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The Post-Cinematic Gesture: Redhack

O ver the last thirty years, once staunchly film history scholars such as Thomas Elsaesser, Jane Gaines, Siegfried Zielinski, André Gaudreault and Benoît Turquety (to name just a few) have abandoned history for historiography and film studies for media archaeology. Considering the heightened attention given to *kulturtechnik* (Siegert), the database as a dominant symbolic metaphor,[1] and the decentered networked tenants of the postmodern global present,[2] cinema is taking on the characteristics of new media, existing in increasingly intertextual space.[3] Thus, the term "post-cinema" has been co-opted as a viable intermediary that accounts for new media conditions, as cinema is no longer emblematic of our cultural climate. It was once presaged in 1992 that "[t]he end of the cinema truly sounds the death knell of the ultimate metaphysical adventure of *Dasein*. In the twilight of post-cinema, of which we are seeing the beginning, human quasi-existence, now stripped of any metaphysical hypostasis and deprived of any theological model, will have to seek

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VOLUME 6 ARTICLES

its proper generic consistency elsewhere."[4] Accordingly, we are no longer "moviegoing animals" who seek images of ourselves among a collective in the dark[5] but, rather, users interfacing within a network of moving images.

By locating post-cinema within the semblance of social media, we are allocated a newfound series of theoretical interventions, the most marked of which is that of media archeology vis-à-vis dialectical materialism. This is a lens through which Brian Winston has recently deftly decried Virtual Reality's "empathy machine" utopic illusionism, bolstered by Chris Milk and a slew of neurohumanities researchers, steadily maintaining that the fundamental myth of "technologies of seeing" is in disguising "their artifice, their cultural formation and their ideological import."[6] However, this approach, which illuminates the bifurcation between Max Horkheimer/Theodor Adorno and Walter Benjamin, neglects what Benjamin identified as occurring to the work of art in the age of its technological reproducibility—a shift from a technology's "cult value," associated with the unique work, to its "exhibition value," associated with the social act of viewing as part of a mass.[7]

Speaking to this divarication, Benjamin Barber, in *Strong Democracy*, foresaw new media's two-fold potential—as they are organized and networked, new media and communications technologies possess the possibility to both energize citizen information and political participation but, simultaneously, to supplement the deterioration of public debate.[8] As evinced by Mark Adrejevic's concept of *Infoglut*, this two-pronged possibility has only been exacerbated by the interlocking relationship between the advent of a "glut" of information, post-truth politics, the demise of symbolic efficiency, and a renewed focus on the role of affect and emotion as "alternative modalities for thinking about the role of communication in a post-referential era."[9]

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Manuel Castells qualifies Barber's pessimism, noting that the Internet can "be an appropriate platform for informed, interactive politics, stimulating political participation.. […] beyond the closed doors of political institutions," but that the Internet, like any technology, "is shaped by its uses and users."[10] Thus, if there exists a positive correlation between exposure to post-cinema media artifacts and political participation, then I seek to explore the revelatory political possibilities of "exhibition value" by way of a particular "post-cinema" case study: the Marxist-Leninist Turkish hacktivist group Redhack's YouTube-circulated documentary *RED!* (2013), a project that demanded—by way of the moving-image—to galvanize cyberprotest and democratize a "hacktivist commons."[11]

Hacktivist Tactical Media and Generic Immanence

My analysis of Redhack and engagement with interventionist tactical media is guided by a political materialist contractility. Granted, there are innumerable attempts to render materialism philosophically acceptable, including structural approaches (Louis Althusser and Roland Barthes), via the transcendental phenomenology of auto-affective life (James Henry), through the trans-individual as synthesis of the collective and the subject (Etienne Balibar), by the deconstruction of its "spectres" (Jacques Derrida), or through metastructure (Jacques Bidet). However, all of these theories have relied on the self-conscious transcendence of revolution and class struggle as well as terms of exchange. Political hacktivism, on the other hand, relies on computer networking to constitute its material and technological basis and, thus, requires an appropriate political philosophy.[12]

These aforementioned metaphysical, dialectical terms are not appropriate for describing our current climate. Rather than merely rescuing Marxism from metaphysics, I seek to present Redhack's hacktivist efforts as a unique example of immanent generic univocity, performing what François Laruelle terms as "being-given terrain…of the radical Real, foreclosed to theory."[13] Indeed, it is through Laruelle's "Non-Marxism" that I seek a new political film philosophy.

Categorizing Laruelle as a Marxist may, at first, appear to be inappropriate—after all, Laruelle's project is to unmoor the "fully accounted" capture of history from the "bastard sciences" of mytho-philosophical ambition, as exemplified by ethnology, linguistics, biology, Greco-Christian anthropology, psychoanalysis and even Karl Marx's "science of history."[14] For Laruelle, identification with any genealogy of the "Sciences of Man" substantiates that epistemes stem from the same archaic, metaphysical presuppositions rather than the generic. Laruelle seeks to establish a rigorous "science of man" that no longer borrows from other sciences, refuting the "purely passive and static genesis" of Marxist structuralism.[15] Nonetheless, Laruelle is a Marxist, despite what one may glean from any surface-level review; in *A Biography of Ordinary Man*, his anticapitalistic project appropriates Althusserian "determination in the last instance" so as to prohibit the necessity of "relations of exchange."[16]

Laruelle's "non-Marxism" identifies standard philosophy with capital—retaining a materialist orientation while voiding materialism of its philosophical determinations—with the aim to emancipate raw materials and practices from standard philosophy's acquisitive domination. The practice of non-Marxism "is a struggle against the postulate of self-sufficient Marxism. […] It is to be attentive to the shared and lived experience of being 'human' as an effect of the Real."[17] Laruelle seeks to emancipate Marx from Marxism and Althusser from

knowledge-effects. Laruelle's starting point is effectively Marx's own statement that he was never a "Marxist."[18] As Jonathan Fardy states, "[t]he key task of a non-Marxist aesthetics is to break with the ideology of exchange reified in standard philosophy."[19] Rather than a teleologically-oriented projected ("destroying philosophy"), non-Marxism treats philosophy, science (and art) as raw materials, or the chóra (χώρα) of metaphysical thought.[20]

Laruelle's determination-in-the-last instance (DLI), which bears a trace of Althusser's Marxism, serves as a placeholder of Laruelle's corpus: it is discursive and signifies Laruelle's conviction that, although "the Real" is not knowable in itself, it is absolutely determinant of every instance and every thought immanent to it.[21] Thus, DLI is the force and vigor of "the Real," and undergirds Laruelle's minimalist theory of causation. While the Real is causal "in the last instance" (Laruelle is, consequently, a vulgar determinist), it is also impossible to trace this "last instance" back to its source (the Real). Therefore, the Real "cannot be grasped in terms of what it is."[22] From this terrain of generic univocal immanence, it follows that all thought is a part of the immanent Real.

What, then, does this mean for a political philosophy of art (and, in our case, a politically galvanized film philosophy)? Laruelle's tactical use of Althusser's determination-in-the-last-instance (DLI) is perhaps best elaborated in his "Theorem 2. Minorities determine Authorities in the last instance, who do not determine them in return."[23] While Laruelle makes liberal use of such edicts and theorems, this is quite possibly the most important, for it preconfigures Laruelle's "Minority Principle," which requires that the "authentic minority, that is individuality, be laid bare and decide to think through itself."[24]

Gilles Deleuze appointed cinema and the arts with the responsibility to facilitate the representation of a "missing people."[25] Deleuze's affirmatory political film theory asserted that art/cinema must initiate a fold in the distribution of the sensible. However, this affirmation, or suspended meaning, has been co-opted in the intermedial age of symbolic efficiency and reappropriation *ad infinitum*. Consequently, what was once considered the positive use of common experience qua resistance (a gesture of instrumental rationality) is no longer circumscribed to the periphery of the unconscious but standard media mechanizations. In contrast, Laruelle's politico-ethical position posits that "[t]he ordinary individual experiences his reality and thinks for himself, in the radical finitude of his essence as inherent (to) himself: he is for himself an immediate given."[26] Laruelle advocates for creative and inventive autoimpression devoid interpersonal or intertextual mediation. Thus, if Laruellean aesthetics and non-Marxism insists that we must treat cinema materially (equally indebted to the on-screen moving image as imagining lenses, aperture plates, focal lengths, gelatin, transparent cellulose nitrate, acetate, and emulsion) then we must, in turn, also consider post-cinema (a digital artifact) through its networked reticulation and code-based impasse.

Post-Cinema and Profanation

This project is equally indebted to Giorgio Agamben's film philosophy qua post-cinema. With the decay of Benjaminian aura via post-cinema's reproducibility, I offer that it is critical that we conceive of Agamben's notion of cinematic "gesture" politically. I posit that by reading Agamben's political film theory through a Benjaminian lens, rather than the traditional Deleuzian

(pedagogical) fixture, we can apply it to the "post-cinema" semblance and galvanize it with new Marxist vigor. While many film theorists consider Agamben a Deleuzian film theorist, I pose that, through this Benjaminian lens, we can parse distinctive cinematic questions that Agamben exclusively pursues—in particular, cinema's potential as a repurposive counter-dispositif to combat dominant forms via critique.

This is not to suggest that parallels do not exist between Agamben and Deleuze's approaches: Deleuze's logic of representation develops an "image of thought that attempts to overcome the binary separation" between matter and spirit, mind and body (Quentin Meillassoux has termed this logic "correlationism").[27] Agamben is also prone to such transcendence. Furthermore, Agamben is unequivocally astricted to the Bergson-bound Deleuzian tradition of "untimeliness," whereby cinema extricates "the fallacious psychological distinction between image as psychic reality and movement as physical reality."[28] Furthermore, both Agamben and Deleuze are committed to a notion of "cinema-thought," as Jean-Luc Nancy terms it, or *haecceities of Oneness*—a commitment to cinema-as-immanence, or *indexing* thought, rather than mediating it via hermetic historicism.[29] However, Agamben's concept of "gesture," as a prelinguistic mode of communication, suspends the symbolic, replacing taxonomy and, therefore, offers a sublime breach: "gesture is the communication of a potential to be communicated."[30] In other words, Agamben's gesture is something of an "enigmatic signifier," insofar as it is impregnated with a primitive and unconscious meaning that can be immanently realized via reproducibility.[31]

In order to demonstrate this reproducibility's political prowess, I will turn to Redhack's intermedial documentary project, *RED!* By way of democratizing a hacktivist commons, *RED!* poses a practice that can "de-auraticize,"

or "make cinema profane," by dispelling digital protest of its cult value. While Horkhemier and Adorno decried the culture industry for exacerbating the auratic terms of mass art (a distinct, newfound aura of detachment), Benjamin neutralized such romantic concepts associated with aura. My analysis recognizes that, within this discourse, a theoretical paradox is born—"the weapon of the star," or spectacle, seeks to restore aura to a means of expression (cinema) that, as a "mass art," is contrary to it. I offer a solution to this problem—by expounding on Agamben's writing on cinema and "the profane," I suggest navigating this "cinematic paradox" via a truly "profane" cinema, or an immanent cinema of the anonymous, via a politically poised post-cinema both infinitely reproducible and, simultaneously, liquidated of the "star."[32] Rather than the standard terms of exchange, however, I borrow from Laruelle's unique mode of Marxism and the system of non-standard philosophy, born from the generic via the real (rather than the transcendental via the real). Let us now turn to our case study.

RED!

Established in 1997, Redhack is the world's oldest hacktivist group that explicitly draws from a systematized Marxist-Leninist organizational history. While infamous for inspiring Anonymous' politically-motivated efforts (such as Operation Tunisia in 2011), at home in Turkey Redhack is quietly lauded for audacious whistleblowing efforts, dispelling disinformation campaigns shepherded by President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, and illuminating the AK Party's authoritarian domestic policies. In a political zeitgeist of paranoia, blanketed by censorship and the ubiquitous potential of imprisonment for dissenters,

Redhack's critical efforts require clandestine methods. While surreptitiously communicating within the impenetrable shadows of IRC networks, Redhack has succeeded in making palpable transgressions.

Redhack breached the Ankara Police Directorate's website in February 2012, leaking documents from the Gendarmerie Intelligence Department about the Turkish state's foreknowledge regarding the 2013 Reyhanli car bombings. The same year, Redhack also hacked the Turkish Power Distribution System to delete over $650,000 of outstanding debt. As expounded by Bülay Doğan in "Contextualizing Hacktivism: The Criminalization of Redhack," Turkish journalists, academics, and authors publish under a nation-wide moratorium that censures discussing or mentioning Redhack in publications, propelling Redhack into further marginalization.[33] This is exemplified by the recent incarceration of six dissenting journalists who reported on Redhack's leaked emails in 2016, whereby the accused were charged by the Turkish government with being members of a "terrorist organization" and "committing a crime in the name of the organization."[34] As Doğan shows, the discourse of the State has fabricated and bolstered a "folk devil" falsehood in characterizing Redhack while imbricating journalists or sympathetic parties under the rhetoric of terrorism.

In 2012, the composer Suavi wrote a march for Redhack, quickly published on the Redhack YouTube channel. This was shortly followed by the publication of the Redhack Documentary *RED!* (2013), which was translated into English and circulated online, lauded by artists, politicians and academics.[35] The documentary voiced first-hand testimonials and articulated Redhack's political aims and activities—shrouding their identities, these on-screen Redhack members' shared rhetoric underscored the development of a "hacktivist commons," which they would

use the moving image to distribute. This "commons"—an open source hacktivist archive—sought to universalize hacktivism by disseminating the hacker's most prized coding tools. The documentary quickly spread, reposted on various YouTube channels. Unraveling the enveloping vectors of nation-state borderlines, Redhack reterritorialized the ethos of "hacktivist-subjectivity," while retaining an anonymous guise via what we might broadly term "hacktivist aesthetics."

Today's internet aesthetics undoubtedly are far from those of *RED!*, which features rather trite editing styles: testimonials and a narrator recounting the history of the hacktivist group while generic and upbeat electronica mixed with hip-hop swell in the background. The 1999 internet-distributed documentary about the Cult of the Dead Cow, *Disinformation*, already had similarly featured nameless hackers, some of them masked, earnestly speaking about exposing corporate weaknesses and secrets for the sake of the public interest. Later hacktivist videos also feature masks and rhetoric regarding the leaking and sharing of secrets and fighting for public good, common freedom, ending private property restrictions; some of these would eventually become clichés in the post-2011 Anonymous videos. The aesthetic qualities of *RED!*, for those of us who saw the Anonymous videos of the mid-to-late aughts (particularly those which coincided with the Occupy movement) will notice much shared in the way of editing and stylization.

What perhaps sets all of these documentaries in contrast to the era of internet culture bedaubed in irony-laden memes injected with a spinal support of sincerity is that the monologues do not separate politics from emotive appeals; the on-screen hackers exude the sensibilities of emotional investment, many of them recounting the great loss they have suffered. These include long and uncertain prison sentences, job losses, and being estranged from

family members. The line between performance and sincerity become obfuscated, while post-cinema recalls a Benjaminian "*Trauerspiel*" (literally "mourning play") of authenticity that corresponds not to an archetypal model (or history) but, instead, to the conditions in which history reappears and the "destiny towards which it is directed," emphasizing the act of discovering that which is unrecognizable.[36] Therefore, post-cinema, as a digitally reticulated media artifact, is relocated beyond material bounds, whereby "origin is not, therefore, discovered by the examination of the actual findings, but it is related to their history and their subsequent development."[37]

Thus, as Francesco Casetti reminds us, the post-cinema artifact works as a phenomenological experience. The hacker's sensibilities remind us of this affect-laden appeal, only heightened and underscored by those problems of our day; at the time that this article is being written (2019-2020), Julian Assange will likely be extradited to the United States and serve a life sentence in a Federal Supermax prison in Florence, Colorado for his journalist efforts and exposure of war crimes. These post-cinema appeals take that which is original, political and authentic and present them as a direct appeal to an unknown and unidentifiable viewer, presuming that this viewer can be prodded to occupy the role of the viewer, a hacker-in-the-making.

The Reticulated Mask

Unlike *Citizenfour* (2014) and Edward Snowden, *The Hacker Wars* (2014) and Barrett Brown, or *The Internet's Own Boy* (2014) and Aaron Swartz, with *RED!* there is no cult of the "star," no single celebrated genius. Rather, a group of hackers are untangled from their identity, each of them masked. In "For an Ethics of Cinema," Agamben's

critique of cinematic personhood discerns the genealogical development towards the filmic "divo" by bifurcating its terms of "individualized emergence" from the persona, tied to the "mask," or the masked theatrical actor.[38] In recounting the *commedia dell'arte* tradition of "Harlequin, Punchinello, Pantalone, and Beltrame," Agamben details encounters whereby the mask no longer provides a "vehicle of a higher realm" but, via anonymity and immanence, allots a contamination between real life and the theatrical scene.[39] In fact, in popular culture the Harlequin is all but the mischief motif par excellence— consider Anonymous' Guy Fawkes mask and its correlation with the gesticulating, pantomime-clown. In fact we see can locate such an instance of historical synthesis (between the Harlequin and the political actor) in the nineteenth century Christmas production of "Harlequin and Guy Fawkes, or, the 5th of November: a Comic Pantomime."[40]

Perhaps we ought to give credence to various hacktivist groups' separate histories in order to prefigure their *modus operandi*. Anonymous drew from jocular *4chan* beginnings, culling the puckish ethos of what Gabriella Coleman dubs "lulz."[41] This is evident in Anonymous' puerile 2006 "Habbo Hotel Raid" or the group's 2008 "Project Chanology" hacks against The Church of Scientology. Redhack, on the other hand, has a markedly Marxist-Leninist history, with its history carved in May Day protests. Consequently, Redhack's anonymizing mask is appropriately a simple red scarf stamped with an axe and sickle.

Agamben describes the mask's role as that "which unites the real name with that of the mask," or a modular coupling between the actor and the act*ed*.[42] *RED!,* in its de-celebritized intermedial circulation, poses a way to navigate an analogous relation where "twoness is dissolved or deterritorialized into a continuous or generic

identity."[43] The mask, lifted from the virtual plane of performance (masquerade, performance, shrouded identity) found its political appropriation in Turkey during the 2013 May Day protests and Gezi Park riots, where crimson scarf-donned marchers demonstrated. By universalizing the shrouded face of the "common hacktivist," masked in the anonymizing red scarf, Redhack visually proclaimed the masked face of Agamben's "generic humanity," sans-identity and, thus, not codifiable by the State (see Figure 1).[44]

Figure 1: A Scene from the Documentary, *RED!*

Source: (*RED!*, 2013).

Through this uniquely inter-mechanical process of reproduction and repetition, we see the actualization of Benjamin's "Author as Producer" (1934), whereby the intellectual merges with the mode of production, directly fused with mankind and, in the most general sense, de-individuated.[45] This is how I would like to bridge *generic being* with what the Maoist Gilles Grelet terms "proletarian gnosis."[46] A swarming mass, moving together, a mechanical force unspooling.

RED!, as a YouTube-networked (social) media object, runs contrary to much of the distribution channels common to both cinema and Marxism. As film scholar Nico Baumbach notes, Agamben explicitly argues that cinema may no longer be "emblematic of our situation"[47] and the same can perhaps be said for Marxist-Leninist and Maoist worker publications. Today, publications like *Jacobin* rely upon the logic of post-cinema for their popularization. As Benjamin identified, a seminal shift regarding the work of art in the age of technological reproducibility includes a transfiguration from cult value to exhibition value, whereby the latter is associated with the social act of mass viewership.

If, as Alexander Galloway proposes in *Laruelle: Against the Digital*, we consider the digital/"digital thinking" as the constitution of the binarisms of being and other (or self and the world), then the digital is the capacity to make distinctions between essence and instance ("the one dividing in two"). The universal mask, subject-bereft, constitutes "the two" integrating as "one," or an analog relation. By democratizing the tools of hacktivism via a "hacktivist commons," Redhack's documentary, *RED!*, offers the new political possibility of what I designate as the "networked mask." This "networked mask," no longer rarefied by the terms of the theatrical stage, national borders, or what Alain Badiou deems the "impure" stasis of the cinema industry, produces a relation of *nondistinction*—an integration between the moving image and the streets of protest (see Figure 2).[48]

Figure 2: Gezi Park Protests

"Those who cannot be disciplined with advice should be scolded, those who cannot be disciplined with scolding deserve Redhack." Translation by Bülay Doğan.

Source: Bülay Doğan, "Contextualizing Hacktivism: The Criminalization of Redhack," *CARGC Papers* 10 (2019), 12.

Walter Benjamin's 1970 text, "Author as Producer," uncovers a path that leads from Plato's dialogues to epic theatre, between essence and instance. In his disquisitions on Bertolt Brecht, Benjamin seeks to rescue the artist in Plato, whom Plato both feared and admonished, while constricting the philosopher's ideal Forms with materialist aesthetics. However, rather than that Brechtian *Verfremdungseffekt* ("distancing effect"), an aesthetic operation of theatrical spectatorship that produces real immediacy through estrangement from spectacle, the theatrical mask is without differentiation or identification—it is real "in itself" and, thereby, precedes scission, separation, or rupture. It is, in fact the aesthetics of politics that opposes the equation of spectacle and power, which Benjamin noted as the affective dimension of fascism.[49] Donning the mask irradiates a Laurellean irreflective immanence, or a "simple identity without

identification," for it prevents the Kantian transcendental system of the universal and scattered multiplicity, which Deleuze tried to tie together in pairing immanence with difference.[50]

A Laruellean Post-Cinema New Media Semblance

For Laruelle, the real and transcendence is pure contradiction: Kantian metaphysics bifurcates— the analytic a priori is the realm of transcendentals and the synthetic a posteriori the realm of the real, the empirical. Laruellean immanence, unlike Deleuze's, superimposes the analytic a priori as the real. As Galloway notes in *A Network is a Network*, this is why a Laruellean approach to media theory must examine the in-structure materially, for it withdraws "rather definitively from the legacy of transcendental philosophy" and "shows a way to augment the classic 'historical' form of materialism (Marx qua Marx) with a rigorously synchronic form of materialism (Laruelle's generic one)."[51] Rather than transcendental philosophy's interest in as-structure, the Laruellean question—of what lies in networks—is most appropriate to post-cinema politics. Instead of what Marx termed the "form-of-appearance," or relational thinking, Laruelle examines univocity via the "in-One." Thus, it is code/computational language and the enacted DDOS attack that become privileged as the Real when we consider Redhack's interest in post-cinema as a vehicle with which to redistribute the commons.

Thus, whereas Mladen Dolar points to theater's *coup de force* as separating the spirit from the body—lifting the curtain and allowing the voice to obtain a surplus-meaning originally disjunct in everyday life—the theatrical mask, imagistically circulated in a political *bal masqué*,

superimposes identity or "clones the One," to borrow Laruelle's conception.[52] Devoid of "aura," the politically-networked mask of immanence becomes Agamben's notion of pure profanity. *RED!*, as both a networked "post-cinema" media-object and as "non-cinematic" film, provides a viable way to navigate Agamben's aforementioned "cinematic paradox" by transfiguring the documentary mode and enacting something a-cinematic: displacing "divo" while democratically circulating the mask, melding the traditionally riven bifurcation of the virtual vector (of "communication and transport") while posing a free alliance between the "technical or cultural." Laruelle's utopian project conjoins the "objective" with "subjective."

The reproduction of the subject and its communalizing factor is one of the ways that the moving image succeeds as a political device. This is one such strategy to answer Badiou's 1998 query in *Cahiers du Cinema*: "What does cinema think that nothing but it can think?" without appropriating Christian Metz and Jean-Louis Baudry's "grand theories" of 1970's film studies, Althusserian "knowledge effects," or reifying Jean-Luc Comolli and Paul Narboni's claim that "every film is political." Film theorists like Noël Carroll, David Bordwell, Kristin Thompson and Jesse Prinz have long realized that cinema is an emotional animal, and that it works by way of producing discrepant affects, allowing for sympathy with "the devil" just as much as for those most marginalized.[53] This is precisely why foreign films can achieve great success beyond their country of origin, as cinema makes evident that cultural differences are not necessarily a complete barrier to comprehension, regardless of changing cultural practices. That is, cinema (particularly post-cinema) offers the possibility of an emotive overlap, which exists to serve as an entry point, where we can recognize other perspectives and ourselves in other perspectives. Cognitive Marxist cinema studies is not perhaps terribly

prevalent in the academy but foreign film-goers will recognize that cinema's expressive translucency exacts the Marxian message of commonality at an intuitive level. That is, films (which includes both documentary films and fiction films) serve as powerful tools for learning about how members of other societies and culture think and act, bridging how we perceive our own socioeconomic conditions, for how we perceive depends heavily on knowledge and experience; as Prinz remarks, "there is no innocent eye," for our techniques of perception are culturally attenuated through knowledge and experience.[54] Jacques Aumont, Raymond Bellour, and Casetti's positions on cinema seem to be in relative agreement that the experience of a film is concentrated and constituted in temporal restraints (despite Casetti being more liberal than most when it comes to what counts as a "cinema experience"). Thomas Elsaesser's post-classical position and theory of "cinema as thought experiment" redefines cinema in relation to the generative feedback of game-spaces and the cultural conditions that frame postmodernity. Perhaps, via specific case studies, we can evaluate post-cinema in terms of how post-cinema burgeons, blossoms, and superimposes the flat and motile filmic experience with the mobile and networked exigence of political protest, using emotion registration and purposing the moving image for the sake of international solidarity.

Control Society Today

> It's true that, even before control societies are fully in place, forms of delinquency or resistance (two different things) are also appearing. Computer piracy and viruses, for example, will replace strikes and what the nineteenth century called 'sabotage.' [...] You ask whether control or communication societies will lead to forms of resistance that might reopen the way for a communism. [...] The key thing may be to create

> vacuoles of noncommunication, circuit breakers, so we can elude control.[55]

As Deleuze notes in his 1990 article, "Postscript on Societies of Control," it would appear that Michel Foucault was aware of a coming shift in the way biopower operates and, retrospectively, we can see this in the trajectory of *Discipline and Punish* (1975). In the very beginning of Foucault's text, we are introduced to Robert-François Damiens (also professedly known as "Damiens the Regicide") at his execution for parricide during some unspecified interval in the late 1600s. Foucault guides us with great detail through a period characterized by the abrupt abandonment of judicial violence as a public ritualized event and its removal/relocation to invisible sites.[56]

These invisible sites have, in an act of coincidental linguistic slippage, become epitomized by the "sites of the web," where contemporary theorists have located the "digital panopticon." Reliant on economies of data, digital industries function by tracking and capturing the activity of web users—for pervasive mobile media technologies, tracking and self-tracking, in particular, produces tacit knowledge that is rendered usable. Such information, which mediates processes and decisions, can be sourced from "direct process information," (also called "sematectonic information") which emerges in and alongside the activity, as opposed to indirect or marker-based information.[57] While interpersonal information can be exchanged, transpersonal coordination is the product of mediation—thus a new socio-economic stasis of "decentralized planning" has arisen, in which the "telecommunication system" is not created via price signals, but instead by way of other forms of communication such as networked computers.[58]

For occupants of this "digital panopticon," who engage with one another ever more intensively via virtual networks and social media, total control comes about not through spatial communicative isolation but through networking and hypercommunication. The "swarm" is a movement organized not only as a network, but also one that possesses features radically distinct from those of the "crowd" or "mob," which the multiplicitous many classically assumed. The digital "swarm" contains no soul or spirit, for the "soul gathers and unites."[59] Antithetically, the "swarm" is comprised of what Deleuze termed "dividuals," or isolated individuals rendered as data-entry points. Unlike the mob, the "swarm" does not proclaim "we" but, instead, is comprised of a manifold abundance of "I's."

Amending Deleuze's "control society," where individuals are rendered *dividuals*, or entry-points for datafication, Bernard Stiegler terms "societies of hyper-control," transfixed as aggregations of individuals who are increasingly automatically disindividuated (disintegrated).[60] By way of Deleuze and Peter Sloterdijk, Stiegler fills in Foucault's shortcoming, as Foucault's *Madness and Civilization* occludes the historical fact of "*marketing as the organization of innovating by disinhibition, which becomes hegemonic.*"[61] As Deleuze coupled the fundamental advent of control societies with marketing and the exploitation of affects via calculability, Stiegler appropriately reshapes biopower so that it is epochally fit for the twentieth century, with probability calculation pooling and amortizing protentions. Thus, in Stiegler's model, biopower now presupposes psychopower, which is invested in the immaterial or psychological realm.

As Sloterdijk notes in *In the World Interior of Capital*, "Columbus was an agent of a pan-European willingness to embrace delusion—though it was psychotechnically

perfected by the USA in the twentieth century (and re-imported to Europe through the consultancy industry)."[62] Through Sloterdijk, Stiegler allows us to see the genesis of what Friedrich Kittler called "psychotechnologies" (e.g. games, computers, SMS, and other such factors of the culture industry) of psychopower, which seep through consumerist capitalism and deluge hyper-control society. According to Kittler, psychotechnologies can become models of the soul, as they "relay psychology and media technology under the pretext that each psychic apparatus is also a technological one, and vice- versa."[63] In cognitive capitalism, the reshaped and psychotechnologized manifestation of psychopower is *neuro*power, which works to "produce changes in the material logics of the brain by affecting the brain's neurons and synapses."[64] Tracing Sloterdijk's undertaking of the history of disinhibition (from colonialism to neoliberal globalization), we can see how the "consultancy industry" along with the data economy, now constitutes a totality of the "activity culture" of modernity, seeping into every aspect of everyday life, from dreaming to cinema spectatorship. This is the gesture of contemporary capitalism, or the gesture of noise.

Whereas communication is an orally-directed game, played between two interlocutors, the "swarm" produces the verbal cacography of *noise* in a contrapuntal matrix that, to the naked eye, is indeterminate in number. While communication takes its subject within the hermeneutic other, *noise's* subject is "the one who makes the noise [...] the parasited one."[65] Although the "lone subject" provides a model of immanence (and communication signals Hermeneutics), it is the model of the Furies that accompanies *noise*, given its hallmark for volatility. The noise of the "swarm" signals noncompliance—an "abdication of both presence and difference."[66] Increasingly cacophonous, the interlocution of noise is necessarily relegated to the non-human entity: the terrain

of Big Data. This is, in turn, exactly what Redhack's post-cinema project attempts to combat.

It is critical that we discern the mass of the "swarm" from Marshall McLuhan's "mass man: of *Homo electronicus*, the previous incarnation of the "electronic citizen [...] whose private identity has been psychically erased."[67] Today, in contrast, the networked *Homo digitalis* is "anything but 'nobody.'"[68] Despite the fact that he takes the stage anonymously, the "mass man" of the contemporaneous *Homo digitalis* is tracked and surveilled. To the human observer, he is part of a grouped relay of digital individuals ("dividuals") found in the ludic, nonbinding carnivalesque space of noise. Empire, however, can decipher this noise for information. While "Empire is a mere apparatus of capture that lives only off the vitality of the multitude," today, (hyper)-control society's apparatus of choice is meta-data collection by way of algorithmic parsing.[69]

The dominating behavioral mode for the trans-individuated "swarm" is "autoexploitation," as control society reaches its completion when its inhabitants communicate out of some inner need rather than due to external constraints. As exemplified by the networked nature of the Continental Direct Action Network (DAN) in North America, or the Movement for Global Resistance (MRG) in Catalonia, the political effects of the external constraints extend far beyond the bounds of the virtual, as militant protest becomes a forum for symbolic exchange. In such instances, the horizontal, directly democratic process through which direct actions are organized—which include decentralized coordination among "autonomous affinity groups" and the prevailing "diversity of tactics" ethic among many activists—embodies the broader cultural logic of networking, itself.[70] However, when fear accompanies rescinding the performance of one's private and intimate life online, the

urge to "put oneself on display, without shame [...] occurs when freedom and control prove indistinguishable."[71] Thus, the delineation between economically-motivated snooping for data and data's implementation for intelligence purposes becomes further and further blurred.

In kind, the "network effect" is propelled by "the self-production of traces, user profiling and real-time supercomputing," producing what Thomas Berns and Antoinette Rouvroy have termed "algorithmic governmentality," whereby multiple new automatic systems model a "social reality" built on statistical aggregation, analysis, and correlation afforded by Big Data.[72] As Jonathan Crary shows, the algorithmic governmentality of "24/7 capitalism" leads to what Freud called "artificial crowds."[73] The digital grammatization of "psychopower" has replaced Foucault's "biopower," as the digital panopticon's power is invested in the psychological or immaterial realm, transcending the physical/spatial bounds of the church or army (where Freud ascribed "group psychology").

Fredrich Kittler used the term *psychophysics* to describe the new technological media stored in the "discourse network of 1900" based on randomness and combinatorics. Whereas Kittler's "1800 kingdom of sense" corresponded to Foucault's sovereign societies and biopolitics, Kittler's "1900 kingdom of pattern," based on images and algorithms, corresponds to Deleuze's control society, though Kittler stalks this development's proleptical conception.[74] Kittler chooses the epochal period of 1900 specifically because of the development of the phonograph and typewriter, where the ability to record sense-data technologically shifted—"for the first time in history, writing ceased to be synonymous with the serial storage of data [...] the real entered into competition with the symbolic."[75] However, Kittler's description omits that this transformation is not only the conversion of

matter into code, or the passage from the qualitative to the quantitative, but also a progression from the non-aesthetic to the aesthetic. This transition, from nonmedia to media, both politicizes life while converting life into an aesthetic object.[76] Thus, post-cinema is a *pharmakon*, both death (sublimation) and cure (political).

At the end of *Discipline and Punish*, power is described as it is exercised in the 20th century, far more economically and efficiently, moving toward self-disciplining behaviors. However, as Deleuze's prescient remark to Antonio Negri in "Control and Becoming" reminds us, sites of control can also function as sites of resistance, or as *pharmakon*—as both poison and remedy.[77] Thus, while Foucault describes the prison as the locus for biopower, prison protest was also once the epitomal symbolic site for structural change —"it is the prisons themselves that put up a resistance."[78] As Deleuze remarks "when power becomes bio-power resistance becomes the power of life, a vital power that cannot be confined within species, environment or the paths of a particular diagram."[79] Concomitant to virtualization and digitization, control is increasingly diffracted and bifurcated, with technics serving the exteriorization of "the reign of proletarianization," while also allotting for the possibility of transindividuation (or "short-circuiting disruption").[80]

In turn, new media objects now occupy this double-edged position for resistance. However, granted the contemporaneous decline of symbolic efficiency in a "post-deferential" internet information-age brimming with "information glut," the erosion of the boundary between "the Real" and the virtual, data-mining sociality, sentiment analysis, and the post-9/11 generalization of "total surveillance," skepticism has besmirched the once-lauded utopic, radical potential for an internet based by openness and access.[81]

In *Protocol: How Control Exists After Decentralization*, Galloway asks "is Life Resistance a way of engaging with distributed forms of protocological management?"[82] Redhack's hacktivism responds with a resounding, booming "affirmative." This "affirmative" response may, at surface value, seem redolent of some mis-placed idealism given the semblance we have broadly outlined: the influx of data-mining and predictive analytics privileges automatic information processing, thereby displacing explanation with correlation. Sentiment analysis purports to translate emotional response and individual opinions into machine readable data that can be mined. Prediction markets unfalteringly replace credentialed expertise with aggregate demand and calls this wisdom. Body language analysis, similarly, "privileges immediate bodily reactions over the vagaries of narrative content." Neuromarketing promises to "bypass the potentially misleading level of conscious discourse."[83] Furthermore, post-cinema is no longer the social stasis where strangers gathered in a dark room for a communal ritualistic experience, a remedy for post-war disparity.[84]

However, hacktivism takes the target of resistance as this vast language of techno-political organization that we call "protocol," or that which "implements the interactions between networked nodes in all their minute detail."[85] This is what Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri termed "being-against," or what Deleuze ascribed those "circuit breakers" and "vacuoles of noncommunication" that might "reopen the way for a new communism" and "elude control."[86] Post-cinema, as a politically redistributed and reticulated instrument of the commons, inscribes the potential of human life to counter forces of exploitation by appropriating those forces in question.

Conclusion

Stiegler's theoretical departure from Paul Virilio's position in *Pure War* is at a fundamental level between the *différance* that is writing and the "real time of what were then called 'new technologies,' computing and interactivity, which were then emerging in all areas of everyday life."[87] Whereas Virilio termed the interactive screen and, by extension, networked technology as inherently poised against humanity, given its exponentially destructive power and speed, Stiegler regards this as a superficial position.[88] I argue that it is a superficial position, because it neglects what cinema can do that for emotion registration via perceptual and automatic recognition; this is why cinema can handle this task better than, for instance, literature. Redhack, given their universalist aims, directed hacktivism towards the commons and social utility, directing critique towards those hegemonic market players (who administrate absolute control of over decentralized networks) who have sought to regulate, domineer, and superintend while facilitating messaging via on-screen interviews.

Jennifer Gabrys, in her environmentally-minded book *Digital Rubbish*, attributes networked electronic circuits with recyclable possibility, describing engineering and hacking as two examples of viable strategies for not only "unpicking the assumed functionality of these [electronic] devices but also for extending the practices of reuse and recycling beyond the study material towards new technological developments."[89] Information technology and environmental problems are inextricably interwoven, and a properly (non)-Marxist hacktivism must direct its attention towards the environmental terrain of Big Data (the a priori stasis of the Real), including how environmental data contributes to the remaking of objects of study and complicates the politics of its designation.

Similarly, Kim Fortun examines the scalar dimension of bioinformatics—specular sequencing technologies that comprehensively inventory abundance—and how they mediate political transitions. Information technologies become drivers of change at multiple scales as they smoothen information production, flow, and processing.[90] Informationalism is the substratum of control society, which serves as Big Data's ecological obverse. Routing desire and shaping subjectivity informationalism has become the ludic analog to the industrialism that was at the heart of Marx's analysis of nineteenth-century capital.[91] The production of knowledge via bioinformatics is not solely determined by scientific experimentation but made environmental insofar as it is crucially dependent on how environmental-risk information is made public; thus, the bioinformatic technological topology is both ecological and technical. Security becomes the locus in question as informatics leads to the creation of discursive gaps within environmentalism that provides for the potential of possibly revolutionary political action.[92] These topologies are interiorized by the corporate technics and empirical measurement devices concerning pharmaceutical marketing and scientific expertise. Leaky security becomes the experimental social bearing that only an unbridled flattening of epistemophilia, or diffracted philia (φιλία), will stimulate.

Post-cinema occupies a uniquely anticipative and epokohal pharmacological perspective, of turning poison into remedy through its widespread exosomatization. Redhack's post-cinema hacktivist project can usher a phase shift (*déphasage*) that indexes non-inhumanity's noetic realization, or the condition that gives rise to a new epoch of individuation. This is what Stiegler lauds as the profound and transcendent possibility dormant in the commons, or the second stage of "doubly epokhal redoubling" that is "transindividuation."[93] This exosomatization is a kind of realization that "artificializes

reality, that is, transforms it, as Marx and Engels will say" while, simultaneously, it "de-realizes it, and [...] thereby de-realizes those who accomplish this derealization: it 'disrupts reality.'"[94]

Considering Gabrys and Fortun's suggestion regarding the bioinformational complement to Big Data, we can trace the morphological and chronobiological topology involved when parsing psychotechnologies. Naturally, we must qualify the variegated nature of hacktivism, and Turkish hacker groups specifically, to specify that the kind of exosomatization I have detailed is most undoubtedly Janus-faced. Many nationalistic pro-government hacktivist groups exist in Turkey (and worldwide)—in fact, "patriotic hackers" who sympathize with uncurbed authoritarian control and state internet filtering laws comprise the largest hacker group in Turkey. The pro-Erdoğan hacking group "Aslan Neferler Tim" (ANT), known in English as "Lion Soldiers Team," is not only the largest hacker conglomerate in Turkey but also engrosses operatives ranging as far away as Kentucky. However, what distinguishes Redhack's unique *modus operandi* is that the group does not possess a general affinity with even leftist politics in Turkey; this kind of diffracted and dislodged "cult of divo," reified in Redhack's swathing crimson shawl. This is, indeed, the *qualunque* (or "whatever") of the generic subject, which Agamben describes as that which "belongs to common nature [...] the particular and the generic become indifferent."[95]

Castells underscores the importance of drawing these distinctions, qualifying the kind of dangerous idealist hacktivist ethos that ultimately reinvigorates Friedrich Hayekian ultra-libertarianism; as Stiegler notes, glorified hacking as "piracy" advocates for total disinhibition —"realizing the dreams of Hakim Bey at the very moment that they are actually serving the cause of Hayek"—with hackers preferring to see themselves as blustering and

wanton Robin Hoods, rather than revolutionaries concerned with the commons economy.[96] Castells also admonishes a "powerful myth, often put forward by hacker icons themselves" where "cooperation, freedom, and the gift culture are able to develop only under the conditions of the new, immaterial production system that takes place in a post-scarcity society."[97] Castells goes on to describe how hacktivism, in situations of extreme poverty (where creative individuals have no access to resources), successfully invents methodological solutions that cannot be reduced to the material conditions of living. Redhack's project is wary of this—in the documentary *RED!*, the cloaked Redhack activists who appear onscreen not only advocate for an online "hacktivist commons" (a meaningful possibility only for those with access to computers and software), but also tout physical solidarity in May Day and Gezi Park protests. Virtual topologies and the terrain of the Real is not circumscribed to what lies behind glass screens—after all, these screens' refulgent projectile lumens bleed beyond their exoskeletal cover, conceding to as much.

Thus, in addition to drawing on the common cultural convergence between human and machine, hacker subcultures like Redhack are built on political principles as well as personal revolt. Never before in history have immaterial and informatic assets been intertwined so closely with capital. Whereas, about a century ago, capital had a monopoly on the physical materiality of industrial production, it now has a monopoly on the immaterial sphere of informatic commerce.[98] In *The Cybernetic Hypothesis*, the French anarchist collective Tiqqun described the conversion of human relations into an ecology of data points that can be tweaked and controlled but remains self-stabilizing.[99] Tiqqun's hypothesis refers to a specific epistemological regime in which systems and networks combine both human and nonhuman agency vis-à-vis mutual communication,

dominating the production and regulation of social and technical life. Etymologically identifying cybernetics with the Greek term *kubernèsis* (the art of "piloting," "navigation," or "steering"), Tiqqun likens cybernetics to control society's petrol. Ever-militant, Tiqqun claims "we want to disrupt the piloting of this ship, to take what detritus is usable and leave the rest to sink in the rising oceans," and provides a strategy: block the circuits (offline and online).[100] Tiqqun cites the 2011 shutdown of the Port of Oakland and of ports up and down the west coast, the *piqueteros* workers movement in Argentina, the sabotage of French train lines, the Occupy movement, and the indigenous-led railway blockades of Idle No More.

An inversion of Virilio's "Total War," Tiqqun's position weaponizes new media objects, networks, and the flux of flow. Unfortunately, Tiqqun's programmatic calls have achieved very little. Perhaps Redhack and post-cinema manifestos like *RED!*, even if not necessarily transmogrifying each viewer into a budding hacktivist, themselves, realize something biocultural via emotion information. The role of emotion in cinema has been well understood by the cognitivists but post-cinema studies has, unfortunately, not yet found its cognitivist-Marxist phase. Redhack's democratization of hacktivism and the group's operational adoption of post-cinema illustrates how we can floodlight the information that is suppressed and collectively inch towards finding ourselves in the other. This is, undoubtedly, what has made foreign films emotionally arresting, as they invite us to find ourselves in faraway cultures, empathizing with characters raised differently from ourselves at best and, even at the most minimal level, recognizing the concerns that motivate them. The masked hacktivists of *RED!* make this commonality rather clear and, despite the fact that it does not flatten differences (foreign political scenarios and foreign cultural cues will never be fully tangible to someone approaching the matter from an entirely distinct

vantage point) the didactic nature of post-cinema can serve the point of solidarity.

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