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Drifting through Occupied Architectures: Confining Necessity and Apophenic Resistance

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Foremost, I am grateful for my advisors Giovanna Borradori and Tobias Armborst for their constant guidance in this project and others. They figure as the dominant pillars of my education, and I am indebted to them. Likewise, I owe a great deal to my friends, who patiently listened to my incessant diatribes and speculations. Unbeknownst to them, much of this thought is derived from our occupying a house together. Additionally, I must note the pivotal advice I have received from countless others, including professors, friends, and family. Perhaps the most important help has come from strangers. All my thoughts about walls stem from being welcomed into so many homes.

I am really writing for an audience of the blind – but aren't we all?

Lawrence Durrell: *Clea*

How, then, does one write a beginning, especially when one has reached the end? Moreover, if the end is not really an end at all but a rather an arbitrary date, how is it possible to circle back? And in returning, will I be able to locate my starting point with any precision?

Someone informed me that an introduction is necessary to help guide readers through the text.[1] At the very least, I was told to name the thinkers I employ. Very well: Constantine P. Cavafy, Martin Heidegger, Sophocles, Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, Judith Butler, Jacques Derrida, the Invisible Committee, Hakim Bey, Dolores Hayden, Giorgio Agamben, Georges Bataille, Ernest Flagg, Gilles Deleuze, Félix Guattari, David Graeber, Naomi Wolf, Gianni Vattimo, Santiago Zabala, Jean Lyotard. Was that really necessary? Can anything be necessary? Isn't necessity the foundations of the architecture that I find most confining?

Jean Lyotard writes, "Driftworks in the plural, for the question is not of leaving *one* shore, but several, simultaneously: what is at work is not one current, pushing and tugging, but different drives and tractions."[2] Yes, Lyotard set me off drifting. But my drifts stray far from him, which of course was vitally important as I intended to avoid coagulation and sedimentation. Moreover, I only found Lyotard by drifting through Hakim Bey. In turn, I stumbled upon Bey by drifting through the Northeastern seaboard in search of resistant habitations. In some sense, that search was the shore I have departed from and I have no doubt that I carry some of its sands in my shoes.

Could I say: my thoughts have been occupied by architecture? Yes, I have been considering, for some time now, architectural occupations: the occupation of the architect; architecture as occupied by a "deconstructivist" aesthetic; architecture as a means of occupying territory. The latter perhaps most of all.

I have often find myself admiring a certain building, before my thoughts drift to other uses of concrete and steel. When it really comes down to it, what is the difference between a modernist villa and the houses of settlers in the occupied territories of Palestine? Or the concrete wall dividing Israel/Palestine? Or a backslash dividing two words?

Words, after all, are occupied territories. "Architecture" is already occupied; one cannot think architecture without contending with various militant factions, the minions of a concatenation of philosophy stretching back at least to the Greeks. Do I mean to say that in drifting I could unsettle these occupational forces? Have I not myself become one? In truth, I mean to mean nothing. Rather, I hope that in tracing the movements of various drifts, undercurrents may be made visible. But, more than not, I have found I drift on an apophenic sea: a superabundance of arbitrary meanings and connections that overflow any stable container. Nothing is really made more intelligible in these pages.

When it really comes down to it, my drifts are also upon a sea that is rising and devastating the homes of millions. Yes, the secret meaning of these drifts: the violence implicit in thinking while the world falls apart. I cannot deny that I have tried to think "the times." Not in the sense of a generalized generation, but in the sense that every page of this text is contaminated by the events of the times I was writing. But despite an urgent sense of compulsion, my writing of events has been delayed. Am I really talking about Occupy? Now? And by means of the ancient Greeks? What?

I inherited a quartet of books by Lawrence Durrell some years ago, and became introduced to the "old poet" of Alexandria. Yes, perhaps it was one of Cavafy's poem that set me adrift. Or, rather, perhaps I cling to the poem to stay afloat in this turbulent sea.

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[1] Rachel Vogel, personal conversation, April 18, 2013

[2] Lyotard, Jean, and Roger McKeon. *Driftworks*. New York, N.Y., U.S.A.: Semiotext(e), 1984. 10

Alexandria, Egypt / 1896 C.E.

For my own personal Alexandria had become, in all this loneliness, as dear as a philosophy of introspection, almost a monomania.

Lawrence Durrell : *Balthazar*

In 1896, Constantine Cavafy was living in Alexandria, Egypt and writing poetry. While it was the city of his birth, the preceding eleven years had been one of the longest consecutive stretches of time that he had spent there. His father, an importer-exporter, had acquired British citizenship and brought his family to England where Cavafy spent the majority of his childhood. After the Long Depression of 1873 dramatically reduced their fortunes, the Cavafy family moved back to the southern shore of the Mediterranean. However, because of the British bombardment of the city in 1882, Cavafy briefly relocated to Constantinople. His family home, a house on Seriph Street, was destroyed in the attack.[1]

In 1885, the Cavafy family returned to their ruined home in Alexandria. Cavafy lived with his mother and two brothers, eventually renting an apartment on Lepsius Street. The apartment bordered a red-light district and was walking distance to the sea. Incidentally, the street was named for a Prussian egyptologist who famously inscribed the name of Frederick Wilhelm IV on the entrance to the Great Pyramid of Giza.[2] Today Lepsius Street is called Sharm El Sheik, and Cavafy's apartment has been turned into a museum devoted to his legacy. Other things have changed in the small apartment besides its address. Because Cavafy's heirs sold his furnishings, the apartment-museum is a reconstruction. It aims to re-create the "atmosphere" of his life. [3]

The traces of the buildings' other inhabitants have been banished to make space for simulacrum. The brass bed, carpets, and light fixtures attempt to signify an endlessly deferred referent: not the photographic images used as guides but rather their "atmosphere." The museum exemplifies Umberto Eco's hyperreality; the dissolution of any distinction between real artifacts and simulations. He writes, "The sign aims to be the thing, to abolish the distinction of the reference, the mechanism of replacement."[4] The apartment enforces a

conception of Cavafy as a historical figure; his poetry as belonging to a historical period. In order to gain access to either the poet or his work, the reader must engage with his "time." Cavafy becomes the means with which to demarcate the contemporary as such. Since the image of Cavafy that is presented is simulacrum, the museum becomes not a true mirror, but a construction reflecting an idealized image.

This pseudo-anachronism defiantly ignores the events that occurred outside its windows: the consecutive dictatorial regimes, the revolutionary struggles. Cavafy, the man who lived and wrote, becomes detached and isolated from the dispersions of his thoughts. His poems are pervaded with his relations to his environment – the city, history, lovers, society and its condemnation of his desires. But in the museum, Cavafy is erected as a stable entity, a motionless "I" whose essence can be extracted and contained in thoroughly historicized appearances. In turn, his poems and journals are placed next to these atmospherically-suggestive objects; both mere signifiers of an imagined past that is entirely cut off from the present.

That year, 1896, Cavafy wrote a poem entitled "Walls":

> *Without pity, without shame, without consideration*
> *they've built around me enormous, towering walls.*
>
> *And I sit here now in growing desperation.*
> *This fate consumes my mind, I think of nothing else:*
>
> *because I had so many things to do out there.*
> *O while they built the walls, why did I not look out?*
>
> *But no noise, no sound from the builders did I hear.*
> *Imperceptibly they shut me off from the world without.*[5]

Cavafy writes an architecture of confinement. The narrator bemoans her inability to register an exterior, "O while they built the walls, why did I not look out?" While Cavafy writes "built" indicating a past action, but without reference to a specific temporal moment. Instead, the temporal is formed relationally to the spatial. Additionally, by means of the present-perfect tense, the past is conditioned by the present and the present is considered in relation to the past. In a similar way, the future taints the past-present; Cavafy's narrator thinks of nothing else but the things she *had* to do but cannot now. The poem conflates the spatial and temporal; both appear in their relation to the individual's potentialities.

Cavafy writes of walls delimiting an interior against an inaccessible exterior. For the most part, the poem describes an encounter with architecture that is habitual. We pass through the rooms of a building without considering the origins of the walls that frame each space. Only when we notice the world around has been recently rewrought do we remember it was always already rewrought. The narrator recognizes the built as an *a priori* condition of subjective experience limiting her potential for movement.†

The narrator regrets not looking out during the construction. Since she did not observe the actual construction, she has no access to the structure of her confinement or the world outside. Perception becomes inextricably bound to the capacity to imagine alternatives to the habitual. The narrator may as well have been blind: her gaze never fell outside of the limits of an interior and now she can think of nothing besides her own condition, her own subjective experience. However, this state of interiority is perceived in complete relationality to its conditions. Walls set off an interior only by means of establishing an exterior.

The narrator experiences a "growing desperation," as she considers her isolation. The walls are oppressive, but the oppressor cannot be identified: the construction crew that erected

the walls are a mere speculation. It is almost as if the narrator experiences a kernel of potential freedom lying latent within the body, and she mourns this originary right that has been denied to her. On the other hand, the narrator's confinement is co-constituted with her recognition of it as such. The conditions of imprisonment make manifest lost potentialities. It is only in recognizing one's shackles that freedom can be imagined. Therefore, resistance must also be located within the confines of the prison.

In the essay "Building, Dwelling, Thinking," Martin Heidegger writes "We do not dwell because we have built, but we build and have built because we dwell, that is, because we are *dwellers*."[6] Building, as verb and as noun, serves as the means for dwelling. Our being as dwellers precedes that which we are building or that which we will build. We continue to build because our nature is, and has been, to dwell. Experiences of the so-called present are inscribed with traces of the past. That is to say, we are always already in a world populated by other dwellers and therefore within and among buildings already built. Heidegger's ontology conceives of being as fundamentally conditioned by that which already happened and that which was already constructed.[7]

Heidegger contends that in the everyday, our relation to being becomes habitual. Therefore the ways in which building, as dwelling, are accomplished draws back from our understanding and we do not grasp dwelling as "the basic character of human being."[8] For Heidegger, dwelling is preserving and sparing; being is remaining in a world that already is, without the possibility for transcendence. An individual is never isolated, one exists in a world that already contains a inextricably tangled web of relations— interpersonal, spatial, temporal. The human being dwells by preserving the networks of relationality: "they do not turn night

into day nor day into a harassed unrest."[9] In dwelling, beings maintain the interrelation of all things and themselves; to divorce things from context and idealize them into isolation is to lose sight of the fundamental ontological character of being as dwelling.

The Heideggarian framework resists normative conceptions of a work of architecture as an object, architecture as a category of art, and formulations of absolute criterion for architectural design. It is not unimaginable that he responds to his contemporaries, who privileged formal concerns of architecture — often with the stated aim of establishing a pure work of architecture and theory for architecture. Such aims affirm the metaphysical possibility for ideas, forms, and absolutes that transcend our own existences as being-in-the-world. The Ville Savoye, built in the late 1920's in Poissy, France by Le Corbusier illustrates this conception of architecture. Le Corbusier design the building to exemplify his "Five Points of Architecture," a treatise that states "essential principles" that should govern any design, regardless of context. The villa consists of simple forms, painted all white. As a whole, it rises from the ground through pilotis. Various cut-outs and windows serve to frame its surroundings. By extension, building becomes solely the arrangement of forms. In raising a building from the ground, it quite literally transcends its context. Furthermore, the cut-outs and windows becomes the means by which the inhabitant of the building experiences the external environment. Metaphorically, the absolute ideals espoused in the design enframe the conceptual understanding of that which is outside of it.

Le Corbusier and his contemporaries operate within an inherited tradition. This philosophical concatenation, notably including Vitruvius and Kant, pervades the "modernist" impulse to establish the limits of the architectural field, with and through a discourse of progress. The grounding of space and location in mathematical terms characterizes these

formulations of strictly formal and idealized approaches to architecture. Heidegger writes, "*Spatium* and *extensio* afford at any time the possibility of measuring things and what they make room for, according to distances, spans, and directions, and of computing these magnitudes. But the fact that they are *universally* applicable to everything that has extension can in no case make numerical magnitudes the *ground* of the nature of space and location that are measurable with the aid of mathematics."[10] Heidegger asserts that the mathematization of space is only enabled by its origination in a location, that which emerges from a building occupied by dwellers. "[Space] is neither an external object nor an inner experience."[11] An exclusive conception of "space," as such, divorces it from the flux of time, from the flows of its use, from the specters haunting it.

As he has destabilized the limits of architecture, building, and construction and revealed their inextricable connection in our already being-in-all-things, Heidegger continues to trouble the limits which conceive of thinking as merely such. Normally, we think of self-reflection as a considering of ourselves outside of contexts, away from things. However, this very notion reifies that our being is a being-with; to conceive of the self in isolation is to expose that we are always with things. He writes, "I am never here only, as this encapsulated body; rather, I am there, that is, I already pervade the room, and only thus can I go through it."[12]

Heidegger considers the housing crisis of his time, and by extension the time of his contemporary Cavafy. In "Building, Dwelling, Thinking," he notes the same aspects that we customarily consign as part of a housing crisis: overpopulation, war, class oppression. Today, we could add environmental degradation, rising sea levels, border walls, increasingly destructive weather. However, Heidegger contends, "The real dwelling plight lies in this, that mortals ever search anew for the nature of dwelling, that they *must ever learn to dwell*."[13]

Returning to the poem's narrator, can we consider her desperation in terms of such a "dwelling plight"?

The narrator suggests that the walls were already built, as their construction was imperceptible. She sits and thinks of "this fate": her imprisonment within the confines of walls that were already built. More pointedly, "this fate *consumes"* her mind. The narrator divorces her fate from that which constitutes its; the self is constituted by its being-in-the-world, yet the narrator conceives of possibilities external that conditions of her own being. The poem exemplifies an anxiety arising from thinking of building as divorced from one's being. The thought of the walls falls away from the walls themselves; the narrator does not sensorily experience the building but rather converts them into a thought that swells to such magnitude that it becomes called fate. Could one suggest that fate is a name given to that anxious state of a being that desires to exist in total independence and then notices that they are actually a being-in-the-world? In realizing the *a priori* conditions of subjectivity, the narrator feels confined and as if potentialities have been withdrawn. Ipseity as immutable self-presence withdraws in the recognition of regulative structures, embodied in architecture.

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[1] "Biography." The Official Website of The Cavafy Archive. http://www.cavafy.com/companion/bio.asp (accessed April 18, 2013).

[2] Clammer, Paul. *Sudan*. Chalfont St. Peter, Bucks, England: *Bradt Travel Guides*, 2005. 128-32

[3] "Cavafy Museum." Hellenic Electronic Center. http://www.greece.org/alexandria/cavafy/cavafy2.htm (accessed April 18, 2013).

[4] Eco, Umberto. *Travels in hyper reality: essays*. San Diego: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1986. 7

[5] Cavafy, Constantine, and Daniel Adam Mendelsohn. *Collected poems*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2009. Print. 191.

[†] Cavafy does not gender the narrator of this poem. I have chosen to use female pronouns, both to avoid normative impositions of masculinity and to clearly distinguish between my references to the narrator and to the poet.

[6] Heidegger, Martin. "Building, Dwelling, Thinking." from *Poetry, Language, Thought*. mysite.pratt.edu/~arch543p/readings/Heidegger.html (accessed April 10, 2013). 3

[7] *ibid*.

[8] Heidegger, "Building, Dwelling, Thinking." 2

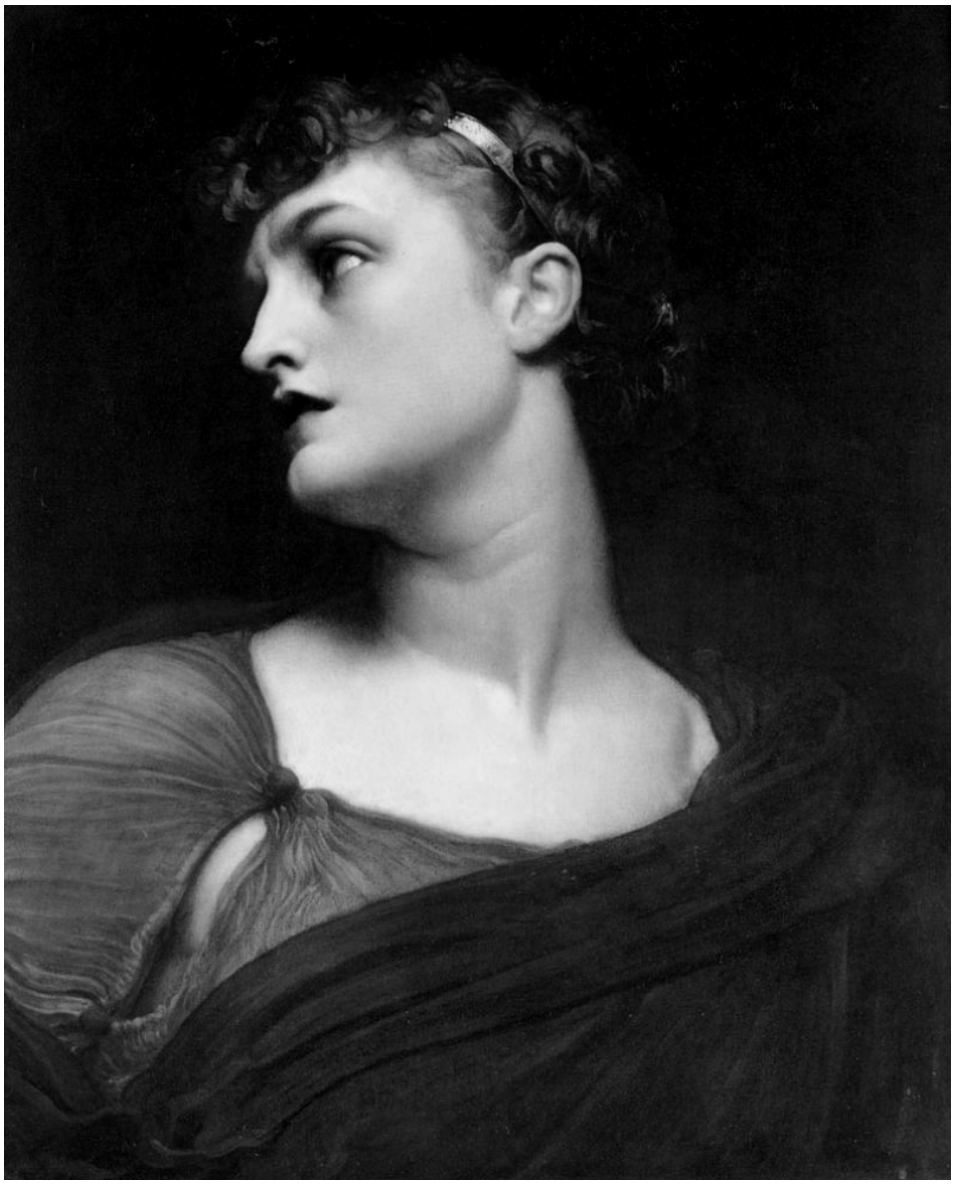
[9] Heidegger, "Building, Dwelling, Thinking." 3

[10] Heidegger, "Building, Dwelling, Thinking." 6

[11] *ibid*.

[12] Heidegger, "Building, Dwelling, Thinking." 7

[13] Heidegger, "Building, Dwelling, Thinking." 8



Thebes, Greece / circa 440 B.C.E.

If the closed system and the moral exclusiveness on divine right were relaxed a little what could we not do?

Lawrence Durrell : *Clea*

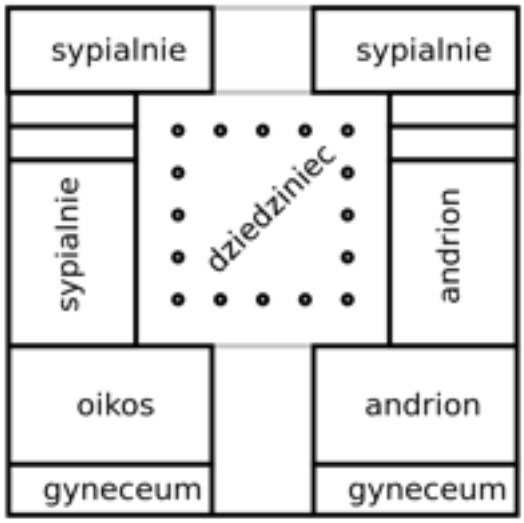
Jacques Derrida writes, "When one says 'political,' one uses a Greek word, a European concept that has always presupposed the State, the concept of polis that is linked to the concept of national territory and autochthony."[1] Writing in English, as I am now, already entails operating within an inherited language. Moreover, English is an imperial language, composed of borrowed parts; its aggregate vocabulary contains traces of that which it has assimilated. To say "political" is to operate within a heritage of the Greeks and presupposes concepts that are not normally ascribed to linguistics. Likewise, when one speaks of "architecture," one is an heir to a certain tradition that has been inscribed in the word and significantly altered by the words' passage through the concatenation of philosophy, practice, and everyday use.

"Architecture" derives from a combination of two Greek words: the prefix *arkhe*, which denotes a first, primary, or basic, as well as, in its older usage, a ruler or chief; and *tekton*, which is a builder, but shares the root *tekhne*, "art" (from L. *ars*) with "text," as well as the Latin *textura*, or "structure." *Tekhne* additionally means "to make something appear."[2] Traces of this etymology remain inscribed in discourses of "architecture," particularly those that grapple with the built as fundamentally structuring lived experience. This inheritance also suggests a latent potential for an architecture that makes the ruler appear.

In another interview, Derrida contends, "When you inherit a language, it does not mean you are totally in it or you are passively programmed by it. To inherit means to be able to, of course, appropriate this language, to transform it, to select something."[3] To *think* architecture is to negotiate the virtual field of the word, first of all by expanding the existent limits imposed by its everyday usage. The transformation of this inheritance already began in the previous attempt at performing a Heideggarian dissolution of the boundaries separating architecture from dwelling, building, and thinking. As Cavafy's poem indicated, in order to break down

walls one must first acknowledge their standing. The etymological inheritance already shows us certain walls and provides us with a means for their further deconstruction; this is to say, to invoke a *tekhne* of the *arkhe*: a revealing of the structures which guide the practice of architecture. While the Greeks were certainly not the first to build, the walls they erected still stand today, albeit perhaps as ruins, and we must attempt to see them.

Our knowledge of the ancients comes largely in fragments, written and built. The latter, unearthed by archaeology, provides us with a typical Grecian floor plan[4]:



The *oikos* was the center of domestic activity, and housed bedrooms and dining rooms. It was entirely seperated from the *andrionitis*, the extension of the male sphere that contained libraries, i.e., knowledge, and guest rooms, i.e., political sociality. While Greek men— excluding slaves— were expected to be active participants in the *polis,* women were confined to the *oikos*. The word *oikos* escapes the confines of its mere spatial definition, simultaneously representing the concepts of a house, household, and family. The head of the latter was the oldest male, and

this sense of *oikos* consisted of his extended family as well as slaves. The Greeks actively employed architecture as a means of enforcing their sociopolitical structure.

The preservation of the tragedies of Sophocles provides another window into Greek society that enables further consideration of its gendered architectonics. In particular, we can turn towards the mythical figure of Antigone, born out of the incestuous marriage of Oedipus and his mother. After the death of her father, Antigone's brothers Eteocles and Polynices were to take turns ruling the city-state of Thebes. After the former's first turn, however, he refuses to give up his power to his brother. In response, Polynices musters an army to attack Thebes. The ensuing battle results in the death of both brothers. Creon, the brother of Oedipus' father, declares that a result of Polynices' aggression agains the city, his body is to be left outside of the city walls to be devoured by animals.

Antigone finds this profaning of the body of her brother to be unjust. More precisely, she conceives of the act as against divine law. Determined to bury her brother, she leaves the confines of the city and buries him in secret before Creon's guards discover her. In front of the ruler of the city, Antigone declares, "It was not Zeus who made that proclamation / To me; nor was it Justice, who resides / In the same house with the gods below the earth, / Who put in place for men such laws as yours."[5] For her, the law of the gods supersedes the laws of a man. Creon responds by imprisoning her. Within the confines of these imposed walls, Antigone kills herself.

Creon tells the leader of the chorus, "Understand that rigid walls are those most apt to fall."[6] While he was referring to the stubbornness of Antigone, he may as well have been referring to the ethical order implicit in his law. In *Phenomenology of the Spirit*, Hegel employs the Sophoclean representation of Antigone to elaborate a dichotomy between the universal law that

governs a community – the ethical power of the state – and the divine law that resides in the family. He contends that a certain substance forges the bonds with which individuals come to exist as a community. This substance becomes manifest as the laws of government, which become in turn the ethics of the individual within it. Divine law also manifests in the individual; Hegel writes, "For the ethical power of the state, being the movement of self-conscious action, finds its antithesis in the simple and immediate essence of the ethical sphere; as *actual* universality it is a force actively opposed to the individual being-for-self; and as actuality in general it finds that *inner* something other than the ethical power of the state."[7] Put in somewhat reductive terms, ethical law is that which governs the social sphere, and divine law is the domain of kinship, of blood.

While the community is fundamentally assemblage of families, it operates exclusively under ethical law. The family, on the other hand, contends with both the ethical law and divine law. When an individual male of a certain age becomes a citizen, he is expelled from the family and enters into the *polis*. This is to say, the man must accept ethical law *over and against* divine law. For Hegel, the male validates his *being-for-self* only in his identity as citizen; citizenship is conferred on a male in his participation in the *polis.* The *polis* fundamentally consists of a collection of individuals agreeing to adhere to generalized principals, or the ethical law. Therefore, in Greek society, individuality is staked to being individual *qua* universal.[8] In other words, Hegelian dialectics asserts that recognition of an-other as an individual consciousness requires mutual adherence to an ethical law that privileges the whole over the particular.

Meanwhile, because the female is excluded from the *polis*, she cannot derive individuality from it.[9] Instead, Hegel contends that she must derive *being-for-self* within the family structure. This is to say, the female stakes her individuality to her role as mother,

daughter, wife, and sister. Hegel asserts that only the former role, that of the sister to a brother, consists of "free individualities in regard to each other." For him, a brother and sister neither require each other for existence (as a child does) nor desire each other. This formulation allows Hegel to describe the loss of the brother as "irreparable" to the sister.[10]

Therefore, Antigone's duty to Polynices is of the highest order. This is the manifestation of the divine law, to which females have access, as superseding the human law, which defined and then condemned her brother. Burying her brother becomes an insurmountable duty, and the law of Creon becomes "a reality which possesses no rights of its own."[11] Because Antigone is a woman, she is confined within the *oikos* and has access only to divine law. The Greek male, on the other hand, claims his individuality in his participation in the *polis* and therefore must adhere to its law. The confinement enforced on women by the *polis* is its own undoing. Since Antigone ultimately has allegiance to divine law instead of human law, she is able to subvert the latter. In doing so, Hegel contends that she ruins the entirety of the ethical structure of the *polis*, exposing its strict adherence to the law as antimonious to reality. Antigone understands herself in terms of her role as sister as defined by the order that manifests as the *polis*. She is then forced outside of the very order that defined her when she adheres to her duties as a sister. This is to say, Antigone stakes her identity to a law that compels her towards particular actions; in performing her roles, she is alienated from this identity.

According to Hegel's representation of ancient Greek society, women are confined within the *oikos,* a sociospatial interior within the *polis.* The *polis* physically and legally erects the walls that confine women into the *oikos.* Since women cannot take part in the design and construction of these walls, theoretically they must always remain inside the *oikos.* However, while the *polis* operate exclusively under the sovereignty of ethical law, it fundamentally

remains a collection of families. Therefore, it would seem that when Antigone acts according to the imperatives of the *oikos*, she must enter into the *polis*, thereby revealing the walls as inherently permeable. This is to say, in acting in accordance with the law confining her within the *oikos*, Antigone has no choice but to dissolve the distinction between *oikos* and the *polis*. *Oikos* is deferred from within. The blueprints of the walls are inscribed with their demolition-to-come.

But we have drifted away from the Hegelian interpretation of Sophocles' play in granting Antigone the power to defer *oikos.* Instead, Hegel considers Antigone as a figure representing the dissolution of the laws of kinship and the constitution of a legal order founded on universality.[12] He does not consider the *polis* to be destabilized by Antigone. After all, Creon's law ultimately triumphs. Antigone dies. However, as Judith Butler asserts, the division between the familial and the political in the text of the play is not as established as Hegel posits. She writes:

> "Opposing Antigone to Creon as the encounter between the forces of kinship and those of state power fails to take into account the Antigone's claim ways in which Antigone has already departed from kinship, herself the daughter of an incestuous bond, herself devoted to an impossible and death-bent incestuous love of her brother, how her actions compel others to regard her as "manly" and thus cast doubt on the way that kinship might underwrite gender, how her language, paradoxically, most closely approximates Creon's, the language of sovereign authority and action, and how Creon himself assumes his sovereignty only by virtue of the kinship line that enables that succession, how he becomes, as it were, unmanned by Antigone's defiance, and finally by his own actions, at once abrogating the norms that secure his place in kinship and in sovereignty."[13]

Butler troubles Hegel's assertion of Antigone's actions as a performance of divine law, which she describes as the laws of kinship. To begin, she asserts that in Sophocles' text Antigone's familial relations are pervasively incestual; she is always already a figure of alterity in regards to the law of *oikos.* For Hegel, Antigone's bond with her brother is free of desire and is

therefore of the highest order. However, Butler notes that she was born from the relationship of a mother and a son, and her father is also her brother. In a similar refutation of Hegel, Butler contends that because Creon's law pertains only to a singular event, it cannot be considered the articulation of a universal law. If Antigone truly finds her brother irreproducible, then the conditions which generate the law are not reproducible either.[14]

Still, Butler maintains a conviction that Antigone profoundly disturbs the *oikos* and the *polis*. Butler argues that Antigone's act is not entirely her own, since she is compelled by love and duty. Nevertheless, Antigone lays claim to her actions; when interrogated by Creon, she defiantly accepts responsibility. In so doing, she performs an exclusively masculine role, to speak in the *polis,* which is also an appropriation of the means by which the sovereign asserts authority. For Butler, Antigone radically disobeys the gender determinations of the *oikos*.[15]

Antigone assimilates the voice of the other whom she refuses; resistance is enacted by usurping the power of the authority that is being resisted. In order to act, Antigone posits a radical autonomy, in which she asserts the primacy of her brother over the community of citizens represented in the *polis,* suggesting the dissolution of a universal law.[16] While on one level she acts out of deference to her familial relations, these relations already drift far from the normative configurations of the Grecian *oikos*. Butler asserts, "Antigone represents neither kinship nor its radical outside but becomes the occasion for a reading of a structurally constrained notion of kinship in terms of its social iterability, the aberrant temporality of the norm."[17] As a female in a patriarchal society, Antigone does not have access to the language of the *polis*. As the product of incestual relations, she does not have total access to the language of the family. Without the possibility of an exterior language, Antigone repeats and performs these languages, or laws, deviantly.

Butler states, "If kinship is the precondition of the human, then Antigone is the occasion for a new field of the human, achieved through political catachresis, the one that happens when the less than human speaks as human, when gender is displaced, and kinship founders on its own founding laws."[18] There is no room in Greek society, in either the *polis* or the *oikos*, for the radical reconfigurations that Antigone embodies. She is condemned to a tomb where she kills herself. For Butler, the figure of Antigone continues to haunt contemporary structures that maintain normative, particularly heteronormative and cisnormative, conditions of kinship. She argues the contemporary discourses parallel the edicts of Creon. She notes two major regulative arguments: the assertion that "aberrant" relations destabilize "the tradition of the family"; the advocating for homosexual pairings exclusively within a modality that replicates maternal and paternal roles. In our society as in Greek society, there is no allowance for any "rearticulation of the norm itself."[19]

Butler follows Giorgio Agamben, conceiving of whole populations who exist in a "state of exception." This is to say, individual or groups whose behavior does not conform to the norms have no sociopolitical influence or voice. They can neither reconfigures the norms, nor are they accepted in a space exterior to the society. Most definitively, their behavior is not recognized as legitimate.[20]

Architecture is more than simply an expression of a society's conventions, it is also part of the process with which norms are diffused into embodied experience, as is evidenced in the *oikos* within ancient Greek society. In his essay "Point de Folie," Derrida deconstructs architecture, particularly as it functions to enforce normatizing structures. He critiques Heidegger's "onto-theology" of dwelling, contending that it is "a call to repeat the very

fundamental of the architecture that we inhabit, that we should learn again how to inhabit, the origin of its meaning."[21] While Heidegger destabilizes boundaries that isolate architecture, Derrida contends that he maintains a conception of an originary meaning for building. Derrida interrogates the possibility of any pure origin to which something could return. For him, the Heideggarian conception of building as dwelling (and thinking) retains a *telos* for architecture, a end to which architecture should work.

In a conversations with Peter Eisenmann, Derrida says, "The deconstruction of architecture in the broader sense will yield an architecture which is no longer a closed, identifiable and specific field. Consequently, architecture must be confronted as being more than building design or buildings. It must be explored as having to do with relationships, including urbanism, of course, but moving beyond to what one calls 'culture' in general: the architecture of the cinema, the architecture of literature or philosophy, and so forth. And no one will be able to prescribe rules or methods for this passage from building to the rest."[22]

While certain meanings inscribed on a place, such as *genius loci*, are relatively easily displaced, Derrida contends that "certain invariables remain" in the conception of architecture.[23] He outlines four primary invariables: an "always hierarchizing" nostalgia for origin, which he argues Heidegger follows, albeit in a manner grounded in relationality; a humanist narrative of progress; a dependance on the fine arts and its categories of value, i.e., beauty; and an experience of meaning which is rooted in dwelling, as the law of *oikos*.

In his interrogation of this law of *oikos,* Derrida turns to the etymological traces that can be unearthed in the word "economy," which derives from the merging of *oikos* and *nomos*, or "to manage." Architecture stubbornly remains attached to "this economy of necessity, a teleology of dwelling.... It is always a question of putting architecture in service, and at service."

Architecture serves, seemingly more than anything else, the *oikos* that is the conventions of kinship and its companion, the act of domestication. Domestication is a process of containment, that constructs an identity by that which it excludes from the contained. To put this another way, the economy of *oikos* is a defining of the interior in opposition to the exterior.

For Derrida, as architecture remains beholden to its meaning as dwelling, it enforces a *telos* of necessity. Existent norms of the family must be upheld at the expense of those who become "excessive," which is to say neither exterior nor interior to the society yet not given welcome within its strictures. Derrida attempts to conceive of a deconstructed architecture that defers the law of the *oikos*, particularly in its assertion of a metaphysics of self-presence. He suggests the possibility of a *maintenant* architecture, and writes, "*Maintenant*: if the word still designates what happens, has just happened, promises to happen to architecture as well as through architecture, this imminence of the just (just happened, is just about to happen) no longer lets itself be inscribed in the ordered sequence of history: it is not a fashion, a period or an era. The *just maintenant* (just now) does not remain a stranger to history, of course, but the relation would be different."[24] Thus, a *maintenant* architecture exists outside of a narrative of progress and historicity; it conceives of the imminent as always already past-present and leaves space for the future. In doing so, it maintains the singularity of the event without asserting absolute presence or resistance to time. Rather, it specifically invokes specters, particularly those of the Other, the nameless and unrecognizable face of those already excluded within architecture. "But this *maintenant* does not only maintain a past and a tradition; it does not ensure a synthesis. It maintains the interruption, in other words, the relation to the other as such."[25]

This *maintenant* architecture that makes room for the Other "would be this maneuver to inscribe the *dis*- and make it into a work itself."[26] This is to say, an architecture of the Other is an architecture of destabilization, deconstruction, dissociation, disjunction, disruption, difference. In assembling difference, this architecture which does not exist, this architecture-to-come, will be singular: a singularity of multiplicities, a singularity always already on the move. Such a singular architecture could not be repeatable or reproducable, but would be an architecture of the event.

It is not a matter of renegotiating the law of *oikos* so that it can include a renegotiated imagining of kinship that includes men who sleep with men, women who sleep with women, or any of the vast plurality of orienting gestures and possible actions within the sphere of the sexual. Such a movement would merely be a folding in of difference, a subsuming of alterity into ipseity. Rather, the architecture of the *mainentant* is always-to-come, always-becoming. Of course, positioned as we are within an overarching *telos* of necessity, an architecture that resists binaries of interiority and exteriority rests almost unimaginable. Such an architecture is of madness (*folies)* and of desire, defiantly resisting the fundamental rationality of positivist society.

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Poughkeepsie, New York ; Tunis, Tunisia / February 7, 2013

The city, half-imagined (yet wholly real), begins and ends in us, roots lodged in our memory.

Lawrence Durrell : *Balthazar*

Yesterday, the police violently chased protesters down that grand central avenue of downtown Tunis lined with ficus trees. Today, I feel melancholy thinking of how many yesterdays there have been like this, how many different todays there have been. Yesterday, I still thought this page would be filled with conversations with my friends in that little country along the southern shores of the Mediterranean. Today, I feel so melancholy as I think of the walls between them and me, of the wall between today and yesterdays.

There was a today not long ago, in 2011, when my thoughts were bright with news of its yesterday. That was a day when I imagined myself in that far-off country, that revolutionary place. I used the same *thing* to look at pictures of white-washed walls draped in bougainvillea that I now use to see images of blood and violence, of fires and smoke.

There was another yesterday, when I myself feared the batons of those policemen. I ran through those winding, dusty streets guided by the friends who I wish would be present on this page. Instead I feel alone, sitting here in this library as light streams through a stained glass window depicting the first female to receive a diploma. And yet I am not alone, for you are here on this page. You must be, if this page is to have any worth at all.

Today, I talked to my friends in Tunis. One is bruised by those same batons, another has not responded to my messages. Badre, my friend, you responded. Tell me how is it that I *hear* sadness in your written words? I scroll through our messages looking for some hope in them. Are the walls between us made more permeable by the computers on which we converse? There seem so many walls: the walls of this institution that enables me to write like this but does not afford the same privilege to you; there are the walls of my country that granted me access to yours, but did not afford the same to you. I can only hope the walls are opened by our conversations, and that in writing this I am not enforcing their structure.

Badre, you sent me a message late last night asking me to write about this man Shokri Belaid. Then today, you seemed less urgent. How silly I feel asking you if this is another revolution. Mon ami, your words ring of truth and leave me with a sinking feeling in my stomach. “I don't think there will be a second revolution cause there was no first, it's very complicated unfortunately a lot of money blood weapons corruption, plus an ignorant society and religion, we are being attaqued by the Wahhabi throught saoudian and quatarian petrodollar financement, brotherhood are on power, lot of young tunisian are engaged in syrian civil war as terrorists I don't know what will happen if Bashar loose and they are back...”

What are the walls present even in your message: of language, of place, of far-off wars that seem unimaginable to me resting securely here in New York state. But there is a brightness in your message that I cannot resist transcribing: “Tell me what's up with your life ? here we are as usual we drink dance smoke and enjoy life.” Badre, it is the same with me.

I think of the yesterday where I met my friend in the encampment in front of the Tunisian parliament and bought hashish. It was only because of the protest against Ennadha that I was able to do something that is so illicit in that country. The walls that were being imposed also opened a space of resistance, where freedoms before unimaginable became manifest. These shackles provide me with the vision of my freedom...

Badre, I find myself thinking about that night where we smoked and sang and danced. I think of your home that you let me into, and the home I let you into. I wish I could let you into this home of mine, and I think how much you would like it. These walls now shelter the thoughts that began in your home. While we may be separated, our thoughts are not. And I find myself reddening at the thought of how I find my own walls so confining and yet you, as you

run down Avenue Habib Bourguiba—face to face with a future that seems to hold no hope—still manage to laugh.

Many yesterdays ago, you wrote to me: “Farm prices still cheap around here with good soil quality, around 10,000 dinar the hectare, there is less governmental control than in developed countries.” How remarkable that I can look at your messages from yesterday and stumble upon this one; so many notes can be passed through the bars of our prisons! The prices are better there and there is less government control. Walls grow as you approach them; they shrink as you step back. I am sitting here and I am thinking of what we would build on so fertile of soil.

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania / October 2012

The little piece of waste land under the arched doors was now the must sumptuous of saloons.
Lawrence Durrell : *Clea*

"Fuck idyllic. There is no idyllic, only violence. Running off into the country doesn't help anything, that's why I love the city. The city is violence, so you can't help but confront it," Justin declared.

Everyone was quiet for a second. Then, looking around at the group of people gathered in this occupied warehouse in Philadelphia, I broke into an uneasy smile. I couldn't say I disagreed. I doubt any of the anarchists, queers, occupiers, and travellers gathered in this giant room could. It was just a rather unwarranted attack.

Justin was responding to a comment from his housemate, a genderqueer youth with black hair and green eyes. Ze was giving me tips on various communes to check out, specifically "idyllic queer spaces" out in rural Kentucky or Vermont. After Justin's comment, ze became quiet and sank back into the overstuffed couch.

I was taken aback by the authority with which Justin spoke to his housemate, and wondered if he considered himself the leader of the house. After the tension in the room was sufficiently diffused, I asked, "So do y'all have a leader or work off consensus?"

Another genderqueer youth, who sat on a chair on top of a pile of boxes at least ten feet of the ground, responded, "We try to work things out by consensus but it doesn't always work. We have a

In 2009, the publisher Semiotext(e) released The Coming Insurrection, a work by the Invisible Committee, a clandestine group based in France. The French police identify the group with the Tarnac Nine, who allegedly attempted to sabotage train lines in an act described as "anarchist terrorism."[1] In the book, they write:

> "The metropolis is a terrain of constant low-intensity conflict... For a long time the city was a place for the military to avoid, or, if anything, to besiege; but the metropolis is perfectly compatible with war. Armed conflict is only a moment in its constant reconfiguration... The battles conducted by the great powers resemble a kind of never-ending police campaign in the black holes of the metropolis... No longer undertaken in view of victory or peace, or even the re-establishment of order, such "interventions" continue a security operation that is always already in progress. War is no longer a distinct event in time, but instead diffracts into a series of micro-operations, by both military and police, to ensure security... The armed forces don't simply adapt themselves to the metropolis, they produce it."[2]

Integral to the conception of the urban as a terrain of conflict contained within The Coming Insurrection, is a confrontation with technologies of surveillance and control embedded in infrastructure. Military technology–– ie. surveillance cameras or the internet–– have become the basis of everyday technologies, implemented throughout cities and employed to reify the power of the state. The distinction between war and peace, "enemy combatants" and civilian populations are increasingly blurred in the course of this implementation. Perhaps the most poignant dissolution of this is in the adaptation of drone-technologies for in-

have a house meeting once a week, but not everyone can come. Afterall, we are all doing so many things. So I wouldn't say we deal with every problem through full consensus. It's usually about the majority of opinions. We don't have any leaders, but Justin and Gregg have lived here the longest."

"But I wouldn't say I have more authority than anyone else," Justin responded.

"How much has to be decided communally? Do y'all share food?" I asked.

"No. There is so many of us it's just too hard, and we all have different amounts of money and income," the black-haired youth said. "But we have meals together at least once a week. Tonight, we're making soup if you want some."

"I think we're good, we have other plans," I replied, "What kind of things do you decide communally?"

"Well we had our first expulsion the other day, and that was reached through consensus," Justin responded.

I asked about the details, which they only briefly would talk about. Put simply: the person in question could not get along with anyone in the house, hence the ease finding consensus. Besides this one point, however, consensus seemed to be difficult to obtain. They talked about how difficult it was to clean their house; sometimes, there would be a spontaneous eruption of a "cleaning fever," in which everyone would get involved.

tra-national policing within the United States. As Eric Holder Jr., the Attorney General for President Barack Obama, explicated, "It is possible, I suppose, to imagine extraordinary circumstance in which it would be necessary to use lethal force within the territory of the United State for the President to authorize the military to use lethal force within the territory of the United States."[3] Hopefully, a nod towards the tremendous repercussions of the Patriot Act and the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2012 will suffice as directions with which one could consider the rapidity with which the United States has dissolved legal protections of its citizens since the turn of the century.

This discourse already finds itself operating within at least two problematic dichotomies: the territorial United States and the extension of its sovereignty extra-territorially; the urban and the rural or "suburban". The Invisible Committee trouble the latter, writing, "All territory is subsumed by the metropolis. Everything occupies the same space, if not geographically then through the intermeshing of its networks".[4] Therefore, an idyll is necessarily impossible. Not only are the politics engaged in rural settings fundamentally contained within the hegemonic structures of capitalism, the state and its violent actions are never contained exclusively within an urban area. In fact, the alleged authors of this text, the Tarnac Nine, lived in such a rural "idyll" in central France.

I looked around the room we were sitting in, and considered the ramifications that loose consensus had on its material existence. The room would be more accurately described as a hall, demarcated into separate spaces by large pilings of furniture, boxes, and random junk. In one corner someone had set up a wood working studio, and they even had a table saw. At the far end of the room, there were remnants of what had once been a stage: a microphone stand fallen over, a keyboard, and some drums. Overhead, electrical wires were haphazardly suspended between I-beams. Some extension cords fell from the ceiling in graceful arcs, just barely remaining connected to sockets. They laughingly told me that someone had once made a list of the worst fire hazards in the building. On the floor below, blackened walls attested to a fire that had erupted years before.

Electricity is free in the building either because of some bureaucratic overlook or, as Justin suspects, the finagling of their landlord. There is neither central heating or air-conditioning. In the summer, everyone puts an air-conditioning unit in their room, causing the poorly-ventilated hallways to become sweltering and uninhabitable; in the winter, their precarious relation with fire takes on a greater intensity as they litter the building in space-heaters and blankets. A dank odor of mold and some black spots on the ceiling suggested broken pipes and water damage.

This being said, the heterogeneity of urban populations, in particular the proximity of peoples with extreme disparities of wealth, has historically led to dense-population centers as the sites of confrontation with the state apparatus. Justin contends that the "city" contains the greater possibilities for institutionalized violence to preempt its own immolation. Similarly, the Invisible Committee writes, "Urban space is more than just the theater of confrontation, it is also the means".[5] Any attempt at confronting the imbalance of power, and the violence which this implies, must necessarily be made on the terrain of conflict. More accurately, as there is no escape from the terrain of conflict, acknowledging it as conflictual is the only possibility for a resistant politics. We can see Justin's polemical statement as suggesting that "rural" communes such as the one ze described are not sites of political engagement if they forego confrontation with the mass violence of the state. Specifically, he seems to dismiss the possibility of utopic microsites that aim to reformulate power relations outside of the hegemony of capitalism and its enforcing agent, the state.

Justin seems to adhere more to a conception of revolutionary struggle like that advocated by the Invisible Committee. Rather than moving outside of municipal limits, such a struggle could employ tactics that utilize urban space as "the means" of confrontation. Such tactics include

Earlier, Justin had showed me his room, which seemed original to the building. Other rooms, however, were built by the residents. Many people lived in the common-spaces, which were other large halls like the one in which we sat. They slept on old couches or worn-out mattresses. There seemed to be more cats than people, which didn't help the smell of the place. The building had two bathrooms, one of which was a recent addition by some visitors from New Haven.

"How do you decide who gets a room?" I asked.

"For the most part, if you pay rent then you get a room. It would be a lot different if we squatted," one of them responded.

"Is rent high?"

"It's about $250," the black-haired kid responded. "Not all of us work, so we make up the difference for the others."

"Does that cause resentment?"

They all laughed.

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taking over government buildings or public spaces through occupation. Alternatively, many argue for the détournement of the very means by which the state apparatus enforces its hegemony. For example, the hacker collective Anonymous can be seen as détourning the internet, which, after all, developed from military technologies. Other examples are actions that disrupt the infrastructure that supports the exchange of capital, such as that of which the Tarnac Nine were accused. With the invention of shipping containers, the globalized economy has come to depend on adherence to strict schedules as part of the perfecting of international commodity-exchange to exact standards. As a result, any disruption in these networks rapidly effects the entire system. The longshoremen strike at the Port of Oakland in November, 2012 demonstrated the rippling repercussions a localized event can have on the global economy.

Consensus-based decision making is often considered as an essential element of communal living by those who do not actually participate in such a lifestyle. In general, however, many people find that full consensus is actually a hindrance towards the improvement of communal relations or the general functioning of a house. In her history of utopic American communities, Dolores Hayden writes, "Every group must achieve a balance between authority and participation, community and privacy,

by consensus but it doesn't always work. We have a have a house meeting once a week, but not everyone can come. Afterall, we are all doing so many things. So I wouldn't say we deal with every problem through full consensus. It's usually about the majority of opinions. We don't have any leaders, but Justin and Gregg have lived here the longest."

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In the case of this building, which often houses around fifteen people––the exact number fluctuates–– Justin and Gregg, the only two residents who had been there since the beginning, seemed to have more sway than others. Still, by reducing the amount of decisions that were made collectively, they seemed to avoid the need for any direct indication of leadership or heirarchizing of influence.

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"Communes that would not define themselves – as collectives tend to do – by what's inside and what's outside them, but by the density of the ties as their core. Not by their membership, but by the spirit that animates them," write the Invisible Committee.[7] Devoid of any organizing structure or unified politic, the Ox can be considered as performing a similar mode of self-definition. In this way, they resist replication of normative family structures. Certainly, the Ox delimits an interior in that they have expelled a member. However, the meaning of the Ox does not arise from the rationale behind this expulsion. This is to say, the law of oikos, which, while existent to some extent, seems to be deferred.

Instead of possessing a common ideology, like micropolitical groups or the traditional Marxian party structure, the Ox attempts maintain a constant liveliness, an "explosive energy." In the

which everyone would get involved.

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interaction of dissimilar individuals, the house maintains disjunction. This sets them off from the society around them and simultaneously allows for the constant formation and reformation of connections between the various members. While organized political bodies tend to become fractured in strategy or minute details of theory, a disorganized grouping forms connections out of difference. Instead of faulting one another for not embodying ideals, they must focus on reasons for staying together.

According to Justin, the singular shared characteristic of residents of the Ox is that they are "misfits." Giorgio Agamben writes in The State of Exception, "...Modern totalitarianism can be defined as the establishment, by means of the state of exception, of a legal civil war that allows for the physical elimination not only of political adversaries but of entire categories of citizens who for some reason cannot be integrated into the political system".[8] If we conclude with Agamben that the United States exists as a totalitarian state, his category of citizens must include those identifying as queer, transgendered, or any other non-normative sexual orientations/identities. Other members of the house identified themselves as "street kids," who were once homeless either through choice or the impossibility of living with their nuclear families. These people could not conform to the normative imperative of their societies and milieus; the Ox

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I leaned back in my chair and looked over at my friend, making brief eye contact. I found myself already reflecting back on the past twenty four hours, which seemed to have been marked by considerable luck. We had arrived in Philadelphia the night before; it was the first stop on a road trip that was designed half for pleasure and half for my own shelters those who would otherwise be without a roof. The Ox is an architecture, in both the conventional sense of a building and in expanded senses, in which the interior is defined by relationality and difference.

For the Ox to transform into a political unity, it might need to define its political character. This would risk the loss of the "explosive energy" offered by its current differential relations. Moreover, while Justin believes the "gentrification" of Kensington heralds the demise of the Ox, one could alternatively suggest that this change could actually make the mere habitation of the building into a radical act. In the disparity between the normative bonds of these new residents, who would assumedly conform to familial structures and capitalist imperatives, and the alternative configurations of relational bonds as practiced by the members of the Ox, a disruption would appear in the very fabric that posits the former as necessary and the latter as excessive.

To further elaborate this potential disruption, we must consider that fabric which establishes conditions of necessity. In "the Notion of Expenditure," Georges Bataille deconstructs classical economics, asserting that it only contends with a particular aspect of a much larger phenomena. Specifically, he critiques the assumption that economic activity can be fundamentally rooted in acquisi-

research on resistant habitation in the Northeastern corridor. We planned to stay at different places using the website couchsurfing.org, but had had no luck finding a place to stay. Desperate, we sat in a bar and texted everyone we knew in the city. Finally, we found a place to stay from a friend of a friend. The next morning we met him and I told him about my project. He put us in contact with Justin, and we drove over to Kensington, a former industrial part of town that had recently experienced partial gentrification.

It was Justin who greeted us when we first arrived. Tall and thin, he sported a long reddish beard and squinted out from small round glasses.

"Welcome to the Ox!"

We walked into the bottom floor of the building, which is reached by a small set of stairs descending from the doorway. Justin informed us that they had more space than they knew what to do with, and they only used the bottom floor for parties and as a bike shop. The latter consisted of a rack for bikes and small tools scattered along the floor.

Justin talked quickly. He had a tendency to move forward and then backwards with a violent jerk, as if his thoughts came quicker than his body could react. We followed him upstairs, where he pointed out a small room on the left where a girl sat on a computer. There was another iMac next to her and a large printer in the corner. On the wall facing

tion as necessity. He writes, "Classical economics imagined that primitive exchange occurred in the form of barter; it had no reason to assume, in fact, that a means of acquisition such as exchange might have as its origin the need to acquire that it satisfies today, but the contrary need, the need to destroy and to lose."[9]

Bataille turns to a series of perhaps esoteric examples in order to illustrate his conception of a "general economy" that can contain more than just the particular exchanges of capital by humans. In order to do so, he draws from a wide range of examples, in particular the Native American tradition of the potlach. Benjamin Noys contends that this movement "is not a romantic projection of the 'noble savage' who exemplifies unproductive expenditure but an act of what Goux calls 'ethnological decentering.' By returning to a different possibility of economy Bataille dislodges our tendency to project capitalism as the eternal model of the economy."[10] Moreover, his general movement to enlarge economics from the particular exchanges of humans can be read as anti-humanist movement. Specifically, Bataille traces the origin of all wealth to a "superabundance" of energy from the sun. Living matter receives this energy, which allows their growth until a limit of growth is reached and excess energy is expended. Excess, rather than scarcity, becomes the basis for Bataille's economics.

The means by which a society expends

the hallway, a large window had been covered with translucent pink plastic.

"This is the work room. After a while, we realized that it was just too hard to work in the common spaces. Nobody is allowed to talk in here."

Next, we came to his room. He had built a wooden bed and an overhanging bookshelf that was crammed with books on political theory, philosophy, and fiction.

"I write," he told us. "Do you mind if I record this?"

"Not at all, it could probably help me out," I responded.

Justin took out an iPad and an iPhone. He explained that he likes to use two different transcription softwares and compare their results. He contended that the disparities between the transcriptions informs his research in technology and politics. Justin is currently a PhD candidate in Political Science at Temple University. His WordPress also states that he is a "Philly Occupier."

We continued our tour of the various rooms of the house. In one room, some of Justin's housemates were sitting. We introduced ourselves, and were met with smiles or empty stares. In the large kitchen, some people were chopping up vegetables for the soup.

One boy stopped, looked me directly in the eyes, and stated, deadpan: "I'm eating rice."

I laughed nervously.

excess energy becomes definitive of its social relations. In the potlach, excess wealth was to be squandered in "a considerable gift of riches offered openly and with the goal of humiliating, defying and obligating a rival."[11] He traces loss of wealth as a means to power throughout history; for example, feudal lords would put on elaborate festivals and tournaments. With the rapid industrialization of the 18th and 19th century, the limits of growth were expanded and therefore required greater expense of excess, partially in general improvements of living conditions. However, Bataille argues, "...if we do not have the force to destroy the surplus energy ourselves, it cannot be used, and, like an unbroken animal that cannot be trained, it is this energy that destroys us; it is we who pay the price of the inevitable explosion."[12] He evidences the first world war as this explosive inevitability.

Bataille asserts, "[The modern bourgeoisie] has distinguished itself from the aristocracy through the fact that it has consented only to spend for itself, and within itself – in other words, by hiding its expenditures as much as possible from the eyes of the other classes."[13] While other societies have expelled surplus energy by redistributing it or by means of lavish entertainment, capitalist society remains always on the brink of revolution or destruction because it operates within this logic of acquisition and necessity. Capitalism asserts its own mode of thought that denies its own reliance on ex-

"Everyone in here is pretty odd," Justin told us. "It's a bunch of misfits, which I much prefer to how we started."

Justin had first moved into the building with a group of friends. They wanted a cheap place to live as well as somewhere to play music and put on shows. After several months struggling to make the building habitable, they began to use it as a venue. Soon, the building acquired the nickname the Ox, and cemented a reputation as an epicenter of Philadelphia's burgeoning do-it-yourself music scene.

Remnants of that era still persist and music is still produced in the building. When I was there, loud heavy metal reverberated. But, at least when I was there, they claimed to stop having shows.

"We were getting a lot of attention from the cops," Justin explained, "and people would trash our shit."

Georgia, a 21 year old graduate from Temple University, used to live in the building during its heyday as a music venue. She left because it became "too much to deal with." Specifically, she couldn't deal with the disorder and apparent lack of hygiene. She told me that the weekend before I visited, she went to a party at the Ox. She claimed that she – and other former members – have felt hostility from the new residents.

I explained to her what I perceived the new demographic to consist of, ie. largely genderqueer

penditure. Bataille writes, "...On the whole, any general judgement of social activity implies the principle that all individual effort, in order to be valid, must be reducible to the fundamental necessities of production and conservation."[14] But, as I have previously mentioned, increased production requires greater expenditure or excessive energy will exceed the ability to be controlled. Bataille asserts the possibility that the working class could rediscover a state of excitation, in which class struggle "becomes the grandest form of social expenditure."[15]

In Bataille's language, this non-recuperable excess of energy is called "the accursed share," and must either be expended knowingly – i.e., in the arts, non-procreative sex, spectacles, etc. – or in a destructive outpouring. This accursed share is that which defies rationality. More precisely, as Derrida contends, "Reason keeps watch over a deep slumber in which it has an interest."[16] Bataille suggests the possibility that the accursed share, which cannot be identified in stable terms, could have its curse be removed through embracing its nonlogical difference. Within the particular economics posited in capitalism, finding sites for the expenditure of this surplus such as in the redistribution of material wealth already defies rational utility. Bataille writes, "The exposition of a general economy implies intervention in public affairs, certainly; but first of all and more profoundly, what it aims at is consciousness, what it looks to from the outset is the self-consciousness

young people, self-professed political radicals, street kids, and one man in his 80s. The latter had introduced himself to us and seemed rather nice. After I explained to him my project, he smiled and told me that he had started living in communes in the 1960s.

"Yeah, the 80-year old!" Georgia exclaimed. "He started freaking out at the party last weekend and kicked us out!"

Justin had explained to me the shift in population of the Ox.

"We became politicized during Occupy... or at least Gregg and I did. A lot of the people who live here now we met there. Like I said before, its a weird group, but I like it like that. I want to get as many weird people together as possible... it creates an explosive energy!"

Justin took us out unto the roof of the building. It is a large expanse, and in the center is a small garden.

"Are you able to feed yourselves?" I asked.

"Not at all–– the weather isn't helpful and we don't have the skills or land–– but we get some food."

"I notice that you use a lot of electricity, how concerned are you with environmental problems and climate change?"

"Well, we do small things, like compost... But now we have too much compost to deal with.

that man would finally achieve in the lucid vision of its linked historical forms."[17]

I would like to suggest considering the Ox in light of Bataille's thinking. On one level, its members practice the expenditure of energy in nonutilitarian – which is to say accursed – ways, such as non-procreative sexuality and commodity-sharing. Particularly in light of their nonconformity to gender, many of the members bear the brunt of the curse of utility and are themselves considered excess. To lift the curse on excess would be to no longer be beholden to a telos of necessity and utility; therefore, cohabitation in terms of relationality and difference allows for individual and collective reimaginings of material and commodity exchange. This is a politics that does not seek identity in opposition to capitalism, but rather actively explores potentialities. Meanwhile, there remains the possibility that those living in proximity to such a habitation could themselves find the apparent necessity of maintaining norms unraveled.

We always have lights on because the building is so big... Honestly, it isn't as big of a concern as it should be, but we make some efforts. I wish we had a set political idea, then it would be a lot easier."

"So you'd like to see the Ox transform into an organized political unity?"

"I'd like to do that, but I don't see it happening here. I mean the Ox won't be here for long."

"What do you mean?"

"The neighborhood is changing. Just look across the street at those bourgeois condos springing up."

[1] Chrisafis, Angelique. " French anarchists arrested - is Tarnac a rural idyll or terrorist hub? ." The Guardian. http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2009/jan/03/france-terrorism-tarnac-anarchists (accessed April 15, 2013).

[2] the Invisible Committee. *The coming insurrection*. Los Angeles, CA: Semiotext(e), 2009. 57

[3] Eric H. Holder, Jr. to Rand Paul, March 4, 2013. from http://big.assets.huffingtonpost.com/BrennanHolderResponse.pdf

[4] the Invisible Committee. *The coming insurrection*. Los Angeles, CA: Semiotext(e), 2009. 52

[5] the Invisible Committee. *The coming insurrection.* 58

[6] Hayden, Dolores. S*even American utopias: the architecture of communitarian socialism, 1790-1975*. Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1976. 5

[7] the Invisible Committee. *The coming insurrection*. 101

[8] Agamben, Giorgio. *State of exception*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005. 2

[9] Bataille, Georges, Fred Botting, and Scott Wilson. *The Bataille reader*. Oxford, UK: Blackwell, 1997. 172

[10] Noys, Benjamin. *Georges Bataille: a critical introduction.* London: Pluto Press, 2000.107

[11] Bataille, *the Bataille Reader.* 172

[12] Bataille, *the Bataille Reader.* 185

[13] Bataille, *the Bataille Reader.* 176

[14] Bataille, *the Bataille Reader.* 168

[15] Bataille, *the Bataille Reader.* 178

[16] Noys, *Georges Bataille: a critical introduction.* 103

[17] Bataille, *the Bataille Reader.* 198


ST. PETER'S, ROME, 400 FT.
CATHEDRAL, ROUEN, FRANCE, 490 FT.
MADISON SQ. GARDEN, N. Y. C., 305 FT.
PHILADELPHIA CITY HALL, 537 FT.
PARK ROW BUILDING, N. Y., 382 FT.
PYRAMID, EGYPT, 485 FT.
WASHINGTON MONUMENT, 555 FT.
CATHEDRAL, SALISBURY, 400 FT.
ST. ISAAC'S, ST. PETERSBURG, 365 FT.
ST. STEPHEN'S, VIENNA, 450 FT.
CATHEDRAL, COLOGNE, 516 FT.
ST. SOPHIA, CONSTANTINOPLE, 200 FT.
SINGER BUILDING
THE SINGER MANUFACTURING COMPANY

New York, New York / 1916 - 2013

All the writing which I had borrowed from the living and the dead, until I myself had become a sort of postscript to a letter which was never ended, never posted...

Lawrence Durrell : *Clea*

In an interview published in the *New York Times* on August 6, 1911, the architect Ernest Flagg is quoted saying, "This is a strange country. We go quickly from one extreme to the other, and no one can predict what the future may bring forth."[1] He perceived American architecture at the time to be pushing an extremity of vulgarity — in its appropriation of various European styles and insensitivity towards the ramifications of a building for its context — and argued for the establishment of building codes as a necessity for the creation of a national architecture that would surpass those of Europe. The former criticism he articulates: "Our architecture smacks too much of archaeology; it is not modern: we use modern methods of construction and antique methods of design. Why do not people in the United States recognize that every great work of art which has had an undying reputation was strictly modern when it was made? No copy or adaptation, no matter how cleverly done, can endure the test of time and stand as a work of art."[2] Flagg himself seemed to practice this mode of thought; an article documenting the structural innovations involved with the construction of one of his building noted that during the dredging of the site, barrels full of Dutch pottery and Native American relics were removed and likely discarded.[3]

But Flagg's predominant concern was the increased height of the city's skyscrapers and its effects on the conditions of the street below. He is quoted saying, "This matter of light is becoming serious in New York. Something ought to be done about it at once, for as matters stand great injustice is being done to property owner, who are losing their fair share of light. At present there is nothing to hinder one owner of land from building up to the height of several hundred feet right on the property line of another owner and pre-empting his light."[4]

Incidentally, three years earlier, one of Flagg's designs, the Singer Building, was completed and set records as the tallest building in the world until this record was surpassed

the next year. Serving as the main offices for the Singer Sewing Machine Company, the building consisted of a 12-story base with a 35-story tower set back a considerable distance. The setback enabled more light to reach the street below and lessened the prohibitive costs necessary to sustain a structure without any setbacks. In fact, Flagg advocated for the establishing of a municipal building code which would legally require such setbacks.

Not longer after, many of Flagg's ideas were incorporated into the 1917 Zoning Resolution, which established limits for the mass of a building in relation to its height. The majority of the time, these measures were articulated as a series of setbacks, not unlike that of the Singer Building. The resolution had profound effects on the architecture of the city, helping to shape the aesthetics of many of the city's monuments such as the Chrysler Building and the Empire State Building. By the mid-century, practitioners of the "International Style" desired to avoid the ziggurat-esque shapes mandated by the code. In 1958, architect Ludwig Mies van der Rohe's Seagram Building was completed. The building appears as a simple bronze box rising in a straight vertical movement from the street. Instead of a series of setbacks, Mies van der Rohe set the entire building back from the street the distance legally required. The resultant space — a large granite plaza — quickly became a popular "public space." The popularity of such plazas prompted the New York planning council to make a series of changes to the resolution that offered height incentives for developers if they included "privately owned public spaces" in front or adjacent to the building.

The New York City Department of Planning defines a publicly-owned private space as follows: "A Privately Owned Public Space (POPS) is an amenity provided, constructed and maintained by a property owner/developer for public use in exchange for additional floor area. The 1961 Zoning Resolution inaugurated the incentive zoning program in New York City. The

program encouraged private developers to provide spaces for the public within or outside their buildings by allowing them greater density in certain high-density districts."[5] These incentives were pivotal for the design of One Liberty Plaza, one of the largest office buildings in the city. Commissioned by U.S. Steel, construction began in 1968 with the demolition of the buildings formerly on the site, chiefly the Singer Building. Until the destruction of the World Trade Centers in 2001, the Singer Building was the largest building to have ever been demolished. Its replacement has 54 floors and a massive area of 204,000 m^2 which required the creation of a privately owned public space. U.S. Steel satisfied this requirement by purchasing an adjacent property and creating Liberty Plaza Park, which quickly became popular as one of the few places with seating and tables in the Financial District. The changes to the site becomes a metaphor for the shift from an industrial economy to a financial one. This metaphor haunts the politics which soon would unfold on it.

The park was physically affected by its proximity to the World Trade Center site. Subsequently, it underwent a massive renovation in 2006 designed by the firm of Cooper, Robertson & Partners. These renovations included the inclusion of "arm rests" on benches, a common device used by developers to discourage sleeping or skateboarding. They serve as a mechanism with which certain 'undesirables' are excluded from this "public space," chiefly the homeless and youth. Interestingly, the designers of Liberty Plaza Park seem to have used this device as a starting point for the larger aesthetics of the site, mimicking their form in the pave stones. Metal bars separate benches into individual seats; the benches in turn separate the park into various areas with relatively definite programs; the metal strips in the pave stone serve as an aesthetic continuation of this rhythm. In this way, the park is a literalization of the Deleuzian concept of striation. Deleuze and Guattari write, "One of the fundamental tasks of the State is to

striate the space over which it reigns, or to utilize the smooth spaces as a means of communication in service of striated space. It is a vital concern of every State not only to vanquish nomadism but to control migrations, and, more generally, to establish a zone of rights over an entire "exterior," over all the flows traversing the ecumenon."[6]

POPS are a manifestation, an effect, of the unapologetic merger of State and finance in late capitalism. This politicization of capital occurs simultaneously with its total socialization. The business creates the public spaces of the 21st century; financial scheming dominates the discourse of the American agora. The business acts as the State acts : the State acts as the business acts. The physical face of the city reflects those who control the productions it harbors. Nomads — the homeless, the migrants, the drifters, the marginalized — are physically restricted from resting in the park. One cannot move through the park of one's own accord but through the channels cut out by the placement of ornaments and benches. Even a dérive is impossible because the mind is tricked to follow the lines in the floor; architectural reviews of Liberty Plaza Park remarked how businesspeople relished the shortcut to the World Trade Center it affords.

A few years after its redesign, the park was renamed after the company chairman of the current owners, Brookfield Office Properties, of One Liberty Plaza: John Zuccotti. In 2011, Zuccotti Park became internationally known when protesters set up camp in the site under the name of Occupy Wall Street. A year later, another major project by Cooper, Robertson & Partners — Battery Park City, an equally exclusive design — was flooded when Hurricane Sandy devastated the New York region.

On September 17, 2011 a few hundred activists set up tents in Zuccoti Park and — for the national and international media — Occupy Wall Street (OWS) began. But, OWS had begun long before. As early as July of that year, the Canadian publication Adbusters had started calling for people to establish a camp to protest the influence of corporations on politics, wealth inequality, and the structures that enable both. In their injunction, the editors of Adbusters wrote, "America needs its own Tahrir," referencing the encampments in Cairo that had precipitated the fall of Hosni Mubarak.[7] The Egyptian revolution had been influenced the Kasbah I and II of the so-called "Jasmine Revolution" in Tunisia, which led to the overthrow of the dictator Zine El Abidine Ben Ali. Moreover, Spanish *indignados* were actively involved in the planning of OWS and readily adapted their experiences from the *acampadas* of the *Movimiento* 15-M. In turn, the *indignados* drew the name from Stéphane Hessel's *Indignez-vous !,* which draws from his experiences in the French Resistance during the second World War.

The impossibility of writing a determinate history of these events asserts the inextricable relationality of them all. One must resist ascribing all these events to a singular cause and belying the particularities of each struggle in relation to their state apparatus and their position within the global economic system. Rather, an assertion of the singularity of each protest movement strengthens their relationality, the shared participation in a global economic system that definitionally privileges particular populations. Various commentators have ascribed the rapid proliferation of a sentiment of *indignation* across the world — Canada, Iceland, Italy, France, Greece, Portugal, Libya, Syria, Israel/Palestine, Thailand, China, Iran, and of course many more — to a generational condition. Wary of the *gen*eralizing motion contained in the assertion of a *gen*eration, it is nevertheless undeniable that each of these countries contains an overflowing, agitated population of "NEET's", or young people who are not in education,

employment, or training. In addition, the form with which young people have demonstrated has consistently been in occupying public space, establishing non-hierarchical and consensus-driven decision-making, and an aesthetic of the carnivalesque (perhaps derived from the writings of the Situationist International and the "Soixante-huit generation" of French thinkers). The reactions from the State have also helped to establish connecting lines between these events; perhaps in every case except for Iceland, protestors have been met with violent police brutality.

Writing about OWS has already become impossible; there is no place to start. Still, I have started, somehow and impossibly, by considering the history of the place. Rather than finding it a sedentary ground on which to build, the site of Zuccotti Park is also in flux and stands as a testament to the rapidity with which capitalism has *violently* remade the form of its most-famous city. The park is haunted, it is filled with ghosts.*

The construction of the Singer Building conjured the specters of the displaced and murdered former residents of the island of Manhattan; in turn, they haunt our present and future, forcing us to look to those accursed, arid regions of the United States to which the descendants of the Native Americans continue to suffer from legal, social, political, economic, educational, and religious acts of disenfranchisement and structured oppression. With its demolition and the subsequent building of One Liberty Plaza, more ghosts are conjured: those who suffered and continue to suffer from the shift from an industrial to financial economy. The park's renovation invokes the specters of those who died in the attack on the World Trade Centers and those who continue to die, are dying as I write, in the aggressive wars that followed. These ghosts where not anticipated; rather, they come as the park is filled with people attempting to speak. The voices of the OWS protestors show forth the traces of the pasts which

continue to haunt our aspirations for revolution. These re-apparitions come to haunt the futures imagined between park benches.

In an article for the first issue of the periodical *Tidal*, which attempts to "occupy" theory and "occupy" strategy, Butler writes, "In our individual vulnerability to precarity, we find that we are social beings, implicated in a set of networks that either sustain us or fail to do so, or do so only intermittently, producing a constant specter of despair and destitution."[8] This is the spectral haunting produced by the gradual disintegration of social services and bonds in favor of a neoliberal ideology; precarity contains within it the processes, induced by governmental and economic institutions, that acclimatize populations to "insecurity and hopelessness." For Butler, the resistant struggle of OWS sustains the social bonds between bodies, at the critical moment at which neoliberalism has almost entirely eradicated them. The networks of capitalism have become enmeshed into the social fabric into the point where nearly every body is vulnerable to a lack of shelter or a lack of employment; simultaneously, an ideology of individual responsibility condemns ameliorative efforts.

Derrida writes that Marx's writing contains a "messianic promise" that "even if it was not fulfilled, at least in the form in which it was uttered, even if it rushed headlong toward an ontological content, will have imprinted an inaugural and unique mark."[9] He contends that this mark haunts us; we have inherited a messianic promise, a messianic hope without a messiah figure, a future-to-come. We are, following Derridian language, indebted to this inherited promise and it remains at work in all philosophy, in all activism, even if unacknowledged. Now, more than ever, the spectral injunctions of Marx demand response. "For it must be cried out, at a time when some have the audacity to neo-evangelize in the name of the ideal of a liberal democracy that has finally revealed itself as the ideal of human history: never

have violence, inequality, exclusion, famine, and thus economic oppression affected as many human beings in the history of earth and humanity."[10]

Many of the bodies who assembled as OWS voiced dismay at the representation of the event in the media. In particular, invoking a constructed narrative of historical precedents, many pundits criticized the lack of leaders. This criticism holds no bearing; it is an affront to the plurivocality that makes OWS singular. In writing the event, one kills its by fixing it in time and place, in history and memory. Derrida writes, "The kind of mass writing that currently dominates in the news media and publishing does not educate its readers; it supposes in some phantasmatic way some already programmed reader, so that it inevitably ends in affirming the existence of some mediocre recipient that it has postulated in advance."[11] This mediocre recipient is the ideal capitalist subject; in OWS bodies gathered together in defiance of this imposed subjecthood. Instead of elevating individuals as leaders, OWS elevated the voice of the collective.

Normative liberal and leftist organizations replicate the structure of the society they attempt to change. They maintain the *organa* [Gk. "tool for making or doing"] of *organ*ization in directing all action towards the fulfillment of a function. Such functionalism is a reification of the foundations on which capitalism maintains its hegemony, a total power that extends to reason, itself. Lyotard writes, "And we don't want to destroy kapital because it isn't rational, but because it is. Reason and power are one and the same thing."[12] As it generates a self-affirming ideology, capitalism simultaneously unleashes systematic oppression on a scale otherwise inconceivable and under a guise of reasonableness. Inequality is packaged and sold as the freedom to maximize one's own market value.

Therefore, OWS is an impossible inevitability: impossible (and irrational) in the pervasiveness of capitalism in all aspects of lived experience, inevitable in Marxian terms. But addressing the latter point, OWS is not the violent overthrowing of the bourgeoisie by the working class. In all reality, the political establishment has not even made movements to distance itself from the financial markets since 2011. This is not to deny the political potency of OWS, but rather to affirm the powerfulness of the power against which OWS speaks. Judgments based on a criterion of functionalism obscure the object of consideration.

Butler asserts that OWS consists of the amassing of bodies to declare that their situation is shared, that they are not disposable, that the neoliberal ideology has not been cemented into their embodied consciousnesses[13]. In this sense, the voices respond to the spectral Marx's injunctions and a give voice to aspirations for justice. "The reason it is said that sometimes there are 'no demands' when bodies assemble under the rubric of 'Occupy Wall Street' is that any list of demands would not exhaust the ideal of justice that is being demanded."[14] Butler reiterates a Derridian ideal of a democracy-to-come, with an emphasis on maintaining *the to-come*. If justice becomes solidified or systematized, as it has in "democratic" nation-states, an abyss opens between the judicial process and justice as an ideal.

OWS opens up a new space for democracy in maintaining (*maintenant)* the to-come. This is to say, rather than mimicking the territorializing movements of capital, OWS actively experiments with potentialities and deterritorializes structures as they emerge. Continuous discourse, consensus-based decision-making, non-hierarchical formations: democracy as the ontic form of a state dissolves into democracy as an active process that is always in the process of becoming. This democracy extends in rhizomatic growths, as general assemblies give birth to spokes and affinity groups. Incidentally, much of the forms in which OWS happens are

borrowed from anarchist theory and practices. David Graeber, an active participant in OWS and anarchist theorist, asserts, “It’s not just that the ends do not justify the means (though they don’t); you will never achieve the ends at all unless the means are themselves a model for the world you wish to create.”[15]

Around midnight on November 25, 2011, occupiers were forced out of their encampments in Zuccotti Park in a violent police crackdown. Non-resistant occupiers felt batons crashing down on their heads, pepper spray in their eyes, and sharp plastic ties binding their wrists. Many were dragged – literally – to jail cells. The apparent legal loop-hole of the POPS had been negotiated and a legal injunction offered the police seemingly-total impunity. A *New York Times* article reported, "New York cops have arrested, punched, whacked, shoved to the ground and tossed a barrier at reporters and photographers."[16] Police officers forced reporters away from the scene on threat of arrest; other journalists were arrested for taking photographs.[17] The few images that have emerged document riot-clad police officers dragging a woman by her hair and a the bloodied face of a young man.

In an article for *the Guardian* Naomi Wolf, an participant in OWS, provided government documents that revealed the crackdown as a coordinated effort by the New York Police Department, the Federal Bureau of Investigation, the Department of Homeland Security, multinational corporations, and banks.[18] Moreover, this blatant merger of government and business – the absolute dissolution of the State’s claim to legitimacy – extends its sovereignty outside of the municipal border of New York City. Wolf writes:

> “The documents, released after long delay in the week between Christmas and New Year, show a nationwide meta-plot unfolding in city after city in an Orwellian world: six

> American universities are sites where campus police funneled information about students involved with OWS to the FBI, with the administrations' knowledge (p51); banks sat down with FBI officials to pool information about OWS protesters harvested by private security; plans to crush Occupy events, planned for a month down the road, were made by the FBI – and offered to the representatives of the same organizations that the protests would target; and even threats of the assassination of OWS leaders by sniper fire – by whom? Where? – now remain redacted and undisclosed to those American citizens in danger, contrary to standard FBI practice to inform the person concerned when there is a threat against a political leader (p61)."[19]

In the same article, she cites FBI documents that describe "Occupy" as a potential terrorist group "from its inception."[20]

The media described OWS as dead[21]; to write an event is to kill it – doubly so if what is written is an obituary. Moreover, in the process of destroying the encampment, the State revealed its unrepentant authoritarianism. In all likeliness, the massive amount of arrests and the sheer brutality of the night were intended to discourage such groupings. The possibilty of a reiteration of OWS appears impossible. Yet, mourning OWS in Zuccotti Park conjures a spectral haunting.[22] Walter Benjamin distinguishes between *überleben*, "to live after death," and *fortleben*, "living on, to keep on living."[23] OWS survives in both senses: it haunts contemporary political discourse, and the banner "Occupy" has emerged and reemerged repeatedly. Regarding the latter senses, even during Occupy Wall Street, this *given* name appeared as a multiplicity of other geographic and virtual nodes.†‡

After devastating Cuba, Jamaica, the Dominican Republic, Puerto Rico, and the Bahamas, the tropical cyclone nicknamed Hurricane Sandy hit the Northeast United States on October 29, 2013. The major coast cities, in particular New York City, experienced devastating flooding and violent winds. The storm left dozens dead, millions without power, and thousands homeless.[24] Many of the communities destroyed were some of the poorest in New York City. Rockaway Beach was in ruins, parts of Harlem were aflame. While much of Manhattan had power and services restored relatively quickly after the storm ended, the other boroughs were not as fortunate. An ABC news article quotes a resident of the Ocean Bay Housing Complex: "In this community, these folks live 200 percent below the poverty level. FEMA is not here. But there are other organizations that should be here."[25]

In an article for the New York Daily News, Rebecca Davis and Meena Hart Duerson write, “Those who believed the Occupy Wall Street movement was all but *dead* after its dramatic removal from Zuccotti Park last fall may have been surprised to see the group pop up again in the days after Hurricane Sandy. But this time, they weren’t organizing protests – they were calling on their large network to come to the aid of those hit hardest by the storm” (italicize my own). [26] Ghost or revenant, Occupy reemerges as Occupy Sandy (OS). Utilizing the vast online networks of prior iterations of Occupy, bodies rapidly gathered in various neighborhoods, setting up centers in churches, community centers, and schools. People donated goods, food, and money which were rapidly and efficiently distributed. In particularly devastated areas, “occupiers” helped rebuild homes.

While not to the same degree as during Hurricane Katrina, governmental agencies faltered in their efforts after Hurricane Sandy. It is impossible to know what these areas would like today, in 2013, had it not been for OS. Gianni Vattimo and Santiago Zabala consider the

relationship between democracy and contemporary states as enacting enframement; instead of democratic elections producing systems, the liberal system frames the concept of democracy as it imposes elections.[27] They write, "Framed democracies are interested in the conservation of their liberal impositions and financial system and in protecting this global condition against any change. While an 'emergency' for framed democracies represents the possibility of change, 'emergency' for the weak is precisely a 'lack of emergency,' that is, a lack of change, alteration, or modification of the current state of affairs."[28] Hurricane Sandy threatened the neoliberal ideology that persistently reduces public services and tethers social bonds. In the radical cooperation of occupiers, emerged the possibility of a different mode of co-habitation, one that affirms the relation to others as its grounding ethical imperative. While devastating to Vattimo and Zabala's "weak," the storm also served as the impetus for the production of radical alternatives to performing capitalist subjectivity.

OWS protests against capitalism and its enfolding of all aspects of social life, including the domestication and normatization of kinship and behavior. In living together and sharing resources, OWS defers the conventions of living-in-a-place. Specifically, OWS shifts a work of architecture that had previously incorporated exclusionary tactics in its very design. An open-air plaza becomes a dwelling without any established interior or exterior, with no walls at all. Even the sidewalk demarcating the physical limits of the park can overfill with people, and the thinking that coincides with this dwelling-together extends infinitely on a spatiotemporal fabric. The practice of life in the encampment deconstructs the fundamental laws and meanings governing architecture.

And then a year later Occupy Sandy rebuilds single-family homes. While architecture may literalize and enforce existing social structures in the everyday, there is nothing inherently oppressive and alienating about walls and roofs. Bodies require sheltering. A typical midcentury single-family home may be designed around a heternormative, cisnormative, and patriarchal conception of a family, but external forms cannot absolutely determine the movements within. Resistant architecture – an architecture that resists – is not method or style of construction but rather a destabilizing of conventions, borders, and limitations.

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[1] Mars, C.J.. "Are American cities going mad architecturally?." The New York Times, August 16, 1911, sec. 5. http://query.nytimes.com/mem/archive-free/pdf?res=F00814FE3D5813738DDDAF0894D0405B818DF1D3 (accessed April 3, 2013).

[2] *ibid*.

[3] Ripley, Charles M.. "A Building Forty-Seven Stories High." The World's Work, October 1907. http://books.google.com/books?id=sojNAAAAMAAJ&pg=RA1-PA9459#v=onepage&q&f=false (accessed April 3, 2013).

[4] *ibid*.

[5] New York City Government. "Privately Owned Public Spaces." New York City Department of City Planning. www.nyc.gov/html/dcp/html/pops/pops.shtml (accessed January 13, 2013).

[6] Deleuze, Gilles, and Felix Guattari. *A thousand plateaus: capitalism and schizophrenia*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987. 385-386.

[7] Schwartz, Mattathias. "Pre-Occupied: The origins and future of Occupy Wall Street." The New Yorker. http://www.newyorker.com/reporting/2011/11/28/111128fa_fact_schwartz?currentPage=all (accessed April 16, 2013).

[*] Jacques Derrida coined the neologism hauntology, which in French is a near-homophone of ontology, in order to understand the spectral presence of memory, history, and past actuality. In describing his hauntology, he invokes the ghost of Hamlet's father, who, hidden beneath the visor of his armor, sees out without himself able to be seen. The specter's presence, invisible and undetectable, haunts the present with traces of the past. The specter's coming is always an re-apparition, a returning, but it cannot be summoned or anticipated.

Derrida explicates the specter in his book *Specters of Marx: the State of the Debt, the Work of Mourning, and the New International*, attempting to answer "whither Marxism?" As Marx begins *The Communist Manifesto* by "seeing ghosts," Derrida posits that we are haunted by the specters of Marx. Justice must be done and the past must be recognized in the present. He contends that the sullying of Marx's thought through its various iterations such as the USSR actually clears the way for a return to the German philosopher. Derrida writes, "When the dogma machine and the "Marxist" ideological apparatuses (states, parties, cells, unions and other places) are in the process of disappearing, we no longer have any excuse, only alibis, for turning away from this responsibility." There are specters of Marx, because, for one, Marx comes to us plurivocally; for example, his early writings in Paris are written in a humanist voice largely absent in Das Kapital and other later writings. Moreover, he spoke to the masses and the crowds, to a plural instead a singular individual. Finally, Marx, the individual, is no longer present or alive so he can no longer claim a singular voice but rather haunts contemporary thought manifoldly.

[8] Butler, Judith. "For and Against Precarity." Tidal I (2011). http://occupytheory.org/ (accessed April 16, 2013).

[9] Derrida, Jacques. *Specters of Marx: the state of the debt, the work of mourning, and the New international.* New York: Routledge, 1994. 114

[10] Derrida, *Specters of Marx*. 106

[11] Derrida, Jacques. Interview with Jean Birnbaum. *Learning to Live Finally: the Last Interview.* New York: Melville House, 2011.

[12] Lyotard, Jean, and Roger McKeon. *Driftworks*. New York, N.Y., U.S.A.: Semiotext(e), 1984. 11.

[13] Butler, Judith. "For and Against Precarity." Tidal I (2011). http://occupytheory.org/ (accessed April 16, 2013).

[14] *ibid.*

[15] Graeber, David. "Occupy Wall Street's Anarchist Roots." In *The Occupy handbook*. New York: Back Bay Books, 2012. 142.

[16] Powell, Michael. "N.Y.P.D. Stops Reporters With Badges and Fists." The New York Times. http://www.nytimes.com/2011/11/22/nyregion/nypd-stops-reporters-with-badges-and-fists.html?_r=0 (accessed April 17, 2013).

[17] Wolf, Naomi. "The shocking truth about the crackdown on Occupy." The Guardian. http://www.guardian.co.uk/commentisfree/cifamerica/2011/nov/25/shocking-truth-about-crackdown-occupy (accessed April 17, 2013).

[18] Wolf, Naomi. " Revealed: how the FBI coordinated the crackdown on Occupy." the Guardian. http://www.guardian.co.uk/commentisfree/2012/dec/29/fbi-coordinated-crackdown-occupy (accessed April 17, 2013).

[19] Wolf, Naomi. " Revealed: how the FBI coordinated the crackdown on Occupy." the Guardian. http://www.guardian.co.uk/commentisfree/2012/dec/29/fbi-coordinated-crackdown-occupy (accessed April 17, 2013).

[20] *ibid*.

[21] Davis, Rebecca, and Meena Hart Duerson. "Occupy Sandy relief effort puts Occupy Wall Street activists in the spotlight again a year after Zuccotti Park." New York Daily News, December 5, 2012. http://articles.nydailynews.com/2012-12-05/news/35629938_1_zuccotti-park-relief-effort-community-aid (accessed December 6, 2012).

[22] Derrida, *Specters of Marx*. 110

[23] Derrida, *Learning to Live Finally*

[†] Geographic nodes such as Occupy Oakland, Occupy Philadelphia, Occupy London, Occupy Los Angeles, Occupy Berlin; virtual nodes such as Occupy Data, Occupy the Hood, Occupy Theory, Occupy Research, Occupy Taxonomy.

[‡] Additionally, it should be noted that the conventional discourse that thinks of OWS as the definitive manifestation of Occupy follows the paradigmatic privileging of urban phenomena over rural, and of "important" urban centers over "unimportant" ones.

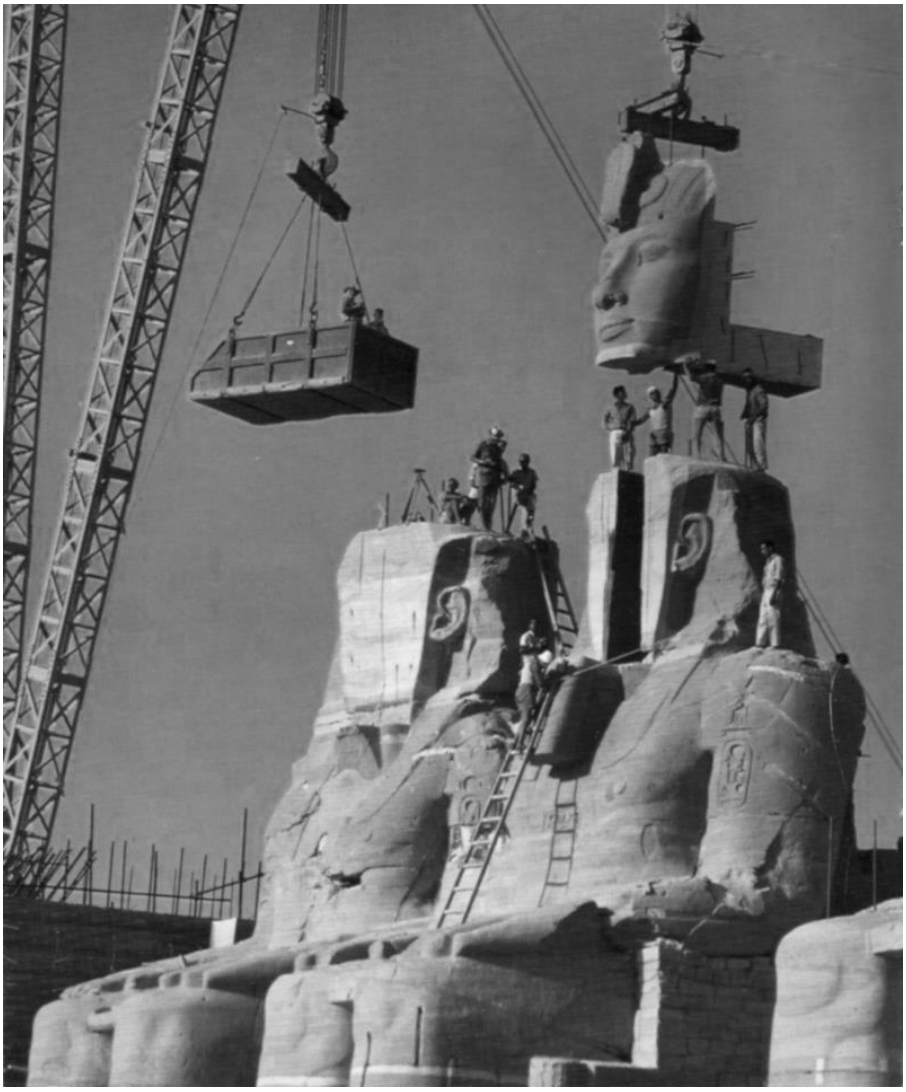
[24] Science News. "Hurricane Sandy: Facts & Data." Live Science. http://www.livescience.com/24380-hurricane-sandy-status-data.html (accessed April 17, 2013).

[25] Pegues, Jeff. "Sandy created dangerous living conditions at public housing complexes." Eyewitness 7. http://abclocal.go.com/wabc/story?section=news%2Flocal%2Fnew_york&id=8884585#comments&status=ok (accessed April 17, 2013).

[26] Davis, Rebecca, and Meena Hart Duerson. "Occupy Sandy relief effort puts Occupy Wall Street activists in the spotlight again a year after Zuccotti Park." New York Daily News, December 5, 2012. http://articles.nydailynews.com/2012-12-05/news/35629938_1_zuccotti-park-relief-effort-community-aid (accessed December 6, 2012).

[27] Vattimo, Gianni, and Santiago Zabala. *Hermeneutic communism: from Heidegger to Marx*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2011. 57

[28] Vattimo, *Hermeneutic communism*. 65



Egypt / 1929

They were eating into one another, these irreconcilable dreams.

Lawrence Durrell : *Clea*

In 1929, a deal was brokered between the British Empire and the recently-independent Egypt over the future of the Nile River. Pierre worked for the Council of Foreign Affairs at the time and wrote about the Nile Water Agreement in their journal. Crabitès was not a Briton, however, but an American. Born in New Orleans in 1877, he experienced the gilded age of the city and attended the University of Tulane. With the aid of family money, he was able continue his education in Paris and Berlin. He subsequently passed the Louisiana bar and was appointed to serve as the American representative to a court in Cairo for international cases involving foreigners and Egyptians. At the time, imperial rule excluded foreigners from being tried at the indigenous courts.[1]

Crabitès became a mirror into Egypt for Americans. His correspondences from abroad enabled a reputation as one of the foremost authorities on North Africa at a time when it was hardly imaginable for most Americans. He writes about the treaty, "Clearly..., the essence of the agreement is the safeguarding of what is described as the 'natural and historical rights of Egypt in the Waters of the Nile.' The stream has, from the dawn of history, been Egypt's river. The recent accord tends to perpetuate this relationship."[2]

Rights are created when a vulnerability is discovered. While Egypt had recently been bequeathed a certain-type of sovereignty, its neighbor to the south Sudan was not accorded a similar gesture of good-will. Sudan was actually a "Condominium," which ran the flags of both the British Empire and Egypt.[3] Still, the possibility of its independence was on the table. More

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[1] Parkinson, Brian Rogers. "Judge Pierre Crabites: A Bourbon Democrat in Egypt, 1877-1943." Publication of Archival Library and Museum Materials. http://digitool.fcla.edu/R/SQYAFJXIHVHSV31KK7PAVA5JXKB8XU4647EFJNP2AJGMKN7485-01503?func=dbin-jump-full&object_id=120686&local_base=GEN01&pds_handle=GUEST (accessed April 19, 2013).

[2] Crabitès, Pierre. "The Nile Water Agreement." *Foreign Affairs*, vol. 8:1. Oct. 1929. 146

[3] *ibid.*

pointedly, since Egypt still maintained its imperial presence in the country, the dearth of cultivated land begged for a modernized irrigation system. On the other hand, Egypt was to be acquiesced to: its large population as well as the solemnity of its name demanded at least this much.

The agreement that condemned Sudan to a relegated position to its northern neighbor was set in place not long after the borders between had been codified. Fundamentally, it guaranteed Egypt the majority of control over a river that stretches down a significant portion of the continent. Luckily Sudan was thought about, even if in a subordinate position. Today, ten countries are dependent on its water: Uganda, Tanzania, Rwanda, Burundi, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Eritrea, Kenya, Ethiopia, Sudan, South Sudan, and Egypt. The latter "claims sixty-five percent per year of the total flow of Nile waters measured at Aswan Dam"[4] and only has obligations to Sudan.

The agreement entitles Egypt to monitor the flow of the river in upstream countries. Moreover, it grants the nation the authority to construct infrastructural projects on the river without the permission of its riparian neighbors.[5] In fact, the Aswan Dam — which monitors the flow of the river — is an example of such a project. In order to build it, the government had to relocate massive temples from their original location.This physical displacement was performed in defiance of the co-mingled histories of the people who lived along the river before the erection of national borders. The various aporias of the treaty requires the constant threat of violence from Egypt's army, which is currently the tenth largest in the world.

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[4] Kieyah, Joseph. "The 1929 Nile Water Agreement: Legal and Economic Analysis." Selected works of Joseph Kieyah. works.bepress.com/joseph_kieyah/1 (accessed February 12, 2013).

[5] *ibid*.

Today, the effects of this treaty can be felt throughout the region. The riparian countries upstream of Egypt have been facing decades of poverty and famine. While attempting to resist totalizing assumptions, it is important to note the economic effects of the agreement on the lack of developmental projects on the Nile in these countries. In a circular fashion, this lack can be evidenced as part of the reason for their continued economic malaise. Even within Egypt, detrimental effects of the agreement and subsequent water management policies — particularly the Aswan Dam — can be felt in the agricultural production of the country. While the dam allowed Egypt to regulate the cycles of extreme flooding and drought that have defined the history of the river's inhabitation, the rich silt that these flood cycles produced has been almost entirely diminished.

In 1980, Anwar el-Sadat said, "If Ethiopia takes any action to block our right to the Nile waters, there will be no alternative for us but to use force. Tampering with the rights of a nation to water is tampering with its life and a decision to go to war on this score is indisputable in the international community."[6] Of course, el-Sadat conveniently places his own nation-state outside of this architecture of tampering. The international community— a term perhaps synonymous with the imperial community — likewise ignores its role in the construction of this architecture of control. Today, tensions are further escalating as water becomes of chief control to most nations, but particularly those of the southern shores of the Mediterranean.

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[6] Shinn, David. "Nile Basin Relations: Egypt, Sudan and Ethiopia." The Elliott School of International Affairs, GW. N.p., n.d. Web. 21 Feb. 2013. <http://elliott.gwu.edu/news/speeches/shin

How can I begin an ending that cannot rightfully end these thoughts? How can I erect an enclosing wall? The only move I have left is to return to Cavafy and the poem that haunts these pages.

As British imperialists signed a treaty regulating control of the Nile, farther up its waters Cavafy was writing "In the Same Space":

> *The setting of houses, cafés, the neighborhood*
> *that I've seen and walked through years on end:*
>
> *I created you while I was happy, while I was sad,*
> *with so many incidents, so many details.*
>
> *And, for me, the whole of you has been transformed into feeling.*[1]

Cavafy writes an architecture: it is not confining. He expresses a potential for moving through structures that neither denies their existence nor finds them oppressive. Such a potential can only be expressed in the poetic; it resists rearticulation into the strictures of an essay. This text is a mere gesturing at the poem's radical emancipatory possibilities. Somehow, I find they are expressed in reapparitions of the poet in the work of Durrell, of Duane Williams, of David Hockney, and of Cy Twombly. To put this another way, I have glimpsed resistance: opening any of four books arbitrarily and finding words strung together in such a way they seem to echo what I had intended to express.

Returning to Cavafy in order to begin my ending, I affirm – yes! – his poetry set me adrift. In some ways, his words lingered in my mind when I first saw the political energy of an occupation in 2011 in Tunis, as my friends and acquaintances set up an encampment in front of the parliament. Later, I thought of them as I stayed with strangers in Montreal during the student protests of the summer of 2012. This ghost, "the old poet" of Durrell's books, haunted me as I began the research that transformed into these pages. I travelled to New York,

Philadelphia, Baltimore and Richmond in search of "resistant habitations." In the process, I met many people who let me stay at their houses and others who told me their experiences fighting police over coffee in anarchist bookstores. They are absent in these pages, at least in the literal sense. But then again, Lyotard, who gave name to movements I tried to name, is also barely on these pages. He was the figure who made me think of writing as an act of occupying. He illuminated the page as an architecture. Is his relative absence an affront?

So much of what I aim to translate into words has been lost. As a witness, I have perjured. But how could I ever do justice to the ideas of others? How could I contain everything in these porous walls? How could I contain anything at all?

Somewhere I made a formulation: in order to deconstruct walls you must first be aware they are there. In order to resist, one must sense oppression. But I have found that in trying to see, I have fallen into an apophenetic abyss: a blinding blindness.

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[1] Cavafy, Constantine, and Daniel Adam Mendelsohn. *Collected poems*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2009.