

On 1st April, 2009, I was one of several thousand ‘kettled’ for five hours in a march, around the international Group of Twenty summit, that assembled at Bank. Apart from containing and condensing the demonstration, the multiple cordons of police bodies kept us at a distance of several hundred metres from the nearest passers-by. We were therefore visible to two readily identifiable groups: the police themselves, as representatives of the state, uniformed and armed with batons, shields and telephoto lenses; and the press, equipped with identity cards, cameras and portable devices. By contrast ours was a diverse crowd: environmental activists, anti-war protesters, professionals against unemployment, drag queens, students, young families, anarchists, artists, the occasional celebrity. Aggressively photographed from above by police, who strategically occupied the junction’s architectural platforms, and by photojournalists huddled together at the margins, I, like many others, drew my camera-phone and, subjecting my viewpoint through its lens, deferred presence to an unknowable spectator.

Since 2006, the Economist Intelligence Unit has undertaken the problematic task of organising the world’s nation-states (whether democratic, communist, totalitarian regime) within a democracy index. In 2008, the UK ranked lowest for political participation of any ‘full democracy’, and lower than hybrid regime Iraq.¹ Reading Chantal Mouffe will reveal how far this apathy, signalled by declining voter turnout, a lack of diversity in parliamentary membership, and antipathy to political affiliation and activity, denies democracy’s contingent difference. In a political system still dominated by citizens who are white, educated, affluent, able-bodied, male (these categories are not discrete) there is an urgent need to create spaces for disruptive and ultimately fragmenting forms of communication, for which Jean-Luc Nancy’s inoperative, or unworked, community as the expression of “being-in-common” will provide a

¹ The Economist Intelligence Unit *Democracy Index* [e-resource] (September 2008) <http://graphics.eiu.com/PDF/Democracy%20Index%202008.pdf> (accessed August 2nd 2009)

useful model.² Protest –the claiming of territory for collective (re)action by “less powerful actors from or against the power-holders, or created more autonomously by them”–³ requires certain resources (social, material, educational) and, as a result, is circumscribed by their existing distribution. That said, the antagonism of power relations that defines protest suggests its potential to expose those marginalised or even excluded to maintain the existing political order. The anti-war demonstration that took place in London on 15th February 2003 was unprecedented in terms of scale but also in the political mobilisation of Muslims alongside various established organisations under the banner of the Stop the War Coalition. Of course, the same event that prompted as many as one million to march in London on a global day of protest against an impending ‘war on terror’ provided spectacular justification for the continued erosion of civil liberties; a consequence of increased surveillance and enhanced counter-terror legislation. The provision made by subsequent Terrorism Acts for criminalising politically motivated internet activity (2006) and latterly even amateur photography (2008) is particularly worthy of mention.⁴ Perverting the same logic, Boris Groys’ claim that over the past decade no artist has produced any image so compelling, nor been as prolific, as the torturers in Abu-Ghraib, however provocative, hinges on the reach of increasingly accessible and advanced communication technologies.⁵ Moreover, it begs a valid question: namely, what can art –politically motivated or otherwise– bring to our democratic discourse (if not an image)?

To answer may require a leap of faith. After all, and notwithstanding the radical impulse of artists such as Adrian Piper, the Guerrilla Girls and Guillermo Gómez-Peña (to name a few), the status of art is maintained by its exclusions. Rosalyn Deutche’s charge of art’s use to effect spatial evictions for urban gentrification relies on a tacit and mutual

² Nancy, J-L. *The Inoperative Community* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1991) pp.44-5

³ Gaventa, J. “Levels, Spaces and Forms of Power: Analysing Opportunities for Change” in Berenskoetter, F. and Williams, M.J. (eds.) *Power in World Politics* (London: Routledge, 2007) p.215

⁴ I refer here to statutory amendments to the *Terrorism Act* (2000) under the *Terrorism Act* (2006) Section 3 and *Counter-Terrorism Act* (2008) Section 76

⁵ Groys, B. “Art at War” in *Art Power* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2008) p.123

understanding; to willingly engage with art reflects –which is to say reproduces– privilege.⁶ It follows then that those practising art, like those who practise politics, fail to represent the breadth, diversity, and so the conflicting interests of society as a whole. Typecast in this way, art’s actors tend towards a common-being, itself immanent in the singular, as opposed to beings “distributed and placed”; exposed as “other for one another, and other, infinitely other, for the Subject of the sharing,” which would be the unworked (art) community.⁷ And yet it is exactly art’s special status –its refusal to coalesce with aspects of popular culture– which, according to artist and writer Judith Barry, enables the opening up of “spaces of possibilities, of potentialities”.⁸ Even in its capacity to enforce existing power relations, art can be understood as already-always political. Demarcated as a site of difference, marketable precisely for its production of novel and surprising forms, art is also always open to the risk of actors who emerge as other to disturb the status quo. Whilst an artist cannot represent anyone but herself, the forms she produces might just reposition those who engage them – deferring visibility to the mutually other. Jacques Rancière describes this possibility in terms of disturbing “the distribution of the sensible”.⁹ Advancing the notion that power relations are manifest in agreed ways of experiencing and communicating; that “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” and around “ways of doing and making”,¹⁰ he also indicates how such an aesthetic disruption would be immanently political. In this vein, we might consider Duchamp’s *Fountain* (1917) as, on the one hand, sabotaging conventions of good (and bad) taste; and on the other, redefining the artist as one who *enacts* art.

The sudden irruption of reenactment into art over the past decade –characteristic of recent works by artists including (but by no means limited to) Iain Forsyth and Jane Pollard, Jeremy Deller, Sharon Hayes, Mary Kelly, Mark Wallinger, Oreet Ashery, and the premise

⁶ See Deutsche, R. “Uneven Development” *Evictions: Art and Spatial Politics* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1996) pp.49-71

⁷ Nancy (1991) p.25

⁸ Barry, J. “The Space that Art Makes” in Sally Yard (ed.) *A Dynamic Equilibrium: in pursuit of public terrain* (San Diego: InSite Installation Gallery, 2007) p.33

⁹ Rancière, J. *The Politics of Aesthetics* trans. Gabriel Rockhill (London; New York: Continuum, 2004) p.15

for group shows such as *Life, Once More* (Rotterdam, 2005), *Once More...With Feeling* (Sunderland, 2006), *History Will Repeat Itself* (Dortmund and Berlin, 2007)– likewise implies an attempt to circumvent the dominant logic of the image by appropriation. In an age of hypercommunication, whose accomplishment has been the supplementation and separation of the face-to-face, the encounter itself has become the ready-made. Of course, the re- of reenactment indicates a further substitution, which is present even when, performed on a scale of one to one, its effects coincide with reality. In fact, this substitution is what connects reenactment with democracy; like reenactment, democracy cannot be fixed (locatable within an individual, space or time), but rather is reconstituted across space and time by interchangeable actors. By turns, the symbolic representation of the democratic state becomes precisely *représentation*, or performance: “Politics plays itself out ... as the relationship between the stage and the audience”.¹¹ Thus focusing on performance art and installations that have reenacted instances of protest from Britain’s past, I will suggest ways in which the shifting ground of history can offer a space for reaction; for activating at least that which the aesthetic shares with the political. Identifying the possible motivations for and repercussions of the reenactment of protest as art, in terms of the nature of the encounter with the event that various works stage, I will ultimately determine strategies for representation through protest that might be reclaimed from reenactment.

Nancy’s attempt to articulate “what no one, no subject, can say” in his alternate model of community –the community of being-in-common, of being in the world– is the unworking and the negation of a mythic community, which is a community of myth. Myth is the familiar scene of story-telling, in (or with) which the community is gathered and forged into a common-being. It is:

the stage upon which we represent everything to ourselves or make appear all our

¹⁰ Rancière (2004) p.13

¹¹ Rancière (2004) p.17

representations, if myth, as Levi Strauss would have it, is primarily defined as that with which or in which time turns into space. With myth, the passing of time takes shape, its ceaseless passing is fixed in an exemplary place of showing and revealing.¹²

This reworking of Levi Strauss' structuralist analysis of myth resonates in the catalogue made to supplement the exhibition *Life, Once More*, only here it is invoked to define reenactment, as that which "spatializes the past," treating "its linearity and continuity as an architectural site, if not a stage that can be animated by new players."¹³ The absence of the preposition, to which Nancy clings –"e/s/t"– to separate and qualify the dis-position of each expression to, in or with the other, perhaps discloses its mythologizing claim. In a subsequent observation, the same writer differentiates the repetition of oral cultures, which collapses past and present, from reenactment, as cleaver of linear time. That said, the apparent conflation of reenactment with myth opens a way into thinking the encounter with protest that art reenactments stage, in terms of the image of the past and/or the community they represent.

With Nancy's description of myth in mind, permit me then to reconstruct Jeremy Deller's *The Battle of Orgreave*, which was commissioned by London-based Artangel (2000), performed on 17 June 2001 and shown again in numerous exhibitions (including the three mentioned above), and on Channel 4, as a documentary film directed by Mike Figgis. The different manifestations of the work, which is to say, at the very least, the live reenactment and the film about the live reenactment, cannot be wholly disentangled: put simply, those who appear in the film, as the witnesses of the live event, also witnessed (the audiences of) the documenting camera. I will come to this later, suffice to say the following observations of the performance are primarily directed by its documentation. This is perhaps fitting given the artist's relationship to his subject. As Deller tells it:

On 18 June 1984, I was watching the evening news and saw footage of a mass

¹² Nancy (1991) p.45

picket at the Orgreave coking plant in South Yorkshire in which thousands of men were chased up a field by mounted police. The image of this pursuit stuck in my mind and for years I wanted to find out what exactly happened on that day with a view to re-enacting or commemorating it in some way.¹⁴

Thus, spurred on by an image, the desire to know and the will to commemorate, Deller assembled a thousand men, a mass of historical reenactment enthusiasts and veterans from both sides of the Orgreave picket line, to plot out a televised confrontation. Representing themselves (or in some instances, and not without embarrassment, the police), the ex-miners were given a space for redress, an opportunity to challenge the official version of events, even as their bodies –older and heavier than the workers on strike in photographs that flash up from 1984– marked the impossibility of changing its outcome. The lasting disaffection of communities from the North of England, South Wales and Scotland built around heavy industry, including mining, and the concomitant erosion of Trades Unions –both traditional stalwarts of the left– has been the legacy of violence by Margaret Thatcher’s government. If physically enacted at Orgreave by police in riot gear developed throughout the 1980s (and some insist also the military),¹⁵ this violence was more insidiously inflicted via aspects of the media, which validated and entrenched the identification of the pickets as “the enemy within.”¹⁶ Whilst the language used by the BBC to describe the strike –“battlefield”, “battle”– and the disproportionate coverage of aggression towards the police indicates bias, the extent of its strategic engagement by the government is epitomised by the episode that Deller watched in June 1984.¹⁷ He saw the mounted police enter *after* an escalation of picket violence, but eyewitness accounts confirm that on the contrary the charge occurred first, not

¹³ Allen, J. “Observations on Reenactment” in Sven Lutticken (ed.) *Life, Once More: Forms of Reenactment in Contemporary Art* (Rotterdam: Witte de With, 2005) p.187

¹⁴ Deller, J. *The English Civil War Part II: Personal Accounts of the 1984-85 Miners’ Strike* ed. Gerrie van Noord (London: Artangel, 2002) p.6

¹⁵ On the development of riot policing see Waddington, P. *Liberty and Order: public order policing in a capital city* (London: UCL Press, 1994) pp.25-7

¹⁶ Thatcher, M. reenacted Enoch Powell’s 1968 ‘othering’ of black immigrants in a speech to the House of Commons, 19th July 1984

¹⁷ See Cumberbatch, G. *et al. Television and the Miners’ Strike* (London: Broadcasting Research Unit, 1986) pp.72-3

quelling but inciting aggression.¹⁸ This, then, is the founding fiction for *The Battle of Orgreave*.

Following Nancy, one might appeal to Freud, as “the last dramatist of this scene [of myth]”,¹⁹ to consider the implications for those ex-miners and -police reenacting their strike in the same village and (as far as the weekend allowed) on its anniversary. One might refer to *repetition compulsion*, to humankind’s want “to experience something twice”, and comment that their remembering is symptomatic of trauma.²⁰ Others have made this connection, and the men’s own talk of finding “closure” appears to justify such a reading.²¹ I would suggest, however, that an intrasubjective approach risks missing the audiences –separated from the action by a cordon or a screen– of what was, after all, a performance. Following Rancière, it is the visibility of the artwork’s psychological effects, more than the effects themselves, which demands consideration here. Deller has stated that his fascination with reenactment stemmed from its curious and even –since the most commonly staged scenes depict a past beyond memory or the means of its (re)production– paradoxical description as “living history”.²² In fact this paradox, and not the depicted confrontation, provided the site of clash in *The Battle of Orgreave*. If the ex-miners opened up personal, ‘living’ memories, the reenactment societies reduced them to a typically coherent historical narrative, a story told over loudspeakers to those gathered to watch, commemorating (*cum memoria*) with memory made collective through interpretation and a 1980’s soundtrack. The deliberate exposure of this scene to and by the documenting camera perhaps demystifies but does not undo the violence

¹⁸ This contested piece of reporting is conspicuously absent from the archive section of the BBC website, where footage of the miners’ strike of 29 May 1984 is shown. <http://news.bbc.co.uk/onthisday/hi/years/1984/> (accessed 12th August 2009)

¹⁹ Nancy (1991) p.45

²⁰ Freud, S. “Über den psychischen Mechanismus hysterischer Phänomene” in *Gesammelte Werke in achtzehn Bänden mit einem Nachtragsband* (Frankfurt, 1987) p. 193 cited in Inke Arns “History Will Repeat Itself: Strategies of Reenactment in Contemporary (Media) Art and Performance” in Arns, I. And Horn, G. (eds.) *History Will Repeat Itself* (Dortmund; Berlin: Hartware MedienKunstVerein; KW Institute for Contemporary Art, 2007) pp.39,47

²¹ Deller himself suggested the project might help “to heal wounds...[by] confronting something and not being afraid to look at it”; ex-miner, both interviewed in *The Battle of Orgreave*, 2001 [DigiBeta] Directed by Mike Figgis. UK: Artangel UK (60 mins)

²² Deller interviewed by John Slyce “Jeremy Deller: Fables of the Reconstruction” *Flash Art International* 36(228): January-February 2003; p.76

of its cohesion. For instance, the audience of the film sees reenactment enthusiasts disclosing their apprehension that the ex-miners might get “carried away”. This patronising attitude possibly reflects the propagandistic vilification of the miners in 1984; it could belie an anxiety about the limitations of reenactment itself as always only substituting past events, or even envy towards those who had actually lived their living history. In any case, its speaker tacitly attempts to ‘other’ those reliving the strike from the reenactment enthusiasts, by turns aligned with the ‘us’ to whom it is directed, before spectacularising their trauma.

The ex-miners for their part were nonetheless willing participants. They clearly wanted for their story to be told and many (always present through film) are visibly moved by the experience. If I tend, moreover, to think the ex-miners a unified, common-being, this was surely always intended: “The miners, united, will never be defeated!”²³ It is therefore logical that, in order to negate their spectacular defamation, they were ready to embrace spectacular means. Speaking about *The Storming of the Winter Palace* (1920), an interpretative reenactment of the 1917 October Revolution staged by theatre director Nikolaj Evreinov and attended by 100,000, Anatoly Lunacharsky explained the reason for staging mass spectacles: “In order to acquire a sense of self the masses must outwardly manifest themselves, and this is possible only when, in Robespierre’s words, they become a spectacle unto themselves.”²⁴ (Now it is the representation of a common self which Nancy attributes to myth that seems to coincide with spectacular reenactment.) If the live audience of *The Battle of Orgreave* was modest, certainly by comparison to those masses in Petrograd evoking the spirit of the French Revolution, the artwork’s subsequent transmission via primetime television created the possibility of reaching diverse spectators including, just maybe, witnesses to that other earlier version of events.²⁵ By thus instating the news broadcast as original reproduction, the act of witnessing could also be reenacted, and one memory of an image supplemented by its equivalent opposite.

²³ This slogan was used by the miners in 1984 and repeated in Deller’s and subsequently Figgis’ *The Battle of Orgreave*, 2001

²⁴ Anatoly Lunacharsky cited in Taylor, R. *October* (London: British Film Institute, 2002) p.8

²⁵ *The Battle of Orgreave* was broadcast on Channel 4 at 19:45 on Sunday, 20th October 2002.

Of course, whilst *The Storming of the Winter Palace* was designed to reinforce Bolshevik successes from within, the ex-miners were defeated in their struggle to keep the coal industry and its communities nearly two decades before Deller's reenactment.²⁶ That the self-professed losers of history should be heroically recast in *The Battle of Orgreave* is no doubt in part because by now the Conservatives had lost out too. As spectacular commemoration, Deller's reenactment marked the failure of the miners' strike but it also and crucially reaffirmed the myth of authentic socialism –exemplified by the heroic masculinity of a (Marxist) workers' uprising– at a time when socialism had been diluted by a centred New Labour. It is moreover significant that art and its institutions should make space for this scene. As Alice Correia points out, the drastic socioeconomic changes of the 1980s resulted in an aestheticization of industrial working life as 'heritage' to attract tourism, and so by employing ex-miners for art, Deller essentially reproduced the effects of “an industry that turns manual workers into cultural employees.”²⁷ With a wry smile, the ex-miners themselves acknowledge the irony of being paid to repeat a strike for which they forfeited their wages. I would suggest, however, that the connection is more difficult than Correia, comparing Deller's performers with the ex-miners-turned-tour-guides at the Big Pit Mining Museum, might recommend. Consider the widespread redevelopment of industrial spaces as spaces for experiencing art characteristic of 1990's urban gentrification: Tate Modern, Tate Liverpool and Gateshead's BALTIC Centre for Contemporary Art are cases in point, but there was also unprecedented public investment in community arts projects located outside of the gallery.²⁸ On the benefits to “the community” of Anthony Gormley's *Angel of the North* (1994-8), the Arts Council England website claims: “Changing an area's image to outsiders is perhaps the hardest part. Jobs in heavy industry and coal mining can be replaced, sometimes

²⁶ As such a comparison with the reenactments performed by Native American Indians might be more apposite. See Reed, T.V. “Old Cowboys, New Indians: Hollywood Frames and the American Indian Movement” *The Art of Protest: Culture and Activism from the Civil Rights Movement to the Streets of Seattle* (Minneapolis; London: University of Minnesota Press, 2005) p.147

²⁷ Correia, A. “Interpreting Jeremy Deller's *The Battle of Orgreave*” *Visual Culture in Britain* 7(2): Winter 2006; p.102

²⁸ Established in 1992, Artangel might be considered a product of this trend.

relatively quickly, but negative stereotypes endure.”²⁹ If this statement expresses a desire to heal the wounds left by industry, its emphasis on image and attracting ‘outsiders’ implies just the social production through art against which Deutsche cautions. Whilst *The Battle of Orgreave* actively engaged Britain’s industrial past and the workers it left behind, it simultaneously evinced the material benefit to art of industry’s demise. This recognition is precisely the interruption and unworking of myth, disrupting identification within the spectacular (Left/Right) polarisation of “we lost and they took it all.”³⁰

The determined political opposition depicted in Deller’s reenactment appears nostalgic in view of the increasingly blurred boundary between left and right (that is, the space which the work itself occupied). It is, however, possible to formulate this nostalgia in terms of a retroactive, rather than backward-looking, impulse with reference to Mouffe’s criticism of ‘third way’ politics. Questioning the assumption that political consensus necessarily assures a “unified and pacified world”, Mouffe points to the eruption of antagonisms that have confounded claims made by liberal theorists concerning the “demise of collective identities”.³¹ Thus, “the emergence in several European countries [including the UK] of right-wing populist parties” and even the “multiplication of terrorist attacks” are thought in relation to widespread disengagement from mainstream political representation. The solution to this crisis, according to Mouffe, is for “radical democratic forces” to become a “we” through the determination of a “they”, and thus reinstate the legitimacy of party-political conflict, or agonism.³² On the surface, this suggestion at once valorises the position of the ex-miners and problematises Nancy’s exposition of community as the “interruption of singularities”.³³ Indeed, for Nancy, community “cannot arise from the domain of *work* [sic.]” which is to say, cannot be produced, because it is in fact constituted by “interruption,

²⁹ Arts Council England *Angel of the North, Gateshead: The Largest Sculpture in Britain* [e-resource] http://www.artscouncil.org.uk/aboutus/project_detail.php?sid=17&id=120 (accessed 12th August 2009)

³⁰ Ex-miner interviewed in *The Battle of Orgreave*, 2001

³¹ Mouffe, C. *On the Political* (London: Routledge, 2005) p.64

³² *Ibid.* p.53

³³ Nancy (1991) p.31

fragmentation, suspension.” If these two viewpoints appear irreconcilable, it is worth considering the plurality of Mouffe’s democratic forces. Specifically, recalling her earlier work with Ernesto Laclau, Mouffe stresses that the extent of democratic struggles, having arisen from the identification of the non-political as political by its very exclusion, can no longer be apprehended simply through the Marxist category of ‘class’.³⁴ In this way raising the politics of identity, her argument conceives of the subject in Lacanian terms –of the symbolic and imaginary that defend against the real– as ‘lack’, which “subverts and is the condition of the constitution of any identity.”³⁵ Thus, for Mouffe as for Nancy, the social agent is constituted by multiple relations, which are not closed and unchanging, but are instead characterised by the “constant movement of overdetermination and displacement.”³⁶ Crucially, this multiplicity means that a subject (or singularity) can be dominant in certain relations whilst subordinated in others, which is the difficulty encountered by the viewer and embedded in the class-bound representation of *The Battle of Orgreave*.

The question that arises in trying to think an alternative ‘we’, as the limit of relations in constant flux, is how to bring about (or even envisage) its *moment*? Mouffe’s appeal to conflict presupposes democracy as indefinitely unfinished, and yet as still awaiting the (necessarily instantaneous) alignment of oppositional democratic forces. Therefore, as Nancy put it, “how to make a world for which all is not already done (played out, finished, enshrined in a destiny), nor still entirely to do (in the future for always future tomorrows)”?³⁷ Unlike myth, which fixes the passing of time, this question acknowledges the irrevocability of its passing even as it interrupts any presumed linearity. Here, the future is not imagined as already foreseen, that is, as the inevitable outcome of past and present action, but rather in Derridean terms of the unknowable *to come*.³⁸ The community of being-

³⁴ Mouffe (2005) p.53

³⁵ Mouffe, C. *The Return of the Political* (London: Verso, 1993) p.76

³⁶ *Ibid.* p.77

³⁷ Nancy, J-L. “What is to be Done?” in Sparks, S. (ed.) *Retreating the Political* (London: Routledge, 1997) p.157

³⁸ Nancy describes Derrida’s distinction between *coming*, as inevitability, and the unforeseeable *to come*. See Nancy, J-L. *Being Singular Plural* trans. Robert D. Richardson and Anne E. O’Byrne (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2000) p.5; “Community without [the mythic] community is *to come*,” Nancy (1991) p.71

in-common, since it can never be produced, can never be completed: “Incompletion is its ‘principle’”.³⁹ This unknowable and indefinite coming moreover belongs to democracy –or a “democracy to come”–⁴⁰ because it precludes the immovability of hegemonic relations. At the same time, it is reasonable to ask what the implications are for protest if present actions have no *a priori* impact on future relations. What, then, will it mean to have acted?

This is the problem Mary Kelly attempted through *Love Songs* (Postmasters Gallery, New York, 2005), a group of works reflecting this time on the artist’s own activist past and in particular her involvement with the Women’s Liberation Movement. Of the various demonstrations she recalls, I will focus here on *The Flashing Nipple Street Theatre Show* (London, 1971), whose reenactment as a protest but, as its title suggests, (which was) also a theatrical performance restates the crossover between radical political and art strategies. In fact this particular protest, initially a rejoinder to the Miss World Contest as spectacularly exploiting patriarchal constructions of femininity, has been multiply represented by Kelly. The text of *Sisterhood is POW...* (2005), laser-cut into acrylic panels illuminated from behind, describes the protest’s action: whilst inside the Royal Albert Hall, “contestants flash teeth and leg-length”, outside “demonstrators, arms locked, hands firm, fingers longer, more lucid,” confronting spectators with their alternative ‘view’, “flash luminous nipples and crotches at fans”. These rememberings form a script of sorts, physically reenacted for *Flashing Nipple Remix*, a work conceived as a photographic triptych and substituted in its turn by an impromptu performance for Documenta 12 (Kassel, 2007). Vice versa, the black and white transparencies –also backlit– that (re)capture the action illustrate its intended effect. In the first of the three (read from left to right), five women are just visible, lined up in the dark all dressed in black with lights fastened over their breasts and vaginas. They are too young to remember the protest –about the same age, in fact, that Kelly

³⁹ Nancy (1991) p.35

⁴⁰ Derrida, J. *La démocratie à venir* ed. Marie-Louise Mallet (Paris: Galilée, 2004) cited in Armstrong, P. *Reticulations* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2009) p.268

would have been in 1971– and stand, not on Kensington Road, but in front of an impossibly straight car park barrier, somewhere perhaps on the UCLA campus where Kelly teaches. In the second and third images, the same women, overwritten by increasingly frenetic lines and spots of light that trace their own choreographed movements and the camera’s shutter speed, are no longer recognisable.

Refusing to think looking as opposed to acting, Rancière identifies the spectator as actively political, in turn implying that visibility is the condition for political recognition. Indeed, this suggestion is why he declares the catchphrase of the police –who are not only agents of state power but anyone defining the configuration of the visible, thinkable, and possible– as: “Move along! There’s nothing to see.”⁴¹ If his argument affords to art and its audiences the potential to “lend to projects of domination or emancipation what they are able to lend to them,” for instance “bodily positions and movements,” this emphasis on what is seen warrants further consideration,⁴² particularly in light of Kelly’s work. Peggy Phelan addresses some of the presumptions that structure the politics of visibility, including (and this is significant given Nancy’s destabilisation of community as sameness) the idea that “physical resemblance is a way of identifying community.”⁴³ Attempting to reconcile identity politics’ emphasis on visible representation with the Lacanian mistrust of visibility as “a trap” that only pretends to unify,⁴⁴ Phelan disrupts the binary opposition of visibility as affording power and invisibility as impotent. Most forcefully, she challenges the belief that empowerment can be achieved only when underrepresented identities are reflected in representational economies, pointing out that, “if representational visibility equals power, then almost-naked young white women should be running Western culture.”⁴⁵ It should be

⁴¹ Rancière, J. “Art of the Possible: Fulvia Carnevale and John Kelsey in conversation with Jaques Rancière” trans. Jeanine Herman in *Artforum* 45(7): March 2007; p.264

⁴² Rancière (2006) p.19

⁴³ Phelan, P. *Unmarked: The Politics of Performance* (London and New York: Routledge, 1993) p.7

⁴⁴ Lacan, J. *Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis* ed. Jacques-Alain Miller trans. Alan Sheridan (New York: Norton, 1978) p.93 cited by Phelan. *Ibid.* p.6

⁴⁵ Phelan (1993) p.10

stated that, contrary to certain writers' claims,⁴⁶ Phelan does not propose an inverse politics of invisibility. (One need only consider the current situation in Burma to realise how such a position would be untenable.) Rather, by reigniting feminist film theory from the 1970s and 1980s, she offers a framework for understanding the *wilful* failure to appear within capitalist reproductions of the visible as potentially radical. The disappearance exposed in *Flashing Nipple Remix* engages this rationale, marking an ecstatic refusal by the women to be defined as a common-being through their anatomical resemblance (to one another and the women on the stage). The luminescent fusion of the women's bodies does not, after all, transgress the limits of touch but rather reveals the limits of vision. Against the backdrop of the Miss World Contest, their becoming abstract through movement indeed denied the dominant way of seeing (and here, Rancière comes back into play) but only by sabotaging its own means. After all, their action relied on their own visibility as women within the distribution of the sensible, and further on their reproducibility as such –that is, the photographic idea– for their subversive invisibility to be seen and their protest diffused.

To the extent that *The Flashing Nipple Street Theatre Show* tactically engaged time and the reproductive logic of becoming, *Flashing Nipple Remix* might be reckoned its resolution. The idea of the artwork as celebration (and perhaps therefore climax) reverberates in the reference to dance music and club culture by its designation, not as reenactment, but remix. That said, Bakhtin has shown the subversive potential of celebration in his reading of Rabelais' use of the carnivalesque, as present in spite of the fact that the carnival's bodily excesses and satire are sanctioned within existing hierarchies.⁴⁷ In any case, if the heady rhythms of the five women facing the camera or the hundred or so who unannounced faced the Documenta crowd were endorsed and circulated as commodities within an international art market, the moves themselves were of the 1971 protest. To clarify, I would like to consider briefly the nature of the relationship with history that remixing asserts. In

⁴⁶ See, for example, Kershaw, B. "Fighting in the Streets: Dramaturgies of Popular Protest, 1968-1989" *New Theatre Quarterly* 13(3): 1997; p.274

⁴⁷ Bakhtin, M. *Rabelais and His World* trans. Helene Iswolsky (Indiana: Indiana University Press, 1984) pp.362-7

appropriating elements of existing music (sampling), the remix cites its source, but its process is essentially one of transformation. The source itself may be recognisable, but not slavishly reproduced; it is resurrected to be taken apart and in part recycled to generate new forms (which may of course be remixed in turn). The effect for the listener is something like Walter Benjamin's description of the past, "seized only as an image which flashes up at the instant when it can be recognized".⁴⁸ This moment of flash –as opposed to the historicist "process of empathy"⁴⁹ is Kelly's medium, a notion literalised in her use of light. Thus, the only light in the installation of *Love Songs* is thrown outward from the works themselves, just like the lights on the women projected towards the viewer as vehicles for their emancipation from the body-as-image. Indeed, even extracted from its original context and sampled by a new generation, the action of *Flashing Nipple Remix* retains its wit and with that its meaning. This may of course serve to indict the protest as a failure in the first instance (in spite of the Women's Liberation movement, Miss World, Miss Earth and Miss Universe are all currently contested titles), and certainly indicates the normative effect across national boundaries of capitalism's continued objectification of girls. However, where Deller's ex-miners admitted their cause as already lost, such realisations only reaffirm that the need to confront oppressive ways of seeing continues too. In the recent conference *On the Idea of Communism*, Alain Badiou discussed the event as rupture, bringing about real change but also changing the possible.⁵⁰ Thus, as an event, it could be said that feminism's accomplishment has been to realise the possibility of redress. Importantly for Kelly, the instant of recognition that led to *Love Songs* was initiated by her students, occurring at the moment when their "political primal scene" coincided with the political scene of her own youth.⁵¹ Taking on board Benjamin's suggestion to "seize hold of memory as it flashes up at a moment of danger," she responded to her students' curiosity with her own memories, and in so doing

⁴⁸ Benjamin, W. "Theses on the Philosophy of History" in *Illuminations* ed. Hannah Ardent, trans. Harry Zorn (London: Pimlico, 1999) p.247

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

⁵⁰ Alain Badiou gave a lecture entitled "Communism: a generic name" at *On the Idea of Communism*, Birkbeck Institute, London, 13th-15th March, 2009

⁵¹ Mary Kelly in interview with White, I. "The Body Politic" *Frieze* 107: May 2007

returned history towards the unknowable to come.⁵²

Essentially, then, the impetus for *Flashing Nipple Remix* was communication; the work itself a means of negotiating the time and space between generations. For Nancy, communication is that which negates the communion of the common-being; it is communication's sharing that delineates the singular being and makes the between, that is, the subject relation appear. Against the oral transmission of myth, 'writing' resists the immanence of the community to that being and exposes the "infinite task" and "struggle" given by the community of sharing.⁵³ If Nancy's emphasis on writing –and at one point he describes the singular being as text– appears yet again to frustrate the project of emancipation (wilful participation in community's sharing) by its own privileged terms, then his claims for love opens out its definition. In Nancy's reading of Bataille, the communion of lovers is neither that of a "lost" community, nor does it expose community; in rendering their speech impotent as an expression of love, lovers only expose to the community that "communication is not communion".⁵⁴ Since with Bataille (and despite him), love is the only solution to the state's incapacity for giving "the *totality* of the world" –the limit of a global community– Nancy insists that his thoughts about love need to be rearticulated. Thus, Nancy conceives love not as communion but as the extreme limit of sharing, which is touch. Shared love between lovers or parent and child thus becomes, by its sharing, communication, and as such exposes (itself to) the community.⁵⁵ Whilst love may not escape uneven distributions of power (as Foucault testifies),⁵⁶ worked in this way it offers a positivist alternative to relations structured by oppression and subordination. Offered up as *Love Songs*, Kelly's political recollections are bound together with passion, evoking the Women's Liberation Movement's motto that "the personal is political." If the interlocking limbs and overt sexuality written in *Sisterhood is POW...* expose this blurring, then the physical presence of bodies for *Flashing Nipple Remix* constituted its sharing.

⁵² Benjamin (1999) p.247

⁵³ Nancy (1991) p.35

⁵⁴ *Ibid.* pp.36-7

⁵⁵ *Ibid.* pp.38-9

Whilst I began by writing about protest in Britain, both the Miss World Contest as target and the international scope of the art world have extended this essay's boundaries. Is it, then, possible to address the proposal for love and even touch as the basis for being in the world –itself constituted by multiple and conflicting political states– to the need for greater democratic participation within the UK? Of course, the simple answer is that the citizen, also belonging to a global community, has recourse to a nation state that wields power on a global stage. It is because of this leverage and its overarching economic and political contexts that protest within the UK (as elsewhere) has increasingly tended to confront, that is, react to issues –around globalisation, international wars, environmental damage– that reach beyond the confines of the nation. However, this easy assimilation is complicated by Giorgio Agamben's claim that it is in fact the noncitizen, or refugee, who reveals the socio-political reality of the global community. He argues that subjects refused citizens' rights are excluded from the "nation-state-territory" exactly because they threaten to overwhelm its terms. As such, noncitizens are "truly *sacred*, in the sense this term used to have in the Roman law of the archaic period: doomed to death."⁵⁷ The immanence of death described here might be understood in terms of Nancy's analysis of death imagined as the reabsorption of the individual into the community, in other words, of the impossible immanence of the community to the individual.⁵⁸ Kelly's reenactment suggests how protest as the communication of love (the sharing of touch, speech, writing) has the potential to expose the community to those with the power to effect change. If this is the case, then surely it follows that protest can also enable those violently absented from democratic discourse (but nonetheless in the community as such) to become present.

To think this possibility –that is, the presence of the 'doomed to death'– in terms of art reenacting protest may seem somewhat misguided. Perhaps it is true that the performance

⁵⁶ See Foucault, M. *The History of Sexuality An Introduction* trans. Robert Hurley (London: Penguin, 1998)

⁵⁷ Agamben, G. *Means Without End: Notes on Politics* trans. Vincenzo Binetti and Cesare Casarino (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2000) pp.21-2

of reenactment itself marks a “little death”,⁵⁹ but this rapturous loss (of self and other) hardly constitutes the death of immanence. Rather, it recalls Derrida’s concept of *différance*, as the difference (the performer as other to the ‘dead’, or absent other) and deferral (the suspension of the self-as-other, that is, the momentary ‘death’ of the performer in order to present the absent other; this process as infinitely repeatable) that characterise representation.⁶⁰ This death that carves out and collapses the space between others moreover belongs to writing, because writing for Derrida is original representation, and as such reveals *différance* as the basis of life. It is, in other words, the death in which the community is revealed; “the true community of *I*’s that are not *egos*” but “others”.⁶¹ Whilst artists reenacting protest may not present the ‘doomed to death’, reenactment itself thus exposes the instability of presence and/or absence at the core of the community of writing. If the commune is defined by its exclusions (the opposition of presence and absence), these divisions and dissociations are themselves shared out by the community. Networking technologies at once demonstrate and realise the logic of this sharing, plotting a space that cuts across nation-state-territories and between mutual others whose presence there as representation is also always their absence.

In 2005 and a state of heightened security, Parliament issued an improbable order under the *Serious Organised Crime and Police Act* (SCOPA, 2005) curtailing protesters’ freedoms within a designated exclusion zone encircling Parliament Square. This provision, which specifically revoked the right to assembly confirmed by the European Convention on Human Rights (1950),⁶² was allegedly to protect access to Parliament and maintain “the

⁵⁸ Nancy uses this idea to describe the logic of sacrifice that constituted, for instance, the Aryan community of Nazi Germany. Nancy (1991) p.12

⁵⁹ Allen, J. in Lütticken, S. (2005) p.179

⁶⁰ See Derrida, J. “Freud and the Scene of Writing” *Writing and Difference* trans. Alan Bass (London: Routledge, 1978) pp.196-205

⁶¹ Nancy (1991) p.15

⁶² Previously, whilst notice had to be given for marches under the *Public Order Act* (1986), there was no such requirement for static demonstrations, nor could the latter be banned. *Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms*, ETS 5, Article 11, largely drafted by British jurists and incorporated into the *Human Rights Act* (1998) Section 1(3), Article 11.

aesthetic and environmental value” of the square.⁶³ Its objective, though, was the eviction of Brian Haw, whose by then rambling demonstration outside the House of Commons had begun in June 2001. It is this persistence that Patrick Cormack MP cited as justification for policy change:

“Has she [Caroline Flint] talked to members of staff in Portcullis house and 1 Parliament street, as well as the police who are on duty at Members entrance day after day, as their lives are made intolerable by those people baying away, without a crowd to address, merely repeating themselves ad nauseam?”⁶⁴

Notwithstanding Cormack’s remarkable failure to see himself, his complaints seem a little unfair: for all Haw’s reiterations, his protest marked its own transformation. Initially levelled at economic sanctions imposed on Iraq and particularly their effects on that country’s children, the handmade signs, sourced material and assorted paraphernalia accumulated over the course of Haw’s vigil –constant throughout 9/11, the ‘war on terror’, bombings in Madrid and London, the killing of Jean-Charles de Menezes– documented its shifting focus over time. Some of this stuff he made himself: “BABY KILLERS” in black above a montage of disfigured infants, “Peace, Salam, Shalom”; much of it was given by supporters and less steadfast campaigners, hence a painting by Banksy of soldiers edgily daubing a Campaign for Nuclear Dissarmament symbol dripping with red, and the somewhat incongruous “pensioners want a slice of the cake, not crumbs”. On the pavement, damaged teddies calling for “bears not bombs” and weather-beaten dolls remembered the death-toll of war like tributes left at the site of someone else’s personal tragedy. And at the centre of this forty-metre roadside sprawl, a photograph of Haw himself, “BLIAR” emblazoned across his chest, pinned to a makeshift wooden cross. This is the scene of deliverance that was confiscated by the police in the middle of the night of 23rd May, 2006.

It is this scene that Mark Wallinger claimed for *State Britain*, a painstakingly executed

⁶³ House of Commons Select Committee on Procedure, *Third Report: Access to Parliament* (2003) 3: 21

replica of Brian Haw's backdrop relocated to Tate Britain's Duveen galleries (15 January-27 August, 2007). In fact, the effect was so convincing –signs carefully duplicated, small wooden crosses and ephemerae found, each item accordingly aged– that the method of production had to be certified by the wall-text accompanying its exhibition; words that performed the work's fakery. Given knowledge of Wallinger's process –of the forty or so assistants who scrutinized his photographs to accurately copy what he'd copied– *State Britain* could be understood as, on the one hand, aping an art historical workshop tradition of masterly imitation and, on the other, addressing questions of authenticity associated with appropriation. In this way turning Haw's protest to art, Wallinger was criticised by some for obscuring its political content. I would argue, however, that such a reading presumes art's invulnerability to its contexts and that, on the contrary, consideration of certain events that, occurring outside of the gallery, framed *State Britain* reveals the extent to which Wallinger restored art's strategies to protest. Commenting on Sherrie Levine's "reenactment" of Egon Schiele's expressionist painting, Deutsche identifies the "moment of unrecognizability for the viewer" as arising with recognition of the work's layers of mediation (in this case, a reproduction of feelings, thought and expressed through paint).⁶⁵ Her observation that, in this unfamiliar moment, identification is arrested brings to mind Brecht's ideas about the uses of alienation in theatre. Essentially, Brecht proposed that in order to provoke the viewer to "suspicious inquiry" it was first necessary to repress unthinking empathy by rendering theatre's artistry opaque as such.⁶⁶ In many ways prefiguring Rancière's "emancipated spectator", his emphasis on the medium as communication is especially pertinent to the experience of viewing *State Britain*. Witnessing Haw's display through its simulacrum, Wallinger's audience was alerted to its calls for peace (and pensions) but also, prompted by an established artistic device, to its and their own dislocation. Crucially, whilst Wallinger was responsible for the protest's forensic reconstruction, legislative powers exercised by the

⁶⁴ Patrick Cormack, comment to the House of Commons, *Hansard Debates* (7th February, 2005) Column 1289

⁶⁵ Deutsche "Agoraphobia" in *Evictions* (1996) p.297

⁶⁶ Brecht, B. in Willet, J. (ed. and trans.) *Brecht on Theatre* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1964) pp.91-9, 143-5, 191-6

police in its dismantling laid the ground for his re-action. Echoing Rancière, Wallinger claimed that his intention for the work was “to make visible what had been rendered invisible.” *State Britain* certainly made it possible to see that which had been taken from view (material deemed detrimental, it seems, to the square’s aesthetic appeal) but, more than that, it enabled the identification of visibility itself as policed.

Given *State Britain*’s status in this way as evidence (not to mention its status as art) it makes sense that Haw should have been prevented from adding to ‘his’ display,⁶⁷ even if asserting authorial control complicated Wallinger’s democratising aims. In fact, unlike Deller’s and Kelly’s reenactments, which foregrounded the performers’ participation, as a stage set for protest *State Britain* seemingly remained empty. As such, its inclusion here as protest reenactment might appear dubious; unless, that is, one recognises Wallinger as having staged the absented (as opposed to Phelan’s purposely invisible) body. It could of course be countered that Haw’s absence from the galleries was attributable to his ongoing presence in Parliament Square: since the law couldn’t be applied retrospectively, his is still the only demonstration that, though diminished, cannot be banned outright. With this in mind, his might reasonably be reckoned a wilful failure to appear, or his exclusion only appropriate to an archive of what was disappeared. However, Wallinger’s appropriation of Haw’s own mattress (as the only item of several left behind by police), or rather the decision to impart this information through text, dramatised the absence of the person associated with that object: Here was a relic, amidst imitations, impressed upon by the dead weight of Haw’s body in sleep. A potent symbol of loss, the empty mattress as the body’s negative at once performed Haw’s vulnerability, emphasising the violence of attempts to silence him, and again exposed the audience as implicated (by the police and with them), cutting across others as death’s metaphor. Moreover, its relative authenticity redoubled the distance between the viewer and the surrounding replicas, through which others already represented in Haw’s display were represented again. Thus, the protest’s various supporters, but also and

⁶⁷ See Yve-Bois, A. “Piece Movement” *Artforum* 45(8): April 2007

significantly the physically disabled, bloodied, sometimes barely recognisable as human children whose likenesses Haw had pinned up –victims, the words explained, of British foreign policy– were directed in their absence. By Haw and then by Wallinger, these beings were represented as noncitizens within and yet violated by our democratic nation state, but as Phelan has shown representational visibility need not equal power. Agamben goes further, claiming that the tyranny of the “spectacular-democratic world organisation” lies in the state’s ability to recognise any identity “(being Italian, working-class, catholic, terrorist etc.)” as long as it can be represented.⁶⁸ Conversely, beings devoid of representable identities, or those who being-in-common “form a community without claiming an identity”, remain radically unaccountable.⁶⁹

If *State Britain* therefore located the viewer within a global community, it did so (as its title suggests) within the logic of the democratic nation-state-territory. That the Duveen Galleries provided the site for the publicly funded relocation of Haw’s protest is remarkable for two reasons. First, as the legacy of capital accumulated by Joseph Duveen, a notoriously unscrupulous art dealer, the imposing architecture that sheltered the jumbled display clashed with its visual sense –“BEEP FOR BRIAN”– but also its ideological opposition to the exploitations sustaining our nation state. Leaving aside the institution’s capacity to absorb (and so arguably negate) institutional critique, it might be commented that the willingness of Tate Britain’s directors to display Wallinger’s work marked a shift in the art world’s attitude towards the New Labour government and even an attempt, in Mouffe’s terms, to delineate ‘them’, The State, against ‘us’ as audience and (because to see is to act) witness. The unlikely notion of Tate Britain as directly transgressing state apparatus was in any case played up within the exhibition’s supplementary material, which leads me to the second way in which the site, and in particular its proximity to Parliament Square, modified the artwork’s identity. A black line, beginning in the book shop, cut through Wallinger’s installation and divided Tate

⁶⁸ Agamben (2000) pp.86-7

⁶⁹ *Ibid.* p.87; Agamben, G. *The Coming Community* trans. Michael Hardt (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1993) p.85

Britain's collection in two: on one side, those works falling within the jurisdiction of SCOPA (Paul Nash's *Totes Meer* for instance) on the other, those which do not. In fact, this line split the work's critics after Stuckist Charles Thomson declared it no more than a theatrical device.⁷⁰ Essentially he was right: the exclusion zone plotted out by *Statutory Instrument 1537* referring to sections 132 to 137 of SCOPA defines Thorney Street as the most southerly boundary, missing Tate Britain by several hundred metres. However, the act itself makes provision for a boundary drawn up to one kilometre from Parliament Square, and it is this (still possible) limit that Wallinger literalised. If it is therefore fair to say that the artist and organisers exaggerated the uncertain legality of *State Britain* –“If I'm over here, anything I say can be taken down and used in evidence against me”–⁷¹ its territorialisation was not entirely one-sided. Besides, the viewer *believing* its demarcation was situated in relation to the act of protest and protest's criminalisation by an act. Staging Tate Britain as a site for civil disobedience, *State Britain* asserted the radical potential of the artworks on show but it also prompted the viewer crossing the line to reenact and (in that moment alienated from herself) to reflect on the conditional freedom of assembly. This was possible because, as a gallery, Tate Britain is consensually codified as a site of difference, open to the public but separated from the street as a space in which to view; at once civilised and civilising.

Through its *différance*, *State Britain* thus generated an excess, namely, a clash between the art institution as one 'partition of the sensible' and the state as another over the right to visibly protest. Moreover, deferred to Haw's demonstration (itself deferred to those represented in turn), Wallinger's reenactment was immediately reappropriated by it. Partly a consequence of the work's timeliness, the dissemination of images and text around *State Britain* via Haw's own website follows the logic of representation: “Because it has always already begun, representation therefore has no end.”⁷² Whilst the demonstration within

⁷⁰ Thomson, C., “Letters” *The Guardian*, 19th January, 2007

⁷¹ Wallinger interviewed for *TateShots* [podcast] (27th February, 2007) Tate Online www.tate.org.uk/tateshots/episode.jsp?item=9107 (accessed 7th August, 2009)

⁷² Derrida (1978) p.250

Parliament Square has been reduced to three metres and marooned by traffic, its online visibility has multiplied, variously linked across time and space to Wallinger's mediated simulation and the coverage of other newsworthy events paradoxically prompted by SCOPA. Derived from and returned to forms of mediation, the reenactments considered here show how far media representation has been reckoned instrumental to the diffusion (and defusion) of protest: whilst *The Flashing Nipple Street Theatre Show* actively addressed photographers, the ex-miners appearing in Figgis' documentary admitted the detrimental effects of negative reporting that in part reflected their own failure to court journalists. The development in communication and information technologies over the past twenty years has proliferated media channels but it has also and significantly exposed them to individuals and groups with relatively limited resources. The effects of this are evident in the number and variety of 'virtual' responses generated by Deller's, Kelly's and Wallinger's works and –as indicated by *State Britian's* return to protest– have been assimilated into contemporary protest politics.

This is perhaps inevitable given that networking technologies are already integrated within the democracy to come.⁷³ The networked audiences staged by art reenactments of protest demonstrate how new technologies, cutting across territorially defined partitions of the sensible, broaden and complicate opportunities for (democratic) participation. Of course, such networks are not universally accessible, being circumscribed by the user's resources (economic, technical, linguistic) and state infrastructures (commercial, technological), nor are they unregulated; they do not exist outside of national and international structures as a political exteriority. If, as Derrida claims, networked telecommunications have commanded the deterritorialisation of the political,⁷⁴ then Agamben indicates how their global reach has facilitated a mythic reterritorialisation, as a constituting condition for (thinking) the spectacular-democratic world. Yet, by their relatively horizontal sharing the same

⁷³ See Derrida, J. *Echographies of Television: Filmed Interviews* trans. Jennifer Bajorek (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2002)

⁷⁴ Derrida, J. (2002) p.65

technologies have frustrated dominant representations. For instance: the virtual site claimed by Indymedia, a non-profit network of media organisations and activists, from which to ‘other’ the news as told by firms whose stories retold across mainstream channels represent the interests of global capital;⁷⁵ and low quality footage broadcast on YouTube of bored troops ‘having fun’ performing gratuitous acts of destruction in Iraq and Afghanistan that (whilst being visible are surely endorsed) complicate conventional identities.⁷⁶ Returning to Agamben’s assertion that the most radical identities are unrepresentable, and reading it across Nancy’s exposure of the community, I suggest that the significance of these examples is not their replacement of one representation with another (which would merely reinforce existing distributions of visibility) but rather their visible distance from alternative views. If the tactical advantage of new forms of communication is their potential to represent the sharing out, the in-between of identification itself, then the radical fragmentation of unending representations becomes possible, and Mouffe’s ‘us’ conceivable (without claiming any singular identity) in terms of “our web or “us” as a web or network.”⁷⁷

Of course, even this fracturing representation anticipates a spectator. Whilst the audience is foregrounded by recent art reenacting protest, its apparent absence has been heightened within protest events –for instance around the G20 summit– operating under the logic of the networked ‘us’. The proliferation of technologies for auto-mediation (‘writing’) has been met with increasingly restrictive policing on the ground, with powers granted by the state under legislation like SCOPA effectively delimiting and so affirming the strategic significance of the (‘live’) visibility of demonstrators. This confrontation can be understood according to Agamben, and in terms of technology’s threat to territorial boundaries, as an attempt by the state to preserve the myth of its cohesion against those who would unwork

⁷⁵ See Indymedia [website] www.indymedia.org (accessed 30th August, 2009); In 2006, 50% of copy available across the major news organisation websites (including *The Guardian* and the BBC) was directly sourced from either Reuters or AP. See Davies, N. *Flat Earth News* (London: Vintage, 2008) p.107

⁷⁶ See for example *Funny Stuff in Iraq* [podcast] at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LZ2O-f4rP7I&feature=related> or *Grenade in a Washing Machine* [podcast] http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jhKKJ4UQ3_A (accessed 31st August, 2009)

⁷⁷ Nancy (2000) p.28

it: “the nonstate”.⁷⁸ Whilst art’s status is territorially inscribed within our democratic nation-state via publicly-funded galleries and projects, its international circulation (following the logic of capital) likewise traverses national borders. Thus Kelly, reenacting a protest against the international commoditisation of the female figure, used art’s reach to censor the dominant way of seeing on its own terms (if not scale). Moreover, and although art’s institutions and artists also dictate what can be seen (within its framework), art’s privileging of the viewer offers a useful model for thinking the audiences of protest. Emancipated from the arts, the politically active spectator staged by Brecht and stated by Rancière opens up the possibility of exposing as mutually other –and in so doing mobilising– those witnesses to protest’s clash. In this vein, one might consider that the excess of written and visual material generated by press but moreover protesters at Bank on 1st April prompted an inquiry resulting in recommendations to the Metropolitan Police to revise tactics including kettling.⁷⁹

That protest’s clash should in turn be witnessed as art –the best example here being Wallinger’s calculated antagonism of the state– simply reaffirms that (territorial) spaces for (re)action exist beyond the confines of the street. If art’s privilege complicates the presumption of protest’s actors as marginal, then it is worth remembering, on the one hand, the instability and multiplicity of subject relations and, on the other, the codified space of the art world as visible precisely to holders of power. Of course, not all of the examples considered here functioned equally as protest, instead indicating the diverse reasons for and effects of its reenactment. Thus: Deller rehearsed and reworked the mythic vilification of the miners under Thatcher’s government, supplementing their collective represented identity with a narrative collectively remembered. Though Figgis’ documentary revealed this process it also realised its terms, and in so doing revived another myth; that of the socialist community (commune) under New Labour. If *The Battle of Orgreave* could therefore be described as historicist, then it is history’s flash that Kelly seized for *Love Songs* as a means

⁷⁸ Agamben (2000) p.88

⁷⁹ It is worth considering the etymology of kettling, which implies a strategy for increasing rather than quelling the volatility of the crowd; See the House of Commons Home Affairs Committee *Policing of the G20 Protests* (2009) 4: 41, 45-6

of communicating across generations and nation-states. As the expression of a forward-looking impulse, *Flashing Nipple Remix* thus exposed the community of sharing –by which identities are fragmented– even as its cogency revealed the action’s only limited success. Finally, in its geographical and temporal proximity to (the removal of) its ‘original’, staging both the absented body and the free assembly of its audience, *State Britain* radically engaged and in turn extended the reach and terms of Haw’s demonstration. These differences in essence reflect the disposition and urgency of those protests to which the various reenactments refer (defer), but do not negate the *différance* that exposes them in common. Revealing protest as embedded within the logic of representation, and as such realised and mediated for spectators, this *différance* likewise reveals representation, which (returned to the bodily) is reenactment, as its means.

In its depiction of street theatre, Kelly’s work literalises the suggestion here of protest performed by actors. This notion has in fact been explored by Baz Kershaw, whose writing about the dramaturgies of protest conceives of specifically violent forms of antagonism not as being framed *by* the dominance of power but rather as staged before, or beyond its dominance, drawing it in to new relations.⁸⁰ Notably, therefore, Kershaw refuses to recognise the police as acting within protest’s dramas, and yet both Deller and (more circuitously) Wallinger have witnessed how, on the contrary, the police have assumed a leading role within protest events. Thinking about police tactics for containing and directing demonstrators in terms of reenactment makes sense of their rehearsed execution. Moreover, insisting the distance between performer and performed, it unworks the mythic fusion of *the* police body, which after all only *appears* as a singular-being. This is significant because, as referents of state power –in fact, as representatives of a state representing its citizens in turn– police (as others; as interchangeable actors) represent precisely the instability of presence and/or absence which constitutes (our) democracy. In this moment, reenactment becomes an enabling condition for the rethink and radical opening of political participation

⁸⁰ Kershaw (1997) p.275

itself. When the representable identity of the democratic nation/state/territory is fragmented by its playing out; that is, when the state is no longer accountable to itself, then it too is exposed within and by the community of sharing. This possibility alone gives the exigency of ongoing struggles towards the unknowable to come.