

CHAPTER 6

Extrastatecraft

The 1999 Battle of Seattle launched an ongoing protest against the WTO and globalization, yet the zone continues as the engine room of globalization, immune from any protest or significant regulation.¹ The “No Blood for Oil” marches of 2003 brought millions of people all over the world into the streets to protest the war in Iraq. Yet, largely unaffected, the Bush Administration proceeded with the war, swaying sentiment with claims of weapons of mass destruction that did not exist. The demonstrations of the Arab Spring spread across North Africa and the Middle East demanding democratic reforms in government. Yet governments could shut down the protests simply by switching off the internet that had been used to organize them. In 2011, the Occupy movement stood up to represent the 99 percent against the 1 percent in the United States who enjoy excessive power and wealth. Even as their resistance mobilizes global unrest around similar issues, the 1 percent maintains its control over elections and legislation.

In countering authoritarian forces, familiar forms of activism are often galvanized around at least a provisional declaration. Assembling and standing firm together, the activists reject abusive policies and protect those who are the target of abuse. Dissent, as resistance and refusal, must often assume an oppositional stance. Activists may fight and die for their principles, employing tactics that often require enormous courage to enact. The most lauded activist takes a stand, fights for what is right, chooses sides, and decides who is and is not sympathetic to the cause. Strongly held, forthright beliefs support the vigilant maintenance of solidarity, decency, and justice. David must kill Goliath.

Yet many powerful players that these activists oppose maintain fluid or undeclared intentions by saying something different from what they are doing. It is easy to toy with or trick activist resistance if declaration is all that qualifies as information. When targeted, the powerful wander away from the bull’s-eye, arranging for shelter or immunity elsewhere. They may successfully propagate a rumor (e.g., that there is evidence of WMD, that climate change is hoax, that Obama is not a US citizen) to capture the world’s attention. Switching the characters in the story, they may even come costumed as resisters. Goliath finds a way to pose as David.

Dissent is then often left shaking its fist at an effigy. Activists who show up at the barricade, the border crossing, or the battleground with familiar political scripts sometimes find that the real fight or the stealthier forms of violence are happening somewhere else. Attempting to cure its failures with “purification,” the left consolidates, and expels those who seem to compromise its values.² And it must make of its opponent an even more dangerous ur-force—an “Unspecified Enemy” like Capital, Empire, or Neoliberalism.

In this way, assumptions regarding the proper techniques and territories for political work may ironically generate some of activism’s most significant internal constraints, foreclosing on the very insurgency that it wishes to instigate. Righteous ultimatums or binaries of enemies and innocents that offer only collusion or refusal might present a structural obstacle greater than any quasi-mythical opponent. In these tragic endgames, the idea that there is a proper realm of political negotiation may even act as the perfect camouflage for undeclared political power.

Still, any deviation from the accepted techniques, even in an attempt to aid and broaden activism, may be interpreted as a betrayal of principles. Entering the market as an entrepreneur, even if only to manipulate that market, is mistaken for collusion. Giving positive attention to agents of systemic change rather than negative opposition to a series of enemies is mistaken for an uncritical stance. Relinquishing overt resistance is mistaken for capitulation or ethical relativism. Answering duplicity with duplicity is mistaken for equivocation or lack of conviction rather than a technique to avoid disclosing a deliberate strategy.³ In the end, righteous and combative narratives may exhaust themselves and escalate tensions. Dissent, in these instances, is inconsolable.

An Expanded Activist Repertoire in Infrastructure Space

The binary division between resistance and non-resistance is an unreal one.—Colin Gordon⁴
There are times to stand up, name an opponent, or assume a binary stance of resistance against authoritarian power, but supplementing these forms of dissent are activist stances that are both

harder to target and less interested in being right. Just as many of the most powerful regimes in the world find it expedient to operate with proxies and doubles in infrastructure space, the most familiar forms of activism might similarly benefit from using undisclosed partners or unorthodox auxiliaries, if only to soften up the ground and offer a better chance of success.

An unorthodox auxiliary entertains techniques that are less heroic, less automatically oppositional, more effective, and sneakier—techniques like gossip, rumor, gift-giving, compliance, mimicry, comedy, remote control, meaninglessness, misdirection, distraction, hacking, or entrepreneurialism. Working together in different constellations, these techniques cannot be isolated or pedantically defined. While they are long-standing practices, for designers accustomed to making object forms or for activists accustomed to making declarations, this alternative aesthetic and political repertoire is perhaps unfamiliar.

Such techniques are politically inflected incarnations of the active forms discussed throughout this book. In infrastructure space, the crucial information about a political bearing is often found not in declaration but in disposition—in an immanent activity and organization. All the active forms that shape spatial products, free zones, broadband technoscapes, and other networks—the multipliers, remotes, interdependencies, or topological adjustments—are both the markers of a disposition and the means to tune or alter it. To hack the operating system by, for instance, breaking up monopolies, increasing access to broadband, or exposing enclaves to richer forms of urbanity is to engage the political power of disposition in infrastructure space.

Redesigning disposition in infrastructure space is not a duel. Given the broad foundational space of infrastructure, the active forms that generate dispositions are capable of effecting significant changes to the operating system. The activist need not face off against every weed in the field but rather, unannounced, alter the chemistry of the soil. Dispositional capacities invite an approach to both form-making and activism that is more performative than prescriptive. While some political traditions call for inversions, revolutions, or the absolute annihilation of the old system, a shift in disposition may sponsor the ongoing reconditioning or revolutionizing of a spatio-political climate. Such adjustments may reduce tensions and violence, and because they are undeclared, they need not call up the prevailing dogmas that must, if named, square up for a symmetrical fight.

An alternative activist repertoire exploits the cultural stories as well as the organizational attributes that inflect disposition. The discrepancies between story and disposition—the ways in which power says something different from what it is doing—offer the first political opening. Discrepancy is always present in the ever-changing dialogue between humans and technologies. It may be a symptom of an organization in denial, with its activities decoupled from its story. It may expose the distance between reality and an overused or degraded ideological story like liberalism. Or it may be the result of a deliberate deception. Focusing on discrepancy is then not only useful in detecting an underlying but undeclared disposition, it is also an opportunity to launch a counter-narrative. It tutors an activism in which the forthright may be less important than the fictional or the sly.

Releasing the tense grip of binary resistance, the auxiliary activist never turns around for the duel but continues pacing away into a new field of extrastatecraft.

Gossip/Rumor/Hoax

There is no manager more powerful than consumption, nor, as a result, any factor more powerful—albeit indirect—in production than the chatter of individuals in their idle hours.—Gabriel Tarde⁵
Gossip, rumor, and hoax are common tools for destabilizing power, and all of the multipliers present in infrastructure space facilitate such trickery.

In *Domination and the Arts of Resistance*, James C. Scott argues against enshrining the techniques of politics proper, looking instead at the actual tools most frequently used by the politically oppressed. Referencing figures from Balzac to Brer Rabbit, he writes, “Most of the political life of subordinate groups is to be found neither in overt collective defiance of power holders nor in complete hegemonic compliance, but in the vast territory between these two polar opposites.”⁶

Scott identifies rumor and gossip as tools of aggression among the powerless. The servant gossips about the master; the underlings can, with anonymity, stir up public opinion about the boss. Gossip, he wrote, never starts anywhere. The “linguistic equivalent and forerunner of witchcraft,” it magically multiplies without attribution, and it cannot be contained.⁷ It is a technique of

“infrapolitics,” the invisible, subterranean territory of subordinate groups.⁸ In this way, gossip and rumor are similar to the disguises, tricks, and perruques—the “art of the weak”—about which the scholar and theorist Michel de Certeau writes.⁹

Still, rumor and gossip are also available to the powerful as well as the weak. Hoax and spin are the raw material of politics. They fuel everyday mischief while also being a practical technique of markets and governments. For the last decade, James Inhofe, a Republican congressman from Oklahoma, has led a dogged campaign to convince the world that climate change is a hoax. In a 2003 senate committee speech, Inhofe claimed that the elaborate climate change hoax was designed to “satisfy the evergrowing demand of environmental groups for money and power and other extremists who simply don’t like capitalism, free markets, and freedom.”¹⁰ Media personalities like Rush Limbaugh provided the story with its necessary multiplier. Limbaugh is what is variously known in pop-culture marketing terms as a “connector” or a “sneezer”—someone with the capacity to contact a large number of people.¹¹ After nearly ten years of broadcasting and embellishing the argument, he claims that the left is finally also convinced that global warming was all an elaborate ruse.¹²

During the US presidential election of 2008, since it was very easy to demonstrate that Barack Obama was Christian, claiming that he was a Muslim was a very effective rumor. It found a compelling multiplier that thrived even on its own falsehood. Being false, it was kept alive even longer and repeated twice over—first to spread the falsehood and then to refute it. Rumor and gossip are less reliant on content than on the way that content behaves, so that what must be designed is not only the content, but also the bounce of the rumor—its active forms.

In the extrastatecraft of infrastructure space, tuning a multiplier is like crafting rumor or gossip. Designers can alter the repertoire of a technology to be more suited to certain populations just as the construction of suburban homes was designed as an assembly-line process. Similarly, a new spatial protocol will be more powerful if it finds a carrier that multiplies it. Infrastructure space is thick with technologies that are potential multipliers: populations of suburban houses, skyscrapers, vehicles, spatial products, zones, mobile phones, or global standards.

As with rumors, active forms are also social or narrative forms, and the designer can enhance the spatial consequences of a multiplier with the non-spatial stories that accompany it. Just as the US suburban house was popularized in part through narratives about family and patriotism, a persuasion or ideology attached to a technology may deliver it to a ready audience or a powerful political machine. The cell phone, for example, is characterized as a source of freedom, a political right, and a tool of economic liberalization. A new free zone, even before completion, is rumored to be a world city fait accompli in an attempt to capture a slice of the global market. The most official communiqué or the most hard-boiled business plan, while purporting to rely on facts, often marshals evidence in a pliable reality that relies on fiction.

Just as the ideological stories that accompany infrastructure space, however immaterial, can have enormous physical consequences, so a counter-story, even a deceptive one, may be the most immaterial yet most effective way to move mountains in infrastructure space. Discussing “energy narratives,” David E. Nye cites the moment when, despite a domestic oil crisis, President Reagan persisted in sending out sunny messages about “abundance.”¹³ Similarly, rather than reveal the dangers surrounding oil extraction, oil companies adopt the imagery of green technologies. Using a story to different ends, the graphic design firm Pentagram countered the assumption that green energy policy is the province of leftist politics by associating it with early American patriotism. Their posters for Cleveland’s new energy policies portrayed a green revolutionary soldier or minuteman who became a memorable icon in the city’s conservation campaign.¹⁴ And the activist organization Greenpeace dramatizes environmental abuse with media-genic “mind bombs” in an alternative form of war.¹⁵

Perhaps only a design that combines organizational active forms with narrative active forms has any chance of successfully engaging the world’s powerful spatial products. For example, when Wal-Mart replaced electric lighting with day lighting, sales actually increased.¹⁶ Here a spatial rumor could find a multiplier in the roof areas and megawatts of power-usage in Wal-Mart stores worldwide, but the environmentally sensitive designer might also embellish this with a narrative rumor—mixture of fact and fiction or what Hollywood calls “faction.” A day-light roof is then reported as being an essential new condition for all big box stores, and whether this is true or false is less important than how the rumor will bounce within its audience. While utopian or visionary

projections offer comprehensive, reasonable, even righteous, reforms, the less resolute factions in the global confidence game offer rumors that may be more contagious.¹⁷

Pandas

Another powerful technique of extrastatecraft, seemingly very different from resistance, is that of the gift. In 2005, China offered Taiwan two pandas named Tuan Tuan and Yuan Yuan. The names, when translated, mean “unity”—referring to the unity with mainland China that Taiwan has passionately refused. The pandas were used here to deploy a fiction of friendship, replacing opposition with conciliatory flattery, while the undisclosed disposition may actually reflect a low-grade but persistent form of aggression. Excessively soft and cute, the panda is a steamroller of sweetness and kindness—an arm-twisting handshake that disarms and controls with apparent benevolence. The pandas were thus used to exert political leverage by exploiting a currency in values, social signals, and sentiments not usually quantified in the marketplace or treated in economic theory.

Infrastructure space—with its free zones, broadband networks, oil exploration, and spatial products—offers many pandas, or gifts that cannot be refused. The zone itself was a “gift” from developed countries to developing countries, one that promised to rescue them from poverty and bestow upon them membership in a global economic club. Yet when global corporations offer to developing countries the gift of mobile telephony or social networking, they are often actually giving themselves a gift—a large amount of data about the world’s next big crop of consumers. Oil exploration in the Ecuadorian Amazon promised to bring progress to the region, just as development formulas like LAPSET come with promises of economic solvency, global fluency, and signature architecture. These sorts of gifts have often leveraged from their host countries billions of consumers, exploitative cheap labor, and immunity from regulation even in the face of labor and environmental abuses.

Gifts of another sort try to temper such abuse by using awards or prizes as incentives for productive behavior or self-regulation. The Mo Ibrahim Prize for Achievement uses profits from mobile telephony to grant 5 million dollars over ten years and \$200,000 per year for life to an elected African official who has served their term and demonstrated strong leadership.¹⁸ The Global Citizen Award, sponsored by Clinton’s Global Initiative, the Aga Khan Awards, the XPrize, and the targeted philanthropy of the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation are among countless examples of awards used to incentivize socially responsible individuals and projects. Certification systems like ISO or Social Accountability International also similarly reward selected behaviors. In extrastatecraft, however, the give-and-take designed into an interplay of spatial variables may offer active forms like governors—pandas more powerful than awards and self-congratulatory certificates. Governors can establish a counterbalancing interdependency that may remain in place to extract more benefits for labor or the environment. They can be designed to yield more than inferior jobs in global free zones. Like the offsets that were part of Dubai’s deal with foreign investors, the offerings of workers, urbanity, natural resources, and consumers can be used more effectively to leverage access to education, technology transfers, wilderness preservation, and better labor practices.

Exaggerated Compliance

In *Domination and the Arts of Resistance*, Scott draws attention to a passage in Milan Kundera’s *The Joke* in which the prisoners in the story are challenged to a relay race against the camp guards. The prisoners decide to run very slowly, while wildly cheering each other on. Their compliance brings them together in an act of defiance that does not diminish their energies as would competing or fighting. Compliance can disarm and deliver independence from authority.¹⁹ It can destabilize an enemy that is bracing for opposition rather than an obedient response.

When the mayor of Copenhagen, Ritt Bjerregaard, made a campaign promise of 5,000 affordable apartments for the city, the Danish architecture firm PLOT (later BIG and JDS Architects) appeared to rush to her aid by producing designs for the buildings in advance. Their designs kept the issue in the press, making it hard for the mayor to break her promise and forcing a design competition for

the housing. In this way, compliant activism can mobilize resources for change in advance of political will—submitting to and even congratulating power on intentions it never had.

The New York City Occupy movement generated symbolic capital by demonstrating that the Occupy Kitchen set up to feed the protestors was actually better at delivering food to the needy than many of the municipal agencies paid to do the job. Winning over their potential critics, they got the upper hand. Like good children whose perfect grades and model behavior strip their parents of all authority, the compliant activist can run rings around supposedly more powerful players.

Responding to the Taksim Square protests of 2013 in Istanbul, Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan delivered a speech in which he referred to the protesters as *çapulcu* or “looters.” The protesters responded by embracing the insult, using it on social media, and printing it on T-shirts and bags. The label served as both a protective camouflage and call to arms. Made into a verb, *çapuling* even came to mean standing up for your rights.²⁰

Exaggerated compliance is central to the tactical bluffs of infrastructure deal-making. Infrastructure contractors have long operated under the banner of economic liberalism, and their access to new territories is often characterized as a struggle with regulation. The companies laying terrestrial or submarine fiberoptic cable in Kenya were all competing against each other for market share while being forced to “submit” to regulations from the host nation, the World Bank, or some other organization. They would all characterize each other as monopolists and competitors at any one moment in the game. Yet, the smartest entrepreneurs discovered that if they stayed together in a reciprocal game, alternating between resistance to regulation and compliance, they generated collective advantages. And the open, competitive system to which they appeared to submit would yield a larger market.

In extrastatecraft, picking one’s submissions rather than one’s battles is an almost invisible, noncontroversial means of gaining advantage in the field without drawing attention to a broader strategy.

Doubling

Head-to-head confrontations are marked by competition and symmetrical mimicry that often leads to violence. Another kind of mimicry, the double, can be not only a source of competition but also an opportunity for confusion and disguise. The double is a skill or proxy that, like twin siblings, can sometimes fool the world or launder an identity. A double can also simply hijack the place or power of its counterpart to increase its territory in the world.

Employing the double as imposter or caricature has long been a tactic in exposing the absurdities of authority. In 2007, a member of the activist group The Yes Men posed on the BBC as an executive from Dow Chemical (which owns Union Carbide) and announced that the company had, after years of evasion, finally decided to make full restitution for all of the suffering they had caused in Bhopal. A Yes Men member also posed as speaker in the US Chamber of Commerce, promoting green policies that the organization lobbies against. Another member appeared at a Wharton Business School conference suggesting that “full private stewardry of labor,” or the buying and selling of human beings, was a realistic approach to economic stability in Africa. The Yes Men could then report that this advocacy of slavery, smothered in jargon, had been politely received without questions or challenges from the floor.²¹

The Dutch non-profit organization Women on Waves (WoW), founded in 1999, is a double that addresses women’s reproductive rights by adopting the imbricated sovereignties and shifting political identities used in commercial maritime trade. Commercial ships move between legal jurisdictions as they cross from national to international waters. When in international waters, they are subject to the laws of the country in which they are registered. Many shipping companies select legal responsibilities that work to their advantage by registering in a country with, for instance, lax labor or environmental laws. Exploiting this freedom, WoW funds a medical ship that conducts abortions for women from countries where abortion is illegal by sailing into international waters where only Dutch law has jurisdiction.²²

On their day off, domestic workers in Hong Kong meet by the hundreds in the central public spaces of the city that are otherwise inhabited by their employers. Taking over these open spaces, they sit, talk, prepare meals, and reconnect to their home culture. Their occupation is entirely peaceful and

yet is a way for the workers to stand their ground and establish themselves as a group of professionals, rather than invisible servants. The doubling is passive but resolute.

The Tea Party movement used the label “fascist” to describe Obama, thus hijacking a marker that had been used defensively by the left to refer to power seized through the exploitation of fear and hatred. The Tea Party double was used offensively to instigate the same kind of fear and hatred that might have been originally anticipated. The double simultaneously defanged the term in its previous usage and inoculated the present user against the accusation.

The doubled and redoubled ideological stories that attend infrastructure space can be used to commandeer political support. FDR appropriated the liberal label to sway right-wing sentiment for his New Deal policies—to capture territory and either confuse or neutralize the arguments of laissez-faire. Sentiments surrounding liberalization have fueled contemporary development patterns related to the zone or to broadband urbanism. The neoliberal label is yet another doubling used to expose the inequities of liberalization and privatization, and something like a libertarian strain of liberalism now attends the “free” exchange of information in social media and the communities they sponsor.

Market platforms like Jana are doubles of the activist crowd-sourcing platform Ushahidi. Jana comes cloaked in ideas about the well-being of the collective and a rerouting of compensation from big business to billions of cell phone customers. Yet it remains to be seen whether Jana will leverage useful income and other assets for developing countries or whether it will be used primarily to shape a consumer market—whether its primary research will be conducted for the UN or for Unilever.

Just as the privateer was a shadow for the state, zone urbanism has served as the double for Hong Kong in Shenzhen, Mumbai in Navi Mumbai, Seoul in New Songdo City, and Almaty in Astana. Each major city or capital has a camouflaging agent able to conduct business with relaxed laws and less accountability, allowing it to operate in more fluid or profitable global networks. The double can also engineer a replacement for abusive or unproductive situations by creating a twin enterprise that satisfies or exceeds projected revenues while being a carrier of alternative politics. When the zone doubles the city, it becomes the city, potentially adopting the politics and public accountability that the city offers without reducing revenues. The interplay of spatial variables in the new broadband digital village and the new financial portfolio for subtracting development are doubles—parallel markets designed to slip into and displace existing markets, social habits, and desires.

Extrastatecraft as an alternative activist repertoire is, in some ways, a doubling of the kind of extrastatecraft practiced by the world’s most powerful. It creates not a binary—an enemy and an innocent—but rather countless mirrorings of power in a world where no one is innocent. It monitors the sleight of hand of any double in the world even as it manipulates these twists and turns of identity with doubles of its own.

Comedy

As an expert on internet dissent in China recently said, “humor works as a natural form of encryption.”²³ Comedy presents contradictions that can, without direct confrontation, topple the logic of dominant organizations. With irreverent cheekiness, it interrupts the rigidities that characterize both concentrations of power and resistances to power. Comedy may engage in a direct satirical address, as do *The Yes Men*. It may rely on wordplay or a single punch line. It may simply effect an inversion, as in the case of the BLO or Barbie Liberation Organization—a project to covertly switch the voice chips of Barbies and GI Joes in toy stores (Barbie: “Eat lead, Cobra.” GI Joe: “Let’s plan our dream wedding”).²⁴

Infrastructural space itself is often a carrier of comedy that is perhaps most powerful when, like the humor of Ryle’s clown, it is dispositional, unfolding, and undeclared.²⁵ Erandi De Silva’s comic design work *Logopelago* satirizes “The World”—Dubai’s familiar archipelago of artificial islands constructed in the shape of a world map. De Silva’s cartoons of similar island formations take the shape of gigantic logos—a Nike swish, a Mickey Mouse head, a Ralph Lauren horse, or the double Cs of Chanel. All these logo islands are populated with the villas, golf courses, and other spatial products that fill up infrastructure space. Yet “The World” itself may be its own best satire. In its hyperbole, the island formation is already a joke about global real estate conquest or the migration

of global power into islands of exemption. Preempting its own critique, or stealing the punch line, each micro-nation is not unlike the city-state of Dubai itself. The comedy now continues in a different vein since, after the financial crisis of 2008, the sea has been reclaiming the dissolving islands.

Similarly, François Roche's *DustyRelief/B_mu*, a 2002 design for a building in Bangkok, avoids the single punch line in favor of a longer comedic performance. The building was designed to attract dust electrostatically from the surrounding polluted air.²⁶ Its continual, obliging willingness to clean its surroundings, coupled with its slow miniscule advance toward becoming a gigantic and adorably flocked fuzz ball, are actively comic in visual, temporal, and cognitive registers. It critiques pollution with a sympathetic, resourceful, and enthusiastic remedy. Yet it associates this desire for cleaner air with hapless self-deprecation rather than the piety and belt-tightening that often accompany green initiatives.

Deadpan reportage of the comedies of infrastructure space might often be sufficient to achieve the desired political effect. Yet another promotional video for yet another zone that begins, as have dozens before it, with a zoom from outer space, exposes the entire PR apparatus with its canned fanfares and toy architectures. A simple comparison of the acronyms for management mottos and creeds—PDCA, POCCC, POSDCORB, CSSBB, ISSISSIPPI among them—together with their buoyant narratives and sober metrics also requires very little effort from the comedian.

Remotes

A remote control effects change indirectly or from some distance away, often without being detected. Jerry, the soft cartoon mouse, presses down on the plunger labeled "TNT" with Tom at the receiving end of a long fuse. He catapults Tom into the air by dropping an anvil on the opposite end of a seesaw where the cat is sitting. Objects in one part of the house ricochet until they eventually hit Tom over the head. In similar fashion, a nation indirectly floods a city when it builds a dam downstream. A hacker drops a pebble in the internet waters with collateral effects. A mass-produced suburb, remote from the center, drains the city of its population. Any switch in any of the networks of infrastructure space can act like a remote—as a valve that may control flows of cars, electricity, microwaves, or broadband capacity somewhere down the line.

The activist often longs to directly confront and cure a problem just as the designer often longs to address urban issues with object form. Political engagement is typically scripted with concerns about the environment, natural resources, labor, or human rights, accompanied by persuasions about volunteerism and self-sacrifice, or dramatized with grave manifestos and sci-fi dystopias. Showing up at the local site and getting one's hands dirty is considered to be a sign of political authenticity.

Yet there may be no great virtue in exclusively local action on the ground when the powerful remote controls in the networks of extrastatecraft may be businesses, governments, or international organizations halfway around the world. These remotes lend extra leverage to the bargaining of "pandas" since, alongside the multinationals, there are now extra players in the game—NGOs, IGOs, and coalitions of all sorts. Saving a wilderness, for instance, relies on direct advocacy as well as remote pressures and incentives from research institutions, distant markets, regulations, and compacts. Advocates who cannot provoke action from their own state can look to NGOs or IGOs in another state or in the international community, creating "governance triangles" that leverage influence or exert pressure on the home state—what has been called a "boomerang effect."²⁷

Remotes are essential to designing an interplay of spatial variables rather than a single prescription. The designer and urbanist Rahul Mehrotra approached the slums of Mumbai not with a master plan to reorganize the entire territory but with a simple public toilet that was designed to have remote effects throughout the slum. Solar panels allowed the toilets to operate off the grid, eliminating a charge for electricity and maintaining consistent power. Women and children were then not fearful to use the toilet at night. A caretaker's apartment above the toilet further ensured its cleanliness and safety, and an open-air porch on the top floor provided a panoramic view, to relieve the limited, congested perspective of streets.²⁸

In the same way that a confidence man needs to find a way to look completely normal, the remote can also be camouflaged in a seemingly nonpolitical, non-spatial, self-serving project with an

undisclosed political intent. The most conscientious consumers already check the labels on clothing or packs of coffee and boycott those products that have been manufactured in abusive conditions. Yet without overt political declaration, a remote might simply work on the prevalent tastes of, for instance, fashion or food. Companies that make clothes poorly with mediocre materials and cuts usually also search for the cheapest labor. A new articulation in desire, seemingly pursued for self-serving, even frivolous reasons, may deliberately deflate the market for disposable clothes or food produced under abusive conditions. These remotes can indirectly retool the disposition of manufacturing and agricultural spaces, buying time before the race to the bottom begins again.

Distraction/Meaninglessness/Irrationality

Activism cast as resistance typically goes head-to-head with an oppressing power, facing off in a symmetrical opposing position. Yet rather than engaging in the fight, with the risk of it escalating or being drawn into its vortex, the activist may distract from it with misdirection and surprise—often by creating a third thing that is supposedly neutral to the opposing forces. The comedian already knows something about the power of distraction to defuse tension. Warring countries are brought together over ping-pong, chess, or music. In Tirana, Albania, mayor Edi Rama transformed the exhausted post-war city by first simply painting the facades with very bright colors—a move sufficiently strange to refresh the terms of development, even governance, in the city.

Meaninglessness can continue the work begun by distraction, crafting the initial moment of destabilization into a condition that must be continually maintained. Generally considered by the forthright activist to be an evacuation of principles and an indication of crisis, meaningless can be the opposite—a tool with enormous political instrumentality. Just as the bait and switch relies on distraction, the longer confidence game relies on a series of distracting stories that draw attention away from the real details of the transaction, which is, of course, never declared. Hustlers lead their suckers down the garden path with countless little courtesies and unimportant details that become collectively untraceable but are inescapable. The absence of a single coherent story is the compelling factor, convincing the victims that they do not see what is in front of them.²⁹

Many of the most powerful political operations in the world are lubricated with obfuscations and irrational desires that have anesthetizing effects, keeping at bay the dogma that incites conflict. In Jerzy Kosinski's novel *Being There*, Chauncey Gardiner is at once a comedian and a beautiful soul whose meaningless statements about the growth of the garden or the inevitability of the seasons allow him to become a confidant of the US president. However transparent, some hypnotizing fictions may form a strong web capable of holding together opposing forces or diffusing cruel forms of authority.

Meaninglessness, like simplemindedness, can be powerful because it is not burdened with information. Leaders like Ronald Reagan often resisted intelligence as a matter of duty and principle. In a now famous story, at one G-7 summit Reagan failed to study the briefing books, choosing instead to stay up and watch his favorite movie, *The Sound of Music*. His aid, David Gergen remembered that the next day Reagan was in top form—able to grasp the “big picture” free of complicating facts.³⁰ Apparent oblivion—a kind of special stupidity—nourishes resilient forms of power and attends many of the most successful political strategies.³¹

However powerful and monolithic it may seem to be, infrastructure space trades on ephemeral desires and irrational aspirations. Organizations of every kind—from celebrity golf suburbs to retail chains to zones—attempt to profit, govern, or otherwise maintain power with instrumental forms of meaninglessness. Quality management attracts a large following with principles that lack any binding content. Managementese is often a form of babble used in isomorphic organizations. It means very little, but it can be used to create consensus around almost anything. Typically these organizations find collective beliefs and rationalizing formulas galvanizing, but they must also develop techniques for overlooking the evidence that contradicts their formulations. They must find ways of decoupling errant events from controlling logics. Rationalizing formulas can also engender nonsensical beliefs to which the group is sentimentally obedient.

For extrastatecraft, the long con is instructive. Just as fictitious rumors can be successful, so too can the stubbornly circuitous unfolding story. The day of reckoning can always be delayed.

Diaphanous fairy tales can replace hard-nosed logics. The auxiliary activist learns that through any

combination of new technologies, new spatial software, or new persuasions, a snaking chain of moves can worm into an infrastructure space and gradually generate leverage against intractable politics.

Hackers/Entrepreneurs

To ask, “How can one escape the market?” is one of those questions whose principal virtue is one’s pleasure in declaring it insoluble.—Jacques Rancière³²

Hackers and entrepreneurs—whether as social, political, or commercial agents—understand the power of multipliers, rumors, remotes, and distractions.³³ Understanding the currencies of all kinds of value, these characters play social and market networks with the viral dissemination of pandas and persuasions as well as products in infrastructure space. Both operate very differently from the utopian activist or designer. The utopian often imagines a transcendent and singular moment of change—a comprehensive reform or a soulful masterpiece. Like the activism of declarations, the designs of architects and urbanists are often presented as a corrective program. Even when, moving away from the object or master plan, design has borrowed extradisciplinary techniques from, for instance, the social sciences, cybernetics, or mathematics, the desire has often still been to declare—to find data or equations that deliver the right answer. The fact that the world never seems to adopt the utopian schemes of planners can then be portrayed as a sad mistake, or a lack of purity.

The hacker/entrepreneur does not value purity but rather relies on multiple cycles of innovation, updating platforms, and tracking changeable desires that supersede, refresh, or reverse the products and plans they introduce into the world. Entrepreneurs cannot survive unless they are always on the way to becoming obsolete. Finding fertile territory in inversion—an inversion that is often considered to be unreasonable—entrepreneurs will be most successful if they renovate what is considered to be practical. They vigorously engage the world looking for multipliers that will amplify their influence.

The cagey and enterprising bargains of the most productive hacker/entrepreneur may not measure their productivity in moral terms—on a determination of what is good. Just as Bateson assessed political temperament in terms of information flow, productive change might constitute those moves that release and mix more information than they hoard or deny—breaking deadlocks, undoing isomorphisms, unwinding authoritarian concentrations of power to generate less violent, more resilient political dispositions. The utopian’s binary righteousness and refusal may even be the least desirable disposition if it means arresting the flow of information.

For the hacker/entrepreneur of extrastatecraft, space is the underexploited opportunity or the low-hanging fruit. Not products and technologies circulating in space but space itself is the operating system to manipulate or overwrite. Spatial variables are the crucial active forms in an extensive shared platform—at once information, technology, product, and pawn. The space that has always been available for manipulation, when seen in this way, becomes a fresh territory for political action.

Inadmissible Evidence

I would rather talk about dissensus than resistance.—Jacques Rancière³⁴

Dissensus, as the opposite of consensus, is usually seen as a condition that needs remedying, but it can also be a positive engine. Dissensus disrupts the self-reflexive consensus that only considers compatible evidence. It also suggests a general unrest, a confusion in order that is more widespread than a single target of dissent. For Jacques Rancière, “The work of dissensus is to always reexamine the boundaries between what is supposed to be normal and what is supposed to be subversive, between what is supposed to be active, and therefore political, and what is supposed to be passive or distant, and therefore apolitical.”³⁵ For Rancière, “inadmissible” evidence generates dissensus.³⁶ For instance, the immigrant worker, a character for whom there is often no relevant national or international law, is something like inadmissible evidence. Rancière describes the immigrant as a wordless victim, object of an unquenchable hatred. The immigrant is first and foremost a worker who has lost his name, a worker who is no longer perceptible as such. Instead of the worker or

proletarian who is the object of an acknowledged wrong and a subject who vents his grievance in struggle and disputation, the immigrant appears as at once the perpetrator of an inexplicable wrong and the cause of a problem calling for the round-table treatment.³⁷

The immigrant worker returns again and again in the evidence of infrastructure space as the subject of an uneasy or false consensus—“the round-table treatment.” Dissensus always exposes this inadmissible evidence, forwarding and highlighting it within the consensus that tries to explain it away.

Looking beyond the sanctioned plotlines of the proper political story, inadmissible evidence identifies the category leftovers, or the butterflies that are not pinned to the board. Political change often pivots around less dramatic turning points that are not taxonomized by either the left or the right. Unlikely evidence may be the real cause of shifts in sentiment, changes in economic fortune, or escalations and suspensions of violence. Just as consensus may deliver the worst and most destructive leaders or juridical forms, an opponent may be strong-armed with a gift. The biggest changes may result from a seemingly innocuous detail that sneaks in when no one is paying attention. The most productive move may be the selfishly motivated innovation of the most abusive player. An abundance of fiction may make a supposedly impossible option, whether productive or unproductive, suddenly inoffensive and plausible. Waters may part inexplicably because of an indirect bargain made over a remote problem.

Extrastatecraft plunges into the field of contradictory or inadmissible evidence. The hacker/entrepreneur looks for openings in a bit of code or a stray desire that will unsettle the status quo and release more information. The scholar looks for the extra history sidelined by the dominant ideologies. The innovative economists, sociologists, information specialists, and urbanists are often looking beyond the master narratives and assumptions of their disciplines for more actors, more complex contexts, and more information for problem solving. The auxiliary activist hopes to engage all kinds of values and concentrations of authoritarian power, not just those celebrated in the political theologies of Capital or Neoliberalism.

Dissensus is not only about identifying the inadmissible and navigating the ripples and dimples on the water; it is also about creating some of those ripples. Space can embody dissensus when it scripts an interplay for multiple opposing or counterbalancing players and when it returns to that game of the laws and people that the market has erased or excluded for its convenience. The dissensus of extrastatecraft troubles the waters.

English

English is a word used when playing pool or billiards, in phrases such as “put a little english on the ball” or “give it some english.” Grazing the cue ball in a particular way imparts a bit of spin that transfers to the numbered ball, perhaps to overcome a bad angle and help the ball slip into the pocket. Apart from the general direction and intent of the shot, which may even be announced by the player, the ball delivers another unannounced agency that is much harder to control, one that even sometimes seems to be a matter between the balls themselves.

In *The Politics of Aesthetics*, Rancière does not discuss the aesthetics of politics, but the politics surrounding a work of art. He does not describe, for instance, the pageant of goose-stepping soldiers in a Zeppelin field, or the aestheticizing of resistance as fervid disappointment. Instead he describes the scatter of associations that attend art or design as they are received and used in political action. For instance, discussing the ways in which art both inflects and generates political activity, he mentions Flaubert:

When *Madame Bovary* was published, or *Sentimental Education*, these works were immediately perceived as “democracy in literature” despite Flaubert’s aristocratic situation and political conformism. His very refusal to entrust literature with any message whatsoever was considered to be evidence of democratic equality.³⁸

Somehow the novels relayed to their audience a liberating disposition despite Flaubert’s conservative politics. The books had “english,” or an indirect political spin in culture.

Bob Dylan’s “Like a Rolling Stone” was something of an accident—the result of a single take after a two-day recording session filled with false starts in June of 1965. The snarling song seemed to be addressed to a rich girl, and it had no explicit political content. Yet for whatever reason—the opening “pistol shot” of drums, Dylan’s association with Woody Guthrie, or his strained voice crying “how does it feel?”—the song became an anthem of the counter-culture during the wars and

assassinations of the 1960s. It introduced a kind of english that helped to ignite the song for political use.³⁹

Political disposition often relies on a bit of english or aesthetic spin. Rancière outlines an aesthetics that “does not refer to a theory of sensibility, taste, and pleasure for art amateurs.” Rather than treating aesthetics as a codified set of guides or rules that culture carefully tends and maintains, he focuses on “aesthetic practices” that both “depict” and enact, that articulate “ways of doing and making.” Aesthetics exists as a changing regime of forms that are full of meaning but not determinate meaning. Rancière describes the ways in which forms are “distributed” into various strata of the sensible.⁴⁰ Just as Foucault’s *dispositif* is a matter of “the said as much as the unsaid,” for Rancière, “Politics revolves around what is seen and what can be said about it, around who has the ability to see and the talent to speak, around the properties of spaces and the possibilities of time.”⁴¹

“English” is an advanced technique in pool and in infrastructure space. It is deployed deliberately but it is not entirely under the user’s control. Its intelligent use lies in the recognition that a special kind of spin is possible beyond the straightforward dynamics of the ball. In the crafting of infrastructure space, it is not possible to control the consequences of technologies and their interactions with humans in space. Being able to control the english in infrastructure space would be like inventing the cell phone knowing that it would go from being a “yuppy toy” to a tool of development in the world’s poorest countries. If it is not possible to control the english, it is nevertheless possible to be at ease with the presence of errant spin, to anticipate it, spot it, and use it to advantage. While perhaps a source of disappointment to those with the fixed anticipations of a proper political program, swerves, unexpected consequences, and the shadings of disposition are the raw material of a political performance in extrastatecraft.

Knowing How

A refreshed activist repertoire learns from a number of characters—pirates, prisoners, hackers, comedians—who, considering themselves too smart to be right, successfully pursue more slippery political practices. Like actors in theater, their job is to create mixtures of opposing intentions—playing actions that are different from the stated text. The operation need not be overt or declared. It may be remote or invisible. The Invisible Man was only powerful because he both appeared and disappeared. When the man himself was not visible, a drink was drained from a glass or doors were opened and closed and only the space that he disturbed was visible. In this context, a sneakier David—happy that Goliath is big—would never go to the trouble of killing the giant. He would see in infrastructure space not defeat but rather opportunity. Why kill the giant when it can be put to work, and when it’s great size, like a multiplier, can amplify that work?

The indeterminacy of these alternative activist techniques is ultimately what is most practical about them. Erving Goffman was fascinated by discrepant characters like confidence men and go-betweens, just as he was fascinated by the discrepancy between what people say and what they do in their everyday performances. He wondered how they learned their art.⁴² Most disciplines train their practitioners to reconcile and verify evidence using their own disciplinary standards, laws, and tests for what constitutes information. One does not ordinarily train in discrepancy or trickery. Discrepancy is the supernatural counterpart of forthright communication, the wispy smoke that passes between the supposedly solid fields of signifiers. Training to be a hustler, a con man, or a shill is learning to be responsive to change. It is dispositional. It relies on practical knowledge and improvisation—what James C. Scott calls *mētis*.⁴³ The techniques of extrastatecraft are rehearsed in preparation for a performance that one can only know how to do.

An auxiliary activism is enacted. The declarative and the enacted approaches to activism both map onto an ethical Möbius. One aligns with the maintenance of consensus around stated principles; the other, in a partial inversion, describes the maintenance of dissensus around a necessarily indeterminate struggle with undeclared but consequential activity. Each—while moving on opposite sites of the same surface and approaching from different directions—supports and challenges the other. The two together describe both the solid, stable state and the state of encounter. The galvanized and the atomized. The moment of certainty and the moment of uncertainty. The prescription and the epidemiology. The fix and the wager. The condition of “knowing that” and the evolving activities of “knowing how.”

1Alexander Cockburn, Jeffrey St. Clair, and Allan Sekula, *5 Days that Shook the World: Seattle and Beyond* (London and New York: Verso, 2000).

2Todd Gitlin, "The Self-Inflicted Wounds of the Academic Left," *The Chronicle Review* 52, no. 35 (2006), B6, at <http://chronicle.com>.

3Architecture discourses often drift toward tragic or stock narratives. For instance, with its attraction to tragic ultimates and endgames, Manfredo Tafuri's critique of the "impotent and ineffectual myths" of a political architecture is apt if architecture sees as its only tools object form and ideology. See Manfredo Tafuri, *Architecture and Utopia: Design and Capitalist Development* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1979), 178, 182.

4Colin Gordon, "Afterword" in Michel Foucault and Colin Gordon, ed., *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings 1972–1977* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1972) 256–7.

5Bruno Latour and Vincent Antoni Lépinay, *The Science of Passionate Interests: An Introduction to Gabriel Tarde's Economic Anthropology* (Chicago: Prickly Paradigm Press, 2009).

6See James C. Scott, *Domination and the Arts of Resistance: Hidden Transcripts* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990), 136.

7Ibid., 143–4.

8Ibid., 19.

9See Michel de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984), 37, 29–44, 142–3.

10"Sen. Inhofe Delivers Major Speech on the Science of Climate Change," at inhofe.senate.gov.

11Two examples of pop-culture books about marketing are Seth Godin, *Unleashing the Idea Virus* (New York: Do You Zoom, 2001); and Malcolm Gladwell, *The Tipping Point* (New York: Little Brown, 2002).

12Rush Limbaugh, "Left Just Now Discovering Global Warming Hoax," April 1, 2013, at rushlimbaugh.com.

13Nye, "Energy Narratives," in *Narratives and Spaces*, 85–6.

14"Green Machines," at <http://new.pentagram.com>.

15See "History" at greenpeace.org.

16"Some Facts About Wal-Mart's Energy Conservation Measures," at <http://news.walmart.com>.

17For an exhibition of architectural rumors see *Some True Stories: Researches in the Field of Flexible Truth*, Storefront for Art and Architecture, New York City, November 2008, at storefrontnews.org.

18"Celtel Chief Unveils \$5 Million Award for Governance," *Property Kenya*, October 31, 2006, at propertykenya.com. Ibrahim founded Celtel International (subsequently bought by Zain and Bahari Airtel) and turned it into one of the continent's largest mobile phone operators. He is one of the most successful African businessmen.

19Scott, *Domination and the Arts of Resistance*, 139–40; Milan Kundera, *The Joke* (New York: Harper, 1992), 139–40.

20Sebnem Arsu, "Protest Group Gives Turkish Officials Demands," *New York Times*, June 6, 2013. The author is indebted to A. J. Artemel for sharing his research on the 2013 anti-government protests in Turkey.

21See <http://theyesmen.org>.

22See womenonwaves.org.

23Hu Yong quoted in Brook Larmer, "Where an Internet Joke Is Not Just a Joke," *New York Times Magazine*, October 30, 2011, 38.

24Cheekiness—the cynicism about which philosopher Peter Sloterdijk writes—resists a self-satisfied cynicism or consensus. See Peter Sloterdijk, *Critique of Cynical Reason* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987), 101–33; and rtmark.com.

25Usually producing the humor of "knowing that" rather than "knowing how," the architecture culture that called itself "postmodern" created compositions from various architectural tropes that were to be consciously read as witticisms and ironies within (ixed object forms and one-to-one correspondences of meaning—"one-liners" in comedy jargon. The counter-culture demonstrations and satires of Ant Farm or Archigram entered into other print, (lm, and performance media with mixtures of object and active forms. Some were designed to reference a speci(c antecedent upon

which the humor relied. Others carried non-specific references that were both funny and disruptive. While there was specific content in the comics that Archigram designed, the very act of depicting architecture with comic books was itself an active form with many associations. Ant Farm's Cadillac Ranch, a sculpture of Cadillacs half buried in the ground, or its Media Burn performance featuring a collision of a car with a pyramid of TVs, travel as active form with no one specific antecedent.

26 See new-territories.com.

27 Kenneth W. Abbott and Duncan Snidal, "The Governance Triangle: Regulatory Standards Institutions and the Shadow of the State," in Walter Mattli and Ngaire Woods, eds., *The Politics of Global Regulation* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009), 50; Margaret E. Keck and Kathryn Sikkink, *Activists Beyond Borders: Advocacy Networks in International Politics* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1998), 23–4, 12–13.

28 "Conversation with Rahul Mehrotra," at <http://harvardmagazine.com>.

29 In *Empire*, Hardt and Negri discuss a number of techniques of political craft, including the refusal of characters like Herman Melville's *Bartleby* or J. M. Coetzee's *Michael K.*, paying particular attention to *Michael K.* as a gardener whose constant movement is mimetic of the vines he wishes to be tending. This serpentine disposition eases the dangerous stakes embodied in default refusal and enhances his chances of success. See Hardt and Negri, *Empire*, 203–4.

30 PBS Newshour, "Remembering Ronald Reagan," airdate June 7, 2004, at pbs.org.

31 For a discussion of "special stupidity," see Easterling, *Enduring Innocence*, 195.

32 Jacques Rancière, "The Art of the Possible: Fulvia Carnevale and John Kelsey in Conversation with Jacques Rancière," *Artforum International* 45 no. 7 (March 2007): 256–60.

33 Mattli and Woods, eds., *The Politics of Global Regulation*, x–xi.

34 Jacques Rancière, "The Art of the Possible: Fulvia Carnevale and John Kelsey in Conversation with Jacques Rancière," *Artforum International* 45, no. 7 (2007), 256–60.

35 *ibid.*

36 Jacques Rancière, *The Politics of Aesthetics* (London: Continuum, 2004), 85.

37 Rancière, *On the Shores of Politics*, 105.

38 Rancière, *The Politics of Aesthetics*, 14.

39 Greil Marcus, *Like a Rolling Stone: Bob Dylan at the Crossroads* (New York: Faber and Faber, 2005), 80, 224, 3.

40 In response to selected media and installation work of the 1990s, art critic Nicolas Bourriaud developed a notion of "relational form" that described art as a "state of encounter" rather than "the assertion of an independent and private symbolic space." In his manifesto, *Relational Aesthetics*, Bourriaud writes that this new "policy" of form "points to a radical upheaval of the aesthetic, cultural and political goals introduced by modern art." Rancière's broader framework describes a politics of aesthetics that does not rely on these new forms of media and performance art as a radical or inaugural moment. See Nicolas Bourriaud, *Relational Aesthetics* (Paris: Les Presses du Réel, 2002).

41 Foucault, "The Confession of the Flesh," in *Power/Knowledge*, 194; Rancière, *The Politics of Aesthetics*, 22–3, 12–14.

42 Goffman, *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*, 73–4.

43 Scott, *Seeing Like a State*, 6–7, 340.