

After Tolerance

Post-Cartesian Community, Post-Kantian Cosmopolitanism

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Paper prepared for The Internet as Labor and Playground, A Conference on Digital Labor, Eugene Lang College, The New School, New York, Nov 12-14 2009

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ABSTRACT

Where the gift of labour has been commercialised, as it has in social networking, the surveillant functions of the database economy serve not only to target but to average. Here the virtual nature of the crowd, its power to act, is removed by a process of forecasting how much deviance is tolerable in a population. The challenge then is to challenge the auto-archiving of network activity with its extension. What is essential is not the actual, nor identity, but precisely non-identity: the non-identical nature of the world to which Western thought perpetually ascribes identity. The challenge is to drive the logic of individualism to its far side; to turn the compulsory choice of consumerism into actual freedom.

1. on political economy

The question before us is a question of political economy. Michel Foucault's (2007) late lectures on liberalism and neo-liberalism make the case that the 'free' market in fact depends entirely on a regulatory regime of property, contracts, money, law. In our case, the question concerns the forms of internet governance that enable the internet economy. In his effort to dethrone economics from the dominant position it holds in Marxism, Foucault wants to demonstrate the pre-eminence of the political: of power, of course, but also of its institutionalisation in the State.

The State stands at the heart of anti- or post-marxist political economy, and for obvious reasons at the heart of political philosophy. A state, we can say, is a territory with a government. The issue of territory is fraught nowadays: globalisation has both extended and diminished the territorial nature of government. Nowhere is this more apparent than in the case of the internet. On the other hand, despite appearances to the contrary, the internet is governed, as at least some facets of globalisation are governed. Miraculously, from the tangled competition and collaboration of a dozen or twenty major and hundreds of minor bodies, the internet functions. This is a political achievement as much as a technical one. From the state-centric positions of the BRICK countries to the Habermasian public

sphere of the Internet Engineering Task Force (IETF) – "We don't believe in presidents, kings or voting; we believe in rough consensus and running code" – bodies in the UN system, non-profit corporations, trade bodies and many others with disparate constituencies and constitutions collide and assemble the regulatory underpinnings of pricing, technical standards and legal structures. Governance rather than government then, and one which in its chaotic clash of models suggests the primaevial genetic soup, from which we sense evolving a different order.

So it is a good idea to start with the question, what is politics? What is the political? The classical political philosophers – Aristotle, Hobbes, Rousseau – suggest that politics is a natural state for the political animal. Rancière (1999), in contrast, suggests that it is not natural at all. The state of nature might favour such natural attributes as strength, gender and age as criteria, but politics began when these 'natural' hierarchies were challenged by those who had been left out of the account. Politics is, he argues, the struggle over inclusion in the arena of the political. In ancient times the artisans, in modern times the landless, and then women, were governed without the possibility of joining the governing. Today the exclusion stands over immigrants and refugees, governed by coercive actions in which, however, they have no say (Abizadeh 2008). In the wake of World War Two, and during the formative years of the United Nations Universal declaration, Hannah Arendt first made the point that there is an unbridgeable gap in the terminology of rights, especially in the founding document of rights-based politics, the *Déclaration des droits de l'homme et du citoyen*. As Rancière has it,

either the rights of man are the rights of the citizen, that is to say the rights of those who have rights, which is a tautology; or the rights of the citizen are the rights of man. But as bare humanity has no rights, then they are the rights of those who have no rights, which is an absurdity (Rancière 2006: 61)

More concretely: the poor may have the right to own property, but they don't have any property to own (a distinction between having a right and possessing it). Rancière disagrees, however, with the analysis that says that democracy is therefore unattainable. Instead, he sees it as the grounds of politics. Taking the example of Rosa Parks, he says

This is what the democratic process implies: the action of subjects who, by working the interval between identities, reconfigure the distributions of the public and the private, the universal and the particular. Democracy can never be identified with the simple domination of the universal (Rancière 2006: 61-2)

Politics is a question of subjects and objects: the subjects of politics, who govern, and the objects, who are governed. When an object of politics demands to be a subject, democracy arises in that demand and how it is met. The putatively universal subject of democracy is never universal to the extent that government means government *of*: of people, tendencies, objects. The gap between "human" and "citizen" – between those who have rights and those who do not – is a gap productive of very particular identities, identities which have cause to demand changes in practice, changes that recognise their particularity. This demand, and the revolt that accompanies it, like sitting in the wrong part of the bus in Montgomery, Alabama on a December day in 1955, challenge whatever status quo there is (and for Rancière it is always oligarchic, always the rule of wealth) to act, and to act politically, so stirring out of inaction. Acting is political : inaction is apolitical. That would indeed be the triumph of the universal, but that is not *our* case. The ceaseless privatisation of the public – public services, public space, public good – of a restless capitalism (the engine of oligarchy today) also attests to the failure to achieve the domination of the universal promised in the goal of the rule of each by all.

But this chaos is never without its negentropic counter, born of the work of order on the flux of cosmic mediation. From this turbulent clash of forces arise structures which, if not permanent, are very long-lived, structures like property rights. Property is not belonging: my wedding ring belongs to me because it is inalienable. My socks are merely property, because they can be alienated, because they have some (very) residual resale value. Under current conditions, what's more, my socks are pretty much interchangeable with any other socks. This is a quality of commodities which arises both from the nature of serial production in manufacture and from the establishment of regulatory frameworks through which exchange can take place on a reliable and comparable basis. Labour theorist Hernando de Soto argues that the accumulation of wealth is not the engine of capitalism. Instead, it is the infrastructure of property rights, contracts, deeds, titles and, crucially for our discussions, intellectual property regimes which, together, drive the system of capital. What is more, the specificity of this infrastructure is that it excludes forms of wealth – of labour and property which cannot be monetised. Thus the wealth of the poor world is excluded: the labour of women and children, domestic labour, subsistence farming; and indigenous and common ownership systems. The difference between monetisable and what de Soto calls 'dead capital' is that the capital that can be monetised is alienable: transferrable, mobile, liquid, and so also transformable. de Soto argues that were we to count in this 'dead labour', the world's poor would actually own the majority of the world's

wealth, a thesis which will invoke the theses of Hardt and Negri's *Empire* and *Multitude* (2000, 2004).

de Soto proposes a market solution to effect this goal. For many reasons that cannot detain us here (but see Clastres 1987 and Barclay 2005), this is not only an unlikely but an undesirable result. One such reason however is the same one that drives the privatisation of the public good: that the tendency of the rate of profit to fall constantly drives capital into the marketisation of new areas of life, each of which inevitably succumbs to the same tendency, with the results we witness today in the problem of the global ecology. The second should take us back to Rancière's conception of democracy, which perhaps offers a way to stand the falling rate of profit motif on its head. Viewed systemically, irruptions of new relations between people and things, other than property rights, characterise the internet. They may be viewed as analogous to the irruption of excluded peoples into the polity that defines their exclusion, and which renders that polity political. The question is whether capital in its post-Fordist, neo-liberal, global phase is now sufficiently mobile, fluid and transformative to accommodate such irruptions, and translate them into monetisable currents: into currency.

A typical answer from critical theory would be, yes, that is the case, as we have seen with the monetisation of the web in the period since the dot.com crash of 2001. Until the dot.com crash of 2001, the web was one of the longest-lived Temporary Autonomous Zones our generation ever knew. Capital failed to understand. Not until the years after 2001 did it begin to build business models based in the Web rather than imported from magazine publishing and the broadcast industry.

Marx had established the principles in the famous Fragment on Machines in *Grundrisse* (1973: 690 ff): the social intellect / general intellect is manifest in two processes. In one, the skill developed over generations in making things is ossified into machinery and turned to purposes of exploitation. In the second, the ways workers organise themselves in factories so they can get longer breaks or leave earlier are systematised by Capital. But as Virno argues in *Grammar of the Multitude* (2004), this innovative power to make new systems is no longer a side benefit of employing workers: it is written into our contracts.

Now of course with Web 2.0, capital has finally managed to catch up and turn that innovatory impetus into a profit-making enterprise, despite damn near blowing itself up in the inflationary vapourware crisis of the early 2000s. For now, the critical theorist

concludes, we have to admit the battle for the internet is over, and capital won. The question is how do we operate now: Tactically? Strategically? And how do we minimise or at least delay the assimilation of whatever we invent into the reproduction of capital?

What is left of the revolutionary Web is marked by nostalgia, as people suggested during a 2008 debate on nettime (*Political Work in the Aftermath of the New Media Arts Crisis*, <http://www.nettime.org/Lists-Archives/nettime-l-0905/threads.html>). But that is no reason to give up fighting for a piece of it; or to build alternatives inside the belly of the whale. Nor is it a reason not to pursue alternatives to the monetised Web, in particular free/libre open source software (FLOSS) and peer-to-peer (P2P). The mysterious, fluid, granular "we" can no more afford to give up the struggle for the Web than we can afford to give up struggling to find new alternatives to it.

There are huge risks involved: the slow but certain approach of IPv6 might flag the splitting of the Web into two, and if two why not many more. Since version 6 is not backward compatible, and since many countries, indeed whole regions will find it difficult to upgrade their infrastructure to accommodate the new address space, the possibility of a rich-poor divide is very real. So too is the embedding of digital rights management into the root code of the protocol, which would drive many quasi-legal activities to use alternative network protocols. Perhaps for nostalgic reasons, I find the thought of a lost commons frightening, but the reality is that with the demise of the English language's monopoly hold on the internet (recognised symbolically with the ending of ICANN's special agreement, the JPA, with the US government), the Web is *de facto* becoming not merely polyglot but divided. On the other hand, there is always the possibility of developing a new platform or protocol for ourselves, even if that risks falling foul of any future governance regime reneging on the principles of net neutrality.

A more hopeful scenario involves freeing more radio spectrum from the dominance of broadcast TV signals, making wireless the new terrain. The risk capital always runs is that the endless revolutions in the means of production (machinery, organisation) constantly run ahead of capital's ability to assimilate them. This is what happened when the Web turned the internet into a mass medium. Capital had no idea how to respond, and the result was a fantastic flowering of creativity, of new kinds of cultural practice, new types of service, new modes of organisation, among which perhaps the Battle of Seattle can stand as a decent monument. But while mobile media are common factors in organising protests, their economics are far less challenging. As a number of commercial

commentators, including Rupert Murdoch, have noted, mobile users are inured to paying for services which internet users expect to sample for free.

Working inside the whale is an option, and an honourable one: to ameliorate, or to minimise the harm, of the systems we are born into. If there is something unsatisfying about this stance, it is that it offers little real hope. Resistance (and its cognate virtues subversion, refusal, sabotage) is futile, as the Borg say, because resistance is always definitionally resistance against a force on which it depends for its existence. Tactics are the strategy of the weak, and operate on the principle of weakness. Hope, as a virtue, demands more than tactical resistance. It yearns for an unknowable but immanent difference. In this it differs from both the future-orientation of the five-year plan, communist or corporate, from risk management, and from the heart of the capitalist system's construction of time, credit. These all depend upon and plan for the minimisation of change. Hope calls for its maximisation. But there is always a cost. It is in the nature of the universe that equations involving information, organisation, time, space, mass and energy always add up to the same figure. We juggle between them as best we can, like the old film production adage: you can have it good, you can have it cheap, you can have it quick – pick two.

In few sectors is this more apparent than in network communications. The rhetoric of weightlessness and immateriality misses the accumulating debt to the most important of all the non-monetarised domains thus far beyond the felicitous calculus of capital: the global environment. The server industry alone already has a greater carbon footprint than the airline business (Boccaletti et al 2006). Smart server design and innovations in the generation and delivery of energy are partial solutions, but the fact remains: there is an environmental cost – in the extraction of materials, manufacture, distribution and retailing, use and recycling – to computer mediated communications. The exclusion which defines democracy, and which I've argued also provides information capital with its core resource, is not exclusively human. Our economies already embrace the networked machines described by Actor-Network Theory, but our politics do not include them. ANT also points towards the exclusion of the natural world from political process (Latour 1997). We cannot imagine giving a vote to the environment, or to machines. But then our ancestors couldn't imagine giving the vote to artisans or slaves, women, Blacks, servants, landless peasants, youths, colonised or indigenous peoples, and nowadays migrants. The challenge, of course, is that we cannot, nor could we ever, simply assimilate these others into an

unchanged system. The system must change, and radically, as it opens its political life to the now incessantly angry voice of the ecosphere.

Both capital and its counter-tendencies, following de Soto and Hardt and Negri, light upon the told and untold wealth, labour and invention of the multitude as the resource which will construct a future. The myth of the weightless, immaterial, friction-free information economy helps build this myth. Partnered by HSBC and Liberty Global, Google plans to establish a sixteen-satellite network christened O3b ('other 3 billion') in 2010, aimed at providing wireless space-to-ground internet capacity for underdeveloped areas of Africa and Asia (<http://www.o3bnetworks.com/>). While this is undoubtedly a genuine step towards democratising the internet, it will also generate a lot more searches, and therefore more revenue for Google's extraction of fractional value from internet traffic: the more traffic, the more value. Not only does this represent a massive increase in traffic and therefore energy use; it also brings a vast new population, equivalent to three times the population of China, with untapped pools of cultural history, into the ambit of internet labour. The combination of large numbers of people and new cultural resources is a rich one, for reasons which Vilém Flusser assessed in relation to photography two decades ago. Once designed, the camera operates according to the program written into its structure. This automation not only abstracts values from the world, but reconstructs the world as information (Flusser 2000: 39). Following Shannon and Weaver's (1949) mathematical definition of information as a ratio between probabilities, Flusser sees the camera seizing not the world but an abstract 'state of things': data. Information depends on the balance between repetition and novelty. The task of the human user, and of the world the camera observes, is to add improbability, chance, to the apparatus, increasing the amount of data which it can convert into photographs. Analysed critically, bridging the information divide is another example of the colonisation of the remainder of the world's resources by an insatiable neo-liberal, globalising database economy.

Central to this economy is information, and the informationalisation, in the case of O3b, of populations and traditions. Information is 'any difference which makes a difference *in some later event*' (Bateson 1973: 351; original emphasis) The temporality has been evaporated by the more frequently truncated quotation of this adage. Our period is one of the the triumph of space over time - most crudely put, of globalisation over tradition, history and memory. It is particularly significant that these endangered elements are the specific places of ethics.

As *ethos*, ethics belongs to the place, community. As *mores* it has the sense of 'how we do things here'. It is prima facie inimical to globalisation, if globalisation is a process in which, with the gathered momentum of modernity, community is progressively dissolved.

The medium of dissolution is the media. As global information system, media dissolve the lifeworlds of communities, producing a kind of suspension in which molecular information clouds gather as facts: probabilistic aggregations of atomised information constituted as states of affairs, and so made ready for commodity exchange. The consolidated market in such states of affairs is declared in the opening sentence of Wittgenstein's *Tractatus* (1961): 'The world is all that is the case'. The result is a single undifferentiated environment, no longer structured by the binarism of the home community against the sublime or terrifying Other.

The dominant modes of ethical practice arising in the context of globalisation is the professional code of conduct. These ostensibly ethical strictures do not, however, provide communal grounds for action, but rules for the smooth functioning of communication professions. They are self-replicating systems which, far from demanding commitment to the Good, the good life, or the infinite demand of the other, ensure that no decision need ever be taken. Decisions have been preemptively made on behalf of the professional by the code of conduct. This is the point of Derrida's clear statement of the challenge of the ethical to the politics of the self-replicating system:

if I know, for example, what the causes and effects of what I am doing are, what the program is for what I am doing, then there is no decision; it is a question, at the moment of judgement, of applying a particular causality. . . . If I know what is to be done then there is no moment of decision, simply the application of a body of knowledge, or at the very least a rule or a norm. For there to be a decision, the decision must be heterogeneous to knowledge as such (Derrida 2001: 231-2)

The only true action is thus one that breaks the rules. But since the rules have emerged from consensus, breaking them is unethical. The only choice is between compliance and evil. (And we know from Arendt that, at least in certain circumstances, compliance may itself be evil). This is the point at which we find ethics opposed to action, ethics as the excluded other of politics defined as the

realm of action. From this standpoint we have to acknowledge the shocking inference drawn by Esposito: "Not only is there no contradiction in principle between evil and politics, but evil, as such, is from a certain point of view always political" (Esposito, 1993: 183).

Thus too the concluding thesis offered by de Carolis: that under the guise of probability, the actuality and material of the world has been usurped by an environment of possibilities.

This involves a change in science, from Newtonian nature-as-necessity to a Pascalian nature-as-contingency. This has not been a complete uprooting of older modes of thought, especially in politics however. While the management of risk is now a central tenet of the state of emergency, older forms of social physics, lever-and-fulcrum policy-making persist everywhere. The emergent network politics of co-dependence should lead to a politics of solidarity, but instead, infected by the pervasive use of fear of the future as a propagandist staple of election campaigns, seems to lead to defeatism, cynicism and opportunism. Each of these responses is profoundly individualist in tenor, a mark of the success achieved by the hyperindividuation of governmental-consumerist strategies in the database economy.

The evolution of new strategies then depends on an escape from ethics as code of conduct. To act requires an understanding of the situation, not the rules circumscribing action in it. The uniqueness of every situation requires consideration if it is to provide the grounds for action. Considering where we are is quite different from either the application of rules or the construction of possible future scenarios in which, in the long run, we are all dead. Consideration of the situation is then an assertion of being alive. Consideration of the situation recognises that the situation is a product of previous actions, that it offers itself as a given, but one which is also ripe with potential, that is, with both possibility and power (*potentia*). Considering the actual, unique situation should therefore seek out what is unique in it: what is unforeseen, unaccounted for in the rule book. It is on the basis of these unforeseen elements in the situation that action becomes possible, that it becomes possible to act, to change the world as given into the world as potential. What for de Carolis appears as a terrain of managed possibilities debarring us from action reveals its contradiction. The givenness of a contingent and probabilistic world becomes the

source of future-oriented capacity for change, the grounds for action capable of bringing about genuinely new situations. This is the grounds on which the analysis, strategising and action implicit in the question 'What is to be done' are enactable, the grounds on which politics is possible.

In our instance, what begins to emerge as a new situation is the contradiction between the total (and perhaps totalitarian) *personalisation* of marketing and communications on the one hand, and the *abstraction* of personality as data-image or data-cloud on the other. Identity (as in ID card) is a dataset abstracted from a lived life. (This is a necessary step in the *universalisation* of identity: to be universal, individuality has to be divorced from the particularity of the real). Hyperindividuation occurs at the same time as, and as the verso of, the probabilistic management of populations as statistical variable. It is in this contradiction that the lost momentum of solidarity leads us towards a new sociology of the crowd in an era characterised by globalisation and network communications, but also by new nationalisms, fundamentalisms, cynicisms and opportunisms: new modes, that is, of the individual-society dialectic that has played through the history of modernity.

The question of identity belongs squarely in the political-economy framework because it is to legally constituted identities that the property rights on which capital depends are premised. Yet identity is not a given but, as Habermas argues, constituted in language:

The reciprocal interpersonal relations that are established through the speaker-hearer perspectives make possible a relation-to-self that by no means presupposes the lonely reflection of the knowing and acting subject upon itself. as an antecedent consciousness. Rather, the self-relation arises out of an interactive context (Habermas 1992: 24).

In a mass-mediated and networked world, this concentration on the face-to-face relation between speakers is no longer relevant, the fixation on language which he shares with discourse analysts and post-autonomists is passé, and Habermasian communicative rationality is unable to explain the irrationalism of contemporary political and economic life. But the premise of the constitution of subjects and identities in interaction is fundamental. Indeed, the point of citing Habermas in this matter is to point out that even in the heart of rationalism, the premises exist for the

splitting of subjectivity. A self-relation emerging from interactions with others, equally constituted in interaction, means that the grounds of the self are always external to the self: identity is always going to be incomplete. It is on this basis that communities come about, as means to overcome the lack in being which constitutes the splitting (Lacan), the schiz (Deleuze and Guattari) of the subject. But equally problematic is the wholeness ascribed to communities of identification: they too are composed from the mutuality of lack and splitting; they too are premised on the externality of what constitutes them both from below in the form of malformed subjectivities, and laterally from other communities of identification with which they are forced to dialogue in everyday meetings and on the terrain of political and economic life.

What is more, once constituted as identities, these collective subjectivities become subject to all sorts of manipulations in the database economy:

In order to consolidate its field of influence, capital demands a constant emergence of subjective and territorialized identities that, at the end of the day, require no more than an equality of exposure according to the uniform prerogatives of the market. Thus we have the capitalist logic of general equivalences and the cultural logic of community and minority identities coming together in an articulated whole (Badiou 1997: 11).

The schiz which constitutes the self as identity also constitutes the group, The market comes to exploit the constitutive differences, just as the state sets about reconstituting them as the universality of 'we the people', even as it excludes from political life not only certain groups, but also certain portions – activities, behaviours – of the selves constructed in interaction; and in the same way that it excludes de Soto's 'dead capital' from the economic reckoning. Some of those portions, rejected from the political economy, are specifically taken up in the marketplace of 'awareness' and commodified as lifestyles, and in web 2.0 as demographics who can be relied on to generate in-group content for an in-group audience which targeted marketing can exploit as a group 'identity'.

Descartes is rather unjustly blamed for imagining a self which is identical with itself. But the name sticks, so I stick with it. We have been, since Freud and Darwin, post-Cartesians, no longer believing in the unity and self-identical nature of subjectivity. But we still believe in a Cartesian model of *culture* as whole, integrating and self-identical, and still

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more so in a whole, integrated and self-identical *polity*, even when we know that it is in fact riven by internal conflict. Indeed, we argue, in the wake of Hobbes, that we need the state precisely in order to contain conflict, to construct Leviathan. This self-identical nature of our central categories of political agency – the identity of self, group and nation as self-identical concepts and self-identical agents – is what stands in the way of grasping the possibilities of a post-Cartesian political economy.

2. post-cartesian politics

In the last chapters of the *Nichomachean Ethics*, Aristotle turns his attention to friendship, the bridge that will lead him from personal and household-based ethics to the city and its politics. Web 2.0 has devised a wonderful apparatus for automating friendship. This doesn't mean that friendship no longer exists, any more than the manufacture of identities and privacy means that we do not experience the world as individuals. It does mean that like individuality, friendship too has entered the realm of commerce. Friendship, from this point on, has a history, and can no longer be considered a given. The invitation to "Join my network" has in it the formalisation of friendship that has been a characteristic of Western freemasonry for a large part of the last century. Before you click through to accept, for a moment you assess the risks, and implicitly the trust, involved in this kind of friendship. We think about it, especially in 'professional' apps like LinkedIn, in terms of benefits.

Identities have been successfully captured, after several centuries of practice at designing and implementing filing systems, for the uses of rule and exploitation. In its the new mode, information capital is no longer interested in the individual as a productive unit, but in relationships, specifically interpersonal relationships. These are the terrain of word-of-mouth, of viral marketing, of personal recommendation. This is no longer the demographic of class, nor even of lifestyle. Information capital presumes that Maslow's hierarchy of needs is already fulfilled, that 'we' – the valuable prosumers – are at play, expanding our intellectual horizons, creating new chance associations. The zigzag paths of interconnection revealed in our Facebook pages evidences a new terrain: a new kind of influence which arrives after opinion-formers and opinion-leaders, long after two-step flow. The new channels of influence are operated less by the corporation and more by the client.

Nor is this a one-way flow. Friendships can be trusted to be productive. The fragmentary, asymmetric, ephemeral collectivities we form and dissolve on an almost hourly basis are

exactly that engine of contingency which Flusser saw as the great lack in capital's apparatus. Severed from nature, only the random jostling of individuals in chance, short-lived collectivities provides the level of innovative randomness which a rational and efficient system is no longer capable of producing for itself. Having suppressed noise and redundancy, capital goes out to seek it as an external force. The more, however, capital colonises new territories, the fewer random innovations occur. What we have to fear is that we might come to the end of the supposedly infinite productivity of human relations, just as we have come to the end of what the 19th century fondly believed to be the endless fecundity of the cod fisheries.

This surely is why we witness in recent years the change from the language of underdevelopment, through 'developing nations' to the latest iteration: 'emerging markets'. Whatever emerges, it will be a market: that is the degree to which the future has been established as merely a further iteration of the present. What emerges is a market: but a 21st century market is not purely consuming, nor would it be worth investing in O3b, for example, if all Africa could offer was a consumer power which has already proven woefully inadequate. 21st century markets are productive, the old division between production and consumption not only lost in the old, rich parts of the world but foundational for the new markets waiting to become the new engines of a novelty the North is no longer capable of. A trip to any biennial will show how the art world is already involved in just this strategic co-option of the once exotic other into the manufacture of contemporaneity.

Where the gift of labour has been commercialised, as it has in social networking, the surveillant functions of the database economy serve not only to target but to average. Here the virtual nature of the crowd, its power to act, is removed by a process of forecasting how much deviance is tolerable in a population. What is new is the continuation of the move away from the management of crowds towards the management of identities. Once that goal was achieved, identity no longer produced the requisite unforeseen behaviours that capital requires in its endless expansion. The capitalisation of friendship is a new trajectory, paralleled by the extension of prosumer status to the vast populations of the global South. Geographical extension in conjunction with sociological intensification. This is the purpose of tolerance in neo-liberalism: not only to defuse excessive identity formation among those resistant to globalisation for nationalist or religious reasons, but to embrace difference as an engine of growth.

The problem is that these differences, being tolerated, no longer signify. Differences are encouraged only in order to reproduce the Same. They are certainly *not* intended to bring about differences in a later state of affairs: there will be no state of affairs that cannot be subsumed under the heading 'emergent market'. Tolerance guides them to provide novelty, not invention. There are, as Ippolita, Lovink and Rossiter recently argued (2009), no enemies on Facebook. Enmity is, unlike friendship, a category of difference, the kind of conflictual difference that threatens real change. Enemies must consider their mutual situation, seek out the unexpected, and act to produce a different state of affairs in the future. Unlike facebook buddies, however, real friendship is a matter of challenge and agonism, as Aristotle knew. It is not about risks and benefits but about discovering the unexpected new in the other, seeking out the obligation to, not the benefit from, friendship. The equilibrium-seeking activity of the blogosphere, where we connect only like-to-like, is a sentimental pastiche of friendship's dynamic of argument and forgiving. It is in friendship that we find not only the giving but the compulsory acceptance of what is offered that signals reciprocity, not exchange, as its core. The (unwanted) gift I am bound to accept, the unwanted obligation it places me under: these are not only essential to the sexual relation but to friendship. They place us at odds. They create differences.

The challenge then is to confront network activity not with its negation but with its extension. What is essential is not the actual, nor identity, but precisely non-identity: the non-identical nature of the world to which Western thought perpetually ascribes identity. The question however is not one concerning the individual, though it is true that individuality's shattering is the legacy of the great 19th century thinkers (Darwin, Marx, Freud). What remains to be thought is the non-identity of the crowd, or the masses, of populations. The two actions are critically interdependent, critically because the crisis of one articulates the crisis of the other. The individual in crisis is the targeted data-image produced in the bot intelligence of search histories, for example on Amazon or in Google. The implication of this schiz is that the crowd is no longer conceivable in terms of a relation between individual and collective, but as an emergent property of probabilities whose behaviours, however, are held to be foreseeable. In this actuarial foreknowledge, it is crucial to discern the object of biopolitical management, an object which is singular. The population managed in biopolitics is a single entity. This is the sovereign people of constitutional representative democracy, the sovereign consumer of the market economy. As Niall Ferguson (2009) explains, statistical management of the future in stock exchanges failed spectacularly in the 2000s not because of bad mathematics, but because

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of the size of the sample. There is only one market in the global economy: statistical prediction based on a sample of one is not especially reliable. Something similar needs to be said about the management of the population, considered as a single entity. What offers itself to be pried open is the unity, the identity, of the crowd.

Here Rancière's understanding of exclusion as the foundation of political life comes to fruition. We live, politically, in a world governed by the distinction between the rights of the citizen and the rights of man: as Anthony Downey (2009) expresses it, 'What if the refugee, the political prisoner, the disappeared, the victim of torture, the dispossessed are not only constitutive of modernity but its emblematic subjects?'. Agamben's analysis, which drives Downey's, misses however a key problem. The refugee is not a subject, is marked out as the subject who is not governed because not within the population, along with those other others. Marking the outside of population, they are the engines of politics, whose central activity is to balance the homogeneity of the population against the necessity to govern those who are not of the population. At some point in the past, it was inconceivable to admit women, servants, landless peasants as citizens, in much the same way. Assimilating them made political change. Assimilating the stateless and the excluded will do something very similar: it should remove the last great barrier to globalisation, which today encourages the free flow of money and goods, and only restricts the free flow of people.

But this is not enough. It is, after all, entirely conceivable that nations open their borders to migrants, conceivable enough to be the motor of fear and protest, activism and fascist backlash, in Europe and elsewhere. What is truly inconceivable is to extend beyond the population and the market into zones where even greater differences challenge conceptions and actualities.

A posthuman politics. Unimaginable. This is the mode of 'real difference that make a difference in a later state of affairs'. Unimaginable: unplanned and unplannable, open. This is the mode of the future which Adorno and Bloch agreed in their last interview (Bloch 1988) was the grounds for political hope: a utopia without content. This is the mode of politics after humanism, after we are forced to accept both our cyborg assemblages, which indeed enable 'population' as concept and political fact, but do so only on the grounds of their exclusion from the humans-only polity which is all we have ever imagined. The question is not 'what rights do animals have', because the problem of rights, deeply

problematic for many from Arendt (1978) to Badiou, is not by any necessity intrinsic to a posthuman polity in which the natural non-human world, sensate and non-sensate, has a stake. Nor is it a question of sustainability, because what is held up for sustenance is the human population. In any posthuman politics, the value of public good is no longer de facto concerned with humans alone. The good life, the vaunted 'quality of life', which is in fact a miasma of commodities and status, of half-understood energies and half-satisfied desires, may well turn out to be both achievable and of a wholly unthought-of order beyond the unitary political economy of biopolitical capitalism.

The challenge is to drive the logic of individualism to its far side; to turn the compulsory choice of consumerism into actual freedom. To do so, we move from the individual to the crowd, dismantle the crowd by demonstrating its exclusion of both technical and physical domains, and cede autonomy to those unthinkable others, machines, animals, environments, geology, oceans and atmosphere. The *Déclaration des droits de l'homme et du citoyen* had to be supplemented with *The Rights of Woman*, and more than once; with the *Universal Declaration*, and with a hundred others. This supplementation is evidence of a failing. It can be traced back to Kant's proposal for cosmopolis as the destiny of the species, the human species, and behind that to Aristotle's definition of the political animal. The polis, however, is not exclusively made of its population. It is rocks and earth, water and air, plants and animals, buildings, services, communications. 'The creature that lives in cities' is as good a description of influenza as it is of humanity, and it is pointless to speak of the 'rights' of viruses. Nonetheless, there they are. Cosmopolis is the goal of politics, and is unimaginable because it is truly future, truly other than the world we inhabit. It is so deeply alien because it is not exclusively human, and its polity is therefore not a matter of rights or citizenship or even of species belonging of the kind that has structured our political philosophies as much as our actual politics. It is perhaps a politics which takes account of the 'speculative realism' of Quentin Meillassoux, for whom the insistence on the subjectivity of knowledge ('correlationism') lacks an aptitude to for knowing what is not an object for a subject. Such is the rock under the city. Science too is a knowledge, for which the subject is the scientific community, and whose tools are mathematical, and specifically arithmetical. That arithmetic is, at the very least, homologous to, isomorphic with, the digitisation which characterises both measurement and representation in the 21st century. It is a knowledge which, like any other, approaches asymptotically perhaps but always from a distance a reality which exceeds it. Unfortunately, the population no longer exceeds its measurement. More and more it becomes its measurement, its auto-archiving in the

instrumentation of the database economy. This is why I argued in iDC discussions that identity is at stake in any future politics. Subjection and subjectivity, rule and representation, are today garnered and taxonomised in a vast apparatus of which we are, as Flusser had it of photographers, mere apparatchiks. Our function, Flusser held, was to provide randomness. But we are little capable of that in a self-regulating cybernetic regime dedicated to homeostasis. Our greatest hope is the unexpected, and we have vast reservoirs of that in the shape of the ancestral dead labour enshrined in our machines, and the great unknown of the natural world.

As the 'dead capital' of de Soto's poor, so Marx's 'dead labour' of technology, and so too the unmonetarised wealth of the living environment. The question is not about how to monetarise this wealth – de Soto's grand strategy, notably in Peru – but on the contrary, to see what happens when we account this wealth in its own terms, not according to the correlationist economics that converts the universe into an environment *for* the human species. Correcting de Carolis, we must understand the environment as alien, or historically alienated, to the extent that it is now no longer even the raw material of manufacture but a hostile Gaia gathering its strength to cast off its cancerously overgrown human population. It's a good time to strike an alliance, when the alternatives are all too thinkable. The alternative which holds out greatest hope for the self-replicating system of capital is the path of perpetual innovation. Technical inventions will provide sustainability; perpetual innovation will fuel perpetual growth. But innovation must come from an increasingly homogenised population, and from a technical infrastructure whose organisational shape is more and more associated with capital itself, that is with the very forms which it is charged with renovating. But innovation comes from difference, and growth has its own costs. As a political economy premised on permanent growth, capital faces the finite limits of the unmonetarised environment (accounting as carbon credits is a farce, credible only to neoliberal fundamentalists: there can be no market in the unmarketable). We cannot place our faith in a universal, popular platform of innovation through user-generated content, because the infrastructure that would permit it is itself finite. That it is also plagued by the very private property regime which enables capital – forcing each user to store their own intellectual property, each corporation to create silos of password-protected data, doubling, quadrupling, googleplexing the energy requirements and material infrastructure of the cloud – makes it even less likely that it will provide anything other than the short-term patch for which capital is beginning to be notorious.

Those that have rights they do not possess; and those that have no rights at all. Those who consume least but are the most castigated as the mass consumer. Those who own everything - those who save for their retirement for example – but who have no control over their money invested in schemes to fleece the poor of their homes. Those who suffer because we have divorced the making of wealth from the making of use-values, business from industry. Those who vainly seek accountability from those who are responsible for disaster. All of us who lose when emergency overtakes pragmatism. Political economy is about value, and about the changing nature of value (Graham 2006): the value system that bails out banks while leaving the desperate poor to fend for themselves. The innocent are punished, the guilty rewarded, and the uninvolved are left to pick up the pieces. But the uninvolved and innocent planet may no longer be innocent or uninvolved, today as we look out towards a different future. In late lectures, Adorno argues that the demand that we sacrifice happiness to some other, putatively higher but always later goal is an imposition. Deferral is 'a kind of economy of thrift', but 'the compensation promised by civilisation and our education in return for our acts of renunciation is not forthcoming' (Adorno 2000: 138). The sacrifice of happiness to rationality or to deferred gratifications is a truly tragic sacrifice. Happiness is not to be passed over. But nor is it to be undersold, passing it off with nostrums and trinkets. Capital fails continuously to address pandemic, famine, poverty, and thrives on war. It has failed globally and consistently; and yet it poses itself as global necessity, which governments must do their best to work within. The very fact that, a hundred years after the *Manifesto*, it is still rife with contradiction makes for hope: the internal differences of a system aspiring to plan the future, to promote innovation while maintaining equilibrium, to organise its universality through an impossible regime of exclusion. Contemporary political activism begins as it did before: in the dialectic, which our intellectual fashions, shaped by what we have learned to recite as a litany of defeat, has placed in the dustbin of residual concepts.

And the greatest of these contradictions is the human exception: that whatever constitutes the good is good exclusively for humans. The founding moment was not the triumph of protestantism over catholicism, but the triumph of monotheism over animism, the dark secret of the enlightenment's attack on superstition: ostensibly against the Roman Church, but in actuality against belief systems which privileged the 'persons', multiple and protean, of nature rather than the single, unified and unifying Godhead. The long construction of God (Debray 2004) is a history of the brutal suppression of animism at home and in the colonies. That indigenous peoples have maintained and developed this animism is a

lesson for us: part of the excluded grit that gets into the machine, the friction in friction-free capital, traction for the new politics.

Toleration is a name for an absence of dialogue. What I tolerate is beneath attention, marginal to my world. It is the kind of tolerance Jodi Dean (2009: 85-7) notes in GW Bush's tolerance of dissent: awareness without exchange of reasons. In a culture of complaint, we rail against the unforeseeable – tsunamis, bush fires, floods, hurricanes – and tolerate the greed, corruption and destructive acts of the oligarchy. After tolerance we do not 'return' to an atavistic Hobbesian war of each against all. We instead abandon the illusion of universality which is the common claim of democracy. We contest it, as Arendt and Agamben contested the exclusion of the refugee. We contest it with the meticulous exclusion of the unthinkable politics of the nonhuman. In thinking that unthinkable, we open the space for a different politics, and a different economics, that we cannot reach through shopping and voting ("Whoever you voted for, the government got in"). It is a politics in which the human is at stake, not just the privilege of the human but the actuality, the identity we award ourselves as human. In the end all identities under the regime of Universal Human Rights, a much desired goal of democratic government in the US model of armed imposition of human rights, is that all identities be subsumed under the single identity of humanity. What is at stake in the opening of politics to the non-human is the end of such an identity.

We have a model, and in line with proposals made by Saskia Sassen in a keynote to the 2006 ISEA conference in San Jose, it is the communicative regime which constitutes the global financial trade. As both Sassen and Knorr Cetina argue, the market is not only invisible but actively constituted in the network communications which today are its limbs, its media, and its actuality. As Knorr Cetina and Bruegger argue, the characteristic feature of markets is

their essential incompleteness of being, which is transposed into a continuous knowledge project for participants. From a theoretical point of view, the defining characteristic of the market as an object is its lack of '*object-ivity*' and *completeness of being, its non-identity with itself*. Markets are always in the process of being materially redefined, they continually acquire new properties and change the ones they have. (Knorr Cetina and Bruegger 2002)

This non-identity is what we stand to gain in sacrificing identity as humans in a posthuman politics which includes not only technologies, as the market already does, but the natural world as well. A central difference between market traders and green politicians is that they care far more about the liquid object of their engagement than we do. The reason why is interesting in its own right: non-identity is, from Habermas to Deleuze, a characteristic of subjects. The market is not just an agency: for these traders it is a living, breathing subject. In many respects we could say that it is The Subject of the contemporary globalising political economy. The question is then how to move from the actor-network theory that ascribes *agency* to both physical and technological actors, to a new political theory that recognises their *subjectivity*.

Rancière's concept of the political as constituted by its exclusion points to just the same phenomenon of incompleteness, of non-identity of the putative universal, which draws market traders to the market's lack in being. But because culturalists, sociologists and political philosophers cling to the concept of identity – gendered, regional, cultural, ethnic, sexual but always already biological – they have deep problems understanding the radical challenge posed by environmental politics, which not only challenges where the political ends, and what constitutes the universe of universalism, but the founding difference which claims their loyalty, the difference between humans and anything else whatever. The cost of constructing human identity is the refusal of political, social, cultural existence to what is different: the machinic and natural phyla. As a result, we have no basis on which to recognise or dialogue with the world, only a vaguely felt and expressed desire to take responsibility for it, to speak in its place, to represent it. In this we succumb to that politics of 'raising awareness' which Jodi Dean (2005) has so assiduously shown to be a sham form of communication under conditions of communicative capitalism.

The only way to rid politics of its foundational evil is to open it to the non-human. In this alone is there hope for a political economy which is truly different from the present, and only in such difference is there the possibility of hope. The post-Cartesian community, stepping beyond both identity and the rule of private property which it derives from and supports, is the basis for a post-Kantian cosmopolis, one where the destiny of growth is not pre-destined, because the cosmopolis is not exclusive to any one species, any more than it is to any one identity, even that of the universal law, universal knowledge, or a universal God. A cosmopolis of differences that make a difference, and in difference creating the possibility that there may be some later state of affairs. In the first instance, the challenge for internet political economy is to reveal and release the natural and

technical (ancestral) participants excluded from both wealth and citizenship. Only in such radical steps will the possibility of a human future be made possible, and a goal beyond the tyranny of instrumental reason and cash. We might begin with the only tribe who have a passion equal to Knorr Cetina's traders, the hackers celebrated by Parikka (2007) and Mackenzie (2006). We have yet to discover the passion that will make the green world integral to the problem of a new political economy of the internet.

A fundamental question, in this framework, is whether the play we witness in social networks constitutes a demand for a political subjectivity, or indeed, extending the argument by analogy to the economic sphere, for an economic subjectivity. The peer-to-peer movement is clearly articulated as a new economics, and intrinsically a new politics, but in instances like Facebook it would appear not to be. A condition of subjectivity is to be aware – aware of the relations one has entered into. Such awareness may not be a property of immersion into social networks (just as loss of self-awareness is characteristic of immersive experiences (since at least the dawn of silent reading memorialised in Augustine's *Confessions* [1961: Book 6, Chapter 3, 113-5], when the students hesitated to disturb the deeply ruminating St Anselm, immersed in the texts of the Fathers of the Church. Such stillness is, in Rancière's terms, a turn away from action and the political, and perversely an acceptance of the chaos from which it withdraws). Awareness is characterised by demand: by a demand for something which is not on offer. The demand for inclusion is only part of this: the demand is for a realignment of the Good for the purpose of which the political exists in the first instance. This demand is not, one suspects, integral to facebook, but is integral to P2P networks, and to the SLOC (small, local, open, connected) model proposed by Ezio Manzini (2009). Such models, to the extent that they are practiced already, are gateways, not roads: the whole point about the future is that it is unknown (unlike the present we know and the past we know about). An administered future – of risk management and five year plans alike, is no future at all. A political future is not constituted by 'emerging markets' (what else might they emerge as?) but by the unforeseeable demands of the excluded for a new polity, which must be achieved in the context of struggle with the old that renews, radically, its presuppositions, including its ethical basis. Since we cannot help but think ahead, we plan, but plan for what is genuinely unknown and unforeseeable. So a future which is imaginable, but not administered out of existence. Imagine: a world of communication between the phyla

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