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## **Virtuality and Resistance: Situating the Manifesto Between Command and Political Metamorphosis**

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*This article surveys and identifies contemporary theories of the manifesto genre's use and place in radical politics. Following the work of Max Horkheimer, Theodor Adorno, Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, this article argues that the manifesto comes to be thought as a mode of spatial and temporal reconfiguration focused in the present, rather than as a program prophesying or determining the future of resistance. Indicative of a metamorphosis in the interplay between state power, capitalist sovereignty and those who resist it, this article's primary claim is that the manifesto is not doomed to obsolescence in the face of new revolutionary forms, but comes to function as a virtual topography of resistance. In our contemporary moment the manifesto comes to be theorized and comes to function as a site where multiple spaces and times of resistance are mobilized against state power and capitalist sovereignty while its tactical imperatives come to be articulated absent of a programmatic determination of their use.*

What I explore in this paper is the relationship shared between space, temporality, and virtuality as it comes to bear on a particular genre of revolutionary expression: the manifesto. My argument is in opposition to thinkers like Naomi Klein who have asserted the virtual power of the internet and social media to be the end of the manifesto genre; a claim that in our contemporary moment follows a line of argument in which the obsolescence of the manifesto is thought to be a result of extant revolutionary potential in virtual outlets like Twitter or Facebook<sup>1</sup>. Here, I argue in favor of a metamorphosis where the

genre is concerned and where revolutionary expression is evolving. I am interested in thinking a politics of the manifesto that exceeds its own instrumentality. Indeed, I think the manifesto is not only indicative of an evolution in radical politics, but a primary site of its reconfiguration. Consequently, the manifesto is treated here as a provocation toward thinking the shape and character of a fundamental shift in the operation and organization of radical politics.

Contemporary scholarship on the manifesto spans both disciplinary and political spectrums; its history and use has been documented and analyzed in literary, art historical, and philosophical fields, and its potential for future political organization has been theorized in both leftist and conservative heritages. But alongside the widespread use of new media in recent popular movements against state power and capitalist sovereignty, the manifesto's place in revolutionary organization and action takes on a new role. Here, I argue that the radical potential of the manifesto is actively theorized in our contemporary moment through its virtual capacities—specifically, as a mode of spatio-temporal reconfiguration focused in the present, rather than as a program prophesying or determining the future of resistance. To make a claim to the manifesto's so-called virtual characteristics and capacities is to ground my argument in a speculative mode of inquiry. It means reviewing, surveying, and developing a critical potential inherent to the genre, but one that is perhaps not immediately identifiable. To this end, I offer theoretical variations on the genre itself and look to a series of manifestos that challenge its generic determination.

The virtual is deployed here in a Deleuzian sense—I am intent on considering the manifesto's extant potential or inherent power for rethinking political possibility. What this focus demands is thus a means of parsing out the relation between political writing and action, or, the impact of manifesto's generic determinations in political discourse. Indeed, this is precisely the problematic through which theorizing the manifesto's virtual capacities appears. Therefore, the trajectory of this paper presents two, interrelated problems at its outset. First, what specifically is the manifesto's relation to political action? Second, on what basis can the genre be ascribed virtual capacity or potential? In its most traditional theorizations, the manifesto is a form of political writing that calls forth a subject of resistance and provides a path for its realization. The genre is, in the very circumstances of its production, a mode of political articulation and orientation. Virtuality, or what I am calling the manifesto's virtual capacities, refers specifically to the avenues of potential that undergird its political orientation and articulation. In this sense, the politics of the genre are not a question of left or right, but posed as processes of reinventing and re-framing our present spatio-temporal distributions, and even further, the content of our subjective determinations.

In a discussion of Vladimir Lenin's 'On Slogans', Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari explore this kind of inherent potential explicitly, claiming that political writing and action share a relation that is at once grounded in the real, but also prefigurative of our individual and collective relations. Deleuze and Guattari make this link explicit in *A Thousand Plateaus* in the connection they draw between 'order-words', or 'the relation of every word or every statement to implicit presuppositions, in other words, to speech acts that are, and can only be, accomplished in the statement,' and incorporeal transformations, or, the speculative, transformational attributes that order-words express (Deleuze & Guattari 1987, p. 79). So the relation between political writing and action can be thought here as the potential for what is immanent to language to manifest through, but also outside of or beyond, the conditions of its enunciation. 'On Slogans' is a particularly pointed example of this process because it enacts the very methods and procedures that are attributed to the manifesto while at the same time troubling its modes of articulation. Here, Deleuze and Guattari explain that the inherent power of Lenin's 'On Slogans' is manifested in the conditions whereby it 'constituted an incorporeal transformation that extracted from the masses a proletarian class as an assemblage of enunciation *before* the conditions were present for the proletariat to exist as a body' (Deleuze & Guattari 1987, p. 83). It is the text, then, that calls forth and establishes the material conditions for the proletariat to appear as a collective assemblage prior to its formation. The incorporeal transformation that Deleuze and Guattari name in this example is not simply the formation of a political subject from the masses, it names an instance in which the virtual or inherent power of a text effectuates something real.

The import of this paper rests on questioning by what means the manifesto distributes this kind of virtual conversion—what spatio-temporalizations does it enact and what incorporeal transformations might be attributed to the genre itself? By way of a brief and somewhat simplified characterization of the genre, then, my argument stands in opposition to, or beyond, two primary attributes thought to be characteristic of the genre. In the course of this paper, I propose to consider the function of the manifesto against an *ought* or intent to command revolutionary struggle that would name its future and provide the political program to manifest it. Relatedly, I move to problematize the bi-partisan, 'us' vs. 'them,' 'friend vs. enemy' relation that is so often asserted where the manifesto names a revolutionary *telos*. For it is precisely a question of *how* the manifesto articulates and orients political action that is of concern here. Indeed, it is precisely in theorizing virtuality that the genre's theorization, use, and operation potentially shift.

Following from these claims, this paper is divided into four parts. First, I survey and review popular arguments concerned with the historiography and political function of the manifesto genre as such. Here, the manifesto's use and function in political discourse is parsed out; however, in a more substantive move, I work to identify several limitations imposed on the genre by its strictly historiographical

theorization. Janet Lyon and Martin Puchner, two contemporary theorists of the manifesto genre, are my primary interlocutors here. Out of this examination, I shift my point of analysis to account for the concepts and practices that modify contemporary political articulation and thus political organization. The manifesto genre is situated at the center of these debates. In this second section, I give a first indication of what a contemporary political manifesto might look like in a discussion of Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri's *Empire*. Third, I turn to arguments posed by Gilles Deleuze in his 1969 *Logic of Sense* in order to more clearly and rigorously theorize the manifesto's virtual transformations and spatio-temporalizations. Here, I argue that demands on contemporary political struggle produce a situation in which the manifesto's modes of representation and spatio-temporal interventions are reinvented. However, the genre's reinvention is not positioned toward the reformation of the party, the formation of a new political program, or a novel position of command on and over political action. Rather, it is anti-programmatic—the manifesto is a site of possible encounters that demands action, but refuses to command its ultimate shape. Finally, in giving an account of anarcho-communist collective Tiqqun's *This is Not a Program*, I offer an example of what a contemporary manifesto could be and a commentary on the continued viability of the genre in political action.

### **Manifesto, Manual, Map**

What I cite above as two problems where the genre is considered is well documented, albeit rarely challenged or problematized, in the work of two contemporary literary and cultural theorists, Janet Lyon and Martin Puchner. In her *Manifestoes: Provocations of the Modern*, Lyon identifies the manifesto's programmatic function, writing:

The manifesto occupies a distinct generic space in the arena of public discourse, and thereby aspires to a concrete form of cultural work even if it only rarely performs that work. More specifically, the manifesto provides a foothold in a culture's dominant ideology by creating generic speaking positions; the nascent audience interpellated by 'we' is then held together as a provisional constituency through a linguistic contract. The potential audience of this contractual 'we' occupies the position of either supporting or rejecting the manifesto as a representative text. (Lyon 1999, p. 24)

Later, she emphasizes the manifesto's seemingly inherent prophetic function as well as its bipartisan figuration of the political—the formation of a 'we' or an 'us' against 'them'—writing that 'the manifesto's revolutionary speaking position constructs political certainty, in other words, not just by reinforcing polemical fields, but also by assuming control of the language of history, the conditions of the plot' (Lyon 1999, p. 60). On this reading, the manifesto's primary purpose is to carve out a speaking position within the domain of public discourse so as to unify and manifest a constituency heretofore excluded by a particular state or culture's dominant ideologies. Stated another way, Lyon understands the manifesto to participate in a

discourse of universal equality that circumscribes its political interventions. Her theorization of the genre understands marginalized or oppressed groups to utilize the manifesto as a means of gaining social recognition and parity within a putatively democratic culture. Any threat of an anti-statist movement, an alter-national movement, etc., that would disavow or work to dissolve a culture's dominant ideology altogether results from an individual or group's inability to receive his, her, or its demands. On Lyon's interpretation, the manifesto is, in the first instance, a reformist enterprise, rather than a more radical attempt at living and thinking in total opposition to state power and capitalist sovereignty.

In at least two arguments featured in his *Poetry of the Revolution: Marx, Manifestos, and the Avant-Gardes*, Martin Puchner recapitulates an argument in favor of the manifesto's seemingly inherent programmatic and prophetic functions, arguing that the politics of the genre establish a revolutionary historiography that it subsequently works to manifest. Described as an internal mechanism of the genre, Puchner claims that the manifesto 'projects a scenario for which it must then seek to be the first realization' (Puchner 2006, p. 29). As the genre came to take on a concrete form in the twentieth century, Puchner argues that this mode of projection, inherent to the genre, became synonymous with a universal program for attaining political power: 'Even if many of the projects outlined in manifestos were never realized, what became firmly established was the act of declaring a new departure, of setting one ism against the next, and of laying claim to the future at the expense of the past. What succeeded, in other words, was the revolutionary historiography dictated by the form of the manifesto' (Puchner 2006, pp. 70-1). Departing only slightly from Lyon, Puchner claims that the manifesto not only commands the language of history, it necessarily organizes revolution as a narrative of supersession and supplantation. The manifesto concretizes a revolutionary historiography by opposing former political forms toward the inception of the new.

The means and the politics by which the manifesto charts socio-political terrains is constitutive of its intervention, easily given over to either statist or minoritarian ideologies. Both Lyon and Puchner acknowledge this, ultimately favoring to theorize and focus on the moments wherein the manifesto affirms and concretizes a universal political operation and language. With this theorization of the genre, however, specific limitations on its use and operation are imposed and reinforced. Where Lyon understands the manifesto to construct political certainty, assuming control over the language of history and polarizing political fields, the genre is thought to operate solely as a program for attaining liberation and political power. On Puchner's argument, the genre cannot organize revolutionary struggle outside of a dialectical bind that both linearizes political struggle and reinforces a bipartisan model for political thought and action.

By way of a brief example, the features of the genre theorized above are identified in and generalized from Marx and Engels *Communist Manifesto*. Indeed, it is Lyon and Puchner's featured example. In its preface, we are witness to *The Communist Manifesto's* global aspirations:

It is high time that Communists should openly, in the face of the whole world, publish their views, their aims, their tendencies, and meet this nursery tale of the *specter of communism* with a manifesto of the party itself. To this end, Communists of various nationalities have assembled in London and sketched the following *Manifesto*, to be published in English, French, German, Italian, Flemish and Danish languages. (Marx & Engels 2008, p. 2)

Here, Marx definitively takes command over the language of history, certainly, the languages of the industrialized world, and attempts to unify the working class under a communist party platform. In the first chapter, partisan relations are oriented between and by two opposing classes: the bourgeoisie and the proletariat. This fundamental bipartisanship gives shape to the manifesto's global movement. For, where the first cause of the manifesto is derived from the claim that 'the history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggles,' the liberation of the working class is thought to manifest in the unification of the proletariat and its violent confrontation with the bourgeoisie: 'working men of all countries, unite' (Marx & Engels 2008, p. 3, 39)!

As both Lyon and Puchner take Marx and Engel's *Communist Manifesto* to be the paradigmatic example of the manifesto in radical politics, what remains constant in the manifesto's revolutionary historiography is the place of the political. Here, the manifesto is theorized as a practice of positing a revolutionary future and establishing the ground for its eventual fruition. In this way, the manifesto operates as a manual for attaining political power; the genre is either utilized as a step-by-step guide for creating and maintaining statist and nationalist political projects *or* inciting revolution and attaining state-like power. Indeed, these two uses of the genre are not far removed from each other. It is the tension produced by these two operations of the genre, however, that I am here intent on exploring: the simultaneous acts of mapping a socio-political field and the impetus to intervene upon it, coordinate it, and manage it. This is to say, the political and philosophical issues that arise as a result of both Lyon and Puchner's arguments above concern the way in which the manifesto both marks off a territory—maps a socio-political field so as to intervene on its cartography—and redirects its composition.

### **A Virtual Topography**

Two little known arguments, but nonetheless interesting and helpful with an eye toward this project from Adorno and Horkheimer's recently published dialogue, *Towards a New Manifesto*, and Hardt

and Negri's *Empire*, initiate an alternative theorization of the manifesto genre, divergent from Lyon and Puchner's arguments above. Adorno and Horkheimer's project is to theorize the political conditions for a new communist manifesto, a communist manifesto for the twentieth century. Acknowledging that political landscapes have changed significantly over the hundred years or so since the publication of Marx and Engels' *Communist Manifesto*, they imagine the work and politics of a new manifesto to be something quite different. Rather than assert a globalized political platform, define the terms of a necessary antagonism for revolutionary fruition, or work to interpellate disparate populations into a unitary political subjectivity, they ultimately abdicate from asserting any claim to revolutionary certainty. It is near the conclusion of their dialogue that they mark what is perhaps their most significant divergence from Marx and Engels, writing: 'What we reject is not practice but telling people what to do. Because we are still permitted to live, we are under an obligation to do something' (Adorno & Horkheimer 2011, p. 109). Here, Adorno and Horkheimer establish a political ground from which to theorize the manifesto genre in opposition to a political program. This is to say, it is a manifesto exclusive of command that Adorno and Horkheimer gesture toward in the quotation above, and a way of theorizing a politics of resistance that encourages action without authoritarian impulses.

The associated political problems of theorizing a programless manifesto are provocative—what *is* a manifesto if not a political program? Further, what does a radical politics look like absent of a center of command? Here, I think that what might be interpreted as uncertainty or ambivalence toward revolutionary praxis might be better framed as a concern that presages what Michel Foucault would pose as a question in his preface to Deleuze and Guattari's *Anti-Oedipus*: 'How does one keep from being a fascist, even (especially) when one believes oneself to be a revolutionary militant' (Foucault 1985, p. xiii)? This is to say, I think the formation and expression of a programless manifesto is not to argue for a formless and directionless politics. What is at stake in the movement to create the conditions for a manifesto against a political program is the desire to organize a revolutionary force without representing a revolutionary future in the form of a totality, and further, without internalizing and redeploying an uncompromising position of command. Reluctant to tell revolutionaries what the future of resistance should look like or how we should get there, Adorno and Horkheimer fundamentally shift the terms of political action and thought. It is, against Lyon and Puchner's theorization of the genre, a move to call forth and represent a radical politics without its collapse into a political doctrine or a battle of -isms.

So the question of fomenting a new, radical politics absent of a political program approached by Adorno and Horkheimer has a two-pronged effect. On the one hand, their project comes to bear on the organization of a radical politics and a radical movement. On the other hand, Adorno and Horkheimer's project, where it is certainly the result of an era of nationalized fascisms and genocide, also signals a



profound shift in the operation of sovereign power on a transnational scale. One key insight with reference to the dialogue is the question of America—whether it is a truly democratic enterprise and therefore a political model to affirm or if the seat of fascism has merely relocated itself across the Atlantic<sup>2</sup>. We can take another cue from twentieth and twenty-first century Continental thought. Post-WWII, fascism hasn't been eliminated and it hasn't disappeared, rather it takes on new forms with various names, something like micro-fascisms, societies of control and technologies of securitization, or the interplay of molar and molecular milieus.

What Adorno and Horkheimer's dialogue signals is thus a contemporary problem. How should resistance be organized and expressed in the face of a shifting globalized political terrain? Hardt and Negri intervene precisely at this juncture, offering both an alternative ground from which to theorize the manifesto genre and an alternative analytic of resistance. In their coauthored *Empire*, the first of the three part *Empire* series, Hardt and Negri write of the manifesto genre, some 50 years or so after Adorno and Horkheimer's dialogue, that:

Today a manifesto, a political discourse, should aspire to fulfill a Spinozist prophetic function, the function of an immanent desire that organizes the multitude. There is not finally here any determinism or utopia: this is rather a radical counterpower, ontologically grounded not on any 'vide pour le futur' but on the actual activity of the multitude, its creation, production, and power—a materialist teleology. (Hardt & Negri 2001, p. 66)

Interestingly, a debate ensued on *Empire's* status as a new communist manifesto immediately following its publication. Perhaps best identified in Slavoj Žižek's 'Have Hardt and Negri Written The Communist Manifesto for the Twenty-First Century?' *Empire* is asserted to be both an exercise in rethinking and rewriting the possible use and function of the genre and a text that is able to 'describe globalization as an ambiguous "deterritorialization"' (Žižek 2001, p. 192). In a manner that extends beyond Marx and Engels' *Communist Manifesto*, *Empire* analyzes how 'victorious global capitalism pushes into every pore of our social lives, into the most intimate of spheres, and installs an ever present dynamic, which no longer is based on patriarchal or other hierarchic structures of dominance' (Žižek 2001, p. 192). Žižek is right to pose the project of the manifesto as a question in reference to *Empire*. With Hardt and Negri's comments above, they seem to refuse the formal political imperatives of traditional manifestos. In their newly coauthored pamphlet, *Declaration*, Hardt and Negri say as much, claiming that:

Manifestos provide a glimpse of a world to come and also call into being the subject, who although now only a specter must materialize to become the agent of change. Manifestos work like the ancient prophets, who by the power of their vision create their own people. Today's social movements have reversed the order,

making manifestos and prophets obsolete. (Hardt & Negri 2012, p. 1)

A blunt but nonetheless interesting claim, Hardt and Negri's comments here are a theoretical continuation of Adorno and Horkheimer's project and a departure from it. For, given both claims about the manifesto, it is questionable as to whether Hardt and Negri are declaring the death of a genre or if they are declaring the death of a particular form of theorizing and organizing radical politics. What is clear is that the manifesto genre is in question and in transformation, and it is of particular socio-political conditions that its continued efficacy and transformation is produced.

Without getting too caught up in its alleged formation and operation, the multitude, Hardt and Negri's figure of revolutionary production and expression, finds its basis in three universal political platforms that command resistance and its futural interventions. To cite from *Commonwealth*, Hardt and Negri write:

A first platform must demand the support of life against misery, that is, simply, that governments must provide everyone with the basic means of life . . . a second platform must demand equality against hierarchy, allowing everyone to be capable of participating in the constitution of society; collective self-rule, and constructive interaction with others . . . a third platform must demand open access to the common against the barriers of private property. (Hardt & Negri 2011, pp. 380-1)

Given these three platforms, the multitude is theorized as an absolute democratic horizon proper to contemporary forms of resistance, anti-capitalist or otherwise. Insofar as the multitude is produced as a resistant force to state power and capitalist sovereignty, it finds its basis in the elimination of misery, equality against hierarchy, and access to the common in every instance. The democratic future produced if the multitude is actualized is thus conditioned by these three platforms. It is important to note that, with a slight twist, these platforms are articulated differently in *Empire*, focused more on demands for global citizenship and creativity<sup>3</sup>. What this position allows Hardt and Negri, however, is a means to reformulate and redefine the focus and intent of revolutionary violence. As resistance is exercised by the multitude, any compulsion or implementation of violent tactics is reconfigured and made subject to its democratic principles. Guided by Hardt and Negri's platforms, the organization of the multitude is somehow able to debate, avow, and even reconceptualize the focus and intent of resistance, as it moves to rend any democratic use of violence from producing destruction on an excessive or mass scale. The violence of the multitude thus somehow reduces destruction to a minimum as it is guided by democratic principles of self-governance. Two arguments in *Multitude: War and Democracy in the Age of Empire* are indicative of this process. Here, Hardt and Negri assert that:

The third principle of the democratic use of violence has to do with democratic organization itself. If according to the first principle the use of violence is always subordinated to political process and decision, and if that political process is democratic, organized in the horizontal, common formation of the multitude, then the use of violence too must be organized democratically. Wars waged by sovereign powers have always required the suspension of freedoms and democracy. The organized violence of its military requires strict, unquestioned authority. The democratic use of violence must be entirely different. There can be no separation between means and ends. (Hardt & Negri 2004, p. 345)

Here, the primary difference between the multitude's use of violence and that of non-democratic entities is as much one of organization as it is one of compulsion. Let me clarify by saying that Hardt and Negri do give lip service to a democratic, horizontal, common formation of the multitude as they subsequently assert a new, democratic form of violence as a result of its organization. How the violence of the multitude is organized and what this new form of democratic violence might be remains absent from any substantive theorization of armed struggle. Here, Hardt and Negri simply conclude this discussion by claiming: 'We need to create weapons that are not merely destructive but are themselves forms of constituent power, weapons capable of constructing democracy and defeating the armies of Empire' (Hardt & Negri 2005, p. 347). I take this claim to directly correspond to the idea that democratic violence is efficient and minimized as there is no separation between means and ends.

What, then, in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries has changed? What allows for, but also, what creates the need for revolutionary expression and the manifesto, a privileged mode of its articulation, to be called into question and to potentially transform? A slow transformation in the operation of sovereign power across and beyond the territory of the nation state—what Hardt and Negri call capitalist sovereignty and what they call Empire—works to produce the conditions for alternative forms of resistance. It is what Foucault terms governmentality, or a spatial division of technologies of security simultaneous with the capitalization of a territory absent of a center and an outside<sup>4</sup>. To put it another way, there is a novelty in the condition from which sovereign power no longer functions as a centrifugal force within a given territory, but a centripetal one over and beyond the territory: it becomes an apparatus of administration rather than a mere lord of the law. Hardt and Negri's claim is that it is a spatial reconfiguration of power from the sovereign nation-state to the transnational administration of life that works hand in hand to produce the conditions for a reconfiguration of an entire genre of resistance.

Two points are of note, then, both in reference to the immanent desire that organizes the multitude and its actual activity. At least with reference to the manifesto, I think Hardt and Negri are correct in *Empire* to focus on its revolutionary effect, or perhaps power, as a turn toward the virtual—as having the potential to radically redistribute

the focus and location of revolutionary intent. Indeed, I think their claim in *Declaration* underscores this idea, albeit through the declared end of the genre. With such a radical revisioning of the relation between sovereign power and resistance, the question of whether or not the written expression of a new politics of resistance can still be called a manifesto is critical. Where the expression of a radical politics is not a question of telling anyone what to do, not a question of determinism or utopia, but an immanent desire toward the spatio-temporal reconfiguration of the present, the potential in and of its actual activity is simultaneously aggregated and dispersed. The political work of the manifesto in this context is focused in the present and in one's present company—on the actual activity of those who resist state power and capitalist sovereignty—without asserting the need for the unity of a political program or calling forth a unitary political subjectivity.

I think the work to theorize the place and function of the manifesto genre in contemporary politics is precisely the kind of weapon that Hardt and Negri imagine in their political odyssey. To theorize and to write a manifesto without determinism or utopia but with the compulsion to act is precisely a way to reschematize political fields, to change the formal structure of an entire genre of resistance, and to focus on manifesting alternative spaces and times of resistance, adapted to a shifting, globalized political terrain. *Empire* itself is a kind of quasi-manifesto that calls forth a new set of rules and pushes the boundaries of what the manifesto can do. Indeed, where a theorization of the genre more generally calls for an end of ancient prophets manifesting a political program and revolutionary subjectivity, political expression is no longer for the project of producing a manual authorizing and determining revolutionary action, it produces a novel 'incorporeal transformation.' Here, the genre comes to function as a virtual topography, or landscape that outlines and distributes possible avenues for resistance. A manifesto in this context, if it is to persist, would become a far more ephemeral and situational genre; it would function as a site of spatio-temporal reconfiguration, but only insofar as its political orientation continues to resonate with the direction of resistance.

### **Mapping the Virtual, Re-Theorizing Resistance**

On this point, I propose to address the problems of political orientation a step or two beyond the claim that the contemporary organization and expression of resistance is not about telling people what to do. With such a radical shift in thinking the organization and force of resistance to state power and capitalist sovereignty, alternative models for resistance are demanded. So, if the shift in the organization and operation of resistance and, indeed, a primary genre through which resistance is articulated, can no longer be expressed with a manual-like function, what does a turn toward the virtual actually produce? If the manifesto is to be theorized as a virtual landscape of possible interaction for resistance rather than a

prophetic vision, how does it work? With Adorno, Horkheimer, Hardt, and Negri calling the manifesto's formal structure and political impact into question, theorizing the manifesto today necessitates uncovering what models of representation are available for expressing a radical politics in the twenty-first century as much as it necessitates considering the way it schematizes political fields. However, contra Hardt and Negri's project in the *Empire* series, disassociating the manifesto from its structure of command is much less about inventing a new revolutionary figure than it is about actualizing alternative times and places for resistance to manifest. Indeed, new revolutionary figures like the multitude or the 99% are common and do not seem to produce or display the revolutionary characteristics attributed to them. Certainly, this is where Hardt and Negri's theorization of the genre and call for its end requires further clarification; precisely how does the manifesto, reformulated as a radical counterpower, either fail or work to produce a multiplicity of times and spaces for resistance?

Theorizing a programless manifesto, despite the political ends that either Adorno and Horkheimer or Hardt and Negri claim, is primarily a political and philosophical question of representation. It poses the problem of claiming that radical alternatives to the present actually exist without producing them as a totality. Indeed, positing a programless manifesto creates the problem of claiming that there is a time and place after the revolution that can be derived from our present social and political conditions, without saying what it is. As stated above, this problem does not lead to a formless or directionless politics, nor does it lead to political quietism. It affirms a vital and dynamic potential for revolutionary expression. Here, the manifesto's experimental theorization and possible end signals a shift away from Lyon's arguments on representation, particularly where she claims that one of the manifesto's fundamental characteristics is to interpellate a 'we' that will demand recognition or struggle to attain it.

One of Lyon's most forceful arguments in *Manifestoes: Provocations of the Modern* is that the manifesto's modes of representation have a distinct temporality. In several instances Lyon asserts that the time of the manifesto is now, literally, *now*, constituting the genre as a kind of revolutionary axis that ultimately recalibrates linear and progressive temporal formations<sup>5</sup>. Puchner affirms this temporal formulation with a slight twist. Where the manifesto calls for revolution *now*, it speculates and establishes possible futures that *will have been* affirmed at a later date: 'the speech acts of the manifesto are thus launched in the anterior future, claiming that their authority will have been provided by the changes they themselves want to bring about' (Puchner 2006, p. 24). In this way, the future tense is effective only insofar as it manifests the temporal conditions of the *now*. In a second temporal figuration, Lyon claims that the manifesto enacts a particular spatialization as it spans history; it 'bridges the different episodes of the "permanent revolution" by acting as a kind of radical Esperanto across decades and nations and cultures' (Lyon 1999, p. 60). Following this argument, the manifesto formalizes revolutionary actions and tactics into distinctive revolutionary episodes where its

temporality and capacity for representation traverses history. The 'we' that is established and represented by the manifesto is at the very same time the revolutionary body that propels its temporal interventions.

Perhaps one of the more practical applications of Adorno, Horkheimer, Hardt, and Negri's theorizations of the manifesto genre is that they work to displace the subject from a position of being represented by text, a political program, or a state, and focus on developing a tactics with which to disrupt authoritarian impulses. An alternative theorization of the genre and an alternative use demands that the manifesto's modes of representation and spatio-temporal interventions be reinvented. A programless manifesto would not posit the question, does this manifesto speak for me, does it adequately describe my cause and provide a remedy to the problem *now*? Rather, it poses the question, does this manifesto impart a composition of techniques for resistance, does it resonate in conditions of struggle or does it remain indecipherable?

In *The Logic of Sense*, his last major work preceding *Anti-Oedipus* and *A Thousand Plateaus*, Gilles Deleuze addresses the political concerns at work in a re-theorization of the manifesto as he produces an analysis of representation that affirms the virtual, rethinking spatialization and underscoring non-linear temporalities. More than this, he offers alternative models for representing a radical politics by restructuring the ways that representation functions. Here, we could say that Deleuze offers a mechanics of what he later terms the incorporeal transformation, writing:

Representation must encompass an expression which it does not represent, but without which it itself would not be 'comprehensive,' and would have truth only by chance or from outside . . . There is a 'use' of representation, without which representation would remain lifeless and senseless. Wittgenstein and his disciples are right to define meaning by means of use. But such use is not defined through a function of representation in relation to the represented, nor even through representativeness as the form of possibility. Here, as elsewhere, the functional is transcended in the direction of a topology, and use is in the relation between representation and something extra-representative, a nonrepresented and merely expressed entity. Representation envelops the event in another nature, it envelops it at its borders, it stretches until this point, and it brings about this lining or hem. (Deleuze 1990, p. 146)

On Deleuze's account, representation refers to something concrete, but also to an alternative temporality and spatialization that cannot be reduced to what is represented. In other words, when something is posited, like a possible future that stands in opposition to the present, its representation is at once defined by its use, or maybe even by its intention, but is not equivalent to a programmatic determination of the future. Representation refuses its capture and its use is located in what exceeds the representation itself. So the use of positing an alternative future is not in enforcing its realization, making what is real

conform to a vision of what it should be, but in locating the tactics and techniques through which radical futures take shape in the present.

Deleuze theorizes representation within a temporal fold, a topological figuration of time in which time and space are indiscernible events. Within this figuration of time, representation is in a constant state of flux, changing and overlapping as it is put into use. So given this spatio-temporalization of representation, it cannot be reduced to its prophecy—to a progressive linearity or a moment in which the future is programmatically determined. To quote Deleuze: 'this is the use of representation: the mime, and no longer the fortune teller. One stops going from the greatest present toward a future and past which are said only of a smaller present; on the contrary, one goes from the future and past as unlimited, all the way to the smallest present of a pure instant which is endlessly subdivided' (Deleuze 1990, p. 147). On this point, Deleuze marks a crucial difference where he considers the temporal figure of the present. Where the *now* refers to the moment in which history is and can redetermine its path or line, he turns to the instant, a temporal frontier in which multiple environs come to be articulated as coconstitutive zones of relation, without linear progression. In Deleuze's words, where the instant stands opposed to the *now*, 'it is no longer the future and past which subvert the existing present; it is the instant which perverts the present into inhering future and past' (Deleuze 1990, p. 165). Here, representation becomes a form of expression actualized by the instant; it becomes a question of how a multiplicity of times and spaces are harnessed, but also how a multiplicity of times and spaces exceeds the way its relation and movement are rendered.

Accordingly, what Deleuze's assertions afford are not merely an alternative way of thinking representation, time, and space but an alternative way of thinking the effects of the manifesto's relation to history. Certainly, it necessitates a reconsideration of the manifesto's very techniques of expression aligned with the projects outlined above by both Lyon and Puchner. For both theorists, the temporal figure of the *now* cites a break and collapse in time. Where the manifesto breaks with progressive, hegemonic histories, past, present, and future are located at once within the same temporal zone of enunciation and implementation: past and future come to be concentrated in the present. This is to say, the *now* of the manifesto is supposed to establish a unitary and immediate temporal mode of revolutionary action in which the present tense functions as both a revelation and a pivot—the *now* of the manifesto calls an end to the current order of history, but also acts as the rotating point at which history is re-determined. In so many words, this is how the manifesto is thought to enact its prophetic function, the revelatory event that redirects a particular milieu toward an alternative future as it assumes historical and political certainty. Lyon's second formulation of the manifesto's temporality establishes a problem of a different order. While claiming that the manifesto spreads out across time, linking revolutionary acts as they are expressed in and through the genre might seem like a temporal mode of expansion, it rather contributes to

the concentration of time in the present. The revolutionary *now* of the manifesto comes to function as a kind of spatio-temporal regulation, territorializing revolutionary struggle within a unitary temporal mode of intervention. Stated another way, the manifestic immediacy of the *now* operates as a kind of territory of time, concentrating revolutionary struggle within a single temporal figure. It is precisely here that a focus on virtuality becomes necessary for fomenting an alternative theorization of the genre.

If *Empire* is a text that both theorizes and provokes theorization of the manifesto genre's virtual capacities, Timothy C. May's 1992 *Crypto Anarchist Manifesto* is an early example of how the genre might distribute its virtual, or inherent power, differently. At the forefront of the Cyberpunk movement, May authored *The Crypto Anarchist Manifesto* immediately prior to the Internet's popularization and corporatization, identifying its capacities for anti-capitalist and anti-statist political projects. While what he describes might sound like an amalgam of science fiction and misplaced hope in virtual technologies, it is, prior to Hardt and Negri's theorization and call for the end of the manifesto genre, a move toward producing an alternative political landscape that emphasizes revolutionary interaction through anonymity, rather than the manifestation of a revolutionary program and subject. Here, May writes:

A specter is haunting the modern world, the specter of crypto anarchy. Computer technology is on the verge of providing the ability for individuals and groups to communicate and interact with each other in a totally anonymous manner. Two persons may exchange messages, conduct business, and negotiate electronic contracts without ever knowing the True Name, or legal identity, of the other. Interactions over networks will be untraceable, via extensive re-routing of encrypted packets and tamper-proof boxes which implement cryptographic protocols with nearly perfect assurance against any tampering . . . Just as the technology of printing altered and reduced the power of medieval guilds and the social power structure, so too will cryptologic methods fundamentally alter the nature of corporations and of government interference in economic transactions. Combined with emerging information markets, crypto anarchy will create a liquid market for any and all material which can be put into words and pictures. (May 1992)

While May maintains the language of *The Communist Manifesto*, anticipating an imminent futural state in which revolutionary capacities will be realized, his use of the genre ultimately alters its form and function. First, it does not command a subject or a revolutionary strategy; it names a practice of resistance and speculates on its possible uses. The manifesto is, in this instance, a tool with which to liquefy the market and refuse the operation of government: to live and to act against and beyond corporate and sovereign capture. A primary benefit of computer technology cited in this manifesto is the proliferation of and interaction through anonymity. A revolutionary body or subject is not called forth; it is formed, maintained, and



dispersed in erasure. In turn, *The Crypto Anarchist Manifesto* manifests a second virtual function where May mobilizes the genre in tandem with computer technology to create a multiplicity of places and times of resistance. Here, computer technology is thought as a virtual plane from which anonymous interaction is constitutive of relations that might alter the ways in which power functions at every level: social, political, and economic, across the globe. Indeed, where new technological landscapes are developed transnationally, the potential for resistance to manifest is simultaneously localized and dispersed, happening here and now but also there, then, and to come. In this way, the virtual or inherent power of the manifesto genre and computer technology do not stand opposed—one does not work to eliminate the other—rather, the manifesto becomes a means of expressing and schematizing a new way of organizing resistance, spatially, temporally, and relationally.

Through a kind of theoretical melding of computer technologies and the manifesto genre, what is produced by *The Crypto Anarchist Manifesto* is neither a program nor a multitude, but a field and a practice from which resistance might spring. Stated another way, *The Crypto Anarchist Manifesto* names the manifesto's potential meta-function, that of outlining a practice through which incorporeal transformations might manifest. In this way, *The Crypto Anarchist Manifesto* is a sketch toward actualizing the manifesto's topographic function as it resists the programmatic determination of its use. It maps out potential political positions that would modify as they manifest and are put into practice. Certainly, what May calls cryptography is precisely the networked interaction of an anonymous force, following a multiplicity of paths toward total resistance. Insofar as the manifesto is coterminous with, or perhaps a provocation toward a radical politics without determinism or utopia, it functions here as a tool by which revolutionary tactics are learned, modified, or rejected in continuous adaptation and re-enactment.

### **Beyond Bipartisan Politics**

As the manifesto's relation to representation shifts, Lyon's language of command and Puchner's revolutionary historiography dictated by the manifesto no longer makes sense. Neither do their political categories. If the manifesto's virtual capacities are championed, its spatio-temporal interventions are no longer predicated on the movement of one -ism triumphing over another, moving toward a revolutionary future. Deleuze's analysis of representation, space, and time above refuses these modes of sublation and replaces them with a threshold for disjunction. As a form of expression actualized in the instant representation allows for total opposition and difference to proliferate rather than political unification in a doctrine, an -ism, or even a program to dominate thought and action. A politics of the genre in opposition and irreducible to a political program thus necessitates theorizing how the manifesto creates opportunities for living a radical politics, rather than how it institutes a framework

wherein it would establish and subsequently dictate a revolutionary historiography. This position necessitates something more than theorizing new models of representation for expressing a radical politics; it necessitates a reconfiguration of its political relations. Indeed, it requires rethinking the processes through which the manifesto participates in schematizing political fields and orienting political action. Therefore, even with a theorization of the genre opposed to Lyon and Puchner, the problem of partisanship hinted at in the introduction doesn't disappear, it is all the more an imminent concern.

While Adorno and Horkheimer don't pursue the question of a new manifesto far enough to consider a reinvention of partisan relations, Hardt and Negri seem to overcompensate for this absence, insisting on the invention of the multitude and asserting its novel capabilities for resistance. But if Hardt and Negri are correct to claim that the landscape of power and resistance is now both transnational and constituted by the actual activities of those who resist state power and capitalist sovereignty, resistance operates as a shifting terrain, susceptible to constant modification. Under such conditions, partisan relations become far more difficult to identify. Where an 'outside' of power can no longer be assumed, the neat existential division and opposition between friends and enemies, certainly the very categorical determination of either position, is equally difficult to parse. Even if one were to concede to Hardt and Negri, claiming the manifesto's obsolescence in favor of a new radical political project, partisan relations are not eliminated from the political, they transform.

It is on this point that Lyon and Puchner's theorization of the manifesto genre display a critical insight into the organization of the political as such. It is precisely the manifesto's polemics concomitant with its assumption of revolutionary certainty that determines political relations. Where the political is reducible to a set of antagonistic forces, the path toward a revolutionary future is clear: compete with the enemy and to the victor goes the spoils. Chantal Mouffe parses out the stakes of this framework in a similar language to Lyon and Puchner above, stating:

In the domain of collective identifications, where what is in question is the creation of a 'we' by the delimitation of a 'them', the possibility always exists that this we/them relation will turn into a relation of the friend/enemy type; in other words it can always become political in [Carl] Schmitt's understanding of the term. This can happen when the other, who was until then considered only under the mode of difference, begins to be perceived as negating our identity, as putting in question our very existence. From that moment onwards, any type of we/them relation, be it religious, ethnic, national, economic or other, becomes the site of a political antagonism. (Mouffe 2006, pp. 2-3)

What Mouffe's argument draws out is that the modes of representation that both Lyon and Puchner attribute to the manifesto

always seem to result in the same fundamental political relation. If the manifesto remains a process of command, supersession, and a battle of –isms, then it will continually reproduce the same political antagonisms. Carl Schmitt provides a particularly problematic, yet concise understanding of how the friend/enemy relation operates in *The Concept of the Political*, one that is attributable to Lyon and Puchner's theorization of the manifesto genre. Here, Schmitt writes, 'the distinction of friend and enemy denotes the utmost degree of intensity of a union or separation, of an association or dissociation,' yet, the enemy 'is nevertheless, the other, the stranger; and it is sufficient for his nature that he is, in a specially intense way, existentially something different and alien, so that in the extreme case conflicts with him are possible' (Schmitt 2007, pp. 26-7). Where Schmitt imagines political relations to exist in and between nations, or perhaps better described as nationally unified partisan bodies, the logical structure of the friend/enemy split is what Lyon and Puchner affirm as the manifesto maps a socio-political field and directs its composition. Both Lyon's analysis of representation and Puchner's claim to a revolutionary historiography dictated by the manifesto fall squarely within a Schmittian definition of the political and describe political relations as an expression of state power or homologous to state power. While this does make political concepts and political relations clear, it does not rethink the manifesto's spatio-temporal interventions. Indeed, it affirms Hardt and Negri's condemning remarks about the genre.

Perhaps the most provocative claim in Hardt and Negri's *Empire* series is that power over life, indeed, production itself, constitutes a partisan relation that might be aligned with an entirely different set of social and political relations. This is to say, what is necessary for the multitude to function as a radical counterpower is the production of an alternative political relation, reschematizing political fields, and affirming the power of bodies in struggle. Straight and to the point, Hardt and Negri claim that 'all notions that pose the power of resistance as homologous or even similar to the power that oppresses us are of no more use' (Hardt & Negri 2005, p. 90). It is here that the focus on production takes precedent over all other political forms and tactics in the name of the multitude. If resistance cannot be conceived in a homologous relation to state power and capitalist sovereignty, it must actively exceed it, breaking from a cycle in which those who resist simply react to Empire with an equal or corresponding relation in structure and origin. Here, Hardt and Negri write, 'biopolitics is a partisan relationship between subjectivity and history that is crafted by a multitudinous strategy, formed by events and resistances, and articulated by a discourse that links political decision making to the construction of bodies in struggle' (Hardt & Negri 2011, p. 61). A positive biopolitical project, or a positive form of production and administration over life, is what actualizes the multitude and a new set of partisan relations; it is what unites Hardt and Negri's democratic principles of violence with the organization of the multitude as well as what allows for the emergence of alternative times and spaces for resistance.

In its own quasi-political pamphlet and manifesto, *This is Not a Program*, anarcho-communist collective Tiqqun is quick to criticize Hardt and Negri on these points, claiming that Negri in particular fails to rid the concepts of Empire and the multitude of authoritarian compulsions:

The three watchwords typical of political Negrism—for all its strength lies in its ability to provide informal neo-militants with issues on which to focus their demands—are the ‘citizens dividend,’ the right to free movement (‘Papers for everyone!’), and the right to creativity, especially if computer-assisted. In this sense, the Negrist perspective is in no way different from the imperial perspective but rather a mere instance of perfectionism within it . . . Hence political Negrism’s incestuous relationship with imperial pacification: it wants reality but not its realism. It wants Biopolitics without police, communication without Spectacle, peace without having to wage war to get it. Strictly speaking, Negrism does not coincide with imperial thought; it is simply the idealist face of political thought. (Tiqqun 2011, pp. 117-18)

Here, the focus of the collective’s criticism lies in the idea that the transnational administration of life, across and beyond territorial boundaries, can be democratically controlled. Where Hardt and Negri insist on the inherent democratic authority of the multitude, they belie their revolutionary project. To use a similar language at work in their theorization of the manifesto, the multitude is a showcase of both determinism and utopia, grounded in an idealized vision of future. Tiqqun does however maintain Hardt and Negri’s claim that homologous relations to state power and capitalist sovereignty are inadequate, refocusing their attention on a reinvention of partisan relations.

In the opening essay of its *This is Not a Program*, Tiqqun asserts the need for a redefinition of social and political antagonism, framing the redefinition of the political as a question of organizing life: ‘A redefinition of historical conflict is needed, not intellectually: vitally’ (Tiqqun 2011, p. 12). This is to say, the political is, for Tiqqun, not a question of asserting new, or rehabilitating what they consider to be antiquated, epistemological categories through which to organize and define antagonism and conflict, it is rather the organization of a concept of partisanship that finds its constitution in forms of life that exceed, oppose, and redistribute a revolutionary *telos*. Indeed, the question of a revolutionary *telos* is challenged and rejected in their redefinition of the political as Tiqqun works toward thinking and living out reengineered modes of antagonism, conflict, and resistance. Most importantly class, stemming from a Marxist figuration of social and political antagonism wherein two unified forces come to oppose each other in a battle for supersession and hegemony, is the limit to which the political is constrained prior to and within the present moment. Here, Tiqqun writes:

Historical conflict no longer opposes two massive molar heaps, two classes—the exploited and the exploiters, the dominant and the

dominated, managers and workers—among which, in each individual case, one could differentiate. The front line no longer cuts through the middle of society; it now runs through the middle of each of us, between what makes us a *citizen*, our predicates, and all the rest. It is thus in each of us that war is being waged between imperial socialization and that which already eludes it. A revolutionary process can be set in motion from any point of the biopolitical fabric, from any singular situation, by exposing, even breaking, the line of flight that traverses it. (Tiqqun 2011, p. 12)

Resistance, and hence any partisan formations that result, then, is conceived of as a practice of life, as an aesthetic, or as a kind of distribution of the sensible. A vital form of partisanship rests on the creation of a form of life that is, at its most basic levels of production, that which opposes and that which exceeds the governing power of 'biopolitical democracies.' In this way, Tiqqun names a practice of resistance without simultaneously calling forth a revolutionary subject. In a manner similar to that of *The Crypto Anarchist Manifesto*, a virtual plane of interaction is theorized, and it is this plane of interaction itself that replaces the formation of revolutionary subjects in homologous opposition to powers of oppression. Here, Tiqqun also insists on revolutionary anonymity rather than the formation of a figure or a subject. The 'Imaginary Party' is offered as an alternative to bipartisan struggle, relying on a categorically different mode of the organization of life: 'building the Party means *establishing forms-of-life in their difference, intensifying, complicating relations between them, developing as subtly as possible civil war between us*' (Tiqqun 2011, p. 13). This alternative relies not on a comprehension of or epistemological command over the relations that give rise to social and political antagonism, but on the circulation of encounters that 'further the process of ethical polarization,' thus creating the possibility for alternative, resistant forms of life (Tiqqun 2011, p. 14).

The title of Tiqqun's quasi pamphlet and manifesto thus strikes at the heart of the problematics and possibilities of theorizing the genre as a provocation toward actualizing a fundamental shift in the operation and organization of radical politics: *This is Not a Program*. As a slogan, this seems to sum up Adorno and Horkheimer's position while refusing to let Hardt and Negri monopolize claims toward the possible reinvention or total extinction of the manifesto genre. Indeed, 'this is not a program' is perhaps the slogan of the manifesto's own incorporeal transformation. As programmatic politics are refused, a complex landscape of revolutionary tactics and expression emerge. Further, with a reinvention of partisan relations, the means by which a radical politics is practiced shifts. Defying a homologous or bipartisan struggle at the heart of the political begins to reshape the language and expression of resistance: resistance becomes the proliferation of multiple times and spaces where anti-capitalist and anti-statist forms of life are lived. Stated another way, the virtual becomes the real. Consequently, what the contemporary focus on the manifesto genre's future, or lack thereof, signifies is a profound desire to reengineer radical politics from the top down. It is an attempt to reimagine the

possibilities inherent to a primary genre of revolutionary expression and a fundamental step toward theorizing and living a radical politics in the present.

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### Notes

<sup>1</sup> Klein's precise claim here is that 'Thanks to the Net, mobilizations are able to unfold with sparse bureaucracy and minimal hierarchy; forced consensus and labored manifestos are fading into the background, replaced instead by a culture of constant, loosely structured, and sometimes compulsive information-swapping' (Klein 2002, p. 267). A condition like this is only compounded in the contemporary moment with technologies like Facebook, Twitter, etc.

<sup>2</sup> In the section of *Towards a New Manifesto* titled 'Political Concreteness,' Adorno and Horkheimer wrestle with the concern for being too abstract in their theorization of a new manifesto, but also being too concrete. Indeed, an argument ensues concerning the idea of drawing a concrete utopic vision into the project of theorizing a new manifesto along with a set of guiding political principles. It is here that certain achievements in America are championed, 'the reliability of the legal system, drugstores, etcetera' (Adorno & Horkheimer 2011, p. 63). Adorno and Horkheimer ultimately conclude the argument by saying that they 'must somehow manage to suggest things rather than say them directly' (Adorno & Horkheimer 2011, p. 64).

<sup>3</sup> In *Empire*, Hardt and Negri focus seven, rather than three demands of the multitude. All oriented toward a democratic transnationalism, these seven demands cohere with Hardt and Negri's three democratic principles of the multitude but display a broader spectrum of possibilities within its production and eventual fruition.

<sup>4</sup> Foucault draws this argument out in detail throughout *Security, Territory, Population: Lectures at the Collège de France 1977-1978*.

<sup>5</sup> A substance discussion of this problem can be found throughout the first chapter of Lyon's *Manifestoes: Provocations of the Modern*.

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