

Hardt, M. and A. Negri (2012) *Declaration*. Argo Navis Author Services.

Opening: Take Up the Baton

This is not a manifesto in which they lay out a plan, a template
it is a capturing in print of the declaration that the uprisings of 2011
have already made
an articulation of the new common sense that is emerging
Tunisia, Egypt
the *indignados* were crucial
refusing representation
exploring real democracy
followed by the Greeks, Israelis, Britons, and Americans...
each struggle is singular, but they spoke directly to each other, and they
shared a common global struggle
[common does not mean same, it means a connectedness in difference]
they were sedentary and claimed and held key spaces; they were
leaderless; they were multitudes; they were organized horizontally; they
explored practices of democratic decision making; they contested
neoliberalism and private property; they contested *public* property and
the control of the state as well; they struggled for a common
there are four primary dominant subjective figures in the world today:
indebted, mediatized, securitized, represented
these must be refused and inverted to discover new forms of subjectivity
and power
the movements articulated constitutional principles that can be the basis for
a new constituent process
reject representation
develop new forms and practices of democratic participation
rediscover and use the common
no codification in a fixed order, but a constituent process that allows the
new relations to be organized and to endure

Chapter 1: Subjective Figures of the Crisis

We must refuse the dominant subjectivities, but also invert them and create
powerful alternatives

debt controls us through guilt and responsibility
it cannot be negated to create an affirmation, it can only deepen its
corruption
i.e. dialectic is not the answer
debtor to creditor is the dominant relation now
labor is now everywhere, not just the factory
production is organized by workers autonomously
rent is the dominant form of appropriation, not profit

debt is the main relation of control—you have to work because you owe

we appear (to ourselves even) as consumers rather than producers compared to the 20th century, a much larger mass of workers is subjected to this regime

it is a master-slave relation, or more accurately indentured servitude the chains must be broken

media now overloads us with information

we are encouraged to express ourselves and to consume information

we need silence in order to think (Deleuze)

the distinction between work and life is blurred, each is now imbricated in the other

we are not active or passive, we are absorbed in our attention to the web

there is living and dead information (Pasquinelli)

living is produced by workers and shared among them

dead information is information of control [of entertainment, of absorption]

we require a physical being-together to communicate living information with each other

e.g. encampments of 2011

we communicate to augment our collective political intelligence, to create new political affects

security—Hobbesian fear of constant threat, to be handled by Leviathan

recording of our activity, total surveillance

which we accept because there seem to be dangerous others

state of exception (which = state of war) prevails

also physical prisons (and camps)

there are many kinds and degrees of incarceration

precarious workers are a threat to the system (dangerous classes)

confinement of so many scares them into behaving/not revolting

other fears are unemployment and not being able to pay your debts

generalized fear on many fronts keeps a sick society toeing the line

representation

representation claims to be democratic, but it separates people from decision-makers

very common in 2011: refusal to be represented

civil society of the 20th c. (KWS) is dead

fear keeps us compliant, but the dissatisfaction (with inequality, economic insecurity) remains: and so charismatic leaders pursue demagoguery

representation was always known to be a way to keep democracy at bay

they use Rousseau for this: a metaphysical passage from 'the will of all' to the 'general will'

{really, in Rousseau, the passage is from a multitude of individuals to the body politic}

Schmitt: to represent means to make present an absence or, really, a no one

[to personate an artificial person]

even if these structures were OK in theory (they're not), the reality of state practice in capitalism makes them far fetched in that practice

the represented must rouse himself and discover his appetite for democracy

the indebted must retake control of his wealth

the mediatized must retake control of the general intellect

the securitized must let go of fear and rediscover friendship and love

when he does, he will be able to explore the possibility of democracy

Chapter 2: Rebellion Against the Crisis

We are told that we need more of that which is making us sick

and so indignation is appropriate

inverting the subjective figures of the crisis requires not dialectical negation but a *kairos*, the event; the capacity for political action (as Arendt conceives of it)

individual resistance to the dominant subjectivity, but also an awareness of a collective condition in which we can resist

we must reconnect to *what we can do* [Marx, *EPM*]

and, more specifically, what we can do when we are reconnected to each other, when we become singular, when we rediscover the subjective force of being together in common and yet different, [when we reconnect with the fact of our existence as an assemblage connected to other assemblages (as Deleuze and Guattari would say)]

debt: alternative subjectivization begins with refusal [I think it 'requires' it but need not 'begin with' it]

reappropriate our own wealth

affirm and develop our own strength, our condition as social beings

discover new social relationships; new [social] bonds and new forms of [social] debt ['I owe you one']

cooperation and productive interdependence; we can discover the productivity we are capable of when we operate in common [Bakunin is all over this discussion]

an ethics of the common—reciprocal recognition of what we owe each other [of the multiple ways each of us depends on a multitude of others for our thriving]

no need to pass from spontaneity to organization, to organize the movements in the old way: rather we must search, with the movements, for new processes capable of forming new social bonds

media: break our attention away from media and discover new ways to communicate

for singularities working together in networks to make new truths

communicative action is not enough
first step is become a singularity
don't 'return to yourself'; rather: become multiple internally and
realize yourself only in your connection to and communication with
others [Bakunin again]
produce a common language (e.g. "99%" or "*que se vayan todos*")
real communication requires an encampment, an occupation in which
we can practice collective self-government [*autogestion*]

security: become invisible

recognize your power, appropriate it, and take it with you as you flee
power is not standing above you; it is in a relation with you that
depends on your participation

if you refuse to participate, it will no longer work
struggle against the prison; the militarization of culture
put an end to fear by renouncing it and create instead real security in
the common—when we are together in the square: *no tenemos miedo*

when fear (of death) is let go of, we can turn our attention, with
Spinoza, to life: to being together, managing our affairs
together, to the joy of politics

representation: representative structures of liberal governance are thrown
into question

the audacious leap from the will of all [which they misunderstand] to
the general will [really it is the leap from a multitude to a body
politic]

we must retain ourselves as a multitude that acts in common, that
is not represented

the multitude must "become prince of the institutions of the
common"

the subjectivity capable of democratic action must emerge and
begin to use its constituent power to organize social production
in accordance with the principles of freedom, equality, and
solidarity

[again I imagine this as one impossibly complex assemblage that
can be perceived at many scales, cell-organ-individual-community-
nation-globe, and has the same (or similar) complexity,
multiplicity, and interdependence with its outside no matter what
scale we define it at]

they herald and new and different left: no to neoliberalism, no to socialist
parties in league with neoliberalism, no to the entire structure of liberal
representation

and exodus from the current political structures in order to prepare the
basis for a **new constituent power**

Chapter 3: Constituting the Common

Productive forces are becoming increasingly of the common, but they are
governed by relations of private property, following their well-known

argument, etc.

ruling powers proposal of austerity shows they are not capable of imagining a way out

global financial markets are the seat of power and are defended as such

new movements actively propose alternative, a new common sense, a new constituent process based in the common

principles: free access to the common, equality in distribution of wealth, sustainability of the common

truly democratic governance would involve people themselves

[but in this section one can see that because of their insistence

that new institutions must be created, they have a heavy appreciation for Locke's insistence on the right of rebellion,

since that right helps keep institutions from growing too powerful —they use his language verbatim without citing him (they do cite

Lincoln, though)]

constituent struggles on the terrain of the common

destroy the old republican constitutions of the 17th-18th centuries,

break through to the other side, a declaration of independence that is the basis of the new constituent process

this is done through the event, which creates “a new ontological condition”

even if the powers that be reassemble after the event (e.g.

Egypt), our new powers remain in existence, latent

autonomous time, seeing time (among other aspects of life) from a radically different standpoint

new participatory methods are both slower and faster; they produce intense affects (joy, cooperation, mutual security, collective

using of our power)

whole discussion of counterpowers, which seems dangerous but also unnecessary

e.g. need counterpower to take immediate action on climate, or anti-eviction mobilizations, or forcing corporations to open access to the common

they don't know seem to know what these counterpowers would be, they are vague here, and they refuse to get specific

recapture the general intellect, which is now the leading edge of production expertise [Bakunin] must be recognized as plural and common

raison d'état (compelling state interest) for secrecy must be destroyed

discussion of new practices of majority rule that can address the issue of minorities

[again the bad handling of Rousseau's 'will of all']

horizontal, democratic assemblies; agglutination or concatenation of differences

here it becomes clear that they favor the will of all (democratic politics decide “according to the will of all”, [which means they don't

understand that in Rousseau, the will of all is the set of every

individual's selfish will, the will that follows natural liberty. What they actually want is not the will of all, but a concatenation of singularities—an assemblage, essentially] everyone participates as different, working actively with others with whom they are interdependent, inside a multiplicity of singularities the wider project is shared but plural; each struggle is a singularity that *increases* the common, participates in it, rather than holds itself aloof from it

begins locally but then spreads horizontally
federalism: federation/association of small movements/assemblies that share management of the common; but that must involve the creation of a new shared subjectivity that can act for itself
hard to know how decisions are made by the multitude, how the multitude decides to act
practice doing with others; practice being collective rather than individual [being a social being with others—Bakunin] in order to be an autonomous and participating subject
the modern political party cannot serve as an organ of decision-making that power must remain with the multitude
no transcendence; only immanent common terrain
but social goods (and their management) must be constitutionalized as **common**
but **not**, and this is important, through **public, i.e. state**, control
planning, expertise, and knowledge must be spread widely and our appetite for democratic participation must be stimulated so we can rediscover the pleasure of political participation
we must transform the public into the common; make the law common; a management system that is based on the principles of the common and democratic participation
the common good is never transcendent, it can never be, it can only be defined immanently, [as the actual common interest of the assemblage...]

common banks; no chrematics, or money for money's sake; but money subordinated to social needs; not under public/state control, since that is an authority that transcends the social [this immanent/transcendent distinction will be the measuring stick for any institutions of the common, I predict]

we need democratic planning to manage and plan the common, and to augment the **metropolis**, which is the prime site for such accumulation [as opposed to the factory as the site of accumulation in the industrial age]

common education; self-education together with others
we already have the power to think [Bakunin again], our intelligence just needs to be cultivated in the common
we don't need to *be* educated, but only to be afforded an environment that allows our appetite for learning to grow according to its own

conatus

and it should be in relation to and interaction with others

[we must realize that 'I' don't know something, that 'we' is always the subject of knowing—knowledge is always social (general intellect), it is absurd to believe otherwise—so the proper goal of education must be to open out onto the world]

education is a cooperative project to augment the general intellect
not public/state education

humanities is the set of disciplines most appropriate to the common (rather than STEM)

in resisting privatization, we cannot fall back on public/state, we can't reaffirm state sovereignty (e.g. Soviet Union)

not state control, but democratic self-management

immediately we can transfer every state-controlled common that is equally well managed in common to common management

we need not be doctrinaire about rejecting strategies of public control, but we should always be unsatisfied with them *because they are state/public* rather than common

[maybe the Chilean student movements offer some lessons]

but we might find some lessons in the relation between the social movements and progressive governments in Latin America

the movements are *external* to government, not absorbed: cooperative and antagonistic relations

this is a "constitutional example" for them

the key is to keep governance immanent, open, multiple, participatory
some relations with the state are just definitely going to happen, so we need to think about how to force the state to become immanent in our relations with it

self-management of the common is the goal

people are alienated by their legislatures, and parties

corruption of money

parties of the left can only lament the situation, not transform it

the republican constitutions can no longer be reformed

a **new constituent process** is needed; based in the principles of the new movements

a legislative power that is run by the participation of all;

constituent, plural assemblies

federations of such assemblies; never pyramidal but horizontal;

local, decentralized power, but federated

what about the scale of society as a whole?

Perhaps in the federations of worker's councils ala German *Rats* and Russian *Soviets*

not representing workers but creating ways they can participate

using their existing activity as a basis for their political activation

not workers' councils in their 20th century form, but drawing inspiration and principles from their experience and their successes

[not much innovation here (as in Holland's global market)]
we need a process that extends decision-making along the lines of the productive forces currently at the leading edge of the economy (common production of knowledges, codes, etc.)
in a way that cultivates people's appetite for politics
practicing democracy is the way to cultivate a taste for democracy
a new executive power is needed as well for planning, expertise, and economic development
organization of the common and building an infrastructure appropriate to it
management of the common so that it is sustained
so that access and contribution to the common is open and equal
no centralization, no bureaucracy (instead: immanent social networks of producers), no hierarchy
developing our capacity to participate in the general intellect should make it possible to distribute and socialize expert knowledge
judicial will be political, and should be recognized as such
this power, too, will need to be distributed and participatory
serves the function of checks and balances on government
interpret the constitution according to the constitutional principles
these principles are already being constructed by the movements,
the discussion about them is already mature...

Next: Event of the Commoner

The city on the hill seems far off; but let's go slowly
the struggles of 2011 will not topple the ruling powers
that will be achieved instead by the event, an event we cannot *make* happen, that must happen on its own [cf. Marozia]
no *coup d'etat*
but we can *prepare* for the event
the multitude can prepare itself, its principles, its subjectivity, its habits, its political practices
so that it is ready when the event comes
begin with organized refusal of the current subjectivities
but also a creative process
to discover our power for political action, for new social debts, for new truths, for a new security without fear
the key is to create *the commoner*
those who work; those without rank; those who produce and manage the common; those who are constituent participants (singularities who communicate through differences)
a becoming common, a realization that we are not the same, we are different, but we are nevertheless linked, we are bound up together with each other, we

are dependent on each other (and on the common) for everything

we must learn to share and manage and augment the common together if we are to survive

the movements of 2011 were distinct, local, but also aware of themselves as bound up together in a common world with common problems which need, to some extent, a common way to address them, and a common alternative project for the future

learn from the movements: learn how they eschewed churches, dogma, leaders, parties, representation, how they insisted on horizontality, decentralization, openness

these were not bugs, they were features

organization was not absent, they were working hard on what it would mean to be organized without party organization, without leaders, without central cadres, without the state

[they were working on how to become democratic]