *Öffentlichkeit* that is fundamentally different from the Habermasian and post-Habermasian concept of a "public sphere" and related notions of counterpublics. By defining it as an act of sorcery, it became an act that could be accommodated across the graduated spheres of publicness of trance.[37]

In recent decades, outside state-sponsored "folklore," Moroccan trance rites have come increasingly under siege by reformers and modernists and, accused of fraud, have been subjected to legal litigation. The artful "deflation by argument" that ended the public scandal of Ksar el-Kbir invoked a notion of publicness that is tied to social practices on site and rests on the possibility of situated "cooperation without consensus." The graduated publicness of trance provides an example of creating "common situations" through "artful mediation" that evades the demands and regulations of European conceptions of discursive public spheres constituted by rational debate. It reintroduces a cascade of public realms that makes scaling the common concern—in both ways.

Acknowledgments

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GoPro Occupation

Networked Cameras, Israeli Military Rule, and the Digital Promise

by Rebecca L. Stein

This paper is an ethnographical exploration of the growing importance of photographic technologies within the contemporary political theater of Israel's military occupation studied from the vantage of Israeli actors and institutions. My ethnography focuses on the Israeli military's growing investment in cameras as public relations technologies and how Israeli human rights groups are employing camera technologies against the military in unprecedented ways and degrees. Both institutions are now laboring to translate their work into visual registers, recognizing that political claims making depends on networked cameras and viral images as never before. My analysis focuses on what I term the "analytics of lapse"—instances in which photographic technologies, images, and associated infrastructures break down, lag, or otherwise fail to deliver on their ostensible communicative promise. Lapse provides a mean of thinking against cyber-utopian theories of new media even as it provides a way of unsettling enduring Israeli colonial logics of technological modernity.

In the summer of 2014, during the course of the Israeli incursion into the Gaza Strip, the Israeli military deployed its "combat camera" team for its first active battlefield engagement. The aim of the project was, in the words of military spokesmen, "better visuals," namely, military-sponsored cameramen on the front lines of unfolding combat situations in Israel's occupied territories equipped with mounted GoPro cameras such that military operations, filmed from the vantage of the security services, could be rapidly shared in something close to real time. Given the exponential rise in Internet connectivity and camera penetration levels within the Palestinian territories, the state's need to generate its own visual content was urgent, a need to respond in kind to the growing Palestinian investment in the networked image as a means of political claims making. The military also sought to correct a history of missteps where official image making was concerned, a history in which they had lost the global battle for hearts and minds because of technological breakdowns and social media miscalculations in the theater of visual operations, or so they believed. The combat camera project was developed as the solution, a project designed to produce original content from the battlefield that would advance the Israeli state's message ("a nation under fire"), ready for immediate liking and sharing.

This paper is an ethnographic exploration of the growing importance of camera technologies and networked image production within the political theater of the Israeli military oc-

cupation. I focus on the work of varying Israeli institutional actors in this context: the Israeli military, with its growing investment in cameras of varying kinds as public relations technologies, and the Israeli human rights community, which is increasingly employing new camera technologies and modes of digital image forensics in an effort to make state violence virally visible. The camera practices of both institutions are heavily affected by changes in the technological playing field of Israel/Palestine, namely, by ever-greater numbers of cameras in greater numbers of hands, by advances in photographic technologies affording greater precision and ease of use, and by heightened Israeli and Palestinian popular investments in the performative political potential of the viral image. For both institutions, these shifts in the techno-visual ecology changed the requisite terms of political claims making, and both have been laboring to make their work camera ready in new ways and degrees. As a result, these institutional actors have been required to get up to photographic and networked speed: to master popular conventions governing social media, to hone their skills in reading the digital image, to recalibrate their sense of what counts as evidence, and so on. For the military, such shifts have required policy makers, spokesmen, and soldiers in the field of military operations to engage in the painstaking process of learning a new set of technologies and PR languages. Israeli human rights groups have spent longer behind the lens. But they, too, find that their accounts of state violence must be recalibrated, their means of data collection and assessment rethought.

The study that follows is also an ethnographic account of the collapse of the ostensible digital guarantee, that is, the promise of new photographic technologies to work better and faster, providing new solutions and advancements to a variety of social

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and political ills, and to reduce mediation through greater image fidelity and speed of delivery.[1] Or so many have hoped of the image in the digital age. In what follows, I will linger in moments when that promise breaks down, in the lapses in technological functionality and signification that attended shifts within the techno-visual ecology of the Israeli occupation. "Lapse," as I am using the term here, has two valences: on the one hand, it marks instances of technological misstep, blunder, or failure in the use of photographic technologies. At the same time, lapse marks a temporal interval—a gap, pause, or interlude—attending the photographic or communicative operation. We see lapse as failure working in instances of infrastructural lack—when, for example, timely image circulation is rendered impossible because of material limits and errors in the technological playing field. Lapse as interval or gap functions, by contrast, in instances when the technological outcomes do not match technological expectations. We see this working in cases when image producers and brokers do not share an understanding of the meaning of image with the audiences who consume them, that is, when a gap emerges between interpretive frameworks or when cameras and resultant images are put to work in ways that differ markedly from the intentions of their producers. An analytics of lapse writes against theories of technological progressivism and dreams of techno-modernity by spotlighting sites and examples where technology fails, somehow, to deliver on its promise, thereby following Brian Larkin, "point[ing] to the gap between the fantasy of technology and its all too real operation" (Larkin 2008:62). Lapse is meant as a corrective to the technological utopianism that still frames many studies of new media, reminding us of the faltering processes and breakdowns rooted in conjoined human and mechanical acts that transitions in technological regimes necessarily involve.[2]

The presence of cameras in the political theater of Israeli military rule is by no means new, nor is their deployment as tools of state. It could be argued that cameras have mediated and enabled Israel's occupation since its inception in 1967. Indeed, in a longer historical view, one can track the conscription of cameras into the Zionist project in Palestine to the late nineteenth century, the early years of territorial Zionism and camera technologies alike. Cameras would be mobilized as tools of the emerging state in the midst and aftermath of the 1948 Nakba, employed to cement the Palestinian dispossession (Azoulay 2011). In the last few decades of Israel's occupation, optical technologies of varying kinds have played increasingly integral roles in military surveillance systems and intelligence gathering, mounted on the separation barrier and deployed on unmanned vehicles (Zureik, Lyon, and Abu-Laban 2010). Soldiers in the field

of military operations employ optical technologies engineered especially for military use, such as riflescopes and thermal-imaging infrared cameras, and those adopted from civilian contexts, including mounted GoPros.[3] And such technologies are an integral part of the military arsenal, particularly in the form of unmanned vehicle systems, all with encrypted wireless capabilities (Denes 2010). In Israeli state discourse, the advanced state of the military's technological playing field is trumpeted as yet another instance of Israeli high-tech supremacy, fueling its branded narrative of the "Start-Up Nation" (Senor and Singer 2009).

Discussion of the visual terms of Israeli settler nationalism is well underway among scholars in Israel-Palestine studies, a literature attentive to not only the political economy of military surveillance but also the ways that Israeli military visuality takes shape through particular geographic epistemologies and practices, architectural and spatial logics, and popular cultural aesthetics (Azoulay 2008; Benvenisti 2002; Hochberg 2015; Weizman 2007). And yet this growing literature has been largely inattentive to the everyday practices by which militarized visuality is produced and sustained. When ethnographic methods are brought to the scene of the military camera—both to military actors using cameras and to human rights actors employing cameras to hold the military accountable—what comes into relief is not only the considerable labor and improvisation involved in harnessing visual fields but also the frequent miscalculations and shortcomings that these processes entail.

This study is framed by the Israeli political history of the last two decades. During these years, amid growing camera penetration and growing literacy in new media technologies on both sides of the Green Line, the mainstream Jewish Israeli public was steadily losing interest in matters of occupation. Such disinterest was enabled by the strong Israeli economy of this period and the spatial fiction advanced by the separation barrier, a structure that enabled Israelis to live *as if* at a remove from Palestinians under occupation. So, too, was it bolstered by Israel's unilateral "withdrawal" from the Gaza Strip in 2005, a political euphemism that obscured the continuation of military occupation over the Gaza Strip, albeit in new forms. Indeed, in these years, many Israeli publications began speaking of "the occupation" only in quotation marks. The 2012 national elections were conducted in the absence of a robust public discussion about Israel's relationship with the Palestinians. In the same year, a judiciary panel convened by Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu would "reject the claim that Israel's presence in the territory is that of an occupying force," a legal opinion that aimed to pave the way for widespread settlement in the West Bank (Levinson and Zarchin 2012). In the Israeli media and in public discourse, images of Israel's military rule were progressively receding; Palestinians rarely

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1. This fantasy is akin to what Morozov calls "technological solutionism" (Morozov 2014).

2. For an elaborated analysis of technological utopianism, see Kuntsman and Stein (2015). This essay also draws on scholarship on the visual terms of militarism and humanitarianism, respectively. See, e.g., Feldman (2015); McLagan and McKee (2012); Sliwinski (2011); and Virilio (1989).

3. For discussion of the dual-use history of helmet-mounted cameras, see Stahl (2010), who argues that this phenomenon is part of the broader logics of the military entertainment industrial complex (Derian 2009; Virilio 1989).

appeared except in the language of "terrorism" and "security threat."

One can articulate these political conditions in visual terms: for most Israelis, the military occupation was becoming harder to see. That is, both the repressive terms of Israeli military rule in the territories and the Palestinian experience of life under occupation were disappearing behind barriers both ideological and material in kind. The cameras of both the military and the Israeli human rights community were responding to this constrained political climate, although in very different ways. Human rights organizations, for their part, were struggling against these constraints—engaged in the difficult labor of educating about state violence in a context where such education was considered tantamount to incitement. Where cameras were concerned, B'Tselem struggled to find images of state abuses that could unsettle this recalcitrant visual-political field. The military, by contrast, was working in compliance with these normative constraints, their cameras employed to buttress consensual blind spots by directing public eyes elsewhere (to the military's humanitarian efforts, its moral terms of engagement, its high-tech prowess, etc.). With so many cameras in the Palestinian territories, there was a sense among international anti-occupation activists that the repressive terms of Israeli military rule had never been more visible, never to so many, and never with greater precision or proximity. Yet at the same time, the terms of normative Israeli seeing were tempering this visual field, enhancing its inability to be seen as such. The relationship between these conflictual visual regimes lies at the core of this paper.

Sniper Cameras and Visual Fallacies

Cameras in soldier hands were present from the very onset of Israel's occupation. In June of 1967, in the final days of warfare that would end in the Israeli occupation of large parcels of land from neighboring Arab countries, Israeli soldiers carried cameras alongside their weapons, documenting the euphoric Israeli conquest in the manner of the tourist (Stein 2008). A decade later, the military would inaugurate its "film unit," tasked with the production of short films for public relations purposes. By the early years of the twenty-first century, the emergence of affordable, pocket-size digital cameras had changed the terms of soldier photography. Now, they had become a common part of the military tool kit—common, indeed, in military theaters across the globe—carried in vest pockets and employed to shoot leisure on base and military operations alike (Struk 2011). In these years, military policy governing the use of such cameras by on-duty soldiers had not yet been codified, although the military had begun to outline regulations limiting the permissible terms and objects of military photography (military bases deemed off limits).

Before the onset of social media or smartphone technologies, most of the cameras carried electively by Israeli soldiers into the field were either rudimentary digital cameras or rudimentary cell phone cameras lacking networked capabilities.

But the military was also giving cameras to its combat soldiers in these years in addition to basic training behind the lens, cameras intended not for the production of public relations material (this would come later) but for intelligence gathering and counterterrorism more generally. The military favored hobby photographers for this job—those with previous experience behind the lens—as formal military training was relatively limited. Eitan Stern was one of those hobby photographers whose interests were redeployed for military purposes. Before the army, he was a self-described photography enthusiast with a particular interest in portraiture. In the army, this enthusiasm would be channeled in new directions. He served from 2005 to 2008 in a sniper unit in the West Bank, Gaza Strip, and Lebanon. In his unit, as in every special forces unit, there was one member in charge of the various photographic technologies. Eitan played that role.

He carried many cameras with varying capabilities depending on the needs of the moment. As he would describe it to me, each camera had its own appeal and operational function.

> I had a lot of lenses. I had a *tele 1000*. It was an amazing camera. I'd use it for taking reconnaissance photos, taking photos of houses where we're going to do an arrest a couple of days later . . . you know, just to gather information. . . . Let's say, we arrested someone and he had guns and ammunition in his house. We'd take photos of that. Or when we were in Lebanon and did an operation and got really deep; I'd use it to take photos of Hezbollah preparing.

During night raids for so-called wanted men, Eitan was tasked with thermal photography with which he would identify the suspect before ordering the kill. "I would tell my snipers: 'Ok, you see that guy?' I give them the range, the angle, the wind. Then I tell them to set the aim." Sometimes, in the wake of such operations, the platoon commander or intelligence officer in the regiment would review the incriminating footage, although this was by no means assured.

Eitan's cameras were also used for what the army calls "mapping."[4] He explained the process in this way:

> *ES.* If you have really nothing to do [no urgent operations] you would do *mapping*. Me and my team called that a "Condoleezza Rice operation." Every time she came [to Israel] we did that kind of work. . . . Each team or platoon gets a street or a neighborhood [in the occupied West Bank], and you go and knock on every door, wake every family up. And you're supposed to be nice. Be really nice. Don't knock the door down, just knock on the door. Take photos of every one of the family members and write down his name, his occupation, and a couple of details. And then you draw a

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4. For a discussion of "mapping" practices, see the work of Breaking the Silence (2012).

map of the house with a pencil, and you move to
the next house.

RS. Now let's clarify the role of cameras here.
You'd photograph everyone in the house?

ES. Yes. . . . You photograph the people that live
inside the house and you draw the house on a
piece of paper.

A photographic history also preceded the night raid. As
Eitan explained it, the unit would first select a particular
residence for the raid. Then they would turn to the military's
computerized archive of aerial photographs of the Palestinian
territories—an archive updated, he noted, almost every day to
account for changes in the built environment. (Every house in
the West Bank has an associated number, making the archive
very user friendly.) In the days before the raid, he or a member
of his unit would visit the military headquarters in Nablus,
where the database was housed, and they would retrieve the
necessary photographic documentation from the central com-
puter: aerial shots of the targeted residence, shot both from
above and from a side angle, along with detailed military maps
of the city or town. All this enabled the unit to plan their raid
with precision.

In a sense, his work during "mapping" exercises drew on
his historic interest in portraiture: these, too, were faces. And
for a while, all was fine, and he complied with military orders.
But he began to have doubts: doubts about the function of the
operation, about the utility of this photographic specificity,
about the necessity of "mapping" as a military practice. And
he began to explore it further.

ES. The first doubt I had about that operation is
that you get like a piece of army paper that you
need to fill—a form [on which you record] the
details, everything. It didn't have a place to write
the [identifying] number of the photo, so that
when we got back to the base we'd know that . . .
it's photo number 36 or something like that.

RS. The form has no place for information about
the photographs?

ES. Right. And I said, "hmmm, that's weird." I got
back to the base and I went to the intelligence
officer and I told him, "Ok, let's download all the
photos I took tonight so you can use them." And
he said, "No, erase them. It's not really impor-
tant." I gave them all the reports—you know, all
the mapping, the drawing of the houses, every-
thing. And he put it all in a shredder.

As this discussion makes clear, Eitan's sniper unit relied on
a range of imaging technologies (the aerial images, the videos

shot from thermal cameras) in order to do their work, to
target and kill their "wanted men." His cameras were also
employed as the eye of the state in night raids into private
Palestinian homes, employed as tools of terror in their own
right. In these instances, the documentary cum surveillance
practice functioned to bolster the military display of wanton
power in the occupied territories—a practice of "making our
presence known" (as per military terminology).

And yet the images produced during these house-to-house
raids were not operationalized, at least, not in any of the
mapping raids in which Eitan participated between 2005 and
2007. In Eitan's experience, they had no afterlife in the op-
erational workings of the military, failing to function after the
event of the photographic encounter—or rather, functioning
chiefly as blunt instruments of trauma. And interestingly, it
was this failure to operationalize that marked the beginnings of
his political radicalization, a politics that hinged on the lapse
between camera promise and camera usage.

Camera and Military Retooling

The Israeli military's incursion into the Gaza Strip in the
summer of 2014 marked the first large-scale military opera-
tion in which the combat camera project was put to work.
And the successes were considerable, at least in the eyes of
the military spokesman. By 2014, the military understood the
importance of "working with the news cycle," of deploying
images in real time when possible, of having their official
cameras on the ground in sites of potential confrontation.
During the course of the incursion, the military established a
"visual operations room"—a secure locale in which they cen-
tralized the visuals, streaming them from the multiple cameras
in the field with the aim of making footage rapidly available
for public relations use. Where military policy and practice
were concerned, the change was twofold: there were now far
greater numbers of cameras in the field coupled with a shift
in military policy orientated toward their rapid redeployment
as media tools. But changes within the Gaza Strip heightened
the military challenge where the visual field was concerned. In
2008–2009, during the first Gaza incursion of this period, Pal-
estinians had lacked widespread social media literacy, Inter-
net connectivity, and access to mobile technologies—lacking,
that is, the means to produce a visual archive to counter the
military message. By 2014, social media literacy and tools had
become widespread within the Gazan population, and the global
social media field was saturated with the images and footage
they had produced, scenes of civilian devastation and death.
Thus, even as the military labored to produce its own visual
PR, it endeavored to respond to and mitigate this viral visual
field.[5]

The military's "visual operations room" was the most sub-
stantial advance of the 2014 war where Israel Defense Forces

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5. Elsewhere I have engaged in a detailed discussion of the social
media field of the 2014 wartime period (Kuntsman and Stein 2015).

(IDF) public relations were concerned, installing the capacity for liveness as never before. In the words of the IDF spokesman. "The combat camera man in the field gives us an influx of visuals constantly—whether we are at war or combat or when nothing is going on." But the proliferation of live streams from the field was not, in and of itself, adequate to the task. This footage required careful assessment and curation, as explained to me by a senior military spokesman in 2014.

> RS. What are you looking for when you are in the [visual operations] room?

> IDF. It depends. . . . It could be all different types of things that serve to *amplify visually the message* we are trying to send, to describe the mission we are carrying out, the type of enemy that we are facing. We need to fine-tune those images so that they serve that understanding.

> RS. By fine-tuning you mean captioning, editing, that kind of thing?

> IDF. I wouldn't say editing it or manipulating it. . . . We put in titles and freeze it so people can see the launch because that [only] takes a second. We freeze it to when you see the launch happening, put a circle around it to draw the attention to it. Otherwise you might miss it. . . . It shows why this is a legitimate target.

What was emerging in 2014 was a new language and set of associated practices for image management as tools of visual "amplification"—amplification required in order to counter the saturated field of images produced by Gazan Palestinians, images with viral traction on global social networks. As military images were "fine-tuned" by those in the visual operations room, military norms governing engagement with the visual field were changing.

The need for the combat camera project and for a real-time PR image emerged out of military failures of the past where image making and circulation were concerned—in particularly, the events of 2010. In May of that year, the Israeli navy intercepted a maritime convoy, named the *Mavi Marmara*, that traveled from Turkey to the Gaza Strip carrying humanitarian aid and hundreds of international activists who aimed to break Israel's Gaza blockade. Nine activists were killed and dozens wounded by Israeli fire after the military boarded the lead ship, events that would be heavily chronicled by international journalists and by the activists themselves who extensively used social media to document their voyage and violent interception by Israel (Bayoumi 2010).

The events were a media disaster for the Israeli military. The military delivery of the images of the interception—which the Israeli media would frame as scenes of a "lynching" (this inversion of victim/victimizer being a classic mode of

media framing in Israel)—reached publics some 11 hours after the onboard events and long after the social media output of the flotilla activists had reached the global networked public. Israeli media pundits agreed on the scale of the national media disaster: "For a country so technologically advanced and with such acute public diplomacy challenges, to fail so miserably at preparing a communications offensive over new media is a failure of strategic proportions" (Mizroch 2010).

The media problem did not rest in the images themselves. The still images and video shot by the military of the nighttime raid were strong, or so the military believed, and they succeeded in telling the state's story of flotilla terrorists in the guise of humanitarians, thereby justifying the military actions that followed. The problem rested in the slow speed of their delivery to global publics and the lack of planning and preparedness for their delivery by those in the military's media wing. In part, the slow pace was the result of internal disagreement within branches of state at the time the events had unfolded: some had argued that the footage damaged the military international reputation by showing Israelis under attack.[6] Others argued that their circulation should have been nearly immediate, as the footage helped justify the military actions that followed. Additional challenges were more infrastructural and bureaucratic in nature. In 2010, the military lacked live-stream capability from the field, lacking the satellite technologies necessary to transmit the images directly from the site of the naval raid. In the absence of such capabilities, the military had planned to transport the footage by air and land to military headquarters, where they would be viewed, processed, and edited. This enormously protracted process was explained to me by a former high-ranking officer in the IDF's spokesman's unit who spoke with me in Jerusalem.

> IDF. Just imagine that that footage comes in, and it takes a couple of hours to get it out back to like Tel Aviv headquarters.

> RS. The footage was helicptered?

> IDF. Yes, if I remember correctly there was a combination of helicopter and motorcycles . . . but [it takes a while to reach] the right office in the navy and a while to climb up the ladder until it gets to the head of the navy. And the head of navy says no, so it goes back down to the spokesperson in the navy. And that spokesperson speaks to the IDF spokesperson's central unit and goes to the top of the spokesperson's unit. And that guy calls up the head of the navy [and so on]. And here you can see it taking a long time.

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6. Others feared that the footage had the potential to reveal crucial military tactics and should not be aired. Buchman, interviewed by Rebecca L. Stein, Jerusalem 2014.

Even after the infrastructural challenge of live transmission had been surmounted, as would occur in 2014, the process was painstaking: the management of this new media infrastructure had to be learned, demanding a recalibration of military command structures, new terms of military engagement, and a shift in the culture of soldiering and combat. Again, here is the IDF former spokesman.

> Here, you have to think about the normal infrastructural issues any of us would have to deal with. Like: how do I beam back live digital footage? How do I do that securely—because a lot of this video footage is very sensitive? And how do I have enough people in the field qualified to hold the cameras? For example, if you are in a combat zone, you need to qualify someone to film stuff. How do I make sure if that person is actually a solider, and how do I make sure . . . he's shooting the video footage instead of shooting their gun?

In some sense, what's being described here is no more than the slow and labored pace of military bureaucracy on the one hand and the challenges that attend infrastructural development and technological advancement on the other. But in the context of Israel's self-brand as a "high-tech nation," it functions as an important reminder that the high-tech potential had to first be installed as an infrastructural possibility and then learned by those in the field—a process of technological retooling rife with error. And with the potential confusion between camera and gun, the stakes were considerable.

B'Tselem: Editing Bitunyia

The Israeli NGO B'Tselem, the Israeli Information Center for Human Rights in the Occupied Territories, is Israel's premier human rights watchdog where state and settler violence in the occupied territories is concerned.[7] Begun in the late 1980s during the early years of the first Palestinian uprising, when Israelis were only beginning to confront the scale of state violence and repressive control in the West Bank and Gaza (Tessler 1990), in 2007 the organization launched their now-famous camera project that delivered hundreds of handheld video cameras and rudimentary training in camera usage to Palestinian families in besieged areas of the occupied West Bank such that they could document their frequent abuse at the hands of soldiers and neighboring settler populations (before most Palestinian families in the West Bank had access to camera technologies, something that has changed dramatically in the years since the project's inception). During the 1980s and 1990s, B'Tselem's meticulous documentation of Israeli abuses of power was based chiefly on oral testimonials from Palestinians. In the years since, cameras and images have played an ever-greater role in their institutional workings. Today, cam-

eras are instrumental in defining the very terms of a rights abuse both in the court of law and the Israeli court of public opinion. Today, the centrality of the camera has changed the terms by which a rights abuse becomes intelligible as such.

Within the current Israeli political climate, B'Tselem's challenge is considerable, namely, to deliver an account of Israeli human rights abuses in the occupied territories to an Israeli public who has long since grown tired of this charge, tired of accounts of Israeli perpetrators and Palestinian victims. Within normative Israeli imaginations of the present moment, the very language of "human rights" is now perceived as an ideologically motivated assault on the Jewish state and its future.[8] It is the rare B'Tselem video that has not been met by public suspicion, by right-wing charges of video tampering and fraud. So powerful and pervasive is this charge that it targets even those incidents of state and settler violence against Palestinians that have been supported by plentiful material evidence; even the visual terms of forensic and autopsy reports are not immune to this charge.

The organization is thus caught in a camera bind, one that has become ubiquitous in global political theaters in the age of digital photography and the network-enabled camera: namely, cameras and resultant images (usually footage) are required to make violence and human rights abuses visible to publics. But in the Israeli context, images almost necessarily fail to persuade the public—often regardless of the precision of the image, the angle or number of cameras, and the manifest volume of substantiating images. Thus, a vicious circle of frenetic verification and denunciation emerges: ever-greater numbers of images are marshaled demonstrating ever-greater degrees of photographic precision, even as political detractors hone their skills in denunciation by means of the image, fine-tuning their work in digital forensics and techno-tactics employed for invalidation of the photographic field.

In the spring of 2014, B'Tselem turned its attention to a deadly episode in the West Bank town of Bitunyia—a shooting of two Palestinian youths by the Israeli Border Police during an annual demonstration commemorating the Palestinian Nakba. The shootings resembled many other state killings of Palestinians. But in this case, the deaths were captured by multiple cameras: by the four security cameras installed on the Palestinian-owned business opposite the site of the shooting; by the video camera of a CNN cameraman who had been filming the demonstrations that day, his lens focused on the Israeli security services; and by a Palestinian photojournalist in a series of successive frames.

The Bitunyia footage emerged slowly: first, video from stationary security cameras on the scene was released to the public (5 days after the shooting), their cameras focused on the street where the young protestors would be hit. Two days later,

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CNN released footage of the Israeli security forces from the time of the incident, including images of the shooter raising and firing his weapon. Photojournalists were also present at the scene, and their still images became available for public viewing. But this relatively large volume of visuals did not still debate about the terms of the killings. Rather, it seemed to fuel it. Each successive revelation would be met by a massive suspicion campaign engineered by Israeli publics and their international supporters. Even as Israeli and international human rights organizations condemned the Israeli security forces for an unprovoked killing of unarmed Palestinians (Human Rights Watch 2014), and even as UN bodies called for an "independent and transparent" investigation of the killings (*Haaretz* 2014), suspicious Israeli networked publics took aim at the footage itself, arguing that it had been doctored for political effect.[9]

These suspicious publics did not dispute the deaths themselves (the men were dead and buried, and this no one denied). Instead, they focused on the identity of the perpetrator/s, laboring to exonerate the state through close reading of the images. Some insisted that Palestinians themselves had been responsible; others claimed that rubber bullets had been fired by the police in accordance with state regulations, erroneously hitting the youth (rather than live bullets, trained deliberately on the protestors, as human rights groups asserted). Drawing on a well-worn vocabulary of doubt, many scrutinized the footage for signs of manipulation, pointing to dubious body movements in the frame (why, numerous pundits would ask, had the body fallen as it did?). The media mobilized numerous military and forensic experts to review the evidence: on the evening news, cameras were trained on them sitting before television monitors reviewing the footage, working slowly, frame by frame, directing the public eye toward the path of the bullet or the suspicious body movements. "Look *here*," says the ballistics expert, pointing at the CNN footage on the screen, his eyes focused on the end of the rifle. Satellite footage was also marshaled to make the case, to track the line of sight between the body and the security forces. On the basis of such scrutiny, numerous experts proclaimed the images a hoax. This was, many agreed, yet another case of *Pallywood*, the Palestinian Hollywood-like industry in manufactured footage of Israeli aggression and its ostensible Palestinian victims.

B'Tselem was heavily involved in the Bitunyia case, as they are in most instances of human rights abuses at the hands of the Israeli security services in the occupied Palestinian territories. Their involvement began the way it always does in such cases. Their fieldworkers received notification about the killings, and they rapidly moved to investigate, gathering as much data about the event as possible: background reports about the site and its actors (compiled, usually, by the local Palestinian fieldworkers); eyewitness testimonials (taken in Arabic and then translated into Hebrew for the B'Tselem West Jerusalem staff—Arabic speakers numbering few among them); medical reports, when relevant (e.g., autopsy findings, some of which can help in the identification of weapons and their provenance); and still images or footage from the event. But the Bitunyia incident was something of an exception, as so many cameras were trained on the scene of the shooting. The footage came in belatedly, 4 days after the deaths, and long after the machinery of public refutation had begun. First, excerpts were released to the media, the silent frames (CCTV has no sound) that show the body falling and youths running to his side. Then the material—a full 4 hours of footage from four different closed-circuit cameras, each trained on the area of the killing from slightly different angles—was placed into the hands of the B'Tselem "data-department," those responsible for parsing and investigating the conditions surrounding a killing or human rights violation, to make sense of it. They worked with the footage against the background of the mounting suspicion campaign, mindful that their assessment required scrutiny of an equally scrupulous sort such that fraudulence charges, bolstered by a fine-grained analysis of the visual field, could be answered in kind.[10]

The work needed to verify the scene of state violence was painstaking. While B'Tselem's labor is always considerable, the pressures of the suspicion charged coupled with the volume of visual material multiplied their labor. Sitting at his monitor, Noam—a veteran member of the B'Tselem data department—was tasked with parsing the footage. He described his job this way.

> What do I look for in a video? Things like what the victim did before his injury and his exact or proximate surroundings. I try to identify the shooter, the context, [whether it was] a demonstration or confrontation, whether there was use of force, whether or not medical help was provided for the injured, [and so on].

The reliability of the video also required assessment, or rather, the degree to which the different cameras, with their varying angles, verified each other. He worked slowly, using two monitors to compare the different cameras, focusing on the 20 minutes before the shooting, moving second by second through the material, frame by frame. His handwritten notes record this meticulous scrutiny: "11:19—burning of a tire. 11:21—first gas grenade. 11:43—youth gathering. . . . 13:02—young man injured. 13:40—the youth run away." Not all the material was clear, and disputes arose with others in the organization over what could be seen: "11:20—I doubt that this guy is Muhammad Aza," he wrote in the margins about a figure in the frame. Numerous questions had to be answered: how many youths were present? Was the population of protestors stable or did it change (were new youths coming and going)? Was there something in the hand of the future victim, and

9. For a detailed discussion of the politics of the Israeli discourse of suspicion, see Kuntsman and Stein (2015).

10. The Forensic Architecture team, under the leadership of Eyal Weizmann, has also worked closely on this case (Forensic Architecture 2016).

might it be a weapon (legal implications for the military would follow)? That is, were the youths involved in a provocation with the security services as the state claimed? This work was at once tedious ("do you know how many hours I have watched this?") and emotionally draining. Sitting in front of the computer, screening the footage multiple times with an eye to the minor details, he watched the youth die over and over again. The footage and technology made this possible. The suspicion discourse made it necessary.

Noam's work of watching—of careful looking, parsing the visual material frame by frame, tracking small movements on the screen—is framed by something of an irony. Even as he works against the terms of the suspicion discourse, laboring to invalidate this increasingly widespread and recalcitrant discourse (by which Israeli state violence is recast and nullified as mere image manipulation), he shares with suspicious readers a set of critical seeing practices. They, too, are working frame by frame, mining the visual archive for minutia. Together, they were collaborating in new national ways of seeing the field of military violence—practices that conjoined experts and laymen alike, human rights workers and militant Israeli publics, on social networks.

Sitting in front of his computer in his cluttered office, his eyes fixed on the screen, he was engaged in a dual process: both a meticulous accounting of the events and an engagement of sorts with the normative conventions and limits governing Israeli sight—conventions that govern and constrain the visibility of the Israeli occupation among Israeli publics. In a sense, then, the object of his meticulous gaze was both footage itself and the constrained terms of the national visual field—a process of anticipating, in advance of the video's release, the limits of its intelligibility.

The Politics of Lapse

In this essay I have sketched the growing importance of photographic technologies as political tools in the theater of Israel's occupation. I focus on the shifts in camera practices, infrastructural developments, and everyday ways of seeing that have been required by Israeli institutions and actors in the digital age. In the military context, spokesmen and soldiers have had to engage in the painstaking process of learning a new set of technologies and PR languages and to master popular conventions governing the protoviral image. In human rights contexts, workers and activists have been recalibrating the micropractices employed in parsing the visual field of violations and assessing the scene of state violence. In both institutional contexts, there is a growing demand to see military rule with ever-greater precision, at multiple angles, at the scale of the pixel, in real time.

Yet these shifts have been neither smooth nor seamless. The labor involved in harnessing new photographic technologies and coming up to speed in the digital age has been considerable: policies and technologies have required updating, infrastructures have needed development, eyes have had to be retrained. And in both military and human rights contexts, lapses of varying kinds have been frequent: cameras have been employed otherwise than intended by those behind the lens, images have failed to deliver on their ostensible promise, and infrastructures have fallen short. Lapse has no singular political valences or effect across these varying contexts. For the Israeli military, lapse in the form of infrastructural lack and temporal delay, as in the infamous case of the *Mavi Marmara*, marked an instance of political threat to the state's public relations message, a message deemed particularly vital in a time of perceived security threat. The 2014 combat camera project, with the capacity for live stream, would follow as an urgent political corrective. For B'Tselem, lapse as communicative failure—or more precisely, the failure of human rights video to persuade a right-wing public—was deemed yet another index of a growing climate of political intolerance within the Jewish Israeli public where human rights claims and political dissent were concerned. The highly variable politics that are tethered to these instances of communicative breakdown are a reminder of the insufficiency of a singular account of the politics of digitality either in the form of "digital democracy," with its cyber-utopian rendering of the role that digital technologies can play in grassroots movements, or in the form of (what we might call) digital supremacy, the notion that new technologies can be seamlessly employed as tools of repressive state power.

In the cases I have outlined I have also aimed to temper a resilient popular investment in the capacity of photographic technologies, in ever-greater hands, to catalyze justice by making injustice ever more visible, a techno-utopian proposition still frequently advanced by activists and academics alike, figured by the iconic global image of the protestor with cameraphone held aloft. It is a well-worn and even "programmatic" fantasy (Keenan 2002), rehearsed in many historical moments of newly mediated violence, that is, when the outbreak of violence corresponds to the emergence of new media or communications technologies that seem to allow this violence to be broadcast, circulated, and consumed more faithfully. One has seen this fantasy activated in the context of the Syrian revolts, briefly hailed as the first YouTube revolution; amid the extrajudicial killings of black men by the US police, so many caught on camera; and in relation to Israeli state violence in the occupied Palestinian territories. In the case of Israel and Palestine, this fantasy takes shape in a popular sense among international anti-occupation activists that Israel's military rule has never been more visible or more photographed, never by so many, and never with such precision and proximity, a narrative of ostensible hypervisibilty that circulated with particular force during and after the 2014 Gaza incursion. Equally well-rehearsed and programmatic, as we know from the work of Susan Sontag and others, is the disappointment that follows when new media fail to deliver on their justice promise. In the Israeli case, the multiplication of cameras, technological literacy, and techno-precision has been contemporaneous with, and inversely proportional to, the popular

Israeli tolerance to see images of Palestinian injury at state hands (to say nothing of the vanishing Israeli investment in a justice agenda where Palestine is concerned). Camera numbers and precision have risen even as the public appetite for such images—as for any discussion of the conditions of Palestinian life under Israeli military rule in the occupied territories—has fallen, and precipitously so in the context of the constrained Israeli political present.

In part, then, this paper is yet another iteration of that formulaic account of photographic failure, particularly so where the case of human rights witnessing is concerned. But I have aimed to move past failure as lament—as per Sontag and others—by taking lapse seriously as a social form and process. The ethnography of lapse reminds us of the inadequacy of notions of the digital tethered to fantasies of radical newness or ruptural transformation, a fantasy bolstered by academic terminology itself ("*new* media"). By contrast, lapse—at once breakdown and gap—refuses the progressivism typically associated with the new in "new media," insisting on all that gets in the way of technological advancement and progression. Lapse also functions as a site of critical political engagement where Israel and Palestine are concerned. If, following Larkin, technological success has long been a means of figuring colonial modernity and progress, the ethnography of lapse might provide a means of figuring colonial breakdown, even if only on the microscale. Through snapshots of a military footage delivered too late or film left undeveloped in a sniper camera, the ostensible supremacy of the "Start-Up Nation" might begin to look otherwise.

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The Crisis in Crisis

by Joseph Masco

In this essay I consider the current logics of crisis in American media cultures and politics. I argue that "crisis" has become a counterrevolutionary idiom in the twenty-first century, a means of stabilizing an existing condition rather than minimizing forms of violence across militarism, economy, and the environment. Assessing nuclear danger and climate danger, I critique and theorize the current standing of existential crisis as a mode of political mobilization and posit the contemporary terms for generating nonutopian but positive futurities.

If you tune in to the mass-mediated frequency of crisis today, it quickly becomes overwhelming. News of infectious disease outbreaks (Ebola, antibiotic-resistant illnesses, measles outbreaks among purposefully unvaccinated children); wars in the Middle East, Africa, and Eastern Europe as well as new stages in the multigenerational US campaigns against drugs and terror; talk of a new Cold War between the United States and Russia, or maybe one with China; the elimination of privacy to surveillance programs (run by both corporations and the security state); financial contagions, fears of economic collapse, and new extremes in global inequality; species die-offs on an unprecedented scale; megadrought, megasnow, megacold, megaheat; proliferating toxicities and corruptions; racialized violence (state driven, terroristic, individual); stand-your-ground laws; ocean acidification, the near-eternal longevity of plastics; peak oil, peak water; smogocalypse in China; arms races (nuclear, biological, cyber)—the everyday reporting of crisis proliferates across subjects, spaces, and temporalities today and is an ever-amplifying media refrain.

This raises an important historical question about how and why crisis has come to be so dominant in our media cultures. On any given issue—disease, finance, war, or the environment—there are specific historical moments more violent than today. Yet the configuration of the future as an unraveling slide into greater and greater degrees of structural chaos across finance, war, and the environment prevails in our mass media. In the United States, a 24-7 media universe offers up endangerment on a vast range of scales, making it so ever present as to dull consumer senses. The power of crisis to shock and thus mobilize is diminishing because of narrative saturation, overuse, and a lack of well-articulated positive futurities to balance stories of end-times. Put differently, if we were to remove crisis talk from our public speech today, what would remain? And if crisis is now an ever-present, near permanent negative "surround," as

Fred Turner (2013) might put it, what has happened to a normative, non-crisis-riven everyday life, not to mention the conditions of possibility for positive futurisms?

In short, there is a "crisis in crisis" today, one that I think is diagnostic of twenty-first-century American capitalism. The United States exists in a structural contradiction, one drawn from being both a democracy and an imperially inclined superpower: since the 1980s, the federal government has increasingly exchanged domestic welfare programs for mass incarceration and permanent war, rewriting the social contract in foundational ways.

In this article I examine American sensibilities about crisis, seeking to historicize and critique the collapsing of a more robust political sphere into the singular language of crisis. Crisis is, in the first instance, an affect-generating idiom, one that seeks to mobilize radical endangerment to foment collective attention and action. As Roitman (2014:82) writes in her extended study of the term, crisis is "an observation that produces meaning" by initiating critique within a given condition. It is thus a predominantly conservative modality, seeking to stabilize an existing structure within a radically contingent world. As social theorists as diverse as Reinhart Koselleck (1988), David Scott (2014), and Susan Buck-Morss (2002) have also noted, crisis and utopia have structured the modernist Euro-American project of social engineering, constituting a future caught between a narrative of collapse and one of constant improvement. The language of collective social improvement has all but disappeared from political debates in the United States over the last generation, a victim of a post-welfare-state mentality and neoliberal economics. "Progress" is no longer tied to collective social conditions (e.g., the elimination of poverty) but increasingly restricted to the boom and bust of markets and changes in consumer technology product cycles. Crary (2013:9) attributes the current "suspension of living" to a 24-7, always-on media and work environment, one that foments a new kind of temporality that increasingly disallows fantasies about improved collective conditions while being increasingly indifferent to the structural violence supporting this economy.

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In the twenty-first century, information technologies offer perhaps the most immediate and available sense of radical change, a sign of how far the social engineering through state planning of the twentieth century has contracted into the market engineering of consumer desires. Technological revolution in consumer electronics is now constant, creating a new kind of techno-social space marked by consumer anticipations of ever-improving informational capacities and a continual transformation in the commodity form. Consider the social effects of the major communication revolutions of the past 20 years in the United States—the Internet, social media, and the smart phone—each of which has been integrated into everyday American life with astonishing speed and ubiquity. This experience of "revolution" in the marketplace is, however, matched by a formal political culture that is theatrically gridlocked at the national level, unable to constitute significant policy on issues of collective endangerment across the domains of finance, war, and the environment. Moreover, policy failure in each of these domains over the past generation has not produced a radical reassessment of supporting assumptions or institutions. Even as shifting information technologies secure an experience of radical structural change in every life today, formal political processes perform being unable to imagine even minor shifts in existing logics or practices despite financial collapse, military failure, and environmental disaster. Thus, while communication has never been easier and information about matters of collective concern has never been more abundant, the media spaces crafted for always-on information systems deliver largely negative portraits of the present and future.

There is, in other words, a steady invitation in American media worlds to fear the future and to reject the power of human agency to modulate even those systems crafted by industry, finance, or the security state. This marks the arrival of a new kind of governance, one based not on eliminating fears through the protective actions of the security apparatus but rather on the amplification of public dangers through inaction. This produces a suicidal form of governance, one that cannot respond to long-standing collective dangers (e.g., climate change) while also generating new ones (such as the poisoning of the public water system in Flint, Michigan, by emergency managers seeking cost savings). The affective circuit of the counterterror state, for example, privileges images of catastrophic future events over such everyday violences, multiplying fears of the future while allowing everyday structural insecurities to remain unaddressed (Masco 2014). Sloterdijk has suggested that the resulting psychic agitation is one important effect of a globalized economy:

> This has progressed to such an extent that those who do not make themselves continuously available for synchronous stress seem asocial. Excitability is now the foremost duty of all citizens. This is why we no longer need military service. What is required is the general theme of duty, that is to say, a readiness to play your role as a conductor of excitation for

collective, opportunist psychoses. (Sloterdijk and Henrichs 2001:82)

This is to say that crisis talk serves a wide range of psycho-social purposes, creating across the domains of finance, war, and the environment an ever-expanding invitation to engage the future through negative affects. Thus, the American public can simultaneously know the United States to be an unrivaled military, economic, and scientific superpower, a state with unprecedented capacities, agencies, and resources, and yet feel completely powerless in the face of failed US military, financial, and environmental commitments. Instead of the crisis-utopia circuit that empowered the high modernist culture of the mid-twentieth century, we now have a crisis-paralysis circuit, a marker of a greatly reduced political horizon in the United States.

I am interested in this lack of political agency for those living within a hyperpower state and wish to interrogate it via a conceptual and historical assessment of the two linked existential dangers of our time: nuclear crisis and climate crisis. Existential danger makes a claim on being the ultimate form of crisis—a mode of collective endangerment that has historically worked in the era of nation-states to define the boundaries of the community and focus the responsibilities of government. To evoke an existential danger is to call on the full powers of the state and society in the name of self-preservation. In the current moment of counterterror, financial instability, and climate change, the call to existential danger no longer functions exclusively in this way. Indeed, existential dangers are now being crafted and enhanced by both state action and inaction. After 15 years of counterterror and geopolitical misrecognitions over weapons of mass destruction, the US nuclear complex is promoting a program to rebuild the entire US nuclear triad of bombers, missiles, and submarines and arm them with new nuclear weapons designs. Similarly, through new drilling technologies and a suspension of regulatory oversight, the United States is now poised to become the world's largest energy producer by 2020—the world's number one petrochemical state—even as earth scientists detail the catastrophic planetary effects of releasing all that carbon from the ground. Thus, the existential security challenges of our time are not being met with programmatic efforts to move out of nuclear or petrochemical economies in the name of collective security. Rather than committing to new security and energy infrastructures, and with them creating a different geopolitics (see Clark 2014), the United States is committing ever more deeply to the most well-known and collectively dangerous industrial activities.

In what follows, I interrogate the media politics around the signing of the 1963 Limited Test Ban Treaty (LTBT)—the first arms control agreement as well as the first environmental treaty—to consider an alternate era of crisis management. I then turn to contemporary climate science, interrogating the terms of America's current petrostate strategy. In each case, I consider how existential danger is mobilized via mass media as a collective crisis and consider the conditions of possibility

for a radical reconsideration of the terms of everyday life. Put differently, the crisis in crisis today marks a new political modality that can experience repeated failure as well as totalizing external danger without generating the need for structural change. "Crisis," in other words, has become a counterrevolutionary force in the twenty-first century, a call to confront collective endangerment that instead increasingly articulates the very limits of the political.

The Nuclear Danger

The period between the Soviet launch of the first artificial Earth satellite on October 4, 1957, and the signing of the LTBT on August 5, 1963, witnessed geopolitical and environmental crises of an astonishing range, scale, and scope. In addition to the building of the Berlin Wall, the Bay of Pigs invasion, and the Cuban Missile Crisis, the United States and the Soviets waged fierce proxy wars in Latin America, Africa, the Middle East, and Southeast Asia. A voluntary nuclear test moratorium between the two powers in the years 1959–1960 ended suddenly in 1961 with 59 Soviet nuclear tests. The following year, the Soviets detonated an additional 79 nuclear devices while the United States exploded 96. Between the two weapons programs, this amounts to a nuclear detonation every other day for the calendar year of 1962 (see fig. 1). The speed and volume of nuclear detonations in 1962 belies a scientific research program,

becoming instead a global theater of nuclear messaging, establishing a US and Soviet commitment to nuclear war. Almost all of these explosions were conducted in the atmosphere. After the atomic bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki in 1945, this makes 1962 probably the most dangerous year in the first two decades of the nuclear age. In addition to narrowly avoiding a nuclear war that would have destroyed North America, Europe, and much of Asia inside a few minutes of conflict (see Rosenberg and Moor 1981–1982; Scott 1987), the nuclear testing programs were a substantial disaster for the global environment. Each of these nuclear "tests" was a planetary ecological event, one that destroyed local ecosystems and sent radioactive fallout high into the stratosphere, where it circled the earth. Aboveground nuclear explosions distributed contamination to every living being on the planet in the mid-twentieth century to a degree that is still measurable today (Masco 2006:302).

The year 1962 thus stands as a superlative year of "crisis" in the nuclear age, involving a war fought via "test" programs and covert actions around the world that nearly became a planetary inferno. By 1962, it was well understood that aboveground nuclear explosions were a major environmental and public health risk. Beginning a decade earlier with the first hydrogen bomb tests in the Pacific, earth scientists began tracking radioactive fallout as a means of understanding ecological transport across atmosphere, biosphere, geology, and oceans. In
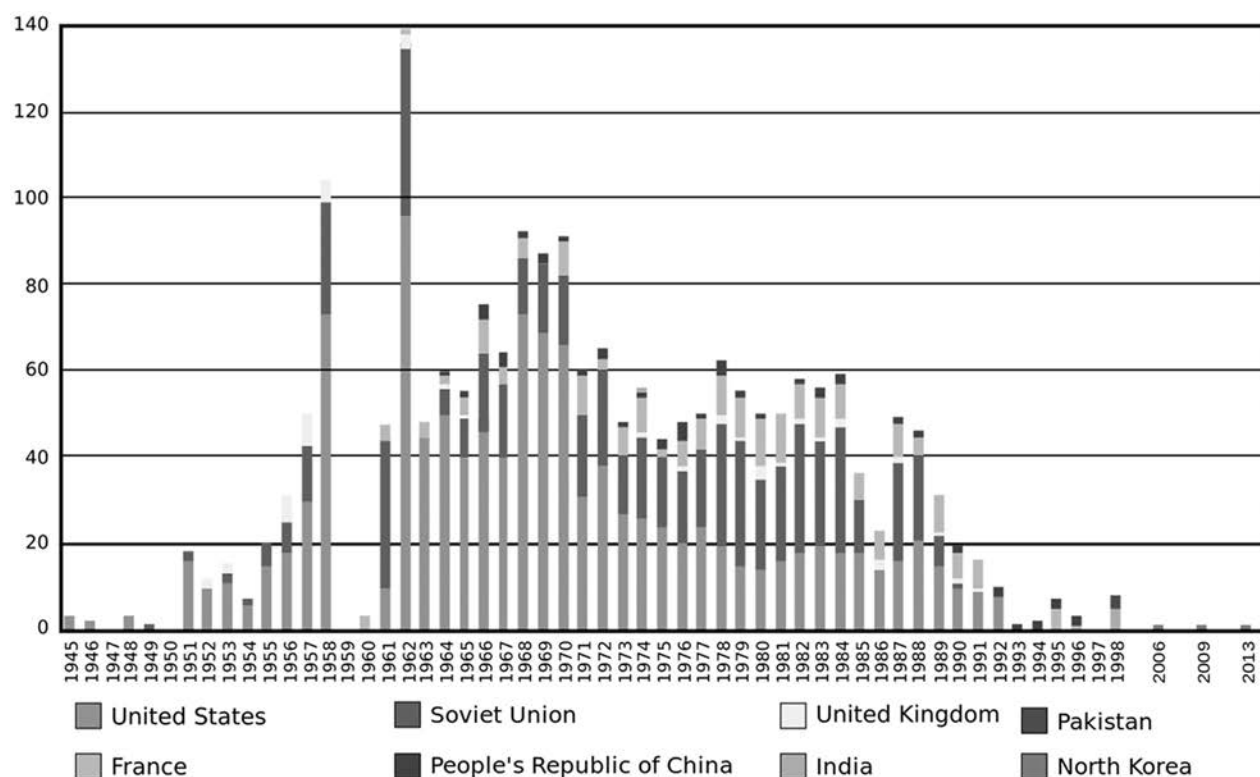
Figure 1. Nuclear tests by country and year, 1945–2013 (courtesy of Wikimedia Commons). A color version of this figure is available online.

1952, the "IVY-Mike" detonation produced a mushroom cloud that rose to over 120,000 feet and was 25 miles wide (fig. 2). United States earth scientists used this radioactive cloud as an experimental lens, tracking the global dispersal of strontium-90 as a means of understanding stratospheric flows and showing with a new specificity how earth, ocean, ecologies, and atmosphere interact.

The fallout produced by the Mike detonation was tracked globally by Machta, List, and Hubert (1956), one of a series of studies that followed the stratospheric transport of nuclear materials produced by atmospheric testing, offering increasingly high-resolution portraits of atmospheric contamination within an integrated biosphere. These wide-ranging studies directly challenged a national security concept that was no longer able to protect discrete territories but was instead generating, in Ulrich Beck's (2007) terms, new "risk societies" united not by territory, national identity, or language but rather by airborne environmental and health risks increasingly shown to be global flows (see Fowler 1960).

Radioactive fallout studies demonstrated a new kind of collective injury emerging on top of the imminent threat of nuclear war, namely, that of an industrially transformed environment. Tracking the radioactive signatures of nuclear tests allowed scientists to map the biosphere as an integrated ecological space, one in which toxicity was a "flow" that connected geologies, oceans, organisms, and atmospheres in specific ways. Fallout

studies required new surveillance systems and generated major data sets for the earth sciences, formally pursued with the goal of understanding nuclear environmental effects and to track the Soviet nuclear program. The early Cold War produced a massive investment in air, ocean, geology, ice cap, and increasingly outer space research. The US nuclear project sought both to militarize nature for national advantage (see Fleming 2010; Hamblin 2013) but also to understand planetary space in a new way. The resulting data sets established, as Paul Edwards (2010) has shown in detail, a new kind of global information infrastructure allowing constantly improving portraits of earth systems to be possible. Contemporary understandings of climate change are based on the foundational scientific and big data work of this early Cold War period. In this way, the nuclear state participated in a larger militarization of environment in the twentieth century (see Sloterdijk 2009), one that enabled new forms of environmental thinking, including a scalar multidisciplinary commitment to connecting locality with regional and global technological infrastructures and ultimately planetary-scale processes (Masco 2015).

By 1960, earth scientists could already document the stratospheric height of fallout, connect it to specific nuclear detonations, and show how US and Soviet nuclear detonations were merging the global north and global south as irradiated space (see fig. 3). The development of US national security in the form of the hydrogen bomb was thus linked to the production of
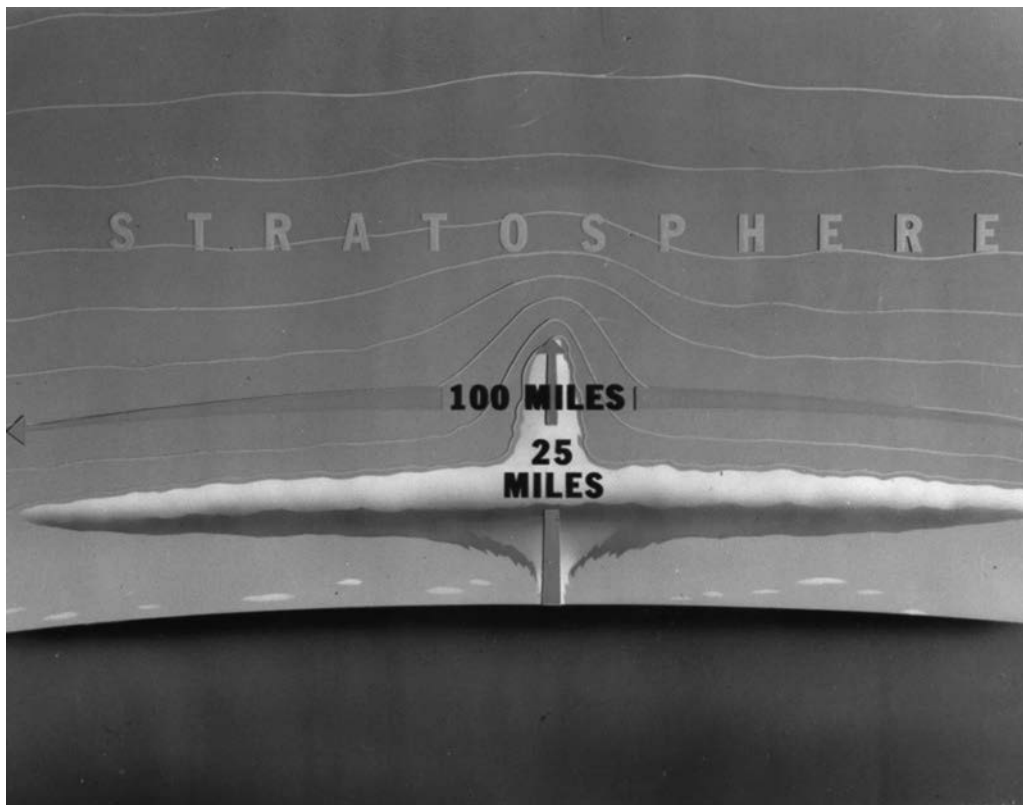
Figure 2. Illustration of the Ivy-Mike fallout cloud (courtesy of US Department of Defense).
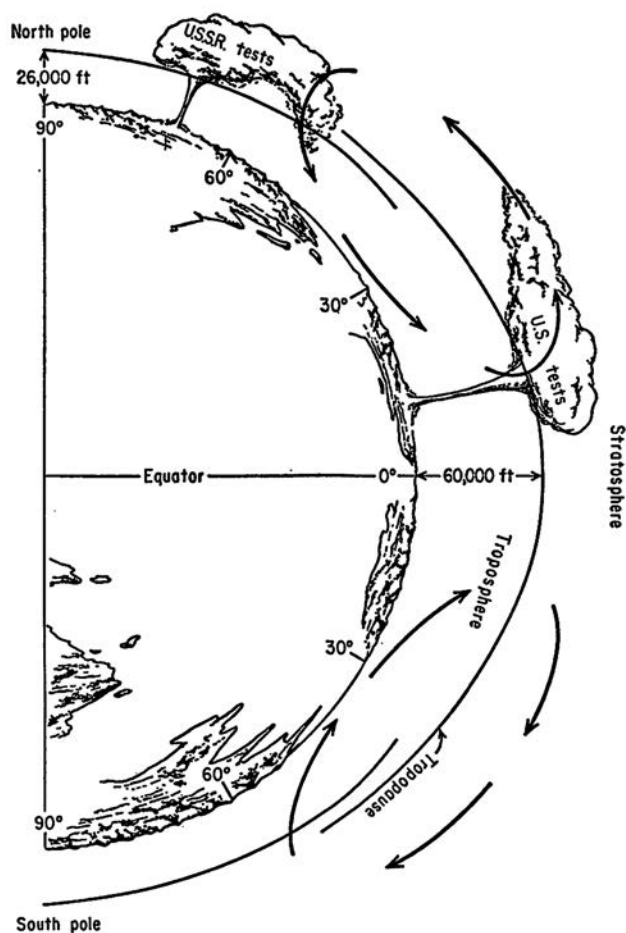
Figure 3. Illustration of the global travel of fallout (from Machta and List 1960).

(1) an entirely new global ecological danger and (2) a new technoscientific and environmental investment in understanding ecological transport in an integrated environmental space, which lead to revolutions in biomedicine, computing, geology, oceanography, and atmospheric sciences (see Doel 2003; Edwards 2010; Farish 2010; Hamblin 2013; Masco 2010). The nuclear danger created research programs that continue to this day, including biomedical studies of exposed populations (from Hiroshima and Nagasaki to the Marshall Islands to the vast population of workers within the nuclear complex itself—see Johnson and Barker 2008; Lindee 1997; Makhijani and Schwartz 2008). These forms of internal and external sacrifice—operating on both fast and slow scales of violence (Nixon 2011)—became embedded within Cold War national security practices raising basic questions about what kind of a human population was being created via the bomb (see also Brown 2013; Kuletz 1998; Petryna 2002).

By 1962 the US media space was filled with contradictory visions of the nuclear present and future, offering up a world of imminent danger across territories and biologies in a manner that is difficult to appreciate today. As the Cold War civil defense programs asked Americans to practice the destruction of the nation-state in yearly drills, earth scientists detailed the dangers to the human genetic pool posed by atmospheric nuclear explosions. Visions of an end of the nation-state in the flash of nuclear war were thus matched in newspaper, radio, and television accounts by portraits of a human species being transformed by the long-term genetic damage of fallout from the test programs. Consider for a moment the *New York Times* for November 21, 1961: alongside a front-page obituary for one of the world's richest men—Axel Wenner-Gren, the philanthropist who created the Viking Fund (the future Wenner-Gren Foundation for Anthropological Research)—and an article on a United Nations vote to ban the use of nuclear weapons and to make Africa a nuclear-free zone, was a detailed report on the Kennedy administration's plan to "dissolve the crisis atmosphere" over atomic civil defense in the United States by committing to a large-scale program to build community fallout shelters across the country (*New York Times* 1961). This discussion of the national panic over nuclear civil defense was followed on page A-2 by "Babies Surveyed for Strontium 90," an account of a St. Louis-based research program to collect baby teeth to measure the effects of fallout on the human body (Sullivan 1961). Publicized by ecologist Barry Commoner (see Egan 2007), this study of strontium-90 in baby teeth continued through 1970. It projected every American family as potential casualties of nuclear testing even as the fallout shelter program sought to protect the population at large by moving it underground. Alongside other fallout studies, the baby-teeth program documented accumulating strontium-90 in American infants, a startling new metric of industrial contamination. Indeed, it is difficult to imagine today in our so-called age of terror the nuclear crises of this early Cold War moment, which asked Americans to move their lives underground while also testing their children's bodies for new forms of injury created by the US national security apparatus in the name of collective defense. As a result, many new forms of activism arose at this moment across issues of war and peace and environmental protection, realigning race, class, and gender politics, to foment a large-scale social justice movement in the United States.

The fraught discussions of this doubled planetary danger—nuclear war and radioactive fallout—in the public sphere enabled an unprecedented treaty between the United States, the United Kingdom, and the Soviet Union. The LTBT eliminated nuclear testing in the atmosphere, outer space, and under water between those nuclear powers. It was the first act in a 40-year sequence of efforts to manage the global nuclear danger via diplomacy and treaties. It also stands as the first global environmental protection treaty. In his radio address to the nation announcing the treaty, President John F. Kennedy (1963) spelled out the stakes of the moment:

A war today or tomorrow, if it led to nuclear war, would not be like any war in history. A full-scale nuclear exchange, lasting less than 60 minutes, with the weapons now in ex-

istence, could wipe out more than 300 million Americans, Europeans, and Russians, as well as untold numbers elsewhere. And the survivors, as Chairman Khrushchev warned the Communist Chinese, "the survivors would envy the dead." For they would inherit a world so devastated by explosions and poison and fire that today we cannot even conceive of its horrors. So let us try to turn the world away from war. Let us make the most of this opportunity, and every opportunity, to reduce tension, to slow down the perilous nuclear arms race, and to check the world's slide toward final annihilation.

Second, this treaty can be a step towards freeing the world from the fears and dangers of radioactive fallout. Our own atmospheric tests last year were conducted under conditions which restricted such fallout to an absolute minimum. But over the years the number and the yield of weapons tested have rapidly increased and so have the radioactive hazards from such testing. Continued unrestricted testing by the nuclear powers, joined in time by other nations which may be less adept in limiting pollution, will increasingly contaminate the air that all of us must breathe.

Even then, the number of children and grandchildren with cancer in their bones, with leukemia in their blood, or with poison in their lungs might seem statistically small to some, in comparison with natural health hazards. But this is not a natural health hazard—and it is not a statistical issue. The loss of even one human life, or the malformation of even one baby—who may be born long after we are gone—should be of concern to us all. Our children and grandchildren are not merely statistics toward which we can be indifferent.

The crisis evoked here is both of the minute and also cast into untold future generations, linking the project of nuclear deterrence to multigenerational health matters in a new way. For Kennedy, the LTBT was primarily an environmental treaty. It also was a public relations project in light of the Cuban Missile Crisis and the well-publicized scientific and environmental activist campaigns against nuclear testing. But even with this highly detailed rendering of the violence of nuclear war and a scientific consensus about the cumulative danger to the human genome and global environment from radioactive fallout, the LTBT did not stop the arms race or eliminate the capacity for nuclear war. Indeed, the move to underground testing consolidated the experimental regimes in the United States and Soviet Union, allowing another 40 years of testing. While the fallout danger was largely eliminated from the USA-USSR arms race, the vast majority of nuclear weapons on planet Earth were built after the LTBT. So in this Cold War moment of existential crisis, the nuclear danger was managed rather than removed, stabilized rather than resolved, allowing the global infrastructure of nuclear war to remain firmly in place to this day. Nonetheless, the LTBT importantly made both public health and the environment national security matters. By twenty-first-century standards, the scope of the LBTB and its important role in establishing a role for treaties and international law in managing insecurity in the global environment

remains a vital achievement, one that informs every hope and ambition for an international agreement on climate change today.

Climate Crisis

The most recent projections of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC 2013, 2014) are shocking, depicting a new kind of danger that is escalating and will play out violently over the coming centuries in every ecosystem on Earth. The extraordinary achievement of the IPCC is its radical interdisciplinarity, allowing teams of scientists across a vast range of fields to integrate huge data sets and via computer simulations to project atmospheric effects out into the coming decades (Edwards 2010). The portrait of the coming century that the IPCC presents, however, asks us to seriously rethink industrial-age understandings of both progress and catastrophe and restages the scale of "collective crisis." The predicted elevation of global temperature over the coming decades, the IPCC argues, will create increasingly volatile environmental conditions: melting polar ice will lead to rising ocean levels, which will flood islands and coastal cities worldwide. It will also produce a more acidic ocean, leading to vast oceanic dead zones. Similarly, extreme weather patterns (producing regional droughts and flooding and heat waves) will challenge food production worldwide while changing habitat zones on a massive scale and enabling new diseases to emerge. Moreover, human population growth, potentially rising from seven to nine billion people by 2050, will create ever more consumers, amplifying greenhouse gases and their reverberating effects. The resulting ecological stress could exceed what ecologists calculate is the "carrying capacity" of the global biosphere, leading to widespread scarcity or even more shocking ecological destabilizations. The worst-case vision is of a future where the food chain collapses, leading to mass starvation and pushing species of all kinds toward extinction (see Kolbert 2014). In short, the industrial-age human has become a planetary-scale force leading to a future of fewer species and potentially catastrophic disruptions in the food chain if consumption patterns and carbon emissions stay on their current course.

Media depictions of climate change now offer a vision of end-times to rival that of the nuclear danger. But if the global nuclear danger is characterized by its shocking immediacy (minutes and hours), climate danger works on an opposite temporality constituting a slower violence that is treacherous precisely because it is so incremental that it is difficult in any given moment to sense a change in the environment or to connect discreet issues (such as sea level or drought or violent weather) to industrially generated greenhouse emissions. It is a cumulative- and momentum-driven process operating on so vast a scale that it raises basic questions about human perception, memory, and the terms of visualization necessary for a planetary-scale problem (Masco 2015). In light of climate change, geologists are now debating how to resequence planetary time to recognize the effects of human industry. The

professional geological societies are formally contemplating the adoption of the term "Anthropocene" to recognize people as a new agentive force with earth systems. As Steffen et al. (2011) put it,

> The advent of the Anthropocene, the time interval in which human activities now rival global geophysical processes, suggests that we need to fundamentally alter our relationship with the planet we inhabit. Many approaches could be adopted, ranging from geoengineering solutions that purposefully manipulate parts of the Earth System to becoming active stewards of our own life support system. The Anthropocene is a reminder that the Holocene, during which complex human societies have developed, has been a stable, accommodating environment and is the only state of the Earth System that we know for sure can support contemporary society. The need to achieve effective planetary stewardship is urgent. As we go further into the Anthropocene, we risk driving the Earth System into a trajectory toward more hostile states from which we cannot easily return.

The 10,000-plus years of the Holocene emerge here as a temporary atmospheric condition on planet Earth but one particularly beneficial to humans, who, living in that special air, rose to become the dominant species, inventing agriculture, writing, cars, computers, smart phones, and atomic bombs in the process. Our concept of the planetary environment is now fundamentally shifting, literally from the stable ground under our collective feet, unchangeable in its nature, to a rather fragile "life boat" in the turbulent waters of petrocapitalism.

Climate change reveals and requires a fundamentally new kind of geopolitics, one that can operate both in and above the nation-state level. Consider figure 4, an illustration from the *Lancet* documenting the proportion of carbon emissions by country (fig. 4*A*) in relation to the related health effects from climate change (fig. 4*B*; Costello et al. 2009). This chart
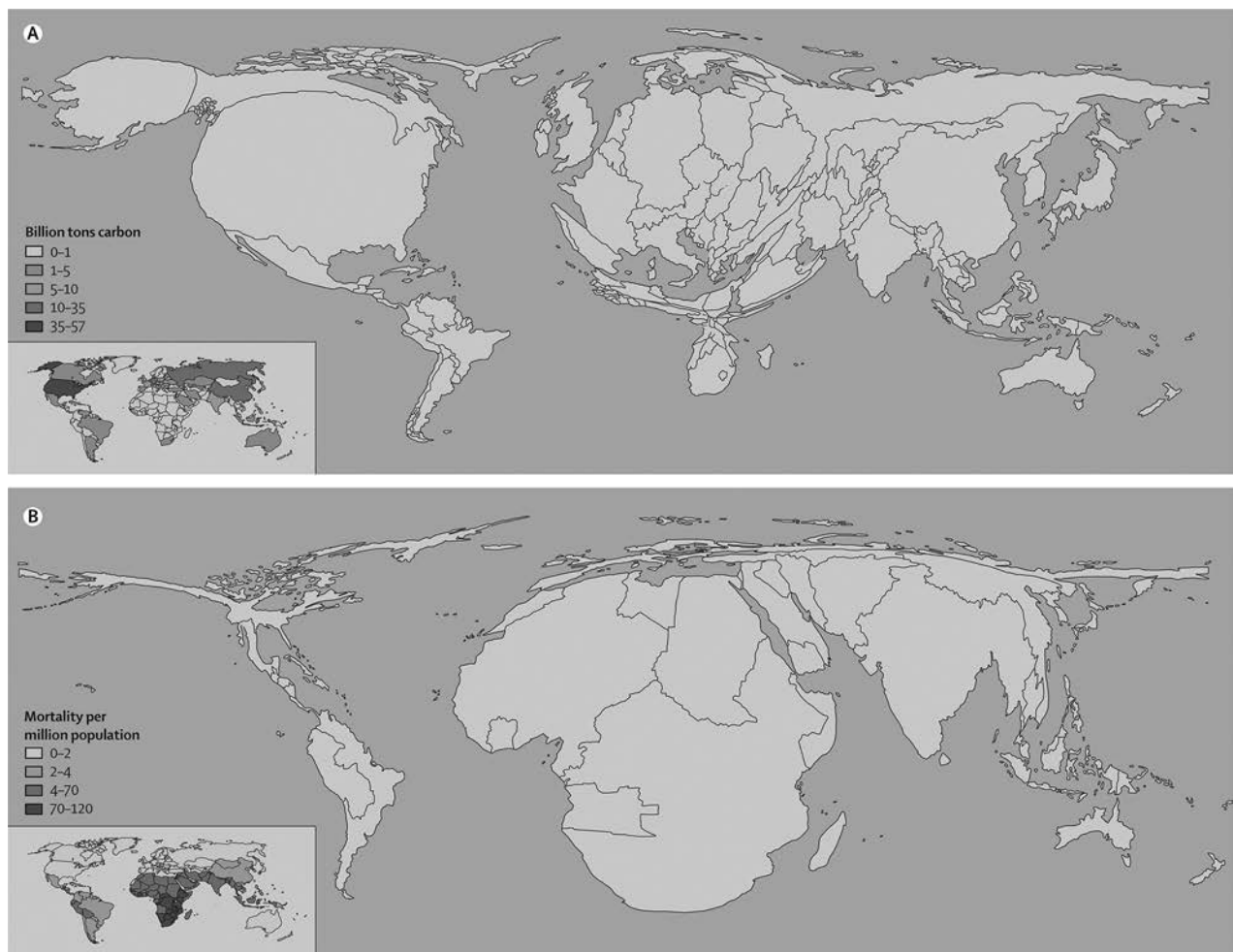

Figure 4. Location of carbon emission (*A*) in relation to proportional health consequences (*B*) of global warming (reprinted from Costello et al. 2009 with permission of Elsevier). A color version of this figure is available online.

documents an emerging relationship between the global north and global south, one played out in the conversion of carbon emissions from the north into new levels of illness in the south. This global circulation requires that one think on a planetary scale while also keeping in focus the differential effects of anthropogenic practices across nation-states and regions. While the global north was first to industrialize and thus has put in motion the current climatic changes, the race to create consumer middle classes in the global south promises to amplify these forms of violence for all organisms on Earth (see Parenti 2011).

Chakrabarty (2009) has pointed out how climate change merges human history with natural history in a new way, creating a temporality that radically undercuts long-standing logics of economic progress and development. This collapsing of human time into geological time forces us to think on unfamiliar scales—such as the planet—and to think not of populations and nation-states but species-level effects on earth systems involving atmosphere, glaciers, oceans, geology, and the biosphere. Climate change challenges our current political, economic, and industrial orders, requiring not only a reverse engineering of energy infrastructures to prevent a deepening ecological crisis but also new conceptual structures that can work on novel scales and temporalities. The built universe of things as well as the desires that organize human consumption patterns are revealed in climate models to be literally catastrophic. The petrochemical economy that has so revolutionized human society, creating the possibility for large-scale urbanization and the rise of nation-states and nuclear superpowers, has unintentionally generated a comprehensive environmental crisis, one that transforms the smallest of everyday consumer activities into a new kind of end-times.

Consider the everydayness of the metrics earth science used to document the starting shift in consumption patterns after World War II. Steffen et al. (2011:742) have graphed human population growth in relation to global GDP, the damming of rivers, water use, fertilizer consumption, urbanization, paper consumption, cars, telephones, tourism, and McDonald's restaurants and have found a shocking parallel process: starting around 1950, these metrics rise exponentially, mirroring one another in an explosive rate of growth that matches fundamental changes in earth systems, including rising carbon dioxide levels, flooding, rising temperature, reduction in fish stocks, forest loss, and species extinctions, among other factors. These metrics confirm a major inflection point beginning around 1950 across consumption patterns, atmospheric chemistry, temperature, and biodiversity loss. The everyday consumption patterns of each person on the planet, unremarkable in their singularity, have become cumulatively destructive in their species totality. This makes the basic requirements for human life (including food, transportation, heating, and clothing) fundamentally dangerous to the future stability of the climate if they remain embedded in the current petrochemical-based global economy. The virtues of modernization, globalization, and technological revolution have thus been turned upside down by climate change: rather than extending equality, security, and comfort, the petrochemical economy has become a slow moving and highly negative form of geoengineering.

The implications as well as consequences of this "great acceleration" are profound. First, it means that everyday American consumption (a global standard for middle-class living) has been a planetary force since the mid-twentieth century, indexing the greatest historical contribution to carbon emissions. Second, it makes the American middle-class consumer economy a spectacular force of violence in the world, one in which planned obsolescence, plastics, and petrochemical innovation have raised standards of living in North America at the expense of the collective environment as well as public health in the global south. Third, it makes climate crisis and nuclear crisis largely coterminous periods, raising important questions about perceptions of danger, the temporality of crisis itself, and the proper definition of "security." Today, the mid-twentieth century stands as the period in which people became an existential threat to themselves in two technologically mediated fashions: via the atomic bomb and via the cumulative force of a petrochemical-based consumer economy. These dual problems are embedded within a unique military-industrial economy in the United States and operate on different temporal scales: since 1950, there has literally been a crisis *inside* of crisis structuring American modernity, one that we are only now beginning to acknowledge in our mass media.

As a response to the oil crisis of the mid-1970s, President Jimmy Carter ordered the US national laboratories, historically devoted to national security science and the development of nuclear weapons, to convert to renewable energy research. By the end of his presidency in 1980, the US national laboratory system was spending over 50% if its funds on alternative energy research, promising Manhattan Projects across the renewable energy sector in the coming years. Carter also symbolically installed solar panels on the White House to demonstrate his commitment to finding a way out of a petrochemical-based energy economy. On arriving in the White House in 1981, President Ronald Reagan ordered the solar panels to be removed immediately and then initiated one of the largest military buildups in American history, redirecting the national laboratories to resume the nuclear arms race as their primary concern. The environment and public health were explicitly delinked from national security policy in the 1980s, allowing both unrestrained militarism and petrochemical extraction to structure American life well into the War on Terror.

Reagan was the first fully committed neoliberal, the first president to break the Cold War logic of balancing large defense budgets with welfare-state programs, the first to entrust the "market" with social engineering. He entertained the thought of winnable nuclear wars and sought ultimately to end the arms race not through disarmament but rather by installing a space-based shield against ballistic missiles. Known as the Strategic Defense Initiative, variants of this program remain active to this day, although it has not produced a reliable defense technology despite an over $200 billion investment since 1983

(Schwartz 2012). Thus, at a key structural moment in negotiating nuclear crisis and energy crisis, the United States moved from a Manhattan Project type of commitment to renewable energy research to a still fantastical quest for missile defense (one that sought to keep US nuclear weapons in place while eliminating the nuclear danger posed by Soviet arsenals). Imagine what an extra 30 years of dedicated research on renewable energy through the extensive national laboratory system might have contributed to mitigating the current climate crisis or a redirecting of military budgets to domestic infrastructures during these decades. Here, our contemporary crisis is revealed to be the outcome of explicit policies and economic priorities; not an infrastructure in collapse but a set of values and choices that have produced multigenerational negative outcomes.

This raises the question of how ideological commitments inform understandings of crisis in the United States and the way that crisis talk can work to maintain a status quo. Oreskes and Conway (2010) have examined the techniques certain industries have used to prevent action on environmental and health matters, documenting a variety of media tactics designed to confuse the public over the scientific standing of a collective problem (see also Ferrell 2016). The use of deception to defer regulation and maximize profits is often supported by more official acts as well. In 2014, the IPCC (2014) as well as the US Climate Assessment (Melillo, Richmond, and Yohe 2014) released major reports detailing a future of unprecedented ecological instability. In response, the US House of Representatives passed a bill prohibiting the Department of Defense from using any funds to respond to the wide range of security programs detailed in the reports (Koronowski 2014). What is at stake here is nothing less than the definition of "security" and the role of government in addressing the vulnerabilities, forms of violence, and uncertainties of a radically changing climate. One legacy of 70-plus years of nuclear crisis in the United States is the American tendency to believe that existential dangers can be deterred endlessly. But there are important material and temporal differences informing state-to-state confrontations mediated by nuclear weapons and the cumulative force of industrial carbon emissions across earth systems. Competing nation-states can achieve "stability" under a logic of mutually assured destruction, while global warming is a set of physical processes only gaining momentum across decades and centuries and that work on a planetary scale. The immediacy of the global nuclear crisis and the longevity of the planetary climate crisis are thus nested within one another (and have been since the mid-twentieth century), making the project of security at once one of protection, perception, and action—all terms that are in question in our current crisis in crisis moment.

Conclusion

The link between nuclear crisis and climate crisis is human industry: both of these existential dangers have been incrementally built over generations of labor in the pursuit of security. The nuclear complex is explicit in its goals, mobi-

lizing the fear of mass destruction as the basis for US security in a world of competing nation-states. A changing climate is the collective effect of human industrial activity, an accumulation of a vast set of petrochemical practices dispersed across regions that have made the global economy over time. These "crises" are thus infrastructural achievements of an American modernity, modes of endangerment that are not necessary forms but rather effects of modern military and industrial systems. Following Roitman's (2014:94) suggestion that crisis constitutes a "blind spot" that restricts narrative explanations as well as limits the kind of actions that can be taken, we could interrogate here how crisis states have become lived infrastructures, linking imaginations, affects, and institutions in a kind of total social formation. The crisis in crisis from this point of view is the radical presentism of crisis talk, the focus on stabilizing a present condition rather than engaging the multiple temporalities at stake in a world of interlocking technological, financial, military, and ecological systems. As Jean-Luc Nancy (2015:30) argues in *After Fukushima*,

> Fukushima is a powerfully exemplary event because it shows the close and brutal connections between a seismic quake, a dense population, and a nuclear installation (under inadequate management). It is also exemplary of a node of complex relationships between public power and private management of the installation, not to mention all the other chains of correlation that extend out from that starting point.

Put differently, there are no "natural" disasters any more, as the imbrication of technology, economy, and nature creates ever-emerging conditions for catastrophe, making crisis seem a permanent condition when it is in fact the effect of financial, technological, militaristic, and political processes interacting with earth systems.

Crisis talk today seeks to stabilize an institution, practice, or reality rather than interrogate the historical conditions of possibility for that endangerment to occur. In our moment, crisis blocks thought by evoking the need for an emergency response to the potential loss of a status quo, emphasizing urgency and restoration over a review of first principles and historical ontologies. In an era of complex interlocking systems of finance, technology, militarism, and ecology, unanticipated effects are inevitable and often cascading processes. In light of a post-welfare-state attitude of crisis management, one that does not protect citizens but rather seeks to restore the conditions from which crisis emerged, there is much attention today to precarity as the very condition for living. Precarity and resilience are the twin logics of a neoliberal order that abandons populations in pursuit of profit and then seeks to naturalize those abandonments as the only possible course of action (see Evans and Reid 2014). Put directly, crisis talk without the commitment to revolution becomes counterrevolutionary.

With this in mind, how can we interrogate the "blind spots" informing nuclear crisis and climate crisis today? Despite the end of the Cold War and the widespread politicization of

"weapons of mass destruction" under the terms of the War on Terror (Masco 2014), the Department of Energy (DOE) is currently planning to rebuild the US nuclear complex over the next 30 years (US Department of Energy 2013). This plan involves the first entirely new weapons designs since the 1980s, part of a strategic effort to create a nuclear arsenal and production complex that can last through the twenty-first century. These planned weapon systems will be less complicated mechanically and more robust that the Cold War designs in the current arsenal (which have been painstaking maintained part by part now for over two decades). They will also employ a new generation of weapons scientists through midcentury. These new designs will not have to be detonated, as did all prior weapons systems, before being deployed into US military arsenals thanks to the last 20 years of nuclear weapons research involving component testing, supercomputing, and simulations (see Masco 2006:43–98). The promise of the virtual weapons laboratory now points to a permanent nuclear production capacity in the United States, one that can maintain a nuclear test ban while also introducing new nuclear weapons. As the DOE's (US Department of Energy 2013:1–6) programmatic report to Congress declares,

> by 2038, a new generation of weapons designers, code developers, experimentalists, and design and production engineers must demonstrate an understanding of nuclear weapons functionality using more predictive and more precisely calibrated computer-aided design and assessment tools than are possible today. High-fidelity experimental capabilities will produce quantitative data that preclude resumption of underground nuclear testing.

This commitment to building new nuclear weapons should place the recent US wars over weapons of mass destruction—both real and imagined—in a new light.

White House calls for a nuclear-free world are now linked to a projected $1 trillion investment over the coming decades in a new US nuclear complex (Wolfsthal, Lewis, and Quint 2014), which is being designed for a deep futurity. This makes current US policy a paradoxical program of pursuing global nuclear disarmament through rebuilding a state-of-the-art US nuclear production complex and arsenal. The crisis in crisis here is the automated renewal of an infrastructure that will necessarily encourage current and future nuclear powers to pursue their own nuclear programs and undercut the collective goal of creating a world incapable of nuclear war. This program also reinvigorates nuclear fear as the coordinating logic of American geopolitics. The DOE has turned aging nuclear weapons and experts into a "crisis" requiring immediate action rather than interrogating and building a new collective security for a post–Cold War, post–War on Terror world. Alongside a new generation of nuclear experts and weapons, future nuclear crises are being built into these programs.

The governance of a warming planet has also been thoroughly politicized in the United States, a victim of national security politics (see Masco 2010) and petroindustry propa-

ganda (see Oreskes and Conway 2010). Not coincidentally, the George W. Bush administration loosened regulatory rules for domestic shale extraction in 2005 (exempting it from the Clean Air Act, the Clean Water Act, and the Safe Drinking Water Act), which, in combination with technological breakthroughs in drilling technology, opened up several large domestic shale formations for immediate exploitation. The Deepwater Horizon oil spill (2010) in the Gulf—alongside Hurricane Katrina (2005), the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear meltdown (2011), and superstorm Sandy (2012)—demonstrated the vulnerability of complex natural, technological, and social systems and the near impossibility of environmental remediation. The boom in hydraulic fracturing has allowed the United States to increase its oil production massively even as climate scientists describe in ever-greater detail the collective environmental costs of such extraction for ice caps, atmospheric chemistry, climate, and public health. In its "Saudi America: The Economics of Shale Oil" article, the *Economist* (2014) reveals that the United States has moved from producing 600,000 barrels of oil a day in 2008 to 3.5 million a day in 2014 because of shale extractions. The *Economist* focuses on the shifting geopolitics of renewed American oil power but does not mention the consequences for the global environment of abundant, inexpensive oil. If current patterns hold, the United States will become the world's leading oil producer in 2020—the number one petrostate—at precisely the moment when the damage of such an achievement has been scientifically documented across the earth sciences.

Since 2005, a vast new infrastructure of wells, pipes, and ponds as well as truck and train lines carrying oil and natural gas has been built to exploit shale formations from Texas to North Dakota to Pennsylvania. In addition to greenhouse gas emissions, these infrastructures require vast amounts of water, create waste ponds, and also leak, raising important questions about the environmental safety of these areas over the projected life of each well. New York State recently banned hydraulic fracturing because of the long list of unknown effects on water, air, and public health (New York Department of Public Health 2014), while in Texas and North Dakota there are boom and bust towns devoted entirely to the enterprise and vast landscapes now covered with industrial infrastructures that produce both energy and radically uncertain environmental futures.

The deregulation of hydraulic fracturing has made petrochemical energy inexpensive and abundant by historical standards at precisely the moment when it would be most socially and environmentally sound to make it ever more expensive. If the neoliberal logics of market determinism were good at engineering a sustainable collective future, the United States would not be embracing shale with such unrestrained enthusiasm. The ever-shorter profit cycle of corporate review, in other words, is diametrically opposed to the long-term investments in renewable energy, installing the perfect terms for ongoing environmental and health crises for as far into the future as anyone can imagine. Thus, one aspect of the crisis in crisis today is a notion of "profit" that has been so narrowly defined that a loss of the

collective environment is easier to imagine than a shift in the nature of petrocapitalism.

Instead of reenergizing a collective imaginary that can engage alternative modes of living and apply resources and agency to collective problems, governance today recommitments to exactly those existentially dangerous projects that should be formally disavowed for the public good: nuclear weapons and oil. This creates a public feeling of "permanent crisis" as well as increasing vulnerabilities across a range of domestic and global issues. One perverse effect of this twenty-first-century circuit is that it encourages social theorists to focus narrowly on the endless modes of precarity that are emerging rather than articulating the alternative futures that are needed, reinforcing a generational gestalt of political gridlock and decline. It is vitally important to understand how cumulative and asymmetrically distributed industrial toxins (from carbon to plastic to nuclear materials) affect communities and individual bodies and to articulate the ways that planetary-scale flows are now remaking local conditions. The age of neoliberal calculation is one that naturalizes the abandonment of populations that are not immediately useful to the quarterly bottom line and renders invisible those many others affected remotely by financial, military, or industrial policies (see Lorey 2015). It is also important to interrogate the affective recruitments to existential crisis and the political work such recruitments do in supporting existing political structures (Masco 2014). However, it is equally important to recover the capacity to generate positive futurities—what, following Berlant (2011), we might call the not yet cruel optimisms—that can affectively charge collective action, particularly on those issues (e.g., nuclear danger and climate danger) that have been constructed by generations of human agency and thus are immediately available to reform.

At the end of World War II, the United States embraced a new kind of technological utopianism, believing that science would solve the problems of health, welfare, and security. Designing the future for both security and prosperity was the role of the state, allowing significant investments in education, welfare-state systems, and the establishment of a variety of environmental protection laws. Indeed, this mid-twentieth-century period of "crisis" is the moment when many of the key infrastructures—and generational investments in education and environmental protections—were established that inform our world today. Thus, the most dangerous moment in American history was, from this point of view, also one of the most productive, creating important commitments to civil rights, education, and the environment while establishing the precedents for international law and treaties to manage existential dangers.

Since the 1980s neoliberal turn in the United States, militarism has remained the project of the state, but the collective future has been assigned to the marketplace, which elevates short-term profitability above all other concerns. What happened to the once vibrant social debate about alternative futures and the commitment to making long-term investments in improving the terms of collective life? The force of global capital has absorbed the power of crisis talk to shock, and thus mobilize, requiring a different call to action. The crisis in crisis today is the inability to both witness the accumulating damage of this system and imagine another politics. A fundamental challenge in our moment is that the key existential dangers of today—nuclear weapons and climate change—operate on different scales, creating friction between the global and the planetary while demanding different kinds of governance (Masco 2015). Because we do not yet have planetary-scale institutions that can govern these collective problems, it is easy to focus on the emerging and amplifying forms of precarity. Instead of a more aggressive media space devoted to detailing the current and projected crises, then, perhaps what our specific historical moment requires is an explicit commitment—a critical theory commitment—to generating the nonutopian but nonetheless positive futurities that can reactivate the world-making powers of society.

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Too Much Democracy in All the Wrong Places
Toward a Grammar of Participation

by Christopher M. Kelty

Participation is a concept and practice that governs many aspects of new media and new publics. There are a wide range of attempts to create more of it and a surprising lack of theorization. In this paper I attempt to present a "grammar" of participation by looking at three cases where participation has been central in the contemporary moment of new, social media and the Internet as well as in the past, stretching back to the 1930s: citizen participation in public administration, workplace participation, and participatory international development. Across these three cases I demonstrate that the grammar of participation shifts from a language of normative enthusiasm to one of critiques of co-optation and bureaucratization and back again. I suggest that this perpetually aspirational logic results in the problem of "too much democracy in all the wrong places."

Participation troubles us. Over roughly the last decade, the trouble has been particularly tied to the spread of the Internet: from the turn of the millennium enthusiasm for remix culture and Web 2.0 to the rise of social media, when *Time* magazine enthusiastically named "You" the Person of the Year in 2005; from the eruption of "Revolution 2.0" across North Africa, when Twitter and Facebook triumphantly took up the task of liberating the world, to the revelations of Edward Snowden, when "we" suddenly realized just how much we participate without ever agreeing to. From free and open source software to crowdsourcing to Wikipedia, we have caught a glimpse of a bright, open, new world of voluntary, rhizomatic, mutual aid; from WikiLeaks to the NSA to the "sharing economy," we have seen behind the curtain of surveillance and extraction and experienced involuntary participation at shocking scales.

Reckoning with participation, good and bad, is certainly bound up with the new media and communication technologies that saturate our lives: servers, clouds, mobile phones, tablets, cameras, passwords, and satellites that seem to waver constantly between providing personal freedom, expressiveness, and mobility and becoming insidious devices of surveillance and paranoia. Participation, as an object or concept, is usually an afterthought to this saturation: mobile devices and the Internet "enable" participation, whether that means unleashing the "cognitive surplus" to do good work (Shirky 2010) or causing us to be "alone together" (Turkle 2011) as a result of our device dependence or awakening some new "Goliath"

of data surveillance and privacy violation (Schneier 2015). In other cases, unwitting, involuntary participation by people is said to be an inevitable result of technological determinism, market fundamentalism, or the natural psychology of human behavior (Carr 2014; Ghonim 2012; Gladwell 2010; Howe 2008; Morozov 2013; Shirky 2008; Tapscott and Williams 2008). But the question of whether participation is enabled, caused, prevented, or promoted by technology is not so much a red herring as it is neither fish nor fowl—we do not really know what participation is that it could be caused or cured by technological development. On one day, participation is the solution to our most practical concerns or even an ethical calling; on the next day it is a containment strategy designed to keep us chillingly in place or to extract data and money from us at every turn.

Indeed, even the modest Wenner-Gren workshop in Portugal for which this paper was prepared exemplified this: two people forthrightly reported that they refused to own a mobile phone—to the awed gasps of the many others who were busy surreptitiously checking their own devices—because of surveillance concerns. But those checking their devices did so only under the table because of the repeated injunction of the Wenner-Gren staff to leave them turned off so as to enforce an ethic of scholarly attentiveness. Some refused to participate, others could not stop themselves from doing so; meanwhile our benefactors invoked ethics to promote maximum participation for our own good.

This mundane experience at our workshop (at the risk of making too much of it) exemplifies the unusual "grammar" of participation—sometimes it is posed as a route to liberation, sometimes as a route to co-optation, sometimes as a practical problem, and sometimes as an ethical injunction. Hanna Pitkin, in her discussion of the dispute between Socrates and Thrasymchus over the concept of justice in Plato's *Republic*,

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points out a similar problem of grammar (Pitkin 1972). Thrasymychus argues that justice is whatever the ruling elite says it is—a realist, if cynical, view. Socrates counters with a normative claim about justice that neither contradicts nor extends Thrasymychus's claim but poses the problem of justice differently—grammatically differently—as "everyone having and doing what is appropriate to him" (Pitkin 1972:170). In one case, the grammar articulates justice as what people have done in the name of justice; in the other, the grammar articulates justice as what we should be trying to achieve. These are not incompatible, but there is something like a grammatical difference—the kind of thing that Wittgenstein pegged to "forms of life." According to Pitkin's reading, the difference concerns a "tension between purpose and institutionalization" that points to the way certain terms can function both as normative guides to practice and as indexes of certain regular forms of action and reaction in social life. What justice is, therefore, might be both a normative guide and a set of expectations or experiences of what is called justice—very much depending on the speaker, the context, and the moment in history.

This kind of "grammatical" difference also attends participation—and not only talk about participation but the doing of participation as well. It is a difference that I demonstrate in three cases of participation present and past: in the workplace, in public administration, and in international development. In all three places it is possible to see how the grammar of participation works: the normative enthusiasm for it, the anxiety about co-optation, and an array of other "grammatical" features that are used to make sense of participation. The past cases demonstrate that there is no simple way in which new media or technology enable or cause participation in these domains, and technological determinism aside, they demonstrate that the participation we have had over the previous decade is not all that different from what we have had in the past. If anything, there is continuity between these past cases and contemporary "new media and new publics" that itself structures the grammatical case of participation today. Participation possesses a grammar we have yet to understand, and until we have a better understanding of that grammar, we will continue to produce "too much democracy in all the wrong places."

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Participation is both absent from scholarly literature and at the same time surprisingly abundant.[1] After the term "par-

ticipatory democracy" was invented in 1962 by Tom Hayden and colleagues in the *Port Huron Statement*, there was a flurry of efforts to rethink participation, chief among them Pateman's classic *Participation and Democratic Theory* (Bachrach and Aryeh Botwinick 1992; Mansbridge 1980; Pateman 1976). Much of this enthusiasm was tempered by the conservative return to power in the United States and Britain in the 1980s, which entailed a number of restrictions on what were perceived to be institutions of participatory governance (expanded housing, welfare or antipoverty programs, as well as restrictions on suffrage and political expression). Subsequently, any political theory of participation was either assimilated or submerged beneath more assertively discursive ones: "deliberative democracy," "critical-rational" discourse and the formation of political opinions in the public sphere, and "language ideologies," to name a few. Participation is most commonly opposed to representation (as in participatory or direct vs. representative democracy) and often reduced to a debate about scale: participation (direct democracy) is accused of being suitable only at a small scale (face-to-face), on the model of Athenian democracy. Representative government, by contrast, is pitched as the only possible technical solution to the size and complexity of modern society. When invoked in political theory, participation generally refers either to the act of citizens electing representatives (as in "voter participation") or as the act of speaking freely and expressing opinions—participation in the public sphere (Manin 1997; Urbinati 2006).[2] For many democratic theorists, participation is discussed only in the critical voice: as a problem to be on guard against. Excess participation can lead to the tyranny of the majority, while the demand for "direct" democracy is both impossible (on account of scale and inclusivity) and more dangerous than representative government—a tradition Carole Pateman referred to as "elite democracy" (Pateman 1976; see also Urbinati 2014). More recently, with the vogue of "new materialism," a different approach to participation has zeroed in on the role of things

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1. Participation entails or networks a string of related concepts: democratization, engagement, collaboration, cooperation, or involvement. The terminology has obvious if subtle differences and relations. Democratization is almost exclusively the province of political science (indeed, an entire journal bears that name, but see esp. Collier and Levitsky 1997). On cooperation, e.g., see Benkler (2011) for a biosocial view or Sennett (2012) for a *homo faber*-esque one. Collaboration suggests a relation of preexisting equality that participation does not assume; and terms such as "engagement" and "involvement" are often watered-down

synonyms for participation that sometimes mean only consultation or informing, sometimes more. "Participation" is almost always the more common and encompassing term. Canonical political theory includes Bachrach and Aryeh Botwinick (1992), Fung and Wright (2003), Pateman (1976), as well as related work on representation (Pitkin 2004; Urbinati 2006) and deliberative democracy (Dryzek 2002; Elster 1998; Mutz 2006). Most scholarship on participation, however, is defined in very domain- or discipline-specific ways, as in the case of recent work by, e.g., media studies (Carpentier 2011), art and art history (Bishop 2012), genetics and medicine (Prainsack 2011), environmental planning (Beierle and Cayford 2002), development (Cooke and Kothari 2001; Cornwall 2011), user-generated innovations (von Hippel 2005), fan cultures and youth media (Jenkins 1992; Jenkins et al. 2007, 2016), collaborative governance (Ansell and Gash 2007), architecture (Cupers 2013; Jones, Petrescu, and Till 2013), or participatory budgeting (Wampler 2012).

2. See especially the debates about the bourgeois versus proletarian public sphere or the gendering of the public sphere (Calhoun 1992; Cody 2011; Fraser 1990; Negt and Kluge 1993).

(Barry 2001; Bennett 2010; Hawkins 2011; Hinchliffe et al. 2007), directing our attention to how infrastructures and material practices encode or transmit political practices. As Marres and Lezaun (2011) point out, when political theory fails to consider objects, things, and concrete material arrangements as part of the political and restricts it instead only to the discursive (deliberation) or to the "will" (elections and delegations), then certain forms of action are rendered subpolitical—hence, the need constantly to assert that "technology is political" in science and technology studies, for instance, or the discovery by Bennett and others of the messy entanglement of politics with the things of this world. Absent these approaches, there is little theoretical attention to participation.

However, participation is also surprisingly abundant in the scholarly literature. But it is present primarily in the literature of what might be called the "minor disciplines"—not mainstream or elite disciplines, such as anthropology, political theory, economics, or philosophy, but rather applied anthropology, development studies, public administration, "action research," or organizational behavior. The bulk of such work spans the period from 1930 to the present, and I will turn to some of it in the stories that follow.[3] What this reveals is that participation is a kind of "midlevel" concept that mediates between high and low, between theory and practice, between the real and the ideal. This is entirely appropriate, given the very long, metaphysically rich history of the concept in its ancient Greek form as *methexis*. The historical usage of the concept was primarily confined to the work of philosophers and theologians up until roughly the age of Rousseau, when the question of general and particular wills became not just a theological or ethical one but a newly pressing procedural and practical one in the design of institutions and the organization of collectives. But the works of Rousseau, de Tocqueville, J. S. Mill, and others central to the liberal tradition of democratic political theory do not discuss things in terms of participation but in terms of democracy, representation, the general will, and liberty. Meanwhile, the practical problem of implementing participation has been the subject of a much less royal tradition of thought—starting perhaps with the early socialist engineers such as Fourier and Saint-Simon (Tresch 2012) and even more concretely in a case such as the Rochdale Pioneers of 1844, who invented such practical techniques of participation as the workers' cooperative and the dividend (Cole 1944). As a middling concept, participation has traveled through the turmoil of everything from Lincolnian democracy (of, by, and for the people) to the expansion of democracy into labor under the label of "industrial democracy" to the embrace of participation as a critique of scientific management in the 1950s and 1960s

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3. The first is Philip Selznick's book *TVA and the Grass Roots*, about the Tennessee Valley Authority, which exemplifies the grammar of participation clearly by arguing that the purposive language of participation and "democracy on the march" was actually an organizational process of co-opting the farmers, extension workers, and local elites in the valley to the Authority's projects and goals (Selznick 1949).

to the invention of the concept of "participatory democracy" in 1962 to the spread of "community development" around the world to the participatory art movements and "relational aesthetics" of the 1990s to fan fiction and user innovation today.

Participation in the Present Tense

Consider, for instance, Open Government Data (OGD; Goldstein 2013; Lathrop 2010; Noveck 2015; Schrock 2016; Tkacz 2012). At the outset of Obama's presidency, ideas of openness and transparency in government combined with entrepreneurial enthusiasm from Silicon Valley to usher in a strangely familiar dream: that citizens would finally be empowered to participate in, and ultimately improve, the administration of government.

> Whether streamlining government service delivery or resolving complex global issues, governments are either actively seeking—or can no longer resist—broader participation from citizens and a diverse array of other stakeholders. Just as the modern multinational corporation sources ideas, parts, and materials from a vast external network of customers, researchers, and suppliers, governments must hone their capacity to integrate skills and knowledge from multiple participants to meet expectations for a more responsive, resourceful, efficient, and accountable form of governance. (Lathrop 2010:xv–xvi)

The quotation is from a book published by the O'Reilly Press, which is best known as a prolific publisher of software and hardware handbooks—more likely to produce a "Recipes in Java for Software Engineers" than a book on public administration (Lathrop 2010). And indeed, the book is chockablock with the promise of applying the perceived success of social media, Web 2.0, crowdsourcing, user-generated content, and so forth, to the process of administration. By making government data open, it argued, government could become a "platform"—like an operating system or a technical "stack" on which to program new solutions and new services. With chapters such as "A Peace Corps for Programmers," "Government as a Platform," and "Engineering Good Government," the movement wears its technophilia proudly on its sleeve. It has direct antecedents in the Silicon Valley embrace of open source and open data and sees government administration as something suffering from an old mentality of hierarchy, bureaucratic complexity, and overengineered, inflexible design. At the end of the book, reprinted as Appendix A, is President Obama's 2009 memo "Transparency and Government," succinctly laying out the demands that animate this ostensibly new movement: "Government should be transparent; Government should be participatory; Government should be collaborative." For many adherents, the project seems genuinely new and exciting because of the (mundane) role of new technologies, such as citizens using cell-phone cameras to document and report infrastructure needs such as unfilled potholes in the road. It is also widely expressed in the creation of "civic hackers" and

"civic hackathons" and in organizations such as Code for America (Goldstein 2013). Much of its enthusiasm is proleptic: looking forward to a world where citizens produce information and knowledge for governance (of the people, by the people, for the people) both consciously, as newly empowered citizen data scientists, and unconsciously, as their devices leave trails of data that, so far, only marketers and the NSA has had access to but that virtuous citizens will no doubt use wisely and justly. Participation is thus both solution and destiny in these projects—even if it fails, and sometimes especially if it fails— because the participation of the people is often presented as an autochthonous force that current bureaucratic and institutional designs work to suppress, and by making government "simpler" (Sunstein 2013) or more transparent or more open, this burbling force from below will be unleashed to do good in the world.

* * *

Participation is also hot at work these days and especially at work in the high tech industry. Whether on Google and Apple's campuses or those of hundreds of start-ups, the techniques associated with openness, collaboration, and participation are almost uniformly promoted as a domain of liberty and autonomy for employees. Open source and related styles of managing innovation (open innovation, user-led innovation) depend on a logic of local expertise (most frequently styled as a bottom-up "bazaar" style of engineering or creativity) vested in the workers and fundamentally opposed to "top-down, hierarchical" design and management. "Holocracy," for instance, is "a new way of running an organization that removes power from a management hierarchy and distributes it across clear roles, which can then be executed autonomously, without a micromanaging boss."[4] "Participatory design" that includes the client in the design process is also a common variant. Open source methodologies promote a style of autonomous task choice (choose to work on the projects that most interest you) but also a promise, and in some cases the reality, of being directly involved in goal setting and the direction of a project or firm—to be able to more clearly exercise voice and to influence the direction of work. In many cases, such participation is said to lead to the responsive, evolutionary development of technologies, services, or products. People come together according to individual skills and desires and through the magic of participation and collaboration organize into collectives that can build complex, expertise-driven technologies pieced together by people who voluntarily choose to do so (even if they are now more often than not paid to do so)—the Linux operating system being a paradigm case. In the process, individuals learn and develop new skills, becoming better experts and thereby better participants.

Development methodologies such as "Agile development" famously promote "Individuals and interactions over Processes and tools; Working software over Comprehensive documentation; Customer collaboration over Contract negotiation; Responding to change over Following a plan."[5] In an Agile project, it is the team that succeeds or fails and is the object of management and reward; participation is essential, but individuals are not rewarded (or punished) unless the team succeeds—everyone has a say, and team members are expected to switch roles, "self-organize," and adapt to changing needs or circumstances autonomously (i.e., without executive direction from managers). One of the darlings of Silicon Valley venture capitalists in 2015–2016 has been the start-up Slack, which provides a new suite of tools to enable such horizontal team-based work. Darker visions almost unanimously point to Amazon Mechanical Turk (AMT) as the new model for exploitation through (very low paid) participation, but even here autonomous task choice, flexible working hours, and a certain kind of educative benefit—knowing how to work the AMT system—accrue. AMT has since been eclipsed by the rise of the so-called sharing economy—Uber, Lyft, AirBnB, and a hundred apps to redistribute labor to the underemployed. Such examples are not "participatory" but they carry the label of "sharing" and exemplify the apparent virtues of participating in the economy—if not quite the workplace per se. As such, they are frequently critiqued for co-opting the power of participation as much as they are discussed as a mode of liberation from hierarchy and control—"think outside the boss."[6]

* * *

International development today also is saturated with opportunities for novel forms of participation. For instance, consider the apparently failed "One Laptop per Child" (OLPC) project, which, aside from gifting laptops to children around the world in order to connect them, is built on principles of software programming and education that argue that creativity and knowledge emerge from participatory play and exploration and so might either enhance education or somehow autonomously educate a new generation of citizens in Africa, India, or Latin America. The tradition of Seymour Papert's Logo programming language (based among other things on the educational psychology of Piaget and Vygotsky, with nods to Paolo Freire and Ivan Illich) was strong in the design of the OLPC's Sugar operating system and is meant to scaffold learning about concepts and relations by drawing users into the practice of programming and potentially the guts of the very software running on those laptops. OLPC wanted to produce

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4. http://www.holacracy.org/how-it-works/.

5. See http://www.agilemanifesto.org/.

6. This is the tag line from a series of conferences by the Sustainable Economies Law Center (see http://www.theselc.org/totb4). The "platform cooperativism" project of Nate Schneider and Trebor Scholz also exemplifies this gestalt; see, e.g., http://platformcoop.net/ (accessed April 13, 2016).

creative experts in developing nations not through formal education but through directly enabled participation—a kind of bottom-up autodidactism using technology as midwife or scaffold. Despite grand plans, OLPC has become just another large aid organization with poor evidence of success and accusations of corruption, but the dream of solving the problems of development through technology has not disappeared.

Today, it is arguably M-Pesa, the massive "mobile-to-mobile" money transfer system owned by Vodafone and used primarily in West Africa, that garners the lion's share of attention and claims of "bottom-up" community-based innovation and problem solving (Maurer 2012). Similar initiatives have been even more focused on aspects of participatory development, such as Kiva.org, which allows donors in the global north to give microloans in the global south. Using a Kickstarter-like system, intermediaries recruit poor people to tell a story about what they would do with $25, and then a user of the website can select an appropriate story, send the money via the website, and track the success of the project and see both the return on the money and the increased participation of people in the economy. Kiva channels a sense of autonomous task choice (recipients define the work they want to do and the money they need to do it) into a system that connects them to lenders directly—and lenders get to benefit from the direct experience of participating in development rather than seeing their money disappear into the development machines (Jhaveri 2012; Karim 2011; Moodie 2013). At the opposite end of the spectrum is something like GiveDirectly.org, which participates in what Ferguson calls the "new politics of distribution" by organizing cash transfers to the very poor (Ferguson 2015). Such an approach returns the donor to the status of mere source of money (not a participant in the lives of the poor), but the organization nonetheless relies on new technologies, crowdsourcing, GPS and satellite imagery, and local networks of volunteers to "target, audit, transfer and monitor" the very poor who will receive the money. At stake is a clear attempt to deal with problems of corruption, bribery, and gaming that seem to inevitably emerge in the context of development aid—but also a sense that identifying the "worthy poor" has become easier than ever through widespread participation using new technologies of tracking and surveillance. Participation is at once a liberating experience for those in poverty and a tool of informatic domination through monitoring

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All three of the above examples exemplify aspects of the grammar of participation: it is both problem and solution; it can emphasize a sense of autonomy and equality among a citizenry or an individual sense of duty and virtue in doing one's part; it can be a way of challenging authority and the reign of expertise as power by emphasizing bottom-up instead of top-down knowledge and planning; or it can be about participating in expert goal setting or direction. It is about becoming a better person—more skilled and knowledgeable as a result of participating, possessed of either civic virtue or economic independence. It is also about making organizations better through the use of local participating communities, which can also be seen as the co-optation of communities into projects not their own. It is a solution to the size and complexity of modern society through dynamics of self-organization or evolutionary interaction—but also something small scale, face-to-face, and "direct." It is apparently about inclusion—in the economy, in development, at work; it is about being involved in one's own governance. Perhaps not quite as obviously, it is also about experiencing the collective—about seeing evidence that it works through the production of stories and metrics of participation, about the experience of seeing participation from above (objectively or via surveillance) and from below (subjectively as a team, a community, a collective). It is the feeling of "making the world better" through voluntary and sometimes involuntary participation.

Participation is almost always a normative good—only ruthless dictators and Bartleby are truly and openly opposed to it. But it is also aspirational because many things can go wrong, leading to phony participation or to the co-optation of participants in the goals and plans of others. Involuntary participation is not true participation (so extraction of data is worse than freely given data, ceteris paribus); voluntary participation without control can also be phony (freely given data or labor are only as valuable as the individual's ultimate control of the resources produced thereby).

Participation in the Past Tense

The three cases introduced above have direct antecedents, often not recognized by the current proponents of new media-enriched participatoriness. There are differences—and chief among them is the question of the role of new media and communication technologies—but there are also some surprising continuities suggesting that the grammar of participation has a consistent core.

The most widely cited paper having to do directly with participation—often reprinted in readers and routinely referenced across many domains—is Sherry Arnstein's (1969) "A Ladder of Citizen Participation." The ladder is reprinted yet again as figure 1.

When she wrote this piece, Arnstein was an advisor to H. Ralph Taylor in the newly created Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), charged with implementing core aspects of the War on Poverty, in particular the Model Cities program. Arnstein's article complained, "The heated controversy over 'citizen participation,' 'citizen control,' and 'maximum feasible participation' has been waged largely in terms of exacerbated rhetoric and misleading euphemisms" (Arnstein 1969:216). The "heated controversy" in this context referred to a set of programs related to urban renewal and antipoverty in which citizen participation had been legally mandated. The Economic Opportunity Act of 1964, the locus of much of this activity, required "maximum feasible partici-
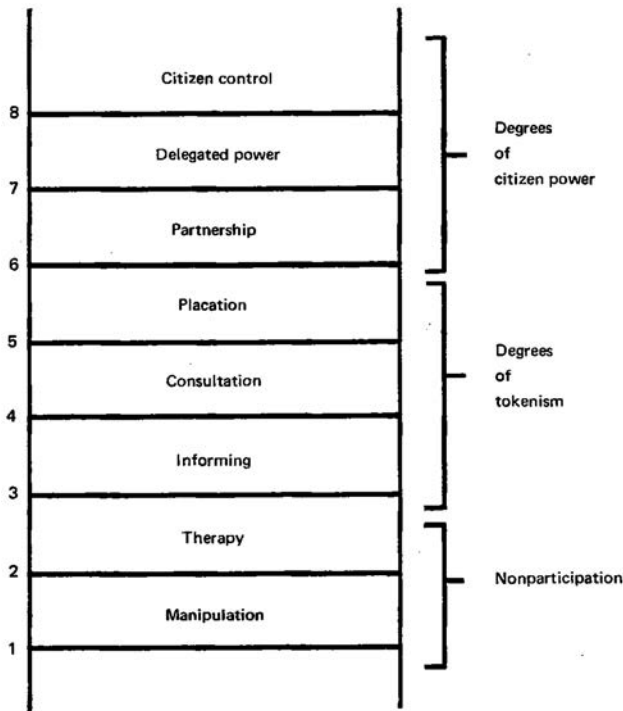
Figure 1. "A Ladder of Citizen Participation." Reprinted from Arnstein (1969, fig. 2).

pation" (Sec. 202, Public Law 8-452, 8-20-1964) in economic opportunity programs. Around the country, hundreds of "City Demonstration Agencies" applied for funds, created planning documents, and attempted to engage local citizens in "maximum feasible participation"—some successfully, some disastrously. Daniel Moynihan published a widely read analysis of the War on Poverty called *Maximum Feasible Misunderstanding*, and the Model Cities Program, along with the Office of Economic Opportunity, did not survive the transition from the Johnson to the Nixon administration. By the mid 1970s, Model Cities was judged a failure, and a substantial part of that failure was linked to the demand for and failure of citizen participation (Burke 1970; Haar 1975; Moynihan 1969; Weber and Wallace 2012).

Citizen participation (also sometimes called "community involvement" or "community development" at the time) had many functions: educating new leaders (civic virtue); improving administrative governance (involvement by residents in agenda setting); granting better local control over design of housing, infrastructure, and government-funded or provisioned services; and providing citizens access to decision making about the allocation of funds or in some cases the design and execution of the projects. These projects did not transform the structure or operation of national or local government by extending the franchise (which was occurring at the same time in the Voting Rights Act) or changing the legal structure of the administrative state in some permanent way, but they did mandate participation without defining it. Participation had been "legalized" where before it had been a vague normative

demand. In our grammatical terms, it had switched suddenly from a language of purpose to one of institutionalization.

In the Model Cities programs, however, this institutionalization was not pursued as part of the legislative process of deliberation and voting but as part of the administration of the government's practical affairs. This is the real origin of the contemporary Open Government movement—even if they are only just (re)discovering it. It is a case where participation came to mean something technocratic and bureaucratic—ironically in the service of fighting the injustices of technocracy and bureaucracy. In the interim, in the field of public administration, there have been several waves of innovation, study, and legislation. Participation has been central to the work of the Environmental Protection Agency, for instance; it has been established as a right within the arcane rulemaking systems of government agencies; and it has been enshrined in legislation, including the Paperwork Reduction Act, the Sunlight Act, and the various Freedom of Information acts and public access laws that promote transparency in government information (now called data).

Arnstein's article appears to many people to be the closest thing to a "theory" of participation in the literature. But it is less theory than a distillation of a critique, and in particular a critique of the implementation of participation. The fact that "maximum feasible participation" was mandated statutorily in the law was a recognition that the long-standing tradition of planning and administration—especially in the domains of urban housing and poverty—were steeped in theories of scientific management and efficiency and were failing to deliver in programs such as Urban Renewal. The racial and class politics of Urban Renewal from the Housing Act of 1949 to the 1960s included massive relocation, destruction of homes, a net loss of housing stock, and targeted redevelopment designed to move some people out (the poor, blacks, migrants) and others in. Such programs failed, according to many people at the time, because they lacked participation from the affected citizens and instead concentrated it in city halls, state governments, and federal agencies. The relative consensus on the need for participation was at the heart of the various Great Society programs and explicit in the case of Model Cities.

But Arnstein's article is not a call for more participation: it is a critique of the failed implementation of "maximum feasible participation." Mandating participation created a possible transfer of resources from city halls around the country to neighborhood groups aiming to be recognized as the locus of "participation." "Technical Assistance Bulletins"—distributed by HUD to local community organizations seeking to officially participate in the process of planning or rebuilding their "Model Cities"—attempted to provide some information on what effective participation should look like: it should entail an organizational structure; it should be representative of the neighborhood or community; it should give participants all necessary information, technical assistance, and even funding; and it should employ residents of the neighborhood. Technical assistance here, however, does not mean technology (save for the mimeograph and telephone, perhaps) but rather assistance in

creating organizations, managing them, understanding federal law and administrative procedure, and knowledge about housing, planning, development, and urban infrastructure.

Today, OGD initiatives around the country do not mandate participation but rather seek to make data available to a corps of participants presumed to be waiting for it. Such projects implement participation in a much weaker sense than the Economic Opportunity Act did by taking an "open it and they will come" approach that involves no technical assistance, no funds, and no rewards other than the pride of being a citizen coder or citizen user of data. In this sense, OGD reverts to a grammar of participation that emphasizes the normative and the purposive—not the (critique of the) institutions. As a result, OGD does not so much suffer from the hubris of thinking that technology can save everything as it does the hubris of assuming no one has ever tried to implement participation before.

Arnstein's critique—the top of her ladder—implied direct, even paid, involvement in the operation of the agencies of government; it imagined the participation of organized collectives—neighborhoods, communities, racial and ethnic groups—in the operation of administration. The OGD movement also advocates direct involvement in administration, but only by individuals and their devices, and without any sense of entitlement or responsibility—it is a kind of vigilante administration, normatively propped up by the appeal of "citizen participation."

It would be impossible to imagine the Model Cities program today: urban development has been decentralized and subjected to all manner of "new public management" theories and schemes in the interim, resulting in a network of public and private actors routinely, often haphazardly, involved in urban development. What was once seen as a shift of power has now become a problem of mixed economic and administrative authority. Thus, OGD, in a somewhat nostalgic way, assumes the existence of a noneconomic type of citizen—unpaid, virtuous, and abundant—who is not included in the operation of government. The reality, however, is that the operation of government today includes an array of citizens operating as economic actors in order to carry out certain forms of administration—and often paid to do so, whether as employees of nonprofits and corporations or recipients of loans, loan guarantees, grants, or other government funds. What OGD imagines is a world where individuals who are not part of any collective (whether community organization or corporation) autonomously (and without remuneration) carry out the tasks of administration. What Arnstein would have diagnosed as successful participation ("citizen control," "delegated power") we might see today as a version of neoliberal "responsibilization" that is not so much insidious as it is superfluous to the actual success of a very different form of "direct citizen participation" that may no longer easily go by that name.

* * *

A very different kind of diagram was published about a decade later in *Administrative Science Quarterly*, one that rep-

resented close to three decades of research into the problem of participation at work. Whereas Arnstein's diagram was a one-dimensional ladder, this one represents multiple dimensions (fig. 2). Peter Dachler and Bernhard Wilpert outlined their theory in an article titled "Conceptual Dimensions and Boundaries of Participation in Organizations: A Critical Evaluation" (Dachler and Wilpert 1978). It is a "complex systems" analysis of participation at a theoretically enthusiastic moment in organizational studies when cybernetics, evolutionary theory, and systems theory were finding their way into the study of organizations. They outline four dimensions—theories and values, properties and structures, context, and outcomes—that create a particular arrangement or "potential" for participation in any given case. The point of this diagram, Dachler and Wilpert hope, will be to give empirical researchers a standard within which they can compare across the multiple cases studies and examples from the vast literature analyzing participation at work. That literature, they claimed, had made little progress, could find no concrete empirical proof of success, and tended to emphasize a range of different values and goals without ever explicitly stating them. It too is critical, but it is also one of a series of attempts to be methodical and constructive about the meaning of participation.

Past research in participation in the workplace descends primarily from a key set of experiments conducted at the Harwood Manufacturing Plant in the mid 1940s (Burnes 2007; Coch and French 1948; Lewin 1946). There are important antecedents—the Hawthorne experiments of Mayo and Roethlisberger and the work of Mary Parker Follett, for example (Follett 1940; Mayo 1933; Roethlisberger and Mayo 1941), but these experiments, conducted by a team of social psychologists in the orbit of Kurt Lewin (Lezaun 2011; Lezaun and Calvillo 2014), set the stage for two decades of discourse about "participative management." The key experiments involved workers—in this case, women working in a pajama factory—in the identification of problems and the design of their own jobs. Factory piecework provided the opportunity to test which groups (those who participated vs. those who did not) produced more work after a change in a job. The experiments have been widely discussed, critiqued, and repeated in many different conditions. For some the results became gospel—scholars such as Douglas MacGregor, Rensis Likert, Chris Argyris, and the owner of the Harwood Manufacturing plant (who was also a student of Kurt Lewin's), Alfred Marrow. These thinkers created a management discourse—a fad we would say today—around the techniques of participative management, the need to study and understand its effects, and the need to transform both organizational structures and even more importantly the attitudes of the manager himself toward those he manages (Alden 2012; Argyris 1957; Kaufman 2001; Likert 1961; MacGregor 1960; Marrow, Bowers, and Seashore 1967).

The experiments in worker participation emphasized a particular aspect: that participation is dyadic. It functions both to remake the subject of participation but also to remake the practices of business and economic activity—to make it more efficient, to manage quality, or to improve productivity. This
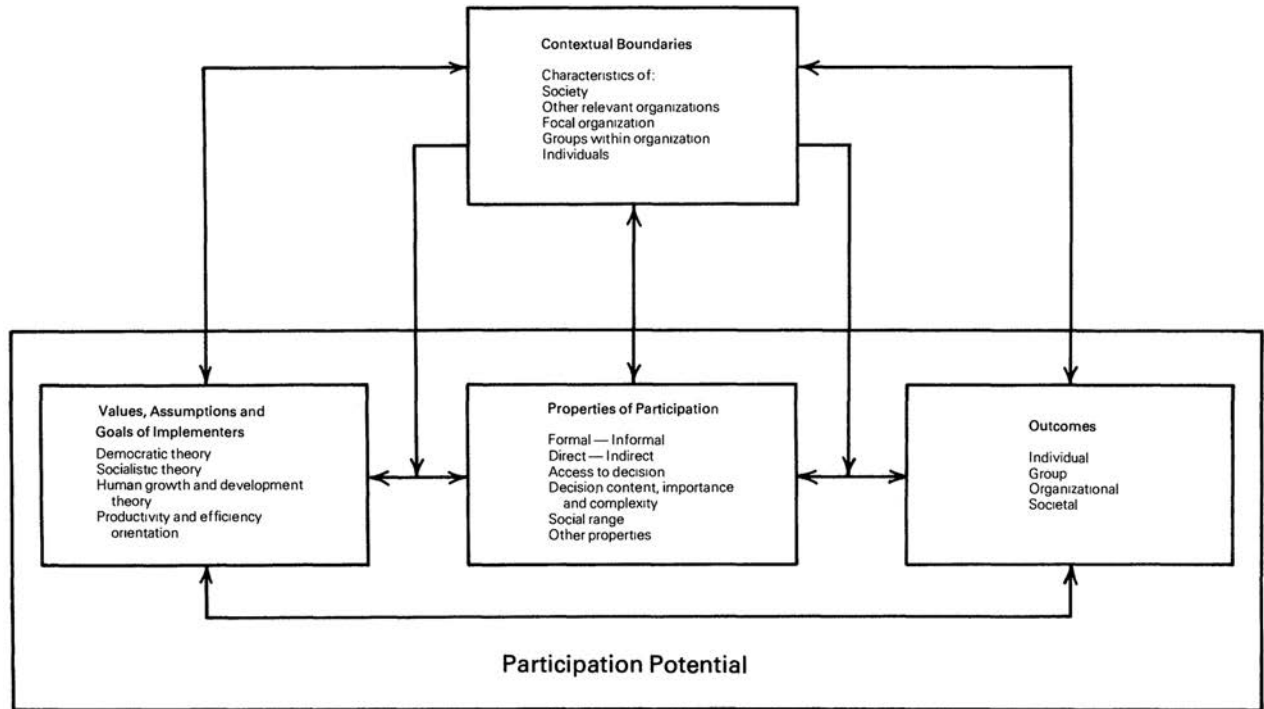
Figure 2. "Dimensions of Participation." Reprinted from Dachler and Wilpert (1978, fig. 1).

dual function of participation was pursued instrumentally and critiqued politically by many who studied and implemented it from as early as the 1930s to the 1990s and beyond. Thus, for instance, the key focus for Dachler and Wilpert (1978) is always on outcomes from different participatory arrangements for more than one party. For their approach, unlike Arnstein's, this is never about a one-dimensional shift of power but an evaluative frame that tries to measure which shifts of power are best for everyone involved.

The function of "dyadic" participation was multiple: to address "alienation" and improve worker satisfaction, to increase quality by devolving responsibility for quality control onto workers closest to the line, or to identify new sources of innovation that top-down management and engineering design hubris obscured. It took different forms in different places but was global—including experiments in India, Israel, Korea, and especially in Scandinavia, where it took an explicitly political form under the label of "participatory design" (Asaro 2000). Some experiments contrasted top-down democracy with top-down autocracy; others assumed democracy was always bottom-up. In all cases participation became not just a solution but a normative demand leveled against both the solitary (alienated) worker and the autocratic manager.

Such experiments were perversely technocratic—applying the ethos of scientific management to exactly that problem (participation) that is often figured as being in opposition to the dominance of top-down scientific management. Out of this came job reorganization, "quality of work life," ad-hocracy, qual-

ity management, autonomous and semiautonomous teams, or "quality circles." These attempts to engineer participation created a contradiction of sorts in which the goal of resisting top-down expertise itself became the province of a set of organization experts and management consultants and could turn participation from means into goal, and so participation at work very easily came to look like a new form of domination— so much so that we now forget that "participative management" is just the old name for "human resource management." This is the critique leveled by critics such as Boltanski and Chiapello (2005), who identify participation as part of an internal critique of capitalism born of the problems of "alienation" in the 1960s and the desire for a capitalism that produces communities, not just workers and profits. Boltanski and Chiapello (2005) play the part of Thrasymychus, arguing that participation is only what management (or capitalism) says it is. The work of Nikolas Rose and Peter Miller (Rose and Miller 2008) also points to the way participation is turned into a tool of governance—governing through freedom—and not a liberating or normative form. However, for every critique of corporate schemes to enhance "involvement" as exploitative or palliative, there emerge, hydra-headed, 10 more attempts to implement participation at work because it carries with it a normative power to achieve a range of goals associated with human potential, equality, and the ideals of democracy.

Today's management fads—like Holocracy and Agile—remain saturated with the language of involvement, teamwork, quality management, autonomy, flexibility, voice, and satis-

faction. Human resources is today a practice focused not so much on finding and acquiring skilled employees as it is on retaining them through a variety of efforts to make work less like work. The field has been saturated from the 1980s forward with titles such as *Second to None: How Our Smartest Companies Put People First* (Garfield 1992), *The Ultimate Advantage: Creating the High-Involvement Organization* (Lawler 1992), or *The End of Management and the Rise of Organizational Democracy* (Cloke and Goldsmith 2002), which are filled with the success stories of firms who involve employees in creating "learning organizations," enhance "employee involvement," build "self-managing teams" and "linking leadership" in "high performance workplaces" using "total quality management," "business process reengineering," and "continuous quality improvement."

It is in this context that contemporary examples such as open source software and the Agile development methodology are rendered in a different light. Rather than seeing open source primarily as a critique of a restrictive intellectual property system or an innovative "wisdom of crowds" approach to finding the best solution to a problem, these practices stand in line with a demand for more participation as a solution to efficiency and productivity and the expansion of civic virtue. Agile's focus on teams and self-organization could fit easily into a 1970s worker participation experiment—but today it is not an academic research project so much as it is an evangelical software development methodology whose value—if not its truth—rests on the normative promise of participation.

* * *

Finally, consider the *Participatory Development Tool Kit* (PDT) designed by Deepa Narayan and Lyra Srinivasan (see fig. 3). The kit, funded by the World Bank, is a leather-bound briefcase filled with folders that correspond to a range of different activities designed to promote participatory development. Some use simple games, some use images, some use "flexi-flan" figures (see fig. 4) that allow participants to engage in development projects in structured ways designed to bring their voices into the world of development, identify stakeholders, create a "Learning Mood," share expertise, work with intermediary NGOs, etc. It contains tools that harken back to the social psychology of Kurt Lewin (force-field analysis) and to other research approaches such as transect walks and SARAR (self-esteem, associative strengths, resourcefulness, action planning, and responsibility) techniques contained in other tool kits and source books, such as the *World Bank Participation Sourcebook* (1996), designed for "enabling local people to make their own appraisals" and "emphasizing local knowledge" through "systematic listening" that "gives voice to poor and other hard to reach beneficiaries."

Along with a range of other handbooks, tool kits, and structured systems for introducing participation, this tool kit can be read as both a legitimation of the faith in participation—the World Bank's endorsement—and as a co-optation of par-

ticipation in order to better control and extend the bank's power—a classic "anti-politics machine" (Ferguson 1990). On the one hand, the tool kit represents a tradition of participatory engagement, action, research, and critique whose most radical emblem is probably Paulo Freire and includes others such as Bud Hall, Orlando Fals-Borda, and Ivan Illich and the various research programs that get lumped together under "participatory action research" (Reason and Bradbury 2001). On the other hand, it is precisely the target of those who have come to critique participation as a "New Tyranny" (Cooke and Kothari 2001). For these critics, participation created pathologies such as the "professional participant" expert in responding to and manipulating this new bureaucratized virtue for self-enrichment. It was a tyranny that had reversed end and means, creating a rigid structure of organizational and documentary demands on projects but that could not demonstrate that participation led to better outcomes.

In between these two extremes is the curious figure of Robert Chambers, whose "Participatory Rural Appraisal" is often cited as the key engine of evangelical enthusiasm. Chambers represents the "double-voiced" version of participation, at once an irrepressible enthusiast for participatory methods and at the same time a harsh critic of the failures of development, regardless of methodology. Chambers repeatedly warned against "empty" participation and the dangers of embracing one tool or method over others but also never gave up on participation as a normative guide (Chambers 2011; Cornwall 2011). Participation remains aspirational—not yet true participation because it has been defined incorrectly, or its outcomes have been improperly tested, or it has simply become a demand that must be met: end rather than means (Green 2010, 2014).

A key difference in the domain of international development was that proper participation should include not just participation in tasks but participation in the production of knowledge and the evaluation of outcomes. In Chambers's work it is a participatory appraisal—drawing maps, taking accounts, visualizing plans for change or improvement—that is the heart of the method, not digging wells or planting seed. In Participatory Action Research, it is research, not necessarily action, that comes first and that must be wrested from the hands of bureaucrats, scientists, and computers in order to achieve liberation, conscientization, or consciousness raising. Such a focus is the necessary obverse of a modernist demand for a "knowledge economy" that emerged at the same time from the 1960s to the present and that presumed a rich-poor gap in knowledge that many participation advocates could therefore rebel against to demonstrate the prior possession of "indigenous technology" or local knowledge or appropriate technology or later "fluid technologies" (de Laet and Mol 2000; Redfield 2015) that demanded attention.

Perhaps even more starkly, participation includes an experience of "becoming collective" by virtue of participation. On the one hand, targets of development are always presumed to be in possession of more authentic, natural, traditional, nonmodern, undeveloped, and so forth, collectivities that are the

Figure 3. *Participatory Development Tool Kit*. Created by Deepa Narayan, Lyra Srinivasan, and others, funded by the World Bank and the United Nations Development Program, produced in India by Whisper Design of New Delhi, and coordinated by Sunita Chakravarty of the Regional Water and Sanitation Group in New Delhi in 1994. This copy owned by the Getty Research Library, Los Angeles. Photos by the author. A color version of this figure is available online.

source of participatory action and knowledge: they know the forest, they understand the flora and fauna, they know where the water is located. On the other hand, the demand for subjects to form a new kind of collective is at least as old as the demand to modernize and represents an alternative tradition of development and modernization that is only sometimes dependent on a concept of participation (Immerwahr 2015). In Matthew Hull's analysis of community development projects in Delhi in the 1950s, for instance, he demonstrates the transfer of Kurt Lewin's experimental findings and methods in the attempt to create "planned change" and to produce newly democratic subjects—a process at work in similar ways in the cases described by Miller and Rose at the Tavistock institute in Britain in the postwar period and by Fred Turner in the case of multimedia art and culture projects (Hull 2010; Rose and Miller 2008; Turner 2013). Subjects of development, indigenous peoples, the poor, and rural farmers are object of and conduit for participation—and it is perhaps from their perspective that the weird grammar of participation becomes most evident.

Contemporary enthusiasms for bringing technology to bear on development—OLPC, Kiva, MPesa, ICT4D—often implicitly suggest that technology enables or brings into being the capacity for participation. But even more so, this capacity is exemplified by the "tool kit"—not only the leather binder full of folders, but the apps, software, start-ups, Kickstarters, and schemes of all sorts whose institutionalization takes the form of material bits and pieces intended to invoke and channel participation outside of formal legal or institutional modes of the past. Often these projects assume that some technological

change accounts for this rather than recognizing a continuity across the late twentieth century. So before the OLPC, it is implied, students could not learn from each other or the Internet (but the PDT is filled with learning activities); before MPesa, villagers could not transact with each other (but the PDT focuses on questions of poverty and its meaning and how transactions take place in a local environment). Rather than providing a window onto the practice of participation, technology obscures that practice by suggesting that there previously was none (or not enough), but with technology participation will be properly enabled and unleashed. Following on this is the parallel assumption that such widespread participation will bring bottom-up innovation—whether it is figured as "appropriate technologies," distributed wisdom of crowds, or enabling a "Silicon savannah" of untapped entrepreneurialism. All this is, in turn, read by critics of participatory development as neocolonial expansion of state power co-opting the (unpaid) voices and actions of the poor. Again, the grammar of participation wavers between unleashing participation (a purpose) and the inequitable institutionalization of it.

Conclusion

The three examples above demonstrate aspects of the grammar of participation: the structure of claims and statements that can be made in its name and the ways that attempting to make participation "doable" respond to these statements. Far from indicating a clear progression—whether one of technological determinism or an expansion of governmental or capitalist power—it indicates instead a recurrence. Participation is al-
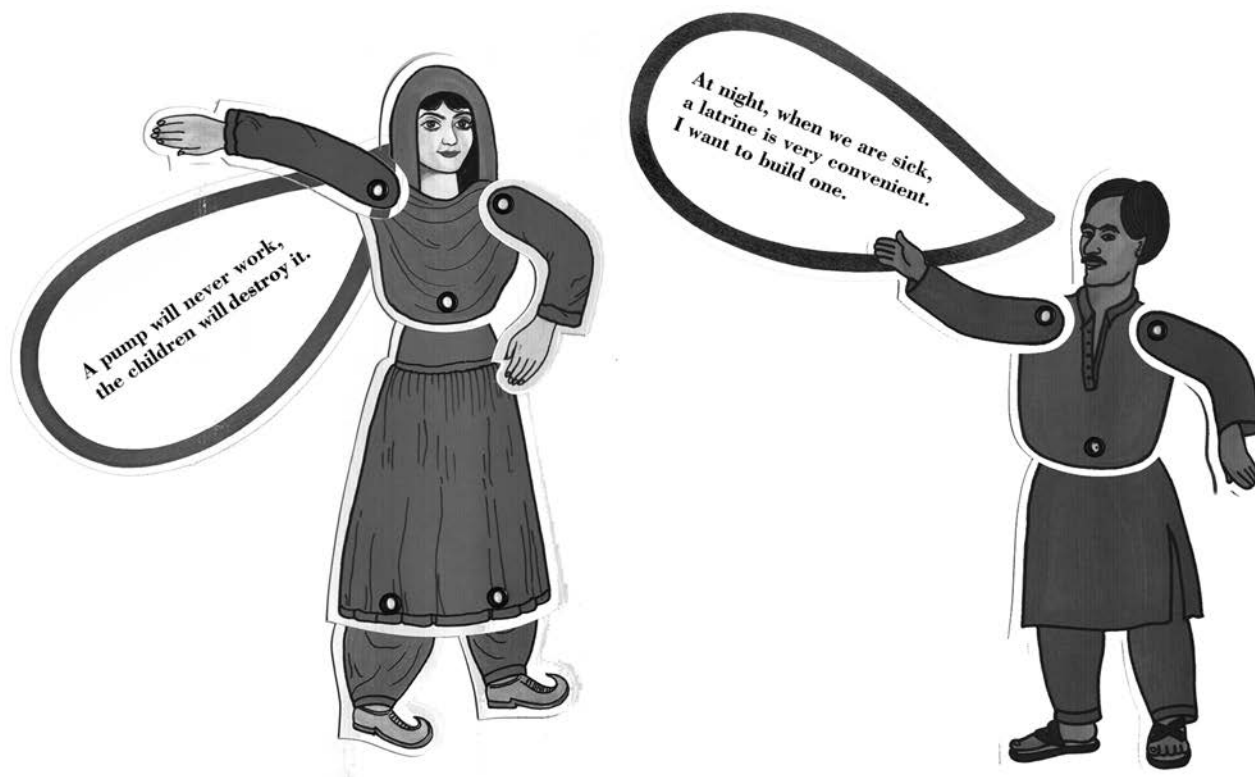
Figure 4. Flexi-flan figures from the *Participatory Development Tool Kit*, Activity 3, "SARAR Resistance to Change Continuum." A color version of this figure is available online.

ways aspirational. One might say it wavers back and forth between two moods: optative and critical. In the optative mood, it signals an enthusiasm, a normativity, a happy hypothesis of change through the involvement of more people rather than fewer, poorer rather than richer, rural rather than urban, indigenous rather than colonial, or everyday experience rather than rarefied expertise. But in a critical mood, what is called participation becomes a false claimant: phony participation. By accusing participation of being false, phony, exploitative, or disappointed, it allows the optative mood in the next turn of phrase—a better, more authentic participation yet to come. Demands for participation suddenly turn out to be critiques of participation—just as Wittgenstein's famous duck-rabbit would predict. Or as Pitkin would put it, the grammar of participation, like that of justice, seems to waver between purpose and institutionalization, between a normative end that would describe participation as a good to be achieved and a corrupted means that perverts its very own ends by becoming overbureaucratized, extractive, or exploitative.

The rise of the Internet and new media thus appear different when one considers this grammar of participation. Rather than a sudden unleashing of some set of capacities unknown before, it appears to repeat aspects of this grammar—first a purpose-driven enthusiasm for massive participation and then a critique of institutionalized or co-optative forms; first Wikipedia

and then WikiLeaks and Snowden; first crowdsourcing and then the sharing economy, and so on.

But there is a subtle shift that has taken place primarily around the continuing creation of ever more self-contained and individualized "tools" and "tool kits" for participation. From the institutionalization of "maximum feasible participation" in the Model Cities program to the creation of apps such as SeeClickFix; from the experimental "participative management" of the mid-twentieth century to the organization of "Agile" team-based work and the fugitive infrastructure of a coordination tool such as Slack; or from the PDT of the 1990s to the data crunching and surveillance of Kickstarter-like projects such as Kiva—there has been a demonstrable shift away from large-scale, infrastructural intervention and maintenance to a world of tool kits, frameworks, small tools, "little development devices," or "humanitarian goods" (Redfield 2012).[7]

Viewed through the grammar of participation, two differences emerge in the present. The first is simply that past attempts at participation took groups and collectives as their objects (neighborhoods, ethic groups, villages, workers in a factory), all of which were presumed to share a set of interests and an experience of collectivity that participation would en-

7. The phrase "little development devices" comes from Stephen Collier.

able, enhance, or take advantage of. Contemporary participation is resolutely focused on the individual participant; the "wisdom of crowds" presumes an emergent collectivity but no necessary sense of belonging. Even the focus on "teams" is simply a way to make individual characteristics complementary with each other rather than some attempt at solidarity of a cointerested collective. Today participation is no longer about the participation of groups but rather about the participation of individuals.

The second is that the "institutional" aspect of the grammar of participation is becoming more temporary and fragile—with good and bad effects. The institutionalization imagined in the Model Cities Program—in which participation was inscribed in federal law—would have essentially created another branch of government with some mixture of legislative and executive functions had it succeeded. But today schemes to induce or appropriate participation tend to be much less permanent, more open to critique, possibly more open to revision and modification on the model of a "recursive public"—one in which it is possible to engage in normative critique from within an institution because of the relatively more flexible nature of a world built out of software, apps, temporary institutional structures, and so on (Kelty 2008). A "grammar" of participation might thus be extended to the "design principles," "pattern languages," or "schematics and source code" of participation. Too much emphasis on the discursive features of participation actually give too much weight to the normative claims—and not enough to the mechanics of institutionalization that seem to almost inevitably lead to an experience of co-optation.

These two subtle shifts, if they are in fact in evidence, lead to the problem of "too much democracy in all the wrong places." The enthusiasm for participation has increasingly been matched by quicker, faster, more flexible implementations of participation. This can be good in some cases and bad in others because the grammar of participation remains unknown: we sometimes speak of participation as a purpose, an end that we assimilate to democratization or liberation; but it is just as often implemented as a means to achieve goals that turn out to be inconsistent with that purpose: too much surveillance, too much unpaid labor, too much devolution of responsibility, too much democracy in all the wrong places.

Coda

In the introduction to this special issue of *Current Anthropology*, the editors invoke Bradbury's *Fahrenheit 451* (Hirschkind, de Abreu, and Caduff 2017). There is an aspect of participation made clear at the end of this novel, and it is one that is not commonly present in the discourses of participation that dominate the minor sciences or the theories of democracy—but an aspect that perhaps should be. At the end of the story, the hero Montag *becomes a book*. Montag becomes one of the last instances of the Book of Ecclesiastes by memorizing it. He joins a "library" of others that includes, for instance, Profes-

sor Simmons from UCLA, who *is* Ortega y Gasset. These individuals become instances of the books they memorize, they *participate* in the books—a final deconstruction of the relation between medium and message. We forget too easily that this is also what participation means: to be an instance of something. The film and book stage bad participation as scripted, co-opted performances in the state television's insipid soap operas. But the end of the book presents us with a different meaning of participation: not to read (a copy) of a book, but to be a book and a person at the same time.

In the context of Bradbury's book, or Truffaut's film, this participation is what makes the *public* persist. Because it is books that serve as a critique of and a threat to power (and not television, which is a clear tool of power, manipulation, and co-optation in the story), as long as this ragtag band of book people live, the public exists. This is an unmistakable nostalgia for the book (to which Truffaut assimilates film, as the editors point out)—to become book is more politically authentic than to become television. The seductions of television—or we might say today, the seductions of new or social media—must be resisted. Liberal politics and the success of democracy demand it. But to blame television, or social media, for the disfigurations of democracy is no different than to claim that the same technologies (or those of the book) will unleash democracy. What we miss in opposing the optative and critical aspects of participation is a third meaning, a question lurking beneath both of them: what does it mean for an individual to become not just a part of but an *instance* of a collective?

Acknowledgments

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From Internet Farming to Weapons of the Geek

by Gabriella Coleman

Hackers and their projects have become routine, authoritative, and public participants in our daily geopolitical goings-on. There are no obvious, much less given, explanations as to why a socially and economically privileged group of actors, once primarily defined by obscure tinkering and technical exploration, is now so willing to engage in popular media advocacy, traditional policy- and law-making, political tool building, and especially forms of direct action and civil disobedience so risky that scores of hackers are currently in jail or exile for their willingness to expose wrongdoing. Why and how have hackers managed to preserve pockets of autonomy? What historical, cultural, and sociological conditions have facilitated their passage into the political arena, especially in such large numbers? Why do a smaller but still notable fraction risk their privilege with acts of civil disobedience? These are questions that beg for nuanced answers—beyond the blind celebration or denigration offered by popular characterizations of hacker politics. In this article I will provide an introductory inventory—a basic outline of the sociocultural attributes and corollary historical conditions—responsible for the intensification of hacker politics during the last 5 years.

In January 2015, after delivering a talk about the protest ensemble Anonymous, I went out to lunch with PW—a 40-something Dutch hacker now living in Canada whom I first met in 2002 while conducting research in Amsterdam. Given his expertise in cryptography, the conversation naturally drifted to the subject of Edward Snowden—a former government contractor who exposed the NSA's secret surveillance programs. PW, long involved in the battle for privacy, benefited from the following situation: many hackers experienced Snowden's act of whistle-blowing as a wake-up call. Scores of technologists were spurred to pursue a privacy agenda through the communal development of encryption tools.

Over lunch I asked him what he thought about the contemporary state of hacker politics. PW—intensely involved in the hacker scene for his whole adult life—did not skip a beat in tendering the following analysis: the political effects of hackers would emerge diffusely over an extended period of time, products—just as the Internet itself is—of the types of technologies they work to build. To punctuate this point, he described hackers as "Internet farmers." Just as the rise of agriculturalists massively altered human material relations to food supplies, so too would hackers and their technologists' allies alter the course of human history through their technological artifacts. The effect of particular hacker individuals or organizations would be largely irrelevant—microgestures within

broader, deterministic forces driven by technological development itself.

But this explanation was just for context. He continued by expressing surprise at the current state of affairs whereby both individual hackers and hacker organizations—many of which were intimately familiar to him—increasingly assume prominent geopolitical roles in sculpting our immediate history. As he offered his commentary, I nodded in agreement: by this point I had been researching the politics of hacking for many years, and while strong pockets of activism or political tool building have long existed (Jordan 2008; Jordan and Taylor 2004), these were but small corners of activity in a vast territory.

Today the landscape has dramatically changed, and in a very short period of time. In the past 5 years, hackers have significantly enlarged the scope of political projects, demonstrating nuanced and diverse ideological commitments that cannot be reduced to the libertarianism so often presupposed as the essence of a hacker ideology (Golumbia 2013). In particular, direct action or civil disobedience have surged in a variety of formats and styles, often related to freezing websites through distributed denial of service campaigns (Sauter 2014) or to whistle-blowing. We see lone leakers, such as Chelsea Manning, and also leftist collectivist leaking endeavors, such as Xnet in Spain. Other political engagements are threaded through software: for instance, protocols (such as BitTorrent) and technical file-sharing platforms (such as the Pirate Bay) enable the sharing of cultural goods (Beyer 2014; McKelvey 2014). Hackers conceptualize these platforms distinctly to suit a range of ideological agendas: from anarchist to socialist, from liberal to libertarian. Since the 1980s, free software hackers have embedded software with legal stipulations that have powerfully tilted the politics of intellectual property law in favor of access

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(Coleman 2013; Kelty 2008) and have inspired others—notably scientists, academics, and lawyers—to embolden arguments for access (Delfanti 2013). Across Europe, Latin America, and the United States, anticapitalist hackers run collectives—many doubling as anarchist associations—providing privacy-enhancing technical support and services for leftist crusaders aiming for systemic social transformations (Wolfson 2014). Anonymous has established itself as one of the most populist manifestations of contemporary geek politics; while no technical skills are required to contribute, the entity has used the attention gained by high-risk hacking trysts to deliver its most powerful messages (Coleman 2015).

Plainly, hackers can no longer be viewed as exotic experts: they have become authoritative and public participants in our daily geopolitical goings-on. There are no obvious, much less given, explanations as to why a privileged group of actors, once primarily defined by obscure tinkering and technical exploration, is now so willing to engage in popular media advocacy, traditional policy- and law-making, political tool building, and especially forms of direct action and civil disobedience so risky that scores of hackers are currently in jail or exile for their willingness to expose wrongdoing.

Working technologists are economically rewarded in step with doctors, lawyers, and academics—and yet these professions seem to produce far fewer politically active practitioners. Why and how have hackers, who enjoy a significant degree of social and economic privilege, managed to preserve pockets of autonomy? What historical, cultural, and sociological conditions have facilitated their passage into the political arena, especially in such large numbers? Why do a smaller but still notable fraction risk their privilege with daring acts of civil disobedience? These are questions that beg for nuanced answers—beyond the blind celebration or denigration offered by popular characterizations of hacker politics.

This article will provide an introductory inventory—a narrative sketch of the sociocultural attributes and historical conditions responsible for the intensification of hacker politics during the last 5 years. Probably the most important factor is a shared commitment to preserving autonomous ways of thinking, being, and interacting. Let us see how they are secured.

The Craft and Craftiness of Hacking

Computers can be a daily source of frustration for user and technologist alike. Whether a catastrophic hard drive crash—which, without a backup, can feel like a chunk of one's life has been yanked away by dark, mysterious forces—or a far more mundane search engine freeze—after having foolishly opened an eighty-fifth web page—rarely does a week or even a day go by without offering a computer malfunction. I found myself in this situation one day in October 2015. At the tail end of a long day, I was replying to a slab of e-mails. Distracted, I foolishly opened that eighty-fifth web page. My computer, which runs a version of the Linux operating system, first froze, then went dark, and finally rebooted itself. Livid, I was fairly

certain hours of work were about to be nuked into oblivion (I was right). Then this happened.

Oct 8 23:48:02 kernel: [27653668.999445] Out of memory: Kill process 12731 (redacted) score 318 or sacrifice child

"Sacrifice child?" I laughed and snapped a picture. Some developer had implanted this humorous message in an otherwise dry (and for the technically illiterate, likely incomprehensible) system log error message.[1] I was reminded that behind every piece of software is an auteur with a distinctive style. Though already familiar with hacker humor—having dedicated a book chapter to the subject (Coleman 2013)—my foul mood was replaced with elation: this was the first time I encountered a joke embedded in technology without hunting for one.

This sort of joke directs us to some unique features common to hackers, at least when compared with other technologists—system administrators, programmers, cryptographers, security researchers—who, like hackers, perform the same sort of labor. Like hackers, all these technologists are quintessential craftspeople driven by the pursuit of quality and excellence (Sennett 2009). The hacker adds something more into the mix: a fastidious and explicit impulse for craftiness. To improve and secure computer technologies, hackers approach solutions not only with technical know-how and ability but also with some degree of agility, guile, and even disrespect. To quote an effective description offered by a security hacker during an interview, "You have to, like, have an innate understanding that technology is arbitrary, it's an arbitrary mechanism that does something that's unnatural and therefore can be circumvented, in all likelihood."

This oscillation between craft and craftiness, of respect for tradition and its wanton disregard, is in itself not exclusive to hackers or technologists. It is common among a range of laborers guided by a crafting sensibility: from engineers to professors, from journalists to carpenters (Orr 1996). Indeed, academics depend on and reproduce convention by referencing the work of peers, but they also strive to advance novel and counterintuitive arguments and gain individual recognition in the doing. What is unique to hackers is how an outward display of craftiness has surpassed mere instrumentality to take on its own, robust life; craftiness and its associated attributes, such as wit and guile, are revered as much for their form as for their function. In contrast, for most craftspeople, craftiness is a means to

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1. The suggestion to sacrifice a child may seem like a random and especially mean-spirited message to send, one designed to shock the clueless user. To those familiar with Unix-based operating systems, however, this statement is technically accurate. In extreme memory-constrained scenarios, the Linux Kernel out of Memory Management (OOM) routine that makes an algorithmic determination to stop a process (by sending a "kill" signal) was done in this case to a subprocess (known as a "child process"). Choosing what process to sacrifice is a bit of a dark art and causes processes to "die," potentially losing work, as a trade-off for regaining access to the system again.

an end—one tool, often exercised tacitly, among others (Collins 2010; Polyani 1967). For hackers, the performance of craftiness has long attained the status of an explicit pursuit, a thing valued in and of itself.

The most evident trace of the hacker quest for and adoration of craftiness is the sheer abundance of humor among them. No ethnography would be complete without considering it—a conclusion I arrived at when, sitting at a hacker conference, it dawned on me that it was acceptable, even welcome, for an audience member to interrupt a speaker in order to crack a joke (perhaps the only other group willing to spontaneously defy social decorum in similar ways are comedians or drunk people). Once tuned in to the frequency of hacker humor, it became clear that hackers inject humor into every social situation and artifact: there is a long tradition of inserting small snippets of wit into code and documentation; and they even embed hidden puzzles (what they call Easter eggs) in code for the amusement of those scrutinizing their work. Sometimes, technical cleverness regiments an entire technical artifact, such as the esoteric and irreverently named programming language BrainFuck. Hackers also have a long history of mischief making and pranking; according to many, the term "hacks" was first coined to describe a type of practical joke (Peterson 2011). Crafty humor is evident in some of the hacker political battles addressed later in this essay. (For detailed analysis of the pervasiveness of cleverness and humor in hacker circles, see Coleman 2013; Goriunova 2014; Montfort 2008). Valorizing this craftiness even for noninstrumental uses, hackers invite levity and play into their activities. Perhaps even more importantly, they also hone a crafty mindset for even nontechnical pursuits, keeping it sharp and ready at hand for when a truly stunning hack is needed.

The Autonomous Mind-Set

Easiest way to get a hacker to do something: tell them they can't. (Institutionalized Oppositional Defiance Disorder [a hacker])

Craftiness depends on a vigilant criticality, a willingness to scrutinize, always with a mind on identifying inconsistencies or upending convention. Perhaps unsurprisingly, another characteristic that might be identified as common to hackers is a dogged antiauthoritarianism, which manifests itself as a profound skepticism toward institutions and other forms of entrenched power. While it might be tempting to see this as merely another journalistic cliché, this attitude is genuinely encoded deep in the hacker cultural DNA. It is as apparent in their flippant, casual conversation as it is in their manifestos, zines, and text files.

Emblematic of this ethos is the iconic "The Conscience of a Hacker," authored by a figure known as the "The Mentor" and collectively redubbed "A Hacker Manifesto." Published in 1986, it ends with a defiant confession: "Yes, I am a criminal. My crime is that of curiosity. My crime is that of judging people by

what they say and think, not what they look like. My crime is that of outsmarting you, something that you will never forgive me for" (The Mentor 1986). While one might imagine a statement such as this as the hyperbolic expression of an angst-ridden, middle-class alienation, the truth is that whatever his economic background, The Mentor wrote it at a particular juncture of his life: "The following was written shortly after my arrest."

The Mentor's biography is uncommon: most hackers never face arrest. But the fact remains that many aspects of hacking, past and present, are littered with examples of disobeyed norms, rules, and sometimes laws. These repeated subversive acts not only support antiauthoritarian attitudes directly but also, as "The Hacker Manifesto" attests, do so through its memorialization in the copious archives of hacker literary and political writings. Indeed, illicit subversion must be understood as an originary condition of hacking itself. When phreaking (originally called freaking) and hacking established their cultural and technical legs in the late 1950s and early 1960s, rule breaking was often essential to gaining access to any equipment. For phone freaks, rule breaking was simply unavoidable. Their entire raison d'être was the exploration of phone systems and to link up with other phone enthusiasts in the doing; even if profit or malice were rarely part of their calculus, they nevertheless violated state and federal laws every time they phreaked. The first freak arrests occurred in 1961 (Lapsley 2013:59), although it would be another few decades before their hacker cousins felt the full brunt of the law.

When compared with the freaks, university-based hackers rarely broke the law. But even among the small cadre of hacker-students enrolled in universities—such as Carnegie Mellon; the University of California, Los Angeles; Stanford; and MIT—rules were frequently twisted—usually to land more time on their beloved computer. In his account of the first-generation MIT hackers, journalist Steven Levy characterizes the hacker proclivity to bend rules:

> To a hacker, a closed door is an insult, and a locked door is an outrage. Just as information should be clearly and elegantly transported within a computer, and just as software should be freely disseminated, hackers believed people should be allowed access to files or tools which might promote the hacker quest to find out and improve the way the world works. (Levy 2010 [1984]:86)

These hackers were partially shielded from punishment because they were, after all, affiliated as students. But a handful of preteen and teenage computer enthusiasts, too young to attend university, also joined the informal club of technologists—at times by sneaking illegally into the facilities at night, a practice which earned them the fitting title of "computer rats."

Collectivism and the Autonomous Spaces of Hacking

Despite differences in degree and typology of insubordination—in some instances, hackers disobey convention while in

other cases, they relish breaking laws—antiauthoritarianism is evident across varied hacking lineages. While craftiness emerges through technical practice and rule bending or law breaking reinforce antiauthoritarianism, both mind-sets now constitute the rhetorical repertoires that hackers use to describe themselves.

Together, craftiness and antiauthoritarianism might be understood to cultivate an attitude that is profoundly individualistic or even antisocial. No doubt it is from isolating and extrapolating these characteristics that the myth of sweeping hacker libertarianism emerges. But the relationship between hackers and individualism is more complex than these two characteristics might suggest. As any sustained observation of hackers is quick to reveal, hacking is, in most instances, a hypersocialized activity. Cooperation, fellowship, mutual aid, and even institution building are quotidian to the hacker experience—even among the most subversive, rule-breaking practitioners.

Even if craftspeople tend to work in solitude—and hackers most definitely do, and as the stereotype goes, heavily caffeinated and late into the night—many aspects of crafting are collectivist. Skilled workers gather in social spaces, such as conferences or workshops, to learn, mentor, and establish (ever-changing) guidelines of quality (Sennett 2009). Hacking is no exception to these dynamics. Whether acknowledged or not by hackers themselves, all types of hacking embody profound forms of social entanglement and feelings of communion. These elements are established by a mutual adoration of technical pursuits and the pragmatic need to secure the help of others; crucially, the collective development of technology is bolstered by social spaces, and hackers have long had and continue to build and inhabit many of these—mailing lists and image boards, code repositories, free software projects, hacker and maker spaces, Internet chat relays, and developer and hacker conferences.

These are sites where hackers gather, deliberate, and work semiautonomously from the mandates and demands of their day jobs. They qualify as what scholars of social movements designate "free spaces." Usefully defined by one sociologist as "settings within a community or movement that are removed from the direct control of dominant groups, are voluntarily participated in, and generate the cultural challenge that precedes or accompanies political mobilization" (Polletta 1999:1), scholars of such spaces have tended to examine locales such as independent book shops, women-only gatherings, bars, block clubs, tenant associations, and union halls.

Free spaces are "free" not because they are open to everyone. While some are inviting to all (e.g., a book shop or a public chat channel), others spaces are regulated—some loosely, others tightly—to control access and membership (a union hall or free software project). They are free for being infused with logics of independence: participants run these spaces collectively and autonomously, outside the penumbra of the direct control or even influence of dominant institutions or values whether they be economic, political, cultural, or some combination of the three. Indeed, a couple of the core technologies that constitute hacker free spaces, such as Internet Relay Chat and mailing lists (and BBSes in earlier eras), are not only easy for hackers to set up but are noncommercial zones on an Internet almost dominated today by private interests.[2]

Hackers cobble together the communication technologies that double as hacker free spaces in distinct ways: some spaces, like those that facilitate free software projects, are structured and transparently documented institutions, while others, like those that serve Anonymous, function as opaque, elastic, and far-flung networks. Juxtaposing these two examples makes it clear that hacker spaces—and thus hacker sociality—are by no means monolithic. And yet both examples also function to dispel the myth that hackers are individualist, or against institutions.

While there are dozens to choose from, one of the most notable examples of a structured hacker organization is the Debian Project. Founded in 1993, it boasts a thousand members who maintain the 25,000 pieces of software that together constitute a Linux-based operating system. Some of the technical engineers within Debian double as political architects, and they have established the project as a federation, which functions something like a guild or workers' cooperative. They have outlined intricate voting procedures for the purposes of governance and have articulated commitments and stipulations ratified in a series of legal and ethical charters and manifestos. Before enrollment, all prospective members are tested on their knowledge of the project's technical policies, legal commitments, and ethical norms (Coleman 2013; O'Neil 2009).

If Debian is configured as a sort of miniature society—and given its social constitution and manifesto, having a very nineteenth-century, Enlightenment feel to it—Anonymous, by contrast, is more opaque, but expansive, functioning more informally as a "scene" (Straw 2014). While increasingly recognizable as advocates for social justice and stewards of direct action, they refuse to establish an ideological common denominator much less universally applicable ethical statements of the sort Debian has ratified. Spread across the globe and inhabiting a range of technologies—Twitter accounts and a multitude of chat rooms, some public and some private—Anonymous is a dynamic, moving target. Many Anonymous-based nodes and collectives, whether small teams, larger networks, or simply groups of loosely connected Twitter accounts, form, disband, and regroup in new ways in the course of weeks or months. Others have existed in relatively stable shape now for 5 years. Still, most operations can be understood as some-

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2. There are some important differences between most hacker and nonhacker free spaces. Compared with traditional free-space venues, whose costs of renting or ownership are significant—downright exorbitant if they are located in cities such as New York, London, Paris, Vancouver, or Sydney—online-based hacker free spaces can be maintained at a comparatively modest cost, usually boiling down to fees for Internet access and labor to maintain systems. A longer account would have to address the material qualities of software because they help ensure the sheer abundance of free spaces among hackers.

how well organized, but given its dynamic geography, Anonymous eschews stabilization. Combine these characteristics with the fact that some hackers rely on partial secrecy, and Anonymous is distinctive (and refreshing) for how it resists extensive sociological mapping and thus categorization.

Where Debian proceeds from a set of rules, Anonymous is like an antialgorithm: hard to predict and difficult to control. They appear more akin to a cipher than a solution. Yet at both these poles and everywhere in between, these participants are social to the extreme. Anonymous members communicate consistently (even if they do not know exactly who is on the other end—and Debian developers do, too) with individuals carefully vetted by the project (to officially join the virtual project, a prospective developer must first get their cryptographic identity verified by another developer, in person).

State Intervention as a Political Catalyst

So far we have considered three crucial components of hacker subjectivity that help us grasp their political subjectivity: the valorization of craftiness, the cultural cultivation of antiauthoritarianism, and the sustenance of fellowship around labor in free spaces. These features do not in themselves account for the hacker tendency toward political action. But by helping to reinforce and reproduce independent habits of thinking, skills suited to maintaining and governing technologies that enable both autonomous congregation and action and communities of mutual support, they form vital pillars capable of propping up the forms of political action that flourish in the community today.

Yet while these components set the stage for action, the thing still missing is a script—and a problem to set the action in motion. While hacker politics today are increasingly oriented in response to the problems of outsiders, the original catalyst that unites hackers in political action tends to emerge when the community itself is threatened (Coleman 2016). Thus, the major, and perhaps unsurprising, trigger of hacker politicization has come about as a response to aggressive state and corporate hostility toward hackers and their technologies. In this sense, the hacker public is also an apt example of what Michael Warner (2002) identifies as a counterpublic—one that "maintain[s] at some level, conscious or not, an awareness of its subordinate status" (56). Here we can understand "subordinate" to mean simply that hackers, their activities, and their artifacts have frequently had their existence challenged by state forces more powerful than themselves. But more to the point, hackers have been quick to sound a high-pitched awareness of this subordinate status whenever the state or the market comes barreling down on them. Their response, typically, has been to fight back. In the short history of hackerdom, such challenges have appeared with a remarkable frequency. Below I will highlight a tiny fraction of such events.

By the 1980s phreaking was largely replaced by the avid exploration of computer networks, instantiating what is commonly referred to as the hacker underground. With the availability of cheaper modems and personal computers, those willing

to engage in the risky sport of computer trespass swelled, as did the technical watering holes—the free spaces of the era—that these nascent hackers built to congregate, swap information, and store contraband. Chief among these were Bulletin Board Systems (BBSes), text-based computer hubs reachable via a modem and phone. As the hacker underground grew more tentacles, its members ran increasingly afoul of the law (Dreyfus 1997; Sterling 1992). Crucially, arrests and subsequent prosecutions were enabled by new statutes with stiff penalties directed specifically at computer users and passed in the United States (Computer Fraud and Abuse Act in 1986),[3] Australia (Crimes Legislation Amendment Act in 1989), and the United Kingdom (Computer Misuse Act in 1990).[4]

Throughout the 1990s, law enforcement coordinated multistate raids that targeted swaths of hackers and sought to shut down the BBSes. Hackers were slapped with trumped up charges and fines that rarely matched the nature of the crime. Bruce Sterling (1992), who chronicled the 1990s American clampdown, described it in no uncertain terms as "a crackdown, a deliberate attempt to nail the core of the operation, to send a dire and potent message that would settle the hash of the digital underground for good" (104).

The most infamous of the 1990s US-based arrests concerned the case of Craig Neidorf. Known in hacker circles by the handle Knight Lightning, Neidorf was a cofounder of the popular e-zine *Phrack* (featuring hyperbolic and relentlessly antiauthoritarian material, a healthy portion of which was expressly devoted to parodying the FBI). While Neidorf originally faced 31 years in jail for circulating an AT&T technical memorandum about the nation's 911 emergency phone call system, it was later revealed that the document was available at the library for any member of the public to access. Ultimately charges were dropped—but only after a costly legal battle. So astounding was his plight that it helped spur the founding of what is now the largest nonprofit for defending civil liberties in the digital realm, the Electronic Frontier Foundation.

Many subsequent cases were as troubling for how state prosecution against hackers resembled persecution (Thomas 2003). In the early 2000s hacker and phreak Kevin Mitnick engaged in multiple, indisputable crimes of computer trespass—online explorations that did not benefit him financially or cause any permanent damage. Nevertheless, because he was a "hacker," the Department of Justice jailed him for 4 years in pretrial confinement followed by 8 months in solitary confinement. Such harsh treatment was deemed necessary because law enforcement officials convinced the judge that Mitnick could "start a nuclear war by whistling into a pay phone."[5]

While a great majority of the 1990s and 2000s cases involved computer intrusion, these hackers rarely sought to profit from

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3. Computer Fraud and Abuse Act of 1986, Pub. L. No. 99-474, 100 Stat. 1213, codified as amended at 18 U.S.C. §103 (1986).

4. Computer Misuse Act, 1990, c.18. Crimes Legislation Amendment Act, 1989, No. 108.

5. Cited in Mills (2008).

their illicit jaunts into computer networks much less damage any equipment or data. Typically, their most substantial crime was hoarding technical data or defrauding the phone companies to make the free calls needed to explore more networks. As a dozen high-profile cases plodded through the court system, journalists wrote or spoke about "mad hackers" and "real electronic Hannibal Lecters."[6] Branded by the courts and the media as outlaws, the antiauthoritarianism harbored by hackers only intensified and became marshaled in campaigns like the "Free Kevin" movement, which devoted itself to exposing the plights of incarcerated hackers.

Only a narrow band of hackers are willing to break the law for the thrill of exploratory joy riding (and then, the ability to boast about the journey to their peers). Most hackers are law-abiding citizens, some with little sympathy for the legal woes of their security-breaching colleagues. But when the conditions needed to write or distribute software are jeopardized—or software is itself targeted for censure or criminalization—they can be spurred to action, even direct action.

Take the case of Pretty Good Privacy, a piece of public encryption technology designed to enhance the privacy of regular citizens. Principally authored by cryptographer Phil Zimmerman, its international release in 1991 constituted a daring act of civil disobedience, breaking international munition and patent laws predicated on the military uses of encryption (Greenberg 2012; Levy 2001, 2010 [1984]). The 1993 FBI criminal investigation of Zimmerman for possible "munitions export without a license" triggered developments in both the then nascent idea that software deserves free speech protections and also the more general idea that publishing software could constitute an act of revolt. Discussed widely on multiple online forums, hackers registered their support for public encryption by crossing international borders wearing T-shirts printed with legally protected encryption source code. As he was pursued by US law enforcement, a crafty solution was devised to dramatically increase his chances for successfully challenging the export control laws he had broken: along with publishing the source code online, MIT Press was persuaded to publish the software blueprints as a book, thus ensuring that the international sale of the printed code would be protected under the First Amendment. Eventually, the FBI mysteriously dropped all charges and has to this day declined any explanation for the sudden change of heart.

A similar pattern of aggressive state intervention occurred between 1999 and 2001 with the release and attempted suppression of DeCSS, a short program designed to bypass access protection on commercial DVDs, enabling them to be played on Linux operating systems or outside of their specified region. This time, the hacker-based protests were more widespread. Following the arrest of Norwegian teenager Jon Johansen for his involvement in its development, some hackers in the United States who shared or published the code were

sued under the Digital Millennium Copyright Act—a copyright statute passed in 1998 forbidding the cracking of digital rights management. This criminalization led to a then unprecedented surge of protest activity among hackers, particularly free software developers, across both Europe and North America. In addition to street demonstrations, many began to share the code as a knowing provocation, a form of civil disobedience: they republished DeCSS online, rewrote the original program in different computer languages, and printed the DeCSS code on T-shirts. Some enacted even craftier forms of protest. One hacker, Seth Schoen (2001), rewrote the program mathematically as a haiku, or, to be more exact, as 465 individual haiku strung together into one epic poem. Meant for the judges overseeing the legal cases, Schoen passionately defended what he dually described as "controversial math" and poetry. His text implores,

> Reader, see how yet
> technical communicants
> deserve free speech rights;
>
> see how numbers, rules,
> patterns, languages you don't
> yourself speak yet,
>
> still should in law be
> protected from suppression,
> called valuable speech!

Although this poem was authored individually, it joined a more collective insistence that free speech rights pertain also to acts of writing, releasing, and sharing code (Coleman 2013).

Still, while the DeCSS legal imbroglio and its activist outcomes became known to most every geek, hacker, civil liberties lawyer, and radical librarian at the time of its unfolding, constituting what is now popularly known as the "digital rights movement" (Postigo 2012), it received scant coverage in the mainstream media, and its implications never really found purchase in the broader public consciousness. That type of colossal media coverage would only emerge a decade or so later, as names and figures such as WikiLeaks, Chelsea Manning, Julian Assange, Anonymous, Aaron Swartz, and Edward Snowden came to the fore. Alternatively supported by their hacker brethren and despised by many in power, these figures nonetheless became household names across the Western world.

WikiLeaks's release of the "Collateral Murder" war video in April of 2010, followed by a large slab of diplomatic cables, set the course of hacker politics in a new direction, catapulting figures such as Chelsea Manning—who was revealed to have leaked the content to WikiLeaks—to global prominence. Beginning in 2011, Anonymous's wily media-spectacular actions made it clear that this sudden gush of direct action and political activity would continue to flow for years.

Yet just like the previous generation of hackers, these figures were not spared the attention of authorities. Chelsea Manning was sentenced to 35 years of US military imprisonment; Aaron

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6. "Geraldo Rivera Browbeats Craig Neidorf," RDFRN, http://www.rdfrn .com/totse/en/hack/legalities_of_hacking/geraldo.html (accessed June 23, 2015).

Swartz took his own life after he found himself threatened with a ludicrous 35-year prison sentence for downloading academic articles; and scores of Anonymous activists, such as Jeremy Hammond, faced arrest and imprisonment for a range of hacking charges. Indeed, sometimes the powers brought to bear on them were of an unprecedented calibre, marshaling geographically extensive state forces, as in the cases of Wiki-Leaks and Edward Snowden. Both Julian Assange and Edward Snowden currently sit in an exiled legal limbo, in Ecuador's London embassy and in Russia, respectively, because of the coordinated efforts of multiple Western states to prosecute them.

Yet in one regard the response today has been markedly different. Rather than ignoring or demonizing the legal plights of these hackers, media outlets have instead publicized these cases widely and sometimes sympathetically (Thorsen, Sreedharan, and Allan 2013). Meanwhile, producers of popular cultural media now routinely portray these hackers as laudable heroes or antiheroes. Television shows such as *Mr. Robot*, *House of Cards*, *The Good Wife*, and *Homeland* feature prominent and powerful hacker characters. Films such as *Who Am I* offer similar treatments. And documentary films sympathetic to these figures, such as Laura Poitras's Academy Award–winning *Citizenfour*, are now capable of earning the West's highest cultural honours. This dual push of cultural celebration and authoritarian crackdown seems only, thus far, to have swelled the ranks of hacker activists, maintaining the state antagonism that prompts reaction while elsewhere popularly celebrating those who react.

Ever since, the most overt protests or fights engaged by hackers—such as WikiLeaks's aggressive quest for radical press freedom or Anonymous's contributions to all the major social revolutions transpiring in 2011—have drawn in hosts of sympathetic allies and bedfellows, extending the reach of their original interventions into increasingly diverse domains. Spurred on by these exceptional events, many hackers previously wary of political involvement—and many of their less technical but no less geeky cousins, too—are involved in full-blown activist and political organizing.

The Liberal and Radical Politics of Hacking

Now that we have identified the circumstances that prompt some hackers to take a political stand, it is worth considering the tone and tenor of this political engagement itself. When hackers do act, what is it they are fighting for? And how does it link with broader political trends and traditions? If hackers are not the libertarians they are so often painted as, what are they? Social anarchists? Rebels without a cause? Reformist liberals? There is no single answer to this question, but an examination of the way hackers engage with the law might at least give us some hints. And here, too, we find more nuance than a blanket antiauthoritarianism might suggest. After all, code functions, in many ways, as a law unto itself.

Hackers do not only hold an exhaustively antagonistic relationship to the law but also at times a scholarly, even cooperative one. As I have argued elsewhere, a homologous relationship exists between the craft of writing code and intuiting legal texts: the modes of reasoning required to write code are similar to those needed for parsing a formal, rule-based system such as the law (Coleman 2013). While many hackers hold nothing but contempt for the unjust laws and prosecutorial abuses of which they are often the target, they nevertheless display enormous interest in and facility with legal principles and statutes.

Hackers have been known to use this dexterity with the law in the service of social change both by diagnosing, avoiding, and arguing against laws they deem bad and, as in the case of free software, by detouring existing laws to assure their productive freedom. But the faculty can be seen as more broadly useful still. While the following excerpt by historian E. P. Thompson describes the saturation of the law in eighteenth-century English society, it could equally be applied to the more general state of the Western world today.

> I found that law did not keep politely to a "level" but was at every bloody level; it was imbricated within the mode of production and productive relations themselves . . . and it was simultaneously present in the philosophy of Locke; it intruded brusquely within alien categories, reappearing be-wigged and gowned in the guise of ideology; . . . it was an arena of politics and politics was one of its arms; it was an academic discipline, subjected to the rigour of its own autonomous logic; it contributed to the definition of self-identity both of rulers and of ruled; above all, it afforded an arena for class struggle, within which alternative notions of law were fought out. (Thompson 1978:96)

For hackers, the law is more than a friend or a foe: it is their reality. And this tight relation between hacking and the law has afforded an arena for many instances of struggle and avoidance, even if not always class related. Hackers both fight for alternative notions of the law and insist on the realization of cherished legal principles that they believe have been corrupted. One class of legal precepts in particular, those of civil liberties—privacy and free speech—have settled so deeply into the cultural and technical sinews of hacking that much of their advocacy is almost inseparable from the idea of the hacker itself.

We can see this civil liberties acculturation at work in Edward Snowden's justification for releasing NSA documents detailing the pervasive citizen surveillance deployed by the American and British governments. Hiding out in a Hong Kong hotel room, in an interview with journalist Glenn Greenwald he explained,

> I remember what the Internet was like before it was being watched. . . . You could have children from one part of the world having an equal discussion . . . where they were sort of granted the same respect for their idea in conversation with experts in a field from another part of the world on any topic. . . . It was free and unrestrained. And we've seen the chilling of that and the cooling and the changing of that

model toward something in which people self-police their views. … It has become an expectation they are being watched. It limits the boundaries of their intellectual exploration. And I am more than willing to *risk imprisonment* than the curtailment of my intellectual freedom.[7]

For Snowden, the Internet ought to be a medium to actualize unhampered exchange of ideas and free thinking. For those of a similar mind to Snowden, a concern for civil liberties is not separate or supplemental to an engagement with these technologies: it is constitutive of the experience itself. Snowden may be exceptional, insofar as he took on enormous risk to expose the current depth of surveillance, but his vision of the Internet as a "a moral order," as Chris Kelty (2008) puts it, is one shared by countless geeks. The hacker commitment to civil liberties demonstrates a commitment to their own existence as an entity—what Kelty (2008) defines as a recursive public, which includes the necessary liberties to pursue self-defined cultural and technical activity.

Given the hacker interest in civil liberties, many of contemporary hacker-led political endeavors also align with and even directly bolster liberal or libertarian aspirations. There are many such examples, including the chartering of Pirate Parties, designed to partake in liberal democratic politics (Beyer 2014; Burkart 2014) or the watchdog functions of associations such as the German-based Chaos Computer Club, who routinely work with journalists in various capacities (Kubitschko 2015). The exemplary case of such a liberal agenda is civic hacking, which aims to develop tools that can solve problems inherent to the current Western political order. While this sometimes means enhancing local services, it also involves attempts to increase government transparency and accountability by making data and processes more readily available (Schrock 2016).

Other hackers rely on civil liberties to incubate a more radical disposition, working to carve out pockets of autonomy or alterity (Söderberg 2007; Wark 2004). Adherents of free software, for instance, are able to build software in commercial or noncommercial settings without ever losing control of the material they produce. Anonymous, in discouraging and criticizing fame seeking and social peacocking, enacts a critical practice of egalitarianism and solidarity (Coleman 2015), maintaining a critical space in popular social media platforms for those whose ethics deviate sharply from the logic of individualized branding (Marwick and boyd 2011).

Elsewhere hacker politics take more resistive forms that are outright contrary or antagonistic to liberalism and capitalism. There are many such examples of self-avowed anarchist, socialist, and Marxist hackers who build tools and support systems for more radical forms of autonomy and sometimes advance revolutionary projects aimed at systemic change (see Juris 2008; Milan 2013; Wolfson 2014). One of the most muscular of these endeavors is Indymedia, a robust alternative me-

dia initiative that has inspired countless copycats in its wake. Conceived by hackers involved in planning the large-scale demonstrations during the 1999 World Trade Organization convention in Seattle, these hacker-organizers anticipated that the mainstream media would hijack the representations of protest activity through tactics of simplification or distortion. They opted to develop an entirely alternative media system rooted in a novel content management system that allowed them to embed videos and photos into their online reports years before pundits (incorrectly) celebrated web 2.0 companies for inventing such functionality. With these tools it was hoped that protest organizers and rabble-rousers could bypass the media to become the media.

At the height of its operations, the Indymedia technical team, spread across the globe, maintained over a couple hundred journalism centers. These material forces helped propel the broader social justice movement outward across space and forward in time. And in so doing, a tight-knit network of revolutionary hackers was constituted—one that has continued to exist into the present, long after the counterglobalization movement was itself relegated to the annals of protest history.

This hacker-cohort has since erected an alternative technical backbone to the commercial Internet, one built on a principled refusal to monitor its users in the manner now normal for Internet corporations offering supposedly free services (Milberry 2014). This infrastructure relies on a sizable roster of independently run Internet service providers, many of which are organized around consensus-based, anarchist principles. Around 28 exist across the world, and their names bear the imprint of radical sensibilities: cybrigade, squat.net, systemausfall.org, flag.blackened.net, hackbloc.org, mutualaid.org, riseup.net, resist.ca, entodaspartes.org, MayFirst, and so on. The largest of this cluster is the US-based Riseup. Chartered by some of the same hackers who founded Indymedia, the collective provides secure e-mail and mailing list services to a user base that is made up of both technologists and leftist organizations whose political agenda is often not anchored in technology itself. Riseup members state that technology is not an end in itself but rather an "aid in the creation of a free society, a world with freedom from want and freedom of expression, a world without oppression or hierarchy, where power is shared equally."[8]

These engagements show that the ideological sensibilities that animate hacker politics are diverse: just as we can locate liberal hackers and projects, so too can we identify radical hackers and projects and see how both engender social change. While a commitment to civil liberties can be seen as something of a universal among politically minded hackers, the reasons for this commitment can vary. While liberals treat civil liberties as the essential condition of individual rights and mainstream political participation (or access, or voice), radical hackers see civil liberties such as free speech and privacy as the gateway

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7. Excerpt from the documentary *Citizenfour*, directed by Laura Poitras (2014, Toronto: Praxis), emphasis added.

8. "About us," Riseup.net, https://help.riseup.net/about-us.

to more substantive projects that aim to enable equality and justice.[9] And as one might expect, wherever the socialist and anarchist left is more represented in society—such as in Spain, Italy, Greece, Croatia, and Argentina—so too are leftist hacker projects more present and robust (Bazzichelli 2013; Corsin Jimenez and Estalella 2016; Maxigas 2012). Some of these characteristics can be explained simply. The ideological division of political sensibilities among hackers often mirrors dominant and regional political patterns, but only up to a point. Other characteristics related to hacker tactics and political sociability are more particular and imminent to the sphere of hacking itself.

While making information publicly available and debating it are undeniably supported by most hackers, many projects—notably WikiLeaks and Anonymous—challenge the core liberal fantasy that status quo channels of debate and official, legally sanctioned domains of politics (notably the electoral party system) are sufficient to catalyze change. Hacker tactics—as evinced by tool making, legal reformulation, leaking, whistle-blowing, and especially direct action hacking—demonstrate a more forthright, hands-on engagement with politics than might be implied by their embrace of civil liberties. Indeed, time and again, hacker interventions exceed liberal publicity and enter squarely into the realm of action—sometimes even principled illegal direct action.[10]

Hackers also distinguish themselves by their avid embrace of political intersectionality: hackers exhibit a high degree of tolerance for working across ideological lines. In many projects, pragmatic judgments often trump ideological ones—leading to situations where, say, an anticapitalist anarchist might work in partnership with a liberal social democrat without friction or sectarian infighting. Let me illustrate with an eminent case: self-professed anarchist hacker Jeremy Hammond is now serving a decade-long stint in jail for acts of computer intrusion and corporate sabotage coordinated with colleagues under the mantle of Anonymous. Hammond dedicated most of his adult existence to demolishing capitalism and the liberal state, aiming to engender a more egalitarian society through all sorts of anarchist and environmental political endeavors, often in ways that had nothing to do with technology. But as a hacker, his interest was piqued by the activist activities of Anonymous. Initially he refused to contribute, put off by the crass and often racist language tolerated among the Anonymous ranks. But

over time his views shifted as he began to judge the merits of Anonymous in terms of its hacking accomplishments and not its style of discourse. Ultimately, his decision to join forces with Anonymous was based on a pragmatic calculus: the actions being executed mattered more than the absence of clearly articulated democratic visions and goals.[11]

In my 15 years of research on hackers I have seen similar logics and forms of reasoning at work numerous times. To be sure, notable exceptions abound: many of the leftist technology collectives discussed above restrict membership because of issues of trust. And political infighting has at times erupted over linguistic minutia—as in the Free and Open Source Software movement, where one contingent accuses another of having adopted the term "open" as an alternative to "free" in the late 1990s as a way to attract funding from investors made nervous by more explicit political language (Berry 2008).

But in a striking number of endeavors—in activism, in piracy, in software development, and beyond—hackers avoid defining (and thus policing) the broadly defined ideologies that all their participants must share (see Postill 2014 for a discussion of pragmatism and political hacking). While, as in the case of Debian, they frequently define policies, codes of conduct, and even requisite skills and knowledge, rarely does this extend to the level of political belief. In some cases, this political agnosticism, as I have termed it elsewhere (Coleman 2013), follows from a drive to configure project goals narrowly, often around technical or civil liberties goals alone. In other instances, as with Anonymous, a more radical form of impurity is perceptible: defining Anonymous within delineated political parameters would be tantamount to confining and strangling its very purpose and spirit.

It would be overly simplistic to claim that the distinct forms that hacker politics assume—the tendency for hackers to supplement publicity with deeds and their accentuated willingness to work across ideological differences—follow in any deterministic way from the craft and craftiness of hacking, from the fact that hackers are avid makers and problem solvers with an antiauthoritarianism and crafty bent, but it would be equally simplistic to entirely discount them in our accounting of the contemporary shape of hacker politics.

Conclusion: Weapons of the Geek

We have seen that hackers perform politics in a variety of ways, engaging in politics for a variety of purposes, with a variety of ends in mind: from liberal, civic engagements designed to enhance government statecraft to anarchic attempts to develop software and communities that exist outside of the capitalist economy and its concomitant liberal political institutions. In

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9. See Keizer (2012) for a defense of privacy on socialist grounds.

10. Darin Barney (2013) convincingly argues that WikiLeaks, so identified with a liberal project of publicity, in fact sharply deviates from a liberal logic, instead relying on tactics that exceed debate and also threaten the very core of liberal governance. A distinct though related—and perceptive—argument has been posed by Johan Söderberg (2013), who notes that even though hackers are wedded to theories of technological determinism, they nevertheless still engage in collective action to fight for change. He not only highlights the disjuncture between deterministic ideas and hacker political practices but also examines how theories of determinism can form the very impetus for action.

11. As a graduate student rightly reminded me during a workshop, pragmatism itself can work ideologically; indeed, it can be thus posed as a core hacker political sensibility. It is still worthwhile to highlight how this embrace of pragmatism, however it is defined, allows for some hackers to work together in spite of holding different political goals and aims.

spite of these differences, central to the contemporary intensification of hacker politics have been a handful of events—what historian Bill Sewell (2005) calls "critical events." These exceptional moments have been crucial in setting the politics of hacking on a new path not only for the changes they immediately trigger but also for their ability to serve as models for emulation. The early days of hacking saw a smattering of such episodes, but the most recent ones cataloged above—beginning with WikiLeaks, followed by a burst of multiyear activity from Anonymous, and being capped off, finally, with Snowden's megaleak—have far surpassed them in terms of geopolitical weightiness.

Still, it would not do to overemphasize the importance of these critical events alone: without the shared sociocultural conditions inventoried in this piece, such events would have been less likely to manifest themselves, or at least so explosively. The particular forms that contemporary hacker political activities take are necessarily heterogeneous, but the attributes addressed here constitute a shared set of cultural practices, sensibilities, and even political tactics that are helpful to consider under a general rubric: "weapons of the geek." This is a modality of politics that obviously sits in direct contrast to the "weapons of the weak," a term the political scientist and anthropologist James Scott (1985) used in his book of the same name to capture the unique nature of clandestine peasant politics. While weapons of the weak embody tactics used by economically marginalized populations—small-scale illicit acts, such as foot dragging and vandalism—that do not appear on their surface to be political, weapons of the geek encompass a range of political interventions—recognized as such—and exercised by a class of privileged and visible actors who often lie at the center of economic life.[12]

To those familiar with Scott's work, connecting hackers with some of the poorest and most exploited members of society—with the subaltern—may strike one as ironic or just plain misguided. But what Scott's work on weapons of the weak so masterfully displayed was that political formations of resistance often exhibit both a logic and artistry tied to concrete material and historical conditions. As craftspeople, hackers develop independent habits of critical thinking, build autonomous communities and infrastructures, and engage with law to reform or even negate it in ways to assert their rights to be hackers; closely related, craftiness and antiauthoritarianism are not only commensurable with the types of direct action and law-breaking tactics common to hacker politics today but also help explain why a portion of hackers are willing to take on such risk in the first place.

But for these conditions and characteristics to exert influence, they must exist widely, reflected in the life histories not of

a handful of individuals but a larger mass of hackers. In fact, PW—the Toronto-based Dutch hacker discussed in the opening of this essay who was so certain of the role played by technologies and events as political motivators—himself possesses a biography laden with the sociocultural cues and attributes covered in this essay. This is evident even from a glance at his LinkedIn page, where along with his many professional work experiences, he lists a diverse set of volunteer affiliations, with a range of free spaces, informal hacker collectives, engineering associations, liberal nonprofits, and policy organizations:

Working Group Chair, Document Editor, Participant of IETF [Internet Engineering Task Force]

member, Electronic Frontier Foundation

Cryptographer, Cypherpunks

Co-Founder, HackLab.TO

Founding Member, The Libreswan Project

member, Hippies from Hell [hacker] Collective

Like PW, many hackers of the weapons of the geek family hold multiple relationships to each other through collective projects and free spaces; in his case, PW has participated in a number of these groups for over a decade. Nevertheless, had I featured someone else, say, an avowedly leftist hacker, her list would likely include a smattering of technical projects but also leftist hack labs or anarchist technology collectives. Geeks and hackers are not bound to a singular political sentiment or even format, and they certainly do not agree on how social change should proceed. But what they all have in common is that their political tools, and to a lesser degree their tactical sensibilities—their willingness to work across political lines and for a smaller number, their willingness to engage in risky illegal acts of direct action—emerge from the concrete experiences of their craft.

Still, under less auspicious conditions, the bloom of hacker politics of today could tomorrow wilt and wither away. One of the many threats to hacker politicization comes in the form of a particular breed of commercial culture: that of Silicon Valley–style entrepreneurship. While this ideology of development emerged from California, it has now diffused itself to major metropolitan centers across the globe, including New York, Austin, Denver, Boston, Shanghai, London, and Berlin (see Barbrook and Cameron 1996; Marwick 2013; Neff 2012; Turner 2006). Autonomous hacker sensibilities and projects have long been and are routinely co-opted by these economic forces, aesthetically adopted for corporate imperatives in hackathons (Irani 2015), or colonized outright by incentivizing individual professionalization and careerism (Delfanti and Söderberg 2015).

Just how this relationship will unfold remains to be seen. In a great many instances, steady employment can grant security

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12. For a thoughtful and detailed discussion of how distinct political tactics of hackers, including leaking, breaching, pirating, and DDoSing, interface with different modalities of power, see Rosado-Murillo and Kelty (2017).

and leisure time to engage in noncommercial projects. And there is a revered tradition among leftist hackers to poach time at work to build and maintain autonomous hacker infrastructure—an easy enough feat to pull off, because managers lacking technical training are unable to tell the difference between one green matrix and another. But the more regions that adopt the particular strains of Bay Area technology culture—which requires significant investments of personal time and paints capitalist-based technological work as politically progressive—the greater the hazard it will be to the reproduction of hacker politics.

Still, despite this (and other) threats, what has been extraordinary about the last 5 years especially is that a sizeable number of hackers increasingly recognize that their rights—and the rights of others—will not be protected unless they engage in wilful political action of the sort that exceeds an inward-facing set of concerns. What this transformation—from securing an inward-facing form of craft autonomy to a more robust outward-facing sphere of political activities—shows us that events are not enough, technologies are not enough, commitments to technology are not enough, individuals are not enough, and free spaces and communities are not enough: what is needed is the dense accretion of all these things. It is the ensemble of all these pieces that constitutes the resources and infrastructure suited to nourishing a desire for and ability to act politically—if and when the right historical circumstances arise.

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Speculative Authorship in the City of Fakes

by Winnie Won Yin Wong

In this paper I examine, on the one hand, an urban rumor about the city of Shenzhen, China, circulated within Hong Kong and American public and popular media, and, on the other, rumors within European and American scientific communities about scientific authorship at the world's largest genomics sequencing firm, which also happens to be located in that same city. I describe two sets of rumors connected to each other by themes of surveillance, science, technology, bodily leisure, and intellectual labor and simply locate them at the site that is their subject. In so doing, I aim not only to falsify cultural imaginaries about this Chinese city and its dystopian reputation as the "city of fakes" in global public culture but also to examine how and why this site so productively spawns gradations of the truth-value and illicitness, attending to the particular configurations of "fact" and human capital that this city, as a site of technologized bioproduction, inaugurates.

Believe Me

Everything you can imagine exists here. Everything you cannot imagine exists here. I've seen everything there is to see, but there's still so much I've never seen! (A Shenzhen "blue"-market driver[1])

There is an urban rumor circulating in Hong Kong about its neighbor, the city of Shenzhen, that is so believable it was circulated in 2007 as an MP3 recording of a radio program purporting to be a firsthand account from a call-in listener. It goes like this. One day two young Hong Kong women head to Shenzhen for a day of shopping and leisure. They flop down at a nail salon for a manicure-pedicure. At some point, one of them gets up to go to the bathroom. Over 10 minutes go by, but she does not return. Her friend, and even the two beauticians, begin to worry. They all head to the bathroom to look for her. But when they get there, all they find is her body on the floor, sliced opened down the middle, all her organs gone.[2]

The call-in listener to the Hong Kong radio program who tells this story—a "friend of a friend"—describes the aftermath of going up to Shenzhen to identify and retrieve the victim's body. In breathless but resigned tones, he explains to the radio host that, during that sleepless night spent in the Shenzhen police station, the police officers told him, well, in these Shenzhen nail salons, they take your nail clippings and run them upstairs. That's where they have the machines that do the DNA analysis. If they identify you as a genetic match

for someone rich, they'll kill you in the bathroom and harvest all of your organs. All in under 15 minutes. "Who knows if it's true," the friend of a friend tells the radio host, "but that's what they said." Like all urban legends, this Chinese DNA-analysis version of what folklorists have called the 1990s "kidney heist" has itself many variations: sometimes it is a hair salon, sometimes it is a shopping mall, sometimes the victim is attacked with a drugged needle, sometimes with a poisonous gas.[3] As with all popular Hong Kong urban leg-

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1. This Shenzhen driver made his colorful remark at the end of a 2-hour discussion in which he recounted the history of illegal border-crossing schemes used at the Shenzhen Second Line and the Hong Kong border. Field notes, December 1, 2008, Shenzhen.

2. A blog dated August 14, 2007, on a Hong Kong citizen journalism site (东方互动) posts the recording and lists various versions of the rumor circulated by e-mail (http://ireport.on.cc/p/b5/web/Detail.jsp?bid = 9442). At the time, I had also been forwarded by e-mail the unsourced audio recording as an MP3 file from relatives and friends in Hong Kong who were alarmed by my plans to conduct fieldwork in Shenzhen. An undated blog post on the mainland social media site renren.com also posts and details that same recording (http://blog.renren.com/share/229430637/1803498045). The rumor persisted in Hong Kong until at least 2010, when it appeared again in the *High Fly Post* (vol. 20, no. 4, editorial, p. 10), a student newspaper of Hong Kong University of Science and Technology, where this time the heist is set in the Dongmen shopping district in Shenzhen (http://issuu.com/hkustsu_eb/docs/hfp_20_4/10). The same audio recording was still being posted on a Hong Kong forum in 2010, with at least one poster responding with incredulity that people are still falling for this urban legend (http://www.uwants.com/viewthread.php?tid = 10213013).

3. For a comprehensive account of "organ theft legends" or the "kidney heist" as circulated in Europe, America, and Latin America in the 1990s, see Campion-Vincent (2005). Importantly, Campion-Vincent distinguishes these legends from the actual international organ trade. For a scholarly study of that trade as well as biopiracy and transplant tourism, see Scheper-Hughes (2002). Note, however, that in the Shenzhen organ theft legends there is a nuanced reversal of the consumer politics of organ theft as described by

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ends about the dangers of visiting Shenzhen, the victims are always women momentarily tricked into being separated from their female companions.[4]

Shenzhen, the model city of the global factory regime so famously built on the labor of young migrant women (Lee 1998; Ngai 2005; Ngai and Chan 2012), has in recent years upskilled itself into the world's maker of very high-tech products, sequenced DNA data among them. Straddling the agrarian, industrial, and postindustrial eras in the working lives of just one generation, geographically the city is divided by a variety of political boundaries that create a series of spaces in which populations can be defined and treated in relation to global market forces, a condition that resembles what the anthropologist Aihwa Ong has called the state strategy of "graduated sovereignty" (Ong 2000:66). In Shenzhen and Hong Kong, these boundaries operationalized relative surplus values across the city and the region, which in turn became the drivers of the spectacular economic transformations of post-Mao China. Locating particular practices (and rumors) in delineated spaces in Shenzhen is thus central to understanding how transformations—from waste to profit, from rural to urban, from socialism to capitalism, from truth to fiction—are possible, and indeed prolific, in this part of China.

The Shenzhen Special Economic Zone is bounded by two borders. The first border, and the most stringently enforced, is the formerly international Sino-British boundary separating Shenzhen, the "Special Economic Zone," from Hong Kong, the "Special Administrative Region," so recategorized in 1997 at the end of British colonial rule over Hong Kong. Today this is the quasi-international boundary of China's "One Country, Two Systems" policy, holding together the

two newly created exceptions to the post–Cold War world order; currently, the "Special Economic Zone" and "Special Administrative Region" denote urban zones where economic and political policy have been temporarily bifurcated from the governing ideologies of the Communist Party of China. Now crossed daily and habitually by the rising Shenzhen middle class and the declining Hong Kong middle class (Hirsh 2016), the Shenzhen–Hong Kong border is the interface of post-Mao Communist China with the global financial markets and neoliberal values (such as democracy) via Hong Kong's newfound postcolonial but antinationalist cosmopolitanism.

The second border lies inside the city of Shenzhen itself. Colloquially called the "Second Line," it is an internal administrative border managed by eight (later 15) official (and many unofficial) checkpoints that separate Shenzhen's Special Economic Zone from the city's other urban districts (Ma and Blackwell, forthcoming). Enforced with flexible irregularity throughout its history, this political architecture created and controlled the illicit migrant labor that powered China's manufacturing boom. It is at this boundary that the institutionalized status of the rural-to-urban migrant—as predetermined by the national Chinese regime of household registration (*hukou*)—interfaces with post-Mao experimental policies in labor flexibility, global capital flows, and private property, all of which were inaugurated in the exceptional administrative space of the Shenzhen Special Economic Zone. The creation of the city of Shenzhen is the forefront and the emblem of the Chinese economic miracle, but the miracle itself is the product of that regime of differentiation in which global market forces were created, (un)administered, and (un)policed at those borders.

These two hugely complex boundaries nevertheless only partially account for the unique political architecture of the region, for within Shenzhen itself, inhabitants have continually witnessed the creation of both visible and invisible boundaries in the city's urban form and administration. Districts, neighborhoods, street-level offices, villages, and towns have been continually created in the city's short 36-year history even as the administrative powers of these multiple layers of government have changed before they could even be documented (O'Donnell 2001). With each reterritorialization, a new experiment in labor, land, and knowledge management was put into action. Meanwhile, the quasi-official and sometimes invisible boundaries between the formerly rural urbanized villages (*chengzhongcun*) and the urban-administered "city" that stitches them together persist and remain one of the most powerful social forces in the city (Bach 2010, 2011).

District by district, neighborhood by neighborhood, these boundaries create the operational illegalities and illicit activities that have become the basis of capital flows and labor exploitation but have also created new legalities, new values, and new subjectivities. Such stratifications of and across the city of Shenzhen make possible the fertile productions that I address in this paper in the realm of scientific authorship in genomics research that the city spectacularly launched in

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Scheper-Hughes, where "all of this field research confirms the existence of a new form of apartheid medicine that privileges one class of patients, organ recipients, over another class of unrecognized patients, organ donors, about whom almost nothing is known" (68). In Hong Kongers' telling of the legends, it is the theft victims who are privileged as a class of knowable victims (Hong Kongers), while it is Shenzheners (and mainland Chinese by extension) who are collectively stigmatized as an undifferentiated class of killers, kidnappers, and thieves.

4. The Shenzhen version of the kidney heist (sans DNA analysis) as circulated by Hong Kongers usually takes place in a bathroom in the shopping mall most frequented by Hong Kongers, Luohu Shopping Center at the Luohu border crossing, or at Dongmen, a pedestrian shopping street. By 2006, the Shenzhen bathroom version of the kidney heist had already reached a New Yorker, who posted a question about this "common problem" on Tripadvisor (http://www.tripadvisor.com/ShowTopic-g297415-i7681 -k856698-Organ_Harvesting_common_problem_in_bathrooms-Shenzhen _Guangdong.html). This and other long-standing urban legends circulated among Hong Kongers (and sometimes among mainland Chinese) about the dangers of visiting Shenzhen are rampant. The stories often involve kidnapping and organ theft and sometimes just ATM withdrawal heists (often said to be done under hypnosis or hypnotic gas). All of these stories share two features prominent in the nail salon legend: they are consistently told in the same performance context (e.g., by a "friend of a friend" of the victim), and the victims are always two women (mother/ daughter, two girlfriends, etc.).

2007 alongside its larger push into the "creative" and "knowledge" industries. The stratifications of distance, privilege, and access to knowledge enabled by the city's internal boundaries draw attention to the changing nature of truth-value itself by providing sites of production in which rumor, legend, and hype are manufactured alongside scientific facts.

Although virtually unknown to the American public, Shenzhen as specter of China has already seeped unnoticeably into the American imagination through the manufacturing firm Foxconn. Maker of all of Apple's popular devices and simultaneously those of all its competitors, Shenzhen exports these products and their components to world markets but either officially reimports them back into China with delays and tariffs to be sold at authorized or official Apple Stores, or allows them to be slipped back in through irregular channels. Those now gray-market products would be sold a district away from the Foxconn factory campus, in Huaqiangbei, a massive 20-block shopping street lined with skyscraper malls and warehouses where, alternatively, one may also buy innumerable variations of these same products. Many of these have ingenious new functions and design alterations, though of course the logos are not authorized by the strict standards of international intellectual property laws. For example, ever since the introduction of the first Apple iPhone, one could buy in Shenzhen an "iPhone" with two SIM-card slots—a very sensible innovation for the daily border-crossing lifestyle. In the late 2000s, throughout China such products would be celebrated as "shanzhai" or "guerilla appropriation," but this kind of creative reverse engineering has been the mainstay of Shenzhen's prolific manufacturing culture for over 30 years.

The guerrilla products of Huaqiangbei uphold Shenzhen's reputation as the "city of fakes" (Abbas 2008) in the realm of consumer technology, but this is a phenomenon that has metastasized throughout the city. Elsewhere in Shenzhen, we have, in Huanggang district, the "second-wife villages" (neighborhoods said to house the cross-border households of Hong Kong men's other wives). In Luohu are the malls and warehouses that are filled with knockoff designer handbags (and watches and jeans and sunglasses, etc.) familiar to Hong Kong's female shoppers. In Shekou, I have puzzled over perfectly legitimate factory-manufactured cars bought from authorized dealers but with inexplicably duplicated vehicle identification numbers. In Meiling, private hospitals offer unapproved experimental procedures. And in Dafen, one can get any painting copied with any signature on it (Wong 2014). Shenzhen is, in other words, a site of stratifications where every legitimate thing has numerous counterparts on the black, gray, and even "blue" markets, a place where the boundary between the licit and the illicit is erased by the magnitude of production.[5]

Many American journalists have described the contradiction of Shenzhen's apparent backwardness and its advanced industrialization, its huge labor power and insane speed, its freewheeling legal variance and its suspect morality (Hessler 2006; Hohn 2008). But, like the Hong Kong rumors, many American news media stories about Shenzhen turn out to be just as inventive as the products the city manufactures. In 2012, the American dramatist Mike Daisey titillated the American public with his theatrical monologue *The Agony and the Ecstasy of Steve Jobs* (2010), a screed on Apple's complicity in Chinese labor exploitation. It aired nationally on the public radio program *This American Life* in January 2012.[6] Daisey told dramatic firsthand stories of labor exploitation in the Foxconn factory in Shenzhen, stories that berated the guilt-ridden American consumer for desiring the very devices on which they were learning about the global injustice that makes possible their newness, perfection, and "affordability." Daisey's most compelling anecdote, published as a *New York Times* editorial and widely recirculated online, described a meeting he had with a disabled former Foxconn worker, who with his mangled hand ("smashed by a metal press") tries out an iPad for the first time (Daisey magnanimously lends him his own).[7] Stroking the touchscreen with his "ruined hand," Daisey breathlessly reports through his translator that this worker nevertheless called the iPad that maimed him "a kind of magic."[8] This is a powerful scene of inversion in which even the disabled worker cannot help but fetishize the very

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they are to be distinguished from "counterfeit taxis" (taxis that appear to be authorized taxis and displaying all the correct signage and logos but that are in fact counterfeit licenses and replica cars).

6. "Mr. Daisey and the Apple Factory," *This American Life*, January 6, 2012. *This American Life* removed the audio file of this episode from its web archive after retracting the story, but the transcript of the episode is available at http://www.thisamericanlife.org/radio-archives/episode/454 /transcript.

7. Mike Daisey, "Against Nostalgia," *New York Times*, October 6, 2011, op-ed sec. (http://www.nytimes.com/2011/10/06/opinion/jobs-looked-to -the-future.html?_r=2). Following news of the retraction, the *New York Times* removed the paragraph describing this encounter. However, it did not remove Daisey's entire op-ed, which includes other claims of suicides, 34-hour shifts, and "widespread beatings" at Foxconn. This selective removal suggests that other parts of Daisey's claims have been fact checked, and one hyperlink is provided to a short report in *Digital Trends* on a Foxconn's worker's death. There are, however, no links to give context to Daisey's "performative" work. I am not contesting the documented existence of worker exploitation at Foxconn, only noting that a theatrical dramatist who has been proven to invent journalistic fact remains here a source for the *New York Times* production of digital news. For a scholarly (e.g., nontheatrical) but activist study of Foxconn's labor practices, see Chan (2013). For an account of Foxconn workers' stories as presented by a Chinese (Shanghai) theatrical collective, see Bo Zheng ("An angry committed alliance," unpublished manuscript).

8. From the paragraph, later excised, from Mike Daisey, "Against Nostalgia," *New York Times*, October 6, 2011, op-ed sec. "I have traveled to southern China and interviewed workers employed in the production of electronics. I spoke with a man whose right hand was permanently

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5. A "blue" market in Shenzhen, e.g., exists in private car and driver services that might otherwise be regarded as black-market taxis in other Chinese cities. Though ostensibly illegal (as "gypsy cabs" or Uber are in some cities), they are not so illegal as black-market taxis, and moreover

commodity that disfigured him.[9] It works because the trope of abject bodily labor of Chinese manufacturing is juxtaposed with the illusory magic of technology, design, and storytelling, which is simultaneously the cause of the American consumer's guilt and his condescension.

It turned out, however, that Daisey had falsified this and most of the other encounters he detailed with Foxconn workers, and several weeks later, *This American Life* was forced to retract the most downloaded episode in its history. Host Ira Glass spent an entire follow-up episode humiliating Daisey for making up all the crucial events and then presenting his story as journalistic truth after only briefly apologizing that he and his staff had failed to fact check Daisey's story.[10] Glass did not belabor his own reasons for falling so completely for Daisey's fabrications, but absurdly it took National Public Radio's China-based reporter Rob Schmitz only a single Google search and a single phone call to identify Daisey's supposedly unreachable Shenzhen translator, "Kathy," who confirmed that Daisey's tale was almost entirely fabricated.[11]

In blaming the liar, however, let us not forget the widespread purchase such stories had across the United States, where Daisey's monologue had been performed to theatrical acclaim in Portland, Berkeley, Seattle, and New York,[12] printed in the *New York Times* editorial pages, and widely circulated, all before its hour-long airing on National Public Radio. Daisey's anecdotes were eminently believable—and indeed fervently retold—in American popular culture because they were part of a far larger discourse about Chinese factory work as a form of labor that by its alienation prompts fraud—the foil to the "manufacturing jobs" in America,

which always express instead the "heart" of the American nation. Perhaps not ironically, it is those who claim to be the most authentic (Daisey, Glass, and friends of a friend) who end up circulating the tallest tales.

For a China-based reporter like Rob Schmitz, the details that were not fact checked were hardly believable in the first place and absurdly easy to falsify. For example, those with even passing touristic familiarity with Shenzhen's electronics malls would likely know that touchscreen technology had been available on various kinds of mobile phones long before Apple's "revolutionary" iPhone. Indeed, touchscreen technology on mobile phones is much more functional for Chinese-character entry (by brushstroke), and, when featured on the unbranded mobile phones produced by Shenzhen's electronics market, were affordable enough to be used by Shenzhen's-migrant workers. Daisey's vivid story of a maimed Foxconn worker finding the touchscreen of an iPad "magical" in 2012 would have sounded absurd to anyone familiar with Shenzhen's inventive technology market or even the everyday life of its migrant workers. Nevertheless, Daisey's tale of Foxconn retains a truth-value of its own and no doubt will continue to circulate as such even among those who believe themselves ethically concerned with Chinese labor.

The fact that solidarity with the globalized working class today prompts leftist artists and labor advocates in the United States to invent firsthand witnessing of labor exploitation in China is a telling symptom of the failures of the liberal framework for understanding or even describing global labor today. Certainly pervasively secretive corporate, industrial, and governmental power can render even the most everyday lives of workers invisible to those dedicated to basic discovery. But how do we account for the continued production of the American ideological fantasy of the Chinese factory? What happens when we scrutinize the construction of (American) facts at the Chinese scene of labor?

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curled into a claw from being smashed in a metal press at Foxconn, where he worked assembling Apple laptops and iPads. I showed him my iPad, and he gasped because he'd never seen one turned on. He stroked the screen and marveled at the icons sliding back and forth, the Apple attention to detail in every pixel. He told my translator, 'It's a kind of magic.'"

9. "He's never actually seen one on, this thing that took his hand. I turn it on, unlock the screen, and pass it to him. He takes it. The icons flare into view. And he strokes the screen with his ruined hand, and the icons slide back and forth. And he says something to Kathy. And Kathy says, "He says it's a kind of magic" (http://www.thisamericanlife.org /radio-archives/episode/454/transcript).

10. Glass had stated in the first episode that "our staff spent weeks of fact checking to corroborate Daisey's findings." In the retraction episode, Glass explained that the staff accepted Daisey's claim that his translator was "unreachable" and never attempted to contact her. "Retraction," *This American Life*, March 16, 2012 (http://www.thisamericanlife.org/radio -archives/episode/460/retraction).

11. Daisey's implied defense was of course that truth and/or art outweigh straight facts. And indeed, as a masterful storyteller himself, Glass's unwillingness to explore that problem while trying to force a confession out of Daisey is itself troubling and aptly described by Jiayang Fan, "Mike Daisey's Pride," *New Yorker*, March 12, 2012, news (http:// www.newyorker.com/news/news-desk/mike-daiseys-pride).

12. Daisey's website later claimed that the piece has been performed "over two hundred times."

Laboratory Afar

It is no coincidence that 2007, the year the urban legend of the organ-harvesting nail salons was circulating in Hong Kong, was also the year that the largest genomics sequencing and bioinformatics institute in the world, BGI (华大基因/ *Huada jiying*), moved its headquarters from oppressively regulated Beijing to freewheeling Shenzhen. In the process, it secured a reported US$1.58 billion credit line from the China Development Bank (Normile 2012; Pomfret 2010). BGI also reportedly received a land grant in the newly created district of Yantian through the personal support of Shenzhen mayor Xu Zongzheng, who was soon after removed from office and convicted of corruption (for which he began in 2011 serving a suspended death-penalty sentence).

Founded in 1999 by four Chinese scientists, the then-named Beijing Genomics Institute was established with the modest goal of getting China to contribute a symbolic 1% to the Human

Genome Project.[13] This token participation of China in that American-led international project was completely overturned 10 years later when in 2010, in its Shenzhen incarnation, BGI was estimated to produce 25% of the world's genomic sequencing data (*Boss Town* 2011). In 2011, *Nature* forecast that BGI would be responsible for 10,000 to 20,000 of the 30,000 human genomes that would be sequenced in the world that year (Callaway 2011*b*). BGI's complete domination of the genomics sequencing field was made all but final when in 2013 it purchased the San Diego–based firm Complete Genomics, its biggest competitor.[14]

How was all this possible? In the American news media, stories of China's recent domination in any industry is accompanied with overtones (if not overt accusations) of fraud, labor exploitation, or state malfeasance.[15] In the Chinese news media, such stories are explained by the immense hard work of Chinese workers, the risk taking of a few pioneering individuals, and the globalization opportunities opened up by the state's correct reform policies. Both propagandas of course obscure the ways in which these narratives naturalize the mechanisms of "growth" even as they elude the historical frameworks that would reveal the injustice and disparities they breed. My assessment of the claims by and rumors about BGI will show how this firm achieved its startlingly impressive position neither through cynical fraud nor risk-taking ingenuity but rather by the highly creative "reverse engineering" so befitting of the city that adopted it. We will see how the firm first deconstructed and then leveraged Westerncentric traditions of scientific authorship to participate in the naturalized tale of economic and technological progress as it spectacularly contributes to the hype and promise of the city.

To understand BGI's sudden international dominance, we can begin with the apparatuses: in this case, the sequencers. BGI began its dominance in 2010 by using its US$1.58 billion Chinese bank loan to purchase 156 Illumina HiSeq 2000 sequencers, at the time the world's newest and fastest (Cyranoski 2010). Because most American and European research institutes owned no more than a handful of such machines, it is obvious how BGI easily surpassed the sequencing capacity of the entire United States, as the *Economist* put it in 2010.[16] Yet this numerical claim of dominance oversimplified the historical forces that made the technology transfer viable: the purchase of these machines from a San Diego company through a US$1.5 billion Chinese bank loan is at least partially made possible by Chinese ownership of American debt, itself a symptom of the American structure of consumer indebtedness by which American consumers purchase products (such as Apple iPads) made in Shenzhen. Simple claims of national competition, in other words, obscure the politics of the global movement of capital and technology across the same zones where laboring subjects are differentiated by their consuming rights and access to debt/credit.

However, capital and technology transfer are only a partial component of the story. BGI's sequencer capacity was so grand that a significant number of BGI's machines actually sit idle. Approximately 20 of them are housed in the headquarters facility to serve merely for display, for vanity projects,[17] or as the sole object to mark off the CEO's otherwise unremarkable cubicle from those of his employees.[18] Perhaps this surplus capacity represents only a brief pause in a longer-term ramping-up process, but their disuse is for now indicative of the necessity for human capital to "catch up" with the surplus apparatus capacities prompted by surplus credit. Thus, more important than BGI's surpassing of American ownership of machines is its assembly of 4,000 knowledge workers, the vast majority of whom are employed to perform the computationally intensive work necessary to analyze the vast amount of data generated by a single genetic sample. Of course, they can hardly do it fast enough.

Recruited out of Chinese universities, BGI claimed in 2010 that its huge bioinformatics team was processing six terabytes per day and by 2013 transferring one terabyte a day to their collaborators.[19] The informational analysis that BGI can produce at greater volume than anyone in Western universities and research institutions is the crux of its intervention in US and Eurocentric experimental science and knowledge production. As one of its executives promised, "If you want your data via FTP, or hard disk, we'll do that. We give you a report, annotation, mapping, analysis. Not just sequencing, we also do all the back end as well" (Davies 2010; Marx 2013). Thanks to

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13.   Beijing Genomics Institute is the firm's name in English. Its original Chinese name, 华大基因, which could be literally translated as "Greater China Genomics," did not change. According to Yang Huanming (BGI founder), it was through University of Washington geneticist Maynard Olson that they joined the Human Genome Project. They pledged to complete 500,000 reads of a segment of human chromosome 3, but they did not even have a single machine (Davies 2011).

14.   The purchase price was about US$117 million. Steve Dickman, "Genomes-R-Us: Is BGI Now Complete?," Xconomy, Exome, September 25, 2012   (http://www.xconomy.com/boston/2012/09/25/genomes-r-us-is-bgi-now-complete/2/); "BGI-Shenzhen Completes Acquisition of Complete Genomics: Combined Company to Focus on High Volume, Accurate Human Genomic Sequencing and Accelerating the Spread of Genomic Medicine" (http://www.completegenomics.com/news-events/press-releases/BGI-Shenzhen-Completes-Acquisition-of-Complete-Genomics-198854331.html; no longer posted).

15.   For example, see Pomfret (2010). Although ostensibly a report on BGI, this article includes general unsourced statements such as "plagiarism and doctored results seem to be as common as chopsticks," or "FBI officials allege that there is a large-scale operation in the United States to pilfer American industrial, scientific, technological, and military secrets."

16.   "The Dragon's DNA," *Economist*, June 17, 2010.

17.   Field notes, October 2008.

18.   *Sydney Morning Herald*, February 15, 2015.

19.   As of 2010, the firm offered a 500-node supercomputer that processed 10 terabytes of raw sequencing data every 24 hours as well as genome-analysis cloud computing services (Callaway 2011*a*; Marx 2013). According to BGI its data center would reach one exabyte of data storage by 2012–2013 and that in 2010 it spent $10 million on electricity annually (Davies 2010).

BGI, Western genomicists now need only identify an experimental problem, conceptualize the framework, gather and prepare the samples, and then cost-effectively outsource much of the technological and analytical labor necessary to produce a scientific paper.[20] As BGI declares on the website of its American office, "From sample to answer in as little as 7 days."[21] (Note that this is a little longer than the nail salons would need to harvest your organs.)

For those scientists without sufficient funding, BGI offers yet another solution: as one of their bosses put it, "give us the samples, we can fund everything, and then we *co-author the publication*" (Davies 2010, emphasis in original). What this means is that BGI offers deep discounts (up to 70% but sometimes even 100%) on its services for projects that it deems "interesting" and for which the authorship of the paper will be shared with BGI's scientists (Cyranoski 2010). In other words, we would be naive to mistake BGI for a for-profit genome factory trying to scrap the bottom of the supply chain of funding-strapped Western science.[22] On the contrary, it has successfully intervened in the material process of how scientific knowledge is produced—that is, as Latour and Woolgar (1979) observed, in the production of scientific literature. Thus, like budding scientists anywhere, BGI's set out to acquire legitimacy and recognition by publishing as quickly and voluminously as possible in the two premiere journals *Science* and *Nature*. Rather pragmatically, BGI offers the global scientific community hefty discounts on its sequencing and bioinformatics services in exchange for coauthorship on scientific publications.

Though it first outraged some scientists (spawning more rumors about Chinese state intrusion into "true science"), BGI's "fee for service" offer was eventually taken up by scientists throughout Europe and North America at all the major research institutions. It was soon understood that the higher the likelihood that the paper would be accepted by either *Science* or *Nature*, the lower BGI's price for sequencing would be. In some cases, the degree of authorship (e.g., first, second, or last author) that a scientist was willing to share with BGI employees appeared as though it might be useful in price negotiations. For BGI, the tangible result was an initially eye-popping but now fairly regular slate of publications coauthored by its very young employees. This conquest of scientific literature production was

proudly displayed in BGI headquarters' corporate museum, revamped in 2012 to feature a wall display of *Science* and *Nature* offprints of publications in which its employees were named as coauthors. As an indication of the bravado this is intended to convey, these offprints were exhibited alongside a tall glass case of mementos from the time BGI's CEO and key subordinates climbed Mount Everest. *Nature* reported that in 2012 alone, BGI was listed in more than 100 publications, that it worked with over 10,000 collaborators, and by 2014, BGI claimed to have coauthored over 600 papers.[23]

BGI's blatant openness with its offer of lower-cost service in exchange for shared authorship first alarmed the Western scientific community because it appeared to violate many presumptions about the sanctity and ethics of scientific authorship, which historically has been tied to both credit and responsibility for the discovery of natural facts. Yet we should be aware that BGI's new practices were introduced during a period in which nearly all values attached to Western scientific authorship had already long been under serious question, particularly in the "big" sciences (Biagioli and Galison 2003). As Biagioli and Galison have described, this is a period in which 2,000 authors regularly appear on papers produced through CERN, where, for example, the Collider Detector at Fermilab maintains a standard authors list consisting of hundreds of authors who must be listed as authors on any paper related to observations from the device—even when those individuals have been away from the lab for up to 1 year either before or after the specific research findings utilized in the paper itself (Biagioli 2003:270–271). This is also a period in which scientific publication as a measure of intellectual work itself is under question even as Nobel Prizes remain limited to three winners (even in fields with thousand-author papers),[24] as the peer review system is openly criticized and as open-source websites such as arXiv.org have become the first and primary place to publish in fields such as theoretical physics and mathematics.

What BGI added to this heady world of thousand-author authorship was, in effect, the conversion of a credit economy into a commodified, money economy that appears to subvert what Mario Biagioli has described as long-held notions of scientific authorship as a gift (in exchange for sponsoring, enabling, or assisting in the discovery) or as credit and responsibility for facts that exist in nature and that cannot be owned (Biagioli 1998). BGI's "fee for service" practice openly converts honorific values into monetary equivalents, quantifying the value of "collaboration" underlying the production of scientific facts. Yet because modern scientific authorship was exchanged as gift and yet contained within it credit and responsibility, BGI's offer to exchange authorship for quantifiable discounts in service

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20. "With help from their colleagues in China, led by Jun Wang at the BGI . . . , Willerslev's team pushed ahead at breakneck speed, completing the sequencing in about two and a half months at a cost of around US$500,000. Wang, a deputy director of the BGI and co-senior author, was able to provide the Willerslev group with unparalleled access to sequencing capacity" (Rex Calton, "DNA Secrets of the Ice Hair," *Nature*, February 10, 2010 [http://www.nature.com/news/2010/100210/full/news.2010.64.html]).

21. BGI Americas' home page (http://bgiamericas.com/).

22. As Huanming Yuan, a BGI founder, put it, "Only an idiot like me would think that sequencing as a service or as a collaboration could make money! Economically, the machine isn't made by us. The reagents are made by us. So how can we make money?" (Davies 2011).

23. "Jun Wang: Genome Juggernaut," *Nature*, December 19, 2012, news feature (http://www.nature.com/news/366-days-nature-s-10-1.11997). Ciara Curtin, "Send Out the Work," *Genome Technology*, May 2012, p. 30.

24. Ashutosuh Jogalekar, "Nobel Complexity," *Scientific American*, October 2013 (http://blogs.scientificamerican.com/the-curious-wavefunction/2013/10/08/nobel-complexity/).

put the "authenticity" of its authorship into question. When such long-held traditions are coupled with nationalistic skepticism of everything "made in China," rumors began to circulate that BGI was yet another shady Chinese factory, this time producing "fake science" at the behest of an authoritarian state.

Underlying that charge of collaboration-in-exchange masquerading as fake science is thus an entire Western apparatus of scientific authorship and intellectual property, one in which the individual scientist is understood as the sole source of genius, ingenuity, and genuine discovery of nature's facts. But in intervening by openly commodifying scientific authorship, BGI instead revealed several uncomfortable open secrets. First, authorship is already traded (if previously through a "gift" economy that masks commodity values). Second, an extreme degree of collaboration and complexity (e.g., in thousand-author papers) suggests that no one can actually be responsible for all the "facts" stated by a given paper, nor can any peer reviewer adequately evaluate—let alone falsify—it. Indeed, errors are already rampant in scientific literature. While it has been presumed that, once for sale, credit and responsibility for scientific work cannot be guaranteed, commodification does not necessarily result in falseness, and "free" authorship can equally result in lies, mistakes, and plagiarism, as does "paid" authorship. Third, while scientific collaboration where publication is the main measure for institutional rewards is not indeed a pure form of gift exchange, neither is self-interested collaboration always one short step to "plagiarism." Finally, where there is a suspicion that production or "collaboration" at ever-more massive scales might lead to shoddy or inconsequential work, this is more readily applied to China but not so much to CERN.[25]

Scholars of the contemporary life sciences, including Melinda Cooper, Kaushik Sundar-Rajan, and Aihwa Ong, have each argued in different ways that China's rise requires us to consider configurations of "Asian" biotechnology and capital that as yet remain uncaptured by US-centric descriptions. Many of BGI's crowning publications indeed speak to these new potentialities: for example, BGI's sequencing projects of the Asian Man, Tibetans, 1,000 Asians, and key Asian agricultural commodities—rice, silkworms, the rubber tree—seemed aimed at the heart of definitions of ethnicity, race, and Asia. Meanwhile, its sequencing projects on the Giant Panda or the pig that survived the 2008 Sichuan earthquake demonstrate the patriotic ways in which BGI works with its excess capacity. BGI's stated mission to claim control and oversight of a future national Chinese biobank will moreover be key to how those definitions are monetized in the bioeconomy. In recent global public health crises such as SARS, H1N1, or *E. coli* in Germany,

BGI has played a prominent role in the race to sequence new epidemic strains of which Shenzhen and the region itself has been identified as the global incubator. BGI's ongoing collaboration with the University of Copenhagen and Aarhus University, which clones miniature pigs that are raised in a Shenzhen "lab/farm" for transgenomic experimentation, has not received as much media attention as their marketability as consumer pets. These and other projects certainly deserve research attention of their own.[26] Yet in detailing BGI's scientific collaboration practices and locating the firm in the city of Shenzhen, I only wish to point out that the potential exceptionalism that "China" promises is already actively being harnessed and appropriated in the interstitial site of that city. In other words, rather than to continue to imagine an exceptional Chinese space opaque to Western knowledge, we ought to recognize that China has already created an exceptional space where Western capital and Western knowledge production have both been subjected to the Chinese gaze and Chinese appropriation.

Here again it is important to map out BGI's operations in a zone of differentiated regulation: the majority of its sequencers are in fact housed in Hong Kong in a former shoe factory, where the import of biological samples can go unregulated in keeping with Hong Kong's postcolonial rights and freedoms. BGI's clients send their samples to the Hong Kong facility, and the sequenced data are transferred digitally across the border to Shenzhen's newly created Yantian district, where more than 3,800 of BGI's 4,000 bioinformatics employees work. Video feeds from the surveillance cameras trained onto the peopleless rows of sequencers in Hong Kong—their efficiency apparently requiring the most minimal of human supervision, are displayed in the Shenzhen headquarters building. Meanwhile, on the Shenzhen factory floor, crowded rows of bioinformaticians work away on laptops between rows of potted plants placed to offset the noxious chemicals known to emit from their "cheap Chinese" cubicle furniture. BGI's surveillance video feed of its own wet biological laboratories are equally peopleless. Because so little experimental work takes place in the Shenzhen headquarters itself, the two floors of state-of-the-art labs appear to be just aspirational models for the laboratories around the world preparing their samples for transport to Hong Kong.

25. Consider the *New Yorker*'s language in describing BGI: "The company routinely offers to sequence data at reduced prices, or even for free, if researchers share the results of their work. That has helped B.G.I. churn out many articles for prestigious journals." Michael Specter, "The Gene Factory," *New Yorker*, January 6, 2014, Letter from Shenzhen (http://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2014/01/06/the-gene-factory).

26. http://inhabitat.com/shenzhen-farm-clones-500-pigs-a-year-at-first-of-its-kind-facility/; http://www.bbc.com/news/science-environment-25576718. Papers that have resulted from this BGI-Denmark collaboration on cloned minipigs include Huan Liu et al., "Development of Transgenic Minipigs with Expression of Antimorphic Human Cryptochrome 1," *PLoS*, October 16, 2013, doi:10.1371/journal.pone.0076098; Fang Xiaodong et al., "The Sequence and Analysis of a Chinese Pig Genome," *Giga Science*1 (2012):16 (http://www.gigasciencejournal.com/content/1/1/16); Rozh H. Al-Mashhadi et al., "Familial Hypercholesterolemia and Atherosclerosis in Cloned Minipigs Created by DNA Transposition of a Human PCSK9 Gain-of-Function Mutant," *Science Translational Medicine* January 2, 2013, p. 1666, doi:10.1126/scitranslmed.3004853.

This particular distribution of worker, machine, and specimen across a region of stratified mobility rights enables an economy of scale that is the first techno-industrial step toward the promised horizon of personalized medicine (for the statelessly wealthy), the hypothetical goal to which BGI and the entire genomics field is aspiring in order to justify its ongoing activity. The speculative horizon of the new biosciences—first legitimated in the form of scientific authorship—has, in other words, made possible this very new and particular international division of intellectual labor: while the scientists in the university-rich West conceptualize projects, seek institutional support, and communicate the findings in Westerncentric language and networks, entrepreneurial scientists in industry-rich China work in spaces of graduated sovereignty, agitate for quasi-governmental support to create economies of scale and technical efficiencies, then train and manage a very large reskilled labor workforce for the intellectual work of bioinformational analysis.

For those whose concern is less with national competitiveness than with the conditions of international workers, we need then examine the internal division of labor that makes BGI so competitive. For its bioinformatics positions, BGI purposefully targets "3rd year university students" of top Chinese universities, encouraging them to drop out before they graduate and are "deadened by academia."[27] BGI's scientists regularly and publicly question the need for a PhD in the most cutting edge of science, and the company even proclaims that their workers "have no plans" to pursue postgraduate studies.[28] BGI finds it necessary, in other words, to figure not only the past of its workers' human capital but also to foreclose particular futures.

This peculiar kind of de-skilling is, however, reframed by a very recognizable logic of creativity and entrepreneurship—one directly linked to BGI's collaborative authorship model—and in China, through the incessant media attention to BGI's top scientists: they are said to be "geniuses" legitimated by the very large numbers of scientific publications they have "authored" while barely in their twenties and without a PhD (Normile 2012:518; *Boss Town* 2011)! In the same vein, BGI's charismatic former CEO, Jun Wang, joked about how highly

Bill Gates regards BGI because "He loves the dropouts" (Larson 2013). Here, the romantic rhetoric of artistic/scientific "creativity" slides into the language of "innovation" and "entrepreneurship," itself validated through the very standards of Western authorship that BGI has reverse engineered so creatively. Yet all that discounted "collaboration" that BGI had created is leveraged, and all the university dropouts it had de-leveraged as human capital are utilized to validate single geniuses of a scientific-entrepreneurial sort.

In this respect, the most telling of BGI's many ambitious projects is its "Cognitive Genomics" project, which aims to identify the genetic markers for "genius," presumably to enhance assisted reproduction technologies. Not incidentally, this project was headed by a 19-year-old Chinese "prodigy" who is himself an elite high school dropout.[29] In disaggregating the training, credentials, collaboration, and genius for both scientific knowledge production and reproduction and in poking fun at the sanctity of the conventions of authorship that formalize it whether in China or in the West, BGI wraps the promise of biomedical and life sciences around the declining value of scientific truth. Instead, BGI momentarily and instrumentally turns scientific authorship into speculative authorship—aka genius.

Credulity at Hand

We are an octopus. With one hand we grab research. With another hand we grab training. We want everything. . . . We are searching for a new way to live. (Wang Jun in 2011)[30]

Schemas of capitalism distinguish menial manual from high-value mental labor (the separation of which is perceived to be central to Marxist alienation). From that historical and intellectual legacy, Shenzhen (and China's) spectacular post-Mao "industrialization" in the period of the West's de-industrialization would first have to be introduced through low-skilled manufacturing jobs and labor exploitation. Therefore, and indeed this is official city policy, Shenzhen must be "upgraded" into the informational/knowledge/innovation/entrepreneurial economy, which is why a high-tech firm such as BGI, and Shenzhen

27. *Boss Town* (2011). BGI's recruitment sheets (2012 in author's collections) offer pay at RMB 2,500 per month for undergrads, 3,500 for MAs, and 4,500 for PhDs. They also promise that workers' household registration issues can easily be resolved because of the firms "excellent relations" with the city government. Posted online on Baidu Tieba forum (http://tieba.baidu.com/p/2323315274).

28. "Shenzhen BGI Research Institute's young scientists have, as first author, published papers in top academic journals and attended conferences. However, they have no plans to pursue postgraduate studies or doctoral studies. BGI has hence created a beneficial new experiment in the area of talent cultivation. If BGI succeeds in realizing this model, it will not only bring innovative research methods into genomic studies, but will also bring about a revolution in education and training." (From BGI's corporate museum display, 2012.)

29. Supposedly by studying the genomes of 1,600 mathematically precocious Americans in a 1971 Johns Hopkins University study group. Christopher C. Chang, Stephen D. H. Hsu, James J. Lee, Laurent C. A. M. Tellier, Rui Yang, and Bowen Zhao, "BGI Cognitive Genomics Lab: Proposal for Gene-Trait Association Study of *g*" (https://www.cog-genomics .org/static/pdf/bgi_g_proposal.pdf). Ed Yong, "Chinese Project Probes the Genetics of Genius," *Nature*, May 14, 2013, news sec. (http://www.nature .com/news/chinese-project-probes-the-genetics-of-genius-1.12985). In the Chinese media, see "金璐 华大'神童'19岁高中肄业领导基因探索团队" [BGI 19-year-old "child prodigy" leaves high school to head genomics research team], *Yangcheng Wanbao*, November 14, 2011.

30. *Boss Town* television interview with BGI CEO Wang Jun (*Boss Town* 2011).

(which houses 50 of China's top IT firms), was given billions in financial support, land-use grants, exceptional regulatory status, and a great deal of promotional attention. Witnessing such new subjectivizations of labor in late capitalism over the past several decades, theoretical and political discussions of "immaterial" and "material" labor have prompted a reevaluation of categories of work on the basis of the separation of hand from mind, but scholars of immaterial labor have largely focused on forms of service work that are newly theorizable through values such as affect, flexibility, and care. BGI's amassing of bioinformatics workers belies the opposite side of that first-world intellectual interest in labor and is one geopolitical and biopolitical symptom of the larger marriage of the experimental sciences with the labor-intensive informational sciences observed by Kaushik Sundar-Rajan (2006). In fact, BGI, like so many of the world's biggest technology firms, does not call itself a "factory" but rather a "training-production-research base" (e.g., a nonprofit but quasi-commercial, quasi-educational, yet nongovernmental organization). Its organizational logic of labor asks us to consider what it means for highly technical and immaterial knowledge work such as bioinformatics to require education *but not graduation* and to be organized at factory-like scales and in former factory spaces built for discipline and regulated mobility even as it celebrates individual creativity and innovation, and, moreover, even as its contributions to the higher socially rewarded forms of scientific authorship have been devalued by skeptical Western collaborators/consumers. Clearly, the relevant comparison for BGI's bioinformatics workers is perhaps not the migrant workers of Foxconn but the highly regulated (if better compensated) digital informatics workers of the Apple Corporate Campus.

Back in 2007, the specter of a personalized biomedical organ-harvesting network using nail salons as a 15-minute front for screening its victims clearly anticipated the prospect of immediate on-demand DNA analysis on the one hand and, on the other, the low-lying anxiety (then as yet unconfirmed) of massive surveillance enabling anonymized yet individualized violence. Hong Kongers sensed long before Edward Snowden went to hide among them that the massive collection of trivial information about each of us enables the targeted violence of a drone-wielding state. Like a Hong Kong kung fu movie (where the most dangerous place is always the safest place), the very site where life is being informationalized was certainly the most strategic place where the antisurveillance hero would go to hide his bodily self. Just as Hong Kongers were imagining those sequencing machines populating the upstairs of Shenzhen nail salons, all along they were are in fact hiding right in their midst, inside BGI's Hong Kong facilities in the Tai Po district.

Yet the urban legend of the piecemeal appropriation of unsuspecting and disposable female bodies in the world's most transformational production zones is also a cautionary admonition against female consumer mobility into zones of production. While the Shenzhen inhabitant is surveilled, delegitimized, dismembered, and motivated through a regime of physical boundaries, mobile and male American and Hong Kong story-tellers are free to roam and ignore those boundaries and to recreate the city as the site of ideological fantasy and urban myth. Although Mike Daisey ended up being humiliated for inventing journalistic "facts," the apparatus underling fact production (at least in genomic and bioinformatics science) has been fully reverse engineered in BGI's production model. BGI is also telling a tall tale about the virtues of its model, a tale that is made possible by the graduated values of human capital produced by Shenzhen as a zone of graduated "truth." The inventive power of a "witness" storyteller like Daisey thus pales in comparison to the immaterial travel of the biospecimens, bioinformatic data, and collaborative authorship that traverse, like friends of a friend, across the transnational boundaries of Shenzhen. Across those borders, scientific authorship is made into the speculative form of bioproduction described by Melinda Cooper (2008:25), through the actual repackaging of youthful intellectual labor for the big data projects of the life sciences, which promises the production of perfect offspring even as it depotentializes the generation it has called into being.

Acknowledgments

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Paraguayan Horses

The Entailments of Internet Policy and Law in Brazil

by Alexander S. Dent

In this paper I consider law and lawlessness as interpretive practices that seek both to unleash and control the Internet in Brazil. I analyze diverse institutions and actors: the government, lawyers, judges, NGOs, hackers, pirates, and police. Whereas users of "new" media frequently distance themselves from previous media forms along technological lines, in this Brazilian case, policy makers index their border with Paraguay. They also point to what they take to be a uniquely Brazilian corporate rapaciousness, arguing that that rapaciousness partakes of bordering practices much like those involved in Paraguay. In this sense, mediation is more about the nation and the corporation than it is about reference to previous technologies. I analyze all this through attention to media piracy, identity theft, and hacking. In order to understand the publics that are facilitated and foreclosed by the Internet, we must attend to durable, localized, border policing as well as mainstream understandings of business transgressions.

Billy is spastic in time, has no control over where he is going next, and the trips aren't necessarily fun. He is in a constant state of stage fright, he says, because he never knows what part of his life he is going to have to act in next.
(Kurt Vonnegut, *Slaughterhouse Five* [2010:29])

In this paper I analyze Brazilian Internet policy and practice. In order to understand digital publics and the ways in which they facilitate and foreclose particular forms of participation (see Kelty 2017; Stein 2017), we must attend not only to the technologistic arguments frequently associated with "new" media. The redemptive and destructive powers of the digital are not only to be found in its capacity to transcend space, reduce response time, compress communicative functionality, and augment portability (Dent, forthcoming). Durable practices associated with national borders and businesses play a significant role in local understandings of Internet governance and use. In this sense, both Paraguay and Brazil become conceivable as modes of mediation with important consequences for digital publics—much as cars and statues mediate one another for Jain (2017) or prosody and law for Morris (2017).

One of the clearest places to grasp public cultural approaches to mediation can be found in analyses of the dialogic space between its positive and negative renderings. For this reason, in this paper I carefully consider digital media piracy, identity theft, and hacking (see Coleman 2017). Through scrutiny of these sites, we will come to see how, in Brazil, both Par-

aguay and Brazilian corporations are figured as lawless spaces and actors and that this presents a problem of containment not only for the Brazilian state but also for Brazilian subjects within that state. For this reason, we will see how arguments for the primacy of face-to-face interaction draw on understandings of boundary maintenance between "fully functioning" states. Put somewhat differently, Paraguay and corporate rapaciousness provide the chronotopic ground on which forms of individuation and rights are seen to rest (Bakhtin 1981; Dent 2007; Stewart 1996).

Along chronotopic lines, one of the central problems for the governance of the Internet lies in the challenges posed by its spatiality and temporality. In news-media outlets, scholarly journals, coffee shops, and blogs, the Internet is frequently indexed by descriptors derived from water—a networked network with amorphous boundaries that are always moving (Higginbotham 2012). Terms such as "flow," "depth," and "stream" get recruited to myriad tasks by devotees and dilettantes alike. No one knows quite where it begins or ends. It will not sit still. Sometimes it becomes positively gaseous, as the now common term "cloud" suggests. Indexes with overly fixed materialities are often unwelcome, as was the case with US senator Ted Stevens's now famous "series of tubes" gaff (Mitchell 2006). The idea behind mocking him was usually that the Internet was nothing like so solid but also that it was much more complicated.[1] When the *New York Times* ran a series of articles on the physical structures that support the cloud in September of 2012, information on the cloud's pollution and power con-

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1. The irony of the negative reaction to Stevens's statement is that the term "pipe" is often used by those who construct the Internet's physical networks in order to explain aspects of connectivity. Stevens was moderately quick to point this out. But the damage had already been done.

sumption came as a shock to many readers (see comments attached to Glanz 2012).

The "open" or "neutral" space-time of G. W. Bush's morphologically synthetic "Interwebs" is frequently granted redemptive qualities by users pointing to ostensibly instant and infinite reaches; I can post to Instagram in Portugal and become manifest to "followers" in Brazil right away. This can be celebrated by a growing army of multitaskers, many of them touting devices whose designers seek to condense as many communicative modalities as possible into one portable object: the smartphone. Just one example: the all-inclusive cloud phone system RingCentral proclaims, on its blog offering tips on how to build customer "confidence" through perpetual availability, that it is possible to "be everywhere at once" and that "business communications never sleep" (see Ricoeur 2004). Being omnipresent and ever wakeful allow for better client relations. Embrace it.

However, just as frequently, the Internet's spatial flexibility and time bending are figured as difficulties. For example, this amorphousness frequently makes the Internet "difficult to police" (Davison 2012), somewhat like the high seas (Dawdy 2011; Dent 2012*b*); no one quite knows where the boundaries lie. Music and film industries plangently complain that the capacity of pirates to create new illicit websites makes taking down illegally posted music and movies almost impossible; the moment an offending site comes down, another one goes up with precisely the same content (Liebowitz 2006).[2] Whack a mole. In a slightly different vein, popular fears circulate about how Anonymous can suddenly surface to harvest names and social security numbers from a credit card company and then, just as quickly, vanish without a trace (Coleman 2012). Further, your capacity to magically go without your purportedly actual identity seems also to open you up to identity theft. Or, in the rhetoric of the intellectual property (IP) "maximalists" (mostly content producers seeking to increase protections for IP; see Sell 2010), the opportunity to listen to all kinds of songs "for free" is more accurately described as a series of "thefts" that are killing music. In much discourse about the Internet, it is characterized as offering a boundary-transgressing conveyance for both individuals and texts that could be great but often ends up being terrible. At times like these, when things go wrong, the Internet's seemingly liberating temporal and spatial aspects look like the shiny skin of a rotten apple.

These anxieties are not new. Consider the novel and movie *Jaws*, and with it, the terror that a large but nonetheless quick and unfettered predator was supposed to produce in a liquid medium (Benchley 1974); the shark is right beneath you and you do not even know it. Or consider *Adventure Comics*'s supervillain Mist, who could change himself into a living gas, making parts of himself suddenly material at will (Bester and Burnley 1941). Both water and gas anxieties continue to play out in contemporary public culture, as seen in the Discovery Channel's *Shark Week* (the network's most popular programming, which celebrates the contemporary possibility of a giant prehistoric shark) or the Disney film *Wreck It Ralph*'s villain Turbo (aka King Candy), who leaves his own video game when his popularity wanes, destroying the games he attempts to inhabit together with the one he has left. Sometimes, we just need to learn to stay in our place.

With these precedents in mind, I analyze the chronotopic properties (Bakhtin 1981; Dent 2007) of the Internet as they relate to its policing, oriented toward digital media "piracy," or unauthorized use (Karaganis 2011). As I have discussed elsewhere (Dent 2009), a chronotope is not merely a space-time relation as it has so often been understood; it is difficult to think of anything that does not have some spatiotemporal components, limiting the analytic purchase of chronotope defined in this way. Rather, a chronotope involves a relationship between space and time with quite particular outcomes for what Bakhtin calls characters and plots (Bakhtin 1981) but that we can stipulate, anthropologically, as modes of subjectivity (Cumming 1997; Fox 1993; Kockelman 2004; Majors 2001; Ortner 2005) and ways of moving between event and structure (Kelly and Kaplan 2001; Sahlins 1985).

In this way, I wish to examine the calibration of spatial and temporal aspects to one another with respect to the Internet, focusing on the capriciousness of boundaries—sometimes so firm and at other moments entirely absent. My argument is that if we are going to understand how particular groups of people—in this case Brazilians—are conceiving of the Internet as a lawless space that seems powerful and efficacious but is often ephemeral and dangerous, we should consider local precedents. In this ambit, then, I wish to consider practices of bordering (Fassin 2011)—in particular those between Brazil and Paraguay as manifest at the "triple" border between Brazil, Argentina, and Paraguay. This border is further complicated by Paraguay's role in negotiating a further border with a noncontiguous entity (China), because Paraguay has become one of the most important paths through which Chinese goods enter Brazil—at least in popular parlance.[3] I also wish to consider a Brazilian critique of rapaciousness that portrays corporate actors as able to enter and leave the lives of common citizens without warning. In this rendition of Brazilian society, corporations come and go as they please, toying with powerless consumers.

Social practice within digital publics is frequently defined by an ideology (Woolard and Schieffelin 1994) whereby two

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2. Note that precisely these arguments are used year after year at the annual United States Trade Representative Special 301 hearings, where the US government establishes its orientation to emerging economies in consultation with the content production industry. For more on the dynamics of this process and the outright plagiarism from corporate documents it frequently involves, see Dent (2013).

3. In fact, a great deal of Chinese merchandise enters through Brazilian ports, some of it legitimately, much of it not.

vectors undermine customary views of space and time; one gravitates toward instantaneous response while the other gravitates toward infinite reach. This ideology grounds beliefs that digital environments obliterate the customary limitations of here and now. However, this ideology does not take shape in precisely the same way in all locations. My argument is therefore that this interplay between cyclicality and spatiality with respect to the Internet is understood through localized approaches not only to contemporary technological forms but also to seemingly antiquated practices of boundary making and corporate "transparency."

In what follows, I begin with Brazilian approaches to policing the Internet as well as a critique of corporate control of society enacted by pro-Internet activists on the left. More specifically, I analyze permeability, appearances, and subterfuge on the Internet, which Brazilians largely accessed, starting in the mid-1990s, by way of low-cost products that came from Paraguay. Next, I consider Paraguay more broadly as an imaginary that shapes digital publics, showing how nations and their boundary practices in turn shape approaches to mediation. We will also see how Paraguay offers a way of thinking about Brazilian rapaciousness. I end with some remarks on what the mutually constitutive dialogue between bordering and the Internet might tell us about circulation.

The Internet(s)

We can learn about the chronotopic properties of a Brazilian Internet by looking at a debate over its policing that has only just been resolved. Back in 1999, a then senator (now a congressman) from the state of Minas Gerais, Eduardo Azeredo, drafted a law that sought to control what he portrayed as the Internet's unruliness. The law went through a series of revisions and was never passed, but it was trotted out again in 2009 when a series of attacks on banks and hacked presidential e-mails made headlines. The dormant "Azeredo Law" was suddenly propelled not only by the run-of-the-mill urgency typical of Brazilian developmentalist speech genres (namely, that Brazil is "behind" other nations and needs to catch up); this time, current criminality added impetus—a form of criminality, mind you, supported by cellular communication from gang leaders behind prison walls. The law's passage seemed immanent, as Azeredo was voted chair of the national government's technology committee. Taking too long to discuss the niceties would make us "overly late," Azeredo argued in the press (Cardoso 2012). The version of the law current in 2009 sought to impose order by criminalizing forms of behavior perceived to be particular to digital environments, among them, implanting viral code, seeking to make use of personal data for purposes other than those for which it had been entered, and either uploading or downloading copyrighted materials.

Many could agree that these were bad things. But the way of policing them that the law proposed immediately led to widespread controversy. According to Azeredo, Internet service providers (ISPs) would have to stockpile information on the activities of their clients for at least 3 years in case it should be needed in prosecuting future cybercrimes. Attached to this, providers would be held responsible for the way their clients were using the Internet such that they would be accountable for the veracity of the data that their users provided and also for its legality (in cases of the exchange of "pirated" texts). Analysis of these provisions suggested that Azeredo and his supporters felt that the Internet was a zone in which criminality had not yet been defined, and hence, a zone of impunity. It was, in a sense, a kind of Paraguay. Furthermore, by way of these proposals, the Azeredo Law's framers indicated their sense that the Internet was a place in which taking or assigning responsibility was fraught. Finally, the law's framers also felt that policing of the space (however it was constituted) would best be accomplished through private means; the people in charge of making sure users were being well behaved ought to be the ISPs themselves, not some external authority established by the state. The state would simply make the policies that private companies would carry out.

Many of these proposals were not distinctive to the Brazilian case and had been either tried or debated in North America and Europe. But what was more unusual was Azeredo's next proposal—that users would have to identify themselves before beginning any operation on the Internet that involved interaction with other users, including sending e-mails, participating in chat rooms, creating blogs, or downloading data. In other words, users would have to furnish their name, telephone number, and general registry number (the equivalent of a social security number in the United States) before doing pretty much anything online. This, once again, was to be privatized. ISPs would be responsible for the compilation and maintenance of records on each user, and access would only be granted when identity had been confirmed by the provider. This would, in turn, necessitate that the provider have copies of the identity documents of actual users on file or else that each provider subcontract this storage to someone else. This was, apparently, the way to keep hackers out of the system; access without identification would be punishable by 2 to 4 years of being barred from the Internet and possibly prison if some crime were committed. This policy tells us that its framers believed that the Internet lacked clear spatiality and temporality and was a zone in which the subject became overly mobile, ephemeral, and perhaps even unknowable. In other words, according to Azeredo et al., the Internet was characterized by epistemological incertitude with respect to subjectivity. It was an omnipresent and lawless zone in which the boundaries between the self and the other and the readability of those boundaries in terms of their surround were dangerously unclear. Strong laws were needed in order to establish the kind of clarity that we enjoyed in regular face-to-face interactions—apparently the standard for evaluating all human interaction.

The law received substantial support, and the way in which that support was phrased contributed to a sense of the Internet as lawless, poorly demarcated, and ubiquitous in Brazil. Using dramatic language, one columnist proposed that the Azeredo Law "disciplined" the Internet by imposing "order on the existing laws, in order to avoid that crimes in the virtual world should cancel out its incalculable value" (Medioli 2009). The columnist then continued in starker language, complete with damnation, death, and chaos.

> The Azeredo Law limits the possibility that the Internet should become debased—a living hell for the well inten- tioned. It is oriented by a preventative intuition, much like the construction of a bypass before twenty or thirty people get run over in that spot. We know that there, there will be more victims very soon, and that moving quickly will pre- vent heartache and tears. Obviously, we can't leave the most democratic and economical mode of access to knowledge to the mercy of anarchy—this tool so useful for large and small alike, rich and poor. (Medioli 2009)

And finally, the columnist concludes that the lack of spa- tiality of the Internet creates dangers: "Delinquents gravitate to the Internet because of the ease of robbing banks, commer- cial establishments, launching attacks, blackmailing without leaving the house, destroying reputations, and maintaining anonymity since one can so easily lose oneself in the abyss of the system" (Medioli 2009). Here, then, was the ultimate fear and the necessary support for Azeredo's requirement that everyone identify himself—that the Internet had created a kind of fourth dimension through which criminals could en- ter our lives and then disappear without a trace: a personalized trapdoor into our homes that they could efface upon leaving. In sum, an unregulated Internet—an Internet without the Azeredo Law—allowed the boundaries between real life and this new virtual world to remain unpoliced and toxic, and it did so by allowing real life and virtual life to mix indiscrim- inately. By way of this poorly demarcated lawless space, crim- inals could get at you in your home without having to leave theirs; you would never even get a good look at them.

Support for the law was far from unanimous, however, and examining its opposition further rounds out our understanding of Brazilian approaches to the Internet's potential for breaking down boundaries as well as its potential for redemption and damnation. These tropes partake of Brazilian approaches to bordering practices with respect to Paraguay. In the case of opposition, the boundaries in question were not between the innocent citizen sitting at home and the rapacious cyberthug but rather between the individual and a brutish oligarchic state (represented by Azeredo and his corporate supporters). The Azeredo Law elicited substantial criticism on the left, most of it suggesting that Azeredo's proposals were totalitar- ian. Critics of the law began to refer to it as the Digital AI-5 (Institutional Act No. 5), comparing it to the harshest anti- press and free-speech act passed by the bureaucratic author- itarian government during the darkest years of Brazil's mili-

tary dictatorship (specifically, 1968–1978). In this sense, the Internet was being given substance by being compared with the news media and with the right to free assembly and speech.[4] Other critics of the Azeredo law proposed that Azeredo had absolutely no understanding of how the Internet "worked," that his attempts to fix the identity of users would only work on the already law abiding; hackers could easily sidestep information requirements. One series of scolds was not directed at the law at all but made use of another trope of Brazilian civil society— that Brazilians were themselves to blame for such a draconian policy because they were forgetful, ill informed, and hence un- worthy for participation in democracy; this, in turn, meant that Brazilian laws were made "in deafness." However, one critique in particular is worth exploring because of the ways in which it reproduces precisely the same anxieties about bordering in circumstances of ostensibly inadequate spatial and temporal fixity.

The Corporate Ether

In another discourse quite typical of Brazilian indictments of governmentality, other critics, among them prominent literary theoretician Idelber Avelar, claimed that Azeredo was guilty of plain old Brazilian style corruption (Avelar 2006). This was abetted by Azeredo's recent implication in a vote-buying scan- dal in the Senate, from which he was forced to step down, only to be elected later as a congressman. In this newer case, the companies that would authenticate the certificates that would be used by the ISPs to determine whether or not a particular user was legitimate were, in part, owned by him, but mostly by his close friends. The sudden requirement for a massive au- thentication industry on the Internet stood to make certain people extremely rich—among them, Azeredo himself. The Internet could thus be rendered familiar in quite local terms— by way of censorship under military dictatorship, the igno- rance of "the people" (*o povo*), and finally as a means by which local politicians might line their pockets in ways that were common for Brazilian politicians and corporations.

Along these lines, anxieties about the Internet's lack of spatial and temporal anchors are, paradoxically, echoed by a young left-wing group of advocates for "freedom" of digital communication at Rio de Janeiro's Freenet Foundation in December of 2012. However, in this context, the fears receive somewhat different voicing—it is not the individual sitting at home seeking to disguise himself as someone else while steal- ing your credit card and pirating movies that is the threat. Here, it is rapacious corporations who lurk in the ether; such

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4. Interestingly, AI-5 did not require fixed identity in situations where that identity was not clear but rather required that newspapers either self-censor (most common) or that they submit all their material each day to the censors (uncommon; see Carneiro 2002; Kushnir 2004; Reimão 2008; Smith 1997).

critiques of Brazil's vulnerability to external influences have their roots in theories of "associated dependent development" (Cardoso 1989) but have taken on a life of their own in comedy in the form of political cartoons (as seen, once upon a time, in *Bundas* magazine) and more recently in popular sketch comedy by the likes of YouTube sensation Porta dos Fundos (Romero 2013). During a conference on IP justice hosted by Rio de Janeiro's Getúlio Vargas Foundation, participants gathered after the first day for a gala to celebrate not only the conference's successful kickoff but also the tenth anniversary of the open licensing platform Creative Commons. The platform had been created 10 years before by a small group of activists and scholars in the United States but had received almost instantaneous support from activists and scholars based at the Getúlio Vargas Foundation (Rio). A few of the American framers were there to lend their support.

We gathered in a warehouse a few kilometers from the conference location to listen to speeches about the truly global reach of Creative Commons and all the ways it had addressed the expectations of its framers: allowing producers of content to take charge of how their work would circulate while sidestepping the pointless complexity and obfuscation of the copyright process. After these initial speeches had been completed, a local Rio think tank took the stage to inject the event with more explicitly local content; the conference's organizers had explained the inclusion of Freenet in the program as an attempt to show that important, globally focused activism was happening in Brazil, too, not just in the United States. Members of the Rio-based group explained their recent completion of a set of videos designed to "raise consciousness" about a series of threats to global communication. Some of these videos, spokesman Marina explained, were aimed at a Brazilian audience. But they all referenced threats that Internet users faced all over the world. The problem, as Marina saw it, was that the Internet, conceived of as a fundamental communicative modality and hence as a human right, was being encroached on by Brazilian corporations in cahoots with international ones—all of them unconcerned about the rights of the average "consumer."

In the first film Marina played, a somewhat dark-complected hairdresser at a salon lectures her two lighter-skinned clients who are oblivious to how absurdly overpriced their Brazilian Internet service is—something that people in the first world would never accept, she intones. The hairdresser becomes increasingly animated as she rails against the evils of Brazilian corporations jacking up the price, frantically teasing the whiter woman's hair into a tangle that more closely resembles her own by the end of the screed. Her interlocutors, one of them being worked on in the chair, the other waiting for her highlights to come up, exchange a worried look as the hairdresser begins to use complex terms about Internet functionality and pricing. In the end, it does not appear that the hairdresser's clients are impressed or even care much about what the hairdresser has been saying. They appear to be merely disgusted by the experience they are having at the salon.

In another video, a young man gets home from traveling, and the first thing he does is pick up the phone to try to get his Internet turned back on. Upon connecting with customer service, he discovers that the company has created a pricing scheme that divides up all the different features that he might want online. If he wants to download content from other providers, he has to pay more. If he wants e-mail, he pays more. He is incredulous, and repeats, numerous times, that the Internet is all one thing, that you cannot carve it up this way. Finally, outraged, he threatens to post the text of this entire conversation on his blog as a way of exposing the absurdity of this Internet nonneutrality. "Oh," the woman interrupts. "The kind sir [*o senhor*] has a blog. Well, if you want to contribute to a blog, you will require our deluxe package, which is R$289 a month." The video ends with the youth's expression of total defeat. We can easily imagine him simply having to pay.

Both of these videos present a situation I had seen enacted many times in Brazil—a critique of Brazilian corporations by showing the powerlessness of the informed "consumer." The increasingly famous comedy troupe Porta dos Fundos has enacted variations on this skit countless times. In the case of the Freenet videos, in the first, the hairdresser's clients are nonplussed and far from persuaded. In the second, the young man seems to be about to fork over the cash. However, it is in a third video that the despatialized and detemporalized properties of the Internet most clearly provide opportunities for corporate bad actors to hide. In this piece, a young man walks around the city being filmed by a hidden camera while a narrator talks about all the information that is being gathered on him. Unbeknownst to him, he is being followed constantly, his every move scrutinized. The video is constructed in such a way that the man walks down the street, stops to buy a newspaper, gets on the metro, walks down more streets, and is everywhere and at all times followed by a surreptitious handheld camera. On-screen information flashes about the man's habits and preferences. In this video, then, the targets are, once again, corporate raiders. However, in this case, these raiders are trying to profile consumers and get money from them; at the end of the video, the narrator suggests that this information could easily be used to accuse people of political crimes and even terrorism. But in this video the risky liquidities of the Internet are identical to those that have been feared by Azeredo and his supporters; at any moment, a hand could reach up out of the pavement and grab the innocent passerby, defying space, time, and common sense. For the Freenet Foundation, the rhetoric is of "transparency," but nonetheless it adds up to an aspiration for fixity very much like that of the Azeredo Law. We need to be able to "see" what these corporate bad actors are doing because now we cannot. Currently, the Internet provides them with a space in which they can appear and then capriciously disappear—an environment of blind spots and smoke screens.

These critiques of the suitability of corporate raiding to the amorphousness of the Internet have, in many ways, fueled

the recently instituted Civil Code of the Internet, or Marco Civil (signed into law in 2014). Instead of seeking to give structure to the Internet by enumerating the crimes that may be committed within it, privatizing its policing, and forcing its users to fix their identities, this document instead operates from a human rights perspective and aims to protect the "rights" of "users" of the Internet to free speech and freedom of association. Though this is nowhere made explicit, the document assumes that these rights need to be protected from the likes of Azeredo and his big-business collaborators, who are currently able to hide, too easily, within the Internet's amorphous spatiality and temporality. Under the Azeredo Law, criminality was to be determined not by intentions but by association; the ISPs become guilty of supporting piracy whether they know about the material their users are illegally posting or not, and "pirates" could just be kids who shared a song without thinking about the larger repercussions. Under the Marco Civil, you had to have intended to perform a criminal act (reenter the primacy of an ostensibly autonomous individual's "intentions," as in Rosaldo [1982]). The drafting of the Marco Civil availed itself of some of the Internet's redemptive qualities by soliciting public feedback online. At the drafting phase, these comments were uploaded to a common page, and many were then incorporated into the policy document. What is noteworthy, here, is that despite the very different political orientations and institutional affiliations of this new Brazilian Internet law, it still relies on fixing an acting individual in space and time, defining behavior as criminal only when it is "intentional." So—once again—the Internet's unruly potentialities are to be circumscribed by firming up a "user" with "rights" in a particular time and space—in this case, Brazil itself.

Paraguay(s)

In Brazil, Paraguay is not just out west. It appears in speech genres (Bakhtin 1986; Briggs and Bauman 1992; Hanks 1987) associated with nationhood, sport, and shopping as a way of commenting on the unpredictability of Brazil's western border, the inadequacy of soccer teams that suddenly implode, and the conundrums of consumption. But most importantly for our purposes, Paraguay's omnipresence has increased tremendously alongside the growth of the use of the Internet in large part because the technology used to access the Internet was acquired—in the 1990s and into the early 2000s—through Paraguay. Under such circumstances, and because of the almost identical terminology used to describe both the chronotopic irregularities of the Internet and those of Paraguay, we should explore in some detail the way that Paraguay surfaces in Brazil in quotidian discourse and, importantly, the ways this has changed over the period in question.

First, nationhood—a way of conceiving of Brazil's neighbor that has remained relatively stable over the course of the twentieth century. Paraguay appears in every elementary school textbook as the aggressor in the bloody War of the

Triple-Alliance (1864–1870), in which it attempted to expand into, and carve a route to the sea through, the territories of Brazil, Argentina, and Uruguay. After a few early and dramatic victories, Paraguay ended up getting trounced. Brazilian historian Boris Fausto—normally a proponent of value-free prose—tells it this way, emphasizing the long-term repercussions of Paraguay's defeat in language that is dramatic for a nation (Brazil) that sometimes unironically proclaims the "order and progress" on its flag.

> Paraguay was devastated by the conflict, and lost parts of its territory to Brazil and Argentina. It also lost its future. Its process of modernization became a thing of the past, and Paraguay itself became an exporter of products of scant value. The most reliable estimates suggest that half of Paraguay's population died in the struggle. . . . Most of the survivors were old people, women, and children. (Fausto 1999: 126)

In many Brazilian contexts, Paraguay holds the status of the gruesomely beaten, and hence, of the subsequently undeveloped and lawless—a kind of "far" west (which Brazilians often utter in English, indexing what we might, in the United States, call "the wild west") where laws and procedures simply are not in effect: the sort of place where escaped Nazis could hole up for ages not only because of myriad sympathizers but because no one can find them (Manzo 2011). In a sense, popular Brazilian treatments of Paraguay suggest that it still has not recovered from the beating it received way back when. The war continues to populate contemporary usage. For instance, though the origins of this particular application of Paraguay are apocryphal, the term *cavalo paraguaio* (Paraguayan horse) is often applied to soccer teams that unexpectedly win at the beginning of a tournament and then self-destruct. One recent ESPN BraSil sports forum asked commentator Paulo Vinícius Coelho to discuss, with fans, their opinions on the biggest *cavalo paraguaio* soccer team of all time, for instance. A wide variety of teams from particular eras were nominated on the air and in subsequent comments (ESPN BraSil 2014).

This sense of disappointment has intensified since the 1990s, populating other ways in which Paraguay circulates in Brazil. This, in turn, is tied to some important socioeconomic variables. In the late fifties, Paraguay declared its eastern portion, with particular emphasis on Ciudad del Este, a duty-free zone, and by the 1980s, Ciudad del Este had become one of the largest entrepôts in the world for all manner of goods, from clothing and perfume to CDs and electronics (Aguiar 2010; Machado 2009; Rabossi 2004, 2012). In times when travel to Europe and North America was restrictively expensive for Brazilians, Ciudad del Este became the low-cost shopping zone of choice, as its suspension of taxes allowed it to offer prices many times lower than the national averages. At its height, tens of thousands of Brazilians visited Ciudad del Este every week, and for a short time, it was reported by *Forbes* to be the third largest urban economy in the world (Seri 2012: 81). This growth went along with an expansion of informal

street markets selling knockoffs and pirated goods within Brazil, all of them supplied by way of Paraguay and several of them subsequently referred to as Paraguayan markets.

Ciudad del Este's piratical importance to Brazil has shrunk somewhat since the passage of the Mercosul agreement between Brazil, Argentina, Uruguay, and Paraguay in 1996, in which trade barriers to China were largely regularized across the four Southern Cone nations. This has made direct importation from China just as good an option for supplying local goods. Paraguay's brief expulsion from Mercosul (in 2012) temporarily reinvigorated its thoroughfare economy; despite the low cost of Chinese imports directly into Brazil, the importance of Paraguay as a site of low-cost importation continues, as thousands still shop at its stores and bring products into Brazil. Furthermore, Ciudad del Este ostensibly remains an important source for the smuggling of drugs, guns, and even human beings into Brazil, or so the myriad news reports on the porosity of the border would suggest. For those traveling by legitimate routes rather than through the nearly unmapped forests and rivers so plentiful on Brazil's western border, traffic jams on the famed Friendship Bridge are still legendary; the quickest way to get across the bridge is to hitch a ride with one of the many motorcycle taxis. Here, we can see the importance of a porous border that indexes a power differential—where Paraguay's destroyed status and subsequent lawlessness continue to make it useful as a supplier of Brazil's modern consumptive habits—particularly in electronics.

It is important to understand that some of the lower-cost goods that flooded Brazil in the 1990s and which continue to circulate on a massive scale were not only smuggled products on which duty had not been paid. They were also low-cost copies of more expensive items, such as the latest cellular phones, TVs, stereos, and MP3 players. Almost without exception, these goods were made in China. Sometimes, they were just plain counterfeits (phones with the Motorola name but without much quality control or brand support). It is in this way that in the late 1990s, Paraguay became one of the most powerful indexes of an important aspect of a localized epistemology of consumption: the moment in which buyers can chose to get a good deal that might stop working very soon or enjoy the pleasures of brand while paying a fortune in duties and taxes (Dent 2012*a*). This tension emerges in quotidian conversations where consumers interact with the objects they have bought, most often when those objects break; disparaging something that malfunctions or works unpredictably as "Paraguayan" is extremely common.

The term is also applied to things that might be expensive but are, on closer examination, cheap. One prominent blog preserves the English term "glamour" in its title: Glamour Paraguaio. The blog's author offers the following baptismal moment for its name.

> One day I found a nostalgic keepsake from my childhood, a 24-hour lipstick from Paraguay (that's right—the kind that was around all the time in the early 90s). I took it out did a

"make" [preserves English word] and went out feeling pretty and RICH, the way we should all feel every day. So my girlfriend asks me: "What pretty lipstick! It's pretty! It's glamour [English word, once again]! IS IT MAC [a line of cosmetics with a very distinct brand and high prices in Brazil]?" "MAC? Nope—it's my Paraguayan Glamour," I said. And it became my all-time favorite expression. (Facirolli 2009)

Here, the viewer is actually fooled rather than the buyer, thinking that the makeup is expensive only to discover that it is not. The blog goes on to document clothing, makeup, and music that is right on the border of tacky, including references to glam rock of the eighties and pictures from fashion magazines that depict tasteless outfits, many of them involving fur and feathers. Paraguay here becomes a way of addressing anxieties over what something costs, whether or not it is, in some sense, "real," and whether that "reality" translates into an interactive experience where its buyer's tastes are valued. Is it truly fashionable, or just ridiculous? "Paraguay," then, points not only to something cheap but also, more precisely, to the fear that in this economy, ways of being certain that things actually are what they purport to be are few and subject to manipulation. In this context, "Paraguay" underscores worries that consumption could, and frequently does, go wrong, and that it does so precisely at places that are deemed important: how you look, or your capacity to participate in the sort of technological consumption that leaves you feeling plugged in. Crucial to this epistemology of consumption is the notion of possible deceit, mingled, crucially, with too much permeability.

What we have seen so far is that this adjoining nation is defined, in Brazil, as an unequal relation, a lawless territory, and a sporadic border—one that offers illusory benefits that threaten economic and communicative orthodoxies while reinforcing them at the same time. This cluster of overlapping tropes came to a head in the summer of 2012, as left-wing Paraguayan president Fernando Lugo was questionably impeached and chased out of office, thus threatening a throwback to the days of military dictatorship that Latin American countries had attempted to distance themselves from all too recently (Brazil redemocratized gradually through the eighties, and Paraguay, not till the early nineties). The other nations of Mercosul responded by cutting Paraguay out of the trading zone while suddenly admitting Venezuela, and when the new right-wing president, who had been put in power by what looked awfully like a coup d'état, finally took charge, he was not at all pleased with Mercosul. He issued a statement saying that the world's largest hydroelectric dam, close to the Brazilian border, and built in collaboration with Brazil, would no longer be selling its substantial surplus to Brazil. The current situation was such that the dam supplied Paraguay with all the electricity it needed, but this used up only 7% of its total output, with the remaining 93% being sold to Brazil. The new Paraguayan leader announced that this excess power would, henceforth, stay home.

This subsequently retracted threat spurred a Brazilian commentator for a prominent newsweekly to derisive flourishes. First of all, the author put Paraguay down for being small, in contrast to Brazil's larger size and buying power: "Since our neighbor [Paraguay] only consumes 7% of the energy it has a right to—precisely because it is economically stunted, with a population of 6.5 million inhabitants, equivalent to half of the residents of the city of São Paulo—Brazil ends up buying all the electricity that remains, for which it forks over close to R$800 million per year [about US$400 million]" (Cilo 2012). Then the columnist's tone becomes even more demeaning, and several Brazilian stereotypes take shape, among them that Paraguay is responsible for flooding Brazilian streets with low-quality merchandise, that it is incapable of collecting taxes or formalizing its economy, that it has a lopsided market with only one export, and that it is incapable of making intelligent policy decisions. The screed is worth quoting at length because it gives a clear idea of how tropes of lawlessness populate Brazilian thinking about Paraguay, returning us to the fears that surround an unregulated and unruly Internet.

> The Paraguayan threat is either a joke in bad taste or an amateurish political bluff. President Franco didn't even blush when he appeared on national television saying that the energy that, today, comes to Brazil, should stay in the country. Stay in the country? Right—to help the economy grow, spur industrialization, and stimulate job growth. But even if Paraguay started locally manufacturing all the contraband products that fill up the illegal commerce of all of Latin America, or even if they decided to give out LED lamps and televisions (without asking for a receipt or paying any taxes, mind you) to all the residences in their country, they would never succeed in consuming the seven thousand megawatts they're entitled to at Itaipu [the name of the dam]. . . . Without the energy from Itaipu, Brazil would fall short, it's true. . . . And on the other side of the border, on the other side of the Friendship Bridge, there would be a well-lit country full of electricity but lacking the money to pay doctors, police, and teachers. It would be a political loss that, in the long run, would cost more than the R$800 million that Paraguay receives. So—who are you going to sell your energy to, you Paraguayan horse? (Cilo 2012)

The answer is Brazil, of course.

To sum up, then, Paraguay has here appeared as the weak and lawless territory whose boundaries are capricious, whose modernization is stunted, and who is thereby able to inundate Brazil with goods that allow Brazilian consumers to feel as though they can participate in modern information and fashion economies on nearly equal footing with Europeans and North Americans. But this participation can be deceptive, because these goods can, and frequently do, underperform when compared with their branded, and considerably more expensive, counterparts. Paraguay is, in some sense, everywhere, not just at Brazil's border. "Paraguay" is the omnipresent anxiety that, in places where your consumption is

marked (the technological devices through which you "stay connected," the kinds of music and film preferences you have, or the way you look), it might go wrong because you paid too little for a fake, a fake that entered the country through a sporadic border.

Coeval Collapsings

Returning to the concept of chronotope with which we began, recall that Bakhtin defined the chronotope with some care as a specific *relation* between time and space *that had particular outcomes for subjectivity*. He argued, for instance, that romantic genres used an orientation to an amorphous past in order to critique a debased present. Or, considering *The Odyssey* as an epic, he argued that this genre involved a series of loosely related events keyed to the outsized qualities of a redeeming hero (Bakhtin 1981). The term "chronotope" was therefore not just a property of genres but was rather a kind of metric for evaluating them and was to be useful for parsing out the specific voicing structures for various kinds of expressive production. Along these lines, we can see that negative judgments about the Internet are derived from anxieties about its unsettling of temporal and spatial grounding, the sort of firm grounding that we expect from face-to-face conversation but also, at the very same moment, from functioning borders between fully functional states or between adequately controlled corporations and public citizens. It is in joining these scales that the chronotopes of law and lawlessness become important. Material and temporal fixity are judged to be loose with the Internet, and this has benefits and dangers for an ostensibly individuated acting subject.

In the context of this discussion of the Internet, it is the crossing of different forms of process that concerns us—the way in which boundaries are crossed, and the way in which the adumbration of an "area" itself becomes a problematic undertaking, sporadically policed. What is striking, here, both for the Internet's boosters and for its critics, is the way in which strategic features of these seemingly distinct domains begin to transform precisely through the process of crossing itself. It is the unexpected nature of the capricious manifestations of the border that unsettles users of an unregulated Internet, an unsettling that, though it has different targets on the Brazilian right and left, nonetheless derives from an isomorphic set of fears. In this Brazilian case we can see that because temporal and spatial problems within the ambit of the genres associated with the Internet become one and the same, pat distinctions between materiality and the ideational come into question (Keane 2005; Miller 2005). These questions pose localized problems not only for the how and where of an individual subject but for the nuts and bolts of what constitutes communication itself. These problems render the customary boundaries of person and property problematic. What seems common to the cases of Paraguay and the critique of the rapacious Brazilian corporation is the way that borders become unstable and hence the way that social categories

and products conceivable as "owned" are put at risk by being allowed to mingle indiscriminately—identities and cellular phones, ideas and the texts that contain them.

In the early 1990s—at the very moment that the Internet was beginning to be spoken of as a life-transforming mode of communication—Paraguay becomes important in particular ways. It becomes important to Brazilians not only in geopolitical terms as the place where the technology required for participation in the Internet becomes suddenly available to a much broader spectrum of the population for much less money—"democratizing" the technology, in the language of its boosters. "Paraguay" becomes an anxiety about a particular experience with respect to how technology and mediation, unchecked, can threaten the realness of things—one's capacity to read things for what they "really" are. In surprisingly similar ways, a long-standing public cultural engagement with the rapaciousness of Brazilian corporations, collaborating with international ones that have no engagement with the Brazilian consumers, ramps up anxieties about a lack of transparency in Brazilian society—an elaborate system of smoke and mirrors that cannot be penetrated by the average user. Put differently, in Brazil, slippery mediation creates locatable incertitudes with respect to who's who and what's what. Liquidity and motility can bring people together for creative work and the salutary sharing of information, or it can, in the words of Brazil's Film and Music Anti-Piracy Association, bring people together who are spread out across the country to trade in pirated goods. These people do not "really" know each other, but, in the words of the most powerful antipiracy NGO taking down illegal sites on the Internet, they "make contact only via computer" (APCM 2008)—a debased and "unreal" form of communion if ever there was one.

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Mediation, the Political Task

Between Language and Violence in Contemporary South Africa

by Rosalind C. Morris

Two paradigms of communication confront each other in South Africa today. One posits an ideal public sphere that recognizes the task of mediation but also requires its effacement. The other, frustrated by deferral, seeks to bypass mediation through apparently immediate forms of speech that range from visual slogans to messianic utterances that can be heard even by the dead. When viewed ethnographically, these competing conceptions and aspirations cannot be linked to particular technologies. On the contrary, the social scene is technologically heterogeneous. Epochal and ontological schemata of mediatic displacement must thus be rethought. In this paper I pursue such a rethinking on the basis of long-term ethnography in the gold-mining region of South Africa following the infamously violent assault on striking miners at Marikana.

Two women, both native isiXhosa speakers, sit in the office of an HIV/AIDS NGO in a gold-mining town near Johannesburg. One is a nurse and director of the NGO and a pioneer of peer-based preventive education in this epidemic-ravaged community. The other is a onetime graduate student of literature in the United States, a translator and education professional. They are speaking with each other but also for me. The topic is the sitting president, Jacob Zuma, who is, at the time, the subject of official corruption inquiries for his use of government funds to upgrade his private, multihome compound called Nkandla. Both of the women previously voted for the African National Congress (ANC). Both have since become disaffected with the party and its privileging of uMkhonto weSizwe (MK) veterans in government employment, tendering, and black capital formation schemes.[1] On this brisk winter's day, they are not talking about corruption or unfair employment practices or the self-aggrandizement and enrichment of former militants. They are talking about Jacob Zuma's English. Or rather, this speech about a speech that is both foreign to itself and national is enabling their condemning discourse about corruption and unfair employment practices and the self-aggrandizement or enrichment of former militants.

Public Speaking, Speaking in Public

There is something exemplary in this gesture, this discoursing about a kind of speech that fails to communicate precisely by becoming visible as speech. We may recognize the structure as an eruption of the mediaticity of the medium onto the horizon of reflexive consciousness (Kittler 1990) and thus as a communicational failure. Such failures are remarkably common in South Africa at present, and they have incited fantasies of an immediacy that would transcend the pitfalls and the limits of all forms of mediation, whether political or technological. But these same fantasies have elicited their counterdiscourses. And so, the fragmented and internally heterogeneous public spheres of the still decolonizing nation have become the sites at which the function of mediation has implicitly emerged as an object—not of deliberation but of an agonistic exchange about the very possibility of exchange. By extension, these disputes address the very possibility of political representationalism. In this paper I attempt to understand why this is the case. To do so, it is necessary to set the scene a little and place it in some relation to other scenes where other aspects of this phenomenon can be observed.

Lace curtains cover the windows, providing genteel camouflage against the intrusive gazes of outsiders. A second door made of latticed ironwork provides additional security. However, the fence that circumscribes the neatly clipped lawn is low and neither covered by barbed wire nor adorned with electrified spikes, as would be the case in much of Johannesburg. This is a small town, riven by crime, but stranded in its imaginary between the twin phantasms of the mining town in postapartheid South Africa: one the idyll of the modernist company town and the other a paranoiac dream image of a nation in thrall to its own possible failures.

An AIDS education office is, of course, a public space promising relative anonymity. Visitors may receive information, obtain prophylactics or antiretroviral drugs, and be tested for seropositivity in private. Aspiring to a radical openness and threat-

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1. uMkhonto weSizwe was the armed faction of the ANC.

ened by it at the same time, the office security expresses the limits and the contradictions of democratic consciousness in this moment of South Africa's history. However, it is neither ideological conflict nor legislated racial difference that structures the exclusionary impulse in this context so much as fear and the incapacity to locate it. Criminality names this fear only inadequately. It provides a vague designator for what suffuses the environment as a monstrous hybrid of statistical hysteria and narrative compulsion as well as real violence that takes its shape under conditions of largely racialized economic inequality (Comaroff and Comaroff 2005; Morris 2006). Criminality authorizes the anticipatory exclusion while enabling the appearance of an unlimited openness. (Only those who are supposedly criminal are to be kept out.)

Nonetheless, and despite the plethora of defensive strategies, people do enter the offices without notice, unbidden, and sometimes unwanted. They repeatedly rupture our conversation, distract us, and call our attention to other spaces, identities, and structures of obligation. They summon us with demands and solicitations, questions and instructions, promises and threats.

And yet, for the most part, no bodies intrude. The women's cell phones are the technological mediums of these absent voices.[2] They sit on the table awaiting the spirit of the times, namely, the demand to be on call (albeit with the option of screening by number; Ronell 1991). Alternately lighting up, buzzing, or ringing, these objects are the ciphers of a profane immanence. They are also fetishes in which are concealed the histories of mining and labor elsewhere.

The women interrupt our conversation for each call that comes, and as one or the other withdraws from our triadic discourse, the other two continue. The miniature public of the AIDS office fissures here: each of us is speaking, each of us is hearing the other speaking, but none of us is necessarily or constantly speaking or listening to the others present. As our discourse splits and responds to absent beings, the impossibility of the presence of the public discloses itself. A certain spectrality descends on the room. Historically, public spheres have been defined by an anonymity of address, by the fact of a speaking that opens itself to anyone who might hear but to no one in particular. It enables a public whose membership cannot be known in advance—even when exclusionary limits are constitutive of its domain. (Because some people are denied access on grounds of identity does not mean that those with recognized title will necessarily be present.) Public spheres understood in this way, as social formations enabled by technomedia phenomena such as newspapers and broadcast media rather than spaces of rational deliberation and consensus making (as in liberal political theory), are fundamentally scenes

of overhearing. Speech in public is by definition vulnerable to such overhearing.[3] Public speaking makes that overhearing its goal.

In the little space of the HIV/AIDS NGO, however, something else can be discerned. It is the division and the opening of public space to a tense and temporarily converging multiplicity of private addresses that refuse generalization. These addresses are not opposed to public speech. Rather, they traverse its domain. Of course, private conversations occur in public all the time. But cell phone conversations spectralize the dyadic relation that provides the (fallacious) model for communication in so much media theory. Ironically, the very absence of the speaker, who nonetheless commands the listener, intensifies the voice as the locus of power and authority. It should not surprise us, then, that cell phones, however much they promise contact with elsewhere, will also, and by virtue of their capacity to transmit absent voices, sometimes appear as obstacles to the desire for full presence and the performative power of words. We shall encounter that frustrated desire below. Before doing so, let me to return to the scene at hand.

Threading itself around innumerable interruptions, much of our shared conversation on this bright winter day revolves around a violent assault experienced by one of the women who runs this program. As she recounts her harrowing tale, a young man is sitting at the table with us, typing on a laptop. I had interviewed him years earlier in an informal settlement near the mines where he both lived and worked as a peer educator among sex workers. At the time, he had told me of three elderly women who had been killed after he accused them of witchcraft. He had claimed that the accusation had not demanded the women's execution by a mob and that he was innocent of their deaths if guilty of inciting suspicion. He did not claim any authority nor grant his own words the force to make something happen. Instead, he had narrated his flight from the police prosecuting this crime and described how, while hiding in the informal settlement near the mine that would become his temporary home, he had himself been attacked by his neighbors who suspected him of sexual impropriety. A deep scar across his face testifies to the injury.

Even so, he has now left the settlement out of fear of violence spilling beyond the conflict between competing groups of pirate miners, the *zamazama*, who have recently staked their claim on his shack community. Like many people, the young man describes them as illiterate "criminals" who "cannot even sign their own name." As such, they are not eligible for a public sphere that depends on literacy. For without literacy, they cannot submit to the law.

Zamazama are, in effect, described as men for whom language provides no alternative to violence. Almost uniformly

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(and contrary to actuality in most instances) they are imagined to speak seSotho.[4] Nor is this fact incidental in this community, whose very name comes from seSotho. The dominant language in the area is now isiXhosa (Mandela's language), which signals ascension to full status as citizen-subject; even non-isiXhosa speakers use it as a first language of address in formal conversation that is not conducted in English. Beyond the question of ethnolinguistic identity, however, the young man with the scarred face says that these migrant pirates of deindustrialization speak only to threaten. They thus abuse language by treating it as a weapon.

The two women mainly disregard this protégé of the program. They nonetheless pause when he describes the *zamazamas*' illiteracy, nodding in agreement with his condemnation of the men who cannot sign their own names. A signature, after all, would be a form of writing recognizable across all of South Africa's (mainly romanized) languages and is the ideal condition of possibility of recognition from within its constitutional order.[5]

Returning to our conversation, the women veer from the narrative of a hijacking to their admiration of Barack Obama—as though there is a link between a style of leadership and the nature of the violence that afflicts the social field. A leader whose speech demonstrates the value of speaking rather than violence, that secures the liberal opposition between language and violence, appears, in this scene, to represent the possibility of violence's overcoming. Obama exemplifies the rhetorical grace appropriate to leadership. The women recall his inauguration speech in order to stage for me a norm against which Zuma's failures are to be remembered. Not Mandela, but Obama. Mandela's authority exceeded his famed rhetorical prowess. His charisma emanated from his identification with a righteous struggle, with his being more than himself. His authority was not therefore reducible to his oratorical skills. To the extent that he spoke for South Africans, he did so in their voice, lending his tongue. But it was his life more than his speech that grounded his authority. For this reason, the contrast with Obama allows the women to both include me in the conversation and emphasize that it is Zuma's oddly accented English that irks them and that symptomatizes his political failure. In unison, they mimic his most recent address to the nation, landing on the word "development" and breaking into derisive laughter. This is not because development is being realized in its breach in a country with the highest Gini

coefficient in the world or because the idea of the developmental state has been evacuated or, worse, become an alibi for neoliberal economic policy. Their criticism is directed not at the signification of his discourse but at the signifier. It is the wrong distribution of emphasis, the heavy first syllable, rather than the appropriately accented second syllable that elicits their contempt. "*Dev*-el-op-ment": they bring themselves to tears of intimate hilarity in a mime of Zuma's improper trochee, treating the missing iamb as though it contained the secret of Zuma's intellectual and political incapacity.

Language As and Beyond Mediation

It is a truism of materialist analyses of language that dialect bears within itself the evidence of social history: of class position, regional origin, gendered identification, ethnic or national affiliation, education, professional training, and so forth (Bakhtin1981). The ridicule heaped on Zuma by these two educated women is partly a derogation of those who lack education, partly a Xhosa bias against Zulu ethnicity, partly a repudiation of the patriarchal traditionalism that Zuma incarnates, and partly a resentment that they have not been the recipients of opportunities they feel they deserve. But, for the moment, I would like to linger on the argument with which I commenced, that there is something exemplary in this scene wherein the mediaticity of speech itself and not merely of media technologies (telephony, telegraphy, and broadcast media) demands to be thought.

Let me thematize what the foregoing narrative has put into question. To begin, the HIV/AIDS NGO office is a metonym and a metaphor for a kind of South African public sphere that aspires to inclusiveness but is terrorized by its incapacity to know what that opens it up to. It therefore arms itself against potentially aggressive others. Narratives of violence work to reinforce the sense of necessity for a general securitization, but they must work in the mode of a negative meritocracy. Those who would violate the rights of others are to be excluded, but no others. The problem is how to know in advance who has perpetrated or intends to perpetrate such a violation.

However, the office scene is not merely a metonym or a metaphor. It is a scene of quotidian exchanges in which face-to-face conversation models itself on a vision of a judiciously deliberative process. Focus group discussions and educational training are a central part of its activities. They aim to generate a commonsense about both the etiology of disease and the best ways to avoid HIV transmission. Nor is it incidental that the office makes this communicative and educative function a source of income, thereby economizing on both democracy and public health. Nonetheless, this scene of face-to-face communication is also one in which myriad technologies of mass mediatization are present: as objects, as solicitous signifiers, as media of connection with absent presences, and as symbolically invested instruments. Cell phones and land-based phones, wired computers, video screens and digital re-

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4. In my interviews with *zamazama*, I have found that they hail from all of the regions that have typically sent workers to the mines. Often, they have previously had formal employment in them. The work teams that they form tend to be organized on the basis of a shared place of origin (including Mozambique and Zimbabwe), and thus language.

5. With the exception of Arabic, Gujarati, and Urdu, widely spoken by South Asian and Muslim citizens in South Africa but not among the official languages, all South African languages are written in the roman alphabet.

cording equipment lie casually about the space, bringing into the material sphere the traces and forces of those who are absent and promising connection across vast distances (calls arrive from across the city but also from across the world). There are also family photographs on desks, key chains, and mass produced posters featuring the images of now-deceased individuals. Photocopied forms with handwritten notes are stacked in piles and filed in cabinets.

In the shadow of communicational technology's fashion industry, this scene has uncountable analogues around the world. But in the bountiful banality of the technologies and artifacts of mass reproducibility that are strewn on desks and tables and concealed in purses or pockets, this scene ridicules the teleological fantasies of every theorist who would speak of the displacement of one kind of technology by another. It is often useful to speak of mediatic technologies in ways that privilege new media as the signifiers of social and historical change that they are said to instigate. In such narratives, one often finds sequences, such as lithography is superseded by photography, which gives way to cinema, which is transformed by sound technology, which is displaced by integrated and multiplatform digital media, and so forth. Ontologized in epochal schema, these sequences become something more and different: analog media are said to be displaced by digital media, and the logic of representation gives way to that of information, as the symbol relinquishes its sovereignty to the binary logic of the code. If the office of the HIV/AIDS NGO can be read as indicative, there is no evidentiary ground for such totalizations or for the belief that new media completely displace already existent forms of mediation. Certainly, new technologies can replace old ones (e.g., there are few public telephones in South Africa today, and legislation has secured the digitization of television). But the conflation of media with mediation, which is itself symptomatic of both a technological determinism and an effort to ontologize technology, demands questioning. I am interested here in certain crises of mediation (not media) at the point where the communicative aspiration and the presumptive unity of medium and message in language are brought to their limit. Media technologies play a role in this drama, but they do not explain it.

The scene above lets us grasp two coexistent and apparently contradictory understandings of the crisis, which nonetheless share a certain logic. For the women, Zuma's speech represents a political failure precisely because it has become so audibly marked. This communicational fail is associated, from their perspective, with illegality, corruption, and violence. If the political sphere were functioning as it should, he would be a great communicator; mediation would occur by virtue of its self-effacement.

Now, this ideal of political speech is different from "immediacy," which term would describe the aspiration of properly performative or magical speech and which would be associated with the politics of the commandment rather than representationalism. Such speech, in the form of witchcraft and prophecy, is known to these devout Christian religious

women and to the young man. If we were to embrace the kind of logocentric historiography that imagines literacy to constitute a secondary mediation of a primal and autoaffective orality, then the young man's derision of zamazama illiteracy would seem to run counter to the women's valorization of a speech that effaces its own mediatic dimension (Derrida 1976). But the opposition does not hold. On the one hand, we must bear in mind his hostility to witches, for they are technicians of a speech in which the identity between word and world reaches its maximal extent, when the mere utterance of a spell (even when that utterance is nonverbal) is thought to cause things to happen. At the same time, his discourse is not a straightforward valorization of literacy in opposition to orality. In his discourse, the foreignness of seSotho is analogous to Zuma's improper English. It inserts a division between the saying and the said, the medium and the message of communication. In his account, the literacy that testifies to zamazama exteriority to the legitimate public sphere is extremely minimal: the sort that lets a man write his name. But precisely to the extent that such men could write, their speech would function as it should: not as threat, or instrument of violence, but as the means for communication across difference. Literacy here does not signify the secondary mediation of a primary orality; it is that which permits the mastery of mediation and thus its effacement.

I emphasize that the operative opposition in this context is not simply between immediacy and mediation and certainly not between signal and noise. The opposition is between self-effacing and apparent mediation. There is no risk here of the scene devolving into one of absolute unintelligibility, even when the specter of violence is present. There is, rather, the experience of a doubleness that is felt as a disturbance and a distraction, one that somehow mitigates the capacity to sustain a desired opposition between language and violence and to thus underwrite a public sphere defined in its essence by legality.

A few anecdotes scraped together from across the years do not yet legitimate generalization. Nonetheless, in my experience, these fragments of discourse are representative of a widespread phenomenon and of a general unease at the heart of a society that is being reconstituted around a commitment to constitutional multilingualism and democratic proceduralism but that is nonetheless felt by many of its citizens to be threatened by foreignness and suffused by violence, criminality, and corruption. Neither has the state secured a monopoly on violence nor has the constitutional valorization of multilingualism been matched by educational reforms capable of generating multilingual literacy. Bureaucratic proceduralism has been read as a tactic of both corrupt governments and labor aristocracies within the unions. Those who were promised a voice at the end of apartheid find themselves frustrated; their expressions of will do not command transformation. To the contrary, everywhere there is delay and deferral, and the rituals of governmentality increasingly appear as evasions of transformational labor and cloaks for the intensification of inequality. In this context, and in contrast to

what can be observed in the HIV/AIDS NGO, direct-action campaigns, strikes, incendiary protests, and messianic movements abound. Political parties are being fractured as youth withdraw from and disavow the structures within which they had previously been expected to enter the hierarchies of power. Elder statesmen of the unions and the established political parties condemn the impatience of youth. But there is also increasing violence carried out by the agents of the law, the most dramatic example being the massacre of strikers at the platinum mines of Marikana in August 2012.

Across a vast and heterogeneous field, one sees tactics that aim to bypass former structures for the representation of interests and to access or deploy power immediately—without delay, without the risk of dissemination or dispersion. On the one hand, the fantasy of immediacy manifests itself in messianic movements and direct-action politics and in various kinds of violence. On the other, as though to short circuit its essential characteristics, there is language hollowed out of ambiguity, pried away from subjectivity, and instrumentalized in slogans and catchphrases from obsolescent ideological programs.

In order to demonstrate the relationship between direct-action politics and a violent drive to immediacy on one hand and what Roland Barthes would describe as relatively unary ideological discourse on the other,[6] I want to turn to the recent and widely publicized debacle in the South African National Assembly as a point of entry before moving to a discussion of the forms of discourse that arose at Marikana and elsewhere in its aftermath.

An Other Scene: The Theater of Noncommunication

On February 12, 2015, President Jacob Zuma delivered his annual state of the nation address, remarking on the sixtieth anniversary of the Freedom Charter, signed at Kliptown, and the twenty-fifth anniversary of the release of Nelson Mandela. It was the Freedom Charter that enshrined the principle of one person, one vote, while promising rights of representation to all residents and not merely citizens of South Africa. And it is to appropriate the force of that still resonant declaration that the ANC declared 2015 to be the "Year of the Freedom Charter and Unity of Action to Advance Economic Freedom." This nomination also sought to appropriate the authority of the emergent and self-consciously militant political party started by the ANC's former (deposed and disciplined) Youth League president, Julius Malema: the Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF). The EFF rose to power in the

aftermath of the massacre at Marikana, vowing to restitute the revolutionary content of the antiapartheid movement through the expropriation and nationalization of lands and mineral resources, the establishment of higher minimum wages, and free universal education.[7]

Before the commencement of Zuma's address, EFF members stood and demanded that he answer questions about his Nkandla estate. Many shouted "pay back the money" or "we want our money."[8] The phrase had become ubiquitous during the 2012 strikes at Marikana, when it expressed a demand for increased wages. Resignified in the aftermath of Malema's own split from Zuma and the ANC, it expressed the demand that Zuma repay some or all of the 246 million rand of public funds used to pay for infrastructure upgrades near or on his estate.[9]

The EFF's interruption of the ritual event was anticipated in advance, but this did not mitigate its capacity to delay the evening's agenda. Although they participated in elections and received more than 6% of the popular vote in 2014, which made them the third largest party in the sitting government, members regularly disavowed parliamentary protocol. Indeed, seven EFF members were charged and found guilty of "contempt" and "creating a disturbance in parliament" when they shouted similar slogans in 2014. In 2015, they accused the Speaker of using bureaucratic regulations to exclude necessary political discussion—as did others. Even former president Thabo Mbeki had opined, "you don't use administrative instruments to resolve a political problem" (South African Press Association 2014). During the confrontations in both 2014 and 2015, the Speaker of the House summoned security personnel to forcibly remove EFF members, and public disgust at the disrespect shown to government was twinned with that regarding the use of violence against the people's representatives.

These events were all televised, photographed, circulated via social media in the form of cell phone videography, and tweeted. But in February 2015, as security forces undertook their eviction, transmitters in the Assembly were intentionally jammed so that cell phone communications from within

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6. Barthes's analysis, traceable to his early writings on myth, remains helpful for thinking ideological discourse not because it is possible to escape such discourse via the "neuter" that he ultimately embraced but because he identifies a violence against language that is foundational for a politics organized by the concept of truth rather than, say, equality (Barthes 2005, 2012). Foucault's analysis of veridiction makes a similar point.

7. http://effighters.org.za/documents/declaration/.

8. This expression was central to the Marikana strikers' protest. It was initially made the refrain of a hit house-music song, using the O'Jay's "For the Love of Money" as background track. It was later remixed and then given an update following the melee of February 2015. For the first remix, see https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o1uZQ7LBdTE&feature=youtu.be. The latest version can be found on *Soundcloud* via the EFF's official website: https://soundcloud.com/economic-freedom-fighters/point-of-order. Another version lays the recording of the parliamentary outbreak over the Pink Floyd hit "Money."

9. The misappropriation of funds was first claimed by *Mail and Guardian* reporters Mandy Rossouw and Chris Roper in December 2009. An investigation by the public protector, Thuli Madonsela, concluded in March 2014 that Zuma was personally responsible for repaying funds from which he benefitted disproportionately. See Rossouw and Roper (2009) and Madonsela (2014).

the parliamentary buildings were prevented. The press considered this a violation of their freedoms, as did many of the MPs. But the delay in dissemination of messages did little to inhibit the rapid relay of images of a House in chaos. Nor did it reinforce ANC authority. Following the eviction of EFF members, a considerable percentage of television viewers ceased watching the broadcast of their president's anniversary speech. In reader-response sections of social media, not a few remarked on the clumsiness of Zuma's discourse, repeating the contempt that had bound the women in the HIV/AIDS NGO office in mocking solidarity.

It is my contention that the physical confrontations in the South African parliament are more than the eruption of frustration or the leakage of affect into a ritually rationalist space. More than this, the EFF's strategy entails the provocation of a mimetic transformation by which the state's representatives are incited into deploying force as a means to defend the regulatory order within which political discourse is contained and made to appear as the disinterested representation of interests (Taussig 1987, 1993). Usually, the concealment of such force provides the ruse by which constitutional orders secure their appearance as the spaces of peaceful deliberation among equals. Thus, its overt display constitutes more than a revelation or a failure to maintain appearances. In the moment that "law-preserving violence," as Walter Benjamin termed it, moves from the realm of immanence to that of overt coercion, the barbarism of civilization is exposed (Benjamin 2004). But the capacity to counterpose violence with something else is also strained. This is why Benjamin had to adduce the concept of "divine violence" to escape from the apparent inextricability of foundational and preservative violence.

EFF members not only repudiate barbarous civilization by speaking "out of turn." The disavowal of their fellow parliamentarians also solicits others elsewhere, namely the television-viewing and social-media-consuming public. To secure this indirect transmission as well as the identification that it enables, they must also and simultaneously secure the appearance of their exteriority to the institution whose corruption they assail—despite having sought electoral office. So, they speak in a manner that will not be admitted in parliament and, at the same time, in a manner that travels uninhibited beyond its confines. This is why they draw attention to the impropriety of their discourse. They theatricalize their own *ob-scenity* so as to inhibit any communication with other government officials and the corollary implication of seeking recognition from them while nonetheless making themselves overhearable.[10] If they invoke *Robert's Rules of Order*, shouting "point of order!" (as they have in the past), their bright red T-shirts and berets are already an ironic repudiation of parliamentary discourse and the deliberative processes behind which capital and the state hide their interests.

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10. As I understand it, to be ob-scene, off scene, is to be outside of the norms of discourse such that an affective force threatens to overwhelm the semantic content of the utterance.

There is an enormous risk in this strategy, which is apparent to everyone. The EFF wants not only to oppose the government and parliamentarianism but to partake of the power that emanates from the people in an electoral democracy. It is significant that they claim to be acting directly and on the basis of an identity with the people. The EFF is thereby confronted not only, as its website says, by the Leninist problem of "what is to be done" but also of how to make people think of the EFF's speech as their own. How indeed can they generate that kind of identity, which would spare them the burden and the contamination of representation, of speaking for others? The postulation of this kind of collective identity enables and even summons a kind of speech in which what is said is already read or known in advance and without subjective inflection. This is why the EFF members can and indeed must generate a sense that there is both absolute continuity between their words and deeds and that what they say might just as easily have been spoken by others.

The need to traverse the gap between word and deed is fulfilled in this context by slogans, which convert the difficult tasks of education and redistribution into the clarion call, "We want the money." Like the lyrics to a song, anyone can utter these words and in so doing find themselves enthralled by the strange sensation of speaking someone else's words and simultaneously experiencing them as one's own. Song often has this power. No wonder, then, that the EFF's slogans and recorded parliamentary interventions have been mixed with lines from familiar pop songs (e.g., by the O'Jays and Pink Floyd) and then remixed to become kwaito-inflected dance house music. They now circulate on social media and can be accessed through the EFF's official website or on its Soundcloud account.

With or without music, the slogan is speech at the point were the boundary between language and thing threatens to dissolve. It is a deeply reified speech, at once vacuous and overfull. Its communicative function is mainly limited to the solicitation of identity among speakers. For it does not open itself to dialogism. Its primary signification is the fact of collective utterance. We can see these qualities by considering the migration of the slogan "We want the money" from the strikes at Marikana to the critique of Zuma's corruption, and I will therefore now turn briefly to that history.

An Unoriginal Slogan

Marikana is the name of a place and also of an event. Following on a week of intensifying interunion conflict, it occurred on August 16, 2012, when police and armed security forces of the Lonmin Platinum Mine opened fire on striking mine workers, killing 34 of them. The killings were followed by mass protests, further strikes, and additional violence leading to numerous deaths among the mine workforce, the management's security personnel, the ANC, and the two unions representing miners: the National Union of Mineworkers (NUM), formed in 1982, and the Association of Mineworkers and Con-

struction Union (AMCU), formed in 2001. The EFF emerged against the backdrop of Marikana and quickly joined those proffering a public critique of corruption in the previously dominant unions and the governing political party. There have now been at least three major documentary films and several extended television reports, numerous books, scholarly and journalistic articles, and even a musical (*Marikana, the Musical*) produced with Marikana as its subject matter. A commission of inquiry, established on August 23, 2012, deliberated for nearly 3 years before issuing its report on March 31, 2015, having amassed thousands of pages of testimony and documentation. Its conclusions exempted top political officials from culpability but found fault with Lonmin's management as well as with the police at all levels. It also impugned the leadership of both the NUM and the AMCU and called for an investigation into the actions of individuals in each of these organizations (Farlam, Hemraj, and Tokota 2015).

I have written elsewhere about these events, the conditions in the mines that led to the strikes, the calendrical logic by which they were deemed illegal, and the citational histories within which the miners gave themselves to be seen by others, knowing as they did that their struggle and their deaths would be televised. As indeed they were. Here, I want to focus

on only two elements of the events, namely, the rapid concentration of the miners' many and sometimes conflicting demands into a single slogan that then functioned as the sign of their unity, and the corollary transformation of individual lamentation on the part of the widows and their supporters into a single, urgent chant.

Two images can assist us in grasping the issue. The first (fig. 1), reproduced and widely circulated across numerous platforms both within South Africa and internationally, was taken in November of 2012, and it depicts women protestors outside of the hearings of the national commission of inquiry. All bear the same placard, mechanically reproduced with letters of sufficient size to be read from afar.

The second, but earlier, image (fig. 2), depicts men, also bearing a placard, but this one is fabricated from found materials—a torn piece of cardboard, with barely visible ink, and nearly illegible script. The script is in Fanagalo, the pidgin lingua franca of the mines. It reads "Tina funa lo mali R12,500" (We want the money 12,500 rand).

It is not surprising that the clumsiness and illegibility of the script on the latter placard drew attention beyond the miners' ostensibly intended signification, namely, a wage increase in the monthly recompense for Rock Drill Operators

Figure 1. "Don't let the police get away with murder." Photo, Mick Hutchings, Reuters Pictures. A color version of this figure is available online.

Figure 2. "Tina Funa Lo Mali." Striking workers at Marikana, August 2012. Photo, Greg Marinovich. A color version of this figure is available online.

(RDOs). If our discussion of Zuma's ridiculed speech prepared us to recognize how the awkward trace of dubious literacy shows itself and thereby introduces resistance into the communicative process, the reflection on EFF strategies demands another, deceptively simple question: who speaks? Or, even, what speaks? In both cases, there is a message inscribed on the placards, addressed to anyone who might be able to read them. This open-ended address, sent into public spheres where it will be read, reread, interpreted, and misunderstood in turn, is nonetheless differently circumscribed in either case. The language on the men's placard is narrowly addressed to those within the mining sphere—no one else speaks this pidgin.[11] Its minimal and unambiguous message borders on telegraphic code. If it seeks out management, it expresses an aspiration to unanimity among the miners. And

yet the code dissipates at the perimeter of the language's functionality, beyond the world of the mines.

By contrast, the women's message is single but multiplied. A serial incarnation of the message suggests the possibility of an infinitely repeating demand: "Don't let the police get away with murder." The English is as close to a global address as it is possible to achieve in South Africa at present. But the organizational title of the "Marikana Support Campaign" that appears below the message summons and evacuates the concept of signature. We are therefore left to ask, is the campaign the author of these words? If so, in whose names does it speak? In whose voice?

What happens when a mass of people enter a public sphere, to actualize their right to "have a voice," only to speak in a manner that lacks the particularity that we associate with the very concept of voice? The words spoken—worn, one should say—could be spoken by any of the women in the image, but in this typographically standardized form, the statements are shown to be no one's in particular. They are the graphical form of a chant, itself the vocalization of a slogan. As we have seen, the fact that anyone can speak such phrases enables their resignification and redeployment. And this remains the case in the EFF's new appropriations of the miners' translated slogan.

11. Indeed, the translation of Fanagalo into English was a contested issue in the Commission of Inquiry. The police commissioner Lieutenant Colonial McIntosh had required a translator to speak with the strike leaders, and the commission's report notes Lonmin's withholding of the name of the translator as an index of the fear that suffused the environment in August before the violence (Farlam, Hemraj, and Tokota 2015:560).

A slogan in a political rally is a literalist response to the mundane crises of mediation that the HIV/AIDS NGO office staged. As we have seen, the public sphere avowed at the HIV/AIDS NGO is based on a belief in the necessity of mediation but also of its effacement. This is quite different from that short circuiting to which the slogan aspires with language that is stripped of ambiguity, pried away from subjectivity, and reduced to the most instrumental dimension. I want to now consider the messianism that expresses, in an even purer form, the drive to transcend mediation altogether.

From Slogan to Sublimity

Shortly after my encounter at the HIV/AIDS office, I met with the leadership of the AMCU in their new offices on Palladium Street. The regional secretary was a young man who spoke slowly and precisely in an elegant, educated English, though it is not his native language. He was accompanied by the union's regional chairperson. In this gold-mining town, which was the seat of NUM's founding in 1982 and which has been central to the narrative of both gold mining and labor activism in national historiography, the AMCU's rise to power came quickly and without much forewarning. Barely 6 weeks after the massacre at Markiana, workers on AngloGold Ashanti's mines staged a monthlong strike, organized against the advice of their NUM representatives, and shortly thereafter, the miners migrated en masse to the upstart union. Within 6 months, the AMCU was granted official bargaining status by the Chamber of Mines.

A few doors from Wimpy's, a franchise diner where the local politicians and businessmen meet to make deals over greasy eggs and bacon, the new office was still without much furniture. There, the secretary explained what had happened with all the art of a storyteller and truly Spartican authority: "For a long time workers have been feeling that they have no power . . . not only in terms of wages or money or salary but in terms of their dignity." There is no way I could understand this, he said, if I had not been underground. After ascertaining that I had been underground, he continued.

> Yeah, it's another world. It's a kind of system in which people are being seen as slaves. Their dignity is reduced drastically. Ah, their safety . . . in terms of money . . . it led to desperation. . . . A human being will work close to 12 hours a day underground without seeing the sun, . . . so that he can meet his monthly needs. . . . The current union at that time, which was the NUM, was becoming distant from the mandate of the workers in terms of daily issues. Workers did not see—I personally did not see NUM, even though I was a member—I personally did not see NUM as a party that can represent me. Ah, in my daily disputes made with management, I wouldn't go to NUM because I knew very well that I'm not going to get assistance. The mass meetings' mandates were not implemented, leaders started to see workers as stepping stones to getting to higher po-

sitions in [the] municipality, in [the] parliament. . . .When you do not listen to your constituency, the very same people that put you there . . . you're looking [at an] erupting volcano if I can put it in that manner. After, after . . . in 2012, as you know, after 34 of the workers were killed, I think that was the last straw . . . where workers decided that we are not going to sit back and watch while our brothers are being murdered like it is still apartheid.[12]

The secretary's passionate narrative moves from working conditions to state and corporate violence against workers while enumerating NUM's failures. But the massacre is not the origin of the radicalization; it is only that which brings to fruition what was already in process, namely, a failure of representation.

> We elected a government democratically and they slaughter the very same people who put them in the parliament. They slaughter the very same people who put them in power. Most of the people in government come from the NUM, they were elected by the very same workers, so it was quite a shock, that they could be slain, the very same workers could be slain like that. Before the uprising in 2012, the workers started joining AMCU, even before the Marikana Massacre, they were joining AMCU drastically, in many numbers.

Later, the secretary would speak of the ways in which labor disputes were recoded as disciplinary hearings. In these proceedings, he argued, a combination of racism's history and the drive for power (and the salaries associated with it) on the part of NUM representatives materialized itself in the demand that workers confess to supervisors' accusations in order to receive lenience. The mitigation of penalties constituted a victory from NUM's perspective even if it meant workers' false confessions. In this narrative, a failure of representation at the level of the elected officials leads to an overt enactment of violence in the place of representation by those officials and against those who are the origin of their power. In other words, the representative function has been confused with a governing function, speaking with the exercise of power. This is precisely what the EFF is trying to expose. However, in the union that claims better representational capacities (there is a sign in the office that reads "AMCU will make the difference"), there is also an attraction to and an aspiration for something beyond this representation, a power that would, in fact, exceed all representationalism.

In our first conversation, the AMCU secretary surprised me with a fabular gesture that paired song and slogan. He said, "there's a song, professor, which basically states that—it's a Xhosa song, a slogan—it states that AMCU found us in the bushes while we were lost, you see, and it took us to the

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12. Technically, NUM is not a party, and yet its role in the Congress of South African Trade Unions, which is part of the Tripartite Alliance governing South Africa, blurs this distinction. As can be seen throughout the interview, NUM's failures are construed in terms of a governmental logic as much as a syndicalist function.

promised land." Despite my obvious expression of surprise he commenced his history, which I have already quoted: "for a long time workers have been feeling that they have no power."

Despite the secretary's performance of moral righteousness, the Biblical metaphor remained enigmatic. Did it imply an identification on the part of the miners with the foundling prince and the Mosaic legend? Did it imply that the surviving miners had been spared a massacre precisely in order to establish a moral order on an analogy with Moses, who, among all the infants of his generation, had been saved by being hidden in the reeds? Would it entail their own exclusion at the threshold of liberation? And who or what would be the AMCU's Joshua? In this social space, where Biblical narrative circulates as common sense and where Zionism names the largest denomination of African Christianity, such readings are at once on the surface and compulsive, unconscious mythopoetic structures. Few miners profess overt religiosity, and yet the messianism of this fable suffuses the post-Marikana political sphere not only in the rhetoric of the mountain, which binds Marikana and other locations (the secretary says, without irony, "we have our own Marikana"), and with the prophetic traditions of Eastern Cape and Kwa-Zulu Natal but also in the understanding of the strike as an ecstatic experience of collectivity and self-presencing rather than self-representation and thus mediation.

Soon thereafter, I met with a shop steward in an empty parking lot of AngloGold Ashanti's properties. We talked in the shadowed back seat of my car as the sun set on silver mountains of mine tailings. This was to avoid the "eyes," which, my interlocutor told me, are always looking. Later, he would tell me to Google him, but this desire for celebrity disclosed itself only after several days of theatrical secrecy. Of course, his insistence on being clandestine was a claim of importance, but this does not mean, at the same time, that there was not surveillance. There was.

The steward had previously worked at a platinum mine in Rustenburg, in the vicinity of Marikana, having entered the mines on the advice of an uncle after his father's death "in the mines." But he had quit, horrified at the intensity of the labor underground, only to be forced back there when he could not obtain work from the municipality. When he moved from the platinum belt to the gold mines following dismissal during a strike, the steward was shocked by the complaisance of his new coworkers and took it upon himself to "inform" them: "I think there was a lack of information. People didn't get a clear picture of what is happening within the mining industry. They were remote controlled." The phrase stood out: a poetic registration of industrial capitalism's compulsive force cast in the idiom of contemporary media. I asked the steward how things had changed after Marikana, recalling the AMCU secretary's insistence that Marikana did not originate but had rather catalyzed an incipient disaffection in this area. "When I arrived here," he answered, "I could see that there is a lot of things that's not going well." To remedy the situation, he

started "to engage people individually. . . . The gold sector as it was, the operation and the system that was used in the mine that I was employed at before, it was a different thing, and you can see that people don't have information of actually what is happening." As he described his efforts to explain to them "how things should be," he meditated with obvious excitement on the "fortunate" events of "2012, when things happened in Marikana. The people started to realize that they got power in their hands. And that is when we decided to go at the hill, on the 25 of September."

The strike at AngloGold Ashanti lasted a month and generated a mere 2% wage increase. But the paucity of economic gains was partly compensated for by the sense of empowerment that came with being on the mountain. I asked the steward what it was like, during those days of anxious anticipation, so soon after the massacre of workers in the neighboring town. He responded, "It was fun. . . . We took a month, on the strike. . . . It was fun, we took it like fun, but it was very difficult. . . . We were very much militant on the engagement with management. . . . We used our own intelligence so that people can't lose their jobs." When I questioned what made the experience fun, he paused and reflected before continuing, grandiosely, "I was a, I was the pillar of around 12,500 people, that were on strike. Not only this shaft. . . . There are three shafts at AngloGold Ashanti, so we gathered at the mountain, the three shafts. So, I could realize that I've got, I've got this, I've got this power mentality, and this power, ways that I can say to people, to convince people. . . . It's not easy to convince people that this is what is happening and we are going to stand for what we are actually here for."

At first sight, the steward appears as an ordinary labor organizer, a man who would exercise his rhetorical skills in suasion appropriate to a public sphere characterized by deliberative processes. His skills, he says, are necessary because something has blocked the other workers in what should have been a verily automatic recognition of their own interests. Precisely because they are blocked, however, he must speak to and for them in order that they discover their own voice.

What is at stake here in this eloquent appropriation of the workers' possible but interrupted capacity for self-representation? We know from Marx's *Eighteenth Brumaire* that the identity of the workers' interests does not automatically become the basis of a sense of community (Spivak 2010). This is why, he asserts, they must be represented. In Spivak's reading, his account of the peasants' superstitious adoration of Louis Napoleon, the figure of the emperor is shown to provide the poor peasants with an image and a trope (*Darstellung*) that absorbs into itself the act of representation as persuasion, a coming to consciousness of an identity of interests (*Vertretung*). The steward appears to recognize the difference between these two elements of representation (concealed in English as "representation"; Spivak 2010). However, this difference is a gap to be closed as much as it is to be mediated or maintained.

It is, indeed, to cover over this gap that he offers himself in the role of "leader" in the pursuit of immediacy. His claim to a metonymic status vis-à-vis the mine workers (a profession that he nonetheless feels himself above) moves his gesture from what might have been organic affiliation, à la Gramsci, to a presumption of the tropological function, which is to say a substitutional function grounded in the claim to full identity. In this respect, his function is extraordinary, and its origins are also extraordinary: "I believe that I was sent to, I was sent here to come and actually rescue the mine workers that are oppressed."

Even before he arrived among these workers, blocked in their capacities for self-representation because they had not yet grasped their own lack, "there were signs" that came to the steward from beyond. To be sure, he says, he "was always in the lead" (at school, in relation to his age-mates), but he came to this community after receiving something like a commandment: "it was like an ancestor." It is to assuage the unease of the ancestor, namely his father, that he says he now speaks, and it is because the ancestor hears him that it (and not the workers) is now "at ease." Up until this point, the father/ancestral figure had been described by the steward only in terms of his failure to fulfill the paternal function ("he has done *nothing* for me").

The steward's speech restores to the father the ideal function of recognition. In this way, however, there is a kind of detour in the representational dramaturgy of the working-class accession to self-representation, a detour and a substitution. As the workers are replaced by the father as the origin of the steward's communicative and thus social power, the labor of history is transferred to a narrative of origins. A patriarchal and phallocentric sublimity overwhelms the steward, who, in the course of our conversation, abandons his earlier self-presentation as a skilled rhetorician and pedagogue and asserts, instead, that he is the recipient of a gift, a quality of leadership at once inborn and compulsive: "leadership . . . it's not something I actually learned, it's something that I was born with."

During our second meeting, this one in the residential section of the compound, where minivans beeped and fruit vendors offered their produce to the men coming off shift, the steward's speech grew more elaborate. He was radiant with this tale. His power assumed mythic proportions as he conjured the specter of a company conspiracy to torture him.

On the mountain, he says, he was chased by security forces in a helicopter but escaped repeatedly, each time returning to his fellow strikers on the mountain, where he "ma[de] that it was a joke." When I asked, "wasn't it frightening?," he responded with alacrity, "No, it wasn't. It wasn't. Because I believed that, eh . . . I am untouchable. I believed that I am untouchable. And I was preaching that." What confers this sense of immunity to violence, deployed by the company in the interest of crowd management and the protection of private property, is, in the end, the paternal gaze: "I believe that wherever my father is, he's watching over me. And I said that

to the employees, that 'I know that my father is watching over me, wherever he is, because I am doing this for you, because he has done nothing.'" This is why, he said, his words became true. He no longer conceals the substitutional logic, the conflation of *Darstellung* with *Vertretung*, and in this very moment, he describes a potent, corporeal sensation of limitlessness, of being the locus of power and not merely its explanatory vehicle. His most thrilling recollection is the sensation of a pure power in speaking, a speaking so potent that it traverses the boundaries separating the living and the dead. It is in this sense that I speak of messianism, a messianism that partakes of both Christological myth and socialist metaphysics while casting them both in the idiomaticity of Xhosa genealogical convention.[13]

The Political Instance

The problem on the mines from the AMCU's perspective is that the elders are uneducated and, despite this, presume authority. They presume authority but do not exercise it, especially with regard to the treatment that black workers have received at the hands of the white establishment. According to the young men, foreign elders, migrant laborers who entered the mines during apartheid, accustomed themselves to being boss boys and living in hostels. They allowed management to tell them when they could strike and what they could negotiate. They accepted the bureaucratic obstructions and institutional degradations that the old union elite now perform in their mimicry of the whites. By contrast, the young mine workers say they have the right to speak on their own behalf and to demand a hearing. Despite all of the critical literature that explains the poor remuneration of the mine workers at Marikana in terms of their poor access to education in rural areas, the mine workers' claim that, today, mine workers are educated, at least relative to their forebears. They can, they say, read the legislation and critique the dissimulations that are encoded in the text of mining capital.

And yet despite their new knowledge, the mine workers cannot make their words the source of transformation in the world. At every turn, there is something obtruding between what should have been and what is. Where people ought to have found their voice they find themselves newly muted and excluded. The presumption, widely shared in this context, is that power consists in making oneself heard and heard in a manner to which others must respond. In liberal, electoral democratic orders, of course, having a voice is the mark of political subjectivity, but this is exercised mainly in the del-

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13. A long tradition of messianism in this area makes the mountain the seat of transcendent powers. Largely associated today with the Nazarite church of Isaiah Shembe, this tradition has been broadly significant in the history of rebellions throughout the Eastern Cape and Kwa-Zulu Natal, especially among the Pondo. As many commentators have noted, the relatively impoverished Pondo ethnic group provides a high percentage of the RDOs, who were at the center of the Marikana strikes.

egation of that speaking function to a representative. Elected representatives should articulate the interests of those who have delegated their speaking function. The perceived failure of such a representative function by union officials was a crucial motivating factor in the disputes at Marikana. Dissatisfaction was also intensified by NUM's vectoral use of cell phone technology to transmit information in lieu of mass meetings. The AMCU had used text messaging to crowd-source such meetings, but it had quickly recognized that the absence of face-to-face engagement was a critical failure on NUM's part. The desire for that thrilling exchange between the one and the many would not be satisfied by a branched tree of text messages. The AMCU recognized and gathered to themselves the desire for a transcendent experience of communication in which the sensation of presence and immediacy is particularly heightened. The point of efficacious speech is, or course, that there be no loss or dissipation between speaking and being heard, whether by one's coworkers or by the spirits.

As we have seen, this desire for immediacy is satisfied differently by different practices—from the slogan that has banished ambiguity at the expensive of signification to the messianic utterance that penetrates even into the realm of the ancestors. It is intensified by a contradiction: technologies promise immediacy and thus a corrective to conditions of miscommunication and deferred access to resources whose distribution should have been secured by political representatives. But technology will not suffice as an answer to political problems, which are experienced by those at the bottom of the social hierarchy as desire in excess, which is to say lack. There is not enough: not enough money, not enough services, not enough jobs, not enough educational opportunities, not enough material resources, and so forth. That there are resources to be had but that these have been removed from the field of circulation and distribution by private property in a system of racialized capital is widely recognized by all.

Insofar as lack is a function of blocked access to resources, the aspiration to immediacy and communicative fullness is a simple oppositional corrective. People desire to overcome what interrupts the path of their desire. The EFF and the shop steward both assert a metonymic relation with the class they would represent, and they do so in ways that, as Spivak describes, collapse the political labor of collective subject formation (whether under the name of class or something else) with a substantialized, corporealized figuration of power. And they make themselves into pure proxies.

The alternative, as we have seen, is provided by the satiric discourse of the HIV/AIDS office. No doubt, it expresses a liberal fantasy of an ideal public sphere in Habermas's sense, but it also reveals that ideal speech community as one predicated on the effacement of communication rather than the actually perfect transmission of intention or the production of consensus. In that scene of pedagogy, where the work of

persuasion (HIV/AIDs prevention) is itself the center of activity, there is suspicion of the one—both Zuma and the EFF's Malema—who would use the critique of bureaucratic proceduralism to underwrite a substitution of a representatum for the work of representing. Bureaucratic proceduralism remains a source of violence, of course, in the form of deafness. But the literalization of Benjamin's divine violence, which is perhaps one way to understand the messianic element in South African labor politics today, does not solve the problem. Rather, it exposes the necessity of critique: of the substitution of the medium (and media in general) for the thought of mediation. Media theorists who are themselves enthralled by the idea that technology can bridge or even suture the gap between these two dimensions might learn from this scenario.

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Visualizing Publics

Digital Crowd Shots and the 2015 Unity Rally in Paris

by Zeynep Devrim Gürsel

The Unity Rally (Marché Republicaine) in Paris on January 11, 2015, organized in the aftermath of the deadly attacks on the satirical journal *Charlie Hebdo*, was a spectacle staged to produce images of unity after an act of terror itself triggered by the global circulation of injurious visuals. In this paper I analyze the Unity Rally as a case study of the production of a contemporary public not merely by the consumption of but also by the collective production and circulation of media. How do publics witness themselves? While the Unity Rally was ostensibly spontaneous, I explore a series of institutional patterns, social needs and behaviors, technological infrastructures, and iconic templates involving state actors, private individuals, and communication networks to understand the overdetermined manner in which it was photographed.

It has been more than 30 years since Benedict Anderson famously argued that the rise of nationalism and the modern nation-state was spurred by the circulation of printed mass media that allowed individuals to imagine themselves as part of a greater community of like-minded citizens. It has often been assumed that there are critical ties between images and imaginaries, but less attention has been paid to the particular practices whereby specific photographs of a given community are produced and circulated.[1] Similarly, while much has been written about spheres in which private citizens meet to discuss public matters, there is still much to understand about how communities produce and consume images of themselves and others. And there remains much to be analyzed about how day-to-day imaginaries and available imaging practices allow certain images to emerge and dominate others. Discussing publics rather than nations, Michael Warner (2005) has argued that publics are not merely preexisting collectivities that consume media but rather are constituted through the circulation of media. However, how can an invisible event—the production of a public—be visualized? How do publics witness themselves?

I analyze the Unity Rally (Marché Republicaine) that took place in Paris on January 11, 2015, as a case study of the production of a contemporary public not merely by the consumption but also the collective production and circulation of media. Specifically, the production and circulation of digital crowd shots served as a manner of constituting a public. While the Unity Rally was ostensibly spontaneous, in this article I explore a series of institutional patterns, social needs and be-

haviors, technological infrastructures, and iconic templates involving state actors, private individuals, and communication networks to understand the overdetermined manner in which it was photographed. How events and publics are visualized matters not only because we live in an image-saturated world but because determining what can be visually represented, managing zones of visibility and invisibility, has become a key means of exercising power whether as a core function of statecraft, corporate mission, or terrorist activity.

Im/Mediate Unity

The day after the massive Unity Rally in Paris, France, on January 11, 2015, organized in the aftermath of the deadly attacks on the satirical journal *Charlie Hebdo*, there was unity above all in its global media coverage. This was true both in text and images reporting on the event.[2] The historical conclusions were readily drawn—France had been forever changed. The relevant facts of the rally were stated thus: "More than a million people surged through the boulevards of Paris behind dozens of world leaders walking arm-in-arm Sunday in a rally for unity described as the largest demonstration in French history. Millions more marched around the country and the world to repudiate three days of terror that killed 17 people and

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1. Two important exceptions within the discipline of anthropology are Christopher Pinney's (2004) *Photos of the Gods: The Printed Image and Political Struggle in India* and Karen Strassler's (2010) *Refracted Visions: Popular Photography and National Modernity in Java*. Strassler (2010:4) explicitly claims, "It is through the reflexive production and circulation of images that 'imagined' social entities like nations become visible and graspable."

2. For more on convergence as a feature of digital news, see Boczowksi (2010).

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changed France."[3] There was some variety in what points were underscored: the 3.7 million who marched throughout France, the demonstrations of solidarity elsewhere in the world, or that this was the largest gathering of people on the streets of Paris since the Allies liberated the city in August 1944. There was some plurality of opinion on why people had taken to the streets: to show solidarity against terror or for freedom of the press, to protest Islamic extremists or to honor the memory of the slain cartoonists at *Charlie Hebdo*. Nonetheless, regardless of the slight nuances in coverage, news publications used very similar if not identical photographs to visualize the rally, often including a group shot of world leaders who appeared to be leading the crowd.

Thus, the rally was very successful in delivering overdetermined images of unity. Despite the sudden force implied in the Associated Press copy—people *surging* through boulevards *behind* world leaders—the Unity Rally was carefully staged and orchestrated. However, my point in analyzing this Unity Rally as a staged spectacle is not to argue that it was any more or less sincere or authentic than other political gatherings but rather to analyze it as a contemporary example of the relationship between images and publics. The Unity Rally was a spectacle staged to produce images of unity after an act of terror itself triggered by the global circulation of injurious visuals.

In the following, I turn to interviews about the mediation of the Unity Rally conducted with professional image brokers (Gürsel 2016).[4] Over more than a decade, my work has focused on making visible the infrastructures of representation and the work of image brokers to understand how certain world events are visualized in the age of digital circulation. During this time, images in the press, from photographs to cartoons, have increasingly not just represented current events but have themselves been factors in causing events, thereby playing critical and highly controversial parts in political and military action.[5] The images of the January 11, 2015, Unity Rally in Paris and the violent attacks preceding it offer us an opportunity to reflect on the contemporary politics of representation. The question of the rights and powers of representation—both in the sense of what can be drawn under freedom of expression regulations and who can be represented as part of the French nation—were central to the Unity Rally. However, before the question of representation must be the issue of circulation:

how photographs, both amateur and professional, circulate in global digital media worlds.

On January 7, 2015, the Kouachi brothers stormed into the weekly editorial meeting at the offices of the French satirical magazine *Charlie Hebdo* and killed twelve people in retaliation for the magazine's depictions of Muslims—specifically, the prophet Mohammed. The magazine had also run the controversial 2005 cartoons initially published in the Danish paper *Jyllands-Posten*.[6] A few hours after the *Charlie Hebdo* massacre, Amedy Coulibaly, an accomplice to the brothers, murdered five people at a Jewish supermarket across town. All three assassins were killed at the end of a 3-day manhunt. Yet the allegedly blasphemous cartoons of the Muslim prophet were not the only images said to have prompted the deadly shootings. Cherif Kouachi, the younger of the two brothers, had served time in prison for ties to terrorism. It was in prison that Cherif met Coulibaly. In the transcript of his 2007 trial, Cherif Kouachi states that he got the idea of joining a terror group when he saw images of the torture and humiliation of Muslims at the hands of American soldiers in Abu Ghraib prison in Iraq.[7]

In the following I will not address the images that are said to have motivated the violent attacks of January 2015, whether by this one means the Abu Ghraib prisoner abuse photographs or the cartoons published in *Charlie Hebdo* and other satirical magazines.[8] Rather, I want to discuss the images produced of and by the Unity Rally to investigate the connection between photography and contemporary publics. The French state and news media, along with international counterparts, collaborated to produce an emotionally compelling spectacle of unity exemplified by the full-page cover image of the French newspaper *Libération* (fig. 1) the morning after with a headline that read "We are a people."

The *Libération* cover is a concrete illustration of the nation as an imagined community: a photograph of people imagining

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3. Several news sites ran the Associated Press dispatch written by Angela Charlton and Thomas Adamson (2015), from which I quote here. This is the opening of the *Yahoo! News* story. Al Jazeera and Fox News also used this first sentence verbatim.

4. Image brokers are the people who act as intermediaries for images through acts such as commissioning, evaluating, licensing, selling, editing, and negotiating; they are the people who move images. For this article I interviewed image brokers from whom I have learned about the international photojournalism industry for more than a decade.

5. While I will not discuss them in this article, recent videos capturing police brutality against African Americans in the United States are also examples of such images. See also Gürsel (2014).

6. For anthropological discussion on the transnational cartoon controversies taking place against the backdrop of the post-9/11 "War on Terror," see Asad et al. (2009), Hervik and Boe (2008), Keane (2009), Klausen (2009), Müller, Özcan, and Seizov (2009), and Yilmaz (2007). For a rich genealogy of cartoons as special kinds of images and their relationship to liberal politics in India that ends by considering reactions to the 2005 Danish cartoons, see Ritu Khanduri's (2014) *Caricaturing Culture in India: Cartoons and History in the Modern World*.

7. See Fassin (2015) for a discussion of the coerced unity around "Je suis Charlie" placards and social inequalities that riddle the French prison system.

8. Journalistic accounts enumerating satirical cartoons with photographs of violence continue to underscore the cartoons as visual triggers of violence. Following the July 14, 2016, terrorist attack in Nice, police found the perpetrator's computer to contain "very violent" images "showing corpses; fighters brandishing the Islamic State's flag; *covers of the satirical magazine Charlie Hebdo*, the target of a January 2015 attack in Paris that killed 12 people; Osama bin Laden; and Mokhtar Belmokhtar, the one-eyed Algerian operative who helped lead Al Qaeda's affiliate in North Africa" (Rubin and Breeden 2016, emphasis added).
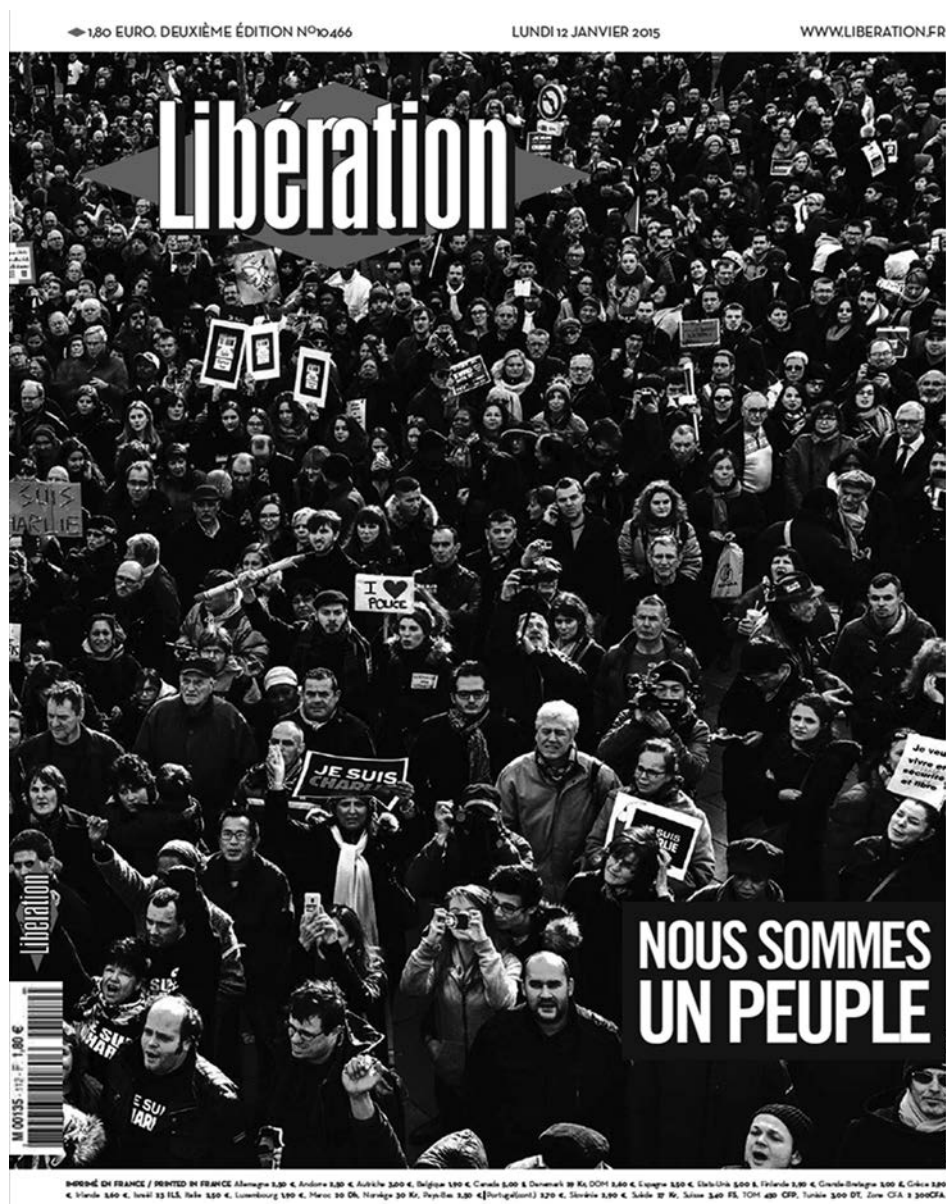
Figure 1. January 12, 2015, cover of *Libération* newspaper. Photograph by Johann Rousselot/Signatures. A color version of this figure is available online.

and declaring that they belong to a larger collective, an *imaged* community. Photographs of crowds compel our attention to move quickly from particular individuals to suggested generalities of groups, types, and mass publics.[9] Here, too, in the

cover of *Libération*, the many individuals depicted are framed as a photograph of "a people," an image of a nation united. Yet how does this image differ from what we might call a mere crowd shot? How is a community imaged? The specific crowd in the image includes many individuals holding cameras of various types. It is a photograph of a crowd caught in the act of photographing itself.

Society of the Spectacle in the Age of the Cell-Phone Camera

Guy Debord (1983:7) famously defined the spectacle not as "a collection of images, but a social relation among people, me-

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9. My thinking about visual representations of crowds has been influenced by the 2015 American Anthropological Association panel "The Crowded Field: Photographing Masses, Visualizing Power," which featured the research of Jenny Chio, Karen Strassler, and Nusrat Chowdhury, with William Mazzarella as discussant. While many, perhaps most prominently Jürgen Habermas, Benedict Anderson, and Michael Warner, have addressed the relationship between mediation and publics, this panel paid particular attention to the politics of specific photographic mediations of crowds.

diated by images." Almost half a century later, in the age of digital photography and social media, to state that social relations are mediated by images is a commonplace. Yet Debord's ideas have renewed salience for thinking about how contemporary images of rallies—and other kinds of digitally circulated crowd shots—become representative of publics today. Can a public that imagines itself as a political collective such as a nation or social movement exist today without the production and distribution of crowd shots? Typically crowds and publics have been theorized as very different kinds of gatherings (Tarde 1969 [1901]).[10] Put crudely, while crowds have been associated with masses and the literal embodiment of popular sovereignty, publics have been defined as forms of address or scenes of deliberative exchange. Yet the 2015 Unity Rally is an example where contemporary crowds and publics seem to converge precisely because what brought individuals to the rally in great numbers was above all their position about the production of images and their circulation. The production of certain images triggered the violent trauma that led to the call for unity in the first place and the dissolution of certain social bonds. Images were then summoned to suture together a fragmented sociality in the form of an imagable unity. Unity in this sense is a fetishistic substitute for a torn collective.

People had begun gathering in public spaces, including at the Place de la République, and holding vigils within hours of the terror attacks. The original call for a rally came that same day from the socialist party and was intended to bring together all political parties except Marine Le Pen's Front National, which was considered divisive and stigmatizing of certain citizens. That evening at 8 p.m., 21 million people watched President François Hollande deliver a short televised message in which he emphasized unity and stressed the importance of gathering together. (Faucher and Boussaguet 2016) Initially, there was some speculation about whether or not the president himself would attend the rally and whether the appropriate term was "rally" or "demonstration." By his evening address 2 days later, however, Hollande declared, "I call on all French women and men to rise up on Sunday together, to carry the values of democracy, freedom, pluralism to which we are all attached and that Europe represents."[11] An advisor to the president underscored the government's role facilitating unity from forces already swelling on the ground: "Two things really struck us immediately: the spontaneous demonstrations and the audience of the televised speech on Wednesday. It was not innocent. The nation was united" (Faucher and Boussaguet 2016). In allowing for the staging of the Unity Rally, the state was harnessing the impassioned energy of the crowds gathering on the streets with the extraordinary size of the television audience. Here was the state facilitating a spectacle, a social relation between people, mediated by images.

But let me take a step back before pressing on. I have benefited tremendously from returning to Vicente Rafael's (2006 [2003]) provocative analysis of the civilian-backed coup that overthrew Filipino president Joseph Estrada in 2001. Rafael argued two distinct media played a central role: the cell phone and the crowd.[12] While highly situated in the congested urban atmosphere of the streets of Manila and very particular kinds of class differences, this early piece about texting as a political technology has held up well to the test of time and is particularly fascinating in the aftermath of the debates about the role of social media in recent social movements from the post 2009 election protests in Iran to protests in lower Manhattan, Tahrir Square, Taksim, Ferguson, Bangkok, and elsewhere. Rafael (2006 [2003]:305) contends, "The crowd is a sort of medium . . . a way of gathering and transforming elements, objects, people and things." He underscores the crowd's capacity to transcend social hierarchies, the generative power of anonymous individuals in close proximity to one another. His observation about the cell phone now has a long history: in politically charged moments cell phones are still "credited along with radio, television and the Internet for summoning the crowd and channeling its desire, turning it into a resource for the reformation of the social order" (Rafael 2006 [2003]:304).

At a key point in his article, Rafael provides a close reading of one woman's post on an Internet discussion group about her own participation in the rally. Upon getting lost and being carried away by a sea of strangers, "she finds herself in a community outside of any community. It fills her with excitement. But rather than reach for a cell phone, she does something else: she takes out her camera" (2006 [2003]:306). For Rafael this is significant because it enables an experience different than the familiar pattern of traversing urban spaces in ways that maintain distance between different social categories. "Flor C. begins to take on the telecommunicative power of the crowd" (Raphael 2006 [2003]:307). Rather than reach for her cell phone, which would allow her to communicate with those at a distance, Flor C. takes photographs and immerses herself in the crowd, her position behind the camera emboldening her to get close to strangers and connect with the crowd around her.[13]

Addressing the centrality of the crowd to new forms of social movements in the era of digital circulation and social media, Rosalind Morris has argued that the essence of such crowds is

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10. The literature differentiating crowds from other groups, whether publics or multitudes, is extensive. See Mazzarella (2010) and Cody (2011) for two overviews that make clear the stakes behind these debates.

11. Quoted in translation in Faucher and Boussaguet (2016).

12. Rafael's prescient piece investigates what is revealed by media politics "understood in both senses of the phrase: the politics of media systems but also the inescapable mediation of the political" (Rafael 2006 [2003]: 297), demonstrating the generative ways in which media anthropology and the anthropology of mediation can be analyzed together (Boyer 2012).

13. See Morris (2009) for a provocative discussion of photography in East and Southeast Asia that pays careful attention to historical and social contexts. Morris forcefully claims, "The task of politics in the era of photography is not only to render photographs as particularly meaningful images, but also to transform the erotic or traumatized, and therefore transform immediate cathexis to photographs into acts of imagination that include the self-representation of the crowd as agentive collectivity" (39).

Figure 2. Example of a front-page usage of the heads of state group shot. Photograph by Olivier Hoslet/European Pressphoto Agency. A color version of this figure is available online.

visibility, and their most notable feature is "their ambition to access the media immediately" (Morris 2013:106). "This crowd, in order to achieve any objectivity—for the purposes of self-sustenance if not self-reproduction—must have an image of itself as such. The image, then, is the anticipatory origin of that force, as well as its reproduction" (Morris 2013:108). Technological convergence has led to many if not most individuals in crowds carrying cell phones with built-in cameras. The cell-phone camera may still serve as a powerful tool for an immersive experience of estrangement, but it is also frequently used to take, view, and circulate images of oneself and the group one is with in real time.[14] The cell-phone camera can potentially both document and interrupt the anonymity of the crowd. Rereading Rafael's article in light of Morris's claims and the Unity Rally compels me to ask: does the use of photography change not only an individual's experience in a crowd but also the very nature of the crowd's political potential?

To return to the staged spectacle of the Unity Rally in Paris in particular, the crowd had been invited by a coalition of political parties and unions and enjoined by the president of the French Republic to stand up together as citizens. This is a case, then, of the crowd gathering not to oppose the state but rather of the state making use of the same media that Rafael drew attention to: cell phones (and cell-phone cameras) and crowds.

Perhaps the most prescient claim in Rafael's (2006 [2003]) article is when he notes the changing directionality of communication: "Bypassing the broadcast media, cell-phone users themselves became broadcasters, receiving and transmitting both news and gossip and often confounding the two. Indeed one could imagine each user becoming his or her own broadcaster; a node in a wider network of communication that the state could not possibly even begin to monitor, much less control" (299). Recent years have proven that his prediction was both right and wrong in terms of the reach of state power: each user has become a broadcaster, but the state as well as the broadcasting platforms have become very creative in how they monitor and control networks of communication.

Producing a Photograph of United Heads of State

A picture, in the present conditions of politics, is itself, if sufficiently well executed, a specific and effective piece of statecraft. (Boal et al. 2005:26)

The day after the Unity Rally, most global news outlets featured an image showing the lineup of dozens of heads of state and foreign dignitaries (fig. 2) along with crowd shots taken at the Place de la République.[15] When President Hollande as the

14. How Flor C.'s experience might change if she were shooting digitally—or with the ability to see, edit, and delete her images immediately, take selfies, or instantly embed her images into social networks—is beyond the scope of this article but important to consider.

15. I looked at the January 12, 2015, front pages of many news publications worldwide online and also took advantage of the Newseum's front pages archive showing more than 800 front pages from that day (http://www.newseum.org/todaysfrontpages/?tfp_display=archive-date&tfp_archive_id=011215).

head of state whose televised address had drawn a vast audience joined the masses, he did not do so alone but with other leaders who, in the language of French newspaper *Le Monde*, "Marched against terror in Paris." Or at least they appeared to be marching together. Most versions of the photograph of the officials marching showed François Hollande flanked by Israeli prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu, Malian president Ibrahim Boubacar Këita, German chancellor Angela Merkel, and Palestinian leader Mahmoud Abbas, all joined arm in arm. Some published versions of the heads of state group shot show a wider angle of the powerful group, and newspapers often also ran images of their nation's representative if one had been sent to the march but did not appear in the front row. Most versions of the influential group shot were taken at eye level—as if by someone marching just ahead of them looking back—showing what looks like the heads of state at the head of a crowd, the surging million presumably just behind them.

Curious as to how such a photograph had been executed, I turned to a long-term informant, Paul Blec, just a few days after the rally. Paul is a photo editor with almost 20 years experience at Agence France Presse (AFP), one of the world's largest news agencies, headquartered in Paris. Paul emphasized, "The idea was that these leaders were going to *join the crowd* in Paris and show support. By *walking through the streets* of Paris."[16] Recalling president Hollande's advisor's comment that they had immediately noticed the mass television audience and the spontaneous demonstrations after the attacks, the group shot of officials was a way to harness the power of both. Instead of audiences watching their head of state on television, heads of states would appear en masse to be leading the people through the streets.[17]

"By the time I showed up for my shift Sunday morning all three of the [AFP photo] chief editors were on site planning for the day." Paul looked up at me with raised eyebrows: the three chief editors work in rotation, and it is rare for the chief editor to be there before the photo editors, whose shift begins at 9 a.m.

They kept telling us "We can't miss anything" and "Be prepared for a very, very large number of photographs." In fact, we've never seen so many people on the streets of Paris. So there was a lot of anxiety in the bureau. . . . I had a lot of friends who would be on the street that day . . . and knowing there would be so many political figures at the same place, at the same time, marching on the street. You never know what can happen. And then there was also my professional side that kept thinking, well, all of them will be there so we've got to have a photo.

Paul described the anticipation of covering a dominant news story knowing it would happen very fast and result in many photographs to edit that by nature would not be all that different from those taken by competing news agencies. Photographs had to be captioned and distributed as quickly as possible for AFP to have any chance of dominating the coverage of the event in news publications. Paul was worried about the safety of the crowd and that of the politicians for, like many, he feared that the rally would serve not only as a spectacle but an opportunity for an attack with significant casualties.

Honestly, the day before I kept asking myself, they're really going to march with the people? This many heads of state? It seemed bizarre. In fact, the security measures were extremely significant. They created an empty zone around them both in front and behind. They all arrived in armored buses, and descended into the streets only after the secret service asked everyone at the windows to go into their homes and close the windows. And they had people in place watching all the windows. They had already determined the exact location where the heads of state could walk on the street. In front of the heads of state there was absolutely no one. Just a few prescreened photographers.

When the secret service insisted that nearby inhabitants close their windows and go inside, they minimized the risk that anyone would shoot the group of leaders, not just with rifles but also with cameras. A few unauthorized snaps were made and circulated on social media and online blogs, but for the most part professional production was limited to those images produced by the prescreened photographers in front of the procession of officials (fig. 3).

They [the politicians] walked 50, at most, 100 meters. The time it would take to film it and photograph it. *The time it took to have taken place*, to say "voila the heads of state united." The critical thing was for the press to have made the photograph. That the heads of state could meet on the streets of Paris. Moreover that they could actually walk and not just stand still but that they could actually participate in the rally and that this be filmed and photographed.[18]

Paul stopped his narrative somewhat abruptly. He smiled wryly and said, "On the one hand it's very concrete and on the other, we're solidly in the world of the symbolic at this point!" Paul agreed that given security concerns, no one would have taken the risk of having the heads of state actually "march on the streets of Paris," at least not for any length of time or as part of a crowd. Yet everyone knew that it was important that heads of state appear to be marching. Like me, Paul and certainly all other journalists at the event and probably at the publications that circulated the image, if not many of those who viewed the image of the state delegates the next day, *knew*

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16. Emphasis added.

17. Saturday Paul had put together a collage of photographs of all the heads of state who would participate in the rally the next day. At that point there were 32, but the number grew overnight. The number of foreign dignitaries was reportedly between 40 and 50.

18. Faucher and Boussaguet (2016) quote President Hollande's communication advisor discussing the deliberate importance given to projecting an impression of freedom of movement in the days immediately after the attacks. It seems it was important for the president not to appear as if he had withdrawn to the safety of his residence.

Figure 3. Aerial view showing the zone of security in front of and behind political leaders attending the Unity Rally. Photograph by Kenzo Tribouillard/Getty Images. A color version of this figure is available online.

that this was a staged photograph. Not just staged in the way that all photographs of politicians are on some level photo opportunities but one carefully choreographed to give the impression that world leaders were uniting with the masses and taking to the streets of Paris with them. World leaders had collaborated to produce an image in which they appeared to be marching with the crowd. They needed not communicate with the crowd or even stand near it to produce an image of connecting with it. This was what Paul meant by photography "in the world of the symbolic." A photograph had to be produced to fulfill the symbolic meaning ascribed to the event even if image brokers themselves suspected the event could not have taken place as photographed. Yet Paul and the other editors at AFP (and at other news services) also felt it was crucial that the press not miss anything, as if they were covering an unpredictable, difficult to visualize event unfolding before them in real time.

In discussing the importance of a crowd having an image of itself, Rosalind Morris (2013:106) underscores the limitations of such crowds substituting for collective political action: "In the return of its image to itself (in a circle but not a dialectic), the rallying crowd assumes its possible identity as a collective subject. However, that subject does not speak so

much as it appears to be speaking."[19] For government actors, this feature of the mediated crowd was precisely what determined their choice of response to the terrorist attacks. As official coordinator of the march for the Socialist Party, François Lamy explained, "a march was the best way to avoid speeches and silence the best way to show respect for the dead, prevent slogans and thus give the *image of consensus*."[20] The heads of state photograph achieved what a typical lineup of politicians meeting at the United Nations or at a secluded summit could not. Captured in motion—in the streets of Paris—in photographs circulating in a sea of other photographs of the rally if not actually physically in front of a surging mass, world leaders took the lead in the production of an imaged community. They did not lead so much as appear to be leading. The group shot sutures the crowd of world leaders with a passionate public, producing an "image of consensus." Bypassing any dialogue or debate that might precede arriving at a consensus, an image of consensus was produced and circulated. A logic of communication is replaced by the logic of visibility. Self-

19. See Morris (2013) for a cogent explication of the stakes of appearing to be speaking rather than actually speaking.

20. Emphasis added. Quoted in Faucher and Boussaguet (2016).

expression and self-exhibition substitute for a communicative relation.[21]

Why was the production of this image so important? Maggie Baer, a senior photo editor at a major American news publication, told me, "To see Netanyahu and Abbas and Merkel . . . this was leadership standing up against violence. That was powerful. Then I saw it deconstructed online and saw that it was more of a photo op and not an actual event." In other words, despite everyone's awareness that this was a constructed image at least insofar as political parties and then the French government had called for this rally soon after the attacks, for some the power of the group shot was diminished by not being a candid moment captured spontaneously during an ongoing event.[22] Even for a veteran image broker like Maggie, the distinction between a photo op and coverage of an actual event still holds, and the borders between them matter. Nonetheless, in the absence of actual international political collaboration, the image wields significant symbolic power as an image showing international leaders appearing to unite against terrorism.

Moreover, despite some skepticism about and criticism of the photograph showing world leaders marching arm in arm in the streets of Paris in the days after its initial publication— the deconstruction online mentioned by Maggie—it is already part of many visual archives not as an awkwardly staged symbolic act but as a journalistic document for the futurepast. The "futurepast" is a peculiar temporality enabled by photography that mandates that one capture the present always with an eye to an imagined moment of distribution and publication in the future (Gürsel 2016). Shot at relatively close range from the position of the prescreened photographer, the empty zone behind and in front of the group disappears, and the photograph of the leaders is indeed powerful, enough so that even a veteran photo editor such as Maggie read it to be precisely the iconic symbol of unity it was meant to be—that of leaders standing up to terrorism and championing freedom of expression. In other words, the information that might question that interpretation at all is outside of the photograph's shallow depth of field and not in the image itself and therefore will neither be archived nor circulated with the image in the future. The staged spectacle has already been validated by being circulated and published widely and entering journalistic archives.

Circulation in the Digital Realm

Maggie had received a breaking news story text notifying her of the *Charlie Hebdo* attack. "Cost concerns determine everything now," she said. Her first thought was not whom to assign to cover the story for her US-based news publication, although a decade ago she may have had three or four photographers covering multiple aspects of the story. She assumed she would have to rely instead on the wire services for images. As the event grew in magnitude, she decided to assign a photographer to the story: "So I went online and spent hours on Facebook and Twitter looking at who was sending pictures out. . . . It's not like before where there was a person at the agency feeding me ideas and pitching me their photographers." Maggie explained to me, "You need someone who can edit, who is fast, and who has an eye. So you're watching on Facebook to see who is posting pictures soon after an event. Are they moving in the digital realm? His images stood out to me on the agency's website, but you always take a chance and have to assume that he can not just shoot but transmit really, really fast. . . . Speed and reach have replaced exclusivity as the key value of news images."[23]

At the turn of the twenty-first century, new digital technologies promised instantaneous dissemination and global reach, but they regularly do not deliver on that promise. Paul Blec, the veteran photo editor at AFP, emphasized that a major challenge in AFP's coverage of the Unity Rally had been the excessive circulation of images: "I don't even remember how many photographers we had working. We even managed to get a photographer who was working from an airplane who could provide aerial views. . . . There were lots of photographers who worked for an hour or two but then they left because it was impossible." Because of the extraordinary number of people on the streets, "they couldn't really circulate," Paul stressed, conflating the circulation of photographers with the circulation of images. "They could practically only photograph what was right in front of them, so they found ways to leave or to transmit."

Earlier Paul had described to me how photographers worked in tandem with an editor back at the desk in central Paris during big events such as the Unity Rally. Once the photographers transmitted their images, which they could do directly from their cameras (either through a Wi-Fi connection

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21. Morris (2012:55) warns, "The problem with expression as a political strategy is that its temporal dimension is radically finite, even reduced to the now of enunciation." Perhaps part of the political appeal of still photography is that it suggests an extension of this temporal dimension, supplying it with a presumed before and after even if, as in the case of the heads of state photo, the temporal dimension was actually merely "the time it took to have been photographed."

22. The aerial images showing the buffer zone around the politicians circulated online. Several conservative French bloggers posted about "la marche truquée," which can be translated as "the rigged march." The word "truquée" is the same adjective used in the French expression "trick photography." This idea of the contagion of inauthenticity and the interrogation of media representations for signs of the lack of transparency in politics has become a common trope not only in France but also globally, from Indonesia to Israel. See Stein (2016).

23. The photographer she reached out to agreed to cover the rally. She also asked him to go shoot the mosque the Kouachi brothers had attended. The news publication's reporter had interviewed the chief imam of the mosque earlier. The photographer sent Maggie the first photos by WeTransfer, an online file-transferring platform, within 2 hours of their initial conversation. He ended up working an additional day or two in order to cover stories about the suburbs of Paris, anti-Semitism, and Muslims in Paris.

or over a 3G or 4G network), the editor at the desk in the AFP office could see the photographer's output on a designated channel right on his or her computer monitor. In theory this could happen instantaneously, so why had transmission been a problem the morning of the rally? "There was practically no network because there were approximately a million people on the street and everyone was photographing themselves and sending selfies to their friends. And all those people were making calls from a single spot so there was absolutely no network functioning, making it impossible to transmit photographs [to the desk]."

The principal challenge in photographing the crowd amassed in Paris was the size of the networked crowd itself. The saturated networks meant the photographers were obliged to physically leave the event. The sheer volume of new media production—photographs taken on cell phones circulated over wireless telephone networks—and bodies in the streets forced the professional photographers not shooting aerial views back onto their motorcycles as in the days before on-site digital transmission. Even once they could get to their motorcycles, they had to negotiate blocked roadways due to traffic and security. They had physically to take their memory cards to the AFP office or at least find a spot far enough from the crowds that they could connect to the Internet and transmit their images. The crowd's production interfered with the circulation of professional photographs. Whether or not the professional photographs had to compete with amateur images for payment or space in journalistic publications online or in print, they were competing with them for the means of circulation, the very infrastructure of representation. The density of usage highlighted digital networks to be precisely that—a network of users—rather than a frictionless infrastructure of distribution. Like all networks, this too has its limits, and expulsion from the network is a real possibility not because of any attribution of qualities to those expelled or because of a regulatory function but because of the finitude of the network. Perhaps the actual democratization of photography is not just a matter of whose images get published or are made available to publics but rather a result of amateur and professional image brokers using the same networks to view and circulate images.

Circulation as News

The act of making an image circulate or the fact that a particular visual representation is circulating widely has itself become a news item. Brian Larkin (2013:246) claims that "circulation is not an automatic reflex but something that must be made to happen," and image brokering is precisely the work of making circulation happen. Referring to the amateur video of the Kouachi brothers gunning down Ahmed Merabet, the French policeman they encountered outside *Charlie Hebdo*'s offices, Paul explained, "If a video like that is circulating online you have to decide whether or not to circulate it on the wire. This decision depends not only on whether or not the

video itself is journalistically important but whether its circulation itself is news. So the news might not be what's in the video but that this video is in wide circulation. . . . There is a distinction between using the video or image as a document itself and saying that this photo or video is circulating on social networks." Echoing a discussion I have had repeatedly with journalists over the last decade, Paul remarked, "We can no longer ignore it. Everyone has a phone now. It's in the air. It's not that everyone is a journalist but everyone can be a visual witness. And people's first instinct is to put it on the web." Keeping in mind both Debord's (1983) critique of a society of spectacle in which social relations are attenuated by their mandatory mediation through images and Rafael's (2006 [2003]) description of photography as a practice that enables imagining novel social relations, how might we understand our current moment when a crowd equipped with cameras *and* cell phones also has access to the means to circulate images of itself through global media? To be a visual witness to an event is not merely to see it with one's eyes but to produce and circulate a photographic record of the event. In producing such an image, a visual witness is already not merely imagining an audience but the passionate uptake of the image by a public.

The crowd in Paris and in cities around the world produced and circulated a great number of photographs as evidenced by the jamming of communication networks at the Place de la République. As in the *Libération* cover image, it was not just that people took to the streets with placards reading "Je suis Charlie" (I am Charlie) or similar iterations visualizing solidarity with specific groups whether policemen or Jews but that they photographed themselves and others with such placards and constituted crowds bearing such individual statements of solidarity that then got photographed by amateurs and professionals alike and were circulated as news images. Even selfies taken at a rally are often by default also crowd shots.[24] The passion of the crowd was often expressed by members of the crowd producing more images.

Jordi Mir, the engineer who shot the video sequence in question of the Kouachi brothers killing the policeman Ahmed Merabet, spoke to Associated Press the day of the Unity Rally.[25] Acknowledging the anguish the circulation of the 42-second video caused Merabet's family, he expressed deep regret at having put it into circulation. Drawn to his window by the gunshot sounds outside, Mir had not understood what he was witnessing and initially thought the two men in black were members of a SWAT team responding to a bank robbery.

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24. This idea of the convergence of crowd shots and selfies at rallies was suggested to me by Karen Strassler's (2015) thought-provoking analysis of a photograph of professional photographer Jay Subyakto photographing a crowd at a political candidate's rally in Indonesia. In order to underscore the authenticity of both his own and the crowd's support for the candidate, Subyakto insisted he photographed the crowd not as a professional but as a citizen volunteer.

25. Mir's may have been the most widely circulated video of the assassination, but as it turned out there were several other versions.

When police arrived on the scene, he handed them the video and then posted it to Facebook. "I had to speak to someone," Mir is quoted as saying. "I was alone in my flat. I put the video on Facebook. That was my error." Though it was only up for 15 minutes, by the time Mir removed it, the video had gone viral and was on television news within the hour. Mir told the reporter that after a decade of using social media, sharing what he saw had become "a stupid reflex" (*Guardian* 2015). Nevertheless, even when an individual perceives putting such visuals in circulation as an automatic reflex, it is still "something that must be made to happen." Mir posted the video because he felt a need to speak to someone yet found himself alone. His comments crystallize a mode of social participation that demands visuality, posting images as a form of communication. To be social is to share an image, whether a selfie taken at a rally, a crowd shot, or a video of a violent event witnessed.

Partly what made the video of policeman Ahmed Merabet's assassination such a powerful force—according to Mir an official told him it had helped galvanize French public opinion—was the surprising dearth of other images of the massacre at the *Charlie Hebdo* offices and the manhunt that followed. As the events took place in the heart of France, this was certainly not for lack of photographers. It is not merely that a well-executed picture can itself be a piece of statecraft, as claimed by Boal et al. (2005), but that creating zones of visibility and invisibility, and hence participating in the production of certain images, is increasingly a function of governance. Faucher and Broussaguet (2016) emphasize the role played by television news in the immediate aftermath of the events as newsrooms relayed rumors picked up on social media and sent crews to investigate: "Cameras could almost be seen as co-constructing events as they unfolded, to the point that teams around the President and the Prime Minister followed events on their screens as much as through communication with the teams on the ground."

Conversely, the police created zones of invisibility by blocking off certain areas. The photos in the following days of the manhunt in Paris were not particularly spectacular because events happened far from the camera lenses, even the telephoto ones that could make out the roof of the factory where the Kouachi brothers hid. Paul stressed, "There was a whole zone that you absolutely couldn't photograph because they had it sealed off so you could photograph the policemen going toward the factory, but it was impossible to photograph the factory itself." While the preselected photographers shooting the heads of states arm in arm were tasked with rendering invisible the empty zones buffering the dignitaries, the police created protective zones that could not be visualized.[26]

The Politics of the Myth of Visibility and the Relentless Demand for Images

In a world awash with photographs where, in the words of Paul Blec from AFP, visual evidence is "in the air" and everyone can potentially be a visual witness, the illusion that world events and injustices can all be visualized is particularly powerful.[27] Some photographs may be manipulated, but nevertheless, the myth remains that everything important can be and is visualized. As citizens we are enjoined to look.[28] Meanwhile, more militaries, governments, corporations, and NGOs as well as terrorist organizations deftly produce and circulate photographs or, better yet, stage spectacles that can then be photographed and archived by recognized journalistic institutions, thereby gaining legitimacy as images.

At a moment when more people are producing more photographs than ever before, mostly on cameras embedded in cell phones, there are also more images being used in journalism. However, this is not due to an increase in news organizations' estimation of the investigative or expressive power of photography but rather to the fact that news items with images are more likely to be clicked by readers online. Images facilitate the most mechanical form of uptake. Moreover, the transition to online journalism has meant that much news is now assembled using content management systems (CMSs), "computer interfaces used for assembling, editing and publishing online which require a minimum of one still or moving image per news item"; the result is "the tyranny of the empty frame," defined as "a hard-coded technological requirement that 'news must be visual'" (Vobič Trivundža 2015).[29]

Paul reminded me that even on the day of the rally, photographic demands were multiple: "There were sports and wars elsewhere." Specifically, reports had emerged of a massacre in Baga, Nigeria, on the border with Chad. Terrorist group Boko Haram had allegedly killed up to two thousand civilians. Paul had to validate aerial shots showing the regions of destruction, but neither AFP nor any of its competitors had anyone in northern Nigeria in the area under Boko Haram's rule. "It was simply too dangerous," Paul stressed. The result was that "many of the documents we have are Boko Haram productions." News agencies distribute grabs from Boko Haram videos posted on YouTube or handouts from military sources and satellite images. The increasing demand for visual content

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26. Faucher and Broussaguet (2016) quote one official saying, "We were following events on TV in my office, then at some point I noticed that there were no new images and the Prime Minister told me that the raid had started." In other words, even for an official at the Prime Minister's residence, it is the absence of new images that signals police activity.

27. See Sekula (2003 [1983]) for a prescient analysis of the ramifications of history taking on the character of spectacle.

28. In France, Amnesty International uses the slogan "Your look/gaze is a weapon" (Votre regard est une arme) for a prominent awareness campaign.

29. As more publications have cut photo editors from their staff, the work of attaching an image to a story falls increasingly to an already harried writer or to online journalists sometimes referred to as new kinds of news workers or a "special breed of journalist." Replaying familiar images takes much less work and time than innovating or researching the best way to visualize a particular story.

and the ubiquity of CMSs means that the visual production of terrorist groups circulates ever more widely in the mainstream media. The only option for photographers is to be embedded with a foreign military presence that, for the moment, does not exist. The very people who 10 years ago were enumerating the journalistic compromises of being embedded with the military now see it as the only possibility in the near future for solid reporting on some of the most important global news stories.

At the same time the state is more concerned about the well-being of journalists not necessarily as a matter of defending freedom of the press but because ransoms paid in exchanged for kidnapped persons is a major source of income for many terrorist groups.[30] Similarly, visuals threatening to kill or confirming the death of journalists have become a tragically familiar way by which terrorist groups interpellate the state, particularly a foreign state. In such situations, it is not photographs taken by the photojournalists but rather photographs of the journalists or their corpses that force the state to take action or answer publicly for their actions. Headlines such as "Obama, 'Appalled' by Beheading, Will Continue Airstrikes" (Shear and Davis 2014) regularly link increased military campaigns to disgust at the circulation of violent images. In turn, terrorist organizations produce such images allegedly in retaliation for military action. Photojournalists are especially vulnerable both because of where they need to be in order to do their work and because their equipment often makes them highly visible targets.

The 2014 AFP annual report stated that AFP not only would not send any of its own reporters to areas such as Syria, Iraq, and northern Nigeria but also that they would not use work produced by freelancers who went to these regions on their own. Global news director Michèle Léridon observed that AFP was confronted with "the unprecedented use of images intended to terrorise." AFP's decision not to send reporters into such risky areas "means that propaganda photos and videos released by IS are often our only sources of information about what is happening inside the self-declared 'caliphate.'" AFP and many other news organizations have decided that the circulation of images that terrorists produce is itself news that needs to be covered. So AFP brokers their images— adding captions and pushing the images out to news clients. Responding to the demand for news images thus renders news organizations conduits and can compromise their function as independent news producers.

As a result, despite the leaders in Paris marching for freedom of the press or standing up against terrorism, in this way

Figure 4. Example of the photograph some called *Pencil Leading the People* being used to illustrate the Unity Rally. Photograph by Stéphane Mahé/Reuters.

at least terrorists have succeeded in reducing journalism, especially visual journalism, being produced about critical contemporary conflicts that are transnational in nature and effect. Over three million people may have purchased the issue of *Charlie Hebdo* published after the attacks, up from their typical weekly circulation of 60,000, but other images are routinely being suppressed, and it is not only a matter of their not being published but of their not being produced. Moreover, the fear functions domestically as well. In November 2015, after another terrorist attack in Paris left 130 dead and many wounded, public gatherings were not encouraged. President Hollande instead suggested that every French person adorn the front of their residence with a French flag. The government information agency relayed his suggestion, adding a call to post selfies with the French tricolor to twitter and other social networks.[31] Hence, while the French state clearly recognized the political power of the suturing of selfies and crowd shots at the Unity Rally, the fear of further terrorism succeeded in preventing further displays of individuals united as a nation. Having successfully protected heads of state from attack during the Unity Rally in January by buffering them from the crowd, the state now felt it had to protect individuals by discouraging the formation of a crowd in the first place. The gesture of appealing

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30. The *New York Times* (Callimachi 2014) reports, "Al Qaeda and its direct affiliates have taken in at least $125 million in revenue from kidnappings since 2008, of which $66 million was paid just last year." Ransoms are particularly important for Boko Haram, who control a region that is exceptionally impoverished, far from the oil fields of Southern Nigeria, and with no other natural resources and little economic activity generating wealth that can be seized.

31. http://www.gouvernement.fr/partagez-hommage-national.

The Washington Post

Prices may vary in areas outside metropolitan Washington.

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Economic mobility a watchword for 2016

Both parties are looking for message to appeal to a squeezed middle class

BY PHILIP RUCKER
AND DAN BALZ

Presidential hopefuls in both parties agree on at least one thing: Economic mobility, and the feeling of many Americans that they are being shut out from the nation's prosperity, will be a defining theme of the 2016 campaign.

Former Florida governor Jeb Bush last week became the latest Republican to signal a readiness to engage Democrats on what historically has been their turf, putting issues of middle-class wage stagnation, poverty and shared prosperity at the forefront of their political messages.

Bush's framing of the economic and social challenges facing the country nearly mirrors that of

More than a million march in Paris

WORLD LEADERS LINK ARMS

But unity after attacks cannot dispel unease

BY ANTHONY FAIOLA
AND GRIFF WITTE

PARIS — An extraordinary chain of 1.5 million people, led by a group of world leaders linking arms, marched down the Boulevard Voltaire in a show of force Sunday meant to illustrate the power of unity and freedom of expression over the sting of fanaticism and terror.

After a barrage of violence that traumatized the nation and left 17 victims dead, the boulevards of Paris produced a striking counterimage: French President François Hollande, arm in arm with German Chancellor Angela Merkel and flanked by Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas, and a host of European and African leaders.

An estimated 4 million people

CHRISTOPHER FURLONG/GETTY IMAGES

Figure 5. One of many similar front pages on January 12, 2015. Photography by Christopher Furlong/Getty Images. A color version of this figure is available online.

for the circulation of selfies in front of the French flag belies a hope that visuals alone can constitute crowds even in the absence of vulnerable bodies.

Staged Spectacles: An Alternate Pair

Paul reflected on the overdetermined nature of the photographs produced on the day of the rally: "The event was major, and there are some impressive photos, but not so much because of the image itself but because they show in the image a very large number of people united in a city that hadn't seen that in a very long time. That was impressive." But there had not been a particular image that moved him unexpectedly or documented something that had not been anticipated. "The publications, despite the incredible number of photographs [available], used very similar ones, because for them what was essential was showing the Place de la République, which was the symbol of the republic and the people on the monument." The very event itself had been staged as a spectacle placing symbolic figures against symbolic monuments for the creation of images that could not but produce images whose symbolism was overdetermined. Despite all the anxiety in the AFP office that morning, the rally was not an event that was difficult to

cover: the state had already set up the shot, and earlier French painters had provided templates.[32]

Journalistic norms demand images that symbolize a particular event. Many both in and outside of journalism circles compared certain images from the rally to Delacroix's painting *Liberty Leading the People*. This was especially the case for Reuters photographer Stéphane Mahé's photograph dubbed "the pencil leading the people" on social media. Mahé spotted the resemblance and apparently made "several tours" of the square before catching the group in the perfect pose and the perfect light: "I had a pretty good idea the photograph would go around the world." The following week a 13 m by 8 m copy

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32. The cover of *Libération*, and to a great extent all the other images of the day, had already been anticipated not only by the photo editors and photojournalists whose daily job it is to anticipate how to visualize world events and make sure cameras are in the right place at the right time but also by the state that had called for the rally in the first place. One can think of many other examples of such events. One recent example might be Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan's meticulously choreographed National Will Rally in June 2013. For a discussion of Turkish photographers' concerns about having their cameras co-opted into the government's political dramaturgy, see Gürsel (2013).

was unfurled on the Centre Georges Pompidou, whose director underscored that the image recalled several canonical Republican icons (fig. 4).[33]

In looking at front pages of world news publications the next day, one could not speak of a particular iconic image, a single photograph so well composed that editors around the world chose it again and again. Most front pages reflected a need to visualize the sheer mass of individuals at the rally. There was, however, a particularly brilliant graphic element—the insertion of a pair of giant spectacles into the crowd—that was reproduced and circulated widely (fig. 5).

This was not a story of a single photographic frame seen around the word but rather one of global news production getting interpellated by a visual intervention made at the site of the event. The spectacles fed among other things the visual need for differentiation, or historical specificity, and supplied visual "interest" in otherwise generic images of a crowd. Like the group shot of heads of state, the spectacles were carefully staged for news cameras. Made up of eight large posters, each carried by a separate person, they were visible in any photograph taken of the Place de la République from Boulevard Voltaire, the eyes behind them unavoidable in the production of any crowd shots by amateurs and professionals alike. Inverse to the heads of state who could only be made to look like they were leading the surging masses at eye level, the spectacles can only be comprehended at a privileged and distant position, not a close-up taken from within the crowd itself.

Most of the publications that ran a photograph featuring the spectacles carried no information on the identities of either the artist whose work this was or of the eyes in the spectacles. The giant spectacles were apparently the work of French street artist and photographer JR, known for his arresting photographs often featuring eyes, that harness the power of optical illusions.[34] The eyes behind the frames of the spectacles were those of Stephane "Charb" Charbonnier, the editor of *Charlie Hebdo* and the assassins' primary target. The Kouachi brothers entered the office yelling "Where's Charb? Where's Charb," and found him in an editorial meeting deciding what to draw for that week's edition. Charbonnier's severe myopia and signature thick frames were mentioned in almost every obituary about him (as they had been in many articles written about him while he was still alive). At the funeral for Charbonnier in his hometown, Pontoise, on January 16, 2015, another *Charlie Hebdo* cartoonist, Jul, explicitly referenced Charbonnier's signature spectacles when eulogizing his friend's unique vision of the world: "Through these glasses the world was entirely deformed, refracted by their corrective lenses. . . . Yet the world wasn't entirely deformed but rather transformed,

it was a correction that afflicted him. Charb's way of looking at the world was physically like looking through a magnifying glass, and I think his work was a little influenced by this." He ended by lamenting, "Well, Charb was killed. We still haven't found the spectacles. We don't see much. Can our eyes find the acuity of his vision again?"

JR's giant spectacles framing the slain cartoonist Charbonnier's eyes tied the crowd at the Unity Rally to the individual who authorized some of the visuals that triggered the terror attacks in the first place. The risk here might be that they suggest that the crowd is not standing up against terror or marching in support of freedom of expression but marching behind Charbonnier's cartoonist vision of the world. Yet the giant spectacles exceed a eulogy of Charb or any meaning JR might have wanted them to carry. They visualize a public in the act of witnessing itself, the eyes of an individual rendered large enough to be photographed by many cameras and returned to the global news audience as a central element of the image of unity. As an oversized instrument of vision correction, the spectacles are both a prosthesis and a sign of failed vision, but they also express a need to see and be seen. On the level of metaphor, the spectacles become a sign for the crowd's own acts of being visual witnesses and of global news audiences' unmet needs in turning to news images to understand let alone interrupt terrorism. Hence, they are also a distress signal for the general loss of acuity of political vision.

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Out of Print

The Orphans of Mass Digitization

by Mary Murrell

In the 2000s an interconnected set of elite projects in the United States sought to digitize "all books in all languages" and make them available online. These mass digitization projects were efforts to absorb the print book infrastructure into a new one centered in computer networks. Mass book digitization has now faded from view, and here I trace its setbacks through a curious figure—the "orphan"—that emerged from within these projects and acted ultimately as an agent of impasse. In legal policy debates, an "orphan" refers to a copyrighted work whose owner cannot be found, but its history, range of meanings, and deployments reveal it to be considerably more complex. Based on fieldwork conducted at a digital library engaged in mass digitization, this paper analyzes the "orphan" as a personifying metaphor that digital library activists embraced in order to challenge and/or disrupt the social relations that adhere in and around books. The figure of the orphan haunts the techno-cultural infrastructural project of mass digitization, and stands, I argue, as a disenchanted emblem for "the book" in suspension between a disfavored past and a fantasized future.

Despite their decreasing prominence in the media culture of the United States, books remain dense and complex symbols through which the human is variously imagined. At a macro historical scale, "the book"—along with its co-constitutive institution, the library—has been narrated as a civilizational form, arising in ancient times and continuing to evolve as part of a universalized human history (e.g., Kilgour 1998). On the timescale of modernity, books are seen as instruments of publicity, forming modern subjects through acts of reading and acts of authorship (Anderson 1983; Habermas 1989; Kant 1784). They also continue to encode the emancipatory promises of the Enlightenment project to produce an informed, virtuous, and self-governing citizenry through circulation and the normative ideals of the public sphere (Darnton 2009; Warner 1990).

In the twentieth century, these layered historical meanings commingled and collided with a modernist sensibility that saw the book as a medium coming to an end. From its inception, media theory has consigned books to a problematic status as antimodern or out of step with modernity. Walter Benjamin declared the book an "outdated mediation" (Benjamin 2008 [1928]), and Marshall McLuhan enthusiastically welcomed a new age of electric media that would relieve the West of the detachment and fragmented individualism that he saw arising

from "print culture" (McLuhan 1962). In a broad critique, books have been cast as foil—a point of reference against which the potentialities of "modern," "mass," and "new" media are surmised, anticipated, and appreciated (Enzensberger 1970; Kittler 1990 (1985); Manovich 2001; McLuhan 1964). For decades, the imminent supersession of the form is always already here and yet never quite arriving. If the book persists, it does so while continuously reminding us of its inevitable overcoming.

At the turn of the twenty-first century, mass digitization projects appeared that, for some, promised to resolve the conflict between these well-established narratives. Also known as "library" digitization, mass digitization here refers specifically to a number of elite projects to digitize books comprehensively—"all the world's books"—and to integrate them into the web. These projects promised not just to rematerialize the print form into the "content" of computers (McLuhan 1964); they also promised to enable the hoary form to participate in and inform a social imaginary that posits networked computers as revitalizing the liberal public sphere. This grand project, if successful, would emancipate the form (and the users of the form) from its inherent and long-standing limitations and inaugurate a new stage in the evolution of both books and humans.

I observed mass digitization from the vantage point of the Internet Archive, a digital library in San Francisco, California, where I conducted fieldwork from 2008 to 2010. By that time, mass digitization had already attracted its share of controversy, but the period of my research witnessed a new and intensified set of debates. This intensification stemmed from an attempt to settle lawsuits brought against Google for copyright infringe-

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ment in relation to its Library Project.[1] After the news of the settlement came out, the Internet Archive, which had since 2005 led a mass book digitization project in opposition to Google's, set itself the task of organizing opposition to what became known as the Google Book Search Settlement.[2] As I participated in and observed the social drama that ensued over the next few years, "the book" came into view not as a discrete object, commodity, or textual form but, macroscopically, as a peopled social complex (Murrell 2012). In this essay, I explore the contemporary instabilities and uncertainties of this complex through attention to one figure: the "orphan." In legal policy debates, an "orphan" refers to a copyrighted work whose owner cannot be found. The subject of significant attention from copyright scholars and legislators, the orphan (or "orphan works," more broadly) has become, especially since 2005, a matter of concern among policymakers and those who seek to influence them (see Hansen 2011, 2016). My purpose here is not to join these policy discussions but to chart the emergence of the orphan within the legal and social murkiness that mass digitization occupies. The orphan is a personifying metaphor that the people I worked with embraced in order to challenge and/or disrupt the social relations that adhere in and around books. Although copyright law is the idiom through which such relations are usually examined, here I seek to decenter formal law—and some of its now predictable polemics—by looking to the novel, awkward, and incomplete work of the orphan that grew out of dissatisfactions with the law. In her book *When Nature Goes Public*, Cori Hayden shows how the plants that bioprospecting scientists pull out of the ground come with people attached to them (Hayden 2003). It is a useful analogy for library digitization: when books are taken off library shelves and transferred to a scanning center, they come with people attached to them even if it is impossible to know who those people might be. The figure of the orphan haunts the technocultural project of mass digitization and stands, I argue, as a disenchanted emblem for "the book" in suspension between a disfavored past and a fantasized future.

Mass Digitization as Infrastructural Event

Mass book digitization is an early twenty-first century infrastructural project of the web by which elites seek to remediate the existing infrastructure around printed books into a new

one centered in computer networks. Their efforts center on the industrial-scale retrospective conversion of books into digital form—that is, into the "content" of computers. Its scale is "mass" in that it involves not thousands but millions of books; "industrial" in that it requires significant capital investment, large data processing capacity and workflow systems, customized equipment, and a great deal of human labor; and "retrospective" in that it specifically involves already existing printed books such as those that fill the stacks of research or national libraries. Although Google's Library Project is the most prominent example of such large-scale digitization, that notable project has both predecessors and competitors with similarly grand ambitions if not the same level of capital investment.[3]

Books are semiotic-material objects that operate within a dynamic assemblage entangling people, objects, knowledges, and technologies—or what a rich vein of recent anthropological work leads me to term an "infrastructure" (see Appel, Anand, and Gupta 2015; Chu 2014; Coleman 2014; Larkin 2013; Rodgers and O'Neill 2012). This literature has largely focused on urbanism in the global south, but the concept has proved flexible enough to include media, communication, and even finance (Besky 2016; Elyachar 2010; Gürsel 2012; Larkin 2008; Sundaram 2015). As a bundle of relationships involving authors, publishers, booksellers, and readers, books authorize and circulate formalized knowledge through contemporaneous "communication circuits" (Darnton 1982). Moving beyond this dominant paradigm, the application of the concept of infrastructure to books expands our analytic purchase beyond their roles as transmitters of meaning. As infrastructure—which involves collective systems, public administration, and forms of governance—books also consolidate and undergird regimes of power and knowledge through interconnected institutions such as libraries, archives, and the state (Foucault 1972, 1980; Hesse 1990, 1991). Such framing helps to foreground the form's social density and complexity beyond its typical depiction as a literary vehicle or consumer good (e.g., Striphas 2009).

Mass digitization took place at the conjuncture of overlapping and intersecting problems in the United States at the start of the twenty-first century: (1) the long utopian anticipation of computer and information science professionals that one day all books would be computerized or converted into digital form (Bush 1945; Fisch 1948; Licklider and Clapp 1965; Rayward 1975, 1990), (2) the national push for digital libraries throughout the 1990s in relation to the growth of the World Wide Web and the concomitant need for a "national information infrastructure" (Arms 2000; Lesk 1997; Lyman 1996), and (3) the decades-long attempt by research libraries to find the optimal means to preserve their ever-growing and ever-fragile book

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1. The Library Project is more familiarly known as Google Books. The two terms are distinct, however, and I retain the more precise term. See https://www.google.com/googlebooks/about/index.html.

2. Beginning in 2005, the Internet Archive spearheaded the Open Content Alliance. With financial support from the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation, libraries, and technology companies like Yahoo and Microsoft, the Open Content Alliance was an attempt to provide an "open access, nonproprietary online library . . . in which no single entity can exercise exclusive control" (Sloan 2006). Book digitization was something of a digression from the Archive's original and still central focus on the collection and preservation of "born-digital" artifacts (Kahle 1997).

3. Predecessors include Carnegie Mellon's Million Book Project, Project Gutenberg, and Amazon's Search Inside. Competing projects have included the Open Content Alliance (see n. 2 above), Microsoft's Live Search, and the French government's Gallica. "Pirate" or "shadow" libraries such as library.nu and LibGen are mass digitization projects of a different sort, which might be thought of as digitization "from below."

collections—without having the financial means to do so (ARL 1964; Binkley 1948; CLR 1986; Luther 1959; Marcum 2016; Rider 1944). These problems converged in the early 2000s to become an infrastructural "event." Infrastructures become "eventful" when they are introduced or when they break down. (Chu 2014). At moments of introduction, they are signs of the modern that address subjects through a version of the "technological" (or "colonial") sublime, and when they break down or fail, they become spectacles of state failure or even national tragedy (Larkin 2008). Julie Chu has analyzed disrepair, in particular, as a murky zone between the mundane maintenance of infrastructure and its more "eventful capacities" (Chu 2014). Mass digitization occurs in something like Chu's murky zone of disrepair, in between an old, failing infrastructure and a drive to replace it. In the view of the directors of research libraries, the material infrastructure around print books is failing in a number of ways. Print books are literally crumbling from age and acidic paper, and they need to be reformatted in a more durable form (Battin 1991; Keller 2009). Library usage statistics also show that the circulation of print holdings is steadily declining (e.g., Martell 2008). Books are also inadequate to a future that grows closer every day, in which information will be circulated, discovered, consumed, and stored, primarily in electronic form. If not digitized, books will be lost to future generations because, soon enough, as I was repeatedly told, "if a book is not online, it won't exist."

Among these practitioners and proponents of mass digitization, I observed a pervasive conviction: that books and their encompassing infrastructure are closed and need to be made open—open, that is, to computer networks imagined as emancipatory. They attempt, paradoxically, to reproduce and extend books' potency at the same time as they hope to overcome their exclusions and shortcomings. As such, digital reformatting is understood as one crucial step in a complex process of infrastructural change.

Google's Library Project

After the announcement, in December 2004, of Google's Library Project, mass book digitization became a matter of concern both in the United States and abroad. A collaboration with some of the largest research libraries in the world—Harvard, Stanford, Oxford, the New York Public Library, and the University of Michigan, to begin—the project intended to digitize "all books in all languages" in order to make "all the world's books discoverable with just a few keystrokes by anyone, anywhere, anytime" (Schmidt 2005). In exchange for loaning the books to Google, libraries would receive a copy of each scanned book to use for their own purposes (within the guidelines of their contracts with Google). One of the initial partners, the University of Michigan, agreed to have the company digitize all of the 7–8 million books in its libraries, regardless of copyright status. Responses to the Library Project were intense and wide ranging. It was a cause célèbre among copyright watchers because its ambitions tested the boundaries

of the copyright system and, as if intended, it attracted legal challenges, most significantly the lawsuit *Authors Guild et al. v. Google*, which would drag on for 11 years. In this legal saga, trade groups purporting to represent all authors and all publishers accused the company of massive copyright infringement.[4] Google claimed their project was fair use under US copyright law. But beyond the legal issues, the project, coming 2 years before Amazon's Kindle made e-books commercially viable, set off a fevered sense that books were reaching a portentous historical threshold—that long-awaited tipping point from print to digital. It also spawned various counterprojects that sought to create alternative, noncommercial, public-minded digital library initiatives such as the Open Content Alliance and, later, the Digital Public Library of America. Outside the United States, it spurred various copycat national book digitization projects that sought, in part, to defend against what they took to be US cultural imperialism (Baldwin 2014; Jeanneney 2007).

The Library Project brought two groups into partnership, each with its own goals and objectives: those who possess the books (research libraries) and those who want to make them the content of computers (the Internet company Google). For the nation's leading libraries, Google's willingness to foot the bill for the large-scale reformatting of their book collections was extraordinary. Although the partnership with Google demanded troublesome concessions—the company required secrecy through nondisclosure agreements and placed restrictions on the libraries' use of public domain books—libraries found the partnership irresistible.[5] Research libraries had been promised money from the federal government for such purposes more than once, only to see such commitments revoked when institutional priorities or administrations changed (Marcum 2016). Furthermore, Google's willingness to do the book scanning itself, on its own dime, represented an expenditure many times greater than anything the government had ever offered.

The Internet Archive

If one created a continuum with research libraries on one end and Google on the other, the Internet Archive would sit somewhere in between the two, as it shares characteristics and commitments with each while also being in a category of its own. Best known for its pioneering work in web archiving, the Internet Archive is a sui generis digital library notable for its bleeding edge efforts to establish precedents and protocols for web-era libraries (Howell 2006; Lepore 2015; Rosenzweig

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4. On the suit as a "saga," see Tushnet (2012). For summaries of the main legal issues, see Band (2006, 2009). For broader takes on the books project, see Levy (2011), Stross (2008), Toobin (2007), and Vaidhyanathan (2012).

5. For example, see Paul Courant, "On Being in Bed with Google," *Au Courant* (blog), November 4, 2007. http://paulcourant.net/2007/11/04/on-being-in-bed-with-google/.

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2007).[6] Its director, Brewster Kahle, an MIT-trained computer engineer and entrepreneur, takes his life's work to be the building of "the Library"—or, the library of libraries made possible by the Internet. The Internet Archive describes itself as a digital library, but the term "digital library" is itself a fluid trope with open and shifting meanings (Murrell 2010). A more precise description of the Internet Archive is to say that it is an experimental institution of the Internet that asks, in practice, what a digital library can or should be. To be even more precise, it asks how a library on the web can be continuous in its practices, ethics, and social efficacy with those of the American public library of the previous century.

Kahle and his organization, staffed mostly with computer engineers of one stripe or another, participate in a network of like-minded groups engaged in debates around the Internet as an emerging infrastructure. Kahle's particular interest is in the storage, collection, and sharing of cultural artifacts (in contrast to, say, scientific literature or data). Kahle proudly emphasizes that the Internet Archive is independent of the government, universities, and corporations. Rather, it belongs to a new generation of "technical" NGOs—such as the Mozilla Foundation, the Wikimedia Foundation, and the Electronic Frontier Foundation, among others—that together are forging the infrastructure of an Internet-specific public sphere against inevitable governmental or corporate efforts to "close it down" or "lock it up." The Internet Archive is also a technical, moral, and social node in the worldwide collective that Chris Kelty has described as a "recursive public" of "geeks" (Kelty 2008). To use the terms of legal scholar James Boyle, the Internet Archive might also be thought of as part of the institutional diversity that constitutes a "cultural environmentalism" active around information policy (Boyle 2007).

In its efforts against the Google Book Search Settlement during the period of my fieldwork, Kahle understood the Internet Archive's work to be part of the "third war" of the Internet. The first was the "physical" layer (the wires or "pipes" that link computers on the Internet); the second was the software layer (the code that makes the hardware run, including Internet protocols); and third, on top, is the "content" layer, or the actual human-facing forms that circulate (cf. Lessig 2001: 23). In his view, the geek publics with which he identifies won the first two "wars" of the Internet (over the network and the software) in the 1980s and 1990s, and yet, as he sees it, they remain mired in a battle over how to make "content" (such as books) circulate consistent with an "open" Internet infrastructure. Such advocacy has earned him much admiration and labels such as "leader of the open access movement" (Taylor 2014:260; see also Lessig 2004, chap. 9).

The orphan became a flashpoint in this "war." For Kahle it became the most important way to articulate, and to counter, the hobbling effect that the regulatory aspects of print infrastructure—especially copyright law—present to those attempt-

ing to build and to establish public libraries within an emergent digital infrastructure. The orphan became a tactic within this broad and complex project in that it provided a way of redescribing the social relations around cultural artifacts—in my case, books—so as to include them in this social project. To understand this tactic, I will trace the orphan's emergence and its complex embrace.

The Emergence of the Orphan

To begin, it is important to understand the magnitude of the changes to US copyright law in the latter part of the twentieth century. Between 1976 and the early 1990s, the copyright law of the United States went through "nothing short of a revolution" (McGill 2013). This revolution began with the overhaul of the copyright statute in 1976, which replaced the 1909 Copyright Act. Between 1909 and 1976 the media landscape of the United States had changed radically, but, just as significant, the United States had become a major exporter of copyrighted works, and intellectual property had moved to the center of US foreign trade policy (Baldwin 2014; Litman 2001). This shift led the United States to seek greater authority to protect its copyrights abroad, and to do that, it needed to finally join the international Berne Copyright Convention, which it had resisted for nearly a century. Preparing the way for full membership in Berne, the 1976 Copyright Act brought US law into alignment with European copyright. This "harmonization" required three consequential changes. First, works that had been protected from the moment of publication are now automatically protected from the moment of creation in fixed, tangible form. In addition, many "formalities" that had been required (notice, registration) were deemed no longer necessary, with the effect that records of copyright ownership are much more challenging than before, when the Copyright Office would have had registration records for all copyrighted works. Finally, the copyright term was generously extended. The 1976 Act increased the term, which had been 56 years at its longest, to the author's life plus 50 years. In 1998 it would be extended again (to authors' life plus 70 years), with the net effect that, whereas in 1973 the average copyright term was 32.2 years, today most extend to 100 years and longer (Lessig 2004:135).

A cumulative effect of these changes has been to muddy the relations in and around published cultural artifacts that persist over time. For photographs, songs, or books that are too young to be in the public domain, it is often difficult to know if the work is in copyright or, if it is, who owns that copyright. Without formalities such as registration, owners are more difficult to locate and identify, and they have little incentive to make themselves easier to find. Furthermore, the more time that passes, the more likely it is that a work and the owner of its copyright drift apart. During a copyright term that may extend up to 100 years, much will change. The companies to which authors transfer copyrights might be sold to other companies or go out of business. These companies will also commonly sell rights to other companies, and those companies may also

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6. Its web archive is accessible to the public through an interface called the Wayback Machine at http://www.archive.orghttp://www.archive.org.

close, move, change names, or sell rights anew. Through the passage of time and the changing of hands, the "paper trail" of ownership is misplaced, lost, or discarded. And, of course, people die, leaving heirs who often have no awareness of inherited copyright interests. The protracted legal tangle over the song "Happy Birthday to You," finally resolved in September 2015, illustrates how hard it can be to determine (or, in this case, dispute) the ownership of a work. In that case, after years of contention, research, and investigation, a judge concluded that it was impossible to know who owned the rights to the song, first published in 1893, or even if the song was still protected at all.[7] "Happy Birthday" epitomizes the difficulties that some have attempted to capture with the term "orphan," and yet few works will receive this level of sleuthing.

Digitization, in attempting to appropriate books into a digital infrastructure, brings the messiness of books' social relations dramatically to light and begs a solution to what became known in the 2000s as the "orphan works problem." For many of the millions of books found in the large collections of a research library—especially the out-of-print books—it is impracticable to determine to whom they belong, in the legal sense, or whether they even do. Furthermore, US law provides for punitive monetary damages so severe that it often inhibits people and organizations, especially underfunded ones like libraries, from taking the risk of digitizing something without permission. That orphan "problem" is itself not one problem but a nest of different ones.

Genealogies of the Orphan

Canadian copyright law refers to the problem outlined above as one of "unlocatable owners," following the French term *titulaire introuvable* (De Beer and Bouchard 2010). The favored term in the United States has been the metaphoric use of the "orphan" and "orphan works." Whereas the term "unlocatable owner" refers to the status of the person (or entity) who might own the copyright, "orphan" shifts concern to the object itself—the book, the song—and personifies that object. This difference in emphasis shifts attention from the copyright system's set of property relations to the prospect of other potential relations. This difference in emphasis emerges from the specific history of the term in the United States, which I will now briefly recount before returning to the Internet Archive, its specific and distinctive deployment of the term in its activism, and the context of my fieldwork.

The use of the "orphan" metaphor to describe cultural artifacts has no simple origin. Rather it has knotted roots in two intertwined cultural and legal debates that took place in the United States in the 1990s: one around film preservation and the other around copyright term extension. As early as the

1950s in the movie business, the term "orphan film" referred to a feature film that had been judged unlikely to be profitable and thus unworthy of promotion (Frick 2010), but in the 1990s the term was taken up by activist archivists in a project of revaluation (Cohen 2004; Frick 2010; Melville and Simmon 1993; Streible 2007). Film archivists sought two things: recognition for orphan films as worthy of archival collection and financial support for their preservation. Orphans were noncommercial, non-Hollywood films—from educational and industrial films to found footage, public service announcements, government films, medical films, test reels, independently produced avantgarde and experimental films, and home movies—which they sought to elevate as "heritage" (Streible 2006). The term "orphan" connoted both a category or type of film and the problem of their not being sufficiently valued. It posed the question of who cared enough about such films to support their preservation. Given the deteriorating film stocks, the question was urgent (Slide 2000). When in 1996 Congress established the National Film Preservation Foundation to dispense federal grants throughout the country solely for the preservation of orphan films, the Library of Congress headlined its press release: "Rescuing the Orphans."[8] By the end of the decade, orphans had become "the poster children of national film heritage" (Frick 2010:120; Streible 2007:124).

As the film preservation movement gained momentum, the US Congress was considering an extension of the copyright term. As long as there has been copyright, there have been debates over whether copyright should be limited or perpetual (see Rose 1988). In US law, the Constitution requires a limited copyright term: "The Congress shall have Power . . . To promote the Progress of Science and useful Arts, by securing for limited Times to Authors and Inventors the exclusive Right to their respective Writings and Discoveries." The question of what "limited times" means has been left to the Congress. In the mid-1990s, this question was again at the fore because the European Union had made it mandatory in 1993 for its member states to increase their copyright term by 20 years—to 70 years from the death of the author. US copyright industries, especially the entertainment industries, wanted their copyrights to have the same protections as their foreign competitors and pressured Congress to "harmonize" US law (once again) with the new European norm (Baldwin 2014, chap. 6). Critics of term expansion complained that it contradicted the purpose of copyright by benefiting large corporations like movie studios and the heirs of a relatively small number of famous authors, while doing little to benefit the public as it actively diminished the public domain (*New York Times* 1998). In congressional hearings, Jack Valenti, the long-time head of the Motion Picture Association of America, claimed the opposite. Making a "tragedy of the commons" argument, he contended that copyright ownership provided a greater guarantee that a cultural artifact (such as a film) would be cared for than if it were to enter the public domain: "A public domain work is an or-

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7. See Brauneis (2009) and Kevin Smith, "'Happy Birthday' and Extended Collective Licensing, *Scholarly Communications* (blog), October 15, 2015. http://blogs.library.duke.edu/scholcomm/2015/10/15/happy-birthday-and-extended-collective-licensing/.

8. http://www.loc.gov/loc/lcib/9617/film.html.

phan. No one is responsible for its life. But everyone exploits its use, until that time certain when it becomes soiled and haggard, barren of its previous virtues. Who, then, will invest the funds to renovate and nourish its future life when no one owns it?"[9] For Valenti, the orphan evokes the lowly status of the unowned cultural artifact, which is destined to be mistreated. An orphan—an abandoned "life"—is lamentable, and good public policy should prevent it from ever existing. That end could be achieved by making copyright perpetual or close to it.

Valenti's use of the term "orphan" is in direct opposition to that of the film archivists. To the archivists, copyright law—determinations of ownership—did not offer a sufficient framework for sorting out who would step up as a steward of deteriorating films. Most orphan films, even when in copyright, do not have owners in any clear or active sense—certainly, no one "renovating" or "nourishing" them. Furthermore, even when their copyright owners were known and aware of both their ownership and the films' condition, they did not consider their value to be greater than the cost of preservation; hence, they were "orphaned." In the case of the orphan film movement, archivists wanted to enable precisely that "renovation" and "nourishment," and that required not the establishment or sorting out of rights but the recognition and assumption of responsibilities for care and preservation. National Film Preservation Foundation member Eric Schwartz has commented that orphan film preservation is "about money not copyright law" (Schwartz 2012), by which he means that it is about securing resources to keep films that have no commercial benefactor from deteriorating and from being lost to future generations.

With the notion of an "orphan," activists resorted neither to an outside of property (the juridical public domain) nor to an inside of property (ownership) but to a space for negotiation between the public domain and private property, where alternative relations might be established. Orphans, for them, indicated a new type of quasi-property whereby the rights of the owner, whether owner in fact or owner in theory, would be curtailed or set aside for the benefit of the public (cf. Rose 2003) or at least for the benefit of people other than the owner. These other people include both current users of archives but also anticipated future users. The film archivists did not seek to become owners of the films or to achieve a certain legal status with regard to the films, but they did seek to become in significant new relation to them.

Advocating for the Digital Orphan

In the late 1990s the novel metaphor of the orphan had no simple or settled meaning. It worked both as a sort of slur that

copyright maximalists directed at the public domain (see Travis 2000) and as a reference to the problem of locating and identifying copyright owners.[10] The latter would become the "official" definition of the state. But, like the film archivists before them, advocates for digital libraries such as the Internet Archive found in the orphan other potential meanings and uses. From its origins in the cultural economy of Hollywood, the orphan became a means of protest against the key undergirding ideas within the copyright system itself, at the precise moment of the web's rapid expansion at the turn of the century.

In 1999, Brewster Kahle sold his start-up web navigation company, Alexa Internet, to Amazon and hit what he calls the "dot com jackpot." Soon afterward he turned his attention (and his newly acquired wealth) toward expanding the nonprofit Internet Archive, which he had founded in 1996, and this brought him face-to-face with the limits that copyright places on digital libraries. From its inception, the Internet Archive was essentially a "dark" archive—web pages stored on servers but unavailable for view—until October 2001 when the web archive became accessible through the Wayback Machine at archive.org. In a strict interpretation of copyright law, the web archive might be seen to perpetrate massive copyright infringement because it makes and stores copies of websites—which are, by law, copyrighted from the point of creation—and it does so without seeking permission of the copyright holder. Even before the Wayback Machine made the web archive accessible to the public, one scholar, in response to a press article about it, wrote: "The Internet Archive is nothing more than an enormous copyright violation disguised as a library."[11] Kahle forged ahead nonetheless and has, as of yet, not suffered legal consequences (Kahle 2015; Zittrain 2008:322–333, n. 125). Another significant early confrontation with copyright occurred during his work with the Million Book Project, an early and influential library book digitization project funded by the National Science Foundation and headquartered at Carnegie Mellon. As the library professionals learned in the Million Book Project, when one works "at scale," as in the case of mass digitization, with large numbers of works, the layers of indeterminacy outlined above make it impracticable to seek and/or receive permission (see Covey 2005; Thomas 2005).

Based on his experiences, Kahle became a committed activist for changes to copyright, with the needs of a free digital library as his frame of reference. In 2000 he met and befriended legal scholar Lawrence Lessig, who was then in the midst of the *Eldred* case, a constitutional challenge to the Copyright Term Extension Act of 1998. Kahle enthusiastically supported Les-

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9. *Copyright Term, Film Labeling, and Film Preservation Legislation: Hearings before the Subcommittee on Courts and Intellectual Property of the H.R. Committee on the Judiciary*, 104th Cong., 1st Sess., on H.R. 989, H.R. 1248, and H.R. 1734, June 1 and July 13, 1995. See similar language in *Copyright Term Extension Act: Hearing on S. 483 before the Committee on the Judiciary*, 104th Cong., 1st Sess., September 20, 1995.

10. See US Register of Copyrights, *Statement of Marybeth Peters, the Register of Copyrights before the Committee on the Judiciary*, US Senate, 106th Cong., 1st Sess., May 25, 1999. https://www.copyright.gov/docs /regstat52599.html. This is the earliest mention I can find of the term "orphan works."

11. Stephen R. Brown, "Is On-Line Archive Fair Use?" Letter to the Editor, *Chronicle of Higher Education*, May 1, 1998.

sig's efforts in *Eldred*.[12] As part of that support, the Internet Archive, along with colleagues, submitted two friend of the court ("amicus") briefs to the US Supreme Court in which they worked out a specific concept of the orphan. The authors of the briefs seized on Valenti's pejorative use of "orphan" and sought to appropriate it for new purposes.[13] They wrote: "[T]he real orphans of the copyright system . . . are the 'soiled and haggard' works that Congress has endowed with unwanted and unsupervised additional protection."[14] If there was damage, it was, in the digital archivists' view, from the misguided "protection" that copyright industries had demanded from Congress (Litman 2001). Echoing other critics, their repurposed use of "orphan" articulated a need to protect cultural artifacts not from tragic neglect but from the potential perils of ownership itself (Boyle 2008; Lessig 2001; Netanel 2008; Vaidhyanathan 2001).

After *Eldred* failed in 2003 and the Supreme Court upheld Congress's extension of the copyright term, Lessig and Kahle moved to put the issue of orphans squarely in the center of their agitations. In 2004, Lessig asked Kahle and Rick Prelinger, a friend and colleague of Kahle who happened also to be a film collector active in the orphan film movement, to serve as named plaintiffs in yet another constitutional challenge that would take a different tack, with the goal of scaling back copyright expansion. Kahle stood in for orphan books (with reference to his work with the Million Book Project) and Prelinger for orphan films. Whereas *Eldred* made its case in the name of the public domain, this new suit (*Kahle v. Gonzales*) did so in the name of orphans. It made orphans emblematic of the unintended but very real consequences of copyright expansion. On the day he filed the suit in March 2004, Lessig announced it on his blog with the title "Save the Orphans."[15]

In their initial complaint, Lessig, Kahle, and Prelinger defined an orphan as "[a book that] an author has no continuing interest to control, but which, because of the burdens of the law, no one else can effectively archive, preserve, or build upon

in the digital environment."[16] Copyright regulation, they noted, had become an undue burden that "blocks the cultivation of our culture and the spread of knowledge" (2). In a subsequent filing, they honed their definition of orphans as "books, films, music, and other creative works which are out of print and no longer commercially available, but which are still regulated by copyright."[17] Compare this understanding to that of the Copyright Office's definition, which is taken as official. In its 2006 report on orphan works, it defined the orphan work as "the situation where the owner of a copyrighted work cannot be identified and located by someone who wishes to make use of the work in a manner that requires permission of the copyright owner." Although the Copyright Office has tweaked the wording from time to time, the official meaning boils down to that of Canadian copyright's "unlocatable owners." This "official" orphan remains much closer to the orphan of Jack Valenti: a work that would be better off if it had a proper owner. In contrast, the digital archivists took up the orphan not to expand ownership over time but to diminish it, but as a way of shifting relations elsewhere. By this view, orphans are works that have continuing historical and cultural value but no longer have commercial value—or are "out of print." Copyright in this sense is the purview of commerce and archives the purview of preservation and longevity. Like orphan films in the 1990s, what these works without commercial value need is not ownership but someone willing to support their digitization and, by extension, their passage into the future.

Building on *Eldred*, Kahle, Lessig, and Prelinger recast orphans into a much more wide-ranging problem than that of film preservation. The orphan became the key way to articulate the problem whereby the rights of copyright owners were being protected to the detriment of digital libraries and archives. Copyright, Kahle and Prelinger told the court, was proving to have an "orphaning effect" in the culture—leaving things unarchived, unpreserved, and uncared for. Copyright posed a distinct danger to culture when the Internet provides the conditions to create libraries that are larger, more comprehensive, and vastly more accessible than they have been in the past. From the perspective of the digital librarian, cultural artifacts are caught in a pernicious bind: the system that seeks to protect them from unauthorized reuse might also, by not allowing for their digitization, risk their demise long term. Indeed, some researchers have shown that, because of copyright restrictions, nineteenth-century books are more available online than most of those from the twentieth century. This discrepancy has been termed the "twentieth-century black hole," which they take as evidence that the past century is at risk of "disappearing" (Boyle 2009; Gomez and Keller 2015; Heald 2013).

12. For example, to coincide with oral arguments before the Supreme Court in October 2002, Kahle drove a makeshift digital bookmobile from San Francisco to Washington, DC, stopping at libraries along the way to print out and distribute free copies of public domain books. https://archive.org/texts/bookmobile.php.

13. Kahle and his colleagues encountered Valenti's use of "orphan" as a pejorative description of the public domain in Jessica Litman's important book *Digital Copyright*. In it Litman, a legal scholar, used some of Valenti's congressional testimony, which I quoted above, as a chapter epigraph (Litman 2001, chap. 5). During my fieldwork, copies of the Litman book could be found scattered about the Internet Archive, where Kahle considered it "required reading."

14. Brief of amici curiae submitted by Internet Archive, Prelinger Archives, and Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation. Eldred v. Ashcroft, 537 US 186-2003. https://cyber.harvard.edu/openlaw/eldredvashcroft/supct/amici/internet-archive.html.

15. Lawrence Lessig, "Save the Orphans," *Lessig*, March 22, 2004. http://web.archive.org/web/20120107100808/http://lessig.org/blog/2004/03/save_the_orphans.html.

16. US District Court, "Civil Complaint for Declaratory Judgment," pp. 1–2. Kahle v. Ashcroft, 3:2004-cv-01127, March 22, 2004.

17. Complaint, Kahle v. Ashcroft, 3:2004-cv-01127, November 19, 2004. For more on the case, see http://cyberlaw.stanford.edu/our-work/cases/kahle-v-gonzales.

The Google Book Search Settlement

In the fall of 2008, as mentioned at the outset, I became enrolled in the Internet Archive's advocacy to prevent the settlement to *Authors Guild et al. v. Google* from being approved. The Google Book Search Settlement was an attempt to resolve the differences that had led publishers and authors to sue Google over its Library Project—but it became much more. The complex agreement resolved the dispute by creating an elaborate system for selling the digitized library books—or what one observer called a move from a "universal library" to a "universal bookstore."[18] The settlement concerned itself primarily with books that were out of print. Google could consult with publishers for books that continued to be commercially available, but a special agreement was needed for the older books that had slipped into the murk of the past, as outlined above. The settlement proposed to give Google a capacious enough license to digitize any book in any research library that was out of print but remained under copyright protection. This category of books accounts for 70–75 % of all books in research libraries, and it was this same category that Kahle, Prelinger, and Lessig have defined as orphans in the early 2000s. In other words, the settlement was directly concerned with orphaned books.

The Internet Archive mobilized a network of friends and expedient bedfellows to join forces against the settlement. Opposition eventually grew to envelope a broad and diverse array of individuals and groups, including professional writers' associations, libraries, literary agents, universities, foreign governments, foreign publishers, and Google's corporate competitors. Continuing the martial metaphor of there being a "war" over content, Kahle bemoaned the settlement as "D-day for digital libraries." To him, the deal, hatched in secret among copyright owners and Google, cut out the public, but, more significantly, it succumbed to the ever-present threat that digitization would prove to be not emancipatory but essentially recommodifying. The digitization Kahle had been passionately advocating among library leaders had been precisely the opposite: libraries, he had pleaded, should digitize their own collections to expand their mission and purpose into the digital era. Orphans should be made available through a lending model and removed from digital libraries if a copyright owner appeared to complain. He urged libraries to digitize themselves rather than to be digitized—that is, overtaken by a corporation like Google. Google's entry into library digitization in 2004 had been worrisome enough to attract a network of opposition in the form of the Open Content Alliance, and yet, to Kahle and additional others, the settlement was much worse for its focused attention on orphans. It would "lock up" these books into a paid subscription model that would nominally increase access, while benefiting those who already had

the most (people affiliated with universities). And, if all of that were not bad enough for Kahle, Google would also become the single most important entry point to "all the world's books." For these and still other reasons, Kahle saw the settlement as further evidence of Google's will to power and its increasing control not only over the infrastructure of the book but over the infrastructure of the web itself.

The proposed settlement of *Authors Guild et al. v. Google* was said to have "cut the Gordian knot" of orphan books, and it did so through a peculiarity of US law—namely, the class action procedure. United States law allows group litigation where a small number of plaintiffs claim to represent a much larger class of individuals who have suffered harm (in this case, having one's book digitized without permission). Through what one legal analyst called the "legal jujitsu" of the class action procedure, US author and publisher trade groups could, with the help of reciprocal global trade agreements, represent nearly every copyright owner of every book throughout the world (see Samuelson 2009, 2011). If successful, class action suits often end with a large cash payment divvied up among the class members—the harmed—who must come forward to claim their share. The genius of the Google Books Settlement was that it included a mechanism—a separate organization called the Books Rights Registry—whereby copyright owners would claim their share of the money and, in the process, provide information that would populate a new comprehensive database of books and their owners. The books that no one claimed would be "true" orphans: books without owners. The settlement thus provided a mechanism for sorting out the murk of property relations around books that has been exacerbated by the continually extending copyright term. This idealized database would solve the "orphan problem."

What the agreement among the publishers, authors, and Google could not do, however, was adequately represent those orphans—the unfindable, unknowable, and unrepresentable. Who had the right to receive the money from the use of "orphan" copyrights in the digital database? Who could speak for them before the judge in the case? How could a judge know that the settling authors and publishers were representing the interests of these ghosts in the machine? Evoked with such terms as "dead souls" (Samuelson 2009) and a "zombie army" (Grimmelman 2009), orphans haunted the settlement and, in the end, were one of the keys to its undoing. In the opinion that ultimately rejected the settlement, the federal judge wrote: "The questions of who should be entrusted with guardianship over orphan books, under what terms, and with what safeguards are matters more appropriately decided by Congress than through an agreement among private, self-interested parties."[19] Indeed, the questions the judge lists harken back to

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18. Paul Courant, "The Google Settlement: From the Universal Library to the Universal Bookstore, *Au Courant* (blog), October 28, 2008. http://paulcourant.net/2008/10/28/the-google-settlement-from-the-universal-library-to-the-universal-bookstore/.

19. Opinion, Dennis Chin, Authors Guild et al. v. Google. Southern District Court of New York, Case 1:05-cv-08136-DC, March 22, 2011. In November 2013, the same judge found that Google's digitization was a fair use because, even though the company copied in-copyright books in their entirety, it only showed small "snippets" from them on its web-

the question the film archivists asked in the 1990s and that Kahle and his colleagues had asked in their court challenges: who shall be the caretakers of a society's cultural accumulations?[20]

The End of the Orphan?

Between the 1990s and the rejection of the Google Book Search Settlement in 2011, orphans became a well-established but still vexed area of policy concern. The Copyright Office invited comments in two cycles seven years apart and submitted three reports, and legislation worked its way through both houses of Congress, nearly passing. But, for activists like Kahle, Prelinger, and Lessig, the orphan has failed to accomplish much at the level of the state, at least in the United States.[21] Some have found the use of the orphan metaphor to be counterproductive. Legal scholar Lydia Loren has argued that the "orphan" is too sentimental, serving only to shore up a copyright system by encouraging a narrative that seeks only to reunite parent and child (Loren 2012). Emphasizing emancipation over adoption or guardianship, Loren recommends the much more violent metaphor of the "hostage" who needs to be set free. Another scholar, William Patry, faults the embrace of the orphan for "misapplying" moral language to what is solely an economic right (Patry 2009). Some outspoken commercial authors have taken offense from the other direction. In her dismay at orphan works legislation in the United Kingdom, Ursula LeGuin offered "kidnapped works" as a counteroppositional metaphor.[22] Others see the orphan as a "trojan horse" that will sneakily weaken copyright protection and threaten an author's ability to make a living and to control use of his work (Holland 2010). In its place, some scholars have argued that advocates should seek to claim "adverse possession" of orphans (Borghi and Karapapa 2013; Meeks 2012; Menell 2014). Adverse possession is a real property doctrine that allows for a trespasser to become an owner when the former property owner is neglectful, absent, or difficult to locate.

But, for Brewster Kahle and the Internet Archive, the boundary work that the figure of the orphan can accomplish remains vital. The foremost concern is not to locate owners but to preserve objects for the future. He and the wider US library community are now suspicious of any state-level solution to or-

phan works and have turned their attention toward small-scale ethical practices of respect, cooperation, and best practices. In its comment filed in response to the Copyright Office's Notice of Inquiry on orphans and mass digitization in 2015, the Internet Archive embraced a "duty of care" principle from common law that depends on standards determined by the relevant community of practice.[23] For this experimental institution, it is precisely in its failure at the national level that the orphan has done its true work. It has moved attention downward, close to actual, evolved, or emerging practices, and outside the rigid codifications of formal law. At a gathering of copyright scholars convened to discuss orphan works, Kahle said: "We have learned a major lesson. Aside from all the laws, if people are pissed, they are going to try to find some way to stop you. But if they are not, they will let it go forward. . . . Things can work if you're receptive and respectful" (Kahle 2012). This is the same ethic the Internet Archive employed with its web archive. As mentioned above, in the late 1990s a web archive that regularly copies the web struck some as "illegal," but, by enabling a way to allow people to remove their websites or to keep them from being copied in the first place, its web archive has become a vital part of a digital cultural infrastructure.

Books in Suspension

After the rejection of the settlement to *Authors Guild et al. v. Google* in March 2011, mass book digitization began its slow end. Despite being well short of its original goal to digitize "all books in all languages" as well as its pledge to digitize the entirety of the University of Michigan's libraries, Google quietly moved away from the project. Scanning capacity was drastically cut in 2011; the Google Books blog was discontinued in 2012; its Twitter feed went silent in 2013; and its staff left or was reassigned. The company continues to scan books, but, according to its partners, its efforts are confined to the public domain, as was the state of play in 2004 before all the brouhaha and lawsuits, when the company so shocked people with its audacious pledge to digitize not just public domain books but "all books in all languages." Like Google, the Internet Archive continues to digitize some books, but the staff devoted to it has dispersed. As Kahle told me, the organization had "thrown itself" at mass digitization in order keep library collections from being commodified, and, after the defeat of the settlement, he decided that that investment had largely paid off and it was time to turn his organization's efforts to the many other pressing challenges of web archiving.

The computer engineers and entrepreneurs who had so recently promised to appropriate library accumulations into a digital infrastructure have quietly passed that baton back to the libraries, which find themselves in even more straitened circumstances than they did in 2004. At a time when public in-

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site. The company won the case again, on appeal, in 2015. In April 2016 the US Supreme Court refused to review the case, leaving the October 2015 appellate court opinion intact.

20. In a 2015 report, the Copyright Office proposed legislation that would approximate the scheme in the Google Book Search Settlement but with general applicability. Its answer to the judge's question was to entrust these issues to yet-to-be established "collective management organizations" (Pallante 2015).

21. In Europe, various forms of orphan-works legislation have taken effect (see Pallante 2015).

22. Ursula LeGuin, "Kidnapped," *Book View Café* (blog), January 21, 2013. http://bookviewcafe.com/blog/2013/01/21/kidnapped/.

23. Internet Archive, letter, October 8, 2015. http://www.copyright.gov /policy/massdigitization/comments/Internet%20Archive.pdf.

vestment in universities continues to shrink, one wonders how grand the ambitions of research libraries can be. In his important essay on infrastructure, Paul Edwards wrote: "Books and libraries remain our most important information infrastructures, even today" (Edwards 2003:207), and, yet, not so many years after he wrote that, one might hesitate before agreeing. Perhaps it is more fitting to say that books and their attendant institutional matrix currently exhibit a particular temporality of suspension (Appel, Anand, and Gupta 2015). For more than a century, books have been found to be out of step with modernity. Mass digitization has revisited and reenacted this persistent dissatisfaction and yet has not proved able to "rationalize" the murk of the people and things it wished both to appropriate and to overcome. Amid a drive to make all information flow together into a global library of universal access, printed books, especially the "orphaned" ones, gesture otherwise. By virtue of their sheer number, the complexity of their social relations, and the many meanings that attach to them, books, as if noise, overwhelm the signal of the universal library. The failures of mass digitization leave printed books, awkwardly, in suspension between an infrastructure representing the past and another representing the future, with the ghostly orphan as the baffling emblem of the in between.

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Afterword: The New-Old Media

by Samuel Weber

Kant, in introducing his Third and final Critique, now rendered in English as *Critique of the Power of Judgment*,[1] a work that was to provide the essential and missing keystone of his critical philosophy by bridging the gap between the cognitive and the moral, between the theoretical and the practical, would never have dreamed of using the word "new" to describe the object of "aesthetical judgment." He was fascinated by a certain type of judgment that seemed to claim universal validity but without having recourse to a universally valid concept, or, put differently, to a previous cognition. Aesthetic judgments of taste—of the beautiful or the sublime—exemplified this strange and significant activity: to call something "beautiful" or "sublime" was not the same as merely stating that one "likes" something or finds it pleasing; precisely, it implied agreement from all others, were they subjected to the same object.

Kant never thought of describing such judgments as "new," although from a contemporary, or modern, perspective, they could well claim such a predicate. After all, they responded to the encounter with objects or situations that did not fit into the existing store of concepts, rules, or general ideas—and precisely as such seemed to defy universalizing judgments. And yet—and yet that is precisely what Kant found in aesthetic judgments of taste: something that shared with cognitive judgment the claim to universal validity but, unlike such judgments, was unable to argue its case, as it were, by presenting concepts that could justify such a claim. Instead, Kant pointed to a "feeling" of pleasure or pain that unlike most feelings did not simply belong to an individual but was experienced as intrinsically shareable, "communicable," or "impartable" (*mitteilbar* is the German word he used).

Kant, writing in the 1780s, still could conceive of aesthetic judgments—and indeed aesthetic experiences—as essentially the property of individual subjects. Over a century later, at the other end of the German-speaking world, Karl Kraus could no longer make such an assumption. For him, aesthetic experience had now been socialized, but in a way that tended to preclude or make difficult the kind of encounter with singularity that so fascinated Kant. The difference was the rise of the media. Not quite yet the audiovisual media of our times,

but its printed forerunner, the press. It was a press that was beginning to use photographs but that was still largely dependent upon written language. In one of the most perceptive, foresighted, and neglected essays dealing with the development of the media, Kraus described what he called "The End of the World through Black Magic"—the "black magic" being that of the increasingly sensational press, mainly in the guise of the Wiener Freie Presse, Kraus's nemesis. The world that was being brought to an end by the Black Magic of the press was a world in which language served to invite, but not to excite, thoughtful imagination. It did this by providing minimal "objective" information in its descriptions, leaving the rest for readers to reflect and/or imagine. Kraus compared descriptions of events in the press of the 1850s with that of his time (1912) and came to the following conclusion:

> The Newspaper ruins all power of imagination: directly, since by serving up facts with fantasy it saves the recipient the trouble of making their own effort; and indirectly, since it renders him unreceptive to art and deprives it of its charm by taking over its surface values.[2]

The examples cited by Kraus, in abundance, demonstrate the tendency toward lurid descriptions, in which "facts"—formerly presented in stark concision and simplicity—are increasingly dressed up in all sorts of images, fostering the illusion of presence and proximity, but also and perhaps above all, of transparency: of the direct access to meaning.

This same tendency was remarked a few years later by one of Kraus's most astute readers, Walter Benjamin, in his essay "The Storyteller." Benjamin retraces the decline of storytelling back, in part at least, to the spread of a certain type of journalistic reporting, organized around what he presciently calls "information":

> Every morning instructs us about new events (*Neuigkeiten*) all over the earth. And yet we are poor in remarkable stories. This is because no occurrence reaches us any longer that is not laced full of explanations. In other words, almost nothing that occurs any more benefits storytelling—almost everything is presented as information. Half the art of storytelling consists in keeping explanations at a distance.[3]

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1. Immanuel Kant, *Critique of the Power of Judgment*, trans. Paul Guyer and Eric Matthews (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000).

2. Karl Kraus, *Untergang der Welt durch schwarze Magie* (Munich: Koselverlag, 1960), p. 425, my translation.

3. Walter Benjamin, "Der Erzähler," in *Illuminationen* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp Verlag, 1961), p. 415, my translation.

One of the newspaper articles referenced by Kraus, in the essay already quoted, bears the title "What New Stories Are Being Told in Vienna?" ("Was erzählt man Neues in Wien?" 435). Note that the title is not simply "What's new in Vienna?" but, rather, what *new stories* are being told. The example he goes on to cite tells of a rumor—a *Gerede*—that is circulating among workers that they have been promised 1 million Gulden by the Archduke Johann—a rumor that is revealed, according to the newspaper "story," to be nothing but a lie. The story concludes by violently admonishing its readers not to believe everything they are told without going to the right place to verify it (*am rechten Orte zu verständigen*).

The problem is that the proper place is no longer accessible, if it ever was, independently of the accumulated data purveyed by the media as "information," "explanations" that in turn depend precisely on the constituted generalities that Kant sought to problematize in his Critique of Aesthetic Judgment. Since these generalities are "old"—preexisting, with long histories of organizing perceptions and encounters—their ubiquitous and unquestioned power produces a thirst for the "new," which, however, turns out generally to be a rehash of the old. For what is really old is the conviction that meaning must consist in an absorption of difference into the same. The search for novelty, for the new, tends to focus on isolated objects and events, whereas precisely that focus is what is highly traditional—and what is used to delimit "new" from "old."

But what if the "new" should be thought of as not simply something excluding the old, as one isolated object excludes another, one event the other—a model for which would be the monotonously repetitive performances of competitive sports, with its fixation on "record-breaking"? What if the relation of new and old were to be construed on the model of Benjamin's notion of storytelling and not on his concept of "information" to which he opposes it? Information involves fixation as meaningful explanation. A story, for Benjamin, is never simply an answer but, rather, a *response*, and a rather particular one at that: it responds to the desire or need for "counsel"—a lame attempt to translate the German word *rat*. This word comes from the verbs *raten*, *erraten*, which means to guess and to conjecture no less than to give advice. A first step in evaluating what might be considered "new" in the "media" would be to raise the question of their status as a *response: to what do they respond, how, and with what effects*? What responses do the media, which are themselves responses, solicit, provoke, but also repress and delegitimate?

Benjamin pointed in a certain direction when he defined the situation to which the novel responds, as "the profound disorientation (*Ratlosigkeit*) of the living." (414). The novel in many ways anticipates contemporary media: not per se—such a per se does not exist—but in the very specific uses for which it has been developed under the conditions of capitalist social relations. The novel, according to Benjamin, sought to provide not just a response but an *answer* to the disorientation of the living, about the "end of life"—and precisely by providing an "end" that the reader could hope to survive. Much of what was once called the "society of spectacle" and its media could be interpreted in this sense. Finite delimitation, whether of stories, images, or sounds, is presented as the stepping-stone to survival qua endurance of the same, of the Self qua same, of the Selfsame, individual or collective. Such delimitation provides a meaningful "end" to the story, transcended by the Self. The story, by contrast with the novel (and the heroic epic from which, according to Benjamin, it descends), does not end but rather stops, if it is not interrupted. And the response it solicits is not an *answer* but merely another question, What comes next? (*Wie ging es weiter?*). If there is a response to this question, it is another story, which, like all stories, repeats and modifies earlier ones. In his preface to *Origins of the German Mourning Play*, Benjamin described this process of transformative repetition as "the dialectic that inheres in the origin." This is also how Benjamin's famous and oft-cited phrase, "Dialektik im Stillstand" should be read—and translated: not as "dialectics *at a* standstill" but, rather, "dialectics *in what is standing still*." This responds to what Kant left unsaid in his Analytics of the Sublime: precisely the necessary transition from the "mathematical" to the "dynamic sublime." What is at stake is the impossibility and yet inevitability of the limit, of cutting off what is an unending concatenation of images and impressions—and above all, the ineluctably problematic status of all *de-limitation*. What is old in the ostensibly "new" media is its insistence on the autonomy of the image, its self-contained quality, in which its enabling limits and frames are taken for granted and "regarded" as the condition of pure transparency. What is forgotten thereby is, as Benjamin put it, how "singularity and repetition reveal themselves to be conditioned through one another." What is "new" resides in the coils and recoils of such singular repetitions, in which the old reveals itself to be uncannily—*unheimlich*—at home, but only once it has been left behind.