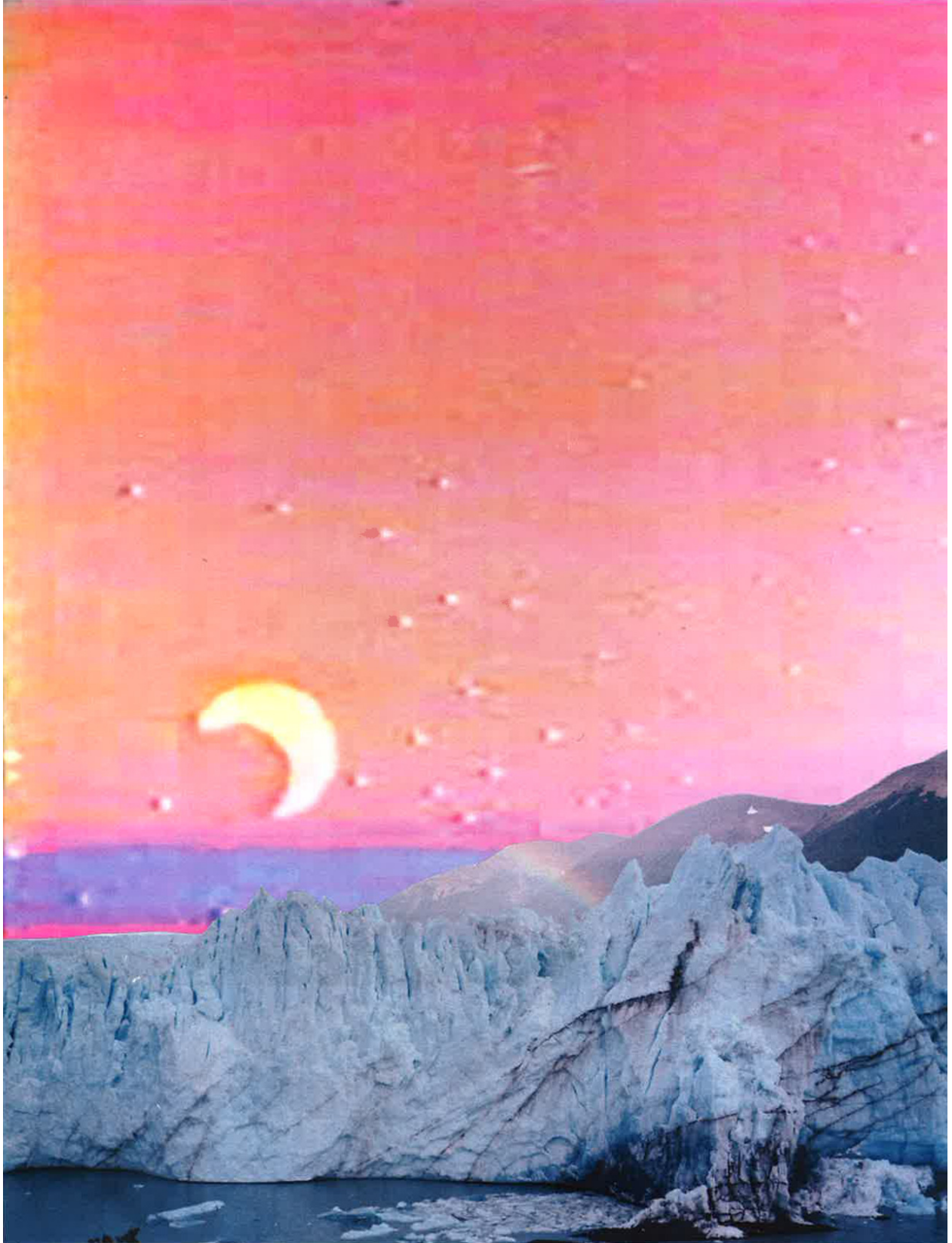


TODAY



Anna Galkina, *Untitled*, collage, 2012 - Courtesy of the artist

TODAY

Franco Berardi Bifo

Reassessing Recomposition: 40 years after the publication of Anti-Oedipus

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Il Foglio di Via dello Scrittore NO TAV

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REASSESSING RECOMPOSITION: 40 YEARS AFTER THE PUBLICATION OF ANTI OEDIPUS

1. Post-Oedipal

The process of subjectivation is based on conditions that have dramatically changed in the forty years since the publication of Deleuze and Guattari's *Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*. Reading that book was a defining moment in my intellectual and political experience, in the first years of the 1970s, when students and workers were fighting and organizing spaces of autonomy and separation from capitalist exploitation. Forty years after the publication of that book the landscape has changed so deeply that very concept of desire has to be re-thought, as it is marking the field of subjectivation in a very different way.

The proliferation of sources of enunciation in this age of the networks, the globalization of the economy and the media, was predicted and in a sense pre-conceptualized Deleuze and Guattari, but they could not know in advance the effects that global capitalism has produced on the unconscious and the dynamics of desire. As production, media and daily life have been subsumed into the sphere of semiocapital we need to reconsider the unconscious from this transformed position.

My starting question is thus: what is capitalism and what is schizophrenia after the psychosocial landscape has been reshaped by the tendencies described by Deleuze and Guattari?

Anti-Oedipus and *A Thousand Plateaus* described, or better yet, mapped in advance the waste and proliferating land of rhizomatic capitalism that we see now deployed in the forms of neoliberal deregulation and financial semiocapitalism. They also mapped the formation of the schizo-psychosphere, in which today the psychosis is taking the central place of neurosis as prevailing clinic condition.

Shortly after its publication *Anti-Oedipus* encountered and inspired a movement that was the expression of the first generation of precarious cognitive workers, a movement which, while continuing the legacy of May 1968, was opening a post-ideological wave, based on the concepts of desire and autonomy. In the streets of Bologna in the year 1977 students yelled 'anti-oedipal' slogans rather than celebrating Che Guevara and Mao Zedong. Those students found in that book the joy of unleashing desire as energy of social solidarity and creation.

When we first read that book in the 1970s we understood it as a claim of liberating desire from the chains of industrial work, from sexual and social repression. This was a legitimate reading, but it was also too narrow, too simplistic. Now the chains of capitalism have become immaterial and semiotic, and psychic suffering does not come so much from repression but mainly from the hyper-expressive compulsion, from competition and acceleration of the infosphere.

In the 1970s we did read that book as a critique of the Freudian reduction of the unconscious to the theatrical dimension, and a critique to the Lacan's reduction of the

unconscious to language. This was a legitimate way to read the book, and a good political starting point.

“Quelque chose se produit: des effets de machine, et non des métaphores” – “Something is happening: machine effects, not metaphors.” We read in the first page of the book, and this was a good introduction to a critique of the logocentrism implied in Freudian and Lacanian cult of interpretation. But beyond that today we should understand what has changed in social imagination and in the collective psychosphere in the decades that come after the publication of this book, which has to be read today as a prefiguration of the new phenomenology of precarious work and the new pathologies of psychic suffering.

We identified desire as a force, and rhizomes as revolutionary models, as we tried to fully develop the liberation of collective life from the repressive tangles of industrial capitalism, and simultaneously from the centric and authoritarian model of the disciplinary state. In my opinion that interpretation was politically legitimate, particularly in the context of unemployment, the precariousness of young people, and persisting political power of the working class, but it was narrow and reductive from a philosophical point of view. Forty years later, in my opinion, we have to abandon the emphasis on the liberating potential of desire and of schizoid expressivity, and replace the assumption of infinite energy of desire with a new consciousness of exhaustion, a consciousness of the limits of living organisms.

Desiring expressivity and rhizomatic proliferation, the processes that the book conceptualized, have been strong factors of change, dismantling the repressive and neurotic form of capitalist domination in its industrial phase. But in the meanwhile, the features of a new model of economic power have emerged, and this new model is based on the topological structure of the rhizome, and is acting as a powerful attractor for the economic investment of desire.

In the 1970s we emphasized the liberating force of desire, and movements deconstructed the neurotic cage of alienated labor and sexual repression. In the 1990s, as language was captured in the process of semiotic production and desire invested in the creative economy and in the financial abstraction, we have to face the ambiguity of desire, which is not a unilaterally progressive force, liberating and joyous. Strictly speaking desire is not even a force, but a field, and the field where the most important action of social communication occur. The basic processes of disaggregation and re-aggregation for power and social movements are happening in the field of desire. This is the fundamental discovery of that book. But this discovery has turned into a misunderstanding.

We translated the words of *Anti-Oedipus* into the idea that desire is in itself a force of liberation, and thus we did not see the pathogenic effects of the acceleration and intensification of the info-stimuli, that are linked to the formation of the electronic infosphere and to precarization of work.

2. Limit

1972 was also the year of publication of a book titled *Limits to the Growth* produced by a group of scientists assembled by the Club of Rome. Asserting that physical resources of the planet are not boundless, the book contained an important conceptual intuition: economic growth cannot be infinite because basic physical resources are doomed to run out. The Arab-Israeli war of 1973 seemed to confirm this. It showed that the fundamental

assumptions of capitalist ideology needed to be rethought and a new political culture developed based on the idea of un-growth.

Similarly, the psychic energies of cognitive work are not boundless, as the organic, psychic and cultural limits of the social body are limits to the potency of the general intellect, and a limit to desire itself. The core of clinic and political attention needs to shift: from the field of the expanding potency of the general intellect and desire to the field of psycho-pathologies of the first generation of precarious cognitive work. The acceleration of the infosphere, the unceasing intensification of mental work, that semicapital is constantly stimulating, has to be seen as factors of the fragilization of the psychic fabric of social composition. This was foreseen by Deleuze and Guattari in the last part of their lives. In their last book *What is philosophy?*, particularly the last chapter, dedicated to Chaos and the brain Deleuze and Guattari write:

We require just a little order to protect us from chaos. Nothing is more distressing than a thought that escapes itself, than ideas that fly off, that disappear hardly formed, already eroded by forgetfulness or precipitated into others that we no longer master.

What is philosophy? is a book on aging, as the authors state in the introduction. Aging, suffering, physical and psychic decay – the continent of exhaustion – that were hidden in the triumphal emphasis of our political reading of *Anti-Oedipus*, emerge here as a new perspective for imagining and conceptualizing the process of subjectivation in the sphere of semicapitalism.

The schizo-strategy outlined in the pages of *Anti-Oedipus* was a way to escape the Freudian phenomenology of neurosis. The psychotic explosion of the high-speed semicapital is changing the landscape. Neoliberal deregulation and network proliferation have deterritorialized the process of subjectivation, and opened the door to the explosion of the repressive cage of industrial labor and of paternal power of interdiction. As the repressive borders of unconscious and labor explode, precariousness becomes the social form of indetermination and uncertainty in the psychogenesis.

In his recent book, *Man without Unconscious*, Massimo Recalcati (an Italian psychoanalyst and philosopher who is trying to redraw the conceptual relation between Lacan and Deleuze and Guattari) lists the emerging diseases of our time: panic, food disorders, dependence on toxic substances, attention deficit disorders: pathologies that cannot be easily referred to the Freudian analysis, and demand a new context of interpretation, the context of post-Fordist, postindustrial deterritorialization, the context of labor precariousness. I call this context semicapital because the general product is no more the physical good but the immaterial semiotic products: information, affection, and aesthetics. Countless users can consume these products without exhausting them, circulating in the market of attention, invading mental space, and producing effects in the cognitive, but also affective and psychic spheres.

In the sphere of semicapital the production of semiotic goods provokes an expansion and acceleration of the infosphere, directly affecting the psychosphere, i.e. the affective, sexual and imaginary dimensions. Consequently the relation between the production process and unconscious comes to be much more immediate and complex than in the industrial age, where production and consumption involved the collective psychic sphere only in an indirect way. Freud's psychoanalysis was intended to bring the plague into the disciplinary space of conformist bourgeois society, opening the door to the vision of unconscious

abysses. The bourgeois society, which tried to deny and remove the disturbing features of sexuality was obliged to look at itself in the mirror of sexual psychogenesis.

Now we inhabit a totally different condition marked by the explosion of imagination, by the hyper-sexualization of media imagery, and the precarization of social connections. Psychosis is no longer confined to the separated sphere of institutionalized madness, but is exploding in the daily dimension as a factor of constant deterritorialization of the activity of imagination and desire.

We cannot face this new situation with the conceptual tools of the Freudian analysis, but at the same time also the categories of schizoanalysis need to be rethought.

Free from the neurogenic cage of the disciplinary society, the unconscious exploded and is proliferating in full daylight, naked and provocative in the dimensions of advertising, pornography and popular diffusion of psychopharmacology and cocaine, and the media hyper-stimulation of attention. Should we reclaim the restoration of the old moral order, of the slow family life, of the hierarchical territorialized system of the Protestant bourgeoisie in the old industrial cities? Obviously not, because this claim would be reactionary and ineffective. But we should not insist on the mere exhibition of the plague, on the mere emphasizing the infinite potencies of desire. Constantly mobilized by the economic machine, shifting from a simulation to the next under-promise of immediate pleasure, desire is turning to panic. The precarious generation is haunted by countless contradictory injunctions: enjoyment and acceleration, expression and competition, freedom and anxiety, creativity and exploitation. What is the way towards subjectivation in these new conditions?

3. Body

In order to imagine paths of social recomposition in the poet-oedipal condition that I have tried to sketch out in these pages we need to understand that the crucial problem, both at the political and at clinical levels, is the bodily dimension of the general intellect. This is why I speak of cognitarians, in order to define the cognitive workers in conditions of precariousness. Precarity is jeopardizing the sphere of affection and language, but we cannot cherish the idea of a comeback to the old times of the 'standardized' employment and social discipline. We should find a way to disentangle the potentialities of the new condition starting from an understanding of its alienation. This is why I use the word "cognitariat." In this concept I want to underline the implication of the intellect and of the body, the denial of this implication, and the separation of mental activity from the social body.

Since 2001, Christian Marazzi has been warning of the dismantling of the general intellect, a process that started after the dotcom crash of the spring 2000. As he predicted, during the first decade of the new century cognitive labor has been disempowered and subjected to the form of precarization. The social and affective body of the cognitive workers has been separated from their daily activities. The alienation of the first generation of people who have learned more words from a machine than from their mother is based on this separation, on the virtualization of social relations. In the last two or three years, in the aftermath of the financial crisis, riots and huge demonstrations have exploded in many European cities, and seem destined to spread and gather strength in the coming years. But it is difficult to imagine what the forms of the struggle will be, as financial capitalism is deterritorialized and virtual, and therefore it is impossible to zero in on a social target, to attack a delimited enemy, as the enemy is nowhere and everywhere. So what is the issue

of the mobilization against financial capitalism, if financial capital is impossible to locate and to contest?

At the same time, the possibility of a revolution seems to be out of reach, as social reality has become too complex, and replacing the ruling class seems useless, as a specific ruling class strictly speaking no longer exists. The financial class is not a territorialized class, as the industrial bourgeoisie used to be, it is rather a transversal function, recombining countless fragmentary actions of net-trading, exchanging stocks, producing simulations and so on. Economic power and political power are not the emanation of a rational decision, but a recombinant function, traversing the boundless sprawl of digital financial exchange. How can this ocean of fragments be subverted, how can a rational direction be imposed on this constellation of segments? It is not possible.

So why are people taking to the streets, and fighting against the police, and destroying the shops and the banks? Old rituals coming from the proletarian revolutions of the nineteenth and twentieth century? Perhaps, in a certain way, yes: old rituals have become ineffective as the city is no more a place of social life, but a simulacrum, and the enemy is no more identifiable and targetable. But we should see another face in this kind of mobilization, one that is not aimed towards aggression and destruction, but towards self-recognition and recomposition.

The cognitarians of this generation are going to the streets to recompose their social and affective bodies. They are reactivating their bodily relations with the metropolitan territory. Riots are reshaping the perception of urban territory, and the perception of the complicity between bodies. From this point of view the students' struggles that exploded in fall 2010 are not to be seen as a sudden outburst of rage, but as the beginning of a long-lasting process that will encompass the next decade, a cognitarian insurrection of sort. Insurrection means rising up, and also full deployment of the potencies of the actor. The actor who is coming out on the historical scene of our time is the general intellect in its process of subjectivation. The potencies of this actor are the potencies of the collective intelligence in the network, the potencies of knowledge, reduced to the narrow dogmatic utilization that capitalist economy is forcing on them.

The full deployment of the general intellect falls beyond the sphere of capitalism. When the general intellect will be able to reconstitute its social and erotic body, the capitalist rule will become obsolete. This is the new consciousness that comes out from the explosion of the last months of 2010 from reclaiming the autonomy of knowledge. The process of social recomposition is essentially the process of reactivation of the body of the general intellect, whose social existence is constrained in the precarious fragmentary form.

PICCOLO SAGGIO SULLA DISERZIONE

Quando non può lottare contro il vento e il mare per seguire la sua rotta, il veliero ha due possibilità: l'andatura di cappa che lo fa andare alla deriva, e la fuga davanti alla tempesta con il mare in poppa e un minimo di tela. La fuga è spesso, quando si è lontani dalla costa, il solo modo di salvare barca ed equipaggio. E in più permette di scoprire rive sconosciute che spuntano all'orizzonte delle acque tornate calme. Rive sconosciute che saranno per sempre ignorate da coloro che hanno l'illusoria fortuna di poter seguire la rotta dei carghi e delle petroliere, la rotta senza imprevisti imposta dalle compagnie di navigazione. Forse conoscete quella barca che si chiama desiderio.

Henri Laborit, *Elogio della Fuga*, 1976.

“W la Resistenza”

(La resistenza è un congegno elettrico)

Collettivo Eveline, Milano, 2006.

C'è stato un momento, nella cultura italiana, in cui i temi dell'esilio e della fuga vennero esplorati in forme generose e originali. C'era il cinema di Gabriele Salvatores, «dedicato a tutti quelli che stanno scappando», e quello di Mario Martone, con i suoi sconfitti dalla vita; le musiche di 99 Posse, Almamegretta, Bisca, Daniele Sepe che esaltavano i valori delle radici e dell'antifascismo militante, ma ancor di più suggerivano una diserzione dal treno progressista; poi la letteratura nomade di Pino Cacucci, i fumetti di Sergio Bonelli, e in generale nelle arti si sentiva ancora l'influenza di Hugo Pratt, di Carmelo Bene, di Jodorowski. Quelle voci ci raccontavano, in modi assai diversi tra loro, di una generazione non ancora pronta a sentirsi adulta e borghese, di amicizie virili, di disgusto per la società del «reflusso», di codardia persino. Lo facevano con linguaggi a volte ingenui, ma senza mai mancare di un certo gusto per l'avventura e della voglia di contaminarsi, di creare collaborazioni, intrecci inaspettati.

Ora tutto questo sembra un romantico ricordo. Gli anni che vanno dal G8 di Genova alla crisi finanziaria del 2008 hanno visto rinascita di mitologie che credevamo estinte per sempre: il Patriottismo di «sinistra», il Tricolore, il feticismo della Costituzione, la Legge e l'Ordine. I movimenti radicali sono rimasti fin troppo a lungo in una posizione di letargo, mentre nel frattempo un'intera generazione «progressista», di giovani e giovanissimi, si amalgamava ad un modello di «partecipazione» mediato dai grandi quotidiani, dalle grandi firme «di denuncia», al circo dei festival e delle celebrazioni: un modello post-televisivo e ormai *web-based*, e con riferimenti culturali che difficilmente andavano oltre lo scontro col berlusconismo, Tangentopoli, la stragi della mafia. Ha preso forma la cosiddetta industria della retorica civile, talvolta necessaria, molto più spesso solamente industria e poco altro.

Il risultato è che la parola «fuga» sembra soccombere all'elogio della «resistenza». Tutti si sentono in qualche modo «resistenti», in questi giorni: dagli spettatori del programma televisivo che fa «denuncia», ai lettori dei grandi quotidiani e dei libri-inchiesta best-seller. Resiste chi «costruisce» e non si lamenta. Chi lavora e fa «il proprio dovere». Resiste chi «non si rassegna ad andarsene», con una convinzione, una serietà e una presunta «consapevolezza» che non troviamo in nessun altro paese d'Europa. Ci sarebbe da chiedersi quale sia il progetto umano e politico di questa resistenza.

In particolare quando si parla di emigrazione – tema a me caro essendo io stesso un emigrato figlio di emigrati – spesso mi trovo a discutere con chi piange disgrazia a proposito della cosiddetta “fuga dei cervelli” : «Se se ne vanno i migliori, chi resta?», è una delle frasi che sento ripetere più di frequente, da quella fetta di società che si sente inclusa, ovviamente, tra i migliori. “Se i cervelli fuggono”, è un altro tormentone, “quando e come cambierà il nostro Paese? Chi lo farà cambiare?”. Sono domande che ogni volta mi spiazzano, e che mi costringono a porne altre: cos’è il «paese»? E che vuol dire «cambiamento»? E «restare», o «partire»?

Talvolta vengo persuaso dai volenterosi che sono rimasti in “trincea” per motivi di bisogno o affezione, e cercano di dare una mano, con il loro operato, fuori dai grandi circuiti della notorietà, fuori dai riflettori, dalla manipolazione. Molto più spesso, l’ammonimento contro la “fuga” viene usato come un’arma piuttosto economica: un manganello morale agitato da coloro che, tutto sommato, in “trincea” stanno comodamente. C’è una larga fetta di Italia progressista che nella crisi attuale ha trovato comunque la sua via per star serenamente al mondo – ha trovato la sua “dimensione” –, e non ha nessuna intenzione di finire come in Grecia, a colpi di molotov per le strade. E c’è chi, ad un livello più alto, restando in “trincea” è riuscito a crearsi un suo piccolo micro-cosmo, con la sua micro-corte e i suoi micro-cortigiani. I peggiori sono forse i professionisti dell’ottimismo, esperti nel suonare la carica tenendo ben nascosto il trombettiere: invocano la mobilitazione, senza mai farci capire davvero chi dev’essere il soggetto protagonista del cambiamento, e per quale modello di società dovremmo immolarci. Se per un nuovo modo di intendere i rapporti umani, il lavoro, il consumo. O, piuttosto, per una semplice riverniciatura dell’attuale modello di alienazione e sfruttamento.

Il cittadino “resistente” in ogni caso si allinea, marcia verso la catastrofe, con una sobrietà che ricorda il vecchio trozkismo: «responsabilità», «austerità», «solidarietà», sono le sue parole d’ordine. Ovviamente: sono propagandate dallo stesso potere che lo manda allo sbaraglio. È un cupo processo auto-costrittorio, in cui ad un ventenne che voglia impegnarsi in politica non viene offerta alcuna alternativa se non una vita di *pursuit of happiness* di marca scadente, fatta di reiterazione di quel modello di potere, di ossessivo cliccare «mi piace» alla notizia di arresto di un politico corrotto, di «passaparola» con link e articoli di “approfondimento”, nell’illusione di tenere quel potere sotto controllo. Ma questa è una spirale suicida. L’informazione disponibile aumenterà sempre di più, in modo esponenziale, e all’aumentare di essa aumenterà l’indignazione di quel ventenne, la sua *addiction* tecnologica e la sua solitudine consumista. Non la sua reale partecipazione – fisica, individuale, vitale – ai processi di cambiamento.

No, di fronte a tutto ciò, sento di essere ancora dalla parte di chi sta scappando.

Qual é una delle conquiste centrali della società contemporanea, se non il diritto di disertare lo scontro frontale con un sistema ingiusto? Quale uno dei privilegi più importanti del nostro tempo, se non la possibilità di creare spazi temporaneamente liberati dalle piccole logiche clientelari, dalla retorica mediatica, dal provincialismo casareccio, sfruttando le mille interconnessioni dei gruppi radicali che già esistono, qui o *altrove*? E la semplice emigrazione, sia pure per motivi squisitamente materiali, perché deve subire questo insopportabile processo alle intenzioni?

Purtroppo, il sinistro richiamo del valore territoriale, piccolo-borghese, della famiglia come campana di vetro dentro cui rifugiarsi, é una delle conseguenze del caos identitario della

nostra epoca. Come esito naturale, il "diritto alla fuga" subisce una pesante connotazione negativa, é sinonimo di passività, arrendevolezza. E i migranti, nel migliore dei casi, non sono "soggetti attivi", ma "vittime" che vanno compatite. Nel peggiore, sono visti come concause dell'incancrenirsi di quelle storture che hanno contribuito alla loro emigrazione.

C'è, ovviamente, il discorso di classe, e la distinzione necessaria tra esilio volontario e migrazione forzata, tra nomadismo e viaggio. Sta al singolo, dopo essersi confrontato con il suo gruppo di riferimento, e poi quel gruppo con altri gruppi, decidere quando organizzarsi sul posto e in quali forme, o se preferire la diserzione, e in quali forme. In ogni caso persino la fuga codarda ed egocentrica è preferibile, vista la prospettiva attuale, al giochino suicida della resistenza mediata dall'oppressore.

Verrebbe da scomodare Max Weber e i suoi studi sui giovani contadini migranti tedeschi, che fuggivano in massa per rifiutare il regime patriarcale, ma anche per sottrarsi al regime dispotico del proprietario terriero. E personalmente non avrei il coraggio di chiedere ad un libico o ad un palestinese di "resistere" sul suo territorio anziché fuggire: chi sono io per incitare la "resistenza" altrui? C'è poi un bellissimo intervento della scrittrice ceca Vera Linhartová, che dopo vent'anni di esilio parigino diede questa definizione del suo status di migrante: il piacere d'essere un pesce piccolo in un oceano, piuttosto che una grossa carpa in uno stagno. In questo trovo tutta la bellezza della fuga come "passo in avanti".

Invece il "diritto alla fuga" viene demonizzato, da parte soprattutto di una *middle-class* che, fingendo di restare in trincea per la liberazione di tutti, in realtà si preoccupa solo di salvare se stessa. Di reiterare un sistema di rimbambimento e sfruttamento collettivo. Ed ecco come la parola stessa "resistenza" viene distorta: si trasforma da sinonimo di "attivismo" a subalternità nei confronti del linguaggio mass-mediale. O peggio, in mediocre Restaurazione.

Giorni fa ho assistito all'inaugurazione di un nuovo Apple Store, a Roma, con un esercito di dipendenti costretti a ballare come zombie radiocomandati, per l'intrattenimento dei clienti, e tutto questo poco prima della festa della Liberazione: sono sicuro che quegli stessi malcapitati si saranno ritrovati a celebrare i partigiani bianchi e rossi, con Bersani e Fini, Napolitano e il Papa, Beppe Severgnini e Fabio Fazio. Ma in cosa consiste la loro "liberazione"? E a cosa stanno "resistendo"?

La sensazione è che la lotta si sia trasformata in difesa di confini territoriali, fossero pure micro-patrie – come la reiterazione del nostro modello genitoriale, dello sciovinismo d'accatto, delle logiche dell'onore e delle radici – alla prova dimostratisi insostenibili, quando invece la lotta dovrebbe essere aggressione – teorica, per lo meno! – di confini immateriali, ideali, etici, quali sono quelli del capitalismo finanziario, delle *addiction* tecnologiche e mediatiche.

La figura del migrante ha invece questo di straordinario: è aggressore di confini, é mescolatore di conoscenze ed esperienze. E nessun "resistente" ci é sembrato più efficace dell'anti-italiano Malatesta, del primo inquieto Ernesto Guevara *on the road*, delle Brigate Internazionali alla volta di Spagna, del Tom Joad che prima di lasciare la mamma e unirsi alla lotta dei braccianti, diceva: *ovunque c'è una lotta contro il sangue e l'odio nell'aria... Dovunque si combatte per uno spazio di dignità un lavoro decente, una mano d'aiuto... cercami e ci sarò.*

«La nostra patria é il mondo intero», cantava qualcuno. E mi sembra ancora lo slogan più bello e salutare in questo mare di conformismo.

Dunque, per ritornare alla domanda che tanto affligge i nostri datori di sventure: se se ne vanno i “migliori”, chi resta? E chi cambierà il nostro Paese? Resteranno quelli che vorranno restare, e a loro spetterà la definizione di ciò che è «Paese». Ogni individuo deve avere il diritto di scegliersi il suo campo di lotta, la sua "tribù" di riferimento, e ogni tribù deve avere il diritto di migrare e creare la sua *communitas* dove meglio crede, senza per questo celebrare l'egoismo e l'indifferenza, ma per meglio interconnettersi con chi vuol salvarsi. Tutto il resto, inclusi il dolore e le perdite che accompagnano, inevitabilmente, ogni migrazione, viene dopo. «Restiamo umani», diceva Vittorio Arrigoni, e crediamo non esista una forma di resistenza più importante di questa. Abbiamo una vita sola, e restare umani nell'arco di questa vita, prima che essa si indurisca e avvizzisca e s'alieni dal resto del mondo, è il principale atto di sabotaggio che possiamo compiere. Meglio se in compagnia di qualcun altro, lo sappiamo.

DISCIPLINE:

ON WRITING AND COLLECTIVITY

If you meet the Buddha, kill him.
Linji Yixuan

It is common practice to look at humans through the filter of the collectivities they supposedly belong to. This is particularly evident in conservative discourses, such as those on Nation and Ethnicity, or in the marketing categorization of different Consumer typologies. But also discourses which self-define as emancipatory rarely constitute an exception to this norm. When fighting for gender equality, for example, it is always through the filter of Gender that we look at our fellow humans kettled inside the various gender categories. Even when talking about humanity *tout court*, it is once again through the filter of Humanity that we look at the singular lives that are gathered on this planet. This is how we often end up fighting for the Woman, the Migrant, the Human, and so on, and hardly ever for the individual woman, the individual migrant, the individual human. Fooled by the pretense of such abstract collectivities to truly embody those who are comprised within them, we often find ourselves fighting, not for the emancipation of our fellow humans, but for that of their collective, capitalized names.

What is the origin of this capitalizing process, which turns the multitudes of singularities into abstract conglomerates? If we were to talk about it borrowing the language of economics, we could call this element a *surplus*, that is, an excess which is produced by human congregations and which, it seems inevitably, ends up enveloping them and imposing itself above them. Under the iron sky of such capitalizations, humans cease to be unique individuals, melting instead into the magmatic material of abstraction. Progressively, this collective surplus takes over the individuals who originally produced it, impersonating them through the 'mystical body' of an abstract name. Like in the early horror movie *The Great Gabbo*, these collective abstractions, which we thought we could dominate and use as our ventriloquist's dummies, finally end up possessing us, forcing us into complete silence.

But is this really the unavoidable result of any attempt at community-making? Is it really impossible to imagine any authentic form of collective composition, even within the struggle for emancipation? On the contrary. For example, as we have recently seen with the actions of the hacker multitude which goes under the name of Anonymous, the possibility of hiding one's actions behind the mask of a shared identity can bring some extremely useful advantages, both in terms of security, of effectiveness and of 'military' strategy. However, if we wish to use such abstract devices, we must do so with the necessary distance and consciousness of the risks involved. Collective identities can be as powerful as hammers, but, like hammers, there is a crucial difference between having them in our hands, or dangerously floating above our heads. At any time, we must maintain a sharp awareness of the substantial difference between the reality of the singular individuals and the dangerous surplus which constitutes the name of the collectivity they decide – or are decided – to belong to.

The same applies to writing. Indeed, from a technical point of view, we might even consider Anonymous as a writing collective, since programming is a practice based on alpha-numeric language. When looking at forms of collective writing, especially in the

context of a struggle for emancipation, we must always remember the fictionality of the collective construct and the reality of its composing parts. Even when a writer is part of a collective project, it is always him or her who is doing his or her share of writing. It is him or her who has to face responsibility for his or her practice (I might add, instead of toying with the ever too common, bloodless critiques of the actions of their own or of someone else's collective, as if such things really existed). It is the individual writer who has to find within him or herself the necessary discipline to give life to the most adequate writing, with the aim of furthering a struggle which must be, first of all, for his or her own individual emancipation.

Such a focus on individuality is not a resignation to a state of existential isolation. It is immediately evident how a writer can never be alone, nor will he or she ever be in the position of thinking his or her practice as disjointed from a universe of others with which it interacts.

First of all, with the *other* which the writer is to him or herself. When writing, one is always forced to investigate oneself while searching for ideas, logic or flow. In doing so, one will inescapably encounter one's *self*, which he or she will meet as if it was an other. Such an encounter with the other, as Levinas reminds us, is always unsettling, and produces at least as much disquiet as surprise. However, a radical transformation of the two parts involved also originates from it. Upon meeting oneself as an other, one is forced to open him or herself to it, losing his or her apparent full sovereignty as an individual, and to start to share his or her individual status with this other. A new, shared space is created between the two, and from this space an infinite, mutual responsibility originates for both: mutual, as it refers to the new state of the two parts being intertwined, and infinite, as its substance is made of the stuff of dreams, desires and necessities.

Translated into an emancipatory discourse, for the writer this means developing what Max Stirner used to define as an *egoistic* approach: that is, the constant, tireless act of reminding oneself that the dreams, desires and necessities, shared with one's own other, are the core of one's practice and the first aim of one's struggle for emancipation. The disquiet generated by this traumatic encounter leads to two opposite, yet connected, directions: outwards, to the transformation of the urgency for one's emancipation into the concrete practice of insurrection; inwards, to the creation by one's own hands of one's *discipline*. Discipline, thus, ceases to be the obedient interiorization of an external command, rather becoming the embodiment into one's own practice of one's infinite responsibility for the space which one shares with that particular other, which is one's self. In this sense, discipline, thus, has to be intended – and re-imagined – as a radical method of emancipatory urgency, born out of the solidarity between one and one's self, and aimed at the unleashing of the full potential of one's dreams, desires and necessities – in other words, at emancipation.

Notoriously, discipline has been one of the most difficult aspects associated with the practice of writing. Especially today, in the age of endless distractions, finding sufficient will-power to simply continue writing for a decent span of time has for many become an almost insurmountable challenge. But we should not be clouded by the annoyance caused to us by the struggle for discipline. It is exactly this quest that might constitute the most powerful reminder of the reasons why we should be writing at all. In fact, the radicality of discipline-as-method consists in its being connected to the *why* of action, rather than to the *how*. As experience teaches us, the iron fist of dictatorially self-imposed, traditional discipline can do very little against the soft power of distractions. Facebook is always too

close, youtube is always too available, and if one doesn't have the internet it might be drinking, or smoking, or god-knows-what that will, with cruel persistence, break the fragile pretense of self-inflicted, military discipline. It is only the reminder of *why* we are doing something – for example, why we are writing – that can lift us above the muddy waters of distractions. All actions which do not pass the test of this discipline, are probably not worth being accomplished.

In his or her practice, the writer is also in constant interaction with the objects or characters he or she creates. In truth, writing is always an exercise in crowd control. Concepts, adjectives, characters, landscapes exist on the page as the defenseless subjects of the writer's absolute monarchy. Their fictional lives depend on us and have nothing to defend themselves with, apart from the infective weapons of the abstract dummy. While having to guard ourselves from their passive-aggressive potential, we should also understand the opportunity of using our writing as a place for practical experimentation. Approaching one's fictional characters or abstract constructs in a considerate manner can become a good training exercise for the relationship with equally 'empty' objects in the real world, such as those commonly defined as materials and resources in the language of economics. Producing useless writing, hopeless characters, superfluous concepts should thus be understood as a metaphor of our everyday production of useless commodities, hopeless subjectivities, superfluous action, and so on. Far from advocating puritan restraint in writing, I would like to invite fellow writers to insert a political and economic dimension in their dealing with their creative objects, in order to strengthen and refine their political and economic practice in their everyday life.

But writers don't only deal with their selves and their fictional creations. Readers, of course, are their fundamental counterparts. Better said, *the* reader, as a singular entity. Due to the very technology of writing, reading is a solitary act, in which the writer and the reader meet through the medium of the text. A writer always talks to one reader at any one time. It was with a deep understanding of the constraints of the written medium that Mussolini famously declared cinema, and not writing, to be the 'strongest weapon' for propaganda. The dialogue between the writer and the reader happens silently, almost secretly, and passes from one singularity to the other. All other writing, especially that type of discourse-to-all-dummies commonly defined as journalism, is little more than an archaic and ineffective form of propaganda: talking to the ghosts of our abstract names – or worse, to the holy ghost of the 'masses' or of the 'general readership' – and trying to persuade them, as if they really existed.

In their secret liaison, what are the writer and reader whispering? Their dialogue reminds us of that between instruments in an orchestra, constantly calling and inviting each other: the writer, through his words; the reader, through the equally creative process of interpretation and completion. Of course, only until they swap roles, as the once-reader will start writing, and the former writer will start reading. Through his or her writing, the writer invites the reader to form an alliance. A willful complicity. When the writer reveals a fictional landscape on the page, he or she does so only with the intent of inviting the reader to participate to its creation, inside and outside the page. This is why writing is never about communication: it is the constant invitation, from the writer to the reader, to become accomplices in drawing one of those 'cartographies of lands yet to come' discussed by Deleuze. Thus, writing and reading, the solitary acts *par excellence*, reveal themselves to be extremely powerful moments of creation of new collectivities. True to the secrecy of their origin, such new collectivities do not establish themselves upon the loud boasting of some shared name, to be repeated *ad infinitum* by all members until their complete self-

annihilation. On the contrary, in order for these new collectivities to take real life and acquire autonomy, they will have to flee the page they were born in, and the realm of abstract language, as soon as possible. Readers and writers should look for each other in real life, meet, conspire, develop together in reality what they began to sketch on paper. Such an act of bringing secret complicities to a state of reality-production is the basic form of insurrection.

All the rest, the tiring refrain of the 'need for organization', will come by itself, structured around each individual's discipline and the discipline that derives from the encounter with one's accomplice as an *other* and from the creation of a shared space of dreams, desires and necessities. *Organization* thus becomes the practical realization of the meeting of *disciplines*. Like the disquiet caused by one's encounter with one's self leads to a transformation of the emancipatory urgency into discipline, the encounter with the discipline of the accomplice – understood as an other who has already encountered him or her self as his or her own other – provides the practical ground on which such discipline can flourish as insurrection. This insurrectionary blossoming, truthful to the infinite nature of its places of origin, unfolds as an organization of infinities. In other words, an ever-changing organization of ethics, rather than as some scaffolding constructed of fixed norms of morality. The field of organization thus ceases to be the totalitarian space of the social factory or of the party factory, and becomes the process of translation into reality of the ethical responsibility of our encounter with the co-existence of several infinities both within ourselves and in the spaces of contact with the others.

Organization, intended as the insurrectionary meeting of disciplines, constitutes the foundation from which new collectivities can spring to life. Such collectives will be born as naturally unable to produce that surplus which would ultimately overtake their components. In fact, collectives such as these will never need a name, a flag or a party symbol. They will no longer be dominating dummies, nor will they be heavy hammers floating over our heads. Rather, they will resemble a good pair of boots. Something which, like utopia in the words of Eduardo Galeano, is just what we need for walking.

OLYMPIC BRITISHNESS AND THE CRISIS OF IDENTITY

As Team GB entered the Olympic stadium during the opening ceremony, it was to David Bowie's '*Heroes*'. The central line from the song struck me as summing up the country's hopes for its sportswomen and men amid a double-dip recession and seemingly terminal economic inertia - '*We can be heroes, just for one day*'. A concession in the choice of song perhaps that the Olympics represent a temporary, if somewhat spectacular, distraction from an increasingly dire reality that can only intensify over the forthcoming years.

Something of a debate has broken out about the meaning of this extraordinary ceremony, not least here on OurKingdom with [Anthony Barnett](#) and [Sunder Katwala](#). The New York Times called it "*...neither a nostalgic sweep through the past nor a bold vision of a brave new future*". This struck me as an accurate summation of an event that presented in microcosm the present historical moment in the wake of the global financial crisis of 2008 and the social and economic malaise that has followed. I was reminded of the quote by Antonio Gramsci on crisis in its consisting "*...precisely in the fact that the old is dying and the new cannot yet be born*". It is similar sentiments that informed the mixed nature of London's opening ceremony, which looked neither wholly forward nor back.

That is not to say that Boyle's efforts were without deeper meaning or any sustained attempt at social and historical critique. In particular, the first section of the opening ceremony offered a reflective and frequently epic expression of the Industrial Revolution.

At the outset of this first movement, the audience is offered a glimpse of '*Merrie England*', a pre-industrial idyll resplendent with maypoles and games. Amid these scenes we hear four songs representing the formation of the British state, whose constituent nations have their hymns consecutively sung. This begins with a lone child singing William Blake's '*Jerusalem*', presumably to represent agrarian England. This is followed by '*Danny Boy*' representing Ulster and what remains of the British conquest in Ireland; next, '*Flower of Scotland*' and the Welsh song '*Bread of Heaven*' (sung in English). These songs represent the political constitution of Britain - the conquest of Wales, the Act of Union with Scotland in 1707, and finally union with Ireland in 1801. Shortly thereafter, '*Jerusalem*' resumes once more, now sung in unison by a choir - representing both the culmination of the political project of state formation, and a sense of foreboding as the 'satanic mills' of industrialisation appear on the horizon of history.

Political union now complete, the engineer Isambard Brunel, played by Kenneth Branagh, leads a group of industrialists from a set of carriages that have entered the arena to the foot of a small hill that represents Glastonbury Tor, where he then proceeds to read from Caliban's '*Be Not Afraid*' speech, from Shakespeare's *Tempest*.

It is the conclusion of this speech by Brunel that initiates an incredibly carnal depiction of the Industrial Revolution. An impressive percussive performance, led by a Boudicca-like [Dame Evelyn Glennie](#), gradually builds, winding up into a coiled mass of energy as the first industrial 'workers' begin to emerge from within the Glastonbury Tor, a new subject unseen in human history until this moment. Brunel's industrialists, having stayed at the foot of the Tor, remain stoical in manner as they observe 'their' creation, the industrial proletariat, as it emerges from the womb of a more ingenuous land, now gone. Boyle

wishes to tell us that this is a seismic moment, both in the history of these islands and also, our species.

The percussion builds, coming to imitate a piston engine or the constant velocity of a locomotive train. Meanwhile, the landscape proceeds to rapidly change from the 'green and pleasant land' of Jerusalem to Blake's '*Satanic Mills*' and, in front of our eyes, the island of [John Constable](#) is replaced with that of [Joseph Wright of Derby](#). The combination of the percussion and the chanting provides a pagan drive to this transformation, as if industrialisation itself expresses the basis of some new religion. This section is entitled 'Pandemonium', the name of John Milton's capital of hell in '*Paradise Lost*'; the choice of title illustrates Boyle's own critique of the new faith. Surely only the zeal of 'divinely' inspired constancy can drive, mediate and intensify such purposeful chaos? Yet this does not seem the devil's work, nor are the industrialists located as uniquely malevolent protagonists within the allegory. Indeed, amid all this turmoil, Brunel's industrialists stare at the creations of the new civilisation in astonishment as though these ziggurats of industry had appeared by magic from the heart of the Earth, greater symbols and more indomitable successors than that totem of the previous pagan faith, the now recedent Glastonbury Tor.

Watching the performance of the industrialists brings to mind Marx, when he writes in the '*Communist Manifesto*' how capitalism represents:

"...a society that has conjured up such gigantic means of production and of exchange, it (the bourgeoisie) is like the sorcerer, who is no longer able to control the powers of the nether world whom he has called up by his spells."

Boyle's capitalists and their collective reaction to the changes in their surroundings evoke the spirit of Marx's words here - they are unleashing forces of history but don't yet know where these forces may lead them.

What does not quite fit, however, is the non-antagonistic nature of the relationship between the industrialists and the workers. The performance depicts it as one of a partnership, an archaic corporatism assiduously intent on increasing the productive capabilities of the nation, of capital and of the human species.

In truth, when those workers did figuratively descend from Glastonbury Tor - or to put it literally, began to engage in industrial forms of production - what happened? There was the insurrection of Luddism in Nottinghamshire and then Derbyshire, Lancashire, Yorkshire and Leicestershire, which ultimately had to be pacified by 12,000 soldiers - more troops than were fighting Napoleonic France at the time (1812). Later, there were the Swing Riots of the 1830s, which were overwhelmingly the result of the progressive impoverishment and dispossession of the English peasantry over the previous fifty years. They were also the direct result, according to Lord Carnarvon, of English agricultural labourers being '*reduced to a plight more abject than that of any race in Europe*'. This experience, of worker resistance and dispossession from common land, as well as state repression, is wholly missing from Boyle's 'People's' history.

Nor is the relationship of the workers to their work particularly representative of historical fact. This feels particularly pertinent at around twenty four minutes through the ceremony when, having quite literally forged an Olympic ring to join the other four already suspended above their heads, the workers and industrialists collectively stand in awe at the sight of their combined achievement. Such a relationship to work in industrial production did not

exist and is precisely what distinguishes it from pre-industrial forms of artisanal labour, in so much as workers produced things for exchange value within the new system and are not afforded the possibility of viewing a commodity as the conclusion of 'their' labour, as the very division of such labour grows ever more sophisticated in the process of transition.

Work under capitalism in general, and in particular within industrial society, is alienating - which is to say one rarely understands what one is actually doing. A good example of this can be found in the film *'The Working Class Goes to Heaven'*, when the protagonist and piece-work operator, Lulu, becomes enraged at realising he doesn't even know what the components he produces every day are for. This is a more accurate depiction of the relationship of the worker to their work than the rhythmic and satisfying encomium that Boyle offers.

Boyle seems to think of industrial production and the '*society of work*' as offering the possibility of producing things of ethical and spiritual significance and perhaps even of redemption. The rings do, after all, hang over the heads of both classes, the workers and the bourgeoisie, as if they were some transcendent god or spiritual ideal. Here is a higher value which they have created through work and which now stands above them. Historically, it could perhaps represent socialism, an ethical ideal formed from class solidarity. Or perhaps the idea (misplaced, in my view) of collective contribution to a purported national interest or human progress. Whatever it is, the collective labours of these men and women seem to attain spiritual significance. Boyle's elision of suffering and alienation is a kind of post-industrial erasure of the historical experience of industrial society.

For the most part, all that work represents within industrial production is that the living human subject is rendered subordinate to the commodity object. Marx calls this the 'ontological inversion', where humans are reduced to the 'object' of commodity labour while the things they produce for exchange are imbued with the metaphysics of life and 'subjecthood'. While there are some jobs that permit a sense of craftsmanship or achievement, such as the construction of the 'majestic' fixed capital of bridges, boats and buildings, the reality of work under industrial capitalism is mostly more akin to those workers of Guangdong in China who are manufacturing the Wenlock and Mandeville toys for the Olympic Games. These workers were forced to work as much as 120 hours a month overtime in the run up to the Games, while being paid as little as 26p an hour for working an 11-and-a-half hour day. Such work is not noble, honourable or creative. It is dull, repetitive and banal - [as this Luddite poem from 1812](#) makes perfectly clear. The same reality of work, although by now of differing degree to that in South and East Asia, remains true almost two centuries later in the UK as is clear [for those cleaners housed in temporary 'slums'](#) on the periphery of the Olympic Park.

As they look upon the fruits of their work, this is not the relationship Boyle's 'workers' have to the Olympic Rings they have forged.

TURBULENCE OF RADIATION AND REVOLUTION

An Ex Post Facto View of 2011

When we reflect upon the year 2011, especially the situations surrounding 3/11 and the global uprisings, everything that happened before appears to have been in preparation for these two extreme moments. All events in the recent past seem to have been proceeding toward or engulfed into these currents: radiation and revolution. This is mainly due to our habit of thinking itself that always thinks things ex post facto rather than ex ante facto. But at the same time this most deadly disaster and the insurrections across the globe, the extreme poles of despair and hope, are framing our present as the accumulation of all temporalities past and present and what they portend for possibilities we are confronting now. The impossible mix of the two currents is, as many of us are forced to experience, now causing a global turbulence whose dynamics and orientation are unpredictable.

For one thing there are unprecedented crises in the lives of the majority on the globe. All key components of the apparatus that capitalism and state power have been building up are now on the verge of collapse and are turning against and attacking the people with sheer violence, as a last resort for the maintenance of financial capitalism, industrial/military conglomeration and the governance: precarious labor conditions approaching either servitude or disposal (expendability), debt of various scales imposed upon entire populaces, genetically modified or poisoned food products widely distributed for daily consumption, environmental contamination by various production and mining affecting the locals everywhere, escalating joblessness and homelessness, budget cuts in every corner of public services, recurring racial and gender discrimination, police brutality or war against civilians in all nation-states, and the radiation-spread instigated by a government itself... Jobs, money, housing, energy, food, medicine and environment – everything we rely on as our lifeline turns into a weapon against us. This is a total war of those in power waged against the commoners.

The logic of the 99%, ambiguous as it may be, is appropriate at least in terms of describing the state of class war today where the oppressed are distributed beyond any class and identitarian territory, traversing and crossing all categories, and finally even include all life forms. This could be seen as a war of the apparatus against life itself [zoé] on a planetary scale. Meanwhile the 1% equals agents and guardians of (and of course, profit-makers from) the apparatus, who can no longer be considered as human subjects for they are too convoluted in the automatism of continuous operation. Automatic services for intricately interlinked interests are the main attribute of today's ruling mechanism.

Even our thoughts and senses seem to have anticipated the 2011 events. On top of amassing problems from the disaster that must be solved layer by layer for years to come beyond the lifespan of any one of us, 3/11 is a marker for the expansion of the apparatus on the planet: the disaster broke out at the frontline of the expansion, where the human construct and the planetary movement collided, sending a signal of more and more disasters to follow. What capitalism has been building has been merging with the planetary body to the extent that the interconnectivity of everything has surpassed a condition that can be grasped in terms of dichotomies such as nature vs. man-made or environment vs. society. In other words, the framework of social construction and its outside or the other no

longer works. It is necessary to grasp everything as One, either as a planetary apparatus or a planetary machine(1).

The emergence of a “new object-oriented philosophy” or a new “materialist ontology” is a way of tackling the interconnectivity in this increasingly desperate condition(2). This tendency of thought can be seen as an awareness of the critical drive of the world we are made part of. In this sense it has been prefigured by Felix Guattari’s *The Three Ecologies* in the late 1980s(3), an epochal work that analyzed the global situation where the signs of irreversibility of environmental changes began to surface hand in hand with an unprecedented expansion of “integrated world capitalism.” In Guattari’s work, ecology is no longer just a matter of environment in a narrow sense, but includes human subjectivity and social relations. This work was the primary attempt to approach the interconnectivity of the world from the vantage point of the anti-capitalist struggle.

What is ecology today? As Timothy Morton implies in his recent works(4), ecology is about everything and totality, involving all the negativities, limits and deviations (or mutations) we refuse to accept. It is a thought of extremity that we have to embrace. And in the socio-political context it speaks to our destiny of having to coexist in interconnectivity whether we like it or not.

Global interconnectivity had been emphatically observed within the so-called human world as well. That is, the globalization of economy has been undermining not only the autonomy of local and national economies but also state sovereignty. Around the turn of the century, Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri called the resulting world of network power “empire.” Some of the tendencies spelled out in their book are sound, except that the image of the imperial world described therein appears now to be rather quiet and peaceful as compared to the real world we have been living in. The globalization we have experienced since has been much more chaotic, brutal, cruel and monstrous with shifting power centers, omnipresent warfare, financial collapse, progressing contamination, more pronounced immiseration of the global south, and accelerating disasters caused by climate change. This world forces us to abandon any idea of history that develops in stages. Rather it seems to inscribe all temporalities that humans have experienced in the past, each of which surfaces independently in its proper moment to let its implication be known: often with violence, brutality, inequality, discrimination and servitude, ancient elements return in newer contexts. Our history is a gigantic chimera of all we know from the past, precisely as the earth itself enfolds all of its previous activities into stratification. We are in the interconnectivity of a spatio-temporal complex in the planetary machine.

Around the years 2009 and 2010, some sectors of the counter-globalization movement transferred to the environmental justice movement. COP 15 in Copenhagen and the following World People’s Conference on Climate Change and the Rights of Mother Earth in Cochabamba involved this tendency, which was significant in entailing possibilities of a coalition between the anti-capitalist-inclined environmental justice movement from the north and the indigenous movements who stand forefront against the capitalist expropriation of bio-diversity and the cultures that keep direct connection with it. The process through which the counter-globalization movement since Seattle 1999 began to show its limitations in form and scope and its shift toward the environmental problematic coincided with the rotation of the world toward turbulence in 2011.

Our body as part of the planetary machine must know in its existence the fact that 3/11 and the global uprisings are interconnected. But our recognition and struggles have not

been able to make the interconnection into a strategy. The current article is written with a hope to be a step toward that goal.

Genealogy of the Nuclear Sublime

3/11 has been the darkest manifestation of this coexistence and interconnectivity, through its uncontrollable radioactive dissemination that is still ongoing and expanding. Unfortunately for everyone on the planet, now, the radioactivity embodies the dark side of being-in-the world. In a broad sense, this situation is the real end of Romanticism, as we have known it: the socio-cultural mechanism to reassure the existence of the domain external to our industrialized everyday life, either as an object of nostalgic admiration or awe to an unknown power – and at the same time the endless source of capitalist exploitation and commodification. The indiscriminating power of radioactivity is affecting the entire ‘environment,’ which is physically equal to the thin layer of atmosphere on the planet where most life forms reside. That is, now another artificial sublime is with us, more and more introduced into our own bodies. Air, water, the green, mountains and blue sky can no longer full-heartedly embrace us with their sources of nourishment (or consumption), nor can they challenge us with their own subliminal presence. For they are now infected by and doubled with the nuclear sublime.

All conduct of the Japanese government in the wake of 3/11 has proven that the state would choose continuation of capitalist operation and its own sovereignty over the well-being of the people. It has been consistently blurring information about present risks of radiation and critical conditions of the power plants. It has been allowing distribution of food products from the contaminated zone, seeking to export them to third world countries, and asking prefectures across Japan to accept rubble from the stricken areas. It has not even given up exportation of its nuclear technology, after the horrendous accident due to its ineptitude. The priority here is the reconstruction of the area for the sake of economic survival. The spatial, informational and psychological strategy of the pro-nuclear state is the most dreadful form of modern bio-politics, that is, the necro-politics of radiation. While bio-politics would close off the contaminated zone and relocate the residents to different areas, this necro-politics is accepting, measuring and controlling illness and death of the people not only in Fukushima and Japan, but across the world.

In *The Nuclear State* (1978)(5) the Austrian writer Robert Jungk warned against the society of internal armament and of extreme civilian control emerging within the regimes that embrace nuclear power. In many senses, his words were prophetic for our world. He traces how scientists, state bureaucrats and capitalists worked in collaboration to create the apparatus of nuclear power by joining their fantasy for unprecedented power and prosperity – as a utopian project made possible by the nuclear sublime. In reality, however, there is a problematic match between the extreme danger of nuclear fission itself and the actual vulnerability in operating these facilities due to technical and human factors. On top of that, for both military and civilian uses, the secrecy and control required for maintaining nuclear facilities have been creating a shadowy regime of surveillance and punishment. Thus nuclear power gradually hostages all populations and lives on the planet.

On the level of international power relations, at the end of the cold war, the bi-lateral deterrence system between the West and the East was cancelled out and production of nuclear weaponry slowed down; but the age of multiple atomic regimes also arrived, accompanied by spreading possibilities of atomic warfare. Since then, it seems that the presence of the nuclear sublime was forgotten, buried under the unconscious of civilian

life. At the same time, the act of waging war has been continuously proclaimed by the US and its allies in order to prohibit new nuclear regimes from appearing.

In the context of the labor movement in nuclear facilities, there is a fundamental difficulty of even voicing disputes on the part of workers. Nuclear industries demand of their workers not only extreme secrecy but also extreme dedication, sometimes even by employing violent measures. The only thing desperate workers can do has been to 'whistleblow', despite the possible retaliations instigated upon them by these electric companies. There have also been cases where workers on strike had to give up their struggle for the sake of preventing accidents that would affect a tremendously large amount of the population(6). In these instances, it is the workers who decided to terminate their struggle based upon their own humanitarian consciousness and the ethics of Life.

In everyday life, the presence of the nuclear regime as well as the potential disaster had been buried under the spectacle of prosperous consumerism and citizens' unconscious, up until some alarming accidents took place, whose ultimate manifestation was 3/11. Since then, the people in Japan have been questioning everything about the politics, society and their lives under the postwar nuclear regime. But at the same time, the invisibility of radioactivity and the irregularity of its effects on the body are producing a number of sub-discourses, which are -- as if trying to detour or escape from the material effects of radioactivity itself -- mostly shifted toward the morality of being good Japanese during a state of national crisis. Here exists the complexity of the politics of the post-nuclear disaster society of control.

One of the crucial lessons from what has been happening since 3/11 is that nuclear power is not only the worst kind of energy production that must be replaced by something else, but that it is also the ultimate stronghold of the power that has been determining and ruling the way of society. The concentration of power specifically required for nuclear operation is a tacit but most dreadful and irrevocable way of rule. As many have pointed out, nuclear technology is essentially military technology. And we should remember that historically its civilian application for power generation -- as promoted by Eisenhower's "atoms for peace" slogan in 1953 -- came only after the nuclear attacks of Hiroshima and Nagasaki in 1945, that is, it followed the genocidal performance of the destructive power showed off to the rising socialist bloc as well as the world.

That is to say, by US global strategy, nuclear power has been employed always in duality: civilian and military. It has always controlled our existence including both its conscious and unconscious layers, like carrots and sticks, as a double bind. On the one hand, we have always remembered the experience of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, and imagined the possible disaster that could be caused by energy production -- subliminal destruction. But on the other hand, we have been living the consumerist everyday life that has been driven by the fabricated need for more and more energy, by the phantasmagoric image of the good life based upon wealth and convenience -- the supreme happiness. Thus we have been existentially trapped by the double bind of the nuclear sublime, in Guattari's three domains of ecology, from subjectivation to social construction to the environment.

Since 3/11 it has been revealed how the existence of nuclear power for both civilian and military uses has been behind the rule of capitalism and the state. The nuclear sublime has always been behind global power, before and after the cold war, during both Fordist and neoliberal phases of capitalism.

Information Warfare on the Planetary Body

The year 2011 was year zero, that is, the beginning of the process through which the 99% were awakened about war having been waged against them by the 1%, and began to fight back across the world. Now everything that grounds our everyday life and lifeline attacks us. Among other things, especially radiation and money are two ultimate weapons that are attacking us in different ontological dimensions. This is a planetary war, which can be conceptualized as information warfare in both material and immaterial senses.

In terms of radiation, it has been attacking us since Hiroshima and Nagasaki, but in the wake of 3/11 the assault has widened further across the country and beyond. In terms of money, it has always been attacking us as debt in the confines of a smaller economy, but it was the so-called Nixon Shock in the early 70s that money really began to show its fangs as a pure force that bites our existence on a global scale – as neoliberalism hand in hand with the US global hegemony, especially after the end of the cold war.

In 1971 US President Richard Nixon decided to abandon the Bretton Woods system and rescind the rules on the convertibility of the dollar into gold. This meant that the dollar was now unhooked from every gauge of objectivity and that the self-referentiality of the American standard was unilaterally imposed upon the world economy. Certainly this initiated the path toward today's collapse of the finance-led capitalist operation. According to the Italian philosopher Franco 'Bifo' Berardi, money thus became a pure act of language (7). What does this mean? It means that the main object of capitalist valorization shifted from physical products and their use value to immaterial signs that dominate the products and their use value. Now the goods that circulate in the economic domain are informational, and as such they penetrate the world of labor, mind and body. This metamorphosis has begun a total commodification of our earthly existence.

With 3/11, however, we become aware that this process has coincided with that through which the nuclear sublime as power operation has been disseminated and introduced more and more into our everyday life, and finally into our bodies as radioactive substances that will continue to destroy our genetic information for years to come.

Therefore we have two dark matters of the interconnectivity or the immanence of the world: money and radiation as informational weapons against us. On the one hand are semiotic signals that dominate our minds and society by the power of valorization; on the other hand are energetic signals that destroy DNA by the power of ionization. The signal-sending acts both material and immaterial assume the preemptive assault of information warfare across the globe. Once affected by these signals, anything and everything turns into a weapon against us. Such is the power of information in interconnectivity. It is no accident that today both capitalist and government operations rely on strict secrecy or the classified act, which turns out to be the main form of rule and oppression, while the most effective assaults against power -- the capitalist/state conglomeration or the military/industry complex -- are varied forms of information action by anonymous hackers.

From a different perspective, this is the new phase for 'the commons,' namely, the common resources for life, community and production -- that it has developed its negative side to the extent that it is threatening the survival of its positive side. The commons in a broad sense -- or the environment or the earth ultimately -- is the basis for not only human world but also life world. It has always nurtured our existence and production, while it has from time to time destroyed human constructs and life environment in the form of natural

disasters. It has always two faces from which all life forms cannot escape. The term 'common' is Janus-headed: it embraces and destroys us. But after the industrial revolution, human production came to add a new massive and concentrated negativity to the commons, significantly, some damages of which are no longer recoverable and whose ultimate form is radiation.

While capitalism privatizes natural resources, land, labor, mind and the body, it creates negative by-products of its operation: servitude, violence, discrimination, debt and waste, and furthermore it socializes or imposes upon us the negative as the new commons. These effects are precisely what appear as immiseration of life and environmental destruction.

2011 year zero announces a kind of limit that has been reached, the limit that has appeared as an over-exhaustion of the positive commons by the imposition of the negative commons. In the broad picture the crisis of capitalism is due to the exhaustion of the positive commons or the resources for capitalist expropriation, exploitation and commodification. However, since capitalism cannot and will not stop its operations, it is taking hostage the positive commons including ourselves and all life forms into its suicidal journey. This is what is happening as the war of the 1% waged against the 99%, the information warfare whose main weapons are money and radiation.

In the year 2011 a struggle broke out across the world. "We cannot go back to a normal life any longer." – This is the word commonly heard in the occupation movement, global uprisings, and the everyday life under radiation. In different contexts the people are at the bottom of their life crisis and seeking to develop a new form of life. That is the basis of the struggle. In this process, the occupiers are saying: "We don't need government and bankers," while "we don't need excessive electricity" is the desperate cry of the people who are fighting for the de-nuke process in Japan. These enunciations embody the will of the 99% to refuse the informational signals transmitted from the "semio-capitalism" and the nuclear sublime, and develop their own informational interconnectivity. These embody the process of de-subjection within the capitalist society based upon excessive (energy) consumption and of re-subjection in the unknown world in formation.

These struggles are different from any movement that has appeared in the global north in the past. They are neither born out of any political slogan, nor organized according to any party platform. They are assemblies of forces that come into existence out of individual life necessity. Some parts of these struggles still consist of the movements, socialist or anti-nuke or whatever, but they are only part of them and not leading the orientation. No movement – no matter how powerful and effective it is – can exist in and of itself; every movement can only coexist with other movements, groups or individuals in interconnectivity. In this sense, the struggles might be considered as an impetus rather than a movement.

Impetus is not something that can be led or controlled by an institution or a concentrated human intention, but a fluid body that affects and is affected by all the forces in and around it. It involves the entire environment that it is part of. It is a magnet field of information, in other words, it is an attractor for actions and events as well as memories and experiences of all constituencies. It is a dynamic assemblage of spatio-temporality. Its confrontation with the enemy is not symmetric as the enemy wants it to be, because it is ontologically different from the monolithic organ of the enemy. Its front is multi-dimensional and omnipresent. It is, as it were, a turbulence created by encounters between different

temperatures and intensities, consisting of innumerable small whirlwinds.

In these struggles, what coordinates or assembles spatio-temporalities is 'collective intelligence,' which is an aggregate of information in a social network, and as such realizes a knowledge-building that cannot be subsumed into individual subjectivity and property; as such it realizes a decision-making beyond leadership. Its premise is the "wisdom of crowds.(8)"

General assemblies that coordinate the occupation movement, though they often internalize misunderstandings, discrepancies and conflicts or precisely thanks to these noises, produce a fluid body of a new sociality within themselves; and these processes are supported by information exchanges by the internet and media. Here we cannot discount the crucial role played by the anonymous hackers who have instigated remarkable assaults against the power for the benefit of the entire impetus.

People living under radiation are researching levels of radioactivity contaminating their living environment and seeking to find ways of surviving varying degrees of internal exposure. Informal and formal groups are making networks to exchange information and knowledge about nuclear technology, nuclear science, nuclear capital and politics as well as medical practices to counter the effects of radioactivity. Therein we can observe the birth of 'popular science,' a collective body of intelligence constantly developing and expanding.

For the formation of collective intelligence, what is maximally indispensable is the Body.

General assemblies are the gathering place for mass corporeality, where the building of collective intelligence can take place only by the physical comingling of bodies. Anti-authoritarian politics based upon horizontal decision-making or the space that allows it is made possible only by the massive body taking over the public space in opposition to urban privatization. Central here are the bodies that struggle in concurrency, as a turbulence.

In the space contaminated by radiation, the core of people's concern is their body. Nobody can overcome radiation, which penetrates through (external exposure) and goes into (internal exposure) anyone's body indiscriminately. But in the actual socio-political context, age, class, gender, lifestyle and regionality discriminate amounts and effects of radiation, which ultimately involve varied possibilities of illness and death. Here exists the main problematic concern for the struggle against the necro-politics of radiation. Under the apocalyptic crisis of everyday reproduction, the goal of popular science is to share a longer and healthier life among the people themselves. In this context, the body means both individual body and the Body, both individual life and the Life. It is from the experience of extreme negativity, namely, possibilities of illness and death that the common understanding of the Body and Life is emerging.

The Body and Life are ephemeral and limited, but for this precise reason they know an eroticism of solidarity in opposition to the eternity obsessively promoted by capitalist valorization and state sovereignty. It is the Body that knows the absolute interconnectivity of the world, and that every issue is related with every other on the planet. Therefore, in the domain of somatic intelligence, all the struggles could be interconnected and forming a Turbulence, whose orientation is unknown, whose battleground is everywhere -- in our

bodies and minds, across the human apparatuses, over the contaminated atmosphere, on the horizon constantly shaken by the activities of tectonic plates.

- (1) A planetary body or a planetary machine – this distinction needs to be further scrutinized.
- (2) Graham Harman, *Towards Speculative Realism*, Winchester, Washington: Zero Books, 2010. *New Materialisms – Ontology, Agency, and Politics*, Edited by Diana Coole and Samantha Frost, Duhram, London: Duke University Press, 2010. And others.
- (3) Felix Guattari, *The Three Ecologies*, translated by Ian Pindar and Paul Sutton, London, New York: Continuum, 2000.
- (4) Timothy Morton, *Ecology Without Nature*, Cambridge, London: Harvard University Press, 2007, and *The Ecological Thought*, Cambridge, London: Harvard University Press, 2010.
- (5) Robert Jungk, *The Nuclear State*, translated by Eric Mosbacher, London: John Calder, 1979.
- (6) Jungk, *Ibid.*
- (7) Franco 'Bifo' Berardi, *After the Future*, edited by Gary Genosko and Nicholas Thoburn, Edinburgh, Oakland, Baltimore: AK Press, 2011.
- (8) Harry Halpin, "Foundations of a Philosophy of Collective Intelligence," which can be acquired in the internet.

IL FOGLIO DI VIA DELLO SCRITTORE NO TAV

Sabato 18 agosto avrebbe dovuto essere la seconda giornata delle nostre vacanze per me e Giustina, la mia compagna.

Assieme ad altre persone, ci si è organizzati per fare una passeggiata in Clarea: un pò per immergersi in quei magnifici boschi, un pò per osservare a distanza di sicurezza gli animali chiusi dentro lo zoo chiamato cantiere.

Molti partono a piedi dal campeggio, mentre tre auto partono per prendere il sentiero che prende avvio da Giaglione.

Lungo la strada, passando per Susa, l'ultima vettura della nostra micro-carovana viene fermata per un controllo: forse la più visibile tra le tre, se non altro per i suoi componenti. Tutti giovani e abbigliati in maniera comoda, mentre nelle due auto davanti c'erano bambini e chi non è più troppo giovane anagraficamente.

Decidiamo comunque di fermarci, a portare solidarietà ed accertarsi che non avvenga nulla di anomalo. La regola è sempre quella: si parte e si torna assieme.

Sembra che stia andando tutto regolare: non c'è nulla da segnalare nei loro confronti, e come di prassi chiedono i documenti anche a noi che ci siamo avvicinati.

"Due minuti e finisce tutto". Parole del maresciallo dei Carabinieri che ci aveva fermato.

Ma purtroppo il mio documento fa perdere troppi minuti.

"Risulta in sospeso un atto di notifica per lei".

Comincia lo spettacolo che vede contrapporsi Carabinieri e Polizia di stato per la consegna della notifica, con noi in impotenti spettatori.

Si cerca di fare di tutto per rendere effettiva la consegna dell'atto alla caserma di Susa: al maresciallo non piace l'idea di scortarmi fino alla questura di Torino. Ma la Polizia insiste: devono notificare loro l'atto. Si mette di mezzo anche il capitano dei Carabinieri di Susa, il quale però riesce solo a trattare per una mediazione: la consegna avverrà alla questura di Rivoli. Una via di mezzo tra Torino e il comune dove mi hanno fermato. Susa.

Lungo il tragitto il maresciallo si confida.

"Non ne posso più di questa valle. Per fortuna che non dobbiamo andare fino a Torino, ma poi anche tu... ma chi te lo ha fatto fare di avvicinarti all'auto? Non te ne potevi stare tranquillo ad aspettare più in là? Ora dobbiamo gestirci tutto questo casino. Poi sembri un bravo ragazzo: non ha la faccia da testa di cazzo..."

Grazie, ma a sapere che c'era una notifica per me, di sicuro non mi avvicinavo all'auto fermata.

Comincia il pronostico sulle possibilità del contenuto dell'atto. La Polizia non ha voluto dire ai Carabinieri di che si tratti. Si va dall'avviso orale al foglio di via. Tutto può essere, ma con l'aria che tira in questi tempi non c'è molto da sperare.

Il giorno prima il giornale titolava: [35 fogli di via per i fatti del treno delle scorie nucleari](#).

Quella notte, il 24 luglio, passava un treno carico di scorie diretto verso la Francia, transitante per la stazione di Bussoleno, comune a due fermate di treno da Chiomonte. Per la mezzanotte era previsto un presidio No Nuke fuori dalla stazione. Dal campeggio c'è chi ci arriva in auto, chi in treno.

Io sono tra quelli che vanno in treno. Lo stesso maledetto treno che si [vedrà bloccato](#) alla stazione di Bussoleno, con 115 persone tra attivisti e passeggeri comuni dentro, e fuori centinaia e centinaia di poliziotti in assetto antisommossa e atteggiamento molto poco amichevole. Casco calato, fazzoletto alzato, mano al manganello e scudo pronto. Chi aveva la vista lunga ha notato un adesivo che copriva il numero di identificazione sul petto.

Ostaggi per quattro ore e mezza, fino a quando non è arrivata una delegazione di

valligiani, avvocati e un ex parlamentare a controllare che l'identificazione si svolgesse senza casini. Io non ho paura a negare il mio ruolo dentro quel treno. Mio malgrado, mi sono trovato a gestire le comunicazioni con Radio Black Out e i compagni della valle, mentre altri ragazzi gestivano improvvisate trattative con la Digos per uscire da quella situazione, peggiorata dal fatto che non c'era nessun valligiano a bordo.

Ma si arriva alla questura di Rivoli, dove avviene una piccola nota di colore, che mi fa capire quanto sono stato fortunato ad essere stato fermato dai Carabinieri e non dalla Polizia. Saliti al primo piano del palazzo, scortato da due marescialli dell'Arma, mi presentano al comandante in servizio al momento.

C'è da attendere che arrivi l'ufficiale di Polizia giudiziaria, ma intanto i Carabinieri fanno registrare il mio arrivo in questura.

"A che riguardo di preciso? Non è chiara la situazione: noi abbiamo preparato la stanza..."

Ci sono due secondi di lunghissimo silenzio. Un improvviso brivido mi gela.

Il maresciallo spacca quella tormentata pausa. *"Ma quale stanza? Qui c'è solo da notificare un atto!"*

La situazione ritorna all'assurda normalità.

Il maresciallo tranquillizza me e Giustina, che mi aveva accompagnato lungo tutto il percorso fin dentro le stanze della questura: *"Ora arriva l'ufficiale della Digos. Vi consegna la notifica e tutto finisce. Solo che davvero non so dirvi cosa c'è in quell'atto."*

Ma come previsto c'è poco da sperare. Foglio di via della durata di due anni dai comuni di: Avigliana, Bussoleno, Chiomonte, Exilles, Gravere, Giaglione e Susa.

I motivi sono vaghi, e a tratti esilaranti.

Risulta che insieme ad altri facinorosi manifestatamene appartenenti all'area di contestazione o anarco-insurrezionalista o marxista-disobbediente, nelle prime ore del 24 corrente luglio prendevo quel famoso treno per Bussoleno. Si dice in più che prima che il treno entrasse in stazione, gli occupanti ne arrestavano la corsa mediante l'azionamento del freno di emergenza. Io mi ricordavo che a fermare il treno, e ad impedire che ripartisse, fossero centinaia di poliziotti che gradivano la nostra compagnia in stazione.

Mi si accusa di campeggiare in luoghi dalla dubbia fama e scegliermi compagni di viaggio poco raccomandabili e che questo, unito al fatto che nei paesi indicati nel foglio di via, non svolgo alcuna stabile attività lavorativa, non ho residenza, o legami famigliari o nessun interesse dichiarato rilevante, fa di me una persona pericolosa per la società.

Ora vorrei soffermarmi sulla mia effettiva pericolosità sociale.

Sono uno scrittore, ho scritto [A Riot Of My Own](#), un romanzo sugli anni '70 e gli esiliati italiani a Parigi, composto assieme a uno degli esuli, Pantaleo Elicio, libro che ho presentato anche al campeggio No Tav verso fine luglio. Il mio prossimo romanzo sarà sulla lotta No Tav. Oltre a questo, sto scrivendo una tesi di laurea sul movimento No Tav e sul suo uso di Internet a fini organizzativi e di contro-informazione, sotto la direzione dell'università di Parigi 8.

Se si tiene conto di questi fatti, la faccenda risulta chiara. Sono pericoloso, pericolosissimo. Perché un ragazzo che lancia pietre loro se lo riescono a gestire, non sanno invece gestirsi chi invece scrive di chi tira le pietre. A lui non puoi sparare lacrimogeni o puntarlo con l'idrante quando è sotto le reti: uno scrittore non è facilmente identificabile come uno con una videocamera o una macchina fotografica in mano.

Mi hanno atteso al varco, quando la situazione era tranquilla per prendermi e mandarmi via dai coglioni. Io per il mio lavoro ho bisogno di essere sul campo, per avere accesso diretto alle fonti, con questo atto sperano di tagliarmi le gambe e farmi ripiegare a scrivere le mie opere tramite la lettura di comunicati, come fanno i giornalisti del Tg1 o della Stampa. Ma questo non è la mia modalità di lavoro.

Per tanto, dico chiaramente che non sarà un pezzo di carta a tenere lontano me e Giustina da una valle dove lasciamo il cuore, oltre che concentrare le nostre passioni in

compagnia delle persone più splendide che abbiamo mai incontrato. I No Tav,
A l'è dūra!