

Train of Thought: Movement, Contingency and the Imagination of Change

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abstract

This paper reflects on the Capturing the Moving Mind conference/event, which took place in September 2005 on the Trans-Siberian Railway, between Moscow and Beijing. The paper follows the structure of a two-screen new media work, entitled Train of Thought, composed of five short episodes: 1. Movement, 2. Biopolitics: Landscape of Prisons, 3. Stationary World, 4. Borderline and 5. 'This intense radiation of energy and thought'. The overall piece is structured by an image of the train's moving shadow cast on the landscape of the Gobi Desert, a register of our presence but also of our hypermediation of the experience, from the relative comfort of first-class carriages, viewing a world through a window, moving through a landscape, imagining movement and change, but also in a sense, not touching (or being touched by) the places through which we passed. This assemblage (part paper, part text animation, part moving image) focuses on three aspects of the journey: firstly the affective register of inactivity, inaction or boredom; secondly, a sense of animation as an aspect of what might be called the market's organicism (its 'biopolitics'); and thirdly an encounter with violence and the phenomenon of coercion (the protection racket). These instances are framed through a combination of what Deleuze calls the perception-image, the affection-image and the action-image.

All things considered, movement-images divide into three sorts of images, when they are related to a centre of indetermination as to a special image: perception-images, action-images and affection-images. And each one of us, the special image or the contingent centre, is nothing but an assemblage of three images, a consolidation of perception-images, action-images and affection-images. (Deleuze, 1986: 66)



MOVIE CLIP 1: Train of Thought: Title - 5-7 secs



Before moving...



TEXT ANIMATION 1

This paper reflects – in a reflexive way – on the *Capturing the Moving Mind* conference/event, which took place in September 2005 on the Trans-Siberian Railway, between Moscow and Beijing. The paper follows the structure of a two-screen new media work, entitled *Train of Thought*, composed of five short episodes: 1. Movement, 2. Biopolitics: Landscape of Prisons, 3. Stationary World, 4. Borderline and 5. ‘This intense radiation of energy and thought’.¹ The overall piece is structured by an accidental image – or rather, by an image which I could not have predicted in planning to make a work about the experience. This image presented itself as we crossed the Gobi Desert, towards the end of the trip, one late afternoon with the sun low in the sky, causing the train’s moving shadow to be cast on the landscape itself, a register of our presence but also of our hypermediation of the experience, from the relative comfort of first-class carriages, viewing a world through a window, moving through a landscape, imagining movement and change, but also in a sense, not touching (or being touched by) the places through which we passed.

1 This work was shown as part of the *Capturing the Moving Mind* exhibition opening, held at the Kiasma Museum of Contemporary Art, Helsinki on April 20th 2006, in the museum’s Rear Window space, 20 April – 2 July, 2006. My thanks to Tuula Karjalainen, Marja Sakari, Akseli Virtanen and Jussi Vähämäki for organizing the exhibition and seminar, which accompanied the opening and to Anna Wartiovaara and to Esa Niiniranta for their assistance in the installation of work.

Part 1 sets movement into play, via a series of images and movie clips (in particular a clip about time – or the relative meaning of time and the disorientation produced on a journey through seven time zones with a time-table set according to the time of the journey's origin: Moscow time. Movement is also thought via the dynamism of capital and the disorientations it also produces). Part 2 reflects on the historical landscape of Siberia, brought into existence as a particular landscape of exile in the nineteenth century, from the Decembrist exiles of the early nineteenth century to the expansion of the prison system, in the repression which followed the assassination of Alexander II in 1881. An image – indeed a whole imaginary – of this landscape arose in this period – well in advance of the Russian Revolution (and, we can say, necessitating it). There are parallels which might be drawn between this historical experience of a 'war on terror' and the more contemporary world of 'permanently temporary war'. Additionally, the enforced labour of this earlier period established a landscape of mines and mining, which is now intensified in massive resource developments since the end of the Soviet Union and the landscape is re-marked by the deep scarring of post-industrial ecological waste and social/cultural dislocations of populations, already deeply marked by traumatic experience and memory.

Part 3 ('Stationary World') further touches on the ecologies of place in the micro-economies built around the train's stopping – both in general and in the particularity of stopping during *this* journey – occasions which meant 'work' (meetings, performances, etc.) as well as play. The train-stop also brought us into direct contact with the brutalities of control, of 'protection rackets' and of 'predatory man' (Veblen), a generally hidden aspect of the emergence of market economies and of state formations within them. Part 4 hotlinks to the discussion of a performance on the border between Russia and Mongolia, entitled 'Action without Reaction', directed by Bernardo Giorgi, an ongoing project on borders. The intertitle of Part 5, 'This intense radiation of energy and thought', is a description of the conference *mood*, given by one of the participants at a certain stage of the journey, but it might also be applied to a sense of generalised dynamism encountered in China at the end of the journey, which some expressed as a sense of 'entering the future'.

This assemblage (part paper, part text animation, part moving image) reflects briefly on three aspects of the journey: firstly the affective register of inactivity, inaction or boredom; secondly, a sense of animation as an aspect of what might be called the market's organicism (its 'biopolitics'); and thirdly an encounter with the phenomenon of coercion (the protection racket).

The *Capturing the Moving Mind* conference/experiment was motivated by the challenge to think change and its effects from within its immersive materiality, demanding an engagement which is therefore both reflective and reflexive. The challenge of writing in the era of what Vilém Flusser (2002) has called the 'technical image' requires a rethink of what it means to write and to be 'written'. Moreover, there is a sense in which we seem increasingly composed of/by images – in a time of the dominance of graphic user interfaces. Deleuze's proposal of three types of images – perception-images, action-images and affection-images – seems also a good way of thinking the particular experiences of this journey, between perception, affection and action.

In a very interesting article exploring the ways in which work on materiality in cultural and social geography is enriched by what might be called the ‘affective turn’, Ben Anderson (2004) surveys a particular history of boredom as suspension of the body’s capacities to affect and be affected. His approach attempts to refigure boredom beyond its characterisation as alienation or anomie, within the model of disenchantment, in which critical theory has contained it. This is a good place to start because boredom opens out thought to the imaginary space of non-thought – the “restlessness of a vacant mind”, as Samuel Johnson saw it, a place of dread for all who subscribe to the language of utilitarianism and instrumentalism, a place of radical non-productivity, of no ‘research outcomes’, of idleness and purposelessness: the place of losers, of failures, and today of the unemployed and of refugees. And, in a word: the sphere of the precariat. But there we were, all sitting around for days with nothing to do except think up new thoughts and actions – or encounter the failure of doing so.



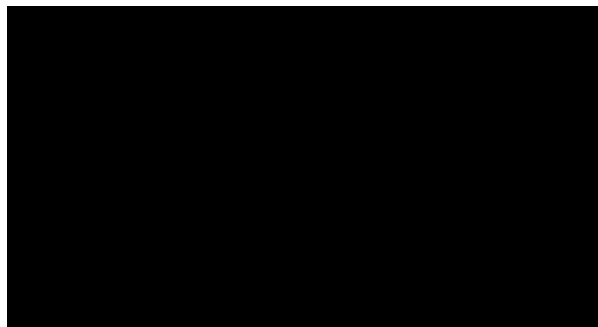
There is relatively little support for boredom in philosophy – though a number of philosophers deal with it. Kierkegaard is ambivalent in *Either/Or*, vacillating, in the imaginary dialogue between A, the aesthete and B, the older, wiser and more earnest judge, between praise for idleness and condemnation of boredom (‘demonic pantheism’) (1987: 290). In this 1843 ‘lifestyle’ manual, a familiar choice is presented: the life of pleasure (A’s ‘aesthetic’ worldview and lifestyle) or the ethical life (B’s purposeful existence). It’s pretty clear that the ‘aesthetic’ life is to be avoided finally because it presupposes a subject who refuses the responsibilities of independent selfhood, preferring the instinctual and infantile pursuit of (more or less choiceless) pleasure and novelty. Such an uncontrolled libidinal economy leads inevitably to boredom, despair, melancholy – the malaise of commodified modern life as Simmel and Kracauer later find – while the pursuit of true happiness – in this somewhat grimmer version of Hillsong – involves the adoption of the moral life, not exactly of the renunciation of pleasure, but of its ordering and control.



Although Kierkegaard liked to travel,² I don't know whether he ever travelled by train – I imagine A & B's dialogue to have developed in a horse-drawn carriage³ rather than a train compartment, since, as Schivelbusch (1986: 73) tells us, the U-shaped design of the coach compartment represented a communicative form of seating, a specifically bourgeois idea to precipitate conversation.

The train compartment on the other hand presented a new anxiety for the bourgeois traveller: having to face strangers in relatively close proximity for hours at a time, resulting in a new form of behaviour – reading while travelling, necessitated by both the development of the train carriage's spatial arrangement and the railway's annihilation of space by time. Between the internal intensities of intimate contact with strangers on the one hand and on the other, the emergence of a 'panoramic' vision and an accompanying numbing of the senses in the experience of mobilisation, an embedded, localised pre-industrial geography is replaced with the non-fixity of a passage through time as much as space, a passage which blurs the sense of 'reality'.

Referring to Schivelbusch in a recent book on boredom, Elizabeth Goodstein suggests that "boredom was the fate of those who could not modernize their ways of seeing in the enforced idleness of the compartment" (2005: 178).



MOVIE CLIP 2: RealTimeElly duration: 16.17



TEXT ANIMATION 3:

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- 2 He acquired a taste for it, when he went to Berlin in 1841 to attend lectures by Schelling at the University of Berlin – also 'audited' by Jakob Burckhardt and Friedrich Engels. See Hong and Hong (1987: viii).
 - 3 It is in fact imminent carriage travel which leads to the discovery of the papers of A & B, as 'Victor Eremita' tells us in the preface. And we also know of Kierkegaard's general sociality: 'The fact is he walks about town all day, and generally in some person's company.... When walking, he is very communicative' (Hong and Hong, 1987: xiv).

It was, then, this space between boredom and idleness which also preoccupied some *Capturing the Moving Mind* fellow travellers in formulating some new post-Kierkegaardian questions about the experience. As the 'Call for Papers' for this issue puts it, in a direct challenge, demanding an affective approach:

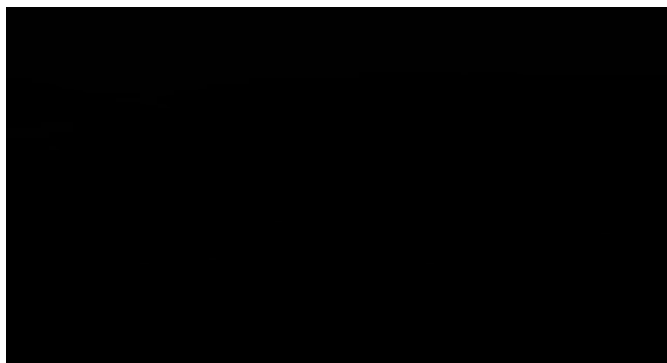
How might the sensual, the sensitive, and the aesthetic contribute to the creation of new political forms? And how might feelings of restlessness and boredom (feelings of being without any task or function – the experience of what it means to be 'human' in the most generic sense) be decisively understood not as a weakness but an asset, a political power not to be given up?

Here, I want to explore some thought processes involved in *imaging* this particular experience of imagining change. This experimental activity (conference/event) put into circulation a desire to imagine new ways of being political beyond the forms of party or stultified 'direct action' as knee-jerk *reaction*, as well as responding to a generalized contemporary *movement* (of peoples, of action and of thought) and the necessity to think *within* movement, to mobilize thought so that a refreshed action can occur, both as event and as 'way of being', engaging affective energies and intensities – generic human capacities – directed towards collaborative forms of creation and resistance.

Well, that was part of the idea, anyway. But there was also the hint of a movement away from this talk of collaboration and unity towards a kind of group or even animal isolationism:



TEXT ANIMATION 4:



MOVIE CLIP 3: Train projected on Gobi Desert (10 secs)

My problem to solve in this experiment was how to realize it as a *production* under circumstances in which its self-organizing principle mitigated against the type of organizational intervention a film or videomaker would engage in, (directing ‘action’ and re-enactment, composing scenarios), in order to encourage the emergence of an event which could form a recordable narrative in the absence of a script (and in this case, the absence also of a budget) – the usual dilemma facing ethnographic filmmakers in particular (with the difference in this instance that an anthropologically-infllected practice of observational detachment could not exist, since this would have implied non-engagement in the experiment itself and engagement was really a condition of participation, necessitated as much as anything by the very principle of immersion in *movement* which the experiential nature of the event – and ordinary sociality – required).



TEXT ANIMATION 5

And then there was the reality of ‘self-organization’, which, more often than not, turned out to mean the individualized ‘care of the self’, a small version of *Either/Or* – the cultivation of the self in meditative and ethical activity (reading, ‘making work’, engaging in productive political discussion or planning of actions) versus pleasure-seeking, drinking, dancing, time-wasting, ‘fucking around’, daydreaming, (or aimless ‘being there’) – and crossing these extremes, simply living (attending to personal care, eating, washing – and the challenges these activities presented and the anxieties to which they gave rise).



TEXT ANIMATION 6

This ordinary living *space* of the ‘non-event’ occupies the *time* between the desire to undertake significant actions – to ‘make history’, to participate in important events, to enter cosmic time (always the territory of self-importance as much as real importance). Here I want to distinguish the ‘non-event’ as everyday reality and the non-event as failed occurrence, precipitating disappointment – the difference consisting in the absence or presence of active expectation. And I want to say that it is the ‘non-event’ (in the former sense) which holds most interest for me, since this is precisely the space in which the sensual, the sensitive and the aesthetic exist as a *potentiality*, as possible *assets* in the emergence of new forms of political life.

The space of the non-event, the time when ‘nothing is happening’ remains a location of profound freedom, separate from the over-organized life (where ‘free time’ is regarded as a – non-productive – ‘waste of time’). This is the true space of ‘self-organization’ in which the power of time as excess – as waste – acquires value of a non-market kind.

1. Movement



MOVIE CLIP 4: ‘BernardoDance’ sequence



TEXT ANIMATION 7

Two particular instances of the *movement* of economy recently presented themselves, underlining the context of mobility and rapid change in which our thoughts of movement also occur. The Hong Kong Stock Market recently announced that companies no longer need to buy newspaper advertisements to declare market-sensitive information and nor are they any longer required to suspend trading in such announcement periods. Instead, reporting requirements will allow companies to electronically distribute information without disruption to trading, bringing the exchange into line with other markets (Yiu, 2006). Noting this shift in the register of official announcement, I also recall, a couple of weeks earlier on a plane flying across the world (in *movement*, in a zone of indeterminate time), a paragraph in the business pages of the *International Herald Tribune* announcing that certain market information will shortly cease to appear in the print form of the newspaper but will henceforth only appear in the on-line version.

What becomes obvious in these small shifts is that all those pages of the public announcement of prices of stocks, of managed funds, of exchange rates and of different indices in world stockmarkets, so neatly tabulated, organized in an ordered way and the staple of the business pages for so long – and of newspapers’ advertising revenue, in the case of compulsory reporting – can simply no longer provide the kind of information able to register the actual movement – the *pulse* as it were – of the market. This is because economic *knowledge* (once barely distinguishable from *information*), which used to be *solid* and in print (the very solidity of the printing process guaranteeing the accuracy of the information, which itself would have been carefully checked in a slow, double proofreading process) has itself become fluid, and in constant movement. (And the double proofreaders, working in carefully balanced pairs in printeries for centuries disappeared about twenty-five years ago.)



TEXT ANIMATION 8

It is therefore no longer the printed page which can handle the required immediacy and ‘liveness’ of economic information, since a logic of quoting prices at the close of trading no longer works for global markets in which there is simply no close of the market, since somewhere, it is always open for business (a new version of the older nineteenth century demonstration of imperial power – of the sun never setting on the British Empire – which always, in the colonial context, produced a sense of being under

the control of some panoptic order. Now it is the empire of capital upon which the sun never sets, though in the darkness in front of the screen, observing the subtle, barely perceptible shifts in information, it's hard to know if anyone notices whether the sun has set or risen).

So the dizzying scroll of teletext becomes a more appropriate means of apprehending economic information and market dynamism – the screen proving more capable of registering movement than the printed page in the demand for ever more 'live' information, though even the screen may be too slow in its refresh rate and in the delay between the registration of sales and purchases and the impact of sales volume on price.

A desire has arisen for the absolute immediacy of the point of sale, a desire for the 'absolute real', an imperative to be immersed utterly 'in the moment' – the 'here and now' of the market, in order to feel its pulse and mood, to be able to predict its subtle shifts, to be completely *immersed* in its actual nervous system in order to gain the smallest margin of advantage (worth millions in high-volume transactions).

Maybe there are some Kantian aspects of this immersive desire, some residues of *das Ding an sich* as it has become transformed by economics (remembering Kant's interest in economics).⁴ On the other hand, something else is happening. *Economy* itself has acquired *life* – as a result of new technological forms of communication; we can say that it is 'alive', partly in a monstrous sense, in acquiring a measurable 'pulse' and 'nervous system', in having 'moods' and 'jitters', the rhythms and patterns of a perverse organicism.

This new 'liveness' – this new 'sense of the real' – targets not only stock traders but becomes a generalised aspect of the visual space of daily life: the multi-track scrolling of news services on television, LED displays of scrolling stock prices, alongside those other realms of the immediate – news and weather – appearing on buildings randomly distributed through cities, TV screens appearing increasingly in shopping centres, airports, hospital waiting rooms etc., registering the 'latest' information (which, ironically turns out often to be a repetition of what has already occurred).

This new market animation as a visual phenomenon is not systematically studied, but technological registers of its arrival can be identified (though the technological is itself partly an effect of larger changes) – in, for example, the development of teletext from the late 1970s, and we begin to see a greater visual awareness of the presence of economic information in the 1980s, most notably around the 1987 stockmarket crash.⁵

The surfeit of information, this apparent excess which is the most visible aspect of economic movement, a constant flow, indeed overflowing into every conceivable space, is itself a surface which masks, in its frenzied activity, a fundamental absence or lack. In writing of the mimetic turn of economy, Vähämäki explains this phenomenon in the following way:

4 See in particular Derrida (1981).

5 I've written elsewhere on the visual/aesthetic dimensions of these shifts in value. See Grace (1991, 1993 and 2002).



TEXT ANIMATION 9

This scenario of information deficit is part of what has become a generalised deficit economy especially affecting what is called (in already negative terms) the sphere of the ‘not-for-profits’ to which is necessarily attached a sense of *loss*, in the absence of *profit*. Deficit itself is in movement – as anyone in a university observes, when departments are declared to be in deficit; negotiations occur, solutions are established and then the deficit moves onto another department as attention shifts and policies change. Non-profitable thought – ‘wasteful’ thought – comes into being in the supercession of various ideas, as if they are like old clothes, still completely serviceable but those who wear them are located immediately in a particular conceptual – and time – frame, in need either of complete renovation or of demolition.

How then to imagine and create new political forms? The first thing we might notice is that in the period in which a particularly dynamic efficacy was attached to radical political thought, it was always perceived to be *in movement* as opposed to the *stasis* of conservative societies – and this sense of movement then became attached to embodiments of thought in mass forms – in the labour *movement* or the women’s *movement*, for example, before a kind of *settling* began to occur in formerly loose and more nomadic groupings and then mass movements fragmented into various identities and were called *communities* (the gay community or the indigenous community, for example). In a slow sense, stasis began to appear in those movements, which had been marked by dynamism at one moment while an energetic and frenzied dynamism began to appear in those spaces formerly characterised by solidity (the sphere of cognitive capitalism, for example – and certainly in the visual space of capitalist operation, in new images of the market and new forms of expression of the market’s movement).

What shape will new political forms take in meeting this challenge? A couple of examples suggest some shifts – and although these instances depart noticeably from the revolutionary desire of a political imaginary established in the middle of the nineteenth century and maintained ever since, regardless of its historical specificity, the examples I cite here represent noticeable strategic shifts which empower, in an admittedly restricted sense, new political subjects formerly excluded from such activity/activism. Firstly, environmentalist groups and others have taken a leading role in the movement of shareholder activism which rises to the challenge of capital’s greater penetration of

personal life (in, for example, the necessity – or, perhaps, false choice – to be directly engaged in ‘investment decisions’ in relation to compulsory superannuation payments – made in lieu of extra wages in what we might call ‘compulsory capitalism’, a kind of wage-hijacking). Secondly, a new ‘non-registered union’ has emerged in New Zealand, specifically targeting young non-unionized workers, working in, for example the casualised fast food industries – workers whom the union movement has failed to recruit over many years, in spite of professed interest in doing so. In March the group, Unite, (registered as a business rather than a union) successfully negotiated a pay increase for 7000 low-paid workers employed by Restaurant Brands, New Zealand’s biggest fastfood service chain, in Starbucks, KFC, Pizza Hut and the Restaurant Brands 0800 call centre). Unite has just launched in Australia – to the concern of other unions (Carbonell, 2006).

2. Biopolitics: Landscape of Prisons



TEXT ANIMATION 10

The Trans-Siberian experiment was an exercise in mobilizing thought and in moving through a landscape which itself had been mobilized and developed through successive wars on terror from the Decembrists to the expansion of prisons in the repression which both preceded and followed the assassination of Alexander II in 1881 (which George Kennan documented, setting down in his images and descriptions the very terms and attitudes which would become the language of the Cold War somewhat in advance of even the Russian Revolution).⁶ (I refer to these historical precedents since general

6 Kennan’s two volume *Siberia and the Exile System* (1891) is accessible at <http://www.questia.com/PM.qst?a=o&d=3884474> (Vol 1) and <http://www.questia.com/PM.qst;jsessionid=G15FJDq5f32WwFZPMvv6RKC0cmKLZsp5GR11IM5byhzPYz262nKb!850685124!1712085583?a=o&d=89543786> (Vol 2). The photographs he took are accessible through the Library of Congress at the following site: <http://frontiers.loc.gov/intldl/mtfhtml/mfdigcol/aboutkenph.html>. Kennan’s initial anti-Tsarist project puts in place the principle, structure and mentality of the defence of ‘freedom & democracy’ which remains to this day. Initially supportive of the idea of revolution in Russia, he opposed its actual practice (on the grounds that the Soviet government lacked the necessary knowledge, experience and education to solve the problems resulting from the overthrow of the Tsar. Kennan’s anti-Bolshevism was taken up and extended with spectacular success by his far

Western knowledge of this landscape is still locked in a conventionally anti-Soviet Cold War time-warp, as numerous conversations on the train revealed).

For some, there was a sense of timelessness as if we were in the land of fairytales, of small dark villages, unconnected to the twenty-first century. But in fact our passage was not so much through beautiful nature, corrupted by the ruins of industrialisation (a cross between Tolstoy and Tarkovsky's Zone) but through an entire landscape fuelled by natural resource developments on the one hand (in Russia) and by industrialisation on the other (in China), in this intensified re-run of the European nineteenth century and simultaneously something we've never seen before.⁷

3. Stationary World



MOVIE clip 5: MARIA



better known second cousin, George F. Kennan, principle architect of the Truman Doctrine of Soviet containment – and major Cold War warrior. See Kennan (1947).

- 7 On the pristine shores of Lake Baikal, new developments are rapidly appearing. See Boykewich (2005). See also Khodorkovsky. More generally, see Belton (2005). For a Chinese perspective see Runping (2006). For developing links between Russia and China see Xuequan (2006). For an expensive view (directed at would-be investors), see Houleberghs and Zaslavsky (2004). For a more critical view of the nature of entrepreneurial capitalism in Russia today see Volkov (2002).

When the train stops another world is entered, another set of movements; intricate small-scale negotiations, a delicate ecology of subsistence, reliant upon time – the duration of the stop, the minutes, the distance between platforms, the time of service and the organization of the market. The train too requires fueling. At one stop, touristic photography is brought to a halt by a man brandishing a small hand-gun – bringing into stark relief a truism of the power of the image and of photography:

Susan Sontag had famously said:

Like guns and cars, cameras are fantasy machines whose use is addictive. The camera-gun does not kill, so the ominous metaphor seems to be all bluff.... Still, there is something predatory in the act of taking a picture. To photograph people is to violate them by seeing them as they never see themselves. By having knowledge of them they can never have. It turns people into objects that can be symbolically possessed. Just as the camera is a sublimation of the gun, to photograph someone is a sublimated murder. A soft murder, appropriate to a sad, frightened time. (Sontag, 1977: 14)

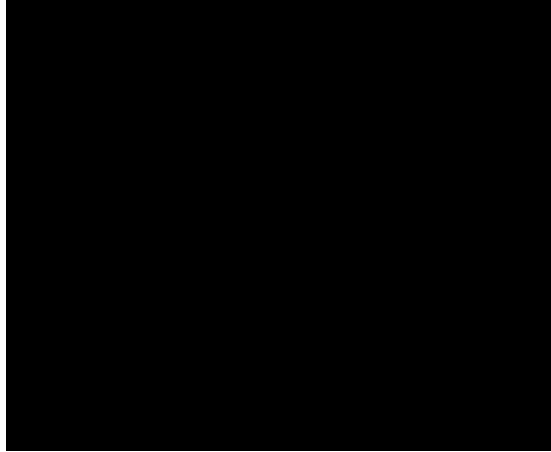
In the face of a gun, the photograph collapses into irrelevance – its ‘violation’ seeming insignificant in competition with the violation of a petty ‘wielder of force’, controlling platform trade in this face-to-face encounter with an example of Veblen’s ‘predatory man’.⁸ Here, an example of ‘violent entrepreneurship’ requires us to rethink the nature of state formation and market building.

Far from regarding the presence of violence as a particular aspect of the collapse of the state in Russia today, Volkov argues that it is an inherent feature of state formation more generally (especially state formations in the service of free-market economies.) He argues that “it is precisely in state formation and in the creation of institutional structures of economic exchange that the role of wielders of force (or violence-managing agencies) is most prominent” (Volkov, 2000: 709). Legitimacy is always, in a sense, forced (following Weber’s definition of the state as “territorial monopoly of legitimate violence” (Weber, 1970: 77-78)):

Coercion allows force to be saved while violence requires its expenditure. So the costs and effects of the two modes of force are different. Still, there is an intrinsic connection between them: violence has to be employed at least once if coercion is to be effective. Coercion always implies violence – but as memory or potentiality. (Volkov, 2000: 709)

8 Veblen cited in Volkov (2000: 709).

4. Borderline



MOVIE CLIP 6: Action Without Reaction excerpt

<http://www.ephemeraweb.org/journal/5-X/border.htm>

5. This Intense Radiation of Energy and Thought



MOVIE clip 7: MARTIN

In recording the experience of this experience/experiment, beyond images and memories, the desire is to actively work with materials and thoughts and to re-imagine forms of life, action, politics and economics and to immerse audiences more energetically in the experience, so that we are not simply presenting documents but pathways which lead beyond the text and into a world where action makes a difference.

As part of this process, it is necessary to register ‘a sense of the real’,⁹ but to acknowledge today that the real no longer resides exactly in that sense of realism or presence that Bazin (1967) identifies in his famous essay on the ontology of the photographic image, which inaugurates *What is cinema?* and which provided a certain manifesto of neo-realism in the post-war period. Rather, today the real resides not in the stillness of physiognomic intensity which fixes on a point of perfect classical harmony (‘the decisive moment’ as Henri Cartier-Bresson called it) but on all the indecisive moments in a general animation of life – on movement, on the seizure of an instant, which is no longer the decisive moment but ‘any moment whatever’. Melissa McMahon nicely condenses this shift in a short essay on beauty:

Deleuze, following Bergson, traces the genesis of modernity to the analysis of movement into equidistant points. This flattening of movement means that a moving body can be intercepted at ‘any-moment-whatever’ in order to yield information, as opposed to the ancient *synthesis* of movement into *privileged* moments (Origin, Telos, Apex, etc.). (2002: 3)



TEXT ANIMATION 11

To edit is to assemble a series of ‘any-moment-whatever(s)’ and to find within these instants the best rhythm which is able to capture the body and mind of a viewer recognising some aspect of the scene. Such an assemblage might be simultaneously a piece of home movie, a diary entry, a slice of reality TV or a sequence of ethnographic cinema (acknowledging that what has become the banality of reality TV began in the intricate and slow intimacy of ethnographic cinema, before the speed of perception was increased by the overstimulation of visual signals to attract the attention of attention-deficit audiences. An assemblage of the kind I have in mind is also a statement of

9 *Sense of the Real* was the thematic title of the ARS06 exhibition at Kiasma Museum of Contemporary Art, Helsinki in the context of which the *Capturing the Moving Mind* exhibition was held. Works in the *Sense of the Real* exhibition explored – within the language of international contemporary art’s managed circulation of artists – practices which we might say, simulated the real (for example, in the visceral hyperrealism of the Chapman Brothers, the ‘virtual reality space’ of AES+F, using fashion models, Gerda Steiner & Jörg Lenzlinger’s fantasy spaces of nature.) For more on the artists, see <http://typo.kiasma.fi/index.php?id=493&L=1&FL=1> and for a curatorial statement, see <http://typo.kiasma.fi/index.php?id=511&FL=1&L=1>.

concepts rendered in images and the purpose of this montage activity is to mobilize thought through the assemblage of spatio-temporal elements which can embrace the body, immersing it in the feelings of an experience, whether or not the depicted event has been experienced.

And in order for concepts to become real, we need to understand what exists between perception and action: what is it that exists in this interval? Let's agree with Deleuze that what lies within this interval is affect, expressed, embodied let's say, in image, in sound – in other words in components which directly touch the body.

So you have to take expression seriously and not regard it as mere *illustration* or *supplement* to theoretically elaborated concepts where thought is considered to be grounded. Unless expression embodies thought, theoretical concepts are empty, dry and lifeless and you cannot expect them to be transformed into action, so you are left lying paralysed in elegant and articulate inactivity, tucked away in your compartment, while the world moves and changes around you.

In animating thought in this space (remembering that thought is always located, always formed by place, however much it moves around and beyond the place of its origin) we have a technical problem to solve: how to estimate the duration of the 'any-moment-whatever' in order to create an after-image which activates the energies of the experience both for those who participated directly in an event and for those who create the event for themselves from their own mental assemblages of images and connections presented here in a structure of (what I want to loosely call) 'open-source editing' – by which I mean, the opening out of image sequences, text animations, audio and video clips to the possibilities of a more dynamic reassemblage.

But these possibilities are necessarily limited by techno-economic constraints. The 'Call for Papers' for this issue of *ephemera* threw out a challenge to imagine alternative forms of presentation – even though the technical limit of a structure of downloadable PDFs restricts to some extent the interactivity and animated potential of on-line rather than off-line options. (In this case, it's probably more accurate to describe the hypertextuality here as 'on-off-on-line'.) And there always remains the tantalising promise of the unrealised – in this case, the unrealised 'secret diary' of the journey, based on a set of 'Thought Logs', which a group of participants produced for me and which only exist so far as a 'Thought Spreadsheet' – transcribed text awaiting animation in a dynamic database form – and as fragments ephemerally appearing in this text. There is, then, a potential space, a virtual form in which the movement will begin again. Once more Deleuze has something useful to say about this:

And how can movement be prevented from already being at least a virtual image and the image from already being at least possible movement. (Deleuze, 1986: 56)



TEXT ANIMATION 12

As the experience of movement becomes memory¹⁰ and reflection of success and failure becomes possible, a few things seem clear in *this* memory at least, to the extent that they have become embedded as persistent images for me, recurring subsequently in a new awareness of technological possibilities not fully appreciated at the time. In spite of technical difficulties the most imaginative part of the journey was the concept of mobicasting, an innovative technological experiment, tested under circumstances which underline what some have called the ‘digital divide’, clearly demonstrating the limitations of technophilic fantasies of global connectivity which the business management model of globalisation takes as its norm. The mobicasting form provides the most interesting model of future political form (Kim, 2003).

The disappearance of the archive as an accessible repository where images, sounds and texts would be located for subsequent re-mixing of the experience is a loss. And yet, the *idea* remains tantalising and the dream of reconnecting to this material lives on. After all, it has not itself disappeared, but has become temporarily unavailable, as often happens with things these days – and it’s not the first time an archive has become inaccessible. In time the material may resurface and then other memories and secrets will emerge, other thoughts on this radical experiment, which imagined change by mobilising bodies in a dynamic space. And traces are left upon the space itself via ephemeral connections made – by radio and by artworks as much as by thoughts still circulating in bodies and potentialities still alive.



10 Recalling Bergson: ‘Memory – between perception and image – utilizes past experience for present action, seeking in the past those representations which are best able to enter into the present situation’ (Bergson, 1991: 137).

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