FAST CAPITALISM

An Interdisciplinary Journal

Volume 13 • Issue 1

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Fast Capitalism is an academic journal with a political intent. We publish reviewed scholarship and essays about the impact of rapid information and communication technologies on self, society and culture in the 21st century. We do not pretend an absolute objectivity; the work we publish is written from the vantages of viewpoint. Our authors examine how heretofore distinct social institutions, such as work and family, education and entertainment, have blurred to the point of near identity in an accelerated, post-Fordist stage of capitalism. This makes it difficult for people to shield themselves from subordination and surveillance. The working day has expanded; there is little down time anymore. People can 'office' anywhere, using laptops and cells to stay in touch. But these invasive technologies that tether us to capital and control can also help us resist these tendencies. People use the Internet as a public sphere in which they express and enlighten themselves and organize others; women, especially, manage their families and nurture children from the job site and on the road, perhaps even 'familizing' traditionally patriarchal and bureaucratic work relations; information technologies afford connection, mitigate isolation, and even make way for social movements. We are convinced that the best way to study an accelerated media culture and its various political economies and existential meanings is dialectically, with nuance, avoiding sheer condemnation and ebullient celebration. We seek to shape these new technologies and social structures in democratic ways.

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The Specter of Neoliberalism: Thanatonomics and the Possibility of Trans-Individualism

Mark Featherstone

I. What is Austerity?

In this article I want to explore the psycho-politics of austerity in the context of neoliberal capitalism with particular reference to the British case, which I take to be the home of early liberalism and industrial capitalism and the contemporary site of what I want to call neoliberal **thanatonomics**, or the approach to political economy that mixes unsustainable levels of austerity and poverty with similarly excessive forms of luxury and consumption. Although neoliberal capitalism is considered a political and economic form defined by its utilitarian rationality, pragmatism, and commitment to the bottom line, I want to suggest that this mode of capitalism is also organized around a kind of hyper-moralism, which is ultimately theological in origin and quasi-theological in practice. Given this cultural, quasi-theological, political economy, I suggest that Britain, Europe, and essentially capitalism more broadly, is in the process of sliding back towards a new Victorianism, defined by hyper-division and hyper-inequality. Under these conditions, my thesis is that the current post-crash settlement, which suggests that austerity and hyper-inequality is a kind of temporary fix, will quickly become unsustainable. At this point, the neoliberal commitment to the realism of base materialism will begin to tip over in a new political idealism able to recognize the necessity of the social relationship between self and other and the ecological interdependence between self, other, and world that is currently prohibited by a combination of economic realism, post-political individualism, and a broader historical repression of the necessity of being together in the world. However, I suggest that in order to reach this point where the truth of what Gilbert Simondon (Combes, 2012) called trans-individualism can be realized, the left will need to confront and pass through what I explore through the idea of the resistance to social analysis that has resulted from the traumatic breaks of first, modern liberal, and second, post-modern neoliberal capitalism. In order to conclude I argue that this confrontation, and "working through," will ultimately be made possible by the contemporary **thanatonomic** model of economics which continues to produce unsustainable levels of inequality, austerity, poverty, luxury, and wealth. On this basis of the re-emergence of a new class politics based in a popular recognition of vast inequality and injustice my claim is that the current spirit of neoliberal capitalism that seeks to legitimate division on the basis of the moral superiority of the super-rich will eventually give way to its demonic other, **the spectre of neoliberalism**, that suggests the possibility of a general economics of social identity, trans-individualism, and what Georges Bataille (1991) wrote about in terms of continuous being. However, before exploring the psycho-politics of **thanatonomics** and moving beyond this to think through the possibilities of working through the repressive resistance to social analysis, I want to turn to the condition of austerity and then open out onto a broader exploration of the inequality and injustice of contemporary, or what we might correctly call, late capitalism.

Like much of Europe, since 2008, and certainly since 2010, the British social, political, economic, and cultural landscape has been defined by the idea of austerity. In this context austerity refers to a material, economic, condition determined by the **logic of the cut**. According to this logic, which was the policy motor of the Cameron-Osborne

Conservative government, public spending must be reduced in the name of a minimal welfare state and what Cameron famously called "the big society" where people effectively live beyond the state and no longer rely on central government to organize their lives. Given this push to reduce state spending and state interference, public institutions, such as the social security state, education, and health, must shrink, and have shrunk, or have been reorganized so that they are more cost effective. The purpose of this drive for efficiency is to purge state-run institutions of non-productive waste. Exposure to the logic of the market is key here because competition ensures that waste and "running in the red" is entirely unsustainable. However, the problem with this austere drive to cut spending is that it appears unsuitable to respond to the economic, never mind social problems caused by the crash and subsequent recession which set in in the wake of the state bank bail outs. As Mark Blyth (2013) notes in his book, Austerity, harsh cuts in state spending cannot produce growth in order to lift an economy out of recession because saving and, beyond this, the investment required to produce growth rely on spending in order to first, generate money which can be saved and second, increase confidence to stimulate investment. For Blyth the policy of austerity is therefore economically utopian in the sense that its core idea is simply unrealistic. In his view the assumption that cuts will balance the books, continue to produce growth, and not produce a spiral of recession and decline is unfounded, unsustainable, and based in a kind of individualized economic common sense.

However, this is not to say that the champions of austerity are naïve because this is clearly not the case and in pointing out their lack of long term economic realism what Blyth tends to underplay in his book is the neoliberal elite's particular brand of political utopianism which relies on an alternative vision of the objectives of economic production. The core idea of this political utopianism, which I would suggest it is possible to observe in the British case, resides in a vision of the reorganization of class society and the construction of a kind of post-modern Victorianism that recalls Disraeli's (2008) idea of the two nations. According to this new neoliberal utopian vision, austerity is absolutely not a temporary fix, concerned to address state over-spend and balance the books in order to create the conditions for sustainable growth and the improvement of living standards across the board, but rather a permanent condition organized around the recognition that growth, spending, and improvement cannot be for everybody, if capitalists are to continue to extract extreme levels of surplus profit from the production process. While Europeans and, in this particular case, the British live with the language of austerity now, it may be the case that this feeling of living under pressure and of not being able to access necessary public goods such as healthcare and education which it is assumed should be available to everybody, will vanish in the austere future when austerity is no longer thought about in terms of a short-term response to crash, recession, and a discourse of state over-spend, but has instead become normalized and entirely accepted by a class society that cannot speak its name or recognize the injustice of hyper-division and hyper-inequality. The first and perhaps critical moment of the implementation of this neoliberal utopian vision in the British case, but also in the European context, came when the financial crash was transformed from a problem generated by the over-leveraging of banks that had adopted a philosophy of **riskless risk** around securitized lending into a crisis of public spending and the over-reach of the state, and particularly the welfare state, into the lives of its citizens. There is no doubt that state over-reach was, and remains, a problem but this is certainly not an issue around public spending and welfare. On the contrary, this issue of over-reach was and is absolutely concerned with state intervention in, or more accurately the attachment to, the agendas of business and finance concerned with the production of excessive levels of surplus value that never trickle down through the class system.

On the basis of this attachment and identification, Blyth (2013) explains that this first moment of what I am writing about in terms of the neoliberal utopian vision of a new Victorianism entailed the discursive sleight of hand that saw a problem of financial irresponsibility become an issue of public over-spend on apparently unproductive welfare and civic goods, such as health and education. Following this claim, Blyth makes the point that the effect of this discursive sleight of hand was to transfer the cost of the private sector bank bailout, which in the British case amounted to over £140 billion, to the public sector that was then required to absorb the cost of this transfer of state funds into private hands. But beyond the short term need to balance the books and absorb the costs of the bail out, it is clear that the crash, crisis, and subsequent recession presented the neoliberal elites with an opportunity to reconstruct social and economic relations and employ the kinds of shock tactics set out by Naomi Klein (2007) in her now classic, The Shock Doctrine, to pursue utopian political ends. In this case the crash, and related discursive transfer of responsibility for financial meltdown from banks to welfare, enabled the neoliberal elite to minimize state responsibility for the welfare of the social body and open up new spaces for private sector investment and ultimately exploitation of a population which, in the British case at least, was largely responsive to the message that the crash, crisis, and recession was the result of state overspend on the undeserving poor. Although the Conservative-Liberal

Democratic coalition which imposed austerity in Britain from 2010 to 2015 suggested that "belt tightening" was universal and that everybody was part of this exercise, it is hard to miss the class based politics of this apparently purely economic policy. Contrary to the Conservative line that "we're all this together," the political impact of the class based dimension of what we might call **uneven austerity** in Britain has been to first, drive vast numbers of people (low earners, the unemployed, single parents, the disabled, and the disadvantaged) into poverty making them fit for exploitation by business looking to suppress wages and second, leave the business elites and super rich free to make and spend money with wild abandon.

While there is certainly economic growth in this scenario, this is not the kind of growth imagined by Keynes or Keynesians who ultimately thought that growth and economic expansion should result in improvement in the lives of the population across the board. On the contrary, this is the kind of growth that Marx (1990) observed in the 19th century and associated with the practice of unlimited exploitation that drove the working classes and lower orders into a state of poverty on the very edge of existence. Although it would be hard to sell a policy of uneven austerity, even to the British who understand class inequality in terms of a kind of feudal social contract between bosses and workers, because notions of meritocracy and the right to consume are deep rooted in neoliberal society, the neoliberal elites have sought to justify the logic of the public sector cut through the **ordoliberal** vision of order and stability. In other words, the basic message of austerity is that the books must be made to balance. In this context Greece has become a symbol of the problem of Keynesian state over-spend, when it is in actual fact a reflection of neoliberal hubris based in normalized corruption, tax evasion, and centrally a belief that there is no end to the wealth that the rich can accumulate in the context of monetary union designed to create a Europe wide frictionless free market. In the wake of the American financial crash, which quickly spread to the Euro zone, it became impossible to manage the Greek debt burden in a situation where monetary union means taking a hit for others, rather than making a profit from their labor, primarily because Greece's EU partners were, and remain, unwilling to support their debtors. As a result, the problem of Greek debt remains, even in the wake of the most recent EU bail out of July, 2015, and it difficult to see how Greece will ever escape a state of indebtedness. While Syriza has sought to defend the right of the Greek people to a decent life, the objective of the Euro zone leaders has been to provide loans to enable the Greeks to repay investors in exchange for the imposition of draconian austerity measures designed to retrofit Greece for a future of neoliberal super-exploitation. In the current political situation, Greece remains a kind of limit case of austerity, and a symbol for the reason austerity must be imposed in a situation where it is impossible to conceive that investors should take a hit in order to avert a socio-economic humanitarian crisis.

The reason it has become unthinkable to write off the Greek debt, and the reason private investment is considered untouchable, is essentially political in the sense that the neoliberal elites stubbornly refuse to consider loses when they can shift responsibility and costs onto the wider social body that they believe should pay for their exorbitant privilege. However, there is also a clear cultural and philosophical history that means that it makes sense to the wider population, especially in the case of Britain which gave birth of liberalism, to reduce state spending and defend private property rights to the very end. It is to this cultural history that I now turn. According to Blyth (2013), the history of austerity starts with John Locke's (2003) work on role of government, which captures the neoliberal ambivalence towards the state that is on the one hand a dangerous institution that costs too much and always threatens the liberty of free men, but on the other hand remains a necessity required to defend private property rights. While this view more or less defines the contemporary neoliberal attitude to the state, which should create the conditions or, in the language of the German **ordoliberals**, the framework for the market to operate, it also reflects the classical liberal anxiety about state spending and centrally state debt that it is possible to find in the writings of Hume and Smith and that has re-emerged in the wake of the crash. Against Keynes (1965), who thought that the state should organize capitalism in the name of the social body, the contemporary neoliberal vision of the state represents a fusion of the **ordoliberal** theory concerned with state responsibility for market order and competition and the laissez faire fear of big government and later, in the work of Hayek, the phobia of totalitarianism. From the latter perspective, which is most clearly represented by Hayek's (2001) The Road to Serfdom, it is absolutely essential that the state does not overstep the mark and meddle in the market. In Hayek's view the Keynesian "tax and spend" welfare state was already well on the road to totalitarianism and he did not hold out much hope that this dystopia could ever be averted because the progress towards the all-encompassing Weberian iron cage seemed unstoppable.

While Blyth (2013) starts his history with Locke, the historian Florian Schui (2014) projects the origins of the idea of austerity back further than liberal concerns about the state and public over-spend, and in a sense deepens the idea of the west's cultural attachment to the notion of the austere life. In his view it is possible to trace the history of Smith's idea of frugality back to Greece, Aristotle, and what we might call the body economic where moderation

is the key to the good life. Although it is hard to understand how this sentiment, which is essentially the cultural progenitor of the theory of economic austerity, survives in the contemporary period characterized by an obsession with consumption and excess, Schui's history shows that Aristotle's vision is deeply embedded in western culture, where it influenced Roman stoicism and the work of Seneca, Christianity where the welfare of the soul requires that the true believer resists the temptations of the flesh that know no limits, through to contemporary populist movements around well-being and happiness in moderation. Indeed, it was only much later in modern Europe, when thinkers such as Hobbes (2008) and Mandeville (1989) began the challenge the wisdom of the ancients, that philosophers and political theorists started to understand the gap between the behavior of the individual and society and recognize that the ancient political psychology of the micro / macrocosm where the individual is a reflection of civic life, which is in turn a reflection of cosmic processes no longer necessarily held. While Hobbes saw that the natural instincts of men needed to be subsumed in the political society of the leviathan able to maintain order, Mandeville explained that private vices could produce public virtue and reached the conclusion that a prosperous society defined by wickedness was in the end a better option than a poor, but virtuous community. But if Mandeville saw the value of or perhaps even good in selfishness, Schui shows how the works of classical liberals such as Smith (2010, 2012) and Weber (2010) were essential to move this new macroeconomic theory towards the logic of capital and capitalism, primarily because they recognized that selfish accumulation is in itself not enough to generate economic growth and that what is required is a sense of frugality, abstinence, and a moral commitment to work able to create a tendency to investment and reinvestment.

Thus Schui (2014) explains that both Smith and Weber imagined the moral or virtuous capitalist who made money and invested capital on the basis of theological belief in the basic goodness of hard work and economy. In other words, what they achieved was to square the circle of ancient moderation, balance, and stasis and modern vice, dynamism, and change and show how economic growth was made possible precisely by the austere worldview. This view of the morality of the market was, of course, contested by Marx (1990), who saw the class basis of the production process, and the violence required to generate surplus value, and later Keynes (1965) who wanted to put the market to work for the good of everybody in the name of a more equal society. But the apparent failure of this social democratic approach that dominated from the great depression through to the 1970s, which saw the emergence of a kind of flat line economy defined by low growth, high unemployment, and inflation, brought the moral vision of the superiority of the efficient market relative to the bloated state back into focus. According to Hayek (2001), the problem with the Keynesian state was that it spent too much and essentially discouraged saving meaning that the cost of private lending became prohibitive. As interest rates increased investment levels decreased with the result that economic growth slowed, unemployment rates began to climb, and the global economy continued to slide towards recession. In the face of this situation the neoliberal response was to cut back state spending, privatize industry, and deregulate labor in order to cut costs and create a more competitive market situation. While this approach offered an economic response to Keynes, it centrally also worked on the basis of a moral critique of the dependent, infantilized, statist man who needed to be freed from the shackles of big government in order to fully realize his liberty. In the wake of this turn towards a political philosophy of anti-statist individualism the politics of class conflict were sidelined and became more or less redundant in the period following the end of cold war, the fall of the Berlin Wall, the collapse of the Soviet Union, Deng's market reforms in China, and the emergence of the American-led end of history narrative. From the late 1980s onwards a fusion of Chicago style economics, or what Foucault (2008) called anarcho-capitalism, and German **ordoliberalism**, which seeks to manage and enable the free market, has dominated the global scene. It is in the context of this social, political, economic, and cultural condition, the subsequent history of neoliberal reform, and centrally high speed, high tech financialization that the crash occurred, the crisis unfolded, and austerity has been imposed across Europe. In the next section of the article I intend the explore the psychopolitics of austerity in the European, and specifically, British context in order to suggest reasons why this approach to economic management has found mass appeal and in some cases increased support for right wing parties committed to welfare and public sector cuts.

II. Thanatonomics and the Spectre of Neoliberalism

While there has been a critical response to harsh austerity measures across Europe, and in particular in countries such as Greece, Spain, and Italy, I would suggest that this has been less apparent in Britain, where protest has been

overshadowed by a post-political moral vision accepting of the "tough love" of austerity that ultimately swept Cameron, Osborne, and the Conservative architects of the cuts agenda back into office in 2015. In this section of the article I want to examine the psycho-politics and cultural reception of austerity in Britain, especially under conditions of neoliberal capitalism's celebration of excess and luxury. My objective in this discussion is to explore the appeal of austerity and seek to understand how first, the Conservative-Liberal Democrat Coalition and second, the current Conservative government have been able to defend the idea of austerity and gain support for a program of public sector cuts in a social context defined by class division, where widespread hardship, poverty, and misery very clearly rub up against extreme, excessive, ostentatious, and very conspicuous levels of consumption in particular sectors of society. My core thesis here is that the British appetite for austerity, despite the persistence of excess and luxury, is organized around a psycho-political moral desire for the austere life rooted in a response to the neoliberal principle of competition. While this economic principle is constructed in purely logical terms, so that competition ensures cost effectiveness, in practice the idea of capitalist struggle moralizes around the protestant, puritan, division between the categories of the saved and damned outlined by Weber (2010) in his The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism. According to this logic, where I ensure my own salvation through capitalist success, the punishment of the other who is damned by austerity makes political sense because their destruction makes my salvation more likely. On the other side of this equation, there is also a sense in which austerity culture satisfies the kind of **thanatological** drive to escape the self set out by Freud (2003b) in his Beyond the Pleasure Principle. In this classic work the founder of psychoanalysis explains that the oedipal self desires escape from the pain of individuation in a **thanatological** replay of the peace of life in utero. Underneath its commitment to cold, hard, instrumental reason I would suggest that the contemporary neoliberal economy pushes in this direction through on the one hand, flight into the **thingness** of absolute luxury, and on the other hand, the austere reduction of human life to its absolute base materialism – in both instances we confront the body that exists, but little more. Given this psychological condition, and the ways it has been made manifest in the neoliberal economy of extreme wealth and poverty, luxury and austerity, it is possible to see how the drive to compete, and moralize the destruction of the other in unsustainable levels of austerity which threatens their very existence, represents the sadistic projection or the other side of the basic masochism where I desire my own austere escape from the world of individuation, endless desire, and the suffocating blizzard of things that has come to define neoliberal consumer culture.

On the basis of the above psycho-political analysis we might suggest that the appeal of, and indeed desire for austerity, in Britain can be understood in terms of the political tradition of liberalism, and its suspicion of the state, and also British theological history, centered around Protestantism and the **thanatological** dimensions of this belief system which revolve around the drive to escape from the meaningless of material things. Of course, the paradox of this drive to overcome materiality in the name of a transcendental position closer to God is that the true believer becomes base material through their austere life when they reject every form of luxury and artifice. There is no more than bare metabolism in this view, which is, ironically, perfectly symmetrical with the neoliberal tendency towards instrumental rationality, economic metaphysics, and the theology of the bottom line. This shift from bare materiality, where economic metabolism is everything, to pure theological idealism, or spirituality is ensured by the dialectical reversal that takes place when the state of base materialism is realized which is precisely what Martin Luther understood in his original critique of Catholic ostentation. Ironically, base materialism, and closeness to death, opens up a direct line to the ideal, theological, universe of God. However, what the contemporary neoliberal political economic situation in Britain shows is that the Catholic approach to communion with God through fine things is equally operative in the post-modern consumer society where the truth of the post-crash settlement is an acceptance of uneven austerity where extreme poverty mixes with excessive wealth and luxury. In the context of uneven austerity, the austere desire to escape materialism finds its complement in the equally extreme pursuit of luxury and fine things which has led London to become home to more billionaires than any other city in the world (Sunday Times Rich List, 2014). On the surface, the world of the super-rich seem be concerned with the obsessive pursuit of material finery and absolutely devoid of any ideal dimension, but I would suggest that it is precisely this extreme materialism and absolute form of luxury that cancels in the emergence of base, or absurd, thingness, which ironically opens out onto a transcendental or, in Freudian language, oceanic space.

Akin to the practice of extreme austerity, which has gripped Europe, and been more or less accepted in Britain by a population that has re-elected the architects of the society of the cut, primarily because of a psycho-political predisposition to pursue an austere life towards death, my view is that the British live with the super-rich and their extreme consumption and ostentatious displays of luxury because ultimately their pursuit of fine things aims at the same post-material, transcendental, quasi-theological conclusion. At this point it is important to emphasize that this

drive is **thanatological** and **quasi-theological** because there is no sense in which this paradoxical drive to **escape materialism through the material** is in any sense religious or organized around an explicit religious ideology because Britain remains a largely secular society. On the contrary, I would suggest that this **thanatological**, quasi-theological, dimension is a kind of unconscious left-over which exists within the British national psyche and has come to define the social and political receipt and general acceptance of neoliberal economics, extreme inequality, and uneven austerity where some suffer and struggle to sustain their existence and others wallow in extreme and absurd luxury. My view is, therefore, that it is possible to find a **spirit of neoliberal capitalism** hidden within this **thanatological**, quasi-theological dimension that explains how this form of economics, or what we might call **thanatonomics**, continues to attract popular support in countries such as Britain in the context of extreme levels of inequality which have become more or less banal and no longer worth speaking about.

I want to return to the banality of inequality and what I want to call the neoliberal resistance to social analysis later in my discussion, but I think it is worth emphasizing here that the value of the exploration of the spirit of neoliberal capitalism is that it has the potential to make sense of the problem of the apparent materiality, necessity, and post-political pragmatism of neoliberalism that conditions its economic realism and subsequently takes the ground of social and political critique. The problem with this realism for critical thinkers is, of course, that it enables the contemporary neoliberal elite to claim that their worldview is simply organized on the basis of economic rationality, that they have no partisan attachment to any political position beyond the one that seeks to organize fair and open competitive market relations, and that there is no real alternative to this position in a world where the more or less free market has been globalized. In many respects this view, which is outlined by Jamie Peck (2012) in his book, Constructions of Neoliberal Reason, has been largely accepted by the left that has bought into the story of the post-ideological, post-political, dimension of neoliberalism and has indeed started to follow the harsh, uneven, realism of the right and the capitalist elites. However, the problem with this acceptance is that it cuts off opposition, resistance, or alternatives before they have even been fully imagined with the result that the left becomes trapped within a state of self-imposed neoliberal reason, realism, and stupidity on the basis of what it mistakes for pure, instrumental, post-political rationality, simply because it can no longer identify the ideological roots of this form of capitalism. The reason this acceptance of hard economic reason, retreat towards self-imposed stupidity, and caution against the utopian imagination is a mistake is because what Peck calls neoliberal reason, and talks about in terms of a form of pragmatism, is not organized around a coherent political ideology which is it possible to oppose on the level of rational thought, but rather a deep unconscious, cultural, inheritance that operates through a form of psycho-political moralism that passes itself off as common sense precisely because of its unconscious, unspoken, status.

My sense is that it is possible to identify the presence of this psycho-political, moral, deep structure through its very absence in the work of the key critics of neoliberal reason such as Peck. In his book there is no neoliberal ideology, but only a form of highly adaptable pragmatism. In Peck's view the core neoliberal idea, the free market, is never complete, but always in process, always under construction. In this respect the lack of a fully coherent neoliberal ideology is the very point of neoliberal ideology or what he calls neoliberal reason. However, the problem with this view is that its recognition of realism, pragmatism, and cognitive mobility entails a loss of coherence and in the end it is unclear what exactly animates or defines the neoliberal project in an overall sense. While Peck (2012) writes of neoliberal reason, my view is that we must look for the ur-principle of neoliberal capitalism in the unconscious, unreason, and the kind of **thanatonomics** that we find expressed in the contemporary political economy of on the one hand, austerity and deprivation, and on the other hand, luxury and excess, precisely because I think that the extreme materiality or objective necessity of the neoliberal project is what confirms its theological, ideal, or unreasonable basis. It is possible find a comparable argument in Joseph Vogl's (2014) work on the idealism of contemporary economy, The Specter of Capital, which exchanges Marx and Engels' (2008) famous line about the specter of communism for Don DeLillo's (2011) reference to the specter of capital which haunts the contemporary global financial system. For Vogl, capitalism has always been a spectral machine ever since Smith wrote about the invisible hand and imagined that some benevolent theological power oversaw the conversion of private vice into public benefit. Vogl calls the contemporary capitalist system an economic theodicy, or **oikodicy** to refer to the idea of God's management of the household economy, but where he falls short in his exploration of the role of God in the neoliberal global system is in his failure to examine the way this idea finds its place in the history of social and political thought and how this mode of thought emerged from a deeply religious cultural milieu – for example, Smith's own theological belief and particularly his early interest in Protestantism which led him to imagine his economic God in the first place. Again, the value of this connection that leads back of Locke's (2003) notion of God-given rights, and even further Hobbes' (2008) biblical idea of the leviathan, is to extend the theory of the pure

materialism and pragmatism of neoliberalism into a recognition of its spectral dimensions and beyond this towards an understanding of the ways in which this spectrality functions in the unconscious of those who accept, consume, and desire austerity on the basis of its promise of **thanatonomic** salvation.

Understanding this **thanatonomic identification** is especially pertinent in the British case under consideration because of the historical position of the home of capitalism caught between the origins of the liberal tradition of Hobbes (2008), Locke (2003), and Smith (2012) and the birth of anti-capitalist resistance, class struggle, and modern communism in the works of Marx and Engels (2008). What recognition of this unconscious dimension explains is precisely how the liberal, laissez faire, position survived the long 20th century from the 1930s onwards and eventually came back by way of Chicago and Austria to take over in the 1970s and even more, endured the 2008 crash, crisis, and recession through the imposition of a new Victorianism upon the British population. However, I would suggest that exploration of the **thanatonomic** spirit which animates neoliberal capitalism is not simply a story of class defeat, but instead also opens up a space for thinking about the critical potential of this perspective where realization of the stupid materiality of, and unconscious drive behind, neoliberalism starts to haunt the economics of limitless desire and endless growth with the specter of its own limitation in a vision of a new kind of economics, what Georges Bataille (1991) called general economy. Here, the stupid medium par excellence, money, no longer commands humans who come to understand that economy is useful, but not fundamental or essential in itself, for the fair distribution of goods across people who are no longer torn asunder by the pain of individuation, but recognize each other outside of the Darwinian logic of savage competition.

Beyond Spencer's (2009) vision of the survival of the fittest, which the English Victorian thinker coined in his Principles of Biology and which really should be seen as a key principle for understanding the conduct of neoliberal social relations, Bataille's general economy stands outside of the economic second nature and presents the possibility for a new kind of humanism. Thus I want to suggest that neoliberal thanatonomics symbolizes the extreme outer limit of capitalism and less death in itself than the death of a particular form of neoliberal subjectivity wedded to the extreme materialism of austerity, luxury, and the violence of economic survivalism. Moreover, I think that it is precisely because the current phase of neoliberalism seems to offer little choice between an austere future on the very edge of survival and a life of absurd excess, ridiculous ostentation, and meaningless luxury that the general economy - which is socialistic and takes into account the needs of humanity and human being in the world rather than mutilated economic individuals who think in terms of the costs and benefits through the lens of the medium of money - ranges into view and suggests the utopian possibility of the trans-individual who is simultaneously made in and through their interactions with others and the world. But before it is possible to think about the emergence of Bataille's (1991) general economy, which would entail the end of the misery of austerity and the absurdity of luxury in a reasonable society organized around a recognition of the truth of trans-individualism and an economic principle of equality, it will be necessary to overcome the moral position that we find in Smith (2012) and Weber (2010) where the austere self is a superior type who deserves everything they achieve and retake the space of critical thought that neoliberalism has very effectively colonized. In the case of Weber's work on the protestant ethic the psychology of the austere capitalist, who saves and reinvests rather than spends and wastes, is taken to be evidence of this type's moral superiority and this vision is employed in contemporary discourse around the deserving super-rich who somehow earn their money. From this point of view it is ironically the super-rich, wallowing in luxury, who are truly living in austerity and the poor who are lazy, wasteful, and ultimately undeserving. However, it is very difficult to support the idea that the contemporary neoliberal elites embody this austere, moral, approach of selfhood, simply because of their commitment to **thanatonomic** consumption practices. On the contrary, in the contemporary British context the critique of waste and wastefulness and the harsh medicine of austerity has been clearly reserved for the weakest members of society, including the poor, children, and the disabled, who are considered in need of reform in order to make them more productive in a situation where welfare is a waste of money.

In light of this kind of political critique of the morality of contemporary austerity, and the ways it separates from what Weber had in mind, which becomes a justification for inequality on the basis that the economic elite are represented as morally superior, I believe that it is possible to exchange the liberal, moral, vision of what we might call the spirit of neoliberal capitalism for a critical perspective that takes in the violence, misery, and injustice inspired by economic relations in contemporary Britain. The effect of this transition from a position where morality justifies the injustice of superiority and inferiority, wealth and poverty, and the imposition of uneven austerity in the context of exorbitant luxury to a critical perspective which recognizes the violence of the contemporary social, political, economic, and cultural settlement is, in my view, to transform the spirit of neoliberal capitalism into its scary other, what I want to call the **specter of neoliberalism**, that haunts the unjust society and points towards the possibility

of some other approach to social life beyond the extremes of wealth and poverty of **thanatonomics**. When the spirit of neoliberal capitalism, which names the energy, attitude, and disposition that drives this ideological form into the future, becomes the specter of the same economic form, the ghosts and ghouls of Marx and Engels' (2008) vision of communism that haunted Victorian capitalism come back onto the scene and it becomes clear that the **thanatonomic** system is unsustainable. The reason for this is that the 20th century model of distributed growth imagined by Keynes (1965), which sustained capitalism in the period stretching from the 1930s through the 1970s, has been exchanged for a kind of Victorian growth that is uneven, poorly distributed, and does very little to tackle the socially divisive problem of inequality. In this situation, where the twin infinitives of austerity and luxury become the key reference points of capitalism, economics become **thanatonomics** and there is no way to defer antagonism into the future. Antagonism is now and there is no escape from the kind of social war Foucault (2004) spoke about in his seminar Society Must be Defended and Virilio (2008) captures through his idea of pure war. In contemporary Britain the neoliberal elite's strategy has been to wage a more or less secret political war on the weakest in society and defend the 19th century vision of the moral spirit of capitalism. In this view the rich are deserving in spite of their very public excesses, while the poor are clearly sinful, lazy, wasteful, undeserving, even when their structural disadvantage is beyond doubt.

What this illustrates is that beyond the ideology of post-politics, which suggests that neoliberalism is a form of rationality, reason, and realism, contemporary capitalism is really based in a deeply violent political, moral, economy that separates the moral from the immoral, the useful from the useless, the deserving from the undeserving, and the normal from the pathological. But explicit recognition of this political strategy, which transforms the weakest members of society into human waste, would clearly be a serious strategic mistake for the elites so the post-political utilitarian explanation takes over and it appears that there is no alternative to the kind of banal, objective, violence that destroys lives in the name of the post-human, **ordoliberal**, lie of economic balance. But I would suggest that it is becoming increasingly difficult to defend the Weberian vision of moral capitalism today, or even pretend that austerity is somehow evenly distributed, because this is clearly a class based project that excludes those who wallow in luxury who are strangely everywhere but nowhere in popular and academic discourse. Given this view it may be that it is better to try to understand the truth of neoliberal capitalism, or at least the truth of the neoliberal capitalist elites, through Werner Sombart's (1967) work on the relationship between luxury and capitalism, which explains that the origins of capitalism reside in consumption, excess, and centrally sexual desire. On the basis of Sombart's reading on luxurious capitalism, which coincidentally emerged in the early 20th century when Freud was in the process of rethinking human psychology and the fundamental importance of the sex instinct, I think that it is possible to suggest that capitalism is essentially never about austerity, and reinvestment in the name of God, but rather its polar opposite – the potentially positive Freudian sex instinct or the transgressive, creative, power of Marx's notion of species being expressed economically. Although Sombart is rarely connected to neoliberal capitalism, which has fallen in love with the idea of a kind of economic realism or rationality that conveniently locates it in a post-political space, there is clearly a direct line from his work, and particularly books such as War and Capitalism, and the neoliberalism of, for example, Schumpeter (2010) who wrote about economic innovation, creative destruction, and the new that cannot be quantified, that suddenly shifts everything, and makes a difference that matters. In this respect I would suggest that it is a mistake to accept the thinly veiled moral politics of contemporary capitalism, which explain that there is no alternative to the necessity of economic realism and the rejection of wastefulness, excess, and change, because neoliberal economics are themselves based in the idea that excess is what drives capitalism forward and opens a space onto the emergence of the new that is essential to the idea of modernity itself.

But what Schumpeter (2010) or the other early neoliberals could not have foreseen or explored in their works where they opposed the freedom of entrepreneurialism to the bureaucratic tyranny and in some cases the outright totalitarianism of the state, was that the late capitalist neoliberal state would itself become the champion of a kind of economic totalitarianism organized around a brutally efficient, highly organized, system for the production of surplus value which leaves very little room for individual freedom in general. Of course, individual freedom remains on the scene, because the contemporary **thanatonomic** system ensures some live lives characterized by a kind of hyper-individualism and hyper-freedom that threatens to cancel itself in its very lack of opposition, but there is little sense that this is in any way distributed through the social system precisely because the majority, and especially those deemed undeserving, worthless, and useless, must live under conditions of strict austerity which limits their ability to realize their formal freedom and even more, very consciously throws them into a state of nature where they must struggle to survive. Beyond the early 20th century pair of Weber (2010) and Sombart (1967), who capture the polar opposites of the austere and excessive capitalist modes of subjectivity, there is a sense in which it is possible

to find the same tension in the works of three contemporary thinkers who have explored the idea of the spirit of capitalism, Luc Boltanski and Eve Chiapello and Bernard Stiegler. In their work on the new spirit of capitalism, Boltanski and Chiapello (2006) show how neoliberalism capitalism emerged from the Keynesian settlement on the basis of a fear of the totalitarian state and its impacts upon individual freedom. For Boltanski and Chiapello the Keynesian state eventually responded to the general fear of totalitarianism, which found expression in events such as May 1968, by adopting a new stance on capitalism and market forces that eventually led to the emergence of the new creative capitalism. In this respect Boltanski and Chiapello update Sombart's story, where capitalism is organized around its ability to harness, what we might call in Freudian terms, libidinal energy in order to produce innovation, development, and growth. However, the problem with this story is that it is incomplete because what we see in contemporary capitalism is the way in which this freedom of desire and expression is unevenly distributed through relations of production which ensure that some enjoy the freedom of what I have called above, hyper-individualism, and others are constrained by the limits of austerity and state imposed austere subjectivity. This is the work of the new leviathan, the neo-totalitarian, neoliberal, iron cage.

Where Boltanski and Chiapello's story is incomplete, therefore, is in its failure to recognize the other side of the neoliberal turn to individual freedom and away from state restriction. While the neoliberal turn reflected a shift in economic policy, and a move away from welfare statism, towards an idea of the free, creative, entrepreneurial self, able to stand on their own two feet, it has also entailed the rise of a biopolitical punitive security state organized to police others and ensure that their behavior follows the new individualistic regime of truth where the moral politics of austere subjectivity applies to those who are not in a position to buy exemption from its constraints. This is precisely what I would suggest a reading of Bernard Stiegler's (2011, 2012, 2014) work on decadence, disbelief, and discredit can explain. In Stiegler's work the neoliberal turn to economic individualism, which has translated the economics of desire, where I must wait for what I want, into the **thanatonomics** of drive, which entails the collapse of the period of deferral into a dense moment of meaningless satisfaction and despair where I want for nothing but also lose my reason for living, has led the state to move from an institution concerned with welfare to one organized around the need to police the fallout from the turn to **thanatonomics**. At this point it is important to understand the psychoanalysis of the emergence of **thanatonomics** because this enables recognition of the profound nature of this fall out. In Stiegler's view the general problem with the end of the modern period of the deferral of desire, which results from an economic system that says "you may have what you want now," even if this involves taking out unsustainable credit, is that the entire symbolic order or cultural system which sustains subjectivity within a framework of norms, regulations, and prohibitions that limit and centrally enable civilized behavior starts to break down. For Stiegler, the result of this breakdown is the emergence of a new kind of society, where there is no future because the very idea of the future relies on a notion of deferral organized through symbolic structures of prohibition and proscription, which represents the social-psychological dimension of Fukuyama's (1992) vision of the geo-political end of history.

Living through the end of history, Stiegler's (2011, 2012, 2014) **de-subjectified subject**, who we can only call a subject negatively because the rules this new person obeys are rules about the end of limits, is the fleshed out psychoanalytic explanation of Fukuyama's last man. While true freedom resides in an appreciation of limits, the last man's freedom no longer recognizes prohibition. In this respect his freedom is properly **thanatonomic** in that it revolves around a utopian, but also centrally dystopian, sense of the end of the future that means that nothing is possible, in the sense that meaningful change has become impossible, but everything is permitted, since there is no prohibition on behavior that assumes its own meaninglessness. It is under these economic conditions, which have resulted in the collapse of normal, oedipal, subjectivity where individuals recognize limits, that the state has adopted a new role centered around neo-totalitarian bio-political control. In the Keynesian period from the end of World War II to the late 1970s this was never necessary because subjective limits could be assumed and the state could encourage spending in order to stimulate growth and centrally redistribution across society. However, under conditions of neoliberalism, where the subject has been fully emancipated from the very constraints that once defined its identity, there is no need to encourage spending, because the new de-subjectified subject will consume until its very end, and redistribution makes no sense because the wider social, symbolic, cultural structures that made the idea of a society matter no longer hold. In this situation, the only possible function for the state in the wake of crash, which was the result of the madness of the financial elites who behaved with complete **de-subjectified abandon**, is to maintain some kind of order within the parameters of the neoliberal **thanatonomic** system, where people are entirely free of social responsibility. This means that there is no real recognition of moral or social responsibility for the crash, but only a class based discourse that explains that the problem resides, and has always resided in the exorbitant cost of

the social structures that make it possible to understand morality and responsibility in the first place.

In the context of the neoliberal ideological framework that no longer recognizes social responsibility, but is on the contrary allergic to the very suggestion of social interdependence, the moralism that emerged in the wake of the crash was never about over-consumption in itself, but rather reliance on the social, welfare, state. This is why austerity, and the project to reconstruct an austere self, is colored by neoliberal extremism, and **thanatonomics**, in that the drive to restrict the new self is in a sense **unrestricted**, and excessive in that it assumes that limits are potentially **limitless**. Since there are no prohibitions on how far the austere individual can be pushed in the name of the reduction of their material burden on others, the drive to austerity becomes a quasi-theological project in that its opposition to material costs eventually lapses into a kind of transcendental idealism, or vision of mystical perfection, where everything becomes perfectly symmetrical, but also, most importantly, subsumed in everything else. It is precisely here, at the extreme edge of neoliberal economics, or what I have sought to call **thanatonomics**, that I think we enter the space of Bataille's general economics beyond neoliberal moralism. While Bataille's central focus in his key work on general economy, The Accursed Share (1991), is luxury, and the ways in which the luxurious transgresses the material for a kind of transcendental, oceanic, space, I would argue that historically, and in the contemporary politics of austerity, the austere aims at the same target, which is the escape from the banal world of things for a more meaningful universe which recognizes the profound interaction between everybody and everything.

However, it is, paradoxically, precisely this universe, the universe of the general economy that contemporary neoliberalism seeks to deny through first, its obsession with the meaninglessness of restricted economic realism, rationalism, and pragmatism, and second, its insistence on both methodological and moral individualism, where the individual is practically limited in terms of what they can know, the rights they can claim, and responsibilities they are expected to fulfil. But it is essentially because of this desperate denial of general economics in the name of restricted economics, particularly in a period where the ecology of human and world has become clear, that it has become impossible to ignore the general economic truth that interactions between humans cannot be reduced to the basic exchange of money. That is to say that the barely contained truth of the contemporary neoliberal condition, which has been repressed in the symptomatic emergence of a horrendous situation where some live in absolute luxury and others struggle to survive in a state of austerity that makes life scarcely livable, is that the human condition is defined by what Gilbert Simondon (Combes, 2012) called trans-individualism, that this state of radical interdependence stretches back across the generations to define our past, present, and possible futures, and that it is impossible to live without the debt that contemporary economics seeks to deny, but which is in reality, a necessity of existence itself. Given that it is impossible for the individual to ever repay their debt to others and the world itself, simply because credit and debt define existence which is always in a state of becoming, it may be the case that neoliberalism represents the most naïve, unrealistic, and unreasonable economic form it is possible to imagine. If this is the case, perhaps the origins of this mode of thinking are less concerned with pragmatism, and more bound up with the ancient, tragic, tradition where the individual refuses their relationship to the world in the name of the escape from necessity into the realm of the Gods. In light of this perhaps it is the tragic wisdom of the ancients that has been lost in the rebellious hubris of neoliberal capitalism that imagines the utopian individual out on his own beyond relations to others and world. Perhaps it is this hubris, and this desperate belief in the omnipotence of the capitalist individual, that the left needs to correct today by exploding the myth that denies the necessity of interdependence of self, other, and world. In the final section of this article I want to conclude in an exploration of what I want to call the resistance to social analysis which I would suggest has come to define the neoliberal period and resulted in the foreclosure of this general economic truth. My argument here is that it is possible to trace this refusal of social, or to use Simondon's term trans-individual, truth back to the origins of liberalism, and then later, neoliberalism and that these points represent traumatic moments, and potentially social, political, economic, and cultural catastrophes, which we must work through in the proper psychoanalytic significance of the idea of "working through" in order to make the leap beyond contemporary **thanatonomics** into the sustainable world of general economics where the relation of self, other, and world is understood as necessary and irreducible.

III. The Trauma of Neo/Liberalism

In order to move beyond the twin infinitives of austerity and luxury, which have come to define neoliberal **thanatonomics** and the common sense market fundamentalism that makes extreme inequality appear acceptable,

my view is that the left must look to oppose what I want to call the resistance to social analysis that comprises the contemporary post-political milieu where economic violence is understood in terms of realism, rationalism, and pragmatism and any sense of social responsibility is considered leftist or Marxist madness. In the most basic sense I would suggest that this resistance to social thought, analysis, and critique finds its basis in the rise of individualism, the collapse of the mainstream left in countries such as Britain, and more profoundly the failure of the very social, symbolic, cultural structures that make sociological understandings possible. In this context my use of the idea of the resistance to social analysis has very particular significance which relates to the psychoanalytic notion of the resistance to psychoanalysis that explains that analysands will tend to resist psychoanalysis, and centrally psychoanalytic truths, precisely because these threaten to unearth repressed, traumatic, contents that the subject cannot accept because these will undermine the very basis of their subjectivity (Freud, 2003a). Thus the subject of psychoanalysis will tend to find psychoanalytic truths absolutely untrue and absolutely ridiculous precisely because these repressed contents represent the very negative foundations of their subjectivity. Given this theory, my thesis is that it is possible to find a similar, social and political form of resistance to critique inherent in the contemporary neoliberal post-political commitment to economic reason and that it is this resistance that the left must oppose or resist if it is to ever construct a viable politics committed to social equality and justice that does not crash upon the rocks of the neoliberal idea of hard economic rationality. In psychoanalysis resistance to analysis represents a defense mechanism against traumatic contents that must be first, uncovered and second, worked through in order to enable the subject to accept its past and centrally move forward into the future free of the endless repetitious effort to resolve the unbearable traumas that are already lost to its past. Regarding the contemporary social and political problem of neoliberalism, and its deep resistance to social analysis that has come to infect the social body that accepts hyper-division and hyper-inequality, my view is that it is possible to identify two key traumatic moments, relating to first, the modern break with the ancients, and second, the post-modern break with the moderns, which must be worked through in order to open out onto a kind of post-post-modern space beyond the capitalist fantasy of the completely independent man from nowhere.

In the first instance I want to suggest that it is possible to turn to the modern father of austerity, John Locke, and particularly his discovery of the world as private property. Here, my suggestion is that Locke's (2003) philosophical innovation around private property represented a traumatic moment in social, political, and economic history on the basis that what he achieved was a radical break from the ancient theory of the relationship between man and world where the human attempt to escape from the environment had always been thought through in terms of tragedy and failure. Against this tragic vision which we find everywhere in the ancient world, Locke took seriously the possibility of man's escape from the world that subsequently becomes his property. Once this initial break had taken place, and the world had been transformed into an economic object, it was also possible for man to take himself for his own property, and the other as a potentially dangerous stranger who could threaten this form of possessive individualism. Thus the state emerges in order to defend man's right to own himself and the world from others who may seek to infringe these rights. Of course, from Marx's (1988) point of view, this freedom is no freedom worthy of the name, but rather represents the alienation of humanity from self, other, and world that comprise our essential species being. Despite this early philosophical critique which we find in Marx's 1848 Manuscripts, unfortunately what the left managed to oppose in the new capitalist system was the material inequality between people, and it is this that Keynes (1965) managed to address in his theory of the state management of the economy. While Smith (2012) sought to place the burden of ethical responsibility onto the benevolent invisible hand, Keynes saw that the state must manage economy and produce growth in order to emancipate people from need and create a situation where it would be possible to live outside of the necessity of money. Although the leftist response to the original modern liberal break with the ancients was, therefore, concerned to address the problem of inequality, I would suggest that it failed to respond to the original traumatic event, which saw self, other, the world torn asunder and transformed into independent economic actors who then need to be made equal. It was only on the basis of the persistence of this condition of estrangement which resulted from the original trauma that Hayek and the neoliberals were able to respond to the threat of what they saw as the totalitarianism implicit in Keynesianism and eventually produce what I would suggest represented the post-modern trauma of neoliberalism that further emancipated the self from other and destroyed any sense of community and social responsibility in a new consumer society where the individual is thought to be absolutely self-contained and beyond the influence of self and world.

In the British case, this post-modern situation has been operative from Margaret Thatcher's period in office, through the Blair / Brown New Labour years, and the current Cameron / May era of harsh cuts and austerity. While Thatcher sought to emancipate the self from community, and in particular destroy the working class sense of social

responsibility and unionism which had become a break on profitability, the Blair / Brown period of government was defined by what Anthony Giddens (1998) called the third way, which named the attempt to reconcile rampant individualism with social welfare, and the catastrophic market crash of 2008. It is this situation that Cameron inherited first, in office with the Liberal Democrats and second, in the current Conservative government, and has sought to resolve through the destruction of the welfare state through austerity. As such, Cameron sought to reconstruct the minimal state imagined by Locke, which was only ever necessary to protect private property, and recreate a Victorian style class system, where the poor must struggle to survive and the rich are free to consume without limits, on the basis this that is morally right inside the neoliberal universe where the truth of sociability is repressed. However, in much the same way that the system that emerged from Locke's (2003) work on private property, the 19th century version of laissez faire capitalism, produced Marx's (1988) philosophical critique of estrangement and the mutilation of humanity, my view is that the polar opposition of contemporary neoliberal society defined by what I have called the **thanatonomics** of austerity and luxury will eventually produce a new idealism, or transcendental materialism, organized around recognition of the interdependence of self, other, and world. I have sought to explain this shift in thought, which essentially describes the telescoping of post-modern and ancient philosophy, through reference to Georges Bataille's work, The Accursed Share (1991), and his theory of the general economy where estrangement collapses into a new state of intimacy and what he calls continuous being. Although this new economics will have to struggle against the contemporary neoliberal resistance to social analysis, which is set on the maintenance of the status quo, my sense is that this deeply repressive approach to the defense of the idea of the free floating individual will not be able to survive the austere future that condemns some to barely livable lives and others to excessive, meaningless, luxury, because extreme levels of inequality will generate the spectral other of this system, the specter of neoliberalism. In the face of this unsustainable situation that rejects the necessary relationship of self, other, and world, **the specter of neoliberalism**, or perhaps more precisely the specter of the end of neoliberalism, that haunts the social, political, and economic system will eventually mean that there is no choice but to confront and work through the historical traumas of modern and post-modern capitalism.

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Anti-Capitalist Resistance in the Liberalist Context

Daniel Fletcher

Costas Douzinas challenges Slavoj Žižek's negativity towards the 2011 cycle of revolts in his Philosophy and Resistance in the Crisis (2013). Seeking to explore the central dynamics of the resistance movements that emerged in the wake of the global financial crisis, and especially those that emerged in the wake of the austerity measures associated with the European sovereign debt crisis, Douzinas focuses on the practices of direct democracy that emerged in the squares, which were occupied by the people who had lost patience with the political and economic establishment. Forms of direct democracy helped to re-empower peoples alienated from the governments that claimed to represent their interests, opening up a new constituent process that revitalized politics in the Muslim world, Southern Europe, and the United States. For Douzinas the direct democracy of the squares has helped to forge an emergent "social ethos" that opposes both the atomizing tendencies of liberal individualism and the totalizing tendencies of communitarian narratives. The social ethos locates human emancipation between these two extremes, in an individual who is autonomous but who recognizes that they share their existence with a community, so that "being in common is an integral part of being self" (2013, 195). The human subject often talks within a communal **We**, yet the subject is never subsumed by the **We** of a communion, and so retains the distinction of **I**. Unlike Žižek, Douzinas embraces the emphasis on individual autonomy and open-ended association in contemporary demonstrations, resisting the temptation to fall back on old-fashioned socialist notions of disciplined centralization that supposedly help constitute commonality but which tend to crush freedom beneath the will of a vanguard.

As alluded to, while Douzinas is keen to embrace individual freedom within a collective project, he explicitly distances the social ethos from liberal individualism (see ibid. 90-96). For him the neoliberal system that penetrates ever deeper into the social fabric of a globalized society exacerbates the atomizing tendencies of liberal individualism by ramping up the culture of individual self-sufficiency. The austerity programs instituted by governments in the times of economic crisis are driven forward by the neoliberal ideology of self-sufficiency: governments demand that the people stop relying on state hand-outs and start taking responsibility for their own lives, with individuals implored to stand on their own two feet with discipline, self-control, and the appropriate level of self-interest. Despite, then, his emphasis on the importance of I, Douzinas follows in a long Marxist-leftist tradition that attempts to create a fundamental opposition between the liberal capitalist order –which in its radicalism can spread only an isolating culture of self-reliance and self-contained "freedom" –and radical movements for democracy, imagining the emergence of an egalitarian social culture to challenge anti-social liberal capitalism.

In this article, however, I will suggest that the concept of individuality through commonality –which Douzinas associates with what is postulated as an essentially non-liberal social ethos– has deep roots in liberal tradition and culture. The article will emphasize that liberalism is not synonymous with capitalism, even if it is compatible with it and often supports its development. It will be argued that the contemporary form of neoliberal capitalism does not represent the fulfilment of liberal ideology per se, but the fulfilment of one (arguably perverse) strand of liberal culture that prioritizes the struggle for individual power over the struggle for individual freedom. The article will argue that from its beginnings liberalism has always been in contradiction with itself, simultaneously perpetuating, on the one hand, possessive/power-seeking individualism, and, on the other, associational/egalitarian individualism. While the culture of possessive individualism has nurtured competitive capitalism, the culture of egalitarian individualism

has cultivated a radical tradition of leftist-libertarian or anarchistic democratic struggle that in the contemporary age climaxes into the **aganaktismenoi**, the **indignado**, and Occupy movements. With this insistence on the radical liberalist character of contemporary protest movements, in this article I will suggest that it is not only inaccurate but also unhelpful to distance the histories of liberalism and democracy in the way that Douzinas does. By facing up to and inhabiting the liberalist character of contemporary resistance movements, we are in a better position to draw out and develop progressive associational/egalitarian individualist notions, such as free association, shared desires, joint self-constitution, egalitarian cooperation and mutual support, whilst remaining conscious of the inherent dangers of movements sliding towards possessive individualism and power seeking. In short, we will be in a better position to discuss how we can keep the spirit of democratic radicalism within its own spirit.

The perspective developed in this article draws much inspiration from DeKoven's (2004) analysis of the birth of the postmodern through the radical struggles of the 1960s. DeKoven notes that the postmodern capitalist system that emerged from the 60s seemed to carry its own forms of resistance within itself, producing and absorbing radical struggle to simultaneously strengthen and undermine itself. What I will try to do in this article is demonstrate that the capitalist system has always carried within itself not just the material conditions but also the culture of its own destruction, for it is dependent on a liberalist ethos that branches off into a supportive possessive culture and a subversive egalitarian culture. Ingrid Hoofd's arguments (2012) on neoliberal contradiction are also relevant here. Hoofd notes that the contemporary era's fast capitalism is premised on the speed elitism of the system, which compels corporations to continuously draw on new technology in order to continuously speed up the integration of global markets and the accumulation of capital. Hoofd, however, in analyzing the contemporary alter-globalization movement's opposition to neoliberal capitalism, notes that the movement carries within itself speed elitist tendencies, encouraging the breaking down of all barriers to movement and communication as well as the increasing mobilization of western knowledge and technology to overcome the apocalyptic threat of climate change. Hoofd considers zealous and/or unreflective embraces of such processes of integration and mobilization by alter-globalist activists to be speed elitist because they inadvertently help speed up Western-led globalization and the hegemony of western culture and western markets that is carried forward by such globalization.

From a post-structuralist perspective, Hoofd suggests that the alter-globalization movement "**cannot help**" (ibid. 19) but carry forward the tendencies of the system it is opposing because its existence is bound up in Western culture and ideology. Specifically, Hoofd argues that like neoliberalism, alter-globalism is caught in a "humanist aporia" (ibid. 22), with the latter affirming the very struggle of the active/activist subject-agent that neo-liberal expansion is dependent upon – Hoofd suggests that the term activist is itself a highly value-laden term rooted in economistic notions of active endeavor to enrich and push forward the advance of the capitalist nation-state. The neoliberal system encourages, even compels its subjects to be active, creative and free. In doing so, it attempts to channel autonomous action towards capital accumulation, but in encouraging creativity and autonomy, it inadvertently encourages resistance against itself, sparking new forms of association and the development of forms of freedom and justice that it cannot control. The alter-globalization movement is the product of this process, but while it seeks to overturn the domineering and exploitative nature of the system, it remains a product of the system, and therefore remains caught up in and fed by the system's processes and dynamism. Building on Hoofd's argument, in this article I intend to place the humanist contradiction of neoliberalism in its historical context, arguing that the contradiction has been growing ever since liberal culture and ideology emerged in embryonic form in the 17th century. The neoliberal cultural context, then, is constituted by two oppositional but interdependent dynamics of exploitation and resistance that have been accelerating towards their present states since the early stirrings of liberal capitalist society, and as the two dynamics continually burgeon and intensify, they exacerbate the possession versus association contradiction of neoliberal society and threaten to pull it apart.

The radical protestors of the neoliberal age are heirs to a long history of self-emancipatory radicalism that has emerged in tandem with the bourgeois history of self-advancement. Liberalist culture has sustained bourgeois power, but the self-emancipatory tendencies of that culture lead into anti-authoritarian sentiments and the search for the formation of the self in common with others. It is here that we find, tightly rooted in the liberalist context, a social ethos, an ethos which contains genuinely anti-capitalist tendencies but which emerges out of a bourgeois striving to find or save the self. In order to demonstrate the contradictory character of liberalist culture, this article will compare the contradiction of self-emancipation in the philosophy of two men who are posited as among the earliest liberalist thinkers; Baruch Spinoza and John Locke. I have chosen these two authors in order to help me re-conceptualize the history of democratic radicalism that is posited by two of the most famous writers on contemporary anti-capitalism; Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri. Hardt and Negri conceptualize a Western history of absolute division between

the egalitarian, constituting multitude and the hierarchizing, constituted power of capitalism, postulating a vision similar to Douzinas's on the irreconcilable opposition between the neoliberal forces of power and the people's forces of liberation. In their seminal work, Empire, Hardt and Negri outline their history of radical democratic struggle, rooting it in the Renaissance humanism that blossomed in Medieval Italy, while setting up Spinoza as the philosopher who encapsulated the radical democratic spirit in the 17th century. While Hardt and Negri make no links between Spinoza and the liberal tradition and imply an essential distinction between Spinoza's philosophy of commonality and liberalism's philosophy of individualism, in this article I will highlight the ways in which Spinoza's philosophy gave expression to an emergent liberalist ethos, an ethos which was developed further in the philosophy of Locke. Critically, I will demonstrate that it is not reasonable to simply extract an anti-social core from the liberal tradition, for even in liberalism's early embryonic stage democratic radicalism was as essential to liberalist thought as was possessive radicalism.

The Dutch Jew Spinoza was resident in the burgeoning Dutch Republic of the 17th century, writing at a time when the merchants of the United Provinces were beginning to establish themselves as a patrician merchant oligarchy. As noted above, Hardt and Negri closely associate Spinoza with the rise of Renaissance humanism and democratic radicalism, but they greatly underplay the extent to which Spinoza's metaphysics gives expression to the unbounded optimism of the merchants of the Dutch Republic, whose spirit defined the Republic's culture and drove forward a nation in the throes of global trade domination. Spinoza was himself from a merchant family – although not a particularly wealthy one – and helped to run the family importing business after his father's death. Spinoza's venture into business was not successful and he ended up becoming an artisan of sorts, working as a modest lens-grinder and instrument maker. Feuer (1958) argues that Spinoza gave up his business interests because of his reaction against the competitive capitalism that marked the outlook of the Jewish elite and the influential, conservative Calvinists (6). Nevertheless, Spinoza remained very much part of the dominant merchant-artisan Bürgertum estate, and he would emerge in the 1660s as a liberal republican supporting the republican Dutch government led by the Grand Pensionary of the Netherlands, Johan de Witt, a man who represented the trade-orientated interests of the oligarchic patrician merchant class (see Žižek, 2004, Deleuze, section 6). For Feuer, while it is true that Spinoza became a moderate republican, this was only after he had started to move away from the religious and political radicalism he had initially embraced in reaction against Holland's conservative elite (from the mid-1650s, around the time of his excommunication from the Jewish community in Amsterdam, Spinoza became closely associated with Utopian radicals in the city, some of whom, like Franciscus Van den Enden, held revolutionary egalitarian ideas (Nyden-Bullock, 1997)). Nevertheless, it should be remembered that the religious radicals – who, Feuer suggests, in a similar vein to Hardt and Negri, broke apart the order of the medieval world – still tended to emerge from the Bürgertum estate, and really only radicalized – and in radicalizing, developed – the self-emancipatory ethos of the elite merchants. Because of the diffuse self-emancipatory ethos uniting radical and moderate members of the Bürgertum, one can understand how a radical such as Spinoza could so easily become a moderate, and why deeply radical notions of existence would remain central to his philosophy even as his political outlook mellowed. Spinoza's self-emancipatory ethos will be explored below.

More so than his actual political philosophy, Spinoza's naturalistic metaphysics inspired the democratic radicalism of the French Enlightenment, significantly influencing the political thought of the **encyclopèdistes** who laid the ideational groundwork for the French Revolution of 1789 (Israel, 2011). Deleuze and Guattari (1984, 1988) inherited this French radical legacy, drawing on it (as well as on Spinoza explicitly) to develop their materialist metaphysics of interconnected desiring multitudes, which would be developed into a clear political vision by Hardt and Negri in Empire (on Deleuze and Guattari's influence on Hardt and Negri, see Hardt and Negri, 2001, 23-28 and 415). Spinoza's metaphysical radicalism, elaborated on most fully in his **magnum opus**, Ethics, lay in his willingness to ground human behavior in a non-teleological nature. For Spinoza, God is immanent in this nature, and cannot be thought of as a transcendent being who bestows special status on certain human beings. Spinoza, then, humbles mankind by suggesting that no man, not even a king, can raise himself up by drawing on the transcendent "power of god" (see TTP 6, 81 – see Spinoza, 2007). Here Spinoza, like Locke, undermines the divine right of kings, but because of his metaphysical naturalism Spinoza's conclusions on rights are starker than Locke's – for Spinoza, without a transcendent legislator, an individual has no natural entitlements, or natural rights in the Lockean sense, at all.

With no conscious Will, God has no normative order to offer, and there is therefore no natural law that mankind is compelled to follow. Spinoza, then, would not be able to abide by Locke's assertion that even in the state of nature men are obliged to follow the natural law of God's reason – Spinoza explicitly rejects the idea of "men in nature

as a state within a state" (TP 2/6 – see Spinoza, 2000). For Spinoza, ultimately men have "sovereign natural right" only to the extent that any other creature has it. That is to say, a man has the "right" to do anything that his natural faculties enable him to do, just as, for example, natural faculties give fish the right to "have possession of the water" (TTP 16, 195). Significantly, Spinoza is asserting here that natural right is synonymous with natural power. A man's powers, or natural faculties, drive him to persevere in his being (E IVP18S - for the Ethics, see Spinoza, 1985). This is a radical conception of an individual's power because it leads Spinoza to the conclusion that men are never bound to adhere to the covenants set in place by a sovereign authority. If a group of individuals decide that a covenant is detrimental to their striving to persevere in being, and if they have the collective power to oppose the sovereign, then they have the natural "right" to ignore the covenant or to declare it "null and void" (see TTP 16, 182). Ultimately, no man can transfer his natural right to the sovereign and be forced to follow the sovereign's whims, for his natural right is his natural power, or his inherent ability to act on his strongest interest. A man, therefore, will inevitably defy the sovereign if it is in his interest to do so. And here emerges the potentially revolutionary implications of Spinoza's philosophy. For Spinoza, unlike for Locke, the people do not have an inalienable juridical right to overthrow an unjust government; nevertheless, for Spinoza the government retains the "right" to its power only to the extent that it appeases the people. If a sovereign does not rule in the people's interests, the people will inevitably challenge its power with their collective counter-power. Regardless of any formal social contract, then, Spinoza believed that any government that wanted to survive in the long-term would be compelled to accept constitutional limitations to ensure that its power was not at odds with the interests and natural power of the people (Sharp, 2013).

For Hardt and Negri, despite Spinoza's acceptance that a constituted sovereign power can survive if it compromises with the people – an acceptance which marks Spinoza as politically moderate or "liberal" – Spinoza's underlying ontology remains radical because Spinoza continues to assert that a sovereign can never really take away the people's collective power; a sovereign's assertions of right remain superficial, dependent on the unlimited constituent power of the people, or the people's **potentia**. A state grasps only a temporary constituted power or **potestas**, an institutionalizing force that limits the multitude's possibilities and overdetermines its potential (see Field, 2012, 23). In his Political Treatise, Spinoza explains that the state emerges spontaneously out of the natural passions of men. Recognizing that they are individually weak and vulnerable to the sway of the passions, men feel compelled to forge civil society and constitute a sovereign state, being drawn together by "some common emotion…a common hope, or common fear, or desire to avenge some common injury" (TP 6/1). Although the state is designed to control the anti-social potential of the passions, it remains forged through the passions, and this for Hardt and Negri offers the hope of the emergence of organic, pre-institutional and non-hierarchical forms of social organization that remain constituent without collapsing into a solid, overarching constituted order.

Nevertheless, in extracting a radical democratic tendency from Spinoza's philosophy, Hardt and Negri overlook a key piece of Bürgertum or proto-bourgeois conservatism that is essential to Spinoza's view of humanity. As Sandra Field points out in her excellent critique of Negri's interpretation of Spinoza (2012), it seems pretty clear that Spinoza does not share Hardt and Negri's optimism about a free desiring multitude. Civil society may emerge out of the passions, but for Spinoza, without the state to control the passions, collective desire cannot be maintained, and civil society collapses into the war of each against all. Spinoza is indebted to Hobbe's view of human nature, suggesting that human beings are generally not rational and tend to be overwhelmed by sad and vicious passions (see EIVP54S), being "more inclined to vengeance than compassion" (TP 1/5). Spinoza, unlike Hobbes, does not suggest that individuals must give absolute power to the sovereign in order to protect humanity from the war of each against all. Nevertheless, Spinoza does not suggest, as Negri claims he does, that free individuals in unmediated social relations will tend towards a collective of horizontal unity and harmony. Because destructive passions tend to overwhelm human reason, individuals rely on the state to protect themselves from themselves. Spinoza, then, seems to directly challenge Hardt and Negri's ontology of emancipatory desire by suggesting that the multitude cannot preserve and nourish its being by following its passions. Indeed, it is precisely passions that hold back the collective potential of the people, which is why Spinoza focuses on the need for strong institutions to channel passions towards the common good. As Field succinctly notes, for Spinoza, "the power of the multitude is inseparable from the institutional mediation that shapes it" (2012, 22).

In the **Ethics**, Spinoza famously rejected Descartes's mind-body dualism and insisted that, while mind and body may be two finite modes of different attributes, they are of one ontological substance, a substance that is the infinity of nature and God. Hart and Negri celebrate this as a thoroughly materialist conception of the Real that opens up the possibility of human beings who come to live in harmony with their own bodies and all the other bodies of nature; the conception leads to the realization of the essential interconnected unity of all things. However, it should

be remembered that Spinoza's monism remains premised on the notion of the rational mind overcoming the body's irrational passions. For Spinoza the passions are external and passive forces affecting the mind. The human mind strives alongside the human body to persevere in being, but desires rooted in the body impress upon the mind a striving after inadequate ideas (EVP20S). However, through its striving to persevere in its being, the mind creates its own adequate ideas that are felt as active affects (see Dutton, 2014). These are active joys and desires that guide man towards a rational understanding of the world. It is this rational understanding that frees mankind from the sway of the passions, leading us to harmony with the world, a world whose affective powers would otherwise overwhelm us.

What we can see here is that, again, Spinoza's ontology cannot support Hardt and Negri's embrace of corporeal desires. Spinoza develops the rather conservative rationalist denigration of passions of the body, which are always inadequate, while elevating the rationalizing mind, which alone can lead the human to adequate ideas and the highest good – knowledge of God. For Spinoza, the mind emerges out of the one ontological essence to lead the human towards the true preservation of its being. The mind cannot detach itself from the body – indeed, it shares its being with the body – but it alone reorients the human being towards spiritual perfection with its divine self-constituting and self-perpetuating power. Ultimately, then, Spinoza's notion of human freedom is egoistic and idea-led, amounting to an early version of Žižek's psychoanalytic philosophy of the transcendental mind that frees human being by emerging from the limited body to reconnect the human entity with the limitless potential of the primordial soup of quantum waves (see Žižek, 2004, on Spinoza's place within modern philosophy[1]). As such, Spinoza's philosophy, rather than a precursor to the anarchistic culture of contemporary anti-capitalism, is a precursor more to the centralizing socialist tradition, which elevates an ordering mind over mass or popular self-organization and spontaneity. While Hardt and Negri present Spinoza as the philosopher who outlined the ontological power of an autonomous multitude, thereby laying the foundations for a postmodern notion of sovereignty, Spinoza's philosophy actually seems to fit much more comfortably with what Hardt and Negri describe as a modern notion of sovereignty, which is premised on a command mentality (see 2001, 69-85).

Although Jewish, Spinoza was shaped by the United Provinces' Christian radicalism, being caught up in Northern Europe's Protestant Reformation. Deleuze and Guattarisuggest that Protestantism played a critical role in individualizing belief (see Dosse, 2010, 203), but in doing so it built on the proto-individualist radicalism of merchant-led Renaissance humanism. The merchants' culture of self-mastery encouraged the rejection of the Catholic Church's transcendental overlordship, spurring Protestantism's embrace of the individual who takes control of the search for freedom and salvation. Even as Protestantism collapsed towards its institutionalized, magisterial forms, it continued to be animated by an undercurrent of groups embracing self-emancipatory radicalism. While the elite Dutch merchants, overseeing the institutional conservatism of the Dutch Reformed Church, could not let go of their oligarchic power, the marginalized religious radicals of the Bürgertum – Spinoza among them – challenged the elite to bring out its own ethos by opening up the social and productive process. The radicals embraced the emergent self-emancipatory ethos by refusing to relent in their search for individual freedom. The radicals may have struggled for a new collective unity, but their struggle emerged out of the merchant struggle for the self and remained premised on the search for self-betterment. Let us again remember here that Spinoza, as one of these radicals, championed civil society only to the extent that it was "consonant with individual liberty" (TTP 16, 207), founding his argument on the essential, self-centered drive to persevere in being:

> **Since reason demands nothing contrary to Nature, it demands that everyone love himself, seek his own advantage, what is really useful to him, want what will really lead a man to greater perfection, and absolutely, that everyone should strive to preserve his own being as far as he can (EIVP18S).**

As Spinoza searched for what was really in the self-interest of man, he came to the conclusion that an individual's salvation could only be achieved in harmony with others. As a result, Spinoza helped to open up the contradiction of the liberalist ethos, bringing out associational desires with his pantheistic metaphysics, complicating the selfish merchant push for self-mastery and power. Many radical protestant groups of the era contributed to the emerging contradiction. Feuer notes, for example, that groups such as the Quakers and the Diggers in England, who shared in the same zeitgeist as Spinoza, also began to embrace pantheistic notions of human existence, believing that God's pervasive spirit united all of nature (1958, 53). As we shall come back to below, here the English radicals were driven by a desire to defend their property rights, but they understood property in a broad sense, defending the individual's right to be, and to be free through egalitarian association.

Ultimately, then, it seems reasonable to argue that while Spinoza's notion of people power was radical for its time, it was not clearly separate from the era's emergent liberalist ethos. Indeed, there seem to be some strikingly

Lockean tones to Spinoza's concept of the multitude's **potentia**. Locke and Spinoza were both shaped by the 17th century struggles against state absolutism and by the protestant radicalism that marked those struggles,[2] and Spinoza and Locke's zeitgeist is expressed by both authors with similar notions of individual liberty. Despite their very different metaphysical outlooks, both philosophers oppose state absolutism by emphasizing the power inherent in each individual. For both philosophers, all human beings are fallible because of their tendency to be swayed by the passions, but all are naturally imbued with God's reason, and for both philosophers this reason is the source of the human being's power. Through their reason humans can recognize the self-destructive tendencies of their desires and can form governments that will oversee social relations to ensure that all can flourish in their liberty. For both the **potestas**, or juridical power that the people consent to, is always dependent on the people's pontentia, the people's capacity for self-determination, a capacity which gives them the "right" to change or overthrow government that does not fit with their determination of individual liberty as expressed through the common good.

When Negri traces the radical democratic tradition back to the genesis of capitalism, he hopes to find a tradition clearly demarcated from capitalism's liberal individualism, and indeed, picking up on 17th century metaphysical radicalism, he imagines he has found the beginnings of this demarcated radical tradition in the work of Spinoza. But on closer inspection it seems that what he has actually stumbled across is a philosopher, who, along with Locke, gave expression to the era's emerging liberalist spirit, which, in reacting against the semi-aristocratic absolutism epitomized by Hobbes's philosophy, championed the power of the liberated individual while simultaneously asserting that individual power is most effectively expressed through associational action. As Field notes (2012, 23), Negri suggests that Spinoza's revolutionary democratic break is found within his insistence that "political power always remains concretely in the bodies of the human individuals who make up the multitude." This sentiment animates the great anti-totalitarian assertion that individuals always have the will and capacity, and therefore the "right," to break free from power structures that attempt to crush the individual beneath a transcendent force. Inconveniently for Negri, this assertion is as much Lockean and liberal as it is Spinozist and radical.

Interestingly, Deleuze and Guattari, Hardt and Negri's philosophical precursors, insist that one should attempt to find the radical ethos or essence in a philosopher, without getting too caught up in the historically rooted conservatism or prejudices that a philosopher might betray (see Hardt, 2006). This logic is used to justify overlooking Spinoza's sexism and his exclusion of servants, foreigners and those who do not lead "respectable lives" when he forms his vision of democracy (see TP 11/3). What it does not seem fair to do, however, is to extract radicalism from Spinoza, a favored author, while overlooking the potential radicalism in other authors, like Locke, who are more difficult to co-opt as radical figures because of their more obvious complicities in the development of the "enemy" system – the capitalist system (see Macpherson, 1962, on Locke's philosophy of accumulation. See also Armitage, 2004, on Locke's complicity in Afro-American slavery). Hardt and Negri may counter by arguing that Spinoza's core ethos was more radical than Locke's because of the way in which it embraces the notion of immanent commonality. Whereas Spinoza was an early Bible critic, Locke's justifications for his political views in the Two Treatises are replete with quotes from the Bible; indeed, Locke embraced the divine revelation of Scripture in The Reasonableness of Christianity (1958 [1695]). Locke's God, unlike Spinoza's, can be a transcendent God who reveals the natural law that mankind must follow even in the state of nature. With a notion of transcendence, Locke can champion inalienable juridical rights that overdetermine the people's inherent power. Nevertheless, as suggested above, Spinoza's rejection of transcendence is as much pragmatic as it is revolutionary, emerging out of a merchant culture of grounded self-reliance. Furthermore, as noted, for Locke juridical power is rooted in an immanent spirituality; it may descend from up high but it is a natural endowment within mankind that is their property – it is part of their natural capacity. One can extract an essentially radical ethos from Locke, then, because his essentially materialist notion of right undermines the transcendent power that he invokes to justify it.[3] Indeed, Locke's empirical epistemological vision arguably pushes materialist conceptions of existence further than Spinoza's semi-mystical rationalism, with the latter seeming to rely on the notion of a divine reason within the order of nature that is beyond the reach of sensory experience. Even in his materialist radicalism, then, Spinoza comes close to inserting a transcendental force into the natural order.

While in his lifetime Spinoza remained a marginalized figure lurking on the fringes of the bourgeois establishment, Locke's close relationship with an emergent bourgeois Whig oligarchy in England marks him out as a more mainstream philosopher. But we should not be deterred from seeking out radicalism that lurks within the conservatism of the mainstream, and Locke's philosophy is interesting precisely because it marks the rise of self-emancipatory radicalism to that mainstream. Of course as a radically subversive philosophical tendency moves into the mainstream it becomes moderated, even if something of its radical core remains. We should not, therefore,

be surprised to find in Locke a much more conventional notion of God, nor a more explicit embrace of personal possession. In any case, it seems that Locke really only teases out or exposes the contradiction that constitutes the radical liberalist ethos embedded in Spinoza. While keen to embrace a divine equality, Spinoza insists on the pre-eminence of the striving individual, implicitly opening up the power-seeking tendencies of self-interested beings (for Žižek, Spinoza's assertion of a purely positive being of self-preservation leads him to embrace (and expose) the raw, competitive, "might-makes-right" tendencies that underlie the juridical equality propounded by liberal bourgeois ideology; see 2004, "Deleuze," section 6). Locke, for better or worse, gives expression to this liberalist contradiction in a more pragmatic way. Like Spinoza, Locke locates human being in the individual's striving for self-preservation, although he does not as clearly (or as idealistically) demarcate a divine mind from corporeal experience. As a result, he more explicitly embraces an individual's desire to claim ownership and better his or her self materially. Nevertheless, Locke's worldview remains premised on a relatively radical notion of a common spirituality that makes possible collective action through reason; for even though a man is born as an independent self, the reason or spirituality he shares with all others makes him always connected to mankind.

Locke's philosophy, then, is representative of the progression of the liberalist ethos from the margins to the mainstream, but as the ethos developed in the mainstream it was not simply corrupted or moderated – it was simultaneously radicalized in a possessive way and a democratic way. As noted, Spinoza largely embraces Hobbes' cynical concept of human nature, believing humans to be under the sway of their largely anti-social passions most of the time (see TTP 16, 200). Although he radically asserts that all men are born with the basic natural faculties needed to cultivate the reason that is necessary to control the passions (see TP 7/4 and 7/27), ultimately Spinoza believes that most men, most of the time, do not think or behave in the way that they should for their own good – that is, they tend not to behave rationally (see Den Uyl, 1983). Feuer (1958) identifies here a fundamental conflict in Spinoza's philosophy; Spinoza attempted to embrace a basic democratizing liberalism but ultimately did not trust in the ability of people to organize their freedom. For Spinoza, because of the overwhelming power of people's basic destructive nature, democracy – even Spinoza's limited form of democracy that borders on timocracy – seems to be postulated more as an ideal than a sustainable form of government (see Niemi, 2013, Section 5).

What we find in Locke, however, is a more optimistic concept of human nature. Locke introduces a basic civility into the state of nature, more fundamentally rejecting the Hobbesian war of each against all. As noted, Spinoza assumes that the notion of natural law, which Locke relies on to support his notion of the state of nature, is an artificial concept that idealistically posits a state within a state. However, as suggested, natural law is really used by Locke to aggrandize a vision of a basic human condition or state marked by civility. It is true that Locke, like Spinoza, follows the potentially elitist early Enlightenment idea that civility or morality is ultimately derived from reason. Nevertheless, civility for Locke seems much more firmly rooted in the basic physical nature of the human being – civility emerging from a basic intuitive agreeableness. For the empiricist Locke the mind does not so much strive to overcome the bodily passions as it does record the patterns of sensual experience. Man's "obligation to mutual love" (Two Treatises, Essay 2, point 4), then, is the self-evident realization that man comes to simply by experiencing what life is – man, it seems, is essentially compelled to share in the sensual spirit that each man has by nature an equal stake in. While Locke shares in Spinoza's early liberal conservatism by promoting anti-popular mixed constitutions and by reducing humankind to mankind, Locke's fledgling democratic ethos seems to display more faith in people than Spinoza's.

Perhaps because Spinoza is more fearful of the liberated masses than Locke, he seems drawn to strong institutions of government that may tend towards absolutism. It can be argued that, in reacting against the selfish tendencies of individuals, Spinoza champions the idea of individuals binding themselves so closely together that they become a super-individual that acts with a single mind (see Den Uyl, 1983, and Barbone, 2001, for discussion of this idea). Indeed, especially in his Political Treatise when discussing aristocracies, Spinoza puts great emphasis on bodies of legal oversight that may represent super-individuals. For the liberal philosopher Isaiah Berlin, by reifying a super-individual state that subsumes individuals within itself, Spinoza dissolves individual freedom within the right of the overarching juridical body (1969). Furthermore, Spinoza develops a notion of universal or civil state religion that has a distinctly Rousseauian ring to it (see TTP 14, 182-183). This is significant because Hardt and Negri are highly critical of Rousseau's philosophy because of its emphasis on a general will that subsumes the singularities of the multitude in the name of the common good (2001, 85). For Hardt and Negri, Rousseau's notion of the general will is tied up in bourgeois notions of transcendent power, a power that overrides democratizing flows. If we can interpret Spinoza's state as a juridical super-individual, then he may well express sentiments in line with Rousseau's general will. In any case, Spinoza and Rousseau's similar views on civil religion are perhaps most telling. Both philosophers

seem to conceive of a sovereign that tolerates spiritual diversity but ultimately monopolizes spiritual virtue and forces all to bend to its rationalizations of right (see Feuer, 1958, on Spinoza's lack of defense for freedom of religious expression).

Locke and Spinoza are both products of their respective cultural and historical contexts, and the philosophies of both authors are important markers on the road of the progression of the liberalist ethos. Both authors are very much after Hobbes, who was really a conservative reactionary writing just before the final blow to absolute monarchy in England; he recognized the significance of the emergence of bourgeois individualism but was desperate to contain it within aristocratic totality (see Robin, 2011). Spinoza gives expression to the limits of early modern merchant-bourgeois (or Bürgertum) society, limits which were reached in the Dutch Republic in the 17th century. The Republic's undercurrent of Bürgertum radicalism, represented by Spinoza, which fed into an emergent liberal individualism with its accompanying free trade agenda (see De la Court brothers, close associates of Johan De Witt, for anti-guild, anti-oligarchy sentiments in the Netherlands in the 17th century; see Petry 1984), was not strong enough to counteract resilient oligarchic, feudal tendencies that continued to permeate through Dutch Bürgertum life. Spinoza's philosophy is revealing here, for as we have seen, even within Spinozist materialist radicalism there lurks a deep fear of the unfettered masses and a strong proto-transcendental rationalist presence that seems strongly influenced by an aristocratic command mentality. In England after the Glorious Revolution of 1688, however, the patrician-merchant ideology of feudal totality began to break apart. Locke's thought is a product of this context, being representative of the early stirrings of a post-medieval, modern liberal ideology. This ideology emerged from Bürgertum culture but more fully incorporated something of the radical undercurrent of the liberalist ethos to begin to effectively counteract the absolute command mentality of the medieval world. This counteracting would be slow, as reflected in the painfully slow process of democratization in England (later the United Kingdom).

England's emergent bourgeoisie would only gradually give up on feudal or aristocratic culture, and would long maintain aristocratic fear of the nation's vast propertyless class. Nevertheless, England did not collapse into absolute patrician-merchant oligarchy as the Dutch Republic did, and slowly but surely the spread of the liberalist ethos through English society undermined bourgeois conservatism and anti-democratic self-interest. With the rise of a Lockean-style liberalism, an ethos of individual empowerment began to trickle down the social strata. The bourgeois-aristocratic clique that ruled early-modern England, then, was undone by its own ideology, because even as this clique desperately tried to preserve its status the hegemonic culture it propounded demanded that the people take responsibility for their own lives and prove their worth through their aspiration. More and more classes of society combined their own self-interest with this culture of empowerment to demand equality of opportunity and to refuse their place in a static hierarchy. And when this populist energy combined with the force of the protestant radicals on the bourgeois fringe, the elite found time and time again that they would have to compromise with the people in order to maintain any legitimacy.[4] As Macpherson suggests (1962), even one of England's first modern popular movements for democratization – the Leveller movement of the English Civil War – was strongly marked by a bourgeois culture of self-emancipation. Macpherson uses his analysis to suggest that the Levellers were not working class activists at all, but petite bourgeois artisans who demanded rights only for themselves, not the masses, and who embraced the bourgeois desire for possession. Even if this were strictly true (and as Levy (1983) suggests, it is not at all clear that it is), it does not change the fact that these aspirant middling sorts were challenging bourgeois elitism by turning the elite's own self-emancipatory ethos against itself, and this was important because it helped to open up the productive process and prevent the collapse towards outright patrician oligarchy. Furthermore, by nurturing the culture that would prevent this collapse the Levellers became important precursors to later movements for popular empowerment, with northern England's working class Chartist movement of the 19th century following in the Leveller tradition.

In his famous study of liberalism's possessive individualism, Macpherson was right to point out that England's formative, popular democratizing movements were marked by self-interested groups clamoring for the right of inclusion in the individualist struggle for possession, but he was wrong to reduce such movements to this form of possession. Macpherson oversimplifies the Anglo-Saxon struggle for property by reducing it to the capitalist struggle to project self-possession onto the world – a projection that supports the notion that external objects, including people, can be claimed or owned by the self. For Macpherson the "possessive quality" of liberalism is found in the "conception of the individual as essentially the proprietor of his own person or capacities, owing nothing to society for them" (1962, 3, emphasis added). The problem with Macpherson's argument, as Levy (1983) points out, is that many early English radicals, including many at the heart of the Leveller movement, such as John Lilburne, were fundamentally opposed to the idea that the free individual owed nothing to society. Offering precursors to Lockean

thought, Lilburne believed that the "Law of God" was "engraven in Nature," and that all men, regardless of status, had an essential moral worth or dignity derived from their sharing in God's Nature. Lilburne, like many Levellers, did defend the right to personal estate, but he did not make estate a prerequisite of equal rights – these rights were derived from the inherent worth in man's common spirituality. Like Locke after them, the Levellers defended a broad range of individual rights under the label "property." They reflected the contradiction of the liberalist ethos in that they turned to both individual trade and estate and egalitarian association to produce an effective counter-power to monarchical absolutism and elite bourgeois exclusivity. However much their complicity with bourgeois possession has complicated their democratic credentials, the communal, spiritual radicalism they nurtured as an essential feature of their worldview has been a vital cultural legacy for later left-wing radicals championing participation and cooperation over atomization and competition.

In this article we have reached the point where we find a radical liberalist ethos brewing in 17th century England but struggling to break free from aristocratic-bourgeois conservatism. A defining feature of this ethos is its refusal to be contained in a constituted order – as Hardt and Negri might say, it is **deterritorializing** by nature, seeking flight from its containment. Inevitably, then, radical bourgeois and petite bourgeois Puritans from England fled the country driven to self-constitute a new society. They fled to America to found New England – for them, a better England, one free from the corrupting influences holding England back. In doing so, as Hardt and Negri suggest, they laid the foundations for the modern Western world (here understanding 'modern' in a general sense, not an academic sense). Yet when the Anglo-Americans published the Declaration of Independence in 1776 – a document which, for Hardt and Negri, expressed a radical democratic ethos (see 2001, 165) – we should remember that it was a Declaration made in the name not of the multitude per se but of the property-owning classes of the 13 Colonies – the cultural (and in many cases, actual) descendants of the bourgeois, petite bourgeois and aspirant emigrants to America who dreamed of a land of unbounded opportunity for spiritual and material betterment. Since the American Revolution the Anglo-Americans have spearheaded the global spread of a prolonged individualist revolution, which, in proclaiming the rights of the individual, has unleashed conflicting tendencies of democratization and competitive struggle. As Hardt and Negri suggest, the Anglo-American break was to a great extent driven forward by revolutionary, democratizing desire, and while this undermined the European elite's command mentality, the Americans still carried with them Europe's corrupting culture of power, which would break out in a new tradition of possessive control.

Following in the radical Anglo-Saxon tradition, when the Occupy movement emerged in the United States in 2011 – with the Americans inspired by their European cousins' struggles against debt and austerity – it was marked not so much by a reaction against American culture as it was by an embrace of the radical edge of America's liberalist ethos. Many Occupy protesters flew American flags – some flew upside down ones, hinting at their desire to turn America on its head by embracing its revolutionary undercurrent (See A Typical Faux, 2012). When the New York City General Assembly occupying Wall Street in Liberty Square issued its declaration on its purpose and demands, its writers echoed the sentiments of the Declaration of Independence and the Founding Fathers, stating that the people must cooperate to form government to protect their rights, and that upon corruption of the government, "it is up to…individuals to protect their own rights, and those of their neighbors" (New York City General Assembly, 2011). In their calls for the 99% to embrace "direct democracy" and a new collective spirit, the occupy demonstrators founded their argument on a radical, anarchistic (and certainly not Tea Party-esque) version of American libertarianism; on the notion that individuals and local communities must themselves act to uphold their rights in equality, embracing participation and contribution to the common good. One American Occupy protester, complete with Guy Fawkes mask and a "we are the 99%" jacket, held a sign that played on the famous Uncle Sam World War One recruitment poster. Complete with Uncle Sam finger pointing, the contemporary version of the poster declared "I want YOU to stop being AFRAID," with the poster listing various "others" Americans should stop being afraid of, including "other classes." It finishes by declaring "YOU'RE AMERICANS, ACT LIKE IT." The message seems pretty clear: be a true American – fight for your rights, but always in communion with your fellow human beings.

As Douzinas notes, the Occupy protesters, along with the **aganaktismenoi** and **indignado** occupiers in Europe, reacted against the dehumanizing accumulation logic of neoliberal globalization, which radicalizes the possessive and power-grasping tendencies of liberal individualism (see 2013, 25-30 and 91). Building on Foucault's concept of **biopower**, leftist scholars like Douzinas suggest that the neoliberal logic of accumulation has, since the 1980s, penetrated deep into the political fabric of liberal-democratic society. In the process, despite the fact that its advocates promote freedom from the state, the neoliberal logic underlies the emergence of an authoritarian state determined to discipline human bodies for consumption and preserve the free market at all costs. Here neo-liberalism pushes classical liberalism further by insisting that the state should not just protect the market in the last instance with

a legal framework and a monopoly on force, but should act as an overarching (yet pervasive) power that steadfastly monitors free-market society and is ready to intervene with all its might whenever necessary to save the system. This is why even the Bush administration recognized that the banks and other financial companies could not be allowed to fail en masse during the Financial Crisis of 2007-08 – the elite had learnt this lesson from the Wall Street Crash of 1929 and the ensuing Great Depression (see The Washington Times, 2008). The loans and purchasing of debt and financial assets by the Federal Reserve and the Bush administration protected private interests **en masse** – the policies buttressed the position of the corporate elites and protected the savings and investments of ordinary members of the public. Under a neoliberal system in which the public literally buys into the free enterprise dream, the public's limited stake in the economy must be the government's concern. And it is argued that the public buy into this dream because the tentacles of the overarching power penetrate deep into society, generating business and management networks to induce individuals to embrace the free-market way. Neoliberalism, then, actually embraces a certain form of proactive governmentality, being driven forward by a market fundamentalism that is determined to inscribe the logic of competitive individualism into the very biology of social subjects.

From the perspective outlined above, then, neoliberalism is today's pervasive capitalist culture that compels individuals to view themselves as self-sufficient, isolated units whose sense of sociality is tenuously based on cold, calculative self-interest. Such individual "units" are consequently primed for austerity, ready to take on the necessary level of self-responsibility that will protect governments from the "burden" of welfare spending and protect society from the "affliction" of "dependency." This article has not sought to undermine this critically important perspective on the extent and threat of neoliberal power; it has sought only to add that neoliberalism represents only one (dominant) strand of liberal culture, and that the anarchistic direct democracy of the squares of 2011 helped give expression to a genuinely revolutionary associational/egalitarian individualist tradition, which has emerged in tandem with possessive individualism but which has on a fundamental level remained in contradiction with it. As neoliberal globalization, then, has speeded up the spread of its possessive **biopower** through the world system, it has inadvertently spread with itself an undercurrent of liberalist radicalism that it can never effectively absorb or pacify; this radicalism propagates a spiritual or deeply social sense of self-interest, advancing a communalist notion of enrichment that connects individual liberty with the common good. This article has connected this socially-inclined notion of individual liberty with what Douzinas identifies as the social ethos of contemporary anti-capitalist resistance movements.

The argument presented here opposes the standard anti-postmodernist leftist argument on contemporary resistance, which, as alluded to at the beginning of the article, is perhaps best exemplified by Žižek. Žižek was critical of both the European and Occupy movements of 2011 because he thought they were too obsessed with enjoying themselves, prioritizing spontaneity and playfulness in the squares over group discipline and pro-active decision making (2011 and 2012). For Žižek the demonstrators did not offer a viable alternative to capitalism but lived through capitalist non-ideology by indulging themselves in rebellion, refusing to develop a revolutionary project. I argue here that what Žižek has failed to grasp is that the spirit of revolt of the contemporary age – which prioritizes the cultivation of democratic participation and inclusion over forced decisions and the general will – marks the development and/or the becoming of an alternative revolutionary tradition, which is centuries in the making and which has outflanked the type of socialism he clings to. The **indignados** and Occupiers may have drawn on liberalist notions of individual freedom and autonomy to develop their joyous and undirected movements, but this is as much to their strength as to their weakness, for the egalitarian individualist notions of community and sociality that they nurture cannot be reduced to neoliberalism's instrumentalist sociality.

The challenge is to continue to nurture these progressive notions of community and sociality in the face of neoliberal **biopower** and the temptations to turn individual empowerment into individual power-seeking. In order to continue to nurture a progressive culture of egalitarianism, this article has suggested that it is necessary to inhabit, work through and draw out the genuinely radical energies inherent in the liberalist cultural context, undermining the pervasive and corrupting neoliberal concept of individual freedom in the process. Nevertheless, as suggested at the beginning of this article, this is not an easy task, for contemporary resistance movements are to a large extent dependent on the dynamics of the neoliberal system, and may well be compelled to intensify their struggle to revolutionize society by the relentless active agency and imperatives of speed produced by the system. Members of such movements, then, caught in liberalism's humanist aporia, always carry the potential to assert their power or right to possession through such movements, even as they struggle to overcome selfishness and reinvent themselves in common with others. However, this article has sought to follow Hoofd's (and incidentally, Hardt and Negri's) lead by insisting that it is better to work through the radical dynamics that exist within the current cultural system

than to dream of a pure anti-capitalist utopia beyond the touch of liberal capitalism. The point here is not to resign ourselves to the impossibility of moving beyond the current state of affairs, but to figure out how best to draw out the associational-egalitarian dynamics from the possessive neoliberal context from which they emerge, helping an already existing radical democratic spirit to continue to grow.

Notes on Citations of Works by Spinoza

- TTP refers to the Tractatus Theologico-Politicus, or Theological-Political Treatise. Citations refer to chapter, then page number (e.g., 6, 18 refers to chapter 6, page 18).
- TP refers to the Tractatus Politicus, or Political Treatise. Citations refer to the chapters/sections (e.g., 2/6 refers to chapter 2, section 6).
- E refers to the Ethics. Citations use the following abbreviations: Roman numerals refer to parts; "P" followed by number refers to proposition; "C" refers to corollary; "D" refers to definition, "S" refers to scholium (e.g., EIVP18S refers to Ethics, part 4 (IV), proposition 18, scholium).

Endnotes

1. For Žižek, Spinoza lays the foundations of modern thought by proposing a radical ontology of one Substance, out of which emerges a multitude of contradictory affects that cannot be reduced to either positive or negative outcomes. Žižek argues, however, that Spinoza remains limited by his belief that out of the one Substance emerges entities that have only a positive striving to persevere in their being. For Žižek, Spinoza shies away from the negativity of being – the death drive of beings, and Deleuze follows in Spinoza's path with his vitalism; 'his elevation of the notion of Life to a new name for Becoming as the only true encompassing Whole, the One-ness, of Being itself' (2004, Deleuze, section 5).

2. Indeed, Feuer suggests a direct connection between the philosophy of Spinoza and Locke (1958, "Epilogue"), noting that Locke travelled to Holland in 1684 and came under the influence of a group of Spinozists. During this period in Holland, Locke wrote the Letter Concerning Toleration.

3. George Berkeley seemed to recognise what was at stake when he suggested in his Treatise Concerning the Principles of Human Knowledge (2007 [1710]) that Locke's rejection of innate ideas would inevitably lead to atheism. Berkeley recognised, then, that Locke's own deep religiousness was being undermined by his empiricism.

4. Following a similar historical trajectory to this thesis, Arrighi et al. (2003) track the spread of capitalism (as a fundamental feature of government) from the Italian city-states to the Dutch proto-nation-state and on into a centralised state – England. They discuss the argument that capitalistic practices became more deeply entrenched in national cultures as capitalism was embraced by increasingly complex states. What this article focuses on is the spread of the liberalist or individualist ethos that developed in tandem with this intensification of capitalist government. The liberalist ethos underpins capitalism and shapes the direction of its evolution.

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Occupying London: Post-Politics or Politics Proper?

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"Neoliberalism has, in short, become hegemonic as a mode of discourse... it has been incorporated into the common sense way many of us interpret, live in, and understand the world"

— (Harvey 2005:3)

"Any naïve leftist explanation that the current financial and economic crisis necessarily opens up a space for the radical left is thus without doubt dangerously short-sighted"

— (Žižek 2009:17)

The "crunch, crash and crisis" of 2007/8 was hailed by many as the inevitable and long-deserved end of neoliberal capitalism as an ideological regime which had risen from the margins of economic theory to becoming the go-to framework for national and global governance (Fukuyama 1992). Critics reveled in their "I told you so" moment against the arrogance of economists and politicians who thought they had found the perfect politico-economic model (personified by Gordon Brown's infamous statement that there would be "no return to boom and bust" (Guardian 2008). Indeed, where neoliberalism had had 1970's stagflation, social unrest around the globe (the so-called "Arab Spring, European Summer and American Fall" of 2011) suggested this could now be the left's long-awaited moment to capitalize upon an economic crisis. However, it seemed that what such premature celebrations of "the return of history" (Badiou 2012) nevertheless missed, was that neoliberalism had become more than simply an economic theory proposed by an eclectic group of economists, politicians and investors; it was now socially and culturally entrenched, with a widespread popular appeal to the material aspirations of a post-Fordist society. Under the auspices of "market freedom" leading to greater "individual liberty," neoliberalism was now wider than something that "they" – brokers; bankers; politicians; ideologues; economists; the 1% – were pushing down people's throats. Instead, it was now a normative and hegemonic framework, consented to via everyday actions and capitalizing upon anti-establishment feeling. In other words, in the aftermath of the 2007/8 crisis, neoliberalism was well-positioned to impose an ideological limit on the very possibility of what counts as rational in contemporary society.

We can define neoliberalism as a particularly acute form of capitalism which involves an explicit and unashamed shift in the legitimation of state power: from one that is legitimized "democratically" through elections to something which is legitimatized so long as it supports and takes on free market principles (see Foucault 2008). As such, any state action or decision is considered to be legitimate insofar as it 'steps in' (e.g. bailouts) or "steps out" (i.e. deregulates) in line with the needs of the market. Principles of competition, meritocracy, measurement, efficiency, outsourcing and expertise – as well as a selective reframing of values such as individual freedom, enjoyment and utilitarian happiness – therefore become a normative framework that provide a measure for the "rationality" of means and ends. In other words, neoliberalism is "a form of governance that seeks to inject marketized principles of competition into all aspects of society and culture" (Gane 2014:1) and which, in doing so, polices society into this framework, by informing the rationality of everyday actions, decisions, interactions, discourses and appearances.

In addition, neoliberalism should also be seen as an order which is based upon the endlessness of a "continuous present." In accordance with market logic, speculation on the future becomes necessary and subject to more and

more vigorous calculation as part of an attempt to mitigate risks, possibilities and contingencies. As such, the future is channeled, measured and limited by the current ideological framework (Swyngedouw 2011; Lazzarato 2014), constraining the ability to perceive a "rational" future which is radically different from the one in which we now find ourselves and creating a situation where "utopias of alternative worlds have been exorcised by the utopia in power" (Žižek 2009:77). It is the contention of this paper, that such a foreclosure of imagination and possibility (through a normative framework of neoliberal common sense) also excludes possibilities for resistance. This situation – which was referred to by a number of theorists before the financial crisis as "post-politics" – aims to capture the "foreclosure of the possibility of politics and the tacit embrace of global capitalism" (Dean 2006:115) and, I argue, has a number of direct effects on post-crash power and resistance.

Because neoliberalism had become the only "rational, reasonable, sensible and pragmatic" approach to legitimate authority, it is suggested that the crisis was not, in fact, an opening up of radical possibility. Instead, neoliberalism was simply able to reassert itself as the "only logical thing to do" and (on the whole) was able to do so without "having to physically compel obedience but to rely on a common sense of what is legitimate and who deserved to be obeyed" (Davies 2014:58). Every debate and clash on alternatives going forward had to take place within what were posited as "apolitical co-ordinates" of reason, or risk being positioned as "impossible non-sense." Or, as Ranciere might put it, the (supposedly apolitical) distribution of the "sensible" acted as a "police order": "a specific regime for identifying and reflecting… a mode of articulation between ways of doing and making, their corresponding forms of visibility, and possible ways of thinking about their relationships (which presupposed a certain idea of thought's effectivity)" (Ranciere 2004:10; also see Burgum & A.N.Onymous, 2014). In other words, processes of identifying, reflecting, articulating, becoming visible, ways of thinking, doing and making were bound into a policed regime of legitimacy and a presupposed exclusion of some possibilities by designating them "non-sensible."

I begin this article with a review of post-crash literature on neoliberalism and by demonstrating how the "post-political" foreclosure of possibility was not in fact challenged by the financial crisis (as many expected), but instead counter-intuitively reaffirmed as a hegemonic framework. I then move onto the more philosophical argument that resistance is perhaps always-already complicit in structures of power in order to challenge the idea of "prefiguration" within social movements and social movement theory. Finally, this will then lead me onto considering how the attempts to resist the reassertion of neoliberalism may also have been limited by such a foreclosure of possibility. In particular, I will be focusing on the post-crash movement of Occupy (in) London to demonstrate this, suggesting that the limits on what "counts" as rational grievance rendered the movement somewhat complicit with prevailing power structures. To conclude, I will then critically consider the symbolic efficacy of the term "post-politics" itself, considering Jodi Dean's critique of the term as leading to a certain marginality and melancholia on the left.

Foreclosure: Neoliberalism as Common Sense

When Hayek argued in The Road to Serfdom (1979) that there was a fundamental contradiction between "liberty" and the "state," he did so by blurring the distinctions between left and right, snidely remarking that "few are ready to recognize that the rise of Fascism and Nazism was not a reaction against the socialist trends of the preceding period, but a necessary outcome of those tendencies" (1979: 3). Such a blurring, however, not only appears to be a profound abuse of reason, but also distributes the terms of debate through a false choice: "You must choose! Either you are pro-freedom and therefore pro-market; or you are pro-state and one-step away from totalitarianism!" Indeed, even the very use of the word "totalitarianism" suggests an attempt to close down alternatives, lumping together any collective attempt at radicality into the same vague oppressive category (see Žižek 2008a). As such, we can understand Hayek's a priori cynicism of the state – beautifully illustrated by Peck's (2010) description of the economist sat on a roof at Cambridge University looking out for Nazi Bombers during World War II – as having a precise ideological effect by foreclosing possibility.

This pre-exclusion of the state is therefore central to the driving concerns of neoliberal theory and can be discerned as early on as the CIA-backed coups in South America and the US-government funding of Chicago School scholarships for Chilean students; through the IMF and World Bank blackmail of countries in need through the "structural adjustment" conditions attached to financial aid; and right up to the exploitation of disasters in order to take advantage of "blank slates" in more stubborn places from New Orleans to Baghdad to Sri Lanka (Klein 2008). However, this slow and steady rise of neoliberalism should in no way be taken as a suggestion that it is a complete

and coherent ideology. In fact, it could be argued that its internal contradictions (such as the extent to which the state should intervene to sustain market competition) could be seen as precisely what has allowed it such a powerful shape-shifting ability that can react to contingencies in different locales. What's more, while neoliberalism isn't therefore universal, it is argued that places which might be considered "outside" of this regime are nevertheless rendered exceptions that prove the rule, marginalized and excluded by international institutions and then taken as evidence of simply "what happens" when you don't adhere to the rationality of free market principles.

What is foreclosed, in other words, is the possibility that the state could ever be something "else" (because such centralized institutions are "necessarily" precluded as the beginning of the slippery road to serfdom). The neoliberal market, on the other hand, is posited as something that humanity has fortuitously and accidentally happened upon (without any inherent biases) and therefore the only thing that can co-ordinate resources without the oppression of centralized power (Hayek, 1948). As such, things like inequality can be positively encouraged as evidence of working competition and meritocracy (as Friedman (1980) famously put it: "a society that puts equality before freedom will get neither…a society that puts freedom before equality will get a high degree of both"); yet maintain a wide and popular appeal because it promises individual freedom (within the rules of private property) to pursue self-desires with impunity. [1]

When the crisis happened, however, it was supposed by many that the contradictions in neoliberal theory were (finally) going to be revealed and that neoliberalism was no longer going to be able to account for a system of such extreme inequality in which 1% of people owned 50% of the world's wealth (Oxfam 2015). Indeed, as Andrew Gamble argued – whilst admitting that "little has apparently changed" (2014:17) – the "crisis" should be seen a political opportunity to shift the normative frame and in which "radically different outcomes were at stake" (2014:29). He therefore joined the chorus that argued that "as the crisis has unfolded, it has also begun to cause an upheaval in previously settled views of the world: in our assumptions and expectations" (2014:27).

However, I find this attempt to simultaneously analyze and frame the crisis as the "opening up" of political opportunity problematic. By attempting to frame the crisis as an opportunity for radical change, is there not a risk of overlooking a critical analysis of a potential "post-political" foreclosure of possibility which has in fact limited such opportunities? Indeed, as others have argued, what the crisis could actually be said to demonstrate is the Lazarus-like ability of neoliberalism to reassert itself as the normative measure of reason within society. For Peck, for instance, the crisis was yet another example of neoliberalism's zombie-like ability to "fail forward" in that "manifest inadequacies have – so far anyway – repeatedly animated further rounds of neoliberal interventions" (2010:6). And for Mirowski, the crisis was simply wasted by the left, as "unaccountably the political right had emerged from the tumult stronger, unapologetic, and even less restrained in its rapacity and credulity that prior to the crash" (2013:1-2). In other words, rather than an instance of radical opportunity, the crisis actually reaffirmed that there was a complete lack of a "viable" alternative, and "far from constituting the end of capitalism, the bank bail-outs were a massive reassertion of the capitalist realist insistence that there is no alternative" (Fisher 2009:78).

Indeed, it was ultimately the viability of radical change that was being reasserted and foreclosed. All politics which followed the crisis seemed to take place within a "distribution of the sensible" policed by neoliberal capitalism, recognizing arguments either as a legitimate and authentic voice (i.e. neoliberal) or designating them as illegitimate "noise" and "non-sense" (i.e. an irrational and unreasonable model of governance). Subsequently, radical alternatives – from the idea of communism (Žižek & Douzinas, 2010); to anarchism (Graeber, 2011); to Keynesianism (Galbraith, 2008); to right-wing nationalism (Matsa, 2013) – were not necessarily "unviable" in themselves; but were designated as such by the normative dominance of neoliberalism. As such, to appear as sensible was to make concessions with "the current financialized regime of accumulation…embedded in the very ontology of our everyday lives to such a large extent that even those social groups that are potentially able to challenge its legitimacy cannot do it without challenging their very existence" (Lilley & Papadopoulos, 2014: 972).

It is precisely the ability for this regime to present itself as post-political pragmatic realism which gives it a hegemonic symbolic efficacy as "ideology par excellence" (Žižek, 2008b: xiv). Indeed, perhaps "the most likely reason the doctrine that precipitated the crisis has evaded responsibility and the renunciation indefinitely postponed is that neoliberalism as worldview has sunk its roots deep into everyday life, almost to the point of passing as the 'ideology of no ideology'" (Mirowski 2013:28). In other words, rather than a confrontation between frameworks of morality, reason and rationality, the "post-political" consensus that business must get back to "normal" as soon as possible, meant that financial proponents could simply respond "to calls for a radical overhaul of their management by calling them unviable and unrealistic" (Worth, 2013: 49).

Complicity: Power and Resistance

Despite this context of ideological dominance, it is nevertheless the contention of many social movement theorists that resistance is somehow able to create "interstitial spaces" (Bassett 2014) that hold the potential to act outside the dominance of prevailing power structures. For instance, it has been argued that social movements "constitute processes through which people identify such features of injustice, oppression, or stigma collectively and articulate alternative understandings to change social relations" (Cox 2014:957) by developing "an alternative 'local rationality'…from its immediate context towards a more generalizable form of movement knowledge which constitutes an alternative way of operating not only to hegemonic 'common sense' but also to the expert-led knowledge" (Cox 2014:965). Whilst I wouldn't want to argue that such utopian space was completely impossible, it seems that such claims nevertheless seem to overlook the complicity that resistance might have in contemporary power relations. Indeed, I find the suggestion that activists have a unique ability to embody counter-hegemonic frameworks of rationality outside of prevailing norms as quite problematic and, in this section, it is my contention that such a view on resistance suffers from an over-simplification of both power and resistance.

As Foucault has argued, power is not simply "possessed" by some elite group, but something which is re-constituted and re-asserted structurally via everyday distributions. As such, while power might most often be "channeled" through those in a position of authority, it should nevertheless be recognized not as something "they" uniquely hold, but which "proceeds from the distribution of individuals in space" (Foucault 1991:141). Put differently, power is something which "disciplines" by ensuring that "each individual has his own place; and each place its individual" (Foucault 1991:143). It is therefore a positive and constituting force rather than something which is necessarily negative and oppressive. It is that which designates the subject and establishes them in their position – characterizing, assessing, hierarchizing, ranking, sorting and categorizing individuals – and rendering them "functional" by establishing relations between them. [2]

As such, power is something "exercised rather than possessed; it is not the 'privilege,' acquired or preserved, of the dominant class, but the overall effect of its strategic position – an effect that is manifested and sometimes extended by the position of those who are dominated" (Foucault 1991:141). According to Foucault, then, those who appear subjected to power can paradoxically be part of its smooth functioning, insofar as they "play the role" assigned to them. It is this counter-intuitive dynamic which Foucault is attempting to capture with his infamous reference to Bentham's design for the panopticon. The prisoners arranged around the guard tower in their individual cells are distributed as individualized and visible bodies. Crucially, however, they cannot see into the guard tower, and therefore there does not need to be surveillance in order for power to operate, as the prisoners inscribe upon themselves their distribution. As such, the very design of the panopticon materializes ideals of asceticism (self-discipline), efficiency (minimal number of guards for large number of prisoners), and utilitarianism (rendering the prisoners "useful" by putting them to work in their own self-discipline). The panopticon is therefore inherently economizing and scientific, characterizing liberal themes and making them powerful through the distribution self-subjecting of bodies.

It is surely this logic which leads Foucault to his well-known assertion in History of Sexuality that "where there is power, there is resistance, and yet, or rather consequently, this resistance is never in a position of exteriority in relation to power" (1998:95). Elaborating further in an interview, he adds that, really, this statement is a tautology: "I am simply saying: as soon as there is a power relation, there is the possibility of resistance…we are never trapped by power, we can always modify its grip in determinate conditions and according to a precise strategy" (Foucault 1989:153). In other words, power and resistance are co-constituting, but while the categories through which powerful institutions and ideas hold their power are potentially coercive, they also bear the possibility of constituting new resistance.

Judith Butler, for instance, has read Foucault as understanding power in two ways. Firstly, as problematic for resistance, in that when "we think we have found a point of opposition to domination…that very point of opposition is the instrument through which domination works, and…we have unwittingly enforced the power of domination through our participation in its opposition" (Butler 2000:28). Secondly, however, it is nevertheless the case that "if subversion is possible, it will be a subversion from within the term of the law, through the possibilities that emerge when the law turns against itself and spawns unexpected permutations of itself" (Butler 2006:127). In neither case, however, is resistance seen as a space "external" or "outside" of power, but is instead continually and reflexively rethought as something "internal" and complicit with such structures.

It is subsequently not productive, I argue, to fetishize resistance as something which is uniquely able to establish space outside of power relations. Indeed, such uncritical romanticism risks overlooking certain structural coercions and limitations that render resistance foreclosed and complicit, with accounts of "interstitial" or "prefigurative" space relying on a fetishization of movements rather than constructive critique. Instead, as I have attempted to demonstrate through Foucault and Butler, "there is no outside" (Foucault 1991:301) and therefore resistance must be thought of in its complexity as something complicit and implicated in power from the start.

Case Study: Occupy (in) London

This section aims to illustrate the ways in which resistance appears to be foreclosed by the (reasserted) power structures of post-crash society with specific reference to Occupy (in) London. [3] My research with this movement has suggested (at least) three different ways in which political possibilities were limited and rendered complicit through the form this particular activism took, and I will now briefly explore individualization, authenticity and cynicism in turn.

Appearing to mobilize spontaneously through a number of pre-existing activist networks that utilized social media – and inspired by the movements immediately preceding them in New York, Athens, Madrid, Cairo and Tunis – Occupy (in) London set up camp outside St Paul's Cathedral in October 2011 (after a failed attempt to occupy the stock exchange next door). Over the following months, this initial campsite diversified from "Occupy LSX" into a series of other occupations, most notably: Finsbury Square, The Bank of Ideas, Leyton Marsh and Mile End, as well as a number of working groups who met at a Quaker Friends House in Euston. However, these divisions were not only a useful division of labor, but also reflected a certain desire to escape the media scrutiny, police pressure, occasional public abuse and in-fighting at St Pauls. As the founding campsite, it seemed that there was more at stake in democratic discussion and, as such, the diversity of stakeholders involved were perhaps less willing to relent on any already-held beliefs because of the site's symbolic significance. Fractures and divisions therefore began to appear and became spatialized throughout the city as people coalesced into splinter groups of like-minded individuals.

As such, Occupy (in) London went from something which claimed to be pre-figuring a more inclusive, horizontal, equal and democratic society ("the 99%") towards a more fractured and divided movement. Rather than working out disagreements and grievances, many instead became exasperated with the General Assembly (GA) and simply formed their own niches and cliques (leading many, confusingly, to reject the name "Occupy London," particularly after the activists evicted from St Pauls began using this universal signifier – and its social capital – for their own particular activism). As such, it is argued that these divisions appeared somewhat complicit with the style and distribution of what "counts" as legitimate political grievances in contemporary society, one in which "political struggle proper is transformed into the cultural struggle for the recognition of marginal identities and the tolerance of differences" (Žižek 2008c:263). Rather than a collective solidarity through directly democratic discussion, each fragmented interest instead seemed to become individualized around particular groups.

Firstly, however, this critique of individualization should not be seen as something which is in any way easy to overcome. For many, the retreat into such identity groups was actually an understandable reaction to the structural inequalities which were (inadvertently) re-established within the "horizontal" space of the General Assembly. A certain "tyranny of structurelessness" (see Freeman 2013 for an all-too-familiar description of this phenomenon) seemed to establish itself, meaning that (despite the attempt or desire to create a horizontal and directly democratic space) "words uttered by some seem to count so much more than words uttered by others" (Hewlett 2007:97) and many exclusionary structures (including patriarchy, racism, ableism, classism) were unwillingly re-created.

Secondly, this critique of identity politics should also not be seen as positing some grievances as somehow "lesser" than some more "fundamental" anti-capitalist struggle. Indeed, while identity politics is problematic because it "does not in fact repoliticize capitalism, because the very notion and form of the political within which it operates is grounded in the depoliticization of the economy" (Žižek 2000:98), it should be recognized that this is just as much a problem for anti-capitalist politics itself. Indeed, anti-capitalist identities can be shown to be at least as susceptible to the complicity of an individualized politics (if not more so in that they deny their complicity even more fervently).

It is argued that one way we can see this complicity of anti-capitalist identities with the distribution of the sensible is through an overriding concern with the pursuit of authenticity. While, on the one hand, the pedigree of contemporary anti-capitalism can perhaps be traced back to May '68 as a shared mythical point of origin and heritage

(particularly apparent in the post-crash movements re-use of the "we are all German Jews" slogan from '68 into others: "we are all Tahir," "we are the 99%"); May '68 could also be seen the beginning of a new spirit of capitalism that precisely feeds into contemporary neoliberal ideas of individual freedom through the market (Boltanski & Chiapello, 2007). Indeed, such "cultural capitalism" – one in which "we primarily buy commodities neither on account of their utility nor as status symbols; we buy them to get the experience provided by them, we consume them in order to render our lives pleasurable and meaningful" (Žižek, 2009: 52) – indicates a potential foreclosure of resistance via a market precorporation (Fisher, 2009: 9) of "authentic rebellious experience."

As such, the preoccupation with activism being "authentic" and uncorrupted by the market is, counter-intuitively, its very complicity with a capitalist culture that is continually searching for new, authentic, innovative, creative experiences to sell. Indeed, this is precisely "how capitalism, at the level of consumption, integrated the legacy of '68, the critique of alienated consumption: authentic experiences matters" (Žižek, 2009: 54). The contemporary city, for example, can perhaps be characterized as endlessly seeking even-more novel opportunities for more "authentic" experiences as integral for urban growth. For instance, the radical potential of urban "happenings" – such as the occupation of space – risks becoming another unique selling point of the "creative city" (Florida, 2003; also see Peck, 2010), in which creativity that pushes the boundaries through risky innovation is actually encouraged as an integral characteristic of the city's economic growth.

Another way in which this concern for authenticity suggests a foreclosure of political possibility is in the a priori dismissal of anything collective (including the state). Occupy's libertarianism meant that anything which resembled an over-arching organisation – a political party or even a set of "rules" – was deemed necessarily oppressive of individual liberty and therefore corrupting the authenticity of their resistance. The crossover with neoliberal libertarianism (as exemplified by Hayek above) is palpable, as "every universality, every feature that cuts across the entire field…[is] rejected as oppressive" (Žižek, 2009: 44). Yet such universality might well be important for a more radical social change. As Butler argues (revising her earlier position): "I came to see the term [universality] has important strategic use precisely as a non-substantial and open-ended category…I came to understand how the assertion of universality can be proleptic and performative, conjuring a reality that does not yet exist, and holding out the possibility for a convergence of cultural horizons that have not yet been met" (2006: xviii). In other words, some universal appeal – like the 99% – might be seen as necessary for asserting possibilities outside the prevailing distribution of the sensible, yet an over-arching libertarian aversion to this not only prevents universals from becoming; but also renders resistance somewhat complicit with neoliberal anti-state logic.

Such cynicism towards universality leads us to our final theme. For Sloterdijk, cynicism can be characterized as an "enlightened false consciousness" which came about with the enlightenment project where seeking the "truth" behind appearances (aletheia) leads to a situation in which "a new form of realism bursts forth, a form that is driven by the fear of becoming deceived or overpowered…everything that appears to us could be a deceptive manoeuvre of an overpowering evil enemy" (Sloterdijk, 1987: 330). In other words, the surface becomes necessarily suspect, meaning that the "truth" of power can be hidden in its very exposure (like in the Emperor's New Clothes) because power is always supposed to be hidden and secretive. Structural criticisms of power (for instance, how neoliberal capitalism was able to reassert its normativity after such an enormous crisis) are therefore foreclosed in favor of narratives of powerful agencies operating behind the scenes.

This theme can perhaps be demonstrated most succinctly within Occupy (in) London via the relative popularity of conspiracy theories. By conspiracy theory, I mean something with a particularly broad definition, as "a narrative that has been constructed in an attempt to explain an event or series of events to be the result of a group of people working in secret to a nefarious end" (Birchall, 2006: 34). Crucially, such a definition is not concerned with the "truth" of the theory's content; but with the form which it takes (as such, I include as conspiracy theory anything from the use of undercover police officers; through the collaboration of politicians and business leaders (e.g. Bilderberg); right up to theories of worldwide networks (e.g. the Illuminati). In particular, therefore, what is important about the form of conspiracy theories is what they tell us about the contemporary relationship between resistance and power. Indeed, what they surely indicate is profound feelings of disillusionment, loss of agency and helplessness in a situation where certain decisions appear to be made in advance, post-politically limiting who may or may not be considered as a legitimate voice. Subsequently, conspiracy theories can be seen as directly linked to the grievances which underpin Occupy: such as the unaccountability and distance of an undemocratic and technocratic neoliberal state that seeks legitimacy in the market.

It seems that whenever protests "symbolically take to task the political leaders of the most powerful nation-states, this can go hand-in-hand – visually, rhetorically and analytically – with the depiction of world leaders and

their associates as secretive, undemocratic conspirators trying to take control of economic processes" (Schlembach, 2014: 18). But the consequence here is that power becomes something that "they" – the 1%, the powers that be, those who pull the strings – possess at "our" cost (rather than something which operates structurally through the normative distribution of the sensible). This forecloses the possibility of such a critique, either passing power off as the result of a few "bad apples" (a "cheap moralization" (Žižek, 2009) or some all-powerful, vague, far-reaching and insurmountable network.

Another problem is that resistance based on conspiracy theory risks becoming something which pre-marginalizes itself as "powerless." While this marginality affords the activist a certain "election and…distinction" (Nietzsche, 2008: 31), such righteous indignation (ressentiment) nevertheless pre-positions their claim to radical change as a fringe claim which can easily be dismissed by the prevailing distribution as non-sensical, irrational and unreasonable. This fetishizing of a certain underdog position, as well as the parallel positing of powerful agencies that are impossible to overcome, means that resistance revels in its own powerlessness, presenting with symptoms of melancholia by being "attached more to a particular political analysis or ideal – even the failure of that idea – than to seizing possibilities for radical change in the present" (Brown, 1999: 19). Indeed, by looking at themselves from the position they have been designated, such activists "end up reinforcing rather than subverting the master's authority" (Dean, 2009: 84) and any "effort to identify the enemy as singular in form is a reverse-discourse that uncritically mimics the strategy of the oppressor instead of offering a different set of terms" (Butler, 2006: 18).

I therefore argue that the individualization of politics; the preoccupation with authenticity; and the cynicism of power through conspiracy theories – which were widely manifested by a number of different people, albeit not everyone, within Occupy London – rendered the possibilities of post-crash resistance foreclosed and complicit with prevailing structures of power. The problem with making such a critique, however, is whether this in-itself has the adverse effect of adding to the distribution of the movement as "non-sense." This distributing of Occupy, however, is not my intention, and I maintain that such a critical reflection on the movement remains necessary for radical politics going forwards.

Conclusion: Did Somebody Say Post-Politics?

Throughout this article I have been tentatively referring to the term "post-politics" to designate that which forecloses and renders complicit the possibilities of post-crash resistance. However, since the crisis, there has been a marked decrease in the use of this term by some of its former proponents (e.g. Žižek, 2012) as well as aforementioned suggestions that we are in fact witnesses to the "rebirth of history" (Badiou, 2012) that appear to reveal an optimism that post-politics was now "at an end." Indeed, for Jodi Dean, the term has become somewhat defunct in an era of post-crash resistance, arguing that "Žižek's description might have worked a decade or so ago, but not anymore… [with] massive uprisings, demonstrations, strikes, occupations, and revolutions" (Dean, 2012: 46). By way of conclusion, I therefore want to briefly discuss the efficacy of the concept "post-politics" (in particular with reference to the work of Dean) in order to ask whether it is a useful term for resistance or whether it counter-intuitively might also foreclose resistive possibility.

While Dean seemed happy to uncritically use the term "post-politics" before the crash (see Dean, 2006: 26), by 2009 she instead argues that the concept is now "childishly petulant" (2009: 12) and typical of "a retreat into cowardice, the retroactive determination of victory as defeat because of the left's fundamental inability to accept responsibility for power and to undertake the difficult task of reinventing our modes of dreaming" (2009: 10). In other words, Dean stretches the critique of left melancholia to "post-politics" as a concept itself, suggesting that this idea is actually part of the problematic self-elected marginality of the left. Dean therefore somewhat "folds" the critique of post-politics back upon itself, arguing that the concept can be seen as a symptom of staying within the distribution of what "counts" as legitimate politics by pre-marginalizing radical alternatives.

Therefore, while Dean recognizes that "aspects of the diagnosis of de-politicization [are] well worth emphasizing" she nevertheless insists that "post-politics, de-politicization and de-democratization are inadequate to the task of theorizing this conjecture" (2009: 12), criticizing theorists like Ranciere for appearing to "write as if the disappearance of politics were possible, as if the evacuation of politics from the social were a characteristic of the current conjecture" (2009: 14). However, while Dean's critique raises some important questions as to the usefulness of the concept, I nevertheless wish to maintain that "post-politics" has some radical potential. Not only, I argue, does

her critique seem to misrecognize the "politics" that the concept supposes to have been evacuated in contemporary society, but she also overlooks the symbolic potential of the term.

I see the term as potentially [4] useful precisely because it operates from a point of "non-sense." The idea that we have moved "past" politics is provocative and dissonant, clashing with preconceived designations of what counts as "political." In other words, the concept is at its most effective "when seen as a critique of the professionalization, cynicism, elitism and depoliticization which often characterizes parliamentary politics in advanced capitalist societies" (Hewlett 2007:112). I do not find it necessary, therefore, to get rid of the term "post-politics" to describe the current post-crash situation. It seems that the confusion and provocation that it causes is its use, upsetting the current distribution of what "counts" as politics and forcing a counter-intuitive concept into analysis. Post-politics, in other words, has a performative ability to "appear as nonsense" and therefore offers a critique which is not already incorporated into the distribution of the sensible.

While neoliberalism seems to install market principles into all areas of society (and has largely succeeded in dominating discourse by becoming the universal limit of what counts "sensible" politics), it is not simply something that is forced upon us from above but something hegemonic, something which is consented to through every actions and appeals to reason. It is therefore difficult to resist, because imagination is only considered rational within such limits (while anything else is deemed "non-sense"). Subsequently, despite many seeing the financial crisis as an opportunity to expand on such limits, I have argued on the contrary that resistance was tempered – foreclosed and rendered complicit – by the neoliberal distribution of the sensible. Occupy is an example of a movement that attempted to find a space outside of these rational limits but appeared unable to do so, inadvertently re-establishing divisions and hierarchies as well as appealing to prevailing logics of individualization, authenticity and conspiratorial power. What the theory of post-politics can potentially do, however, is create a critique that "makes nonsense appear" against its designation as such, and (while this may sound contrarian) it is suggested that this critique is nevertheless the starting point for reflecting upon contemporary resistance.

Endnotes

1. In particular, we can see this appeal to "reason" through the common use of sporting metaphors (Davies 2014:44) to justify competition. Here, the free market economy is compared to the logic of sport as a "fair" and "just" way of distributing outcomes, giving each "player" an "equal opportunity" to fulfil their potential on a "level playing field" (as well as the "unfairness" of a "referee" – the state – stepping in to control the game in any way). As the logic goes, in market as in sport: if one loses then it is their own fault; if they win then fair play.

2. As implied by this article, I find it useful to read Foucault and Butler alongside theorists such as Ranciere and Žižek (despite their insistence of radical differences). I don't have space to go into these conflicts here, but see Armstrong (2008) for a good overview.

3. This is informed by ethnographic work conducted with Occupy (in) London since 2012, involving a large number of unstructured interviews (with conversations guided by themes from critical literature) as well as a number of participant observations. The critique here captures neither the full diversity of the movement nor post-crash resistance beyond London, yet it is hoped that it might prove indicative of some problems faced by other movements in a context of the neoliberal foreclosure of resistance.

4. Having said all this, I do not find it necessary to "over-insist" on the term either. Indeed, I have found that using the term can, on occasion, lead conversation to focus more on its applicability rather than the problem it is intended to spark discussion around (the foreclosure of possibility in society). As such, insisting on the concept in the wrong context could actually foreclose deeper conversation.

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The Necropolitics of Austerity: Discursive Constructions and Material Consequences in the Greek Context

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Introduction

The onset of the global capitalist crisis in 2008, brought about important shifts beyond the material plane. A crisis of capitalism can never be understood as simply an economic crisis; it is also, at its core, a political and ideological crisis. The ideological aspect of the crisis is further articulated through language, that is, through the use of particular discourses. Conservative think tanks and larger-than-life financial institutions have highjacked the mainstream narrative around the crisis and its consequences, and have changed the terms these crises are talked about and, therefore, understood.

In this article I am offering a critical discussion of the **closing of the universe of discourse** since the beginning of the capitalist crisis in the Greek context. In the framework of what is often projected as an anthropomorphist economy, I examine the discursive and material construction of "austerity" as it articulates with other supporting discourses: that of "markets as people," "sacrifice," and "living beyond one's means" as well as the discourse of "obedience/disobedience." The narratives around these concepts have largely shaped and distorted the debate around the Greek financial crisis. My argument is, once more, that the shift in language is not natural or neutral but it reflects, refracts and shapes a deeper shift in its framing and therefore, in policies/politics. Those institutions that have the power to produce politics and ideologies, have also the power to produce a "strong discourse" and, thus, have hegemony over that discourse.

The imposed cutthroat austerity in Greece the last seven years as a panacea for what has been touted the "overspending of the public sector" and for "tidying up the budget" has nothing to do with financial efficiency or even a viable economic plan for the Greek people. It has everything to do with an attempt of the autochthonous and global elites to maintain power and wealth, coupled with the increased authoritarianism and discipline in the European Union and the ongoing weakening of decision making of national governments/member states. In the name of the global financial interests of an oligarchy, EU leaders are quick to forget the "democratic" roots of "a peaceful, united and prosperous Europe" (**The History of European Union**) in order to promote a violent capitalist agenda under the guise of our "common European family." The limited autonomy in decision making for EU member-states became abundantly clear in the week after the "No" vote at the July 2015 referendum in Greece leading to the full capitulation and sellout of the Syriza government. At the time, top European officials intervened in the Greek public discourse, openly discrediting the result of the Greek referendum, even putting forth the idea of a regime change in Greece that would institute a complacent and servile government. Syriza capitulated quickly so they found their servants in Syriza's cabinet.

It is not an exaggeration to claim that Greece has been treated as a protectorate or a debt colony, where directives are communicated straight from Brussels and the headquarters of the European Central Bank (ECB). Granted, similar "coups" have taken place in many parts of Latin America and Africa before, wherever mega financial institutions such as the IMF have stepped in to "save" other countries at the edge of their "financial catastrophe."

However, it is the first time that an EU member is being subject to such a "special treatment." For example, the list of demands that arose from the July 2015 Eurogroup in order to guarantee a new 86 billion Euros bailout for a non-viable debt— then at 177% of the GDP (Flassbeck and Lapavitsas, 2015) were labeled a "catalogue of cruelties" by Der Spiegel Online, while Paul Krugman stressed that they go "beyond harsh into pure vindictiveness, complete destruction of national sovereignty and no hope of relief […] a grotesque betrayal of everything the European project was supposed to stand for" (2015a). Along the same lines, Joseph Stiglitz called Germany's imposition of inefficient, counter-productive models that produce injustice and inequality not just punitive but of blind stupidity (Stiglitz, 2015).

This "catalogue of cruelties" that has been expanded during Syriza's first year in government, resonates a great deal with "necropolitics," or politics that promote death. These are in line with what I have termed elsewhere, in the context of neoliberalism, as "social necrophilia" (Gounari, 2014). More specifically, the neoliberal experiment, as implemented in Greece, that breeds destructiveness and death, can be understood as a form of "social necrophilia"; By that I mean the blunt organized effort on the part of the domestic political system and foreign neoliberal centers to implement economic policies that result in the physical, material, social and financial destruction of human beings: policies that promote death, whether physical or symbolic. The goal of the ongoing unprecedented austerity measures in Greece is to destroy physically and symbolically the most vulnerable strata of the population, to put the entire society in a moribund state, in order generate profit for the most privileged classes internationally. Without succumbing to a discourse-centered analysis that would over-celebrate language over the material conditions and supplant social events (Holborow 2015) I am offering here a critical approach on those discourses and narratives that have dressed the policies of death with progress, development, entrepreneurialship, and other neoliberal terms systematically used to build the neoliberal fairy tale.

The Rise of "Economese"

In the last seven years we have been observing what Marcuse has called "the closing of the universe of discourse" (Marcuse, 1964) where language, neutralized and purged of its historical meanings and significations, has been operationalized in the service of capitalist significations. Dominant capitalist discourses militate against the development of meaning, as "natural" and "neutral" codes are now used to talk about material and symbolic violence in the most innocent and non-threatening way. Marcuse (1964) correctly noted that "language tends to express and promote the immediate identification of reason and fact, truth and established truth, essence and existence, the thing and its function" (p. 85). More importantly, this constructed neoliberal-dominated universe of discourse closes itself against any other discourse that is not on its own terms.

A typical characteristic of any emerging neoliberal state is the rise of "economese," that is, technical language inspired from Economics that has penetrated the public discourse and is used with pre-given and self-evident meanings to justify economic policies. Economese is a "common sense" discourse that limits the universe of discourse and re-routes language in the service of the capitalist order, therefore obstructing people's capacity to question its meaning and content. Economese has become since 2008 part of Greek mainstream discourse in an almost natural and seamless way. Words like **bailout, default, memoranda of understanding, CDS, haircut, restructuring, government bonds** and so forth, found their way into mainstream discourses. They invaded television screens, newspaper articles, blogs, analyses, almost every realm of public and private discourse. Politicians, intellectuals, journalists and other public figures—what Fromm (1981) calls "political priests"—who shape public opinion and alter collective consciousness, have emerged promptly to provide their services to the new economic and political order using a well-crafted discourse to administer "the idea of freedom to protect the economic interests of their social class. The priests declare that people are not capable of being free and take over ideas and decide how they will be formulated" (Fromm, 1981, p.17). These political priests are the guarantors of consensus since they are the ones feeding and promulgating the new economese to the public.

Krugman (2013) admits that "economese may sound like English [or any other language for that matter], but it sometimes has crucial differences" and confusion often arises "from the way economists use words. Fairly often, we have a term of art that is pretty deeply embedded in the professional discourse, but which either sounds strange to outsiders or can be misinterpreted" and he concludes "it's ultimately not about the words — it's about the model." Krugman is right about the misinterpretation, or rather, the re-framing of words taken from professional discourses

when they are used outside of their intended context. But contrary to his last claim, I believe that it is as much about the words as it is about the model. Words as constituents of discourses often create a new model through a strong discourse, one that bears no relevance to the original technical term; and in turn, any model needs to be represented and framed through words. In addition, there is historicity in the terms we use, both in a synchronic and diachronic way: word definitions always come with a "historical burden" but words often shift meanings in given historical and political contexts. The problem with neoliberal economese is that it appropriates financial terms in order to create a mainstream language by stripping words from their history and historically-shaped meanings. For example, the use of the word "market" has taken a life (of significations) of its own in neoliberal economese. These days the "market" whether used as a noun, subject or object, is projected as an overarching authority, above and beyond everybody, a self-evident entity that should be kept happy and satisfied. Markets are personified and they have acquired "the status of living, breathing humans" …. "omnipotent, adversarial, autonomous, intensely unpredictable, and in a position to dictate at will what should happen and what exact policies should be adopted" (Holborow, 2015, pp. 35-36). The anthropomorphism of the market is illustrated when markets are used in the mainstream media in sentences such as "the markets showed satisfaction today" or "the market is struggling," and "we need to convince the markets," "we should appease the markets" or "let's wait and see how the markets respond." One could also read impressive lines to that effect in news media inspired by the 2015 Greek referendum such as "it is difficult to tell what the markets are dancing: ballet, tsamiko or tsifteteli," "why the markets did not contract the Greek flu" and "markets are worried about the Grexit scenario." The invisible market's "reactions" give legitimacy to the "human sacrifices," as all "market feelings" depend on increasing anti-social and counterproductive austerity measures that relegate a large part of Greek productive population to the unemployment trashcan. Beyond all the mythology about self-regulation and naturalness of a highly economic realm, real markets are definitely not people, they have no feelings and they are highly political. As Karl Polanyi noted at the end of World War II, there is nothing natural about markets. They are constituted of "systems of rules and regulations made and enforced by both state and non-state agencies, including market actors themselves" (Leys, 2001, p.3). Markets are complex, they are typically linked to wide range of other markets and they are also "'embedded' […] in a vast range of other social relations" finally, they are inherently unstable, from the nature of competition itself" (Leys, 2001, p. 3).

The more human qualities are attributed to the markets, the more real people are robbed off their own human substance and agency, even though neoliberal discourses are trying to argue for the opposite. It seems as if the system needs to dehumanize people in order to "humanize" the economy, the markets, the banks or other financial institutions. People become unalive things and the market becomes alive. This purposeful operation on the part of the powerful elites can be understood as the process of creating a neoliberal subject as human capital in the context of capitalism. As Richard Seymour notes, "neoliberals recognize that human beings are not necessarily predisposed to embrace 'the market' […] People must be compelled to embrace their 'entrepreneurial' selves, to treat every aspect of their lives as a self-maximizing quest, and to embrace the calculus of risks and rewards in the market, including the inequalities that come with it, rather than seeking to control it" (Seymour, 2014, p. 9).

While people become things, things, in turn, become "people." People are slowly losing their humanity as they transition into "neoliberal subjects" with the government abandoning its social and welfare functions, and at the same time economic entities are becoming the new referent people should care and worry about. Economic institutions while being lifeless things, are acquiring a soul and a character in the neoliberal discourse. One can observe an interesting phenomenon in the official government discourse, loyally reproduced by mainstream media: a continuous attempt to ascribe human properties to financial institutions. This is along the lines of administering "things and men as one" (Fromm 1963, p. 22). This anthropomorphism is illustrated in the 2010 ruling of the U.S. **Supreme Court in Citizens United v. Federal Election Commission** that corporations are people, upholding the rights of corporations to unlimited corporate and union spending on political issues under the First Amendment. The U.S. Supreme Court endorsed corporate personhood holding that business firms have rights to religious freedom under federal law. Not only do corporations have rights, their rights are often stronger than people's rights. The same idea was echoed in republican presidential hopeful Mitt Romney's statement in 2012, that "Corporations are people, my friend!"[1] to which Robert Reich, Berkeley professor and former Secretary of Labor countered "I'll believe corporations are people when Texas executes one."

Language is used in the capitalist context as a vehicle for re-naming the ongoing shift of the state from human welfare to market welfare (Gounari 2006, 2012). It is not a coincidence that the current austerity measures in Greece are promoted under the umbrella of restructuring, reform, improvement, progress and streamlining of an inherently problematic system. However, these structural changes and reforms are, in essence, the epitome of deregulation

and/or ways of facilitating investment for foreign companies, privatizations, release of any state controls and out-of-control economic development that has only one goal: accumulation of wealth and interest for the global financial capital. This language also supports the conscious attempt on the part of dominant ideologies to package austerity measures in such way that hides the fact that the real beneficiaries are, in fact, foreign investment capital, banking and financial organizations and not the Greek people. For instance, only a small fraction (less than 10%) of the 240 billion Euros total bailout money Greece received in 2010 and 2012 went into the government's coffers to address the 2008 financial crash and to fund reform programs. Most of the money went to the banks that lent Greece funds before the crash (Inman, 2015).

The Discursive Construction of Austerity versus "Litotita"

> "There is little doubt that [austerity] is an economy that is basically killing itself"
>
> — (Fleissbeck and Lapavitsas, 2015, p. 239)

Economic austerity can be safely labeled as one of the most fatally flawed "economic ideas" of the century. There is really no well worked out "theory of austerity" in economic thought. Austerity simply does not work (Blyth, 2013; Krugman 2015; Semour 2015). It is a "delusion" (Blyth, 2013; Krugman 2015) and a "strange malady" (Krugman, 2015) since its policies are "more often than not exactly the wrong thing to do precisely because [they] produce the very outcomes you are trying to avoid" (Blyth, 2013, p. 14). As Blyth puts it,

> Austerity is a form of voluntary deflation in which the economy adjusts through the reduction of wages, prices, and public spending to restore competitiveness, which is (supposedly) best achieved by cutting the state's budget, debts, and deficits. Doing so, its advocates believe, will inspire "business confidence" since the government will neither be "crowding-out" the market for investment by sucking up all the available capital through the issuance of debt, nor adding to the nation's already "too big" debt" (p. 14).

Austerity's central idea is that states cannot spend more than they take in, so, in order to balance their deficit budgets, they need to reduce spending while increasing taxes and cutting pensions and salaries. Greece, for instance, was forced to reduce its deficit by transferring the cost to pensioners, welfare recipients and salaried workers. As Holborow notes, "proceeding from the logic of translating private debt into social debt, austerity socializes the crisis by calling on the whole of society to make cutbacks. Austerity reinforces a concealment of the original causes of the crisis, vividly illustrating the tight cross-over between ideology and language" (Holborow, 2015, pp. 96-97).

Clearly, austerity implemented in an already depressed and weakened economy can only push it deeper into depression and delay, if not prevent altogether any signs of recovery so why is it still projected as an optimal solution? Given that financial crises have nothing to do with states and everything to do with markets, why are citizens called to pay for the markets' crisis? The answer to these questions is straightforward: austerity, the way it has been implemented, has nothing to do with the economy. Austerity is the implementation of neoliberal necroeconomics under the guise of an economic "theory." What we have in place in the context of a violent capitalism is a broader "shift in the entire civilizational edifice of capitalism" (Seymour 2014, p. 3). Drawing on Seymour's work I want to make the case that this shift includes but is not limited to the following:1 a) the reorganization/regrouping of the elites since the system they have copiously put in place and operate is at risk, and the "recomposition of social classes with more inequality and more stratification" b) the shift from the welfare state to the militarized and corporatized state that is increasingly taking on a punitive role, c) the creation of the neoliberal subject that, in turn, becomes part of a more competitive, highly hierarchical society that values "casual sadism toward the weak" d) "The growing strength of financial capital within capitalist economies and the accompanying spread of 'precarity' in all areas of life" (Seymour, p.3-4) and, finally, e) the shift in the ideological plane and away from the economy, as illustrated for example, in European Council leader Donald Tusk's statement to the Financial Times: "I am really afraid of this ideological or political contagion, not financial contagion, of this Greek crisis" (Der Spiegel, 2015).

Wherever austerity was implemented to address similar financial crises, it has failed miserably not only because there is no soundness to the theory but also because it has always moved along the interests of the ruling capitalist classes. While economic domination of the population is the end goal, and while real material strangleholds are suffocating Greek people, the twist of contemporary European politics is materialized on the political and ideological

realm where one can witness a blunt, unapologetic, totalitarian stance that seeks to humiliate and discipline while subjugating on the economic realm.

As mentioned earlier, with the onset of the Greek financial crisis, mainstream language was injected with new financial terms that automatically took on given, predetermined meanings. As Doreen Massey notes, "the vocabularies which have reclassified roles, identities and relationships – of people, places and institutions – and the practices which enact them embody and enforce the ideology of neoliberalism, and thus a new capitalist hegemony […]These definitions constitute another element of 'common sense' – about the way the economic world 'naturally' is and must remain" (Massey, 2013, p. 9)

The discourse of "austerity" is a way to talk about the economy in moral terms without talking about the human consequences—the real moral plane; these are simply collateral damage; they are invisible as are the people who suffer these consequences. In this way, the meaning and content of austerity is not simply reduced, it imposes limitations on the ways we think about it. Austerity was re-introduced into the Greek vocabulary in 2008, as part of the new neoliberal "economese." It instantly acquired momentum and, with it, a pre-given unquestioned meaning as it penetrated our language in a seamless, quiet and natural way. But once more, we did not know what we were talking about and yet we used it ad nauseam in the context of the Greek crisis, as something that needed to be done. Interestingly, austerity defined as "enforced or extreme economy" toped the 2010 search for words in Merriam Webster Dictionary's word of the year, as "people's attention was drawn to global economic conditions and the debt crises in Europe, but lookups also remained strong throughout the year, reflecting widespread use of the word in many contexts" according to the site (Merriam-Webster Dictionary Online 2015). "**Austerity** clearly resonates with many people," noted Peter Sokolowski, Editor at Large at Merriam-Webster, adding that "we often hear it used in the context of government measures, but we also apply it to our own personal finances and what is sometimes called the new normal" (Merriam-Webster Online). This statement underscores vividly the conflation of uses for a single word that has been uncritically accepted and used with different significations. Nations cannot and should not be run like households.

The construction and promulgation of a natural "austerity discourse" achieves three goals: First, it blurs the flaws of its purported "financial" soundness; second, it masks its human consequences; and third, it further strengthens the stereotype of "disobedient" Greeks. There is an interesting semantic game at play here: Austerity exists in the Greek language as such in the word "austerotita" (/af.sti.ˈɾɔ.ti.ta/) deriving from the ancient Greek verb «αὐω» ([auo]) that means "to dry up." It translates into strictness, harshness, rigidity, stringency. For example, one can talk about an "austere teacher" or "austere rules" "austere measures" but not about "austerity measures." In Greek, the word "litotita» ([λιτότητα]) is used instead of the term «austerity» to refer to the cutthroat measures. "Litotita" resonates with simplicity, frugality, and ascetism. Outside the crisis context, the term does not necessarily have a negative connotation resonating with living a simple life, not spending much, and a detachment from material goods and consumerism. The linguistic dialectics of the latin/anglo "austerity"2 (latin "austeritas") versus the Greek "litotita" are interesting because austerity is always imposed (it needs a subject and an object) but litotita is usually lived, often even as a personal choice. In addition, austerity has an implied connotation of discipline. It needs an "object" that is going to be disciplined because they did something wrong. The same is not true for the Greek term "letotis" since there is no punitive dimension to its significations. The manufactured neoliberal narrative then, presents austerity as "the payback for something called the 'sovereign debt crisis,' supposedly brought on by states that apparently 'spent too much'" (Seymour, 2014, p. 18) which is an absolute misrepresentation of the facts. According to Seymour "these problems, including the crisis in the bond markets, started with the banks and will end with the banks" (p. 18).

I made the case earlier that austerity resonates with neoliberal necropolitics and I will now turn to the ways austerity translates in terms of human consequences, beyond the discursive level. At this point I would also like to make the argument that austerity is straightforward class politics since "the effects of austerity are felt differently across the income distribution. Those at the bottom of the income distribution lose more than those at the top for the simple reason that those at the top rely far less on government-produced services and can afford to lose more because they have more wealth to start with" (Blyth, 2013, p. 20).

The impact of austerity, according to Seymour (2014), is comparable in some respects to a major war: a catastrophic decline in GDP, such that a projected -3.8 per cent growth in 2013 was considered an improvement on expectations; a drastic and unprecedented fall in the live birth rate of almost 15 per cent; […] and working class Greeks forced to scavenge for food or queue at soup kitchens as a result of four years of sustained fiscal contraction" (p. 101). Right now Greece is actually worse off than the United States during the Great Depression in 1933 (Alderman, Buchannan & Porter, 2015). For instance, unemployment in 1933 in the U.S. was at 26% while

official accounts put unemployment in Greece right now at 28% with unofficial accounts exceeding 30% (with 50% among those under 25). The irony here is that the IMF, one of the main players in the Greek crisis was supposedly established in order to prevent another Great Depression like the one of the 1930s.

Greece has experienced 25% drop in gross domestic product, a 28% reduction in public sector employment, 28,5% drop in food consumption, 61% drop in the average pension down to 833 Euros with 45% number of pensioners living under the poverty line (The Guardian, 2015). According to the Hellenic Statistics Authority (2015), in 2014, 36% of the population lived in the poverty threshold. The risk of poverty or social exclusion rose in the ages between 18 and 64 to 40%. The threshold of poverty is set at 4,608 Euros annual income per person and 9,677 Euros for a household of two adults and two dependents under the age of 14. It is estimated that 888,452 out of a total of 2,266,745 households are at risk of poverty which amounts to 2,384,035 people out of 10,785,312 the general population of Greece. There are 1,165,000 or 19.4% of people living in households where not one member is employed or who is employed for no more than three months. There is an increase in the percentage of households that cannot afford to provide their children either with one meal with meat, chicken or fish at least once a day (8.9% in 2014 from 4.0% in 2009), or with fruits and vegetables once a day (5.3% in 2014 from 1.1% in 2009). Again Blyth is on point when he notes that the "Greek state is slashing itself to insolvency and mass poverty while given ever-more loans to do so" (2013, pp. 14-15). Unfortunately, by the time austerians realize that this model is not working once more, we will have a Greek population at the brink of extinction. The self-labeled "leftist" government of Syriza has been carrying on the same catastrophic austerity politics that not only have further relegated people in the poverty ranks but have severely undermined the country's national sovereignty and assets.

The Discourse of Disobedience

In 2010 when Greece was forced to resort to the IMF mechanism, it was portrayed as the "rebel of the European south": the misbehaving kid of the EU, a disobedient country with unlawful, unruly and disorganized citizens who were in need of discipline. The "discipline" and "civilizing mission" in neocolonial terms, came from the law-abiding, protestant European North (Germany mostly) and has been used as a tool for "growth," "progress," and alignment with the other "orderly" European member states. Largely constructed by Greek and European media, fiscal and civil disobedience were used as an excuse for bringing in the IMF and the ECB as policing mechanisms that would straighten things up and bring order back. This loss of national sovereignty was aptly illustrated once more during the fourteen days of "disobedience," the time between the Greek referendum and Syriza's capitulation. The representation of the disobedient Greek has re-emerged after the July 5th 2015 referendum when the landslide victory of "no," was not registered as a clear articulation of the will of the people and their discontent with ongoing austerity, but rather as a rebellion or defection from the European family.

Six years of impoverishment, misery, illness, malnutrition, suicides, and alcoholism, without any welfare state safety nets brought Greek people to their knees in a developed-world humanitarian crisis. The referendum was a space to articulate a clear voice against the ongoing austerity but the disdain of the EU cancelled it out. Popular vote was also cancelled out and thrown in the trashcan a few days later in a series of treasonous decisions and the full capitulation of the Syriza government. As a result, the freedom to decide on the affairs of their polis has been taken away from the Greek people. In the dominant narrative of Greeks who "lived beyond their means," austerity was not simply promoted as a "financial solution" but mostly as a punishment: "The narrative goes as follows: for years, this country's irresponsible and corrupt rulers offered citizens unaffordable perks, instead of reforming taxes; it allowed inefficient and uncompetitive practices to flourish in its state sector instead of disciplining labour markets; and above all, it borrowed beyond its means" (Seymour, 2014, p. 102).

Austerity has been constructed on the premise of fear for the worse not on the promise for a better life. Austerity has further fed into the narrative of good versus bad European citizens, obedient versus disobedient, lazy south versus hard working north and so forth. This polarization has created a two-tiered Europe: Those countries who suffer the Brussels-inspired austerity, that is, the lazy south's Portugal, Spain, Greece plus Ireland (also known as P.I.G.S), versus the responsible, hard-working North, those who pick up the bill, who have always been good citizens, the Germans, Dutch, and Finns. A parallel and persistent narrative to that of unruly Greeks has been that of "living beyond one's means." Greeks have been portrayed in national and international media as spending more than they earn, including other countries' and taxpayers' money and living as parasites sucking off resources

from "developed Europe." The deep corruption in Greek politics can hardly start to explain the current financial situation. It is interesting to note that in this case the Greek crisis acquired a human face, albeit an ugly one: the disobedient, parasitic, inert Greek. The financial irresponsibility burdens individuals and the state equally. Both need to be disciplined and punished. However, this is an absolute misrepresentation since, according to OECD, "the average Greek worked 2,120 hours in the crisis year of 2008. That is 690 hours more than the average German, 467 hours more than the average Briton and 356 more than the OECD average" (cited in Pogatsa, 2014). Looking at the average number of hours that a person works each week in the EU in 2012, Greeks worked on average more than anyone else. The average working week in Greece is 40.9 hours, compared to 37.2 hours in Spain, 37.9 hours in Portugal, 36.6 hours in France, 35.5 hours in Germany and 34.6 hours in Denmark. Indeed, the Greek working week is substantially longer than both the European Union average week at 36.7 hours and the Euro-area average week at 36.2 hours (Katsikas & Filinis, 2013). Greeks work on average 1,824 hours per year, or 125 more hours than the Dutch, 165 more hours than the Germans and 250 more hours than the French do (Ibid).

Greeks on average also have fewer vacation days per year and retire later than both the British and the Germans. The expenditure of the Greek state in relation to GDP was actually lower rather than higher than the Eurozone average before the crisis, and significantly lower than that of Germany's (Zafiropoulos 2015). Furthermore, contrary to another persistent myth, Greek public servants did not receive significantly greater levels of compensation compared to the European average. However, public servants have been vilified and anything public has been discredited as dysfunctional. Doreen Massey notes that "in the 1950s the adjective 'public' (worker, sector, sphere) designated something to be respected and relied upon […] It took a labour of persistent denigration of 'the public' to turn things around. And that labour has been crucial to the ability to pursue the economic strategies we are currently enduring."

Social spending in Greece was significantly lower than the European average.

These numbers hardly justify the portrayal of Greeks as the lazy grasshoppers of the European Union, especially if we take into consideration the fact that Greek salaries are now among the lowest in the EU.

The kind of obedience required by the "disciplined" European North requires an "authoritarian conscience", that is, the internalized voice of an authority, the obedience to outside thoughts and power, one that tends to debilitate "humanistic conscience," that is, our intuitive knowledge to know what's human and inhuman, the ability to be and to judge oneself, the voice that calls us back to ourselves and to our humanity (Fromm, 1981, p. 7). In other words, it requires of Greek people to submit to their own destruction, submit their national sovereignty, sell off their country, lose the capacity to disobey, so they are not even aware of the fact that they obey. Fromm uses two telling examples, the myths of Adam and Eve on one hand, and Prometheus on the other, who, through their disobedience started human history. He claims that humans developed spiritually and intellectually exactly because they were able to say no to the powers that be; therefore, submission to the same powers can only mean spiritual and intellectual death. As a result, says Fromm, (1981) "human history begun with an act of disobedience, and it is not unlikely that it will be terminated by an act of obedience" (p. 1). Here we need to understand that obedience and disobedience are in a dialectical relationship as illustrated, for example, in Antigone's story: by disobeying the inhuman laws of the State, she obeyed the laws of humanity. Every act of disobedience includes an act of obedience to something else. In a very real sense, this kind of disobedience is connected with a notion of human agency; In the collective consciousness disobedience sets people free, embodies what it means to be human. In the dominant narrative, it robs people of their humanity and automatizes them. Greeks, with few exceptions (anti-fascist movements, anti-capitalist left frontal movements, solidarity groups and so forth) have been complicit in their own dehumanization because obeying makes them feel safe and protected: "my obedience makes me part of the power I worship and hence I feel strong. I can make no error since it decides for me" (Fromm, 1981, p. 8). There is a notion among Greek people that if they obey they will avoid the worst, being unable to see themselves as actually living the worst. Neoliberal authoritarian political systems continue to make obedience the human cornerstone of their existence and a perfect system of manufacturing consent.

Conclusion

Given the rapacity and aggression with which neoliberal policies are being implemented, there is in Greece a kind of "psychologically unmoored" and "physically uprooted" population (Klein, 2008, p. 25) in a very vulnerable

position. They are the recipients of the catastrophic consequences of austerity and they are the ones doing all the "sacrifices." The EU, the ECB and the IMF together with a complacent Greek government have attempted to establish obedience in Greece by sheer force in the form of economic strangulation, as well as through political blackmail and by capitalizing on Greek people's fear. In order to go forward with "order building," free-market ideologues need to create the perfect setting for their financial ambitions. Both fear and force have been used in the Greek context to preserve obedience and consent. Violent austerity measures have been voted on and implemented not only as "punishment," but also packaged as "sacrifice." However, sacrifice has been projected in the name of avoiding the worse, not as a promise for a better future. Bare individual survival has become the golden standard in neoliberal societies. The neoliberal subject is a deeply individualistic, cruel and egotistic individual. It is a person who becomes complacent to his/her own destruction. Just before a new round of austerity measures, "leftist" prime minister Alexis Tsipras "assured" that "these sacrifices will be the last ones" and that this will be the last round of austerity policies his government will be "forced" to implement. His initial electoral campaign slogan "no sacrifice for the Euro" seemed to have become "any and all sacrifice to remain in the Euro and the EU." Here, however, we need to identify who is the subject of those sacrifices. The burden once more falls on the shoulders of the working class, salaried employees, pensioners, and young people. Ongoing austerity has created a massive underclass that barely survives, is psychologically exhausted and politically disillusioned. The "leftist" management of neoliberal politics since February 2015 has by and large shut down popular resistance.

Syriza came to power in February 2015 campaigning with the slogan "hope is coming." Their message seemed "simple" and was short: "After five years of destruction and fear that led nowhere, it is time for change. With dignity, justice, and democracy, Greece is moving forward, Europe is changing, hope is coming." One of the biggest illusions in this message was the belief that Syriza would be able, as a reformist left party (and even this label is debatable), amidst a climate of political and economic blackmail in the EU to shift the political balance both nationally but also in Europe through negotiations. The July 2015 tour de force on EU's part that led to the full capitulation of the Syriza government, as well as the recent Brexit vote palpably demonstrate that hope cannot survive in the context of an undemocratic, authoritarian and vindictive Europe; A Europe that seems to have forgotten its violent colonial histories, and now repeats its cruel colonial practices to its member-states; A Europe that has never existed as a "family" to all European peoples; A Europe that requires more sacrifices than grants rights and freedoms in the name of being labeled "European." In other words, hope cannot survive within the EU context. It also showed that any type of "hope" cannot survive without a massive, well-organized, politically conscious, and goal-driven popular movement; and that change and rupture do not come through electoral politics and by switching the political management to another party-even if it is a "left" party. The new austerity packages that have been agreed upon, have pushed Greek people further into economic and psychological depression barring any glimpse of hope in the near future. The Greek welfare state will be destroyed down to its root, and the public good will disappear as people will be pushed to their psychological and physical limits: such are the necropolitics of neoliberalism and they cannot be fought with an abstract promise of reformist politics in the name of addressing the humanitarian crisis while implementing a neoliberal program dressed in social welfare language, as Syriza does. It has been one year since the July 5th 2015 referendum when Greek people overwhelmingly had voted "No" to the continued austerity and to the financial and political strangleholds imposed by the European Union, the European Central Bank and the International Monetary Fund since 2010. In the first referendum in the country in 40 years, (the last one in 1974 ousted monarchy) 61,3% of Greeks voted "no to the lenders' proposals" that would subjugate the country to new Memoranda of Understanding, in exchange for "guaranteeing" cash flow in the form of new debts. It took less than one year for the Syriza government to turn the "no" vote into a "yes." Syriza aligned itself politically with the previous neoliberal governments, signed a third memorandum and, essentially, carried on the austerity attack in an even more violent scale than before. Their discourse was literally one of "creative destruction" since they continued the wholesale of the country and its people, implementing violent austerity while maintaining a "leftist" discourse of social sensibility. Such are the times of neoliberal leftism.

Endnotes

1. Here I am expanding on Seymour's discussion, see Seymour, R. (2014). Against Austerity: How we can Fix the Crisis they Made . New York: Pluto Books.

2. Note here that French (austerité) and Spanish (austeridad) also draw from the same Latin word.

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Dromocratic Arbitrage and Financial Bailouts

Sascha Engel

"if you're playing anyway so you might as well play to win but I mean even when you win you have to keep playing!"

— (Gaddis 2012: 647)

This paper [1] examines the function of financial instability for what I call financial dromocracy: the global dominance of financial arbitrage as the contemporary form of capital accumulation, sustained in a space in which all political, economic, social, and cultural barriers are constituted as so many arbitrage opportunities. I maintain that financial dromocracy requires a certain, constant amount of turbulence to function, thereby imposing its instability on real economies and policy-makers alike in a form of governance which is ultimately parasitical. I reject the "common postulate of international relations that transnational markets are brittle structures unless backed by a powerful state or supported by a group of states acting in concert." (Cerny 1994: 224) Even the United States, the hegemon of hegemonic stability theory, is embedded into and shaped by financial dromocracy (Eichengreen 1996). I show this particularly for the 2008 Troubled Asset Relief Program (TARP), the biggest of the U.S. Treasury's bailouts of the American financial system after the collapse of Lehman Brothers. Far from showing the strength of the U.S. Treasury as financial stabilizer of last resort, TARP showed that this strength is inscribed into financial dromocratic rule.

My argument proceeds in three steps. In the first section, I use Paul Virilio's concept of dromology to describe the speed-space of financial dromocracy. I argue that this dromocracy's **modus operandi** is arbitrage, i.e., the quasi-instantaneous exploitation of differentials of price, location, risk, or other asset characteristics, for a profit. Since arbitrage is only quasi-instantaneous – subject to the transmission speed of electric impulses – financial dromocratic speed-space is at least bifurcated: a real material space of electric transmission, and the space of becoming-arbitrage, where all material (social, legal, political) barriers are constituted as so many opportunities for profit. Examining two empirical examples – the events of May 2010 between riots on Greece's Syntagma Square and turbulences within Wall Street's high-speed trading systems as well as the events unfolding June through August 2015 between Chinese stock market corrections and U.S. Treasury Securities – the section argues that a third layer of financial dromocratic speed-space must be considered, a layer of ripple effects in which each differential arbitrated serially influences all other differentials across globally integrated trading platforms.

It follows from this description that the core necessity of financial dromocracy is a permanent level of financial instability allowing differential changes to ripple outward. In the second section of this paper, I examine the state's function in the trifurcated speed-space of financial dromocracy. I maintain that states are constituted within financial dromocracy as asset producers – sovereign bonds and securities who can fulfill functions as Tier 1 capital on financial portfolios – as well as sources for bailout funds. In both ways, states provide liquidity to financial dromocracy, thus stabilizing it. Yyet, they do so according to the dromocracy's rather than their own, ostensibly sovereign, rules and requirements. For asset production, states must prove their full faith and credit to borrow at market interest rates. For bailouts, states must provide outright liquidity, but not in such a way that arbitrage opportunities get too depressed – spreads must be closed and 'markets calmed,' but not so far that instability disappears.

Section three combines the findings of the previous two. If section one has shown that "crisis" is normality in

financial dromocracy, upholding profitable arbitrage opportunities, and section two has argued that state speech – sovereign debt issuance and outright bailouts – conforms as much to the speed-space of financial dromocracy as the global real economies, then the function of bailouts must be reassessed. The state has to provide emergency liquidity, restoring intra-market lending and "calming markets." Yet, if only a turbulent market is a profitable market, restoring "calm" must restore a certain instability, otherwise, it would be senseless or counter effective. The purpose of bailouts in financial dromocracy, then, is not only the restoration of market liquidity as such, but its provision while maintaining profitable arbitrage opportunities. A certain amount of turbulent instability is necessary for financial dromocracy, I conclude in the fourth section; a dromological vindication of Minsky's (2008) work.

1. Financial Dromocracy

What I call "financial dromocracy" in this paper is a designator for the economic, social, and political effects resulting from the quantitative and qualitative dominance of what Philip Cerny calls the "infrastructure of the infrastructure": "growing pressures from more complex and volatile international capital flows and the increasing impossibility of insulating national economies at both macroeconomic and microeconomic levels." (1994: 223). Financial dromocracy occurs in a trifurcated speed-space: as material electronic impulses traversing a fiber optic, microwave, and satellite circuitry; as arbitrage opportunities, i.e., as differentials perceived and seized by certain economic actors; and as what I call "ripple effects" where arbitrage in one such economic differential instantaneously changes others, removing and providing arbitrage opportunities.

Financial intermediation is a form of exercizing power, a dromocracy: it controls "the distribution of time" (Virilio cited in Breuer 2009: 233). Being faster than others is a very classical tool of social rule: "In most known societies, the position of the ruling classes was based not least on the fact that, compared with the ruled, they had greater speed at their disposal." (Breuer 2009: 222) Embodying this dromocratic advantage in a society whose "finality is the finality of the economic genre" and where "success is gaining time" (Lyotard 1988: xv), financial dromocracy has become dominant to the point where "economic production and exchange are shaped first and foremost by financial and monetary imperatives." (Cerny 1994: 226) By the same token, financial dromocracy introduces a specific form of space into material capitalist production. This space is governed by the dominance of "new communications technologies, from the telegraph to satellites, [which] produced a comprehensive network in which all the surfaces of the globe are directly present to one another." Not the revolutionalization of production, but that of circulation was thus the decisive advance that began the "deterritorialization" basic to modernity, providing the conditions for a new "technological space" that is not geographical, but rather a "speed-space." (Breuer 2009: 223) This speed-space is trifurcated. Two of its dimensions are well-known and theorized: the infrastructural dimension and the arbitrage dimension. My emphasis here is on a third, which I call ripple effects; likewise, well-known to financial practitioners, but undertheorized as to its spatio-temporal-dromological structure.

Financial intermediation consists of messages traversing financial circuits and subject to portfolio allocation decisions: buy and sell orders, profits and fundamentals, price differentials, risk coefficients and value-at-risk, IPOs and quarterly earnings reports. Each of these traverses space in two simultaneous ways: as electronic impulses in their circuits, and as becoming-arbitrage. In all cases, speed is at the heart of the financial economy's conduct because its main activity is arbitrage, i.e., the profitable exploitation – and hence removal – of price and other differences before any competitor notices them (Shleifer and Vishny 1997). With respect to the former, transmission velocity is subject to technological, geographical, and infrastructural boundary conditions. "Location matters" since the exploitation of arbitrage relies on the discovery of price differentials at higher speed and lower cost than competitors, an arms race has developed over the technological means to transmit and retain messages whose content are infinitesimally small arbitrage opportunities (Hau 2001). For example, Bloomberg's Terminal service allows access at lower latency rates than its competitors, thus speeding up the receipt of market data by those subscribing to it and allowing profits based on this competitive edge (Edgecliffe-Johnson 2012). Likewise, ultra-low latency connections are built at great expense between trading platforms to shorten transmission times (Troianovski 2012).

Nevertheless, electric impulses are fundamentally equal on this technical level, moving at the speed of light, which means that the profits of arbitrage lie not in the impulses themselves but in their exploitation as differentials: speed "is not a phenomenon but a relationship between phenomena: in other words, relativity itself." (Virilio 2008: 12) The speed of arbitrage is independent of what Virilio calls the "true velocity" of material transmission of electrical

impulses (though locational differences do engender or hinder profits); it is a question of the "virtual velocity" of the content of these electrical impulses – the becoming-arbitrage of the differential they indicate (ibid). This becoming-phenomenal, however, it not necessarily its becoming-sensible to human beings. An arbitrage opportunity is a phenomenon in Virilio's sense, a difference in two related data points. Finding and exploiting it thus a question of pattern recognition, not human recognition (Kittler 1993: 58-80). It is the recognition and removal of an arbitrage opportunity by computerized algorithmic transaction before a competing algorithm notices it (Xiong 2001).

Arbitrage opportunities are differentials between two data points: two prices and their difference; two trading platforms and their transmission speed differential; two market segments and their liquidity difference; two sets of legal environments and their constraint difference; and so forth (Shleifer and Vishny: 35-37). The realization of an arbitrage opportunity is identical to its algorithmic removal in a light-speed transaction. Thus, any given arbitrage opportunity is constituted out of a mass of other differentials which, in turn, are potential arbitrage opportunities. Once the profit in any specific arbitrage opportunity is realized and the opportunity removed for competitors, a multitude of other differentials are set in motion – a change in one of them is a change in all of them (Virilio 2008: 23). If the price of aluminum falls due to arbitrage – whether real economic arbitrage, where large amounts of aluminum are transported across U.S. state lines, or financial arbitrage through insurance instruments – the aluminum-to-wheat ratio changes, which has effects on the price of oil and other commodities, and so forth for currencies, stocks, sovereign bonds, and other financial instruments (Kocieniewski 2013).

This introduces the third layer of financial dromocracy in a Virilian speed-space: a rippling-outward of differentials through integrated global financial markets because one arbitrage opportunity realized instantaneously changes an endless chain of differentials, in turn representing so many opportunities to arbitrage. This occurs instantaneously: a change in one differential is automatically a change in all other differentials. Yet, this instantaneity is a phenomenal instantaneity, i.e., it is in turn internally bifurcated. The rippling-outward of differentials is partly a matter of electronic transmission whose real velocity is light speed. Partly, however, it is the becoming-arbitrage of these ripple effects to the algorithms reacting to them. News of the arbitrage opportunity is identical to the arbitrage opportunity itself – as a price differential changes, the computer system recognizes this change in the instant it occurs. If the information were to reach the computer system any later, this difference would in turn be subject to arbitrage – in this case, hardware adjustments towards greater speed of transmission and/or pattern recognition; terminals and microwave connections.

Thus, each localized occurrence instantaneously becomes a generalized occurrence: financial dromocracy depends on constant, endless, systemic instability (Minsky 2008: 219-245). What is often called "crisis," or even "irrationality," is thus not at all out of the ordinary: on the contrary, it is the structure of dromocratic normality (Shiller 2005; Roitman 2014). "[U]ntil now, with the supremacy of local space-time, each of us was still exposed only to a specific accident, one precisely located; with the emergence of world time, however, we will all be exposed (or, more precisely, overexposed) to the general accident." (Virilio 2008: 69) Each local event instantaneously ripples outward to every other financial phenomenon, "the delocalization of action and reaction (interaction) necessarily implying the delocalization of all accidents." (ibid) All regional events are arbitrage opportunities engendering endless further series of events rippling outward. As each is hedged against and speculated upon, all join the generalized accident where speed-space is instantaneous.

Global real economies are shaped decisively by the dominance of this financial dromocracy (Cerny 1994: 226). They, too, increasingly resemble ripple effects. Two empirical examples illuminate this in particular: the May 2010 market turmoil between Greek riots and the so-called "Flash Crash," and the 2015 market corrections in China. In both cases, liquidity gyrations spread through the "infrastructure of the infrastructure," across borders and market segments, trading platforms and asset classes. To financial dromocracy, all of these boundaries are so many arbitrage opportunities, and in both cases, the "general accident" (Virilio 2008: 69) is also a generalized arbitrage opportunity (Minsky 2008)

Events in May 2010 mark a localized accident rippling outward to become a general once. It exemplifies how the trifurcated structure of financial dromocracy reconstitutes even the most capillary ends of the contemporary political economy. The day's epicenter wason the streets of Athens, Greece. On May 5, 2010, a demonstration of 200,000 people had assembled on Syntagma Square, where the Greek Parliament is situated. The protests, initially peaceful, consisted of a rather varied crowd: right-wing and moderate unions shouting populist and nationalist slogans (TPTG 2011: 261), groups of protesters not affiliated with any group – mainly protesting social security cuts proposed in the recently introduced austerity budget –, and presumably groups affiliated with SYNaspismos (the precursor to current main opposition party SYRIZA – the "Coalition of the Radical Left"), KKE (the Communist Party), and an

anarchist contingent. Property destruction began relatively soon (ibid). Moreover, some protesters attacked a Marfin Bank branch with Molotov cocktails. In the subsequent fire, despite attempts to save them, employees Paraskeui Zoulia, Aggeliki Papathanaspopolou and Epameinondas Tsakalis died (Occupied London 2010b).

While one of the immediate questions was why employees were in the bank branch at all when downtown Athens was otherwise empty (Occupied London 2010a) – three members of the Marfin executive board have since been convicted of manslaughter (ekathimerini.com 2013) – the event naturally had a number of other ramifications, particularly on the communities attempting to resist austerity. Seen from that perspective, May 5 not only marked the reactionary counter-movement: in times of "crisis," it was not only possible for Greek media to separate "anarchist violence" from genuine protests, but also for Greek politics to discredit the entire protest as a disruption in a time when "national unity" was needed (Lynteris 2011: 210, Kaplanis 2011: 217). Some of these gestures were also reinforced within the anarchist movement itself, in which a series of quasi-purges occurred after May 5, attempting to separate genuine social movements from neoliberal subjects whose only concern was, as was suggested, "anarchy" as a brand of fashion or a form of dogma (Flesh Machine 2010).

Yet, dead bank clerks by themselves or Greece alone have never been relevant to global capital flows. Messages spread and profliferated; arbitrage opportunities emerged. Between May 3 and 7, 2010, catalyzed by the protests, Greece's sovereign bond risk premia relative to Germany rose from 545 basis points on May 3 to 968 on May 7. Simultaneously, rapid increases in European peripheral yield spreads over German sovereign bonds occurred for Portugal, Spain, Ireland and Italy. The simultaneity of the yield spread movements suggests that this is not due to the countries' fundamentals (Lo Conte 2009: 344; Claessens et al. 2010: 269; Blyth 2015: 62-73). For example, country fundamentals do not seem to be sufficient to explain Italy's distress – despite its dual economy and high debt levels, the country had never been in danger of becoming insolvent (Belke 2011: 685; Pusch 2012: 3; European Commission 2012b).

Rather, the mechanism by which arbitrage opportunities proliferated – the transmission from localized to generalized accident – was 'sovereign debt of European peripheral countries' as a contagious asset category. On May 6, 2010, Moody's (2010b) issued a report indicating that the Greek "sovereign weakness," through banking connections, could spread not only to Portugal, Spain, Italy and Ireland, but also to the United Kingdom. The report itself is certainly very cautious – emphasizing several times that each of "these countries' banking systems faces different challenges of different magnitudes," that the Italian banking system in particular had been "relatively robust so far," and that the questions addressed in the report depend on a variety of factors, particularly European bailout funds (Moody's 2010b). Nevertheless, there appears to have been a contagious dynamic which went beyond individual countries to a class of countries (the "PIIGS" countries) – and even beyond this class: for example, to Great Britain (Blyth 2015: 71-73).

Perception of the UK financial system's integrity immediately became compromised. Already on May 1, 2010, some had warned that while Britain's fiscal situation was not comparable to Greece's (particularly because of its independence from the euro zone), it was nevertheless subject to a variety of pressures: particularly because of public sector borrowing in response to its financial sector's 2008 distress, as well as "[t]he market's assessment of the impact of a hung parliament" (Allen 2010). With Greece and Portugal in the line of fire on May 6, 2010, "UK banks were London's biggest fallers yesterday [May 5, S.E.] on the FTSE 100 share index" (Pilditch 2010). Stuck between American and European markets and hence the ramifications of the 2007/2008 crisis (Coates and Dickstein 2011: 60), and engaged in austerity (Mullard 2011: 188), the UK's inclusion in the dynamics of May 5 and 6, 2010, promised disastrous effects on already fickle markets since the British banking sector was extraordinarily large relative to GDP and held significant amounts of UK sovereign debt (Treanor 2010).

Announcements like Moody's warning about effects of downgraded Portuguese sovereign debt on Portuguese bank balance sheets on May 5, 2010 suggest another avenue by which Greece's news rippled outward: the European banking sector and its significant cross-border exposure to Eurozone sovereigns' debt (Lucarelli 2011: 208) as well as interbank interconnections (Schüler 2002). "Moody's Investors Service has today placed under review for possible downgrade the senior and junior debt ratings of all ten rated Portuguese banks. The rating action has been triggered by the review for possible downgrade of the Aa2 ratings of the Portuguese government." (Moody's 2010a). On the other hand, an even more important indication is that on May 6, 2010, the European Central Bank board of directors, in its monthly meeting, decided that the ECB would set up a mechanism to purchase European sovereign bonds directly in the secondary market – a major reversal of policy (Bastasin 2012: 202). The mechanism formally announced on May 9 and taking effect on May 14, 2010 was the Securities Market Programme (SMP), which remained in effect until it was replaced by Outright Monetary Transactions (OMT) in September 2012 (ECB 2010b: 2; Ewing

and Erlanger 2012). The SMP succeeded in its main task, market making on the secondary bond market (Lucarelli 2011: 210, Giannone et al. 2012: F479; Eser and Schwaab 2013: 3).

Yet, the Securities Market Programme decision shows that the European events of May 2010 were embedded into – and themselves engendered – global ripple effects due to financial dromocratic interconnections. That Great Britain came to be implicated in the events of May 2010 could, perhaps, still have been explained by geographical proximity and institutional ties: after all, while the UK may not be a member of the euro zone, but it is (as of writing this) a member of the European Union and European Economic Area. Yet, the Eurozone had long been embedded into developments seemingly entirely unrelated, yet connected by the global field of differential ripple effects. Greek sovereign debt ratings had become questionable when a debt restructuring occurred in November 2009 in Dubai (TPTG 2011: 256; Lane 2012: 56, Fn. 2). Likewise, the ECB board of director's decision to attempt to flatten Eurozone yield spreads was not so much a reaction to Greek fiscal difficulties and more to the so-called "Flash Crash" on May 6, 2010 (Bastasin 2012: 201). Already on May 5, 2010, global stock markets had fallen considerably in reaction to Moody's warning regarding Portuguese contagion – and despite good news about US labor market fundamentals, which is another indication that financial dromocracy cares little about real economic fundamentals (Pepitone 2010). On May 6 itself, "[i]n one of the most gut-wrenching hours in Wall Street history" (Twin 2010a), a computer error led to a selling cascade which became "the biggest one-day point decline on an intraday basis in Dow Jones history." This, in turn, sent new and additional shock waves through global markets, with gold and US treasury bills (both safe-haven investments and thus indicators for market distress) spiking at record levels and markets in Europe, America, and Asia "extremely volatile" and reaching new lows across boards despite good news from Asia as well (Twin 2010b).

U.S. stock markets as well as futures markets reacted negatively to these new developments in Europe (Moon 2010a, Moon 2010b, Krudy 2010). Even seemingly unconnected events, such as a Brazilian bond issuance scheduled for early May 2010, a globally dispersed series of initial public offerings, as well as East Asian currency exchange rates, were affected by what observers called a "global anxiety" in early May 2010 (Schwartz and Dash 2010). Even the first traces of the US debt crises of 2011 and 2013 can be found in the events of May 2010, as Greek debt contagion engendered early seeds of anxiety regarding US federal government deficits – despite the continued safe-haven status of US T-bills (ibid). Yet, this 'global anxiety' also presents a global field of arbitrage opportunities. Investors oriented towards 'safety' chased German Bundesanleihen, U.S. Treasury Securities, and gold. More adventurous portfolios contained East Asian currencies, making use of the profit margins offered by their volatility. To be sure, this was bad time for real economic IPOs and Brazilian bond issuance, but financial dromocracy had few problems profitably reallocating their portfolios.

Though taking place on a far less global scale, the June-August 2015 Chinese market correction nevertheless shows that instantaneous ripple effects structure financial dromocracy. In June 2015, a Chinese stock market bubble burst which had long been fueled by excess leverage in an overoptimistic investment climate (Gough 2015). In July and August 2015, respectively, stock markets fell again, these times more significantly (Denyer 2015). As in the May 2010 ripple effects, ramifications of these initial events crossed the boundaries of their respective trading platforms and country borders. As investors attempted to remove Chinese stocks from their portfolios, flights-to-safety occurred, raising prices of U.S. Treasury Bills as well as the value of the Dollar. Between June and August 2015, the return associated with U.S. two-year, five-year and ten-year Treasury notes decreased by a third, a fifth, and a fifth, respectively, as demand for them increased (U.S. Treasury 2015a).

Here again, technicalities have political effects, as U.S. exports thereby become more expensive, potentially decreasing their volume and threatening domestic employment – while simultaneously increasing American purchasing power for goods produced in China and elsewhere (Roach 2012). This, in turn, may depress U.S. stocks (Lim 2015) and did indeed depress sales of firms globally operating and importing into China – particularly for luxury goods (Serafino 2015). Once again, the ripple effects present a maze of arbitrage opportunities arising instantaneously as depressed U.S. stocks lead to higher-valued commodities, for example (Lord 1991). Likewise, each arbitrage realized changes a differential – price, legal, geographical – thus changing all differentials: depressed Chinese stock values decrease U.S. stock values both directly and indirectly, via flights-to-safety to U.S. Treasury Securities (Xindan and Zhang 2013). In turn, each of these remote effects is instantaneous as its virtual velocity is identical to its real velocity: becoming-phenomenon is becoming-arbitrage, which is removing-arbitrage.

Each tiniest accident's effects ripple across the globe since they change price differentials across the entirety of the financial dromocratic field: "immediacy of information immediately creates the crisis" (Virilio 2009: 208). Yet, since financial dromocracy is nothing but the becoming-arbitrage and hence the disappearance of individual price

differentials, these accidents are normal arbitrage opportunities (Kregel 1998; Rodrik 2011: 89-111). What is a field of cacophonic chaos for real economies and policy makers is a field of generalized profit to financial dromocrats. As algorithmic trade carries the day, human sense-making is irrelevant and "the frailty of reasoning power," as Virilio would have it, does not prevent profit (2009: 208).

2. Financial Dromocracy and Bailout Sovereignty

Yet, both examples also illustrate that financial profits can only be realized under volatile conditions if sufficient liquidity is present. Financial dromocracy is not invincible. It requires a twofold state intervention. States provide sovereign bonds as portfolio-stabilizing assets, i.e., partly as liquidity provision, partly as raw data based on which market actors can engage in arbitrage (Lou et al. 2013). Secondly, states provide outright bailouts – liquidity injections whose ripple effects in turn obey dromocratic structure. In this section, I discuss them in turn. In both cases the generalized accident, though no "crisis" in the sense that the financial system was actually endangered by any of its myriad arbitrage fluctuations, does delineate the stakes of financial dromocracy and hence the precise form that such outside interventions must take.

As human sense-making is incapable of keeping up with algorithmic arbitrage, "a new and final form of cybernetics, at once social and political, has emerged in the history of society. Our democracies have every reason to fear it." (Virilio 2008: 84) This form of cybernetics is insufficiently explained by depictions of market "herd behavior" (Lux 1995) mired in "panic" (De Grauwe and Ji 2013). Nor is it merely a form of technocratic expert rule, "the growing power of experts who silence every thought that does not originate from instrumental-technical thought" (Stehr and Grundmann 2011: 86), although the power of rating agencies has been criticized in this vein (Bartels and Weder di Mauro 2013; Fuchs and Gehring 2014). Rather, financial dromocratic cybernetics occur in the trifurcated speed-space described above, the fundamental structure of which is the rippling-outward of differentials presenting endless series of arbitrage opportunities.

Individual assets are as much inscribed into ripple dynamics as market actors at large. Moreover, real economic actors providing assets come to be inscribed into them as well. The most important of these is the state, the conditions of whose sovereign debt issuance present an exemplary case of financial dromocratic cybernetics whose effects are ill-explained when "decision makers" and other anthropomorphizations are invoked. In the Eurozone as in the case of the United States, the United Kingdom, and increasingly China, the state fulfills a role as an insurance provider of tier 1-eligible assets (Lo Conte 2009). More than just setting funding flows in motion to or away from sovereigns, cybernetic automatisms based on financial dromocratic ripple effects constitute and reconstitute, establish and reestablish the state as a market producer of assets inscribed into arbitrage ripple effects and their algorithmic arbitrageur circuitries.

The system of dromocratic arbitrage into which the state is embedded when producing sovereign bonds and being rated according to its ability to do so is qualitatively different from the state's own administrative language establishing territorial sovereignty and administering laws. At stake in the state's market incarnation is the its ability to credibly produce assets of a quality superior to other assets, thus opening at once a liquidity provision and an arbitrage opportunity for market actors (Eaton 1993). I discuss the liquidity provision aspect first. When producing sovereign bonds, the state acts as a producer of assets endowed with specific regulatory privileges. Sovereign bonds issued by the U.S., Canada, all Eurozone member states, the U.K., and a handful of other states are eligible to be weighted as tier 1 capital on bank balance sheets for the purposes of leveraging and banking sector stress tests (EBA 2011). [2] That is, a bank holding sovereign bonds worth €100 may lend by a factor multiplied by its leverage ratio (say, 5) to engage in any financial transaction (say, €500) (Epstein and Habbard 2013). Likewise, U.S. financial actors hold U.S. Treasury Bills as well as German and other Eurozone sovereign bonds as tier 1 capital (Noeth and Sengupta 2010). Since leveraged transaction are one of the primary sources of global financial instability – after all, a leveraged transaction involves a multitude of lenders who are indebted to one another, leading to cascading lending withdrawals if doubt arises about the quality of just one of them, which occurred in 2007 – the status of sovereign bonds as portfolio stabilizers is crucial (Minsky 2008: 38-41). If the value of sovereign bonds remains stable, banks enjoy the ability to engage in leveraged transactions subject to leverage ratio requirements, ensuring the liquidity of the financial system. In this way, states can be said to provide liquidity.

Equally important, however, are the arbitrage opportunities provided by sovereign bond issuance. German, U.S.,

and U.K. bonds present opportunities to "park" money otherwise threatened by financial instability (Roley 1980; Longstaff 2004; Pusch 2012). For other countries, particularly in the Eurozone periphery, arbitrage can become significantly more problematic. Here, too, cybernetic ripple effects of financial dromocracy are at work. If Greece's bonds decline in value, for example – yet remain eligible to be tier 1 capital under the European Capital Requirements Directive – this decreases the volume of the portfolio containing its sovereign bonds not just by the value reduction of sovereign bonds, but by this reduction multiplied with their leverage ratio. For every $1 fall of the value of the sovereign bonds in the above example, the size of a firm's portfolio contain it would decline by $5. For this reason, it is individually rational for banks to sell sovereign bonds in the secondary market (and demand higher interest rates in the primary market) as soon as 'doubts' arise – i.e., as soon as the Greece-Germany differential becomes phenomenal as a dromocratic arbitrage opportunity.

Each country's asset production is inscribed into regulatory cybernetics; in Europe, via government bond holding by the integrated European banking circuitry (Lucarelli 2011); in the U.S. as global safe haven asset (Longstaff 2004). In this way, countries become investments as differentiated arbitrage opportunities by phenomena complementary to the contagion discussed above, so-called "flights-to-safety" (Pusch 2012: 2-6). Both peripheral and core countries come to be inscribed into self-reinforcing movements between asset classes. For countries – just like firms – these present themselves as interest rate hike spirals where investors choose the sovereign bonds of so-called "safe havens," countries with undisputed good records as targets for their investments. Yet, these records are not achieved by countries themselves, but are rather effects of market self-referentiality allowing the countries in question to maintain their own good records independent of their own domestic policies: investors moving funds to "safe havens" decrease the interest rates of these countries' sovereign finance, thereby improving their fiscal position independent of its fundamentals (Engel 2015). This way, the U.S. was able to weather its own debt ceiling crisis without losing access to market funding – the downgrade by Standard & Poor's in 2011 was proved unimportant in light of the absence of a similar downgrade by the other ratings agencies (Sullivan 2011). Likewise, Germany has at times paid negative interest rates on short-term bonds (i.e., investors paid Germany to invest into its bonds), thereby gaining upwards of €100 billion in unpaid interest relative to a non-crisis scenario since 2009 (Dany et al. 2015).

The example of May 2010 discussed above, however, illustrates that many countries experience the opposite effects. Arbitrage to safe havens is arbitrage away from non-safe havens – whether from countries whose bonds are not eligible as tier 1 capital to countries whose bonds are, or from peripheral countries within this class to core countries within this class. On May 6, 2010, Moody's released a statement (amended on May 21) in which it stated that it "reviews all rated Portuguese banks for possible downgrade." (Moody's 2010b) This downgrade, in turn, was a ripple effect triggered by "the review for possible downgrade of the Aa2 ratings of the Portuguese government" (ibid) following the deterioration of Portuguese lending conditions, a ripple effect of Greece's predicament. Simultaneously, however, Moody's also stated that the banks in question had been placed on review because of "the impact of the challenging economic and financial market conditions on the banks' standalone credit profile." (ibid) On the surface, these statements mean that Portuguese banks' portfolios are coming under scrutiny; seemingly a constative statement. Firstly, their scrutiny is due to their holdings of Portuguese government bonds whose value was likely to deteriorate given flights-from-contagion and which could therefore possibly no longer fulfill their role as debt securities (Lo Conte 2009: 347). Secondly, it was due to the Portuguese government's difficulties rolling over its debt after being downgraded which, to Moody's, posed the question "to what extent a potentially lower-rated government will be able and willing to support its banking system." (Moody's 2010b) Yet, despite its constative appearance, Moody's statement marked a performative escalation from the so-called sovereign bond crisis to an interbank market crisis: with this statement, the gates were opened for sovereign bond contagion to spill over into interbank contagion as cross-border holdings of Portuguese sovereign debt by non-Portuguese banks spread doubts about their portfolios.

Portugal's attempt to uphold its full faith and credit – its market function of liquidity provision – thus came under fire from cascading ripple effects outpacing it on all fronts of its virtual velocity, i.e., from its function of providing raw data for arbitrage. Betting on further fiscal deterioration and downgrades, flights-to-safety from Portuguese to German and U.S. sovereign debt, interbank portfolio restructurings, CDS spread explosions, and the other global events of May 2010 with their effects on wholesale and European interbank lending all combined to outpace Portugal's attempts to retain its full faith and credit, i.e., to outpace "contagion" (Twin 2010a; Twin 2010b).

Investments into countries are thus not investments into fundamentals, as the literature claims (Eaton 1993; Panizza et al. 2009; Stiglitz 2010). Criticizing "hot money" markets on the grounds that they are – and that they are insufficient in this regard is likewise problematic (Strange 1998). They are self-referential exploits of arbitrage

opportunities posited by establishing which countries are safe havens and which are not, what investment is safe or not, which arbitrage opportunity yields more profit than others and so forth (Manganelli and Wolswijk 2008). Market speech is performative speech (Austin 1965; MacKenzie and Millo 2003). It steers lending flows exercizing power over the real economy and fiscal solvency of countries and companies alike. The state, embedded into financial speed-space, must engage in market speech, offering its sovereign bonds as a product among products embedded into self-referential financial lending flows following arbitrage opportunities. Financial dromocracy reembeds state functions, subjecting state performance to asset requirements. It thereby embeds the state from its classical slow dromocracy to a fast dromocracy, inscribing it into the trifurcated cybernetic speed-space of arbitrage. A sovereign rating, for example, establishes its virtual velocity against the state's virtual velocity in establishing its own full faith and credit in the context of so-called 'contagion,' i.e., ripple effects and arbitrage opportunities.

The state's establishment of its full faith and credit – both for those states profiting and for those suffering from flights-to-safety – is always already a reestablishment under attack from market speech and facing the task of outpacing it so as to not fall prey to arbitrage. Yet, another state function looms under financial dromocratic conditions. Beyond its role as portfolio stabilizer, Portugal also had to rescue and stabilize its banking system in 2014 (Goncalves 2014). Here, markets are endowed with an agenda-setting power: they technocratically "define situations and set priorities." (Stehr and Grundmann 2011: 46) Firstly, they set the obligation to sustain the financial system without shortening its profits (Mirowski 2013): "[w]e had to do whatever we could to help people feel their money was safe in the system, even if it made us unpopular, even if it helped individuals and institutions that didn't deserve help." (Geithner 2014: 213) State bailouts – the American Troubled Asset Relief Program as well as the European Stability Mechanism – are refinanced by sovereign debt issuance, which means that states rescuing their financial systems remain beholden to their dromocratic rule while doing so. Liquidity provision must remain subject to arbitrage provision. States therefore have an ongoing obligation to prioritize debt servicing (European Commission 2012a: 6-7). As Ireland's finance minister Brian Lenihan put it in 2009: "We need to persuade the international markets that we are capable of taking the tough decisions now to get our house in order." (cited in Considine and Dukelow 2011: 191)

The state can thus bail out because of its full faith and credit. Yet, as said above, this full faith and credit is always a reestablishment subject to the trifurcated speed-space of financial dromocracy. Both ways in which the state is embedded into financial dromocracy alter its temporality. The state's bailouts rely on full faith and credit at once established and threatened in the engagement of state sovereignty with financial dromocracy contained in sovereign debt issuance. They derive their credibility not from the majestically glacier-like temporality of duration guiding the state's classical violence of law, order, and territory (Lefebvre 1991: 278-282). States are tasked with not just adhering to the performativity and technocratic legitimacy of market speech, but also with uphold it at its, and not the state's classical virtual velocity, outpacing instantaneous ripple effects.

Under these conditions, duration and history disappear; "all that remains is a real instant over which, in the end, no one has any control." (Virilio 2008: 18) Unlike the temporality of sovereignty as a territorial monopoly of legitimate violence, which is built upon duration, market-contested state speech is built upon the trifurcated structure of financial dromopolitics. "Implicitly doing away with the "historic" time of politics – more precisely, of geopolitics – and exclusively promoting the "anti-historic" time of the media, the general spread of real-time information causes a radical divide beside which the industrial revolution will pale into insignificance." (ibid: 70) This is not to say, as many a neoliberal anti-statist has claimed, that state speed in classical sovereignty had been slow (Castells 2010: 461-467). Blitzkrieg and **levee en masse**, bullet, warhorse, and flight have all been predicated upon strategic and tactical speed (De Landa 1991: 68-78). Rather, I maintain here that classical state speed is based on a politics of duration. To be sure, sovereignty has to be renewed constantly (Hobbes 2008: 186-193). Yet, this renewal is that of a static order; it is always **restauratio**, **renovatio**, or **rinascita** (Lefebvre 1991: 254-291).

By contrast, the state in financial dromocracy is embedded into all three levels of its speed-space. The state's announcements must be received with the same real velocity as other news in financial monitoring systems. Secondly, its virtual velocity must be higher than that of arbitrageurs. An attempt to restore Portugal's full faith and credit, since it would lower the yield spread between Germany's safe haven bond and Portugal's, must outpace those arbitrageurs taking advantage of the spread – i.e., so-called flights-to-safety. Thirdly, Portugal must try to outpace instantaneous ripple effects, since its distress offers a plethora of simultaneous opportunities for arbitrage, thus incentivizing speculative attacks against it (van Rijckeghem and Weder 2002). Outpacing these differentials, in turn, would tip the scale the other way, potentially engendering self-fulfilling arbitrage opportunities lowering Portugal's interest rates – turning it into a safe haven. It is not enough anymore to defend domestic tranquility; the state is situated inside of the financial field and must stabilize it (Foucault 1990: 92-102). As such, the exercise of dromocratic state sovereignty

must remain within the boundaries of financial dromocratic intelligibility: as market-stabilizing asset issuance, as divine intervention of state bailout and, most importantly, as attempted outpacing of market speech in its trifurcated speed-space.

3. Lehman, AIG, TARP

"Crises" such as the 2007/2008 turbulences posit a peculiar problem in this regard: a contradiction between the necessity of liquidity provision and the problem that arbitrage opportunities close in the course of such provision. Here, too, financial dromocracy relies on the state to uphold both. State sovereignty is incarnated under financial dromocracy as sovereign debt issuance – exposing the state's full faith and credit to the arbitrage supported by the tier 1 capital status of the sovereign debt issued – as well as the outright restoration of market liquidity by bailouts. However, the latter also "calms" markets, i.e., closes spreads and removes arbitrage opportunities arising from turbulent markets (Norris 2011). The 2008 bailouts of the U.S. financial system by the Treasury show that even hegemonic reserve stabilizers like the United States, frequently seen to be above the fray of market turbulence, must conform to financial dromocratic requirements they cannot control (Cerny 1994: 227-228).

The so-called subprime bubble had begun unravelling between mid-2006 and late 2007. As housing prices had declined sharply and foreclosures mounted, asset pools and repackaged securities became problematic. In 2008, Lehman Brothers, Bear Stearns, and Merrill Lynch, investment banks with large exposures to these assets, went bankrupt or were sold off (Roubini and Mihm 2011: 104-105). When this occurred, calls for U.S. bailout dromocracy mounted. The first response – allowing the bankruptcy of Lehman Brothers – was partly intended as a message to "moral hazard fundamentalists" that the U.S. government was not going to let the previous years' financial practices go unpunished (Geithner 2014: 445-450). More importantly, however, I argue that it was an attempt on the part of the U.S. government to maintain its status above financial dromocracy, maintaining classical sovereignty based on duration: "By denying funding to Lehman suitors," said then-president of the St. Louis Federal Reserve, James Bullard, "the Fed has begun to re-establish the idea that markets should not expect help at each difficult juncture." (cited in Morgenson 2014)

On the other hand, taking over Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac and bailing out AIG, as well as the eventual Troubled Asset Relief Program (TARP) were designed to restore financial liquidity (Kindleberger and Aliber 2011: 24). Yet, both of these messages has effects beyond their intentions and thus illustrate how firmly even the United States are embedded into financial dromocracy. Significantly, they intercepted each other and resulted in an interplay which added at least as much 'insecurity' – i.e., arbitrage opportunities rippling outward – as they alleviated.

The decision by the U.S. treasury not to support Lehman Brothers in September 2007 is often cited as the decisive factor turning what had been a looming liquidity shortage due to market distrust emerging from the subprime sector into a full-blown crisis. Prior to the announcement of Lehman filing for bankruptcy (15 September 2008), immediately followed by U.S. Treasury secretary Paulson's statement that the American government would not interfere with the proceedings, investment banks and commercial banks came under fire (Roubini and Mihm 2011: 110-111). Not saving Lehman exacerbated ripple effects which had originated in the unravelling of subprime securitization where "[m]ortgages of various qualities" had been "rearranged into packages of various sizes and estimated qualities and sold to investors." (Magdoff and Yates 2009: 61)

One of the techniques by which subprime mortgages had been securitized and which had made their unravelling systemically pervasive was asset slicing. Here, a mortgage's first ten years of repayment (principal plus interest) were separated from its second ten years and its third ten years. This way, the original mortgage was converted into three separate vehicles, each with an independent credit rating. The first, more secure vehicle – where payment was more likely – would ideally get a higher credit rating, yet yield lower prices on the secondary market where it would be sold, since its risk was lower (Financial Crisis Inquiry Commission 2011: 113-118). In reality, however, all three tranches would get equal triple-A ratings and be sold at roughly equal prices (Hull and White 2012). Moreover, buyers of the tranches would repackage them further and sell them elsewhere (Magdoff and Yates 2009: 61). The annulment of just one mortgage was therefore bound to have ramifications rippling far beyond its originating financial institute.

Asset repackaging and its unravelling exhibit the ripple effect characteristics of financial dromocracy. In a hot potato market, the strategic dissimulation of what is really contained in any given financial asset is identical to the asset itself, whose sole purpose it is to be repackaged as quickly as possible (Financial Crisis Inquiry Commission

2011: 129-133). When repackaging functions properly, the dissimulation is successful and the difference between the subprime content of each tranche and its triple-A packaging does not enter the realm of Virilian phenomena (Virilio 2008: 12). Markets subject to "yield panic" will invest in ever riskier loans and ever more complex and interdependent financial instruments, raising market risk to ever higher levels while kicking their own cans down the road – with a profit (Hau and Thum 2008: 716). By the time the difference between the triple-A packaging of the tranche at hand and its actual subprime content becomes visible, the "crisis" has begun (Hull and White 2012). the localized doubt about one such asset – the discovery of the localized accident – is identical to the generalized doubt of all such assets (Virilio 2008: 69). Kicking the subprime can down the road of financial repackaging entails an ever longer chain of dissimulation whose emergence as phenomenal dissimulation is identical to the unravelling of the entire chain, i.e., the generalized accident.

By the same token, generalized unease mounts, not least because black-swan doomsaying is a profitable business whose prophecies are often bound, and indeed guaranteed to eventually be true (Roubini and Mihm 2011: 38-60). Once "doubts" about just one asset on someone's portfolio arise – i.e., the information that there was dissimulation – the surface of triple-A assets falls apart everywhere into three separate statements: that there was dissimulation; what had been dissimulated (i.e., the subprime character of the asset); and most importantly, that the sudden emergence of the difference between the former two requires a portfolio restructuring away from the asset. Thus, three further movements occur: repackaged assets and asset pools are cancelled or disassembled; insurances, bets, and financial instruments come due, in turn causing downgrades and margin calls, recalling liquidity and distressing the portfolio holding the asset in question; and general distrust of repackaged securities emerges, removing incentives to continue lending and hence the ability to maintain leveraged portfolios (Kindleberger and Aliber 2011: 257-258).

By 2007, financial actors distrusted each other's portfolios: what if the asset they were sold to was a covered-up toxic asset? (Roitman 2014: 60) Interbank and intra-market lending froze up. In the days after the Lehman collapse, U.S. financial sector lending volumes declined dramatically. This was only the tip of the iceberg, as already "in mid-August [2007, S.E.], borrowers had trouble rolling over maturing issues. The quantity of commercial paper outstanding dropped precipitously … the relevant market threatened to become almost functionally illiquid. […] No data exists on the quantity of interbank lending, but anecdotal evidence strongly suggests that few loans were actually occurring" at the LIBOR rates reached in late 2007 (Cecchetti 2009: 60). When Lehman Brothers collapsed, interbank market interest rates "increased by a factor of 30 to 40 relative to the interest rates on US Treasury bills" (Kindleberger and Aliber 2011: 258). Financial dromocracy ground to a halt: with disappearing flows, ripple effects and hence arbitrage opportunities disappeared. The U.S. Treasury's attempt to remain above the fray and merely preserving the order of financial dromocracy as such had failed.

Never mind the original mortgage borrowers, for whom almost no relief was offered. In this situation, as said above, it was the primary – almost exclusive – task of the state to preserve the field of financial arbitrage through outright liquidity provision and at minimal reduction of the profits of the firms rescued. This is precisely what happened subsequently. To be successful, the bailout message sent had to fulfill a number of presuppositions. First, the state must assert its bailout ability – i.e., its sovereignty operationalized as full faith and credit according to the demands of financial dromocracy. This was not much of a problem for the U.S. Treasury, whose full faith and credit is supported by its status as a global safe haven asset producer (Longstaff 2004). It does not seem as if this status could ever be endangered – even the 2011 and 2013 debt ceiling standoffs and a downgrade (!) have not been able to challenge it.

Secondly, it is important to remember that this safe haven status comes at the expense of other asset classes – non-U.S. sovereigns and commodities in particular (McCauley 2002). Thus, a different kind of obligation arises, as important or even more important than full faith and credit as such. As the state restores liquidity by outright bailout and its refinancing through sovereign debt issuance, not only do some spreads close (TED in particular) and some commodities prices go down (gold in particular), but markets "calm," which is to say, arbitrage opportunities are somewhat harder to come by (Norris 2011). This puts the additional, but no less important obligation on the state to orchestrate its bailout such that it preserves systemic liquidity without depressing arbitrage opportunities – and hence profits – too far.

Moreover, this had to happen quickly, as the Lehman bankruptcy set cybernetic ripple effects in motion through financial speed-space: "[t]he result was a sudden hoarding of cash and cessation of interbank lending, which in turn led to severe liquidity constraints on many financial institutions." (Cecchetti 2009: 57) By late September 2008, yields on short-term U.S. Treasury Securities were at zero or negative, which meant that safety-oriented investors paid the Treasury to hold their money (U.S. Treasury 2015b). Clearly, another state signal needed to be sent. When the

American International Group (AIG) came under distress in September 2008 as its structured debt securities were affected by the general unravelling of financial assets after Lehman's fall and its liquidity dried up, this proved decisive (Geithner 2014: 191-192). The bailout was approved on the same day AIG's distress had emerged, 16 September 2008 (Stein 2012: 99). Speed was crucial as the virtual velocity of the AIG bailout signal had to be higher than those of "doubt," i.e., the lending freeze increasingly grinding financial dromocracy to a halt (Karnitschnig et al. 2008). Likewise, saving only AIG would leave arbitrage opportunities intact since it, too, would be only a minimal intrusion into financial dromocracy.

Yet, by the same token, the localized response to the general accident was not enough, as a sense persisted that AIG might have been a singular occurrence (Egginton et al. 2010). Spreads indicating market turbulence reacted adversely: the TED spread between the three-month LIBOR average and the yield of three-month U.S. Treasury Bills, commonly used as indicator for market turbulence, did decline somewhat from 3.03 on 17 September 2008 to 2.9 on 26 September 2007, but reached its peak at 4.3 only on 14 October 2008 (Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis 2015). After all, a merely localized response was subject to its instantaneous undoing by ripple effects presenting arbitrage opportunities; in this case, towards "safety" and hence drying up liquidity.

The exercise of sovereignty by the U.S. Treasury was thus surrounded and shaped on all sides by the cybernetic effects of market dromocracy. Would the bailout of AIG remain the only one, setting the Lehman ripple effects back into force? Would the bailout of AIG signal an override of the Lehman signal, calming markets? By the same token: would calmer markets mean less turmoil and hence less opportunities for arbitrage and the profits derived from arbitrage? Would this mean that profit from turbulence would have to be made now rather than later, i.e., that it was individually rational to worsen the collective situation? The only general response to the general accident, preserving financial dromocracy as a whole and its arbitrage opportunities – was the inauguration of the Troubled Asset Relief Program (TARP) in early October 2008. Only its blanket guarantee, it seemed, could outpace the instantaneous virtual velocity of asset unravelling and restore liquidity (Geithner 2014: 224-227).

To preserve arbitrage opportunities at the same time, TARP's mode of deployment remained that of a signal akin to the AIG and Lehman, rather than deriving its efficacy from its actual investments. To be sure, TARP supported asset relief and financial portfolio recapitalization in a total volume of $426.4 billion (Tracy et al 2014). However, TARP payouts and actual support measures did not start until October 28, when the US government acquired shares from five large investment banks, while its calming effects on markets were exhibited earlier, immediately after the initial announcement of these takeovers by the US government on October 14 (Solomon et al. 2008). Nor did the majority of the transactions pursued through TARP amoung to simple asset purchases. Rather, the U.S. government bought a minority of assets, while negotiating mergers and otherwise giving guarantees (New York Times 2008). Shares TARP acquired came without assuming operative capital over the companies involved (Solomon et al. 2008). Finally, the program was refinanced by the issuance of Treasury Securities, thus providing safe haven assets at the same time as the outright bailout – and hence maintaining the arbitrage opportunities posited by depressing commodity prices and foreign sovereign bonds.

To be sure, even after TARP's initial rollout markets remained at considerable unease, as international financial ripples and the bankruptcy proceedings of General Motors and Chrysler lagged on, combined with a recession in the US real economy (Yellen 2009). The TED spread, a measurement of credit risk perception, fell back to its pre-October 2008 level only by January 2009 (Federal Reserve of St. Louis 2015). Monetary policy to date has not recovered, as even seven years after the crisis an increase in Federal Reserve interest rates was ill-received (Hilsenrath and Leusbdorf 2015). Nevertheless, TARP achieved its objective of "calming markets." Trading volumes went up again as US interbank market interest rates decreased (Roubini and Mihm 2011: 178-179). In 2010, the recession was declared over (Hulbert 2010). Not only had TARP's virtual velocity indeed been faster than the ripple effects activated and exacerbated by the uneasy coexistence of the previous AIG and Lehman signals; it has also succeeded in restoring the financial system's profits were restored and the entire dromocratic edifice.

In all three cases, then, Lehman, AIG, and TARP, sovereignty under market dromocracy even of the world's safe haven asset producer remained beholden to trifurcated market speed-space. As state speech moves with the same real velocity as market speech, its virtual velocity must outpace it. Attempting to preserve the state's rule merely as neutral arbiter is not enough – as the Lehman case shows, it is interpreted by markets as a non-intervention, which is an intervention in the sense that it does send a message. By the same token, a real bailout of just one institution solves nothing as it is merely a localized response to a generalized accident. Markets calm not because individual institutions are being supported, but because it is announced that they all are being supported. The real occurrence of a bailout is a derivative function of its virtual announcement in the dromologically saturated landscape of financial information

arbitrage.

By the same token, TARP did not "assuage fears" or "restore tranquility" so much as exchange one particular arbitrage circuitry with another one. The profits which had been made with subprime lending and which moved into TED spread speculation and banking consolidation during the "crisis" have moved to other arbitrage opportunities: commodities, a resurgence of partly dark pools of complex assets, and Chinese stock markets. After 2012 in particular, commodities trade increased significantly, including the aluminum arbitrage acitivites mentioned above (Ascher et al. 2012; Baer 2015). TARP guarantees have also allowed portfolio diversifications in other directions, such as dark asset pools (in 2014 in particular) and Chinese stocks (Mooney 2015). What has not been achieved is the actual purpose of TARP, the restoration of lending to the American real economy: "Treasury … provided the money to banks with no effective policy or effort to compel the extension of credit. […] It was therefore no surprise that lending did not increase but rather continued to decline well into the recovery." (Barofsky 2011)

What then was the real effect of "rescue" state speech if its stated effect – "[w]e had to do whatever we could to help people feel their money was safe in the system" (Geithner 2014: 213) – has evidently not been achieved? When state speech "stabilizes" financial dromocracy, it delivers data to the algorithmic circuitries of financial intermediation. Depressing some spreads and opening others, state intervention delivers the markets from lending freezes and restores their funding flows across arbitrage opportunities. Some of these are helpful to the state itself: US Treasury Securities remain highly desired. Yet in the vast majority of all cases, state speech is merely another signal in the labyrinthic maze of financial arbitrage; globally integrated yet significantly disconnected from the real economies of the world.

4. Conclusion: Persistent Crisis, Arbitrage and Instability

Another example for this would be the European case, where the equivalent to TARP was a mixture of a program by the European Central Bank called Outright Monetary Transactions (OMT), combined with a rescue facility for governments called European Stability Mechanism (ESM). As in the case of TARP, the actual occasion on which markets "calmed" were not these programs themselves, but their announcement, i.e., ECB president Mario Draghi's now famous message that the ECB would do "whatever it takes" to save the Euro in 2012 (Rachman 2014). In the Eurozone "crisis," too, a generalized response to a general accident seemed necessary – and as in the American case, the Eurozone crisis is still on-going and growth in the Eurozone has yet to be restored (Shambaugh 2012; Blyth 2015).

Much like the post-crisis United States, the Eurozone has yet to return to robust growth because neither of the two economies has been able to restore lending to its real economy. In the US, tapping into financial markets has been difficult for real economic firms since 2007. In Europe, too, where bank lending to businesses is their main source of refinancing, this lending has been lagging since 2009, with no sign of picking up (Abbassi et al. 2015). In both cases, this has been despite the effects of the generalized 'rescue' statements, TARP and Mario Draghi's 'whatever it takes.' (Likewise, beyond the scope of this paper, this has in both cases been despite ultra-low interest rates.) The modus operandi of financial dromocracy, as this paper has argued, is to maintain a certain permanent degree of market turbulence or "crisis." There must always be enough instability for spreads and differentials to present arbitrage opportunities. Yet, the level of instability must never reach to point where liquidity stalls. This is where the state comes in. Indirectly, it restores liquidity as a provider of safe haven assets allowing leveraged transactions. Directly, the state restores liquidity in a lending freeze through outright bailout programs. Yet, as TARP and its European equivalent OMT show, this must in turn conform to financial dromocratic presuppositions, restoring liquidity without flattening arbitrage opportunities or assuming executive power over financial businesses.

Thus, this paper has shown three elements of state bailouts under financial dromocracy: their trifurcated structure corresponding to the speed-space of financial dromocracy; their reconstitution of state speed from duration-based domestic tranquility to the outpacing of financial dromocratic ripple effects; the persistent necessity of upholding a certain amount of instability for the financial circuitry. Moreover, I have argued here that financial dromocracy not only reshapes and reconstitutes state sovereignty, but also global real economies and economic policies towards maintaining persistent instability. Financial dromocracy, the "infrastructure of the infrastructure," operates by pervading, reshaping, and remodulating every aspect of the global economy as a generalized field of arbitrage opportunities. This is an exploitative and parasitic strategy vis-a-vis global real economies (Rodrik 2011). Since these

global arbitrage opportunities are best exploited under conditions of permanently maintained financial instability – secured and preserved by state funds harnessed as sovereign debt and outright bailout – financial dromocracy reconstitutes the world not just as a field of global arbitrage, but also as a persistent and global "crisis."

Endnotes

1. Parts of this paper's second section were presented at the 2014 annual conference of the ISA South in Richmond, VA. A different version of parts of the first section has been published as "What the Eurozone crisis can tell us about Sino-American relations" in the Virginia Tech Institute for Policy and Governance's Reflections and Explorations: A Graduate Student Commentary. I would like to thank Scott Nelson, Max Stephenson, and the respondent at ISA South for their insightful feedback on the different versions of this manuscript.

2. In this respect, it is noteworthy that only a handful of states – all of which are members of the Five Eyes, the Eurozone, and the BRICS group – are eligible for this under Basel II and Basel III regulations. Since a significant portion of global leveraging and resulting contagion relies on this status, however – particularly in the Eurozone, where it is arguably responsible for the GIIPS' suffering, as I will argue below – this leads to the somewhat surprising conclusion that sovereign contagion and resulting crises are actually luxury phenomena. Countries whose sovereign bonds are not eligible as tier 1 assets cannot be subject to the lending dynamics in the Eurozone crisis.

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Endangered Humanities at a Time of Crisis in the EU and Beyond: Shrinking, Downsize and The Itinerant Academic

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I am still convinced that our transmitting the message of ancient arts and civilisations to our age is of fundamental importance. To fulfil this task could not be easy in our civilisation in which the humanities are pushed into the margins but just therefore the role of out subject is indispensable for understanding our roots, identity and task. Moreover, I wish you pleasant adventure in the discovery of the unknown and never give up!

— Jan Bouzek, June 2015

Going Public at a Time of Crisis?

Swift changes to the organizational structure, funding and teaching of the humanities in many countries across the EU, as well as of the cultural heritage sector, have resulted in many speaking of the future of the humanities as "endangered." In particular, fields such as history, archaeology, anthropology, classics and modern languages have received some of the stronger blows. The present article deals with the challenges and outlook of a subset of the humanities (mainly archaeology, ancient history and anthropology) and the cultural heritage sector in the European Union (EU). It examines EU and national policies on academic research and heritage management, including the impact on its practitioners. Its aim is to delineate the current state of affairs, highlight efforts at the professional group, national and international levels so as to address some of the existing problems and suggest new avenues for tackling these issues. In a nutshell, it addresses the crux of the issue: why invest in something as "shaky" as the humanities dealing with the past, at a time of precarious present and future?

The ongoing economic crisis that has severely affected Europe has had a detrimental effect on the humanities and on the heritage management sector. Different approaches by national governments coalesce on the point of the curtailing and downsizing measures employed, albeit in different ways. These policies, despite glossy and high-pitched rhetoric as to the contrary, work in tandem with a broader tendency to undervalue and demote the role of the humanities in contemporary European societies, mediated via national and supra-national authorities. This tendency, however, goes hand-in-hand with the market-oriented and "technocratic" ethics of the neoliberal economic model that has permeated Europe, where the open, democratic political debate is being increasingly replaced by unchallenged, top-down decision-making by unelected agents of supra-national institutional structures that pursue specific sets of economic goals. These goals recurrently and consistently fail to address existing, large-scale social problems, while setting the precedent of substantial democratic deficiency. The severe repercussions of these developments have reached a visible zenith during the past five years. As such, the demotion of the humanities in Europe is symptomatic of a general crisis of values in Europe that is manifested in a wide array of social and political phenomena.

By and large, the challenges that humanities face are multifaceted and complex, with impact on the academic disciplines, the cultural heritage sector and the lives of their practitioners. How are we poised to address these

challenges with the state and super-state apparatuses and with the public in such rapidly-changing socio-political circumstances? What will the outlook be over the next twenty years? What is the future of academics? The difficulties that the academy faces have been explored in breadth in the past few years. In a recent volume (Killebrew and Scham 2015) the difficulties faced by archaeologists, in particular, are explored in detail, offering advice, through personal life narratives, on how to carve meaningful professional paths outside academia. The perspective hinges mainly on the impact of the neoliberal policies and realities on the individual. Almost two decades ago, a different type of article by McGuire and Walker (1999) addressed the same problems from the lens of how professional groups should respond to the wider institutional framework of the academy and the cultural heritage sector. My goal here is different from both these approaches. I will frame the analysis in terms of how the function of institutions requires reform, but also in terms of the individual's necessary contribution as a member of a collectivity, underlining group responsibility and action as solutions to issues that can be dealt with institutionally through collective initiatives.

But why is this important in the first place? Why is it important to maintain funding for archaeology and ancient history departments, why indeed study archaeology or ancient history at all even in the wealthiest countries of the EU, since chances are, graduates will end up scrambling for a living? Why not fund departments that will provide these people with the means to address the needs of a technologically forward, economically salient 21st century world? Framing the debate, I will respond to these questions after sketching out the backdrop of the neoliberal policies on research and education that characterize EU and national agendas, and which reflect the functional underpinnings of the EU. I will show how they privilege the "interests of the market" to the detriment of quality of research, public good, and social vision. First, I analyze the structure and effects of the EU and national policies on academic research and heritage management in the EU so as to examine the policy responses to the EU economic crisis vis-à-vis mainly archaeology and the cultural heritage sectors, using case studies. I will address the measures taken to counterbalance the economic crisis as this affects humanities, the impact of these measures, the challenges and responses that they pose.

The discussion will be integrated in a critical analysis of the EU structure and function, which has shaped policy that disfigures research, both directly via EU policy, and indirectly, through the latter's influence. This will be followed by an in-depth analysis of what constitutes a "EU at a time of crisis," using specific examples. This part is indispensable to understanding EU and national policy on research in the humanities during this time. This is not only because EU policy affects directly research in the continent. Essentially, the financialization of research and its obsession with metrics-based evaluation on the level of EU policy transcends legal documents and borders, and crystallizes in social mentalities of what is of value within the individual member states, independently of official EU policy. Thus, subsequently it is perpetuated in an authoritative, top-down and unchallengeable value system, independently of the supra-national policies that gave rise to it, through the grip of the neoliberal market forces on national policy bodies and university management.

Additionally, the market-oriented EU areas of competence indirectly impinge on the function and value of the humanities vis-à-vis the public. Discourses on their inherent value are gradually being replaced by ideas on how to promote a cultural product intended for public consumption, thus taking a narrow view of their function and creating a deterministic frame of perceiving the value of the humanities. This ideological determinism permeates policy but also finds a new life in the ideological preoccupations it perpetuates and reproduces through the training and employment of new generations of academics and heritage practitioners – often done unconsciously of the biases in which the educational-academic system has been embedded.

Two case studies will be used. Since different EU member states are governed by different legislation, characterized by widely different traditions in educational approach and heritage management policies, case studies will be country-based, rather than theme-based according to sector. This will facilitate a holistic understanding of the way the economic crisis was approached in each case, and the measures and responses to it, as the underlying historical and social realities in different countries vary widely. The alternative way of adopting a sector-based examination that would lump examples from across countries in each case (research funding, heritage management) endangers a superficial analysis that glosses over major, country specific differences of historical dimensions, thus distorting the understanding of the processes involved. So as to offer a representative sample of the variety of challenges and responses, the two case studies selected are countries at the opposite ends on the economic ranking within the EU, and whose approaches to the study and value of the humanities regarding the ancient past are radically different: The Netherlands and Greece. For example, the Netherlands' different approaches to heritage management, as well as to the funding and teaching of archaeology, present a different pattern of challenges and responses than in Greece, where the state apparatus plays a predominant role in both academic humanities and the cultural heritage sector. One

point of convergence appears to be the deployment of an array of similar measures of "counter-acting" the crisis, which result in the demotion of the value of these disciplines, albeit orchestrated in different ways.

The Functionalist Europe: Technocracy, the Reduction of the Political and the Democratic Gloss

The ongoing economic crisis aggravated previously existing difficulties, inadequacies and weaknesses on several levels. These are the outcome of weaknesses in EU legislation relating to policies concerning the allocation of research funding and the paths that new research is expected to take, as well as to particular national priorities with regard to these issues. Effectively, while speaking of the current "state of the humanities" across the EU is valid in as much as a basic central EU policy framework, with funding tools, exists for the allocation of research funding, along with EU-wide heritage management policy guidelines, deep-rooted structural differences at national level create a disparate mosaic of problems and outlook across different EU member states.

So as to understand such policies, and the responses to them, one needs to understand how the EU envisions itself, its structure, goals and actions. Increasingly, the European dream, as a union of socially democratic countries, appears withered, with many perceiving it a chimera of an optimistic period of economic growth. The rhetoric of leaderships across the continent has followed an increasingly nationalistic and self-referential tone in the past half-decade, permeating media and social opinion, which yet lacked meaningful substance on the role of the EU and its future. While this may have been startling for people raised with the European dream as an attained ideal, these developments pivot on the very conditions and structures of the establishment of the EU. The Treaties of Paris (1951; "European Community of Coal and Steel") and Rome (1957; "European Economic Union") were concerned with the creation of a tax-free zone for trade in the commodities of large industries (steel and coal), unencumbered from transaction costs. This "common market" goal, progressively expanded, and with it, the concept of the common market was substituted by that of the "single market." With the Maastricht Treaty (1991), the expansion of the goals and range of actions envisaged by the Union did not entail a modification of the essentially functionalist underpinnings of its formation, i.e. as an economic-industrialist group brandishing the banner of geopolitical stability, even as it morphed into the **European Union** (e.g. Bartl 2015: 33).

The problems, therefore, are rooted in the origins and structure of the EU since its conception. Several studies emphasize that the substantive democratic deficit in EU governance is the direct outcome of the functionalist underpinnings of the EU. Bartl (2015) demonstrates two main reasons for this: 1. the narrow range of topics open to democratic debate with the EU and 2. the depoliticization of EU goals and policymaking, leading to increasingly shallower debates, which replace genuine political debate on politically salient matters, substituting them with discussions on "procedural" matters about how the **a priori** goals would be best implemented. Thus, concerns such as social impact, health, environment etc. remain outside consideration, because the expansion of the "market" silently privileges all other concerns.

The principle of subsidiarity, aiming at weakening this democratic deficit, was introduced with the Treaty of Lisbon, but its implementation has so far led to a further strengthening of the democratic deficit (Bartl 2015), as was predicted early on by its critics, some of whom favored the principle of 'proportionality' instead (Davies 2006). Since the principle of subsidiarity is often used to expand EU competencies on social matters (i.e. matters beyond the framed competencies of the EU), it results in aggravating the democratic deficit by entering the parameter of "market" into policy-making on socially salient and others matters, where the "interests of the market" should not be of relevance or at least not of primary interest (Bartl 2015). Seen under this light, the substantial democratic deficit and lack of interest in things "non-economic" in EU governance, as well as the commonplace, transnational criticism that the EU places center-stage the economic benefit of oligarchies at the expense of majorities, is not a source of surprise.

The above observations, common in the legal discourse, however, shadow the causes behind this approach of privileging the market-related competencies over other concerns — as if the EU legislative-executive power nexus were impersonal or as if describing a natural ecosystem where things "just are" by nature. Rather than symbiosis, the EU nexus of power increasingly recalls more interrelationships akin to parasitism. In reality, the bias behind the goal setting of the EU promotes specific interests, national, corporate or those of lobby groups, which is clearly seen in an additional parameter of governance, the unaccountability of emerging power structures. These parameters will be

discussed below, as they affect directly the new climate of decision-making in Europe and the resultant disfiguring of "ideals" in EU discourse, central to research and public education.

Economic Crisis and the "Neutrality of Expertise"

The EU economic crisis took the cue from the 2008 USA collapse of mortgage bonds, showcasing several of the widely acknowledged contributing factors (lapsed ethics, standards and accountability of financial institutions, failures in risk management in corporate and national governance). What was never officially stressed to the European public was that a monetary union that was not based on a financial union would present many problems and inequalities even without an imported economic crisis. Ironically, however, the process of monetary "harmonization" caused divergence within the EU, bringing to the fore latent centrifugal forces. European Central Bank (ECB) policies were structured in a way that favored strong economies, such as Germany, from the outset. A monetary union based on a strong currency, with the Deutsches Mark (DM) as its predecessor, could not but work detrimentally to the economically weaker countries, whose economies relied on a cheaper currency that boosted exports and supported growth, one also which—importantly—they could regulate. A union that was only monetary and not fiscal was prone to falter very soon – as it did. In addition, the artificial imposition of a debt ceiling at 3% of public budget for its member states further aggravated the situation (Douzinas 2013), especially since Germany continues to break EU law by keeping its surplus higher than the allowed limit while demanding observance of the debt ceiling from others. The simple truth that within the monetary union of the EU one country's surplus is another's deficit appears to have escaped many. The resulting EU **à deux** vitesses functioned as a catalyst for a dynamic of further erosion within the EU, as a deepening economic crisis was easy to precipitate under these conditions.1

The main response to the crisis was to set up **ad hoc** mechanisms (ESM, ESFS, temporary liquidity mechanisms from the ECB and "loans" by the EU/IMF) disguised under the mantle of financial control and fiscal discipline. These were ill thought out, and had one main target: to nationalize private loss and privatize national profit. Budgetary policies on national level repeatedly were portrayed on the ranks of the EU as having to appease private credit-rating companies in the USA, which often betted against national economies – in essence rendering private bodies situated across the Atlantic as stakeholders in national policy-making of sovereign countries in Europe.2 The measures taken were allegedly "technocratic," aiming at the amelioration of the economy through neutral, expert knowledge. Throughout the crisis, however, several world-known economists contradicted the wisdom of austerity meted out for the southern European countries by the EU elite. The rationale was that lowering budgetary expenses would lower debt. In reality, the contractionary, extremely recessionary measures (severe lowering of wages, pensions, accompanied by unprecedented and irrational tax hikes) led to increased unemployment, mass closure of business, mass individual and business migration, a situation that led to a downward spiral of the economy. The measures, instead, benefited the lenders (e.g. Germany) whose cheap supply of money through the ECB was lent at much higher interest rates to the countries to "be rescued" – a phrase that perpetually continues to remain in EU official debate, and remarkably, it is not used euphemistically.

The bias of the functionalist goal-setting as shown in the responses to the crisis consists in labeling strategic decisions on politically salient matter "technocratic," i.e. allegedly apolitical decisions, leaving open questions as to what constitutes good governance within the EU. Masquerading measures taken with strategic interests in mind as neutral and expert, thus "technocratic," leads to axiomatic assumptions about the nature of policy a country needs to follow, and stops all dialogue at its tracks. While the rationale behind the measures is not allowed to be discussed, "heeding the agreements" has become an EU **mantra**, whose rationale is never put to discussion even though they obviously do not work: not in the case of Portugal, Cyprus, Spain, Greece or Ireland. This practice was responsible for the collapse of dialogue between the EU and a newly elected Greek government of January 2015, which led to a national referendum and subsequent elections in July and September of the same year respectively.3

Greece is a case in point, and will be used below to demonstrate the absurdity of the policies followed, if the ostensible, proclaimed reasoning behind them is taken at face value. The imposed measures have led the country to an unprecedented socioeconomic collapse, and have failed and continue to fail with no end in sight,4 even in the admission of the IMF. The organization, however, despite its own belated selfcriticism5 continues to administer the same measures that have already proved a patent failure. Further such austerity packages continue to be even against agreed terms, six years on. While the amelioration of the Greek economy cannot be the real aim, asset

stripping on the pretext of fiscal deficit and the recapitalization of Franco-German banks, which had predatorily invested in Greek state bonds over a number of decades from the 1990s, due to them yielding higher interests than in domestic financial institutions (Varoufakis 2014) may come closer to the real agenda.6 The response of the EU to the worsening situation that could endanger Franco-German banks was a nationalization of private debt and privatization of national profit: thus through three so-called "Memoranda of Understanding" (MoU) (also known as "loan agreements" and "rescue packages"), the debt of French and German banks was turned into public debt, which affected mostly Greek tax payers, even as it was distributed across EU countries. In essence, the bonds issued by the Greek state and held by foreign financial institutions (predominantly German and French banks) amounted to a 'debt' that was distributed across EU nation-states as national debt through the famous PSI mechanism. Effectively, this EU plan forced European nations to pay for the recapitalization of German and French banks and other financial institutions that had made unwise investments over a number of years. The costs of these measures taxed (literally) mainly the Greeks, who were subjected to onerous loan agreements simply to maintain payments to the lenders and so as to keep servicing an ever-increasing debt.7 This is because the so-called rescue packages consist in a mechanism of "servicing an ever-increasing debt," which means they are used to refinance various western European banks, as imposed austerity further worsens the economy and thus increases the debt (e.g. Varoufakis 2014) As the EU-prescribed austerity continues, which has none of the allegedly expected results, this process is perpetuated **ad infinitum** because the austerity program creates more debt, and thus more avenues for creating profit for the lenders. Tellingly, while Germany has pressed for crippling austerity in Greece so as to stave off the crisis, it chose a different path for itself, fiscal stimulus, which led to quick economic recovery (Karanikolos et al. 2013: 1324). The crippling austerity imposed on Greece followed other failures of the EU, namely the attempt to curb cross-national inequality by focusing on the reduction of differences in macro-economic indicators, without taking into account the domestic (national) context (Papatheodorou and Pavlopoulos 2014).

In parallel, a system of appropriation of Greek public property was set up, so that national property could be "privatized" in crisis-induced prices. This consists in the EU structuring a new fund (TAIPED), essentially managed by the EU, in which the public assets of Greece are collected (state infrastructure, coastlines, groups of airports, energy companies) and then expropriated at a tiny fraction of their true value, with the money allegedly contributing to the reduction of an ever-increasing, through the austerity policies, unsustainable debt. The public assets themselves come into the hands of often foreign, private consortia, established in the countries that demand the austerity policies that aggravate the Greek economy. This creates an obvious vicious circle for Greece but an incentive for the creation of austerity policies for its "lenders", especially since money lending (for the so-called aid packages) occurs at much higher rates than ECB lending in the lender-countries (which receive cheap money from the ECB and then lend it at high interests to those countries in need of "rescue"). For example, the privatization of several peripheral Greek airports (19 in number), serving small border island communities and being therefore necessary as a lifeline for these communities, was taken over by the German Fraport company, as part of this process. A main stakeholder in this company is the German federal state of Hesse (Kouvelakis 2016: 67). Effectively, the asset stripping on the pretext of budgetary deficit undermines the very process of recovery by seizing the very means the country owns to reverse the economic onslaught (Pavlopoulos 2015).

Construing thus "national interest" in a narrow way, without recourse as to whether social justice is part of it, the EU continues to implement policies that are detrimental to national entities and to the Union as a whole. The other face of the failure to address the economic crisis was the damaging, for the Union, portrayal of the crisis. Instead of communicating economic realities in a balanced way, a concerted media campaign of intently demonizing specific nations though the press by creating an ethnically-tainted narrative of profligate-lazy southern Europeans was promoted, so as to cover the EU's own structural asymmetries and the realities behind the debt. Masterminded so as to soften public opinion in the rest of Europe for the aggressive austerity policies to be inflicted on the countries to "be rescued," it sought scapegoats not in the extant regulations or practices of the Eurozone, on the predatory investments of financial institutions or the corruption of interconnected EU "elites" (the well-documented collusion of private and public interests) but in national entities, and the very people that constitute them, at that. The countries that were involved in the "loan agreement" programs came to be known as PIIGS (Portugal, Ireland, Italy, Greece, Spain – by chance?). Even academics, including historians were not innocent in the mediatic, ethnic demonization frenzy.8 The orchestrated, vituperative narratives were channeled through a wide array of public speeches on the part of EU officials and national leaders, reinforced by the media, reviving ethnic-based stereotypes reminiscent of the inter-war period. For most people, such lowly "discourses" formed part of a shameful period of European history, forever buried in a different era. Yet nationalistic stereotyping and clichés became the norm from mid-2010

onwards, which through repetition transcended their overt propagandistic character and dominated the mainstream political debate but also daily public life. They became factoids, "truths" that run routinely in daily life, unchallenged by logic. The hegemonic role of media was reinforced by uneven linguistic distribution that boosted real power asymmetries: while several dozen millions across the EU speak or understand to some degree French, German, and English, languages of lesser numbers of speakers (Portuguese, Greek) put an obstacle to a balanced flow of information as to what really was taking place. "The avalanche of ignorant commentary on Greece" (Douzinas 2013: 7) invited measured responses that were yet unable to turn the tide of misinformation and prejudice (e.g. Karyotis and Gerodimos 2013; Pappa 2013).

The neologism **debtocracy** emerged precisely so as to indicate new forms of colonization through, on the one hand, the induced "impoverishment-ization" policies and the recurring EU ultimata threatening weak national economies with bankruptcy (via the control of the ECB banking system across the EU), and on the other, through the strong manipulation of public opinion via the mass media. In reality, these practices reflect new forms of colonialism that take their cue straight from the 19th and 20th centuries (Hamilakis 2013).

Only the Market Matters! Contravening the EU's Own Laws

In several cases both national and EU legislation is flouted by the austerity dispensed by the EU.9 Several of the contractionary measures, for example, led to such breadth and depth of socio-economic collapse that the effects on the national populations, even biologically, were not taken into account, as EU law dictates. As a rare, critical study observes: "The Directorate-General for Health and Consumer Protection of the European Commission, despite its legal obligation to assess the health effects of EU policies, has not assessed the effects of the troika's drive for austerity, and has instead limited EU commentary to advice about how health ministries can cut their budgets (Karanikolos et al. 2013: 1330). The effects on public health across Greece, Portugal and Ireland were tremendous, yet "public health experts have remained largely silent during this crisis" (Karanikolos et al. 2013). In southern Europe alone, suicide rate markedly increased. In Greece, a country with until then one of the lowest suicide rates in the EU "a 40% rise in suicides between January and May, 2011 [was documented], compared with the same period in 2010 (albeit from a low initial rate);" major depressive episodes, and a general deterioration of public health sketch the main outlines of the dismal picture (Karanikolos et al. 2013: 1328).

This is explained by the fact that in several EU official speeches, over a number of years since the onslaught of the crisis, the rights and needs of the markets were construed as a **de facto** priority over social needs, social justice and democratic rule. The direct contravention of democratic laws and regulations of both national and EU level was implemented by direct intervention in national policies via **ad hoc**, informal (unlegislated for) formations, such as the so-called "eurogroup" (a panel of EU finance ministers) which appeared suddenly and without any legal basis in EU or national legislation. This non-accountable (to anyone) power structure has assumed, nevertheless, the powers of an instrument of both legislative and executive power for politically salient matters involving different member states, while stupendously, at the same time, its procedures, goal-setting, and regulation enforcement cannot be challenged at the EU court of justice or anywhere else, since they are non-institutional and informal, as very cynically it was made clear by the EU Commission in July 2015.10 Essentially, set outside of an EU legal framework, that is, beyond the grip of the law, the eurogroup made decisions and forced their implementation at national level in Greece, regardless of the opposition they met from a democratically elected government, regardless of the fact that the procedures remained secret and regardless of the fact that the rationale behind the aims was not discussed, as the infamous saga of negotiations on the so-called Greek debt that took dozens of eurogroup meetings demonstrates.11

Such ways of "responding" to the crisis contravene basic notion of democratic governance within the EU, as financial control bodies (that came to be known as "Troika") were formed by so-called economic experts chosen by the ECB, the EU and the IMF, unelected by anyone and not even accountable to the EU parliament. They startlingly came to replace national parliaments in shaping national policy. In practice, certain states came to be governed in large part via emails sent from abroad, amounting to the eyes of the citizen body as a parody of democratic process. Hijacking parliamentary institutions, often overtly, they assumed a less than shadowy dictatorial function that **de facto** annuls democratic legislation, presenting the austerity-inducing measures, privileging sectarian interests, as neutral, common-sense administrative measures.

Greece is a case in point. The country is currently under an officially unacknowledged, peculiar form of

"protectorate" governance.

> There is a new austerity package, with further cuts and taxes—to an economy that has already lost a quarter of its GDP. The Greek government has lost any real legislative power, since any bill has to be approved by the Quartet [EU Commission/ European Stability Mechanism/ECB/IMF] before being submitted to the Parliament. On the side of the executive power, the tax-collecting body, the General Secretariat of Public Revenue, is now fully 'independent' of the elected government and is in reality controlled by appointees of Brussels. Decrees issued by the Secretariat have an equal value to decisions of the Cabinet—this is written in the Memorandum. Then there's the Council for Fiscal Discipline, with five members, functioning along the same lines. They are unaccountable to any governmental authority, closely monitored by the Quartet and can impose cuts on any expenditure if they suspect there might be a deviation from fiscal targets, which demand a 3.5 per cent surplus from 2018. Deprived of its levers, the Greek state is also being stripped of its remaining assets. (Kouvelakis 2016: 66–67)

How did it come to this? The Greek austerity is administered through the three MoU, which were (nominally) voted in the Greek parliament, albeit after intense and protracted political pressure from abroad leading to political instability and constant elections. The voting of the first two MoU flouted the stipulations of the Greek constitution and particular legislation on passing law bills (e.g. annulling the preview time that MPs are allowed, and the preview stage of parliamentary deliberations, where laws are debated before being passed in subsequent parliamentary sessions, as happened with the 2nd MoU in February 2012). Effectively, this resulted in the MPs being called to vote on "loan agreements" that ran over several hundreds of pages of technical documents and which were given to them only the night or two before – evidently without anyone being able to read the highly legal and technical text in full.12 The undesired loan agreements, in reality, a straightjacket, led to the voting in power of a socialist government in January 2015, which was consistently undermined by its EU partners, leading to new elections seven months later and a referendum in the summer of the same year.

The third MoU was signed by a new government (Syriza/Anel coalition) that was forced to ignore the outcome of the national referendum that had taken place a few days before and while the EU had forced Greek banks to shut down for an indefinite period of time by stopping the emergency funding mechanism that is regulated by the European Central Bank. This move was aimed as a bargaining chip on the efforts of the EU elite to increase the pressure on the Greek government to accept further austerity (and recession) despite the worsening – on all fronts – situation in the country. This pressure mechanism was unprecedented in the history of the EU and disregards any notion of democracy and good governance. Despite the pressure generated by the closure of banks and strict capital controls, the outcome of the referendum was a resounding "no" against the austerity meted out by the EU elites, albeit one that was completely ignored given the prevailing asymmetries of power between a bankrupted member state and an EU with full powers over the banking and economic system of said member state.13 Punitive measures were in large part intended as setting an example to other states (Portugal, Spain) that would potentially look to Greece for alternative ways of addressing the economic crisis, beyond the anti-social EU doctrines.

The Troika-EU leadership, dominated (uninstitutionally) by Germany, forced the country already from the beginning of the crisis to completely abolish collective labor agreements – an achievement of the struggles for labors rights over the course of the 20th century – and privatize on a mass scale, ostensibly so as to service an unsustainable debt, partly created through the structural asymmetries of the Eurozone itself. The privatization program is run through the TAIPED fund, mentioned above. It is telling that in order for this fund to run from mid-2012 onwards, the law regarding the parliamentary majorities for approving bills had to urgently change on June 9, 2012 since the government had failed in a special committee in the parliament that took place the same day to achieve the necessary majority and pass it legally. Thus retroactively, on the same day, the Greek law was modified in order to accommodate the undemocratic and illegal procedures that were affecting the appropriation of public infrastructure.14 The list in the privatization program includes even profitable and healthy public companies. Such extreme measures continue to be demanded, even if their implementation in other EU states has patently failed, leading to re-nationalization. Among them, imminent is the privatization of the "public good" water corporation of Greece. Such privatizations of water companies have a history of failure in the very same countries that continue to demand them from Greece. Tellingly water companies in Germany became public in the 1990s, after the failures of privatization to maintain the quality of drinking water for public safety standards led to renationalization (Varoufakis 2014).

Thus, these measures consist in transferring the burden of responsibility and the weight of 'punishment' for the crisis completely only to one party (and a nation, at that), rather than to both sides (i.e. also financial institutions in Germany and France that invested in Greece). They do so by contravening laws, as well as at the expense of basic

humanitarian considerations, and civil rights attained over a 130-year long struggle (i.e. collective labors agreements). This is clearly unethical by various yardsticks and on many fronts, embodies a solipsistic notion of economic prosperity and absolves of responsibility the agents behind the asymmetrical power relations within the EU. Instead, the mentality of imposing the MoU on Greece and other countries annuls the main tenet behind the notion of the "investment:" that the probability of profit pivots on the possibility of loss. Instead, the MoU assure profit to the investors of Greece (i.e. banks) as well as ascertaining that any potential losses would not be incurred by them, but by EU taxpayers and Greece. Thus, stupendously they shift all the burden of investment losses to (nominally) the EU tax-payers (which receive it back through loan repayments), but mostly to Greek citizens (who are not recompensed by anyone). Thus through EU measures, the investors (financial institutions) faced no possibility of loss and had their gains guaranteed by rolling the debt onto EU taxpayers. This forms clearly a EU construction that perverts the notions of social democracy that the EU supposedly espouses. Economy being subject to politics, politics being subject to personal interest, prejudice and not rarely, arrogance, the institutional response to the crisis has teamed with errors, biases on ethnic stereotypes and "technocratic" approaches that do a disservice to the EU and its nations, socially and economically. The increasing amount of the break of ethics and lack of accountability in current EU governance amount to an enduring lack of morality in EU action, which is characterized by social injustice, punitive measures and national demonization and victimization, treating economically weak nations as if they were social pariahs that "need a lesson" on one hand, and on the other, as bankrupt companies that can be dispensed with.

EU Economic "Crisis," the Market and the Humanities

The EU already has announced drastic plans to cut funding for the humanities, as it is evident in the new plans concerning the Horizon 2020 Program, the EU Framework Program for Research and Innovation, despite the constant, official rhetoric on supporting excellence in research. A planned 35% cut to the budget relegated to the humanities was announced in October 2014 by the then EU commissioner-designate for Research, Science, Innovation (C. Moedas), presaging a deterioration of the status of the humanities in the continent.15

The Horizon 2020 program forms the main tool for research funding in the EU. The intentional shrinking of the importance that humanities appear to attain within these new plans compounds already existing problems of EU funding allocation, i.e. the low funds relegated to the research projects in the humanities, the professional uncertainty that the award of short grants (1–3 years) generates for non-tenured academics, the international mobility as a necessary precondition for obtaining them and the slim chance of remaining employed once the period of 2–3 years of post-doctoral research has been completed. Often early career research grants (in the previous ERC scheme, on the rung of € 800,000) are reserved for a tiny and ever-shrinking minority of researchers. The ensuing "bottleneck" effect translates into a significant loss of human capital and public investment, as the majority of those specialists compelled to leave academia have been educated at public expense (Saltini-Semerari 2014). It also leads inadvertently to an erratic development of research fields, whereby previously-funded sub-fields can silently disappear completely from a country, not out of a conscious, premeditated decision by some competent public committee but due to chance factors from one year to the next in the assessment of grant proposals.16

These problems compound existing inadequacies stemming from the EU framework on tertiary education. Controversial educational policies aimed at harmonizing university curricula across the EU, although they remain inadequately implemented, have begotten their own monstrosities. The Bologna Process, for example, launched in 1999, was an effort by European authorities, universities and other stakeholders to create some form of tertiary education pattern as a blueprint of standardization across the continent. The intended harmonization of Higher Education in the non-binding Bologna Process was politically enshrined in the 2007 EU Lisbon Treaty. Its premise hinged on assumptions about quality, 17 whose political underpinnings became clearer in the Lisbon Treaty (Capano and Piattoni 2011). In reality, the proposed tertiary degree system is based on the shorter, neoliberal (i.e. market-oriented) British model (BA, BSc etc.), with little recourse to the multitude of longer, more labor-intensive first-degree courses across other EU states. Its real premise was to transform universities into economic actors, which would boost the competiveness of the European universities and would render quality "quantifiable" (Bal et al. 2015, 53). Early in that process, optimistic studies concluded that increasing globalization would function as a stimulus for competition in Higher Education and force state intervention as a guarantor of high quality (Kivinen and Nurmi 2003). This optimism is difficult to maintain nowadays.

Extra-EU initiatives have also followed a similar trajectory. Archaeology, in particular, has not been aided by the Council of Europe 2007 Malta Treaty, which transforms cultural heritage management into a purely administrative procedure, in contact more with spatial planners, than with the arts and culture sector.18

Funding the Humanities or Feeding the Irrational?

Attracting external funding has become the main task of a researcher, at the detriment of the quality of his/her work output. Frequently the efforts yield no gain in grant acquisition but result in mass losses for the universities. The EU and national prescriptions of incessant grant competitions, the constant pressure to gain grants on the basis of "excellence" and "competitiveness" have actually plagued research. If tenured, the university expects a number of grants per year from staff, often setting a benchmark (Blommaert 2015); if not, then obtaining a grant, in the humanities, is often the only way of remaining employed. This is an integral aspect of the increasing neoliberal model that has encroached and "occupied" university management, education and research in Europe (Lorenz 2015; Papari 2015; Bal et al. 2014; Engelen et al. 2014; Halffman 2014).

The absurdity is well illustrated by the application process entailed in research grants. The application process is assumed by a member of staff but often supported by teams of university staff tasked specifically with consultations on the drafting of grant proposals, thus increasing the potential for success. Thus, in the effort of attracting money, the university spends financial resources when the success rate can be as low as 2% (Blommaert 2015). In some cases, the extra-academic input on supporting grant proposals reaches the degree of lobbying at the appropriate EU contact points in the respective countries. This already enters a significant bias in the system, privileging the better-funded universities, which happen to be those in the wealthier EU countries and have stronger lobbying connections (e.g. with the industry).

This external set of bias in the preparation of grant proposals is added to the inherently problematic assessment procedures endorsed by EU, and national funding bodies. The assessment is based on metrics and quantifications with little rational substance as markers of quality on the level of individual. One of them is the journal impact factor. Journal impact factors are used widely as proxies for individual research quality, in which they are misleading. The impact factor arose to denote the average number of citations to articles published in that journal in the two preceding years, which statistically is a dubious measure for assessing journal quality, much less individual article quality; yet now it has been promoted, through misuse, to a proxy for individual researcher quality, albeit without any statistical basis supporting that function (Gruber 2014, 170). Citation metrics such as the so-called **h-index** disadvantage early career researchers, as they take years to accumulate (Gruber 2014, 174–175; Burrows 2012). Additionally, citation metrics per se cannot reliably be used as a measure of quality. Factors such the author's personal position, professional networks, attempt to please colleagues etc. can increase the citation of an article; alternatively, research can be cited due to the faults or inadequacies contained therein (Gruber 2014, 171–172). This all shows that statistical counts per se are statistically worthless and meaningless in assessing quality of research.

These citation metrics become completely irrational when applied to the humanities, which use extensively print-only media for publications. Anglo-American corporations such as Google and the Times Higher Education were given the ability to "determine their own criteria of evaluation" for data ranking, for which "humanities hardly matter" (Lorenz 2015, 9). The monograph, the main output in the humanities, does not feature in these rankings. Since a great percentage of the publication output of these disciplines is in print-only journals and books, the digital-only citation counts provide worthless statistical data. Another factor distorting the value of citation counts is the size of the research field. An article in a popular field such as Olmec anthropology will attract a much higher readership and conceivably more citations than a smaller field, such as Iron Age Alpine archaeology. The linguistic bias offers another factor that renders the ranking regime an absurdity. Additionally, citation counts serve mainly mono-glottal research "markets" or at most, publications in the widely spoken languages. One could not hope to accumulate many citations writing in their (mother) tongue of Hungarian, Finnish, Greek, or Czech, even if extensive publications in the humanities are produced in European languages spoken by few million people. Yet that (low count) is not a measure of the quality of research per se. Such rankings are then unreliable in assessing one's quality of research in the humanities, yet they determine grant assessment process worth billions of euros. What is instead needed is a qualitative review of one's work, not abstract metrics that are conceptually and pragmatically unreliable as measures of quality.

An additional factor plaguing the assessment process of EU-based research grants is the lack of competence/expertise of the respective panel/committee members in the subject areas they are called to assess, as well as their often inadequate usage of extant regulation to compensate for these inadequacies. For example, panel members of

the "Human Past" in the ERC Starting Grant funding scheme, a main EU funding scheme until recently, were often inadequately versed in the broad gamut of subjects they were called to assess. The synthesis of the committees did not account for unconscious linguistic, cultural and national biases. Often the discrepancy is such that specialists in the history of 20th century history of market economics and others whose expertise ranges from medieval Frankish society to European post-war development are called to assess applications on the Neolithic in Europe, with no prescribed need to justify their assessment vis-à-vis the double peer-review of the proposals. The "redress" function that theoretically enables the applicant to respond to the assessment is merely a formality. The actual procedures followed during such proposal assessment remain a "black box" even to the consultants employed by the universities to aid the proposal preparation, or in Blommaert's (2015) word "carefully guarded secrets."

Thus, the hundreds of hours spent on each proposal submission, of several salaried individuals, per grant proposal, multiplied by the thousands of applications submitted annually amount to millions of hours spent on, effectively, no outcome. Millions of taxpayers' euros get lost, and ironically, in an effort to gain money on the part of the university as Blommaert (2015) succinctly notes. A success rate of 1.3 % for the Horizon 2020 program, as remarked in the same study, is not a mark of quality, or else "all academics in Europe are bad ones." It is clear that this process for discerning excellence through competitiveness "will have cost more millions to the EU academic community" (Blommaert 2015) – with the resources spent not on generating research, but on pointless bureaucratic pursuits. "The system of selection is, when all has been said and done, simply irrational and unreasonable" (Blommaert 2015). These factors, **inter alia**, account for the fact that despite the university, i.e. public investments, in human and financial resources, several of the larger EU grants are often referred to in various circles as amounting to little more than a **lottery**.

What is not mentioned in Blommaert's well-argued but common-sense critique, approached from a different disciplinary field, is that in the humanities partaking in this process is not merely a way for an employed academic to attain tenure or for a team to gain more funding for extending the research – but the only way for an academic to become or remain employed.

An ERC or Marie Curie grant, for example, may be the only way for a young academic in the humanities to stay employed, as university chairs become rare and even teaching positions are often non-existent or offer a low number of teaching hours that are inadequate for covering even basic expenses. Yet, an ERC proposal runs on well over 30 pages of dense text (often over 16 000 words), takes often months to prepare (either of unpaid hours or during salaried hours) and can enlist the help of several staff members, all paid through tax-payers. The applicant is expected to submit two forms, the first containing a mini-version of the proposal often running in ten pages. Unless the applicant progresses to the next stage, the "substance" of the proposal in the much longer second form (≈10,000 words), is never read by anyone – no peer reviewer, no assessment committee, no one outside the applicant and his/her advisers – if there are any.

Experience with the system leads to stalwart disillusion. Buttressing this empirical data, one can also use the statistical evidence provided by the ERC funding scheme to document the (unconscious ?) bias of the system in the distribution of grant success rates. These are concentrated in the wealthier EU states, with the stronger lobby mechanisms, and in universities that can afford grant proposal consultants.19 An EU-commissioned monitoring report on the social sciences and humanities (SSH) projects "funded under the Societal Challenges and Industrial Leadership" acknowledged that the humanities and arts formed only 9% of the funded projects (Hetel et al. 2015, 6). Another important finding was the statistical verification of what one would expect through even a dalliance with the EU funding system as an insider: there exists a wide geographical divide in the SSH contributors, as they come from the older and more established members of the EU (in descending order: Germany; the Netherlands; the United Kingdom; Spain; Italy; France and Belgium). "Together, the top seven countries account for 73% of the SSH coordinators while only 3% of SSH coordinators come from the EU-13", i.e. the eastern European countries that joined the EU recently (Hetel et al. 2015, 6). While the authors note the "geographical divide" as a crucial finding, in reality they identify a divide that is at its core political and economic, underlining the asymmetrical power relations embedded in the EU, which are reproduced through its agencies. This comes into sharp contrast with the slick rhetoric of the purported aims of "harmonization" of EU-wide research or the continuously reiterated aspirations of "excellence."

The trends described compound the already dim view of assessing academic and scientific quality broadly, where an obsession and fixation with metrics seemingly has permeated a swathe of disciplines. "They [indicators] ignore and destroy the variety of knowledge forms and practices in various fields of study. That what is not measurable and comparable, does not count, is a waste of energy and should therefore be destroyed. In the indicator game, a

book of four hundred pages published by Cambridge University Press hardly counts, or does not even count at all; a three-page article does. The specific publication system of (a part of) the natural and life sciences has been forced upon the rest of the sciences, even where it does not fit." (Halffman and Radder 2015, 167). Gruber (2014) contends "I do not know where this obsession with measuring, the urge to quantify everything comes from." That is not hard to comprehend. It is the direct outcome of the financialization of the European university through the neo-liberal reforms, which affect education and research, crystallized in EU and national policy. Lorenz (2015, 7–8) considers the corporate-dominated ranking regime of metrics and quantifications a "de-professionalization of the faculty," as the monitoring of the quality is not relegated to the professional body, but to managerial interests and political agendas "replacing professional ideas and practices concerning the judgment of quality – and thus of professional selection – by the 'metrification of output' in both the domain of teaching and of research." This obsession for quantification disadvantages mostly the humanities.

The Humanities and…Market Economics on the National Level

This already problematic framework for allocating funding (lack of transparency in the allocation of EU funding, bureaucratic and counter-productive absurdities) discussed above, is further exacerbated by a mentality of intentionally decreasing the importance of the humanities at national level, reflected in the continuous cuts to national funding. Although there exist significant structural and ideological differences across different EU national settings, individual countries have followed the same trajectory of responding with cuts in education and research of the humanities, albeit of different magnitudes.

The neo-liberal model of university that has permeated since the 1980s even those European countries supposedly shielded from rampant market-based powers is based on a new type of management that is characterized by financialization, marketization and quantified performativity. It views market control as the medium for socio-economic development, narrowly conceived (Bal et al. 2014; Lorenz 2012). Managerial controls, demands of quantifiable outputs in the form of audit with pre-set quantified goals, and efficiency "interpreted as at least the self-financing of organizations, and if possible [expectations of being] profitable" (Lorenz 2012, 605) form a radical break with the past. Institutional deficiencies derive from this business model, where dispensable staff and the institutional deficiencies generated by this model are masqueraded as "personal" lack of competence and failure. This forms a major, radical break with the past, a break from the vision of the university as a public good, open to all, sanctioned by a well-governing, democratic state.

British universities were the first to enter the neo-liberal model, whereas other countries, such as the Netherlands, are following closely. Across Europe, despite the established practices, the economic crisis has deepened the university-as-business model. Criticism has been slow to mount as the process was gradual and initially crept in silently through reformations of laws. A gradual realization of the changing circumstances caused fierce criticism, albeit the resistance from within is tempered by the precarious employment circumstances this system imposes on its staff.

The economic crisis has precipitated these developments. Austerity measures taken and the gravity of the cuts depend on economic robustness, national priorities, history of budgetary planning and public opinion. While the weaker players of the EU have opted for minimizing research funding almost in every sector, the prevailing ramping austerity mentality has not left even the economically much stronger northwestern EU members unaffected. Countries such as Greece and Portugal, which were placed under international economic supervision, effectively lost the ability to determine their own fiscal policy. For them, budget planning became the prerogative of the foreign "economists" of their respective Troikas. This is part of the reason behind the severity of the measures taken in these countries, since governance was relegated to unelected individuals whose concern was "number crunching" at all costs. In several of the wealthier countries of the EU, however, similar policies followed in the same austerity-praising mantra, responding needlessly from a fiscal perspective, with severe cuts, massive overhauls and a more "corporate-oriented" management.

Cases of "overnight" decisions to close down entire university departments, curtail museums of historical and national importance and research institutions complete the rather dismal picture of exigency in the unwarranted economically obliteration of culture capital. For example, the Swedish government announced in late 2014 that it would close down the Swedish Institutes at Athens, Rome and Istanbul. Following suit, the University of Copenhagen

announced severe cuts across the humanities, with the intended closure of the Department of Classics (February 2016).

What should the response be to such a level of threat? Should there be a concerted attempt to highlight, from a professional body's point of view, potential disadvantages? These conditions have left a vacuum of response, especially among the academic world, which due to its members' frequent mobility across international borders is not well organized in terms of voicing opposition or preserving labor rights (in contrast with other professional bodies). In publications, blogs and books, Dutch academics are increasingly criticized for "being prepared to put up with almost anything,"20 although this changed in the course of 2014-2015. One may draw a sharp contrast with the months-long sit-ins, organized by student organizations at public Greek universities. But these differing developments should be seen within their context, i.e. the tradition of consensus decision-making in the case of the Netherlands and a robust economy and social welfare system that can still support unemployed academics, in contrast with the Greek context's high insecurity and lack of avenues for professional achievements, aggravated by the abolishment of collective labor agreements since the 2010 EU intervention in the country.

Responses have often been small-scaled and grassroots, through the petitions and publications.21 On few occasions, responses to crisis-instigated measures have been successful, however. Plans to shut down the Swedish Institute in Athens, a research institution devoted to the study and dissemination of research in classical antiquity, were temporarily halted thanks to an international campaign of protest, using online petitions and open letters by academics, organizations for classics and archaeology etc.

Case Study 1: The Kingdom of the Netherlands

The Netherlands has a population of over 16 million people. It is one of the wealthier countries within the EU, although its trade-based economy is highly susceptible to any global economy oscillations. Despite its economic strength, its response to the crisis could be construed by many as "preemptive" with rapid and radical decisions to downsize, merge and close down state-funded entities. One of the differences in how this affected living standards compared to other countries is the existence of a robust welfare state that offers a safety net to those in society who find themselves in a vulnerable position, mitigating the adverse socio-economic effects of the radical austerity measures.

Attention has been recently brought to the increasing financialization of Dutch universities, institutions that are either public bodies or **verenigingen**, associations (i.e. often relying on a trust fund as well as receiving funds from the state). The financialization of the universities is increasingly turning them more into corporate-functioning entities that abstain from investing in research, instead simply trying to attract state/EU funding via individual researchers, while minimizing expenses for teaching and research. Such measures (cuts, layoffs, merging of faculties) are presented as the only way for the economic survival of the institutions involved, much like the overbearing austerity policies across the EU. Tight fiscal measures are commonly depicted by the managerial elite as a **sina qua non.**

There exist 13 Dutch universities in the Netherlands. Access to the universities is open to everyone who has finished secondary education (VWO). The emergence of the smaller Liberal Arts Colleges, as parts of the general universities, emphasizes teaching over research, but also offers more exclusive education: the tuition fees charged are considerably higher than those of the general universities and admission follows a strict application and interview procedure (Bal et al. 2014, 57).

With a change in legislation in the 1990s, the adoption of the neoliberal model of university management resulted in a top-down bureaucratic model of operation, with a strict hierarchical function, which delineated "competences" linked to "functional profiles" across a hierarchical structure (Lorenz 2015, 7). This model was advanced through the increasing financialization of the universities, where the reduction of public funding in combination with the expansion of student numbers led to a structural change towards a business-like managerial style. Ineluctably, this shift led involvement with dubious financial tactics, including the consumption of investment banking products and the speculation games they involve (Engelen et al. 2014).

The new managerial style advances the ideal of quantifiable academic output, privileging only sectors clearly linked to economic gain. Academic quality is reduced to a matter of metrics through management-organized audits. Thus, the quality of research is measured by people, systems and means not in the position to assess the quality of

work output. Lorenz (2015, 7) describes this set of circumstances as the loss of the "professional autonomy of the faculty", i.e. the undermining of its professionalism. Tenured positions become fewer, whereas the casualization of staff is the new norm, creating a cascade of negative effects for staff, students and ultimately, public education. Teachers of anthropology at Liberal Arts Colleges in Amsterdam, for example, found that the new neo-liberal, individualistic model of success, privileging personal success over public advancement of knowledge and teaching, and quantitative data over qualitative data, came into contrast with the self-reflexive epistemic methods of anthropology, but also with the central tenet of anthropology itself, which places human empathy center-stage (Bal et al. 2014).

These negative developments derive directly from state policy on the value and use of research fields, a value measured as short-term, immediate and direct financial output. Investment in research is then directly connected with the interests of the industry, through a state-sanctioned, top-down approach. "In the Dutch case the representatives of nine economic 'top sectors' have been installed by the government to determine which researchers shall live or die in the future. The 'top sectors' are: 1. Horticulture and Basic Materials; 2. Agri & Food; 3. Water; 4. Life Sciences & Health; 5. Chemical Industry; 6. High Tech; 7. Energy; 8. Logistics, and 9. Creative Industry." (Lorenz 2015, 10).

Valorization as Financial Output: A Pragmatic Approach or the Drive to Extinction?

Research funding has been almost exclusively relegated to the Netherlands Organization for Scientific Research (NWO), the main body for funding research and science, supported by the Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences. While the actual funding amounts have not been dramatically altered in recent years, new clauses and conditions that have been introduced for the preparatory stages of grant proposals significantly change the fields to which these fund are channeled. The new requirements in grant applications have been engineered to disadvantage those working in fields where no immediate economic output can be demonstrated, i.e. especially fields such as anthropology, ancient history, classics, and archaeology. The tangible, short-term economic gains expected by the state explain the recent entry of the "valorization" clause in the research grant applications, which determines which fields stay or become extinct in the Netherlands. Yet, the humanities have already suffered from lower budgets than those ascribed to other fields. This new clause is meant to measure the knowledge valorization of the research to be funded, expressed as the societal impact seen in a tangible form within 5 years, i.e. something that can be measurable or immediately demonstrable.

Specifically, this added pre-condition of "knowledge valorization" for a successful research project proposal requires from the researcher candidate not only to design and produce research that will yield some form of specified social impact – and within five years from the completion of research at that – but also to specify and organize the way this societal impact will be achieved. This clause of knowledge valorization has persisted despite initial criticism from those working in the humanities in the Netherlands. Effectively, the award of project grants impinges on the drafting of projects that include stages of research, and also some form of implementing or applying the research results. Thus, this precondition turns on its head the established practice according to which the valorization of research results (in history, archaeology, anthropology, classics etc.) is a task for those working in education policy and heritage management. Additionally, the expectation that the researcher assumes a role for which he/she has not received any relevant education or training, and which is the expertise of other professionals (i.e. the application/implementation of results, especially in the humanities) seems to come against professional ethics, encroaching on other fields, which also face high unemployment.

The valorization clause introduces a new way of perceiving the benefits of knowledge, taking a particularly narrow view of the social benefit incurred by an epistemic field. In doing so, it encourages a market approach to scientific research, with results counting as some crypto-substitute for a market price tag on the research project. This cannot but lead to the stifling of academic research. By circumscribing the value of research in such a bounded way, policy prevents academic freedom from carrying out fundamental research, and from planting seeds for the future. The expectation of tangible, measurable results within the narrow time frame of five years minimizes the temporal frame in which scientific value can be appropriated to a negligible time slot. Yet, the history of science consistently shows that some of the greater human achievements are built on the accumulation of human knowledge, painstakingly gathered with no immediate economic output in mind. Some of the most innovative discoveries and advances were based on much older findings. The 20th century leaps in astrophysics would not have been feasible without 17th century laws on gravity. Humanity had to wait for several centuries for tangible valorization, far more than the Dutch expectation of 5 years, as it has been pointed out by critics of this policy.

Thereby, archaeologists applying for research funding in the Netherlands, for example, are increasingly attempting to circumnavigate this clause by proposing the organization of small museum exhibitions related to some aspect of

their project. This may be viable if one conducts archaeological research connected to some aspect of the country's history, less so in the case of research done in other parts of the world where the infrastructure or legislation do not allow such pursuits and for which no equivalent or appropriate museum would exist to take over their organization. The process of successfully applying for a research grant awards has thus increasingly become more difficult for those working in the humanities. A classicist would be left to devise knowledge valorization projects, as an added part of a grant proposal, instead of focusing on the long-term effects of generating knowledge and its slow, trickle-down effect on society through education. Claims of useful impact, through the generation of knowledge, and social progress through the understanding of past human societies, make no strong cases for award and are therefore outright rejected. The economic crisis has thus speeded up a process of "pragmatism" and expected benefit tied into some form of economic output that had already been under way by the 1990s, with the adoption of neoliberal mindsets in university management. At the same time, since universities cuts mean no new positions, such grants are often the only way for an academic to stay employed. In the best of cases, the PhD graduates would only in part be absorbed for a short postdoctoral career. A longer-term employment becomes impossible for the majority, leading to the disappearance of expertise. To a large extent, this mentality mirrors that of the EU funding schemes.

Financialization and Protest in the Public Space

Strict austerity measures, implemented in a country with a robust national economy, one of the strongest within the EU, were preemptive vis-à-vis the potentially deepening crisis, and counter-productive, since economic growth and prosperity cannot come from attacking the knowledge society has built over centuries on the human condition. More pertinently, in addition to the immediate impact on the state of the humanities in the country, the allegedly exigent measures create a disconcerting precedent.

Articles in the media and in academia from within the country timidly started to focus on the "financialization" of Dutch universities, and by the 2010s they expressly castigated the "take-over" of the universities by corporate-style managements. Their charges aim at the cost-cutting (in the name of so-called "efficiency") in research and teaching, running Higher Education institutions as if they were companies aiming at profit maximization, at the expense of their actual **raison d' être**: the education of Dutch and other citizens and the maintenance and expansion of a society of knowledge. Already in 2009, Prof. Bert van der Spek, lecturer of ancient history at the VU University Amsterdam, an expert in cuneiform studies, was brusquely commenting that, should the VU continue to invest in flashy buildings and other dazzling infrastructure, instead of investing in research, then "wordt de VU een groot stadion waar matige voetballers spelen" ("the VU will become a large stadium where mediocre footballers play"). In 2012, news broke out that the "VU faced margin calls to the tune of €44 million on 'naked' interest rate swap contracts written out on future loans for planned real estate projects" (Engelen et al. 2014, 1072–1073). As it seemed, the corporate-style management had not actually led to efficiency. Or any measurable gains. Coupled with reduced public funding, these losses instigated austerity measures. The jeopardy of losing disciplines and jobs led to initiatives of inter-faculty or inter-university merging of departments and schools, types of restructuring that nevertheless necessitated the layoff of staff, regardless.

By the fall of 2014, unprecedented by contemporary Dutch standards mass sit-in protests were unrolling at the seat of the College van Bestuur (the management committee) of the other university of the Dutch capital, the University of Amsterdam. They went on for months, attracting the attention of international media. Organized by students and members of staff, they protested the mass closing-down, merging and downscaling of entire departments, affecting mainly the humanities. The University of Amsterdam had previously proceeded in severe cuts in the humanities, announcing the cut of entire teaching programs and the planned disappearance of degrees. The movement "Save the humanities at the University of Amsterdam," scathingly criticized the imposition of "ruthless cuts on the Humanities," starting a petition: "Teachers, staff and students unite against these destructive plans. Support the action committee Humanities Rally in its resistance!"22 Van der Spek's comment, mentioned above, stressing that funds exist for other types of investment (e.g. unnecessary infrastructure), amounted to a pillory precisely against this reality.

Geared towards the Dutch context, Halffman and Radder (2014, 175) describe the "occupation" of the university by "management, a regime obsessed with 'accountability' through measurement, increased competition, efficiency, 'excellence', and misconceived economic salvation." They call for a "a public university aimed at the common good - and at the careful deliberation of what comprises 'the common good' ", so as to "offer (world) citizens and their organizations our knowledge, even if they cannot afford it" (Halffman and Radder 2014, 175–176). They list practical

steps towards the strategic achievement of these goals, noting however that managements are impervious to these steps. Their manifesto is a call to arms, of academic sorts: exit (from academia), legal action, "muddling through and work-to-rule" (i.e. intentionally deceiving managerial controls and rankings), sabotage, collective refusal, trade union actions, mass demonstration, "contra indicators as counter-measures" (i.e. to the international corporate-produced rankings), strike, contra-occupation, parliamentary and political action (Halffman and Radder 2015, 180–185).

Celebrating Cultural Heritage While Closing Down Museums

The Netherlands Cultural Heritage Agency (Rijksdienst voor het Cultureel Erfgoed, RCE) is a state agency tasked with the management of moveable and immovable cultural heritage in the Netherlands, as well as with what it terms "mutual heritage," the aspects of Dutch heritage found internationally through the colonial, maritime history of the 16th–17th c. (e.g. in Suriname, Indonesia, as well as with foreign forms of heritage found in the Netherlands (e.g. English shipwrecks). Independent (private) archaeological companies do exist and operate under an institutional framework for the protection of the archaeological heritage, often operating in collaboration with universities. At the intersection of research and cultural heritage, the Centre for Global Heritage, at the University of Leiden aims to study and develop new ways of approaching cultural heritage studies, calling for its inherent relevance with "archaeology, the social sciences, the humanities the technical and natural sciences and the design disciplines."23

Somewhat paradoxically though, forms of culture that are considered to bring in revenue to the country through tourism are touted, such as large museums that attract millions of tourists annually (Lütticken 2014). In other cases, where such revenue is deemed of lower economic potential, the response is drastic, on the reverse. In 2012, it was decided that the public library of the Tropenmuseum, the Royal Tropical Museum of the Netherlands, which offers a post-colonial perspective on the 17th–19th century past of the Netherlands, would close down. The library's collections were literally handed out to every interested member of the public that wished to obtain a book, while part of the collection was shipped to Egypt, to be housed in the new library of Alexandria.24 And yet the Tropenmuseum is of unique importance in the presentation of national history in the country as its narrative of historical events and situations offers the much-needed post-colonial perspective, counterbalancing the hegemonic discourse of the "Golden 17th Century" of Dutch maritime trade and colonization. It offers localized narratives from Indonesia and other former Dutch colonies, demonstrating the effects of the Dutch trading network on some of the indigenous communities. By contrast, the Rijksmuseum, the Royal Museum of History, where hardly anything of the colonized people's perspective can be glimpsed in its narrative, underwent an ambitious and costly program of renovation, aiming to further raise Amsterdam's culture potential by selectively portraying aspects of Dutch history. The library of the Tropenmuseum was stunningly distributed across residents of Amsterdam who could receive a free book, if so they wished, with the rest being shipped to the new library in Egypt – a loss of historical and anthropological knowledge capital for the Netherlands.25

The archaeological heritage of the country is managed through excavations by municipal or private archaeological companies. The latter have suffered though the crisis, due to the domino effects of a lack of construction. If building projects cease, archaeological teams are not called in. Mass lay-offs were probably irreversible. A solution to that would be to increase public funding, but also public awareness and interest to the value of archaeology, as a sector that can generate information for periods of history for which no other information exists or which change the perception of historical eras. Large-scale projects such as the excavations of the Limes (northern Roman borders) can be a first port-of-call for boosting interest in a local context, in a country where archaeology is still considered a bit "fringe" as an occupation. "Without public, no Malta" (Scheerhout 2007), as was remarked with reference to the implementation of the Valetta Treaty stipulations in the Netherlands.

Case Study 2: The Hellenic Republic

The Hellenic Republic is a presidential, parliamentary democracy and member of the EU since 1982. With a population of nearly 11 million (according to the last census of 2001), it is one of the smaller EU members. Prior to the rapid expansion of EU membership to incorporate former Soviet Union members or countries under the influence of former Soviet Union, it had one of the lowest GDP in the EU. This translated into longer working hours, lower salaries and pensions, a weaker welfare state for disadvantaged social groups and an over-stretched

national health care system. Being already a "weaker link" susceptible to the economic and financial vicissitudes, the 2008 economic crisis found Greece exposed to a growth bubble (Mitsopolous and Pelagidis 2009), facilitated by the liberalization of markets, EU inflows and high-risk intra-EU investment strategies and EU subsidies for the cessation of domestic production spheres (e.g. in the primary economic sector). The onslaught brought already by the first UoM led to the complete abolishment of the collective labor agreements and the worsening of labor relations on all fronts (Ntanos 2011), with a precipitous fall on living standards, already low by western European standards (e.g. Douzinas 2013). At the same time, with resettlement and asylum policy recommendations on how the EU should act in response to the displacement of people fleeing ongoing conflict in the Middle East and seeking refuge in Europe (e.g. Fargues 2014; Fargues and Fandrich 2012/14) falling on the deaf ears of the democratically deficient EU leadership, Greece has been forced to carry out the lion's share of the burden of this humanitarian crisis (with over 1 million people arriving/passing through in the country within 2015 alone).

Humanities and Higher Education: Neoliberalism from the Outside

Education is considered a central pillar of modern Greek society, providing the basis for the development of "free and responsible citizens" as set out in the constitution.26 Thus education is considered a public good, free and open to all. Throughout all three educational tiers, the state provides free education for all residents in the country (whether citizens or not). In reality, the free education provided by public schools is complemented by a system of private tuition education ("shadow education") with high prevalence. This is meant to provide added value by providing systematic and intensive tuition throughout secondary and tertiary education. The motivation behind the emergence of this private shadow education is the increase of success in the university entrance exams, which are extremely competitive.

Greece has 22 public universities, 14 Higher Education Technological Institutes and several other specific interest Academies. Compulsory education lasts nine years. Tertiary education is optional and accessible only though the particularly competitive Pan-Hellenic competition. The Pan-Hellenic exams are a state-managed, centralized examination system which functions both as high school end exams and university entrance examination. The content of the exams is identical throughout the country. They are held at the same date and time, safeguarding unbiased and objective results as much as possible. The higher the scores attained, the more likely it is for the candidate to end up at the university and department on top of his/her list of choice.

Given that attendance at all public universities is free regardless of the university or the subject, the demand for university places is high. Thus competition in the exams serves as the regulating mechanism given the finite number of places for each degree at each university. This is in contrast to the situation in other EU countries. Some EU member states have a policy of open registration to all secondary education graduates (e.g. Netherlands, Italy), regulating increased demand for some degrees (e.g. medicine) through a lottery system (Netherlands). Other EU states relegate undergraduate admission to the individual university through an application/interview system. The level of tuition fees charged by each university for specific degrees also plays a decisive role in the degree/university to be chosen (e.g. Britain). In such neoliberal educational systems, market forces play a determining role in the type of university one chooses given differentiations in fee levels, but in Greece this is not the case (Gerasimou 2006). Academic merit (construed narrowly as success in the entry examination, but ignoring talent for extra-curricular pursuits) is the only criterion of determining admission to a particular university or department.

To preserve research freedom and shield universities from industry interests driving research, public universities are constrained in accepting private funding (e.g. for biomedical research), as is current common practice in other European states. As universities are publicly funded (in some cases supported also by charging tuition fees for post-graduate degrees), their situation is exacerbated during an economic crisis. The ideology of their function, however, has not changed towards increased marketization. Public funding for education forms 2% of the public budget, one of the lowest within the EU (Papari 2015). Since public budgets are effectively determined by committees and panels of (foreign) unelected individuals working for financial institutions (Troika), the Greek state has little leeway in addressing this, in a peculiar situation of fiscal captivity in its own legal and physical territory.

The teaching quality remains high (as attested indirectly by the high number of graduate students and academics from Greece at foreign institutions, in proportion to the Greek population). Yet the depreciation of the humanities and the social sciences comes from the low budgets that limit the appointment of new staff, and abolish university seats. Since an education in the humanities relies exclusively on the public sector, this poses a major problem for the continuation of Higher Education in the country,27 at least to the level on which it operates. The shrinking of university departments is a corollary to the underfunding of the universities. Academic libraries are shrinking and

forced to merge with significant problems met across the entire spectrum of the function/activities of academic libraries, as a result of the economic crisis (Vazaiou and Kostagiolas 2013). Further, although in Greece education is considered a "normal good" and "necessary commodity", there has always been a demand for life-long learning in Higher Education, including shadow education. The demand for Higher Education is considered inflexible (i.e. independent of other factors), although a recent study showed that the possibility of paying for the amelioration of the provision of the educational "good" is negatively affected by the salary reductions and the financial insecurity (Solaki 2014).

Unlike the Netherlands, where the financialization is a top-down programmatic approach intertwined with the state planning, the depreciation of education in Greece comes from extra-national agents that deploy neo-liberal practices to public good entities through a fiscal asphyxiation across all fronts of the national budgets (healthcare, pension system, welfare, public infrastructure).

Cultural Heritage, the De-secralization of National Imaginary and the Unraveling of the State

The ancient past in modern Greece forms a powerful cache of resources from which to draw on so as to express authoritative power and high moral point in the present (Kotsonas 2012; Hamilakis 2012; Hamilakis and Yalouri 1996). As such, the organizational aspects of fields related to the ancient material culture in Greece are governed by a distinct set of mentalities regarding the fields' importance to the very existence of the state. Any cuts to services have a demonstrably different degree of significance in the eyes of the public than those in other European countries (Hamilakis 2012b; Hamilakis and Yalouri 1999; Karakasidou 1994). Given a long history of looting and transfer of antiquities to countries outside Greece, the state through its agencies is legally the sole entity tasked with heritage management.

The (mostly Greek) academic fixation with deconstruction found a fertile ground in the national imaginary of Greece and its antiquities. Plenty of efforts focused on deconstructing the superstructure of a discourse allegedly built in the nation-making of Greece in the 19th century, with the contribution of the European colonial powers, their political agendas and romantic philhellenism (e.g. Hamilakis 2012; Gourgouris 1996). These discourses emphasize the role of the archaeological record in the perception of a grandiose past (the Classical antiquity, but also early historical periods, such as the Minoan civilization), as symbolic resource in which modern Greek identity rests. They cite, for example, the way the material culture of the archaeological record is deployed in moments of national significance, as in the 2004 Olympic Games (Plantzos 2012).

Criticism is leveled also against the 20th century archaeological practice of approaching material culture with a sort of metaphysical reverence (Hamilakis and Yalouri 1999). Platzos (2014) describes the ancient past in Greece as an ideal and a counter-ideal, in a quest for authenticity. Accordingly, the formal disciplines of archaeology and classics, brought by the western intelligentsia are perceived to have been the inauthentic terms of giving voice to the past, an alien, elite pursuit presented across a range of forms in modern Greek art and literature, including film-making. "it had become abundantly clear that philhellenism, especially its German variety, was a corollary of (other people's) nationalism: Greek ruins had been appropriated throughout the nineteenth century by foreign archaeological expeditions, with the French and the Germans at the forefront" (Plantzos 2014, 149). Via this indigenous resistance to the colonial powers, according to the same author, there came the "crypto-colonialism" of the Greeks, which stressed a metaphysical connection to the land and its past, an authentic representation that could not be reduced to the prescriptions for a reified, modern Greek identity.

The response of the subaltern, in a very European sense, alien both to Said's Orientalism and to Bhahba's notions of resistance through the creation of forms of hybridity, assumed instead a form of resistance, in the form of allegedly authentic representations of the past. These were both different from the artificial European representation, and due to its "glorious" past, superior. Plantzos (2014) criticizes this alleged 19th century "crypto-colonialism" of the Greeks, which purportedly carried on to the 20ieth century.

These academic efforts do not simply ignore other contemporary realities of how the cultural heritage gets enmeshed in politics of appropriation that deploy cultural heritage in strategic ways according to contemporary political agendas and pursuits (Kotsonas 2015). Attempts at deconstructing the so-called national imaginary gained a momentum in recent years, even as the state of Greece per se was unraveling in very practical terms and with tangible effects. Under extreme pressure, the social and state apparatus began shrinking, while collectivities and NGOs started assuming several of its functions (healthcare, basic provisions for vulnerable groups of the population). What was the symbolic capital left for a population under extreme stress in economic and biological terms, while also forced to constant self-analysis and self-exploration, given the international mediatic onslaught against it? Plantzos (2012, 159–

160) uses the well-known episode of C. Lagarde commenting on the poverty of the Greeks contemptuously – the poverty affected by the IMF over which she still presides – so as to offer an ivory tower view of how the Greeks have supposedly internalized perceptions of "civilizing the world."28 A less subjective account of the comment, mindset and practices it conveys, would place emphasis on the detrimental effects that the IMF market-style "management" of the crisis in Greece and on its managerial style increasingly presented as a universal template for value systems – of less society, less culture, less civilization.

Digging through the Crisis

Massive overhauls in the structure and staffing of the Greek Archaeological Service, the state service entrusted with the discovery and preservation of archaeological heritage, undermine many critical aspects of its functions.29 The ephorates (the divisions that make up the Archaeological Service) have a monopoly on all aspects of heritage management when it comes to the archaeological record. Several ephorates and museums across the country remain understaffed and with inadequate protection, archaeological sites remain closed due to the lack of personnel and several archaeologists have been given responsibilities far surpassing the hours of work for which they are employed.

The under-staffing of museums and ephorates, despite the exorbitant rates of unemployment among archaeology graduates, led to various suggestions as to how the issue should be addressed. Some foreign academics suggested that part of the management can be relegated to the private sector, a huge taboo for a country that maintains a centralized, public monopoly on the national heritage management. Addressing this "taboo" of private involvement, rooted in fears of colonial-style "appropriation" of archaeological heritage by stronger nations (as happened in the 18th or 19th centuries) and enshrined in law would seem however to antagonize public sentiment on an issue considered of pertinent national importance – the archaeological heritage. The recent case of the ongoing discoveries at the Macedonian funerary complex of Amphipolis (Hill of Kasta) that remained center-front in media coverage and public debate from mid-2014 through part of 2015 highlights some of the issues that such an approach of countering the economic crisis would generate. In the eyes of the public, it would be inconceivable to allow the protection of a "national treasure" to a private entity. The Greek government in power in 2014, on the other hand, made a point of how it considered that particular archaeological site of national importance. Such manipulation of archaeological discoveries for political purposes (spectacular publicizing of discoveries and daily newsreels on the issue), masquerades a very different reality, one of diminishing investment in heritage management and academic research, of which the public is not always aware.

While in northern Europe, archaeology needed to adjust to the profit-driven conditions of the market, with the development of private agencies, such an outlook generates images of dystopia in Greece, and not without reason given the local context. On the other hand, the so-called "foreign schools" (foreign archaeological institutes of research and fieldwork, active in Greece) conduct fieldwork under the formal supervision of the Greek archaeological ephorates. This amounts to practical aid in the cultural heritage management, on the level of excavations and publication. However, the Archaeological Service, as the basic service of antiquity management and promotion structure in our country, has been shaken by terminally alarming and continuous structural (and sweeping) rearrangements that have have alarmed even foreign schools, since archeology excavation programs depend on the smooth functioning of local ephorates.

A different suggestion for addressing the increasing under-staffing of the Archaeological Service has been the introduction of community archaeology, a concept foreign to the mentality and practice of archaeology in Greece, but existent in north-western Europe, e.g. in the UK, Belgium and the Netherlands. Community archaeology would theoretically provide a response to the demands posed by severe cuts and mass layoffs of archaeological staff, a taboo of private initiative, and a means to engage the public in a productive way that also has the potential of counteracting the effect of non-scientific, popularized accounts of the past. The latter are disconcerting given the rise of extreme forms of political representation (far-right parties), with their strange concoction of populism and nationalism mingled with glorified accounts of the ancient past. What are the ethical dilemmas, however, in delegating the excavation of sites to amateur archaeologists (conceivably pensioners and schoolchildren), when many trained archaeology graduates, career archaeologists and academics, remain unemployed or are by the circumstances forced to choose a different career or emigrate? Some of these concerns will remain of academic interest only, as any such change requires first political initiative for which interest is thin, when the governmental agendas show different priorities. Potentially, however, over the long term, some of these debates and the distilled ideas they generate can infuse policy-making affecting some level of change. Despite continuous staff reductions and removal of services, the neuralgic area of archeology continues to serve the country's needs for cultural management thanks to the work

done by archaeologists, their loyalty to their profession and personal sacrifices.

Impact on Researchers: The Itinerant Academic

Scholarship, teaching is a vocation, a love and an ideal. From this derives much of the self-sacrificial tone surrounding work in the humanities, tied to the "sanctity" of producing and disseminating knowledge. This widespread perception explains the little resistance to the sacrifices entailed in following an academic career (Bal et al. 2015, 65; Lorenz 2015, 7). Hardly peculiar to a European context, this universal (almost) template was until now widely tempered by notions of an afterlife, i.e. the attainment of basic living standards while working in the humanities.30 These are concerns that are encountered even among the most privileged classes, members of which are still subjected to the inherent, structural violence of the system.31

The mass increase in the number of doctoral titles obtained in OECD countries, with an annual average rise of 5% per year, during the last decade alone (2010–2015) (Papari 2015) erodes the basis of this model, in tandem with the imported neoliberalism. The increase in the availability of highly-qualified personnel contributes to the "precatarization" of young academics. Standing's (2014) **precatariat**, coined as a portmanteau to denote the precarious living conditions created by the neoliberal flexibility of the labor market since the 1970s, aptly reflects the life conditions of many academics.

The severe repercussions of a labor market that transfers the employment-related risk and insecurity to the employees/workers can be seen in aggravated physical and mental health, financial insecurity without safety nets and social isolation, stressed from across the EU (Papari 2015; Lorenz 2015; Halffman 2014). The prevailing employment conditions, be it in teaching or in research funding, prescribe a constant reality of insecurity, casualization of work and mobility, which has serious repercussions not only for the personal lives of those involved, but also for the quality of the research per se. In the case of the EU grant "Marie Curie," for example, early career researchers are required to move to a different country from the one they have been working thus far, hence elevating mobility to a proxy for desirability and excellence – regardless of the fact that increased expectations of mobility can obviously have adverse effects on research output. With academics not belonging to any institutionalized professional collectives, neither health (Bal et al. 2015, 50), nor income or other security is respected. In tandem, the much-celebrated urban nomadic lifestyles expected of academics (alias for "European integration" and "harmonization") do not provide any sense of long-term security, as the academic finds himself/herself outside the regular labor groups (Papari 2015), thus being reduced to isolation as a citizen, and more than often, as a migrant. Unionizing thus becomes impossible due to the dispersed, scattered, ever-temporary and mobile nature of employment of the labor force concerned.

Insecurity due to low salaries and temporary contracts, with newly-invented academic titles to match them (e.g. "teacher," "instructor"), form an aspect of this. While job titles change and longer-term job security becomes a dream, academic positions continue to nevertheless demand full academic credentials, with little reward in terms of covering basic material needs. Compounding problems at a time of crisis, unemployment for a certain length of time is a given.

This is aggravated by the strict conditions on the employment of post-doctoral researchers, beyond obvious qualifications.32 Early career fellowships, nominally designed for young academics, often come with restrictions on years after the obtainment of a doctoral title or on age. Yet these do not take into account gaps of unemployment due to the constrains of the labor market, thus diminishing even that short-term, temporary employment avenue to many. This being empirically common knowledge, a recent study estimated the average of the post-doc/trial' period after the obtainment of PhD to 13 years at Dutch universities (Halffman 2014). Young people are then left with academic credentials, but lack of long-term academic posts and the inability to apply for lower-ranking posts for they do not meet the strict age criteria. Extreme overspecialization already creates a limited pool of jobs stretching across the globe. These restrictions are often caused by over-regulations that have outlived their original purpose of safeguarding a position for new researchers who need a boost at the start of their career. They were clearly devised in periods with different economic circumstances, and do not apply in an economy where securing a reasonably safe (not even tenured) position may take decades. It appears that policy on funding has not caught up with reality.

In the end, universities are those that benefit from these conditions in the labor market, which leads to the "casualization" of academic personnel. Through the creation of a global pool of "casual reserves" to draw upon, universities afford to keep offering short-term, low-paid contracts, which translates into a life of insecurity and

sacrifice of current income for a future stability on the part of the academic precatariat. This employment status masks the adverse effects of unemployment under the mantle of temporary employment, transforming the academic career into a globally-stretching, hierarchically horizontal network of occupational status, whereby one cannot move up the academic ladder and is often found in perpetual precarious labor conditions (Papari 2015). These casualized researchers and teachers have little leverage in negotiating the contracts they are offered. In this system, (career) failure is then seen as personal not institutional (Bal et al. 2014, 63), due to lack of competence. In their incisive critique on the class struggle in archaeology in the USA academic and cultural heritage sectors, McGuire and Walker (1999) pilloried the precariousness caused by this neoliberal set of relations, speaking openly of systemic exploitation.

The widespread sense of precariousness, felt globally in the field of archaeology, led to a recent volume on how to address the scarcity of academics jobs and how to move onwards to the "real-world" (Killebrew and Scham 2015). The term "real world" is unfortunate, of course, since entering academia and the effort it necessitates to remain employed are very much part of the real world, and one that due to its international nature demands a lot of skills and resources while it offers limited security on all fronts, especially in relation to other, more "set" professions. While the expectations of quality of research is often set in starry-eyed expletives both by the EU and national funding bodies, the quality of provisions hardly provides the conditions that would enable "excellence in research."

In many ways, such expectations from researchers work only on a platonic universe of ideas – a parallel universe where the academic need not move to a new country, negotiate brand new living and citizen conditions, need not learn a local new language or civic state administration/bureaucracy at the very least, need not manoeuvre new social and political contexts, need no social interactions or have no longer-term expectations – in fact, his/her entire life can be measured alone by (thus, reduced to) his/her scientific research output, assessed by the output of publications, which in turn are based on the quantification provided by statistically invalid metrics of journal rankings and the like. More importantly, a parallel universe where the academic, often within the first two months of taking up a position and starting a new research project, is in no need to start writing a new grant application, as is currently very much the case.

The contingency of national contexts aggravates the wider conditions of employment. In Greece, for example, academics face a harder reality than a lot of their peers, despite the presence of several Higher Education institutions in the country relative to its population size. Overregulation in the sector and employment that follows extreme bureaucratic procedures were the norm even before the crisis, which has generated a new wave of obstacles. According to the Greek Statistical Service data, in 2010 the number of doctoral candidates was 23,853. In 2014/2015 almost 950 doctoral theses were submitted to Greek universities (Papari 2015). In a country where the budget relegated to research remains negligent due to the constraints imposed from outside, the main option for doctoral holders is to enter the application rounds to European and US institutions. The status of private tertiary education remains legally ambivalent, and creates little potential for career advancement, especially since humanities are rarely offered in the more market-oriented curricula of these private schools. Even the most recent innovative initiative of the (public) Open Hellenic University is not an option, as in practice staff members are sourced from the established academics of the public universities in the country. The result is that preemptively new doctoral holders are excluded from any chance to attain a position (Papari 2015).

On the institutional level, Killebrew and Scham (2015, 234–237) note that current doctoral programs have little evolved since the Middle Ages, suggesting that their necessary restructuring takes into account transferrable skills for careers outside academia. Taking as a departure point the insecurity that the neo-liberal policies of higher education lead to, they suggest the introduction of teaching modules that lead to technological proficiency, "real-life leadership," and management skills. Reinforcing this pragmatic approach, they call for academia itself to begin evaluating positively career choices and experience outside the academic sector.

On the personal level, Papari (2015) notes that these circumstances create "personal frustration, sense of thwarting, futility" creating doubts as to the value of repeated sacrifices. In the end, as many authors point out in Killebrew and Scham (2015), while it may difficult to cut ties with something one loves deeply and to which has devoted years of their life, there are other options: In Tarler's (2015, 276) words "But you are not a one-dimensional person." Indeed, exiting academia is an option, and one offered recently as a form of resistance to the neo-liberal model (Halffman and Radder 2015, 171). Its applicability, however, depends on the local and national context. What are the consequences if someone does not opt for that? A typical, real life narrative is given below:

> I am lucky, in the sense that, unlike many colleagues and friends, I have not (yet) experienced long periods of unemployment. On the other hand, I have yet to discover the added value of the post-doc experience. My first position, held overseas, in

> the USA, was a one-year position, meaning that the first thing I had to dedicate myself to, was a new batch of applications, to secure a position for the next year. This left me with little time for research or publications. In addition, the absence of a coherent mentoring system, or further opportunities for cv building, such as organising a workshop, teaching a class or even start a reading group, meant that, academically, the experience had no significant effects upon my career. Next, I obtained a position in the new "promised land" for academics, Germany, back on the European continent. This time, the position came with a mentoring program, specifically aiming at enhancing the postdoc experience. Given that it is a two-year position, even with a possibility to extend it to a third year, I can at least relieve myself, for some time, of serial application writing, and actually do research and publish. I was even able to propose my own course to teach. The other side of the coin is that the stipend does not exceed the official minimum wage. Given that it is paid as a stipend and not as a true wage, I have to provide for my own health insurance (obligatory, with rates normally charged to the liberal professions) and pension scheme (which I can obviously not afford). The size of my stipend does not allow me to save money to bridge gaps between positions or save for retirement. Thus, I fear to be on the brink of poverty, if not soon, then likely later. Apart from struggling to pay the bills, I can hardly afford to buy books, or travel to conferences, which means that, again, my position obstructs rather than enhances my career development (Lieve Donnellan).

Value vs. Valorization in the Humanities

Perceiving valorization: Views from archaeology

In this climate of increasing financialization, research is tied to its economic output. Alas, the humanities are significantly disadvantaged. Thus attempts to remain "societally relevant" as academics are crucial to survival yet distorted by the perspective through which relevance is assessed. For example, the attempt to render archaeology and related disciplines relevant has resulted in several folly pursuits and distortions of the real value of the humanities. Hotlfof (2007) discussed three main trends in archaeology, so as to render their use a conscious choice. He labeled them the "Democratic Model," the "Public Relations" Model and the "Education Model" (Hotlfof 2007, 150).

Holtorf's (2007) discussion of how archaeologists project to the public their research is instructive. The "Democratic Model" refers to – one may argue – the original approach in the field, the view that the archaeology's value consists in producing knowledge for the enlightenment of society, serving a collectively better future. His criticism comes fiercely:

> To define public education in such terms is to presuppose an infantile condition among its audience. It can mean to assume that prior to education a void exists in the citizens' minds where knowledge of the past should be. Or it can mean.... really, not genuine education but rather re-education. Either attitude is patronizing towards any fellow Homo sapiens (Holtorf 2007, 152).

Thus, the attempt to disseminate knowledge to the public about the past, gained through scientific enquiry, is construed as being open to patronizing and condescending overtones, depicting the representation of the past as the prerogative of archaeologists and historians. Why should that be construed as patronizing? Do archaeologists feel patronized when informed about progress in fields in which they have no competence? Does the discovery of the existence of gravitational waves in the universe make adults of the Homo sapiens species feel patronized by physicists? During the course of an adult's life, almost everyone defers to an expert in some area of life, be that medical care or legal service or the building of a house. Does attracting expertise by those who have the relevant training and capacity in one field render the rest victims of condescension?

In discussing the "Public Relations Model," which he equally considers ethically untenable, **Hotlof** opines that it advances the social milieu of the archaeologists themselves. The former considers that publicity, even through channels that misrepresent the discipline (Hotlof 2007, 155–157), competes in an arena of commercial mechanisms.

Discussing the "Democratic Model," the author refers to the way that indigenous voices, narratives and memories are included in the representation of the past (in contexts where this is relevant). By extension, Hotlof (2007, 157–158) asks "Why should ordinary but non-indigenous citizens be granted any less attention?" (Hotlof 2007, 161). The answer is one of context. Hotlof's experience comes mainly from the Scandinavian context, where the indigenous voice may be relevant, and thus by extension, that of the "ordinary but non-indigenous citizens." He argues for the "right balance between public participation and the possibility of creative self-realization for as many people as possible on the one hand, and the need for the state and its agencies to ensure that competent decisions are taken in all areas." This presupposes a well-functioning state, and of course, a democratic one.

From a European context, this approach raises some questions: is the stakeholder the EU, whose competence

is that of the market, as a de facto priority, or perhaps the nation, whose budgets can be relegated to extra-state bodies whose only competence and interest is in fiscal concerns? Holtorf (2007, 152) ends with the alarming: "… in one way it does not matter very much if our knowledge of the past is accurate or not," considering knowledge of the past meaningful only in as much as it indexes one's social class and lifestyle. Trying to qualify this strong, "not fully-developed" argument, he adds that in cases such as the long-term environmental trends, knowledge of the past does matter. The author seems to fully disregard how knowledge of the past forms group identities, not on the level of lifestyle choices, but on the level of national ethics, political views and the like. Indeed, the view reflects rather a more aloof and until-recently cushioned reality of life in a Scandinavian country. Such views, among archaeologists themselves no less, are worrisome in the extreme. Yet a watered-down view of the world with all the misinformation it begets, becomes the first tool of anyone wanting to misdirect public opinion.

The questions of why all this relativism in the humanities of the past and self-undermining becomes imperative. Why all this discourse about the artificially authentic knowledge being passed on? Isn't this after all what disciplines across the spectrum of the scientific fields do? Produce knowledge that can be passed on, with the caveat that future knowledge may render it amenable? With the caveat that some of this may turn out to be partly wrong, or entirely wrong even, susceptible to scrutiny? With the exception of the contexts where this is truly appropriate and needed (e.g. in colonial contexts) should, for example, the public be engaged in the representation of the past? Would it be summoned to aid in the descripton of a new galaxy when astrophysicists present some new evidence? Should there be a public consensus on the nature of a newly discovered planet, one that accommodates the public's interests and opinions and perceived needs? The question is hard not to ask. The answer boils down to the value of the disciplines, in contrast to the easy packaging of "valorization."

Inherent Value as Social Capital

Current perspectives in archaeology may emphasize the ways that practitioners in the field of humanities represent and communicate to the public their knowledge about the past. Polyphony, relativism and the "ownership" of the past have emerged as pivotal subjects (e.g. Scarre and Scarre 2010). In fields concerned with the study of colonial contexts, it is fundamental to be aware of the hegemonic relations in the production of "knowledge" through structures that are embedded in the state apparatus. Yet humanists have been thrust into the position of not being allowed to challenge the state apparatus – by contrast, they need to appease it and flag its economic potential.

Increasingly archaeology has been packaged as a cultural product ready for the consumption of an elite. It is the marketing mechanisms that then determines the valorization of the discipline, making it dependent on whether it can compete in the arena of entertainment industry, contributing to one's lifestyle, or to the tourist industry. This is the outcome of the financialization of universities, and of their attachment to the neoliberal principles. In such a climate, the humanities do not serve their purpose, rather they serve the status quo, failing to critique and challenge the rationale, fairness and integrity of its decision-making, and slavishly relying on it for the continuation of their existence through state funding or more perilously, though commercial mechanisms.

Yet archaeology is not a cultural product, a small extra something an affluent family enjoys on a Sunday morning. The humanities as a whole are not some added airy-fairy pursuit that wastes resources unless a tangible economic benefit can be linked to it. Humanities are central, indispensable to a society that needs reflection, critical thinking and cultivation to exist in a democratic, society that values participation and collective decision-making through the careful selections of its representation bodies. How can the humanities help towards that?

Let's take archaeology, for example. It is a discipline concerned with the whole spectrum of past human experience, from early human origins and cognitive development to the emergence of the first sedentary societies, the introduction of agriculture, the invention of ground-breaking technological advances such as writing and the wheel and the development of symbolic systems, which changed the course of history, setting it onto a trajectory that led to the present as we know it. And this is specifically where the value of archaeology lies – in its ability to shed light onto the past, on "where" we came from as humans and "how" our ancestors thought and lived, so as to better understand our present and the future as human societies. This is even more crucial for regions and periods of the world for which no or scant historical sources exist: without archaeology to fill in those preliterate or scantily known through textual sources periods of human history, our knowledge of the past would be teemed with confusing, bewildering gaps. This critically endangers the ability to fully grasp the roots and evolution of humanity diachronically from a global perspective, understanding its bearing on the present through the accumulation and exchange of norms and modes of social relationships that transcend neatly-described chronological periods. Pertinently, a lack of knowledge

of the past or its misrepresentation harbors the true possibility of it being manipulated for political or economic ends, a reality that we have seen – and continue to see – repeatedly across different periods and regions of the globe. As such, the past is inextricably woven into the present – because the present would not exist without it and in many ways it is incorporated into it – so knowledge of the past does not have value only for archaeologists or historians alone but for the society as a whole.

It is this value that humanities, and especially fields such as anthropology, history, archaeology and classics bring – the very disciplines that suffer the most. The most severe repercussion in the long-term will ineluctably be the shrinking importance of these disciplines within universities and their status in the public domain. While university departments, research groups, infrastructure and learned practice take decades to develop a certain standing, tradition of research and level of expertise, radical overhauls as a knee-jerk response to a temporary or passing fiscal crisis can have lost-lasting results, effectively resulting in the disappearance of whole disciplines from university teaching and the loss of public collections.

Policy-makers, especially through regulations on the allocation of funding, can have an impact on the paths that research takes or on whether certain fields will continue to exist in the future. While on a personal level regarding practitioners, these policies have severe repercussions creating a negative environment of (professional) uncertainty, the results cumulatively are potentially catastrophic for the future of fields in specific countries. Massive overhauls and cuts ineluctably lead to many seeking careers outside their chosen field or moving abroad, a cause of "brain drain" that is already being recognized as a major plague in countries such as Spain, Portugal, Spain, Greece and Ireland. Yet more pertinently, the shrinking or actual destruction of institutions that generate, preserve and disseminate knowledge will have catastrophic results on society in the long term.

Egregious decisions towards a society lacking the buttress of critical thought can only exacerbate the rising nationalism across the continent, the pitying of one social group against the other as a response to the socio-economic melt-down. Yet the full scale of the consequences will become apparent only in several years. When both national governments and supra-national bodies cut funding for the humanities, the result is not just less "culture" to consume, but also less civilization in a society. And decisions as to this should not be allowed to be determined by the passing government or at the precept of a bureaucratic elite following its agenda, far-removed from social, national or cultural needs. That which gets demolished within a few years – entire departments, and with them the research, the knowledge, the contribution to society – actually took decades to build. Once gone, they are gone. A new government will not just put them back in place on a whim. A corporate-managerial attitude to universities, education and research may create enough surpluses to have new buildings constructed for a campus, but will not go far in terms of the cultivation of those they purportedly aim to educate and enrich.

Responding to the Neo-liberal Model of Disfiguring Society through Eroding Education

Some of the immediate consequences of the financialization of the universities and research can be readily seen. The deficiencies of humanistic education across the EU can be seen in the immediate responses to the economic crisis across large social segments: from increased forms of nationalism, chauvinism and xenophobia to distorted understandings of the competences and faults of the EU, public complacency on how one's own actions and state policies affect different social/national groups, as well as media propaganda, state and supra-national arbitrariness.

Academics should be the first line of defense against the erosion brought by the neoliberal measures and not only because their own professional status or livelihoods are put at peril. "The response to the cynicism" of the neoliberal labor market is the recognition and redefinition of the social role of the university in Europe as "a vision and a public good" that will create a knowledge-based society for the prosperity of the 21st century (Papari 2015). This type of university will support fundamental research, "a vital resource [from which] we can draw upon if the future turns out to be totally different than our short-term extrapolations" (Halffman and Radder 12015, 76). Such a society should keep state power and other forms of authority in check, respond to societal needs with wisdom and forethought and face challenges cognizant of what came before and of the potential offered by technological and scientific advancements, without the excesses of the past.

The mere addition of further funding is not a panacea for European universities. As Papari notes (2015), what is crucially needed is policies towards a creative role for the university where it:

> will listen to and will observe on a local and universal level the developments taking place and will relate and be diffused to society, utilizing the new scientists and researchers ...be that in teaching or in public research projects that will widen its service, while the researchers will demand equal participation in the global scientific community.

Both the need for academia to be societally relevant and the need to value those who work in it are stressed. National and supra-national policy changes will need to be directed towards this aim. Short-term suggestions for the amelioration of these conditions on a microscale can include affiliations of independent researchers with foreign institutions. Whereas this does not provide a solution in the long-term, or even in the short term for the profession as a whole, it may give some respite to individuals, who in the long term may be able to create their own groups, should funding become available. There are several cases in science, for example, demonstrating the potential of implementing such ideas.33 In the end, though, such initiatives cannot replace a restructuring of the funding mechanisms of the humanities, which if it does not come through sensible national policies, should come from forms of resistance from within the academic community. Several forms have been outlined in academic counter-occupation projects (Halffman and Radder 2015, 180–185).

Valorizing cultural heritage: the past, its material remains and the collective future

How should we demonstrate the value of cultural heritage as a resource of culture and civilization? Archaeologists are often seen as merely custodians of dead stones and their work and its output are often relegated to the dustbin of irrelevant to modern life subjects (and according to some opinions, objects too). In this sense, the cultural heritage loses all of its meanings, including most importantly, as a conveyor of education and culture. Alternatively, it is perceived as the pursuit of an exclusive and privileged elite, or worse it is consciously used for the promotion of nationalistic agendas.

How can this situation be addressed, so that the promotion of cultural heritage moves away from these hindrances? Since often heritage management practitioners cannot escape such trappings, and easily fall into such discourses that alienate segments of the society, the aim would be to develop professional development platforms through which heritage management practitioners can be better trained in understanding some of the deep-engrained biases instilled in their earlier education and training and in how to promote cultural heritage in a healthy and productive way that underscores its value as a knowledge resource for all. This, in the longer term, will be poised to influence policy-making at the national level, so that the entire discourse surrounding cultural heritage will take into account its universal relevance. This could be achieved by organizing seminars and series of workshops aiming specifically at how cultural heritage practitioners communicate the results of their work to the public, avoiding, for example, unfortunate popularizations of their work. Such workshops would focus on communicating to the public, in a responsible way, conscious of its potential biases, the work and importance done by cultural heritage practitioners.

Current perceptions of cultural heritage in Greece offer a compelling example, but also suggest ways of how to better the connection of society with cultural heritage. In a rapidly changing Greek society, which becomes increasingly more mobile, better educated and international in outlook but also multi-cultural, with the influx of populations from different countries and even continents, the presentation of cultural heritage as the tangible aspect of a sacrosanct discourse of a glorious ancient past (as taught at schools) is turning the perception of ancient cultural heritage into something arcane and even obsolete with little relevance to the lives of adults. Quite commonly, however, this imaginary is appropriated in unscientific ways for supporting nationalistic discourses that are plaguing understandings of the past as well as of the present, attracting the less educated and older segments of society. Effectively, for a large part of the population, interest in ancient temples, theatres and tumuli is considered to be the arcane past-time of a dying intelligentsia elite, or, in a diametrically opposite way, it becomes the fixation of an uncultured and easily impressed crowd through popularized accounts in the media, hungry for past "glories." When revived with enthusiasm, it is often in association with the internalization of the sacrosanct discourse of classical Greece and "our golden ancestors" – in a sort of establishing metaphysical connections with the past – that can be seen in the reaction to the intended re-burial of the Altar of the Twelve Gods in Athens in 2011 (which amounted to full protests taking place in Athens in a well-intended but ill-conceived attempt to "protect the past"). The flourishing of TV channels, magazines, books and other publications presenting irresponsible and sensational accounts of the ancient past is another, more malignant manifestation of this tendency to relate unscientifically and unproductively with the cultural heritage as a source of modern fixations, not of useful knowledge. Alternatively, cultural heritage is deemed entirely irrelevant to a large number of people living in Greece whose backgrounds are to be found outside Greece, and who thus cannot relate to a discourse of "golden age" ancestors, usually because it is promoted as such by heritage management practitioners.

How can we engage society with the humanities, as a source of valuable experience and powerful knowledge, so that the values of the discipline get unlocked? Developments that can already be seen in fields such as archaeology and ancient history (e.g. "popular science" magazines) have gained impetus among the wider public, casting aside

more legitimate sources of learning about the past.

Rather, the engagement of the public needs to showcase tangibly the role of cultural heritage as a valuable resource of culture and civilization for contemporary and future societies. Such goals should be permeated by the conviction that the preservation and promotion of the humanities and our cultural heritage occupies a central importance in the education and cultivation of communities and society as a whole, especially at times of rampaging economic and social crisis that amount to, and underlie, a crisis of values. With informed knowledge of our human past, individuals, communities and societies can gain a holistic understanding of the depth of human history, of not merely events but also intellectual currents, achievements, mistakes and their repercussions into the present that can increase their resistance to the vicissitudes of modern life, but also tangibly, foster new pathways of sustainable economic development. The past can thus become alive with significance for the present, as an invaluable resource of human knowledge for comprehending problems, solutions and preparing for a better future.

In practice, this entails the protection, conservation and valorization of cultural heritage, the management of which depends on individual competency, local contexts and structures, as well as national agendas and international policy. To contribute positively to the goals listed above, given such a varied environment within the EU that often works circuitously in its impact on cultural heritage, initiatives should follow, broadly, ways of interventions that cover the main categories of needs and challenges that cultural heritage now faces.

Focus should be placed on enriching capacity building for sustainable cultural potential in pragmatic ways and developing and disseminating expertise for addressing multivariate challenges and threats that endanger heritage globally. Grassroots approaches are far and few, but some have shown already a momentum.

The Initiative for Cultural Heritage, for example, an international organization, is already working along the state apparatus for the valorization of the cultural heritage in Greece through capacity building (educational and training programs), while developing and delivering cultural heritage management with international reach. Building expertise through workshops, courses and seminars, as appropriate, emphasizing the 'universal value' aspect of cultural heritage and its relevance for contemporary society, independent of biological ties and nationalistic concerns, can result in promoting a healthier connection with the past and its relics, without the fixation, obsession or indifference to it that form part of the mosaic of contemporary attitudes in Europe.

Alternative ways of attracting funding for promoting cultural heritage management, on the potential of utilizing private investment in the promotion of cultural heritage should be considered. There have been cases, for example, where important archaeological sites developed by private investment following rescue excavations in highly urban areas, e.g. the archaeological site of the Iron Age port and cemetery musealized **in situ** under the Millennium BCP bank building in Lisbon (Portugal), in an underground exhibition space that also houses a museum, with daily guided visits.

Lastly, the economic interest of the cultural heritage is well recognized, in terms of attracting heritage tourists but also in terms of promulgating a broader "cultural" image. Building management capacity need not reduce cultural heritage to a folkloric touristic package. Instead, it should take into account current international framework (international policy on heritage protection, illegal trade in antiquities in Europe), cultural heritage infrastructure, local needs and academic research. An idea would be to combine in public projects tangible with intangible heritage. Intangible heritage is recognized increasingly as an aspect of heritage that needs to be safeguarded and promoted. This aspect can easily facilitate engagement with local communities, especially in rural areas distanced from museum and other events organized to celebrate cultural heritage. Capacity building for its sustainable economic potential, in ways that make it relevant internationally, can span many areas of competence, from linguistic idioms to traditional music and architecture to folkloric narratives (oral poetry, legends, narratives).

Conclusions

No easy or straightforward solution exists that solve problems over a series of interrelated issues, across 28 EU state members. A start will be the realization of the degree of erosion of the meaning and value of the humanities caused by the neoliberal system of the financialization of the universities. Reinstalling the potential of social value into policy should begin with a shift away from market-inspired fixations and obsessions with metrics, quantifications, economic output and financial valorization that underline the amnesia of purpose of it all: which is to produce knowledge that is central to the function of a well-governed, society formed by a **body politik** with critical ability. It

is pertinent to remember that knowledge currently produced will be susceptible to change in the future, to the degree of being fully discarded. At a time of multiple crises plaguing the social, economic and democratic fabric of the EU, only a citizen body with critical acumen can survive political and economic decisions that are being taken with it **in absentia.** And critical acumen cannot develop in a void of knowledge about the past or with the fetishization of the market.

Endnotes

1. See for example how the euro system TARGET 2 (Trans-European Automated Realtime Gross settlement Express Transfer system 2) of the European Central Bank operates (Vaorufakis 2014: 127–128).

2. The notion that a nation's economy is amenable to the profit-increasing games played by private companies (credit rate agencies), which by fear-mongering alone playing to their own interests' tune, can increase a country's debt (translating as increased unemployment, reduced healthcare provisions, asphyxiated welfare state, more suicides and so on) seems deeply absurd to many. Suggestions around 2011 from high echelons in the EU to establish European credit-rating agencies as a bulwark to faltering standards of risk management in financial institutions and accountability have since succumbed to oblivion.

3. Žižek on the impossible dialogue between the Greek government and EU institutions in 2015: "Strategic decisions based on power are more and more masked as administrative regulations based on neutral expert knowledge, and they are more and more negotiated in secrecy and enforced without democratic consultation", http://www.newstatesman.com/politics/2015/07/Slavoj-Zizek-greece-chance-europeawaken

4. The debt of Greece was 298.5 billion euros (129% of GDP) in 2009 (before any so-called aid to Greece) and in 2015 it stood at 322.5 billion euros (a whopping 175% of GDP), while the country continues to suffer a contraction of economy and mounting socio-economic problems.

5. The admission of a mistake in the mathematical formulas used by the IMF to evaluate the impact of the austerity it administered on Greek society occurred "gradually," first in the World Economic Outlook (2012) of the IMF, and then in a 2013 report by the chief economist of the IMF, Olivier Blanchard (Valavani 2015: 36– 37).

6. The potential of gain in an investment is tied to the risk of loss. With German bank investments in Greek bonds being jeopardized, however, the enforced "loan agreements" to Greece entailed both the expectation of profit and the obliteration of any possible loss. Since the failure of financial institutions would inevitably affect the welfare of nation states, a just approach would have been for both parties of the investment to be held culpable. In reality all moral blame was pointed at the Greek state despite the predatory lending of German banks, and in practice it was by far the one party sustaining losses through the EU response measures.

7. On the prescribed down spiral of the Greek economy by the EU/IMFE, see indicatively Pavlopoulos and Vassalos (2015) and Douzinas (2013). Specifically, for the economically irrational policies followed by the EU with the first two "loan agreements" see Varoufakis (2014: 25–370).

8. Indicative of the trend is an article by Michael Wolffsohn (professor of history at Universität der Bundeswehr Munich, entitled "Volksverführer – order is das Volk doof?" (Demagogue – or, is the nation stupid?") with reference to Greece (16/2/2015), handelsblatt.com

9. Between 2010 and 2015 new bills and legislature were voted by the parliament without due procedure, after delivered by the Troika. The passing of the second MoU in February 2012, with the area outside the parliament in flames, strong protests and episodes and the MPs requested to vote on a 500-page technical and legalistic document so that "the country would be saved," thereby indebting it for generations (with explicitly stated no provision for a debt forgiveness in future generations) is instructive. The text was given few days in advance so that it would not be read before being voted in the parliament and without the preparatory stages that Greek law requires.

10. The secretariat-general of the EU Commission allegedly gave the following response to the then finance minister's Yannis Varoufakis quest for legal advice on being excluded from the eurogroup of 27 June 2015: "The Eurogroup is an informal group. Thus it is not bound by Treaties or written regulations. While unanimity is conventionally adhered to, the Eurogroup President is not bound to explicit rules," http://yanisvaroufakis.eu/2015/06/28/as-it-happened-yanis-varoufakis-interventionduring-the-27th-june-2015-eurogroup-meeting/

11. The very reason that such a high number of eurogroup meetings was invested in trite matters such as the VAT on Greek islands, while the EU was facing

the Ukraine crisis and the refugee crisis creates plausible questions and indeed assumptions about the real causes behind these protracted meetings over subjects that on a European level were at the very least insignificant.

12. For example, the 1st MoU with the Law 3845 ("Measures for the application of the support mechanism for the Greek economy by Euro Area Member States and the International Monetary Fund") became law of the Greek state on 6/6/2010, even though the "loan agreement" that was part of it was never discussed in the parliament, as it is stipulated in the Greek constitution. Subsequently on 1/7/2011, Law 3986/2011 was discussed in the parliament so that additional "urgent" austerity measures would be voted in (the so-called "Medium Term Framework of Fiscal Strategy 2012–2015"), which was passed with 155 MPs voting in favor, although a parliamentary majority of at least 180 votes is required as stipulated in the Greek constitution. See e.g. http://www.ilo.org/dyn/natlex/natlex4.detail?p_lang=en&p_isn=84784&p_country=G RC&p_classification=01.06

13. For the roadmap to the referendum and the signing of the Third MoU, see Kouvelakis (2016).

14. The session in the parliament was in a special committee of public good companies and required 2/3 members majority to approve it (Valavani 2015: 98–100).

15. http://www.futureofhumanities.eu/humanities-and-social-sciences-research-budgetreceives-significant-cuts-under-horizon-2020-framework/

16. Saltini-Semerari demonstrated the "bottleneck effect," using as case studies three European countries (the UK, the Netherlands and Germany) in order to assess the postdoc application process requirements and outcome, focusing "on requirements, assessment process, resources offered if successful, and successful project oversight", showcasing the problems in "the balance between these different aspects and their reciprocal interaction."

17. For a discursive analysis on the meaning of the notion "quality" in the goal settings of the convention leading to the formation of the Bologna process at transnational settings, see Saarinen (2005).

18. The Valletta Treaty (2007) confers a central role in the management of the archaeological record to the municipal authorities. As a result, the practice of archaeology becomes connected with spatial planning and economic considerations, turning into some form of liability and "steering it away from [its] natural habitat: arts, heritage and culture in general" (Raemaekers 2014).

19. https://erc.europa.eu/projects-and-results/statistics

20. Lütticken (2014):http://svenlutticken.org/2014/11/12/holland-in-2014-a-culturednation/

21. http://www.futureofhumanities.eu/humanities-and-social-sciences-research-budgetreceives-significant-cuts-under-horizon-2020-framework/ (accessed December 2014).

22. https://www.change.org/p/college-van-bestuurred-de-geesteswetenschappen-aande-uva-save-the-humanities-at-theuva?utm_campaign=friend_inviter_chat&utm_medium=facebook&utm_source=share_petition&utm_term=permissions_dialog_false&share_id=MOgXHBdWuB

23. http://www.globalheritage.nl/research

24. http://www.simplyamsterdam.nl/Tropenmuseum.htm

25. https://oxfordasiantextilegroup.wordpress.com/2013/06/25/tropenmuseumamsterdam-saved-from-closure/

26. In article 16, paragraph 2 of the Greek Constitution (1982), it is stated that "Education comprises the main mission of the state...and has as the aim the moral, intellectual, professional and physical development of the Greeks...and their formation into free and responsible citizens."

27. Private tertiary education exists, usually in the form of branches of USA and EU universities, as well as Greek colleges. Degrees from these are not recognized by the Greek state as equivalent to public Greek universities, thus the deriving of "professional rights" is problematic, meaning exclusion from the (Greek) labor market.

28. Christine Lagarde, as Managing Director to the International Monetary Fund, publicly commented: "little kids from a school in a little village in Niger [...] need even more help than the people in Athens" because "all these people in Greece [...] are trying to escape tax" (The Guardian...). While the alleged tax evasion of an entire nation is fictitious, Lagarde's tax exemption on a six-digit annual salary, is a fact. "It's payback time: don't expect sympathy – Lagarde to Greeks," Guardian 25/5/2012, http://www.theguardian.com/world/2012/may/25/payback-time-lagarde-greeks

29. http://www.enet.gr/?i=news.el.ellada&id=445156

30. "In the ideology of our discipline the archaeologist exists to serve a higher goal, the search for knowledge, but archaeologists must also serve the archaeological record. This ideology includes a strong notion of self-sacrifice, that the archaeologist should sacrifice economic gain and even well-being to achieve knowledge and to protect the archaeological record." (McGuire and Walker's 1999, 164). The authors' "guild model" analogy worked, until now, for Europe too.

31. Bernbeck (2008) terms "structural violence" the practice of archaeology within academia that sees large asymmetries between the Middle East and other "peripheral areas" of the modern world and hot spots of "knowledge production" through modern capitalism.

32. For example, in a recent announcement of 25 post-doctoral positions at the University of Liège, at the BeIPD-COFUND program, "The applicant must have obtained his/ her doctoral degree after 1 October 2010 or be in a position to obtain his/ her doctoral degree before 16 March 2016," thereby excluding people who gained their doctorates more than 5 years ago. A five year period is hardly a duration in which a researcher in Europe would be expected to secure a senior position that would render such a post-doctoral position attractive only to the least qualified of the "older PhD" holders, presumably the reasoning behind it.

33. Dr Sergis, affiliate of the Academy of Athens, an astrophysicist, collaborates with NASA, while living in Greece, computing the measurements required for the development of the space robot Cassini, which has been placed into an orbit around Saturn.

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Informal Labor in the Sharing Economy: Everyone Can Be a Record Producer

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The availability of Digital Audio Workstations (DAWs) – digital software that allows musicians and producers to record music on a computer – changes the social relations of production in the studio. Much as digital music stores helped to close bricks-and-mortar music stores (Arditi 2014c), cheap DAWs have made large record studios increasingly obsolete. The informality of digital media does not end with distribution and consumption, but extends to labor in the production of digital culture. With digital technology, everyone can be a record producer, but even fewer people can make a living from record production.

Sharing is fundamental to rhetorical discussions of the Internet. Jonas Andersson Schwarz claims "'Sharing' has become one of the most telling pastimes of our digital, networked age" (Andersson Schwarz 2013:1). There are four uses of the term "sharing" as relates to the Internet. First, we can talk about file sharing and the gift economy. Matthew David claims that file sharing has "the potential to circulate [informational] goods freely through the Internet," which he contends could lead to the end of scarcity of informational goods (2010:2). Proponents of file sharing claim "information wants to be free." Of course, the Culture Industry sees file sharing as a threat to their monopoly on cultural commodities. Second, there is the idea of sharing one's ideas, thoughts, pictures, and daily routines with others through social media. Ben Agger labels this narcissistic tendency "oversharing" as we begin to put our every detail on the Internet for everyone to see (2011). What was once private has become public as we share likes, dislikes, secrets, and obsessions to everyone on the Internet. Third, sharing is a code word for Internet corporations with regard to what they do with our data. In this case "sharing" is a substitute for "selling" that intentionally obscures our understanding of sharing in the first two senses (Fuchs 2013).

Fourth, a sharing economy implies an informal economy where people sell the use of things they own. As Juliet Schor defines "the new sharing economy as economic activity that is Peer-to-Peer, or person-to-person, facilitated by digital platforms" (2015). Platforms place people in contact with each other to "share" goods and time. Advocates of the sharing economy claim that these platforms make under-utilized goods productive. In effect, "sharing" is selling the usage rights to an owned commodity. However, sharing could be viewed as unending labor—a type of labor power dependent on the constant work of individuals under precarious circumstances. These workers "have no protections—not even minimum wage guarantees—when payment is by the job, rather than by time" (Schor 2015). From Uber and Airbnb to Favor and Rent Like a Champion, mobile devices have become tools for the informalization of labor – a process where companies describe themselves as web-platforms instead of cab companies, delivery services or hotels. In effect, the workers own their means of production, but the tech companies use their brand power to connect workers to customers. It is in the fourth sense that I am exploring the way record producers become "sharing" entrepreneurs whereby they sell access to their studios.

The social relations of production in recording studios changes as musicians and labels stop using large recording studios. Record production has been scattered through a number of smaller craft studios, which fundamentally changes the work environment for people working in studios. The prospect of full time employment in large studios has always been a challenge, and studio workers are known to labor precariously to earn a living; however, DAWs have rapidly increased this precariousness over the last several decades. Many of these workers live job-to-job or toil in part-time positions in other industries hoping to catch a break with their music production career. This new form

of production gives corporations a means to increase capital by cutting production budgets.

The digital transition of recording studios is not the logical outcome of the progress of technology, but rather a product of the logic of capitalism. A raw technological determinism assumes that technology is devoid of ideology and that the creation of new technology can only mark progress that advances society and humanity. However, it is important to remember that technological development is embedded within a particular set of social relations. In Noise: The Political Economy of Music (1985), Jacques Attali proposes that the political economy of music predicts or foreshadows shifts in the economic system. For instance, workers in the sharing economy have been described a "turn toward precarious employment and the privatization of risk . . . more accurately understood as the '1099 economy,' since their workers are not employees receiving IRS W-2 forms, but 1099-MISC forms. That is they are temporary contractors" (Walker 2015). Musicians have worked as temporary contractors filing 1099 tax forms for decades whether they are gigging musicians, session musicians, or signed to a record contract. The sharing economy models itself on the informal labor structure under which musicians have been oppressed. With regard to record production, there is a remarkable similarity between the displacement of studio production from large label studios to small project (typically home) studios and the overall shift from large corporate owned services to the sharing economy.

While the informalization of labor in the production of music is not necessarily linked to an online platform that operates under the guise of sharing, there are distinct similarities to the precarity of labor that occurs with digitization. This essay outlines the changes to the recording studio, then critiques these changes in terms of their influence on the conditions of labor. I conclude by discussing the website platform, SoundBetter—a site designed to connect musicians and music production workers to record music. I use a Cultural Studies methodology that interrogates a cultural object (music studios) with the goal of illuminating the situatedness of that object within a broader social discourse. To do this, I employ the method of immanent critique as "a means of detecting the societal contradictions which offer the most determinate possibilities for emancipatory social change" (Antonio 1981:330). What follows is a theorization of the effects of digital music production on the social relations of production in new studio spaces.

Digitizing and Decentering the Studio

As large studios developed in a handful of major cities, other studios clustered nearby to exploit the available labor. Allen Scott contends that this "clustering together of many different types of firms and specialized workers in one place provides all participants in the industry with a form of social insurance in the sense that clustering will almost always guarantee a relatively high probability of finding just the right kind of input within easy access at just the right time" (Scott 2000:121). In other words, record labels and musicians cluster in New York, Los Angeles, and Nashville because there are already musicians in those locations.[2] Clustering creates easy access to a pool of qualified musicians, producers, engineers, Artist & Repertoire (A&R) staff, and composers. With all of these different types of labor near each other, capitalism has an efficient system of production because little time and resources are lost seeking out the right types of labor to exploit; clustering creates a reserve army of labor. As a result, record labels built studios in these key cities to exploit the cultural labor that existed in these locations. Large record label-owned or established studios allowed capital to expropriate labor at a high profit; however, DAWs are upending the institutional need for these large studios and replacing them with smaller decentralized studios.

Large studios operate under a Fordist economic model. Their goal is to produce a large quantity of music with nominal costs. The most effective strategy to produce music was to develop an economy of scale. Berry Gordy perfected this model in the Detroit-based Motown Studios, 1959-1972, where composers/authors, musicians, engineers, producers, directors worked under the same roof (Smith 2001). Gordy's model operated through a logic where the parts were interchangeable (Horkheimer and Adorno 1972); a song written by Holland-Dozier-Holland (a Motown songwriting team) could be recorded by Motown session musicians, vocals could be recorded by both Stevie Wonder and Marvin Gaye, then ultimately Motown management could decide which recording artist would have the song on their album. This was possible because of the location of surplus army of musical labor in one place.

This model was used across the recording industry. Again, this is based on an economy of scale. If we just consider janitorial services, one large studio that has the capacity to record multiple sessions at the same time could employ one janitor to clean the floors and bathrooms of a large studio, but if the studio were half the size and split

into two locations, two janitors would be needed to keep the studio clean. I mention janitors because this is how deeply embedded labor is in these studios. On the production level, a team of sound engineers in a large studio allows an engineer to set-up a session in one room while recording is taking place in a different room. Their labor is always necessary around the studio on a rotating basis to keep projects moving through the studio. While the clustering of labels in specific cities allowed for the grouping together of various types of labor across the recording industry (Scott 2000), these studios allowed for fewer workers on a larger scale.

Since analog recording equipment was so expensive, recording studios required significant capital to open; this meant that record labels were ideal owners of studios. Recording studios have been the main element of the means of production in the recording industry because instruments and other performance gear is relatively cheap. Therefore, record labels owned recording studios as a means to employ various types of labor to produce music. The reason why musicians recorded in these large studios was simple: musicians did not have the capital to own the means of production to record music. If musicians wanted to record and sell music, they had to pay for time in a studio. Ownership of the means of production is so important to capitalism because it is what allows capital to exploit labor. Since labor cannot afford to produce records on their own, they need to work for capital. However, all of this changes with DAWs because of the diminution of the cost of recording equipment. This decline in the cost of recording equipment has led to the closing of recording studios.

For example, the closure of Room With A View studios illustrates the expense to run a high-end recording studio. Billboard closely followed the development of Room With A View studios going as far as to consider this small one-room facility "one of the top mixing facilities in the world" used by recording artists such as Dave Matthews Band, Ozzy Osbourne, Paula Cole and The Verve Pipe (Verna 1997). The excitement around the studio, which opened in 1994, stemmed from the studio's purchase of a Solid State Logic (SSL) 9000 J series console, a recording console that cost "hundreds of thousands of dollars" (Verna 1997). Slightly over a year later in 1998, Paul Verna reported a story about the closure of Room With A View. In this later story, former studio owner Alessandro Cecconi stated the following:

> "When we got our 9000, there were three in town," he says. "Now there are eight or nine, and SSL is dropping their prices, so the studios are dropping their rates. You can get an 80-channel board for $400,000. As a studio owner, you never win. You put in a 9000 and you sell your room for $2,000 a day. Then the next guy puts one in and charges $1,800 a day. Then the next guy charges $1,600"(Verna 1998a).

This illustrates the high cost of high-end recording studios. Cecconi attempted to create a high-end recording studio on a small-scale to compete with the large multi-room studios run by the major record labels. While Cecconi blames the cost of SSL for his studio's failure, a point that SSL vehemently denies (Verna 1998b), this episode exemplifies the barrier for small studios to purchase the means of production to compete on equal ground with the majors. For a major record label or an established multi-room studio, a $400,000 piece of equipment is an investment in a business that can be made by reinvesting capital, whereas, Room With A View undoubtedly received a loan to purchase the equipment that would ultimately have to be paid off with more expensive studio time. This initial difference in capital reflects the capacity for different types of studios to charge different daily rates; large concentrated firms will always be able to stifle the competition similar to the effects of Walmart on small businesses in the retail industry. And yet, it is an irony that Room With A View made an attempt to compete with large studios by purchasing an expensive recording console at a time when expensive recording equipment was quickly becoming unnecessary.

A transformation to this model of large recording studios began decades ago because studio equipment has become less expensive, smaller, and more portable. As the smaller and cheaper equipment has improved in quality, "the distinction between what can be considered a 'professional' or 'commercial' project studio and simply a 'personal' or 'home' studio has become increasingly difficult to make" (Théberge 2012:83). Since high quality recording technology is available in the home that is indistinguishable from that available in expensive studios, there has been widespread adaptation of these technologies by musicians and producers. A report by Billboard about the closing of Hit Factory in New York City and Cello Studios in Los Angeles within five days in 2005 points to the fact that music can be "completed in small, inexpensive DAW-based suites, some of them personal or home studios" (Walsh 2005). The low cost of new recording technology has lowered the cost of the means of production displacing the importance of large studios in the recording process. Even Sony Studio, one of the last unionized studios in NYC was valued "more as real estate than any amount of financial gain, organization efficiency or corporate prestige" (Théberge 2012:78). In other words, even the organizational efficiency and corporate inertia of large studios was

no match for the increased efficiency of outsourcing studio work to independent producers. Susan Christopherson highlights a similar process in the film and television industries where "new technologies have also affected content production, making it less expensive and adapted to the demand for inexpensive programming. In particular, lightweight video, lighting and audio equipment have made it possible to reduce the number of people necessary for a 'shoot'" (Christopherson 2008:79). Because cheaper production processes are available, film and television budgets have decreased, thereby forcing producers to produce content on smaller budgets using cheaper technologies; this is precisely the process taking place in the recording industry.

Large studios have been closing around the country. Mergers have been the source of some closures, such as the A&M Recording Studios complex, which closed as a result of Universal Music Group's purchasing of Polygram records in 1999 (Verna 1999). In New York City, Hit Factory, famous for recording artists from Paul Simon to Michael Jackson, closed its doors in 2005 and is now luxury condos (Rose 2009). As Billboard contends, "inexpensive, high-quality digital recording equipment has increasingly enabled musicians to take production into their own hands," a trend that the recording industry's trade journal claims to find "troubling" in places like Austin, Texas (Walsh 2003). I highlight the word troubling because it implies a degree of conscience on the part of Billboard; however, the overall thrust of the content in Billboard emphasizes the profitability of major record labels. To that end, the closing of studios in Austin, Texas signals the reduced costs for major record labels to produce and sell albums. In fact, later in the same article (Walsh 2003), Billboard blames the closing of Austin's studios on the declining major label recording budgets; however, the article does not connect the availability of cheap recording equipment with the declining budgets.

What causes the decline of major record label recording budgets? The dominant narrative perpetuates the idea that declining budgets are a direct result of declining music sales. As an example, an article in the Christian Science Monitor relays the narrative that "following the downturn in music sales this decade, many studios are struggling or simply have closed their doors" (Guarino 2009). This articulation implies that studios are closing because of declining music sales. However, as I have demonstrated elsewhere (Arditi 2014b, 2014c), this argument is specious because the major record labels define this narrative. A critical analysis of the status of recording budgets points in a different direction: the decline of the cost of the means of production (in this instance, recording equipment and space) led to smaller budgets. Smaller budgets are a result of the logic of capitalism. Why would a label budget for a $2,000/day studio when it can budget for a studio that charges $500/day? Major record labels will not spend unnecessary money on the recording process. Because recording can be done on a small scale from small/boutique/producer-owned/home studios, there is no longer a need for record labels' budgets to support the overhead cost of running a large recording studio. The new low cost of the means of record production dislodged production by forcing the closure of large studios and changing the space of record production to decentralized small studios.

There are parallels to the growing sharing economy in the ability for workers to own, at least, part of the means of production. Uber and Lyft are known as "rideshare" services because they allow vehicle owners to act as taxi drivers. People who own cars can drive passengers for a fee on their "free" time. This is significantly different from driving for a taxi cab company or limousine service where the company owns the vehicle and the drivers are employees who need the company to earn a wage. With ridesharing, Uber and Lyft do not own the vehicles (at least for most of their services), but rather count on crowdsourcing drivers and their cars throughout selected cities. Ridesharing services define themselves as web platforms because their applications connect passengers to drivers. NeighborGoods is a website that allows individuals to rent their tools. CouchSurfing and Airbnb connect people willing to rent their homes to travelers.

In each case, the company earns revenue from workers who use their own means of production, but would lack the cumulative network of people using these services to generate a wage from driving or renting their own equipment. Small studios work in a similar way where studio "owners" (people with a laptop and several microphones) can record their own music and record the music of others, but their studios lack the reputation to gain the recordings any recognition.

Owning a personal home studio has become a significant part of a musician's identity. In an ethnography of the underground hip-hop music scene entitled "Get on the Mic: Recording Studios as Symbolic Spaces in Rap Music" (2014), Geoff Harkness investigates the role of studio space in rap music. In Harkness' illustration of the symbolic spaces in which emcees record and produce their music, I see two levels of craft production. First, Harkness describes the studio space of National Sound, a "professional studio with enough computer gear and digital paraphernalia to fill a small airplane hangar" (Harkness 2014:82). Second, Harkness identifies the myriad varieties of home studio spaces. These spaces remove the centrality of capital in the recording process because they

allow for the dispersal of recording sites. However, these new spaces more thoroughly point to the informalization of labor that is a quintessential part of the contemporary recording industry and sharing economy more generally.

Informalizing Labor

Before the proliferation of DAWs and cheap recording equipment, musicians were the primary source of precarious casual labor in the recording industry. Many musicians have an ideology that to succeed in their craft, they need to sign a record contract, and as part of that ideology, they earn a living by not committing themselves to a stable career. Rather, musicians dedicate their lives to one day "making it" in the music business by playing gigs at night and working part-time jobs or teaching music lessons during the day. In doing so, these musicians accept whatever type of work can permit them the flexibility to set their own schedule. Since they see their primary source of work (i.e. being a musician) as flexible and casual, they are willing to accept other forms of flexible and casual employment to supplement their income (Arditi 2014a). This has been the labor model for musicians for the better part of a century. Attali's proclamation that the political economy of music foreshadows the broader political economic system is relevant here because the global economic system shifted to embrace the contingent nature of employment for musicians for all types of labor. "Capital-owners have won lavish returns from casualization – subcontracting, outsourcing and other modes of flexploitation – and increasingly expect the same in higher-skill sectors of the economy. As a result, we have seen the steady march of contingency into the lower and middle levels of the professional and high-wage service industries" (Ross 2008:34). As Andrew Ross suggests, capital is instituting precarious labor at all levels and in all types of labor. This has been implemented through the language of creativity and creative workers under the argument that for workers to be the most productive and happiest, they must be given the space to have a flexible work environment. The non-musician labor in the recording industry is increasingly emulating the labor conditions of musicians. While some workers within the Culture Industry have made considerable money from flexible outsourced label, far more make less money.

In large multi-room studios, there are a number of labor positions necessary for the everyday functioning of the studio. As discussed above, this labor includes everything from the janitorial staff to sound engineers. Large studios employ these workers on a full-time basis to ensure a smooth operating studio. Therefore, these studios must pay employees for working full-time, which includes complying with state-mandated benefits for full-time employees. This is the "organizational efficiency" (Théberge 2012) discussed above; because record labels owned large studios, they already had labor within these studios. There is no need to locate workers in large studios, and negotiate their wages because they were part of the studio. Small studios work under a mode of production where the cost of the means of production is shifted to labor itself.

The political economy of this scenario is interesting because of the way the new model places the economic burden on subcontracted labor – an expansion of the so-called "1099 economy" discussed above. As a hypothetical example, whereas an established studio may charge $1500–2,000/day for the use of a studio, a small professional project studio may charge $50/hour (or $400 for an eight-hour day). The availability of cheap digital recording equipment is not enough to explain this decrease in price; it can only be described in terms of a parallel reduction in labor costs. As Susan Christopherson characterizes this process, "large media firms are paring down their production workforces to an essential core and using temporary workers and self-employed workers on an as-needed basis" (Christopherson 2008:83). In other words, record labels reduce the cost to produce albums by relying on contingent labor that not only produces music at a lower cost, but also does this by employing fewer workers. Small project studios are operated generally by the owner who acts as owner/producer/engineer/janitor as is the case with Abe at National Sound (Harkness 2014). Even in instances where the producer has a big name, these relations of production require the producer to determine his/her studio's labor configuration to meet the demands of a budget. In other words, it is the producer's decision who to hire to help run the studio. Unfortunately, this has led to both a reduction in the number of employees necessary in a production studio and the amount that producers are willing to or required by law to pay employees. Therefore, digital studios have led to the increasingly precariousness of employment for workers in the recording industry.

The concept of "precariousness" used by many Autonomist Marxists and critical media theorists is relevant to this labor position. As labor flexibility increases, it erodes at Marx's concept of the reserve army of labor. Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri posit that "What is called the flexibility of the labor market means that no job is secure"

(2004:131). Without job security, even the employed are unsure of their future employment and many workers remain underemployed as they string together odd jobs to try to pay bills. "Precariousness (in relation to work) refers to all forms of insecure, contingent, flexible work – from illegalized, casualized and temporary, to homeworking, piecework and freelancing" (Gill and Pratt 2008:3). Whereas many economists promote creative labor as a model for all labor, Gill and Pratt argue precisely the flexibility of so-called "creative workers" places them in an insecure position. For instance, the two types of new project studios, described by Harkness (2014), allow for endless tinkering on the part of musicians, and in the professional project studios, it overworks the staff of the studio for little pay. The musician's home tinkering is a form of homeworking that advances itself in perpetuity – a musician will spend all of his/her free time working on a track to "perfect" it, but there is no compensation for time-spent working. Meanwhile, producers who open their own studios must always work to find musicians to record sessions because their survival is contingent on a demand for studio space. If their studio business is struggling to remain open, the producer-owner must be willing to record whenever musicians would like to record. Whereas labor in a Fordist industrial model is guaranteed a wage as long as they remain employed, precarious employment is dependent on the whims of demand and the insecurity of the next project.

Precarity is demonstrated throughout the record industry. In The Death & Life of the Music Industry in the Digital Age (2013), Jim Rogers calls the celebrity status of particular producers the "cult" of the record producer. Rogers suggests that "record producers now exist as individual brands in their own right. Beyond serving to shape or define the sound of the record, many producers, courtesy of the elevated status they have come to enjoy, are widely perceived as fundamental to enhancing the public profile of the artists they produce" (Rogers 2013:193).

Producers become larger than the artists themselves. As a result, picking the right producer(s) for an album contributes to the overall success of the album. For instance, Adele's album 25, which was always destined to go multi-platinum benefited directly from the cult of the record producer. In Rolling Stone's review of 25, the reviewer explains that "pop's biggest names, from Max Martin to Bruno Mars, join familiar faces like Paul Epworth and Ryan Tedder in 25's dream team of producers and co-writers" (Dolan 2015:61). These are producers/songwriters with the biggest hits at the time; their names and reputations almost guarantee a hit album. Furthermore, Rogers insists this gives lesser-known artists access to larger audiences. It is important to note that this has little to do with production quality, and is more closely related to the producer's brand.

Moreover, "big-name producers are largely only accessible through one of the major labels," which Rogers argues "helps to maintain and bolster an oligopolistic industrial structure" (Rogers 2013:194). Since big-name producers are available only to major label artists, the cult of the producer leads to even greater distinctions between music produced by majors and independents. The class divide between majors and independents grows deeper because independent artists can only use non-major-affiliated producers who do not have the brand-power to expose their music to a larger audience.

To help with the recording process, owner-producers seek even more contingent/flexible/casual labor. Many project studios turn to interns to fill the labor gaps in their studios. Whereas the traditional studio model used apprentices to do much of the less skilled labor around the studio and paid sound engineers to facilitate the recording process, today's project studios focus on interns. In some instances, studios open "their doors to interns for a fee, thus generating income during periods when the studio would otherwise be unused" (Théberge 2012:88). In other words, the precariousness of project studio employment encourages owner-producers to use further types of casualized labor and go as far as charging them for their exploitation. Alexandre Frenette (2013) reveals the precariousness of interns working for the major record labels. In a way, the interns who Frenette describes at the major record labels represent a privileged position compared to those working at project studios because the major labels operate within the work standards of labor laws—however low those standards are for interns. Since project studios may operate without licenses, there may not be documentation that an individual interns at a project studio; this increases the precariousness of the intern's labor.

By contracting studio work to small independent project studios, major record labels create disturbing labor practices that exploit the disempowered character of studio owner-producers. People that want to work in recording studios do so only in the most precarious of labor relations. Ultimately, the most practical way to make money working in a recording studio is for aspirant producers to build their own studios because their work is too contingent otherwise. However, opening one's own studio is also a quick route to bankruptcy because the lack of contracts and competition among producers makes owning a studio unstable. Major record labels continue to decrease recording budgets for their recording artists because they know how the system of outsourcing works to minimize costs. Recording artists seek out cheaper studios to make their recording budgets go further. As a result, there is a race

to the bottom among project studio owners who are desperate to slash their rates to compete against the always-increasing number of project studios

Conclusion

Already, a web platform exists to find "freelancers" to record your album. SoundBetter is a website with lofty goals to "democratize the music production world, to help pros get work remotely, to increase transparency via verified reviews and help the huge market of self producing musicians securely connect with the right partners from anywhere in the world" (https://soundbetter.com/about, February 1, 2016). By promising a "democratic" structure, SoundBetter elicits the connotation that all are created equal. There is a free "Basic" plan that allows producers, beatmakers, mixers, musicians, sound engineers, etc. to create a profile and use the platform. However, there is a tiered pricing plan for $39/month or $395/year to have greater access (which includes access to the job board—an important feature for people who want to make a living through the site). So in practice, SoundBetter parallels American democracy where people with money have greater access than the poor masses. At the same time, SoundBetter generates revenue from users regardless of whether these users actually receive gigs. By placing people in contact with potential producers, beatmakers and sound engineers, SoundBetter extracts profit from the dreams of aspiring record producers without giving them much other than a central place to be found.

Record producers in small studios are independent contractors who rely on landing gigs to earn an income. This essay opens lines of inquiry for future work around three ideologies that induce producers to work in the informal economy. First, producers succumb to the ideology of creative autonomy. Second, many producers endlessly tinker with their music with the hope to one day "make it" and be released from their everyday struggle. Third, producers believe that the path to celebrity requires dedicating all of their time to their craft.

When everyone can be a cab driver, hotelier or record producer, no one can make a living from driving people around, renting out a room or recording music. For example, by driving for Uber in one's "free" time, it reduces the number of riders available to people driving full time. Not only do people fail to make a living from these activities, there is no solidarity between workers and no chance of unionization. In the music industry, there are no credible data on the number of workers – the U.S. Bureau of Labor statistics has no way to track the number of people who work as producers. While musicians have always had this precarity, the rest of the economy is following their lead to become an economy of 1099 workers. Virtually no one can make a living producing music, but that does not stop the dreamers from toiling to hit it big.

Endnotes

1. This article is derived, in part, from an essay published in The production and consumption of music in the digital age on April 26, 2016.

2. Of course, there are varying reasons why these cities became sites for the recording industry. For example, Los Angeles developed as musicians from across the United States migrated to be close to film recording (Zinn, Kelley, and Frank 2002).

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"Inside Doesn't Matter": Consumerism's Serial Annihilation of Women and the Self in American Psycho

Reagan Ross

> That...consumption is no longer restricted to the necessities but, on the contrary, mainly concentrates on the superfluities of life...harbors the grave danger that eventually no object of the world will be safe from consumption and annihilation through consumption.
>
> — (Arendt, 1958: 133)

Perhaps no film more radically reveals the "serial killer" (cannibalistic) nature of consumerism than American Psycho (2000, Mary Harron). The implications of this disturbing "reality" are cataclysmically far reaching: The end of the world may not come from some tangible material catastrophe (at least insofar as it isn't a corollary of this dehumanization process); rather, more insidiously, it may come via a psychological de-humanization process whereby we literally lose our humanity from the inside out. To understand this development, the film didactically reveals an all-consuming consumption fixation that begins with a food fetish but then is extended to the consumption of women in particular, Others in general, and, most disturbingly – and informing the first two – the "self."

The Political Didactic

Before I discuss this film, I want to defend the importance of the popular political film (and I would strongly argue that American Psycho is one of the most radical political films ever to come out of Hollywood as I will show in this paper). Indeed, I would argue that the progressive (and subversive) potential of popular cinema in general is substantial. I have argued elsewhere that "popular" films in particular are important as a first step towards breaking free of the commodified and reified chains that keep mass audiences in place.[1] One cannot drag people kicking and screaming into the de-reified air of engagement with the dominant social order; rather, one must do so through a series of steps, the first step being that which they can most relate to, the "popular."

More particularly, the oppositional possibilities of popular cinema reside in what I have called the "political didactic." In present times, the neglected notion of the didactic in aesthetics has been generally seen as a devaluing of art. However, in the postmodern moment, when the norm is the opposite of the didactic – the decentered (displaced, fragmented) and reified subject – the didactic potentially grounds the subject back to a more coalesced perspective of the current moment.

Fredric Jameson has suggested something similar in his work. He has said that we need an aesthetic that allows for "the reinvention of possibilities of cognition and perception [and] that allow social phenomena once again to become transparent, as moments of the struggle between classes" (1977: 212). Jameson has come back to this need for "transparency" repeatedly in his work on the postmodern. Indeed, in his influential concept "cognitive mapping," Jameson posits a kind of aesthetic application with a "deeply pedagogical function [that] teaches us something about what would be involved in positioning ourselves in the world" (Wegner, 2009: 167)." While I do not suggest that

"popular cinema" can do this, I do suggest that popular cinema can serve a critical function in its didactic mode: as a first step to a break from a reified and commodified existence.

I will also argue that while it is true that popular, mainstream films mostly only offer us the symptoms of a commodifying and reifying capitalism, that may be enough, at least for those first few steps I mentioned above. The seemingly sedimented belief that only texts from the margins can usefully awaken people to their reified existence doesn't take into consideration the incredibly powerful hegemonizing influences of global capitalism. It is time to recognize that we can't begin at the margins and hope to bring the margins to the center. That strategy has merely kept progressive ideas where the dominant social order wants them, at the margin. No, we have to re-strategize, working from the center out, bringing people to the margin (and thus bringing the margin to the center). We begin to do that, by gaining a foothold in the mind of the reified viewer.

To further attest to this postmodern shift in the oppositional potentialities of popular cinema, I offer another angle to this debate. In contradistinction to the modernist approach of the post-'68 French film groups (journals such as Cahiers du Cinéma and Cinétheque, filmmakers such as Jean-Luc Godard, and organizations such as the Dziga Vertov group), who saw the political and the oppositional more in terms of an avant-gardist approach – as a way of getting "outside" the dominant mode of the social order – I suggest the necessity of seeing an oppositional aesthetic that is only possible from the "inside." That is, as Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri put it in their important text Empire:

> We should be done once and for all with the search for an outside, a standpoint that imagines a purity for our politics. It is better both theoretically and practically to enter the terrain of Empire and confront its homogenizing and heterogenizing flows in all their complexity, grounding our analysis in the power of the global multitude (2000: 46).

As global capitalism has expanded its reach to every corner of the globe (and the unconscious, as Jameson says), as "the capitalist [world] market" becomes "the diagram of imperial power" (Hardt and Negri, 2000: 190) "the only way out," in Marco Abel's words, "is through!" (Abel, 2001: 140)

This process of "through" – of engaging a "deterritorialized" capitalism on its own terrain – I argue, begins on the most simple level (at the level of the didactically exposed mindless mass consumption in the case of American Psycho), where popular, "political didactic" texts offer up, in Hardt and Negri's words, "the power to affirm [the multitude's] autonomy…expressing itself through an apparatus [text] of widespread, transversal territorial [cognitive] reappropriation" (2000: 398), texts that register symptoms of the dehumanizing and destructive nature of the dominant capitalistic order. As I said, while they largely don't specifically address the causal forces that create the symptoms they relate, they do offer a glimpse of them. In addition to the didactic registers of consumerist identity formations and the dangerous consequences of this ontological shift, American Psycho also critically registers symptoms via allegorical "figurations," an important consideration for Jameson in his theorization of the postmodern moment. He says that

> an essentially allegorical concept must be introduced – the 'play of figuration' – in order to convey some sense that these new and enormous global realities are inaccessible to any individual subject or consciousness...which is to say that those fundamental realities are somehow ultimately unrepresentable or, to use the Althusserian phrase, are something like an absent cause, one that can never emerge into the presence of perception. Yet this absent cause can find figures through which to express itself in distorted and symbolic ways: indeed, one of our basic tasks as critics of literature is to track down and make conceptually available the ultimate realities and experiences designated by those figures, which the reading mind inevitably tends to reify and to read as primary contents in their own right (1991: 411-412).

Because we cannot represent – and thus, confront – the enormous powerful forces (transnational, corporate apparatus/global capitalism, or in Negri and Hardt's terms, "empire") that act on us every day, we can only indirectly allude to these forces through political allegory.

Political Allegory plays a critical role in American Psycho, a film that cogently "maps" out class disparities and hierarchies – and, indeed, arguably, even this "absent cause" (again, the transnational, corporate apparatus/global capitalism) – though, most particularly, it didactically maps out a consumerism that is as monstrous in its formation of a "serial killer" sensibility as the serial killer himself.

Key Differences between Novel and Film

I want to also first say something about the adaptation of Brett Easton Ellis' notorious novel of the same

name before I begin my analysis of the film. I'm not going to get into the on-going debate as to whether Ellis' novel was a misogynistic text (as I felt it was while reading it) or a brilliant anti-consumerism text (as I also felt it was while reading it). Instead, I want to focus on the film Harron and screenwriter Guinevere Turner adapted.[2] In one sense, Harron and Turner's adaptation is a faithful visual realization of Ellis' very visual oriented novel. In many ways the novel and film function in the same manner, as scathing satires of the hedonist 1980s in America. Harron and Turner used much of the dialogue in the book and many similar sequences. Moreover, the film retains the novel's ambiguity of whether Patrick really is a serial killer or imagines himself as a serial killer. The brilliance of this strategy is in making both "realities" possible, which allows the spectator/reader to see the (self) destructive nature of discourses of consumerism. Because such discourses have become so internalized they literally alter our "reality," blur the boundaries between "reality" and the imaginary, while collapsing the real and the imaginary into one narrative. (I'll come back to this in my discussion of Patrick's loss of self.) Whether real serial killer or fantasist serial killer, the meaning is the same since the film itself (and the novel) enacts the serial killer elements as if they are real, coding them for us as real, allegorically marking them as the Real of consumerism. Here I'm using the "Real" in the Slavoj Žižekian sense of how the Real can be shown, especially in cinema, where we can "touch the Real through those points where symbolization fails; through trauma, aversion, dislocation and all those markers of uncertainty where the Symbolic fails to deliver a consistent and coherent reality"; that is, "while the Real cannot be directly represented…it can nonetheless be shown in terms of symbolic failure and can be alluded to through figurative embodiments of horror-excess that threaten disintegration (monsters, forces of nature, disease/viruses and so on)" (Daly 2016). American Psycho superlatively does this, it reveals both how consumerist identity formations traumatically "dislocates," "disintegrates" identity, which, in turn, reveals the instability of the symbolic ("reality"/representation) itself, a formation reliant on ideological signification in general and thus always potentially at a point of destabilization, and the film reveals the real and cognitive violence embedded in consumerism. I'll further extrapolate on this element in my "Return of the Repressed/Return of the Real" section.

The differences between book and film are significant as well. For one thing, Harron and Turner stripped the excess from the book, paring the film down to its most essential material. Most glaringly removed are the revolting details of Patrick's killings and tortures. Also eliminated are the tedious, endless details of consumer objects. My sense is that by eliminating the excessive detail of the book, especially the extreme violence, Harron and Turner turn the focus more to the political didactic dimensions of the novel. Moreover, while the novel breaks down narrative conventions in every postmodern way, the film at least gives us the facsimile of a mimetic narrative, important for the allegorical inversion the film makes, which I will come back to in a moment. As Elizabeth Young contends, the novel never gives us the anchor of a mirrored reality, nor does it give us a reliable central character:

> Patrick is a cipher; a sign in language and it is in language that he disintegrates, slips out of our grasp. Patrick is Void. He is the Abyss. He is a textual impossibility, written out, elided until there is no "Patrick" other than the sign or signifier that sets in motion the process that must destroy him and thus at the end of the book must go back to its beginnings and start again (1992: 119, emphasis original).

Though the film retains this sense of indeterminacy – Patrick is still a lost signifier looking for an anchoring signified (due to his consumerist identity formation, more on this below) – the film also at least gives us the seeming moorings of a mirrored reality and gives us at least the semblance of a dimensional characterization in perhaps the most complex cinematic serial killer of all time: Patrick Bateman.

The film secures a mimetic narrative through another key change that Harron and Turner make. Unlike the novel where we only get Patrick's point of view (even when the novel shifts to an omniscient third person narration, the novel hints that it is Patrick), the film breaks away from Patrick to give us the perspectives of Others, especially women. Unlike the novel, where the women are all presented through Patrick's misogynist point of view, Harron and Turner give women in the film privileged moments. By making this shift, Harron and Turner not only offer us an anchoring reality outside of Patrick's fantasy world, they also offer us a feminine Other (that plays alongside the permeating presence of Otherness in the film) that ruptures the phallocentric narrative. The discernible presence of the feminine Other forces the spectator to see Patrick's excesses and misogyny through a woman's eye, thereby accentuating Patrick's actions as misogynistic. Again, in making this change Harron and Turner have arguably created a feminist political didactic text, as I'll show next.

The Consumption of Women

Particularly revealing is the ending moment (an added scene) where Jean, Patrick's secretary, looks at Patrick's

appointment book and sees the horrendous, misogynist drawings of women being tortured and killed. As Jean looks down on the images of atrocities to women (us taking on her point of view), we can't help but share her shock and horror. To Jean, Patrick is the perfect "GQ" male, good looking, fit, successful, fashionable, even projecting an inexplicably all-American innocent "boy next door" quality, as he is referred to three times. So, for Jean to see these atrocities that Patrick has drawn is to see an inconceivable Patrick he so embodies an ideological "model" of perfection in Jean's eyes, a perfection that is also coded as his projected corporate image in general, an image that would typically signify an admired all "American" (Dream) sensibility. Jean's shattering comprehension is due to her only being able to see the surface of Patrick, for, like everyone else in the film, she too suffers from discourses of consumerism that are all about only seeing surfaces. But then that is part of Harron and Turner's project here, to pull back the curtain from the consumerist agenda of a supposed "perfect" surface designer status/image creation (e.g., America itself). More specifically, Patrick's "perfection" stems from him conscientiously making himself a coveted "brand." That is, via his rigorous exercise routine, tanning, and grooming himself and via his equally rigorous adherence to brand name clothes and tastes, Patrick commodifies himself, attempting to construct a much desired and valuable commodity, which of course Jean wants to consume.

That is why this moment in the film is so crucial, for Jean represents the "ordinary" plebian worker in awe of Patrick's surface "perfection" and who becomes our surrogate point of view of seeing the surface of Patrick as others see him. In finally seeing Patrick's Real "inside," the spell of "perfection" is shattered, which, in terms of Patrick's allegorical signification, has profound implications. For one, what American Psycho does so well is didactically deconstruct this projection, again and again revealing the violence embedded in the consumerist brand name. In this case, the brand of "Patrick" hides a monstrous objectification, dehumanization of and violence against women.

This glaring embedded violence in consumerism is repressed in society, a necessary thing in order for such a destructive system to remain in place. The more profound point here is the ambitious trajectory this film takes with Patrick, a conspicuously allegorical figure if there ever was one (e.g., for one thing, he is an "American" psycho), a crucial element in the film that I will reveal in the course of my analysis. For now, in this moment, these misogynist drawings by Patrick take on much deeper implications than simply Jean seeing Patrick's misogyny and psychopathy. Allegorically, Patrick is signified as quintessentially American: phallocentric, patriarchal, capitalistic, consumerist. At least in terms of "patriarchy" (but expanding this sentiment to these other aspects of the ideological) Jane Caputi puts this moment simply: "Generally, awareness that this society is a patriarchal one, that is, committed to committing atrocities against women, is repressed" (1993: 104). In this scene, that ideological "repression" didactically erupts into the clear view of sight and consciousness for Jean and us.

Another moment bares this allegorical misogyny out, a moment that very much prefigures the appointment book moment. This moment is in the book as well, but as I have tried to argue, because of the feminine presence in the film (versus their lack of a tangible presence in the novel) this moment becomes more interrogative. Patrick's friends are degrading women in the usual objectifying locker room banter. Patrick's contribution to this discussion is particularly repellent. He tells them what serial killer Ed Gein had to say about women: "He wondered what [a woman's] head would look like on a stick." By inserting this extreme comment into their seemingly typical casual male conversation, Harron and Turner (and Ellis) are again (along with the later drawings revelation) revealing the Real (or return of the repressed) latent within his colleagues' pernicious comments. By making this revelation, Harron and Turner show how the misogyny and objectification of women is part and parcel of a destructive part of consumerism that markets women's bodies like pieces of meat, even more telling in a film where this cliché takes on literal meaning.

Like Jean, "Christie," the prostitute who Patrick picks up, is also given a point of view. Unlike the other characters (except Jean and the homeless bum Al and perhaps tragic Courtney) that feel no emotion and have no conscience that we can discern, "Christie" exhibits human characteristics, an important move on Harron and Turner's part. By giving "Christie" her humanity, her commodification and consumption becomes all that more apparent and painful for us. The second time Patrick picks her up, her desperate straits overcome her agitation from Patrick's previous severe abuse, "Christie" is obviously distressed at being in Patrick's company again. At this point, we have a real investment in her well-being due to what she has endured thus far, and the fact that she is so desperate for money that she will endure more. Tanner aptly expresses the painfulness of "Christie's" situation:

> The power of the john, who is able to repair and repurchase even a damaged body by producing money, anticipates the explicitly violent force of the psychotic killer who is able to transform the individual subjective body into typical,

> physiological matter by producing a weapon. As a critique of the dangers of '80s capitalism, American Psycho suggests that not only the john but any powerful capitalist manipulates and violates bodies in the process of buying and selling. The psycho, then, merely extends logically the assumptions of capitalism as he translates human bodies into commodities subject to both physical and economic manipulation (1994: 97).

Again, this figuration of Patrick into something more than merely a typical serial killer and "Christie" as something more than a disposable victim, didactically "unveil[s] the machinery that creates the magical illusions of a psycho-capitalist world in which the wealthy and beautiful have the power to transform anything into anything" (Tanner, 1994: 98). In this case, Patrick (re)names "Christie" (and "Sabrina") and transmits internalized narratives of consumerism (pornography and "torture porn" serial killer/horror film narratives, especially the chainsaw wielding Leatherface in The Texas Chainsaw Massacre) that literally use women's bodies for his/its consumption needs. These are the extreme ends of an overall sexist and misogynistic pattern throughout where Patrick is always telling women how to dress and look and behave and what to say. In other words, in allegorical terms, Patrick embodies a consumerism/capitalism where women are purely commodified players in his/its consumerist identity-consumption enactments.

Caputi takes this point even further, suggesting a deeper level of animus towards women: "Although this is rarely openly admitted, patriarchal culture does indeed require the ritual sacrifice of women, sometimes called witches, sometimes, prostitutes, sometimes even feminists" (1993: 106). Resonating here of course is the "serial killer" sub-genre itself, a disturbingly popular sub-genre of the horror film presently in currency, a fact that I believe Harron and Turner were aware of, making the film a kind of metanarrative as well, encapsulating the very real dehumanization of this pernicious sub-genre.[3]Indeed, Caputi sees the "ascendency" of the serial killer as the height of this dehumanization of women:

> [T]he ascendancy of the serial killer is a harbinger of apocalypse for the culture that has immortalized him, a culture that enacts on a grand scale an attack on the feminine, women and often literally the womb (as in the crimes of Jack the Ripper), understood within our tradition to be an assault on the core source of life and, hence, the future itself (1993: 107).

Again, my sense is that Harron and Turner are meeting Caputi's implicit challenge, by elevating Ellis' original narrative to a grander allegorical level, placing the blame for misogyny not only on patriarchy ideology but on consumerism/capitalism as well. No scene in any film that I can think of makes this clearer than this one: Patrick is apparently performing cunnilingus on his "friend" Elizabeth (played by Turner no less). To our (and "Christie" whose point of view we share) horror, he begins to literally eat her. By making her vagina the body part of choice for his appetites – not coincidently, the symbolic locus for life's entry way – Turner and Harron hyper-accentuate the misogynistic nature of the "serial killer" sub-genre. However, that only begins to get at the relevance of this moment and how it climaxes the commodification of women in general, as I will reveal in a moment.

Many writers have made the cannibalism/capitalist-consumerist analogy. For example, Michelle Warner contends that American Psycho "depicts the end project of a society that teaches its members only to consume others. American Psycho takes psychological cannibalism to its physical extreme, that of true physical cannibalism" (1996: 144). Caputi explains this interesting phenomenon:

> To understand why cannibalism has become a major motif in horror film and fiction since the 1960s, we might consider it as a metaphor for, in a word, consumerism. A corporate consumerist society is inherently ravenous, devouring natural resources and ever insatiable for new mass-produced goods. Perhaps [Hannibal] Lecter (and the actual sex murderer and cannibal, Jeffrey Dahmer) so grip the collective imagination in part because they mirror gluttonous American incorporation of the land and resources (bodies) of others, most frequently racial others (1993: 105).

Laura E. Tanner reinforces Caputi's and Warner's sentiments by showing how the capitalist devalues (dehumanizes/"consumes"/eats) the (disposable) human body:

> In using money to make money, Marx's capitalist profits without labor; he trades in the abstract and the invisible at the expense of those whose bodies are visibly used up by his exploitation of them. Marx's descriptions of the capitalist's dealings stress their apparent magical quality, the ease with which the capitalist is able to make something out of nothing. In doing so, of course, the capitalist also turns something into nothing; he transforms human beings into material: 'Production does not simply produce man as a commodity, the human commodity, man in the role of commodity; it produces him in keeping with this role as a mentally and physically dehumanized being' (Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts, 1844: 121). The 'increasing value' of the capitalist's world not only results in but depends upon what Marx describes as 'the devaluation of the world of men' (1844: 107). Whereas Marx's work on economy traces capitalism back to its origin in the gritty sacrifice

> of the worker's mind and body, American Psycho pushes the capitalist mentality to an extreme that renders visible the machinery at work beneath its apparent magic (1994: 96, original enphasis).

Indeed, as Tanner so skillfully conveys, that is what American Psycho didactically realizes, the absolute commodification (literal de-humanization) of self and Other. To further accentuate this uber-commodification, we can see how this consumption/cannibalism analogy is the Real of a capitalistic system.

To look at this film from this angle and to further demonstrate the differences between novel and film, I want to look at one particularly important moment, Harron's clever opening sequence.

The film begins with what looks like a knife cutting something (presumably human) and blood spewing forth. However, the blood is not blood but a red sauce and the knife is cutting, but it is cutting food. The opening image, then, is a clever ruse: What we think we see isn't what we see at all. That speaks to four different points: First, it manifests in a nutshell the operating mechanism of the film, the blurring of boundaries between reality and image, or discourses of consumerism, between what we think we see and what may in fact be Patrick's imaginings, which, in turn, reveals another pernicious consequence of consumerism, the breakdown of the "reality" "chain of signifiers" where signifiers of consumerism literally become our "reality" (more on this below). Second, it speaks to the most bizarre and telling aspect of our discourses of consumerism, our image conscious society, where even food is packaged, fetishized, in an imagistic (designer) way. Third, it begins the film on the most pernicious image of consumption, eating exotic, extravagant (wasteful) foods while Others in the world eat little or nothing, the larger point of which is that consumerism itself is about putting consumption and branding (or hedonistic pleasures) before all else. In this sense, then, this opening moment already speaks to the Jean moment I discussed above, the facade that consumerism perpetuates (the glossy, designer world), and the underlying, murderous Real (blood/violence).

To further highlight these ideas, the film's opening becomes a recurring motif in the film: Many of the sequences in the film involve food consumption (or attempting to get "reservations" for food consumption). The characters in the film are often seen eating out and Harron often emphasizes the fetishized nature of designer food dishes. In one telling moment in particular, just after Patrick has improbably killed "Christie," we get a cut to another designer food dish. After lingering on this image for a moment, Harron then tilts down to reveal that Patrick is drawing an image of his recent kill (or, more probably, the image speaks to an imagined kill[4]).Adding to this provocative image is yet another motif in the film, the color pattern of red, white, and blue. Not only is the facsimile image of dead "Christie" drawn in red and blue (set against the white table cloth) but the dish is prepared on a blue dish with a white dusting of powdered sugar, red berries on top, giving the dish itself the dominate coding of red, white and blue. Throughout the film, we see this red, white and blue color coding, especially in some of Patrick's suits. In this way, Harron emphasizes what I've suggested above, that not only has food been commodified but that – in linking the designer food to murdered, commodified "Christie" – food consumption is being equated to the consumption of women – consumption conspicuously associated with American ideology – a consumption too that has, via the serial killer sub-genre and other "torture porn" sub-genres of the horror film, been also commodified. In other words, this film constructs an extremely complex and disturbing picture of consumerism where (A) virtually every facet of life has become commodified, as will become more clear in a moment, and (B) most egregiously targets women as the most commodified and consumed Other.

In this shifting of point of view and focus (e.g., to a feminine presence in the film), again, Harron and Turner have made Ellis's vision their own, didactically emphasizing the commodification of women. Compounding this allegorical political-didactic meaning is a personal political-didactic one as well: Consumerism dehumanizes Patrick – robs him of his empathy – which, in turn, conjoined with discourses of consumerism that commodify women, turns him into a consumer of women, a thread I will explore more in the next section.

Patrick's Consumerist Identity Formation

Along with the dehumanization (consumption) of women, the film's other principal focus is on the dehumanization (consumption) of the self. Again, perhaps more devastating than any other film that focuses on consumerism American Psycho reveals the utter loss of self from consumerism. What is so hideous about this aspect of consumerism is how recent research suggests that consumerism plays a part in the degradation of empathy, which, in turn, is a major factor in the materialization of psychopaths and the concurrent consumption of women.

Again, we distinctly see this outcome with Patrick, who enacts discourses of consumerism that explicitly encourage the consumption of women, e.g., principally serial killer narratives, fiction or non-fiction (especially punctuated by his fixation on The Texas Chainsaw Massacre) and pornography though we also get body image messaging (the men's locker room banter) and phallocentric narratives (e.g., the cowboy signifier in Patrick's room and many phallic moments, especially the business card duel). This dehumanization of the self stems from an identity formation that is largely produced by consumerism. In their essay "Globalization, Corporate Culture, and Freedom," Allen D. Kanner and Renée G. Soule say, "[W]hen people are advertised to, they are objectified in a very specific manner. Their value and worth as a human being is reduced to that of a consumer. As a result, people's identity becomes increasingly based on their ability to buy things. They also judge others by the same criterion" (2003: 57). Tim Kasser affirms this experiential reality:

> In the face of messages glorifying the path of consumption and wealth, all of us to some extent take on or internalize materialistic values. That is, we incorporate the messages of consumer society into our own value and belief systems. These values then begin to organize our lives by influencing the goals we pursue, the attitudes we have toward particular people and objects, and the behaviors in which we engage (2002: 26).

This internalization of "materialistic values" then leads to a devaluation of Others:

> When people place a strong emphasis on consuming and buying, earning and spending, thinking of the monetary worth of things, and thinking of things a great deal of time, they may also become more likely to treat people like things. Philosopher Martin Buber referred to this interpersonal stance as I-It relationships, in which others' qualities, subjective experience, feelings, and desires are ignored, seen as unimportant, or viewed only in terms of their usefulness to oneself. In such relationships, other people become reduced to objects, little different from products that may be purchased, used, and discarded as necessary (Kasser, 2002: 67).

Disturbingly, Kasser goes on to say that "it is not hard to find examples of I-It relationships and objectification in consumer-driven cultures, as they have become increasingly common" (2002: 67). In terms of Patrick in particular, his actions and choices suggest a narcissistic personality, a disorder potentially "bred" from consumerism: "Narcissists are typically vain, expect special treatment and admiration from others and can be manipulative and hostile toward others. Social critics and psychologists have often suggested that consumer culture breeds a narcissistic personality by focusing individuals on the glorification of consumption" (2002: 12) In his essay "Seriality Kills," Frank Dexter affirms this reality of consumption, where "commodification…is the official substitute for social interaction…[now] the normal form in which wants are to be satisfied, freed of the oppressive complications of reciprocity, obligation, uncalculated generosity and all the other antiquated vestiges of a bygone symbolic order" (1992: 29).

We see Patrick's dehumanized, consumerist state most clearly early on, in one of the most striking scenes in the film, when Patrick takes us through his beautifying routine, capped off by applying a beauty mask to his face. As he is peeling his mask off, we hear in voice over:

> There is an idea of a Patrick Bateman, some kind of abstraction, but there is no real me, only an entity, something illusory, and though I can hide my cold gaze, and you can shake my hand and feel flesh gripping yours, and maybe you can even sense our lifestyles are probably comparable, I am simply not there.

Removing a mask usually means revealing the true persona underneath. For this moment, however, the removal of Patrick's mask reveals not a true (authentic) self underneath, but rather, a consumerist ("not there") self. And, indeed, Patrick doesn't seem to be there for much of the film. His fellow workers often do not recognize him and his reflection in various objects (on a framed print of the play Les Misérables[5], in the cab with his fiancée, on a menu) are constantly blurred. By not being linked to humanity, consumerist-Patrick is set adrift in a sea of signifiers. Patrick becomes a sliding signifier (and others in his circle as well) to which multiple signifieds can be attached. It is not only that Patrick is mistaken for his fellow "vice presidents" (a recurring joke that occurs amongst the other characters as well, everybody mistaking everybody for someone else), but he also seems interchangeable with them, making them all in a sense a designer construction. Warner recognizes the extreme danger in this development: "The native society is now dangerous because it devalues personal perception and any formation of internal identity. In this society people are identified in terms of what they wear, what they buy, and how they look" (1996: 141).

Patrick's consumerist existence stems from a systemic "consumption of identity" (Warner, 1996: 141) and the power of American Psycho is in its giving us a textbook, didactic representation of what this consumerist world looks like, so valuable for mainstream audiences who to one degree or another have suffered from the same consumerist

identity formation and have few texts to inform them of their de-realized self-formation. In one striking example, Bryce disingenuously talks about how they should all concern themselves with "the massacres in Sri Lanka…, how, like, the Sikhs are killing, like, tons of Israelis over there." But he merely conveys this to project an image of erudition and philanthropy. Patrick responds likewise (in an unaffected tone, registering the falsity of his monologue) with a litany of other causes:

> There are a lot more important problems than Sri Lanka. We have to end apartheid for one, and slow down the nuclear arms race, stop terrorism, and world hunger. We have to provide food and shelter for the homeless and oppose racial discrimination and promote civil rights while also promoting equal rights for women. We have to encourage a return to traditional moral values. Most importantly, we have to promote general social concern and less materialism in young people.

Unlike everyone else at that table (and the film), Patrick conveys this list with full self-awareness that he (and his "friends") doesn't really care. In a consumerist state of being, one can only go through the motions of caring about real world concerns. Similarly, it is also clear that global capitalism discourses (and its embodied figurations) only account for the lesser fortunate as a necessity of maintaining its consumerist human(e) facade. As Juchartz says, "Bateman has just been mouthing the same 'outrage' voiced by contemporary political leaders and civic groups…. The outrage consists of no more than words; there are no actions associated with them, other than a continuation and even escalation of the violence and amorality being protested" (1996: 73).

Juchartz only gets this sensibility partially right: It isn't that Patrick is doing the same thing as "political leaders and civic groups" but rather that he has consumed canned consumerist political rhetoric into his identity formation. That is, Patrick's identity is purely an amalgamation of consumerist signifiers. Virtually everything he says and does and wears and eats is internalized signifiers of consumerism regurgitated. In addition to the above consumerist rhetoric, we see this most conspicuously during one sexual encounter with "Sabrina" and "Christie" where, again, the sex is emulated from pornography (and, indeed, he films the scenes and narcissistically "performs" for the camera). We also get Patrick using consumerist slogans ("Just say no"), incessantly dropping brand name references (and clothing himself and surrounding himself with brand name objects), repeating a food critic's review of a "tasty dish," name dropping famous character names ("Cliff Huxtable") and, most hilariously, waxing (canned) philosophies that seem to emanate in part from the shallow meanings of pop songs themselves and in part from reviews of the music, all of which are substitutes for authentic identity markers. Most disturbingly, he imitates chainsaw wielding Leatherface, yet another figuration for how discourses of consumerism are not innocuous (e.g., food or clothes consumption) but rather inevitably extends to more explicit forms of (self) destructive modes of patterning.

"I've got to return some videotapes"

Patrick's lack of self-manifests itself in a subtle way as well. Throughout the film, Patrick sprinkles numerous popular catchphrases and lines ("I want to fit in"; "you look marvelous"; "it was a laugh riot"; "I'm on a diet" to list just a few) into his comments and responses to other characters. Patrick uses these catchphrases as ready-made responses to character conveyances, which further accentuates what I convey above, that Patrick has no authentic center of being but rather not only internalizes language, interests, belief systems and so on from discourses of consumerism and name brand objects but fills his self with popular colloquial language he consumes from others. That is, because Patrick so utterly lacks an authentic self – because consumerism signifies him – with real (historical, cultural, familial, societal) values and beliefs (an "inside") he is as Young says above, literally a "cipher…void." The implications of this are profound: Not only is Patrick's core identity determined by consumerism, but the people around him become an extension of consumerism and objects for his consumption in every way possible, from appropriating their language to appropriating their identities (at least twice he becomes others – Marcus Halberstram and Paul Allen), as well as literally consuming bodies for his every need – especially, again, women – or, at least so it seems, a (cannibalistic) metaphor that informs every other appropriation.

This reification process is so transparent because Patrick uses these catchphrases even when they are obviously inappropriate, as if because he has no "inside" to call up his own calculated responses, he can only respond with commonly used lines, even if they are inappropriate. No line best exemplifies this meaning than the line "I've got to return some videotapes."

The first time Patrick uses the line is as an escape mechanism to flee Luis's surprise come-on to Patrick (though,

intriguingly, the fleeing seems to be more about a homosexual panic on Patrick's part, Patrick apparently suffering from repressed homosexuality). He later uses the line in response to "Detective Donald Kimball" asking him where he was on the night of Paul Allen's disappearance ("I guess I was probably returning videotapes") and when a distressed Evelyn (Patrick has just broken up with her) asks a retreating Patrick where he is going ("I have to return some videotapes"). In all three cases, the line is extremely incongruous to the characters' questions, which, to my mind, is in part why the line is amusing: The line-as-response perplexes us because it is such an inexplicably unsuitable response. Moreover, the line is also wildly incongruous because Patrick does not have to return videotapes! That is, at various times, he probably does have to return all of those videotapes we see playing in the background (e.g., pornography and The Texas Chainsaw Massacre); however, since he has excessive wealth, late fees and even the expense of an unreturned videotape can't register as an immediate or necessary need. In this sense, the line becomes even more transparently ridiculous (and thus humorous). More pertinently, again, this transparent incongruity reveals Patrick as being a transmitter of internalized consumerist signifiers.

Disturbingly, Patrick's arbitrary responses reveal how consumerism in general "breaks down the signifying chain," a deeply profound shift in postmodern being and meaning creation as Jameson elucidates:

> When that relationship breaks down, when the links of the signifying chain snap, then we have schizophrenia in the form of a rubble of distinct and unrelated signifiers. The connection between this kind of linguistic malfunction and the psyche of the schizophrenic may then be grasped by way of a twofold proposition: first, that personal identity is itself the effect of certain temporal unification of past and future with one's present; and, second, that such active temporal unification is itself a function of language, or better still of the sentence, as it moves along its hermeneutic circle through time. If we are unable to unify the past, present, and future of the sentence, then we are similarly unable to unify the past, present, and future of our own biographical experience or psychic life. With the breakdown of the signifying chain, therefore, the schizophrenic is reduced to an experience of pure material signifiers, or, in other words, a series of pure and unrelated presents in time (1999: 26-27).

Among the many consequences of this break down is what Jameson calls "the waning of affect," a "liberation… from the older anomie of the centered subject" which means a "liberation from every…kind of feeling [and emotion]…since there is no longer a self present to do the feeling" (1999: 15) and a "psychic fragmentation" where "the structural distraction of the decentered subject [is] now promoted to the very motor and existential logic of late capitalism itself" (1999: 117). In other words, this consumerist (postmodern) subject is a temporal cipher detached from any grounding whatsoever – historical, cultural, societal, familial, (inter- and intra-) personal – ontologically designed instead by discourses of consumerism schizophrenically (euphorically) existing purely for consumption and…commodification. Perhaps no other fictional character embodies this mode of being better than Patrick, a human turned into a free floating signifier of consumerism detached from these very (historical, cultural, societal, familial, personal) links that make us human – give us a sense of our place in the world and history, symbiotically connect us to the material matter of our environments, empathetically relate to others and cognitively comprehend how our actions and choices impact the "global village" we inhabit.

Interestingly, as a by-product of this signification, this line also reflects a mundane, normative state of being outside of Patrick's otherwise affluent ostentatious decadent lifestyle (normal people do indeed have to worry about "returning videotapes"), which, in turn, further emphasizes the incongruity of this line because it emphasizes the real class disparity between corporate Patrick (who uses the line as an empty signifier) and the rest of us whose first response is in relating the real need to…"return those videotapes."

Patrick's (Our) Prison of Consumerism

Paradoxically – unrealistically – the element in the film that perhaps gives it its most unique flavor while also heightening this loss of authentic self is Harron and Turner choosing to give Patrick himself his humanity – in personalizing the severe consequences of consumerism on his humanity and in his awareness of his lack of it.

American Psycho has no hero to speak of, no figure that we can suture our point of view into, no real moral center, unusual for the serial killer sub-genre. With no moral center and no hero figure, no collapse into the too easily rendered dichotomy of good and evil, and with a characterization of a serial killer that offers some realization of his (lost) humanity, the film gives us nowhere to go but Patrick.In some ways, this "no moral center" strategy gives us a Brechtian distanciation effect (e.g., because we aren't sutured into anyone, we are kept at a distance). However,

I would also argue that because the film gives Patrick an anguished state of being from which we can relate – a consumerism that we all feel is dehumanizing us to some degree – we can't help but come to some investment in Patrick. In this way, then, the film takes on an even more complex web of identity formation: Instead of devolving into the typical Christian mode of "evil" for causal monster identity formations (e.g., even when not spelled out, the lack of cause is assumed to be just that, some simplistic ill-informed notion of soul-less "evil") or suggesting some specific "reason" for a monster's evil-ness (e.g., abusive parenting), the film targets instead the system itself – e.g., consumerism/capitalism – truly rare in commercial cinema. That is, I would argue that the point both film and novel make (though the film it seems to me gets this across better) is that Patrick's psychotic, murderous state is inevitable in a system that so dehumanizes its inhabitants. To attribute his state to some specific causal mechanism would be to do what most texts do, make his illness a symptom of something specific and correctable in society instead of "seeing" the deeper truth, that specific causes are merely symptoms of a deeper, much less easily graspable and correctable problem: capitalism itself.

In a mesmerizing performance, Christian Bale perfectly captures the torment of Patrick, his visage and comments always revealing his self-awareness (in a sea of figures who have no clue) of the "horror" of this consumerist world and his own part in it and in the constant suffering that such a prison of consumerism brings him, especially in terms of his experiences in attempting to measure his worth as a commodity (via adopting a consumerist self) against other "self" commodities. In this sense, though we are sickened by Patrick's acts we cannot fully dismiss him as a monster as we do other fictional serial killers (Buffalo Bill/The Silence of the Lambs, Jigsaw/Saw, John Doe/Se7en, etc.).

In terms of Patrick's self-awareness, we see this self-knowledge in many ways, via his actual words and thoughts, e.g., him knowing that he is "not there" (see above) and that there is "no inside" (see below) but also in other ways as well, such as him writing "Die Yuppie Scum" in blood on a wall, a line that suggests Patrick's deep rooted hatred for his "yuppie" lifestyle. Patrick's tormented state goes much deeper than this however; indeed, Harron and Turner gives us a serial killer who is as much victim and victimizer, perhaps more so if Patrick has not actually killed anyone. Harron and Turner do this in two principal ways: Psychologically speaking, by making him an extremely vulnerable serial killer and by emphasizing his critical lack of a real, meaningful human connection in his life.

In terms of the former, we get this most strikingly in the business cards duel sequence, for me, the single most interesting "phallic" symbol sequence in film history (for one thing, it links reinforcing masculinity to consumerism/capitalism in complex ways, a subject for another paper). In this sequence, Patrick "draws" his new business card, thinking his new card to be superior to his colleagues, but as others reveal their own new cards, it becomes clear that Patrick's card is the weakest of the bunch (even though for us they all look alike). Since Patrick's sense of worth is symbiotically attached to consumerist status symbols (as is typically the case with consumerist identities) him losing the business cards duel (especially as his card is apparently vastly inferior to his nemesis's card, "perfect" Paul Allen) is beyond devastating to him, for these crushing losses of status symbols are constant castrating stabs to Patrick's self-worth. Harron emphasizes this shattering loss of "self" with her extreme close-up of Patrick's sweaty, distorted, pasty facial features, an extreme and telling break from the "perfect" façade that Patrick projects up until this point. Though this moment is the stand out moment for Patrick's loss (lack) of self-worth, Harron and Turner gives us many moments like this where again and again, Patrick's symbiotic attachment to consumerist status symbols fail him – as they invariably will – and reveal an inexplicably vulnerable serial killer – because he is a deeply insecure individual whose sense of self-worth rises and falls according to the success or failure of commodity status symbols (e.g., the status acknowledgement of Others). As Kasser says, consumerism creates individuals whose "sense of esteem is frequently threatened, and their feelings of competence and worthiness are tenuous, even when they succeed" (2002: 48).

In terms of the latter – Patrick's lack of a meaningful connection (replaced by a drive for consumption of objects) – Harron and Turner emphasize this lack of Patrick's by giving us the barest hints of Patrick's suppressed desire for a genuine relationship with his secretary Jean, which we especially see in one of the most complex sequences in the film. Patrick and Jean are about to go on a date. To our horror, Patrick seems ready to kill her with a nail gun. However Patrick's seeming choice to kill Jean is thwarted by fiancée Evelyn's phone call. After Evelyn leaves a message on Patrick's machine, Jean asks Patrick if he wants her to leave. With a pained look on his face, Patrick responds, "Yeah, I don't think I can control myself…. I think if you stay, something bad will happen. I think I might hurt you." This moment of mercy and empathy for Jean reveals some "shred of humanity" left in Patrick. However, since research has shown again and again that serial killers have no empathy and thus see their victims as nothing more than disposable objects – which is otherwise very much the case elsewhere in the film – that simply cannot be the case here. And yet inexplicably it is. That is why I say "unrealistically" above. Harron and Turner choose to give Patrick that "shred of humanity" I just said was impossible for him to have. They do that to have their cake and

eat it too so to speak. That is, they get their ostensible serial killer horror film but they also get something more, a horror film with political content. In short, again, by giving Patrick his humanity in moments such as this scene – in his inability to form meaningful attachments – Harron and Turner reveal in his utter commodification a human as a victim, a necessary move to activate our own sense of loss in the face of a dehumanizing consumerism that has imprisoned all of us.

Later, in another key Jean moment, really falling apart now, Patrick calls Jean and says, "I need help…. I don't think I'm going to make it Jean." Here again we see Patrick's real latent desire for a real connection, a real relationship with one of the few "real" individuals in the film – Jean – break through his self-absorbed consumerist self. In this latter scene, despair setting in as his carefully constructed alternative reality – again, crafted together from discourses of consumerism (though, interestingly, this break down also activates discourses of consumerism as well as we see with the over-the-top confrontation with police) – breaks down, Patrick is in full blown panic mode. His call to Jean suggests him reaching out to the one human being he knows genuinely cares about his well-being, making Patrick – despite him also being horribly repellant – at least in moments such as these, a pathetic and even sympathetic figure.

In humanizing Patrick, Harron and Turner situate Patrick with the most complex cinematic serial killers in film, Norman Bates (Psycho) and Mark Lewis (Peeping Tom), both of whom are also arguably sympathetic and vulnerable serial killers, though unlike those two figures – whose psychopathy stems from parental origins and perhaps make them less relatable – Patrick's psychopathy at least in large part, or inextricably linked to any other implicit origins, stems from something we can all relate to, dehumanizing consumerism, a distinction that makes Patrick unique indeed.

Patrick's displaced humanity perfectly supports research on the devastating consequences of a consumerist lifestyle. As Kanner and Soule say, "Corporate policy and actions [e.g., advertising, marketing, consumerism] often compromise both outer and inner freedom, with dire psychological consequences" (2002: 50). Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi asserts "that excessive concern with financial success and material values is associated with lower levels of life satisfaction and self-esteem, presumably because such concerns reflect a sense of 'contingent worth' predicated on having rather being" (2003: 102, His italics). Erika L. Rosenberg cites Eric Fromm's work to support this consumerist process of "self" degradation:

> In psychology, Fromm (1947) proposed a personality type that can emerge from an isolated self in a consumer economy: the marketing character. People of this type have so lost a sense of inherent worth and connection to others that they have come to see themselves as a commodity. Seeing oneself as a commodity comes from a sense of isolation, which ultimately stems from the fundamental human need of interrelatedness that is not being met (2003: 113).

Finally, Kasser emphasizes how consumerism can lead to life and self-diminishment:

> [S]tudies document that strong materialistic values are associated with a pervasive undermining of people's well-being, from low life satisfaction and happiness, to depression and anxiety, to physical problems such as headaches, and to personality disorders, narcissism, and antisocial behavior (2002: 22)

What these scholars have discovered in their research on consumerism is just how dehumanizing consumerism is – in so many ways and so many levels – and yet we continue to inexplicably embrace our own self degradation, a sign of our own psychosis, an inversion the film didactically makes, as Scott Wilson suggests:

> On the sound Catch-22 principle that the very act of declaring one's madness is proof of one's sanity, while active, unreflecting participation in society (i.e. flying more missions) is evident lunacy, so it is not Bateman who is psychotic but America itself. Bateman knows that he is an amoral killer in an amoral universe, he is not deluded....While he is amoral, Bateman still discloses, at various points, an ill-defined anguish... (2000: 496).

Wilson's inversion here – that it is America that is "psychotic" – because of this "unreflecting participation" in a system that systematically dehumanizes human beings – whether that be from "flying more missions" or consumerism – signifies a consciousness "lack," stemming from a "consumerist consciousness." Harron and Turner especially signify this inversion in another potent inversion scene.

The film and novel both end with Patrick being juxtaposed with a clip of former President Ronald Reagan playing on a TV set. In both book and film, we roughly get the same provocative commentary by Patrick's associate Timothy Bryce. In the film, Bryce says, "How can he lie like that? How can he pull that shit? How can he be so fucking, I don't know, cool about it? He presents himself as this harmless old codger, but…inside…but inside…." Patrick finishes Bryce' commentary with his interior "but inside doesn't matter." Explicit in these comments is the

fact that Reagan, like Patrick, is all surface and no depth. That is, Reagan and Patrick are both media/consumerism creations. In the film, however, this juxtaposition becomes more explicitly a doppelganger effect as Patrick is set in a kind of mirror shot exactly opposite Reagan's image on TV. Further emphasized by his red, white, and blue suit, Patrick then becomes a didactic figuration for Reagan himself: Patrick becomes a stand-in for the dominant American order. Conversely, Reagan becomes the "American psycho."

And that then becomes the film's radical "revolutionary" commentary: The "American" in the title American Psycho is not about one individual – Patrick Bateman – but rather it directs us at another kind of American "exceptionalism" (change the title to this: American: Psycho) an American sociopathy that stems from the consumerist identity formation that I have been discussing in this essay. Compounding all of this though is yet another dehumanizing element: As Patrick expresses at the end, when everyone is a product of a consumerist identity formation, there is no way to "confess" (or see) one's murderous desires – and thus "no exit" (as the door just behind Patrick in that last scene conspicuously signifies) from the inevitable slide into a consumption of Others – since everyone has lost their "inside." That is, in the proverbial "vicious circle," as we become more commodified and reified and thus can't see our dehumanized state, we take ourselves even deeper into a commodified (reified) state of being, which, in turn, blinds us even more to the commodification process and so on.

This loss of self to a consumerist identity formation has an even more profound disturbing implication: Perhaps no power on earth blocks real political awareness, political investment, and political collectivity more insidiously than a consumerist identity formation that is wired for self-absorption and for desocialization. And that then is why this is a didactic message that cannot be undervalued, a message of just how truly devastating – devastating for self but also devastating for society – consumerist modes of identity formation are. That this message is consigned to a "popular" film makes the potential imprint of this message all the more impactful. Framing these important messages in a popular text may be the only way enlightenment takes place for reified audiences who only survey mainstream texts and whose cinematic language, so to speak, is the "language" of mainstream cinema. That, too, then informs why American Psycho is not only a vital political didactic text but a "revolutionary" one as well, a description that fits well for Robin Wood's famous proposition of the potential power of the horror genre.

The Return of the Repressed/The Return of the Real

Wood's suggestion in his seminal essay "An Introduction to the American Horror Film" that the horror genre is a potentially revolutionary genre, because it so artfully disguises its revolutionary material and because it reveals the "return of the repressed" of society – and the concurrent underlying ideological power mechanisms that oppress self and Others – is exemplified in American Psycho. Coincidentally, spelling this concept out is Wood's analysis of the grotesque family in The Texas Chainsaw Massacre, the distorted shadow ("return of the repressed") of our American capitalist system. That is, the family is a literal indictment of a capitalism that leaves human debris in its wake (they are the remnants of a slaughterhouse that was shut down), and a figurative marker of our distorted, repressed shadows staring back at us, human beings turned into cannibals (capitalists). Wood reveals the "distinction the film makes between the affluent young [protagonists] and the psychotic family, representatives of an exploited and degraded proletariat" (1985: 212). In a similar way, American Psycho offers us another kind of figurative ("return of the repressed") marker: Though still a monstrous capitalism that eats its own, in accordance with the shift to global capitalism, the nightmare has now become the omniscient presence of the transnational, corporate apparatus and its omniscient symbiotic arm, consumerism, all allegorically signified by corporate-consumer-cannibal Patrick Bateman. This sensibility is best exemplified by Patrick's "return of the repressed" turn of corporate phrases (e.g., "mergers and acquisitions" becomes "murders and executions") and by the name of Patrick's corporate master "Pierce and Pierce" which also didactically reveals the violence implicit in its predatory business of "mergers and acquisitions."

In a complementary vein, American Psycho also registers the deeper traumatic register of the "return of the Real":

> Just as the inevitable return of the repressed undermines the fantasy of unity that is the ego, so also does the return of the Real highlight the inadequacy of capitalist ideology, which revolves around the imaginary object that is the ego. Moreover, the return of the Real as traumatic intrusion (e.g., economic and ecological crises), reveals the masturbatory idiocy implicit to global capitalism's injunction to ever more enjoyment (Kelsey Wood, 2012: 310).

If we replace "consumerism" with "global capitalism" (though consumerism is part and parcel of global capitalism) we can especially see how telling this "masturbatory idiocy [for]… ever more enjoyment" is, a more glaring (symbolic) "fantasy frame." In these Žižekean terms, the Real in this film is a symptom of "an unbearable truth" that "resists integration" into the social order. This is the great Žižekian inversion, where the Real functions as the "real truth" of the symbolic order:

> [I]t should...be clear how 'identification with the symptom' is correlated with 'going through the fantasy': by means of such an identification with the (social) symptom, we traverse and subvert the fantasy frame that determines the field of social meaning, the ideological self-understanding of a given society, i.e., the frame within which, precisely, the 'symptom' appears as some alien, disturbing intrusion, and not as the point of eruption of the otherwise hidden truth of the existing social order (Žižek, 1995: 140).

The genius of the film is that it takes our consumerist reality, or "fantasy frame," and through representation – through Patrick and Patrick's psychotic consumerist-fantasy "reality" – reveals the "hidden truth" (or the Real) of the symbolic order itself, this capitalistic transversion of our "reality" into a "consumerist" (hedonistic, narcissistic, simulacrum) "reality." But, then, in a manifold effect, the film registers the Real of this consumerist symbolic order itself, a compounding of the deeply disturbing ramifications of consumerism. In another revealing passage, where Žižek discusses Fritz Lang's classic film Woman in the Window, Žižek gives us another example of this inversion. In the film a professor dreams he kills a man. Žižek inverts the discourse:

> The message of the film is not consoling, not: 'it was only a dream, in reality I am a normal man like others and not a murderer!' but rather; in our unconscious, in the real of our desire, we are all murderers....we could say that the professor awakes in order to continue his dream (about being a normal person like his fellow men), that is, to escape the real (the 'psychic reality') of his desire (1995: 16, His italics).

In the same way, then, we can say that this "return of the Real" in American Psycho goes even deeper than revealing the shift to a consumerist reality. That is, allegorical-didactic Patrick/American Psycho reveals the Real violence of consumerism, a violence we all partake in everyday: murder; misogyny and objectification of/violence against women; lack of empathy; a consumerist (lack of/loss of) identity and singular desire to consume, and the alienation and despair that comes from this ontological mode of being; consumption of others to satisfy needs and appetites; a consumerist identity that doesn't see its own self degradation and is cognitively (hedonistically, narcissistically) detached from mapping its own place in the social order. And this, then, is also the "truth" (Real) of a global capitalism that seems to be inexorably driving us to a de-evolutionary mode of being. In other words, as I've conveyed throughout my essay, like the professor whose Real "framing" is "murderer," allegorical Patrick codes us all as: "American psycho."

I want to end this essay on one final moment in the film. At one point, Patrick encounters "Al," an African American homeless man. Patrick stops and belittles the homeless man. The homeless man does not ask anything from Patrick, an important point. Instead of making the homeless man the stereotypical image of disgust and irrelevance, the man is given a humanity the rest of the highbrow characters lack. Set against the dehumanized, consumerist Patrick, the homeless bum becomes a more "authentic" person. The homeless man's responses to Patrick's entreaties further emphasize Patrick's de-humanized state. For Patrick, the homeless man is merely an object to prop his dented image back up (as I convey above, previous to this moment, Patrick's self-worth takes a bruising when his virtually identical "business card" is deemed inferior to his associates'). He "kills" (consumes) him and Patrick's egomaniacal, narcissistic-consumerist self is reaffirmed.

Allegorically configured in this moment, again, is the clear demarcation between corporate power and proletariat, racial/ethnic Other and the inevitable results of this dichotomy. Others populate almost all low positions in American Psycho accentuating the white, patriarchal power structure so tangibly manifested in the 1980s and to a slightly lesser extent still maintained today. Of all the moments where we see this dichotomy, this moment between Patrick and the African American homeless man is the most telling. After Patrick has given the man a false impression of being human and helping the man (conveying canned lines that echo his earlier "concerned" rhetoric), Patrick stands up and says "I don't have anything in common with you" (shot at a low angle) emphasizing not only Patrick's inhumaneness and utter lack of empathy but also (again, allegorically speaking) a whole upper class of people's sense of superiority and entitlement. In this way, American Psycho cogently shows us the dementia of a capitalistic system. That is, as I suggested earlier in the Jean/misogynist drawings moment – that embedded in consumerism is a violence to self and Other – here too we get this allegorically and didactically spelled out. In typical exchanges between server

and served in the film, we get at best indifference to the server/Other though typically verbal abuse. However, with this Al moment (and other moments, e.g. the "Christie" moments), we see the Real embedded violence to the Other, whether that be from individuals (e.g., Patrick) or from the film's allegorical counterpart, consumerism and transnational late capitalistic corporate power. In creating this complex allegorical frame of a dominant social and ideological system that simulates class and race "equality" and care for the poor and disenfranchised, American Psycho "maps" out the Real: The Other is mere fodder for the privileged who see these human beings not as human beings but as disposable objects to be consumed for their own ends and needs, their incessant consumerism (wealth accumulation, never-ending drive for profit) an un-empathetic normative state of being, a historical mode of being that is perhaps best – most stunningly – summed up in a moment in Sally Potter's brilliant Orlando (1992): Several aristocrats are looking down on – laughing at – the frozen body of a servant, a young man or woman who apparently fell through the iced over waterway. The moment is telling for its unbelievably utter callousness and cruelty issuing forth in the form of laughter from the privileged royalty. But more than that, the moment speaks to this "frozen" moment in time: In that historical moment (mid to late 16th Century England), royalty could laugh openly at the "low" without recriminations from public backlash, registering the extreme disregard for those below them (as the servant literally is in this scene). Today, such callousness would not be tolerated, at least openly, but that doesn't mean that this utter lack of feeling for the underprivileged are still not "frozen" in place, as this moment between corporate/high Patrick and disposable/low Al testifies to.

It is such moments of (didactic) clarity that offer spectators a way back to a congruent re-intact chain of signifiers. Indeed, coming back to Jameson's theoretical conception "cognitive mapping," Jameson offers us a possible way to remedy our postmodern late capitalistic "psychic fragmentation," a text that (re)situates us in our late capitalistic, globalized, consumerism mode of being; or, rather, curatively, a text that didactically (re) grounds us in a historical-cultural (diachronic) mode of being. In other words, as late capitalistic modes of displacement (consumerism, globalization) continue to phenomenologically dis-locate us from our place in an intelligible economic and ideological structure that determines us, we desperately need texts that "cognitively" re-connect us to our place in the dominant social order. That is why I think "popular" films such as allegorical-didactic American Psycho are so important for they offer us clarity to our reified dehumanized lives, in this case a consumerism and corporate power that serially annihilates women and the self, and that is an invaluable point of departure to engaging our fall into the consumerist "abyss" of lost signifier Patrick Bateman.

Endnotes

1. See my essay "Allegorical Figurations and the Political Didactic in Bulworth" (2004) in Cineaction 65: 54-61.

2. For interesting and compelling defenses of the book see the following: Elizabeth Young, "The Beast in the Jungle, The Figure in the Carpet: Brett Easton Ellis's American Psycho," Shopping in Space: Essays on American "Blank Generation" Fiction (London: Serpent's Tail, 1992), 85-122; Patrick W. Shaw, "Hubert Selby, Jr.'s Last Exit to Brooklyn and Bret Easton Ellis's American Psycho," The Modern American Novel of Violence (New York: The Whitson Publishing Company, 2000) 187-199; Philip L. Simpson, Psycho Paths: Tracking the Serial Killer Through Contemporary American Film and Fiction (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 2000), 148-155; Marco Abel, "Judgment is Not an Exit: Toward an Affective Criticism of Violence with American Psycho," Angelaki: Journal of the Theoretical Humanities, 6, no. 3 (December 2001): 140; Linda S. Kauffman, Bad Girls and Sick Boys: Fantasies in Contemporary Art and Culture (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998), 243-256; Larry Juchartz and Erica Hunter, "Ultraviolent Metaphors for (Un)Popular Culture: A Defense of Bret Easton Ellis," Popular Culture Review 7.1 (February 1996):67-79; Carla Freccero, "Historical Violence, Censorship, and the Serial Killer: The Case of American Psycho," Diacritics 27.2 (1997): 44-58; Michelle Warner, "The Development of the Psycho-Social Cannibal in the Fiction of Bret Easton Ellis," Journal of Evolutionary Psychology 17.2 (March 1996): 140-146; Laura E. Tanner, "American Psycho and the American Psyche: Reading the Forbidden Text," Intimate Violence: Reading Rape and Torture in Twentieth-Century Fiction (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994), 96-114; and David W. Price, "Bakhtinian Prosaics, Grotesque Realism, and the Question of the Carnivalesque in Bret Easton Ellis's American Psycho," Southern Humanities Review 32, no. 4 (Fall 1998): 321-334.

3. See David Robinson (2006) "The Unattainable Narrative: Identity, Consumerism and the Slasher Film in Mary Harron's American Psycho" in Cineaction 68:

26-35 for an interesting reading on the metanarrative angle of the film.

4. I think it is pretty clear that probably most (all?) of the murders are not real. For one, it is clear that Patrick is fantasizing because his fantasy (consumerism) reality breaks down towards the end of the film: A bank machine tells him to "feed" it the cat and we see him go on a preposterous killing spree afterwards (including the implausible shots that blow up two police cars). But I think it is clear before this series of incidences that Patrick is creating an elaborate consumerism "reality." There are many improbable events that speak to daydreaming moments: Patrick dragging Paul Allen's body across the lobby, leaving a trail of blood behind; Patrick taking over Paul Allen's apartment and piling numerous bodies into it (and then we find it clean and empty the day after we see this development); and Patrick chasing Christie, the prostitute, with a whirring chainsaw (again, recalling Leatherface) through an apartment building, Christie screaming and pounding on doors (which nobody answers), until he kills her by improbably aiming and dropping the chainsaw from about five stories up. We also see this breakdown of his fantasy reality in the apparent psychotic comments he makes to other characters. The point has been made that the characters he speaks to are simply so shallow and caught up in their own self-centered consumerism reality that they don't pay attention to him. I think though that it is clear by one scene in particular that it is Patrick's consumerist "reality." In the dry cleaning shop scene, he seemingly says to the dry cleaning lady, "If you don't shut your fucking mouth, I will kill you," the dry cleaning lady apparently hearing him, her reaction registering shock. However, if the scene is looked at closely, we can hear the conversation between the dry cleaning lady and Patrick continuing under the cut-in shot of Patrick screaming his psychotic line. It is interesting to note that if all of these lurid comments are part of Patrick's consumerist "reality," he only fantasizes the laundry lady registering his comments, thus in effect inserting class distinctions into the mix.

5. Les Miserables was a recurring motif in the novel, but we only see the poster this one time in the film. Larry Juchartz's reading of this significant motif sums up its importance in both novel and film: "The author's concern shows as he provides a recurring backdrop in many of his outdoor scenes: buses, park benches, and billboards advertising the Broadway production of Les Miserables – a constant reminder of human misery surrounded by so much human excess." Larry Juchartz and Erica Hunter (1996) "Ultraviolent Metaphors for (Un)Popular Culture: A Defense of Bret Easton Ellis," Popular Culture Review 7.1 (February): 73. In the film, the image perhaps takes another turn. The reflection of Patrick's visage superimposed over Cosette also suggests perhaps a mirror reflection of the miserable (dehumanized) state they both share.

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Biopolitics and the Infected Community: Foucault, Sartre, Esposito, and Butler

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When Michel Foucault enumerated the various ways that bio-politics emerges he pinpointed it as an outgrowth of patria potestas or the paternalistic power over life. It was the father in Roman Society who had the ability to "dispose" of the lives of slaves and children. Theorists have reacted to Foucault's insights with the most important extension of this work done by Roberto Esposito and Giorgio Agamben. Agamben locates the origins of bio-politics in Ancient Roman Law, and his thesis is that every life must remain sacred in order to counter-act the degradation of "disposable" life.

Early on in Foucault's career in his "experience book" History of Madness he was writing in direct response to the existentialist politics of Jean-Paul Sartre expressed so eloquently in Being and Nothingness. Foucault's immediate political engagements were in direct response to the notion that agency could only be construed by utilizing a Cartesian conception of the Subject. A critique of Sartre was still very much in his mind later on in his life when he began to unravel bio-politics later on in his work on sexuality. Michel Foucault's praxis is a non-totalizing theory that must be placed in conversation with his entire oeuvre.

If philosophers take biopolitics to its conclusion and "cut off the head of the king" as Foucault said had never been done in political theory, it becomes a powerful rebuttal to the tiresome political theory of the "philosopher kings" who want nothing more than to whisper sweet nothings into the ear of the sovereign. Can political theory be something more than a simplistic love/hate relationship with the state? Can it be something other than the dysfunction of party hacks filling the proletariat with fear of this or that pseudo-controversy; caught between the pettiness of the petit-bourgeoisie, and the boorishness of the proletariat there needs to be a different way to understand political discourse. Can there be a community where its telos is something else besides a fantasy that ends with everyone becoming millionaires at the end. Can there be an understanding that liberalism as it currently stands also messes with the working class; in reading the full quote from Deleuze in Anti-Oedipus; "Why do people fight for their servitude as if it were their salvation, crying more taxes less bread" is not a cry for social-democracy and liberal party politics but full anarcho-communism. There is no "essence" to be revealed beneath the surface level of false consciousness and faulty ideas.

One major concern with this line of thought is that it can be Occidentalist in nature. Did the Aztecs experience sacred life in the same way as the Romans? Does the Japanese Emperor have the same sacred meaning for the Japanese people as the Pope for the followers of the Catholic Church? These are major concerns and to think that all states operate the same way is to have a homogenized view of history.

Can there be a multi-cultural pluralistic method to uncover a universalist ground to ontology? It seems that this is the major impasse of leftist political theory over the last forty to fifty years. Every time a political theorist discovers what amounts to a universal principle of the "being of beings" one is immediately labelled a Eurocentric, or Masculinist, or limiting the question to being merely a homogenous totality. One begins to discern from this impasse that totalities are akin to state power that place limitations on the plurality of differences and thereby territorialize the being of beings. Can theorists think in other terms? We can think of the thing in itself but only as an abstraction because our approach is always muddled. As human beings we have emotions, impulses, and our attention tends to be distracted. Prolonged research over lengthy periods of time is a luxury of a few scholars and

yet, we turn to these scholars who have devoted their lives to these questions to better understand the long view of history. There are some aspects of biopolitics that are new to contemporary capitalism but there are latent kernels sprinkled throughout Western History that have become manifest as time passes and tropes solidify into the meta-narrative mythos of what passes as Universal History.

In understanding the primacy of state power over life, Foucault traces this back to the Roman family structure which became the Western template for governmentality. In this family structure Father had the right to kill any wives, children, or slaves and the sovereign when posed with direct danger could have the right to kill his subjects. Therefore, these sub-human lives were considered disposable (a point that Giorgio Agamben has brilliantly exposed in his analysis of "bare life" as disposable life in most of his works).

However, Foucault claims that this direct power to take lives has been sublimated and redirected externally elsewhere. Now, when the sovereign has an attack on power, where the sovereign's life is in danger, it is within the state's power to kill the subjects by redirecting their energy into war. It is not direct killing of the subjects by the sovereign, but a redirecting of libidinal energies into the fascism of total war.

> It was no longer considered that this power of the sovereign over his subjects could be exercised in an absolute and unconditional way, but only in cases where the sovereign's very existence was in jeopardy: a sort of right of rejoinder. If he were threatened by external enemies who sought to overthrow him or contest his rights, he could then legitimately wage war, and require his subjects to take part in the defense of the state; without directly proposing their death, he was empowered to expose their life: in this sense, he wielded an indirect power over them of life and death. (Foucault, 1978, 135)

The state is analogous to the paternalistic family structure, the Roman "Father" looking after its subjects for their own good, disposing of life at any time. There are also ways that the creeping state presence in a bureaucratic Western society creates repressive social modalities that eventually bring every aspect of society under its regulating gaze via the normative aspects of legal state apparatuses. The father's no has become the yes of consumerism. I will try to construct a viable set of ideological alternatives by juxtaposing the differences between Michel Foucault and Jean-Paul Sartre.

In bio-politics risk is spread out over the entire population as:

> Wars are no longer waged in the name of a sovereign who must be defended; they are waged on behalf of the existence of everyone; entire populations are mobilized for the purpose of wholesale slaughter in the name of life necessity: massacres have become vital. It is as managers of life and survival, of bodies and the race, that so many regimes have been able to wage so many wars, causing so many men to be killed. (Foucault, 1978, 137)

As life is exposed it becomes "bare life" increasingly informed by the naked question of survival. In the seventies there was a push towards nuclear disarmament a major question that still lingers, and Foucault presses the issue by saying: "The atomic situation is now at the end point of this process: the power to expose a whole population to death is the underside of the power to guarantee an individual's continued existence." (ibid.) Now that his lectures have been published we can see in Society Must be Defended; Security, Territory, Population; The Birth of Biopolitics; and elsewhere how his research on this issue was shaped by textual references within the canonical traditions of philosophy, in particular by many of the Enlightenment Period political philosophers such as Hobbes and Bentham. His work also stems up to the Nazi thinkers and the American neo-liberal capitalist reactions to the rise of Fascism bred by a total and complete paranoia of any state intervention into daily life. All of that has been in the name of biopolitics.

Is there an anti-essentialist dimension to even biopolitics? It is hard to pigeon hole Foucault as a philosopher of the institutional aspects of power when he says point blank: "One needs to be nominalistic, no doubt: power is not an institution, and not a structure; neither is it a certain strength we are endowed with; it is the name that one attributes to a complex strategical situation in a particular society" (Foucault, History of Sexuality Volume 1, pg. 93). When I talk with even learned scholars about Foucault there is still a weird idea that he only talks of institutional aspects of power.

Discipline and Punish was a political intervention at a particular moment in the early seventies when the prison population was spiraling out of control and my hypothesis is the state was criminalizing minor drug offenses and locking people away as a tactical maneuver to suppress the resistance that had gained popularity in the sixties and seventies which was when the Rockefeller Drug Laws began to take effect; this is also when the problem of prison overcrowding became a major problem which required a move towards prison abolition. History of Madness was written in the early sixties at the beginning of psychoanalysis as a serious medical discourse and psychiatry with talk therapy was starting to gain traction as a widely accepted social phenomenon. As Foucault points out though, these

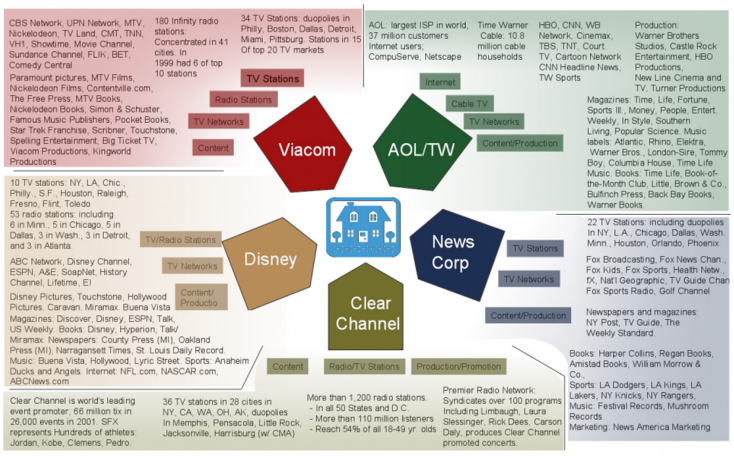
were all methods of creating spaces of incarceration and modes of surveillance on the criminal and mad populations that were deemed to be political threats to the state due to living by non-normative behaviors. The criminalization of madness was also a major tactic of repressive political discourses at that time, which still exist as tropes to this day. As a result of these social institutions the mental hospital and the prison gaining ascendancy as repressive apparatuses that incarcerate and create surveillance the result was a mass homogenization of experience and a total fear that lead to the post-modern surface level "fluffy" simulacrum life experience where every social interaction was an interaction at the level of superficiality.

Digging into the depths of the psyche to do the hard inner work of self-transformation would lead to unleashing the negativity that pent up as a result of being harassed by these repressive political institutions. The age-regressions that occur when someone is made slightly uncomfortable when in the seventies capitalism was moving more towards a service economy, retail, office jobs, therapy, health fields, and this leads to the stroking of the bourgeois and petit bourgeois ego from all sides by capitalist consumerism that serves everyone and says "Yes" to any desire. Lower classes are being incarcerated in massive proportions especially racial minorities in the United States. But, in the midst of this, impatience with any subtlety has grown prevalent and the big issue now is that capitalism always says yes, even to the most perverse desires and horrific violent transgressions. Experiences can be bought at least as simulacrums in virtual or tele-visual forms. Acting out in a repressive society has taken the form of simulated acting out, actors acting out parts on television and in movies, but in reality workers (and especially women) are more repressed now than ever before. Now truth has become nothing more than accrued habits and whatever helps everyone feel comfortable and satisfied.

For some reason the discourse of bio-politics is extremely seductive in garnering support for American imperialistic endeavors abroad, the subjects seem to turn a blind eye to the violence inflicted by the US Military when it is conducted as a humanitarian "peace-keeping" mission. Or, as Roberto Esposito points out the way of garnering the alleged consent of the masses for a war effort is by positing the necessity to take life in order to preserve life. Often in Bosnia, Iraq, Afghanistan and Libya, the US Government bombed the so-called enemies while they also air dropped medical supplies. The taking of life is problematically coupled with the desire for immunization, to create death and destruction while also trying to sanitize, clean up, and "fix" the broken situation.

The Affordable Care Act is no such exception to the rule. It tries to offer healthcare to workers who will remain productive in an effort to maintain the working class as healthy subjects, but it is a prescriptive measure designed to put a band-aid on the problems of health that arise when the workers are worn down due to frenetic bodily activities of manual labor, and the stasis of intellectual immaterial office work which contributes to certain health risks such as obesity. It is the bio-political ethos in praxis, because the predominant political discourse surrounding the pro and con positions regarding the reforms was almost always economic in nature. Does the policy save consumers money? Does it save the government money? Nowhere in the discussion was there any analysis that perhaps capitalism contributes to these health related issues that need preventative care, or in the pseudo-debates about veterans' health care that their health problems are a direct result of bio-political discourses that provoked wars over the last ten to twenty years. There is a certain matrix by which the bio-political conversation has continued unabated.

I would like to add two supplemental charts which may outline a very important point. The illusion of choice. This chart shows the mass consolidation of ownership of what Gramsci called the 'dominant discourses' to win the consent of the masses. What Althusser called the "Ideological State Apparatuses" the institutions that create sympathy for hegemonic ideologies.



I could not find the original source for this chart, but it was widely shared on Reddit.com and shows the mass consolidation of power in the modes of food production.

Thomas Pynchon is brilliant at 'fictionalizing' a sort of conspiratorial causality where the government works to cause problems while selling the public the immunizations that may save us. I find it interesting that at the same time when Barack Obama was attempting to pass his Affordable Care Act, the signature accomplishment of his terms as President, shortly thereafter on March 26, 2013 after much protest and without much attention from the press gave special accommodations to the largest genetic engineering corporation in the world in the form of H.R. 933, the Monsanto Protection Act. Anyone who follows health and wellness knows that Monsanto is the corporation responsible for most of the genetic alterations in our foods which has most likely caused many of the gluten and peanut allergies, caused type 2 diabetes in children by adding sick amounts of sugar to our dairy supply.[1]

Will there be any freedom at all in the next century? In the midst of these conversations there is a nefarious granularity or specificity that clouds the problematic metaphysics of the ongoing discussions. As Althusser was right to point out, capitalism has interpolating processes that call the subjugated subjects as individuals. This granularity of individual conscience can impede the forward thrust of history, and this how I view the impasse in thinking between Jean-Paul Sartre and Michel Foucault. Jean-Paul Sartre hated the granularity of bourgeois idle chatter in his famous line, "Hell is other people" which expresses a strong sense of anxiety over simple-minded self-indulgent small talk and gossip that impedes the power of praxis in the conversations that go on in the environment of the salon.

In the introduction to Being and Nothingness, the entire first section of the book is about ridding the subject of an "interior" that makes the dualism of "being and appearance" completely absurd. The "Pre-Reflective Cogito" there is a core to the subject that can be traced to its external negation which can be unwound via the overturning of "bad faith" in the subject that carries negative, cynical, attitudes about him/herself. The subject that is anything but a "Not;" Sartre is all to skeptical that most people will never overcome their position as a "not." As he says, "There are even men (e.g. caretakers, overseers, gaolers) whose social reality is uniquely that of the Not, who will live and die, having forever been only a Not upon the earth" (Sartre, Being and Nothingness, pg. 47). In bringing this act of negation into conversation with biopolitics, Nikolas Luhmann is a thinker whose work arrived at the radical consequences of "immunization" in saying that: "the system does not immunize itself against the no but with the help of the no" or, "to put this in terms of an older distinction, it protects through negation against annihilation" (qtd in Esposito, Bios, pg.49). The thesis being that biopolitical systems function not by rejecting conflicts and contradictions, but by placing them in the body as necessary antigens that reactivate natural anti-bodies. To put madness in the context of this therapeutic framework, as R.D. Laing one said, madness is not all break-down, it is sometimes also a breakthrough.

It is the commonality of experience tied together through that artificial individuation constituted properly by the sovereign dispositif, and as Esposito claims, there is an external negation to bio-politics: "Sovereignty is the not being (il non essere) in common of individuals, the political form of their desocialization" (Esposito, Bios, pg. 61). There is negativity to immunization, a push-back on behalf of the population that is being inoculated, a stubborn death-drive; particularly in mad-subjects in my field work there is a desire to cling to the disease, the damage, the broken

frailty, the imperfect eccentric identity that meshes with the diagnostic labels that have been externally imposed upon the subjects.

Bad faith is a self-negation that doubts, questions, second guesses the self-inflicted inwardness absorbed through cultural cynicism normalized as if it were human nature. In this sense, Sartrean liberation is conducted as the process of moving from self-negation to a the almost reflexive, outward agency of positivity ala "good faith" reminiscent of Max Stirner's ego of agency. Jean-Paul Sartre is still operating within the nexus of the "repressive hypothesis;" liberation as negating the myth of the repression carried over from previous historical episteme by turning the No into a Yes. The modernist Joycean liberation as "saying Yes, to his Yes," and getting everyone to the big O, but as Slavoj Zizek points out, this is exactly what feeds into the power matrices of post-modern open ended oppression. Even in the indecision between Yes and No we always claim to reduce indecision through the rules of Logic to a unitary One.

Why is there this injunction to enjoy? Does it not merely reproduce and codify new forms of control and normative disciplinary structures as the bio-politics that creates "life" via the open expression of its creative vitalism without truly negating the underlying, material prison like structures that remain in place in contemporary capitalism? You can engage in whatever sexual lifestyle you want as long as you report to work at a corporation and obey the state, subject yourself to its constant NSA surveillance, and as long as the basic discourses that support the violence of bio-politics remain in-tact, everything else is fair game. It is more cogent to frame oppression in the context of immunization and biopolitics, the politics of life, rather than the politics of enjoyment and expression.

Gilles Deleuze was correct in asserting that there are individual forms of repression, but in societies of control, one must also be concerned with "dividual" oppression. Dividual oppression is the existence of the subject within the digital relations, the credit report, the use of a social security card, bank accounts, the personal identity that is handed over to corporations and the state in the computer era is so much more oppressive because all of the damage and surveillance that is done to the subject is concealed from sight. Unbeknownst to the individual, the virtual space of the "dividual" identity can be totally destroyed, and ultimately lead to the oppression and downfall of the individual in its actual, material, lived experience in reality. One can be denied housing, or an automobile, or health insurance, or a bank account, or be wrongfully incarcerated and denied any other basic necessities that one needs in modern capitalist society to survive and maintain a productive life.

This is where Jean-Paul Sartre did not go far enough, and where Michel Foucault is far more radical, and ultimately correct in his assertions. The distinguishing feature between Sartre and Foucault is Sartre's belief in consciousness. Since Foucault openly criticized the position of intellectuals within the university's "power/knowledge" apparatuses, the question of his work being a systematic unraveling of a position given from a place of authority is problematic. Foucault favored praxis as a non-totalizing theory and he says this: "In this sense, theory does not express, translate, or serve to apply to practice; it is practice. But it is local and regional, as (Deleuze) said, and not totalizing" (Foucault, Language, Counter-Memory, Practice, pg. 208). The praxis of a theory that moves through the circuitry, relays, networks, and channels of power in the creation of a subterranean anti-hegemonic bloc, rather than the Stirnerian "ego of agency" where consciousness is raised and the knowing powerful subject goes out and changes the world. It was Deleuze who best understood Foucault's position on power:

> As the postulate of property, power would be the 'property' won by a class. Foucault shows that power does not come about in this way: it is less property than a strategy, and its effects cannot be attributed to an appropriation 'but to dispositions, maneuvers, tactics, techniques, functionings'; it is exercised rather than possessed, it is not the privilege acquired or preserved, of the dominant class, but the overall effect of its strategic positions. (Deleuze, Foucault, pg. 25)

There are innumerable points of conflict and places of instability that open up in this way of understanding power. It unravels via the confrontation with the micro-politics of everyday fascism, millions of little revolutions spread out over an entire social field, rather than the storming of the state, smashing it, redistributing wealth, and then recreating masters and slaves all over again. This is a much more gradual almost glacial pace by which the stubborn dimension of creating a subterranean anti-hegemonic bloc contrary to the discourses of "intelligence" in the power/knowledge matrices.

All too often the media posits itself as a meta-salon. It is important for a truth discourse to break through the white noise of the media-salon to liberate discourse from the labyrinth of competing and overlapping interests that become inscribed upon consumers of the ideological state apparatuses. Interpellation and aestheticizing en masse via the personal sensitive touch of the cold heartless head of state can be a powerful impediment to this kind of critique. The humanization of the brutal sovereign—the bêtise—the stupidity of the monster, the sovereignty of

the animal, as Deleuze called it in Difference and Repetition, who eventually inspired Derrida to focus on this issue at length as well.

In Foucault, there is a movement towards an "ec-centric" or "ex-orbitant" subject that Western humanist discourses have sought to discipline and reform via assimilation into its symbolic order. The mad-center-elsewhere, or the madness that is perpetually subjected to disciplinary measures of diagnostic, taxonomical classifications, with medicine being more akin to a "teratology" (a study on the classification of monsters) – and the telos of striving to tame these monsters, with the underlying presupposition always being that the 'monster' is in need of morals, or that the violence conducted upon the mad is necessary as a preventative security measure to protect the masses "for their own good;" because as Foucault was right to point out in Society Must be Defended, the state always tries to express political discourse as war by other means. Political discourse has become hegemonic blocs with overlapping competing interests in trench warfare against one another stuck in their foxhole. Or that the violence inflicted upon the mad via the repression of analysis reproduces the violence that occurs in the mad subject.

The monster is the body of possibility, of a being that could be completely external to the normative biases that cloud the predominant political truth regimes. The gatekeepers and deputies of the dominant discourses are afraid of madness and this fear continues through to the petrified ambassadors of civility and civilization who try everything in their power to discipline and make the mad normal. In the History of Madness I do not see a lot of discourses, but I do see communities opening up to the mad, and then the mad pose a threat to the immunity of the community. They are codified as diseased via their original relation in medical discourse to the leper (leper colonies were transformed into psychiatric hospitals in France after the Black Plague). There is a conflict between Christian Charity and Pity towards the mad.

Does the community welcome the mad who will then "infect" the sanctity of the allegedly pristine collective bringing sin into the City of God, thereby bringing God's wrath upon the people? Or do they drive out the mad who are then ostracized? This conundrum usually ends with the process of self-enrichment placed upon the allegedly broken mad-subject who are then "educated," "liberated," and "domesticated" by being taught to unlearn their bad habits so as to fit in with the prevailing Christian sanctimonious ethos of clean, happy, docile, useful, subjects. Normative cultures of all epochs and epistemes usher in "new" methods by which the mad are handled in exactly the same way. The raw material of insanity is worked over to become a "finished good:" morally, economically, politically, and even aesthetically. This is all a way of eliminating the eccentricity of limit-experiences and the madness of "losing one's face" ripping oneself apart via experience books to become a totally new person. If man is a "rational animal" as Aristotle wrote, then animals heavily figure in the symbolic representations of madness that have arisen in Western culture. Animals are stand-ins, body-doubles for the mad. Madness is the denaturalized violence of animals in nature, and if the mad are "irrational" then the mad are nothing more than sub-human species in this Aristotelian understanding of human nature. Jean-Paul Sartre is still attempting to interpellate "rational animals" in his attachment to the Cartesian Cogito. Sartre uses the aesthetics of language to create poems and beautifully worded philosophical positions akin to Buddhist Koans in knowing that logic does not adequately function as a necessary means to understanding reality and metaphysics. Sartre still posits the Subject as a rational, sane actor. Sartre is still trying to build the City of God as constructed by an Atheist socialist with a nihilistic face.

In the Heideggerian vicissitudes that creep into Foucault's work, the act of interpreting "the mad" is not intended to break through false consciousness, or false representations to an ontological essence of Truth, or to bring pure Being into immediate view in the sense of closing off distance between the perceiving subject and the being it would re-present. Madness is the absent Real that is always already a historically specific inscription within history's disciplinary structures that are implicated in the violence against/committed by the mad. The suppression of madness and its liberation as an epistemological object is merely the transposition of one normative disciplinary structure for another normative disciplinary structure. These are tactics employed to ensnare madness in a normalizing regulatory gaze that codifies it as dysfunctional, broken, abnormal, deviant, criminal, and a monstrous-Other to be tamed. As Foucault claims in Discipline and Punish: "Visilibility is a trap" (Foucault, Discipline and Punish, pg. 200) and again:

> **Thanks to the mechanisms of observation, it gains efficiency and in the ability to penetrate into men's behavior; knowledge follows the advances of power, discovering new objects of knowledge over all the surfaces on which power is exercised. (Foucault, Discipline and Punish, pg. 204)**

How much more critical of Hegel's Master-Slave Dialectic can you get here? Foucault is obliterating the ethos posited by Hegel that power is about recognition. In the master-slave dialectic the master controls the slave by somehow getting the slave to passionately care about recognition in the eyes of the master, making honor and praise

visible, transferring and transcribing virtue onto the body of the slave, is a timeless way to warp everyone into actually believing they are not slaves. This is how the entire monetary system functions in the psyche of those who are buy into commodity fetishism hook line and sinker; through libidinal investments in the decorum of "recognition" – a wage is the slaves recognition for a job well done in the service of capitalism. Either you become instrumental cogs in this fascist machine or you are cast aside as mere human debris. Simple as that there are no other choices in real subsumption, because all aspects of life are products of the market; even the aspiring entrepreneur who blazes a new frontier has to produce something in response to a market need in order to create wealth, there has to be a need to transfer money into the hands of that business. There are no solipsisitic billionaries, but there are narcissistic ones, that is a subtle difference, you can argue that all that is solid melts into air and that the foundational grounds of morality are ethereal in capitalism, but to actually posit the non-existence of material realm is to be mad.

If madess is construed as criminal it is also subject to the Panoptic Gaze as well as the Medical Gaze that regulates all aspects of life through constant surveillance in the biopolitical realm that constitutes the impasse of the current conjuncture in late capitalism. In describing the Panopticon, there is a sense that life is at stake in that it immunizes and corrects the behavior of the deviant criminal in that it assures its disciplinary efficacy by its "preventative character, its continuous functioning, and its automatic mechanisms" (Foucault, Discipline and Punish, pg. 206). The process of instilling morals becomes the second nature of the imprisoned/incarcerated individual in the austere institutions that are all around the subject in modern life; the barracks, the family at home, the school, the prison, the corporation, and the hospital all become loci and biopolitical battlefields connected in a network of relations pinned together by the Panopticon, which as Foucault posits: "Is a marvelous machine which, whatever use one may wish to put it to, produces homogeneous effects of power" (Foucault, Discipline and Punish, pg. 202).

One must look at the Foucauldean inversion of the Platonic Soul in the Phaedo where the body is the prison of the soul. In disciplinary power the soul is the prison of the body. Normative aspects of morality become second nature and appear as the inner dialogue of the conscience of the moral person. However, there is another thread in Foucault that is an homage to Georges Bataille and Friedrich Nietzsche. Consisting of breaking with the habitual behaviors of banal bourgeois life by escalating consciousness into the "white heat" of libidinal passion to borrow from Bataille; or the Dionysian Spirit to borrow from Nietzsche. Limit experiences at the threshold of consciousness where freedom is experienced as the meltdown of all rationality.

The meta-discourses of bio-politics keep the conversation clean for political reasons and the sanitized (or rather, sane-itized) structures of these discourses try to maintain hegemony via: "a faceless gaze that transformed the whole social body into a field of perception: thousands of eyes posted everywhere, mobile attentions ever on the alert, a long, hierarchized network…" (Foucault, ibid, pg. 214).

Through the meta-discipline of this homogeneous panoptic discourse, the sovereign accustoms the people to order and obedience, as if the people had a voice, as if there is a state that listens, cares, and pays attention to the problems of the people. Disciplinary power creates constituent power in the form of technologies of the self that produce docile, useful, malleable, and easily exploitable labor-power that can continue into the "fields:" the factories, the universities, and now the corporations. It is rather interesting to me that the writers Foucault claims were his biggest influences were always referred to by him as being external to the dominant academic debates at the time. Names like Nietzsche, Bataille, and Blanchot form the nexus by which he rallied against the suffocating groupthink mentality of the communist parties in France in the 1950's; he was also trying to put forth a different approach to radical politics beyond the realm of the Marx-Freud fusions of the Frankfurt School.

He writes, putting forth a totally different approach to power, that goes against the common understanding that he was only interested in the topic of "institutional power:"

> Discipline may be identified neither with an institution nor with an apparatus; it is a type of power, a modality for its exercise, comprising a whole set of instruments, techniques, procedures, levels of application, targets; it is a 'physics' or an 'anatomy' of power, a technology. (Foucault, Discipline and Punish, pg. 215)

If institutional power is important it is as a method of providing decorum and the discursive dispersal of signifiers that Power produces.

> There is no question that the appearance in nineteenth-century psychiatry, jurisprudence, and literature of a whole series of discourses on the species and subspecies of homosexuality, inversion, pederasty, and psychic hermaphrodism made possible a strong advance of social controls into this area of "perversith;" but it also made possible the formation of a "reverse" discourse: homosexuality began to speak in its own behalf, to demand that its legitimacy or "naturality" be acknowledged,

> often in the same vocabulary, using the same categories by which it was medically disqualified. There is not, on the one side, a discourse of power, and opposite it, another discourse that runs counter to it. Discourses are tactical elements or blocks operating in the field of force relations. (Foucault, History of Sexuality Volume 1, pg. 101-2)

And much more concrete to the point: "Power is everywhere, not because it embraces everything, but because it comes from everywhere. And 'Power,' insofar as it is permanent, repetitious, inert, and self-reproducing, is simply the over-all effect that emerges from all these mobilities, the concatenation that rests on each of them and seeks in turn to arrest their movement" (ibid. pg. 93). The entire chapter entitled "Method" in the first volume of the History of Sexuality puts a fine point on Foucault's entire oeuvre.

It is clear that in these passages there are some aporias to be unpacked. How can power be everywhere as an implacable set of flows in the sense of a physics of power? It sounds appropriated from Nietzsche's active and passive power with the added dimension of discursivity that perpetually bifurcates power into resistance against itself, which transforms its base. And then, he has quasi-essentialist tendencies, but he has to add the cautious "Power," insofar as it is permanent; the key here is "insofar" which leads me to believe that he is skeptical about the permanence of any structures of power; be they institutional or discursive. Especially when he follows up with the conclusion that the alleged permanent aspects of power are a result of "all these mobilities;" it is unclear what he means by "mobilities?" I would presume, and I could be wrong, but my hypothesis is that it is another mode of circulation as a political-libidinal-economics. Mobility of labor; but sexual labor; the movement of bodies that transgress the immobilizing territorializing aspects of the repression of the Law. He is very clear at the beginning of the Method chapter that he is putting forth an analysis of sexuality that is done, "not in terms of repression or law, but in terms of power" (ibid. 92). Power and power as akin to Being and beings; there are meta and micro levels of power which interact often pushing against one another which causes friction and much like electricity; this friction also releases power, which is empowering and oppressive simultaneously, it is not either or in a binary distinction where these two concepts are separate; power enmeshes everything, even that which resists. One professor of mine in graduate school once said that there were no Althusserians but to me, this is the most Althusserian move that Foucault ever makes. He is showing how Power reproduces itself through the epigones it creates that then echo back to itself the desire to make chains an essential complement to its liberation. These bifurcations of Power/power are bound together through a traumatic wound that eventually scars and never goes away, repeated/resurrected through painful tropes of Historical consciousness. Quite possibly all we have are specters and ghosts to illuminate the present and indicate our transformations into the future. Through the sheer inertia of History, Power replicates itself as it sends off sparks that ignite new passions and new fires through the friction of mobility. In this sense, even in Foucault we are immanent in the realm of the Nomadology.

It is bizarre how on the one hand American capitalism tries to open up borders for trade and make the economy more mobile for itself through free trade agreements like NAFTA. While simultaneously stirring up xenophobic hatred towards the disenfranchised laborers who try to traverse these borders into the United States; often in pursuit of something simple like a minimum wage. It is much more complex issue than simply rabble rousing about building walls to keep immigrants out while accelerating the accumulation of capital by allowing trans-national corporations to freely traverse these borders. Borders are there for the lower classes; much like how Nietzsche discovered that morality is for the slave-classes. Unfortunately, the economic despair produced by these free trade agreements increases pressure and pushes potential energy into kinetic energy as it is released when immigrant populations are perpetually circulating across the borders. The hard truth is that these borders are juridical constructions that perpetuate racial hatred between the "beings" to divert attention from Beings.

Again with the term "Method" he is thinking of an epistemology of Power/knowledge. To know how power inscribes itself down to the capillaries of the subject is to turn existentialism in on itself. Sartre seems like a naïve schoolboy to think that anyone is ever an autonomous free individual. The problem is the repetition of historical tropes in the psyche of the subject (the torrid history of racism for example that beckons so many adults who have never learned otherwise). Absolute freedom seems totally undesirable though; and total decoding of all libidinal flows into anti-repression can have the horrifying consequences of degrading beings into primal violence. The missed opportunity there is that Wilhelm Reich did not meet Michel Foucault.

Foucault is clearly distancing his interpretation of power from that of Thomas Hobbes' Leviathan; the head of a monolithic state as the ravaging ruthless animal who will stop at nothing to maintain a position of sovereignty, ruling through the totalitarianism of total fear, and instilling power through the threat of death.

Biopolitics has turned the corner where it now uses the discourse of immunity. Killing so as to clean up the mess

made by other allegedly sub-human irrational-animals external to the state that are allegedly "mad" enemy-Others who pose security threats to the life of the citizens that the sovereign has sworn to look after and take care of in a fundamentally paternalistic sense of governmentality. The freedom in neo-liberalism is not real freedom it is nothing more than the ignorance of these regulating, normalizing, and determining market factors spearheaded by the state and capital working in collusion with one another holding a duopoly on power. Trading one regime of power for another without changing the prevailing discourses of biopolitics that underpin these structures of violence will do nothing to eventually eradicate the stranglehold that these institutions have upon contemporary society, which give off the impression that the demos is actually free. The biopolitical repression is freedom through non-freedom, peace through war, violence as a helping hand, killing to save lives, health to maintain the exploitation of productive labor, security and surveillance as an ongoing Kafkaesque process of interrogation without a reason that continues "for our own good;" and not true liberation.

Neo-liberal capitalism and the state that does its bidding has been seeping through the United States like a homogenizing-glacier over the last few decades. Gradually subsuming all aspects of life. Freedom is ignorance of the forces that determine our choices. Some Marxists have even termed the current capitalist phase in America, not as a class system, but as a caste system, so with this in mind, what can these theorists tell us about tactical pathways out of the current conjuncture. Now, the privatization of health care and the prison system seems to be the final maneuver to keep this resistance down as there is a profit motive to keeping people sick and on pills, and to keeping people locked up in jail. The repression becomes absolute unless there is a novel becoming that transforms our daily existence where the working class is surrounded by repressive apparatuses at all sides, and the bourgeoisie thumbs their nose at them as if their caste position were a matter of virtue ethics, personal choice, and a lack of moral character. Class is not a moral category it is an economic category due to market driven forces that are outside of the control of the individual

The question becomes: Is it possible to think about life outside of a political context? At the current moment the distinctions between public and private, state and society, local and global divisions are collapsing sources of political legitimacy are also becoming more and more vacuous, and yet, as this seems to bring a new kind of liberation the opposite is happening; as Roberto Esposito says: "life becomes encamped in the center of every political procedure. No other politics is conceivable other than a politics of life, in the objective and subjective sense of the term" (Esposito, Bios, pg. 15).

If the body-politics is conceptualized as a mind-body connection in capitalism with the bourgeoisie being the brain and the proletariat being the body, biopolitics construed this way tends to view dissent as a disease infecting the body as germs which feed off of its vital substance, "degenerating" the body. Immunization being the violent "cure" enacted by state-doctors who clean up the "dirt" and the filth, via the eugenic racial politics of deciding which lives are fit to remain alive. A utopian fantasy that life will triumph and all diseases will be ameliorated, death overcome, is somewhat of a hangover from modern political theory. It has been assumed that Hobbes "not only places the problem of the conservation vitae at the center of his own thought, but conditions it to the subordination of a constitutive power that is external to it, namely, to sovereign power, the immunitary principle has virtually been founded" (Esposito, Bios, pg.46).

Life is expanded via the acceleration of death among remote dissident populations that are beyond the view of the fit, healthy, so-called racially superior classes. In capitalism the appropriation of profits is a zero sum game and it subordinates life to the same exploitative matrices, but then appear as if this is a scientific, and evolutionary fact of nature, rather than a discursive bio-political construction that grafts the body and brain onto politics. All of power/knowledge's dispositifs play the role of protective containment in the face of a vital power (potenza) that is led to expand without limits, via the will to power in the sense described by Nietzsche. This is stifled by the repressive apparatuses of the state (potestas) which attempt, but usually fail, to immobilize the conatus of the oppressed classes who strive towards the power to be, the power to exist, and live within the paradoxical situation of becoming what is (amor fati); rather than what the state says ought to be (utopian socialism).

Literally meaning that the tangible molecular make-up of these organs correspond to an actual structure in the state-apparatuses, with the "germs" and "diseases" being codified as the racially impure populations that were sectioned off from the rest of society in various taxonomical classifications through phrenology and other such exclusionary pseudo-sciences like psychiatry. This type of bio-political fascism has not gone away, it is still going strong, because it posits itself as the natural, scientific and empirically factual truth about human nature and its political manifestations. By studying the effects of bio-power as inscribed upon the bodies of the dissidents, the criminals, the deviants, the lepers that transcribed into the mad, sickness became one of the vehicles of agency in

Foucault's work. The germs within the body politic causing disruptions, and privileging the corporeal as resistance to framing his work as a consciousness-raising intellectual who places the seat of power in the intelligence of the brain.

It is only from the position of the absolute symptom that one can posit a true understanding of the suffering of the oppressed, and rather than simply inoculate the symptom, one must take a Marxist approach and put forth a radical meta-critique of all aspects of the social-political environment, the base and the superstructure, and then work to radically alter that dysfunctional, alienating set of social relations within that community, and the economic, political structures that condition those relations. While there is an ethical responsibility to maintain the health and vitality of the community, in Western cultures there is a precarious revulsion towards sickness, death, and the eventual breakdown and decrepitude of the body which trickles into the biologically driven representations of the fascist bio-political discourses. This is no way intended to glamorize or sensationalize disease, madness, sickness, and death, but the strange alienation from these facts of life in fascist discourse, the desire to clean up the dirty populations, cure every disease through eugenics, actually creates more sickness, more death, and more destruction. That part of the human experience that the fascists were alienated from, actually becomes exacerbated, multiplied, through its serious repression, there was more death and destruction as a result of the attempts to inoculate the community of its alleged "flaws" and eccentricities.

Judith Butler's Psychic Life of Power as Panacea to Biopolitic

Judith Butler does a few things in the Psychic Life of Power that that are groundbreaking. First, she explores the ways in which power forms subjectivity from within the subject. She examines power as inscription from within the subject, at the level of deepest, hidden desires that may be held in secret even to ourselves. Yet she shows that these hidden desires still pull the subject in directions we may be unable to fully cope with. Appropriating power and making it our own does not effectively distinguish the self from the power that relates to it from within.

Conclusively, the appropriative dimension of power insinuates that a subject simply puts its own verbiage onto the power that grafts itself upon the subject's psyche. The fact that we can articulate our own ideological position within capitalism, via the illusion of free will, does not mean that we are somehow liberated from the apparatuses of capitalism. It is precisely Judith Butler's point that the immanence of power that constitutes the domain wherein power forms a subjugated subject par excellence.

The subject's way of thinking and being in the world is possible in the context of power that allows a subject to appropriate a subjugated position within the symbolic order. We are free insofar as we select the modus operandi of a subjection that is own-most. The irony is that we, as subjects, are stubbornly attached to the instruments of our subordination, and yet expropriate all that we work to create. Subjection happens even at the level of the intimate modes of poiesis that produce our conception of "selfhood." It happens by giving the product of our labor to a "Lord/Bourgeoisie" class only interested in "Our/the Bondsman's" labor if it creates a product to be sold. Inexplicably, the Lord, who then sells tangible-material and/or ontological properties, as if it were not the Bondsman's, takes that which is produced away. Thus appropriating a product at the level of producing a self or an identity that is alien to the subject. In the sense of a Derridean specter haunting the Bondsman's being (s)he becomes possessed by the Lord. Selfhood is constructed out of nothing, a nothing that is actually something menacing and anxiety inducing, but that must be given away. My reading of Butler in this chapter deals with how this problematic power-dynamic can be construed immanently as going on within the subject's psyche. My intention is similar to Butler's stated purpose in The Psychic Life of Power insofar as this is an attempt to draw awareness to a particular discursive process producing subjection. This attempt to make sense of subjection will in itself raise awareness and hopefully lead to liberation once the awareness occurs.

Judith Butler's points in The Psychic Life of Power are quite complex, and deeply profound. My first impression was that she leaves little room to escape from the intricate, immanent, and intimate workings of power. It seems that for Butler, as with Foucault, there is virtually no space for alterity beyond the realm of discursivity. Yet, ironically the grounding of resistance emerges out of the excess of power arising from within a particularly abusive socio-political system. Judith Butler challenges her audience to deal with the possibility that power relates to a subject via immanence instead of via transcendence. The terrain in this text occurs primarily in the realm of immanence, albeit by evoking problematic ways power takes hold of a subject from "within."

For Butler, power is enacted at the psychical level, an observation that is not necessarily new because critical

theorists from the early Frankfurt School were saying this in their attempts to fuse Marx and Freud in the 1940-70's. Yet, her basic presupposition challenges her audience to think through the possibility that power is not "out there," in the sense that a subject is not detached from that which it attempts to resist. While the basic problem of Western Marxism has been – "Why is there yet to be a communist revolution in the West?" Butler turns the Master/Slave dialectic into an analogy for any number of resistances that bear an affinity to the communist cause, but also work to liberate subjects at the level of bodily, corporeal, even psychical forms of oppression. To me the importance of The Psychic Life of Power cannot be discounted.

In another text written a few years earlier by Judith Butler, Bodies That Matter, she claims that the "materiality" of the body, within the domain of science, calls to be explained, described, diagnosed, altered and within the cultural fabric of lived experience. Her thesis at that time was that a body is fed, exercised, mobilized, put to sleep, and constitutes a site of enactments and passions of various kinds. Yet she notes that without the body there would be no site upon which the psyche could be enacted. She describes the relation between the body and the psyche by arguing that this relation is: "Not the blank slate or passive medium upon which the psyche acts, but, rather, the constitutive demand that mobilizes psychic action from the start, that is that very mobilization, and in its transmuted and projected bodily form, remains (linked to) that psyche.[2]"

This is an important point to make because the dynamic between the body and the psyche forms the supple ground upon which the immanence of power produces the formation of the subject. Psychical formations such as "stubborn attachments" to objects, tangible or non-corporeal, constitutively create a symbolic substitute for the loss of real inter-personal relationships. Butler's point is that "stubborn attachments" place limitations that inhibit lasting and meaningful relationships with others. Forming "stubborn attachments" to objects, like a clinical diagnosis of "bi-polar" or "schizophrenia" may be therapeutic for some people because it could create a sense of stability. On the other hand, universalizing the formation of "stubborn attachments" toward unhealthy, even destructive ways of living, such as attachments to consumer-driven commodity fetishism, could lead to catastrophic social circumstances on a macro-political level. Such catastrophes could include the depletion of natural resources, global warming, and ecological not to mention economical and socio-political disasters.

In the context of a positive "attachment"' a sense could emerge wherein a subject believes, "Yes, now I know how to improve myself." However, in an oppressive situation the symbolic representations designated by the diagnosis may also create a set of circumstances where the subject develops a "stubborn attachment" to the object (the diagnosis) at the expense of living a healthy life. The person may believe – "Oh, I have a diagnosis – I am abnormal," leading to a sense that there is a permanent "brokenness" that forms an allegedly "essential" part of the person's being. My position is that this sense of permanent brokenness as a process is constitutive of a subject becoming accustomed to subjection.

Butler's mode of analysis takes us through a detailed outline of how the latter of the subjects I just described are formed. In turning to Louis Althusser, Butler's point becomes explicitly a Marxist one. When the product of our labor is taken away from us we are supposed to find satisfaction in a maze of money relationships. Unable to literally produce what we want, we are presented with a family, school, and media-instilled social training that leads us to buy products that will give us friendships, sexual satisfaction, and even personal salvation. What has been called consumerism is in fact a manifestation of these alienated relationships to objects, tangible or non-corporeal, that other workers have created and that provide an economic gain for the "Lords" also known as the capitalist owners of the modes of production[3]. However, consumerism is based upon psychic, libidinal investments, made on an unconscious, even instinctual level, that create the ontological basis for seeking out these symbolic substitutes that stand-in for what is lacking in a fully formed subject.

For a moment I want to take this discussion further by saying that the object being sought is fundamentally ethereal; "it" is craved, perhaps even obsessed about, and once "it" is possessed objectively the subject becomes "possessed" ontologically by the desire for more, more, more of "it." The "it" is actually nothing, and constitutes a latent non-corporeal nothingness that is manifested as a tangible something. Obtaining a static sense of pleasure, or the absence of pleasure and pain, and simply being in a state of continuous stable comfort, is virtually impossible in capitalism. Epicurus would not stand a chance in contemporary capitalism. Once a subject finds some sense of stability, unless a certain sense of isolation is cultivated, then there is an eternal recurrence of desire that pokes in and demands something "more." Hence, static pleasure that Epicurus[4] said was the highest form of happiness was in fact the hardest form of happiness to possess.

Most powerful about Butler's turn to Hegel as a pre-requisite to Marx is that she opens a space for a new set of psychic identities/subjectivities to emerge. Therefore, when she discusses the way that some liberationist struggles

have turned to Hegel she does not mean to define this in terms of reductive Marxist categories of liberationist struggles against capital, but also post-colonial and feminist struggles among others. I am interested in her approach for one particular reason, her book offers a complex analysis of raw power as it works upon any subject be it Mad Pride, or Gay Pride, or any other "We/I" subjectivity that not only seeks representation, but a voice empowered to exist outside of institutional discourses that can inscribe "us" from within. Lordship is inherently dependent upon the Bondsman for recognition.

A Lord only has power insofar as there are subject peoples who recognize that the power is real. However, the way I read The Psychic Life of Power is that the Lordship/Bondsman motif is indicative of a power dynamic that is immanent within the subject. Often the "Master/Slave" dialectic is recognized as somehow detached from the subject, but in actuality the more troubling possibility is that power may saturate the subject from within as an immanent relationship working directly upon the psyche. Master and Slave, Lord and Bondsman, are two sides of the same subject working in dialectical opposition from within.

How does power become in effect pervasive throughout the subject? By creating the illusion of a mind/body dualism that convinced the subject. According to Butler, this process of subjugation occurs when the Bondsman: "Disavows one's body, to render it "Other" and then to establish the "Other" as an effect of autonomy, (and) to produce one's body in such a way that the activity of its production – and its essential relation to the lord – is denied."[5]

She continues by saying that the Bondsman is essentially required to "be" the Lord's body, but in such a way that the Lord forgets or disavows its activity in producing the Bondsman's. She calls this process of subjection "projection."[6] This process involves a severe sense of denial regarding the nefarious relation between the Self/Bondsman and the Other/Lord, which acts out within the "site" of the body and the psyche. Butler calls this process "Self-enslavement" as the process is occurring within the domain of a single subject. The Bondsman's labor forms the product yet the product always belongs to the Lord, because the Lord has essentially hired the Bondsman to be its body. The product is marked by the Bondsman's signature, yet the product itself is the property of the Lord.

I interpret this as a process of "repression" that undermines the Bondsman's ability to take ownership of the product that bears the subject's signature. The Bondsman and the Lord are stuck in an economy, perhaps a libidinal economy of desiring-production, that bases the relation on a "position of pure consumption, objects were transitory, and he (the Bondsman and Lord) were defined as a series of transitory desires."[7] For the Lord, nothing seemed to last, perhaps not even the power exerted over the production process. Yet the Bondsman becomes detached from the products him creates, even though the products outlast him. A precarious pseudo-repression occurs which is why she turns to Foucault.

Her reading of Foucault's "Repressive Hypothesis" in juxtaposition to Freud and Hegel is an attempt to show that for every expression of power there are also sights of possible resistance. When power obtains recognition within the body that it seeks to suppress, the proliferation of the power dynamics through body by juridical regimes creates the conditions of a dialectical reversal. Drawing on Foucault, Butler's position is that the "pathos" of a certain condition, assumed to be a bodily or mental dysfunction, inadvertently creates the conditions for a proliferation and mobilization of the cultures it seeks to suppress.

The Icarus Project could be considered one such site of "resistance." An Anarchist Collective, the Icarus Project constitutes a radical approach to mental health and "mad pride" where the alleged pathos associated with mental illness is reinterpreted and re-appropriated into something resembling a "gift." The official Icarus Project website posted its ethos on its homepage stating: "Icarus Project: Navigating the Space Between Brilliance and Madness." I view this as an empowering way of dealing with a mental health diagnosis. However, the Foucaultean/Butlerian point is that by marginalizing a condition assumed to be a defective "pathos," or emotional state, the juridical regimes, which hinge upon a certain restrictive and contradictory epistemology, ultimately come undone. Once resistance mobilizes it attaches to the terms laid out by the juridical regimes that depict that pathology as "monstrous," or "horrifying."[8] Hence, for Foucault, the marginal body is only constituted after it is repressed. Once repressed the body then can become proliferated throughout a social milieu precisely because it is constituted as an allegedly taboo mode of existence.

The Icarus Project is an online community of mad pride activists that tries to assist people with the experiences of mental health diagnoses by offering coping skills. There is even a radio broadcast network that offers call in talk shows where people can talk to other victims of mental health incarceration to share stories. The goal is empowerment so as to find coping skills that work, even ridding the subjects of their dependency on prescriptions, using meditation, and other alternative therapies not offered by mainstream mental health care. They have chapters in most left leaning

progressively oriented metropolitan areas such as New York, Philadelphia, Boston, Washington D.C., Chicago, San Francisco, Portland, Seattle, and Austin. There are also smaller chapters such as the one I attended in Binghamton, New York, and the Radical Mental Health Collective in Asheville, North Carolina. It is interesting to note that these are cities often associated with a vibrant arts scene and have numerous vibrant liberal arts colleges in these cities as well. In the Binghamton chapter, I noticed that almost all of the participants were in their early twenties and the meetings entirely consisted of current college students or people who had attended at least some college in the past.

A few years ago I had the privilege of meeting a notable member of the Icarus Project named Ken Rosenthal at a mad pride conference in New York City. Rosenthal's film Crooked Beauty features interview excerpts with notable founders of the Icarus Project including a young artist named Jaks. He was supportive of my paper saying it was inspirational; and he gave me his film for free as a token of friendship. Rosenthal now has many other documentary films on mad studies and they all deal with these ethical issues of madness and alienation. His work shows that there are sensitive artistic people like Jaks who say in his film, "I do not have a spirit that can spend all day in an office cubicle." She also recounts an experience in a college astronomy course where she learned that all life on earth originated from exploding stars, she was disappointed that merely telling people this basic fact did not immediately bring world peace and harmony to everyone on the planet. There is also a very moving anecdote where Jaks tells us she decided to leave home when her mother could not simply say "I love you" without adding the word "but" at the end of the phrase with an addendum of disparaging criticisms added onto the end of the comment.

What is interesting about the Icarus Project as a community of activist oriented "mad" subjects is that we always allowed people the opportunity to vent about these horrible situations and would view these experiences as oppression. Mental health issues were always viewed as symptoms of oppression rather than chemical imbalances in the subject which is why there was such an emphasis on turning away from prescriptions as a cure for these ills. The goal was to address the root causes which were social and political in nature. There is even poetry offered by the Icarus Project because writing and reading is viewed as emotionally therapeutic, to vent, and to know that others experience similar traumas comes as a relief, it alleviates the loneliness. This is the politics of friendship through solidarity and it helps to lighten some of the burden of social alienation associated with having a mental illness, these are safe spaces where one can explore their emotions with other compassionate caring group members who will listen. More importantly, it is free, there is no need for insurance coverage, no drugs to take, this is a much more empowering and cost effective way to treat mental health issues, through the bonds of solidarity offered in lasting friendships. As Jacques Derrida writes; the politics of friendship is about offering community for those who have no community. Icarus is based on that ethical political premise.

What Psychic Life of Power is really about is the status of freedom. Instead of simply stating that freedom is "there" as an intrinsic condition of being, Butler explores a deep concern with subjugated peoples who "stubbornly attach" psychically to the modus operandi of subjection. The promise of the book is to shine light on the inner workings of power and subjection, and to expose the immanence of power ultimately inducing people to liberation. Her point is to be weary of liberation as a "telos" or "end" rather than an open-ended dialectical process. Her book uses Hegel's Master/Slave dialectic to discuss ways in which freedom resolves into unfreedom. In my own words, it is a psychical obsession, much like how conservatives in the media are paranoid about hostile liberals taking over all aspects of American society, and then proceed to only talk about liberals in a paranoid objectification of the object that is allegedly causing their oppression.

Butler argues that this resolution to non-freedom and unhappy consciousness is often overlooked in the Hegelian scholarship that turns to Phenomenology of Spirit specifically to inspire liberation struggles.

A "master/slave" relation implies a mutual dependency. As Butler says, "subjection is literally, the making of the subject, the principle of regulation according to which a subject is formulated or produced." Subjection is not simply about domination from outside the subject, but it designates a restriction in production without which the formation and production of subject would not take place at all. Butler argues that in the work of Foucault it is precisely the formation of a conscience or a "soul" that constitutes the site of this problematic power dynamic. Without a conscience the subject would be unable to form judgments and the whole edifice of the juridical forms of power would cease to exist.

Yet with the formation of the conscience the emotions of guilt, shame, remorse, and unhappiness can work upon the subject to improve the prisoner. The burden of conscience can imprison the prisoner in profound ways other than by simply designating punitive spatial limitations signified by the physical boundaries of the prison itself. If a person can form a conscience, then all sorts of affective measures can be taken to work upon the subject from within by making the prisoner feel guilt, shame, remorse, and other indications that a "soul" has emerged. This

process is a way of enforcing a sort of "humanizing" effect upon the subject, but as Foucault is quick to point out, "the soul is the prison of the body."[9] However, as I will explore later on in this chapter, the process of cultivating a guilty conscience in a subject can lead to the excessive internalization of negative affects to the point where "self-beratement" occurs and undermines the possibility of experiencing fulfilling happiness.

First I would like to use an illustrative example of this process of producing a "soul" from my time in Icarus Project meetings. In my time involved with the Icarus Project the question of consciousness was always a prevalent issue. In looking at this problem there were several ways in which the sessions often resorted to a projection of self-beratement onto an external Other. Something that bothered me about our particular Icarus meetings was the way the discourse was always enmeshed with "the them."[10] We were preoccupied with power as it related to others 'out there'. For reasons I can only associate with denial we rarely investigated the ways the things we were trying to change influenced our psyches from 'within'.

The Icarus meetings were still encoded with popular discourses based upon the "inner/outer" binary opposition of social relations. To the detriment of radical praxis, we even based our discussions of agency on this shoddily premised binary opposition. In my estimation, the imprint of institutional discourses upon people in the group, including myself was quite profound. Even though intentions existed within the group, and the desire to take radical approaches to the explorations of one's consciousness was always being discussed, there was a pseudo-paranoia underlying the idle talk of the group. "They" were oppressing us.

This leads me to believe that there was still an overwhelming desire to remain attached to the dominant discourse regarding the status of everyone in the group[11] even in the midst of a counter-acting desire to extirpate the self from that very discourse. More often than not our discussions of power were limited by a methodology bound to transcendence, power as something nefarious working upon us from "out there." What we should have done instead was conceptualize power through the lens of immanence, power deriving from within. In this way, power as immanence means power is intimate, encoding us from within. By decoding the "master/slave" dialectic within our own psyches, we could "empower" ourselves to transition the inner-psychical workings of this dialectic.

The master/slave dialectic was clearly being investigated in so many ways, but the realization that "we", the subjects, are in a position that is mutually dependent upon the "others", the masters, was something we never fully realized. After all a King is no longer a King if the subjects refuse to obey. Power needs a subject, but once the subject refuses to be subjected then transformation will occur. By looking back in hindsight, the Icarus Meetings would have benefited from serious reflection on the work of Judith Butler. If we take Judith Butler's analysis seriously, this view of power as "out there" is an unhappy consciousness. It is based on the objectification of the "they" by "us," that creates a splitting off of ideation from affect.

Rather than have a real interaction with the other all of us in the group typically outlined a series of hyperbolic planes that represented the other in hostile terms. Ironically, the urge was always to change the other, to make "them" care about "us" when all the time the power we needed to cope with and improve our conditions was always-already within "us". Often the explicit desire of everyone in the group was to experience some kind of "Unity of Mind" that could not occur in our daily lives because none of us could truly reveal ourselves as 'mad' within the confines of everyday life. The truth is that the master and slave, the lord and bondsman, the self and other are actually constituted from within the mind and body of the thinking subject. Butler's whole point in The Psychic Life of Power is that conscience does not come from outside (God, or society, etc.), albeit the outside is an influence, but the external and internal are interwoven. The object-loss can push the subject to the point where the "self-beratement" or bad conscience is constituted as a relation of immanence within the subject.

The question then becomes, how to avoid resolving subjectivity into some kind of solipsistic or narcissistic reflexivity. If morality is premised upon "self-beratement" and reflexivity, then how does a subject relate to others as a being-in-the-world? This is where a discussion of intentions becomes relevant.

My contention is that intentions are always-already present in any subject. Certainly intentions exist in people who are considered to be outside of political subjectivity such as "the mad." I know this because typical Icarus Project meetings were also about our hoped for intentions, goals, dreams, desires, and ambitions. The constitution of consciousness, and also a therapeutic course of action, is never a matter of abstraction or relations to a transcendental field beyond the self, but daily living as an intimate relation. During any medical decision making process the issue at stake is always a pragmatic consideration of possible outcomes. This entails understanding how an individual experiences a personal sort of consciousness. Lived experience serves the purpose of navigating the immanence of the world. Immanent experience forms the foundation for creating intentionality.

For instance, the ability take corrective action for yourself involves a series of choices and payoffs. Someone

considering whether to go on medication may weigh these pros and cons; "will this medication stop me from hearing voices? Will my cognitive functioning be reduced to a level where I cannot enjoy life the same way I do without medication?" Most of the time an individual may have no idea how the actions taken within the plane of immanence will actually impact their future way of life. Will going on medication for psychosis benefit or worsen the situation? That is a matter to be understood as a person lives and through the unfolding of time on a very personal, existential-phenomenological level.

In the context of a group in an inter-subjective environment the discussion of what should be done in the aforementioned scenario can become even more complex. A certain segment of the group will agree that the benefits of medicating. These people may argue that the benefits outweigh the negative side effects of hearing voices, however others may disagree and take the opposite position. The group can help with abstractions in the sense that the group itself might be a sort of transcendent field "out there," but in actuality intentionality must be made within the mind of the individual, and within the world as a lived set of experiences that are often times irreversible. I believe, and I may be wrong, that everyone uses reason, intention, and cognitive thinking skills, even people who are considered irrational. Even in the most post-modern attunement to sensuality, surfaces, virtual reality, and desires there is a sentiment of rationality. It is rationality as a perpetual self-overcoming that is implicit within the process of being-in-the-world.

Drawing on Lacan, Butler theorizes that the ideal position of the subject within the symbolic order creates the norm that installs the subject within language and hence as an intelligible being, and she insists that this subject is always produced at a cost. Whatever resists the normative demand by which subjects are instituted remains unconscious.[12]

More often than not how these rational intentions are formed is a result of a thought of immanence not transcendence. What I mean by this is that thinking immanence puts the burden of action squarely upon the subject's shoulders instead of a Transcendent Being that may or may not exist beyond the physical realm. This means that the radical decision making process such as a change of life policy enacted at the level of daily life is within lived ontology. Living lives in the world as something abstracted away like some kind of unattainable Platonic Idea. According to Butler an un-socialized remainder is produced in the psyche that contests the appearances of a law-abiding subject that signifies the limit of normalizing demands.

Forming intentions, meaning the desire and will to act, on this existential-phenomenological level within the world, perhaps in the context of an inter-subjective support group can often times create the necessary conditions for a therapeutic set of circumstances to arise? In later publications I will expound upon these theories to better understand how and why the Subject Group makes inter-subjective intentions on an existential-phenomenological level more probable.

In the formation of intentions, there is an ongoing self-regulating process. Working as little panopticons within all of us, instead of as a regulating eye beyond the self, the internal gaze that folds in upon the subject creates a social environment wherein everyone is policing himself or herself. This could conceivably continue without the intervention of an institutional form of coercion. If everyone decides to ignore those internal panopticons, becoming like lines of flight, then a mobile subject emerges that can escape the grasp of the call of interpellation.

My hypothesis is that within subject groups, subjectivity and intentions could conceivably form out of this self-policing environment. A certain panoptic environment produces a non-totalizing totality of many subsequent and differential ontological constructions that could even be therapeutic. A pure group vision has to eject forces that oppose its organic notion of the social Body into a pure externality, for instance in the form of real or perceived paranoia within the subjugated group itself.

Thus re-exerting the will in the context of a radical antagonism between the social body and an Other, for instance the differential social ground to relations inherent within Capitalism, and the external decadent forces serving as the base of Capitalism, creates a nexus playing out upon the consciousness of the subjugated subjects within the activist group. Ultimately the group can decide to remove these paranoid, panoptic discourses when a conscious effort occurs, but this begins only when there is a desire to do so.

Liberation involves the inherent, perhaps immanent, contradictions within the objective laws of capitalist development. The contingency of heterogeneous social forces that work out upon the subject on a micro-political level, perhaps even within the structure of the subject group itself, can create a series of negative utopias where discursive spaces are opened up and unsavory desires safely emerge. Radical critiques, Thanotopic-drives, and otherwise repressed desires could conceivably be expressed in this environment. Any project where agency is asserted involves the autonomous intervention of will within the context of history. My position is that agency also

involves the transformation of habitual psychical refrains. Literally expressing desires in a different way by creating new subjectivities, new thoughts, new modes of expression, can be an inherently revolutionary form of praxis on a micro-political level and this may or may not lead to a ripple effect upon the mezzo and macro-political schema and strata within the rest of capitalism. In fact, the obscure aspects of my own writing have been an attempt to obfuscate the obvious in the hopes of playing with the discursive possibility of creating new thoughts.

The presage to active living is the thought of immanence in the sense that collective will is necessitated by my active involvement in the world that envelops me, or us. I agree with Felix Guattari who argued that a group devoted to collective action should be pre-eminently interested and aware of its own "death." The allusion to death carries a double meaning. First, death means literal material death in the sense of the end of the physical body itself and the end to suffering, then there are Thanotopic-drives. A death-drive expressed in a subject group involves the formation of self-beratement or self-destructive intentions. The expression of death-drives should be born out of an open articulation of seemingly undesirable paroxysms; "I hate my life. Here is why!" or worse, "I have had suicidal thoughts because…"

This sort of statement occurred at nearly every Icarus Project meeting. The group would then begin an honest interrogation into the reasons why the person would make such a statement. At times these confessions spiraled into a collective feeding frenzy where others in the group would open up to share their Thanotopic-thoughts. We would never blame the person who was confiding because there was an almost unspoken pact in the group that meant nobody within the group was ever to blame for their situation. Some folks were looking for pity, but for the most part it was accepted that blame was something that family members would dish out and Icarus was supposed to be a safe place to vent. So the airing of undesirable paroxysms was very common and it often initiated the discussions on an extremely personal level. Yet, this was something that made Icarus different from most other support groups I have been involved with. In an Icarus meeting the stated purpose was to offer a safe place to openly express madness. Other support groups were immersed in the subjection perpetuated by medical discourses, namely because a typical Bi-Polar support group often starts from the premise that the members of the group are suffering from a "disease." On the other hand, Icarus began from the premise that madness was a gift to be cultivated and safely explored. I found the Icarus Project's ideology to be much more open to the free expression of madness – where it was completely acceptable to "be crazy together" as one member put it.

The open expression of gifts deemed to be socially deviant or abnormal that created a wonderfully self-empowering environment to talk in ways that allegedly "sane" people would most likely consider strange. At the end of most meetings I often left with a feeling that a symbolic veil had been lifted and my pure essence had been revealed.

Even in an Icarus Project meeting there was still plenty of 'self-beratement' that went into discussions of past traumas. Sometimes a sadistic revelation about a childhood setback would snowball into full-blown conversations about a person's previous suicide attempts. Other times it would turn into long-winded rants about the perception that other society was full of people who "don't care about anything." My point is that all of these conversations involve being-towards-death and on some level. Specifically, a death within the subject emerges in the sense that there is an attempt to kill off the negative feelings by pouring on more guilt, shame and anger. This often compounds negative emotions and spirals a person further into a subjugated position towards them and others. In some instances, an emotional release may occur where the person would feel better by sharing something traumatic, and other times a confession would build into a full blown anxiety attack.

The premise is that when a group fails to remain useful a person should leave the group and re-evaluate whether it is serving that person's needs. When a subject group no longer serves a purpose it should be disassembled. I remember talking to someone on the Icarus discussion boards about the way the Binghamton chapter broke down and ended. His response was all about this sort of confrontation with death. A paraphrasing of his response was something like, "Icarus is a collectively run group. If it serves no purpose for you then take a step back. There should be no pressure to force you to engage with Icarus project. If you are helped by it that's great, but if not, then you should try something else." The death of the group was viewed as quite possibly the most therapeutic event in the life of the group.

Another meaning of Death is far more figurative and it involves a death or finitude of the group itself. This second meaning involves thinking about how to pragmatically deconstruct the group itself once the stated political goals have been accomplished. A thought of finitude does not involve a thought of failure, but of achievement. Living constitutes a dialectical process of self-overcoming that only ceases in death. Once a goal has been accomplished are there mechanisms involved in the structure of the group itself that would allow for a non-hierarchical power

dynamic within the end product. Will the end product be stripped away by the precarious social milieu predominated by a Master/Slave dialectic ala capitalist production? When the subject group accomplishes its purposes how will it produce its own death? More than likely because its members have accomplished what they have set out to do the death of the group will be accepted happily. Nobody needs a lumbering bureaucratic institution outlasting its purpose.

Oftentimes at a typical Icarus Project meeting the connections could be made between individually lived alienations, and life within a broader social field like capitalism in general. One could get the feeling that, as Bernard Stiegler points out, "Capitalism has lost its mind."[13] We would constantly theorize about problems related in part to what Deleuze called, "a society of control," and it was typically assumed that this sort of society of control was creating mass apathy.

While I disagree with the theory that there is some kind of mass apathy inhibiting political will, my view is that there are many countervailing discourses that create a situation resembling what Deleuze and Guattari called "anti-production," wherein people are convinced that what they are doing is in their own self-interest when in fact it is not. The famous question from Anti-Oedipus is one that Judith Butler deals with in Psychic Life of Power, "Why do people fight for their servitude as if it were their salvation?" This question is still relevant when discussing the Icarus Project.

My conclusion from observing the Icarus Project is that anti-production, or desiring counter-productive ideologies, always serves the purpose of creating political enemies. When discussing "anti-production" it is always a matter of "them, over there," who do not know what they are doing is against their self-interest, yet "we, us over here," know better.

Another conclusion that can be drawn is that the problem of political agency is much more complex than simply projecting the appearance of a ruse upon someone whose political positions disagree with "mine." In most cases during the Icarus Project meetings doing this abstracts the "their" position, perhaps changing it into some kind of transcendental force beyond the world. I prefer Foucauldean analysis over Sartrean in the sense that Foucault conceptualized all types of political will as a result of desiring production within a social milieu that has many countervailing discourses; a point he appropriated from Friedrich Nietzsche's Genealogy of Morality. In addition, Foucault's research showed counter-productive hegemonies that may create conflicting positions, interests, and ultimately conflicting forces often pull political will in a multitude of contradicting directions. In many ways Michel Foucault is the most interesting interpreter of Nietzschean Genealogy; a point that Sartre elided; overlooked; perhaps even misread. This is precisely Judith Butler's point in Psychic Life of Power when she appropriates a Foucauldean / Nietzschean / Althusserian methodology to unravel the "unconscious attachments to subjection."[14]

This is also a major point in the work of the Marxist Theorists; Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri. Unlike the early work of Antonio Negri; such as Marx Beyond Marx; and the Savage Anomoly; in his collaborative with Michael Hardt; and after the mid-1980's collaborations with Felix Guattari entitled "Communists like Us, "Negri's work begins to engage much more with Deleuze and Guattari to theorize that capital functions on a plane of immanence. The following quotation seems to be a new theorization that offers a synthesis of the Foucaultean / Nietzschean / Althusserian genealogical analysis of the capitalist mode of production and the methodologies offered by Deleuze and Guattari that show an intensification of exploitation leading to the suffering that explodes into antagonistic lines of flight:

> **"Through relays and networks of relationships of domination, without reliance on a transcendent center of power. It tends historically to destroy traditional social boundaries, expanding across territories and enveloping always new populations within its processes."[15]**

The plane of immanence forms the base, or the horizon of the event.[16] While they are undoubtedly echoing the Communist Manifesto; "in capitalism all that is solid melts into air," The way to situate Hardt and Negri; is through the lens of his early solo projects written on Spinoza and the Grundrisse; which centered on "conatus" and antagonisms over the wage. These are the major movements labor makes striving towards its own liberation. In engaging with Deleuze and Guattari; rather than Althusser (whose invitation inspired the work Marx Beyond Marx); there is a way that these intensifications of suffering and exploitation become the sites of antagonistic-conatus; that explode into lines of flight.

Hardt and Negri's argument is powerful in that there is not a transcendent center to capitalist subjectivity. As the intensification of exploitation reveals this is move from contradicting discourses (as many often misunderstand Foucault as a discourse theorist; or a philosopher of language via a misappropriation through the worst kinds of

Heideggerian-Derridean a-rationalist deconstructionists of the "linguistic turn"); many countervailing discourses, interests, and even desires that intersect in competition along many points where hegemony is contested. This means that there is no single location where resistance can attack, but power may be aligned in a continuum of nodes or loci where resistances can emerge along this plane of immanence.

Even a seemingly innocuous Icarus Project meeting, or a thread of posts on the website, can have a viral impact on a segment of the plane of immanence if the consciousness and subjectivity produced somehow finds other networks where unrepresented voices can be articulated openly. The exact effects are perhaps unknown, much like deciphering the correct course of therapeutic action with the aforementioned patient deciding whether or not to take medication. The fact that an antagonism is formed at some point along the plane of immanence may have an impact upon other seemingly unrelated areas of the social field. My argument is not meant as an abstraction along the lines of the bad infinity of some types of Chaos Theory where a butterfly flaps their wings in Jakarta and suddenly world history is radically altered. My point is that actions in one area may in fact have an impact upon the rest of society in very concrete ways, but we do not always know the outcome or what the impact "out there" will be. I also want to stress that actions might have unintended consequences, or perhaps undesirable consequences, and almost all actions are in fact consequential in nature. Even inaction has consequences. However, the nature of these consequences is typically unknowable until they actually happen.

For instance, there is a common assertion among members of the Icarus Project, and it is common on the discussion boards which to paraphrase goes something like this: "The diagnostic categories that my psychiatrist uses to diagnose me are insufficient and I do not identify with them because I am a unique and special individual that cannot be subjected to classification or diagnosis. Therefore I am not ill, or at the very least my diagnosis is an insufficient, my identity is far more complex than that, etc."

This discourse falls squarely within the domain of a humanist brand of immanence because it implies that we are all unique individuals. My point is that we are all allowed to appropriate a space for ourselves within the social order, but we are never allowed to actually deconstruct the very base of the social order or undermine the very premise of the symbolic order.

I believe that everyone seeks pleasure. Happiness is the obtainment of pleasure, and although some psychoanalysts like Jacques Lacan have argued that "happiness is not necessarily about getting what you want," I disagree. Sought after pleasure forms the basis of what constitutes happiness. Michel Foucault in History of Sexuality Volumes 2&3 is masterful in his understanding of how pleasure is used. He describes the Greek way of life in thorough detail that involved equilibrium of pleasure, or what he referred to as the use of pleasure. For the Greeks, seeking beauty involved its usefulness, not its excess. Enjoying fine food, or sex, in balance and not for the sake of seeking an excess of pleasure creates a greater sense of joy because it brings balance to life.

Often in Foucault this type of care of the self occurs when a balance is struck between the self and the other and it can only come about through an authentic being-towards-death. Why? Understanding the finitude of life creates a desire to maximize life and to maximize the pleasure of living. Altruism is balance, which Foucault argued was the highest form of pleasure. So, I'm not just studying philosophy to gain wisdom for myself but to someday give back some of my wisdom to others through teaching, or to facilitate an education process that leads students to understand that they in fact have wisdom in themselves. Usually this sort of role-playing was always prevalent in a typical Icarus project meeting. Each of us played the role of group facilitator and it was always a matter of striking a balance between taking wisdom for myself, and providing wisdom or advice for others. There was always a give and take process inherent in every Icarus group meeting.

It is also important to note when studying Deleuze, Negri, or even Foucault for that matter, that they are deeply troubled by the way so-called modern society, with its excesses of disciplinary power and pseudo-rationalism, tended to manufacture mass subjectivities. Foucault, and this can also be said of Deleuze, Negri, and even their notable predecessors in Marx and Nietzsche, was deeply troubled by what it means for certain notions, such as "sanity", to become normalized, and to ultimately enter the world of human knowledge (or epistemes) and practice not merely as operational constructs, but as universal "truths of being." Along with Foucault one might argue here that to downplay concerns of normalization is to underestimate the power of discourse to literally shape and mold human behavior through the mass production of ideologies, and beliefs, which create the horizon-line of what constitutes the realm of the thinkable.

In contemporary society certain "facts" of human life are presumed to be universal, eternal, everlasting, and transcendent, when in fact what happens is that the deviation from particular social norms, perhaps thinking the unthinkable, or even stretching the realm of subjectivity to include ideas and emotions that are irreducible to the

linguistic-form (or finding expression of thoughts that do not easily reduce down to words, but are better expressed in a flurry of seemingly disconnected allusions, images, or emotive motifs) can create the presumption of being "mad." In fact, one of the presuppositions that Deleuze only hints at in his book on Bergson where he discusses temporality as duration, is that someone who is thought to be a "schizo-subject," may in fact be experiencing a non-linear conception of time, and may be expressing thoughts in a circular, or even less organized flow, that makes sense inside that subjects head, but may be impossible to communicate with another human being. Often times this sort of expression appears as the breakdown of "Rational thinking," but in fact, what is happening, and R.D. Laing points this out many times, is that the "psychotic" can make sense, it just takes an incredible amount of time and effort on behalf of a trained therapist to decipher the code, because the "psychotic" subjects thoughts are for him or herself. A meaning is being communicated, but it is a deviation from the normal forms that so-called "sane" discursive practices take.

In essence, what the work of Deleuze, Foucault, and Negri, have in common with the "psychotic" is that they are breaking with the lazy, habitual, perhaps even genealogical presuppositions of modernist discourse that has turned the joy of thinking into some technical professionalized institutionally austere form of pseudo-rationalist philosophical carcass. Why has this happened? And why is Western philosophy haunted by madness, the allegedly irrational subject that has no subjectivity? It is because there is a long Western philosophical tradition leading back to the Greeks that says Ethos and Logos should predominate over Pathos.

In the Western philosophical tradition, it is commonly accepted that Ethos, or ethics, the ability to make reasonable judgments about right and wrong, along with Logos, or logical thinking, giving a coherent "argument," should supersede Pathos, emotional or affective argumentation based on feelings. To make a statement based on Pathos is typically viewed as being less than credible. Yet, I would say that judging by the track record of Western philosophy, specifically the monstrosity that is contemporary analytical thought, one could argue that the privileging of Ethos and Logos has yet to produce desirable effects.

The reason for turning to the Icarus Project as a site of "antagonistic-conatus" is this diminution of the Pathos in the Western philosophical tradition has had a direct impact upon the treatment of the "Mad" for the simple reason that to have uncontrollable affects and emotions has been viewed as being "Pathological." In medical discourse, having uncontrollable emotions or being swept away by strong emotions is viewed as a mental illness. To put my conclusions in the terms passed on by Karl Marx, the "grund-werke" of capitalism must change.

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11. What I mean is that even though some people vocalized their discontent with diagnostic labels there was still an overwhelming sentiment among these people resembling what some other activists have labeled, "Mad Pride." I have problems with this label because it still resorts to the term "Mad" to identify the members of the group. By saying "I'm mad" or as some people in Icarus Project said from time to time, "I come to this group to feel comfortable expressing my madness among people like me," I always felt as though this sort of idle talk led to a complacency in the understanding that the people in the people in the group were abnormal. I have problems with this for

the reasons outlined in my discussion of being-in-the-world; I feel as though mood disorders are not always "disorders" or deviances from the norm, but excesses of emotion and desire. It's not that we, "the mad" are outside the limits of normalcy, but that we have an excess of completely normal emotions, we feel in excess to the point where it encompasses our entire being. Since other folks are fail to feel on a deep profound level, they are most likely walking around like living dead people or "zombies," and that is more akin to being insane than being deeply affected by, for instance, the thought of the finitude of life and the facticity of impending death. Basically "the mad" are people who feel things, or think things, or act out in a way that other people have killed in themselves. There is a being-towards-death implicit in being "Mad," because often times mad person has yet to actually kill their ability to feel, what people call madness is an intensity of the ability to intensely feel the ups and downs of life. An appropriation of the word "Mad" was happening that felt a bit odd to me.

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Maybe That's Enough: Towards the Social, and Socially Conscious, Micro-Budget Filmmaker

Brandon Niezgoda

Introduction

In an age of conglomeration, tentpole films, Indiewood Cinema—in an age of… Ultron—Michael Z. Newman sees a multitude of individuals searching for an authentic, autonomous, alternative cinema.

He writes of this seemingly intangible cinema as

> "Authentic, insofar as a film is recognized to be the sincere production of an artist or group of artists. Autonomous, to the extent that the artist or group of artists is free to pursue their personal agenda and not constrained by business demands. And alternative, as the authenticity and autonomy of the film and its production is regarded as a contrast to the dominant process for making movies, which is the Hollywood studio way (2009, p.222).

Authors, academics, and patrons—whether they know it or not—pine for this form of cinema. Whereas each of these trends goes against the Hollywood grain, "each can be viewed as an implicit (or explicit) assault on the conventions of the studio film, the mainstream movie, and the institutions through which it is experienced—or at least as an effort to provide a needed counterbalance and response to it (2009, p.222). Amidst endless simulacra, in April 2014 a small passing article was posted on the blog for streaming website Fandor. The article was to commemorate the digital distribution of Joe Swanberg's All the Light in the Sky (2011), and poses some sort of answer or hope that this type of cinema is not out of reach.

For the occasion Fandor hosted a conversation between Swanberg and fellow director Frank V. Ross. Interpreting their dialogue, Kevin Lee appreciated something atypical. Instead of allowing the medium to dictate the representative format of a publicity interview, Swanberg chose to speak of Ross's work. The two share a collaborative friendship. Ross has acted and helped with Swanberg's films. Swanberg has assisted in Ross's films. This was not a one sided discussion. The two share a mutual appreciation, and it becomes increasingly clear while watching that neither would be in their position, although this by no means indicates any type of excessive wealth or spotlight, without the other.

Lee believes that this is "the kind of rapport that might be the saving grace of low-budget independent filmmaking as it faces its latest set of crises." The directors prove to be very sober about their practice. "We shouldn't expect to make any money from our movies," Joe reflects. Lee concludes his piece with this statement; "They seem sincerely grateful that their films exist, thanks in a large part to collaborative goodwill and mutual support. Maybe all we have is each other. And maybe that's enough." The goal of this paper is to see what role social capital has for Joe Swanberg and his contemporaries, in opening up new modes of authentic, autonomous and alternative cinema. "I sense a disconnect between, within Mumblecore in general, the sort of like antagonisms towards this idea of Mumblecore like these films weren't meant to have hype around them. They're not able to stand up to that sort of expectation," Joe Swanberg recounts in a 2011 interview. This paper asks what types of expectation are they supposed to be judged by and what the curious results specify.

Literature Review

With his first two films Swanberg's work became engulfed under the notorious Mumblecore umbrella; part genre, part movement, part moment. Sound mixer Eric Masunaga jokingly devised the moniker to describe films he had worked on that were screening at 2005's South by Southwest Festival. It went viral when filmmaker Andrew Bujalski used it in an Indiewire.com interview soon after.

It is tough to believe, now or ever, that there is any room for autonomous cinema. When film critics encountered the works of the Mumblecore directors, many quickly denounced the films as being insignificant, and sanitized. Devin Faraci deemed Mumblecore as "the blandest, most self-indulgent bullshit, aimed only at the narcissists who make it" (personal communication, Sept. 22 2012).

Stuart Cunningham writes in, "Rates of Change: Online Distribution as Disruptive Technology in the Film Industry," that "much debate in media and communication studies is based on exaggerated opposition between the digital sublime and the digital abject: overly enthusiastic optimism versus determined pessimism over the potential of new technologies" (2010, p. 119). Yet, reviewing contemporary literature on technological determinism and filmmaking proves that the simple fact for having cameras cannot account for Joe Swanberg's continuance in the industry.

Similarly, there are academics who focus on mythologies of individualism, film students who dream of being found at Sundance, and audiences who see Indiewood as providing some sort of (illusion of) choice.

This literature review works to deconstruct mythologies of technological determinism, and autuerism. Ultimately, the amount of agency afforded to other forces in their role in for promoting success for a film director, is less agency that can be given to social capital.

Technological Determinism

The term 'technological determinism' was apparently coined by the American sociologist and economist Thorstein Veblen (1857-1929). Just like other deterministic theories, technological determinism seeks to explain social and historical phenomena in terms of one principal or determining factor. It is a doctrine of historical or causal primacy. In its most extreme form, the entire form of society is seen as being determined by technology: new technologies transform society at every level, including institutions, social interaction and individuals. At the least a wide range of social and cultural phenomena are seen as shaped by technology. "Human factors" and social arrangements are seen as secondary.

Various non-Marxist theorists such as Sigfried Giedion, Leslie White, Lynn White Jr, Harold Innis and Marshall McLuhan have adopted the stance of technological determinism (Chandler, 1995). McLuhan's basic premise is that all technologies are extensions of human capacities. Tools and implements are extensions of manual skills; the computer is an extension of the brain. It was up to his followers- Neil Postman, Walter Ong, and Joshua Meyrowitz,- to revisit and make sense of his paradoxical oeuvre, as well as to infer a "general media theory" (sometimes referred to as "medium theory")from his pun-filled prose (Laron, 2003, p. 2).

Despite criticisms and misreadings, technological determinism persists in manifold theoretical and abstract accounts of the relationship between the technical and the social. It remains in the justifications of actors who are keen to promote a particular direction of change, and as part of a broader public discourse which seeks to render technology opaque and beyond political intervention and control (Wyatt, 2008, p. 167).

Several authors, have written about the age of media convergence to "make sense of the ways in which new cinema technologies are being used not only by the major media corporations but also by DIY independent filmmakers" (Tryon, 2007, p.4). Emphasizing technological determinism above all else has been found provincial. John Belton claims the digital revolution is a "false revolution." Cheaper technology has certainly helped cinema become a more productive and democratized medium. But this is only part of it; a soft determinism. In their critical report on the contemporary film industry Eliashberg, Elberse and Leenders state "the benefits of digital technology will change the production process but not lead to fundamental shifts in power structures, (2006, p. 645). Robert Sickels confirms that belief in his book American Film in the Digital Age. "The movie industry movies into the digital age, it's undergoing cataclysmic industrial changes", he writes, "but when the dust settles for a while, neither its more than a century old-basic premise, providing for-profit entertainment to consumers, nor the underlying

structure required to control the market—production, distribution, and exhibition—will have changed" (2011, p. 163). Sickels only sees how things are produced, distributed and exhibited as changed. The major media companies will still control them.

When writing "On Digital Media as a Potential Alternative Cinema Apparatus: A Marketplace Analysis," (2004) Robert Irwin believes that it is not simply a high-quality, low cost digital revolution that will come and save us but rather what is necessary is having "enough people must have the requisite knowledge of film and video production, digital marketing, and business models," coupled with the "relatively modest capital needed to establish operations" (15). Capital needed for creating a film is secondary. Still, no-budget and micro-budget cinema has been significantly overlooked for political reasons. David Bordwell finds that being empirical does not rule out being theoretical. He has made a powerful case for what he calls middle-level research (Shand, 2008, p. 2). Those working outside of the Hollywood industry have been ignored by the public, and researchers.

> But the struggles of these renegades to produce work and to have it seen underscore how deeply amateur/professional divides had been ingrained into social and economic practice. In short, make amateur technology smaller; make film stocks reversal, so that prints can't easily be struck; monopolize and deny access to distribution; offer no viable editing or sound capabilities... and amateur media production is rendered private, frivolous, and inconsequential (Fox, 2004, p.8).

Fox points towards future research because "what the non-Lucases of the world do with their potential digital power remains to be seen" (15). Joe Swanberg made his second feature, LOL, in 2006. The film examines relationships of three men in their twenties. Art reflects life here. He himself graduated from Southern Illinois University Carbondale, where he developed in interest in emerging video technology and the creative possibilities of the internet. He became an avid web designer in school. While his second film LOL focuses on the sometimes troubling and inept interpersonal tendencies engendered by digital technology, the filmmaker doesn't see himself as singularly interested with technology. The director became disinterested with "tech-heads," and with the repeated Q&A questions about how the film was made, and with what equipment. For Joe Swanberg, and his collaborators for the film C. Mason Wells and Kevin Bewersdorf, they simply worked and cared about the camera they had; and at that point it is simply the only camera they could afford.

Auteurism

Swanberg, and a few contemporaries, have also been deemed as prolific and singular successes. They are outliers who have caught fire and never went away; who are good enough to be drawn up to the majors like Quintin Tarantino, from working at blockbuster. This all points towards the theory of auteurism which is a similarly stubborn mythology of contemporary cinema. Auteur theory stems from the work of Cashiers Du Cinema. Advocated by director and critic Francois Truffaut in his 1954 essay "A Certain Tendency of French Cinema," and subsequently defined with the help of several other critics, especially Godard, Eric Rohmer, and Jacques Rivette auteur theory states that some directors (based on subjective judgments of value), are auteurs who possess a personal signature. This leaves scriptwriting to a secondary level, simply supplying the raw material (Marie, 2003, p. 41).

From its induction, the theory has been protested for its provocative and paradoxical nature. It ultimately betrays and denies the collective nature of the whole cinematic creation process, causing theorists to constantly deconstruct its meaning and implications. In his iconic essay "Notes on Auteur Theory," Andrew Sarris regards auteur theory as a nascent idea, having no definition in the British and English language. Francois Truffaut himself admitted that it was merely a polemical weapon for a given time and a given place; one situated within a classical French cinema of book adaptation.

Janet Staiger focuses on the historical account of auteurism. By the mid-1950, and in the post-World War II era, limited output, independent production, and the package-unit system typified Hollywood. With the end of the studio era, the package-unit system further intensified the need to differentiate the product on the basis of its innovations, its story, and its stars. The success of auteur films in the 1970's and 1980's within the package system did not give directors, actors, or production staff more funding; but instead made them increasingly dependent on studio financing to produce and distribute such big films. The package unit system made the blockbuster the center of the industry (1985, p. 368).Highly profitable films then were used for growth purposes, diversifying into areas which might provide a stable growth in come to counterbalance more speculative film-finance operations. Rather than

seeing an industry mature, directors like Francis Ford Coppola admire the Hollywood model of the 1930's; voicing hope that film production might attain the infectious team spirit of the theatrical rehearsal room (Lewis, 1998, p.58). While it offers a more manageable way for critics to debate films, it misinterprets the actual models of production. Auteurism is one of many myths perpetuated in the film industry.

> "A critical project that aimed to venerate those directors that somehow managed to repeatedly produce films that were distinguishable from the standard commercial entertainment has ended up as a theoretical project that questioned the very capacities of authorship through both ideology's capacity to determine the social subject and the instability of language and representation," (Sellors, 2011, p.4).

This shift allows us to refocus our attention from the coherent picture of a film's reception to the more complicated situation of its production; the political economy of a film. A more mature use of the theory has seen auteurism as within a "nexus of communicative alliances" that permit share positions built on patterns of simultaneous innovation, recognition, and repetition. This is seminally important in understanding film authorship, as it promotes a historically robust understanding of the actual means which a film comes about; a more accountable analysis of how films are meaningful and culturally significant. For instance, Federico Pacchioni's Collaborative analysis on Fellini and his screenwriters is able to "provide an assessment of lesser-known influential writers, identifying the authorial and cultural network behind the films and giving a concrete representation of the evolution of Fellini's approach to filmmaking" (2010, p. p. IV). For those auteurs such as Dominique Cabrera, Noemie Lvoksky, Laetitia Masson, Mario Vernoux written about by Hamid Naficy in his book An Accented Cinema, their personal work should never been seen removed from social intimacy; it should be seen as a continuing possibility of constructing new solidarities through the intimate.

For Jean Luc-Godard, the auteurist style eventually did not sustain what morally his goal as a director was. His turn post 1968 to the Dziga Vertov group shows that collaboration is the core, crux, and sometimes burden of filmmaking as Truffaut and Godard's friendship never survived past a rift in 1973 over the aesthetics of cinema. As auteurist cinema fell into some of the same commodity driven functions that the Hollywood package system distributed, working collectively highlighted different emphases. By working collectively and withholding his personal "signature" (the art consumer's guarantee of "originality") Godard challenges this glorification of the individual, and by de-emphasizing the exchange value of his reputation, Godard attempts to shift the film-goer's attention to the use value of a film." Authors like Rosanna Maule look "Beyond Auteurism" reconfiguring the sociocultural function of the film author and advocating for a historicized view of the category with regards to modes of film production and reception" (14).

Swanberg started making movies with his Dad's camcorder, with brothers and friends acting in them. Later in high school his parents signed him up for film class at college in Chicago, shooting on 16mm. At Southern Illinois Carbondale he met his future wife Kris Williams. Kissing on the Mouth was something he had in the works for a while. Kris and Swanberg got serious about the film around Christmas 2003, when the script writing began. Kate Winterich then agreed to be in the movie. First shooting began in late February 2004, and high school friend Kevin Pittman joined not long after. The four individuals were the entire cast and crew. A lot of this first film was improvisation. With all full time jobs, the film was made shooting at night or on the weekends. LOL was similarly shot by friends. Kevin Bewersdorf composed the soundtrack while in Berlin, spending nights packed into a friend's small apartment for internet and communicating with Swanberg. The budget for the picture was only $3,000.

In an iconic event, Joe Swanberg and critic Devin Faraci held a spirited debate in a boxing ring at the 2012 Fantastic Fest. Faraci attacked Swanberg's films as being insignificant, and opportunist.

Faraci: "…Mumblecore is the opposite of everything that's great about indie film. It's the laziest form of filmmaking. It's a bunch of middle class and upper class white kids whining about their ennui and their middle class white lives in front of a camera, without a script, without good actors. Here's what you need to make a Mumblecore movie: a sense of entitlement, white skin, and Greta Gerwig, and that's it…." (qtd. in Singer, 2011).

Devin Farci's interpretation ignores the specific social and political circumstances of Swanberg's work. His films are made by friends— many with no hope or expectation that it would be viewed by anyone else but friends and acquaintances; and some, so delicate that they actually strained relationships.

Social Network Analysis

Social Network Analysis is a body of work, and methodology, directly suitable to address issues of organizational communication that this study focuses on. SNA has been used to describe and measure modes of partnership, alliance and association to have a geopolitical understanding that many disciplines cannot offer.

Network Analysis allows researchers to examine, on a small scale, an individual's circle of contacts and how those contacts serve them. The foundations are both motivational and cognitive. Researchers explain the urge to "network" and the limitations of human abilities to manage networks. Two kinds of basic human motivations respond to primary needs; 1) to feel safe and 2) to reach out (Kadushin, 2011, p. 56). These correspond to two basic and complementary aspects of social networks: the connections between some of the elements of a network and the holes or non-connections between other elements. One motivation is to stay within one's social cocoon, for the connections between people and social units lead to feelings of safety, comfort, and support. Another motivation is to reach out and make connections where there were none. In addition to these primary motivations, there is one created by the network itself. It goes by various names such as envy, "status seeking," or "keeping up with the Joneses." Networks are not only about getting things done but about "community", "social circles", and the "social support" one receives from these communities, (Kadushin, 2011, p. 56).

Social Network Analysis also works on a larger scale, to see how organizations and societies adapt and function. There are several seminal studies essential to the discussion of social capital and film collectivity. Robert Putnam's seminal book Bowling Alone (2001), is formative research featuring multiple regression analysis correlating high social capital with relative levels of success. Fowler and Christakis have recently confirmed these ideas, finding that happiness tends to be correlated in social networks (2008).

Felton and Graham (2010) have found similar benefits in outer suburban Australia. Gall (2010) sees the alternative filmmaking practice of Punk Cinema as being paramount to their success "exploring notions of a socialized practice centered upon participation, non-hierarchal structures and the development of radical filmmaking strategies outside of traditional models (2)." Elizabeth Furling in his 2010 study of a Portland Oregon artistic collective has found substantial benefits of cooperation and place. Coe has seen interpersonal relationships as a key element in the generation of an indigenous Vancouver filmmaking industry (2000) and Kean Fan Lim has found Hong Kong filmmaker's ability to new cross-scalar production networks and target new markets as to remain competitive (2006).

In his 2014 article, "The Collaborative Advantage," Yosh Beier writes "collaborative capacity-the ability to collaborate and co-create has become the new competitive frontier for organizations." Mark Lorenzen and Florian Taube's 2008 research conclude that the existence of a well-defined and geographically centered social network among producers, directors and other key roles in filmmaking in Mumbai influences the evolution of an upstart "Bollywood model" of filmmaking remarkably different, and experiencing recent surges of performance and export.

Lilach Nachum found the competitive advantages that firms in clusters develop when analyzing the external linkages of firms in the media cluster of Central London. Stefan Kratke draws from Bruno Latour's Actor Network Theory to find that major innovation impulses arise from the interlinking of knowledge resources. Dean Simonton's article "Group Artistic Creativity" works against the image of the "lone genius" that pervades both the mass media and research literature to research the productivity found in group artistic creativity in clusters. Rob Sabal, as a theorist and professor recounts that it is essential for the film production teacher to foster a collaborative environment. Knowing fully that the romantic notion of the artistic standing outside of society is both a fiction and an impediment to quality artistic production, Sabal sees this as an essential task.

The industrial movie industry is filled with conglomerate ties; its own form of networked affiliations from actors and director companionships. Steven Peacock evaluates the positive influence in the continued collaboration of Greengrass and Damon in his 2012 article. Pixar's network culture is praised by Catmull (2008), claiming success as a direct result of their open communication channels, and rich pre-production and post-production network ties. Gino Cattani and Simone Ferriani advance a relational perspective in studying creativity in Hollywood, recognizing a core/periphery perspective driving cinematic achievements in Hollywood (2008). To find success in Hollywood, there has always been an emphasis on "who you know." So too, must this emphasis be magnified for micro-budget industries. Mark Deuze's 2007 article "Convergence Culture in the Creative Industries" acknowledges that the key to understanding the new media ecosystem as "based on networked technologies that are P2P in organization and collaborative in principle" (257).

Methodology

This study focuses on the activated, deactivated, and reactivated modalities of social capital of Joe Swanberg and contemporary filmmakers. The Internet Movie Database (IMDb), has a tremendous amount of data on virtually every movie ever made. The electronic source was used in this study to collect ego-network data.

The sample for this study are alters (actors, producers, etc.) from Joe Swanberg's 12 feature films. Feature films are identified as over fifty minutes in length. Anthology films, such as Autoerotic with directed segments from Joe Swanberg and Adam Wingard, are not included. Members are color coded, indicating chronologically their first collaboration in one of Swanberg's feature films. White- Kissing on the Mouth (2005), Orange-LOL (2006), Yellow-Hannah Takes the Stairs (2007), Forest Green-Nights and Weekends (2008), Cyan-Alexander the Last (2009), Blue-Caitlin Plays Herself (2009), Slate Blue-Uncle Kent (2011), Red-Silver Bullets(2011), Art History(2011)- No New Collective Members, Pink- The Zone(2011), Lime Green- Marriage Material (2012), Lavender- All The Light in the Sky (2012). Using IMDB's "Who's worked with who" function, in a one-mode network, each collaborator is then compared to every other, creating a weighted value. A one-mode Agency matrix was then created, and subsequently imported to UCINET. Sociogram for visual analysis is used through NodeXL.

Results

Including all crew members, cast members, set workers, Joe Swanberg had a total of 118 alters in his feature film ego-network. This is an incredibly small list, recognizing that Blockbuster films employ hundreds of works in one film. While seemingly small, the sociogram reveals a staggering amount of data to be extrapolated.

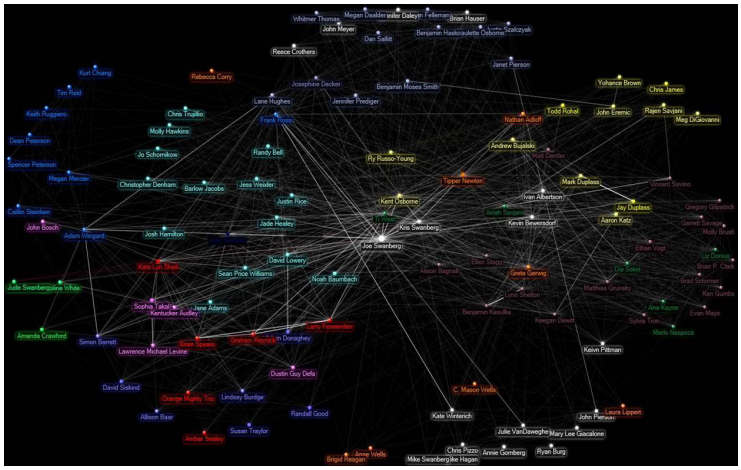

Figure 1. Joe Swanberg Feature Film Ego Network

The network encompassed an astounding 3,774 unique edges, and an average geodesic distance of 1.712008; with the maximum possible being 2 as each member is connected to Joe Swanberg. With Joe Swanberg removed from the network, the average Geodesic Average is 1.779531 with a Maximum Geodesic Distance of only 3. Of essential importance for Joe Swanberg's ego network are the edge weights; shown on the graph by opacity levels. Brothers Mark and Jay Duplass, who recently wrote, directed, and produced HBO's Togetherness have 35 collaborations together. Second is Joe Swanberg and his wife Kris Swanberg who have collaborated 24 times, and third are Brian Spears and Larry Fessenden with 19 collaborations. Calculated through the program Gephi, the average node degree is 31.983, with the average weighted degree at 52.542. Joe Swanberg has a degree of 177 (of course collaborating with every person in his own network), but a weighted degree of 391. Fifteen people in the network have weighted densities of more than 100. However, this is not to say that every person in the network has a high density. There are those, particularly from Swanberg's earlier films, who were only present in the beginning. By Swanberg's 2011

films he had united with a core group of directors including Frank V. Ross, Adam Wingard, and Ti West. Adam Wingard iconically dropped out of Fox's "The Lot," not willing to perform for studio heads. Although they are more horror film based, Swanberg had been asked to act in his friend's films. The contingent of West, Wingard and his writing partner Simon Barrett make up what is called "Mumblegore." This partnership and merging of horror and communicative based cinema has been mutually beneficial for both parties.

Important is the high density of members within Joe Swanberg's films. He collaborated with couple Lawrence Michael Levine and Sophia Takal in his film The Zone. Swanberg's candid directorial techniques featuring sex, and intimacy, could only be done with people who trust each other. Takal recounts the experience in a 2012 Hollywood Chicago interview.

> I'm in Ti West's [segment]. It was the best thing ever. It was just me, Joe, Ti and Kate sharing a hotel room in Arizona, going out for karaoke every night, shooting sometimes and seeing the Grand Canyon for the first time. It was my birthday weekend and they were really nice to me. I didn't even know that they were submitting it [to] festivals. I had no idea what was going to happen with it, and the fact that it's this buzzy horror movie is really funny to me. It was such a fun, mellow time.

Kent Osborne's central position in the network is extremely important; working as a broker in many relationships; especially when regarding Osborne's already solidified position in the industry as a primary developer of Sponge Bob Square Pants. Swanberg collaborated with other members outside of the film industry. His film Caitlin Plays Herself features primarily peripheral members from the art world.

For Joe Swanberg to have such a big weighted density in his ego-network means that he is doing much more than acting. Rather, he must be playing various roles in other people's networks besides directing. He must be in the core and periphery other people's ego networks.

Frank V. Ross, who Swanberg has developed a friendship with, has at this point directed seven feature films; Oh! My Dear Desire, Queitly on By, Hohokam, Present Company, Audrey the Trainwreck, Tiger Tail in Blue, Bloomin Mud Shuffle.

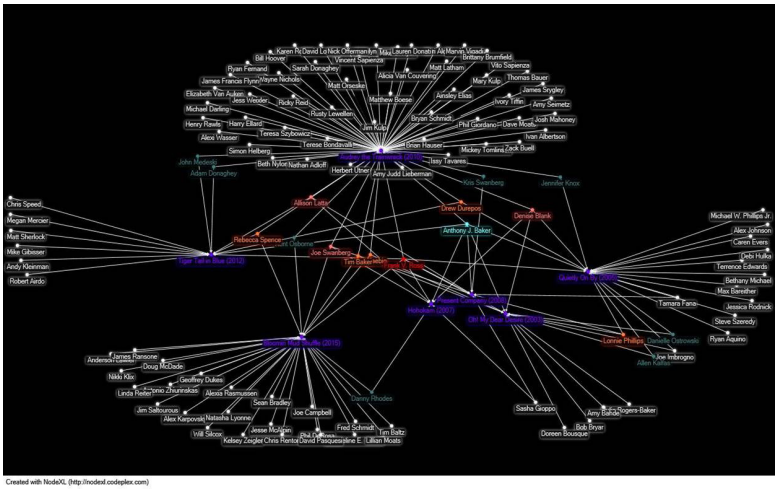

Figure 2. Frank V. Ross Ego Network

Represented above is a two mode, undirected, unweighted ego network of Frank V. Ross's feature films. Members are color coded. Those with only one collaboration are white, two films are green, three films are orange, four films are peach, five films are yellow, and six films are cyan.

Joe Swanberg has appeared in four of Frank V. Ross's films. What is clear about Frank V. Ross's network is that he has various people in the center of the network that are constantly repeated in his films. Interestingly, some of these core members do not repeat in Swanberg's. Anthony J. Baker has appeared in 6 out of 7 of Frank V. Ross's films, playing key and pivotal acting roles in them. He has only acted in one other thing besides this. This idea brings to light that there are those members in people's network that are devoted to only their friend's filmmaking. Denise Blank has appeared in four of Frank V. Ross's films, with no other credits. Along with the devoted friends, Joe

Swanberg provided publicity for Frank V. Ross's film Tiger Tail in Blue when providing his top 10 films of the year list.

Joe Swanberg similarly plays peripheral roles in other people's ego-networks. Zach Clark has made four feature films in his career. Rock and Roll Eulogy, Modern Love is Automatic, Vacation!, and White Reindeer.

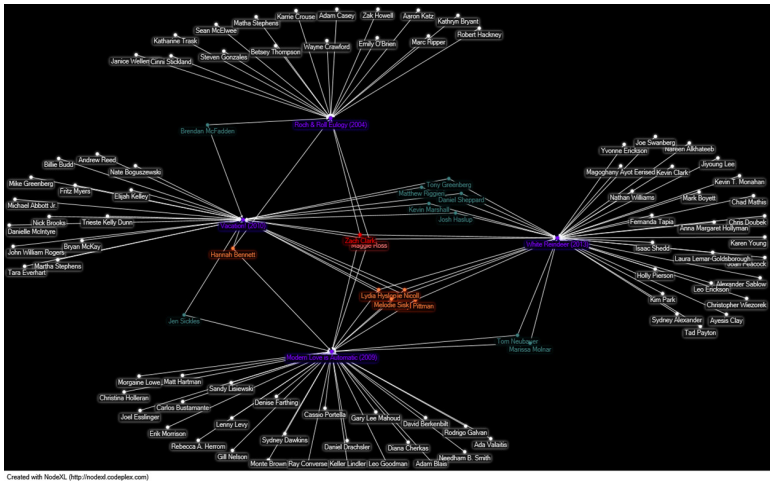

Figure 3. Zach Clark Ego Network

Presented is a two mode, unweighted, undirected network for Zach Clark's feature films. Purple nodes reflect the four films directed. Nodes are color coded. Nodes with only one collaboration are on the peripheral, in white Members with two collaborations are green. Members with three collaborations are orange, and members with four collaborations are Peach. Zack Clark is red. Joe Swanberg only appears in one of the films, acting in White Reindeer. Clark, as with Frank V. Ross, has a core group of members including Maggie Ross, and Hannah Bennet. Maggie Ross has twelve acting credits, with her last five being outside of Zach Clark's work showing that Zack Clark's films worked as a jumping off point for her to enter the industry. Hannah Bennet's only three acting credits are working for Zack Clark, showing that she is devoted to helping and collaborating with Clark.

Joe Swanberg similarly appears in only one of Andrew Balas's films. Andrew Balas is a micro budget director. With his wife he has founded Robel Films. Balas and his wife Deidre Helrey met in college. They were continuously paired together in acting courses because they were both tall. They recently recounted this story in their part documentary Ice Saints: detailing the lead up, and implications of their wedding together.

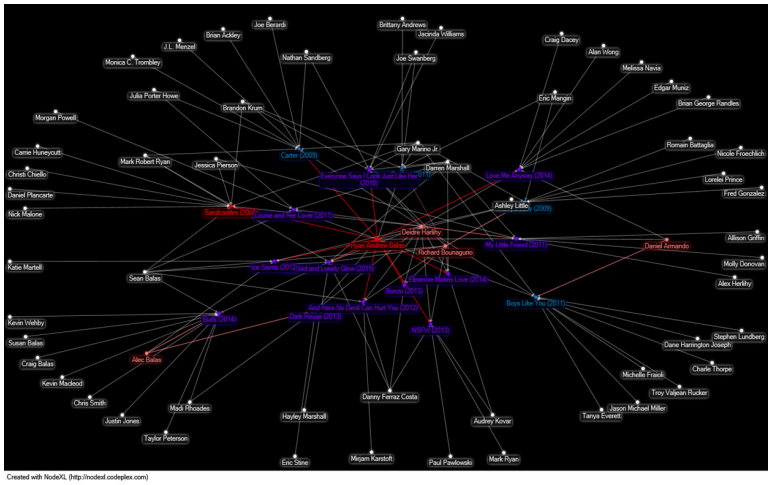

Figure 4. Directed Robel Films Network

Shown above is a two mode, directed network of all of the Robel films. Important to note, is that members in these two early films before the creation of the production company, helped comprise cast and crews for Robel. These other films include Sandcastles (2008), and Carter (2009).

The red lines show who directed the films. Robel Films is not solely the directorial work of Ryan Balas. Rather, his wife Deidre Helrey directed My Little Friend, while Balas acts. Stage Brother is directed by Richard Bounagurio. Joe Swanberg directed a small super 8 segment for the film that followed Bounagurio's sister as she struggles with the decision to become a porn actress. Core members of the group include Balas's family members, who has similarly directed films for the collective while Ryan Balas plays supportive roles.

Truly, at the core of the network, is Balas and Helrey. The continued collaboration with each other, and the focus at the wedding as much about the two keep on making art, as love, is touching. Similarly, is Kris Swanberg's position in Joe Swanberg's ego network. Kris Swanberg continuously plays significant roles in Swanberg's films, and he in hers. Kris Swanberg now has directed two feature films, It was Nice But I'm Ready to Come Home, and the aptly named Empire Builder. Swanberg coproduced the film with his wife. Kris Swanberg used the same music group, the independent Orange Mighty Trio that Swanberg used for his Silver Bullets and All the Light in the Sky. He has created a mutually beneficial relationship with the group; directing a music video for them. For Empire Builder, Joe Swanberg starred in the picture with Kate Lyn Sheil about a new mother who strays away from her distant husband and has an affair. Joe Swanberg and Kris Swanberg's child, Jude Swanberg appears in the film. He was appeared in Joe Swanberg's Marriage Material, and Art History.

Starting with friends and family, by 2011 through connections engendered Swanberg had created a self-sustaining network in linking with similar filmmakers who similarly relied on the good will and mutual support of others to get to this point in their career. At the end of Art History, a movie made in Joe Swanberg's four feature films in 2011, the film cuts back to Joe Swanberg and Kris Swanberg taking care of Jude. The two have a candid discussion about Swanberg's filmmaking; as he continues to seemingly make the same films over and over again. She helps him work through his frustration in the filmmaking process. Swanberg's The Zone similarly twists towards self-reflexivity; saying something about collaboration, and social thought.

Richard Brody poetically details his thoughts on Swanberg's process, appropriately addressing a filmmaking process that is social and naked, rather than narcissistic.

> Filmmakers who make films about their lives are beginning to think about their lives as they're lived off-screen. As Socrates said, those who imitate should beware "lest, from the imitation, they draw off some of the being." Here the line between imitation and being has been effaced, and the actors—or, rather, the people onscreen—are in a zone of total vulnerability and total complicity. The closed space of the cinema cries out for the door to be opened—and a camera is running outside, too (2012, New Yorker).

Discussion/Implications

Where does this leave us? What hope is there, truly, for an autonomous, alternative cinema? There has been potential before, as with the work of New Queer Cinema. Yet this once claimed movement, was declared a "moment" by B. Ruby Rich.

Playing a version of himself in his film Silver Bullets (2011), Swanberg addresses his directorial practice to an actress and offers some sort of solution, or consolation.

> "I would not pick up a camera for the rest of my life, or never make a movie again if I found something else to make me happy, because movies do not make me happy. Making them does not make me happy. Watching them does not make me happy. Mostly I am just really critical and I hate everything. [It] is no Thing that the movies could get. Me. They get me close to people. That's all that is left. You know? Making movies allows me to get close to people that I find interesting. That's probably why I am still doing it."

Friendship maybe is all we have. But, do not take this as a small accomplishment. Anyone who chooses filmmaking as a career is not choosing the easy way out. Quite the opposite. But then enter the idea that anyone who is choosing filmmaking for a career truly feels that filmmaking is a profound art, worth devoting your time to. This can then cause rift's when you differ from friends in how one sees filmmaking. To quote from Godard, on his deteriating relationship with Truffaut in the 1970s,

"When you cease to share ideas about movies, when you cease to love the same films, you fight- and you separate. The friendship dies."

The fact that for a period of time, the New Wave collaboratively even existed has been enough for generations of filmmakers afterward to pick up a camera.

New Queer Cinema director Cheryl Dunye created The Owls in 2010. Within the film, there is a talking head interview of the actress. Candidly, she says -"I'm starting to age, these hands are starting to wrinkle I'm getting grey hairs and I'm really feeling lost, further lost from where I began, in my spiritual journey to sisterhood to empower hood to building community. I'm lost." She had taken a step forward towards this empower hood to building community in the building of this very film. The film returns queer cinema back to its population, through collectivity. The Owls, made for $22,000 is a collective act created by New Queer Cinema's Cheryl Dunye, re-thinking how to make films that matter outside the system. The Owls Parliament states,

> We created our own system, peopled by lesbians, queers and people of color, film professionals all raising themes about aging as well as inter-generational dialogue; loneliness and community; dreams raised and deferred; butch/trans anxiety; cross-racial and inter-racial desire and strain; and the history of lesbian cinema and self-representation.

In our modern world, the populace misinterprets and ultimately ignores Swanberg's work has been misinterpreted as narcissistic. Yet, going into the Cultural Industries is much more courageous than many other trades. This process is so intimate and grueling that Swanberg who is "interested in the million tiny death that occur in everyday human interactions." These micro budget filmmakers need respect, admiration. It needs people who will help; without compensation and figures who will continue to push them and make them work. At Ryan and Deidre's wedding, there was as much of a focus on the couple's continuing artistic practice as their relationship. Recognizing risk, self-sacrifice, and selflessness is important for spectators.

Seen in Swanberg's ego network is meticulous, selfless, and even volatile support built on mutual appreciation. Swanberg and Gerwig's relationship barely survived the filmmaking of Nights and Weekends; a film about a long distance relationship that mirrored reality as the two drifted away towards different sects in the industry during gaps in the long filmmaking.

Understanding this, and understanding the plight of these post-graduate artists towards uncapitalistic means, can open up more room to maneuver in society and the film industry. In her article "From 3d to Mumblecore" (2011), Brigitta Wagner praises the ingenuity and burgeoning maturity of Joe Swanberg's Art History as "both an homage to collaborative filmmaking in the era of HD and Craigslist (where Swanberg finds his sets) and a testament to the broader implications of image making in a culture saturated with instant representations." Localized collaboration on an independent micro-budget level seems to be a continuing trend. Groups and networks that have popped up to serve a specific purpose that can be engendered through community and collaboration. Recognizing that collaboration drives the local the theatre industry, Split Pillow (of Chicago) has been able to reinvigorate the micro-cinema of their city through well-chosen partnerships. Michigan Creative Film Alliance was created as a union between Michigan State University, University of Michigan and Wayne State for the public to understand the importance of collaboration as a tool to combat the "brain drain" of talented young filmmakers to the east and west coasts (Wunder, 2011). Kodwo Eshun sees that "the return to the artistic practice of the Black Audio Film Collective entails the return of criticality and its discontents. One is confronted with a scale, a sensibility, a temporality, and an ambition that remains singular, even as its influence is discernible throughout postmodern culture" (2004, p.39).

Writing in his blog article "A Call for Collaboration," micro-budget filmmaker Robert Curry writes that a collaborative mode of filmmaking is already becoming popular in Philadelphia.

> But a communication between collectives in different regions would better the chances of exhibition and production, and a web of such collectives would without a doubt ensure some form of national exposure. It's time to take the cinema back to the artists in this country. But a communication between collectives in different regions would better the chances of exhibition and production, and a web of such collectives would without a doubt ensure some form of national exposure. It's time to take the cinema back to the artists in this country (2014, para. 4).

There is hope for more autonomous film. Digital technology has something to do with it, so does the drive of individuals. But most importantly, it is the work of a community. Helping others succeed and connect, taking Craigslist casting calls for no money, and helping assist those who need a helping hand. The reason one can't find any good movies browsing on Netflix, is because they aren't out currently helping those willing to make alternative film because to make a film you need more people. "Over the past few decades in the West, we have entered a

period of hyper individualism, which has its pros and cons. But the power of billions of connected individuals, now flexing more power than markets, governments, and corporations, using new ideas our economic model cannot yet comprehend should be welcomed" (Mason, 2011, p. 240).

When filming Fitzcaraldo, Herzog eventually had the chance to look up at the gigantic ship he had only before in his dreams seen at the top of a mountain. At the end of a tumultuous shoot that took years longer than planned, he ponders; that it is a beautiful metaphor he just doesn't know what the metaphor is. The ship could in fact be relevant his sustained relationship with Klaus Kinski, who through five movies, fights, death threats, the two stayed together longer than one would believe possible until they would eventually split. Herzog recounts in his documentary My Best Friend that he did not wish to direct the brilliant, but notoriously difficult actor's, script. Directing the movie was said to destroy Kinski.

The key about autonomous cinema in our future, is that hopefully when searching for it, you won't be alone. And that, is enough.

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The Dissipation of American Democracy in 2016: On the Emptiness of Elitism and the Poverty of Populism in the Trump Zone

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In the contemporary capitalist global economy, as many of the authors in this issue of Fast Capitalism assert, markets have been remade by neoliberal leaders and organizations to favor greater global finance, manufacturing, and trade over preserving the prosperity of entire national economies. Under the blows of the austerity that such policies bring, democratic political hopes and cultural traditions are suffering new crises and shocks. From the Brexit vote in Great Britain, a hard-line party crackdown in China, and low intensity warfare with Russia in Ukraine to a failed coup in Turkey, a severe presidential crisis in Brazil, and the on-going fragmentation Syria in its brutal civil war, the struggles between ruling elites and restive mass publics are becoming more bitter and severe. In this respect, the United States plainly is no longer an exceptional country.

Indeed, as the 2016 presidential primaries for the Democratic and Republican parties in the United States of America have unfolded both at home and around the world, the crass culture of "reality TV" with its heated celebrations of extraordinary individual wealth, cruel competitive gamesmanship, and vicious spectacles of personal debasement simply to gain a bigger audience and dominate daily discussion incredibly has colonized the presidential elections in the USA. The centerpiece of this development is the bizarrely successful bid by Donald J. Trump to win the Republican Party nomination, which he captured during July 2016 despite widespread dissatisfaction in the party with this outcome. Trump's unique rhetorical mix of individual put-downs, suspiciously sweeping negative generalizations, anti-establishment insults, and xenophobic calls to greatness quickly have, in turn, become his campaign's most distinctive feature. While his bombast has started to stall going into the general campaign in August 2016, if only because of Trump's resolve to run as a Washington outsider and champion of "America First" policies, his over-the-line approach to electioneering continues to excite many alienated voters. Many political pundits are arguing that Trump also is driving away most moderate voters, and he is flagging in almost all of the swing states. Nonetheless, it is still over two weeks before Labor Day, and many electoral campaigns find new focus and energy as Election Day draws near.

Even so, one must return the decades before World War II to find equally extreme politicking in a major political party's campaign messaging and policy positioning. By praising Vladimir Putin's strong leadership, harping on President Obama's African heritage, ridiculing disabled reporters for their special needs, insulting female newscasters with sexist comments, doubting the geopolitical purposes of NATO, suggesting nuclear weapons would be used in the Middle East to defeat fundamentalist Islamic terrorists, hinting gun owners in defense of the Second Amendment "might do something" about Hilary Clinton to prevent her packing the Supreme Court with anti-gun justices, and claiming President Obama founded ISIS (the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria), Trump has pressed harder on his strangely twisted appeal to the darkest fears of the GOP party faithful by taking his gloomy vision into the national campaign. He unfortunately won too many primary elections by appearing seriously to regard myths as facts, facts

as fictions, and previous administrations' policies (both Democratic and Republican) as evil government conspiracies aimed at destroying the good life for average ordinary Americans.

Coming on the heels of the Tea Party insurgency in 2010, many pundits and politicians are conceding that the USA is trapped within a new space of "post-factual politics," which is also at work in Russia's hybrid war over the Eastern Ukraine, the Brexit vote in Great Britain, and China's active annexation of rocky shoals in the South China Sea as parts of its homeland. While post-factual politics is sparking pushback among the general electorate, Trump is keeping these polemical excesses alive and kicking, convinced they are effective and will lead to victory as he exults in a style that some see, like the 1930s and 1940s, as linked ideologically to "the end of truth" (Cohen, 2016).

A complete new-comer to electoral politics, Trump's eagerness to assail anyone with insulting put-downs, tout preposterous political claims as obvious truths, and trash-talk high-profile Democratic and Republican politicians for their alleged policy failures over the past generation undoubtedly comes from his shrewd assessment that this rhetorical spectacle is the royal road to free media. Making outlandish claims, and then sustaining efforts to deny, explain or account for them is a Trump tactic to dominate talk shows, nightly news broadcasts, and the writings of most election observers. Any pretense of Trump acting as a decent and fair GOP candidate in civic dedication to the public is now lost in the never-ending effort to answer the question, "Did he really say that, and mean it?"

As Trump rode this wave of free media coverage, he also openly has threatened successful Wall Street bankers, corporate supporters of NAFTA and other free trade pacts, all Mexican immigrants to USA, and professional women in the workplace, to illustrate how he would make American great again. These positions are transforming him into the most favored candidate of many regions of the country, especially those feeling left behind since 1991. Here, Trump is running to remain the tribune of all the many downwardly mobile, white, working class men and women intent upon punishing all "Establishment" politicians who supposedly have let American become weak, poor, and insignificant in the world since the Reagan era.

Loved by many, but loathed by many more, Trump has sparked truly intense public reactions at home and abroad. Two Belgian creative freelancers, for example, have constructed a website that enables users anywhere to create continuous digital message streams with a radius of 350 meters to render "that territory your personal 'No Trump Zone'" <notrumpzone.org/an-open-letter-to-the-world/>. Yet, Trump relentlessly rolls ahead, placing first in the highly divided GOP primaries. With 16 candidates that split the same vote of the party's base between many bad alternatives, the most intense and extreme option, as models of collective choice cycles would suggest, prevailed. Trump himself proved to the most impassioned outsider among the host of more conventional GOP alternatives. He leveraged victory after victory with his no-holds barred reality TV persona, ever adept at constant prevarication, hyperbole, and calumny. While the good intentions these "two Belgian creatives" are still marking multiple spots around the world with 350 square meters of resistance in digital domains, it is too late for the United States of America. The nation already has raced past these electronic warning signs, and entered "the Trump Zone."

Returning to the ironic observations of Rod Serling over 50 years ago, the United States of America appears again to be traveling through this other dimension, "not only of sight and sound but of mind. A journey into a wondrous land of imagination" ("The Twilight Zone," 1960), which loosely defines the expanses of the Trump Zone. Occupying that "middle ground between light and shadow, between science and imagination," Trump's Zone is devoted to "making America great again" by continuously whipping the dark resentment and bitter rage of millions of voters. Their painful losses can be both real and imagined, but Trump's cruel imagery of the America's current condition directly "lies between the pit of man's fear's and the summit of his knowledge" ("The Twilight Zone," 1959) for these blocs of the electorate.

The ethical revulsion and political crisis exposed in tolerating this campaign for the presidency in 2016 even has moved long-time inveterate Republicans who are tolerating repudiating his claims and leaving the GOP to register as "Independent" voters. Of course, the USA has survived through comparable political turmoil during the 1790s, 1820s, 1850s, and 1890s. And, encounters with democracy, lived as a malevolent mash-up of personal threats, complete fabrications, and impossible promises, have sparked many debates in Western political thought for centuries about what is also at stake today about the nature of good governance, the struggles among ruling elites for dominance, levels of trust in normal partisan debate, the purposes of political parties, and who should be entrusted to preserve a republican constitution with a country with still evolving democratic practices.

During a time in which "the one percent" of rich powerful elites are sharply resented by the much poorer "99 percent" that constitutes the voting public, two New York-based upper-crust party nominees -- Donald J. Trump and Hillary Rodham Clinton -- are brawling daily over the presidency by confessing intensely how they feel the pain

of the 99 percent. Even though they are both the most unpopular partisan candidates to run for the White House since election pollsters began asking the voting public about each candidate's overall favorable ranking, and both of them are the focus of on-going legal suits, legislative hearings, and media investigations, the vote on November 8, 2016 will be between a billionaire businessman of dubious capabilities and a millionaire career politico associated with decades of scandal.

One can return, of course, to the ancients for insights into how to govern, but it is more useful only to turn to the nineteenth century to consider how volatile, rare, and advantageous a functioning democracy is. Henry Sumner Maine, for example, in his Popular Government: Four Essays notes a key characteristic about democratic politics that remains all too true today, namely, "of all forms of government, democracy is the most difficult" (1885: 15). A pioneer in comparative jurisprudence, the sociology of law, and organizational theory, Maine was a Victorian educator from Scotland, educated in England, who served in India, and died in France during the hey-day of the British Empire. He astutely regarded what many other voices repeated as dogmatic precepts about modern life and popular government as essentially "unsettled questions," because the centers of royal power, entrenched aristocracy, parliamentary monarchy, military dictatorship, and industrial plutocracy in his time worried openly about whether "popular government" would overturn their rule. If they did, then could popular government succeed?

Predictable elitist political responses during the recent history of the West have undercut the populace by dismissing popular initiatives to share power, because "the people" cannot handle, manage or understand them. More strategic statesmen occasionally did cherry-pick the most popular causes desired by the people to stall popular governance, like accepting a limited political franchise for certain groups of adult males or implementing social insurance schemes for the elderly, permanently disabled or incurably ill, but such civic-minded moves have been few and far between. Otherwise, savvy Old Regime politicos stuck with ideological positions and institutional practices aimed at dissipating the popular forces struggling for "democracy" by reducing them either to political irrelevance or setting them up for criminal incarceration.

Democracy is difficult, and then so too can it be dangerous. But when it works, the widespread benefits for the many far outweigh the narrow rackets of the few. Strangely today, two openly elitist politicians are striving to appear to the American electorate as ordinary, common, and humble as the typical voter, while proposing policies that will preserve longstanding elite privileges by wrapping them up in "making America great again" or affirming "the breaking the glass ceiling for women in politics." Regardless, voting for either one of these two candidates cannot attain either grandiose aspiration except in that "middle ground between light and shadow" that remains "the wondrous land of the imagination."

In the history of the United States of America, Maine's observations come into sharper focus when their full implications become manifest in remarkable elections, such as the ones of 1912 and 2016 (Gould, 2008). Like the current contest, when Bernie Sanders of Vermont declared in the Democratic primaries that Washington must turn to "socialism" for solutions, another Socialist outsider, Eugene V. Debs, made a major play for the White House in 1912. The Republican Party was racked by deep schisms over style, personality, and vision after Theodore Roosevelt declined to campaign for a second elected term (his first came in 1901 as the result of William McKinley's assassination a few months after his reelection), leaving the GOP to nominate William Howard Taft. And, the Democratic Party was tangled up in many traditional tensions between conservative and progressive agendas, sectional frictions, and racial contradictions as Jim Crow America made a joke of most party platform points. It also took the Democrats fourteen ballots to nominate an aloof intellectual elitist, who was a Virginian by birth. This made Woodrow Wilson the first Southerner to have a serious chance at the White House since 1848, but he also was the sitting governor of New Jersey after his successful academic career at Princeton University.

During the 1890s and 1900s, anti-establishment movements in various Populist parties and Progressive associations also arose to challenge the new industrial order growing out of the Second Industrial Revolution (Noble, 1977; and, Chace, 2006) in a manner not unlike the Tea Party or Occupy movement over the past decade. Populist-leaning or Progressive-minded elites had come to hold sway in many cities, counties, and towns, but a truly national regime with aspirations for constructing an industrial democracy, turning to a decisionist presidentialism, and embracing a New Nationalist political culture emerged in difficult fits-and-starts only during the showdown between Woodrow Wilson and Theodore Roosevelt in 1912. An avowed Progressive, Roosevelt quickly revolted against the Republican Party establishment to stand, like "a bull moose," as the candidate of the shaky Progressive Party (Egerton, 2013).

After the realigning election of 1896 (Williams, 2010), the extraordinary electoral race of 1912 arguably left

the USA very different as the victors started work upon the deep foundations of a much more highly centralized national technocratic order that still is unfolding today. 1912 also featured a stern Socialist agitator seeking "political revolution," a charismatic national hero outcast from his own party, an Establishment GOP nominee intent upon protecting elite interests, and a Democratic nominee, who also was "a first," namely, the first and only presidential candidate with a PhD win the office. With Wilson's victory, and the rise of more Progressive forces in both national parties, this electoral battle also left trenches on the political terrain, which still frame many difficulties of American democracy in twenty-first century. Genuinely popular government has been abandoned to the mercy of professional-technical oligarchies in almost all policy domains since 1912 by experts adept at displacing and dissipating deeper democratic practices in the dead-ends of arcane policy discourse and aggravatingly incremental decision-making (Gould, 2008).

The putative worldwide drift toward democracy -- despite the sagas of liberal triumphalism sung worldwide after 1991 -- is neither inevitable nor easy. Rising tides of economic anxiety, sectarian controversy, ethnonationalist fear, and geopolitical conflict in the twenty-first century have pushed many nations toward new mediagenic forms of authoritarianism taking hold in China or Russia. Indeed, the reversal of those post-Cold War currents of liberalization and democratization in the former Soviet Union, Eastern Europe, Southeast Asia or the now lost Arab Spring is ominous. Nonetheless, no change is permanent, and definite turns toward democracy frequently flow from either exhaustion or frustration with other such forms of government. To accept democracy, however, political elites and mass publics must acknowledge the most discomforting reality about democratic governance; namely, the greatest impediment to attaining and maintaining democracy is intrinsic to democracy itself. Despite the warm feelings that self-rule gives so many people in their tummies, all democracies still are states.

As a result, a state apparatus brings the heavy hand of coercion with all of its violent indifference into everyone's life. Yet, such hard facts are not what everyone who shows up to democratic rallies, meetings, and elections, wants to encounter, even though each democratic election usually constitutes intense conflicts short of war in hard struggles to command its capacities. Democracy also purports to serve effectively and justly the interests of all people. Ironically, all states make the same claims. Autocracy and aristocracy, oligarchy and ochloarchy, monarchy and mobocracy also embrace these noble aspirations. Still, a century ago, would-be democrats did push for something less cynical, realizing in the emergent modern industrial economies and societies of the North Atlantic "that power should proceed from below rather from above, and that it is not safe to vest large powers in any branch of government or any group of persons" (Miller, 1915: 213).

It is with this same spirit that most reforms implemented in the name of popular rule since the 1920s, 1960s or 1990s in the United States of America have unfolded, even though all reforms create new winners and losers, gains and losses, identities and differences. While not trusting any branch of government or group of persons, the democratic turn in the USA has never broken large monied interests behind the workings of modern industrial regimes. On the one hand, the best corrective for serious deficiencies in democracy allegedly is greater democracy: more universal suffrage, more direct elections, more intense deliberation, more participation opportunities, more minority rights, etc. Yet, on the other hand, these beliefs do not hold up well in practice, as new electors, more deliberations, added participants, and additional rights holders soon have their agendas co-opted by the oligarchies of authority and interest that democrats in principle oppose. Addressing the difficulties of democracy with still greater democratization, at the same time, only sparks new difficulties for democracy as a system of people's power, because "the people" empowered behind the veil of these good constitutional intentions are never a constant in the equations of power. Indeed, "the People" are unavoidably conflicted, discontinuous, mutable, and variegated, because they are always shifting blocs of peoples, and then so too are the democratic difficulties that ensue.

Although power comes, or appears to come from below, the reluctance by "the demos" to vest power in some definite branch of government or group of persons of "the demos" of democracies also is constrained. With democracy displaced or dissipated, the Progressivist turn in 1912 toward expertise gave trained professional elites the open doors to power, leaving in their wake evermore-impoverished traces of fictive popular rule. Displacing the voice of the people in the noise of constant polling, dissipating true civil devotion into many ritualized civic irrelevancies, and deliberating free individuals with burdensome procedural requirements to allow them participation in electoral politics ends up diluting popular rule.

Similarly, Wilson's pledge in 1914 to keep America "neutral" in the Great War, only to declare war on the Central Powers in the year of his second inauguration three years later led to decades of exceptional presidential authority, which has disfigured American democracy as its popular government has been instrumentalized to serve different

military goals and geopolitical purposes (Chace, 2005). After 1912, special favor was granted by the formal education, social prestige or hard work demonstrated by professional-technical experts of modern industrial economies. And, whether it means hammering together legislative details, partisan deals, or commercial development, these social forces have produced an technocratic polyarchy structured in a manner that would not be disfavored by republican elitists, like Madison, Jay or Hamilton in The Federalist Papers.

Examining hard questions of democracy and its difficulties against the long horizon of modern governmentality is one facet of Foucault's "critical ontology" of ourselves, which seeks to express "the critique of what we are" as well as "the historical analysis of the limits imposed on us and an experiment with the possibility of going beyond them" (1984:50). Because Foucault (1984: 39) approaches modernity as an "attitude" or an "ethos," it makes sense to explore the conditions of democratization not on the easy terms of liberal democratic theory (Rawls, 1976 and Habermas, 1998). One must take to mapping the difficulty of democracy as a surrender to such technocratic expertise, and the ethos, attitudes, and milieux that integrally are wound up within apparatuses and practices needed for "relating to contemporary reality; a voluntary choice made by certain people; in the end, a way of thinking and feeling; a way, too, of acting and behaving that at one and the same time marks a relation of belonging and presents itself as a task" (1984: 39) in modern democratic governments.

As this analysis suggests, the shift in the United States of America in which these choices were consciously made as a way of belonging, as ways of thinking and feeling, and as the task of producing contemporary reality begins with the remarkable Progressive movement of the 1890s and 1900s. The Republic did move in 1912 toward seeing "promise of American life" (Croly, 1909) in an industrial democracy with a New Nationalism -- lived out as the continuous choices of mass consumption in "lands of desire" (Leach, 1992) at the command of "captains of consciousness" (Ewen, 1976) under the controls of an "America by design" (Noble, 1977) while permanently preparing to mobilize endlessly for war in a world that "must be made safe for democracy" (Wilson, 1917).

To explore how this kind of democracy intertwines its possibilities and prohibitions with theoretical as well as technified governmentality, it must recognize how fully democracy as government of/by/for the people entails a new subjectivity created from/to/through government. The observations in Maine's Popular Government: Four Essays about the embedded difficulties with the democratic impulse requires one to look implicitly at how the "governmentalization of the popular" sculpts, stabilizes and then settles for the economistic consumer subjectivity that now constitutes liberal capitalist democracy. Trump pledges to bring a "business mentality" into policy and sack all of the experts. But this claim is a ruse; he only would seek out other experts in different firms, universities, and think tanks, not unlike Nixon in 1968. It is the satisfaction or dissatisfaction of the consuming public, and those who produce what they consume, that animates the populace and its government. And, no one knows this reality better than the relatively successful owner of glitzy casino resorts.

Moreover, the empowerment of new cadres of administrators, engineers, managers, scientists, and technicians with formal education in what, for example, the USA tagged as "agricultural, mechanical, and other useful arts" (in the Morill Act of 1862 to federally endow new universities to foster such training on the eve of the Second Industrial Revolution) becomes actualized in America's modern industrial formations, commercial culture, and national bureaucracies. Within its matrices of mechanized order, one discovers the life, liberty, and happiness that are the material substrate for sustaining everyday practices for an "industrial democracy" of growing personal consumption and guided free enterprise, which now constitute the sine qua non of liberty, equality, and fraternity (Rose, 1999).

Against this apparent reliance on expertise, The Trump Zone is deeply disturbing. Indeed, it is extraordinary in its use of debasing tabloid style discourse to assail expertise in governance with an angry animus against "the insiders" flowing from "the outsiders" in American democracy. In many ways, Trump is the first presidential candidate grounded in "infoglut" (Andrejevic, 2013), as his vanguard position in the "birther movement" reveals. As he discovered in 2011 during the Internet tizzy over President Obama's "missing" and/or "suppressed" Hawai'ian birth certificate, which Trump asserted would reveal the President to be a Muslim and Kenyan born "non-citizen" (Wickham, 2011: A9), the abundance of information and access to it on mobile wireless devices can lead anyone to believe he or she is "an expert." In the birther networks, the seduction of conspiracy theories, the "bad optics" of numerous uploaded videos, blogs, and news clips, and Trump's claims that own private teams of investigators "could not believe what they were finding" congealed into a "truthiness" that survives today as The Trump Zone's benchmarks of accuracy and reliability. Since many ordinary people can get tremendous access to fast and deep streams of "information" 24x7, even major news networks pretend that everyman and everywoman is not unlike a professional expert ready with "the facts" to make their own shrewd analysis of anything anytime and anyone with

some validity and credibility. As Andrejevic notes, however, such travels through Trump Zones of discourse are covered with volatile compounds of market-driven opinion mining, sentiment analysis, and visceral literacy in which the infoglut transmogrifies critiques into imaginative conspiracies that gain traction in daily political dialogues (2013: 111).

No matter how much the ultimate insider Trump actually is, this glut of digital information enables him to push back against other elite experts and insiders that he constantly labels as "losers." While those same established losers look upon the success of his vulgarian style of campaigning in disbelief, Trump's messy modes of marketing "infoglut" truths are upending the pragmatics of American popular politics. By the same token, comparable forces came together during 1912. The newly instituted state-based system of political party primaries, personalized newspaper appeals by "important personalities" for party nominees, and daily silent movie newsreels of the candidates' campaigning as well as the more established use audio recordings by the candidates themselves created another new media ecology that Debs and Roosevelt used to furiously stir the boiling angst of that time, while Taft and Wilson worked with less effectiveness in 1912's informational context. Once again, our current political moment in the United States of America is one that was foreshadowed, in large part, by the electoral contest of 1912.

A new kind of expert and wealthy oligarchy rooted in nationalism, power, knowledge, and wealth, and yet obscured by a veil of ignorance celebrated by liberal apologists, was forged in 1912. It grew bolder and strengthened in 1916 until it gradually developed its own habitus of privileged empowerment in the crises of 1932-1947. Because of World I, the Great Depression, World War II, the Cold War, the rise of fundamentalist Islamic terrorism, and the Great Recession, elements of this social formation -- despite changes in its regional bases, social composition, political agendas, managerial style, and ideological goals -- linger institutionally today, mitigating the progressives' ideological decline as different streams in their movements have steered many of the most decisive policy interventions in the USA for over 100 years.

Some believe rule by "the best and the brightest" crashed in the aftermath of Vietnam. In actuality, one bloc of what now is regarded as the tribunes of "smart power" simply mobilized another winning coalition of putatively even "better and brighter" professional-technical experts to manage democracy's difficulties. Looking at these trends, anyone can see the progressivist/anti-progressive struggles of the USA as a "plutonomy" (Luke, 2011) are not over, whether Trump wins or loses.

Ultimately, generations of progressives gradually have created a uniquely robust habitus (Bourdieu, 1990: 52-65; and, Bourdieu, 2000: 138-145) for the position, power, and privilege of progressivism in wings of both major political parties. This habitus underpins a concrete ordering of America's economy and society, which pivots upon, as George Will observes, "government's vastly more ambitious plan to manage" (2013b). Whether it is "the mass media and democracy" (Luke, 1999), "carbon democracy" (Mitchell, 2013) or "war and democracy" (Hardt and Negri, 2005), the multitudes seeking popular governance will accede to an "expertocracy" grounded in technocratic command, control, and communication and/or corporate wheeling-and-dealing, financial leverage, and crass self-promotion. This social formation works, because its authority molds the democratic subjectivity of the multitudes needed to legitimate permanent managerialism for democracy as everyday governmentality.

As a cohesive social order, this regime has been "progressively inscribed in people's minds" by means of a series of "cultural products" of habitus that produce, and reproduce, their effects via the acculturating force of habitation, ranging from language, values, or taxonomies of cultural classification to the education, religion, or structures of everyday life (Bourdieu, 1984: 471). Such orders of distinction, taste or habit unconsciously do facilitate the acceptance of Progressivist-inspired social boundaries, cultural differences, and political hierarchies, and the Trump Zone is becoming a major new wrinkle in such domains of decision by promising to revitalize America's alleged lost greatness. If elected, neither Clinton nor Trump will forsake expertocratic governance syles, but both of them are running hard against the notoriously self-interested corrupt insiders that supposedly have ruined America since the end of the Cold War.

To understand the Progressive habitus in action, one must understand why "the difficulty of democracy" is how to maintain an intrinsic set of institutional constraints on political practice tied to the form of rule itself. It must be able to morph into an order for enduring many varied alternating rulers, who will leverage this habitus of progressivism as a system for ruling over "the People" rather than unequivocal rule by "the People." In this regard, the vision of Isaiah Berlin (1958) of freedom versus Michel Foucault on governance (1978) typify how "the governmentalization of the popular" rather than strictly "popular government" tacitly has led since 1912 to a guided metrocratic oligarchical republicanism -- under both the Democrats and the Republicans – after the Progressivist

turn.

Despite the populist turn ignited by Sanders in the Democratic Party to revisit the merits of socialism, and "America First" xenophobia resurrected by Trump from the darkest corners of the GOP in the 1930s, both of these candidates still would tap into the Progressivist ideological habitus at the core of American governance. Even as Trump heckles and hectors Clinton as "Crooked Hilary," and she coyly frames him as "Demented Donald," cohorts of professional-technical experts are hard at work behind both of them. The ultimate riddle, "not only of sight and sound but of mind" in the Trump Zone, is how will one of these two individuals become America's next chief executive, and then lead America's mystifying quasi-democratic/quasi-technocratic republican order, as it has evolved since 1912, far beyond its brittle operational tolerances to cope with the myriad challenges of the twenty-first century in January 2017.

— August 15, 2016

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