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The excellent institution[*]

Peter Svensson, Sverre Spoelstra, Michael Pedersen and Stephanie Schreven

'What institution was ever so wisely planned that no disadvantage could arise therefrom?' (Spinoza, 2002 [1670]: 569)

Institution

We often understand institutions as some kind of durable structure that transcends human lives and their intentions. Defined in more technical terms: 'institutionalization occurs whenever there is a reciprocal typification of habitualized actions by types of actors' (Berger and Luckmann, 1967: 54). The habits that constitute institutions remain, while the actors that perform these habits come and go. Institutions transcend individual endeavours as well as time and generations.

An institution may also be characterized by walls that separate the inside from the outside. Inside the walls one may find habits of virtue, reason, and organization. Beyond its walls you may step into an unsettling world of irrationality, chaos, and evil. As André Spicer argues in his contribution to this issue, this formless and unattractive outside, what he calls 'extitution', is created by the institution in order to legitimize itself. The walls of the institution protect its inhabitants from the dangers of the outside world, but at the price of immobility of body and mind. Institutionalization is therefore not merely a wall that separates the inside from the outside; it also guides the way we think and act.

The university is perhaps the modern institution par excellence, and its walls are crumbling fast. For Kant (1992 [1798]), the university (or at least the faculty of philosophy within the university) was the institution that manages to protect itself from other (reason-threatening) institutions, like religion and the state. But this protection against hostile institutions, for better and worse, is rapidly disappearing. Kant's question has become reversed. The question is no longer how universities can protect themselves from unwanted intruders, like the state or the market. The protecting walls surrounding universities are now seen as barriers to developing forms of useful expertise that fit the demands of the knowledge economy. 'Excellence', the main qualifier of academic

activity today, has little to do with old academic ideals of reason or *Bildung*. As Bill Readings shows in his book *The University in Ruins* (1996), 'excellence' refers to a self-referential system that has posited its own success as its primary goal. So now the question is: 'How can we break down the walls of the university – so that the market and society can freely enter?'.

Researchers are increasingly valued for their capacity to attract grants, and the logic here is twofold: 1) if industry (or the industry-minded state) is willing to sponsor research, it must be 'relevant' and 2) attracting money from the outside is good for the university itself, which is increasingly supposed to act as a business. Copenhagen Business School has captured this trend in a marketing slogan: it is now (supposedly) the place 'Where university means business' (CBS, 2010). This marketization of academic knowledge is no doubt a dangerous development, but as Ingrid Hoofd argues (in this issue), nostalgia for Kant's protected sphere, which she finds in activist-research projects like *Edu-factory* that strongly oppose the marketization of academia, is not a viable alternative. To use Readings' (1996) phrase, we are destined to dwell within 'the ruins of the university', and had better make the best of it.

Today, one does not need to search long for so-called excellent universities: any accreditation system will provide you with a list of universities that are excellent in research and teaching. They are not excellent in terms of pursuing a particular educational model, in producing a particular new theory, in asking particular questions, in advancing a particular politics, or in creating alternative forms of organization; they are 'simply' excellent, no questions asked (other than questions around the number of highly-ranked journal publications, the nature of student feedback, and the number of successful professors).

It would be a mistake to characterize the university of excellence as an 'open institution' that is all about 'facilitation, boundary crossing and dialogue' (Spicer, in this issue) or as a 'nomad institution', which is concerned with speed, mobility and connections (Hoofd, in this issue). The university of excellence does establish a break with traditional ideals of the university, but it does not create an unambiguously open environment instead. As we shall argue, manifestations of excellence in publishing tend to leave little room for boundary crossing between disciplines, and it is quite averse to creative connections that authors may pursue. This should perhaps not surprise us if we remind ourselves of the 'original' concept of excellence. The point of Peters and Waterman's business classic *In Search of Excellence* (1982), which popularized excellence as a management concept, was quite opposite to the creation of openness:

> the gurus of Excellence charge management with the responsibility for building and strengthening cultures wherein a sense of self-determination and security is itself systematically constructed: strong corporate cultures are commended for their provision of a framework of discipline 'in which practical autonomy takes place routinely' (Peters and Waterman, 1982, p. 322). (Willmott, 1992: 61)

Management researchers have debated the academic merits of Peters and Waterman's book for many years. They ask: 'was their argument scientifically rigorous if so many of the "excellent" Fortune 500 companies went bankrupt?' 'Maybe their method was flawed?' Of course the book wasn't a great example of reasoning or rigorous scientific method. Its prime objective was to inspire managers to build strong organizational cultures, not to help management science progress. However, this hasn't prevented the concept of excellence from conquering the university. Ironically, the concept that has received so much critique within management studies is now, in somewhat altered form, but not less empty, the basis on which the quality of management studies is measured.

Interestingly enough, precisely because of its vacuousness excellence can also create environments for critical scholars. While highly sceptical of the university of excellence, Readings (1996: 91) notes that some critical disciplines, such gay and lesbian studies, also prosper by alluding to excellence. This also applies to critical management studies. Critical management scholars have been highly successful in publishing excellent articles, and many of them are amazingly productive. Some appear to write more than they read. This can even become a guideline within the excellent institution. Reading is then only relevant in producing a gap (or 'locating a gap', for the believers) that is later to be filled with a contribution. The hyper-productivity of critical management scholars, targeted at excellent journals, has turned critical management into an excellent institution, and many critically oriented scholars are employed because of this mastery in publishing excellent papers.

Publishing

The excellence of a university faculty, department, or research group is often measured in terms of the number of texts published in highly ranked journals. Making your thoughts public in prestigious journals with high impact factors is a way of transforming excellent work in-doors into manifest, auditable documents. Thinking, considering, pondering, outlining, drafting, reviewing, editing and commenting – arguably very important academic work tasks – mean very little if these activities are not rendered visible in published output.

Publishing has gone through a dramatic change the last two decades or so. Announcing one's whereabouts and mood swings on Facebook is generally not considered symptomatic of a pathological attention seeking personality disorder. The regular publication of what is on your mind, relationship status and geographical location has rather become one of the ways in which we are rendered identifiable and definable. Publishers of printed, edited diaries no longer solely control the distribution of inner thoughts and confessional tales. Your personal, yet public, blog is only three or four clicks away.

Not surprisingly, academic publishing too has gone through changes. The expansion of the university and higher education has brought with it a burgeoning growth of academic journals. New journals are launched on what seems to be a weekly basis. Some of these journals willingly play the game of excellence by all possible means, for example by climbing the journal rankings through excessive self-citation. Other journals, however, challenge the hegemony of older, more established counterparts by making space for research that struggles to find its way into the top-ranked journals. The latter can allow themselves to be untraditional since they have no history to defend, and to be less institutionalised since they have not yet become institutions in their own right. The birth of new journals also means that new blood can be infused into what at times appears to be a rather narrow and homogeneous editorial population.

Perhaps it is possible to claim that publishing has become more democratic; any voice with an internet connection is potentially publishable and there is always more than one way to get your message through. And if so, what we are witnessing today is something similar to what Geertjan de Vugt (in this issue) and Jacques Rancière (interviewed in this issue) suggest: that traditional hierarchies of authority have collapsed. Perhaps we are experiencing what De Vugt, in his note on Wikipedia, refers to as the development of 'authocracy' where 'the author is nowhere, nowhere is authority' and 'the author is everywhere, everywhere is authority' (De Vugt, in this issue). Established publishers and journals are facing increased competition from smaller publishers, new journals and open-access journals (such as *ephemera*, to mention an excellent example).

Publishing is also a particularly interesting example of an institution where the act of opening up for the public is being combined with an internally regulated evaluation and production process. More often than not, the review process is double-blind, fully open to the journal editor only. The identity of the reviewer will forever remain a secret to the author. Moreover, the review process is also usually closed to the third party, i.e. the public, the readers, the research community. Given this closure, the legitimacy of the institution of publishing is dependent upon public faith in a journal's capacity to evaluate, secure and enhance the quality of published research.

In his note on open-process academic publishing, Toni Prug (in this issue) suggests that the review process should be opened up for the public. According to Prug this would result in an increased quality of submissions and published texts as well as an increased willingness among researchers to take intellectual risks. In the open, everything is observable and there are few places to hide. Bad performance will be punished, whereas high quality and serious work will be rewarded. Prug's text has something to tell us about the transparency of the institution of publishing and it links back to a broader debate about the audit society. Audit, surveillance and transparency are strong motifs in both discourses of management and public governance. Has the time now come for transparency and an auditing culture in academia?

A very recent example of open reviewing, in line with Prug's ideas, is showcased by the humanities journal *Shakespeare Quarterly* (Cohen, 2010). For the forthcoming fall issue, four papers were posted online before they were accepted for publication. Registered people could then comment on the papers before the editors of the journal finally reviewed the texts. Given the large number of helpful comments posted on the website, the experiment seemed to be successful.

This development raises important questions regarding the relation between the inside and outside of the institution of publishing. Is open publishing a change for the better or is it something we should be cautious about? What happens to the university if it takes the idea of open publication and reviewing seriously; if it opens up the gates to the public and reveals the secrets of reviewing and editorial work?

From excellent to good enough

Even in the most open of open times, doors will be closed and entries will be denied, academic publishing being no exception. Within the long list of journals reside many institutionalised short-lists of approved, top-ranked and prestigious journals. The merit systems regulating much of academics' daily work and career planning promote some journals as more valuable than others. If, for instance, one works within the field of critical management studies, ten journals or so may be considered excellent. Individual academic careers are directly interlinked with these lists, which even in the most 'critical' research contexts are often treated as givens and thus beyond discussion and negotiation. Interestingly, in many institutional environments this list does not include most of the journals with a critical profile. We frequently hear from potential contributors that they would love to publish in *ephemera*, rather than in some highly ranked management journal, but that their institutional environment discourages them to do so. They frequently end up doing more traditional research instead that keeps the autotelic system of excellence running. In our view, 'excellence' is the name of a game that too often produces stuff that just isn't good enough.

The various lists of legitimate journals organising and governing a great extent of the academic work undertaken at universities are self-fulfilling. Adhering to these norm-systems by submitting your research to the listed journals can be a rewarding choice for the career-minded academic. After all, texts published in leading journals must say something about the authors behind the publications. Leading scholars publish in leading journals and leading journals only publish leading work. The circle is closed and so is the institution of publishing. The self-referentiality of academic excellence is here more evident than ever.

How, then, should we relate to the institution of publishing? The pragmatic answer would be to play along and, if we wish, slowly change it for the better from within.

Most likely this is a wise recommendation from a supervisor to a PhD-student, at least if the aim is to survive or perhaps even to pursue a successful career. But what if academics want something more than playing along and thereby contributing to the institutions that we, knowingly or not, are captured within? We believe that research is too important to submit to a blind process of excellence.

Over the years, *ephemera* has published many papers and even special issues dealing with the changing nature of the university (see especially issues 8.3 and 9.4) and we will continue to do so. This issue – an open issue, but with a remarkable thematic consistency – is another engagement with this broad problem, and it specifically explores new forms of academic institutionalization as well as attempts to escape from them. We are proud to say that none of the contributions to this issue are excellent – but they are, to borrow Deleuze and Guattari's (1994: 82) words, 'Interesting, Remarkable or Important'. That's good enough for us.

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**the editors**   Peter Svensson is a member of the *ephemera* editorial collective.
E-mail: peter.svensson@fek.lu.se

Sverre Spoelstra is a member of the *ephemera* editorial collective.
E-mail: sverre.spoelstra@fek.lu.se

Michael Pedersen is a member of the *ephemera* editorial collective.
E-mail: mip.lpf@cbs.dk

Stephanie Schreven is an affiliate member of *ephemera*.
E-mail: stephanie_schreven@yahoo.com
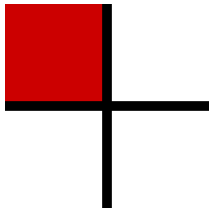
The accelerated university: Activist-academic alliances and the simulation of thought

Ingrid M. Hoofd

abstract   Resentment regarding the demise of the university due to neoliberal corporatisation proliferates, and for good reasons. For many academics and activists, what is needed to salvage the 'original' university is a move outside its institutional borders so as to foster online and mobile alliances with anyone or anything that represents radical alterity vis-à-vis neo-liberalisation. This paper will show by way of analysing 'activist-research projects' that many of these projects reveal a passionate nostalgia or desire for the 'real' liberal university and its possibility of justice through social critique and dialogue. It will argue that this performance of the liberal university of critical thought, its move 'beyond' its institutional walls, and its desire for dialogue with and enlightenment through the 'other' to make happen the university's original objective, is itself complicit in an ongoing usurpation of such thought in a increasingly accelerated global economy and its new modes of disenfranchisement. The paper concludes that the belief in social justice through the interplay of thinking and action that lies at the heart of technological acceleration renders the future outcomes of this acceleration more violent as well as more promising.

> It is … our humanist ethos *itself* that works most efficiently in the direction of un-differentiation … and of mono-thought. This regime has at least some positive aspect however, insofar as it offers us the chance to call into question [its] basic elements. (Baudrillard, 2000: 26)

> In view of what interests, *to what ends* do they wish to come with these heated proclamations on the end to come or the end already accomplished? (Derrida, 1993: 125).

Cries announcing the demise of the university abound, in particular in Europe and North America. Those who utter these cries often do this in an admirable attempt to renew the original mandate of the university, namely the fostering of truth, justice and democratic debate. Giving up on the now largely neoliberal and managerial university system that plagues Europe and the United States, some such critics try to mobilise a renewal of this mandate outside academia's institutional walls with people and groups who represent an alternative to neoliberal globalisation. Much of this mobilisation is in turn done through technologies and discourses of mobility and tele-communication. Examples here are the European anti-Bologna 'new university' projects like *Edu-Factory*, the various autonomous virtual universities, and the intellectual collaboration with local and international activists and non-Western academics. I am referring here in particular to the promising formation of various extra-academic 'activist-research' networks and

conferences over the last years, like *Facoltà di Fuga* (Faculty of Escape), *Mobilized Investigation*, *Rete Ricercatori Precari* (Network of Precarious Researchers), Investigacció (Research), *Universidad Nómada* (Nomadic University), and *Glocal Research Space*. Characteristically, these projects organise events that try to set up dialogues between non-Western and anti-neoliberal activists and academics, and carve out spaces for offline and web-based discussion and participation. Initiators and participants of these projects often conceptualise their positions as relating closely to alter-globalist activism – positions which hence are hoped to effectively subvert neo-liberalism as well as the elitist-managerial university space and its problematic method of scientific objectification for capitalist innovation.

In this paper, I will explain how such announcements of the university's demise, the conceptualisation of its current situation as one of crisis, as well as the mobilisation of the true academic mandate today which often segues into a nostalgia for the original university of independent thought, truth and justice, are themselves paradoxically complicit in the techno-acceleration that precisely grounds and reproduces neo-liberalism. This is because the playing out of such nostalgia typically runs through the problematic invocation of the humanist opposition between doing and thinking. This causes the terms and their mode of production to become increasingly intertwined under contemporary conditions of capitalist simulation in which 'thinking' is more and more done in service of an economist form of 'doing'. The aforementioned commendable projects thus paradoxically appear foremost as *symptoms* of acceleration.

Moreover, I will argue that this acceleration increasingly renders certain groups and individuals as targets of techno-academic scrutiny and violence. This increasing objectification that runs through the contemporary prostheses of the humanist subject hence spells disaster for non-technogenic forms of gendered, raced and classed otherness. I therefore suggest that this disastrous state of affairs is precisely carried out by the humanist promise of transcendence, democracy and justice that currently speeds up institutions like the university, and vice versa. Following this line of thought through, I claim that technological acceleration then surprisingly also harbours the *promise* of the coming of a radical alternative to neo-liberalism, and that it is precisely through the eschatological performance of this promise – arguably a repetition of the Christian belief in the apocalypse – that these activist-research projects and their neo-liberal mode of production may fruitfully become the future objects of their own critique. In short then, this paper attempts to affirm and displace the projects' call for reinstating the original 'true' or transcending the current 'spoilt' university, in the hope of gesturing towards yet another alterity, through its own accelerated argument.

I argue that the complicity of projects like *Edu-Factory* and *Facoltà di Fuga* in technological acceleration should primarily be understood in terms of what I in my work call *speed-elitism* (Hoofd, 2009: 201). I extrapolate the idea of speed-elitism largely from the work of John Armitage on the discursive and technocratic machinery underlying current neoliberal capitalism. In turn, I will argue that these activist-academic projects exacerbate speed-elitism by connecting the latter to Jacques Derrida's ideas on technology and thought, as well as the late Bill Readings' and Fred Moten and Stefano Harney's critiques of the contemporary university. In 'Dromoeconomics: Towards a Political Economy of Speed', Armitage and Phil Graham suggest that due to

the capitalist need for the production of excess, there is a strong relationship between the forces of communication and the logic of speed. They connect the logic of speed specifically to a certain militarisation of society under neoliberalism. In line with Virilio's *Speed and Politics*, they argue that the areas of war, communication and trade are today intimately connected through the technological usurpation and control of space (and territory), and through the compression and regulation of time. Eventually, Armitage and Graham suggest that 'circulation has become an essential process of capitalism, an end in itself' (Armitage and Graham, 2001: 118) and that therefore any form of cultural production increasingly finds itself tied up in this logic.

Neoliberal capitalism is hence a system in which the most intimate and fundamental aspects of human social life – in particular, forms of *thought* and linguistic difference – are formally subsumed under this system by being circulated *as* capital. In "Resisting the Neoliberal Discourse of Technology', Armitage elaborates on this theme of circulation by pointing out that the current mode of late-capitalism relies on the continuous extension and validation of the infrastructure and the optimistic discourses of the new information technologies. Discourses that typically get repeated in favour of what I designate as the emerging speed-elite are those of connection, instantaneity, liberation, transformation, multiplicity and border crossing. Speed-elitism, I therefore argue, replaces Eurocentrism today as the primary nexus around which global and local disparities are organised, even though it largely builds on the *formalisation* of Eurocentric conceptual differences like doing versus thinking, and East versus West.

Under speed-elitism, the utopian emphasis on the transparent mediation through technologies of instantaneity gives rise to the *fantasy* of the networked spaces 'outside' the traditional academic borders as radical spaces, as well as the desire for a productive dialogue or alliance between activism and academia. This would mean that activism and academia have become *relative* others under globalisation, in which the (non-Western or anti-capitalist) activist figures as some kind of *hallucination* of radical otherness for the Western intellectual. This technological hallucination serves an increasingly aggressive neo-colonial and patriarchal economic state of exploitation, despite – or perhaps rather *because of* – such technologies of travel and communication having come to figure as tools for liberation and transformation.

So the discourses of techno-progress, making connections, heightened mobility and crossing borders in activist-academic alliances often go hand in hand with the (implicit) celebration of highly mediated spaces for action and communication between allied groups. Such discourses however suppress the violent colonial, capitalist and patriarchal history of those technological spaces and the subsequent unevenness of any such alliance. More severely, they foster an oppressive sort of imaginary 'collective' or 'unity of struggles' through the myth of 'truly' allowing for radical difference and multiplicity within that space – a form of techno-inclusiveness that in turn excludes a variety of non-technogenic groups and slower classes. That these highly mediated spaces of thought and knowledge production are exclusivist is also shown by Sheila Slaughter and Gary Rhoades' study of the transformation of higher education in 'The Academic Capitalist Knowledge/Learning Regime'. Slaughter and Rhoades argue that new technologies allow the neo-liberal university to precisely cross the borders of universities and external for-profit and non-profit agencies in the name of development,

production and efficacy, resulting in 'new circuits of knowledge'. These 'opportunity structures' (Slaughter and Rhoades, 2004: 306) that the neoliberal economy creates, I in turn argue, become precisely those spaces of imagination that come to signify as well as being resultant of the university's humanist promise of reaching-out to alterity. This paradoxically also leads to what Slaughter and Rhoades accurately identify as a 'restratification among and within colleges and universities' (2004: 307).

Thought is then increasingly exercised in, and made possible through, spaces that are just as much spaces of acceleration and militarisation. The increasing complicity of the humanities in the applied sciences within the contemporary university, and hence the integration of critical thinking and neo-liberalist acceleration, is also a major theme running through Jacques Derrida's *Eyes of the University*. Derrida there suggests that neo-liberalisation entails a militarisation of the university, claiming that 'never before has so-called basic research been so deeply committed to ends that are at the same time military ends' (Derrida, 2004: 143). The intricate relation between the military ('missiles') and the imperatives of the humanities ('missives') also pervades Derrida's 'No Apocalypse, Not Now', in which he argues that the increasing urgency with which intellectuals feel compelled to address disenfranchisement and crisis paradoxically leads to a differential acceleration of such oppression through technologies of instantaneous action. But the relationship between new technologies and the subject's *perception* of and subsequent desire for the incorporation of otherness that speed-elitism engenders, is best illustrated through Derrida's *Archive Fever* and *Monolingualism of the Other*. Derrida's concerns here are not so much directly with the contemporary university, but rather with the link between how thought is situated in technologies of communication (like language) and the emergence of authority as well as (academic and activist) empowerment.

Allow me to digress here a bit into Derrida's argument, as it will shed light on the claim of activist-research projects to renew the university. Derrida uses as well as critiques psychoanalysis in *Archive Fever* by showing that if psycho-analysis illustrates how archiving and memory work by repression, its own authority must likewise be constructed on repressing the symbolic and material violence of its own repression. This is after all what makes possible the claim to an 'objective' interpretation of symptoms by the analyst. Derrida goes on to argue that if at the base of this repression, as Freud claimed, resides the death drive, then our currently ubiquitous technological 'archive fever' – the frantic desire to store and communicate thoughts – must mean that there is today lots of death drive at work: violence, repression and repetition (Derrida 1996: 98). The speed of iteration through technologies of archiving results in the sensation that *origins slip away*, as copies are incessantly layered upon copies. This post-modern arena of simulation prompts a permanent state of nostalgia for lost origins, which in turn inspires the manifestation of all kinds of fundamentalisms. Importantly, these fundamentalisms claim to 'recuperate' a lost origin, but such an origin is only a hallucination brought about by incessant technological acceleration and simulation. The very nostalgia for a fundamentally 'original' and pure university is, I claim, precisely part of this recourse to fundamentalisms inspired by technologies of acceleration.

The slip that Freud makes from machine as metaphor for memory into equating machine with memory, allows Derrida to conclude that the archiving machine is in fact

internal to the psyche. In short, we think and remember through our machines – the machine is not external to the subject, but a 'prosthesis at the origin' (Derrida, 1998: 1). It is the fantasy that machines are outside and discreet from us, that allows for the sense of being an autonomous subject, as well as for that subject's perception of otherness. A nostalgic desire for the 'original' university therefore can easily give rise to an aspiration to connect with the academic subject's semiotic other, like non-Western folks, activists, or groups that *appear* as the subversive other of neo-liberalism. Satisfying the desire for such connections therefore often results in some sort of technological neo-colonisation through the discourses, institutions and technologies of the humanist subject.

Alliances and connections are ever more made with that or (aspects of) those (which or) whom *can already be thought*, understood, perceived or recognised by new machines of perception. Understood in this way, the illusory status of *radical* alterity assigned to various forms of 'non-Western' or alter-globalist activist groups by these new university projects, masks these groups' *relative* alterity in service of the speed-elite.

It may be useful here to remember once again that the Advanced Research Projects Agency Network (ArpaNet) – the predecessor of the current Internet – was largely developed in Western universities from military monies. The Internet then signifies a more aggressive and ubiquitous involvement of new technologies in the stratification of contemporary society, its individuals, and its various forms of exchange. It also signifies the ongoing faith in the supposed transparency of such forms of communication, as well as the desire to transcend institutional borders, even though such faith is increasingly a delusion brought about by the *circular logic* of such a system of knowing (the other).

In 'The Academic Speed-up', Fred Moten and Stefano Harney address precisely the way contemporary academia is engaged in what they call 'the internalization of a cybernetics of production' (Moten and Harney, 1999: 18) and its background in an imperialist Cold War logic. Moten and Harney are rightly wary of crisis-talk that assumes crisis is unique to the contemporary moment – rather, they claim, crisis is always part and parcel of capitalism, and hence of any academic project that needs to justify and re-produce itself within such an economic logic. Nostalgia for some lost 'golden age' of academia is therefore not only misplaced, but also dangerous, as it seeks to mobilize grounds for resistance in the *illusions* of academic independence, equal collaboration and autonomy. Instead, these illusions are themselves effects of the academic mode of production and of how the latter engenders new forms of in- and exclusion, creating a 'way to organize *hopeful ideas*, and ... real rewards' (1999: 12, italics mine). According to Moten and Harney, the progression from the assembly-line type of academic work towards the contemporary speed-up involves newer and more efficient ways of extracting academic surplus labour through out-sourcing, just-in-time production and flexibility in which academics are asking to 'link a series of sites of production' (1999: 13).

While they suggest that this 'recombination of time and space discourage[s] the formation of alliance with alternatives' (1999: 16), I instead conclude from their lucid analysis that the academic speed-up precisely encourages the formation of connections

'outside' its former institutional walls, especially since many of these activities are un-salaried. Such alliances namely facilitate capitalist acceleration – and therefore 'relative immisseration' (1999: 17) – because the cybernetic space signifies the imaginary potential for 'pure and radical thought' under neoliberal capitalism. In 'Doing Academic Work', Harney and Moten ask the crucial question: whom or what the increase of knowledge production, which 'would always *seem* to be a good thing', (Harney and Moten, 1998: 165, italics mine) finally serves. This enquiry leads them to conclude that within post-war academia, 'newly produced knowledge contributes to the force of production' (1998: 166) and hence, I would claim, to accelerated exploitation, not only within academia itself, but especially through those spaces that double its mandate.

The way in which I argue that many new university and activist-research projects paradoxically contribute to this global re-stratification of otherness through technological acceleration, also connects well with Bill Readings' work on the contemporary university. In *The University in Ruins*, Readings argues that the change from the 'university of reason and culture' to the present-day 'university of excellence' means that the centre of power has shifted largely away from the nation-state (Readings, 1996: 22). To read power as residing primarily in the sum of ideological and repressive state apparatuses hence no longer makes sense. It would therefore not suffice to critique the university simply as an institution that functions as the nurturer of national culture and the cultured elites for the nation-state. Readings points out that it is telling that strong oppositional critiques of the university seem to become possible precisely at the moment where its centralising power and knowledge have vacated its premises. More importantly, the function of the university of excellence – one that successfully transforms it into yet another trans-national corporation – relies on the fantasy that the university *is* or *should be* still that university of reason and culture, and that it originally *did* pursue universal truth, justice and knowledge.

So the invocation of the fantasy of an originary university of knowledge and truth to which *Edu-Factory*'s and other similar activist-academics carefully seek to be responsible, facilitates the doubling of the production of information – *as if* it were still knowledge and culture – into speed-spaces outside the university walls proper. According to Bernard Stiegler in *Technics and Time 2: Disorientation*, new technologies of acceleration therefore lead to a tension in contemporary university practices under neoliberalism: they make possible thought through continuous differentiation into the virtual, but likewise reduce and manage thought to its calculable double – thus creating non-thought. The point for Stiegler is then to bring about 'epochal redoubling' which synthesises the current tension into an affirmation of technology as well as humanity (Stiegler, 2009: 7). While I agree with Stiegler on the ambiguity and doubling at the heart of acceleration, his imagined solution is nonetheless suspect. This is due to his narrative of the heroic overcoming of this tension in which an analysis of the complicities of a politics of difference is glaringly absent – in other words, the conceptual problem in Stiegler, activist-research, and eventually also in this article, is one of discerning (or *thinking*) 'good' from 'bad' doubling.

I claim for now rather, in line with Derrida and Armitage, that alter-globalist activism here in particular functions as the supposed 'other', and hence authentic locus of truth

and justice, where that fantasy of the originary university – which is the mirror-image of the fantasy of some future utopian university – is allegedly to be re-found. Alter-globalism can have this function because it is itself largely structured by the concepts and technologies of neo-liberalism. The borderlands of the real and the virtual, of West and the non-West, of thinking and doing, as well as of 'alternative' global activism and academia, become highly productive sites in the expansion and quickening of neo-liberal capital. Activist-research projects and alliances, as well as all narratives – like this one – that invoke the interplay between activism and academia as a positive means for the quest for truth and justice, are therefore symptomatic of the contemporary redefinition of the university, caused by the relative crisis of the nation-state in the face of trans-national globalisation.

The university – if we still want to call it that – thus becomes in essence a nomad institution, able to vicariously pop up in various geographical and virtual spaces in the name of connecting to 'truly liberating' activists or non-Western peoples, as long as this facilitates technocratic (re)production. This technologically endowed dispersal and quickening of thought and expertise is paradoxically the effect of the desire for progress and liberation that humanist society seeks. The new activist-research endeavours are the latest productive results of this – productive, that is then, in the humanist *and* capitalist senses of the word. The emphasis in these initiatives on displacement and dispersal can thus once more be expected to valorise the terms and concepts of speed, such as mobility, flexibility, nomadism, transformation and creating connections, as well as a general rhetoric of autonomy and radicality, while expressing a strong allegiance to that project of justice that often goes under the heading of new social movements and technologies. The rhetoric of overcoming boundaries, both (inter)nationally and institutionally, plays a crucial role in the portrayal of such activity as liberatory or subversive. The romanticisation of certain forms of activism or otherness, as if they were harbouring 'ultimate justice', cross-bred with the appeal to the university of reason and culture as 'original', facilitates the emergence of technologically endowed nomad activist-academic-research initiatives as the new spaces and bodies for the generation of trans-national capital – *as if* that Enlightenment 'subject of reason and autonomy' still exists (or has ever existed). If one were to be unfriendly, one could perhaps say that through these projects, speed-elitist neo-liberalism parades *as if* it were justice.

Edu-Factory is one such promising initiative that nonetheless reflects the logic of nostalgia, accelerated perception and its usurpation of alterity outlined above, as well as the general appeal to transcendence and transformation through (online) networking. It was initiated by university groups and individuals with the laudable intention to oppose the Bologna Convention on Higher Education in Europe, which aimed at a far-reaching neo-liberalisation of European universities. Much of its interrogations of the neo-liberalisation of higher education are constructively imagining the possibility of an autonomous global university by debating the shortcomings of peer-review and for-profit education, as well as the need for more self-reflection – precisely those issues that this article also seeks to be responsive to. *Edu-Factory* strongly encourages dialogue and exchange with academics and activists locally and globally, stressing that they get quite some participation from 'militants and students' as well as researchers, and that its editorial board also consists of 'activists' (Edu-Factory, 2007). It also has links with 'autonomous' virtual universities like the Italian *Rete per l'Autoinformazione* (Self-

informed Network), the *Free University of Los Angeles*, and the *University of Openness*, and even inspired the making of a Masters of Arts in Activism at the University of Leeds. Interestingly, it seeks to interrogate popular representations of academic resistance, and mentions that its process 'has not been without tensions and conflicts' which lead them to the question of 'translation, scale and resources' in the aim to continue and expand its influence beyond its initial email list.

This is all of course exceedingly promising. Yet *Edu-Factory*'s first online manifesto narrates problematically a university in crisis in which its victimised knowledge workers are now perhaps in an equally precarious position as factory workers were under industrialisation. The manifesto overall conjures up a nostalgic image of the old university as relatively free of political tensions, whereas the current university is fittingly depicted as a corrupt space of highly politicised struggles that requires 'open[ing] a process of conflict in the knowledge production system' so as to 'build up a trans-national network of research' (2007). The manifesto presses for:

> *A series of transnational web-based discussions* on the condition of the university today. [...] It is important that contributions come from all continents, from different types of universities, from people with different relations to the university. The aim is to [...] sound out the geographically disjunctive relations between the participants, creating a collective knowledge that contributes to *the development of new forms of relation* and resistance. (Edu-Factory, 2007; italics in original)

The manifesto not only harbours a rhetoric of nostalgia and crisis, besides the problematic suggestion of academics being victimised like factory workers, but in particular emphasises mobile trans-national alliances with 'difference' through electronic network- and archiving technologies. A host of diverse struggles within various universities worldwide roll by on its email-list as examples of resistance against neo-liberalisation, without adequate contextualisation or exploration of other (ethnic, post-colonial, nationalist) factors at work. By connecting such disparate struggles under the sign of 'one collective', *Edu-Factory* has managed to expand its list- and homepage operations and debates (hosted by Italian web-company Aruba) into new online spaces like Facebook and YouTube (in a section called EduTube).

Such differences and tensions in its 'collective' therefore figure in the creation of a *certain* resistance, which is precisely the point at which the manifesto repeats the humanist promise through its rather one-dimensional vision of techno-empowerment. This has led to the formation of a freely downloadable journal aimed at 'open[ing] new spaces of thinking' (Edu-Factory, 2010) – precisely the doubling of the academic imperative into the realm of online acceleration which today fatally enmeshes left-wing justice with capitalist violence. What is also telling is that the rhetoric and other tools of preference of *Edu-Factory* are remarkably similar to those of the denunciated European Union position papers on higher education, like the Bologna Convention, as well as to those of the European Union's 2005 Warsaw Declaration which defines the current political philosophy behind the Union. These Union papers likewise speak of the importance of trans-national participation and cooperation, inter-cultural dialogue through technologies of mobility and communication, fighting marginalisation, all in the spirit of democracy and humanist values. The only difference perhaps is the fact that the Union overtly states its allegiance to 'creating a dynamic knowledge-based economy' that can compete globally. But the effects and aims of *Edu-Factory*

eventually add up to much the same: participants gain credibility through global alliances with 'difference', which in turn allows their academic work to be productively inundated with ideas of social progress and justice, and hence provides them with 'hopeful ideas ... and real rewards' as Moten and Harney suggest (Moten and Harney, 1999: 12). Also, while the university is certainly a space of social struggles and not (in fact, never) a static ivory tower, to declare it as the 'key space of conflict' runs the risk of ignoring the relative privilege of many contemporary knowledge workers in terms of cultural capital and mobility.

One could therefore say that *Edu-Factory* manages to keep the humanist promise of (academic) justice alive by implicating itself fatally in speed-elitism through the intensification of a largely online and networked politics.

Other new activist-research initiatives also often draw on speed-elitist notions of autonomy and mobility, and tend to romanticise extra-academic and non-Western alterity and activism. *Facoltà di Fuga* (Faculty of Escape) for instance, set up in 2002 as an 'independent' branch of the university of Roma La Sapienza, defines itself in online magazine *MetaMute* as an 'experiment in self-organised formation' and a 'free university in the Net', which is created with the ultimate goal of 'free circulation of knowledge and the free exercise of thought' (Facoltà di Fuga, 2005: 1). In 'EU free and self-governing European university' on the radical Italian *rekombinant* mailing list, several unnamed authors say that the project was instigated by a dislike of the neo-liberalisation of the Italian universities into institutions of 'speed, functionality and flexibility' (Facoltà di Fuga, 2007: 1) – the kinds of fixations this article likewise seeks to critique. They acknowledge that this neo-liberalisation has caused strong competition between students, and has sadly led to those who are not flexible, creative, cooperative and mobile enough, to drop out.

However, despite all this lucid analysis, they problematically conceptualise *escape* from the university boundaries as an inherently subversive act. This forecloses an analysis of the privileges that underlie the access *Facoltà di Fuga* has to extra-academic spaces like the Net, sophisticated political language, and various local cultural centres. Moreover, the relativist term 'self-organised' pretends not only that there are no gendered, classed or raced hierarchies between the actors, but also suggests a subject capable of organising – one that has the knowledge, frame of mind and access to use tools and technologies for organising meetings and mailing lists. The type of 'freedom' they purport requires thus a very stratified sort of individual: one who can effectively engender and manage cross-organisational ties, thus linking 'series of sites of production' as Moten and Harney suggest happens under neo-liberalism in 'The Academic Speed-up' (Moten and Harney, 1999: 13).

Facoltà di Fuga gave birth to the larger initiative *Rete Ricercatori Precari* (Network of Precarious Researchers), which equally denounces the neo-liberalisation of universities in Europe. In 'Globalisation, academic flexibility and the right to research', they point out, in line with Readings argument, that a growing demand for internationalisation of research and education has led to 'market-like behaviour'. This facilitated the creation of 'centres of excellence' that rely heavily on European-level networking, and that usurp available resources to the detriment of 'less productive' universities (Rete

Ricercatori Precari, 2007: 2). They argue that European-level legislation constitutes a 'globalisation from above' which should be countered by one 'from below'. For this purpose, they suggest the:

> formation of a *post-national public space of research* and *cultural exchange* in which internationalisation would be perceived as a process aiming to develop practices of mutual recognition and encounter. (Rete Ricercatori Precari, 2007: 2, emphasis mine)

This formation should according to them happen mostly through web-spaces, as such spaces would allow for the humanist exercise of one's 'right to research' for as long as one wishes. Again, in all its good intentions, we see how the new media here function to uphold an illusory space of potential justice that nonetheless directly informs neoliberal acceleration, discursively as well as technically. This rhetoric from *Rete Ricercatori Precari* hence not surprisingly echoes once again quite closely the European arguments for neo-liberalisation of the universities in the Bologna and Lisbon Declarations, with its trans-national emphasis, its creation of 'virtual and lifelong learning' and its homogenisation of educational formats and grading so as to foster mutual recognition of grades and diplomas. The fact that *Rete Ricercatori Precari* requests a 'free circulation of knowledge' is also in tandem with what Readings and Armitage identified as the central premise of late-capitalism, where simply more circulation and more activity, no matter what its content, is required. The writers also interestingly remark that there is a disagreement within *Ricercatori Precari* to either see Europe as a 'space of constrictions and limitations' or as a 'space of self-organisation and collective mobilisation' (2007: 2). Their suggestion for an 'alternative university in the Net' shows that the former and the latter viewpoints are possibly one and the same, as it is the speed-elitist infrastructure of the European Union itself that precisely allows for such new forms of mobility and self-organisation. The opposition between 'from above' (European Union) versus 'from below' (academic-activists) – a very popular opposition in alter-globalist rhetoric – that the writers use is therefore highly problematic.

In short, *Ricercatori Precari* repeat the logic of European Union-style neo-liberalism in their strategy of empowerment by opposing activism and academia, while doubling the humanist myth of the 'self-organising' subject of rights and freedom into 'virtual' space.

Although *Facoltà di Fuga* and *Ricercatori Precari* do not ally themselves explicitly with the alter-globalist movement, their call against neo-liberalism and for online thinking and research in service of the struggles of 'the oppressed and marginalised' makes them quite suitable for creating such alliances. This call for 'knowledge in service of the oppressed' is more explicitly present in *Investigacció* (Research), which was set up in order to combine the agendas of social movement activists with those of university researchers. In their flyer for their first international meeting on 'Social Movements and Activist Research' in 2004 in Spain, *Investigacció* likewise aptly accuses the neo-liberal privatisation of knowledge as the main cause for current social exclusion. Knowledge, in their view, instead should be produced from the 'focal point of activist research' which should entail the 'actual subjectivities of research from and for social movements', instead of from those who reside within the privileged space of academia (Investigacció, 2005: 1). The meeting is hopefully envisioned to be a 'space of encounter and self-formation' which 'self-constitute[s] as a-disciplinary so that we

can overcome the fictitious distinctions common to academicism' (2005: 2). Knowledge will thus, according to *Investigacció*, be generated 'from our own subjectivities (in contrast to aiming for scientific 'objectivity') without limitations or hierarchies' (2005: 3).

But far from an 'a-disciplinary self-constitution' that supposedly overcomes any fictitious distinction, *Investigacció* for one relies heavily on the common fictitious distinction between activism and academia to validate their praxis. By contrasting their initiative to the false objectivity of academicism, they validate their own knowledge production by claiming to be in the margins as opposed to the 'ivory tower', as if the latter is a stable area from which one can detach oneself from the outside world and hence objectively analyse. Also, one could wonder *to what extent* one is actually speaking from the margins when one has the time, technologies, spaces and connections to organise an event like *Investigacció*. The desire to generate knowledge from 'one's own subjectivity, without limitations' (2005: 3) is analogous to the mythical humanist narrative of breaking with and improving upon previous knowledge – a form of knowledge-innovation that the academic institution is also infused with.

The university of excellence as well as its doublings into projects like *Investigacció* are therefore an effect of its repetitions (with a difference) into the neo-liberal mythical space of progress and acceleration. The creation of more and more 'spaces and mechanisms of production, exchange and collective reflection' (2005: 3) is indeed precisely what late-capitalism seeks to forge, as long as such reflection generates an intensification of production. The idea that subjectivities from social movements are in any way less produced by neo-liberal globalisation is highly problematic. In fact, such an idea suggests a rather positivist notion of the subject – similar to that supposedly objective academic individual *Investigacció* seeks to dethrone. *Investigacció* then somewhat nostalgically narrates a subject untainted by power structures and technologies. In fact, the *Investigacció* initiative displays how the subject of activist research empowers her- or himself *through* recreating the fictitious distinction between activism and academia. S/he does so by reproducing this opposition, which in turn co-creates and accelerates these 'new spaces' – spaces that were created with the goal of facilitating global capitalism and its speed-elite, and that allow for the perfection of military power through technologies of surveillance.

The call for participants to become active and productive in co-organising the international event – of course, without any monetary remuneration – is also much present in *Investigacció*'s rhetoric. They suggest that participants should engage with one another not only at the meeting, but especially through the online spaces *Investigacció* has created for the purpose of generating activist research. 'Take action!' says their flyer, '[...] make it so the conference is yours!' This seductive appeal to the subject-individual as the centre of creative production is very common to neo-liberal consumerism and its emphasis on cybernetic interactivity. But it is also false in that it gives the participants a sense of control over *Investigacció* that they actually do not have – eventually, the main organisers (have already) set the agenda and handed out the stakes. In short, the organisers fail to situate themselves by pretending everyone is on the same level of privilege – for example, not requiring monetary compensation – in

this project, and this failure is strangely an effect of their attempt at reviving a *more democratic* academic structure.

The non-validity of this collective or consumer-control becomes apparent in terms of the actual meeting and its website. This *illusion* of control is also apparent in terms of the activist-academic's general influence on subverting technocratic globalisation; counter to the common notion that the masses dabble in individual escapism, I would argue that many individuals worldwide are in fact more and more politically active. Nonetheless, this activity seems less and less capable of reaching the desired effect of countering or subverting neo-liberal globalisation. This is, as Jean Baudrillard, whom I will discuss shortly, would have it in 'The Implosion of Meaning in the Media', because the desire to be politically active is in fact increasingly a *function* of acceleration under late-capitalism. Political activity in general becomes an important motor behind capitalist circulation, and the new technologies intensify this process with their quality of instantaneity and simulation. *Investigacció* thus fails to see that their call for activist action and their anti-academic stance implicitly upholds a particular *theory* of the politically energised subject that also underpins speed-elitism.

The arguments from *Investigacció* that research should be done solely in the service and for the glory of liberatory social movements, in effect puts social movement activism on a pedestal that problematically results in a foreclosure of any critique of complicity of such activism in acceleration. Paradoxically though, it is this temporal foreclosure that allows for such activity – as for a theory of justice – to concern itself with and perform justice *as if* its praxis was 'truly liberating'.

A particularly vivid example of this strategy of foreclosure is 'Activist Research' by a group that calls itself *Glocal Research Space*. This group emerged out of the *Infoespai* (Infospace) project in Barcelona, which aims at empowering non-profit organisations and social movements through mass and new media solutions. *Glocal Research Space*'s name already suggests a problematic conflation of the global and the local, pointing towards an instantaneous connection of certain places and spaces and a technological extension of a specific sort of locality onto the global. The piece mentions that the growing enthusiasm for social mobilisation seems to be accompanied by a strong emergence of activist-research initiatives, in particular in Europe and one of its favourite others, Latin America. While such an insight might inform an analysis of how this emergence appears as a symptom of neo-liberalism, they nonetheless propose that this emergence is proof of a 'new form of commitment and antagonistic subjectivity' (Glocal Research Space, 2003: 18). Moreover, they claim that social research should be:

> Research that pursues the creation of a knowledge that is valued for its *practical* effectiveness ... *as opposed to* an objective and contemplative theoretical knowledge in the traditional academic fashion. That is, a knowledge that can then be added ... to social mobilization; a knowledge that generates and *maximises action*. (Glocal Research Space, 2003: 18, italics mine)

The demonisation of contemplation, and the economist urge to 'maximise action', sounds eerily close to the speed-elitist discourse of accelerating production by seeking to obliterate any doubt, delay or 'impractical' critique that may complicate the opposition between doing and thinking. I would claim that to simply maximise action says nothing about the effects of such action, and the implication that actions are

automatically subversive not only repeats the fantasy of the active subject as in control of the outcome of her actions, but also elides any critical reflection on the complicities of such actions. It is noteworthy also that this call for the intensification of activity is created through an opposition to a mythical academic space, again as if that university space is or has ever been purely objective and theoretical. Further on in the piece, *Glocal Research Space* argues that activist-research should also be 'nomadic and travelling' and that it should be conducted as 'springing from the relation between subject-investigator and subject-investigated [...] without an object' (2003: 18). They rightly note here that academic objectivity is an illusion. Nonetheless, they go on to validate activist-research through claiming that the people working in these projects are 'open about their motives and opinions' (2003: 19) unlike academic researchers. They even flip the narrative of objectivity in favour of activist-research by saying that the latter overcomes academic institutionalisation and hence 'generates free, public, inclusive and non-discriminatory knowledge for universal use' (2003: 19). This statement, as well as their previous argument that traditional academic knowledge is 'objective', effectively defeats their previous argument that objective knowledge is a fantasy.

'Activist Research' shows how the call for justice from *Investigacció* and *Glocal Research Space* falls prey to universalising its particularity by discursively repeating the action-thought dialectic and by eventually acting as if it has overcome this aporia by aligning itself to an ontological concept of action. But the justification of action still hinges on the particular humanist dialectic of action and thought. Therefore, their claim unwittingly erases how such activist-research is also always situated and limited to its techno-economic context, meanwhile silencing any type of research or experience that does not fit the humanist point of view. This claim thus makes the (false) idea of objectivity once more the overarching logic of social change. The idea that 'knowledges generated by social movements' (2003: 19) can in any way be transparently read as objective truths, as opposed to academic knowledge, not only discards the possibility that academic practice is culturally and historically contingent, but also employs the strategy of writing oneself into the margins as an empowering tool that obscures the privileges that allow such forms of empowerment.

It is also interesting that 'Activist Research' asks for 'subject-researchers' and 'subject-investigated' to enter a 'composition process' (2003: 18), and even goes so far as to argue that ideally, the researcher is the activist s/he investigates. This suggested confusion of the boundary between researcher and researched appears to complicate the traditional academic scene, though I would argue that the indiscernible entanglement of subject and object is today always already the case. To argue however, as *Glocal Research Space* does, that subject and object *should* enter a composition process presupposes that they are initially discreet entities which then requires a sort of nomadic crossing-over. This implies again that the activist-research nexus is a highly productive one. Likewise, the emphasis on nomadism in, for instance, the Spanish *Universidad Nómada* (Nomadic University) invokes the humanist imperative of this online space of thought, which is really an effect of the imperative of various forms of border-crossing for acceleration – hence the stress on 'hybridity' and 'trans-nationalism' on its website (Universidad Nómada, 2010). The website also drums up a certain radicality of the

Universidad through images of street-activists on its homepage, which is in fact hosted at the American company DreamHost in California.

These new dispersed and online 'spaces of thought' like *Edu-Factory*, *Facoltà di Fuga*, *Investigacció*, and *Glocal Research Space* are therefore heavily implicated in the continuous flow of information that neo-liberal capital and its prime tools of colonisation require in their relentless craving for networked overproduction. The rhetoric of overcoming the contemporary constraints of the university from a supposed autonomous location is itself implicated in the duplication of Bill Readings' 'university of excellence' into networked spaces through the myth of independent thought and transparent communication. As Armitage and Derrida suggest, thought indeed appears here as formally subsumed under neo-liberal capital. In other words, thought is limited as well as produced by the current horizon of techno-speed, which is itself grounded in the humanist promise of transcendence and transparency. In light of this, it is also no surprise that contemporary academic obsessions in the humanities and social sciences lie with analysing or locating subversive potential within those projects and peoples, like those who engage in networked activism and alliance, which validate academia's own conditions of possibility within the hegemony of speed.

But clearly, more can and should be said about the concurrent acceleration of capital by means of humanist thought and politics – after all, this article is itself also a symptom of the current university's neoliberal-humanist mandate that demands that thought be productive. If humanism today has mostly mutated into speed-elitism, then the affirmation of acceleration also *promises* a change *beyond* neo-liberalism. To finally raise the stakes of this circular logic of acceleration, it is useful to turn to Jean Baudrillard's 'The Implosion of Meaning in the Media' and 'The Final Solution' in *The Vital Illusion* in which the effects of such a circular logic and its relationship to the rhetoric of transcendence figures prominently.

Initially, one could think that Baudrillard's assessment confirms my analytical suspicion regarding activist-research projects. In 'The Implosion', Baudrillard starts from the premise that the increase of information in our media-saturated society results in a *loss* of meaning because it 'exhausts itself in the act of staging communication'. New media technologies exacerbate the subject's *fantasy* of transparent communication, while increasingly what are communicated are mere copies of the same, a 'recycling in the negative of the traditional institution' (Baudrillard, 1994: 80). New technologies are simply the materialisation of that fantasy of communication, and the 'lure' (1994: 81) of such a technocratic system resides in the requirement of active political engagement to uphold that fantasy. This translates in a call to subjectivise oneself – to be vocal, participate, and to 'play the [...] liberating claim of subjecthood' (1994: 85). The result of the intensifying circular logic of this system, he says, is that meaning not only implodes in the media, but also that the social implodes in the masses – the construction of a 'hyperreal' (1994: 81). Contra the claim of *Glocal Research Space* that such praxes of alliance are 'without an object' (Glocal Research Space, 2003: 19), this does not mean that objectification does not take place *at all*. Instead, and in line with Baudrillard's argument, the urge to subjectivise oneself and the objectification of the individual go hand in hand under speed-elitism – a double bind that locks the individual firmly into her or his technocratic conditions.

Indeed, the argument in 'Activist Research' that 'research [should be] like an effective procedure [which is] in itself already a result' (2003: 19) describes the conditions of Readings' 'university of excellence' where any research activity, thanks to technological instantaneity, translates immediately into the capitalist result of increased information flow (Readings, 1996: 22). Active subjects and their others become the cybernetic objects of such a system of information flow. The insistence in 'Activist Research' on free, travelling and nomadic research simply makes sure that this logic of increased flow is repeated. Because of this desire for increased flow and connection, activist-research projects are paradoxically highly exclusivist in advocating the discourses and tools of the speed-elite. The problem with projects like *Edu-Factory* or the productive cross-over of activism and academia is therefore not only that their political counter-information means just more information (and loss of meaning) as well as more capitalist production, but that it puts its faith in precisely those technologies and fantasies of control, communication and of 'being political' that underlie the current logic of overproduction.

It is at this point that John Armitage and Joanne Roberts in 'Chronotopia' contend that such a 'cyclical repetition' (Armitage and Roberts, 2002: 52) is particularly dangerous because the fantasy of control remains exactly that, a fantasy. At the same time, this increasingly forceful repetition can only eventually give way to 'the accident' because chronotopian speed-spaces are fundamentally and exponentially unstable. Armitage and Roberts' idea of 'cyclical repetition' through chronotopianism does thus not mean an exact repetition of the speed-elite's quest for mastery – instead, I would argue that it is this immanent quality of difference in repetition, of the 'essential drifting due to [a technology's] iterative structure cut off from […] consciousness as the authority of the last analysis' as Derrida calls it in 'Signature Event Context' (Derrida, 1982: 316) that allows for the accident or true event to appear. The difference through technologically sped-up repetition appears then perhaps as a potential, but only precisely as a growing potential that cannot be willed – in this sense, it will be an unanticipated event indeed.

One could then speak of an *intensification* of politics in what is perhaps too hastily called the neo-liberal university, opening up unexpected spaces for critique in the face of its neo-liberalisation, which in turn points to the fundamental instability of its enterprise. Activist-research projects add to this intensification by virtue of their techno-acceleration. This intensification of politics is no ground for univocal celebration, since it remains also the hallmark of the neo-liberal mode of production of knowledge through the new tele-technologies as excellent, regardless of its critical content. The current university's instability mirrors and aggravates the volatility of a capitalism marked by non-sustainability, a growing feminisation of poverty, the rise of a new global upper class, and highly mediated illusions of cybernetic mastery. This nonetheless also opens up new forms of thought, if only appearing as 'accidents'.

Derrida hints at this, but also at the university's elusiveness, in 'Mochlos, or: the Conflict of the Faculties', when he claims that he 'would *almost* call [the university] the child of an inseparable couple, metaphysics and technology' (Derrida, 1993: 5, emphasis mine). Almost, but never quite – here then emerges the possibility of truly subversive change. But this change will not be brought about by the mere content of the critique, but by the way it pushes acceleration to the point of systemic disintegration or

implosion. In *Fatal Strategies*, Baudrillard calls this the 'fatal strategy' that contemporary theory must adopt: a sort of conceptual suicide attack which aims at pulling the rug out from under the speed-elitist mobilisation of semiotic oppositions, and which shows the paradox behind any attempt at structural predictions.

In 'The Final Solution', Baudrillard relates this intensification of the humanist obsession with dialectics, mastery, and transparency – the quest for immortality that is at the basis of techno-scientific research – to destruction and the death drive through the metaphor of and actual research around cloning, which strangely resonates well with Derrida's investigation of the tele-technological archive in *Archive Fever*. I read Baudrillard's 'Final Solution' here as a metaphor for the duplication (cloning) of thought into virtual spaces outside the university walls proper. If contemporary research seeks to make human cloning possible, argues Baudrillard, then this endeavour is equivalent to cancer: after all, cancer is simply automatic cloning, a deadly form of multiplication. It is of interest here to note that the possibility of creating an army of clones has likewise garnered much military interest, just as academia today more and more serves military ends. As the logic of cloning as automatic multiplication is typical of all current technological and humanist advancements, the exacerbation of this logic can only mean more promise and death. At this point my argument mirrors the apocalyptic tone of the activist-research projects.

In the final analysis, the problem with *Edu-Factory*, *Facoltà di Fuga*, *Investigacció*, *Universidad Nómada*, *Ricercatori Precari*, and *Glocal Research Space* is that these projects entail a very specific form of subjugation with dire consequences for the slower and less techno-genic classes. Techno-scientific progress entails a regress into immortality, epitomised by a nostalgia typical of the current socio-technical situation, for when we were 'undivided' (Baudrillard, 2000: 6). I contend that Baudrillard refers not only to the lifeless stage before humans became sexed life forms, but also makes an allusion to psycho-analytic readings of the 'subject divided in language' and its nostalgia for wholeness and transparent communication. The desire for immortality, like archive fever, is therefore the same as the Freudian death drive, and we ourselves ultimately become the object of our technologies of scrutiny and nostalgia. The humanist quest of totally transparency of oneself and of the world to oneself that grounds the idea of the modern techno-scientific university, is ultimately an attempt at (self-)destruction, or in any case an attempted destruction of (one's) radical difference.

The urgent political question, which Stiegler problematically avoided in *Disorientation*, then becomes: which selves are and will become caught up in the delusion of total self-transparency and self-justification, and which selves will be destroyed? And how may we conceive of an 'ethic of intellectual inquiry or aesthetic contemplation' that 'resists the imperatives of speed', as Jon Cook likewise wonders in 'The Techno-University and the Future of Knowledge' (Cook, 1999: 323)? It is of particular importance to note here that the very inception of this question and its possible analysis, like the conception of the speed-elite, is itself again a performative repetition of the grounding myth of the university of independent truth, justice and reason. Therefore, in carrying forward the humanist promise, this analysis is itself bound up in the intensification of the logic of acceleration and destruction, and that is then also equally tenuous. This complicity of thought in the violence of acceleration itself in turn quickens the machine of the

humanist promise, and can only manifest itself in the prediction of a coming apocalypse – whether it concerns a narrative of the death of thought and the university, or of a technological acceleration engendering the Freudian death drive. We are then simply the next target in the technological realisation of complete γνωθι σαυτον (know thyself) – or so it *seems*. Because after all, a clone is never an exact copy, as Baudrillard very well knows; and therefore, the extent to which activist-research projects hopefully invite alterity can thankfully not yet be thought.

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the author

Ingrid M. Hoofd is an Assistant Professor in the Communications and New Media Programme at the National University of Singapore (NUS). Her research interests are the transformation of higher education, feminist and critical theories, and philosophy of technology. Her book project *Between Activism and Academia: Complicities of Alter-Globalist Resistances in Speed* discusses the ways in which alter-globalist activists and left-wing academics mobilize neoliberal discourses and divisions in an attempt to overcome gendered, raced and classed oppressions worldwide. Ingrid has been involved in various feminist and new media activist projects, like *Indymedia*, *Next Five Minutes*, *HelpB92*, and *NextGenderation*.

Email: cnmhim@nus.edu.sg.
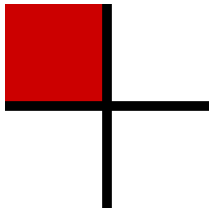
Extitutions: The other side of institutions

André Spicer

abstract
Institutions are structured around an extitutional core that always escapes them. Extitutions are figures which have an ambiguous, destabilised and sometimes threatening quality. The central problem that institutional workers face is dealing with and ultimately capturing these extitutions. I look at two ways that institutions have sought to deal with extitutions – through attempts to discipline them or through more recent attempts to control them. I suggest that the generalised crisis of institutions may involve this passage from disciplining extitutions to controlling them.

> We are in a generalized crisis in relation to all the environments of enclosure--prison, hospital, factory, school, family. The family is an 'interior', in crisis like all other interiors--scholarly, professional, etc. The administrations in charge never cease announcing supposedly necessary reforms: to reform schools, to reform industries, hospitals, the armed forces, prisons. But everyone knows that these institutions are finished, whatever the length of their expiration periods. It's only a matter of administering their last rites and of keeping people employed until the installation of the new forces knocking at the door.
> (Deleuze, 1992: 3-4)

Institution. The very word seethes with meaning. When it slips from our tongue we think of a walled facility containing individuals who follow a strict timetable, wear similar clothes and share an occult language. It could be a prison, a psychiatric hospital or a factory. This is the kind of institution that featured so strongly in modern literature. It was Franz Kafka's *Castle*, Janet Frame's *Asylum*, and J M Coetzee's *Refugee Camp*. It was separated from the outside world by a strict parameter. It had an inner world governed by rules that remained opaque to everyone from the lowest intern to the dark figures who oversaw the system. Existence in an institution was a life lived in an 'iron cage' (Weber, 1958: 181).

Today, many claim we have woken from this nightmare. Life has escaped the institution. We are no longer bound by the strict parameters and normalizing forces that were once so predominant in institutional life. The demand of many movements for institutional reform has had a profound effect. The parameter fences have gone. They have been replaced with electronic tracking, care in the community, and home offices. The opaque rules have been replaced with ubiquitous corporate cultures. The shrouded mandarins who administer the system have shuffled away from their bureaus. In their place we find celebrity CEOs who never miss a photo opportunity. The indecipherable

language of professionals has gone. In its' place is brand messaging. Today's institutionalised life is lived in 'glass cage' where we are constantly on display (Gabriel, 2005).

For sure, the epochal decline of modern institutions is far from complete. Protests during the 1960s and 1970s bemoaned the spirit crush and deeply conformist nature of these institutions (e.g. Illich, 1973). Protestors pleaded for a de-institutionalized life. These demands for reform or radical repudiation have often created the grounds for the redesign and recalibration of institutional life. In some cases this has resulted in designs that appear to contravene disciplinary institutions. Instead of emphasising conformity, categorization and confinement, these institutions emphasize experimentation, boundary crossing and extensiveness. But at the very same time that we have seen the rise of such pervasive institutions, we have also witnessed the intensification of confinement in contemporary institutions like the refugee camp and the bloated incarceration facilities. We have also witnessed the rapid spread of categorization and conformity through audit cultures (Power, 1997), risk management technologies (Power, 2007), and performance management devices (Townley, 2007). Many modern institutions try to instil discipline as well as facilitate experimentation and self-exploration. Think of the employee who must display a creative flare at the same time as they meticulously track their work hours. Or perhaps the prisoner who needs to work through a personal development plan with their personal councillor at the same time as they adhere to a strict timetable. In both these cases we don't seem to have just an 'iron cage' or a 'glass cage' (or any other kind of cage for that matter). We appear to have 'cages in tandem' (Kärreman and Alvesson, 2004).

The result is that contemporary institutions are often paradoxical and confusing places. On the one hand, there appears to be a drive to escape from the strict confines of institutional discipline and to embrace a de-institutionalised life. On the other hand, there appears to be a continued attempt to extend various disciplinary technologies into hitherto un-disciplined aspects of social life. The result is a kind of double failure. On the one hand, escape attempts from institutional life become grist for the mill for further rounds of the extension of contemporary institutions. On the other hand, when an institution extends its reach, it often cannot deliver on all the fine promises which are made. But this double failure is also a kind of double success: attempts to escape institutions actually open up new areas for institutionalization; the failure of institutions creates many cracks and fissures in which non-institutionalized life grows (Deleuze, 1988: 70-93).

In this essay, I would like to explore the tension between attempts to escape modern institutions and the extension of modern institutions, between the failure due to over-extension and the creation of new zones of non-institutional life. To explore this tension, I will take a look at the other-side of institutional life. To do this I would like to suggest the concept of the 'extitution'. This is a kind of 'formless life' (Ten Bos, 2005) that exceeds, disturbs and does not fit with an institution. Some examples include the 'gay' who does not fit the institution of the 'traditional' nuclear family, the 'refugee' who does not fit into the modern state, or the 'idler' who does not fit with the disciplines of the modern workplace. Institution seeks to capture these extitutional (forms/entities?) through a range of strategies. However, this procedure remains beyond

the reach of most modern institutions and they lack the capacity to completely capture and domesticate extitutions. The result is cracks and fissures in the institutional edifice that the formless life of an extitution spills out of. Further, I would like to argue that the strategies that institutional workers use to capture these extitutions are configured in different ways. Modern disciplinary institutions seek to confine and normalize extitutions. In contrast, post-modern controlling institutions are more permissive and seek to harness extitutions (Deleuze, 1992; Hardt, 1998).

In the essay that follows, I will substantiate this argument. I will begin with accounts of modern institutions that highlight how they seek to progressively rationalize the social world. I then note that existing studies of institutions have largely missed how they target what I call extitution. I then consider some of the ways these exitiutions are handled. I give the example of 'disciplinary' and 'control' based strategies (Deleuze, 1992). I then conclude the essay by drawing out what this might tell us about what some have called our current crisis of institutions.

The institution

The concept of the institution is central to sociological thought. It has a long history that can be traced back to multiple roots including Max Weber, Emile Durkheim, and various American political reformers (see; Scott, 2001 chapter 1). The result is that there remain multiple and competing accounts of exactly what an institution is (Schmidt, forthcoming). Within the ghetto of Organization Studies, we find that definitions have been largely dominated by 'neo-institutional' accounts (DiMaggio and Powell, 1991). The typical definition we find here seems to be regularized ways of doing something that cannot be changed without a significant (social) cost. For instance in his standard introduction to the subject, Scott (2001) defines institutions as 'cultured-cognitive, normative and regulative elements that…provide stability and meaning to social life…Institutions are transmitted by various types of carriers, including symbolic systems, relational systems, routines and artefacts' (p.48). Similarly, Fligstein (2001: 108) sees institutions as the 'rules and shared meanings … that define social relationships, help define who occupies what position in those relationships and guide interaction by giving actors cognitive frames or sets of meanings to interpret the behaviour of others'.

Organization theory has largely focused on how institutions are 'rational myths' that give organizations a sense of legitimacy (e.g. Meyer and Rowan, 1977). For instance, bureaucracy can be seen as a 'rational myth' insofar as it involves a widespread meaning that is associated with an organizational structure (Meyer and Rowan, 1997: 343). Meyer and Rowan point out that this myth is highly rationalized and impersonal. They transform what are often complex human negotiations into apparently object and value free rules. They also appear to be beyond the discretion of individuals. The result is that institutions appear to be reified things that individuals must conform with to gain legitimacy and avoid sanctions. This insight has led to a deep stream of research examining the power that modern institutions can wield. This work has pointed out how institutions shape what we think is acceptable, normal and legitimate (DiMaggio and

Powell, 1983). By doing so, institutions create a kind of iron cage of conformity which delimits what actors can and cannot do. In short, institutions are engines of conformity.

The axiom that institutions create conformity has been called into question with increasing veracity in recent years. Many studies reveal how the occupants of institutions are not 'cultural dopes' who adopt the dictates laid out by an institutional order. Rather, they seek to cleverly negotiate, and at times avoid the institutional demands they are burdened with. One way to do this is by symbolically adopting institutions in a way that is decoupled from the actual day-to-day activities (Meyer and Rowan, 1977; for a recent account see: Hirsch and Bermiss, 2009). Others have pointed out that actors often have a range of competing institutions that they might draw on in any situation. This allows them to splice together a kind of institutional composite that might make their practices appear to be legitimate (Zilber, 2006). Still others have pointed out that institutions might be resisted and rejected by actors – often in defence of their own traditions (Marquis and Lounsbury, 2007). Finally, many studies have noted that actors will frequently seek to depose existing institutions and replace them with new ones which they find more sympathetic (Maguire and Hardy, 2009). Thus no matter how entrenched existing institutions appear to be, they remain relatively fragile achievements that are constantly open to question and challenge (Lawrence and Suddaby, 2005).

Thus, institutions appear to be torn between two apparently opposing dynamics. On the one hand, there are attempts to create a sense of order and conformity through the propagation of 'rational myths' (Meyer and Rowan, 1977). On the other hand, those imprisoned within these rational myths frequently attempt to challenge and escape them. I am by no means the first to register these opposite dynamics. Within the neo-institutionalist literature, Stephen Barley and Pam Tolbert (1997) have argued that these dynamics create a process of structuration: institutions establish a structure which is elaborated, interpreted and challenged through action, which instantiates a new mode of structure. Another way these two apparently opposing forces have been bought together is through Seo and Creed's (2002) 'dialectical model' of institutional change. They point out that contradictions in an institution will often create an opportunity for actions on the part of institutional entrepreneurs who seek to reconstruct or rework an institutional structure. This action then solidifies into a new version of institutional structure with its own brand of contradictions.

What these two well-know models have in common is an emphasis on a cyclical relationship between institutional structure and the various attempts to transform that structure. However, they both share a common assumption. Following much of the current obsession with institutional change, they are interested in wily and skilled actors who take advantage of gaps and complications in existing institutions. What this view misses is that how the various attempts at transformation of institutions often escapes the institution. We do not really understand how institutions seem to be fuelled by and find their meaning in the on-going work of capturing institutional escape attempts. We don't know how institutions capitalise on all these attempts by actors to avoid having their lives reduced to the institution. In what follows, I would like to suggest that the concept of the 'extitution' might help us to begin to understand this process.

The extitution

To begin considering the other side of institutions, I would like to start with a fairly simple axiom at the centre of Meyer and Rowan's (1977) analysis of modern institutions (which of course derives directly from Weber). The idea is that modern institutions rationalize. They seek to apply the rational institution to anything - mental illness, work, administration, or poverty. Dealing with these issues involves bringing them within the boundaries of a modern institution and subjecting them to rationality (or at least the mythical semblance of it). However, this process relies on one thing: an irrational other which the rational institution can work on.

This point was comprehended by Michel Foucault in his analyses of many of the great rational modern institutions such as the hospital, the asylum, the human sciences and the prison. He pointed out that each of these institutions would produce a whole discourse that made new issues visible and new things sayable. He also pointed out that these discourses created problems they could attempt to solve. The discourse of psychiatry created the figure of the mentally ill to which it would subsequently offer itself as a treatment (Foucault, 1965). Similarly, the discourse of criminology created the criminal who it would help to regulate and rehabilitate (Foucault, 1977). Medical discourse created the ill that could be cured (Foucault, 1994). In many ways these problems come prior to the elaboration of the institution itself. Institutional workers construct the character they do their daily work on. But this work should always remain incomplete. An institution always needs its problems to work on. The prison needs criminals, the hospital needs the sick, and the asylum needs the mad. Indeed, most of these institutions actually seek to extend the number of subjects who they address. This actually means that instead of trying to address the problem these institutions set out to solve, they actually want to extend the problems they can address. The medical profession has been famously successful at doing this by extending the category of 'medical problem' from immediate pain to nearly any discomfort from deflated libidos to depression to naughty children. In this way, institutions are myths that manufacture problems.

What is particularly interesting about the problems of institutions is that they appear to have a kind of formless quality. Before institutions set to work on their objects, they do not fit into the neatly formed categories institutional workers know how to deal with. Rather, these problems appear as 'formless life' (Ten Bos, 2005; see also Agamben, 1998). This is life that has not yet taken on a form that is recognisable in an institutional field. It is bare life that is not a citizen, a prison inmate or pupil. It is life before an institutional matrix has given it characteristics. It is not recognisable by the institution. It lacks a voice and cannot speak the language that an institutional framework might use to classify it. Because it does not (yet) fit into the categories and strictures of the institution, this formless life cannot be attributed anything like rights, much less any kind of responsibilities.

This formless life is excessive. By this I mean that it continues to overflow the capacity of an institution to cope with the problems it poses. One thinks for instance of an educational reformer marvelling at the unfathomable supply of stupidity, a mental health reformer talking about the mind-boggling depths of insanity, or a sexual health

campaigner speaking of the uncontrollable depravity of human desires. Each of these problems is not just beyond our meagre human capacity to deal with. They actually have no end. They are essentially excessive and cannot be brought under control. In short, institutions typically pit themselves against something that always overflows them. For the institutional workers, there is an endless supply of this incurable formless life to work upon. The excess that constantly overflows the institution is the force that activates institutional order and gives it an endless supply of subjects to work. It is the formless life that institutions seek to domesticate. This is what I will call an extitution.

The extitution is a figure that threatens to undo the regularity and order established by the careful regulation of an institution. The criminal is not the law-abiding citizen. The insane are bereft of rationality. The sick have taken leave of health. The child is in need of education. The act of giving order to an extitution therefore involves an attempt to give rise to institutional work. The asylum cleans up insanity and seeks to restore the rule of rationality. Institutions that regulate the market get rid of irregularities and return us to the normalities of perfect competition. The corporation eschews idlers and ensures efficient return on investment. The work of institutions involves attempt to give rational order to that which exists outside of institutional order, that which is essentially formless.

The creation of an extitution involves giving an ordered place to dis-orderliness, a form to formless life. Many years ago now, Berger and Luckmann (1967) pointed out this happens through a process of reification whereby our raw flow of experience is assigned meaning, which is then inter-subjectively agreed upon, and becomes reified into common categories and typifications. Through this process, a common language and common constructions of subjects and objects emerge. For instance, the discourse around the whale as a pleasant, playful, awe-inspiring and perhaps even spiritual creature has been instrumental in constructing a whole whale watching industry (Lawrence and Philips, 2005). Similarly the discourse of refugees as deserving victims allows a whole series of activities such as the provision or various forms of care (Maguire et al, 2004). The point seems to be that the discourse associated with an institution constructs a certain subject that the institution can address its work to.

But lurking behind these constructs is something that cannot be fully captured by existing discourses. Despite the massive profusion of discourse around it, insanity cannot be captured completely in discourse. Nor can the emotionally loaded figure of the illegal immigrant. As I have already pointed out, these figures appear to continually overflow the boundaries that institutions seek to place around them. They are always more than the institution. In some ways, they are unfathomable. They continue to escape the experts. Nonetheless, these experts try to spin all manner of strategies for capturing these extitutional elements.

In what follows, I would like to look at two strategies that many institutional workers have employed in their attempts to capture extitutions. Building on Gilles Deleuze's (1992) short essay 'Post-script to societies of control' (see also Hardt, 1998), I would like to argue that in some institutions, we have witnessed a stunning transformation in the way that extitutions are captured. This has involved a shift from disciplinary institutions to controlling institutions. Discipline captured existitions through strict

categorization, containment, using them for negative educational purposes and being a space of marginal insights. In contrast, institutions based on principles of control have developed a more permissive approach to extitutional elements. This works through facilitating the blurring of categories, spatial openness and extension, using extitutions for positive educational purposes and bringing them to the very centre of the institution. In what follows, I will look at each of these configurations in a little more detail.

Disciplining extitutions

One of the central problems that institutions face is how to deal with extitutions. During what we might loosely call modernity, one of the dominant institutional responses to coping with and capturing extitutions was discipline (Foucault, 1977). This involved 'vast spaces of enclosure' (Deleuze, 1992: 3) such as the factory, the panoptic prison or the large hospital. These total institutions sought to discipline the various extitutional elements they contained. They did this through a range of strategies such as categorization and containment, using extitutions as a negative example and drawing on them for marginal insights. In the rest of this section I will look at each of these strategies in some more detail.

Modern institutions are sorting machines. Their driving question is 'what category do you fit into'? This activity of sorting and categorization in many ways is the very life-blood of institutions. Douglas (1986) points out that institutions work by providing a set of categories in which people and things are distributed. These categories literally become the world-view of that institution. One example is Appellation d'Origine Contrôlé (AOC) which is used to designate French wines by rank (Cru, Grand Cru etc) and region (Champaign, Côte du Rhône etc). The French wine industry is structured according to these categories that are maintained not just by an agency that designates wine (the *Institut National des Appellations d'Origine*), but also a set of national and international laws. These divisions are also maintained by the organization of wine in shops (where French wine are arrayed on shelves by Region), wine guides and critics (who use these categories are reference points) as well as consumers (who also use these categories to structure their vinological desires). Categories become deeply entrenched sign-posts that consumers use to negotiate their world.

A similar process of categorization has been noticed in aspects of the social world as far flung as crime and cheese, trees and terrorism. Institutions work by sorting what is often rather uncertain and malformed material into categories (Jenkins, 2000). This often happens through the process of the examination. Individuals and objects are put to the test to see if and where exactly they fit into these categories. Students are tested to see where they fit into various ranks ('gifted' or not). Cheese is inspected to ensure that it fits with AOC designation (for instance, whether Roquefort is stored in particular caves for the correct duration of time). The mentally ill are assessed by experts to designate them according to the categories of the Diagnostic and Statistical Manuel (DSM). Sorting and categorization is one of the central parts of modern institutional work.

A second way extitutions are handled is through containment. Prisoners are locked up, students located within a grading scale, and the insane are constrained to their wards.

Perhaps the most obvious way that containment works is through spatial confinement. If we consider any form of modern institutional architecture, we cannot help but be struck by the significant effort that is put into attempts to cordon off and restrict the extitutional elements that lurk within. Prisons, schools, barracks and factories all had well policed walls. These walls were there not just to keep the extitutional element in, but also to keep the rest of the world out. As Erving Goffman (1959) pointed out some time ago, these modern institutions were often 'total institutions' insofar as they constituted a whole world for their occupants. They provided for all the needs of the occupants within their walls. They feed, cloth, council and even bury their occupants. The result is that there is no need to go outside the institution. And if the occupant ventures out, they can be struck by the looming and lurching horizons of the chaotic outside world. Thus the walls of the institution not only protect society at large from what is contained within, they also protect the occupants from the horrors of the external world.

But these walls are not the way institutions work. As Michel Foucault (and his many followers) have pointed out, the principal way that extitutions are contained is through discipline. These disciplinary mechanisms come in all shapes and forms including the examination, the time-table, the surveillance system, and other modes of modern control. As we know, these modes of control work by giving the individual a precise location within the institution. They locate people in a precise fashion. Moreover, these disciplinary mechanisms are internalised by the subjects of institutional discipline. They inscribe the practices and very souls of the occupants of an institution. They become their daily co-ordinates, their attitudes and their movements. Indeed, the very life-world of an institution becomes made up of these disciplinary regimes. They regulate the ebb and flow of the institution.

Some-times extitutions are put on display. Doctors would bring 'interesting cases' of people who do not precisely fit into existing definitions before an audience (be it of medical students or the learned public). Also, we know all too well how the media typically feeds off cases of extreme or abnormal behaviour such as extreme crimes or bizarre medical conditions. Part of such instances seems to be some kind of voyeuristic declaration of 'Look here! How strange!' Another more striking aspect is the fact that this base voyeurism is followed by the statement – 'Let this extreme example be a lesson to you!' What seems to be occurring here is that extitutional anomalies become a negative educative prop used by the institution. Perhaps the most well known example that Foucault (1980) gives is the hermaphrodite Herculine Barbin who did not clearly fit into either category of Male or Female. Herculine's body became an important source for a whole series of institutional labours by priests and the medical fraternity. They tried to fit this curious body into the categories. When Barbin's body did not yield, s/he became an example to educate the broader public about the strange constitution of her reproductive organs as well as the importance of the institution of gender. Similarly, the frequent appearance of depraved criminality in the press is used to educate the public in the necessity of upholding the law. Modern anthropologists put the strange rituals of 'pre-modern' people on public display to remind their audience of their superiority.

The final way that extitutions are dealt with in disciplinary regimes is by seeing them as a kind of ladder to higher levels of insight. An institutional anomaly is thought to be

something that can provide access to the mystical and mysterious. This lends it a positive and educative character. For instance, mystical and insightful qualities are often projected onto the mentally ill. They are sometimes seen to provide greater insights into the reality of life and higher spiritual powers than the sane. The idiot savant is celebrated as someone who is both severely limited, but also especially gifted. What these examples seem to suggest is that anomalies that transcend or least confuse institutional reason can be re-harnessed by an institution as a kind of special power for dealing with and confronting unique situations such as the passage between life and death. In these cases, the extitution is a kind of element of magic in what are otherwise highly constrained and regulated systems. However, it is an element of magic that is highly limited in scope and application.

Embracing Extitutions

The modern solution to the menace of extitutions was discipline. As I have already mentioned, the archetypical modern institution was Goffman's total institution – the place where you could never check out from. Such disciplinary institutions continue to litter the social landscape. There are still containment systems like refugee camps or the gigantic Foxconn factory in Southern China that makes Apple's iPods. And they shock us. This is because they grate against our liberal sensibility of freedom, movement, individualization and personal development. We find these systems of containment so scandalizing because they do not allow their inmates to 'be who they really are'. In other words, we find them abhorrent because they rob us of our apparently innate desire to nurture our authenticity. And as some have pointed out, it is authenticity that is the central practical ethic today (e.g. Fleming, 2009). All we want is to just be ourselves.

This was once the rallying cry of various radicals in nineteenth century Paris (Berman, 1970) and among many of the post 1968 social movements (Boltanksi and Chiapello, 2006). Today, it is a demand that has been incorporated (to some extent) into nearly every modern institution including the workplace, consumption, culture and politics. Today, even the military promises potential recruits authenticity. A recent French Army recruit campaign used the slogan 'Denvenez vous-même' (be yourself). This reminds us that some institutions no longer seek to contain the extitutional elements within them. Rather, they seek to rework institutional boundaries that had contained and disciplined this unformed life. For sure the extitution is still worked upon, still institutionized, but in a different way. This is largely because 'the walls of the instiution are breaking down so that the inside and the outside become indistinguishable' (Hardt, 1998: 149). This has resulted in a situation where what were once relatively fixed boundaries and categories have become fluid. Instead of seeking to eradicate difference, it is harnessed. This is the form of every present yet constantly change power which Deleuze called 'control'. In what follows, I would like to suggest this embrace has led to some fundamental changes in extitutional handling strategies on the part of institutional workers.

I have argued that one way modern institutions deal with extitutional elements is through fixing them into safe categories. But it seems that post-modern instiutions have actually registered one the catch-cries of 68: 'don't label me, man!' Instead of seeking

to strictly fix a label or classification onto inmates, intuitions actually seem to facilitate the blurring of existing categories. For instance, the modern workplace has produced a massive blurring between the category of the worker and the non-worker. This has occurred through uncertain boundaries between who is actually part of the firm and who is not. Contemporary workplaces are usually staffed by many operatives who are short-term consultants, temporary workers, contract workers and so on. Even those who are certain about their employment status have become unclear about what is work and what is private time (Fleming and Spicer, 2004). This has happened as aspects of working life invade more and more of our non-work life. At the same time, the organization seeks to draw increasingly broad aspects of our private lives into work (Land and Taylor, 2010).

A second example of institutions seeking to blur categories is recent changes that have come about with the 'enterprising up' of many social welfare programmes. Previously, those who found themselves in need of welfare had to put an inordinate amount of effort into trying to fit into various categories that might not strictly define them. Today, it seems strict categories between welfare recipients and those who work are being called into question. This blurring is done under the rubric of helping people to shift away from state dependency, feel empowered and ultimately re-entering the labour market. What we notice in both these cases is that instead of seeking to up-hold long established categories and points of difference, institutional workers focus their effort on blurring established categories. The extitutional anomalies that don't fit are not something to be forced into a category. Instead, they are to be celebrated.

A typical strategy of handling extitutions we have already looked at involves containment. Often this takes on very physical manifestations such as locked doors, fences, cells, and inescapable architecture. If we speak of 'institutional architecture' we seem to be referring to a complex of buildings that are faceless, impersonal, standardized and above all imprisoning. The central aim of much of this kind of architecture is to keep people inside, often rendering them unseen by the outside world. For sure, much of this institutional architecture still exists (think of a refugee camp for instance). However, many modern institutions have replaced this strict barred off and regulated world with something altogether different. In its place, we often find an architecture that actually encourages the exposure of the institutional inmates to the outside world. People are no longer immobilized in a particular place. Rather they are encouraged to be mobile, move around and to float in a creative and free way. Walls have been replaced by porous zones. Individual confinement has given way to internal cafés, encounter zones and spaces of play. And concealing concrete has been replaced with transparent glass.

These architectural changes are all underpinned by a broader attempt to facilitate interaction and movement. Yiannis Gabriel (2005) captures this in an essay on post-modern organizations that he describes as 'glass cages'. What is interesting for Gabriel is that this new institutional architecture encourages various forms of surveillance and exhibitionism. People know that they are always on display, and they act in such a way. This often involves displays of being unique, special and talented. The people inside are certainly not hidden away – they are out on display. However, at the same time as certain aspects of organizational life are put on show, there is also a whole underground

machinery which is hidden from view and quite opaque. In many ways this new form of architecture seeks to render some aspects of these institutions 'transparent'.

Perhaps the paradigmatic example here is the reconstructed German Reichstag that introduced a 'transparent' debating chamber so that the public could directly view what is occurring inside (Barnstone, 2005). This involves an attempt to expose the dirty process of making laws, which, as we might remember, Bismarck advised we should not ask after ('Laws are like sausages. It's better not to see them being made'). Such a mode of making everything public has rapidly spread into most institutions. Organizations now gleefully create open-plan workplaces that encourage a flow of people through them. State bureaucracies try to render their internal workings visible, and in some cases encourage citizens to get involved. Even the military has got in on the act. For instance, the Swedish military recently relocated its Stockholm college from a 19th century central city building with thick and defensible walls to a glass and steel office complex which encourages people to pass through the site, feel engaged and render the activities of the modern military transparent.[1] We are reminded that while this building may provide an appealing transparent façade for the military in Stockholm, it also draws our attention away from other aspects of the military which may not be so transparent. The aim is to make the people within this institution visible and accessible to the external world – but also ensure this transparency does not go too far.

Modern institutions tended to use extitutions as a way of teaching people a lesson. I have argued that the lesson is usually a negative one. It serves as an example of what *not* to do. For the scholarly, they are peculiar cases that tickle the interest. In regimes of control, the educational value attributed to these anomalies has changed. Instead of being elements for vilification and questioning, they have become the focus of what we might call positive educational activity. Elements that don't fit an institution are held up as examples of what *should* be done. They become a kind of example of something to aspire to, or at least to be carefully studied and learned from. We certainly saw examples of this in many post-1968 movements that sought to radically challenge modern institutions. One of the dominant themes that ran through these movements is that the extitutional elements at the centre of institutional life should be celebrated for their positive insights and potentiality. For instance, the patient in the mental asylum should not be seen as some kind of sick deviation from the norm. Rather they should be seen as providing more lucid insights into reality than those who guard and maintain the institution. This is because they are though to have a more profound and closer relationship with reality than normal 'sane' society. Designing institutions becomes about creating a space where insights can be expressed, nurtured and perhaps learned from.

Another instance of this is the current obsession with 'outliers' (Gladwell, 2008). These are actors who wilfully adopt practices that seriously challenge or question existing institutional schemes. The student of institutional life is asked to turn their attention to these people who radically disturb existing institutions rather than study the boring arts of conformity. Indeed, if we were to believe the scholarly literature on the subject, it

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1   I thank Fredrik Weibull for providing me with this example.

would seem that radical change has become the institution of the day. Being a good institutional player today means learning the arts of interrupting the institution.

In disciplinary regimes, extitutional elements were often seen as a way of accessing higher-level insights and hallowed places thought to be inaccessible to those who dwelled at the heart of the institution. They provided something special which only a few could grasp. And these rare insights were often to be found at the margins of the institution. Under regimes of control institutional anomalies don't just occur in marginal situations. They become seen as part of institutional life. Instead of providing rare and wild insight, things that don't clearly fit have become part of the daily life of some institutions. For instance, corporations are encouraged by various management gurus to hire radicals who are rule breakers (Fleming, 2009). They are also pushed to engage with social movements and copy their unusual practices. In the words of one author writing in Harvard Business Review, corporations should seek to turn these pesky 'gadflies into allies' (Yaziji, 2004).

We can see a similar process at work in popular culture. Previously marginal individuals have become mainstream consumer products. One just has to walk down the high-street of any English town to see an off-duty accountant wearing a tee-shirt with 'criminal' emblazoned on the front of it. Although we might savour the irony, the accountant does not. They are simply consuming a brand that is described as 'renowned for it's edgy, subversive attitude and wild party loving culture'. Passers-by do not bat an eyelid at this corporate crazy man. And after-all, our weekend 'criminal' consumer is part of a longer process of the colonization of cool. This has involved the marketing industries seeking to capture what were considered to be deviant and edgy practices from jazz, drug cultures and gansta rap and turn them into marketing campaigns for anything from automobiles to life insurance (Frank, 1997). In both these instances, we notice that even the most edgy and bizarre instances become something defanged and domesticated. But at the same time, they often become one of the central things which institutions like the innovation hungry businesses and the 'cool hunting' culture industries feed off and thrive. The aim is no longer to contain this extitutional element. Rather, it is to capture and exploit its unusualness, deviance and difference.

Conclusion

In this essay, I have argued that institutions are driven by a tension between attempts to create conformity to modern rational myths and attempts to escape or resist these myths in various ways. Recent research in neo-institutional theory has partially addressed this tension by looking at how resistance can give rise to new institutions. Here I have sought to reverse this by considering how existing institutions feed off aspects that escape the institution. In order to understand this process, I have developed the concept of the extitution. I have argued that this is a kind of formless life which exceeds institutional parameters, but which institutions seek to capture. In many ways we can look at an institution as a huge machine designed to regulate and contain these extitutional elements, whereby the work of institutions is precisely this work of containment. However, I have also pointed out that extitutions are rarely completely

captured. Rather, they are excessive and often overflow the boundaries of existing institutions. This overflow gives rise to further rounds of institution building.

I have tried to show in this piece that there are at least two possible ways institutions have sought to deal with extitutional elements: through discipline and through control. The technologies of discipline developed in modern institutions certainly did not please everyone. There were many protestors who questioned institutionalized life. These include the anti-psychiatry movement, the prisoner's movement, and the de-schooling movement. At the heart of each of these movements was a desire to destroy the modern total institution and rebuild something altogether different. Their central hope was to break down the walls of the institution. Obviously these movements were often not completely successful. They did not demolish institutions as was expected. Prisons populations grew. Schooling took up more of our life. Work took over our time. Record numbers of the population are now on some kind of medication.

In some ways, we have never been more institutionalized than we are today. But if we look a little closer, we begin to realise that the churn and chug of these institutions has changed. An institutional life is no longer just characterised by regularity and discipline. Rather, the mantra seems to be innovation, diversity and experimentation. This has meant that instead of seeking to carefully contain the extitutional elements, institutional workers try to facilitate and engage them. The cumulative result was a thorough going redesign of institutions and their functioning. Instead of being designed around principles of closure and capture, the new institutional archetype seemed to be one of facilitation, boundary crossing and dialogue. The total institution is out. The open institution is in.

To be sure, empirical reality is often not quite as stark as this. There are many people on this planet whose lives are not incorporated into either disciplinary or control based institutions. Instead they rely on 'pre-modern' institutions such as kinship-based networks or exist in situations where most existing institutions have broken down (eg. Mair and Martí, 2009). There are others whose lives are totally determined and shaped by disciplinary technologies. There are others still who must deal not just with disciplinary mechanisms, but also strategies of control at the same time. Indeed, we might speculate that purely control-based institutions are relatively rare. Nonetheless, they seem to have become an increasingly important aspect of life today, which we are only beginning to understand.

The rise of control means that institutional life, for some, is lived beyond the confines of the iron cage. The boundaries of what is normal, permissible and legitimate have become increasingly porous. It is as if we increasingly occupy an institutional grey-zone. It is therefore not so surprising that the armies of neo-institutional theorists have recalibrated their increasingly complex instruments to track institutional change and irregularity rather than seeking an answer to that increasingly passé question of institutional isomorphism. It is also not so surprising that what passes for an institution in the social sciences has become increasingly gaseous. We once had a shared sense of exactly what an institution was. Today, it seems that almost anything can pass for an institution (a handshake, a meal in a fancy French restaurant, dolphin watching tours). At the same time as social scientists seem to have lost control of the concept, in our

daily lives we have lost a sense of where the institutions which we inhabit begin and end. To paraphrase Gilles Deleuze (1992), we are never finished with institutions like schools, the hospital, and the office. They are constantly present in our lives. This is because they have no beginning or end – temporally or spatially. We are always in training, always monitoring our health, and always at work (or at least on call). The result is what Deleuze so perceptively noted was a crisis in modern institutions. And this crisis is not just a question of how these institutions might be designed, created and staffed. It is also a question of how we might occupy and live within them (or perhaps outside them).

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the author   André Spicer is Professor in organization studies at Warwick Business School. He is co-author of *Unmasking the Entrepreneur* (with Campbell Jones, Edward Elgar, 2009) and *Contesting the Corporation* (with Peter Fleming, Cambridge University Press, 2007) and an affiliate member of *ephemera*.
E-Mail: andre.spicer@wbs.ac.uk

Open-process academic publishing[*]

Toni Prug

abstract   Publishing and knowledge production in academia can be significantly improved if aspects of cooperative models developed in software and networking communities are adopted. The Open Access movement focuses on the openness of the final result. The most important attributes of the development of the Internet, the Web and their communication-cooperation tools is the openness of the entire process of production. The novelty that can take many forms is in the organizational structures, decision-making and cooperation. This paper argues that journals adopting a form of Open Process could benefit by increased quality of submissions and publications, faster and more responsive pace of research and by attracting more risk taking and innovative authors. Through open-process publishing and peer reviewing clearer structure and visibility of tasks could be achieved. Equally important could be the possible internal benefits for journal management: the recognition of the most important workers and decision making in their hands, easier and improved project management, attracting new volunteers and reducing the impact of counter-productive participants. If these changes were implemented well, such open-process journals would gain readership and reputation. A simple transition model is suggested: how to start with an email list and proper cultural safeguards. Gcommons.org, a more advanced solution, is a highly configurable Free Software platform that assists open processes.

Free software and 'Open Process: why Open Access, or Open Source is not enough'

Publishing and peer review processes in academia are outdated and closed models. Key flaws are lack of transparency in the pre-publication process, a lack of dialogue in both pre and post-publication phases, and a linear use of digital media that only scratches the surface of possibilities for greater reflexivity and dialogue in order to have more powerful, effective and responsive knowledge production (Cope and Kalantzis, 2009).

The history of peer review is closely tied to state and royal censorship, and academics take turn in disciplining each other and providing a sense of order and assurance that good science is produced, so that the contract between the state and science is preserved (Biagioli, 2002: 12-13). Black box seems a correct description:

> You submit a study to a journal. It enters a system that is effectively a black box, and then a more or less sensible answer comes out at the other end. The black box is like the roulette wheel, and the prizes and the losses can be big. For an academic, publication in a major journal like Nature or Cell is to win the jackpot. (Smith, 2006)

At least in the areas I operate in (social sciences and humanities), these processes should be far more, if not entirely, open, with a provision for privacy in special cases. I call this model 'Open-process academic publishing'. The name deliberately distinguishes itself from Open Access (Suber, 2007), which refers only to the outcome of academic knowledge production being open. The suggestion is not to open the process in random ways, but in ways in which this openness – fundamentally based on volunteer participation – brings and enables more structure, more internalized working discipline, more commitment, and more ability to improve cooperation with deliberate precision, all with the goal of improving the outcomes. Since 'culture of open processes was essential in enabling the Internet to grow and evolve as spectacularly as it has' (Crocker, 2009), we could call it 'The Internet Model' (software + networking). Its potential screams for being reused, hacked, for other areas of production. Academia, especially its publishing side, seems to me capable of embracing such volunteer-core open-process cooperation.

The overall model presented here is new, though some components have been used by journals for a while. Most notable early examples are *British Medical Journal* (BMJ) and *Journal of Interactive Media in Education* (Buckingham Shum and Sumner, 2001), whose peer reviewing process contains discussion based reviewing, first private then publicly open, in several stages. Recent ones include *Papers in Physics* and *Geoscientific Model Development*. *Atmospheric Chemistry and Physics* implement multi-stage reviewing model, which includes an eight week period for public comments and another author revision prior to peer reviews (Atmospheric Chemistry, 2009a). It brings with it the following advantages: rapid publication and free dissemination, traceable peer-review, immediate feedback by interactive discussion within the scientific community, and efficient new ways of publishing special issues (no 'waiting for the last paper') (Atmospheric Chemistry, 2009b). Several journals use this model, enabled by a proprietary online publishing platform (Copernicus Publications).

In medicine, *PLoS One* (2009) journal started from scratch in 2006. Today, it is one of the largest journals by volume in the world, peer reviewed, open access and with rich use of commenting tools and automatically generated article metrics. Its primary publishing criteria are data and methodology validity, while they leave the originality and importance for readers to judge. Their downside is a highly problematic principle that authors pay substantial publishing costs, although this is somewhat balanced by a fee waiver system and by the reviewers not knowing whether the authors pay or not. In physics, *Papers in Physics* publishes the article, the reviewer's comments and the author's reply alongside the names of all involved – if the paper is considered original

and technically sound: 'This way, it promotes the open discussion of controversies among specialists that are of help to the reader and to the transparency of the editorial process. [...] reviewers receive their due recognition by publishing a recorded citable report' (Papers in Physics, 2010).

The difference between the above examples and the model proposed here is threefold. *First*, we propose a component-based highly configurable model where journals will select what type of production workflow they wish to use, including closed ones, with no external open-process components, if they so choose. Most importantly, Open Process does not stop at being an intellectual exercise; gComm(o)ns is our software whose early users include Historical Materialism[2] and Cultural Studies Association (U.S.). *Second*, Open Process is not primarily concerned with technology (the field where inspiration comes from) nor with knowledge production (the field of first application) alone. The central point of Open Process is the organization of labour and decision making in general and their relation to society. Since Open Process provides us with the trace, production can be made entirely open to inspection by anyone. In other words, open-process cooperation is a widely applicable paradigm. *Third*, Open Process aims to follow the example of Free Software ethical axioms[3] and their building of software commons, extending it further. Contrary to Free Software, Open Source was a self-declared capitalist movement whose sole aim was the attraction of investments from large IT corporations, by removing from Free Software and hacker ethics what capitalists did not like:

> Our success after would depend on replacing the negative Free Software Foundation stereotypes with positive stereotypes of our own pragmatic tales, sweet to managers' and investors' ears, of higher reliability and lower cost and better features. [...] our job was to rebrand the product, and build its reputation into one the corporate world would hasten to buy. (Raymond, 2001: 176)

Now contrast that with Free Software and GNU manifesto commitments: axioms to mandate an ethics of sharing; the creation of a software commons (Stallman, 1999); a post-scarcity world where increased productivity will translate into more leisure and less work to make a living for everyone; a reward system whereby only what can be freely shared will deserve reward (Stallman, 2009b). In short, there is a fundamental political difference between Free Software and Open Source. Since Free Software existed 15 years prior to creation of Open Source, losing Free Software from the theoretical debate, an omission typical for the vast majority of academics writing on this topic, means losing the entire political field of battle, ceding it to the capitalist model called Open Source. Open Process restores this battle ground to its coordinates, adding the work of networking communities, represented by the work of Internet Engineering Task Force (IETF) to the mix.[4]

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2   All of Historical Materialism 2010 and Cultural Studies Association (U.S.) 2011 conferences submissions have been taken through gComm(o)ns Conference system.

3   Sharing, studying and changing the source (access to source is a precondition) and mandatory distribution of changes (Stallman, 2009a).

4   IETF's 'cardinal principle' is called open process: 'any interested person can participate in the work, know what is being decided, and make his or her voice heard on the issue. Part of this principle is our commitment to making our documents, our WG mailing lists, our attendance lists, and our meeting

Critics may see Open Process as too alien to academia. A counter argument, and a strong one in believe, is that open processes, a key component of hacker ethics, have first developed and thrived in academia amongst software and networking communities.[5] Himanen draws many comparisons: in academia, a point of departure for researchers is the problem they personally find interesting. The academic ethic demands that analysis and solutions to problems to be published in order that everyone may use, criticize and develop further. Fulfilment of this is not required by law, but by scientific community internal rules (2001: 63-79). In business, almost all aspects of cooperation – goals, teams, time frames, plans, methods, distribution of results – are typically set by the hierarchy of management. In academia, teams are largely self-selected and self-managed with large levels of autonomy. Hacker ethic, widely shared amongst software and networking communities discussed here, shares all these features of cooperation. That is why I see Open Process in many ways as a good fit to academic knowledge production, and as a logical way to progress.

The model proposed here brings only some new aspects, related to the work done in the Open Organizations project (Geer, Malter and Prug, 2005a). It is an abstraction, a theoretical development of decades of developments in software and networking, and in related concepts and practices, especially in their open process part, that has already been partly reused in news production (Arnison, 2003).

What are my motives, you might ask? I am a PhD student dreading the idea of being drawn into the existing closed and opaque model. In the social sciences and humanities (dozens of journals that I checked), authors mostly have very little idea how long it will take for their submission to be processed, what the stages in the process are and how to engage with it, other than to wait for an unknown length of time. Quite a few journals do have some of these elements stated on their web pages, but it still takes many months and sometimes years, and it does not embrace open processes for better cooperation.

Given what is possible and what we can observe in the production of software and networking, the current practice makes very little sense to me. Geared against innovation, seemingly 'most appropriate for papers that contain little that is new', on average with less capable researchers often judging the work by the best ones (Armstrong, 1997: 6) – I find the current state of academic publishing depressing and unacceptable. The most unacceptable element is that we are supposed to produce new knowledge. And yet, with all the existing tools and processes for communication and cooperation, processes that gave us the Internet, the Web, and most of what is good about them, in academia, in terms of our working processes, ways of cooperation, we still mostly operate as if very little of this open volunteer based cooperation has actually happened – we mostly ignore it.

In many ways opposite to this explosion of open-process cooperation that largely originated and developed in academia by hackers, the culture of doing safe work is

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minutes publicly available on the Internet' (Alverstrand, 2004). See Kolkman (2010) for an excellent introduction to IETF's work.

[5] The best account of hackers' early MIT days (later University of California and Stanford) is in Levy's recently reissued book (2010).

widespread in academia today. Information Systems is not isolated in 'leaders *explicitly advising* new faculty *not to innovate* if they want a career' (Whitworth and Friedman, 2009a), an anti-innovation culture starts earlier. I was part of a class of twenty, first year PhD students at the Sociology department, London School of Economics in 2008, given the same advice. To increase our chances of being published, we were advised not to innovate, but instead stick to what is familiar, in order to make it easy for editors to accept our work. Avoidance of innovation and risk taking and conformance to the publishing system which discourages it, is now part of the academic training in some disciplines. It seems that changing the publishing system might be the first key step towards changing the knowledge production.

Instead of enabling better cooperation, which is the key for knowledge production, the Internet and electronic tools are used in academic institutions increasingly to enlarge and multiply bureaucratic procedures, regulations and managerial control, radically changing the university in the process (Dyer-Witheford, 2005). That seems to be the trend (Sievers, 2008: 242-3). While managers are imposing more control in many aspects (Bousquet, 2008: 12-13, 59-70), we need to ask why it is that academics are so slow in adapting those new tools and processes. One aspect, which this paper does not deal with, and which requires a separate study, is the possible use for the improvement of internal processes within the university departments: self-governance, labour relations, and organization of work in all aspects. The other aspect is the production of knowledge, most of it revolving around writing and publishing in journal papers. Is the situation as dreadful as this recent paper boldly states?

> Academics are now gate–keepers of feudal knowledge castles, not humble knowledge gardeners. They have for over a century successfully organized, specialized and built walls against error. [...] As research grows, knowledge feudalism, like its physical counterpart, is a social advance that has had its day. (Whitworth and Friedman, 2009a)

The Open Access movement and academic blogging are examples of the positive adoption. However, blogging is limited to individuals working on their own, linking and having discussion through comments. It does not apply to the full software-networking Internet model, which is not a surprise – it is not meant to be about collective, organised, prolonged production work. Still, I am tempted to argue that blogs, pingbacks (Langridge and Hickson, 2002), discussions in comments[6] (Adio et al., 2009), intense circulation of new posts and comments via RSS (RSS Advisory Board, 2009) amongst clusters of inter-linked blogs, are all elements of an early form of open-process cooperation developing in academia. Not developing in an institutional setting, but, for now, in a self-administered, out-of-institutions, way. Which is a good thing; it carries the volunteer-core spirit, an essential part of the Internet Model open-process aspect.

That said, I would not fully agree that 'science is already a wiki [...] just a really, really inefficient one – the incremental edits are made in papers instead of wikispace' (Wilbanks, 2009). However, there are several aspects of wikis, blogs and comments that

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[6]   There are reputable journals already allowing comments directly in texts – blue squares in the text are user made comments.

could lend itself well to the creation of new forms of scientific production that could be a step forward from the current journal model.

While I fully agree with Open Access (OA) movement goals, OA falls much too short of what, given the models and tools we have at our disposal, could and should be done in academia. The primary limitation of OA is focusing on the Open Source paradigm and its central attribute: openness of the final product. Which is not a surprise, given that this was the most dominant concept signifying the success of software and networking communities at the time of the creation of the OA ideas.

Today, I claim, we need a paradigm shift. Open Source is a very limited subset of the methodology that made software and networking communities so successful.[7] To re-capture what was lost in the Open Source, to go back to the Free Software and early hacker ethic, we need an Open Process and The Internet Model to replace it, and thus to expose the world to the potential of the re-use of these models in many spheres of society, starting with knowledge production.

Although it seems that most academics on journal editorial boards are already employed in universities, labour of editing and peer reviewing is unaccounted for in their university jobs. This in turn leads to lack of financial support from universities and mixed feelings about the work in journals, which makes journals easy prey for corporate publishers seeking profit alone. Open Process makes work visible, traceable and hence easier to argue for the necessity of institutional support and recognition. This could lead to more university funds for labour in journals, with the result of journals being able to offer articles for free, taking them out of expensive corporate subscriptions.

According to Iain Pirie, there is no doubt that the current model is based on the private appropriation of public labour (2009). Corporations are a significant source of funding, but hold no qualitative role in the production of journals. In the process they make significant profits, year after year rising subscription rates for libraries, with almost entire production based on volunteer labour of academics. This conflict of interest between the academic community and corporations – who fund the fraction of the total cost, yet control almost entirely the price and profits – came to prominence with the clash of titans between University of California and Nature Publishing Group (Howard, 2010). The solution Pirie proposes is sensible: why not have those funds contributed by the state, all other parts of the system are largely state funded already – why not bring publishing in-house. With Open Process and gComm(o)ns platform we are addressing lack of organizational models and tools to make such move possible.

Open-process publishing and reviewing advantages

My claim on how to use the Open Process cooperative model, how to develop it further, is partly a speculation much inspired by the practice and theoretical work in the Open

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[7]   By successful I mean inspiring hundreds of thousands of international volunteers in cooperatively creating software and sets of ground breaking network protocols, and further inspiring even larger number of people in other spheres to reuse and adopt some of their methods and ethics.

Organizations project, coming out of over two years of intense work in a distributed networked organization (Indymedia), largely modelled on hacker (and partly academic, as demonstrated by Himanen et al, 2001) organizational elements: radical openness to participation, sharing of results, peer review, working groups, extensive use of email lists and online chat, rough consensus as decision making principle and intense documentation.

Based on that experience and my reading of software and network communities, i.e. based on The Internet Model and The Open Process that came out of it, I speculate that journals implementing these processes could benefit in the following ways. Structure and visibility of tasks, processes and work done to complete them will be clearer, which contributes to the easier recognition of the workers who contribute the most work that matters to the organization. As a result of this visibility, focus on implementation work[8] and continuously carried out processes will increase, which keeps the organization alive and developing. Project management will become easier, while decision making will be placed into the hands of those who matter most, who contribute most to the implementation work, work whose progress defines the organization and ensures its continued existence. All of this will attract new volunteers and reduce the impact of the existing counter-productive internal participants. Today, given the structure of organizations across society, given our time based obligations to work place, and our waged labour, it is no surprise that it is difficult to see how these new processes of work, this hacker culture, especially its volunteer aspect, could be applicable. I'll try to argue here how it might impact academic journal publishing.

The following benefits could be gained with open-process publishing and peer reviewing:

1) The quality of submissions would increase over time – because new authors would see the history of the entire process and learn from it (from the archive of all submissions, peer reviews, editorial board comments, etc).[9] In addition, quality would increase because new authors would be less likely to submit badly written texts with no adjustments to publicly stated journal guidelines – a big problem for editors, I am told repeatedly, is the large amount of low quality initial submissions. In the current system, with externally invisible submissions, the *reputation cost* of submissions for authors is too low: they can submit any rubbish without adjusting it to the journal's guidelines and without caring for the quality of what they submit. The only people who see these disrespectful acts (towards work of editors, especially volunteer work), and who associate it with the author's name, are editors. If submissions were openly visible, the cost of submitting random, unadjusted, low quality, undeveloped papers would be far higher, since such disrespectful behaviour would be publicly linked to the author.

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8   In the Open Organizations project we defined implementation work: 'anyone doing implementation work in the group, or has done such work in the recent past (e.g. within the past two months), can participate in its decision making' (Geer, Malter, and Prug, 2005b)

9   Richard Smith's argument that 'some readers, particularly researchers, will want to follow the scientific debate that goes on in the peer review process' (1997) is the essential feature through which software and networking communities improve their work: decisions and changes debated and commented on email lists, blogs, and even in the source code (Kotula, 2000).

Furthermore, in the case of highly ranked journals their editorial decisions – which directly and strongly influence the chances of authors in the academic job market – would become visible and a possible matter of external scrutiny. *Atmospheric Chemistry and Physics* journal has been operating an open, two-stage peer review process for years, and the results do confirm the logic of my hypothesis:

> Public peer review and interactive discussion deter authors from submitting low-quality manuscripts, and thus relieve editors and reviewers from spending too much time on deficient submissions. [..] The deterrent is particularly important, because reviewing capacities are the most limited resource in the publication process. (Koop, 2006)

As both referees of this text claimed, and as proponents of anonymous and blind peer reviewing process claim, open-process peer reviewing might be a significant deterrent to many, if not to the vast majority of referees. The logic is the following: younger academics, or those with a lower career profile, or simply those whose work might be affected by any aspect of the reaction of the author who is being reviewed – none of these academics are likely to be willing to review a paper of a big academic star, if their names are revealed. According to this logic, anonymity protects the referee and gives her the freedom to respond without any possible retaliation by the author. Following the advice of referees and editors to put myself in the shoes of reviewers, rethinking the issues once more, I cannot identify with this logic. I tried. It does not work for me. If anything comes to my mind in such role playing, it is the desire to always have my name associated with the work I do. Anything less feels wrong to me, and rather unethical (Godlee, 2002). A critique behind the veil of anonymity, the key purported positive feature of the current system, seems also entirely at odds with how the new writing is produced. In writing, everything has to be referenced, the more, the better. Ideas are critiqued, improved or abolished, and it works not only because we see rational arguments in relation to each other, but because by knowing the name, the history, the previous work and intellectual, sometimes even business and political, associations of the author, we can put those ideas, both original and their critiques, in context.

Especially in the social sciences, name and biography of the author are essential ingredients without which it is impossible to evaluate the ideas. This *core logic of academic production is dropped by the current reviewing system*. After giving it a second thought, I hold that the current system is flawed and destructive to the open battle and cooperation of ideas that academia relies on through sharing, referencing, quoting. These key features could and therefore should be upheld by a new peer reviewing and publishing system, replacing the current one. Open Process gives us an option to consider.

Peer review has a long history (Spier, 2002), but it was not much researched until 1990s. A large scale randomized controlled trial with 420 reviewers by *The British Medical Journal* (BMJ) – introducing eight areas of weakness in a paper accepted for publication, giving it to five separate groups of reviews under different conditions of anonymity and blinding of reviewers – found out that 'neither binding reviewers to the authors and origin of the paper, nor requiring them to sign their report had any effect on rate of detection of errors' (Godlee, Gale and Martyn, 1998). A follow up BMJ

randomized trial, examining effects of revealing reviewers names to authors of the paper, found out that although identified reviewers produced slightly, but not significantly, better quality reviews, there was a significant difference in the number of reviewers refusing the review, with 12% more rejections (35% v 23%) for reviewers with a revealed identity. They concluded:

> open peer review is feasible in a large medical journal and would not be detrimental to the quality of the reviews. It would seem that ethical arguments in favour of open peer review outweigh any practical concerns against it. The results of our questionnaire survey of authors also suggest that authors would support a move towards open peer review' (van Rooyen et al., 1999: 26).

The British Journal of Psychiatry randomized trial a year later, with a goal to 'evaluate the feasibility of an open peer review system' through 498 reviews, found that the quality of signed groups was significantly higher, with a more courteous tone, but took significantly longer to complete. Surprisingly high number of reviewers, 76%, decided to sign their reviews (Walsh et al. 2000).

Finally, Open Process will challenge current notions of the quality of peer reviewing system. Only when we can see the full process – from the initial submissions, through the reviews and revisions after the peer reviewing process to the published version – we will be in a position to compare the two models. As it stands today, stating that peer review contributes to quality[10] seems a wild guess that lacks a proper argument and any scientific basis. Moreover, as I suggest here, only if we make all submissions visible at the time of the submission we are making editorial boards and reviewers accountable and fully rewarded for their work:

> a number of important questions about peer review can only be answered, however, by studying rejected manuscripts as well as those that are accepted. Until such research is undertaken, peer review should be regarded as an untested process with uncertain outcomes. (Jefferson et al., 2002: 2786)

Richard Smith, editor of the BMJ and chief executive of the BMJ Publishing Group for 13 years wrote one of the most damning articles on peer review and is worth a lengthy quote:

> People have a great many fantasies about peer review, and one of the most powerful is that it is a highly objective, reliable, and consistent process. [...] it is little better than tossing a coin [...] 'it is based on faith in its effects, rather than on facts' [...] it is not a reliable method for detecting fraud because it works on trust [...] it is slow, expensive, profligate of academic time, highly subjective, something of a lottery, prone to bias, and easily abused [...] it is probably unreasonable to expect it to be objective and consistent [...] Sometimes the inconsistency can be laughable. Here is an example of two reviewers commenting on the same papers.   Reviewer A: 'I found this paper an extremely muddled paper with a large number of deficits'; Reviewer B: 'It is written in a clear style and would be understood by any reader'. [...] (Smith, 2006: 179)

During his work at BMJ, several international conferences on peer review were organized, eventually leading to the BMJ switch to open peer reviewing as their default

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10   A political elephant in the room is here the question of quality. Open-process production of knowledge would provide additional ways to open up the often unspoken political aspects of quality assessments.

policy. Together with *The Journal of the American Medical Association* (JAMA) and *The New England Journal of Medicine*, they were leaders in the introduction open peer reviewing (Smith, 2005). As a reading through the peer review history to the latest experiments suggests: 'the core assumptions inherent in the process must be evaluated and adapted to the changing environment.' (Benos et al., 2007: 151).

2) The quality and innovation in published texts would increase – because of the above point one, and because opening up the whole, or most, of the publishing process would improve the quality of peer and editorial board reviews. Doing low quality, superficial peer or editorial reviews would be publicly exposed and vice versa – the possibility of a lost, or gained reputation as an editor or peer reviewer would be a motivating factor.[11] In the current model, all of that work is visible only to those few who participate.[12] In one of the most comprehensive studies, a review of 68 papers concerning peer review, a rather depressing picture is painted. At the time of writing it, Scott Armstrong had been professor for over thirty years, founding two journals and acting on fourteen editorial boards. He draws attention to the anonymity aspect of reviewing and the lack of reward, thus confirming what I concluded speculatively: 'reviewers generally work without extrinsic rewards. Their names are not revealed, so their reputations do not depend on their doing high quality reviews'. Although 'reviewers typically have less experience with the problem than do the authors', they do not contribute with any new data nor analyses, they spend between two and six hours doing it, often after waiting for months to do it. Overall, reviewers use their opinion against the scientific work of authors, often differing from other reviewers (Armstrong, 1997: 5). To complicate the whole thing further, academics are impressed by and prefer 'complex procedures' and 'obscure writing'.

Amongst several suggestions Armstrong makes is to *have authors nominate one of the reviewers*. This is especially important for innovative work, type of work that provides 'useful and important new findings that advance scientific knowledge [...] which typically conflicts with prior beliefs', and requires a paradigm shift (Armstrong, 1997: 2). Another suggestion he makes is open peer reviewing, since 'disclosure of reviewer identity allows for a deeper dialogue among interested parties [...] while once the article is pronounced "peer reviewed" and published, there is little record of the process and no means of further development' (Phillips, Bergen, and Heavner, 2009). Such open process would create lasting relationships and build a reputation for good reviewers. The logic of reputation works well in life in general, it can work well via online tools too – Ebay is a good example of quite a successful model of closely attaching behaviour to a name. Peer reviewers could still easily stay anonymous, if they choose so – they could send their review to editors who could forward it to the open-process system. In that case, they lose the reputation they could have gained for a signed well done reviewing. Neylon argued that reviewers should be 'held accountable for the quality of their work. If we value this work we should also value and publicly laud good examples. And conversely poor work should be criticised.' Recognizing that most of us

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[11]   See Kaplan (2005) as an example of a proposal to make reviewers to account for their comments.

[12]   See Fitzpatrick (2010) book draft for an extensive analysis of the problems of anonymity in peer reviewing.

do bad review at times, he states clearly why is this the case: 'After all, why should we work hard at it? No credit, no consequences, why would you bother?' Regarding the reciprocity argument, that we can only expect good quality peer reviews if we do the same ourselves, the author concludes that this may be true 'only in the long run, and only if there are active and public pressures to raise quality. None of which I have seen.'

Another couple of key points the author makes are *portability of reviews between journals* and the loss of opportunity for journals which could 'demonstrate the high standards they apply in terms of quality and rigor – and indeed the high expectations they have of their referees', only if reviews were open. Finally, 'virtually none track the changes made in response to referee's comments enabling a reader to make their own judgement as to whether a paper was improved or made worse', thus setting editorial boards of journals up as judges who can pass an infallible judgement on every aspect of publishing on the behalf of their readers (Neylon, 2010).

3) Journals who implement this process well would attract more agile and risk taking authors – because through the open-process publishing it makes more sense for authors to take more risks (which might sound counter-intuitive at first), to situate themselves less within the known/accepted knowledge boundaries, since they can rely on the peer and editorial assessments of their work done in public. This in turn can lead to less politically correct, career-opportunist position taking from both authors and reviewers and to an opportunity for more bold leaps from both sides. In short, openness would steer the reviewing assessment towards a focus on the merit of the work assessed. Hence the authors can be more confident in submitting more risky, less compromise driven works. This would lead us away from 'the modern academic system that has become almost a training ground for conformity' (Whitworth and Friedman 2009a), and away from the 'publish or perish' devaluing model whose low-risk, but well-referenced style of writing has made overall research difficult to assess. It would encourage ground-breaking authors to publish their new research early and suppress mediocre authors who often, by the sheer number of low-risk publications, prosper in the current play-it-safe system. Armstrong's research again confirmed this: as a wide variety of research points out, it is common for reviewers to reject ground-breaking papers, as 'it is more rewarding (for researchers) to focus on their own advancement rather than the advancement of science. Why invest time working on an important problem if it might lead to controversial results that are difficult to publish?' (Armstrong, 1997: 15)

If open-process publishing were widely spread, re-writing of the same papers for different journals, again for the sake of careerism, to get research points and an extra publication would be far easier to spot and expose. The current opaque system makes it easy for low-risk careerists. Whereas Open Access is contributing to this changing for better, Open Process would reduce it drastically. We could use any good web search engine to check for key paragraphs, concepts with the author's name, and it would be soon clear whether the author has already published on the topic, where and exactly what. Simultaneously, participation of the wider community of reviewers would

increase the chance of innovative, risk taking, work being spotted and it would help to develop it and publish it (Beel and Gipp, 2008).[13]

4) Journals that implement this process well would significantly raise the dynamics/pace of research – because some of the most in-depth debates that now happen on academic blogs[14] could develop thanks to the faster and open-process peer reviewing and commenting being integrated into journals in some form. The form could be shorter, still referenced as academic papers are, and arguments even more focused than those in an average 8000 words paper. My impression is that most journal papers revolve around few core ideas (often a single one), not necessarily always connected as closely as to require a single paper. Today, I believe that some of these ideas originate in blog posts. We could enable those high quality 700-800 words blog posts to be submitted, first as rough drafts, and then in a fully referenced short, still burst alike form of 1500-2000 words.[15] Since the argument would be shorter and more focused, it would be easier to evaluate, which would mean shorter turn around peer reviewing and publishing, and hence a sooner possibility for those whose work relates to it to respond.[16] Let us call this '*early screening*'. The cycle of publishing would thus follow more closely the way we research, especially for senior academics for whom 'research is often done when a few precious hours can be salvaged from a deluge of other responsibilities' (Weber, 1999). It would also contribute to possibly avoiding the fact that 'many journal papers are out of date before they are even published'; with a rather frustrating truth that many experience personally, namely that 'in the glacial world of academic publishing one rejection can delay publication by two–four years' (Whitworth and Friedman, 2009a). In addition to this, there are situations when a rapid response of scientists could be immensely beneficial (Varmus, 2009). PLoS Currents is a recently started project to provide a platform for fast publishing of scientific papers on specific issues (worldwide H1N1 influenza A virus outbreak is the first one (Public Library of Science, 2009)), using a board of expert moderators instead of in-depth peer review in order to get papers shared as rapidly as possible.[17]

5) Journals would gain readership and reputation – because of all the above and because of internal benefits and their public visibility. That is, given that they remain in a form which still justifies calling them journals. Several authors consider that the future of academic publishing will be focused on articles, with a possibility of moving towards 'public research environments' (Mietchen, 2009b) that will be displacing the notion of journals. One thing is more certain, that journals do not have a single future (Nielsen

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[13]   See how peer review functions could be developed and improved with cooperative approach, through a new system Scienstein. For a more technical explanation of Scienstein, see Gipp, Beel and Hentschel.

[14]   See Nielsen (2009b), especially the part where he discussed how New York Times cannot compete in providing scientific writing with plenty of top scientists and their blogs.

[15]   Armstrong (1997: 22-23) suggests alternative forms of articles, including publishing electronically peer reviews.

[16]   See Gura (2002: 258-260) for an open peer-reviewing model which starts with fully finished articles.

[17]   In the spirit of open process, Mietchen (2009a) provided several excellent comments and references soon after I posted first version of this text on my blog, some of which I incorporated.

2009c). Different platforms are already emerging and we will be seeing more of it in the near future. Scientific blogs are places where emerging models are discussed. There are big problems for a more collaborative model to emerge. Academic journal publishing is a hugely profitable industry (Cope and Kalantzis, 2009) achieving its profits by a paradox of the privatization of the work done by communities funded mostly by the state, selling the access to it back to those who produce it via library subscriptions. In health sciences and within most established institutions 'the current publication and review process is controlled and fiercely defended by those who benefit from it' (Phillips, Bergen, and Heavner, 2009). For Nielsen, for radically open collaboration, science lacks both tools (infrastructure) and incentives: why would one write and comment on blogs if that does not count when grants and jobs are given (Nielsen 2009a). Perhaps that is true in physics, where he works, although I doubt it. I believe cooperation on blogs and comments, and the existing journal system, can and do co-exist for the benefit of the participants in both producing better work and in enhancing their careers. For example, early exposure of this piece on the blog resulted in the text being significantly improved (in dialogue with Benjamin Geer and others), a presentation at a conference accepted,[18] and an invitation to give a lecture. Clearly, I benefited a lot from an early exposure and from developing it in the open. It also did not limit my publishing options, quite the opposite, it has increased them.

It is important to note that this type of open work and early releasing is not always possible, and I realized it immediately, while simultaneously writing another political text. This confirms that there will be different platforms, writing and cooperative scenarios and methodologies, for different situations, scientific fields and communities. Our thinking has to be open, if we are to increase the possibility of benefiting from the rupture of the centuries old model of scientific collaboration and publishing.

Internal benefits for journals

In addition, there could be enormous internal benefits for journals, all of which would contribute to their increased organizational health and development:

1) A clearer structure and visibility of tasks and processes contributes to recognizing its most important workers – due to the breaking up of a large task (publishing a new issue) into a set of defined and openly recorded smaller steps, a more precise and transparent allocation of tasks and responsibilities exposes who does what, how and when. This is crucial, since such practice, system, structure of work, rewards those who do more, better and timely work. In organizations, especially in voluntary ones (most editorial boards/collectives in social sciences and humanities), recognizing contribution, and lack of it, is one of the keys for the survival and improvement of the project. Often, in projects where the structure of openly defined, recorded and visible smaller tasks does not exist, it happens that the majority of the recognition for the work collectively done falls to the wrong people i.e. to those who have better social connections, who are in a more visible position within the communities in which the journal/project operates. This default mode of disorganization is a source of constant damage for the project. It kills

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[18]   CSA 2010, 18th-20th March 2010, Berkeley, USA

the spirit, rightly, of harder working, more if not the most important, participants. In addition, it frequently makes them either imitate the behaviour of those who collect the recognition (contribute less, collect more reputation towards your career progress), or it makes them leave the project. This in turn requires constant recruitment of new project members either who will be blind to the unjust distribution of rewards (reputation), or who will accept it as it is. If we can take is as relevant, given the differences in the fields of operation, a recent study has shown that contributors to popular websites (Youtube.com, Digg.com) are motivated by the attention they get. The attention comes from the volume of contributions. Users who get no attention tend to stop (Wu, Wilkinson and Huberman, 2009). Although the work of a contributor to Youtube.com is significantly different from a volunteer in a collectively produced journal, there are some parallels. Translated in our context here, it suggests that making the work on tasks visible (open-process publishing's key point) is likely to award most attention to those who do most of it, which is a positive outcome for any project that relies on retaining the most productive members.

2) An increased focus on implementation work and continuously carried out processes. Defining the workflow steps and stages exposes what is the necessary implementation work that has to be continuously carried out. It puts emphasis on organizations, groups, and collectives as a set of ongoing processes. It also exposes other kinds of work as less important, and hence those who do it as less essential for the existence of the project and the group. Many voluntary loosely structured groups suffer from participants who talk and communicate a lot, often object a lot as well, but contribute little to the implementation of work tasks. Frequently, these participants hinder other key group members – on whose contribution the project and group rely – from getting on with their tasks. Reducing the influence of talk and communication intensive participants who do not contribute much to the implementation work is highly positive for the survival, development and quality of the work produced.

In other words, *structured open processes* make it possible for an organization, collective, group to not be open and welcoming to any kind of participation, internally nor externally, but be selective instead. More of this kind of openness means more structure, more internalised working discipline, more commitment, and more ability to improve cooperation with precision. In a slightly more abstract terms, the more a whole is exposed, defined, and its workings and operations known and visible, the more likely we can adjust it, reshuffle it, to make it do what participants in the whole want it to do. Open processes enable this. Closed processes allow more corruption of organizational goals: the less we know about the processes, components and their relations, the more individuals can utilise the results of collective work, or of the work of others, for own goals and benefits (in academia, for their career first).

In Free Software terms, long-term freedoms to act and produce collectively do not come cheaply, and have to be defined, developed and defended. The key pre-requisite for the four Free Software freedoms (defined as ethical demands) to cooperate and share is universal free access to software source code. What is missing from the Free Software definition to give us an accurate picture of the cooperative model discussed here – although it was present in Richard Stallman's work as a hacker developing software cooperatively, and in the work of software and networking communities – is what is

visible from the Internet Engineering Task Force principles. In short, to explain the success of the Internet Model, having the source code is not sufficient. Other key components must be present: defined goals, open participation (anyone can join) and work processes, respect for and focus on competence, volunteering core, rough consensus and running code decision making principle (voting used only in extreme circumstances) and defined responsibilities.[19] This is precisely why Open Access concept and movement are not enough, nor was it their goal to implement a successful open cooperation on the trail of the Internet software-networking model. A specific organizational model is necessary too. Using the Open Source paradigm, a business friendly and self-declared ethics-free version of Free Software,[20] is even more misleading, because of its emphasis on the source code alone. Open Source is the least useful model and concept to help here, since it lacks both explicitly defined ethics – which makes it possible in the first place to define, develop and defend sharing and cooperation in Free Software – and a defined organizational model. To explain the successful model of software and networking communities, I propose a following formula: *The Internet Model = Free Software + IETF*. In other words: *software + networking*. Or, even better: *ethics + organization*.

To the existing Internet Model, I would add the following attributes as highly beneficial: first, a mapped workflow of all working groups, components and their relations, and second, a defined *exclusion process*. The first one can be done through splitting of the work in stages (recognizable, definable points in collaboration), designating working groups with known tasks and participants, and mapping their relations, their inter-processes, so that dependencies between the stages, working groups and other components of total group activity are known and visible. All of this is geared towards enabling and focusing on the openness of processes and on the contributions of those who carry out most of the implementation work. Since such type of work is the blood stream of collective work: without its movement, groups, collectives, organizations cannot produce. With open processes at each stage of work, possibility for new workers joining and participating in only selected parts of the overall production opens up.

3) *Easier project management* – increased task modularity and real-time visibility of the status and article history (anyone can anytime check the state, comments, versions, reviews of any submission on the web system used) allows for better project management, easier allocation, delegation of tasks, and a more precise sense of progress and problems. All beneficial for the general work spirit, time and resource assessments, and to keep authors who submit papers, and all other parties involved, informed correctly at all times about the full status of the submission.

4) *Decision-making into the hands of the people who matter most* – because who does what, when and how becomes visible, and because those who carry out implementation work continuously matter most for the organization, decision making can be more in

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[19] Protocol ownership, in the IETF case (Alverstrand, 2004), maintainer in the FS case, or package maintainer in the case of GNU/Linux distributions (Michlmayr and Hill 2003).

[20] Elsewhere I have argued that the ethics-free claim is false: the ethics of Open Source is a capitalist one (Prug, 2007).

their hands. For example, the Marxists Internet Archive (MIA) addresses this by defining a volunteer, and hence defining decision makers, through work contributions: 'MIA volunteers are people who have, in the most recent six-month period, made at least three separate contributions over a period of three weeks to six months' (Marxist Internet Archive Admin Committee, 2009) – not far from the above definition of the implementation work.

5) Attract new volunteers and reduce the impact of the existing counter-productive internal participants – utilizing the above task and process openness and visibility, journal editorial boards could use decision making rules similar to the MIA to attract volunteers. Through linking of decision making rights and defined implementation work, it would be recognized that a certain type of work that could be done by external participants matters more than the mere presence of existing internal talk and communication intensive participants. To reduce risk, only certain decision making rights can be given to new participants to start with, until the existing board is assured they are fit to carry out editorial work according to the journal's long term goals and strategies. This opens up groups and projects for new participants who would from the beginning adopt the culture (habits) of doing the implementation work, while simultaneously reducing detrimental influence. It could also lead to justified exclusion, or sidelining, of existing internal talk and communication intensive participants. In the context of volunteer self-managed groups, this is a positive culture to develop.

Modular process: workflows, states, actions and transitions

To summarise, fully open-process academic publishing would amount to the following being open: initial submissions, editorial collective and individual comments, peer reviews, further peer comments, author comments back to reviewers, all the subsequent drafts, and the final published or rejected text. One objection is that authors would want only their final version clearly marked, used and quoted. A way to ensure this is to map and implement the entire production in software: modularise and define the workflows, roles, states, their actions and transitions. This gives us a good control of what is exposed publicly, when and how, thus enabling us to address wishes and concerns of involved parties: authors, editorial boards, reviewers. A workflow diagram (see figure 1) will explain this best.

As the submission moves through the states of the publishing process, its status changes accordingly.[21] The system has different *roles* (Author, Editor, Reviewer, Copyeditor) which require to take *actions* at a specific article state. Comments can be left at the time of state change. Once a state change is made, additional automated actions (called

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[21] Critical Studies in Peer Production journal, following an alternative evaluation model (democratic knowledge exchange system design) developed by Whitworth and Friedman (2009b), implement the concept of signals (2010), where reviewers signal what they think of the article in eleven categories, instead of rejecting or accepting it.
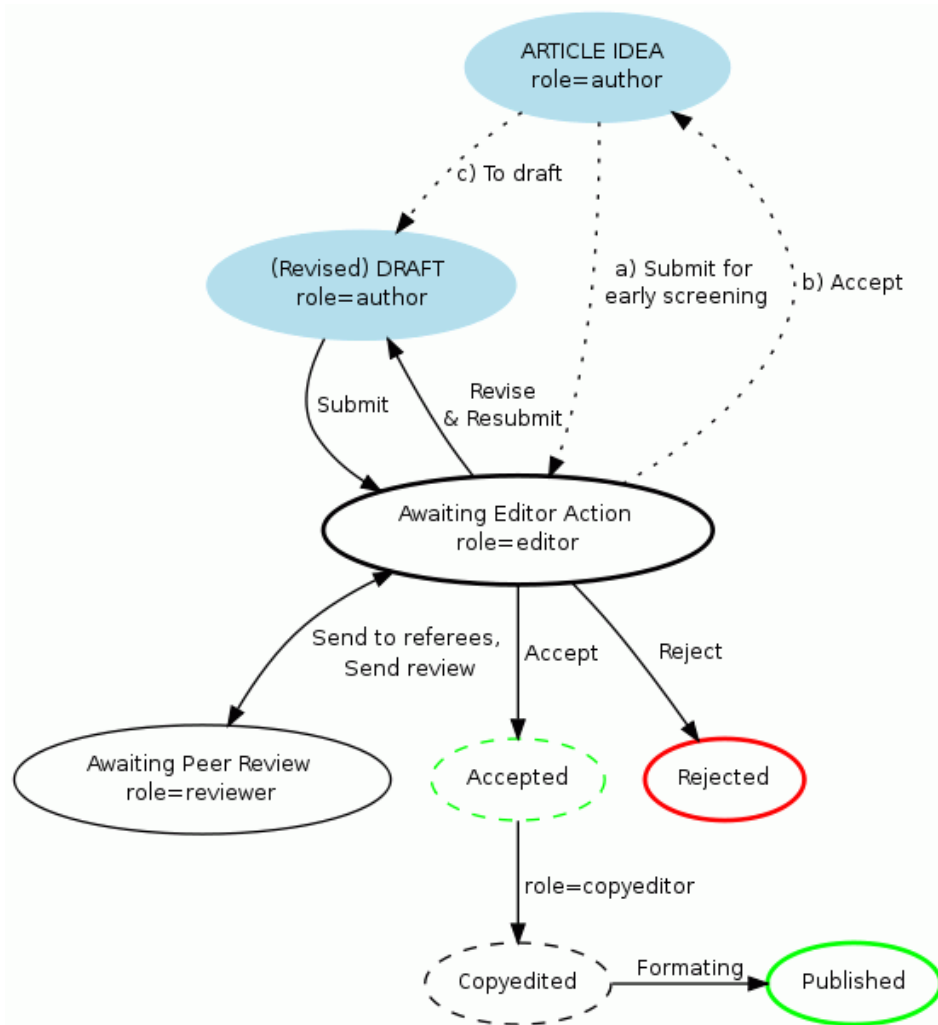
Figure 1: gComm(o)ns article workflow with peer review (Grigera and Prug, 2010).

transitions) can be configured and programmed to run.[22] Logged in editors can see queues with the latest articles in a given stage (imagine it like an RSS feed on the side bar of a website).[23] Editors can also assemble a personal dashboard, creating an individual view of the production process, selecting article queues and other available components. This provides a complete view of all the latest articles in the publishing process. Here is one such dashboard showing six state queues (Submissions contains submitted Drafts) with the latest articles (figure 2):

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[22]   Sending an email to inform author about an article being accepted is an example. Transition can also be time defined (Ohtamaa, 2009), providing a mechanism to send emails about overdue tasks.

[23]   One of the reasons we choose Plone content management system to implement gComm(o)ns is its inbuilt support for workflows and states (Stahl, 2008).
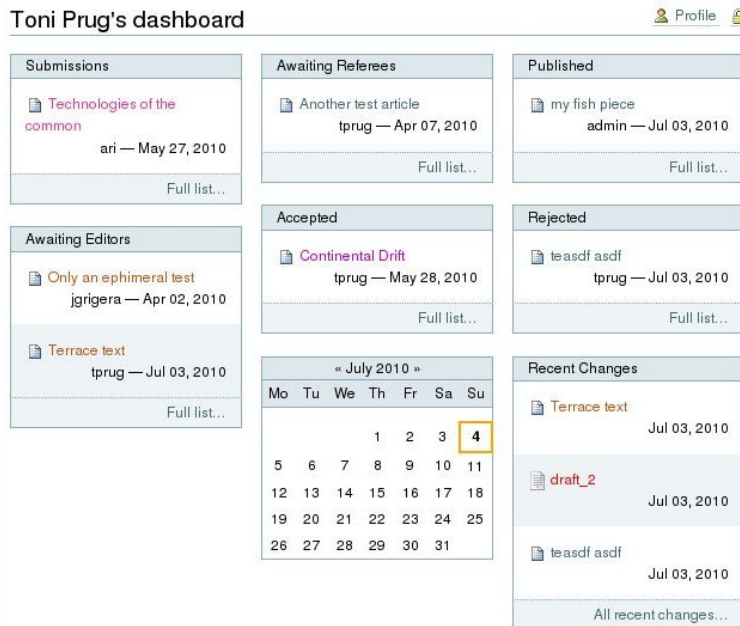
Figure 2: dashboard.

This is a highly flexible system, and with relatively small changes, available mostly through configuration files and with small additional programming, each journal can configure its own workflow. It would be interesting to see differences in editorial models becoming visible as different journals start adjusting the platform to their needs.[24]

The picture I present here is quite a developed system. However, existing tools, as simple as a blog software and freely available wikis, blogs and content management systems (Drupal, Joomla, Wordpress) can be customized well enough to enable us to start working using open-process collaborative practices with a significant degree of labour saving automation and other benefits now. Some of these are available in commercial hosting packages with customizable point-and-click installation, backup and administration for less than few hundred pounds per year. It is the human element – seeing the potentially positive benefits, seeing them being larger than the risks associated with those changes and the risk of remaining in current closed models, changing the habits of editorial boards – that is the biggest obstacle.

A simple transition model, issues and research threads

The above elaboration is perhaps too complex to implement straight away, to be the next step in a move from a closed access journal, to an open-process one. Ideally, we

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[24]   Although Open Journal System (OJS), a widely used journal publishing system, has the concept of workflow (Public Knowledge Project, 2008:12), we found it rigid, too difficult to adjust to the needs of different journals and open process optional aspects we required.

need simpler transition models.[25] One option is borrow from the software development model through email lists. Authors could be asked to provide a summary to start with (up to 1000 words), and editors would comment at the prospect of the central idea developing into a full article of acceptable quality. They could do this much more quickly than traditional peer review, because they would not have to read an 8,000 words article to find out that there is a serious problem: it is well known that it is much cheaper and quicker to fix bugs at the design stage.[26] This is what I proposed we call 'early screening'. Indeed, to improve peer reviewing, some of Armstrong's suggestions are very close to ours:

> With an early acceptance procedure, researchers could find out whether it was worthwhile to do research on a controversial topic before they invested much time. An additional benefit of such a review is that they receive suggestions from reviewers before doing the work and can then improve the design. (Armstrong, 1997: 17)

The author would also get a good idea of how receptive the reviewers are to the article, and thus how likely it is to be published. This helps everyone avoid wasting time on submissions that have no chance of being accepted, and yet, most important, the quality control role of the peer reviewing process is maintained. Network of peer reviewers used by the journal could also be invited to in this process (another email list could be used for editors and peer reviewers network early screenings). It also means development of a community of peer reviewers whose interest becomes to increase the reputation of a journal in which they publish. Instead of publishing issues on a regular basis, the journal can publish each article electronically whenever it is ready. Articles get published when the community consensus is that they are good enough to publish. At any given time, if there are no finished articles, the journal does not have to publish anything; thus there is no pressure to lower standards or to rush the process in order to meet a deadline. A print issue can be treated as the 'Best of', or a special/themed issue, containing only a selection of what has been published on-line.

Parallel with issues and special issues, a new form of bundling articles together could be even more suitable. Let us call it *research threads* (Prug, 2010). I find that calls for special issues are often a frustrating experience. I frequently find the ones I like, but cannot interrupt what I am at that moment working on and switch to write for the special issue. This happened on many occasions. Every single academic colleague I asked confirmed it frequently happens to them too. Here's the reasoning: a call for special issues often goes out 6-12 months in advance. By the time an author hears about it, the author can be faced with only a few months left until the deadline – this frequently seems to be the case – unless the author is already part of circles through which she/he will get informed directly (this also seems to be the pattern). Researching and writing a good academic article requires several months, often much longer. By the current dynamics of special issues, many authors that do think they have something to contribute and are willing to write on the topic end up missing the opportunity. This is

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[25] The idea for this section comes from Benjamin Geer, who commented substantially on an early version of this text on my hackthestate.org blog. Unexpectedly, developing open process in academia ended up being done in the open.

[26] See Atmospheric Chemistry (2009a), where the first draft gets posted on a website for an eight week long open discussion, after which it gets edited, to finally enter the peer reviewing process.

why special issues are more collections of articles of existing clusters/mini-networks of academics, rather than collections of the best and most suitable work that is being done on the given topic at given moment in time. I do not believe that special issues, as a form, are suitable any more for the best possible production of knowledge. Instead, I propose a model of research threads, with two distinct features: 1) *long deadlines* – minimum of two, perhaps even three years ahead; 2) *ongoing publishing* – submitted articles are published within a research thread as soon as they are accepted and peer reviewed, in order to present new research as soon as possible, to make the research thread alive (with possible responses to published articles) and to not make authors wait for a long time before their accepted article gets published.

Several parallel research threads running simultaneously would give the journal a distinct identity and a sense of constant development through the current research threads; since papers could be posted closer to a form of dialogue, responding closely to each other.[27] In the simplest and most open form, all of this could be done on a publicly visible email list, thus enabling journal readers to get engaged through this open process. There are significant problems with the processes as open as we are suggesting here. Although authors might like the more extensive peer reviewing that is likely to happen on an open mailing list, it is to expect that most of them would not want to have their work cited, nor used anywhere, before the final version accepted by the journal is not ready. A way to alleviate this (also suggested by Armstrong) is to have the right cultural safeguards. There would have to be some principle like 'respect for peer review', which meant that citing journal-mailing-list messages and preliminary drafts in academic articles would be considered a huge taboo. Academic ethics would have to include the idea that you can criticise preliminary drafts as much as you want, but only on the journal-mailing-list. If you want to criticise them anywhere else, you have to wait until the final version, or a draft version approved by the author, is published. Another problem is competition. In academia, ideas are essential starting elements in the chain of valorization. Authors might avoid early screening or draft peer reviewing on open mailing list because of fear of their ideas being stolen. A closed email list might be more appealing to authors. However, what is lost with closed email lists are several aspects that make software model successful. First, with no visibility of the reviewing process, readers cannot judge the quality of the work done by reviewers and hence reviewers do not gain reputation (assigned to them by the readers) from doing it. Second, new reviewers cannot join the project, nor can author submit, on the basis of reading and judging first how its reviewing processes operate. Third, knowledge produced in the process of reviewing cannot be reused and applied elsewhere. Fourth, the process of reviewing itself cannot be studied freely, thus reducing the possibilities of it being improved. Software model thrives on all of these four features. With the Free Software model, even a tiny amount of code can always be traced and attributed to the author. A single character changed in the code can fix an important bug. With ideas, early rough versions cannot be easily traced and attributed: they can be stolen and developed in different directions.

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27   Lateral, a new online publishing platform by the Cultural Studies Association (U.S.) embraced research threads (Burgett and Martin, 2010).

Final words

When I started writing this article, I thought there are multiple risks, drawbacks, significant additional labour investments, transition plans, and other reasonably raised issues to be addressed, in order for this proposal to make sense to the editorial boards who will be making decisions whether to try adopting elements of open-process academic publishing and peer reviewing, or not. What I found through research surprised me. I have been convinced that successful journals that do not take risks and change towards open-process participatory publishing in some way, risk losing most. They risk losing relevance to new journals that could capture the attention of the academic community in a given field if they embrace elements of open-process possibilities as their competitive advantage.

Implementing open processes widely would also present an opportunity to challenge the logic behind journal ranking tables and other existing metrics. A demand could be formulated to open the processes of all ranked journals. Seeing editorial work – what gets rejected, what accepted, and on the basis on which arguments and reviews – could provide us with the arguments to open up debates and pose a challenge to the ranking tables, rendering them less authoritative.

Furthermore, open-process publishing would make labour in journals visible, thus enabling the demand to account for it in academic employment contracts. This would reduce the rate of unaccounted free labour. Most important for universities that have to buy back expensive access to journals edited, peer reviewed and written by their own staff and other academics on university salaries: it would enable us to quantify financial investment of universities in the production of journals and academic books, thus forming the clearer argument for re-negotiating, or perhaps abolishing the control of corporate publishers over the access to journals and books. In other words, Open Process would provide a strong financial argument for more open access journals and books.

Finally, implementing open processes would also open up the biggest paradox involved in the academic knowledge production. Namely, both labour and processes through which works of academics are selected for publishing are mostly opaque, erratic, unreliable (BMJ trials evidence) and not accounted nor directly paid for. Since allocation of academic jobs is to a large degree closely related to this labour and these processes (authors that publish in highly regarded journals get jobs and best position), it follows that the allocation of jobs in academia is to a large extent based on opaque, erratic, and unreliable basis, i.e. on journal publishing processes. This is the bitter truth of academic knowledge production that Open Process aims to disrupt.

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the author   Toni Prug is a PhD candidate at the School of Business and Management, Queen Mary, University of London. With ten years of software and network engineering and hacking behind him, he is working on organizational forms, hacking existing practices, ideologies and state-forms. Along with working with academic journals on implementing aspects of open-process cooperation through http://gcommons.org, he is working on a book, 'The Objects of Communism'. His work can be followed at http://hackthestate.org.
E-mail: tony@irational.or
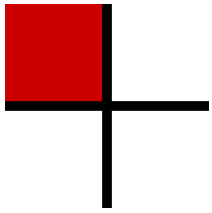
Dare to edit! – the politics of Wikipedia

Geertjan de Vugt

Between 1751 and 1772 Denis Diderot and Jean le Rond d'Alembert published their *Encyclopédie, ou dictionnaire raissoné des sciences, des arts et des metiers*. The work, of which the Discours Préliminaire des Éditeurs could be seen as the programmatic outline, is nowadays often regarded as one of the monuments of European Enlightenment. It formed an enormous project which had an almost gargantuan aim that reached beyond the geographical borders of France. The idea behind the *Encyclopédie*, according to Diderot, was that it should contain all knowledge available on the planet:

> The goal of an encyclopedia is to assemble the knowledge scattered far and wide on the surface of the earth, to expose its general system to our fellow men with whom we live and to transmit it to those who will follow us, so that […] our sons, by becoming more educated, might become at the same time more virtuous and happy. (quoted in J. Creech, 1982: 183)

It is hard to find a better summary of the Enlightenment ideals. The project of the *Encyclopédie* is an ethical project and its constituters found themselves saddled with a moral task. With more knowledge, that is, all the knowledge from all over the world, people can become more virtuous, i.e. better individuals. *Sapere aude*, dare to know, as we follow Kant's motto for the Enlightenment. But also, dare to speak! Who else than the great minds of that era – Voltaire, Rousseau and Montesquieu – could serve this moral undertaking?

Today, having gone through more than two hundred years and multiple technological developments, this motto *Sapere aude* could be turned into *Dare to edit!* As Wikipedia screams from the screen: 'Don't be afraid to edit — anyone can edit almost any page, and we encourage you to be bold!'[28] It is within the Wikipedia project that traces of Diderot´s and d´Alembert´s *Encyclopédie* return. With a network that spans the whole globe the ideal of the *Encyclopédie* seems within reach. However, it is not just the great minds that create this new encyclopedia, but anyone that feels the need to contribute. The authority of the big authors has begun to vanish, and a new form of authorship has come into existence. In Wikipedia anyone can be an author. As I will argue in this essay, this change in authorship has led to a new form of politics in which the author has not disappeared, but on the contrary can be found everywhere. Wikipedia cannot be

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[28] Wikipedia (2010) 'Wikipedia: Introduction'. [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:Introduction]

called a democracy, but constitutes what I propose to call an *authocracy*. From now on authors govern the community.

The portal to the world

The question of how to structure an encyclopedia is not only an epistemological issue, but probably even more a political one. As Michael Zimmer argues, encylopedias 'are not simply transparent windows or portals to a discrete world of information' (Zimmer, 2010: 97). Rather, they structure what can be said and what can not be said about our world. It is the structuring and through this structuring the control over the information about the world. In a more or less Foucaultian way Zimmer argues that: 'The structure of encyclopedias, then, serves the purposes of specific social and political contexts, not just organizing and presenting information, but shaping it in ways that exert control over how discourses of knowledge can even take place. The encyclopedia's structure sets the very framework within which the knowledge it means to impart becomes possible to attain' (Zimmer, 2009: 98). In this way, every encyclopedia sets up a certain poetics of knowledge. The ultimate question is how to structure knowledge in the slightest political way. Needless to say, the encyclopedia should appear to be freed of any suspicious political traits and Diderot and d'Alembert, already aware of this major problem, tried to overcome these politics by creating their own original poetics.

Before the *Encyclopédie* there were two ways of ordering that underpinned the epistemology of encyclopedias. One way was the systematic organization according to subject matter. One well known example of this systematic organization is Borges' Chinese encyclopedia (discussed by Foucault in a very lucid way in his *Order of Things*) in which a strange classification of animals can be found. This classification reduces the scattered division of topics in some larger sets of knowledge. The other option, alphabetization, leaves every single topic in place. With alphabetization, the compilers of the encyclopedia are no longer dependent on the more or less arbitrary subsumption of topics in some larger units. The structure of the encyclopedia becomes more user-friendly. It certainly overcomes the problem of the arbitrariness that constitute larger categories. According to Zimmer, alphabetization not only served user-friendliness, but had a more important role on an ontological level: 'Alphabetization was viewed as a more egalitarian method of organization […] avoiding the hierarchies of systematization and reducing all subjects to the same ontological level' (Zimmer, 2009: 100). Nevertheless, alphabetization is never a true egalitarian method for at least two reasons. First, it is always confined to the structure, the hierarchy of the alphabet, which is in essence a particular cultural structure. So by escaping the hierarchy of subject matter, one is still trapped in the hierarchy of the alphabet. Second, it is an attempt to create egalitarianism on the level of subject matter, yet leaves the hierarchy between author and reader intact.

Against this background, Diderot and d'Alembert developed their own epistemological model: their encyclopedia was a project with a future-oriented focus. Readers could become more virtuous and happy by reading their collection of all available knowledge. Therefore, the articles written for the *Encyclopédie* should anticipate future knowledge, and accommodate as well as inspire the ongoing quest for knowledge. With a very

luminous idea, Diderot and d'Alembert found a solution for overcoming the linearity of the text. They invented a system of *renvois*, of cross-references, in which they found a way out of the confinements of the alphabet. They were able to guide readers from one text to another to obtain further knowledge. It is a system of referring to not yet read texts in which it becomes clear that knowledge only exists as a whole. This system of *renvois* can be seen as the reflection of their epistemology. As James Creech argues: 'Just as the *Encyclopedia* is a permanent anticipation of its epistemological model, the text is itself an anticipation of the object – knowledge – that it is supposed to represent' (Creech, 1982: 188). Furthermore, the system of *renvois* had the function of a hidden political instrument in that it made things visible that were not allowed to be visible. Zimmer, aware of the political potential of the cross-referencing, argues that the system of *renvois* made it possible to juxtapose articles with opposing ideas, hereby placing heavy weight on the reader's shoulders: 'Diderot's *renvois* shaped the presentation of knowledge in an ideologically subversive way to the benefit of the user' (Zimmer, 2009: 104).

The system of *renvois* did not only anticipate future knowledge. Seen from a contemporary perspective, it is possible to say that in the proposed solution to the struggle with the fixation of knowledge, the modern hypertext was anticipated. With this early hypertextual structure a premature possibility for the death of the author can be traced. However, the *Encyclopédie*'s authors were still confined to the physicality of the format of the printed book. It is only until Wikipedia came into existence that the problem of fixation is overcome, nevertheless leading to new problems.

As Diderot and d'Alembert did feel the pressure of time while working on their project, for they did not only want to represent the whole of knowledge but as pointed out above they tried to anticipate it, this gigantic task obviously could not be completed by two people only. As Creech shows, Diderot was aware of the fact that only a group could accomplish the moral and intellectual undertaking within the time span of twenty years (Creech, 1982: 189-190). The work was divided and each author worked individually on a text. According to Landow and Delany, this collaborative process could be called the segmentation model (Landow and Delany, 2002: 234). As a form of collaborative work, the *Encyclopédie* already challenges the romantic notion of author-genius (or author-god). There is no longer one authority responsible for the meaning of the whole text, that is, the whole encyclopedia. The several segments or lexias of the *Encyclopédie*, nevertheless, were still related to one author(ity). It kept the hierarchy between authority and reader in place. Here the fundamental difference between the *Encyclopédie* and Wikipedia can be found. At the moment of writing, there are more than 75,000 people contributing to Wikipedia. There are more than 10 million articles written in 260 different languages.[29] There is no doubt that with Wikipedia the function, and with the function the whole notion of authorship has changed. The question is not if, but rather how this authorship has changed. Which characteristics of the author-function can be discerned and which disappeared? To answer this question two texts will be discussed which recur in probably every debate on authorship from the 1960s onwards. It is true that the importance of those two texts, Roland Barthes' 'The Death

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[29] Wikipedia (2010) 'Wikipedia: About'. [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:About]

of the Author' and Michel Foucault's 'What is an Author?', for contemporary debates of authorship cannot be overestimated.

Let the dead bury their dead…

In 1968 Roland Barthes buried the author in his essay 'The Death of the Author.' According to Barthes, the author is a modern figure that emerged from the Middle Ages via French rationalism up until the moment of Barthes' publication. Before Barthes developed his anti-hierarchical argument, literary studies and criticism were 'tyranically centred on the author, his person, his life, his tastes, his passions' (Barthes, 1977: 143). But since it is never possible to fully grasp who this author is, Barthes was able to put forward that 'writing is the destruction of every voice, of every point of origin' (Barthes, 1977: 142). Now the author has been eliminated, the language of literature turned on itself and nothing but itself. As always with French theory of the 1960s, Mallarmé functions as the historical point of reference. With Barthes' discussion of this elimination, the characteristics of the author-function become clear. The author is there first and foremost to limit, to close, the text. To 'furnish it with a final signified' in Barthes' words (Barthes, 1977: 147). It is exactly this theological authority, Barthes speaks of an Author-God, that he wants to get rid of. Secondly, the author is there to put the text in the context of a temporality: 'the Author, when believed in, is always conceived of as the past of his own book' (Barthes, 1977: 145). This temporal characteristic is related to the theological characteristic in that one always has to believe in the author as point of origin. It is the author that is the creator, the one who gave birth to the work. Therefore, the author is conceived as the authority underneath the text. But Barthes showed us – like the New Critics more than 20 years before him had done – the impossibility of knowing the author. Ripped of his theological and temporal characteristics, the author is nothing more than what Barthes calls a scriptor: 'the modern scriptor is born simultaneously with the text, is in no way equipped with a being preceding or exceeding the writing, is not the subject with the book as predicate' (Barthes, 1977: 145). The only power he has is 'to mix writings, to counter the ones with the others, in such a way as never to rest on any one of them' (Barthes, 1977: 146). This brings Barthes to his metaphor of the text as a tissue, which, needless to say, has the connotation of texture, a network of quotations. The only place where those different lines come together is the reader. As Barthes' famus dictum suggests: 'the birth of the reader must be at the cost of the death of the Author' (Barthes, 1977: 148).

Later Barthes has worked this out in *S/Z*, his magnificent essay on Balzac's *Sarrasine*. In this text he arrives at the distinction between the writerly text and the readerly text. The readerly text leaves no room for the act of interpretation. That is, there is no room 'to appreciate what plural constitutes it' (Barthes, 1974: 5). There is no room for the texture of the text. For Barthes all classic texts are readerly texts. With the writerly text, however, the reader is no longer a consumer, but becomes a producer of a text. The writerly text gets its right to exist not as physical object, but as the act of interpretation. It lives by its being as tissue, as a network of multiple lines.

Barthes is very critical of the literary institution because it pushes the reader in a position of idleness, which maintains a clear division between producer and user of the

text, between owner and customer and between author and reader. The reader then 'instead of gaining access to the magic of the signifier, to the pleasure of writing, […] is left with no more than the poor freedom either to accept or reject the text: reading is nothing more than a *referendum*' (Barthes, 1974: 5). His anti-hierarchical argument does not only concern the relationship between reader and author, but the relation between consumer and the literary institution as well. Barthes' argument specifically concerns literary works. Nevertheless, the descriptions of the characteristics of the author-function he puts forward are useful in a non-literary discourse as well and describe perfectly well where the articles of Diderot's encyclopedia derived their authority from. But it is in Foucault's text that we find a more thorough analysis of this author-function.

Two years after Barthes' declaration of the death of the author, Michel Foucault, in his essay 'What is an Author', takes issue with this claim. Foucault, like Barthes, sees the turning of literature upon itself, he takes Beckett as his example, as the condition for the killing of the author. Writing is intimately linked to death: 'Where a work had the duty of creating immortality, it now attains the right to kill, to become the murderer of its author' (Foucault, 2001: 1624). There is no longer that particular personality behind the text , but only 'the singularity of his absence […] a victim of his own writing' (Foucault, 2001: 1624). It is, however, never enough to accept this claim without taking the responsibility for its consequences. Thus, Foucault felt the need to polemicize against Barthes (without directly referring to him): 'It is obviously insufficient to repeat empty slogans: the author has disappeared; God and man died a common death. Rather, we should re-examine the empty space left by the author's disappearance; we should attentively observe, along its gaps and fault lines, its new demarcations, and the reapportionment of this void; we should await the fluid functions released by this disappearance' (Foucault, 2001: 1626). It is precisely what Foucault has done, through the analysis of the problems and the functions that come with a certain form of authorship, in his essay 'What is an author?'

The first problem that serves as a prelude for the discussion of the different functions of the author is the author's name. Foucault asks what exactly the author's name is doing. On the one hand, the author's name describes the author as an object, while on the other hand it designates the person that bears that name. Furthermore, it is not something that could easily be replaced by a simple pronoun. It is not a simple element of discourse. Rather, it designates a specific type of discourse for it serves as a classification of texts. Its name 'remains at the contours of the texts – separating one from the other, defining their form, and characterizing their mode of existence' (Foucault, 2001: 1628). Although the author limits the text, it does not mean that there is necessarily only one possible meaning, which would be the intended meaning of the author, of the text.

Where Barthes' essay was more concerned with the consequences of the death of the author for the interpretation of texts, Foucault seems to focus more on the construction of authorship and its consequences for the status of a discourse. He discerns at least four different characteristics of the author-function. First, there is a legal characteristic. Texts are objects of appropriation. This characteristic came only into existence at the moment that a system of ownership and copyright rules was established. Second, the author-function is not always the same in all discourses. Even within one discourse the author-

function changes over time. Foucault points to the distinctions between a literary discourse and a more scientific discourse. In the history of both discourses authorship changes over time. An author of a scientific text from the Middle Ages has a different function compared to the author of a contemporary scientific text. The same goes for authorship within the literary discourse. The third point concerns the way the author-function is constructed. It is not a simple formation but a convergence of several aspects. In the example of Saint Jerome, Foucault sees four criteria of authenticity that are still used by modern critics: a standard level of quality, a conceptual or theoretical coherence, stylistic uniformity and the formation of a historical figure (in which one could recognize Barthes' theologico-temporal characteristic). Finally, Foucault notes that 'all discourses that support this 'author-function' are characterized by this plurality of egos' (Foucault, 2001: 1631). There are a number of voices which make it no longer possible to refer to one extra-discursive individual.

It is nonetheless possible to apply the author-function to classify or name larger quantities of discourses. Foucault names this the '"transdiscursive" position', and the authors that occupy these positions 'initiators of discursive practices' (Foucault, 2001: 1632). They should not be confused with the romantic genius of the great literary authors. Rather, one should think of the examples of Marx or Freud and although he leaves this point as a sketch, it becomes clear that these initiators distinguish themselves by setting the rules of the game. They create the possibility of other discourses and other texts.

Foucault's analysis is an analysis of the historical formation of authorship. Nonetheless, he was tempted to envision future developments for the function of authorship: 'We can easily imagine a culture where discourse would circulate without any need for an author. Discourses, whatever their status, form, or value, and regardless of our manner of handling them, would unfold in a pervasive anonymity' (Foucault, 2001: 1636). The questions will no longer be the questions concerning the authenticity of the author, but the questions that concern the status, control and circulation of the discourse. At this stage the author has become what Barthes called the scriptor, the one who is only able to mix writings, and the authority of the author has changed.

Both essays are dealing with the problem of the hierarchy between author and reader. Barthes, with his theory of intertextuality, blows up any possible relation between reader and author, which ultimately leads to an infinite relativism for where do we find the borders of a text? Foucault with his inquiry into speaking positions paved the way for the possibilities of a discourse without an author. By burying the Author, at the hands, nevertheless, of these well-known authors, the seeds for a new form of authorship were planted.

…and the new rise up

As the example of the *Encyclopédie* has shown, despite the potentialities of the system of *renvois* the hierarchy between author and reader was still kept in place. That is to say, it was only the voice of the author that could be heard. The author as authority decided what could be said and what not, what could be heard and what not, what could be seen

and what not. The authors of the *Encyclopédie* were those author-gods to whom the text as form of knowledge could be traced. Notwithstanding the polemics of Barthes and Foucault, it is only until the invention of the Internet that this hierarchy collapsed. As it is often argued, Seán Burke observes that the hypertextual construction of the Internet is the practical elaboration of the theories of Barthes and Foucault. By way of claims which conflate readerly and political empowerment, the new technologies are represented as the material embodiment of the 'Copernican overturning' by which the texts revolve around the reader rather than the author. 'The "ultrademocratic" freedom of the reader as Burke points out 'is opposed to a tyrannically author-centred literature which forces the reader down a pre-determined and linear path imposed by authorial intention' (Burke, 1998: 199-200). Landow and Delany, like Burke, see the hypertext as the embodiment of the concepts coming from French post-structuralist thought (Landow and Delany, 2002: 230). The argument that the author-god has disappeared so that an ultra-democracy comes into being seems likely at first sight, but needs to be scrutinized.

Wikipedia is the ultimate embodiment of the collapse of the culture of the book, of which according to Burke the concept of the author is derived. However, authorship has not disappeared, that is, only its functions have changed. With Wikipedia there is no author as authority behind the discourse any longer. Yet, it is not possible to declare the author dead, because the reader is at the same time author as the author is at the same time reader. Although this does not mean that the reader-as-author becomes an author-god, it is very well possible to alter the whole universe of the text by changing just one sentence. But in that case there could always be another author to undo and alter this altering of the text. Since there is a history of changes for every wiki, it is possible to undo and redo any altering at any time such that there is no single being that has complete control over the whole text.

Hierarchies of authority, i.e. representation, are collapsed. As the whole Wikipedia-project revolves around this new form of authorship, for it is an encyclopedia build by authors from all over the world, it comes as no surprise that this is the most fundamental principle of the politics of Wikipedia. Chantal Mouffe very lucidly defines politics as 'the set of practices and institutions through wich an order is created, organizing human coexistence in the context of conflictuality provided by the political' (Mouffe, 2005: 9). 'The political' is 'the dimension of antagonism which I [= Mouffe] take to be constitutive of human societies' (Mouffe, 2005: 9). What will be shown is that it is exactly this ordering of human coexistence in combination with conflictuality that is central to the Wikipedia project. Wikipedia is the ordering of what could be said about our world, driven by the antagonisms which find their way into the project in the form of the constant revision of the text. The reader can keep track of these revisions, and thus of 'the political', through the discussion page, that treats controversial topics, as well as through the history page, that keeps track of the history of additions and undo's. Essentially, what is going on on the 'pages' of Wikipedia in terms of politics is a struggle over voice, a struggle which only becomes visible when one decides to delve further into the wiki structure, i.e. the discussion and history pages. Before Wikipedia the only group that had a voice was the group that consisted of Authors. Therefore, the reader had no voice, had no influence over what could be said and what not. With Wikipedia there is no hierarchical divide between the reader and the author, which means that the project is build on a fundamental egalitarianism. The reader-as-author

has become able to speak, has obtained a voice in the community, and this community exists within a participatory culture. As Henry Jenkins observes and describes the collapse between reader and author in favor of participation: 'Rather than talking about media producers and consumers as occupying separate roles, we might now see them as participants who interact with each other' (Jenkins, 2006: 3). However, in Jenkins' view not all participants are created equally. Although this might be true on a practical level, the radical equality on a theoretical level still holds.

The fundamental egalitarianism within the community even goes beyond the roles and authority of the members of the community. Since every member is reader as well as author, the reader has the authority to decide whatever topic is interesting enough to add to the encyclopedia. And, because there is no difference in the appreciation of the individuals that make up the community, given that authority is absent, there is neither a hierarchy in subject matter. Obviously, some subjects get more attention than others, but that does not make them more important than the others. When every subject in the encyclopedia has the same right to exist there is no need to count visits or words anymore. In an encyclopedia, which has as aim to collect all knowledge available, every single piece is important for the construction of the whole, i.e. it gains its authority from its totality as being all-comprehensive. In its turn, this radical equality of subject matter finds its reflection in the structure of the encyclopedia. As pointed out above, Diderot and d'Alembert prefered alphabetization over the systematic categorization to construct equality of subject matter. With Wikipedia this problem of systematic or alphabetical structure is resolved. It uses both alphabetization and systematic structuring as navigation tools. But with the search engine and the hypertextual structure one could enter the encyclopedia wherever one wants to, one could go wherever and alter whatever one wants to. It is clear that the politics of Wikipedia do not only reside in the author-as-reader or reader-as-author function, but also in the order of things, which is directly resolved into the reader-as-author-function, that is, the accesibility and entrance to the structure of the whole.

This structuring of Wikipedia overcomes another problem as well. The hypertextual structure of the encyclopedia, like Barthes' writerly text, asks for a new reading strategy. The hypertextual structure constantly contests a linear way of reading, whereas the individual lexias have a more traditional structure. What happens is that there is a tension between the writerly and the readerly which is resolved in what could be called a *participatory* text. In this participatory text the reader-as-author has the ability in every instant to edit the text, that is, Wikipedia encourages the reader-as-author to be bold in altering the physicality of the text. Wikipedia overcomes one of the problems, concerning a fundamental epistemological principle that was central to Diderot's and d'Alembert's project: the fixation of knowledge. A certain fixation was necessary for the *Encyclopédie* to give future readers a ground on which to build their knowledge. However, with Wikipedia both linearity and temporality collapse. It does anticipate future readers and future knowledge like the *Encyclopédie*, but what counts for Wikipedia is the here and now of the knowledge. We want the world and we want it now. Where the here and now in the *Encyclopédie* functioned as a sort of baseline, the here and now in Wikipedia is constantly anticipated. The driving force behind this anticipation is the idea that knowledge always could and will be improved, because the world itself is not a fixed whole that consists of determined objects. Rather, those

objects are always part of a certain partition that already in itself contains a specific poetics that could always be questioned leading to a new partitioning. Therefore, it seems more suitable for the development of knowledge in that it is constantly alterable. This, of course, comes with a flipside: it will be hard to refer to the wiki because it is in a potential infinite flux. The only moment that counts is the very now, and this very now is always already moving away: today's knowledge will be less worth seen from tomorrow's perspective. This is precisely where enemies and friends find their ground for battle. It is the ultimate problem, the aporia, of the participatory text: the threat of relativism that is itself part of Wikipedia's poetics. With absolute knowledge as the limit, the mission of Wikipedia will never be fulfilled.

The birth of authocracy…

There is no single author that limits the participatory text anymore. No single being that can appropriate, as Foucault's first characteristic of the author-function would have it, the text in a legal way. Instead, it is possible to hear a polyphony of voices. The plurality of egos has become more tangible. In addition, the construction of authorship, Foucault's third characteristic of the author-function, has become more problematic. The principles that Saint Jerome proposed considering the construction of authorship and that Foucault discusses have lost their value. The author is no longer seen as a historical figure bringing stylistical uniformity, theoretical coherence and a standard level of quality. Is this a real problem? Burke gives us the answer: 'the phenomenon of multiple authorship has only ever been problematic to the notion of authorship when the latter is romantically conceived in terms of solitary genius' (Burke, 1998: 196), which has perfectly been done away with by Barthes. It is a notion that does not belong in our participatory culture which asks not for passive spectatorship but for active participants who share a certain responsibility towards what could be seen as the objects of our world, that is to say, the common. 'What emerges' as Jenkins argues 'might be called a moral economy of information: that is, a sense of mutual obligations and shared experiences about what constitutes good citizenship within a knowledge community' (Jenkins, 2006: 255). What this good citizenship consists of is nothing but being a reader-as-author. The only condition for entrance into the community lies in becoming an author, otherwise you cannot be heard, and you cannot be seen. What is more important, in terms of equality, is that you will not have any influence over what could be said, what could be seen and what could be done. As a reader, you will not have any influence over the order of the perceptible, that is to say: it is precisely in this poetical moment, through which the object has become visible, that the reader-as-author or the author-as-reader forms a community. Thus, one always has the potential to become an author and consequently a member of the community.

To enter the community of Wikipedia one must apply for the citizenship of being a reader-as-author. This implies that the community consists only of readers-as-authors sharing, a sensus communis, a responsibility for the objects, and thus the partitioning of our world. Would one call this a democracy? What, then, is the demos, to use a signifier that refers to a faceless unrecognizable mass? It seems that contrary to what some technological utopianists make us believe, Wikipedia cannot be called a democratic project. As the encyclopedia itself, in a list of negative definitions, i.e. of what it is not,

makes clear: 'Wikipedia is NOT a democracy.'[30] There is no proper demos to govern the community. Neither can it be called, as some techno-negativists seem to do, an anarchy, because in that anti-ideal, citizenship itself becomes irrelevant, impossible even. Moreover, what could be said about the world becomes completely irrelevant, which in the positive ideal of Wikipedia this would never be the case. The only order that governs the community is the order of authors, but not from a central place. Wikipedia cannot be compared with an agora, in that there is no centre from where the authorities govern. Rather, there are two opposing forces struggling to give this community its form. The author is nowhere, nowhere is authority. And the author is everywhere, everywhere is authority. It is the essence of this communal form we can call *authocracy*. As shown before, the authocracy of the Wikipedia-community consists of 75,000 authors all working on one single work, namely Wikipedia as encyclopedia. This collective of authors constitutes one enormous writing body. But it is impossible to locate this writing body. With Barthes, it is possible to say that here the theological function of this author has ceased to be. It becomes impossible to locate the origin of the text, like it becomes impossible to see any possible direction a text could be going. Barthes eliminated the temporal embeddedness of the text which with Wikipedia has become all the more real. Since it is impossible to say anything on past or future, the only thing that counts, as already pointed out, is the here and now, and in the very moment of the here and now the writing body is so dispersed that the author is everywhere. Thousands of authors are working in the same moment on the structuring and controlling of the knowledge about our world.

… and how it was killed by the police

It has become clear that Wikipedia is an entirely political project, a project which could only be built on a new stripped form of authorship. The politics of Wikipedia consist of restructuring the order of our world of knowledge. It is the reordering of what can be said and what not, what can be heard and what not and what can be done and what not. But it is also a reordering of who is allowed to speak, to make things visible or to silence things. It is the space where politics and epistemology meet. The structuring of the available knowledge goes hand in hand with the structuring of the community, where the ordering of speaking positions goes hand in hand with the formation of citizenship.

In this authocratic community, where the author is at the same time everywhere as he is nowhere, it becomes impossible to attribute the text to a single author. Who is responsible for the text, or, who is the owner? This question of Foucault's first author-function, which is in essence a question of hierarchy, can now only be answered with: the community. However, the founders of the Wikipedia-project felt the need to go back to the kind of hierarchical structure that is more characteristic of the printed book and thus erode the fundamental principle on which the community was built, the egalitarian idea of authorship. It is possible to identify at least three different developments that threaten the authocratic principle that came with the birth of the reader-as-author.

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30   Wikipedia (2010) 'Wikepdia: Wikipedia is an encyclopedia' [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:
     Wikipedia_is_an_encyclopedia]

The first development forms a direct threat to the kind of authorship Wikipedia is built on. The founders of the Wikipedia-project thought it necessary to construct a social contract. In order to guarantee the freedom of all citizens, the founders think it is necessary to limit this freedom. Clearly not everything is sayable. As Wikipedia puts it:

> You are a Wikipedia editor. Since Wikipedia has no editor-in-chief or top-down article approval mechanism, active participants make copyedits and corrections to the format and content problems they see. So the participants are both writers *and* editors.
>
> Individual users thus enforce most of the policies and guidelines by editing pages, and discussing matters with each other. Some policies, such as vandalism, are enforced by administrators by blocking users. In extreme cases the Arbitration Committee has the power to deal with highly disruptive situations, as part of the general dispute resolution procedure.
>
> Some features of the software which could potentially be misused, such as deleting pages and locking pages from editing, are available only to administrators, who are experienced and trusted members of the community.[31]

The individual users have influence over most of the policies and guidelines. That is to say: there is a residue of non-authocratic power. But more importantly, what this policy guideline suggests is the return to hierarchy, a specific power structure, in other words, the end of the authocracy. The founders installed a police order, made up of 'trusted members', whoever they may be and whoever decides on this trustworthiness, that have the right to exclude people who behave in a non-tolerable manner. 'Non-tolerable behavior' is what Wikipedia calls vandalism: 'common types of vandalism are the addition of obscenities or crude humor, page blanking, and the insertion of nonsense into articles'.[32] This setting up of a police order, which is called the administration, threatens the theoretical underpinnings of the encyclopedia. The administration has the ultimate power to exclude citizens, that is, to silence authors. The administration also has the power to lock the pages from being edited, which constitutes a threat to the epistemological idea of the anticipation of the constantly changing knowledge. Nevertheless, the authors still have the power to add subject matter to the encyclopedia. As the administrators would like us to believe there is no top-down mechanism.

The second development that threatens the authocratic community is the policing of the articles. On the one hand, there is 'positive' policing in the form of so-called featured articles: 'A featured article exemplifies our very best work and features professional standards of writing, presentation and sourcing.'[33] Those articles, recognizable by the bronze star on the top right corner, have an examplary function for the community, they show what good citizenship, and thus good authorship, consists of. The implication is that authors themselves do not know what good citizenship is, and that they need to be governed by higher ranked community members. Furthermore, it is the return to a

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[31]   Wikipedia (2010) 'Wikipedia: Policies and Guidelines'. [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia: Policies_and_guidelines# How_are_policies_enforce.3F]

[32]   Wikipedia (2010) 'Wikipedia: Vandalism'. [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:Dealing_ with_vandalism#How_to_respond_to_vandalism]

[33]   Wikipedia   (2010)   'Wikipedia: Featured   Article   Criteria'. [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia: Featured_article_criteria]

hierarchy of importance and quality, downgrading all the other non-ranked articles. Nonetheless, these articles do not always keep their status as featured article: some have lost their status because they could not stand up against the continuous flux of the text. On the other hand, alongside 'positive policing' 'negative policing' exists in the form of the disputed statement. According to Wikipedia:

The accuracy of a statement may be a cause for concern if:

- It contains unlikely information, without providing references.

- It contains information which is particularly difficult to verify.

- It has been written (or edited) by a user who is known to write inaccurately on the topic.[34]

Obviously, these ways of labelling articles forms a threat to the egalitarian principles of the authocratic community.

The third development, perhaps the most radical, affects the voice of the author. Since 2003 the authors are only allowed to include verifiable information. Information should come from a reliable third-party source, so that it always is possible to check it. Wikipedia is more and more depending on the authority of other sources. And the author? The author has become what Barthes called a scriptor: the one who is only able to mix writings so as not to rely on one single source. The one, who is at the same time multiple, who creates a tissue in which every word practically has become a *renvoy*.

What, then, is left of the authocratic ideal of Wikpedia since it is no longer only the author who governs the community? As argued above, with Wikipedia the temporal and theological characteristics of the author-function have vanished. Because of the multiplicity of voices it became impossible to construct the author as a historical figure. As a consequence it was impossible to ascribe the text to a single author. Instead, the text could only be attributed to the community. Therefore, the authors had a political role central to the encyclopedia. Their function was to deconstruct all possible hierarchies in order to give Wikipedia its full potential. Since everyone became an author, all authors governed the community, and this is where the encyclopedia gained its authority from. The authocracy not only brought our central assumptions of authorship and authority into clear focus, it radically challenged those assumptions, especially the notion of the author-god, the notion of ownership and our poetics of knowledge. But most of all it challenged our notion of authority. This is what the founders of the project were not able to deal with. As a consequence authocracy, almost before it had practically begun to flourish, had to be killed.

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the author   Geertjan de Vugt is a graduate student at Utrecht University, the Netherlands. Currently Geertjan is finishing his thesis on the political theory of Jacques Rancière and the performance of democracy in and through the first edition of Walt Whitman's *Leaves of Grass*.
E-mail: geertjandevugt@gmail.com
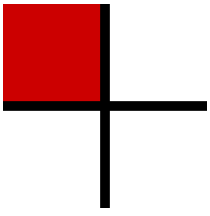
Interview with Jacques Rancière

Jacques Rancière and Nina Power

I'm endlessly fascinated with one particular book by Jacques Rancière, namely *The Ignorant Schoolmaster: Five Lessons in Intellectual Emancipation* (the original French was published in 1987; the English translation appeared with a fine introduction by Kristin Ross in 1991). The exploration of the assumption of axiomatic equality, of equality as a practice, the focus on the particular anti-pedagogical method of Joseph Jacotot and the brilliant way in which intervention, philosophy and history intersect in the name of a true education of emancipation has been enormously important for me, both in my work and my teaching practice. In the era of feedback forms, endless monitoring and stultifying exams we sadly can't 'teach' as Jacotot did, nevertheless the question of the 'will' to learn has always struck me as the crucial factor in education of any kind, and transforms the idea of teaching from the transmission of knowledge into the attempt to engage the capacity of both the educator and the pupil in the name of a shared understanding in which neither participant has automatic superiority. Although the book that was out around the time I conducted this short interview, *The Emancipated Spectator*, returns to some of the themes of *the Ignorant Schoolmaster*, Rancière has predictably been pounced upon by the art world in recent years, and he returns the favour by focussing on questions of audience, photography, film and art and in this book.

As you can see from the interview, which was rather short, no doubt mostly due to my lack of desire to push sweet old men into difficult territory, I didn't ask Rancière anything much about art, preferring to focus on questions of pedagogy and capacity. The question about pornography was, in retrospect, something of a dead-end, though I continue to believe it does relate to some of the ideas Rancière has about challenging the opposition between viewing and acting, although perhaps not in a particularly elevated way. I wonder if the shortness of this interview is something to do with a stubborn Rancièrean strategy in these situations – the couple of times I'd met him before, at conferences and workshops arranged in his honour, he'd always seemed ill-at-ease with the organisers and much happier talking to the students about what they were interested in. I may well now be on the 'wrong side'. Rancière's attitude, insofar as I've understood it at all, is very much in keeping with his work, of course, where every text is an attempt to undermine hierarchy, but makes it difficult in some ways to get him to 'perform' as the master-figure in an interview situation. Mind you, Rancière has given

plenty of successful interviews in the past, so perhaps something else was going on here, a fatigue at having to sit through half-a-dozen interviews in a row, perhaps. When Rancière is critical, however, he can be brutal. See for example, his attacks on Althusser in *La Lecon d'Althusser* and on sociology as a discipline in *the Philosopher and his Poor*. I once asked him what he thought about Samuel Beckett. He paused for a moment before replying: 'I 'ave no affinity for 'im.' And that was that.

Rancière's answer in the interview regarding the internet struck me as very clear and quite amusing about the republican guardians of knowledge in France, and it's easy to picture the kind of pompous figure Rancière is painting here. If this interview has a highlight, it's his claim that 'I think what we can see on the internet is an erasing of the hierarchical model, of the person who has the authority'. I would like Rancière in future to write a book about the internet, which would perhaps include a chapter about pornography. Hopefully his interest in the new commons, in the opening up of knowledge and autonomous learning will increase in the future, and he'll start to address some of the newer and potentially more universal forms of knowledge-distribution.

Nina Power: A really important thing for me is the link between two of your books, *The Ignorant Schoolmaster* and *The Emancipated Spectator*. Obviously you make it clear at the beginning that you want to take up some of the ideas in the earlier book in relation to the paradox of the spectator. You also make it very clear that there are links between what you say about the relationship between the pedagogue and the pupil and the classical image of the performance and the passive spectator: these questions turn around ignorance and passivity. You say of the pupil that it's really a question of the lack of knowledge of ignorance, and here I'm reminded of your critique of Bourdieu – his description of cultural capital and so on – because it's as if he's setting up a new science, but it's a science in predicated on ignorance. Could you talk a little bit about this link between the pupil and the spectator, how you see them and the ways this link is usually conceived?

Jacques Rancière: Basically my interest is neither in pedagogy nor in art, in the pedagogical mode as such – it is in the interpretation of social domination as a matter of knowledge and ignorance. What's basic for me is a general critique of the model in which people are dominated or oppressed because they don't know precisely why they occupy this position. Because of the way things are structured they cannot see; they do not have a global view and so I'm interested in rethinking the relation between domination and an optical model. So what's interesting to me is the way this is working, the presupposition of inequality: there are people who see and people who don't see, and if people are unequal it is because of real inequality, but they are unable to see it. All my work about emancipation was a critique of this presupposition that matters of domination and liberation are matters of ignorance and knowledge. And of course all this for me goes back to the Platonic model of the relation between the people fettered in the cave and the chosen. So what interests me is a strong articulation, a thesis on the relation between truth and visibility, in terms of the question of inequality. I think *The Emancipated Spectator* was for me an occasion to make a point about the optical model

as such, because in *The Ignorant Schoolmaster* it was not about this issue of the visible as a place for deception. It was about the presupposition of equality or inequality, and about the logic of explanation. I was asked to speak this summer at this academy of arts by people interested in *The Emancipated Spectator*, so my question was: why are we interested in this? Why would a choreographer – because it was mostly a matter of choreographers – be interested in the model of intellectual emancipation? I was led to the question of performance, this double side of the Platonic model: that the spectator at the same time is one who is ignorant and the one who is passive. What has always interested me about the so-called pedagogical question is how education, the school system, works as an allegory of society. So this relation between an idea of the student and an idea of the people – for instance, in historical teleology – and how the ignorant gain knowledge, become more learned, and therefore equal.

NP: There's an interesting third term in *The Ignorant Schoolmaster* where you have the book as the thing that deflects or undermines the question of hierarchy, so in a sense it's the book that equalises. And here you mention briefly about the script, that even if you have a play there's still the script. But I was thinking – I suppose in a sense this is a rather empirical question, because in a way I can see this in my students – that the internet in a strange way allows access to a great deal of information and texts: you can read everything Plato, Marx wrote or whatever, and people really do want to read this stuff. I suppose in a way what I'm asking you is how you conceive the role of the internet given what you say about the book in relation to Jacotot.

JR: Well I think the relation is different because in the case of Jacotot you can say that the book is the third term in the relation between the master and the pupil, the place where both can check. The idea of the book is the one thing in common from which it is possible to learn language, and to learn everything. So with the internet of course the question is different, but I think certainly it makes sense how many people – people in France who call themselves republicans – think that the transmission of knowledge is the only way to liberation. And yet at the same time they are irritated about the internet – because precisely the internet, in a sense, is a refutation of the certifying process. Jacotot describes it: the certifying process is that you must start from this point and go to this point and there is a right way to go from the first point to the last point. We can see the fervour with which people make these incredible statements: 'Why, the internet is horrible! There is all this knowledge but people don't know, they can't know, they need to be guided!' But the point they are entirely able, is that is very easy to go from one link to another link, it's very easy even I think for a beginner after one day on the internet to discern what information is reliable or not. It is very easy to go from the most superficial to the most elaborate. So I think it is an interesting case because the internet is a living refutation of a pedagogical model of 'the good way'. And this is why there is a very strong polemic against the internet in France, in this milieu of so-called republican intellectuals, very strong accusations against Wikipedia, for instance. 'But on Wikipedia, who knows who is writing the information? There is no control etc. etc.' My answer is about Wikipedia is that on Wikipedia you can see the information, but the people are asked to verify it. Of course this never happens in a normal encyclopaedia, in a normal dictionary or encyclopaedia, so the people occupy a position of authority. So I think what we can see on the internet is an erasing of the hierarchical model, of the

person who has the authority. It's obvious to all people that if you are doing research on the internet it's very easy to come very quickly to forms of knowledge which are very serious knowledge, and verified and so on. But the idea that you can get to this so quickly is intolerable for the supposed elite of the 'learned' people.

NP: I'm very glad you think that! Okay, well I have a sort of related question, you don't have to answer this if you don't want to because maybe it's not an area of interest for you, but I was thinking reading *The Emancipated Spectator* not only of the internet. You say that emancipation begins when we challenge the opposition between viewing and acting, and whether there is in a sense a more participatory relation than precisely the things you're saying about the internet. But one of the other things that the internet is infamous for is pornography and I suppose I'm curious about what you think of, if you think anything at all, about pornography as a mode of viewing or acting. Maybe it's not interesting.

JR: I'm not sure I've really something to say about it! Certainly it's a problem, but it's not a problem related to my own research.

NP: No, sure. It just occurred to me because in a way if you're talking about the spectacle what's more of a spectacle than this? Nevertheless, it doesn't have quite the same relation to passivity in the audience as the model you're attacking. The other main area I want to talk about is this question of capacity because I'm very interested in this myself, I do some work on Virno and questions of naturalism, questions of human nature particularly in relation to Chomsky and Virno, trying to look at the ways in which questions of human nature have re- emerged in a post-Marxist way. It's very strange – a lot of these questions are more scientific in their later model but they're the same kinds of questions that were being asked in the 1830s and 1840s. How do you naturalise Hegel? What is human nature? I read somewhere that you started a PhD on Feuerbach, can you tell me a bit about that?

JR: I don't know whether I can really give you something interesting about Feuerbach. Well, I started doing a PhD about Feuerbach, about the concept of man, but it wasn't about the concept of man intended as human nature. I remember my leading thread was this sentence, Feuerbach saying 'Man is the name of all names'. So a new way of thinking about man which can be related as Foucault was trying to do at the same time to a new science of language. But what interested me at the end of Feuerbach is the way in which he was reappropriating the religious figure of man, which became more and more cogent in Feuerbach. The idea of creating a religion of man. So what struck me was his theory of incorporation, so revealing man as an incorporation of language, history, language, history, etc. etc. So that was my point; it was not really related to questions of human nature.

NP: Just on this question of capacity, you make this claim about Virno where you're critical of him but at least, you say, it's not this leftist melancholy. It's really this question of capacity. In the Italian workerist tradition you have this question of what it means to be fully exploited at the level of your basic human capacities, the capacity to speak, and so on. You said that what you're interested in is this question of

'emancipation as emergence from a state of minority where the incapable are seen as capable'. Now that's obviously different from Virno, although I think Virno is also interested in incapacity, that his naturalism is an unhappy naturalism, it's about human nature as a very uncertain and unfinished idea – this idea of neoteny, or an openness to the world that isn't a positive phenomenological relation. Could you just speak a little bit about what you mean by capacity or capability? You were saying it has no relation to these questions of human nature, so is it simply looking to see where the supposedly incapable are actually incapable? Because obviously in the political register Hardt and Negri would say well, precisely, it's where our capacities are exploited, we just need to flick the switch and people will realise that actually this is about communism, people will realise that everything they're doing they're just selling their capacities but if they just realised that this was on the side of communism then – well, this is simplistic but you know what I mean.

JR: I think there was no direct relation with the theses of Negri or Virno really, it came from my own research about emancipation, both social and intellectual. So the point is not about belief – I think the point is that in any kind of human relation you have the choice between two presuppositions: the presupposition that we are dealing with somebody who is not your equal, or the presupposition that you are dealing with someone who is your equal, meaning that they are sharing the one capacity which is involved in the relation. So that was the problem for Aristotle, that if you give an order to a slave, the slave must be in possession of language and Aristotle provides a kind of Sophist mask, saying 'Yes, a slave understands language but he doesn't process language'. And so it is this kind of question that interests me, so when you are dealing with a student or when you are just presenting your argument or making your description in general, do you address to an addressee that is supposed to have the capacity, or do we address an addressee who we suppose has not got the capacity? So I think it is really from the point of view of the pedagogical model; for me it doesn't imply some kind of global historical process, something like the global reappropriation of the capacity. My current stance is to distance this kind of thinking, so it is not a matter of reappropriating this capacity which has been alienated but that has become the power of capitalism. And the power is really the collectivisation of the capacity that we have already, to create a specific network of egalitarian relationships. So for me that's the main point, it's about the way we think the relation between the presupposition between equality and the idea of possible collective intelligence.

Transcribed and Edited by Jon Melling

the authors   Jacques Rancière is Professor of Philosophy at European Graduate School in Saas-Fee and Emeritus Professor of Philosophy at the University of Paris (St. Denis).

Nina Power is a Senior Lecturer in Philosophy at Roehampton University.

The global financial crisis recently exposed the uncertain conditions of the capitalist system reminding us of the vulnerability of both life itself and of capital.

and security. The social contract is founded on fear of death (Cavarero, 2009: 5). Cavarero develops Hobbes' argument to suggest that contemporary forms of violence, such as terrorism and suicide bombings, are directed not towards the production of death, but towards the destruction of the uniqueness and dignity of the human body.

and security (Cavarero, 2009: 80). In its effects, however, the terror necessary for securing the sovereign state transforms itself into an ontological crime - against being - targeted at destroying the uniqueness that Cavarero, after Hannah Arendt, regards as constitutive of the human condition. In suicide attacks, she observes, the vulnerability of the human condition is expressed with particular clarity, since they unexpectedly occur in the midst of everyday life. These attacks are difficult to predict and strike against those with no means of defending themselves. When the deadly violence coincides with the helplessness of the victims, acts of terror turn into horror.

In the seventeen brief chapters that comprise the book, Cavarero outlines the neologism of 'horrorism' that she suggests is better suited to account for contemporary violence than the established concepts of terror and war. In order to delineate horrorism, she traces the articulation of horror in ancient Greek texts and writings in the modern age by, most notably, George Bataille, Primo Levi, and Hannah Arendt. Enclosed in an appendix is an interesting reading of the works of Joseph Conrad, where the argument seems to culminate in the observation that horrorism involves the overlapping of means and ends, victim and perpetrator, in the valorisation of a primitive innocence. The methodology Cavarero uses in revealing the nature of horrorism is instructive for organisation theorists interested in critical methods. She describes this particular method as undoing 'the master's house using his own tools' and reading with 'bad intentions' (Cavarero and Bertolino, 2008: 134, 137). Reading with bad intentions involves re-signifying sacred concepts and figures in influential texts by means of strategically resituating them (Cavarero, 1995: 5). The aim is to intervene in the symbolic order to accomplish radical change, particularly with reference to the way that the feminine is traditionally cast within philosophy (Cavarero and Bertolino, 2008). In this way, Cavarero advances the poststructuralist project by engaging in a productive form of deconstruction. Accepted truths are not rejected but strategically rethought, which is consistent with the ambition to rework conventional representations.

A central task in *Horrorism* is to rework the archetype of the mother by demonstrating how its traditional association with care is intimately entwined with the destructive nature of violence. There is something repugnant about horror that makes the body paralyzed. In part, Cavarero relates this repugnance to the observation that physical violence is increasingly carried out by women, who we tend to associate with concern rather than brutality. The female face of horror is made visible through the telling of stories of perpetrators and victims: teenage girls blowing themselves up in mundane environments like the supermarket, a father collecting the pieces of his daughter's mutilated body after a suicide attack, a group of naked prisoners subjected to torture by pony-tailed female soldiers smiling at the camera. In shifting the perspective from the anonymous casualties of war to the embodied experiences of violence, Cavarero concretises the abstractness of war by revealing its voices, smells, slaughters, and bodies.

Horrorism describes the consequences of offending the ontology of uniqueness that Cavarero has previously expanded on at greater length (e.g. Cavarero, 1995; 2000; 2002). In order to find a way between the universal (male) subject and the postmodern fragmented self, Cavarero develops a particular ontology pieced together from Arendt's

thinking of the political and the sexual difference perspective of Luce Irigaray. To Arendt's argument that speech becomes political not through what it designates but on account of the self-revelation of the speaker in action, Cavarero adds a focus on the corporeal (Cavarero and Bertolino, 2008). In contrast to Judith Butler, for whom the conception of singularity is formed on social normativity and therefore involves a degree of substitutability (Butler, 2005: 33), Cavarero's conception of uniqueness refers to an absolute singularity. This argument is made possible by grounding singularity in the corporeal rather than in language. Uniqueness, then, means that the materiality of the body is performed in relation to another body. The exposure to the other is what constitutes the singular self and what defines him or her in a corporeal sense. In this way, our social existence is dependent on an exposure to and recognition by others, since it is in this relation that our uniqueness is revealed (Butler, 2005: 33). In horrorism, uniqueness is destroyed by means of the random dismemberment of bodies. Examples of the removal of uniqueness is found in the mixing up of body parts in suicide attacks to the extent that they become inseparable, the piles of naked bodies of prisoners in the torture scenes from Abu Ghraib reducing the individual body to limbs, and the extreme dehumanisation that took place in Nazi concentration camps. In other words, horrorism is found in those places where there is a lack of an exposure to and recognition by an other. Exposing oneself to an other is about making oneself vulnerable to the judgements of others, which is precisely what horrorism precludes. Understood in a corporeal sense, vulnerability involves recognising that human subjects are mutually vulnerable and that we are dependent on others for survival.

Even though Cavarero does not engage directly in a discussion of biopolitics, there are interesting parallels between horrorism and governmentality in advanced capitalism. As a mode of governing, sovereignty insists on the independence of the subject and so prevents the exposure of vulnerability. Horrorism installs itself at the point where the relations to others and to the self are made impossible by a subject that has become invulnerable. Cavarero takes Primo Levi's figure of the Musselmann as the extreme image of the invulnerable subject who is detached from all human relations. She writes:

> The aberrant final production of the invulnerable makes use of techniques, atrociously coherent, that begin by removing from vulnerability that relational dimension in which it consists. You could even say that the celebrated struggle of all against all depicted by Hobbes, far from being a state of nature, was instead an artificial condition that the Nazi system of horror, vastly exceeding the imagination of the English philosopher produced in the twentieth century. (Cavarero, 2009: 38)

Following Rose (2001) an important aspect of present-day governing is the control of the future by means of the calculation of risk. Life itself is turned into an individual project of securing the survival of one's job and protecting ourselves and our loved ones from misfortune. By controlling the present through preventive measures that intervene in the uncertain future, in my view, risk management attempts to minimise vulnerability. Risk management aims to undermine competition in the neo-liberal market by making the individual indispensible (e.g. through education) and hence able to maintain his or her established position. *Horrorism* informs us that the key to indispensability is not found in the rational calculation of one's own competitive advantages, but rather in the relation to others where the vulnerable self is revealed as

the unforeseen. From this perspective, the relation to others is grounded in the recognition that each of us is equally vulnerable, rather than in the suspicion that everyone else may not be as vulnerable as oneself.

While Cavarero demonstrates that the cost of sovereignty in its extreme form is dehumanisation, as it reduces humans to abstract categories, she also presents the reader with an alternative. In her exposition of horrorism, there are clues to an alternative mode of being grounded in the exposure and recognition of vulnerability. Examples of horror arising as the effect of risk calculations may also be found outside the global battlefield in organisational settings. In this sense, *Horrorism* helps us to identify what the effects of governing through sovereignty may be. This increases the relevance of the book for readers who are interested in the consequences of the governing mechanisms of advanced capitalism. In the context of workplace subjectivity, the embrace of vulnerability as a necessary part of human life would imply a shift from existing for others based on generalised categories (e.g. profession, position, gender) to an existence based on reciprocal moments of recognition. It seems to me that this mode of being has the potential to constitute a way of dealing with feelings of unease that arise from the current uncertainties of labour and the insecurities of everyday life.

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the author   Cecilia Cassinger is a lecturer at Essex Business School and the Department of Business Administration, Lund University. In her research, she employs Adriana Cavarero's concept of the narratable self to rethink the company-centred view on how consumers' images of retailers and similar types of organisations are formed.
E-mail: cecilia.cassinger@fek.lu.se
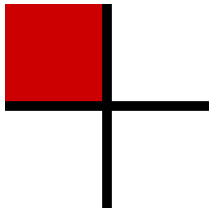
A bridge over troubled water?

Pekka Kuusela

Nicos P. Mouzelis has written many books on social theory during the last two decades. In *Modern and Postmodern Social Theorizing* he makes an updated synthesis of his previous critical studies on the current state of modern and postmodern social theory, and attempts to show a way out of the deadlocks of some radical versions of sociological theorizing. Although Mouzelis writes in the introduction that his book is not a textbook, his study is a long and informative journey into the landscape of modern and postmodern theorizing. It ends with a methodological consideration of the implications of the 'open-ended holistic paradigm', as he calls his own orientation. In a way, Mouzelis' book is a general overview of sociological theory from Talcott Parsons' system functionalist orientation to Margaret Archer's critical realism and a theoretical analysis of agency-structure problematics common to almost all sociological and organizational theories. So Mouzelis' analysis is actually very ambitious. He deals with all the important sociological theories developed in European and North-American sociology before and after the Second World War. All the chapters are linked together with an idea of dealing with agency-structure problematics in different sociological theories. In this sense, his consideration offers a new interpretation of the problems of modern and postmodern social theories.

Mouzelis' book is divided into short chapters which are organized into five main themes. These deal with the theoretical background of modern social theory, Parsonian and post-Parsonian developments, Giddens' and Bourdieu's social theories, bridges between modern and postmodern theoretizing, and non-essentialist holism as a methodological standpoint in social theory. Instead of using long quotations from original studies, Mouzelis condenses the main ideas of different theories with some general observations on the quality of different social theories. This helps the reader to understand the broad spectrum of different orientations in sociological theorizing, but also opens up some critical questions concerning the possibility of making a coherent analysis of diverse orientations which have developed from various scientific traditions. But this holistic approach is not a novelty in social theory. Giddens' theory of

structuration, which originally sought to provide a new understanding of structure-agency problematic in social theory, is perhaps the best example of this kind of orientation.

The key task in the first two parts of Mouzelis' study is to map the role of Parsons' theoretical thinking in social theory and to analyze the works of his followers, especially Jeffrey Alexander's contribution to post-Parsonsian action theory. Mouzelis' orientation is quite critical toward Parsons, although he also positively comments on Parsons' views of societal development, which for him makes sense of the decline of Soviet socialism two decades ago. Mouzelis criticizes Parsons' functionalist theory for adopting a too passive view of human subjects. Because of this, some of Parsons' students also later rejected his action theory as an abstract and one-sided view of social world which did not give them suitable tools to analyze interaction between social agents. Mouzelis' final conclusion of Parsons' legacy and Alexander's cultural sociology is, however, double-faced. On the one hand, Parsons could be seen as an important figure crossing the boundaries between different sociological traditions and developing a more elaborated action theory for the social sciences. On the other hand, although Alexander's reformulations of post-Parsonian action theory provide resources to understand the autonomy of cultural sphere and its linkages with social structures, Alexander's strong program of cultural sociology leaves open some crucial problems of social theory.

The main result of Mouzelis' long journey into modern and postmodern social theory is that something is still missing from the main currents of sociological thinking. The missing element is a consistent explanation, how to connect the interaction level of analysis to the social system level of analysis. Therefore, Mouzelis underscores that Lockwood's famous distinction into social and system integration is still useful and serves as a good analytical approach to analyse micro-scale interaction and macro-scale social processes. He stresses that Giddens, Habermas, or Bourdieu's elaborations of Lockwood's views do not provide help to override the question of subjective and objective perspective. According to Lockwood's original formulation, social integration refers to orderly or conflictual relationships between actors, whereas system integration analyzes the relationships between the parts of the social system. Mouzelis states that this conceptual definition is still relevant for sociological analysis, making it possible to solve some enduring conceptual problems related to the analysis of human agency and the institutional level of action.

Mouzelis also criticizes Bourdieu's sociological thinking. His social theory is more a theory on reproduction than transformation, Mouzelis (139) argues, and moreover claims that Bourdieu's theory of practice 'underemphasizes the rational, calculative and reflexive aspects of human action'. Therefore, the structure-disposition-practice scheme should be reformulated so that it takes seriously the reflexive, rational, and voluntaristic aspects of social action and the interactive-figurational structure of social games. As a conclusion, Mouzelis presents an elaborated version of Bourdieu's theory of practice by separating analytically the time-dimension and the institutional and figurational structures. This model resembles Margaret Archer's social theory, which is based on Rom Harre and Roy Bhaskar's philosophical thinking. Mouzelis also critically

comments on Archer's realist social theory in another part in his book and sees some conceptual ambiguities in Archer's critical realist approach.

In the third part of his study, Mouzelis introduces an important critique of sociological modernization theory, cultural relativism, communitarism, and the anti-positivistic critique of objectivism. These questions are essential in order to understand the differences between modern and postmodern theorizing. First, as Mouzelis states, the problem with modernization theory is that it is a Eurocentric perspective in which Western capitalism is seen as highest form of social development. Mouzelis (147), however, stresses the point that 'the Western modernity is just one form of modernity among others'. Second, in his critique of cultural relativism and authoritarian views typical of communitarism, Mouzelis defends the idea that from the evolutionist point of view Western societies are strongly interrelated. Therefore, it is wrong to speak about isolated communities as sources of values, as the communitarists do. Third, Mouzelis also criticizes some postmodern theorists who overstate their anti-empirical attitude and exaggerate the symbolic construction of social phenomena. According to a more balanced view, empirical verification is still an important element in the social sciences, and we should keep separate the symbolical nature of the social world and the empirical verification of social scientific theories. As Mouzelis (189) claims, '[s]ocial reality, although symbolically constructed, and although to some extent affected by second-order theories trying to explain it, should not be conflated with these theories'.

Perhaps the most interesting part of the book is the final one, where Mouzelis presents a methodological view of his own. This methodological frame of reference is a more sophisticated model compared with existing social theories. It stresses the distinction between external and internal environments of action and takes into account both intra- and interactive processes while studying social phenomena. Mouzelis also clarifies his new methodological model by using some illuminating examples to clarify his ideas. But there is no simple road from abstract models to a concrete research agenda. The book ends with a chapter in which Mouzelis introduces twelve methodological rules for the construction of an open-ended holist paradigm for sociological and social theoretical research. According to Mouzelis (278), these rules 'merely provide a set of guidelines for empirical investigation of social wholes (groups, communities, formal organizations, etc.) in a non-essentialist as well non-reductive manner'. This rather humble statement suggests that we need some methodological guidelines in order to make abstract principles more concrete in research work.

How does Mouzelis succeed in constructing bridges between different social theories? Is his study a bridge over the troubled water of modern and postmodern social theorizing? Maybe it is an exaggeration to speak about bridging in the sense of having solid ground for a non-essentialist social theory. Mouzelis' methodological views are not new, and other social theorists have also stated comparable kinds of ideas. For example, Margaret Archer and Keith Sawyer's social theories have similarities with Mouzelis' own views. Generally speaking, Mouzelis manages to show some essential weaknesses in modern and postmodern social theories and points out that there is an urgent need for conceptual clarification of the key concepts of social theory. So one could say that, with Mouzelis' analysis, we now have a surveyor's map to build new bridges and to continue the investigation with clear landmarks.

the author   Pekka Kuusela, Pekka, PhD, Senior Lecturer, University of Eastern Finland, Department of Social
Sciences.
E-mail: pekka.kuusela@uef.

www.ephemeraweb.org