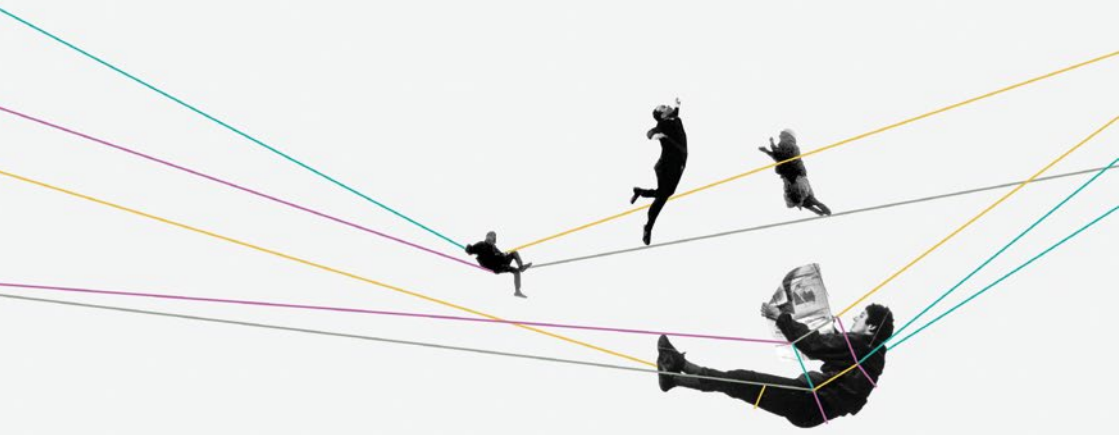
ARTISTIC UTOPIAS OF REVOLT

Claremont Road, Reclaim the Streets, and the City of Sol

JULIA RAMÍREZ BLANCO



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Utopianism is an interdisciplinary concept which covers philosophy, sociology, literature, history of ideas, art and architecture, religion, futurology and other fields. While literary utopianism is usually dated from Thomas More's *Utopia* (1516), communitarian movements and ideologies proposing utopian ends have existed in most societies through history. They imagine varied ideal beginnings of the species, like golden ages or paradises, potential futures akin to the millennium, and also ways of attaining similar states within real time. Utopianism, in the sense of striving for a much improved world, is also present in many trends in contemporary popular movements, and in phenomena as diverse as films, video games, environmental and medical projections. Increasingly utopia shares the limelight with dystopia, its negative inversion, and with projections of the degeneration of humanity and nature alike. This series will aim to publish the best new scholarship across these varied fields. It will focus on original studies of interest to a broad readership, including, but not limited to, historical and theoretical narratives as well as accounts of contemporary utopian thought, interpretation and action.

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To my parents, to their good places

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In one way or another, every book has a collective authorship. We rely on precedents, we gather ideas, we see films, we talk, discuss, participate in demonstrations. While it is impossible to list here all the people who, directly or indirectly, have played a role in a process such as this, I do not wish to leave unmentioned those who have been particularly important.

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CHAPTER 1

Introduction: Art as Language, Utopia as Discourse

Organize your enthusiasm.

History is made of flesh and bone. For me, the spring of 2011 marked the beginning of a period of commitment which transformed my way of reading historical narratives. I know now that at times of social change, the squares of towns and cities take on the colours of skin. And that political struggles, great ideals, and fiery speeches are made out of human passions. Hiding behind the events is the agitation of people who get excited, who compete and collaborate, who suffer, fear, and who make plans. Across their very bodies, the macro-economy evolves and power flexes its muscles.

With this book I try to tell history as *a story*.[1] In spite of the fact that events have many causes, writing tends to require the choice of a few threads within the whole weave: in these pages, through the narration of certain events, I investigate the artistic dimensions and the utopian meanings of certain social movements[2] of the extra-parliamentary left, mainly European,[3] since the 1990s (Fig. 1.1).

One of the issues I deal with is that which we could call 'activist creativity'. Close to the 'category' of *outsider art*,[4] which encompasses 'art'[5] produced by people who are not 'artists', the specific context here would be that of political struggle and social experimentation. Although activist creativity does not often try to *be* 'art', it nonetheless uses some

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Fig. 1.1 *Artistic utopias of revolt* are located between communitarian practice, artistic creativity, and activism itself

of the tools that have traditionally belonged to the artistic domain. Over the years, people have used an artistic and performative language to affirm their desire for change. The matter goes beyond the mere deployment of a visual vocabulary. In the words of writer Rebecca Solnit, in activism, 'the terrain of […] action is usually immaterial, the realm of the symbolic, political discourse, collective imagination'.[6] If the meaning of many actions is symbolic, an aesthetic analysis could prove useful.

Artistic Utopias of Revolt is a first attempt to apply my disciplinary training as an art historian:[7] an initial hypothesis is methodological, and concerns a form of iconographical reading of history linked to what has been called political iconography. The question of tools is once again relevant: while this book deals with people who use 'artistic' means to conduct politics, I, for my part, adopt the methods of art history to approach the 'artistic' forms of social movements. Thus, the abundance of illustrations complements the words, tracing a kind of parallel path that enables a visual reading.[8]

Throughout these pages, the aesthetic analysis enables us to enter into the dimensions of social thought, the *utopian subtext* of activism. If social movements are motivated by the search for collective change, their 'artistic' expressions can often be related to the fantasy of a better world.

This book is not intended to be a compilation of the complex theories that, over the centuries, have sought the formula for a happy society. Rather, it seeks to narrate certain specific activist moments, where the

concept of utopia is employed in a double sense: on the one hand, as a reference within political action, which is translated into forms of organizing and acting; on the other hand, as a physical place which acts as a catalyst for the forces of confrontation and collective hope.

In this book, I study various cases that belong to what some theoreticians have called 'utopian practice',[9] with examples where participants try to implement, in a real way, their ideals about how to live together communally. In the activities that I describe here, protests are not necessarily linked to the demands of labour or of class, and political struggle is intrinsically tied to certain forms of alternative lifestyle,[10] which in themselves entail an ideological discourse. Unveiling the social thinking implicit in these activities could be particularly useful when it concerns movements that rarely have a programme or a list of proposals. In that respect, utopia plays the role of political discourse.

One of the things which interests me in analysing activist creativity is to see how it contributes to the creation of a dissident spatiality. From the field of utopian studies, the book sketches a possible genealogy and definition of those sites of communitarian protest that I call 'utopias of revolt'. In the face of the agitation and risks of political struggle, utopia often implies a kind of rest, inventing a society where confrontation is not necessary. But here the dreamed-of world is inserted into the struggle itself and becomes a weapon in the conflict. *Proposal* and *protest* are inseparable, and together shape the same settlements.

These paradoxical places can provide activist creativity a home in which it can develop. The profuse symbolism that is produced in the environments covered by this text invites consideration of their aesthetic possibilities. Thus, I pose the following questions: Might one speak of an art of the liberated space?[11] In what way would it function politically? In terms of the places themselves, it is also worth asking: What are the characteristics of these 'utopias of revolt' and how could we consider their political 'effectiveness'?

This book traverses various places and communitarian practices in Europe since the fall of the Berlin Wall, between 1992 and 2011. Although the new global capitalism had been shaping itself since much earlier, the fall of the Berlin Wall represents a symbolic moment. With the disintegration of what had been known as the Second World, capitalism underwent a radicalization process and its expansion accelerated. Meanwhile, dissident movements developed simultaneously with the self-reorganization and consolidation of economic power.

The text begins with a kind of 'British school of protest'. This opening relates to the fact that, in the early 1990s, forms of taking over the street started to develop in the United Kingdom, which would later be echoed loudly in some very different places. In the area of economic politics, the United Kingdom was the first European country to introduce a system where privatizations and incentives to big companies were accompanied by cuts in social spending and increased powers for the police to control dissent.[12]

The first chapter is dedicated the British anti-roads movement, focusing on the production of spatiality in the occupied street of Claremont Road, where activists tried to obstruct the demolition of buildings by the Department of Transport which wanted to build a motorway in the area. It concerns a campaign which was developed in various neighbouring districts and where activities were connected with other initiatives of an equally local character.

The second and third chapters analyse what could be called the 'aesthetics of protest' or the *forms* taken by political protest in the street. The specific examples allow a reflection on how such aesthetics serve to configure spaces of utopian practice. This is the case of the British collective Reclaim the Streets which, during the second half of the 1990s, organized illegal anti-capitalist raves in the street, holding up traffic and commercial activity and thereby creating ephemeral worlds. Its activity sought to turn the protest event into a festival, where countercultural entertainment and political action are brought together. The fourth chapter deals with social movements which, at the end of the decade, adopted an international coordination that had not been seen before outside of bloc politics: this concerns what many have called the 'alter-globalization movement', the 'anti-globalization movement', or the 'movement of movements'. Focusing briefly on a few events, the chapter analyses the codification and dissemination of the repertoire of a new vocabulary of protest that was subsequently applied in very different contexts. The account then moves into a kind of 'fade to black', given the impossibility of covering everything.

There is an implicit line of continuity between the form of resistance in the United Kingdom of the Thatcher and post-Thatcher years and the recent opposition across Europe to 'austerity politics' that were introduced following the financial crisis of 2008. Although the supposed causes are different, the same politics, which minimizes the role of the providing State while increasing its repressive functions, is involved. The loss of social and labour rights and the liberalization of markets create a system of

privileges which points towards a total absence of restrictions for those who possess economic power.

The fifth chapter is set in the spring of 2011, when a protest camp was set up in Madrid, initiating in the West a new cycle of occupying the public space. Like the form of the ideal cities imagined by literary utopias, this book also has a circular narrative. To some extent, there is a connection between the first chapter and the last: in both cases, the social movement *is* a place. Both the anti-roads movement and the dissident camps of 2011 are about spatial typologies that are replicated in different places, extending in a viral manner. Again, utopia is propagated as politics,[13] bringing along its own aesthetics. The dialogue between local and global frameworks suggests one of the axes which, as in a skeletal system, keeps the whole body of the text upright.

Diving between photographs, videos, pamphlets, articles, interviews, banners, music, social networks, and books, I have tried to reconstruct the spaces and the artistic forms of the bygone multitude.[14] In many cases, when dealing with directly lived experiences, I have tried to build an intellectual structure that could help me *understand*. This volume is my explanation within many other possible ones.

In a sense, the social movements described in these pages could imply the antithesis of the present system: here I seek to mobilize dialectical functions and provoke readers into carrying out some kind of synthesis, pointing towards social change. Each of us has the potential to have an impact on our surroundings. Beyond those creative activities that have been planned in advance, it is possible that some moments of popular utopian insurrection could function as catalysts, activating the artistic drive that is latent within all human beings. Perhaps the feeling of political empowerment can generate an expressive empowerment,[15] in the context of situations which allow us to participate in the creation of a different kind of society. If for Joseph Beuys, 'every human being is an artist', I would add that each of us has the potential to act, in our own lives, as creators of utopias. After all, who does not want to live in a world which reduces that irritating distance that separates reality and desire?

Notes

1. In this, I am not trying to be relativist: I do not mean to say that truths do not exist, but rather that the events are much richer and more complex than would be permitted in a single narrative.

2. The concept of 'social movement' is the subject of much controversy. A certain narrative establishes a genealogy which starts with the civil rights movement, continues in the following decades with freedom-of-speech activism, the anti-war movement, ecology, and feminism. As part of the legacy of May 1968, workerism (*operaismo*), also known as the autonomous movement, developed in Italy. Autonomy does not believe that vanguard groups, political parties, or the State can be tools for political emancipation. The sociologist Alberto Melucci speaks of how, after the 1960s, the so-called 'new social movements' constituted ways of life where cultural elements and creativity have a central importance (Alberto Melucci, *Nomads of the Present: Social Movements and Individual Needs in Contemporary Society* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1989).
3. The narrative of this book is basically a Western one. While there is a clear need for a postcolonial and non-Eurocentric rewriting of activist narratives, centred on the global South, this is beyond the scope of the current book, which puts together different accounts of social movements comprising mostly young, middle-class white people who are mainly male. Revising this would require a different book.
4. See John Maizels, *Raw Creation: Outsider Art and Beyond* (London: Phaidon, 1996).
5. In general, throughout the book I use the word 'art' in the sense of human creativity. I am not interested in entering a discussion on what is art and what is not. The artistic institution, understood as a complex network in which various agents and institutions are involved as participants, is easier to delineate. In this sense, neither *outsider art* nor activist creativity *fully* participate in this system, although on occasions they are seen to be partially integrated into it.
6. Rebecca Solnit, *Hope in the Dark* (Edinburgh–New York–Melbourne: Canongate, 2005), 92.
7. Although my articles for *The Nation* newspaper emphasized the cultural elements of social movements, there my approach was not explicitly artistic (see http://www.thenation.com/authors/julia-ramirez-blanco#axzz2YVA5Jk1d [Consulted: 03/09/2015]). The present work is based on the interpretation of political action through symbolism that has been carried out by various British and North American authors such as Andrew Boyd, Stephen Duncombe, and John Jordan, as well as on many analyses of the relationships between counterculture and politics, of which the contribution of George McKay stands out. An important referent has been the Lebanese Lina Khatib's book *Image Politics in the Middle East: The Role of the Visual in Political Struggle* (Cairo: I.B. Taurus, 2013). Within the Spanish context, where I come from, one can highlight the work of Paloma Blanco, Jesús Carrillo, Jordi Claramonte, Darío Corbeira, Marcelo Expósito, Leónidas Martín, Esteban Pujals, or Jaime Vindel, among others.

8. This seeks to overcome the lack of visual documentation found in many books about this subject.
9. The expert in utopian studies Lyman Tower Sargent speaks of three faces of utopianism: utopian literature (which derives from Thomas More with precedents in Ancient Greece), utopian social theory (which has utopia as a theoretical reference), and utopian practice (carried out through acts or communities of one sort or another). Unlike the self-contained nature of texts, the exploration of utopian practice shows the contradictions of real life. See Lyman Tower Sargent, 'The Three Faces of Utopianism Revisited', *Utopian Studies*, vol. 5, no. 1, 1994, 1–37, and *Utopianism: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010).
10. Murray Bookchin speaks rather acidly of *lifestyle anarchism*, criticising forms of anarchism which seek to achieve lifestyles for a specific group instead of trying to achieve a change in the system. See Murray Bookchin, *Social Anarchism or Lifestyle Anarchism: An Unbridgeable Chasm* (Edinburgh–Oakland: AK Press, 1995).
11. 'Liberated space' is understood as a space taken over by activism, in order to give it social, communitarian, or political functions that are different from those which the place originally provided.
12. In her book *The Shock Doctrine*, Naomi Klein claims that the system implanted in the 1980s by Margaret Thatcher had been tested in a pioneering form during the dictatorship of Augusto Pinochet in Chile (after 1973), and was also applied in the USA of Ronald Reagan. Naomi Klein, *The Shock Doctrine: The Rise of Disaster Capitalism* (New York: Picador, 2007).
13. Although other insurrectional moments could have been analysed, the choice—always subjective—was based on aesthetic relevance and the importance of the communitarian aspect.
14. More than twenty personal interviews with artists, activists, and theoreticians served to complement access to direct and indirect sources.
15. While it is habitual to refer to political empowerment, here I want to speak of an expressive empowerment, where non-specialist people give themselves creative power to symbolically transform reality.

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CHAPTER 2

Activism as a Place: The British Anti-Roads Movement and the Squatted Street of Claremont Road

We are more possible than you can powerfully imagine.[1]

John Jordan describes how his father died when he was still a child. When a doctor asked him back then how he felt, he threw up. Later, as an adult, Jordan says that he would like to be able to continue reacting in a physical way when confronted with horror. He refers to the intention of bringing the body back into politics.

John Jordan studied theatre and fine arts. At the beginning of the 1990s, he was on the verge of turning thirty, about to have a son, and was working as an 'artist'. He did performances linked to body art and formed part of the socially engaged art collective Platform.[2] In the London gallery circuit, he felt that it was always the same people that came to see him. And when he carried out actions in the street, he was disappointed to discover how passers-by took him for a lunatic or dragged him into sterile discussions about whether what he was doing could be considered as 'art'.[3] However, Jordan did not want to debate the significance of that great word: he wanted to use his work to talk about society, capitalism, the ecological crisis, the denial of death ….

By 1989 he had come to see the city as an absurd organism. This revelation came about when, along with other members of Platform, he camped for ten weeks at five points along the river Thames in London.[4] Four years later, Jordan found a way of expressing this non-belief in urban

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development, when he participated in an environmental activist campaign for the first time. Although he had already read about the direct-action ecologism of groups such as Earth First!,[5] until then his approach had only been theoretical.

The First Camps: From Greenham Common to Twyford Down

At the end of 1989, a crowd tried to cross the Berlin Wall from both sides, breaking through the barrier. Soon afterwards, in 1990, demolition work began and in 1991 the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics was dissolved.

In the United Kingdom at the beginning of the 1990s, with the combination of privatization, deregulation, cuts, and repressive policing that became known as 'Thatcherism', the consequences of eleven years of the Conservative government of Margaret Thatcher had already been felt.

The country had started the decade with a wave of riots against the recently introduced Community Charge (popularly known as the 'Poll Tax'). Its most spectacular expression was the so-called 'Battle of Trafalgar [Square]' in the centre of London, where anti-poll tax protestors clashed with the police. The expert in (counter-)cultural studies George McKay indicates the importance of these events for the resurgence of forms of intervention outside the legal channels of institutional politics.[6]

When Margaret Thatcher resigned in November 1990,[7] her successor John Major continued many of her policies. From the 'Iron Lady', Major inherited the grandiose *Roads for Prosperity* plan, which had been presented in 1989 as 'the biggest road-building programme since the Romans'.[8] This project generated opposition far beyond the cities: the dissident movement was populated by 'neo-pagan' ecologists whose ideas were close to anarchism.

From 1992, there was a multitude of campaigns in which activists set up precarious camps on the route of the motorways planned by the government, sabotaging construction works. These enclaves of ecological protest were closely related to the peace camps that had proliferated in the previous decade as part of a strong mobilization against the Thatcher administration's collaboration with the militarist politics of US president Ronald Reagan. In these camps, direct action and communitarian practice played a central role.

In parallel with a global anti-nuclear movement, in which women played a leading role,[9] in the United Kingdom the Greenham Common Peace Camp sprang up as the first of a wave of protest camps across the country. Between 1981 and 2000, a changing group of women camped near the perimeter fence of the military air base of Greenham Common to demonstrate their opposition to the presence of nuclear missiles.[10]

The heterogeneous identity of the group was reflected in the structuring of the space: the camp comprised nine smaller camps, organized according to a chromatic scheme and situated next to each of the entrances of the military base. The Yellow Gate was set up first, followed by the Turquoise, Indigo, and Orange gates, as well as the so-called Pedestrian Gate. The colours marked specific boundaries: the Green Gate was the only one which did not accept male visitors during the day; the Violet Gate had a religious focus; the Blue Gate was more New Age;[11] and the Red Gate indicated an area for artists.[12] These colours came together symbolically in a kind of peace rainbow.

Women decorated the fence which surrounded the military base with anti-war messages and images. Some hung photographs of children; others placed texts or attached small pieces of fabric to form different pictures (Fig. 2.1). From time to time, they carried out incursions of direct action and sabotage, which can be read as collective performances. Through the power of their images, they contributed to a battle in which symbols were also fighting. On 12 December 1982, in the Embrace the Base action, a multitude held hands around the military perimeter creating a blockade through a united presence of solidarity.

Over the years, the base was obstructed in different ways. Some involved 'closing off' the military zone through sit-ins that blocked access or by locking the entrance doors to imprison military personnel within their own base. Others involved opening the enclosed space: at various times, women cut the wire mesh with bolt cutters, creating 'doors and windows' in different parts of the fence.[13] For centuries, peasants had gone out to the fields armed with tools to break barriers that started to delimit territory under a growing regime of private property, begun with the 'enclosure' of common land.[14] In their images of destroying barriers, the Greenham Common women evoked the ancestral dream of reversing the division of land, restoring it to its former condition of common land without owners (Fig. 2.2).

The daily practice of these pacifists who, in the midst of great difficulties[15] lived together while pursuing a common goal, links their camp to

Fig. 2.1 The fence of the Greenham Common military base was richly decorated. This rainbow evokes the chromatic organization of the Peace Camp situated next to the military enclave

Fig. 2.2 On several occasions, the women of the Greenham Common Peace Camp cut the base's perimeter fence. Here the barrier is parted as if it were a curtain

utopian practice. For George McKay, Greenham Common has a fundamental role in terms of communitarian protest:

> Ever since the Peace Camps, direct action has developed physical obstruction and intervention to combine an oppositional impulse with a positive effort at community organization. The aim is to produce (…) 'a community of resistance', a form of communal protest honed from the jumble of lived experience and space.[16]

In 1991, a decade after the women's arrival, the nuclear missiles were withdrawn from Greenham Common. Only a year later,[17] the first ecologist protest camp was established in the English landscape of Twyford Down.[18]

This area of exceptional ecological value was threatened by plans to build the final section of the M3 motorway. After a long and fruitless legal campaign, a small group of people went to the site.[19] They were very young and had been politicized through the rich British counterculture, with its illegal parties, its free festivals, and its New Age travellers. Since the 1970s, the latter had roamed the English countryside with their wagons and caravans, trying to go from festival to festival, stopping at places where they set up camp as if every site were common land.[20] They had chosen a life of constant travelling, moving in groups, in richly decorated mobile homes. In February 1992, two such travellers stopped in the Twyford Down area, where they found out that the beautiful landscape was about to be destroyed in order to build a motorway. They then decided to start a campaign to defend the place. Soon, more activists joined them. Alexandra Plows describes the first moment as follows:

> [A] group of people arrived in ones and twos on Twyford Down near Winchester and stayed to defend it from being destroyed by the M3 motorway. While most of us were already keen environmentalists, craftworkers and herbalists, living full-time outdoors in a communal situation, cooking on fires, building simple but snug shelters was new.[21]

The 'simple shelters' were made out of various wooden structures, tents, and a large tepee with a bonfire inside.[22] A trench was excavated as a defensive element and a tripod structure was erected to serve as a watchtower. The tepee is one of the architectonic structures associated with the Back to the Land communal movement, which had a spectacular

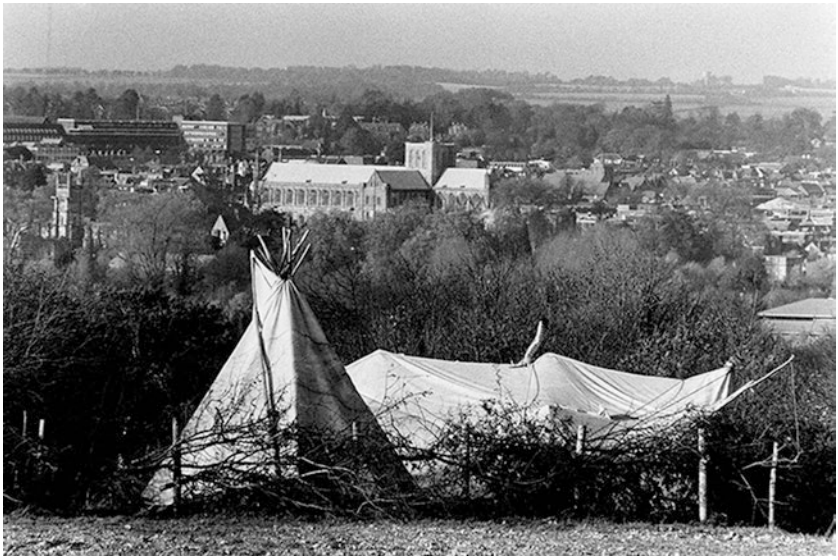

Fig. 2.3 At the beginning of 1992, a camp appeared in the countryside of Twyford Down, opposing the building of a motorway. The occupation's protagonists sought a lifestyle in intimate contact with nature (Image ©Alex MacNaughton)

boom in the 1960s. In the Twyford Down settlement, one can see the continuity of the dreams of that decade through the desire to live near nature, in a model where the scale has been reduced to small social groups (Fig. 2.3).

To begin with, between ten and twenty people camped at Twyford Down: this number would vary according to the different stages of the campaign. Among this small population close communitarian bonds were formed, which McKay relates to the huge physical and emotional risks implicit in acts of sabotage: climbing a tree to prevent its felling or tying oneself to a bulldozer to try to stop its progress.[23] Activists used their physical presence as a tool. Their gestures presented a binary staging in which humans confronted the machine, opposing the natural quality of the human being and the landscape to the mechanism of those cogs and gears which threatened them both.

The feeling of collective identity led the group to describe itself as a tribe, the self-proclaimed Donga Tribe,[24] whose name derives from the archaic local term for the Iron Age paths that cross Twyford Down. By

adopting this name, the activists connected themselves to a whole primitivistic ethos that aspires to a communitarian and nomadic existence closely linked to nature. Beyond protest, the Donga camp was searching for alternative lifestyles,[25] something which was also reflected in the aesthetics adopted by members of the Tribe as well as in the forms of the camp itself,[26] whose creativity was intimately connected to an animistic view of the world.

Alexandra Plows speaks of practical paganism[27]: one of the Donga's anchors was ritual. With the aim of paralysing the building of the motorway they invoked sympathetic magic and decorated their barricades with images, messages, and spells. The parties, chants, and dances were related to the magical thinking which is frequently associated with primitive societies, passed through the filter of New Age hippy-ism. During moments of confrontation, the authorities reacted with bewilderment to symbolic actions that they did not understand.

On 9 December 1992, security guards wearing yellow high-visibility jackets arrived at the camp site and, employing crude violence, confronted the Donga. That day was popularized in the slang of the activists as 'Yellow Wednesday'. Another powerful image was created on 4 July 1993, when about 1500 people broke into the construction area. Even though the call was to stage collective lament for destroyed nature, once there, the crowd joined hands and danced.[28] Again, the act of trespass is connected to the dreamed remembrance of common land. Construction of the motorway had already started and the excavated zone revealed a deep layer of white chalk.

Although the actions at Twyford Down originally involved a very small number of people, they had the sympathy of a significant section of public opinion and the growing support of very different social groups. The events involving the Donga were the first of a wave of campaigns in a new phase of the anti-roads movement. A repertoire of action, which to a large extent came from Earth First! and the Donga, now became commonplace: camping, chaining oneself to machinery, and making tree houses turned into frequently deployed practices.[29]

In 1995, the creation of fourteen interconnected tree settlements began in Newbury.[30] That same year, the first urban campaign of the anti-roads movement started in London, where the strategies were replicated, adapting themselves to an urban environment. The protest camps situated in beautiful landscapes transformed into occupations of the public space.

The Campaign Against the M11 Motorway

Homes, not roads![31]

In 1993 work began on the M11 motorway.[32] Its construction involved not only the felling of a hundred-year-old wood but also the demolition of many homes in the districts of Leytonstone, Leyton, and Wanstead, forcibly displacing their inhabitants (Fig. 2.4). An explicitly social dimension had now joined with ecological protest.

As had become customary, a legal battle preceded the use of direct action. The story is familiar: a group of people connected to the countercultural world arrived in September 1993 with the start of the motorway construction work. This campaign was named 'No M11' and between 1993 and 1994 it went through various phases and moments of intense activity. The participants built defensive elements and carried out effective media work, through events that had a strong symbolic dimension and which generated extraordinarily powerful images.

The actions started around a 250-year-old tree. Neighbours and activists started to defend the chestnut tree on George Green in Wanstead. The gesture of a sympathizer who sent a letter to a house that had been built

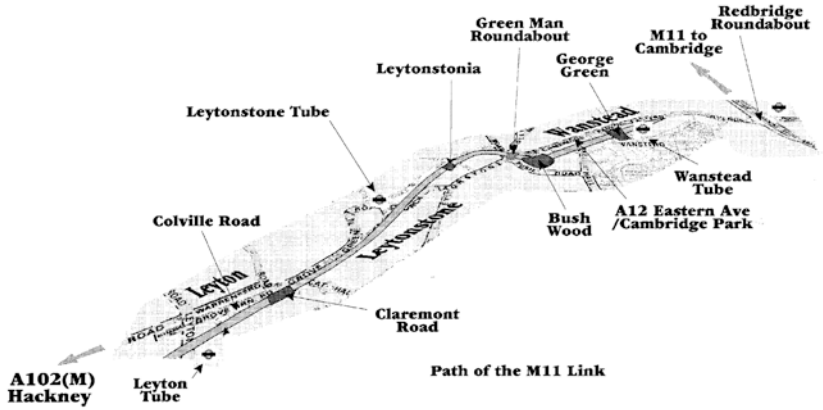

Fig. 2.4 The construction of the M11 motorway involved the demolition of parts of the London districts of Wanstead, Leyton, and Leytonstone. From 1993, the No M11 campaign translated the strategies of the anti-roads movement to an urban setting (Mapped by Kate Evans, courtesy of the author)

in its branches ended up creating a legal precedent. The activists argued successfully in the courts that the tree constituted a home, making an eviction notice necessary in order to be able to carry out the felling of the tree.[33] When it was eventually cut down, the campaign's reach was extended across the neighbourhood and the surrounding areas.

The route of the future motorway went through some 300 houses with their paved streets.[34] As well as setting up the customary camps and building tree houses, activists now squatted in the buildings and on the pavements.[35] Four large houses were proclaimed as the 'Independent Free Area of Wanstonia'.[36] A small moat symbolically marked the exit from Great Britain and the entrance to this 'republic' where meetings, exhibitions, and dinners were held. Between January and February 1994 mock passports were issued, the joke going to the extreme of sending a letter to the United Nations seeking recognition as an independent country.[37] These actions were framed within the context of micro-nationalism, where small plots of territory proclaim themselves sovereign nations. Here, meaning oscillates between hyperbolic gesture and pragmatic strategy.[38]

When the eviction of Wanstonia took place, the houses were protected by barricades. Many activists moved across the roofs of the homes by means of an internal communication system composed of small ladders. Some stayed still, chained to the chimneys or to concrete blocks that they had added to the rooftops.[39] One of the trees housed a telephone (which became known as the 'tree phone'), and at all times there was someone with a video camera to record the protestors' own version of events.[40] These ways of proceeding were repeated in later evictions during the No M11 campaign.[41]

Operation Roadblock started on 15 March, as a programme of daily direct action which lasted for six weeks. To facilitate its organization, more telephones had been placed in the trees to call those who might be interested in taking part. About 2,000 people turned up. The recent arrivals were given a brief training in sabotage work. Among them was John Jordan, for whom this was a transformative moment:

> On an early morning in 1994, I climbed over a wall topped with shards of broken glass and everything changed. For the first time I threw my body in the way of a bulldozer (…) Suddenly live art meant something completely different—the pragmatic collided with the poetic, the performative with the political. Placing my body directly in the cogs of the machine, as a point of resistance in the flow of power, was not just playful but felt deeply effective.[42]

As other artists had done earlier, John Jordan retired from art after its (revolutionary) realization in the field of life.[43] Jordan's move from performance to direct action constitutes a coherent evolution: while performance emerges in relation to a crisis in *artistic* representation, which questions whether the mimetic arts can truly grasp reality, direct action concerns a crisis in *political* representation, which questions whether professional politicians can mediate the desires of the population.

In the face of this lack of belief in representative systems, George McKay speaks of the rise of 'DIY culture'.[44] This has three forms of expression: the creation of alternative media (fanzines, videos, internet platforms, and networks), the production or reclamation of space (squatted houses, protest camps, and any other attempt at creating an Autonomous Zone), and direct action.[45] For John Jordan, the latter kind of intervention represents the ultimate performance.

On the perimeter of the M11, while the authorities tried to clear one zone, work on building the motorway started in another. There, activists dodged guards and climbed cranes.[46] Squatting, meanwhile, continued. During the month of October, a group of houses was declared to constitute the 'State of Euphoria', and, until June, Leyton Wood was claimed as 'Leytonstonia'. Although these acts delayed the works, almost the entire area had been cleared one year after the start of the dissident campaign.

Claremont Road became the last bastion of resistance. Comprising thirty Victorian houses, the road had been completely squatted during November.[47] In these final moments, it seemed clear that the motorway would be built and that those who opposed it would be evicted sooner or later. Nonetheless, for many people the dissident enclave represented an end in itself, whose relevance surpassed the initial objective of hampering the construction of the motorway. In the space planned for the road, a dissident community sprouted. For the *Aufheben* journal, the most relevant thing was its 'climate of autonomy, disobedience and resistance', which it said, pointed 'to the way a whole society could live'.[48]

In Claremont Road, an artists' house was set up, along with two cafes, a stage, a bicycle workshop, and an information point. Near to a gable roof, at the top of a wall, a mock publicity poster was hung parodying the aesthetics of estate agents. Its text announced: 'Welcome to Claremont Road—ideal homes. Working towards a better world.' The sign was more

than a joke: this piece reveals the utopian will of the squatted enclave which, from inside London itself, experimented with a system based on the inexistence of formal norms. More than an anarchist site, this was a profoundly anarchic social space, in which visual creation took on a great importance.

The Utopian Creativity of Claremont Road

> The street itself was art.[49]

Prior to 1994, the population of squatters and artists in the street had grown, encouraged by the fall in prices that preceded the plans for demolition. In 1994, the participants of the No M11 campaign collectively turned Claremont Road into a huge inhabitable installation.

The walls of the houses were painted and the rooms were filled with elements that made the space coherent with its new meaning as an activist environment. The urban fragment was resignified in order to make it part of a new symbolic universe which many participants referred to as a Temporary Autonomous Zone or TAZ, alluding to anarchist writer Hakim Bey's concept.[50] A TAZ is an anarchist environment that does not seek permanence but maintains its emancipatory purity by continually changing its location. According to Bey, the Autonomous Zone has certain advantages over traditional revolution:

> [The TAZ] can provide the quality of enhancement associated with uprising without necessarily leading to violence and martyrdom. The TAZ is like an uprising which does not engage directly with the State, a guerrilla operation which liberates an area (of land, of time, of imagination) and then dissolves itself to reform itself elsewhere/elsewhen, *before* the State can crush it.[51]

In Claremont Road the ground was decorated and sculptures multiplied, mostly made from assembled objects. Small houses were built in the treetops (Fig. 2.5), from whose branches hung a variety of elements, such as mannequins, cloths, and even television sets. Modifying the aspect of the existing architecture, walls, windows, and pavements were covered with murals, graffiti, painted papers, and stencils (Figs. 2.6 and 2.7). Artistic activity abounded in a space where there were no limitations. For

Fig. 2.5 Small houses were built among the branches of the trees, referring to a childhood universe of play and refuge (Image by Maureen Measure, courtesy of the author)

Fig. 2.6 The fronts of the Victorian houses were adorned with graffiti, stencils, and paintings, which resulted in a complex intervention that changed the meaning of the street. Here the bricked-up window is 'opened' with a mural that evokes a homelike scene (Image by Maureen Measure, courtesy of the author)

Fig. 2.7 The mural of this house, situated next to the already demolished area, seems to imagine fictitious wild horses gambolling among the remains of civilization (Image by Maureen Measure, courtesy of the author)

John Jordan, this explosion of collective creativity is related to the very idea of social change:

> For me, a revolutionary situation is that where everybody can follow their passions and creativity without any coercion [… In Claremont Road] anybody could have a passion and apply their creativity to it, making it tangible. It didn´t matter if these people considered themselves 'artists' or anything else.[52]

In the street, aesthetic gesture and tactical action were intimately related and direct action had its correlation with artistic practice. One example is that of recycling based on sabotage: the mechanical pieces and construction materials that had been stolen from the work areas during direct action were reused in an 'artistic' way. The neo-Luddism[53] of attacking the machines was rounded off with a creative use of the 'loot'. Rubble, bricks, and mechanical pieces were turned into sculptures. The aesthetic of some of these creations recalled artistic currents that had their origins in Dadaism—such as British pop art and new realism—where the waste from consumer society was accumulated and hybridized. These aesthetics arrived at the counterculture through their influence on punk.

The vast chess board painted on the street used bits of machinery as chess pieces for an ironic game that suggested tactics of attack, diversion, attraction, or blocking and which could be seen as a metaphor for the struggle against the State and Capital. Playfulness became a primordial element within a hedonistic environment, where people met their friends and went to parties. Contrasting with acts of destructive sabotage, productive activity in the street was fundamentally dedicated to creating sculptures, playing music, giving concerts, dancing, and constructing barricades. Conventional work had been eliminated and in its place there was a contemplative and festive existence, sprinkled with the 'adventure' of direct action and inevitable confrontation with the police.

One of the first things that the activists did was to pull down all the fences that separated the gardens. This gesture turned the whole street into common ground, making it completely accessible. When the weather started to get warmer, the space was closed to motorized traffic.

In Claremont Road, the car became a symbol of the type of society that was being fought against, as it was the element which directly justified the construction of motorways such as the M11. Several vehicles were modified to create iconic images that prefigured a world where these machines

Fig. 2.8 In line with the zebra crossing, a car has been painted in black and white stripes. In this way it is converted into its exact opposite: a pedestrian zone (Image by Maureen Measure, courtesy of the author)

would become mere sculptural material (Fig. 2.8).[54] One of the most emblematic was a green car with the words *Rust in Peace* written on its side.[55] Its whole upper part was covered with plants: after the death of the car, rusty vehicles would be filled with flowers (Fig. 2.9).

Freed from fumes and the risk of being run over, the street was transformed into a place for everyday life (Fig. 2.10). The interior elements of the houses were turned out onto the pavement, and the furniture was arranged in imitation of its location within the homes. The ordinary interior became exterior, converting the tarmac into a place to live. With their tables, armchairs, and sofas, these urban installations highlighted the removal of the separation between the public and the private.[56] People slept outside, resting on sofas in front of the squatted houses where others were living communally.

On the outside of the buildings, a mural representing a daisy chain united the fronts of all the houses (Fig. 2.11). The activist and cartoonist

Fig. 2.9 With the phrase *Rust In Peace* written on its side, this manipulated car plays on the words 'Rest in Peace'. The sculpture evokes a world without cars where flowers can grow on their mechanical remains (Image by Maureen Measure, courtesy of the author)

Kate Evans speaks of how this painting constituted one of the first gestures of reclaiming the street.[57] This floral connection echoed the hippy movement and one can relate it to the desire for a communitarian life. The representation of the chain of flowers had a parallel inside the houses, where a tunnel was created through all of the walls: although the holes were made to enable activists to chain themselves to the walls to obstruct attempts at eviction, they also spoke of the search for a shared intimacy, perforating the barriers that separate us from each other.

Nonetheless, Claremont Road was no more than a row of squatted houses in a small road lined with several trees. Surrounding it was the space left by the demolition, a wasteland scattered with rubble. This isolation created a strong image and a powerful metaphor, suggesting the construction of a new world which emerges from the ruins created by capitalism. The idea recalls old paintings which show the Holy Family

Fig. 2.10 The arrangement of the furniture imitates typical domestic settings and is reminiscent of children playing at being a family and having a house. Its presence blocks the street and allows people to live outdoors (Image by Maureen Measure, courtesy of the author)

happily installed among the broken remnants of Roman buildings, symbolizing the end of paganism. Here the new emerged from the remains of the old, as grass grows in the cracks of a building or plants take root amid the gears of a rusting car. But, in spite of the beauty of some of its symbolism, in practice Claremont Road was far from being an idyllic place.

John Jordan claims that 'if Utopia is a kind of map, Claremont Road would be in its wild edge. In the wild and unexplored edge of Utopia.'[58] The artist speaks of a strong presence of drugs in the street and of several deaths from heroin overdoses. The enclave which emerged from the protest had generated an environment of total liberty and flagrant dissent. Jordan indicates that one of the problems was that the explosion of creativity which took place in Claremont Road was not accompanied by a consciousness of collective responsibility.[59] In various ways, it was a difficult and tough space, whose functioning lacked the articulated perfection that we associate with the 'good place'.

Fig. 2.11 The floral garland that united a group of houses displays the hippy references that characterize 'New Age' culture. The mural had a parallel inside, where a tunnel pierced the walls and provided an opening to which people chained themselves during the eviction process (Image by Maureen Measure, courtesy of the author)

This complex and contradictory environment was not made for contemplation; it was a place for events of an ever-greater theatrical nature. During the summer there were parties every Sunday, attended by people who would not normally participate in a protest.[60] The leading role played by electronic rhythms, related to the height of the rave scene, recalls Hakim Bey's account of the musical organization of the TAZ. For their creative and political effervescence, the summer months at Claremont Road were called a 'Festival of Resistance'. However, the biggest celebration took place in winter, at the time of the eviction. It was at this point when the more aggressive dimensions of the 'works of art' at Claremont Road were activated. Filled with earth, rubble, and concrete, most of the sculptures had also been conceived to act as barricades. The aesthetic elements showed their practical effectiveness during a brief period when a strong mix of intensity, pathos, and spectacle was displayed.

The Spectacle of Eviction

> Then the if's and but's and would-be scenarios became irrelevant. First one riot van, then another and another, and another and another. The stream of police vehicles was incredible; this was real and it was happening now. Before the cheers could start someone had turned the sound system on the tower on. The bailiffs were greeted by hundreds of roof top protesters and full-on in your face rave. The atmosphere was incredible.[61]

On 26 November at two o'clock in the afternoon, 700 policemen, 400 security guards, and 300 bailiffs arrived at Claremont Road. The activists greeted them with welcoming shouts.[62]

Thus began the process of expelling from the street some 500 people, who responded by deploying a whole series of artefacts and methods of resistance. Many seemed to be lying down on the ground, on top of mattresses and displaying an attitude of indifference. However, they had their arms attached to the ground with cement and they had to be dug up with violence and noisy machines. Others took refuge in four underground bunkers, whose entrance was sealed with earth. It was necessary to enter with shovels in order to remove them, one by one. However, most of the protesters were situated above ground level, involved in a spectacular system of tactical weightlessness.

From the classic avant-garde movements such as constructivism, passing through works of the second half of the twentieth century such as Yves Klein's joyful *Jump into the Void*, art has dreamed of overcoming the primary attachment which prevents us from raising ourselves above the earth. At Claremont Road, activists created an overhead layer made of nets and bridges which connected the rooftops and the trees. The ensemble, of great beauty, also had a practical use: those on high were separated in an effective way from the guards below. The nets made it possible to move around the street, far away from the police, and connected the various people in a kind of collective body of resistance. Martin, who took part in the campaign, indicated their fundamental importance:

> The nets were a major success. Supplies were coming in & people could go up & down the whole street on the nets … The nets connected everything, we started loosing [*sic*] when the nets went—we were suddenly individuals not connected.[63]

At an earlier stage, activists had started building small wooden towers. After seeing their utility against police incursions, the protestors decided to make a larger one. Soon after the eviction began, the inhabitants of Claremont Road stole a mass of scaffolding pieces, connecting them up to create an impressive structure. Painted in bright colours, 'Dolly's Tower' was some thirty metres high and became an icon of the protest (Figs. 2.12 and 2.13).

In its origins, the idea seems to have come from a children's book where the hero, threatened by building constructors, escapes by fleeing through a tower that he has erected on the roof of his self-constructed house.[64] Like this character, the activists climbed up high to get away from the guards. This system of tree houses, nets, towers, and bridges that we find in Claremont Road lends the political event the purity of childhood dreaming. Its arboreal lattice is reminiscent of the world of the free, flying children of Peter Pan's Neverland.[65]

Here there is also an implicit affirmation of moral superiority, of situating oneself above the other. And at this time, when it was clear that the eviction would be effective, the objective was to win even while losing: demonstrating conviction, the obstinacy of 'being right'. Appropriating the eviction operation, the activists converted it into a spectacle that, transmitted by the media, gave visibility to their cause. In spite of the cold, journalists also climbed up to the top part of the buildings to gain a better position for filming the 'battle' that was taking place.

While the police were digging out people or tearing at the roofs with cranes known as 'cherry pickers', rave music blasted out from the tower. Justin describes it thus:

> They kicked in with The Prodigy: 'WHAT WE ARE DEALING WITH HERE IS A TOTAL LACK OF RESPECT FOR THE LAW'. Then three hundred and fifty people started dancing! […] There was all these police and you could just see the confusion on their faces. That total defiance, and the theatre of it all: they were there with their fucking big sticks and we were dancing.[66]

The song and its repetitive electronic bass rhythms was a provocation against a recently approved law which criminalized both rave parties and acts of civil disobedience.[67] When the authorities cut the electricity to the street, the people below shouted 'power to the tower'. Soon afterwards, the sound started to reverberate again, the electrical current arriving

Fig. 2.12 As the eviction drew near, the inhabitants of Claremont Road erected 'Dolly's Tower' which, as in the children's story *The House that Beebo Built*, emerged from the top of a roof (Image by Maureen Measure, courtesy of the author)

Fig. 2.13 During the eviction, activists fled from the police by clambering up to the layer above the street. Meanwhile, electronic music coming from the Tower could be heard (Image by Maureen Measure, courtesy of the author)

through a tunnel (nicknamed 'Vicky') which had been dug by the activists. The music continued to thunder from above. A cage, at the top of Dolly's Tower, held a small group of people.

On 1 December 1994, Phil McLeish, the last person on the tower, was brought down. The police operation had lasted five days, costing some £6 million.[68] Certain commentators have suggested an operatic reading, which would come to complete the realization of the *Gesamtkunstwerk* [total work of art]. For Justin, 'Claremont Road was opera, dramatic opera.' According to him, one of the meanings of activism is that it succeeds in bringing 'a thousand people to watch a scene':

> We bring all these people in to watch. We bring coppers, we bring security guards, bailiffs, TV crews, to see something that they wouldn't see otherwise. They've got to get their heads around it afterwards.[69]

The M11 motorway was opened in 1999. Claremont Road no longer exists. It cannot be demonstrated that the abandonment of the road-building projects by the New Labour government, which took office in 1997, was specifically related to the No M11 campaign. But it does seem plausible to consider this campaign, together with the rest of the anti-roads movement's activities, as important elements within a wider process of reconsidering models for managing transport. In terms of the history of social movements, many testimonies relate the occupation of Claremont Road to the illegal parties organized by the group Reclaim the Streets in the following years.[70] However, the later events involved an evolution more than a continuity. Jordan speaks of the emancipatory importance of accepting endings:

> I think it is a sort of acceptance of death. One could get into deeper reflections about capitalism as a fear of death, and the need to stop this fear in order to overcome this system.[71]

To the factors which conditioned creativity at Claremont Road one can add its consciously ephemeral nature. That perhaps made the event more intense, perhaps more precarious. Probably both. However, every ending is also a beginning.

Notes

1. Slogan of the anti-roads movement.
2. Platform is an artistic group founded in 1983 which combines 'art, activism, education and investigation'. See its website: http://platformlondon.org [Consulted: 06/09/2015].
3. Lecture by John Jordan, in *Cómo acabar con el mal* [*How to End Evil*], Barcelona, 2012.
4. The work is entitled *Tree of Life, City of Life: The Tent Project* and formed part of Common Ground's *Tree of Life* project at the Royal Festival Hall in London. This work by Platform was 'aimed at diagnosing the state of the biological metabolism of a section of the city'. See: http://old.platform-london.org/otherprojects.asp#tree [Consulted: 06/09/2015].
5. Earth First! is an ecologist direct-action and advocacy group which emerged in the USA in 1980, inspired in some respects by Edward Abbey's novel *The Monkey Wrench Gang* (Salt Lake City: Dream Garden Press, 1999) [the first edition was published in 1975]. When other independent groups emerged in various countries Earth First! intensified its libertarian

focus. The British faction was formed in 1990 and put a greater emphasis on social ecology, from positions aligned with anarchism.

6. George McKay, *Senseless Acts of Beauty: Cultures of Resistance since the Sixties* (London–New York: Verso, 1996), 128.
7. The causes of Thatcher's resignation were complex. As well as the fall in her popularity as a result of the Poll Tax, analysis tend to highlight internal conflicts within her own party caused by her posture on Europe.
8. Richard Sadler, 'Roads to Ruin', *The Guardian*, 13 December 2006, 11. Available at: http://www.guardian.co.uk/society/2006/dec/13/guardiansocietysupplement3 [Consulted: 06/09/2015].
9. See, for instance, Barbara Epstein's text about the organizational forms of the anti-nuclear movement in the USA: Epstein, 'The Politics of Prefigurative Community', in Stephen Duncombe, *Cultural Resistance Reader* (London–New York: Verso, 2002), 333–47.
10. On 5 December 1981, a group of women called Women for Life on Earth came together to try to debate the decision to station cruise missiles at Greenham Common. After their proposal for dialogue was rejected, they set up camp. See the website of The Guardian's Greenham Project, which collates testimonies, press cuttings, video, and photographs: http://www.yourgreenham.co.uk [Consulted: 06/09/2015].
11. *New Age* is a term used to discuss a supposed astrological 'new age', the Age of Aquarius, which would be characterized by peace and prosperity. This belief in the New Age is associated with a spiritual syncretism, whose origins are linked to 1960s counterculture and the mysticism of the hippie movement.
12. 'Records of Greenham Common Women's Peace Camp (Yellow Gate)', *The National Archives*. Available at: http://discovery.nationalarchives.gov.uk/details/rd/d625b55a-e807-4729-9d8c-087c918dbaff [Consulted: 06/09/2015].
13. This expression comes from the account of one of the activists. See the video and photographs of these actions at http://www.yourgreenham.co.uk [Consulted: 06/09/2015].
14. In *Utopia*, Thomas More refers to the process of enclosing land that England was experiencing at that time. Karl Marx speaks of this type of practice as a process of 'primitive accumulation', which preceded the development of capitalism. Writers such as Silvia Federici, however, consider that primitive accumulation is not an antecedent of capitalism but rather forms part of it: capitalism constantly needs to grow in order to be able to survive as a system, and for this it is necessary that, every once in a while, a few appropriate the resources which had previously belonged to the collective.

15. As well as the 'natural' obstacles presented by living outdoors, with few resources and having to put up with the rigours of the weather, there was also police repression, often violent, and arrests took place at various times.
16. This claim refers to the British context. McKay, *Senseless Acts*, 130.
17. The success was clearly at a very local level: neither world peace nor the disappearance of American bases from foreign countries was achieved.
18. Alexandra Plows, who took part in the campaign, indicates the relative chronological proximity of the period of greatest activity at Greenham Common and the emergence of the Twyford Down protest. For this writer, 'Greenham is one of the most tangible links in the context of the diffusion of repertoires from previous mobilisation cycles.' See Alexandra Jane Plows, 'Praxis and Practice: The "What, How and Why" of the UK Environmental Direct Action (EDA) Movement in the 1990s', doctoral thesis, University of Bangor, School of Social Sciences, 2002, 42–3. Available on the university's online catalogue at iol.ie/~mazzoldi/toolsforchange/afpp/plowsphd.rtf [Consulted: 06/09/2015].
19. The residents of the area who had taken part in the legal campaign supported the countercultural activists, resulting in some meetings between extremely different social groups and ideological positions. See Simon Winchcombe's documentary, *The Secret Life of the Motorway: The End of the Affair*, United Kingdom, 2007.
20. George McKay speaks of how the New Age travellers were problematic not only for the authorities but also for many people in the countercultural context. The travellers often generated conflicts and destroyed the places where they had temporarily installed themselves. See McKay, *Senseless Acts*, 45–71.
21. Alexandra Plows, 'Eco-philosophy and Popular Protest: The Significance and Implications of the Ideology and Actions of the Donga Tribe', *Alternative Futures and Popular Protest*, vol. 1, Manchester, 1995, no page numbers. Cited by McKay, *Senseless Acts*, 137.
22. The idea of the permanent settlement seems to be related to members of Earth First! See Winchcombe, *Secret Life*.
23. McKay, *Senseless Acts*, 134–48. Some of the forms of acting are connected with protests against tree felling in Australia and North America.
24. It is curious to see how this group invents an *ex novo* indigenism, vis-à-vis indigenous people's movements that are fighting for their rights in various parts of the world.
25. If some of those who took part in the campaign at Twyford Down were New Age travellers, others adopted this lifestyle after the camp, thereby closing the circle. Alexandra Plows, interview with the author, 12/04/2012.

26. The New Age travellers had a direct relationship with the peace camps: during the summer of 1982, one of their convoys of caravans passed by the Greenham Common Peace Camp, and then started to call itself the Peace Convoy.
27. McKay, *Senseless Acts*, 147.
28. See Nicholas Schoon, 'Twyford Down Protesters Invade Motorway Site', *The Independent*, 5 July 1993. Available at: http://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/twyford-down-protesters-invade-motorway-site-nicholas-schoon-reports-on-how-a-mass-trespass-by-activists-turned-a-requiem-into-a-party-1483038.html [Consulted: 06/09/2015].
29. Various tactics came from the experience of Australian environmentalism. On this context, see Verity Burgmann and Hans A. Baer, *Climate Politics and the Climate Movement in Australia* (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 2012).
30. In the UK, some of the best-known campaigns took place in Newcastle (1993), Salisbury Hill (1994), Blackburn (1995), Glasgow (1996), Berkshire (1996–7), and Exeter (1997).
31. Slogan of the No M11 campaign, related to a 1970s slogan, 'Homes before roads'.
32. The complete official name of this road was the A12 Hackney to M11 Link Road.
33. Using the letters sent to the tree on George Green, a book called *Dear Tree* was published. The defence of trees as homes became a tactic of the anti-roads movement that was repeated time and time again.
34. One of the activists, named Justin, calculated that of the 300 houses, 'for at least half of them there was some kind of resistance to the eviction'. Another participant, called Cathy, recalls: 'They'd evict a house, put in security guards, and then the next day come and trash it': in Kate Evans, *Copse: The Cartoon Book of Tree Protesting* (London: self-published, 1998, no page numbers). When the neighbours had been moved out and the houses left empty, the squatters snuck into the buildings and set themselves up inside.
35. If the Dongas were linked to the New Age travellers and their erratic countryside nomadism, here there is a clear link with the squatter movement, which appropriates buildings, thereby denouncing property speculation and questioning town planning. The strategy of occupying a space in order to protect it had been used on many occasions. For instance, in Amsterdam between 1972 and 1975, houses that were threatened by the building of an underground railway line were occupied. Also in the 1970s, resisting urban 'modernization' plans, buildings in the old part of the same city were occupied. The wave of occupations in West Berlin in 1979–80 started as a way to save buildings that were going to be demolished.

36. Micro-nationalism and self-determination were recurrent elements within the anti-roads movement: see McKay, *Senseless Acts*, 156. See also Table 23.1 ('Direct Action Campaigns Against the M11 Link Road') which Beverly Butler attached to her text about the material culture of Claremont Road: 'The Tree, the Tower and the Shaman', in Graham Harvey (ed.), *Shamanism: A Reader* (London–New York: Routledge, 2003), 384.
37. In reply to this letter, the United Nations stated that self-determination required the recognition of other countries. For a while, there was an attempt to get various African countries to consider Wanstonia as a nation.
38. Given the 'ludic' character of the passports, another possible reference could be the classic British comedy film from 1949, *Passport to Pimlico*, in which the London district of Pimlico, near Victoria station, declares independence.
39. The lock-ons were concrete blocks with a hole in them that enabled people to chain or tie themselves to the blocks with handcuffs, padlocks, or lengths of rope. Their use significantly complicated the process of eviction. For more on this element of activist design, see Gavin Grindon and Catherine Flood (eds.), *Disobedient Objects* (London: V&A Publishing, 2014).
40. The campaign against the M11 represented a defining moment in terms of activist video filming. In 1994, Small World Media, later known as Undercurrents, emerged as a producer of counter-information videos which would play an important role in the following years.
41. To evict activists from just four houses involved some 700 police, 200 security guards, and 40 bailiffs, in an operation which cost £200,000.
42. John Jordan, transcript of the talk 'Deserting the Art Bunker', in *Live Cultures: Performance and the Contemporary*, London, Tate Modern, 29 March 2003. Available at: http://www.nettime.org/Lists-Archives/nettime-l0304/msg00016.html [Consulted: 06/09/2015].
43. Referring to French artist Jean-Jacques Lebel, Claire Bishop points out: 'It is telling that after May '68 Lebel ceased to make Happenings, considering them to have been achieved in the occupations, barricades and protests; the avant-gardist dream of turning art into life via a collective creative experience had (for him) finally been realised.' See Claire Bishop *Artificial Hells* (London–New York: Verso, 2012), 103.
44. See George McKay, *DiY Culture: Party and Protest in Nineties Britain* (London–New York: Verso, 1998).
45. Lyman Tower Sargent claims that the places referred to by Bey and McKay 'in retrospect, […] can be called utopian because they temporarily produced what the participants saw as a better life however briefly'. Lyman Tower Sargent, *Utopianism: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 48.

46. This procedure is known as 'digger-diving' or 'bulldozer-diving'. One of the activists, called Sean, remembers it thus: '[w]hat they did at the M11 was they cleared one bit while working on another. You were sitting around bored waiting for them to evict you, so you went out and trashed the machines, or sat on some machinery. They provided lots of exciting things to do. We did large amounts of site fence jumping and bulldozer diving during the day, and at night we'd be barricading and/or wandering around with balaclavas on our faces.' Quoted in Evans, *Copse*.
47. According to Justin: 'It started off as just a few individual houses and then somebody decided at some point that we were going to try and take the whole street.' Cathy, another participant, tells how 'they started demolishing Fillebrooke Road, and Grove Green Road was in tatters, Dyers Hall was in tatters, suddenly everybody moved to Claremont Road'. In Evans, *Copse*.
48. See *Aufheben*, 'The Politics of Anti-Road Struggle and the Struggles of Anti-Road Politics: The Case of the No M11 Link Road Campaign', in McKay (ed.), *DiY Culture*, 107. At this level, the local neighbours had become accustomed to activist procedures and to them—according to Kate Evans—'[s]quatting and digger diving became the new way of life'. In Evans, *Copse*.
49. Justin, quoted in Evans, *Copse*.
50. Hakim Bey, *T.A.Z.: The Temporary Autonomous Zone, Ontological Anarchy, Poetic Terrorism* (Brooklyn, Autonomedia, 1985). One often-quoted example of a TAZ is the Burning Man festival in the USA where a group of people live together for a week in an ephemeral city in the Nevada desert.
51. Bey, *T.A.Z.*, 4.
52. John Jordan, interview with the author, 21/11/2011.
53. The Luddites are perhaps the best known of a multitude of groups that confronted the emergence of machinery. Developing in parallel with industrialization, the destruction of machines by textile workers sought to apply pressure on mill owners and to defend artisanal working practices. See, for instance, Kirkpatrick Sale, *Rebels Against the Future: The Luddites and Their War on the Industrial Revolution* (Harlow: Addison Wesley, 1995).
54. This profusion of wrecked cars recalls the half-buried Cadillacs of Ant Farm's *Cadillac Ranch*. It is also reminiscent of the work of the German artist Wolf Vostell who modified cars and made their conventional use impossible.
55. This play on the phrase 'rest in peace' was repeated in certain quarters in 2013 after the death of Margaret Thatcher, the 'Iron Lady'.
56. For Cathy, taking the furniture out into the street was also about saying: '[y]ou are putting us out of our houses!'. See Evans, *Copse*.
57. Evans, *Copse*.

58. Jordan, interview with the author, 21/11/2011.
59. Jordan, interview with the author, 21/11/2011.
60. An activist named 'Jelly' remembers it like this: '[A]ll different types of people would come down. You'd get a lot of nutters, but there was a complete mixture … What I loved was that loads of people had gone there for the so-called 'Wrong Reasons', not political, not trying to save anything; they were there to meet friends or girlfriends, for social reasons maybe, whatever, but they'd *end up* being active.' In Evans, *Copse*.
61. Unknown author, 'M11 Latest News', *SchNEWS* 3, 7 December 1994, no page numbers. The scanned version of this self-published activist newspaper is available at: http://www.schnews.org.uk/archive/pdf/news003.pdf [Consulted: 07/09/2015].
62. Justin recalls that 'everyone was going, "Yay! Here we go. Hooray. This is the beginning."' In Evans, *Copse*.
63. Martin, quoted by Adrian Harris, 'M11 Link Road', *The Green Fuse for Environmental Philosophy, Deep Ecology, Social Ecology, Eco-Feminism, Earth-Centered Spirituality*. Available at: http://www.thegreenfuse.org/protest/m11.htm [Consulted: 07/09/2015].
64. *The House that Beebo Built* is a book written by Janine Ast and Alain Grée, and illustrated by Philipe Fix (London: Paul Hamlyn, 1969). Apparently, it was activist Paul Morotzo who first thought of building the tower.
65. The anti-roads movement often used tactics of great evocative power: underground tunnels were later added to the tree houses, nets, and bridges.
66. In Evans, *Copse*. The song 'Their Law', by the English electronic music group The Prodigy, starts with this phrase. It then continues: 'I'm the law and you can't beat the law. Fuck 'em and their law. Crackdown at sundown.' The Prodigy, *Music for the Jilted Generation*, XL Recordings, 1994. This record was launched in the summer, four months before the evictions at Claremont Road took place.
67. The Criminal Justice and Public Order Act 1994, which will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 3.
68. See Butler, 'The Tree, the Tower and the Shaman', 384. After the great media spectacle, there were some final incidents that were no longer followed so much by the press, but which ensured that the protest continued into 1995: a protest camp called Greenmania was established and the last house, named 'Wanstonia', was squatted.
69. In Evans, *Copse*.
70. Adrian Harris indicates: 'The M11 campaigners invented or rediscovered many of the techniques used & developed by later campaigns; nets, tunnels, concrete lock-on points, "Art Actions", etc.' Harris, 'M11 Link Road': see http://www.thegreenfuse.org/protest/index.htm [Consulted: 07/09/2015].
71. Jordan, interview with the author, 21/11/2011.

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CHAPTER 3

The Reclaim the Streets Protest Parties in London

If I can't dance, it's not my revolution.[1]

> No sign, relic or trace of Claremont Road remains. We always knew that one day all this would be rubble, and this awareness of impermanence gave us immense strength—the impossibility of failure—the strength to move this Temporary Autonomous Zone on to somewhere else. Our festival of resistance could never be evicted. We would continue to transgress the distinction between art and everyday life. We would continue to make every political act a moment of poetry. If we could no longer reclaim Claremont Road, we would reclaim the streets of London.[2]

After the campaign against the M11, John Jordan decided to work as an artist within the activist movements themselves, helping to give *form* to social change. His idea was to use his tools as an artist to create a kind of invisible art,[3] but without explicitly saying that this was what he was doing:

> I slowly melted into a social movement, gave up the label of artist, but kept the weapons of creativity by my side and I soon realised that this was the most powerful, inspiring and socially efficacious context that I could use those weapons in.[4]

J. Ramírez Blanco, *Artistic Utopias of Revolt*, Palgrave Studies in Utopianism, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-71422-6_3

Over the following years, Jordan formed part of a group whose 'style' of taking over the street served to redefine the aesthetics of protest.

Reclaim the Streets (RTS) was created in London in 1992, linked to Earth First![5] During its first year of existence, the group carried out small ecologist actions, such as painting bicycle lanes at night or picketing a car fair. Its members declared themselves to be emphatically 'FOR walking, cycling and cheap, or free, public transport, and AGAINST cars, roads, and the system that pushes them'.[6] On a spring day in 1992, the group brought traffic in London to a halt with a small illegal party in the street. As the police evicted them, they were filmed by cameras, which captured the prophetic warning of one of those detained: 'Protest is gonna get bigger; the car culture is growing constantly! This is just the first stage.'[7] A few months later, the group was dissolved.

However, its members did not stop being active: between 1992 and 1994 many concentrated their energy in the anti-roads movement, first taking part in some of the actions at Twyford Down and then going to the M11 zone.[8] Reclaim the Streets reunited in 1995 to plan new forms of action. Its internal functioning was based on assemblies, with meetings that were open, interesting, and chaotic.[9] The experience of the street parties during the final stage of Claremont Road had radically changed the point of view.[10]

Now, on top of the existing reasons for protest, there was a clear trigger in the shape of a repressive new law—the Criminal Justice and Public Order Act 1994[11]—which took effect on 3 November 1994, just days before the musical eviction of Claremont Road.

The Criminal Justice and Public Order Act involved a drastic reduction in civil liberties. The text penalized collective trespass in areas of private property, simultaneously affecting the tactics of the anti-roads movement, the taking over of buildings by the squatters' movement, a long tradition of free festivals,[12] and the lives of New Age travellers. The existence of this last group was also made more difficult with the removal of the right of nomadic populations to set up camps.

Rave parties—illegal celebrations where people dance to electronic music—were specifically attacked. Gatherings of more than ten people who listened to 'sounds wholly or predominantly characterised by the emission of a succession of repetitive beats'[13] were criminalized. Throughout this document, forms of behaviour linked to British countercultural leisure and political dissidence outside of the party system were converted into criminal offences. Faced with these practices, the police were given increased powers to detain and identify people: they were

permitted to take samples of bodily fluids, and an accused person's right to silence was now eroded so that adverse inferences could be drawn by the courts. Various sources describe how this new legislation had the effect of uniting and politicizing different kinds of 'outsiders' whose lifestyles were under threat.

Radicalizing Rave

> The party, that space beyond normal time.[14]

The writer and activist Naomi Klein points out that the common demand of a wide range of countercultural groups is for 'the right to uncolonized space—for homes, for trees, for gathering, for dancing'.[15] In the mid-1990s, hybrid forms of protest were created, where the party was radicalized and protests were turned into celebrations. Reclaim the Streets channelled these energies, (dis)organizing[16] the regular invasion of urban space with sudden raves that illegally blocked traffic and paralysed business. Between 1995 and 2000 there were dozens of parties which grew, spread, and evolved.

On 14 May 1995, two cars crashed into each other in London. Their drivers, overcome with histrionic rage, got out of their vehicles and started to hit them violently. In reality, it was all theatre. The second-hand cars had been bought especially for the occasion by members of Reclaim the Streets. Placed in the middle of the road, they blocked traffic, leaving the normally busy Camden High Street car-free. The area quickly filled with people and, using electricity generated by the constant pedalling of bicycles, music sound systems burst into life. 'Repetitive rhythms' of rave reverberated and some 300 people threw themselves into dancing in the group's first big party.

Thus arose the modus operandi of occupying urban areas with celebrations that appropriated public space for a few hours. Free food was handed out, toys were given to the children, and banners were displayed which spoke of the changes that had occurred: 'Breathe', 'car free', 'Reclaim the streets!'. Camden Town, an area of London very much devoted to the commercialization of 'alternative' culture, became a place of non-monetary leisure. This fragment of the city temporarily changed its function in a carnivalesque inversion of social order. The absence of authority, the play of children, the giving out of food and toys for free …: the street was transformed into a place to play, eat, drink, and dance, with no money and no permission.

The interruption of motorized transport as an act of collective civil disobedience against the city's traffic norms is related to the street without cars at Claremont Road and also, in a wider sense, to the gatherings of Critical Mass, whose lively and crowded bicycle protests block car traffic.[17] While the anti-roads movement sought to prevent the building of new roads, RTS proposed temporarily blocking those that already existed, thereby sketching the image of a city without cars. The criticism of car culture was a fundamental ideological element in this phase of the collective's life and led to many iconographic elements, such as destroyed cars or small home-made banners which played with the appearance of traffic signals.

In the second party, several tripod structures were placed in the middle of the road. These could be dismantled only by obliging the person sitting on top of them to come down. Thanks to this technique, of Australian origin, some 3000 people danced in Upper Street, in the London borough of Islington, without traffic, on 23 July 1995. In only two months, the attendance of the first street event had grown tenfold.

This number of participants was related to the strong rave scene in the United Kingdom of the 1980s and 1990s which the Criminal Justice Act sought to destroy. RTS combined the neo-Luddite hatred of the car with the technophile love of electronic music, accompanied by the use of drugs made in laboratories.[18] The very organizational methodology used by Reclaim the Streets came from the practice of rave: participants were invited to meet at a precise stop on the London Underground and, once there, a small group led them towards the destination, which was kept secret until the last moment. RTS parties had the novelty of taking place in the heart of the city in a deliberately visible way. Rave became politicized and was celebrated in a provocative manner, challenging the authorities. The rhythms of techno and acid house were heard in surroundings full of slogans, and a triple call to action became famous: 'RECLAIM THE STREETS, FREE THE CITY, KILL THE CAR'.

Fundamental to the idea of subversive leisure is the tradition of countercultural music festivals which emerged in 1960s California. At the end of that decade, the great event of Woodstock took place: between 15 and 17 August 1969, thousands of people enjoyed 'three days of peace and music'. The night before the festival began, participants had cut the fence, breaking the barrier and making the event open and free.[19] Although this kind of celebration was not explicitly political, its practice introduced participants to radically different ways of living a shared experience.

In a parallel way, so-called 'free festivals' appeared in the United Kingdom at the beginning of the 1970s. In 1972, the first Windsor Free Festival set up camp on land belonging to the Crown. As well as the will to come together, play music, and have fun without exchanging money, there was also an explicit intention to reclaim the land through forms of collective enjoyment. An anonymous leaflet recalls some of the later rhetoric of RTS:

> Free festivals are practical demonstrations of what society could be like all the time: miniature utopias of joy and communal awareness rising for a few days from the grey morass of mundane, inhibited, paranoid and repressive everyday existence … the most lively [young people] escape geographically and physically to the 'Never Never Land' of a free festival where they become citizens, indeed rulers, in a new reality.[20]

The Reclaim the Streets parties also sought to create situations which belong to a better place. John Jordan speaks of how the street rave tries to prefigure 'a vision in which the streets of the city could be a system that prioritized people above profit and ecology above economy'.[21] Significantly, the strains of Louis Armstrong's song *What a Wonderful World* issued from the loudspeakers in Upper Street.

During parties like this, people's experience of being is very different from that of their normal lives: conventional norms disappear and people express themselves through dance, playing music, or making artistic interventions on any available surface. Here, the economic system is one of abundance and generosity. For Jordan, this is 'the perfect propaganda for the possible',[22] something which considers the emergence of a world where things are freely exchanged, a world of partying communities, of shared goods and common space.[23]

The magazine *Do or Die* claimed that 'inherent within its praxis—its mix of desire, spontaneity and organization—lie some of the foundations on which to build a participatory politics for a liberated, ecological society'.[24] There is a willingness to explore latent potentialities whose development has been stifled by our society.

During the Upper Street party, an iconic image appeared which expressed the realization of the impossible. A lorry emptied tonnes of sand onto the pavement, creating a situation which inverted the famous slogan of May 1968, '*Sous les pavés, la plage*' ['Under the cobblestones, the beach'].

This scene was created again in one of the British collective's most emblematic celebrations, which took place on 13 July 1996. In London, some 8,000 people danced for nine hours on the M41 motorway, after the surge of adrenaline coming from collectively breaking through a strong police cordon.[25]

The M41 is only about 800 metres long. It is a vestige of the failed project of the Conservative government to surround London with a huge ring of motorways. Dancing there in some way implied a celebration of the triumph of the anti-roads movement after the paralysation of the Roads for Prosperity project. It was also a joyful variation on previous interventions: people were now blocking the road by dancing.

The records of this party show us a floral banner and a giant cloth sun which recall the hippy festivals. The rave scene's connection with psychedelia is very clear, to the point that the late 1980s—when the rhythms of acid house exploded—were declared to be 'the second summer of love'.[26] In the photographs and videos of the M41 celebration, one can observe how the omnipresent legacy of punk mixed with elements of earlier urban tribes and with the newer spirit of electronic music. Once again, the countercultural meeting produced an intense collective artistry, a kind of *art brut* of the party. Although the framework of this celebration was planned in advance,[27] its real essence involved the intervention of both chance events and the creativity of the people who were partying, without any attempt by members of the RTS collective to impose total control.

In this context, spectacle merges with the empowering gestures of direct action. Two stilt-walkers dressed up in eighteenth-century wigs walked along the M41.[28] While the stilt-walkers above played bagpipes, danced, and greeted people, their enormous skirts hid various members of Reclaim the Streets. Using pneumatic drills, they were perforating the asphalt and planting trees in the holes: the music and the general tumult meant that their noise went unheard. If sand on the street in Islington had created a symbolic beach within the city, this action of guerrilla gardening, for Jordan, metaphorically turned the road into a woodland. During this party on the M41, a pink-and-black leaflet was distributed which explicitly referred to the memory of English common land and its enclosure:

> We are about taking back public space from the enclosed private arena. At its simplest this is an attack on cars as a principal agent of enclosure. It's about reclaiming the streets as public inclusive space from the private exclusive use of the car. But we believe in this as a broader principle, taking

> back those things that have been enclosed within capitalist circulation and returning them to collective use as a commons … Under the tarmac, the forest.[29]

During the celebration, people danced on the common land that the party sought to restore. Like many other countercultural groups, RTS invoked dreams of a return to a natural environment. The trees that were planted in the M41 were samples rescued from the century-old wood at Leyton that had been cut down to make way for the M11 motorway. Planting them on another road implied a metaphorical return of nature, coming back to invade the tarmac that had tried to displace it.

Following this 'road rave', a group of dock workers got in touch with Reclaim the Streets. The firm Mersey Docks and Harbour Company (MDHC), which owned and managed the infrastructure and services of the port of Liverpool, had sacked them for backing a picket by workers of the docks company Torside Ltd. In spite of the ideological differences which separated them from the London group, the port workers were fascinated by the great poetical force of the defiant plantation on the M41.[30]

A joint event was held in Liverpool on 28 September 1996 called 'Reclaim the Future'. The participants blocked the port so that not a single ship could enter or leave and they climbed the office building of the Mersey Docks and Harbour Company in a symbolic occupation that echoed an early Earth First! action at that same place. A banner triumphantly fluttered in the breeze from the top of the company's headquarters: it bore the recently created insignia of Reclaim the Streets, which was making its first public appearance.

The flag, a quintessential element of self-determination, emphasized the idea of the Temporary Autonomous Zone. Its diagonal composition could be seen as a version of the classic red-and-black anarchist insignia. The colours black, green, and red respectively allude to the libertarian, ecologist, and socialist roots of the movement. The zigzag motif is like an ascending ray of light which evokes sudden and powerful bursts of electricity, explosions of social protest, and rave.

On 12 April 1997, just before the UK general election that would end eighteen years of Conservative government, Reclaim the Streets issued an explicit call for abstention and incited direct action with the slogan 'Never Mind the Ballots—Reclaim the Streets'. The image of the poster announcing this call for a 'two-day festival of resistance'—Charlie Chaplin

using his body against the machine in *Modern Times*—recalls the tactics of ecological direct action where protestors literally used their own bodies to obstruct construction devices (Fig. 3.1). It also seems to evoke the famous speech by Mario Savio on the steps of Sproul Hall at the University of California, Berkeley on 2 December 1964 in the context of the movement for freedom of expression in US universities:

> There's a time when the operation of the machine becomes so odious, makes you so sick at heart, that you can't take part! You can't even passively take part! And you've got to put your bodies upon the gears and upon the wheels, upon the levers, upon all the apparatus—and you've got to make it stop! And you've got to indicate to the people who run it, to the people who own it—that unless you're free, the machine will be prevented from working at all![31]

The body as a tool for disruption continued to play a leading role in the Reclaim the Streets parties. In 1997, thousands of people ended up dancing in Trafalgar Square, filling one of London's emblematic centres with dancing bodies, banners, and techno rhythms. The triumphal images seemed to belong to a revolutionary world, where the masses proclaim themselves owners of grand squares and revel in their new role. On one of the walls of the National Gallery, a piece of graffiti demanded that cultural goods be treated as something common: 'Art for everybody or for nobody'.

As with most events of this kind, there were less peaceful moments too. Trafalgar Square, the location of many demonstrations, was the place where the violent protests against the Poll Tax had taken place in 1990. In 1997, clashes with the forces of order situated the celebration as an insurrection. The party ended as a riot, with several thousand police officers involved. This day marked a critical point in the criminalization of the events organized by Reclaim the Streets, as during a few hours a group of DJs was accused of attempted murder for driving its van near the police. Violence did not, in fact, contradict the aims of RTS. The British group sought to bring about popular uprising through the party—or, rather, it sought to create parties of revolt. The group reflected on the relationship between these two forms of collective explosion:

> The great moments of revolutionary history have all been enormous popular festivals—the storming of the Bastille, the uprisings of 1848, the Paris Commune, the revolutions of 1917–9, Paris '68. Conversely, popular festivities have always been looked on by the authorities as a problem, whether

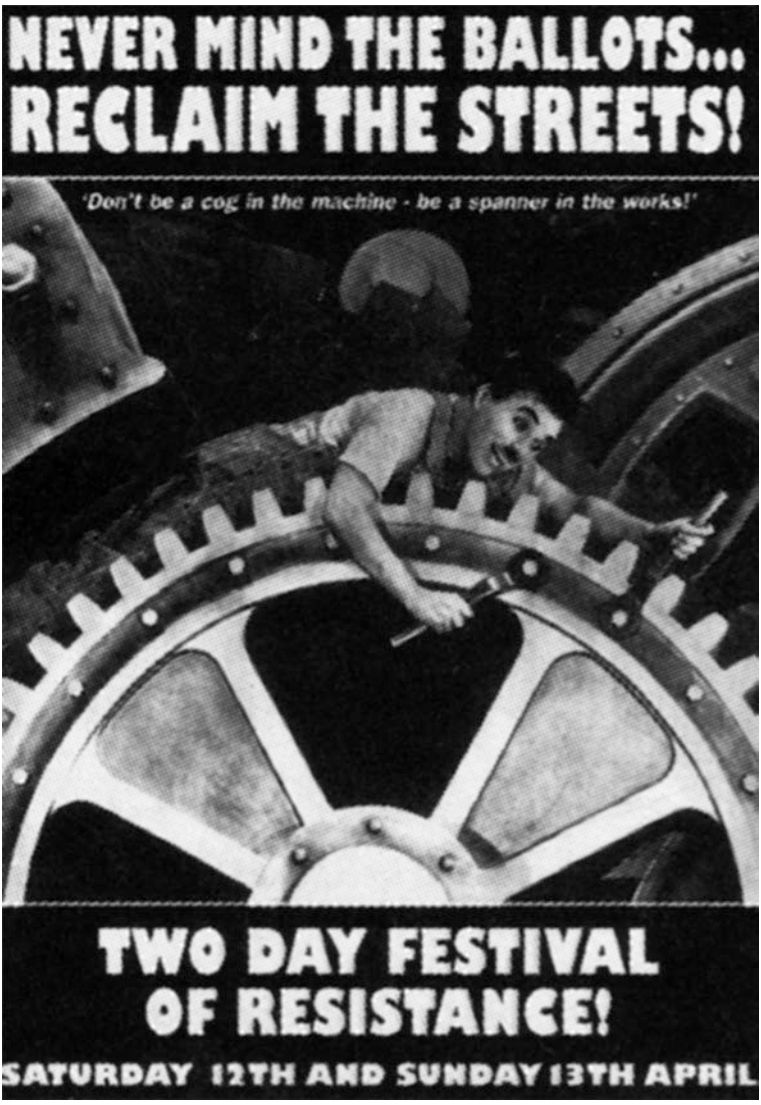

Fig. 3.1 In 1997, an anti-election rave-party was announced with an image taken from the film *Modern Times*. In this film, extreme manufacturing alienation leads the protagonist to place his body in the cogs of the machine (Image courtesy of John Jordan)

> they have banned, tolerated or semi-institutionalised them. Why does power fear free celebration? Could it be something to do with the utopian urges which seize a crowd becoming aware of its own power?[32]

Reclaim the Streets did not define itself as a non-violent group. The destruction of private property and defensive confrontation had a symbolic function for the collective. Indeed, the acronym 'RTS' could be seen as suggesting 'riots'. John Jordan believes in the power of an ambiguous image, somewhere between organizing parties and organizing riots.[33] Both of these activities would continue to grow.

Protest Dances: The Carnival Method

> Against Capital, musical pleasure.[34]

From the very beginning, Reclaim the Streets sought to expand street raves.[35] During the autumn and winter of 1995, across the United Kingdom, celebrations were self-organized independently of the original collective. The name of the group came to designate a practice that was replicated in different places.

In 1997, parties to reclaim the streets started to take place in other countries. Towards the end of the decade, ubiquity gave way to synchronization. In the context of an international dissident movement that was beginning to organize itself, the first global street party was held on 16 May 1998. The second took place a year later: the Carnival Against Capital was launched as an 'international day of action, protest and carnival aimed at the heart of the global economy'. Its sites would be financial centres and banking districts.

The 'original' Reclaim the Streets group organized the London party collectively and through assemblies.[36] This celebration took place in the City of London, the most powerful financial centre in Europe, and one of the areas in the world with most video surveillance. The leaflet that announced the event contained a quotation falsely attributed to the French philosopher Raoul Vaneigem, which claimed that 'to work for delight and authentic festivity is barely distinguishable from preparing for a general insurrection' (Fig. 3.2).[37]

For the day of carnival, masks were made in green, black, red, and gold. Three of the colours relate to the ideological components of Reclaim the Streets that are reflected in the group's flag. Gold refers to the environment in which the party was held: this time they were dancing in the seat

Fig. 3.2 This Reclaim the Streets pamphlet announces the Carnival Against Capital in London in 1999. It contrasts the definitions of 'carnival' and 'capitalism', calling for the celebration of a revolutionary carnival (Image courtesy of John Jordan)

of money, of gold. On the inside of the masks was a text about hiding one's identity (Fig. 3.3):

> Those in authority fear the mask for their power partly resides in identifying, stamping and cataloguing: in knowing who you are. But a Carnival needs masks, thousands of masks … Masking up releases our commonality, enables us to act together … During the last years the power of money has presented a new mask over its criminal face. Disregarding borders, with no importance given to race or colours, the power of money humiliates dignities, insults honesties and assassinates hopes.
>
> On the signal follow your colour / Let the Carnival begin …[38]

The meeting place selected on 18 June was Liverpool Street underground station, where the masks were distributed.[39] Among the thousands of people who turned up were four giant-headed carnival figures, in the

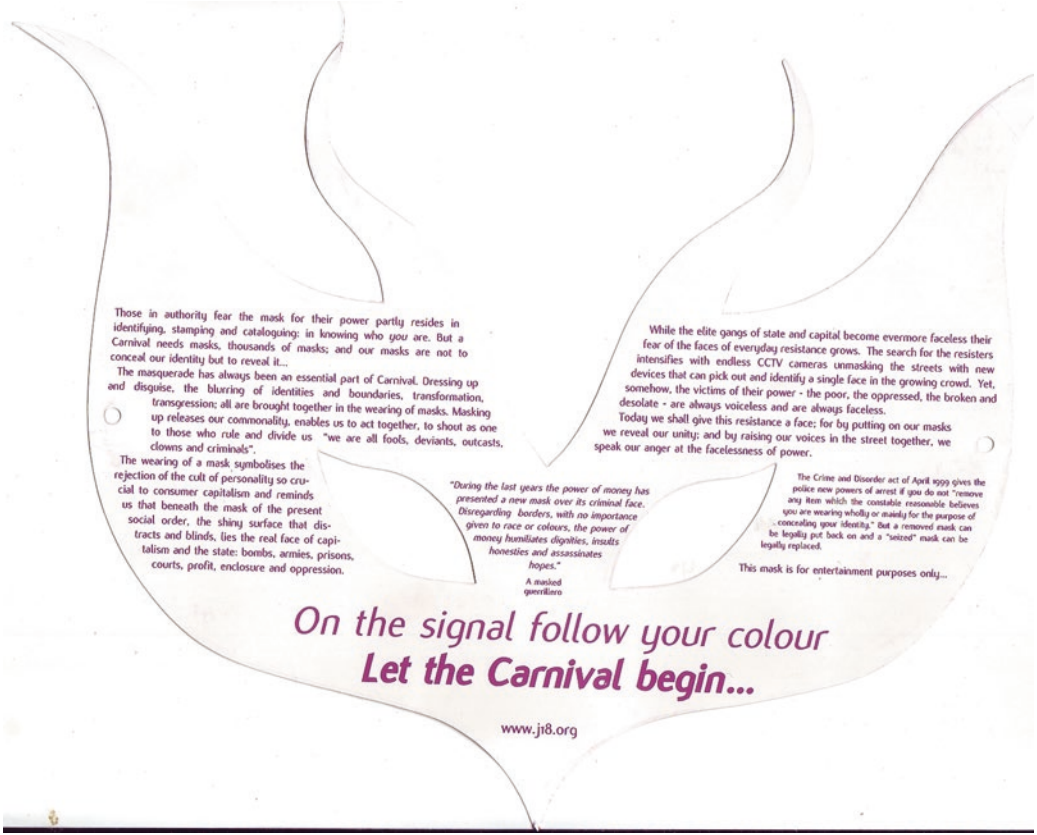

Fig. 3.3 The masks that were handed out during the Carnival had a form that evoked fire. On the inside, a text which praised the hiding of identity gave instructions for the organization of the party: 'On the signal follow your colour' (RTS mask, image courtesy of John Jordan)

same colours as the masks: one was green, another red, the third black, and the fourth golden. When music from the film *Mission: Impossible* started to play, the crowd was supposed to divide itself according to mask colour and follow the corresponding giant-headed figure. But when this moment arrived, the music could not be heard above the general noise, so the activists used flags and set off a firework. The four groups formed themselves in a somewhat chaotic fashion, mixing up their colours: each one followed a different route towards the same place. One of them got lost and improvised its own party at a different location.

In spite of the changes to the original plans, this tactic seemed to achieve its objective of frustrating the system of police vigilance which was receiving contradictory information: 'They are going North', 'they're heading East', 'they're going South' … Thus, security forces did not prevent the demonstrators from reaching their secret final destination, the London International Financial Futures and Options Exchange (LIFFE). The building was surrounded by a multitude enjoying the impunity granted by carnival: many hid their faces to avoid being filmed by the hundreds of surveillance cameras monitoring and recording video clips of this day of partying. However, a large number of these devices had been covered over at the start of the day, the beginning of a whole series of actions designed to shut down the City on a working Friday.

Along the way, several branches of McDonald's were attacked and people danced inside various shops. This was accompanied by the now classic interruption of motorized traffic: the synchronized pedalling of some 700 cyclists from the Critical Mass group impeded the progress of cars. In the City, activists gained access to offices of various banks and other institutions, including NatWest Bank and the auditors KPMG. Although they did not manage to penetrate the commercial areas of the LIFFE headquarters, the building was evacuated for the whole day by the authorities. While demonstrators were entering the spaces of financial power, the street was home to various interventions that added new iconographic elements to the City, altering an aesthetic normally governed by the rhythms of the stock-market trade. Some of the actions had an iconoclastic character. Others were related to imagery of utopia and freedom.

During the day, at the entrance to Liverpool Street underground station, the Food Not Bombs[40] network handed out free food, an action consistent with the best tradition of RTS—plenty for everyone and everything free of charge. Towards four o'clock in the afternoon, a fire hydrant was opened, the idea being to symbolically unearth a river, the Walbrook,

which runs silently beneath the City. While the revellers refreshed themselves in the water, a surge of images was produced that displayed the explosion of liberty and the eroticism of wet bodies. A moment of a couple kissing in this stream of water was photographed. Bringing to light something that flows beneath the earth perhaps evokes the emergence of the hidden, the liberation of the repressed.

It is easy to see John Jordan as one of the people behind this 'constructed situation'. In a way, it was a late echo of one of Jordan's artistic projects with the group Platform before he 'deserted the art world', at a time when he was exploring the idea of making secret art.[41] In 1992, Platform had proposed unearthing a subterranean river that flows invisibly and inaudibly beneath the British capital as part of the project *Still Waters: Reimagining London's Rivers*.[42]

During the carnival, beneath the aquatic torrent, the demonstrators continued to dance. There was live samba and a concert by an anarchist dub-ska-punk group called P.A.I.N. In addition, inside the four giant figures were sound systems that emitted the electronic rhythms of illegal rave as they made their way among the crowd. Rumour had it that even some executives joined in the merriment, and that there was some conflict with other City workers who started throwing champagne glasses. Adding to the confusion, some party-goers had chosen to disguise themselves as City brokers for the carnival day, surrounded by puppets and people covered with all kinds of masks. The images were of joyful and festive revolution, of a new world in microcosm.

The physical occupation of the space was accompanied by an ideological occupation. The environment of skyscrapers dedicated to financial activity was subverted not only by the dancing masses with their masks and disguises. There were also banners hung across the street between buildings, displaying messages such as: 'Don't Speculate, Live!'; 'Road Rave not Road Rage'; 'The Earth is not the Casino of the Rich'; 'Global Ecology not Global Economy'; 'Life before Profit', and 'The Earth is a common treasury for all'.[43] Ne Pas Plier, a French collective which makes banners, posters, and stickers to be distributed at demonstrations, provided exquisitely designed posters with the slogan 'RESISTENCE EXISTENCE':[44] existing and resisting were put forward as related verbs. From its initial fight against car culture, RTS had evolved towards an openly anti-capitalist positioning.

Many individual protestors sprayed graffiti with a wide range of slogans. Unlike the banners and placards, this kind of intervention seeks to

appropriate the space and leave long-lasting marks on walls. Creation and destruction go hand in hand in an act where the intention of generating an image or message coexists with that of attacking the walls of buildings that represent hated institutions.

Many interventions were forms of iconoclasm. One of the most powerful was the bricking up of the LIFFE building. Using cement and concrete blocks that had been brought along specifically for the purpose, a wall one-and-a-half metres high was built to obstruct the main door. The entrance was sealed, producing an image that prefigured a world in which financial entities are blocked. Symbolically, financial speculation had been walled up.

In a more spontaneous manner, a large number of acts of vandalism took place, with windows, cars, and street furniture broken. As with iconoclasm, the power of these acts is symbolic: smashing the windows of a McDonald's restaurant hardly inflicts any real damage on the multinational and its huge profits. What this kind of practice does produce is images of capitalism under threat, making political conflict visible. On the other hand, it also serves to justify repression. On the afternoon of 18 June, riot police arrived, including many mounted policemen.

A big battle with the police took place in the City as the climax of the Carnival. Perhaps the battle with the forces of order is the ultimate iconoclastic act, given that the attack is against people who are living symbols of authority. That day police and demonstrators battled with each other and, according to an RTS press release, forty-six people ended up in hospital.[45] Layered in an iconic palimpsest were scenes that simultaneously evoked war, mutiny, and revolution. The next day these photographs appeared in all the newspapers.

Thus, during the Carnival Against Capital, symbolic activity was situated between iconoclasm (crossing out, covering over) and creative addition (unearthing a river, hanging a banner); between the destructive (breaking things, carrying out violent acts) and the creative (playing music, dancing, painting). It is estimated that some 10,000 people took part in RTS's biggest and most complex party. In London, all the actions planned for this global day of action went ahead so successfully that one member of Reclaim the Streets lamented that they did not go further:

> We'd failed in our under-ambition … Unprepared, we never imagined we could get so close to occupying a trading floor in one of the City's major exchanges … But we'd stopped short of planning for full-scale occupation.[46]

Nonetheless, when this coordinated party took place, the police were already spying on Reclaim the Streets. Only ten people knew the final destination of the LIFFE building and one of these was an undercover police officer. Jim Sutton—real name, Jim Boyling—worked for a Scotland Yard unit that specialized in the surveillance of activists.[47] His personal history, in which he ended up marrying a member of Reclaim the Streets, is particularly significant. His case reveals that the security forces knew in advance what was going to take place, how it would take place, and where. So why, then, did they decide to let it happen?

Perhaps they saw this kind of event as a necessary catharsis. John Jordan, though, thinks that the secret services wanted to observe the new actor on the political scene, and speaks of a recording from a helicopter that was watching events from above. According to his account, in this recording, two voices can be heard: one asks if they should intervene and the other says 'No' but to keep 'watching'.[48] The great show of Reclaim the Streets was a spectacle that was followed with great interest by a flying audience. Perhaps the view from above was looking for indications of what was to come. The success of the Carnival Against Capital was one of the impulses for the demonstrations in Seattle, which had already been called to take place a few months later. These events in the US city would place the protests at the centre of attention for the world's media.

Utopia and Celebration

> I'm bound to stay
> Where you sleep all day,
> Where they hung the jerk
> That invented work
> In the Big Rock Candy Mountains …[49]

Many of the creative elements of the RTS events made reference to a utopian dimension. John Jordan claims that 'with the street party there's always an edge between the political and the aesthetical, between the party and the social change, between pleasure and politics', with 'a border which is very, very fluid'.[50] The party creates a space for participation, freedom, and joy. Talking to Naomi Klein, Jordan dreamt that the celebration would grow and last ad infinitum, so that it would become a permanent way of life:

> The street party is only a beginning, a taster of future possibilities. To date there have been 30 street parties all over the country, imagine that growing to 100, imagine each one of those happening on the same day, imagine each one lasting for days on end and growing … Imagine the street party growing roots … *la fête permanente*.[51]

The idea of a perpetual party reminds us of mediaeval dreams of the land of milk and honey, also known as *Cucaña*, *Schlaraffenland*, *Cockaigne*, and *Cocagne*, according to the different regions of a hungry Europe that dreamt about places of physical pleasures. Related to the belief in paradise, the common land, and the fantasy of an infinitely lush nature, this legendary region was characterized by the exuberant abundance of an endless banquet. Brueghel the Elder´s painting of this mythical land shows three men who seem to be exhausted by the effort of fulfilment. This is hardly surprising in a land where the rivers flow with oil, milk, and wine, and birds fly ready-cooked in order to land in the mouths of those who wish to eat them.[52]

Reclaim the Streets explored the potential of egalitarian happiness, joy, and indulgence that belong to the party. It also developed its subversive character:[53] the group's raves sought to combine three mythic moments of revolution—insurrection, the better world which this establishes, and the celebration of the change. For a while, the party sought to be *both* the violent explosion *and* the place of utopia, mixing the means with the ends. This relates to the two poles of civil disobedience and prefigurative politics upon which the activities of Reclaim the Streets rested. The creativity of utopian choreography and the iconoclastic dance of rebellion were fused in the same dance. However, in the years to come, it became difficult to continue combining their different steps.

Notes

1. Slogan often attributed to Emma Goldman, but in fact a decontextualized summary of a passage of her autobiographical book, first published in 1931, *Living My Life* (New York: Da Capo Press, 1970).
2. John Jordan, in George McKay, *Senseless Acts of Beauty: Cultures of Resistance since the Sixties* (London–New York: Verso, 1996), 39.
3. In a talk at Tate Modern, Jordan issued a call in this way: 'And I make a plea for the artists to desert, to turn our backs on the system and walk away from the museums which have simply become outsourced corporate PR agencies, abandon the draw of glamour and fame, move out of the

spotlight that assumes a monopoly of creativity and discard the notion of us being the experts of the imagination. I plea for us to refuse the spaces that make us separate from society, give up our privilege, renounce the cult of the individual and recognise the powerful "we" which comes out of the many separate "Is". Its [*sic*] time for the artist to become invisible. To dissolve back into life': John Jordan, transcript of the talk 'Deserting the Art Bunker', in *Live Cultures: Performance and the Contemporary*, London, Tate Modern, 29 March 2003. Available at: http://www.nettime.org/Lists-Archives/nettime-l0304/msg00016.html [Consulted: 06/09/2015]. The expression 'invisible art' perhaps comes from the notion of 'invisible theatre' developed by Augusto Boal in the 1970s. See 'Invisible Theatre', in Will Bradley and Charles Esche (eds.), *Art and Social Change: A Critical Reader* (London: Tate Publishing–Afterall, 2009), 213–15.

4. Jordan, 'Deserting the Art Bunker'.
5. Derek Wall, *Earth First and the Anti-Roads Movement: Radical Environmentalism and Comparative Social Movements* (London–New York: Routledge, 1999), 63.
6. John Jordan, 'Reclaim the Streets', in Immanuel Ness (ed.), *International Encyclopedia of Revolution and Protest* (Hoboken: Blackwell Publishing, 2009), 2, 807.
7. Agustín de Quijano, *RECLAIM THE STREETS, Anarchy on our Streets?* 85-minute documentary, Channel 4 Television, 1999. Broadcast on British television on 19 January 2000. Available at: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bUL0C_T-Sqk [Consulted: 07/09/2015].
8. Jordan, in Ness, *International Encyclopedia*, 2, 807.
9. Jordan, interview with the author, 27/02/2012.
10. For Marion Hamm, in the following years Reclaim the Streets succeeded in 'adapting the action form of the anti-road protests in a rural environment to the circumstances of the metropolis (…)'. See Marion Hamm, 'Reclaim the Streets! Global Protests and Local Space', in *Republic Art*, May 2002. Available at: http://republicart.net/disc/hybridresistance/hamm01_en.htm [Consulted: 07/09/2015].
11. The text of the Act is available at: http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1994/33/contents [Consulted: 07/09/2015].
12. McKay, *Senseless Acts*, 11–44.
13. Criminal Justice and Public Order Act: 1994, section 63, subsection 1b.
14. Uwe Schultz, 'El ser que festeja', in Uwe Schultz (ed.) *La fiesta: una historia cultural desde la antigüedad hasta nuestros días* [*The Party: A Cultural History from Ancient Times Until Today*] (Madrid: Alianza, 1993), 12.
15. Naomi Klein, *No Logo: Taking Aim at the Brand Bullies* (New York, Picador, 2000), 312. Here, Klein practically paraphrases Phil McLeish, the

last person taken down from Dolly's Tower in Claremont Road: 'In seeking to criminalize such lifestyles, the State has succeeded in politicizing them. No longer is dropping-out copping-out … Youth-culture is now closer to radical politics than at any time since the days of punk. Squatters, travellers, ravers, activists – the common denominator of the movement is a demand for free space.' Phil McLeish, 'A View from the Tower', *Claremont Road E11: A Festival of Resistance* (London: self-published, 1995), no page numbers, quoted in McKay, *Senseless Acts*, 184.

16. The group insisted in considering itself to be a 'disorganization'.
17. Using the name 'Critical Mass', this type of demonstration emerged in San Francisco in 1992 and continues to take place periodically today.
18. Ecstasy was the drug par excellence in the raves. One of its effects is to provoke feelings of empathy and community, which contrasts with a society that exalts individualism.
19. See Michael Wadley's documentary *Woodstock*, USA, 1970, 184 min.
20. Anonymous leaflet entitled *Free Festivals in England 1970–1978*, cited in McKay, *Senseless Acts*, 15.
21. Jordan, in Ness, *International Encyclopedia*, 2, 808.
22. Jordan, in McKay, *Senseless Acts*, 146.
23. On music, communal experience, and spirituality, see Dan Graham's film where he links the religion of rock to heretic sects and millenarianism. Dan Graham, *Rock my Religion*, USA, 1984, 55 min.
24. 'Reclaim the Streets!', *Do or Die*, 6, 1997, 1–10. Available at: http://www.eco-action.org/dod/no6/rts.htm [Consulted: 07/09/2015]. The articles in this magazine are unsigned.
25. Charlie Fourier, 'Reclaim the Streets: An Arrow of Hope', in Notes from Nowhere (eds.), *We Are Everywhere* (London–New York: Verso, 2003), 59. 'Charlie Fourier', like the names of all the authors of this book, is a playful pseudonym, which refers to the French utopian socialist Charles Fourier. The book's title, *We are Everywhere*, is an homage to the text of that name by 'yippie' Jerry Rubin.
26. See the documentary, *The Summer of Rave, 1989*, United Kingdom, 2006, 60 min. Available at: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SX2SOFCUPec [Consulted: 27/12/2011].
27. Given the illegal nature of the parties, the organizers always had alternative plans prepared. There was also a strong element of improvisation, as it was necessary to adapt to situations as they developed.
28. In relation to the tradition of dissident puppets which appeared in the demonstrations, an early and particularly interesting case is the US collective Bread and Puppet, which has its own museum in Vermont. See http://breadandpuppet.org [Consulted: 15/06/2013].
29. Jordan, interview with the author, 16/01/2012.

30. Jordan, interview with the author, 02/10/2011.
31. See http://www.americanrhetoric.com/speeches/mariosaviosproulhallsitin.htm [Consulted: 31/01/2015].
32. See http://rts.gn.apc.org/prop14.htm [Consulted: 16/01/2018]. On its website, the collective even puts forwards ten steps for creating one's own party: http://rts.gn.apc.org/sortit.htm [Consulted: 31/08/2015].
33. John Jordan, in conversation with Marcelo Expósito, Dean Inkster, Alejandra Rieram and Montse Romaní, 'Activismo social y prácticas transdisciplinares' [Social Activism and Transdisciplinary Practices], 6. Spanish version available at http://marceloexposito.net/pdf/johnjordan_radiotemporaire_es.pdf [Consulted: 08/09/2015].
34. 'Contra el Capital, placer musical', María Salgado, '"Le Parody la indudable" El bio(e)pic' ['"The indubitable Le Parody". The bio(e)pic'] Available at: http://leparody.tumblr.com/post/31650105941/le-parody-la-indudable-el-bio-e-pic-by-ramsay [Consulted: 02/09/2015].
35. See 'Direct Action: Street Reclaiming', in Notes from Nowhere, *We Are Everywhere*, 61.
36. The idea emerged in June of the previous year, through a conversation between members of RTS and London Greenpeace, an anarcho-ecologist group unrelated to Greenpeace International. For a detailed account of the preparations, see 'Friday June 18th 1999. Confronting Capital and Smashing the State', *Do or Die*, no. 8, 1999, 1–12. Available at: http://www.eco-action.org/dod/no8/index.html [Consulted: 02/09/2015].
37. See Raoul Vaneigem, *The Revolution of Everyday Life* (Welcombe: Rebel Press, 2001). First edition in French, 1967.
38. The art critic Brian Holmes indicates that this text is partially taken from Subcomandante Marcos's *First Declaration of La Realidad for Humanity and against Neoliberalism*. Available in English at: http://www.struggle.ws/mexico/ezln/ccri_1st_dec_real.html [Consulted: 01/09/2015]. See Brian Holmes, 'Do It Yourself Geopolitics', in Blake Stimson and Gregory Sholette (eds.), *Collectivism after Modernism: The Art of Social Imagination after 1945* (Minneapolis–London: University of Minnesota Press, 2007), 275–6.
39. Text on the inside of the mask warns: 'The Crime and Disorder Act of April 1989 gives the police new powers of arrest if you do not "remove any item which the constable reasonably believes you are wearing wholly or mainly for the purpose of concealing your identity". But a removed mask can be legally put back on and a "seized" mask can be legally replaced.' It also claimes that 'this mask is for entertainment purposes only …'.
40. Food Not Bombs emerged in the USA in 1980, created by American activists. Today it is a network of independent groups which gives out vegan food for free, making extensive use of food that was going to be thrown away.

41. Jordan, interview with the author, 02/10/2011.
42. The project was exhibited that year at the London Ecology Centre and at the church of St James's, Piccadilly.
43. This slogan is a quote from Gerrard Winstanley of the seventeenth century group known as 'the Diggers', of which more will be said in Chap. 4.
44. On its website, Ne Pas Plier defines itself thus: 'The association Ne Pas Plier was founded in 1991 to ensure that the misery of signs is not added to the signs of misery. Our territory is that of education and popular struggle. In an experimental way, we propose political and aesthetic means (speeches, images, words) to take part in struggles with happy forms' (own translation). Available at: http://www.nepasplier.fr [Consulted: 07/09/2015].
45. See the event's web page: http://bak.spc.org/j18/site/ukpr.html [Consulted: 02/09/2015].
46. Wat Tyler, 'Dancing at the Edge of Chaos: A Spanner in the Works of Global Capitalism', in Notes from Nowhere, *We are Everywhere*, 194.
47. See Paul Lewis and Rob Evans, 'Undercover Police and the Law: The Men Who Weren't There', *The Guardian*, 19 October 2011. Available at: http://www.guardian.co.uk/uk/2011/oct/19/undercover-police-law-men-there [Consulted: 02/09/2015].
48. Jordan, interview with the author, 07/05/2012.
49. 'Big Rock Candy Mountain', is a popular song which describes a hobo's utopia and which was recorded for the first time by Harry McClintock in 1928.
50. John Jordan, in the film by Marcelo Expósito and Nuria Vila, *Radical Imagination (Carnivals of Resistance)*, Spain, 2004, 60 min.
51. John Jordan, quoted by Klein, *No Logo*, 319. Regarding the continuous dance, it is interesting to recall an historical event. In July 1518, in Strasbourg (France) a certain Madame Troffea started to dance in the middle of the street without any music. Her ecstatic dance was, it seems, contagious: within a week, a hundred people had joined in this syncopated and frenetic movement. Some danced until death, apparently caused by heart attacks, heat stroke, or sheer exhaustion. Doctors thought that the cure might lie in allowing them to continue, to which end places for dancing were established, including a kind of public stage on which various musicians appeared. Although in the Europe of 1519 there had already been at least ten dancing plagues, this one is the best documented. The historian John Weller believes that it was the result of a collective hysteria related to extremely difficult life conditions, which combined with the fear of the curse of St Vitus. See John Weller, *A Time to Dance, a Time to Die: The Extraordinary Story of the Dancing Plague of 1518* (London: Icon, 2009).

52. See Herman Pleij, *Dreaming of Cockaigne* (Columbia: Columbia University Press, 2001).
53. For a classic text, see the subversive interpretation of the carnivalesque world offered by Mikhail Bakhtin in his 1940 book, *Rabelais and His World* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1984).

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CHAPTER 4

Interlude: The Globalization of the Aesthetics of Protest

Another world is possible.[1]

During the 1990s, global capitalism expanded its scope and scale. A network of powerful transnational organizations started to play an increasingly important role, opening the way for corporate expansion. In 1995, the World Trade Organization (WTO) was created to promote agreements that 'spell out the principles of [commercial] liberalization, and the permitted exceptions'.[2] This entity complements the work of the International Monetary Fund (IMF),[3] the World Bank (WB),[4] and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD).[5] Amory Starr, sociologist and activist, indicates how globalization policies

> force *deregulation* when environmental protections, labour law or land reform are in the way of business operations. They force *regulation* to ensure patent payments or to create requirements that are cost-effective only for large-scale producers (handily disposing of competition from small, local competitors).[6]

From the 1980s, as a condition for granting loans, the IMF and the WB started to impose so-called Structural Adjustment Programmes: economic schemes for indebted countries, advised by international institutions. In two decades, more than 90 countries in the 'Third World'

J. Ramírez Blanco, *Artistic Utopias of Revolt*, Palgrave Studies in Utopianism, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-71422-6_4

signed up to packages of measures which imposed 'austerity' for the State (implying a reduction in public services and the elimination of programmes to alleviate poverty)[7] and 'freedom' for the market (with the consequent introduction of 'flexible' working conditions, the privatization of public services, and the elimination of protection for national economies). The progress of these policies was marked by various waves of civil unrest.[8]

Globalizing Resistance

Asking, we walk.[9]

From early on, there were demonstrations against what was perceived as a hidden government by international financial powers.[10] For Pablo Iglesias—Spanish activist, doctor of political science, and politician—the 1988 protests against the IMF and the WB in Berlin created a model that showed how times were changing. Certain features, such as political heterogeneity and a high degree of media awareness, came to characterize the new forms of dissidence.[11]

From the beginning of the 1990s, activists in various places started creating alliances that operated beyond borders. Vía Campesina [The Peasants' Way] was founded in 1993 in Mons (Belgium) as an international coalition of peasants from four continents, with the aim of promoting local agricultural production against its management by multinational businesses. The model of 'small-scale sustainable agriculture' was presented as a way to 'promote social justice and dignity'.[12]

In 1994, in Mexico, an *indigenista* group in the Lacandona Chiapas jungle rose up against the government. The insurrection started on 1 January 1994, coinciding with the implementation of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) between Canada, Mexico, and the USA.[13] The Mexican government, pressured by mobilizations across the country in support of the rebels, relaxed its repression after only a dozen days. By then, the self-proclaimed Ejército Zapatista de Liberación Nacional (EZLN) [Zapatista Army of National Liberation] was already launching communications that expressed a kind of politics that was as poetic as it was evocative.[14] Although these texts were disseminated through posters stuck on walls of nearby villages, they became known across the world thanks to their appearance on the internet. Much later, Subcomandante Marcos recalled:

> We learned that … A young student in Texas, USA, maybe a *nerd* (or however you say it), created a web page and simply named it 'ezln'. This was the first webpage of the EZLN. And this *compa* [comrade] started to 'put up' all of the communiqués and letters made public in the press on that site. People from other parts of the world who had found out about the uprising through photos, recorded video images, or in the newspaper, went to that site to find our word. And we never knew this *compa*, or maybe we did.[15]

It seems paradoxical that the neo-Zapatista *indigenismo* was introduced into the global imaginary through the media activity of an anonymous North American. News of these rebels dug in deep in the jungle spread quickly. The iconography of this dissident army has connections with many guerrilla movements and with the history of other Latin American revolutions, such as the Mexican Revolution of 1910[16] (invoked by the movement's own name), and the Cuban revolution of 1959. A political myth emerged from within its ranks, embodied in the mysterious character of Subcomandante Marcos, one of its main spokespeople.

Like all the other members of the EZLN, Marcos hid his features behind a black balaclava which left only his eyes visible (Fig. 4.1). The covered face evokes both the stereotypical representation of the terrorist and the image of masked heroes in popular culture, such as Zorro.[17] The writer WuMing1 (Roberto Bui) speaks of the mythical relationship with the character of Emiliano Zapata:

> Marcos was not even a heroic leader, he was just a spokesperson and a 'subcommander', which also implied an interesting approach to myths: according to a popular Mexican legend, Emiliano Zapata is still alive and riding his horse somewhere, in the woods and on the mountains (…) Contemporary Zapatistas have been able to communicate to society from an intersection between folklore and pop culture. In a way, the *real* Commander (…) is still Zapata. It was like saying: 'Don't you care about me, I'm not your masked hero, our revolution is impersonal, it is new but is also the same revolution as always, Zapata still rides.'[18]

It has been reported that, before marching off to the jungle, Marcos was a teacher at the Universidad Metropolitana de México.[19] The secrecy around his 'true' identity means that, in a messianic way, he can embody 'all the exploited, marginalized, oppressed minorities resisting and saying "Enough"' as well as 'every majority that must shut up and listen'.[20] The balaclava is converted into a symbol of the different struggles of that varied

Fig. 4.1 From the ranks of the Ejército Zapatista de Liberación Nacional [Zapatista Army of National Liberation] in Mexico sprang the political myth of Subcomandante Marcos: an emblematic figure of the rebel army who always kept his face hidden under a balaclava (Image by Oriana Eliçabe, courtesy of the author)

group of individuals which has become known as 'the people'. Addressing local peculiarities, the EZLN underlined the need for diversity: unlike the unique model of some traditional utopias, Marcos claimed that Zapatismo wanted a world 'where many worlds fit'.[21]

When, in 1995, the Mexican government resumed its attempt to repress the insurrection, the EZLN launched an international appeal. In response, support groups emerged in various countries. In May 1996, several European collectives close to Zapatismo staged the first Continental Gathering for Humanity and against Neoliberalism in Berlin.[22] At that point, they received an invitation from the Zapatista Army to take part in the first Intercontinental Gathering for Humanity and against Neoliberalism, in an *Encuentro* [Gathering] which took place during the summer of that year in Chiapas.

In July 1996, some 6000 people from forty countries travelled to the Aguascalientes Zapatistas for a week of meetings.[23] Representatives from a wide range of backgrounds took part in the inaugural session.[24] The rebel army of the fluent word and the poetic expression acted as a binding agent for international dissidence: although this *Encuentro* created an international network of support for the Zapatistas, it also had the effect of bringing together social movements from different countries, which continued to unite their strategies.

In July 1997, the second *Encuentro* took place in various places in Spain. During this gathering, the possibility of forming an international coordinating platform for social movements was raised. This idea led to the formation in 1998 of Peoples' Global Action (PGA), which called for the first 'days of global action' between 16 and 20 May of the same year. The date chosen coincided with the meeting of the leaders of the most powerful states, configured as the G7+1, in Birmingham, in the UK (15–17 May), shortly before the Second Conference of Ministers of the WTO in Geneva, in Switzerland (18–20 May). Activists organized their parallel meetings and danced the first Global Street Party in the style of Reclaim the Streets. Using the slogan 'Our resistance will be as transnational as capital', synchronized protests took place in sixty countries.

On 18 June 1999, while the Group of Eight (G8) met in Cologne, simultaneous anti-capitalist celebrations took place in seventy countries:[25] this second day of action took the form of a Global Carnival Against Capital. In the leaflet created for the event's celebration in London, capitalism was defined as 'a social system overthrown at the end of the 20th

century'. This was in 1999 and it seemed inevitable that a certain degree of millenarianism affected discourses. In various places across the planet, social movements tried to prefigure an imminent change.

Back in Mexico—as it had done before in many other places—the IMF 'recommended' that the Central American country privatize higher education.[26] In April 1999, the Universidad Nacional de México (UNAM) declared a strike to prevent the introduction of student fees, and both students and members of faculty barricaded themselves into the campus buildings. As the months passed, their demands widened.[27]

The tower of the UNAM vice-chancellor's office displays a huge mural painting by the communist artist David Alfaro Siqueiros, known as *The right for culture* or *The dates in the history of Mexico*. Under huge arms which reach out forwards are several significant dates in the nation's history: 1521 refers to the Spanish conquest; 1810 to independence; 1857 to the liberal constitution; and 1910 to the revolution. Another—incomplete—date appears below: '19??'. In July, during the university lock-in, students superimposed two nines on the question marks of the final number—a gesture which sought to complete Siqueiros' work in the only possible way, with the affirmation of an effective social change, taking place in the final year of the millennium (Fig. 4.2).[28]

The mobilizations succeeded in ensuring that the UNAM did not introduce student fees. And five months after this utopian graffiti, in the North American city of Seattle, a crowd protesting against the WTO captured international attention. For the first time in a decade, the USA became the stage for a spectacular transnational protest, with all that this implied in terms of media coverage. The press now started to talk about an 'anti-globalization movement'. In fact, Seattle showed a global synchronization of earlier social movements, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and unions, which had been forging alliances over the years. The event's participants themselves referred to this coming together more as an 'alter-globalization' movement or a 'movement of movements'.[29]

The Counter-Summit Model (Seattle, 1999)

Whose streets? Our streets![30]

On 29 November 1999, four members of the NGO Rainforest Action Network hung a huge semi-transparent banner in Seattle whose two arrows indicated opposing directions for 'Democracy' and the 'WTO'

Fig. 4.2 The last figure in the David Alfaro Siqueiros mural known as *Las fechas en la historia de México* [The dates in the history of Mexico] is '19??'. During the 1999 strike at the Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, students added two nines, as if prefiguring an imminent change (Image by Rebecca Teasdale, courtesy of the author)

(Fig. 4.3). The previous day, coinciding with the Third Inter-Ministerial Conference of the World Trade Organization, a series of mobilizations had started.

Although the protests carried on until 4 December, the most important events took place on 30 November. During the day there were student protests, marches by trade unions, and a demonstration by representatives of developing countries. Groups with very diverse postures united, some who demanded reform and others calling for revolution. Many demonstrators identified with the anti-capitalist struggle, the traditional labour movement, anarchism, autonomy, communism, the defence of human rights, ecology, the anti-nuclear movement, and pacifism, with infinite variations and nuances. Protestors in the US city were also joined by religious groups—of varying degrees of radicalness—who were dissatisfied with the system.

Reclaim the Streets had provided the celebratory 'style' for uniting such diversity: in Seattle, the insistent mass of people was grouped together in the form of a 'carnival-protest'.[31] Writers such as Naomi Klein speak of

Fig. 4.3 In 1999, during the Seattle protests against the World Trade Organization, the Rainforest Action Network hung a banner from the top of a crane. The diverging arrows, which seemed to have been drawn in the air, illustrate a natural opposition between 'Democracy' and the 'WTO' (Image courtesy of the RAN)

a great 'coming out party' to present a synchronized dissidence that had been gestating since the first *Encuentro* in the Lacandon jungle.[32]

Amongst the protestors on 30 November, there were people in disguise, musical bands, dancers, theatre groups, giant puppets, marionettes, and 300 people dressed as turtles.[33] This huge aesthetic variety reflected the political heterogeneity of this polyphonic event. The disguises and the music suggest a taste for the 'multicultural',[34] which also extended to the idea of different political cultures living together and striving for mutual enrichment.

Various affinity groups[35] came together to plan a huge blockade to prevent WTO delegates from arriving at the Sheraton hotel, where their meeting was to take place. A decentralized organism called Direct Action Network (DAN) was set up to coordinate the various groups that were to engage in direct action in Seattle. Basing its decisions on consensus reached in assemblies, DAN used a form of sign language to show disagreement or

approval. Raising open hands and waving the fingers was equivalent to silent applause.

Many people surrounded the hotel zone early in the day, holding hands or interlinking arms. About 200 protestors linked themselves together: their form of action was based on physical presence itself, blocking the street and placing themselves in the way. In turn, various demonstrators destroyed shop windows and cars.

Attempting to clear the centre of the city, police used tear gas, pepper sprays, and rubber bullets. Repression became harsher during the afternoon, and increased in brutality on subsequent days. 'The whole world is watching!', demonstrators then chanted.[36] A 'state of emergency' was declared the following day when more than 600 arrests took place. Fifty blocks of the city were declared a 'no-protest zone', in a procedure that would be repeated in later policing operations.[37]

There was an element of frustration to this authoritarianism: on 30 November it was already known that the blockade had been successful. Fewer than 10 per cent of WTO delegates had been able to cross the activists' human wall, and the meeting of the few who managed to do so ended without any significant agreements. Seattle became a model for dissidence, launching certain forms of street intervention onto the international stage.

The format of the 'counter-summit', whose origins Pablo Iglesias locates in the mobilizations against the World Bank in Berlin in 1988, achieved notoriety in Seattle, partly due to its large scale.[38] A 'counter-summit' involves organizing an international protest at the same time and in the same place as meetings of transnational power. Even though internationalism was one of the pillars of the classic workers' movement and although many non-governmental organizations developed their work beyond borders, this time was different. It was no longer a politics of blocs, nor of NGOs working across a wide spectrum. What was happening now was a new idea, centred on the international synchronization of dissident *heterogeneity*. Unlike models of socialist organization that have been compared with hierarchical insects such as bees,[39] here the metaphor was a swarm of mosquitoes.[40] Michael Hardt and Toni Negri, thinkers connected to the autonomous movement, employ the term 'multitude' to refer to this non-homogeneous crowd.[41]

Those who took over the centre of Seattle were also learning how to occupy the immaterial space of the internet. Indymedia—a network of alternative media platforms which disseminates and connects the participants' own versions of events—was launched during the counter-summit.[42]

Its non-hierarchical functioning, understood as a set of independent nodes, can be related to the concept of the multitude as a decentralized and diverse entity. Instead of setting up a structure based on blocs, affinity groups are formed in the streets and on the web. Indymedia published numerous texts, videos, and photographs created by people who had taken part in the Seattle protests. However, the events in the US city were not just talked about within the activist milieu. They also took centre stage in the 'official' mass media.

For Iglesias, the counter-summit was 'essentially a spectacle, a televised representation of a political and systemic clash which made a confrontation with capitalism visible to millions of spectators'.[43] This communicational success was not only the result of the relevance of the actions and of the North American 'stage' on which they had taken place. It was also related to the sophistication that social movements had achieved in their use of visual language and their handling of symbolic elements. After Seattle, the format of the counter-summit was repeated across the world, following the meetings of the IMF, the WB, the WTO, and the G8.

'Rebel Colors' (Prague, 2000)

Art history can perhaps be useful in analysing what we could call the 'iconography of the crowd', observing not only representations but also the actual configurations of the human multitude. This creates the possibility of an aesthetic (and political) analysis of the united bodies which throughout history have acted in a collective way to protest, destroy, and propose.

During the renewal of protest forms which took place in the 1990s, the military paradigm of a protesting bloc that marches towards the frontline was combined with the model of the festival, where groups of people are more dynamic and move in a non-linear manner. To a certain extent, the revolutionary masses had become a dancing multitude. The rupture of the classic image of the group that advances could be related to criticism of the idea of progress.

For Subcomandante Marcos,

> The revolution, in general, is no longer presented according to the codes of Soviet realism, with men and women behind a red flag advancing stoically towards a joyful future. Rather, it has become a kind of carnival.[44]

This kind of festive reunion, far from wanting to erase differences, celebrates them in a joint dance of varied steps.[45] In these demonstrations, as in carnival parades, various clearly defined groups appear, each with its own characteristic aesthetics and its own way of moving through the street.

After the success of Seattle, the percussive rhythm of global demonstrations accelerated. Little more than a month after protests against the IMF and the WB in Washington, the first large-scale European counter-summit took place in Prague. On 26 September 2000, when activists prepared to receive these same entities in the Czech capital, the crowd was ordered according to chromatic groups.

Division by groups is traditional in European demonstrations: in Prague, the colour scheme was part of a coordination strategy. The various blocks left from the same point and took different routes so that they could converge on the area around the IMF and WB meeting place from several directions. The yellow column came from the north, the blue from the west, and the pink from the east. As events unfolded, these colours became associated with three different forms of interaction with the police: Italian disobedience, street fighting, and 'tactical frivolity'.

Given the usefulness of colours as a communications tool, their deployment in the service of a non-violent revolution had already been recommended by the American philosopher of political science Gene Sharp.[46] This 'aesthetic protest tactic' took on great importance and 'rebel colours' became part of the shared identity of the movement of movements.[47] This most likely came directly from the Eastern European 'colour revolutions', which were still fresh in the collective memory.

In Prague, the slogan of the blue line was 'No compromises'. This faction practised urban-guerrilla tactics, confronting police water cannons and tear gas by throwing Molotov cocktails and paving stones.[48] Within this group marched the Black Block, whose members were united chromatically through the use of black sweatshirts, hoods, balaclavas, and scarves. Since the 1980s, this aesthetic tactic had served to lend a theatrical dimension to riots which tended to involve the destruction of private property.[49] In 2000, there was also a musical band, the Infernal Noise Brigade, marching in a 'noisy procession' to animate the crowd. Amid the clouds of tear gas, masked musicians continued to play their drums.

The yellow line was led by the Tute Bianche [White Overalls], a group with powerful imagery (Fig. 4.4). Its origins go back to 1994, linked to Italian squatters' social centres where there had been a strong development

Fig. 4.4 The Tutte Bianche protected themselves from the police with helmets, shields, and other forms of protection. Their white overalls sought to make 'visible' those whom the system had rendered 'invisible' (Footage from the film *Disobbedienti* by Oliver Ressler and Dario Azzellini, Austria and Italy, 2002, 54 mins, courtesy of the author)

of post-autonomous movements, inheritors of the Italian insurrection of the 1970s. The richness of these environments led the newspaper *Le Monde* to refer to this network of squats as 'the Italian cultural jewel'.[50]

In 1994, the emblematic Leoncavallo social centre in Milan was evicted. Squatted in 1975, it was the first big Italian social centre. The town's mayor, Marco Formentini, who belonged to the racist Northern League party, declared at the time that after the eviction the squatters would be no more than ghosts wandering the streets. This provoked the use of white overalls, which became linked to demonstrations in support of the social centre.[51] When Leoncavallo opened its doors again in a newly squatted building, the Tute Bianche were already an organized faction within the collective, acting in a way as the centre's security guards. The role of the costume and those who wore it evolved over time:

> The white overall was not really a uniform, even if it had started out in this way. The Tutte Bianchi used it for all kinds of purposes: to carry out 'blitzes', to create counter-information, to occupy temporary-work agencies, to demonstrate against immigrant detention centres, and to protest against NATO bases during the bombing of Kosovo.[52]

As time passed, the clothing came to be associated with those whose were rendered invisible by the system: unemployed, precarious, immigrant people. Overalls, which were a garment typical of the industrial worker,

were stripped of their colour in order to protest against forms of exploitation and exclusion that characterize post-Fordist capitalism. Iglesias suggests that this was 'the European version of the [Zapatista] balaclava' because it too implied 'an instrument to make visible the invisibility of those excluded from political and union representation and [an instrument] to practise collective action'.[53] From the spring of 2000, the White Overalls started to appear at demonstrations, approaching confrontation with the police in their own particular manner.

For the Tute Bianche, confrontation was above all a communicative act. They advanced together like a white army and sought a frontal collision with riot police. Creating spectacular media images, they endured these clashes thanks to their home-made shields and protective equipment. In Prague, this was all put together in only a few hours, in the purest DIY style. Iglesias describes it thus:

> They organized a workshop for making the protective kit using all the materials that could be found in the stadium; the foam rubber of the mattresses was used to make armours, the guy ropes of the tents in the stadium were used to attach them, and signs, hard plastic panels, and the lids of rubbish containers were used to make shields. After getting hold of some inner tubes in a scrap yard, with plastic and more ropes that were recovered from the stadium, they made large frontal protections for clashing with the police. Together with construction-workers' helmets acquired in a local hardware store and anti-gas masks (…) the material for the Italian disobedience was ready for battle.[54]

Iglesias points at how, in their way of tackling conflict, the Tute Bianche maintained the 'mystique of confrontation', which is to say its representation, its image. Putting up with the physical pressure of the police, but avoiding initiating an attack themselves, they sought to make visible that it was the authorities that were using violence.[55] This way of proceeding came to be known as 'Italian disobedience'. The White Overalls' staging of an interconnected collective body recalls *Nexus*, the prototype of body architecture on which British artist Lucy Orta worked between 1994 and 2004. This clothing—modular in nature and evocative of workers' overalls—allowed various people to connect themselves to each other through sleeves and zips, thereby creating a grid of linked individuals.[56]

At first, the pink column was made up of socialist groups. However, some fifteen people dressed in pink and silver also walked with them. The members of this small troop, of British origin, considered themselves

inheritors of Reclaim the Streets and defied the police by dancing.[57] This pink-costumed crowd had appeared for the first time some months earlier, in the last big Reclaim the Streets event in London, a guerrilla–gardening action which took place on 1 May. The aesthetic of artificiality and tackiness of this 'Pink Block' is a play on the confrontational seriousness of the 'Black Block'.

The Pink Block replaced the electronic music of RTS with the Brazilian beats of the band Rhythms of Resistance, whose instruments were harder for the police to seize.[58] Marchers at the head of the group carried a mass of balloons and a large pink banner bearing the word 'SAMBA' in silver letters. The group's members wore elaborate pink disguises, which presented the *kitsch* imagery of parodic ultra-femininity.[59] The woman who had the idea of this band in pink was appropriately named *Rosie* Nobbs.

In 2000, the Terrorist Act had come into force in the UK, the first of a series of successive legal measures. The Act expanded the definition of what could be considered a terrorist offence and gave more powers to the police. Rosie Nobbs came from a background of squatters' houses and countercultural festivals, and had been part of the anti-roads movement. The moment had arrived when she decided that, if she was 'going to be legislated into being a terrorist', she would become 'the most ridiculous kind of terrorist there is', so that her case would be 'laughed out of court'.[60] This musician, poet, and performer developed the concept of 'tactical frivolity': using amusement and humour as weapons 'in a situation where everyone is geared up for confrontation'.[61]

In Prague, this approach worked, and it was impressive to see how a group of policemen stepped back when faced by Rosie, who was wearing an eighteenth-century-style disguise and wielding a pink wand crowned with a heart (Fig. 4.5).[62] The sexist prejudices of the officers meant that initially they found it difficult to hit women who were disguised as women. This play with stereotypes practised a playful feminism, which could be related to the theorization of femininity as a mask that can be put on and taken off.[63]

The Pink Block crossed the police line and arrived at the place where the Prague meetings of the IMF and the WB were taking place. Two of its members managed to enter the convention centre itself and talk to the delegates. The meeting of the international organizations ended a day before its scheduled official conclusion.[64]

Scenes such as this demonstrate how on certain occasions the 'aesthetic tactics of protest' can have a clearly contentious potential. In any

Fig. 4.5 At the Prague counter-summit in 2000, Rosie Nobbs (creator of the so-called 'Pink Block') confronted the police wearing an eighteenth-century wig, garters, tulle, and a lengthy train. Against this kind of 'gender' tactics, police officers seemed at a loss to know how to react. They initially felt obliged to retreat when Rosie advanced towards them wielding a pink wand crowned with a heart (Screenshots of *Tactical Frivolity + Rhythms of Resistance*, Marcelo Expósito and Núria Vila, 2008, courtesy of the author)

case, for this kind of action the surprise factor is hugely important. The tactics work only until the police become accustomed to them and learn how to react. This requires constant innovation that, in practice, is not always possible.

David Solnit, co-founder of the Direct Action Network, insists that 'art shouldn't be just an ornament, but rather an integral part of the movement'. This activist and puppet-maker considers how, in the end, a street demonstration is no more than an act of communication: 'everything is theatrical. Traditional protest—the march, the rally, the chants—is just bad theatre.'[65]

Throughout history, each epoch has had its own way of taking to the street, displaying its own 'party aesthetics' and 'protest aesthetics'.[66] The latter forms part of a long tradition which functions as a cultural legacy similar to a certain kind of folklore. As in popular celebrations, not only are ways of doing things passed on from one generation to the next, but also physical elements such as banners, shields, and disguises, are handed down from one demonstration to another.[67]

In the 1990s, many people felt that demonstrations did not achieve anything: the new forms of protest created powerful images which tried to provoke a real dialogue between society and the political class. Groups such as the White Overalls and the Pink Block sought to create a vision of revolution that did not imply an armed insurrection. Theirs was a spectacle that was seeking to change the world.

Utopia and Dystopia

This is what democracy looks like![68]

During the counter-summits, some of those who took part in the protests were housed in *convergence* centres. These were buildings that had been squatted or lent, where people coming from different countries lived together for a while. In 1999, the convergence centre in Seattle was an old warehouse, while in Prague in 2000 three abandoned industrial units were used, one of which was designated as an art space (Fig. 4.6).[69] These self-managed enclaves were communitarian places that functioned as general headquarters for direct action. They provided multipurpose spaces which served as places to welcome new arrivals, as sickbays, and as venues for assemblies, theatre areas, concert halls, and dance floors (Fig. 4.7). In spite of the problems of living together, people sought to experiment with forms of non-hierarchical human relationships, based on equality and autonomy.

Beyond the counter-summits, various activist events had a more proactive focus. Already in 1997, in the art exhibition *Documenta X* in Kassel, curated by Catherine David, the *Kein Mensch ist illegal* [*No one is Illegal*] manifesto[70] had been presented, starting a campaign that led to the creation of an international anti-racist network in favour of the free movement of people. Out of this emerged the coalition of groups No Border which, in turn, gave rise to the No Border Camps, situated 'as close to a

Fig. 4.6 Convergence Centres were squatted or lent buildings where activists slept and organized events during counter-summits. At the Prague Convergence Centre, tasks such as banner-making took place (Photograph © Immo Klink, courtesy of the photographer)

border as possible'.[71] During the summer of 2001, a series of settlements were set up simultaneously in places such as the Polish frontier, in Tarifa, in Tijuana, and at Frankfurt airport.[72] These camps were not only spaces of protest but also communitarian experiments.[73]

In 2002, the No Border Camp in Strasbourg brought together between 2,000 and 3,000 people (Fig. 4.8). The camp's geodesic structures had visual echoes of 1960s communes. This architectonic form—popularized back then by Buckminster Fuller—continues to evoke spaces mythologized as Drop City, a community of artists and filmmakers whose geodesic modules sought to configure a habitable work of art. The Strasbourg camp of 2002 was divided into five sections, or 'districts', grouped around the same number of kitchens. The activist Ed Hollants highlighted the problems of the assembly methodology—whose slowness meant that few actions were actually carried out—and the lack of participation by migrants themselves.[74] On that occasion, the social experiment, with its own dynamics, seemed to win out over specific political actions.

Fig. 4.7 Convergence Centres were also spaces of countercultural leisure, where concerts, parties, and other forms of collective fun also took place (Photograph © Immo Klink, courtesy of the photographer)

No Border is also the subtitle of some preparatory drawings of the colourful camp which Lucy Orta started to design in 2006, together with her artistic partner Jorge Orta. The fabric which they sewed onto the tents, made out of fragments of many flags, evokes the migrant and refugee condition of a large part of the world's population.

Regarding the movement of movement's propositional dimension, some activists indicate its particular forms of organization as images of a desirable social model. Through a system of direct democracy and agreements between different groups, 'globalization from below' could replace the system of transnational hierarchies.[75] However, going beyond these reflections, one of the most important initiatives was the World Social Forum in Porto Alegre, which held its first meeting in January 2001.[76] An international reunion was organized in this Brazilian city to debate the ways to advance collectively towards this 'other possible world' promised by the event's slogan. Establishing an alternative to the World Economic Forum in Davos,[77] Porto Alegre sought to build solutions that would give continuity to paths of convergence between social movements that had

Fig. 4.8 From the summer of 2000, camps in favour of the free movement of people were established on the borders between certain countries. One of the biggest was the No Border Camp in Strasbourg in 2002 (Photograph by Oriana Eliçabe, CC, courtesy of the author)

started in the *Encuentros* and counter-summits. However, over the following months the global panorama changed drastically. The violence of street 'battles' which accompanied the counter-summits continued to grow. And when activists, time after time, repeated the same pattern of trying to block access to designated meeting places, these venues became increasingly shielded.

During the summer of 2001, some 100,000 demonstrators attended the Genoa counter-summit to protest during a G8 meeting. Shortly before these demonstrations, the White Overalls had removed their characteristic outfits. They announced that they had turned into the *Disobedienti* [the Disobedient Ones]. Luca Casarini, one of the Tute Bianche spokespeople, describes the original group as 'a subjective experience and a small army', while the *Disobendienti* were 'a multitude and a movement'.[78] By this time, the tactics of Italian disobedience had been adopted by the majority of demonstrators (Fig. 4.9). Putting the inadequacy of their protection

Fig. 4.9 The graffiti on this shield shows the words 'Genova Libera' ['Free Genoa'], alluding to the massive police presence which overwhelmed the Italian city during the protests against the G8 meeting (Photograph by Oriana Eliçabe, courtesy of the author)

equipment and shields to the test, this dissident reunion experienced totally disproportional police violence, which was only in part related to the Italian government of Silvio Berlusconi.

On 20 July 2001, in the midst of heavy rioting, Carlo Giuliani, a balaclava-clad youth, threatened a police car with a fire extinguisher which he had picked up off the ground. At that moment, the *carabinieri* claimed their first death, shooting him in the head and then running over him in a police vehicle (Fig. 4.10).[79] Mario Placanica, the police officer who appeared to have fired the shot, said that he felt that everything was part of an apparatus that was much bigger than he was.[80]

Towards midnight the next day, supposedly responding to reports of incidents taking place, the police forcibly entered the Diaz Pertini school, used by the Genoa Social Forum which was coordinating the groups involved in the demonstrations. Going from floor to floor, the police officers repeatedly beat the ninety-two people who were inside the building. Of the seventy-three who were hospitalized, three were left in a

Fig. 4.10 On 20 July 2001, during the riots of the counter-summit in Genoa, the police killed young activist Carlo Giuliani, shooting him in the head. In the background of this image, Carlo Giuliani lies without balaclava, with his face bloody and framed by the boots of the police force (Photograph by Oriana Eliçabe, courtesy of the author)

serious condition: a 28-year-old German student called Melanie Jonasch had her skull fractured, the German Karl Wolgang Baro suffered a cranial trauma, and the British journalist Mark Covell had a perforated lung caused by broken ribs, a cranial trauma, and lost ten teeth.[81] Seeing images of the walls covered with blood, some Italian members of parliament spoke of a 'Chilean'-style search, referring to the practices of the dictatorship of Augusto Pinochet. From being a place of communitarian practice, the convergence centre was abruptly turned into a space of torture.

Many of those who were in the Diaz Pertini school were taken to a detention facility in Bolzaneto, where the abuse continued. They were charged with 'delinquent association with intentions of destruction and looting, aggravated resistance of authority, and carrying of weapons'.[82] That morning, police also entered the building where accredited journalists were sleeping and took away several hard-disk drives and computers which

stored images of the killing of Giuliani.[83] Later, the police admitted having fabricated evidence to incriminate the activists.[84] According to Iglesias:

> faced with the repressive model of Genoa, in terms of confrontation, the global movement's organizations and collectives had only two alternatives. They could either demonstrate in a conventional way, and thereby give up all the communicative potential that was their very own, or they could adopt the modality of street conflict where death (both that of protestors and even of members of the forces of order) would seem to be a perfectly possible outcome, something unacceptable for the movement and incompatible with its huge social success.[85]

This terrible risk placed the events on a dystopian stage, contributing to the exhaustion of the counter-summit model. The slogan now was a horrified '*Assassini*!' ['Murderers!']. The movement of movements was trapped in conflict.

Two months after Giuliani's death in Genoa, two passenger planes were hijacked by Islamist terrorists of the al-Qaeda group and flown into the World Trade Center in New York on 11 September 2001. The twin towers collapsed and almost 3000 people died. This tragedy was followed by huge collective pain. US president George W. Bush opted to respond with authoritarianism, repression and—within a short space of time—war.

At the end of 2001, there was a dramatic economic collapse in Argentina.[86] Protests took the name of 'cacerolazo' from the angry banging of pots and pans which became a deafening sound. Citizens attacked banks and blocked roads,[87] and supermarkets were looted over several days: hundreds of people broke into shops and carried off food, cleaning materials, and other items. During this period, a multitude of forms of popular self-organization flourished. A large number of workers employed in the many factories that had been closed returned to them and started up the machinery that had been abandoned by their owners,[88] while many communities started to get involved in district assemblies.

In the midst of heavy repressive measures, two successive presidents resigned. However, their standing down produced neither the renovation nor the elimination of the political class that had been demanded in the street, where one of the most popular slogans was 'Que se vayan todos!' ['Out with them all!']. Argentines also shouted another slogan which affirmed the insistence of a popular presence: 'No se va, no se va, el pueblo no se va' ['We won't go, we won't go, the people will not go'].

In Europe there was now talk of the step from civil disobedience to *social disobedience*, which sought to practise actions of everyday rebellion that could extend beyond the ambit of the social movements.[89] There are many examples which could illustrate the utopian dream and the struggle for social change during these years; but it seems advisable to make a kind of 'fade to black', as a proliferation of cases would do little to change this book´s story.

'Creative Activism'

We will make revolution irresistible.[90]

Traditions

As the twenty-first century advances, we are continuing to witness a hectic innovation in the *forms of protest*. In a broad sense, we could speak of a certain 'aesthetic turn' in the extra-parliamentary politics of social movements after the 1960s, as a result of the huge explicit importance acquired by the creation of symbolism. As we have seen, creativity had developed using a wide repertoire of visual elements and working around the symbolic and aesthetic character of the actions themselves: activism created new ways both to protest and to propose.

During the 1990s, a reflection took place about the possibilities offered by artistic creation as a tool to be used on the stage of conflict. The terminology of the happening and the performance was adopted to analyse creative direct action by authors like John Jordan,[91] and early on, the curator and theoretician Nina Felshin tried to categorize what she called 'activist art'.[92] Words of a new stamp also emerged: one of these was 'artivism'.[93]

Stéphanie Lemoine and Samira Ouardi, authors of the book *Artivisme*, highlight the cultural legacy of the historical avant-garde movements, in particular the role of futurism and Dadaism. They also emphasize the importance of the forms of expanded art from the 1960s and 1970s as practised by groups such as the situationists[94] in France, the Provos in the Netherlands, and the international network of creators around Fluxus. These authors point to the intersection of diverse traditions: the repertoire of civil disobedience and direct action is combined with the legacy of pop and the influence of the counterculture.

Understood as a discontinuous line evolving from the 1950s to current times, counterculture is fundamental for understanding the social movements that this book portrays. In its genealogy, the inheritance of the beatniks, hippies, and punks is superimposed, in a living tradition that continues to evolve. In spite of the impossibility of constructing here a history of all these currents, it is perhaps worthwhile invoking, as flashes, a few groups and their actions.

Principally from the 1960s, distinct forms of cultural resistance became tied to forms of alternative lifestyle. In this (con)fusion, 'artistic' creation was applied to everyday living and to political intervention. In 1965, a group of actors called the San Francisco Diggers started to practise what they called the 'theatre of life',[95] attempting to impact the reality which surrounded them.

Their name comes from a group of Protestant peasants who, in 1649 during the English Civil War, started to plant vegetables on common land on St George's Hill in Weybridge, Surrey. Although they were few in number, they invited others to join them, promising meat, drink, and clothing, claiming that in three days they would be a multitude. Because of their belief in economic equality, they called themselves 'True Levellers', but they were nicknamed 'Diggers' because of their practice of tilling the earth.

The San Francisco Diggers played with this precedent, but they also referred to a slang expression of the time: *dig it*, meaning to grasp or gather the significance of something, or to enjoy something or find it attractive. With the Free City project, they proposed a network of spaces where 'food, accommodation, and leisure would be free'.[96] In the capital of the hippy movement, the group set up shops where products could be taken without paying. Every day they cooked food that was left over by the supermarkets and handed it out in Haight-Ashbury park.

Two years later, the Youth International Party, better known as the party of the Yippies, directed its attention to the young American electorate. Of an anti-authoritarian and anti-militarist character, the Yippies defended the creation of a 'New Nation', formed by a network of cooperatives, independent media, and community services, which would end up supplanting the traditional State through expansion and imitation. This heterodox 'party' carried out an important task of making theatre out of politics, which was understood as a big joke. One of the most celebrated actions of its famous members Abbie Hoffman and Jerry Rubin consisted of throwing money (most of it fake) from the top of the New York Stock Exchange on 24 August 1967.

With its spiky presence, the punk movement appeared in the United Kingdom in the mid-1970s. Vitality and rage accompanied a nihilistic expression that believed only in one's own action. 'Do It Yourself' and the denial of heroic references ('No heroes') were premises that could be extrapolated beyond musical styles and ways of dressing. Via the punk legacy, a certain Dadaist aesthetics entered social movements. The influence of this avant-garde movement passed through the situationist heritage, in part related to Malcolm McLaren, the manager and graphic designer of the Sex Pistols, who in 1974 was involved in the first anthology of situationist texts in English.

During the 1980s, very different groups such as CLASS WAR[97] in the United Kingdom and ACT UP[98] in the USA carried out a systematic exploration of the performative possibilities of protest, developing a strong media consciousness which would come to characterize later activism.

In time, countercultural forms would be appropriated in a superficial way by capitalism. But counterculture was never a homogeneous project: those proposals that were based on an individualistic hedonism centred on immediate pleasure and were incorporated into the repertoire of promises tied to consumption. However, other aspects of counterculture, tied to the possibility of communitarian living in a framework of participatory politics, continued outside the system and remained as open questions, issues to be resolved. Perhaps in this sense, the 'underground' is a useful term: as with certain subterranean waters, a section of counterculture emerged at the surface while another part remained hidden. Later generations would draw on these currents as they tried to create a different society where it would be possible to live in other ways and by other means.[99]

(Counter)spectacle

Power has always used spectacle to express and strengthen its rule. Throughout history dissidence too has created its own spectacular interventions, on its own scale, using whatever means are within its reach at any particular time. Various complementary forms of communication have been deployed, including trying to appear on television and in the press. In the context of a society where the media occupy a leading role in the construction of meaning, eye-catching forms of creative activism succeed in capturing much more attention and, because of this, they are more efficient at serving the aim of dissemination. This 'external' functionality exists alongside the internal meaning of the actions, which is always directed towards its own participants. The 'utilitarian' media function

exists at the same time as the expression of a passion that is both intrinsically human and fundamentally 'useless', as is the creative impulse.

Another approach to the mass media has to do with intervening in them, altering their original meaning. During the 1990s, some social movements reflected seriously about how to use media in their favour. At this time people started to speak of 'communication guerrilla'[100] and 'culture jamming'[101] to describe forms of social intervention which used culture as a weapon. Examples include false advertising, modified posters, and fake websites.

Over the years, the idea of creating one's own counter-information media, immune from corporate manipulation, gained increasing strength. At first, this involved fanzines, pamphlets, newspapers, pirate radio stations, and video-activist organizations. The rise of the Internet, where more and more content was generated by users, has led to a real revolution. Today, the images that are created by activism are often directed towards the Internet and social media.

Intermediate Zones

In some cases, there have been encounters between street dissidence and the institutions of art. At the beginning of the 1990s in Valencia, three colleagues in the movement against compulsory military service—Curro Aix, Santi Barber, and Jordi Claramonte[102]—set up the group La Fiambrera Obrera [the Worker's Lunchbox].[103] In 1999, Manuel Borja Villel, then director of the MACBA contemporary art museum in Barcelona, invited them to organize a seminar linked to the institution. Villel was interested in conceiving artistic institutions as a kind of public space in which dissent could enter. Claramonte coordinated the seminar and created a workshop, *De la acción directa considerada como una de las Bellas Artes*[104] [*Of direct action considered as one of the Fine Arts*] in which groups such as Reclaim the Streets, Kein Mensch ist illegal, autonome a.f.r.i.k.a gruppe., Ne Pas Plier, and Rtmark (®™ark) participated.[105] As a follow-up, the museum hired Claramonte to be 'curator' of a project that was given the name Las Agencias [the Agencies][106] and which brought together many of the city's activists. Taking part was a 26-year-old woman called Ada Colau, who in 2015 would become the mayor of Barcelona.

At first, Las Agencias was divided into five working groups (although they later merged): a graphic design agency, a spatial agency (which reopened the MACBA bar), a media agency, a photographic agency, and

another for fashion and accessories, which made clothes, shields, and protective items in the style of a burlesque Italian disobedience. Playing with the idea of *Prêt-à-Porter*, this clothing collection was called *Prêt-à-Revolter*: its photographic campaign, of a playful character with clothes in vivid colours, imitated the style of fashion reporting.

Members of Las Agencias also bought a bus that they called the Showbus. Through collaborative workshops with people living in Barcelona, they modified it and converted it into a vehicle for carrying out interventions in the public space: the interior was equipped to hold workshops, while some windows were converted into projection screens and a stage was set up.[107]

Most of the material produced by Las Agencias was created for use during protests that would accompany the 2001 meeting of the WB in Barcelona.[108] This association with a specific activist event led the government delegate for Catalonia to demand that the museum cut its links with the project. When the mobilizations finally took place, the police charged into the artistic institution itself.[109] Las Agencias ended with sharp conflicts between the activists and the museum, and between the activists themselves. However, this had been one of the earliest examples of the articulation of creative activism in a museum.

In 2002, in relation to recent mass lootings in Argentina, some people in Barcelona created YOMANGO [I STEAL], a 'brand' which promoted pinching products from big stores as a way of life.[110] Its 'corporate' image included designing clothes and accessories created with theft in mind (pockets, double bottoms, materials that overrode alarms …). Various actions and texts were used to launch the brand.

On 5 July 2002, the brand was unveiled in Barcelona. A group of people organized a festive meeting around a branch of Bershka fashion store, during which various 'models' entered the shop and stole clothes. One of these '*mangado*' items was later exhibited in the galleries of the Centro Contemporáneo de Cultura de Barcelona. 'Commerce imprisons desire in objects. YOMANGO liberates it', we are told in the video which documents the action: 'YOMANGO is the art of transforming things without effort, without work, without money or credit cards.'[111]

A subsequent performance in the city paid homage to the Argentinian social revolts, commemorating their first anniversary.[112] In the Yomango Tango, loud music was played in a supermarket in Las Ramblas. Festooned in red and black, dancers incorporated the theft of bottles of champagne into the steps of a tango (Fig. 4.11). On the following day, champagne

Fig. 4.11 In 2002, the Barcelona group YOMANGO carried out the action *Yo Mango, Tango*, in 'homage' to the Argentinian insurrection. Activists danced to the rhythm of a tango in a supermarket while they stole bottles of champagne. The next day, they raised their glasses in one of the banks responsible for the Argentinian crisis (Images by Oriana Eliçabe, courtesy of the author)

was uncorked in the entrance of Banco Santander, 'one of those responsible for the crisis in Argentina'.[113] In the words of artivist Leónidas Martín: 'We joyfully toasted to the free movement of things, people, and desires.'[114]

After Las Agencias, a group called SCCPP (Sabotaje Contra el Capital Pasándoselo Pipa) [Sabotage Against Capital Having a Good Time][115] was formed in Madrid in 2002. At about the same time as the actions took place in Barcelona, SCCPP organized YOMANGO workshops and conferences. That same year, they published the *Libro rojo* [*Red Book*]: this small volume, designed in the style of parodic pop Maoism, explains various techniques of stealing. Claramonte speaks of how, in contrast to philosopher Michel de Certeau's distinction between the tactical and the strategic level of action,[116] here they were dealing with an operational dimension. The actions of daily disobedience would introduce cracks into the system, until a point would be reached when the combination of fissures would cause it to break.[117]

Against the obvious contradiction of an approach that was parasitic upon the capitalist system, YOMANGO claimed to be against accumulation, promoting instead the free circulation of goods. The *Red Book* tells us that its ethos is more about the rediscovery of 'generosity, caprice, indeterminacy'. YOMANGO quickly became famous and 'franchises' emerged in many other places. Globally, in activist and/or artistic contexts, YOMANGO banquets were held at which stolen products were eaten and drunk collectively. If economy is defined as the management of scarcity, this type of practice proposed the free nature of the stolen as a means to achieve the circulation of abundance. As with Reclaim the Streets, the social dream concerns a regime of copiousness and overflow, where pleasure satisfies ever-changing desires. In this form of prefigurative politics that generates situations free of monetary exchange, one can once again hear echoes of the lands of milk and honey.

Following the spirit of tactical frivolity and of the action-spectacle, other groups continued trying to change the confrontational face of revolt, seeking to convert it into a joyous practice. By now, the new forms had been completely incorporated into the aesthetics of protest. A vocabulary and grammar of action extended globally. In many countries there were rebellious raves, Pink Blocks, and samba bands. Many people made their own protective equipment and shields, and the practice of decorating the latter with human faces or the covers of books—the so-called Book blocks—spread widely.

In 2003, together with Jenifer Verson, Matt Trevelyan, and the performer Larry Bogad, John Jordan became one of the founders of CIRCA (Clandestine Insurgent Rebel Clown Army). This parodic army merged 'the ancient art of clowning with contemporary tactics of nonviolent direct action'.[118] Given the hard nature of activist existence, the formation sought to develop 'a practice that tried to provide tools for transforming and sustaining the inner emotional life of the activists as well as being an effective technique for taking direct action' (Figs. 4.12 and 4.13).[119] In various dissident events, they tried out a changing repertoire which, through humour, sought to bring down the binary oppositions that characterize confrontation.

CIRCA was formed to greet 'arch-clown'[120] George W. Bush on his visit to the United Kingdom in November 2003.[121] At that time, there was a complex installation in the turbine hall of the Tate Modern which formed part of artist Olafur Eliasson's *The Weather Project*. In this vast space, an artificial sun generated an atmosphere of pleasurable unreality, which attracted a large number of visitors. In this place, on 18 November,

Fig. 4.12 Formed in 2003, the Clandestine Insurgent Rebel Clown Army (CIRCA) sought to coordinate civil disobedience using the repertoire of the clown (Image by Ian Teh, courtesy of the author)

a group of artists drew the phrase 'Bush go home' using their own bodies. The words of this 'human banner' were reflected clearly in the mirror on the ceiling,[122] and applause and congratulations greeted this iconic action. The context here was that of a huge international anti-war movement. What at that point were the biggest demonstrations in history had taken place in a synchronized way across the world on 15 and 16 February 2003—millions of people protested against the invasion of Iraq, to the indifference of the US president who started the attack in March.

The Artistic Institution

Throughout these years, the art world had been 'digesting' the ideological and aesthetic innovations that had been produced in the field of social movements. Incorporation took place at different levels: activism nurtured 'Art' with subjects, practices, and aesthetic elements.

Fig. 4.13 Against the 'serious bloc' of the police, the rebels formed a 'parodic bloc' which dismantled traditional ideas of confrontation (Photograph by Immo Klink, courtesy of the photographer)

During the 1990s, so-called 'political art' became a sort of trend, placing those topics that agitated the streets within the institutions. In this type of work, politics is a *theme*: these critical works are not usually intended to constitute themselves as artefacts of direct use but rather seek to carry out a reflection, to raise consciousness, or to provoke revulsion. The best examples succeed in allowing air to enter from the street, conceptually piercing the walls of artistic centres like stones thrown at a window. But when they do not work, the artworks become mere rhetorical exercises, through which the institution disguises its lack of porosity.

Without the necessity of explicit politicization, art also incorporated some of the *practices* that countercultural dissidence had disseminated through a large number of events. Mainly in museums and public institutions, there was a flourishing of situations that involved collaboration, non-monetary exchange, group encounters, and non-hierarchical discussions that were understood as works of art in themselves.[123] The philosopher Nicholas Bourriaud developed the concept of 'relational

aesthetics',[124] while other writers debated the definition of a 'communitarian art' which, working with groups of people, tried to improve their environment in one way or another. A neo-situationist current impregnated the artistic discourse with quotes from Debord, Baudrillard, Vaneigem, and Certeau.

On occasion, the *aesthetics* of protest that developed in the streets acted as a kind of iconographic source from which artists drew inspiration. Creators such as Jeremy Deller and Sharon Hayes work with the format of the banner, bringing it into the museum context. Hayes's project *In the Near Future* (2009) decontextualized slogans from previous struggles and translated them to the present, displaying them beyond specific protest events. The large sculpture called *NO*, which Santiago Sierra made in 2009, presented a clear analogy with a 3D banner used during the 1988 campaign for 'No' to the military dictatorship in Chile.[125] The work of the Spanish artist placed the emphasis on dissent, on pure negation as a discourse.

In 2008, the Lehman Brothers bank collapsed, triggering a serious economic crisis that started with financial entities and went on to drag down with them other sectors of society.[126] Along with Greece, Italy, and Portugal, Spain was one of the most affected European Union countries. On top of the global problem, there were local specifics such as a 'property bubble' that had 'burst' after years of growth based on speculation, as well as a large external debt. The political system, tarnished by a lack of transparency and by corruption, made it very difficult to punish those responsible. Spanish electoral law also complicated the possibility of electing a government outside of the two main parties, which basically proposed the same economic policies. At these times, activism did not seem to have reacted in an adequate manner. However, both utopia and revolt are like those underground rivers that John Jordan wanted to dig up and bring to the surface. They have their hidden flow and from time to time flood the surface with the force of possible change.

Notes

1. Slogan of the 'movement of movements', which also became that of the Porto Alegre Social Forum.
2. In the section, 'What is the WTO? What we do' of the WTO's website: https://www.wto.org/english/thewto_e/whatis_e/what_we_do_e.htm [Consulted 16/09/2015].

3. The IMF was created in 1945 'to build a framework for economic co-operation'. This inter-governmental organization, which today has 188 member countries, according to its website 'oversees the international monetary system and monitors the economic and financial policies', highlights 'possible risks to stability and advises on needed policy adjustments'. It also 'helps its member countries design economic policies and manage their financial affairs' offering 'technical assistance and training'. See its website: http://www.imf.org/ [Consulted 16/09/2015].
4. Created in 1944, the WB comprises five institutions, including the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD) and the International Development Association (IDA). It defines itself as a 'source of financial and technical assistance to developing countries around the world'. This 'assistance' is provided in the form of loans for specific projects. Members of the World Bank also have to be members of the IMF. See its website: http://www.worldbank.org/ [Consulted 16/09/2015].
5. The OECD was created in 1960. Among its tasks is measuring 'productivity and global flows of trade and investment' and setting 'international standards on a wide range of things, from agriculture and tax to the safety of chemicals'. See its website: http://www.oecd.org/ [Consulted: 16/09/2015].
6. Amory Starr, *Global Revolt* (London: Zed Books, 2005), 6.
7. Josep Maria Fontana claims that in fact there has not been a reduction in State spending but rather that this has been diverted from social services to the forces of order (the police and the army). Josep Maria Fontana, *El futuro es un país extraño* [*The Future is a Foreign Country*] (Barcelona: Pasado y Presente, 2013).
8. See *State of Unrest*, the set of documents compiled by the World Development Movement, 2002.
9. Slogan of the Ejército Zapatista de Liberación Nacional (EZLN) [Zapatista Army of National Liberation].
10. Different peasant movements were formed in countries in the Global South. Examples would include the movement of landless peasants which has been active in Brazil since the 1970s, actions against genetically modified seeds in India which started at the beginning of the 1990s, and the large mobilizations against IMF Structural Adjustment Programmes during the same decade in South Korea. Although the relevance of these actions is global, the geographical framework of this book is essentially a European one.
11. Pablo Iglesias, 'Multitud y acción colectiva postnacional: un estudio comparado de los desobedientes: de Italia a Madrid (2000–2005)' ['The Multitude and Post-National Collective Action: A Comparative Study of

the Disobedient: From Italy to Madrid (2000–2005)']. Doctoral thesis (Universidad Complutense de Madrid, Department of Political Science and Administration, 2009), 196. Available via the online catalogue of the Universidad Complutense: http://eprints.ucm.es/8458/1/T30518.pdf [Consulted: 19/10/2015]. The decade of the 1990s was shaped by events of an international dissidence that was becoming increasingly coordinated. Although this is not the place for a list, it is worth highlighting the mobilization against the Group of Seven (G7) in Paris in 1989 and the demonstrations against the IMF and the WB in Madrid in 1994, as well as the Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro in 1992.

12. See its website: http://viacampesina.org/en/index.php/organisation-mainmenu-44 [Consulted: 16/09/2015]. Josep Maria Fontana cites the Vía Campesina when he says that: 'the problem of hunger is related to the expanded development of industrial agriculture, which promotes monoculture and the massive accumulation of land'. Vía Campesina, 'Banco Mundial: ¡Fuera de la Tierra!' ['World Bank: Get Off the Land!'], April 2012, [own translation], in Fontana, *El Futuro*, 77. At the World Food Summit in 1996, Vía Campesina launched the concept of 'food sovereignty'. This expression took on a great relevance and is today a fundamental idea for many activists. Food sovereignty refers to 'the right of peoples to healthy and culturally appropriate food produced through sustainable methods and their right to define their own food and agriculture systems'. Today, Vía Campesina has affiliates in seventy countries.
13. The NAFTA removed commercial barriers and protected intellectual property, creating an economic bloc for transactions between Canada, Mexico, and the USA. This document granted great privileges to multinational businesses.
14. These rebels had been training and organizing in the jungle since 1983. See Abelardo Hernández Millán, *EZLN. Revolución para la revolución (1994–2005)* [*EZLN. Revolution for the Revolution (1994–2005)*] (Madrid: Editorial Popular, 2007).
15. Subcomandante Marcos, 'Ellos y nosotros VI. Las Miradas 4' ['Them and Us VI. The Gaze Part 4'], communication of 11 February 2013. The English version is available at: http://enlacezapatista.ezln.org.mx/2013/02/17/them-and-us-vi-the-gaze-4-to-look-and-communicate [Consulted: 21/11/2015].
16. The name of the EZLN refers to Emiliano Zapata, one of the main leaders of the Mexican revolution of 1910.
17. Regarding the activist use of the iconography of the superhero and other popular mythologies, see Leónidas Martín and Núria Campadabal, *Activismo y ficción* [*Activism and Fiction*] (Metrópolis, TVE2, Spain, 2012). The different forms of covering the face are a recurrent element in

political protest. One later variation is that of the hacker group Anonymous, where the face is covered by a mask like that worn by 'V', the main character of the film *V for Vendetta*. The film, based on the comic of the same name by Alan Moore, is about an anarchist avenger who, from a sort of underground palace, plans various acts of terrorism against a fascist and authoritarian government. Like superheroes, like terrorists, like Subcomandante Marcos, like the Black Bloc, V covers his face—with the image of Guy Fawkes, a conspirator who took part in the attempt to blow up the British parliament in 1605.

18. In Wu Ming 1 (Roberto Bui), 'Tute Bianche: The Practical Side of Myth Making (In Catastrophic Times)', speech prepared for the 'Semi(o)resistance' panel of the *make-world festival*, Munich, 20 October 2001. Available at: http://www.wumingfoundation.com/english/giap/giap-digest11.html [Consulted: 17/09/2015].
19. On 9 February 1995, the Mexican government of Ernesto Zedillo claimed that Marcos's real name was Rafael Sebastián Guillén Vicente, born in 1957, and that he was a former student of philosophy and teacher at the Universidad Metropolitana de México.
20. Subcomandante Marcos, statement of 28 May 1994. Available at: https://www.greenleft.org.au/node/16118 [Consulted: 17/09/2015].
21. This quotation is part of the 'Fourth Declaration of the Lacandon Jungle' (January 1996): 'In the world we want many worlds to fit. The Nation which we construct is one where all communities and languages fit, where all steps may walk, where all may have laughter, where all may live the dawn.' See 'Fourth Declaration of the Lacandon Jungle', available at: http://www.struggle.ws/mexico/ezln/jung4.html [Consulted: 17/09/2015].
22. The term 'neoliberalism' is often used in a critical way to refer to the politics of the 'free market' which tend to be related to the liberalization of trade and the privatization, externalization, and corporatization of public services. See David Harvey, *A Brief History of Neoliberalism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005).
23. From their creation in August 1994, the Zapatista's 'Aguascalientes' were centres for debate and encounters with civil society. The Encuentro took place in several of these centres: *Aguascalientes I* (La Realidad), *Aguascalientes II* (Oventic), *Aguascalientes III* (La Garrucha), *Aguascalientes IV* (Morelia), and *Aguascalientes V* (Roberto Barrios). In 2003, the Aguascalientes [literally 'hot waters', named after the city of Aguascalientes that hosted the Supreme Revolutionary Convention in 1914] were replaced by the 'Caracoles' [Snails] and the 'Juntas de Buen Gobierno' [Councils of Good Government]. See Sally Burch, 'De Aguascalientes a Caracoles' ['From Aguascalientes to Caracoles'], *ALAI*

América Latina En Movimiento, 12 August 2003, at http://www.alainet.org/es/active/4239 [Consulted: 17/09/2015].

24. These included people from the French trade movement ART (Association Ressamblement Travailleurs), Russian feminism, the independent trade union of Belgrade, and the Spanish trade union of Andalusian agrarian workers SOC (Sindicato de Obreros Agrícolas de Andalucía).
25. The internet proved fundamental in coordinating and disseminating actions, to a large extent supplanting the conventional media of press and television. Via the network of networks, the various protests against multinationals and banks that were taking place in different countries were shown in real time.
26. Recommendations for the gradual privatization of higher education by the international financial organizations ran parallel to implementation of the various free-trade treaties with the USA.
27. See María Teresa Camarillo and Guadalupe Curiel, *Hemerografía del Movimiento Estudiantil Universitario (1999–2000)* [*Press Cuttings of the University Student Movement (1990–2000)*] (Mexico: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, 2005), 181.
28. The art historian Raquel Tibol claims that the students 'are only complying with the intention of the muralist in painting in the date of a social movement on the work'. Cited by Myriam Audifred, in Camarillo & Curiel, *Hemerografía*, 181.
29. See Naomi Klein, 'Reclaiming the Commons', *New Left Review*, vol. 9, May–June 2001, 81–9. Available at: http://newleftreview.org/II/9/naomi-klein-reclaiming-the-commons [Consulted 17/09/2015].
30. Slogan in Seattle.
31. David Solnit, cited in Benjamin Shepard and Ronald Hayduk, *From ACT UP to WTO: Urban Protest and Community Building in the Era of Globalization* (London–New York: Verso, 2002), 247.
32. Klein, 'Reclaiming the Commons', 81.
33. See John Sellers, 'Battle in Seattle', in Andrew Boyd and Dave Oswald Mitchell (eds.), *Beautiful Trouble: A Toolbox for Revolution* (London–New York: OR Books, 2012), 286–9.
34. It is worth recalling the controversial exhibition *Magiciens de la Terre* [*Magicians of the World*], or the third Havana Biennial, which in 1989 raised the question of multiculturality in art.
35. An affinity group is made up of a small number of people who agree to carry out direct action. Its organization is decentralized and non-hierarchical, and is based on mutual trust among the members of the group.
36. Like so many others, this slogan is old, and was chanted in the protest against the Democratic convention in Chicago in 1968 in the context

of the struggle against the Vietnam War. See Amador Fernández-Savater, 'Los Yippies y nosotros, que los queremos tanto (primera parte)' ['The Yippies and Us, who love them so much (part one)'], in Abbie Hoffman, *Yippie! Una pasada de revolución* [*Revolution for the Hell of it*] (Madrid: Acuarela Libros–Antonio Machado, 2013), 31. In the videos of the interventions of the US group ACT UP, activists can be seen shouting this phrase in the 1980s. See: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=By9kgVBuEok [Consulted: 17/09/2015].

37. Iglesias, 'Multitud y acción colectiva', 214.
38. Iglesias speaks of the 'Berlin model'. See Iglesias, 'Multitud y acción colectiva', 194–8.
39. See Juan Antonio Ramírez, *The Beehive Metaphor: From Gaudí to Le Corbusier* (London: Reaktion, 2000).
40. See, for example, Naomi Klein, 'Farewell to the "End of History": Organization and Vision in Anti-Corporate Movements', in Louise Amoore (ed.), *The Global Resistance Reader* (New York: Routledge, 2005), 166. The text reproduces Klein's speech at the first World Social Forum in Porto Alegre in 2001. John Arquilla and David Ronfeld used the term 'swarming' for the first time to refer to the Zapatistas' internet strategies. See John Arquilla and David Ronfeld, *Networks and Netwars* (Santa Monica: National Defense Research Institute, RAND, 2001).
41. Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, *Empire* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2000), and *Multitude: War and Democracy in the Age of Empire* (New York: Penguin, 2004).
42. It is worth highlighting the concept of 'tactical media' which had been developed by Rita Raley and Geert Lovink. Activist art groups such as RTMark, The Yes Men, Institute for Applied Autonomy, Bureau of Inverse Technology, and 0100101110101101.org have used the Internet as their main action terrain.
43. Iglesias, 'Multitud y acción colectiva', 216.
44. Own translation. Subcomandante Marcos, quoted in Stéphanie Lemoine and Samira Ouardi, *Artivisme: Art, action politique et résistance culturelle* (Paris: Éditions Alternatives, 2010), 59.
45. The art historian Gavin Grindon indicates the importance of the Russian writer Mikhail Bakhtin who, in *Rabelais and His World* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1984) presents the carnival as an inversion of the status quo which gives back to bodily functions their primitive origins. Grindon also relates the Carnival Against Capital to the work of Raoul Vaneigem and Hakim Bey. See Gavin Grindon, 'Carnival Against Capital: A Comparison of Bakhtin, Vaneigem and Bey', *Anarchist Studies*, vol. 12, no. 2, 147–61. The curator Claire Tancons highlights the force that the liberating model of this party has for certain anarchist groups.

See Claire Tancons, 'Occupy Wall Street: Carnival Against Capital? Carnivalesque as Protest Sensibility'. Available at: http://www.e-flux.com/journal/occupy-wall-street-carnival-against-capital-carnivalesque-as-protest-sensibility/ [Consulted: 18/09/2015]. See also Benjamin Shepard, *Play, Creativity and Social Movements: If I Can't Dance It Is Not My Revolution* (New York: Routledge, 2011).

46. See Gene Sharp, *From Dictatorship to Democracy: A Conceptual Framework for Liberation* (Boston: Albert Einstein Institution, 1994).
47. Pablo Iglesias, *Desobedientes: de Chiapas a Madrid* [*Disobedient People: From Chiapas to Madrid*] (Madrid: Editorial Popular, 2011), 102. See also the Indymedia documentary *Praha 2000. Rebel Colours*, Indymedia, 2001.
48. The medium-length film *Crowd Bites Wolf* shows many scenes of street violence in Prague. See *Crowd Bites Wolf*, Guerrillavision, 2001. Available at: http://vimeo.com/44259206 [Consulted: 18/09/2015].
49. Maxime Boidy has dedicated his PhD thesis to the visual culture and the political iconography of black blocks: 'Une iconologie politique du voilement. Sociologie et culture visuelles du black bloc', doctoral thesis, Université de Strasbourg, 2014. See also Maxime Boidy, 'Le black bloc, terrain visuel du global. Éléments pour une iconologie politique de l'altermondialisme', *Terrains/Theories*, vol. 5, 2016. Available at: http://teth.revues.org/834; doi: 10.4000/teth.834 [Consulted: 01/08/2017].
50. In Naomi Klein, 'Squatters in White Overalls', *The Guardian*, 8 June 2001 (http://theguardian.com/world/2001/jun/08/globalisation.comment) [Consulted: 18/09/2015]. The organization of these spaces which combine culture and politics led to the presentation in 1998 of the *Carta di Milano* [*The Milan Charter*], a synthesis of demands and goals of the squatters' social centres developed through an Italian national assembly. The *Carta di Milano* is available (in Italian) at http://www.ecn.org/leoncavallo/26set98/ [Consulted: 18/09/2015].
51. At first, they carried out various actions of everyday disobedience while wearing the overalls, such as entering a cinema without paying. In 1998, for the first time there was a confrontation with the police, after an attempt to enter a NATO military base. See Iglesias, *Desobedientes*, 64.
52. Wu Ming 1 (Roberto Bui), 'Un día de sol en Kreuzberg y una grabadora, octubre de 2001' ['A sunny day in Kreuzberg and a tape recorder, October 2001'], full version of the interview given by Wu Ming 1 to the magazine *Arranca* and the Berlin newspaper *Jungle World* in a park in the Kreuzberg district on 23 October 2001; interview and transcription by Stefania Maffeis, in Wu Ming, *Esta revolución no tiene rostro, escritos sobre literatura, catástrofes, mitopoiesis* [*This Revolution is Faceless: Writings about Literature, Catastrophe, Mythopoeia*] (Madrid: Acuarela Libros, 2002), 32.

53. Iglesias, 'Multitud y acción colectiva', 24.
54. Iglesias, 'Multitud y acción colectiva', 264.
55. Iglesias, *Desobedientes*, 63. Preparing the staging of the confrontations, on many occasions the Tute Bianche reached a prior agreement with the police on some details of the police charges; agreements that were not respected.
56. According to cultural theorist Paul Virilio, with this design 'the physical link weaves a social link'. See the website of Orta's studio: http://www.studio-orta.com [Consulted: 15/10/2015].
57. Rosie Nobbs, interview with the author, 26/03/2013.
58. Núria Vila and Marcelo Expósito, *Tactical Frivolity + Rhythms of Resistance*, Spain, Hamaca, 2007, 39 mins.
59. See Kate Evans, 'It's Got to Be Silver and Pink: On the Road with Tactical Frivolity', in Notes from Nowhere, *We are Everywhere: The Irresistible Rise of Global Anticapitalism* (London: Verso, 2003), 290–5.
60. 'The only way you can deal with that amount of legal machinery as a single, little person with nothing, no money, no nothing, is to have it laughed out of court. You just gotta laugh it away.' Nobbs in Vila and Expósito, *Tactical Frivolity*. See the UK government's legislative website: http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2000/11/contents [Consulted 15/10/2015].
61. Kate Evans in Vila and Expósito, *Tactical Frivolity*. Nobbs sums it up thus: 'take the piss out of your local oppressor'. The concept of tactical frivolity has expanded and today many groups follow this principle. Rosie Nobbs, interview with the author, 26/03/2013.
62. Rosie continues to carry out acts of insurgent performativity. In 2013, during the party in London's Trafalgar Square which celebrated the death of Margaret Thatcher, Rosie dressed up as the Wicked Witch of the West. There was a campaign at the time to try to get the song 'Ding-Dong! The Witch is Dead' from the film *The Wizard of Oz* to number one in the music charts, in reference to the death of the former prime minister. Rosie climbed the steps of the National Gallery and invited people to come near. She danced, arranged her breasts, and jumped and was caught by a large group of people. Later she said: 'That was a show of faith, a trust exercise. I trust the people in this country.' See Piers Eady, 'Margaret Thatcher Death Party: Reveller Dressed as Wicked Witch Jumps from National Gallery Steps into the Crowd', *The Mirror*, 13 April 2013. Available at: http://mirror.co.uk/news/uk-news/margaret-thatcher-death-party-reveller-1830820 [Consulted: 16/10/2015].
63. An early text is Joan Rivière's 'Womanliness as a Masquerade' (1929). See Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (New York: Routledge, 1990).

64. Kate Connelly, 'The World Bank and IMF Cut Short Prague Meeting', *The Guardian*, 28 September 2000. Available at: http://www.guardian.co.uk/business/2000/sep/28/imf.economics [Consulted: 16/10/2015].
65. Solnit, quoted in Shepard and Hayduk, *From ACT UP to WTO*, 247.
66. See Kathleen Ritter, 'Revolt! The Performative Aesthetics of Protest', *Switch, The Power Plant*, Toronto, Spring 2009. Available at: http://www.hadleyandmaxwell.net/revolt-the-performative-aesthetics-of-protest/ [Consulted: 16/10/2015] and Simon Sheikh, 'Positively Protest Aesthetics Revisited', *e-flux Journal,* 20, November 2010. Available at http://www.e-flux.com/journal/positively-protest-aesthetics-revisited/ [Consulted: 16/10/2015]. These texts, however, deal with cultural products that come out of dissidence rather than talk about the aesthetics of protest properly speaking. See also the magazine *Journal of Aesthetics and Protest*. Available at: http://www.journalofaestheticsandprotest.org/ [Consulted: 16/10/2015].
67. The philosopher and creative activist Jordi Claramonte tells of how shields made for anti-globalization demonstrations in Barcelona in 2001 later appeared in anti-war demonstrations in 2003 and in many other events. Jordi Claramonte, personal interview with the author, 02/03/2012.
68. Street slogan.
69. See the Indymedia documentary.
70. No one is Illegal is a coalition of autonomous anti-racist groups which defend the rights of undocumented immigrants and refugees. It emerged in 1997 after the death of the Sudanese refugee Aamir Ageeb at the hands of the German police. The network made its first appearance at *Documenta X* in Kassel. Soon there were hundreds of groups. See http://www5.kmii-koeln.de/ and also the website of the Deportation Class project which signalled the air routes used for deporting migrant people: http://www.noborder.org/archive/www.deportation-class.com/ [Consulted 16/10/2015]. The group No one is Illegal is linked to the later network No Border.
71. 'Direct Action. No Borders, No Nation', in Notes from Nowhere, *We are Everywhere*, 429.
72. Also at this time, the self-managed feminist festival Ladyfest expanded to Europe, with its first event in Glasgow. See its historical website: http://www.grassrootsfeminism.net/cms/node/98 [Consulted: 16/10/2015].
73. Strasbourg was the biggest example of this kind of enclave. See Gerald Raunig, *Art and Revolution: Transversal Activism in the Long Twentieth Century* (Los Angeles: Semiotext(e), 2007), 245–65.
74. Ed Hollants, 'No Border No Nation Action Camp Strasbourg', *Autonoom Centrum*. Available at: http://ac.home.xs4all.nl/english/discussie/strasbourgh.htm [Consulted: 16/10/2015].

75. T. V. Reed, *The Art of Protest: Culture and Activism from the Civil Rights Movement to the Streets of Seattle* (Minnesota: University of Minnesota Press, 2005), 271.
76. See http://www.forumsocialmundial.org.br [Consulted: 18/10/2015]. Porto Alegre had already attained a landmark in its recent history, as in 1989 it became the first place to institute a participatory budget, allowing citizens to influence decisions about public spending.
77. The World Economic Forum defines itself as 'the International Organization for Public–Private Cooperation. The Forum engages the foremost political, business and other leaders of society to shape global, regional and industry agendas.' With its headquarters in Geneva, it celebrates its annual meeting in Davos (Switzerland). All participants have to be invited in order to attend. See the official website: http://www.weforum.org/world-economic-forum [Consulted: 18/10/2015].
78. Casarini, quoted in Nato Thompson and Gregory Sholette (eds.), *The Interventionists: Users' Manual for the Creative Disruption of Everyday Life* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2004), 54.
79. See Carlo Gubitosa, *Genova, nome per nome* (Genoa, Altra Economia and Editrice Berti, 2003), 227–70. The sequence of photographs of the death of Carlo Giuliani can be seen in *Archivos de protesta global* [Archives of Global Protest]. Available at: http://www.nadir.org/nadir/initiativ/agp/free/genova/pics3a.htm [Consulted: 18/10/2015].
80. Iglesias, 'Multitud y acción colectiva', 348.
81. See the account of events by journalist Nick Davies, based on the work of the prosecution lawyer Emilio Zucca, 'The Bloody Battle of Genoa', *The Guardian*, 17 July 2008. Available at: http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2008/jul/17/italy.g8?INTCMP=SRCH [Consulted: 18/10/2015]. See also the website of Comitato di Verità e Giustizia per Genova [Committee for Truth and Justice for Genoa] at http://www.veritagiustizia.it/docs/scheda_diaz.php [Consulted: 18/10/2015].
82. In Italian, 'associazione a delinquere finalizzata alla devastazione e saccheggio, resistenza aggravata a pubblico ufficiale e detenzione abusiva di armi da guerra, ossia due bottiglie molotov'.
83. The charges against Mario Placanica were withdrawn in 2003 as the judge hearing the case considered that Placanica had acted in self-defence and had not targeted the shot against Giuliani. See 'Genoa Protester Case Dismissed', BBC News, 5 May 2003. Available at: http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/3002469.stm [Consulted: 19/10/2015]. Subsequent attempts to reopen the case did not change the situation. The other officers accused of abuse of authority, falsifying evidence, and torture, were declared innocent in a trial which took place in 2008. See Nick Squires, 'Italian Court Sparks Outrage by Clearing 16 Senior Policemen in G8 Genoa Case', *The Telegraph*, 14 November 2008. Available at:

http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/europe/italy/3457851/Italian-court-sparks-outrage-by-clearing-16-senior-policemen-in-G8-Genoa-Case.html [Consulted 19/10/2015]. In 2010, a new appeal found some officials guilty, but the significant amount of time that had passed meant that most of the offences had expired: John Hooper, 'Top Italian Policemen Get Up to Five Years for Violent Attack on G8 Protesters', *The Guardian*, 19 May 2010. Available at: http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2010/may/19/g8-italian-police-sentenced [Consulted: 19/10/2015]. In 2015, the European Court of Human Rights condemned Italy for crimes of torture at the Diaz school, denouncing the absence of laws against these kinds of practices. See 'Italy Condemned for Acts Amounting to Torture During the G8 Summit of 2008', *Atlas of Torture: Observing the Situation of Torture Worldwide*, 9 April 2015, available at http://www.univie.ac.at/bimtor/news/1764 [Consulted: 19/10/2015].

84. See 'Genoa Police "Admit Fabrication"', BBC, 7 January 2003. Available at: http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/2636647.stm and 'Media Missing New Evidence about Genoa Violence', *FAIR: Fairness and Accuracy in Reporting*, 10 January 2003. Available at: http://fair.org/take-action/action-alerts/media-missing-new-evidence-about-genoa-violence/ [Consulted: 10/10/2015].
85. Iglesias, *Desobedientes*, 171.
86. The massive Argentinian debt had its origins in the dictatorship period and to a large extent resulted from the socialization of private debt which was systematically nationalized. From 1991, the Argentinian Currency Board, set up by minister Domingo Cavallo during Carlos Menem's government, pegged the value of the Argentinian peso to the US dollar, under a system which worked through the occasional injection of capital raised by the privatization of public resources. However, in the long run, the exchange rate prejudiced the local market: many businesses went bankrupt and unemployment rose. At this point, the then president Fernando de la Rúa demanded a deferment on external debt (the so-called 'megacanje' [mega-swap]), which increased the interest on the debt. On 2 December 2001, to avoid a flight of capital, the government announced measures to restrict cash withdrawals, in a policy popularly known as '*el Corralito*' [lit. small enclosure].
87. Although the '*piqueteros*' [pickets] movement, initially made up of unemployed people, had its origins in 1996, it expanded massively in 2001 in the face of the magnitude of the economic crisis.
88. See the documentary by Avi Lewis written by Naomi Klein, *The Take*, United States, 2004, 87 mins.
89. Iglesias, *Desobedientes*, 181.

90. Activist slogan based on a quote from the Afro-American writer, filmmaker, and activist Toni Cade Bambara: 'the purpose of the writer is to make the revolution irresistible'.
91. See Jordan, in McKay, *DIY Culture*, 129–51.
92. Nina Felshin, *But Is It Art? The Spirit of Art as Activism* (Seattle: Bay Press, 1995).
93. See Lemoine and Ouardi, *Artivisme*.
94. The influence of situationism on the cultural environment became particularly relevant in the 1990s, when some people spoke of a neo-situationist tendency in art. An explanation of this resurgence of its ideas could be the exhibition about this particular '*-ism*' that was mounted by the Institute for Contemporary Art in Paris, Boston, and London in 1989. Some authors consider the parties of Reclaim the Streets as constructed situations which employ *détournement*. John Jordan refers to situationism's explicit influence on certain people in the group. However, he stresses the variety of references: many were marked by anarchist theory, radical ecology, and many other currents (interview with the author, 27/11/2011). For Gavin Grindon, situationism is the strand that united the avant-garde with creative activism from the 1990s. He speaks of certain social movements as 'a second-wave situationism', which for him 'was something both to 1999 and to 1968'. Gavin Grindon, 'The Breath of the Possible', in Stevphen Shukaitis and David Graeber (eds.), *Constituent Imagination: Militant Investigations, Collective Theorization* (Oakland–Edinburgh: AK Press, 2007), 98. See also Gavin Grindon, 'Second-Wave Situationism?', *Fifth Estate*, vol. 11 (2009), 50–1.
95. See the documentary by Jean-Pierre Zirn, Céline Deransart, and Alice Gaillard, *Les Diggers de San Francisco*, France, 1998. Also, Alice Gaillard, *Les Diggers: Révolution et contre-culture à San Francisco (1966–1968)* [*The Diggers: Revolution and Counterculture in San Francisco (1966–1968)*] (Montreuil: L'Échappée, 2014).
96. Berg, in Zirn et al., *Les Diggers de San Francisco*.
97. CLASS WAR was the name of a newspaper and an anarchist group, founded in 1983. Positioned in favour of violence, which the group considered to be necessary for the class war, its members carried out a series of demonstrations called 'Bash the Rich', in which marches with threatening banners took place in the richest zones of London. Related to the punk scene, they also made a music record. Factions in other cities emerged, based on the London group.
98. The acronym ACT UP stood for AIDS Coalition to Unleash Power. Founded in 1987 in New York, this group carried out intense work of spectacular direct action, visual campaigns, educational projects, and interventions in order to promote collective consciousness-raising,

demanding scientific investigation, medical protection, and legislative changes in the face of the AIDS crisis.

99. This idea was developed for the first time in relationship to the work of the underground cartoonist Robert Crumb. See Julia Ramírez Blanco, 'Corrientes subterráneas: Robert Crumb y el cómic *underground*' ['Subterranean Currents: Robert Crumb and the *Underground* Comic'], *Arquitectura Viva*, vol. 147 (2013), 78–9.
100. The communication guerrilla tries to generate codes for an alternative cultural grammar or acts as a parasite on existing media by introducing interferences: one example is modified advertising. Although Umberto Ecco´s 'semiologic guerrilla' may be considered a precedent, the term was created by the autonome a.f.r.i.k.a. gruppe [Autonomous Group a.f.r.i.k.a]. See Grupo autónmo a.f.r.i.k.a., Luther Blissett and Sonja Brünzels, *Manual de guerrilla de la comunicación* [*The Communication Guerrilla's Handbook*] (Barcelona: Virus, 2000).
101. In 1994, as an invention linked to social movements, Luther Blissett was created—a collective pseudonym which served as a mask that could be put on by anyone. Over the following five years, hundreds of artists and activists signed 'unorthodox solidarity campaigns to support the victims of censorship and repression' and 'played elaborate media pranks as a form of art' in the name of Blissett. See this project's website: http://www.lutherblissett.net/ [Consulted: 15/03/2016]. Also, Grupo autónomo a.f.r.i.k.a., '¿Todos o nadie? Nombres múltiples, personas imaginarias, mitos colectivos' ['Everyone or No One? Multiple Names, Imaginary People, Collective Myths'], in *Republicart*, 1997. Available at http://www.republicart.net/disc/artsabotage/afrikagruppe02_es.htm [Consulted: 15/03/2016].
102. Later, others such as Xelo Bosch, Ernesto Ferrer, and Mercedes Palomar joined the project.
103. See Albin Senghor, 'La Fiambrera Obrera: instrucciones de uso' ['The Worker's Lunchbox: Usage Instructions'], *La Dinamo*, May–June 2005. Available at: http://www.ladinamo.org/ldnm/articulo.php?numero=16&id=396 [Consulted: 10/06/2011]. See, also, the group's website, www.sindominio.net/fiambrera/index3.htm [Consulted: 10/06/2011], and Jordi Claramonte, *Del arte de concepto al arte de contexto* [*From Conceptual Art to Contextual Art*] (San Sebastián, Nerea, 2011).
104. The programme can be viewed in the museum's archives: http://www.macba.cat/es/de-la-accion-directa-considerada-como-una-de-las-bellas-artes [Consulted: 12/08/2011].
105. ®TMark was a coalition of actions that concern guerrilla communication. ®TMark 'supports the informative alteration of corporate products, from

dolls to children's educational tools and videogames'. See the website: http://www.rtmark.com/homesp.html [Consulted: 15/01/2013]. Its activities were at the origin of what would later become the Yes Men.

106. This name comes from the workshops' discussions, where the idea of creating various 'agencies' to connect skills and needs was put forward. There is also an explicit play with the idea of political agency. See [various authors], 'Las Agencias'. Available at: http://leodecerca.net/textos/acerca-de-lasagencias/ [Consulted: 12/06/2013]. Regarding the media reception of these activities, see, for example, Catalina Sierra, 'El MACBA arropa el activismo' ['The MACBA Supports Activism'], *El País*, 3 May 2001. Available at: http://elpais.com/diario/2001/05/09/catalunya/989370463_850215.html [Consulted: 04/05/2011].
107. This vehicle was burnt during the European Summit. A number of its authors would later form New Kids on the Black Bloc, a fictitious radical group which, through its humoristic staging, pretended to have burnt its own bus. The real Black Block had been very critical of the Las Agencias activists for collaborating with an institution.
108. The WB meeting was eventually cancelled, but the marches took place anyway. See EFE, 'El Banco Mundial suspende su reunión en Barcelona por miedo a las protestas' [The World Bank Cancels its Meeting in Barcelona out of Fear of Protests], *El País*, 19 May 2001. Available at: http://economia.elpais.com/economia/2001/05/19/actualidad/990257574_850215.html [Consulted: 03/10/2012].
109. In Senghor, 'La Fiambrera Obrera'.
110. See the websites: http://yomango.net/ and http://www.sindominio.net/fiambrera/007/ymng/index.htm [Consulted: 06/10/2012].
111. See ' YOMANGO, Presentación de la marca en sociedad' ['YOMANGO, Presentation of the Brand in Society']. Available at: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v= wED5Zn0k8fE [Consulted: 12/06/2012].
112. See 'Yomango' (unsigned text), 06/10/2011. Available at: http://leodecerca.net/yomango/ [Consulted: 05/05/2013].
113. Martín, 'Yomango'.
114. Martín, 'Yomango'.
115. The founders were Jaime Baró, Jordi Claramonte, and David Rodríguez. See the website http://www.sindominio.net/fiambrera/sccpp/sumarios.htm [Consulted: 01/10/2011].
116. See Michel de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life* (Berkeley–Los Angeles–London, University of California Press, 2000).
117. Jordi Claramonte, interview with the author, 08/06/2011.
118. John Jordan, 'Case Study: Clandestine Insurgent Rebel Clown Army (CIRCA)', in Boyd and Mitchell (eds.), *Beautiful Trouble*, 304.

119. John Jordan, 'Notes Whilst Walking on How to Break the Heart of Empire', *EIPCP* [*European Institute for Progressive Cultural Policies*], August 2005, at http://eipcp.net/transversal/1007/jordan/en [Consulted: 07/02/2016].
120. John Jordan, 'Case Study …', in Boyd and Mitchell (eds.), *Beautiful Trouble*, 304.
121. See Kolonel Klepto and Major Up Evil, 'The Clandestine Insurgent Rebel Clown Army Goes to Scotland Via a Few Other Places', in David Harvey, David Watts, and Ben Trott (eds.), *Shut Them Down!: The G8, Gleneagles 2005 and the Movement of Movements* (Leeds–New York: Dissent! and Autonomedia, 2006), 243–54. Available at: http://labofii.net/docs/kolonel%20klepto%20and%20major%20up%20evil.pdf [Consulted: 20/11/2012]. The pseudonyms correspond to the writers' clown identities.
122. See Art for a Change, 'Artists Hold Protest at U.K. Tate Gallery'. Available at: http://www.indybay.org/newsitems/2003/11/18/16602231.php?show_comments=1 [Consulted: 05/05/2013].
123. In her book *Artificial Hells*, Claire Bishop speaks of three participatory turns in twentieth-century Western art, which in general terms coincide with three moments of great social upheaval: the Russian Revolution, the rebellions of 1968, and the fall of the Berlin Wall. Claire Bishop, *Artificial Hells* (London–New York: Verso, 2012).
124. Bourriaud coined the term in 1996, in a text for the exhibition *Traffic* (CAPC Musée d'Art Contemporain de Bordeaux, February–March 1996). See Nicholas Bourriaud, *Esthétique relationnelle* (Dijon: Les presses du réel, 1998).
125. The Chilean dictatorship ended that year with a referendum. Regarding the role of the publicists in the 'No' campaign, see Pablo Larraín's film *No*, Chile, France, and USA, 2012, 118 mins. The formal analogy between the two three-dimensional 'noes' was shown to me by the artist Marco Godoy. At a 2012 demonstration we found a similar 'No': its authors, linked to the field of fine arts, were conscious of the similarity and said that they had made 'a Sierra'.
126. Naomi Klein speaks of 'disaster capitalism'. In this system, the measures of a neoliberal economy based on the thesis of Milton Friedman would need disasters in order to establish themselves, taking advantage of the state of shock of a petrified population. The cause of this strong impression could be hurricanes, earthquakes, wars, or big economic crises. See Naomi Klein, *The Shock Doctrine: The Rise of Disaster Capitalism* (New York: Picador, 2007).

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CHAPTER 5

Disobedience as an Urban Form: The Acampadasol in Madrid

'We are not leaving' (Fig. 5.1).[1]

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a b c d e f g h i j k l m n o p q r s t u v w x y z
a new alphabet for a new party[2]

In May 2011, I received a message on my mobile telephone from a friend who was in the Puerta del Sol: 'I am in an assembly with a thousand people who are all keeping silence. We are making history! Come!' When I arrived the assembly had finished. The square was full and, beneath the orange light of the street lamps, people were talking with each other. A young North American was there. His name was Kyle. He was returning to New York in a few hours, after that single night in town. His time in the city was spent among the crowd, talking, helping, and sitting on the ground, joining various gatherings of people. During the hours that Kyle was in the Puerta del Sol, a camp was built.

For my part, that moment opened a period which I spent with the intensity of enthusiasm: almost without noticing I had changed the desk for the square. At the beginning, I did not know very well how to bridge those two realities. This book emerged from there: its pages were my way to

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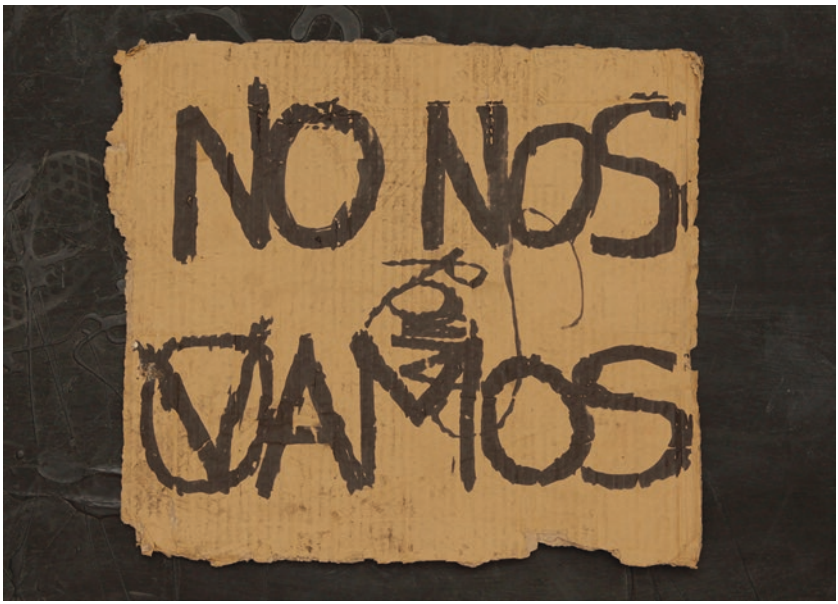

Fig. 5.1 One of the slogans of the Argentinian uprisings of 2001 declared: 'no se va, el pueblo no se va' ['We won't go, the people won't go']. In May 2011, an activist camp was set up in the centre of Madrid. There, this poster took up this refusal to abandon the public space: 'no nos vamos' ['We are not leaving'] (Photograph by Marco Godoy/Archivo 15M, courtesy of the artist)

bring the desk and the square together, to understand the square through the act of writing, and to try to relate this gesture to the act of taking to the street.

Where Shall We Live?

You'll never have a house in your whole fucking life.[3]

Although the activist camp of the Puerta del Sol seemed to appear out of nowhere, its origins can be traced in a tradition of local activism with long-established roots. In Spain, as elsewhere, various groups had developed from the movement that opposed the Iraq War in 2003.

A horrific Islamist terrorist attack took place in Madrid on 11 March 2004, killing 192 people. This was widely seen as a reaction to Spanish participation in the armed conflict. But even when various media outlets revealed the Islamist authorship of the attack, the government of the conservative Partido Popular (PP) continued to blame the Euskadi Ta Askatasuna (ETA) terrorist group for the attack, a strategy designed to protect their position in upcoming elections. On the night of 13 March, a crowd took to the street spontaneously, coming together via mobile telephones and gathering in front of the PP headquarters.[4] The next day, voters rejected PP, the party that had opted to participate in the Iraq War, and the election was won by the other main party, the socialist Partido Socialista Obrero Español (PSOE).

Meanwhile, like an underground network, the squatted spaces had continued evolving in their own way. In Madrid, between 2007 and 2008 the squatters' (*okupa*) movement revived after a period of some crisis:[5] various self-managed social centres flourished, where sumptuous abandoned buildings were transformed into places for concerts, workshops, and meetings of a politicized counterculture. Many of these buildings belonged to promoters implicated in the increasingly frequent corruption schemes of the construction sector.[6] These enclaves adopted particular meanings in a country where property speculation had made access to housing extremely difficult for a large part of the population.

During the 2000s, a movement for decent housing had begun a variety of activities on behalf of this cause. On 14 May 2006, it started a call to action to engage in mass sit-downs, known as V de Vivienda [H for Housing], a playful reference to *V de Vendetta* [*V for Vendetta*], the Alan Moore comic which had inspired the 2005 film of the same name. Some 'artivists' had designed its logo to demonstrate the difficulty of 'representing something whose identity lies in non-representation'.[7] Slogans were printed in black letters on a yellow background. This typography and direct style was later taken up by Juventud Sin Futuro [Youth Without Future], a pressure group that emerged from various student organizations in Madrid in April 2011.[8] The group called a demonstration that same month: the punk cry of 'No Future' had become a political demand.

By this time, the consequences of the macro-economic crisis were tangible on the streets. Unemployment had reached levels that were difficult to bear and cuts to the welfare state had been implemented.[9] Regional elections on 22 May were approaching and the atmosphere was one of a profound lack of confidence in a political class that seemed very distant

from the population that had voted for it. With the slogan '*No somos mercancía en manos de políticos y banqueros*' ['We are not merchandise in the hands of politicians and bankers'], Democracia Real Ya (DRY) [Real Democracy Now]—a recently created mobilization platform—called for a national protest on 15 May. While the police said that 20,000 people took to the street that day, DRY's figures put the total at 50,000.[10]

At night, after the customary clashes with the police, a group of between thirty and fifty people decided to sleep in the Puerta del Sol, where the Madrid demonstration had ended and from which in theory people should have dispersed.[11] Soon, a complex camp was set up there, quickly dubbed *Acampadasol* [Sol Camp] in the social networks.

This form of protest was part of an inherited repertoire of action[12]: at the local level, an important precedent was the so-called *Campamento de la Esperanza* [Camp of Hope], an impressive protest settlement that workers from the defunct company Sintel set up in central Madrid in 2001.[13] However, in 2011, the idea of taking to the central square of a town or city and setting up camp was directly inspired by the series of successive revolutions which had just started to take place in the Arab world. In particular, Cairo's Tahrir Square had become iconic: its tents dovetailed with an element of construction typical of the desert, which now served to structure urban dissidence (Fig. 5.2).

The journalist Olga Rodríguez, who had covered the Egyptian uprising for an alternative media outlet, speaks of how Spanish activists 'copied a protest model which was the camp and the taking over of a square'.[14] In Madrid, during the night of 15 May, Rodríguez was telephoned and asked what had been done by protestors in order to spend the night in Tahrir Square.[15] There, the first thing had been getting hold of food and shelter. In Spain, the small group of people asked for leftovers from nearby restaurants and looked for cardboard boxes, sleeping bags, and blankets in order to sleep: it was still cold.

Constructive Processes

> The plaza, my home.[16]

During the night of 15 May, an assembly took place, lit by street lamps and electronic devices.[17] Adopting an organizational approach that came from the squatters' social centres, activists divided themselves into work-

Fig. 5.2 The trigger for the Madrid camp can be found in the one in Tahrir Square, Cairo, with its echoes of the tradition of desert architecture (Image by Jonathan Rashad, CC. BY 2.0)

ing groups and committees.[18] Five committees were set up: Infrastructure, Food, Cleaning, Expansion, and Communication. The latter opened a Twitter account, set up an email address, and started a blog.[19]

Building began in the early hours of the morning: while the first assembly was taking place, a group of about seven punks built a kind of *jaima*, a sort of North African-style tent.[20] They used four rubbish containers, scaffolding, and a building-site canvas, insulating the interior with cardboard boxes. This tent, which had not been approved by the assembly, was the first construction in a square where camping is prohibited by law.

The next day, a blue garden hut with a small plastic window in its fabric walls appeared. It seemed to have come from the *Patio Maravillas*, a squatters' social centre not far from the Puerta del Sol.[21] It stood next to the punk *jaima*: both were in the zone near the 'Oso y el Madroño' statue on the east side of the square.[22] Inside the hut, tables were arranged. Some

hackers came in, set up their computers, and within less than forty-five minutes were providing free internet access to the area. The hashtag #spanishrevolution became a 'trending topic' on the Twitter social network.[23]

The blue hut provoked the first conflict with the police, who demanded its removal. People waited in the square to assemble and give a response. Nacho Miranda, a poet who camped from the first night, tells of how at that point the press was looking for the 'leaders' and of how a series of decisions was taken in an intuitive manner.

People had been called to an assembly at eight in the evening, but it took an hour just to make the preparations. When more than a thousand people arrived, filling the square for the first time, some activists from the Patio Maravillas squatted social centre wanted to harangue the masses. However, in the end the convoked assembly was held. As there were too many people for it to function properly, it was consciously decided to make it a '*symbolic* assembly'. Those who had spent the night in the plaza were crouching down under the railings of the equestrian statue of Charles III and started to talk without moving from where they were. Thus voices could be heard but not a single face could be seen. Only two questions were asked to see the reaction of the crowd: 'Shall we stay tonight?' and 'Do we stay until after the elections?'[24] Cheers greeted both questions. Later, some 250 people stayed to sleep. During the night they were evicted by the police: the authorities removed the *jaima* and the hut, leaving everything in *tabula rasa*.

As dawn rose on 17 May, the square was free of constructed elements. The eviction had the effect of issuing a rallying cry: during that day, the event became massive and at nightfall the Puerta de Sol was still full. It was in this context of empowerment when the first foundations were laid of what could really be called the camp.

Small groups devoted themselves to clearing a space between the people. They swept the ground with cardboard which they then stuck to the pavement, creating a kind of giant carpet which was broken up to form pathways (Fig. 5.3). People also started to tie ropes to the lamp posts and the equestrian statue: from this lightweight structure they hung the tarpaulin which would create a fabric covering.

The Electoral Commission ruled that demonstrating in the square on 18 May would be illegal.[25] During that day a large tent appeared, under which the huge group of people who had turned up in defiance of the prohibition took refuge. It rained throughout the night, so all the camp's

Fig. 5.3 On 17 May 2011, the Puerta del Sol was covered with a layer of cardboard, creating an insulating and soft surface upon which the camp was built (Photograph by Santiago Ochoa Marcos, courtesy of the author)

materials had to be replaced, and more solid structures were created.[26] On 19 May, the assembly decided to remain camped out until after the elections, which were to take place just three days later. On 21 May, a vegetable garden was planted in the piece of earth which surrounded the two fountains in the Puerta del Sol. 'La plaza echa raíces' ['the square is putting down roots'] could be read on a small poster, which metaphorically expressed a desire to remain.

DIY Architecture

This form of taking, this taking of form.[27]

At the Acampadasol, the Infrastructure Committee did not want to set itself up as a group of specialists. Rather, it sought to dedicate itself to sharing out the materials that arrived so that people could make their own huts in a 'do-it-yourself' spirit (Fig. 5.4).[28] Self-construction activated various kinds of practical know-how from the participants in terms of skills such as electricity and carpentry, and the experience of those who were related to the squatter environment proved fundamental.

Here materials were recycled and tended to be modest. Furniture found in the street was taken apart and its pieces used to build other structures. The profusion of cardboard was related to the central location of

Fig. 5.4 The construction of the camp followed the premises of DIY. It drew upon all kinds of materials, reusing them as architectural supports (Photograph from 19 May. Julio Albarrán, courtesy of the author)

the square: big commercial stores create a special kind of rubbish, most of which comprises the remains of packaging. At the Acampadasol, cardboard was used as an element in construction, as insulation, and as the medium for posters. It lent the place an ochre tone that was in dialogue with the blue and white of the canvas above, which was tied with rope to lamp posts or held up by homemade pillars. The Zuloark architectural group eulogized these supports—made from a mixture of wood, broom sticks, and even a toilet bowl—which presented extremely imaginative building solutions. Zuloark highlighted the 'making of a single constructive typology in a single context out of multiple different forms', indicating that the pillars served a 'double and triple function, which allowed them to become a medium for information, rubbish bins, and rest spaces'.[29]

Tied to the vertical elements, like sails to a mast, the blue canvas of the awnings lent a certain maritime image to a city without a beach: fluttering in the breeze, at times seeming to evoke the movement of water (Fig. 5.5).

Fig. 5.5 The canopy surface expanded with the accelerated growth of the camp (Photograph from 20 May. Julio Albarrán, courtesy of the author)

Below, an atmosphere of complete otherness was created, recalling the souks of Spain's Muslim past. In the zone of the tents, homely sheets appeared, creating resonances of intimacy in the public space.

The 'City of Sol'

In the square, self-construction went hand in hand with a system of self-government via assemblies, where work was voluntary. Although the square had been taken over as a *protest* against a corrupt and unjust system, the Acampadasol was a place of enthusiasm where people attempted to put into practice different ways of doing things.[30] Asking for a different society, activists started to build a small town within the metropolis of Madrid which some came to call *Ciudad de Sol* [City of Sol, or City of the Sun]. This metaphorical enunciation recalls the classic utopia of Tommaso Campanella who, in the seventeenth century, described an imaginary 'City of the Sun', which took a circular form.[31]

As the committees proliferated,[32] stalls made of wood and cardboard followed. Each one of these served to provide physical space to the various elements of reflection and work. On tables which served as display counters, information and pamphlets were laid out, along with lists of everything that was needed.[33] The City of Sol was populated with all kinds of constructions that met the needs of a fluctuating and varying population, within a regime where everything was free of charge.

Throughout the camp's rapid growth a series of passageways was maintained at all times. Zonal divisions were designated according to spatial functions: the areas for sleeping (the camp itself) (Fig. 5.6), the rest area, and the perimeter set aside for daily general assemblies were clearly marked out. The west zone, near the *Mallorquina* bakery, was always left free to allow access for ambulances in the event of any problems. It seems that a group of firefighters played an important role in these safety considerations.[34]

The first map of the City of Sol was sketched on the night of 17 May.[35] Mapping seemed to advance at the same time as construction, but its

Fig. 5.6 The camp was divided into activity and rest zones (Photograph from 19 May. Julio Albarrán, courtesy of the author)

Fig. 5.7 The changing urbanism of the camp generated maps of orientation and signposting. In the mapping, the various services that this symbolic city offered can be seen: first-aid posts, food stalls, nursery, library, and vegetable garden (Montage by Julia Ramírez Blanco, CC. BY 2.0)

representations were out of date almost immediately given the camp's constant expansion. The various cartographic efforts are documents that, at the time, served to provide orientation within the complex spatiality of the activist settlement. Today, they serve as snapshots that show the impressive heights of organization reached by the camp committees (Fig. 5.7).

Various committees occupied themselves with logistics and maintaining the space. The Food Committee, which handled donations, ended up having three different stands in the square and stored surplus food and drink (Fig. 5.8). Portable toilets were also set up and the Committee for Infrastructure and Cleaning was established, along with a place for lost objects and a recycling point. The Respect Committee acted as a kind of non-violent police service that tried to mediate pacifically in conflicts.

There were also groups which were concerned with care work: a Children's Zone (comprising a library and a nursery) catered for children,

Fig. 5.8 The food stalls received so many donations that the food had to be stored (Photograph from 19 May. Julio Albarrán, courtesy of the author)

while the nursing stands relied on the altruistic work of professionals who dealt with any medical problems. In the Acampada, sun cream and even hats were provided to protect people from that sun which was becoming stronger as summer approached.

Some groups were more directly related to 'activist' work understood in the strictest sense of the word. The Action Committee planned actions, which were then examined by the Legal Committee, composed of lawyers who saw their work as an interpretation of law 'in terms of rights'.

Several suggestion boxes sited in different parts of the square allowed citizens to articulate and share some 15,000 ideas for change, written on small pieces of paper. There were also several places for signing documents to show approval of the settlement.

Short courses were given to train activists in how to deal with the conventional media and act as spokespeople. The Communication Committee used the Internet intensively to convoke, disseminate, analyse, and inform through texts, photographs, and videos. The legacy networks of earlier

social movements were profoundly revamped, creating a multitude of new platforms on the Web, more or less connected to the nodes which preceded them.

The years since 2000 had been an era of wikis, blogs, and websites such as YouTube, MySpace, Twitter, and Facebook: this new phase of the Internet, whose content is generated by users themselves, opened a flow of information and stories in an unprecedented way. Tools such as these have changed the population's self-perception, granting a large number of people certain iconic skills and the possibility of creating an audience for their thoughts and opinions, something that had previously been possessed only by artists and experts in mass communication. In a way, the ability to create spectacle has been democratized. If the users of social networks are accustomed to generating and managing an account of their own lives, social movements too are playing—consciously or otherwise—in the terrain of the production of narrative, symbolism, and images.

Moreover, and beyond the various elements related to the configuration, maintenance, and management of the camp, the Acampada also generated a whole fabric of thought and discussion which was the real ground of the social movement. People began to come together around the square to talk about socio-economic problems and possible alternatives, reflecting on different areas: groups worked variously on the electoral system, the economy, education, the environment, and short- and long-term politics. The Puerta del Sol took on a strong cultural dimension:[36] between 19 and 21 May, a library was created, with a section for adults and a children's area. During the course of the month it received more than 4,000 donated books.[37] At the same time, a Documentation and Archive Committee was formed: history was being recorded from inside the very process itself.

In the Acampada, self-government sought to follow a system of direct democracy. As in the squatted social centres, various committees were made up of working groups and came together in a general assembly. During the month of May, many people learnt political theory and were initiated into debating and taking decisions through assembly-based systems. This type of meeting took place twice a day in a space reserved specifically for the purpose.

People sat on the ground around the metro station, leaving free 'pathways'. Each meeting had an agenda, and in order to speak participants had to wait their turn to address the assembly. A sound system enabled everyone's voice to be heard. Approval, doubt, and veto were expressed in sign language so that speakers were not interrupted (Fig. 5.9). At the start, the

Fig. 5.9 The settlement was self-governing through an assembly system. In order not to interrupt speakers, participants used sign language (Image of a general assembly by Julio Albarrán, courtesy of the author)

taking of decisions required unanimity, but eventually this posture was softened to the search for an agreement with a substantial majority (four fifths), in order to make the system more functional. Even though the huge size of the general assemblies meant that they were barely functional, their space for discussion encapsulated the very meaning of the square as an agora.

The camp also fulfilled a role of dialectical antagonism in relation to the rest of the city: it was a small antithesis to the system, situated in the very centre of the metropolis.[38] Its demands were expressed through the dynamics of the space itself: the organizational and urban structures of Sol configured a systemic proposal which spoke of the possibility of radical self-organization, of an existence without formal hierarchies, of forms of voluntary work and non-monetary economy, and of a communitarian life where caregiving is carried out collectively.

To a certain extent, some of the services provided (such as nursing, the crèche, and the library) could be seen as a symbolic reinvention of some of

the public services that were being threatened by the dismantling of the welfare state. Self-government and the assembly system, in contrast, had more to do with the traditions of anarchism and autonomy, which had always been very strong in Spain.[39] With its elements varying between the metaphorical and the pragmatic, the Acampada proposed an 'ideal city', which to a large extent represented ideas tied to a politicized counterculture related to the extra-parliamentary left, combined with certain reformist ideas and concepts belonging to socialism and traditional workers' movements.

The Acampada brought together and gave visibility to a whole series of practices that had been developing for years without gaining much public attention. Suddenly, their underground currents burst through and overflowed onto the surface. In a certain sense, the square acted as a kind of 'fair' for activism, where each group was able to set up its own self-made 'pavilion' from which it could provide information about its activities and ways of seeing the world, inviting others to join. Taken as a whole, the camp and its agents staged a radically different urban model, another possible city. Civil disobedience had created its own disobedient settlement. And this was situated in the heart of the capital, Madrid's very centre, right in front of the headquarters of the regional government.

A Regime of Gleaning and an Aesthetics of Precariousness

Like so many other people, during the month of May the artists Antoni Muntadas and Hans Haacke came to the camp and took photographs. It is interesting to see how the aesthetic of the Acampada coincides with a current in contemporary art that is interested in the use of rubbish and precarious materials. For decades, architects and creators have contemplated the constructive process of shanty towns as architecture at its most basic level.[40]

In particular, the camp showed certain visual echoes of the work of the Swiss artist Thomas Hirschhorn. Speaking about his work, Hirschhorn declared: 'I love the power of forms made in urgency and necessity. These forms have an explosive density. They are untameable and rebellious.'[41] His recurrent materials are cardboard and balsa wood, adhesive tape, plastic, and rubbish. The *clochard* aesthetic of his work is similar to that of the City of Sol.

Some have spoken of the 'enlightened shanty town',[42] alluding to forms of construction based on emergency and immediate need. In the dissident settlement, this way of proceeding had an ideological meaning: those who originally configured it did so of their own free will, unlike the unchosen precariousness of millions of people who build and live in slums across the world. This circle was closed when homeless people started to install themselves in the Sol camp.

The use of rubbish has a strong political meaning, as it is the other face of consumer capitalism. In her film *The Gleaners and I*,[43] Agnès Varda gathers various examples of two different attitudes towards reuse: choice and necessity. The film shows various forms of gleaning: although the origin of this term is in the rural practice of collecting what remains on the ground after harvest, Varda extends the concept, applying it to different forms of reusing that which others have discarded, also in the context of the city. The filmmaker depicts people who collect food or objects in a subjective catalogue of ways in which they live off leftovers and construct worlds through bits and pieces. This is not difficult to do in our society of excess, where every day tonnes of food and other goods in perfect condition are thrown away.

In the Acampada, the economic system was that of generosity (through donations of materials, objects, and food) and gleaning (through the gathering and recycling of all kinds of refuse). Money was explicitly forbidden (Fig. 5.10). Nacho Miranda expresses surprise at how 'it was possible to do something so wonderful with something that we had not bought, that we did not own, that belonged to everyone and no one at the same time'.[44] Those things gathered outside the direct situations of buying and selling could perhaps generate other kinds of relationships. Implicit in Miranda's words seems to be the idea of the gathered as a kind of *commons*, framed within that crucial concept at the heart of the book *Commonwealth* by Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri.[45]

As in Varda's film, reuse at Sol opened a door of hope. Places such as the Acampada sketched the possibility of beginning to build a new world on the basis of the old one's waste. As with gleaned fruit, the leftovers belonged to everyone. It was a question of organizing the excess, reordering rubbish, and using it for building. This way of acting would imply a dialectical scheme, in which the alternative depends upon capitalism to provide it with resources: however, this can be seen as merely the start, the first step towards creating a sustainable framework. A form of beginning, based on radical degrowth.

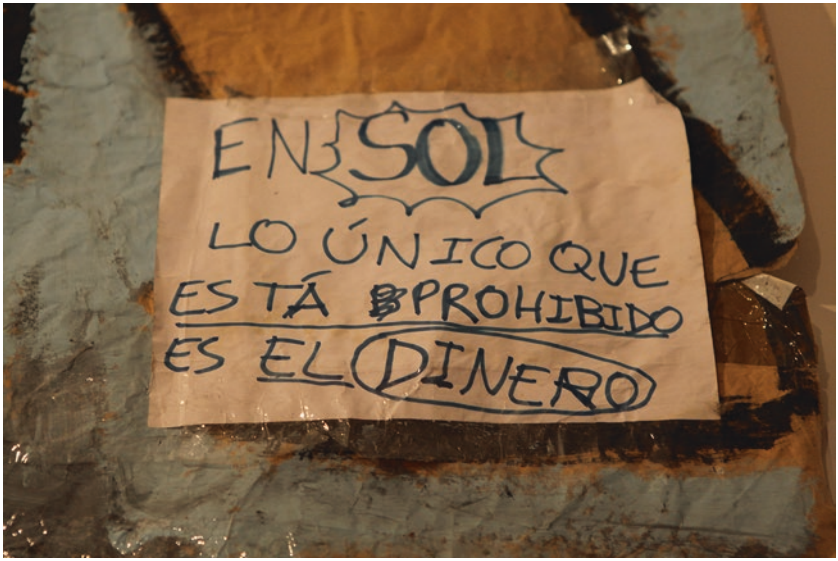

Fig. 5.10 The camp's economy was governed by the practices of collection and donation. This small poster refers to the explicit banning of money throughout the camp (Image by Marco Godoy, courtesy of the author)

Political Heterogeneity and the Principle of Collage

In the Puerta del Sol, heterogeneity was both political and aesthetic. The place became a kind of mosaic of great eclecticism where neither the political nor the aesthetic seemed to have any 'possible direction or guideline'.[46] Elements were added to a motley ensemble where anyone who wished to express themselves could do so.

This overabundance of direct individual expressions can be seen as yet another manifestation of the crisis of representation.[47] Many people in the square seemed to feel the need to communicate their opinions and beliefs. Attempts at unification failed: one of the few large banners referred to this lack of faith in the idea that a single element could speak in the name of everyone. It showed a portrait of Himmler with Mickey Mouse ears and a cap bearing the euro sign—pulling together symbols of Nazism, North American capitalism, and the European Union's single currency—together with the words '*No nos representan*' ['They do not represent us']. This banner was hung on top of a huge shampoo advertisement.[48]

The giant poster which showed Spanish actress Paz Vega promoting a shampoo for 'Mediterranean hair' had been acted on in an example of communication guerrilla tactics. What started out as an attack on an element of advertising,[49] ended up becoming a *détournement*, a diversion which playfully appropriated the image in the service of a new meaning. Through crossing out and superimposing letters, 'L'Oréal' became 'Democracia Real' ['Real Democracy'] (Fig. 5.11). Next to the silhouette of the actress erupted an international exhortation: 'PEOPLE OF EUROPE RISE UP!' Paz Vega, as an involuntary muse of the revolution, inspired posters which insisted on the idea of non-violence by playing with her name ['*paz*' is Spanish for 'peace'] and actively using humour, that primary subversive resource. Under her giant photograph, which had become a collective mural, a verbal node could be found. In the scaffolding which covered the building on which the advertisement was sited, nestled a dense mass of signs.

Fig. 5.11 On one of the buildings which surrounds the square, a huge advertising hoarding was subjected to a collective intervention. The cosmetics brand 'L'Oreal' became 'Democracia Real' ['Real Democracy'] (Photograph by Julio Albarrán, courtesy of the author)

Crowds in Assembly; Banners and Posters

> Phrases which are repeated for the mere pleasure of hearing them again.[50]

The engineer and cultural critic Raúl Minchinela points to the popular recuperation of language as a fundamental element of the camp.[51] Within the settlement, posters invaded everything: hung from the ropes that held up the awnings, stuck to the walls of surrounding buildings, on the committee tables, on the walls of their stalls. An architecture of signs took shape in the square, which once again recalls the textual and conceptual overabundance of the work of Thomas Hirschhorn. Its solidity was made of messages and ideas which were balanced between coherency and contradiction.[52] This importance of language can be related to its centrality within the assembly system, which is based on government through hours and hours of spoken words (Fig. 5.12).

Fig. 5.12 The profusion of signs formed a complex verbal palimpsest of overlapping and superimposed meanings. The textual oversaturation of the space showed a kind of *horror vacui* of texts which kept on accumulating (Photograph of 19 May. Julio Albarrán, courtesy of the author)

A large number of posters sought to restore meaning to words such as 'democracy' or 'crisis', proposing possible solutions to various economic and social problems. Taken together, they signify an impressive exercise in collective political thought, with repeated thematic points: the privileges of the political class, the schism between institutional politics and the citizenry, the self-interested manipulation of the economic crisis, the parasitic character of the governing classes, and the need for radical change.[53] Some old slogans were taken up again, revealed as earlier strata of the discourse (Fig. 5.13).

The popular reclaiming of language not only retrieves the use of political terminology but also exercises the right to use speech as a vehicle of subjectivity and poetry, enjoying the ludic–symbolic possibilities offered by words. Many texts speak of personal experiences. Others play with metaphor: an example of such creativity is the rhetoric of the sun [*sol*], referring to Puerta del Sol, a place name which in Spanish means 'Gateway of the Sun'. The sun is taken as a symbol of the social movement and its implicit promises, with banners such as 'Tenemos el Sol, ahora queremos la luna' ['we have the Sun, now we want the moon'] or 'hace un día de sol precioso' ['it's a beautifully sunny day'] (Fig. 5.14). The square itself became the 'Plaza de la SOLución' ['square of the SOL-ution']: the new city planning was completed with the invention of a new toponymy, changing the names of those places that had been transformed (Fig. 5.15).

The Graphic and Visual Arts Committee worked continuously to produce signs and symbolic elements for display in the square (Fig. 5.16). While banners on demonstrations are mobile, walking along with their bearers, the placards in the Sol camp were more static, placed there by protestors who had set up camp in the square, and they played a fundamental role in creating a new sense of space. Many of them were made *in situ*, drawn with pens or even pencils, in a vast catalogue of calligraphies. Most of the messages were written on paper, cardboard, or even using the minimal format of Post-It notes. The principle of collective and evolving collage was also applied to these spontaneous texts, whose conjunction formed part of 'a very combinatory aesthetic'.[54] The constant advance of signs was of a modular character, in which the small predominated: as anything big had to be approved by the Assembly, the aesthetic elements of the camp essentially added small items of horizontal growth with various points of concentration. Texts, drawings, paintings, graffiti, stencils, printed photographs, interventions on advertisements, cardboard marionettes …. All were superimposed in an accumulation of meanings that

Fig. 5.13 The vast variety of posters which populated the camp oscillated between poetry, humour, and proclamation (Montage by Marco Godoy, CC/ Archivo 15M)

Fig. 5.14 'Hace un día de sol precioso' [it's a beautifully sunny day]. Appealing to the double meaning suggested by 'dawn' (literal and metaphorical), Puerta del Sol—which means 'Gateway of the Sun'—became a name identified with the promises of change that are heralded by revolt (Photograph by Sole Parody, courtesy of the author)

became measureless. The handmade banners—and with them, the concepts they displayed—grew rhizomatically and were placed in the space in a spontaneous way, with a kind of *horror vacui*.

Philosophers Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari claim that the rhizome structure is inherently subversive.[55] The horizontal organization of the camp was also translated into a horizontal arrangement of its messages. This is also linked to a young population educated in Web 2.0: the overabundance of essentially equivalent texts corresponds to this phase of the Internet's development where excess replaces exception. One of the centres of verbal concentration was the entrance to the Sol metro and train station, which became a place to exchange ideas. In a way similar to that of posting opinions on a blog, written papers accumulated on the glass, rendering it almost opaque.

Fig. 5.15 The Puerta de Sol itself was dubbed *Plaza Sol-ución* [Plaza Sol-ution]. In a kind of new revolutionary topography, the activist alteration of the space was accompanied by a change of name (Image by Julio Albarrán, courtesy of the author)

Many people left the metro and entered the square through this glass structure, emerging from beneath a profusion of written messages. The star project of the Partido Popular in Madrid became a democratic medium, a noticeboard for change. Elements such as this reveal that the Puerta del Sol had become a huge open-air book. Written words were read in an environment of spoken, shouted, or chanted words, of slogans old and new,[56] personal and common, aggressive and enthusiastic. The square became, literally, a square of words, in an environment that was a total overflowing of language.

The 'Silent Scream': After Utopia

> On the first evening of fighting, it so happened that the dials on clock towers were being fired at simultaneously and independently from several locations in Paris. An eyewitness, who may have owed his insight to the rhyme, wrote as follows:

Fig. 5.16 The Arts Committee carried out a constant production of posters, in which there was an impressive collective exercise in creativity and political reflection (Photograph by Julia Ramírez Blanco, CC BY 2.0)

> *Qui le croirait! On dirait qu'irrités contre l'heure*
> *De nouveaux Josués, au pied de chaque tour,*
> *Tiraient sur les cadrans pour arrêter le jour.*
> [Who would believe it! It is said that, incensed at the hour,
> Latter-day Joshuas, at the foot of every clock tower,
> Were firing on clock faces to make the day stand still.][57]

During the first week, the camp did not stop growing. The square's inhabitants were overwhelmed with a feeling of imminent social change. Meanwhile, the Legal Committee provided the telephone numbers of lawyers, which people wrote on their skin, to use in the event of eviction and/or arrest. These first moments were a period of wonder. Almost immediately the Madrid camp spawned similar settlements in various Spanish cities. In the capital the euphoria grew. Nonetheless, outside the

Acampada and its surroundings, the rest of the city continued under the regime of earlier 'normality', as if the activist place inhabited a different temporality.

However, during the two days before the elections it seemed that one city had fallen on top of another. 'Lo llaman democracia y no lo es' ['They call it democracy, but it's not'] had already become a popular slogan and it resounded throughout the square. Many of those chanting it had not previously been connected to any social movement. They were there despite the fact that, on Friday 20 May, the Electoral Commission had explicitly prohibited all demonstrations on the following Saturday.[58]

At midnight, therefore, the gathering officially became illegal. The crowd then expressed disobedience in a performative manner. Those thousands of people who had come to the Puerta del Sol kept silence and waved their hands in assembly-style applause. Some had sealed their mouths with duct tape. The twelve chimes of the city-hall clock were heard in pristine clarity. When the chiming finished, there were shouts and applause. More than 20,000 people stood under the orange light of the street lamps.

That great collective performance became known as the 'silent scream' (Fig. 5.17). The extended hands evoke surrender, in a kind of pacifist defiance, which in Spain is reminiscent of the *manos blancas* [white hands] of the demonstrations against the ETA terrorist group. The scene also makes one think of the national tradition of eating a dozen grapes on 31 December, one for each of the chimes which announce the start of the New Year. Some banners played with the analogy: 'Si viene la policía, sacad las uvas y disimulad' ['If the police come, take out grapes and pretend'].

After the silent scream, there was a voiceless tension. Would there be an eviction? There were too many people, it would be impossible to leave the square …. Nothing happened and this moment was lived as a triumph. It was the biggest act of civil disobedience in the post-Franco history of the country.

The silent scream acted as a huge collective explosion. Everyone was there, with their hands stretched out into the night. Because of the proximity of bodies, there was hardly any space to move. Moments such as this act as catalysts. Years earlier, the writer Yves Frémion had proposed the metaphor of the 'orgasms of history' to describe processes of insurgence:

> [Like the orgasm, the uprisings] too, boast a stage when the struggles (slowly but inexorably) are hatching and building up. The explosion when it comes, comes abruptly, and is hard to control, even for those who unleash

Fig. 5.17 On 20 May 2011, more than 20,000 people occupied the Puerta del Sol, defying the Electoral Commission's prohibition. This enormous performance—one of the largest acts of civil disobedience in Spanish history—became known as the *grito mudo* or the silent scream (Photograph by Julio Albarrán, courtesy of the author)

> it. Once the explosion is over, there is an undeniable easing of tension, an ebb tide heralding the very palpable torpor of the aftermath of pleasure […] Away then, with the hoary image of revolution as a once-and-for-all success: and with the notion of love as an ongoing orgasm. Sure, the orgasm may be short-lived, but it is damned fine while it lasts.[59]

The moment that follows the utopian explosion is similar to that which comes 'after love'. And, in a certain way, one can also see the Acampada as a big celebration, whose excess led to a kind of collective 'hangover'. At that moment, the events of representative politics did not help.

When the regional elections took place on 22 May it seemed that the activist event had left no mark on parliamentary politics. The Partido Popular, the most right-wing option among mainstream parties, won an overwhelming majority:[60] many people had abstained from voting, and some had put slices of chorizo in the voting envelope, alluding to the

corruption of the political class.[61] On top of all this, the square had emptied noticeably.

Despite the constant fear of eviction, after the police repression of 15 May the authorities had not sought to repeat an attempt at removing the Madrid camp.[62] After the elections, the building of the Acampada's structures continued to progress in a space that sheltered far fewer people. Now the settlement's inhabitants were more clearly tied to the countercultural scene and the networks of previous activism.

In time, internal conflicts became increasingly bitter, and thefts and aggressive behaviour took on greater significance. Again, the participants were aware that to throw out those whose behaviour was 'problematic' was against their own principles. Many people noticed how a large amount of energy was focused on managing the space, to the detriment of carrying out actions. Where previously there had been consensus, the debate started about when and how to leave, in order to be able to channel the social movement in another way.

After a week of tense assemblies where only a small number of people opposed the general decision, the group decided to dismantle the settlement. People then started to talk of *Mudanzas 15M* [15M Removals]. On 12 June 2011, the materials of the Sol camp were put into vans and most were taken to various squatters' social centres in the city.[63] At this time, there was a big gathering up of posters, banners, and other objects which became part of the 15M Archive.[64]

Once the ground had been swept and the area vacated, the Acampadasol wanted to leave a permanent information point in the square along with a ground-level monument: next to the statue of Carlos III a metal plate was placed, with the text 'Dormíamos, despertamos. Plaza tomada, 2011' ['We were sleeping, we awoke. Square taken over, 2011'] (Fig. 5.18). On the last day of the settlement, there was a summing-up assembly during which the various committees and working groups gave accounts of their work. The camp had endured for a total of twenty-eight days.

By now, the Acampadasol had already become a global trigger and when the Madrid camp disappeared, there were already similar settlements in many other places across the globe, initiating a new wave of activism at an international level. On 17 September 2011, Occupy Wall Street appeared, siting its dissident camp in Zuccotti Park, very near the New York Stock Exchange, one of capitalism's main symbolic centres. As with the movement of movements, the people in the street cried 'Another world is

Fig. 5.18 After its dismantlement, those at the camp wanted to leave a small monument at ground level. This plaque spoke of the activist transformation understood as an 'awakening': 'We were asleep. We awoke. Square taken over, 2011' (Photograph by Juanlu Sánchez, courtesy of the author)

possible!' In his analysis, the social geographer David Harvey once again turned to the metaphor of the machine and the idea of putting one's own body between the cogs of the system:

> Spreading from city to city, the tactics of Occupy Wall Street are to take a central public space, a park or a square, close to where many of the levers of power are centered, and, by putting human bodies in that place, to convert public space into a political commons—a place for open discussion and debate over what the power is doing and how best to oppose its reach.[65]

Through the camps, the people in the crowd seemed to be reclaiming their right to intervene in the cities which they inhabited.[66] Occupying squares had become a form of acting which spread with great force and speed.[67] The Madrid camp had translated the Arab phenomenon to the

West, establishing the basis for a kind of utopian and countercultural settlement, where the communitarian experiment was inseparable from political protest.[68]

Although very varied according to their different contexts, the camps had elements in common. They all included the aesthetic of precariousness, the profusion of words through small handmade posters, and the construction of space through structures of wood and cardboard. Certain elements with a strong symbolic significance, such as the library, sprouted from Athens to New York.

The Tahrir-style camp, through the filter of Madrid, implied a new typology in the vocabulary of the aesthetics of protest, as had happened previously with the Reclaim the Streets style of rave-carnival and the counter-summit in the manner of Seattle and Prague. Now, public space was taken over by building a small metropolis inside the main one—a kind of symbolic State that implied a radical questioning of how things function.

But the settlements did not function in the long term and nor would they have survived without resources provided by the rest of the city. More than 'real' communities, the camps were performative communities. Nonetheless, in these spaces, people could *experience* that another way of living *could be possible*.

Le Corbusier reflected on the utopian impulse and its relation to building in *Vers une architecture*:

> Society is filled with a violent desire for something which it may obtain or not. Everything lies in that: everything depends on the effort made and the attention paid to these alarming symptoms. Architecture or Revolution. Revolution can be avoided.[69]

The global camps seemed to want to resolve this opposition by proposing (popular) architecture as a tool of rebellion.[70] New social movements emerged everywhere where this dissident urbanism arose, emanating from life at the camps themselves. In Spain, the 15M movement appeared, whose characteristics were initially related to the lines that had been articulated by the camps: the assembly approach, horizontality, and voluntary work divided by thematic areas. At the same time, a myriad of specific campaigns arose, which adopted the '15M style' of spectacular action and collective disobedience.[71]

After the camp, insurrection continued while the 'normal' city imposed its increasingly authoritarian plans in a state of growing deficiency and

fear, very far removed from the hopes of that May. Cuts in social spending were combined with repression in the context of growing poverty.[72] The utopian place had served as a catalyst, but there was soon a growing despair which combined with dumb rage. 'Nobody expects the Spanish Revolution',[73] declared one of the slogans, while a piece of graffiti added: '*No pasa hasta que pasa*' ['it doesn't happen until it happens']. On 25 September 2012, a defiant protest attempted to surround and blockade the Congress building. This *Rodea el Congreso* [Surround the Congress] action—developed in the context of a strong police presence and high levels of repression—showed the Congress building behind a perimeter of fences, against the citizenry. During the following months, the barriers and the surveillance were maintained, as if the institutions had to protect themselves from the people.

At first, the camp had barely influenced institutional politics. However, a very rapid political process unfolded in Spain which ensured that a strong impact would be felt in subsequent elections. It was not easy to predict that the experience of the camp would give legitimacy to the creation in 2014 of a new political party, called *Podemos* [We Can]. Pablo Iglesias, its leader, had been part of the *Tutte Bianche* and described their civil disobedience practices in his doctoral thesis, emphasizing the importance of spectacles that capture the attention of the media. The alter-globalization generation of activists had come together with new waves of people who had been politicized by 2011's camps, and some of them had decided to speak the language of the media and to enter the game of political parties. Podemos would very soon gain popularity and institutional power. Different radical groups grew at the municipal level, and some of these would come together with Podemos in electoral coalitions. One such example is AhoraMadrid, formed 'as an instrumental party without organic internal life' in order to win the elections. In May 2015, AhoraMadrid (with the support of PSOE) took power in the Madrid city hall while a similar coalition, BarcelonaenComú, did so in Barcelona. Ada Colau, linked to the squatters' movement and the campaign for decent housing, and connected to Las Agencias, became mayor of Barcelona. In December of the same year, analogous groupings backed Podemos in the general election at which it became a significant political force.

Thus, in a way, the crowd moved from trying to surround and disrupt a congress which they felt did not represent them to attempting to enter it through the front door—but now returning to the language of representative politics. The activist and poet Ernesto Garcia speaks of how

> The 'movementist' cycle (2011–13) and the institutional and electoral cycle (2013 onwards) would be two connected cycles with distinct political subjectivities. […] The second is not a mere evolution of the first and nor is the first a pre-political process that has nothing to do with the institutional. Rather, I consider that both periods (with all their recursion, confusion, interaction) do not behave as clear stages but […] conduct a dialogue with the institutional from distinct places. The 'movementist' cycle implies […] among many other things the construction of a political subjectivity that is antagonistic to institutional rationales and to parties, a new sensibility sustained by the centrality of the citizen-neighbour, but in dialectic tension with the State; while the second phase constructs a 'new political animal' where (through Podemos) the rationale of the party is reassembled, but in a different style, in a transversal manner, with new internal dynamics. In this regard, it is not correct to attribute to Podemos the social demobilization (the streets had already been vacated since autumn 2013), nor could we ascribe to it the supposed translation of the 15-M in terms of 'political maturing'.[74]

The *micro* had quickly influenced the *macro*, and part of the countercultural youth that slept in the open air of the camp embarked on a rapid journey to what they called the 'institutional assault' or even the 'storming of heaven'.[75] New complexities opened up, and it is hard to tell where they might lead. The closing of this book therefore lies at the entrance to a path that crosses both the lands of Utopia and the earthly grounds of realpolitik.

Notes

1. 'No nos vamos', slogan, May 2011.
2. María Salgado, blog entry 17.5.11. Available at http://globorapido.blogspot.com.es/search?updated-min=2011-01-01T00:00:00%2B01:00&updated-max=2012-01-01T00:00:00%2B01:00&max-results=50 [Consulted: 28/12/2015].
3. 'No vas a tener casa en la puta vida', slogan of V de Vivienda, a movement which campaigned for decent housing.
4. 14 March 2004 became known as the 'night of the mobile telephones', in which text messages spread the message with a 'pass it on'.
5. Miguel Ángel Martínez, 'El Movimiento de Okupaciones: Contracultura Urbana y Dinámicas Alter-Globalización' ['The Squatters' Movement: Urban Counterculture and Alter-Globalization Dynamics'], *Revista de Estudios de Juventud*, no. 76, March 2007, 225–43.

6. Normally the squatter 'ethic' implies the taking over of buildings that have been left for a long time without being used. In Spain, the profusion of property scandals, which were related to speculation, made squatting those buildings an equally 'moral' alternative.
7. Ada Colau, future mayor of Barcelona, was also linked to these groups. Some of these people later formed part of the Enmedio Collective. Enmedio continued to be very active, designing images for campaigns such as the *escraches* (a form of demonstration where protestors target the homes or workplaces of people they wish to protest against) of the Plataforma de Afectados por la Hipoteca (a campaigning group for people struggling with mortgage repayments and repossessions). See http://www.enmedio.info [Consulted: 28/12/2015].
8. A little later, a similar image was used by Occupy Wall Street, through the design of the artivist group Not An Alternative, strongly linked to Enmedio. Not An Alternative speaks of a voluntary resemblance, aiming at an aesthetic connection with the Madrid Camp. Jason Jones, interview with the author, 20/03/2014.
9. These problems sharpened considerably in a very short space of time.
10. The event was supported by hundreds of blogs and organizations with an anti-globalization and anti-captialist orientation, not tied to political parties or trade unions: among them one could highlight certain collectives related to the movement of movements, such as ATTAC; groups which defend internet freedom, e.g. Anonymous and No Les Votes [Don't Vote For Them]; and organizations with origins within a university framework, such as Juventud Sin Futuro.
11. Puerta del Sol is a place of great symbolic importance: it had been the scene of the uprising of 2 May 1808 (painted by Goya), and where the Second Republic was proclaimed in 1931. In the square, one of the most important buildings is the main office of the regional government.
12. A large number of examples could be cited. In 2006, in Mexico, the presidential candidate Manuel López Obrador called for 'civil disobedience' camps to demand a recount of votes. See 'Ciudad de México, paralizada por los campamentos' [Mexico City, Paralysed by the Camps], *El Mundo*, 1 August 2006. Available at: http://www.elmundo.es/elmundo2006/07/31/internacional/1154365213.html [Consulted: 28/12/2015]. In the course of research for this book, it became apparent that other examples, such as Greenham Common and the camps of the anti-roads movement, can be regarded as quality examples of prolonged activist experiments at living in community. For a study of this tactic, see Anna Feigenbaum, Fabian Frenzel, and Patrick McCurdy, *Protest Camps* (London: Zed Books, 2013).

13. Sintel installed telephone systems and was part of the Telefónica group. In 1996, during the privatization of the public sector, it was sold to a company called Mas Tec. A slow decline in business led ultimately to its closure in 2000, resulting in mass redundancies that affected 900 employees. In protest, they erected a camp in the public thoroughfare Castellana which lasted six months—the camp contained showers and microwave ovens.
14. Olga Rodríguez reported on the Egyptian revolution for the alternative media outlet *Periodismo Humano*—this organization gained significance in May 2011 by extensively covering the events in Puerta del Sol. Olga Rodríguez, *Conversaciones 15m.cc6*. Available at: http://madrid.15m.cc/2012/01/conversaciones-15mcc-olga-rodriguez.html [Consulted: 28/12/2015]. Rodríguez is the author of the book *Yo muero hoy: Las revueltas en el mundo árabe* [*I Die Today: Revolts in the Arab World*] (Barcelona: Debate, 2012).
15. Rodríguez, *Conversaciones 15mcc6*.
16. 'La plaza, mi casa', slogan in Puerta del Sol, May 2011.
17. The entire first night of assembly was recorded by sound activist Kamen Nedev, using a binaural system. Available at https://archive.org/search.php?query=%2315MAudio&sort=publicdate [Consulted: 03/03/2016].
18. Within the group that stayed to sleep on the first night were several people who formed part of the network of squatted social centres. See Miguel Ángel Martínez, 'Ocupar las plazas, liberar los edificios (sobre el movimiento 15M y la okupación)' ['Occupy the Squares, Liberate the Buildings (Concerning the 15M Movement and Squatting)'], *ACME: An International E-Journal for Critical Geographies*, 2015, vol. 14, no. 1, 157–84.
19. The original blog contains testimonies from the first days and nights: http://concentracionsolmadrid.blogspot.com/ [Consulted: 28/12/2015]. On 17 May, its web address was changed to http://tomalaplaza.net [Consulted: 28/12/2015].
20. Nacho Miranda, interview with the author, 25/01/2012.
21. The social centres contributed to the logistics of the camp. As well as Patio Maravillas (squatted in its second location since 2010), the social centres of Casablanca (squatted since 2010) and Tabacalera (a self-managed project which has been developed since 2009 in a building lent by the Ministry of Culture) perhaps stand out.
22. This statue of the bear and the strawberry tree, the symbol of Madrid and the work of the sculptor Navarro Santafé, was unveiled in 1967 by the then mayor Arias Navarro during the Franco dictatorship. In 1994, the PP mayor Álvarez de Manzano unveiled the equestrian statue dedicated to King Charles III.

23. Marta G. Franco, who formed part of the Communication Committee, gives this account: 'We started to work with some fragile connections (someone brought a 3G dongle, some people signed up for mobile data … or we used the Wi-Fi of Rodilla and McDonalds). During the day the Facebook page Spanish Revolution was launched. During the night […] it was decided to launch [the website] tomalaplaza and its subdomains […]. After finishing this, two "hactivist" friends went to the home of one of them (or to the [squatted social centre] Patio [Maravillas], I'm not sure) to buy the domain and install WordPress. And I went to my home to start to work on madrid.tomalaplaza.net. While I was doing this, the eviction took place, on the morning of the 17th […] And then we returned and put up what was the real infernal tent at the rear of the horse [the equestrian statue of Carlos III], which underwent several mutations. That night of the 17th and 18th the boom in donations started and among the things which people brought were 3G modems and Fonera routers. In addition, hackers turned up and installed the Wi-Fi network in the rear of the horse. Those Wi-Fi routers which provided connection (some were open and others required a password, these latter to assure bandwidth for people who were working in Communication) connected to the internet at times through 3G, Fonera routers and Wi-Fi connections that the hackers had been able to pirate […]. Martin Varsavsky (of [Wi-Fi provider] Fon) gave us Fonera routers and credits. I don't recall exactly how this Fon stuff worked, but the fact was that these Foneras gave us a connection which we did not have to pay for.' Marta G. Franco, e-mail to the author, 29/06/2013. On the donation by Martín Varsavsky, businessman and founder of companies such as Viatel, Ya.com, Jazztel, and Fon, see his personal website: http://spanish.martinvarsavsky.net/general/ofreciendo-wifi-a-la-spanishrevolution.html [Consulted: 28/12/2015]. It seems that Varsavsky wanted to seek a commercial and political opportunity in the Acampada—he had frequently criticized the 'backward' politics of Spain, though proposing solutions in line with neoliberal globalization.
24. This account comes from the words of Nacho Miranda: interview with the author, 25/01/2012.
25. In Spain, political demonstrations are not allowed on the days before elections. See F. Javier Barroso, 'La Junta Electoral de Madrid prohíbe la concentración en la Puerta del Sol' ['The Electoral Commission Bans the Concentration at Puerta del Sol'], *El País*, 18 May 2011. Available at: http://politica.elpais.com/politica/2011/05/16/actualidad/1305579962_497160.html [Consulted: 28/12/2012].
26. Juanlu Sánchez, interview with the author, 26/01/2012. Sánchez is one of the journalists who has written most about the Acampada, working for *Periodismo Humano*.

27. María Salgado, interview in *Los viernes al Sol* [*Fridays in the Sun*], 10 February 2012, Universidad de Alicante. Available at: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=73rE-Nw8gSs [Consulted: 28/12/2015].
28. Nacho Miranda, interview with the author, 02/03/2012.
29. Zuloark, 'IC Sol. Los pilares de la #spanishrevolution' ['Collective Intelligence Sol. The Pillars of the #spanishrevolution']. Available at: http://minipost.zuloark.es/post/6582491440/pilares-spanish revolution [Consulted: 31/12/2015].
30. The press named this new social group *Los indignados* [the indignant ones, the outraged], taking the term from the book of the French Resistance veteran Stéphane Hessel, with which many participants did not identify. See Stéphane Hessel, *Time for Outrage (Indignez-vous!)* (New York, Twelve, 2011).
31. Francis Bacon and Tomasso Campanella, *The New Atlantis and The City of the Sun: Two Classic Utopias* (New York: Dover Publications, 2003).
32. See Adolfo Estalella and Alberto Corsín, '#spanishrevolution', *Anthropology Today*, vol. 27, no. 4, August 2011, 19–23. Available at: http://es.scribd.com/doc/115467840/spanishrevolution [Consulted: 31/12/2015].
33. This procedure is frequent in squatted social centres.
34. Before 15 May, firefighters were already camped out, in Madrid's Cuesta de Mayano, to protest against cuts. From the night of 15 May, communication was established between the two settlements. Even though as a body the firefighters were not officially connected to the Acampada, they demonstrated an explicit level of personal support. The journalist Jessica Romero tells of having seen maps made by firefighters. Jessica Romero, interview with the author, 26/01/2012.
35. Juanlu Sánchez, interview with the author, 26/01/2012.
36. See Alejandro Torrús, 'Una cultura propia para una democracia real' ['A Culture of One's Own for a Real Democracy'], *Público*, 5 May 2012. Available at: http://www.publico.es/espana/431981/una-cultura-propia-para-una-democracia-real [Consulted: 31/12/2015]. See also T. V. Reed, *The Art of Protest: Culture and Activism from the Civil Rights Movement to the Streets of Seattle* (Minnesota: University of Minnesota Press, 2005).
37. See the blog of the group *Bibliosol*, which continued after the end of the Acampada: http://bibliosol.wordpress.com/quienes-somos/ [Consulted 1/12/2015].
38. The media began to show huge interest in knowing what the so-called Acampadasol 'wanted'. However, and although some people insisted on creating a document which made specific demands (the so-called 'minimum consensus'), the heterogeneity of the settlement combined with the assembly methodology and the refusal of many to enter into dialogue with

the political class made this impossible. Thus the discourse can be found in the practices of the settlement itself.

39. The hashtag #spanishrevolution was derived to reflect the way in which anarchists refer to the wave of collectivization and self-management which took place during the Spanish Civil War of 1936–9.
40. In the field of art, some examples are the works of Marjetrica Potrc, Helio Oiticica, and the shanty-town designs of Atelier van Lieshout. The *arte povera* of the 1970s is a benchmark in terms of the celebration of precarious materials, although the 'style' is very different. Regarding recycling refuse for construction, see the classic text by Martin Pawley, *Garbage Housing* (Florida: Krieger Publishing Company, 1978).
41. In Craig Garrett, 'Thomas Hirschhorn, Philosophical Battery'. Available at: http://www.papercoffin.com/writing/articles/hirschhorn.html [Consulted 31/12/2015]. The work of Hirschhorn has a strongly political content. This is expressed not only in the subjects chosen for his works, but also in the very praxis his work implies. A paradigmatic example is the Musée Précaire Albinet, of 2004: for this project, Hirschhorn erected barracks in which key works of contemporary art were displayed. To construct this alternative institution, he sought the collaboration of the inhabitants of the working-class district of Albinet in Aubervilliers. However, he has also been criticized for maintaining a hierarchy based on the figure of the artist.
42. '*Chabolismo ilustrado*', a term invented by the Beatus Ille group of architects, whose members include Alberto Araico Brito, creator of the project for an information point which remained for some time in the Puerta del Sol. See 'Arquitectura de Guerrilla para el 15-M', *El País*, 17 June 2011. Available at: http://elpais.com/diario/2011/06/17/madrid/1308309860_850215.html [Consulted: 31/12/2015].
43. Agnès Varda, *Les glaneurs et la glaneuse* [*The Gleaners and I*], France, 2000. Its continuation, *Les glaneurs et la glaneuse … deux ans après* [*The Gleaners and I: Two Years Later*], France, 2002, is more hopeless and sad.
44. Nacho Miranda, interview with the author, 25/01/2012.
45. Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, *Commonwealth* (Harvard: Harvard University Press, 2009). See also Peter Linebaugh, *The Magna Carta Manifesto: Liberties and Commons for All* (Berkeley: Los Angeles–London, University of California Press, 2008).
46. Marta G. Franco, interview with the author, 17/01/2012.
47. Jordi Claramonte speaks of the relationship of the 15M to the crisis of representation. Interview with the author, 02/03/2012. In 2009, Claramonte was one of the people who proposed the Tabacalera self-managed social centre to the Ministry of Culture, at a time when Ángeles Albert was the General Director of Fine Arts.

48. On Thursday 19 May, a banner whose meaning was transversal, 'La revolución será feminista o no será' ['The revolution will be feminist or it won't be'], was torn down. The man who removed it beat his chest 'King Kong-style' and was applauded by people below. The banner was later replaced and the incident was condemned by the General Assembly. The Feminist tent, in response, organized a 'feminism for beginners' workshop. This incident was described by the writer Belén Gopegui in 'Será feminista. Un taller de feminismo para principiantes en la Puerta del Sol' [It will be feminist. A feminism-for-beginners workshop in the Puerta del Sol], Rebelion.org, 21 May 2011. Available at: http://www.rebelion.org/noticia.php?id=128853 [Consulted 31/12/2015].
49. Marta G. Franco describes it thus: 'we started to hang things on the scaffolding because there was a hurtful advertising poster which everyone wanted to destroy. We were there, getting stuck in. At first, most of the banners were put on top of that of L'Oreal and the other scaffold was left empty (…) because the important thing was to break that L'Oreal shit.' Interview with the author, 17/01/2012.
50. Salgado, *Los viernes al Sol.*
51. Lecture by Raúl Minchinela, 'REALISMO SUCIO. Lemas y consignas en el movimiento 15M' ['DIRTY REALISM. Slogans and Banners in the 15M Movement'], in *¡URGENTE!*, CCCB, 15 July 2011.
52. In Marta G. Franco's account: 'Sometimes for what was written on the banners, one noted that there was little in the way of shared principles, for someone arrived who wrote some stupid "sons of bitches", then a feminist would arrive and cover it over, then someone else came and put an x …', interview with the author, 17/01/2012.
53. Raúl Minchinela points out that the thematic axes were to denounce lies, defend thought, oppose the bailing out of the banks, condemn government by financial power, and criticize materialism. *Minchinela*, 'REALISMO SUCIO'.
54. Kamen Nedev, interview with the author, 19/01/2012.
55. See Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, trans. Brian Massumi, 'Rhizome', introduction to *A Thousand Plateaus* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987).
56. For Kamen Nedev, the slogans 'were pure collage re-appropriation'. Interview with the author, 19/01/2012.
57. Walter Benjamin, in Michael Löwy, *Fire Alarm: Reading Walter Benjamin's On the Concept of History* (London–New York: Verso, 2005), 90.
58. Juanlu Sánchez, in Adriano Morán Conesa's documentary, *La Plaza, la gestación del movimiento 15M* [*The Square, the Gestation of the 15M Movement*], Spain, 2011. See http:// especiales.la informacion.com/espana/documental15m/ [Consulted: 31/12/15].

59. Yves Frémion, *Orgasms of History: 3000 Years of Spontaneous Insurrection* (Edinburgh–Oakland: AK Press, 2002), xi.
60. Even though the number of votes for smaller parties rose, their increase was not sufficient to play a role in the government. In the national elections on 20 November, this vote against bipartisanship increased further. The Izquierda Unida [United Left] coalition was one of the parties that gained most. However, the PP continued to have an overall majority. At the next general election, in December 2015, the situation changed dramatically when some people linked to the social movements integrated themselves into the party political system.
61. 'Chorizo' is a colloquial term for 'thief' in Spain.
62. In Barcelona, however, there was a violent eviction, coinciding with a football match: the square was cleared out so that a celebration could be held after the sports event.
63. The Casablanca squatters' social centre was the main recipient of materials and groups. The library (Bibliosol) was set up there, along with the archive (Archivo 15M) and the Arts Committee. Its importance as an organizational place meant that the police evicted it in September 2012, as part of a campaign of preventive repression directed towards the activist event 'Rodea el Congreso' ['Surround the parliament'].
64. When the Acampada was taken down, all the posters that remained became part of the Archivo 15M, which since then has been classified and digitalized. See my text 'El archivo del 15M' ['The 15M Archive'], published at http://archivosol15m.wordpress.com/about/ [Consulted 31/12/2015] and 'Banners and the Madrid 2011 Protest Camp: Reading the Signs of Revolt', Disobedient Objects blog, Victoria and Albert Museum, accessible at http://www.vam.ac.uk/blog/disobedient-objects/banners-and-2011-madrid-protest-camp-reading-signs-revolt [Consulted 16/08/2017]. See also Alberto Senante, 'Archivo 15M, la memoria de un sueño' ['15M Archive, the Remembrance of a Dream'], *Periodismo Humano*, 28 March 2012. Available at: http://periodismohumano.com/sociedad/memoria/archivo-15m-la-memoria-de-un-sueno.html [Consulted 31/12/2015].
65. David Harvey, *Rebel Cities* (London–New York: Verso, 2012), 161.
66. See Henri Lefebvre, *Le droit à la ville* [*The Right to the City*], (Paris: Anthropos, 1968) and David Harvey, *Rebel Cities*.
67. On 20 May, it was estimated that there were sixty camps in Spain and fifteen in other countries. On 25 May, Athenians set up camp in Syntagma Square. (Exaggerated) estimates in June 2011 spoke of 140 camps across the world. See http://wiki.15m.cc/wiki/Lista_de_acampadas [Consulted 31/12/2015].
68. The art world renewed its interest in activism, which seemed to have been left forgotten since the unrest of the 1990s and the beginning of the 2000s.

In the prestigious magazine *Art Forum*, Manuel Borja Villel, director of the Reina Sofía museum (and director of the Barcelona Museum of Contemporary Art [MACBA] at the time of Las Agencias), speaks of the Acampadasol as the most important event of 2011. See 'Best of 2011', *Art Forum*, December 2011, 196. Months later, the European Prize for Urban Public Space created a special category in order to praise its virtues (see http://www.publicspace.org/en/works/g001-acampada-en-la-puerta-del-sol/prize [Consulted: 31/12/2015]). The artistic environment tried to involve members of the various Occupy camps in their shows: in 2012, Documenta in Kassel asked a local camp if it would set up next to its headquarters and, during the Berlin Biennial, the artistic centre KunstWerke became a paradoxical protest camp (see the exhibition catalogue: Artur Zmijewski and Joanna Warsza [eds.], *Forget Fear* [Cologne: KW/Verlag der Buchhandlung Walter König, 2012]).

69. Le Corbusier, *Vers une architecture* (París, G. Crès, 1923), 225.
70. These ideas were articulated for the first time in Julia Ramírez Blanco, 'La ciudad de Sol' ['The City of Sol'], *Arquitectura Viva*, vol. 145, 2012, 112.
71. Closing the circle of the problem of where to live, movements that have undergone revival are the squatters' movement and the movement for decent housing, led to a great extent by the Plataforma de Afectados por la Hipoteca [Platform of Those Affected by Mortgages]. Also, those affected by cuts to the welfare state organized themselves in a 'chromatic' way in the so-called *mareas* [tides]: the ones which have had most impact in the media are the *marea verde* [green tide] of education and the *marea blanca* [white tide] of healthcare.
72. Josep Maria Fontana indicates how 'an IMF study of 173 cases of fiscal austerity recorded in advanced countries between 1978 and 2009 confirmed that the results were generally negative: economic contraction and increased unemployment'. Josep Maria Fontana, *El futuro es un país extraño* (Barcelona: Pasado y Presente, 2013), 65.
73. A playful reference to the Monty Python sketch in which one of the characters repeatedly says 'Nobody expects the Spanish Inquisition!'.
74. Ernesto García, email to the author, 09/03/2016. In García's opinion, 'the only social movements which stick to it and during the institutionalist phase maintained "the street" would be the feminist movement, the anti-eviction movement (PAH), and the ecologist movement with its strong involvement in initiatives such as the fight against the TTIP (Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership)'.
75. This expression is a quote from Karl Marx in a letter he wrote to Ludwig Kugelmann referring to the Paris Commune on 12 April 1871, available at https://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1871/letters/71_04_12.htm [Consulted: 08/03/2016].

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CHAPTER 6

Notes Towards a Conclusion

'A' is for 'Art': Towards an Aesthetics of the Liberated Space

> Social movements receive a new impulse every time a new form appears.[1]
>
> Ethics and Aesthetics are one.[2]

It is clear that the conditions of a liberated space are not the same as those of a workshop, a museum, or a gallery. The type of creativity carried out by people and societies is influenced in various ways by context, and the forms of living offered by liberated spaces open up a whole series of possibilities, although not all of these are taken advantage of. In the history of activist creativity and its places, as in the history of art, there are some exceptional aesthetic moments:[3] the study of Claremont Road, Reclaim the Streets, and the Acampadasol allows the observation of some 'artistic' potentialities of the liberated space. Perhaps one could articulate a series of constants where political praxis and aesthetic practice are intimately related:

(a) *Physical appropriation of a space and aesthetic intervention within it*: kicking down the door of a building, entering it, and making it one's own is a gesture that is completed with artistic intervention.

J. Ramírez Blanco, *Artistic Utopias of Revolt*, Palgrave Studies in Utopianism, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-71422-6_6

Thus physical and aesthetic appropriation of the space go hand in hand. Where public space is occupied, something similar happens: the collective presence brings elements that change the meaning of the place, such as banners, costumes, puppets, objects, furniture, tents, and other ephemeral structures. The action of settling in a place has its parallel in the way that the symbolism of this environment is then modified.

(b) *Questioning of private property and dissolution of authorship*: in the liberated space, there are other forms of collective and expanded ownership in addition to the possession of private goods. This can be related to the questioning of traditional authorship which is often found in the aesthetic elements of these places. In the aesthetics of revolt, it is not always easy to know who the author of each creation is, where a specific work begins or ends, or who first had the idea. Many activists agree this to be an irrelevant question, as they often seek to contribute to a 'common' expression. Illegality also obliges a degree of anonymity, and discoveries are replicated in one place and another, without necessarily citing the 'original' source.

(c) *Heterogeneous crowds and eclectic creativity*: the greater the diversity of a group, the more varied its artistic expressions, provided there is no leadership or explicit regulation concerning them.[4] The overlapping and cohabitation of work created by many hands produces hybrid forms, aesthetic dissonances, and distinct ways of collaboration. On many occasions, creations recall collage or a type of evolving mosaic, which is collective and ungoverned.

(d) *Activist tradition and countercultural aesthetics*: if inherited political knowledge functions as a kind of 'folklore' of political practices, the same thing happens with an aesthetics of dissidence that had already set out its own genealogy, marked by the counterculture of the 1960s and 1970s and by the spirit of punk. Social movements often repeat mythical–political iconographies, configuring the stereotypical aspect of the place of protest or a particular type of squatted social centre that can be seen in many different countries. References to popular culture are frequent, constituting a shared vocabulary, a common language that is appropriated by the people.

(e) *Non-professional politics and non-specialized artistic creation*: direct action and spontaneous creativity follow the same 'do-it-yourself'

spirit, marked by forms of expression where people avoid delegating to others the resolution of their own needs and desires. Liberated spaces are formed in loopholes and cracks, and thus tend to be ephemeral places in which the possibility of disappearance is always present. This means that one can sense in their procedures a renunciation of that permanence traditionally sought by the art system, with its teams of curators and restorers.

(f) *Revolutionary ideals and a utopian art of revolt*: the kind of creativity which is discussed in this book is abundant, collective, and spontaneous. The case studies show a form of 'utopian art' because they propound how art would be in a non-mercantile society where creativity, enjoyment of resources, interpersonal relationships, organization of work, and distribution of space would function in another manner.

Like the various forms of expanded art, places of prefigurative politics are not situated in the field of representation but they do not necessarily transform 'external' reality in a radical way either, because of factors to do with duration, scale, and effectiveness. On certain occasions, these spaces function like art by carrying out a symbolic staging of an imagined world. It is possible that both their strength and their weakness reside in this *artistic* dimension.

The aesthetics of protest creates images that are transmitted by the media, introducing dissonances into the dominant discourse and allowing certain questions to be posed to the majority of the population. Nonetheless, Stephen Duncombe, sociologist and expert in artistic activism, notes how on some occasions the strength of a spectacular action can leave people satisfied with merely having created a powerful image, and does not encourage them to go beyond that.[5] For George McKay, there is the risk that 'the spectacle of rebellion replaces the possibility of revolution',[6] while Naomi Klein warns of the dangers of confusing an attack on the symbols of power with an offensive against the powerful themselves:

> For years, (…) we have fed off our opponents' symbols—their brands, their office towers, their photo-opportunity summits. We have used them as rallying cries, as focal points, as popular education tools. But these symbols were never the real targets; they were the levers, the handles. The symbols were only ever windows. It's time to move through them.[7]

The various paths of actions show both the potency of the symbolic arena and its limitations. Although the task of rewriting narratives is a precondition for any political change, in itself this is not enough. The creative activist Andrew Boyd argues that the 'artistic' form of actions such as street theatre, the making of banners, group performances, and symbolic direct action should be accompanied by sustained work that may be less eye-catching or even less 'pure', such as collecting signatures, mounting lawsuits, and negotiating with the political class. In this sense, the creation of political parties such as Podemos in post-2014 Spain, could be seen as an extreme example of this more pragmatic approach.

When the aesthetics of protest do not venture outside themselves, we are perhaps looking at cases of activist formalism, where form or 'style', with all its power, displaces content. After the promises of the avant-garde, it might be necessary at times to step back and move towards distinguishing between art and life, between the symbolic gesture and the effective action, without ceasing to carry out both. Or perhaps we could choose the option of expanding the notion of art until the point at which it merges with life. Thus, effectiveness would form part of the quality of the 'work of activist art'. In that case, various factors would have to be taken into account: the 'value judgement' of creative activism would be situated in the area of intersection between 'artistic' power and political implications. In the 'utopias of revolt', there would also be the question of whether communitarian experiments were interesting and if they worked (Fig. 6.1).

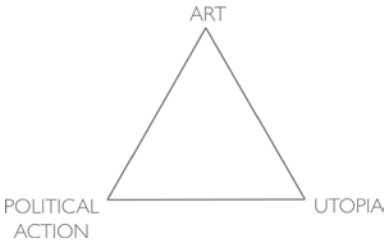

Fig. 6.1 In artistic utopias of revolt, judgement should be 'combined'. Their relevance is situated in the intermediate zone created by the conjunction of three large forces in variable balance: symbolic potential, political effectiveness, and the interest of the communitarian experience

'B' is for the 'Better Place': Towards a Utopianism of the Liberated Space

Perhaps one could talk of an *art of the commons*: an art of recuperating or generating spaces, however ephemeral, for the collective. For several months, Claremont Road hosted an anarchic social experiment, where people could live and develop their creativity without following any norm. Reclaim the Streets' celebrations outlined a Dionysian utopia that suspended the rhythms of production and consumption that belong to the capitalist city, replacing them with the cadences of ephemeral free parties, with slogans anchored in social ecology and the 'right to the city'.[8] The movement of movements complemented opposition to global capitalism with varied proposals ranging from feminism to anarchy, with an infinity of propositions that came together through specific pacts. Madrid's 2011 camp was a settlement sustained by gleaning, donations, and voluntary work. Its functioning staged many of the principles linked to libertarian traditions. Various organizational forms and political peculiarities of the square were related to the movement of movements: for example, the absence of leaders, the assembly system, and the varied multitude, which constitutes a political agent comprising groups of people who do not totally agree with each other. Understood as places that are in a certain sense utopian, all these environments present notable characteristics. Maybe we can articulate some of these:

(a) *Islands with a tendency to become archipelagos*: all the case studies in this book involve exceptional places that nonetheless tend to replicate themselves. The protest camps of the anti-roads movement extended out of Twyford Down across the whole of England; the parties of Reclaim the Streets soon came to be celebrated in different places around the world until they merged into the movement of movements; the camp situated in Madrid's Puerta de Sol spread to a multitude of Spanish, Greek, Finnish, and North American cities. The insular character of the utopian place here tends to generate a dissident archipelago.

(b) *Politics of immediacy, centrality of the body*: since the 1960s, crises in artistic and political representation have resulted in artists and activists attempting to substitute the representation for the act, marked by an immediate physical engagement. In both cases, the same paradox appears through which the act ends up being turned

once more into a representation, whether through the museum piece or the media image. Moreover, on many occasions an act can be, in some way, a representation, because it has a functionality that is, above all, symbolic.

(c) *Precariousness and abundance*: the mere existence of liberated enclaves derives from the overflowing of human energies and, in one way or another, these spaces live off the leftovers of a society of excess. In spite of their material precariousness, they generate abundance in relation to that which is lacking in the dominant system: communitarian, verbal, creative and dialectic exuberance. The discourse against consumer capitalism promotes a society whose wealth is not material, but rather human and affective. The self-published fanzine *buah!* acclaims it thus:

> It already constitutes an expense and an excess so e(c)lectric that it may well in itself imply love, love of the good kind, the *Good Love*[9] […] which is able to transform subjects microscopically, more because of its wearing out and its theft of what is useful and normal than for that which it proposes programmatically.[10]

Enthusiasm, not money, is the great source of energy. When it runs out, utopias languish.

(d) *Rage and joy*: the examples explored here show a tendency to generate spatiality that has a place within a long tradition of civil disobedience and direct action. We could speak of spatial disobedience or of disobedient places, where a series of normally repressed longings are activated. If utopia tends to confront the impossible task of uniting opposites, here it is placed in the dichotomy between creation and destruction which characterizes insurrectional moments. The context of activist outbursts invites the use of a volcanic metaphor: utopias of revolt are explosions *t*hat generate islands, creating new terrains. Like the two-faced Roman god Janus, they simultaneously look in opposite directions, pointing both to the violent destruction of the present order and to the construction of a better world [56].

In a sense, utopianism is both the greatest weakness and the greatest strength of these spaces. A problem with places of communitarian protest is the amount of energy and time that needs to be spent in order to main-

tain a space with all its internal tensions. Alexandra Plows speaks of the strain implied by those 'nutters' who installed themselves in the anti-roads settlements solely for reasons of survival. The question of whether it is legitimate to distinguish between those who have the 'right' to participate and those who do not—and if there is someone who can adopt the authority to decide—often comes up for discussion. All kinds of people turned up at Claremont Road, and at one point some were expelled, who later returned. In Sol there were thefts and acts of violence.

David Harvey draws attention to the problem of scale, which complicates matters still further:

> As we 'jump scales' (as geographers like to put it), the whole nature of the common-property problem and the prospects of finding a solution change dramatically. What looks like a good way to resolve problems at one scale does not hold at another scale. Even worse, good solutions at one scale (say, the local) do not necessarily aggregate up, or cascade down, to make for good solutions at another scale (say, the global).[11]

Perhaps the spaces of this book have to been seen as metaphorical places. Spaces where people live for a limited period in this other possible world in a way that is, at the same time, both real and poetic. Paraphrasing the writer Eduardo Galeano, utopia is a distant and impossible horizon, the vision (and experience) of which drives us forward.

Claremont Road and the Acampadasol were large habitable installations, where the very construction of space was, discursively speaking, at least as important as the forms of collective behaviour that were developed there. They function as a kind of complex three-dimensional map, which implies both the representation and the experiencing of social imagination. For Andrew Boyd:

> to bring utopia into history, making it happen even if only for a moment, in a localised place, and experiencing it, affects you at a very visceral level, at the level of your nervous system, of all your being, of your body and your soul. That's where I believe that utopia, when it lands for a moment and then moves off, is an extremely powerful presence.[12]

Utopias of revolt are spaces which can function as places of political revelation that activate social commitment. These environments of antithesis have the effect of putting into action the dialectic of history, and ensuring that the hinges of progress (always partial) continue to open and close. We need the dream in order to improve the reality, although utopia

forms part of a process where pragmatism also has to be activated—both the dreaming functions and those of wakefulness are needed for effective change.

'C' is for 'Commune': From the Camp to the Countryside

Our gardens prepare woodlands[13]

Precisely because utopia is not enough, the creation of the utopian place can be followed by dispersive activity that tends to result in conflicts, as it was out of conflict that these utopias emerged. Many of the activists who appear in this book have been spied on by the police, followed, or arrested. The system does not tolerate those who want to change it and, inevitably, violence and police repression follows. The equilibrium between constructive and confrontational dimensions is difficult to maintain, and the balance tends to incline towards one side or the other. At critical times, many people want to escape the predictable violence while others see a need to be part of it.

On the other side of the spectrum that ranges from revolt to utopia, the communitarian places of protest are intimately related to utopian spaces in a more traditional sense. To some extent, they come from the same vision, and on many occasions there is a back-and-forth movement, with much hybridization. Perhaps because of that, some activists decide to leave—to go to the countryside and farm.

In England, in 1994, some New Age travellers and people connected to the anti-roads movement bought a plot of land where they established the community of Tinkers' Bubble, a permanent enclave where they adopted an ecological lifestyle.[14] In Spain, the social movement that emerged from the Acampadasol has driven the creation and development of cooperatives and stimulated many people to start their own vegetable gardens or allotments. Soon after, people connected to the Occupy Wall Street camp turned their hands to put various abandoned farms back into production. The architect Nicholas Anastasopoulus believes that in Greece the occupation of Syntagma Square in 2011 forms part of a genealogy that is directly connected to rural initiatives of recent years.[15] This reminds us of the ending of Voltaire's *Candide*: '"That is well put," replied Candide, "but we must cultivate our garden".' [16]

Moving to the country does not have to be escapism. Back in the 1960s many communes were already engaged in deeply political work. Julien

Coupat, one of the supposed authors of *The Coming Insurrection*,[17] was living on a farm near the village of Tarnac when the police arrested him and eight others in 2008. The neo-rural movement in France—which attracted young people who moved to the country to experience new forms of life while maintaining their radical political convictions—seems to have scared the former president Nicolas Sarkozy.[18] The natural environment also attracted groups of hackers, who gave courses in civil disobedience. Dissidence hid itself in the mountains.

John Jordan is part of this current. Together with the radical educator Isabelle Fremeaux and another four people he co-founded 'La r.O.n.c.e.': the initials refer to 'resist', 'organise', 'nurture', 'create', and 'exist'.[19] In seven hectares of Brittany, this group wanted to create an 'experience of ecology and self-management,[20] where creative resistance and alternatives blend together like brambles'.[21] Once again, they seek to reconcile the destruction of the system and the construction of alternatives. Not far from La r.O.n.c.e., in Nantes, there is land which the government wanted to use to build an airport. Although the authorities forced some residents and farmers to leave, many remained in resistance. Events echo and repeat themselves. In 2009, activists took over the space and, on this occasion, squatters and farmers revived a whole network of farms and land that are now run as commons. The area is named *Zone à Défendre* [Zone to Defend]. It is said to be the biggest *autonomous zone* in Europe. History continues, the dances are repeated, and we can only move without having any idea of where we will end up. In the end, the 'C' of 'conclusions' is more that of 'continuation' … which reaches far beyond the pages of this book.

> What unforeseeable golden ages art thou preparing—ill-mastered, indomitable harbinger of treasures dearly paid for, my kingdom to be conquered, the future ….[22]

Notes

1. John Jordan, interview with the author, 27/02/2012.
2. Ludwig Wittgenstein, journal entry 1916. Quoted by the Laboratory of Insurrectionary Imagination. https://labofii.wordpress.com/2014/10/28/an-open-letter-in-the-dark/ [Consulted: 05/03/2016].
3. As ever, this depends to a large extent on the people involved and their vision (narrow or open) of creative processes.

4. For example, in many squatters' social centres the aesthetic elements are controlled by the assembly.
5. Stephen Duncombe, in conversation with the author, 16/06/2013.
6. George McKay, *Senseless Acts of Beauty: Cultures of Resistance since the Sixties* (London–New York: Verso, 1996), 9.
7. Naomi Klein, *Fences and Windows: Dispatches from the Front Lines of the Globalization Debate* (New York: Picador, 2002), 458.
8. Henri Lefebvre, *Le droit à la ville* (Paris: Anthropos, 1968).
9. This is a reference to *El Libro de Buen Amor* (*The Book of Good Love*), a fourteenth-century book of poetry by Juan Ruiz, the Archpriest of Hita.
10. María Salgado, *buah!*, *#a*, *No pasa hasta que pasa* [*It doesn't happen until it happens*], self-published fanzine, Madrid, 2011, without page numbers.
11. David Harvey, *Rebel Cities* (London–New York: Verso, 2012), 110.
12. Andrew Boyd, interview with the author, 12/11/2012.
13. René Char, cited by Rafael Sánchez-Mateos Paniagua in the exhibition 'En nuestros jardines se preparan bosques' ['Our gardens prepare woodlands'], Musac, 2012.
14. McKay, *Senseless Acts*, 45.
15. Nicholas Anastasopoulus, interview with the author, 08/12/2012.
16. Voltaire, *Candide and Other Stories* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990), 99–100.
17. The Invisible Committee, *The Coming Insurrection*, Semiotext(e), Los Angeles, 2009 (first edition in French, 2007). Also available at: http://theanarchistlibrary.org/library/comite-invisible-the-coming-insurrection [Consulted: 29/01/2016].
18. Andrés Pérez, 'Los neorruralistas asustan a Sarkozy' ['The Neo-Ruralists Scare Sarkozy'], *Público*, 21 September 2009, available at: http://www.publico.es/internacional/253699/los-neorruralistas-asustan-a-sarkozy [Consulted: 29/01/2016].
19. In French, 'Résister, Organiser, Nourrir, Créer, Exister'. 'Ronces' is French for 'brambles'.
20. Permaculture is a way of living from the earth taking as a model the functioning of natural ecosystems. In this regard, it pays special attention to the relationship between different organisms, seeking positive synergies.
21. *L.a.b.o.f.i.i.*, introductory text to La r.O.n.c.e. Available at: http://utoplib.blogspot.com.es/2010/02/la-ronce-une-utopie-en-morbihan.html [Consulted: 29/01/2016]. Later, John Jordan would move to the Z.A.D.
22. Italo Calvino, *The Nonexistent Knight* (Boston–New York: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 1962), 141.

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Voltaire. *Candide and Other Stories*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990.

Chronology of Events

1973 Coup d'état in Chile which ended the legitimate government of Salvador Allende. Establishment of the dictatorship of Augusto Pinochet, which experimented with a 'free market' regime.

1979 Election of Margaret Thatcher as prime minister of the United Kingdom. Her government privatized public services and 'liberalized' the markets.

1981 Election of Ronald Reagan as president of the USA. His economic policies were similar to those of Pinochet and Thatcher.
Greenham Common Peace Camp set up in the United Kingdom. Movement of peace camps against Reagan's militarism.

1983 First camp of the EZLN in the Lacandon jungle of Chiapas (Mexico).

1988 Protests against the IMF and the WB in Berlin.

1989 Election of George Herbert Walter Bush as president of the USA.
Fall of the Berlin Wall.

1990 End of the Pinochet dictatorship in Chile, after a 'No' vote in a referendum (held on 5 October 1988) on extending his rule for another eight years.
Beginning of the work to demolish the Berlin Wall.
Riots against the Poll Tax in the UK.
Resignation of Margaret Thatcher and her succession as UK prime minister by John Major.

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1991 Dissolution of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics.
Withdrawal of nuclear missiles from the Greenham Common military base.

1992 First protest camp of a new phase of the UK anti-roads movement at Twyford Down.
Creation in London of the Reclaim the Streets group.
Small Reclaim the Streets party in London.

1993 Protests against the M11 motorway in east London.
First battles between the EZLN and the federal army in Mexico.

1994 EZLN uprising, coinciding with the implementation of the NAFTA.
Declaration of the district of Wanstead as the independent zone of 'Wanstonia', in the area of the M11 motorway in London.
Protests in the UK against the Criminal Justice and Public Order Act 1994.
Claremont Road leads the campaign against the M11. Eviction at the end of the year.
Formation of the autonomous activist group Tute Bianche in Italy.
Nexus collective costumes by the artist Lucy Orta.
Creation of the Luther Blissett pseudonym.

1995 Reclaim the Streets meet again in London. First parties.
Independent parties staged by British collectives across the United Kingdom.
Creation of the WTO.
International call by the EZLN and formation of support groups across the world.

1996 First Intercontinental Encounter for Humanity and Against Neoliberalism in Chiapas (27 July–2 August), called by the EZLN.
Growth of Reclaim the Streets parties.

1997 Reclaim the Streets-style parties outside the UK.
Second *zapatista* Encounter held in several places in Spain.
Emergence of Kein Mensch ist illegal [Nobody is illegal] at *Documenta* in Kassel, the origin of an international anti-racist network which defends the rights of migrants.

1998 Creation of PGA, a transnational coordinator of social movements.
Organization of the first days of global action, coinciding with the meeting of the G7+1 in Geneva (May). First global street party.

1999 Start of the strike at the Universidad Autónoma de México to prevent an increase in university fees.
Celebration of a Global Carnival Against Capital, coinciding with the G8 meeting in Cologne.
Protests against the WTO in Seattle.

2000 Successful end of the strike at the Universidad Autónoma de México.
Public appearance of the *Tute Bianche* in demonstrations.
Last event convened by the London group Reclaim the Streets: a huge act of guerrilla gardening on May Day (1 May).
Various No Border Camps established in different frontier zones.
First big European 'counter-summit', against the IMF and the WB, in Prague.
Workshop *De la acción directa como una de las bellas artes* [*Of direct action as one of the fine arts*] at the MACBA, organized by La Fiambrera Obrera collective.
End of the peace camp at Greenham Common.

2001 First World Social Forum held at Porto Alegre in Brazil (January).
Las Agencias project in the MACBA, Barcelona (May).
Disbanding of the *Tute Bianche*, which became the *Disobbedienti* [the Disobedient Ones].
Protests against the G8 meeting in Genoa (18–22 July). Death of activist Carlo Giuliani at the hands of the police (20 July) and police raid on the Diaz Pertini school (21 July).
Attack on the Twin Towers in New York (11 September).

2002 Creation of CIRCA (Clandestine Insurgent Rebel Clown Army).
Creation of YOMANGO [I STEAL].

2003 Global mobilization against the war in Iraq. The biggest demonstrations in history took place on 15 and 16 February.

2008 Collapse of the Lehman Brothers bank, which marked the beginning of a global economic crisis.

2010 Start of a wave of insurrection in various countries which became known as the 'Arab Spring'.

2011 Continuation of uprisings in the Arab world. Fall of governments in Tunisia, Egypt, Yemen, and Libya. Protest camp in Tahrir Square, Cairo, Egypt.
Acampadasol, Puerta del Sol protest camp in Madrid (May–June).
Protest camps spread across the world.

2012 Occupy Wall Street camp in Zuccotti Park, New York (September).

Rodea el Congreso protest [Surround the Congress] in Madrid (September).
In Spain: 15M social movement, violent protests by miners, one-day general strike.
In Greece, rise of Syriza [Coalition of the Radical Left].

2014 Creation of Podemos [We Can] in Spain in January. The party achieves 8 per cent of the votes in the European Elections in May.
In Greece, Syriza receives the most votes in the European Elections.
Creation of municipal electoral groups, such as Municipalia in Madrid, later called Ganemos [Let's Win], and Guanyem in Barcelona.

2015 General Elections in Greece: Syriza becomes the main political force.
Municipal elections in Spain: Podemos allies with municipal assembly groups (such as Ganemos and Guanyem). These coalitions win in major cities including Madrid, Barcelona, Cádiz, and La Coruña. In Barcelona, Ada Colau, a former squatter, becomes mayor.
General Elections: Podemos enters into pacts with regional groups, and wins 20.66 per cent of the votes, gaining sixty-nine members in the 350-member parliament.

Glossary

There are concepts that bring people out onto the streets. Seeking to avoid unnecessary terminological barriers, this brief glossary includes definitions of some terms that are relevant to the text. There is a collective character to the authorship of this section, carried out by artists, activists, theoreticians …. The writers are in one way or another part of a 'community of resistance': the voices are those of *buah! fanzine* (*bf*), Esteban Pujals (EP), Jordi Claramonte (JC), John Jordan (JJ), Julia Ramírez Blanco (JRB), Leticia Fernández-Fontecha (LFF), Miguel Ángel Martínez (MAM), Olivia Nieto Yusta (ONY), Stephen Duncombe (SD), Stephen Lambert (SL), and Sole Parody (SP).

Activists Those who develop an activity of invention, dissemination, and coordination in relation to initiatives geared towards changing society and the political system which regulates it (EP).

Anarchism A political ideology in which all authority over the free will of individuals and groups is rejected. In particular, social organization in the form of the State is rejected. But in its place, faith is placed not in market forces, where buying and selling take place according to the wealth of each person, but in cooperation between free and equal people both in terms of rights and wealth, through the self-management of collective resources. In any case, throughout history there have been many tendencies that have been claimed as anarchist, so the nuances between them are important (MAM).

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Artistic Activism A hybrid practice combining the aesthetic process-based approach of the arts with the instrumental, outcome focus of activism. It recognizes that in order to shift power you need also to shift perspectives, and in order to shift perspectives you need also to shift power. Artistic Activism blends the affective and the effective (SD and SL).

Assembly A way of taking decisions in which all implicated parties intervene, preferably by consensus; that is to say, without carrying out votes which leave one part of the group in the position of losers (EP).

A form of self-organization, coming from the libertarian tradition and based on the radical equality of all people, which seeks collective responses to the issues that affect the community. If there is not active listening and respect, it is not an assembly (*bf*).

Autonomy The capacity to provide one's own laws. It is always specific and for that reason it is limited or dependent. Dependency and autonomy go together like inhalation and exhalation. To deny the former would be folly, to deny the latter bad faith (JC).

Civil Disobedience Everything we take for granted—the weekend, gay rights, contraception, women wearing trousers, the right to strike, to form a union, to print an independent 'zine—everything was won by civil disobedience, by people breaking laws that they felt were unjust. In his essay envisioning a future world without government where everyone was free to become the artist of their own life, Oscar Wilde suggested that 'Disobedience, in the eyes of anyone who has read history, is man's [*sic*] original virtue. It is through disobedience and rebellion that progress has been made.' He knew that only by acting out his greatest desires, even if they could land him temporarily in jail, was he going to be really free (JJ).

Counterculture Starting out from the assumption that cultural institutions constitute an extension of the political system of privileges, dedicated to the indoctrination of citizens, this expression designates an alternative culture developed outside of institutions and often inverting their values (EP).

Since the 1960s, there has been a project of underground youth culture opposing the consumerist hegemony. This should not be understood as a pure space separated from the world, but if we think of it as a network of practices, memories, and experiments in autonomy, it continues to make more beautiful lives possible (*bf*).

Direct Action Direct action enables us to take control of our own lives, refusing to accept the authority of bureaucrats or politicians, 'leaders', or 'experts' to act on our behalf. It sets itself apart from the dangers and betrayals of representation and puts affairs into our own hands, allowing us to act collectively to confront our own concerns (JJ).

DIY In a world run by 'experts', 'specialists', 'pundits', 'doctors', and 'professionals', DIY (do-it-yourself) is presented as the empowering imperative which breaks the barriers of exclusive qualification. 'You want to do it? Well, do it!' And, one can add, 'if you don't know, you can always learn'. This is at the basis of the concept of self-management (SP).

Empowerment A process of self-recognition and self-affirmation by people belonging to marginalized social groups. This process involves making visible, giving dignity to, and recovering qualities and rights attacked or denied by dominant social groups. The becoming aware of one's own power is accompanied by the consequent use of this to enact social change: action added to liberation. It is an individual transformation which affects the group, and vice versa. The personal is political (SP).

Free Culture The concept of culture as an exchange of work (software, music, literature, etc.) that takes into account that, for its very existence, creator and recipient are equally important. Free culture returns to authors the power of decision over the forms of production and publication of their works and implicates the recipient as an active subject responsible for the work received. It seeks new forms of distributing and commercializing works, understanding artistic creations not as products at risk that should be protected from their consumers, but as goods that should be shared and cared for by the community (SP).

Horizontality While hierarchical systems configure 'vertical' structures where some people are placed above others, egalitarian modes of organization form horizontal structures where all individuals are on the same level. Horizontality, therefore, refers to collaboration without hierarchies (JRB).

Imagination The faculty of representing imagined or real images. In imagining, we manipulate information from memory, converting elements already perceived into a new reality. Imagination gives rise to experience. Imagination gives form to new realities, other possible worlds. Imagination does not understand limits or impossibilities. Utopia takes form, first of all, in the imagination. To imagine is not to evade. To imagine is not to run away. To imagine is to resist. Imagination as resistance (LFF).

Liberated space A term used to describe those plots and buildings that are appropriated by a collective, *liberating* them from the exclusivity given to them by private ownership at the same time as allowing their new users to develop there *in liberty*. The 'liberation', then, consists in a recovery and return to society of a spatial resource, which is typically urban (MAM).

Self-Management In relation to activities and/or spaces, the term 'self-management' refers to the practices of administration, action, and development carried out by a group of people acting in an autonomous way. Autonomy, applied in these cases, results in models of horizontal management, not dependent on sponsors or external support, in which more importance tends to be given to the process than the achievement of objectives. The polar opposite of capitalist models of profitability and alienation, self-management seeks the empowerment of people and the development of sustainable projects (SP).

Self-Organization A term which emerges from the study of biological models and refers to the process by which the pattern of a global system emerges through the interaction between the individual elements of that previously disorganized system. Applied to political and social movements, it concerns models of coordination that come from interaction between like-minded people. It is related to self-management, assembly processes, and working in networks (SP).

Social Movements Refers to methods of supporting causes or initiatives, not organized around political leaders or parties (EP).

Throughout history, social movements are understood as collective phenomena with a certain degree of consolidation, in which some organized groups mobilize the population around them in order to question political decisions, legislation, or problematic situations (MAM).

Social Sculpture A term invented by the German artist Joseph Beuys, social sculpture refers to what he called an 'expanded concept of art'. For Beuys, the role of the artist consisted in creating situations in which everybody recognized his or her own potential to be an artist and to transform society. The material of art was society itself, instead of traditional materials such as wood, metal, or painting. Social sculpture included remodelling the social fabric. For Beuys, this included implicating oneself directly and also conducting politics in the real world. Beuys was one of the founders of the German green party and promoted forms of direct democracy through his extensive work as a teacher (JJ).

Squatters People who occupy all or part of a building without being granted any right to do so by its owners. Above all, it is a way of claiming the right to use a house or another type of property given the impossibility of doing so with one's own resources, and it is also a form of protest at the unequal distribution of wealth in this matter. Because of their political demands and the experiences of collective self-management of many of the squatted spaces, squatters can be considered as members of a social movement, although they are not always recognized as such and there are few formal structures of coordination between different squatters (MAM).

Perroflautas [lit. 'dog flutes'] The meaning of the expression (originally used by certain right-wing Spanish politicians) is to discredit social movements by identifying them with a common urban image of the last three decades: that of a young heterosexual *neo-clochard* couple who beg money playing the tin whistle and who tend to be accompanied by a dog. In the United Kingdom, the term 'dog-on-a-string' is often used in a similarly disparaging way to describe these people (EP).

Prefigurative Politics Prefigurative politics are actions and events that say YES: this is the world we imagine, dream of, and desire, rather than simply NO—no war, no sexism, no banks, no climate change—no, no, no, no, etc. … Examples of this vary from the large spectacular street parties of Reclaim the Streets where motorways filled with cars were replaced with dancing, partying people, or the huge 15M camps and direct democratic assemblies, to the much smaller scale, such as paying a parking-metre space for a day and turning the parking space into a picnic or a garden. People who practice prefigurative politics realize that giving others a taste of a better future world in the present can serve to change the horrors of today (JJ).

Ravers A term used to describe those individuals who organize or participate in improvised clandestine parties in the open air, in natural environments, or abandoned buildings, which can last for anything from a single night to several days, and which are accompanied by music, generally electronic (techno, house, electro, dance, etc., along with their variants). The number of participants fluctuates, and can involve large gatherings of people (ONY).

T.A.Z. (Temporary Autonomous Zone) Invented in 1990 by Hakim Bey, the T.A.Z aims to keep the creativity, energy, and enthusiasm of uprisings without replicating the inevitable betrayal and violence that has been the reaction to most revolutions throughout history. The

answer lies in refusing to wait for a revolutionary moment but creating spaces of freedom in the immediate present whilst avoiding direct confrontation with the state. A T.A.Z is a liberated area ('of land, time or imagination', says Bey, while insisting on its being in a physical somewhere!), where one can be *for* something, not just against, and where new ways of being human together are explored and experimented with (JJ).

Index[1]

[1]Note: Page number followed by 'n' refers to notes.

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