The Politics and Aesthetics of Refusal

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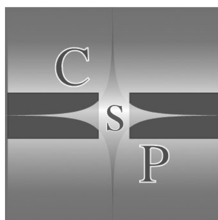
Edited by

Caroline Hamilton, Michelle Kelly, Elaine Minor
and Will Noonan



CAMBRIDGE SCHOLARS PUBLISHING

The Politics and Aesthetics of Refusal, edited by Caroline Hamilton, Michelle Kelly, Elaine Minor and Will Noonan

This book first published 2007 by

Cambridge Scholars Publishing

15 Angerton Gardens, Newcastle, NE5 2JA, UK

British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data
A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

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ISBN 1-84718-244-5; ISBN 13: 9781847182449

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ON REFUSAL

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The title of this volume raises some difficult questions about the status of a concept, "refusal," the accepted definition of which concerns a *subjective indication of unwillingness*, in two often incompatible frames of reference: the political and the aesthetic. Moreover, it inadvertently but inevitably conjures up another frame of reference: the ethical, which has sometimes been thought to bridge the chasm between those other orders.

So-called political "refusal" is most striking for the extent to which it is seen to emanate from an ethical injunction; hunger strikers, conscientious objectors, peace demonstrators, anti-capitalists, and so on, all variously construe their political praxis as a performative *disengagement* from ongoing processes *because they are unethical*. In this, they and their mode of praxis differ from those modalities grouped under other "r-words"—revolution, rebellion, riot, reaction, and resistance—all of which are defined in relation to a structure of power that is conceived directly *politically*, rather than ethically. There is no question, of course, about the extraordinary political salience of certain ethically motivated acts of refusal. Thinking only of the Israeli soldiers who braved severe military "justice" and widespread media calumniation by putting down their rifles and refusing to enforce their state's policy in the Occupied Territories, or of the retiring Republican Governor George Ryan of Illinois who, in 2002 as a last act in office, declared a moratorium on capital punishment and commuted the sentences of every prisoner in the state on death row, it is more important than ever to affirm the "passage of a Truth" (in Alain Badiou's terms) made radiant by each such performative *indication of unwillingness* to participate in evil. And yet, doubts must remain about the broader political potentiality of such subjective acts, which too often vanish in the resumption of the status quo.

Meanwhile, aesthetic "refusal," which tends to be thought under the name of Marcuse and the concept of negation, cannot escape its own constitutive ambivalences and paradoxes.

> Whether ritualized or not, art contains the rationality of negation. In its advanced positions, it is the Great Refusal—the protest against that which is. The modes in which man and things are made to appear, to sing and sound and speak, are modes of refuting, breaking, and recreating their factual existence. But these modes of negation pay tribute to the antagonistic society to which they are linked. Separated from the sphere of labor where society reproduces itself and its misery, the world of art which they create remains, with all its truth, a privilege and an illusion.[1]

Here, artistic refusal is presented, soberly and dialectically, as entirely contingent upon a "privileged" mode of participation in what is refused; an irony that is brought to its fullest extremity in late capitalist society, where the erstwhile "essential gap between the arts and the order of the day" is "progressively closed," to the point that "the Great Refusal is in turn refused; the 'other dimension' is absorbed into the prevailing state of affairs" in the form of "commercials."[2] Commercial aesthetics today, then, effectively negate the (aesthetic) negation, flipping high bourgeois art's refusal of what is over into a cynical celebration of the same. So, indeed, every merely "symbolic" act of negation is *refused in its refusal* by a mode of production that thrives vampirically on the immediate value of the new, however "negative." In this way, "refusal" morphs ceaselessly into "affirmation" on the Möbius strip of consumer capitalism.

Perhaps, then, the only dignified refusal of a social system like ours is *not* to go on striving to find the "right" symbolic form or gesture, the one that would once and for all puncture the order of things with a fatal thrust, but to refuse the choice between refusal and affirmation altogether—by *renouncing* the entire enterprise. This final "r-word" then calls for its own constellation and treatment, for along with cognate categories such as "resignation" and "recantation," renunciation would seem to be at least one logical *terminus ad quem* for any endeavour, artistic or political, predicated on refusal for its own sake. The type of this choice in the sphere of Art is Rimbaud, who, at age nineteen and after a series of some of the most excoriating acts of poetic refusal ever launched at French "Culture," famously abandoned writing and society altogether, resigned to an itinerant life in the Indies, Arabia, and Africa. No doubt there is a kind of heroism in this decision against decision, this *refusal to refuse* brought home to the biographical subject itself; but it is a heroism poised on the verge of an Abyss, into which it constantly threatens to topple. It is an Abyss given pithy formulation by Adorno, in his rejoinder to those who accused him, and other "older representatives" of the Frankfurt School, of *resignation*:

> A person who in the present hour doubts the possibility of radical change in society and who for that reason neither takes part nor recommends spectacular, violent action is guilty of resignation … In leaving conditions as they are, he offers his tacit approval of them.[3]

But Adorno, who witheringly dismissed most political praxis as mere "pseudo-activity," believed that refusal, like reaction, if coerced into practical form, leads down a blind alley of immediacy. "Political acts of violence," like aesthetic ones, "can also sink to the level of pseudo-activity, resulting in mere theatre."[4] And *that* terrible threat, the instant impoverishment, the theft, of all signs of refusal, their conversion into mythical and theatrical affirmations of systemic "tolerance," "democracy," and the like, is what draws genuine thought ever closer to the Abyss of resignation, renunciation, and recantation.

What prevents that outcome, "the sacrifice of autonomous thinking," for Adorno, is the simple, subjective act of repeatedly "not giving up": the Beckettian formula, "I can't go on, I will go on," which characterises "uncompromisingly critical" thought.

> The Utopian impulse in thinking is all the stronger, the less it objectifies itself as Utopia—a further form of regression—whereby it sabotages its own realization. Open thinking points beyond itself … Beyond all specialized and particular content, thinking is actually and above all the force of resistance, alienated from resistance only with great effort … The happiness visible to the eye of a thinker is the happiness of mankind. The universal tendency toward suppression goes against thought as such. Such thought is happiness, even where unhappiness prevails; thought achieves happiness in the expression of unhappiness. Whoever refuses to permit this thought to be taken from him has not resigned.[5]

Here is the true philosophical essence of "refusal" for our historical moment: what one must absolutely *refuse* to allow is the theft from oneself of the thought that *thought achieves happiness by expressing unhappiness*. Yet even if this is the authentic content of all refusal today, what is not specified, other than negatively, is the form it would take at the level of expression. Adorno, typically, offers a negative prescription against "objectifying" Utopia positively, but beyond that, and apart from the object lesson of his own negative dialectical style, we might wonder what form this *happy refusal* might take.

It is in this sense that we need to think most seriously about the speech-acts of an apt culture-hero for our times, who has slowly built his reputation since he first appeared in 1853, and gradually consolidated his position as perhaps *the* spokesman for a contemporary politics and aesthetics of refusal. His name is Bartleby. Herman Melville's profoundly disturbing tale concerns a scrivener employed in a legal chambers on Wall Street sometime in the 1840s. Initially turning to the tedious work of copying for enthusiastic hours on end, Bartleby's

industry gradually wanes to the point that he does exactly nothing—neither copying nor collating, eating nor drinking, going home after hours nor quitting when he is fired. He dies refusing to eat in the Tombs of the law courts. The critical heritage has variously tried to interpellate Bartleby as a figure of political contestation, an extension of feminine modes of retreat from the market (via agoraphobia and anorexia), a type of the artist-writer under capital, an allegory of Melville's fate, an argument for euthanasia, *ad infinitum*; the one constant has been the sheer intensity of fascination exerted by the character on the interpretive faculties: Bartleby must be made to *mean* something.

But what if the true significance of the figure is precisely his *happy refusal* to stabilise into anything resembling a sense? What if he consistently expresses through his habits, gestures, and speech nothing other than a refusal of the ubiquitous binary "yes/no" structure of choice that would make of his unhappiness either a pathology or a political manifestation? Gilles Deleuze writes approvingly of the very grammar of his repeated verbal formula, *I would prefer not to*: "this logic of negative preference, a negativism beyond all negation."[6] Such a logic is an ingenious evasion of the very structures of intelligibility governing a society predicated on meaningless production and extorted consumption. Bartleby, of course, prefers not to collate *and* not to copy; the unfinished infinitive form in his formula leaves empty the slot reserved for the verb, which can then be filled in indifferently by every imperative proposed to him. In this way, the act of refusal is modulated from a simple negation into a complex and capacious affirmation—a *preference*—simply in the grammatical form itself. This form is viral, and seizes hold of every kind of activity and predication in its linguistic milieu, only to traduce it with the selfsame preferential negation. Bartleby's formula is a viral form worming through the bricks and mortar of Law itself and the Capital it screens behind quadruplicated mountains of inscribed testimony; it is the "perverse" and "unreasonable" white noise barely audible behind the clear ring of that other name, "John Jacob Astor," which the narrator "love[s] to repeat; for it hath a rounded an orbicular sound to it, and rings like unto bullion."[7]

In Slavoj Žižek's paraphrase of all this,

> [Bartleby's] "I would prefer not to" is to be taken literally: it says "I would prefer not to," *not* "I don't prefer (or care) to"—so we are back at Kant's distinction between negative and infinite judgment. In his refusal of the Master's order, Bartleby does not negate the predicate; rather, he affirms a non-predicate: he does not say that he *doesn't want to do it*; he says that *he prefers (wants) not to do it*. This is how we pass from the politics of "resistance" or "protestation," which parasitises upon what it negates, to a politics which opens up a new space outside the hegemonic position *and* its negation.[8]

This is, as Žižek puts it, "the formal gesture of refusal as such,"[9] the minimal difference between the affirmation of unhappiness, and any cultural interpretation of that expression as a regulated meaning with full ideological content. As per Adorno, the key lies in refusing the theft and expropriation of one's own refusal—an adamant resistance to any and all symbolic captation of the subject's halting expression of unfulfilment. The ultimate tendency of Bartleby's formula is a collapse of the entire symbolic edifice of Capital, a joyous mortification of all values, of the very logic and system of exchange that keeps those values buoyant. As such it short-circuits the opposition between aesthetics and politics, and gestures towards an entirely different construal of the ethical itself, henceforth to be conceived in Badiou's sense of a subjective "subtraction" from all given states of affairs.[10] There is no "new order" implicit in Bartleby's preference, only a resolute commitment to the *void* of its situation: the empty set of what does not, and cannot be made to, count. Ethics today, understood as such a commitment, refuses the facility of political and aesthetic dogmas in the name of a militant belief in the Utopian impulse pointing "beyond all specialized and particular content,"[11] and towards the Unnameable, whose advent operates always on the edge of the void.

1. Herbert Marcuse, *One-Dimensional Man: Studies in the Ideology of Advanced Industrial Society*, 2nd ed. (London: Routledge, 1991), 63.
2. Ibid., 64.
3. Theodor Adorno, "Resignation," trans. Wes Blomster, in *The Culture Industry: Selected Essays on Mass Culture*, ed. J. M. Bernstein (London: Routledge, 1991), 171.
4. Ibid., 174.
5. Ibid.
6. Gilles Deleuze, "Bartleby; or, the Formula," in *Essays Critical and Clinical*, trans. Daniel W. Smith and Michael A. Greco (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997), 71.
7. Herman Melville, "Bartleby," in *Billy Budd and Other Stories* (London: Penguin, 1986), 20, 4.
8. Slavoj Žižek, *The Parallax View* (London: MIT Press, 2006), 381-82.
9. Ibid., 384.
10. See Alain Badiou, *Ethics: An Essay on the Understanding of Evil*, trans. Peter Hallward (London: Verso, 2002).
11. Adorno, "Resignation," 171.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This book has been above all a collective effort. *The Politics and Aesthetics of Refusal* began life as a postgraduate humanities conference held in April 2005, and has involved many individuals over its long gestation period. The project is the brainchild of the Philament collective, a group of postgraduate research students at the University of Sydney who have published an online scholarly journal since September 2003.

The editors would like to thank all those who have helped in many different capacities. The success of this conference was due to the work of members of the Philament collective as well as many fellow postgraduates, and funding for the event was generously provided by the Department of English at the University of Sydney, and the Sydney University Postgraduate Representative Association. We would like to thank the participants in this conference, and are particularly grateful for the patience, good humour and collegiality of those whose work appears in this volume. The same thanks go to those who responded to our call for further papers, resulting in what we feel is a stronger and better balanced interdisciplinary collection that reflects the diversity of emerging scholarship in the humanities.

As postgraduate students, we are constantly indebted to the established scholars who support our activities, and who generously donate their time as advisers and as anonymous referees. Without them, neither this peer-reviewed collection nor our online journal would be possible.

Philament is supported by the Faculty of Arts at the University of Sydney, but the contribution of its members is entirely voluntary. We would like to thank all past and present members of the collective for their effort and enthusiasm, and we are especially grateful to Julian Pinder for the time he generously provided and for his meticulous attention to detail.

We dedicate this book to our postgraduate colleagues.

The Editors
March 2007
http://www.arts.usyd.edu.au/publications/philament

INTRODUCTION

The Politics and Aesthetics of Refusal started as a conference held at the University of Sydney in April 2005. The project was organised by members of the collective who publish the *Philament* online journal, who were interested in opening up lines of communication between new academics in the humanities. "Refusal" seemed an appropriate theme for such a conference, both as the embodiment of a resistance to conventional boundaries between academic disciplines, and as a concept with an underlying negative or reactive force that can be widely interpreted and applied.

The idea of converting the conference program to a book occurred during the process of selecting papers. So many emerging academics were writing on subjects that engaged with the notion of refusal that it seemed important to acknowledge the impact of the subject in contemporary modes of living and thinking, whether in scholarly discourse or everyday life. The applications of "refusal" outlined in this volume—ranging from activism and the politics of cultural production through to problems of identity and knowledge classification—raise questions about often-elided relationships of agency and complicity in routine experience. From this viewpoint, the slogan "choose to refuse"—printed on canvas shopping bags as part of a campaign by the Bagbusters organisation to encourage Australian consumers to reject plastic—suggests a new spirit of the times. "Choose to refuse": refusal is no longer just a negating reaction, it can also, paradoxically, be an affirmation.

In his 1982 essay "The Subject and Power," Michel Foucault argues that the modern era places individuals in a "kind of political 'double bind,' which is the simultaneous individualization and totalization of modern power structures."[1] We face this double bind every day, certainly, and its impact can be felt within our popular culture, our history, and our notion of what constitutes society. For Foucault, this contradictory existence necessitates a new notion of identity. "Maybe," he speculates, "the target nowadays is not to discover what we are but to refuse what we are." This inversion, the reduction of the self to the essence of what we *are not*, suggests a complex environment in which the subject can more easily comprehend what is to be refused rather than what is already accepted. As Foucault suggests, "we have to promote new forms of subjectivity through the refusal of this kind of individuality which has been imposed on us for several centuries."

Not only is this principle of refusal and re-embodiment of the individual addressed in the essays that follow, it also serves rather aptly to describe the organisation of the volume. *The Politics and Aesthetics of Refusal* acknowledges its own tricky place in the simultaneous individuation and unification that such a book represents. We have tried to avoid dividing the collection according to established academic disciplines, as the imposition of such traditional categories seems particularly inappropriate for a volume on "refusal." Instead, the order of essays has been chosen to represent a cross-disciplinary flow of ideas, and to highlight some of the interesting connections that appear between different approaches to a varied selection of subject matter.

Of the twelve peer-reviewed essays included in this volume, the first four revolve around the complications of political and aesthetic resistance in contemporary society. The following four are focused on the manifestation of refusal via textual identities, while the remaining four concentrate on the reconfiguration of the ostensibly political and practical according to aesthetic principles or philosophies, constituting a wholly new entity—a mode of living that does not so much refuse the political as reinvent it in new and imaginative ways.

The notion of what constitutes the theoretical invocation of "refusal" has, of course, multiple interpretations. We have attempted with this collection to take a catholic approach which acknowledges the many important manifestations of refusal in life and thought. Thus, abnegation, apostasy, defiance, disapproval, interdiction, refutation, withholding, and debris can be traced throughout the collection, and have served to guide our organisation of this volume. Equally important are the overlaps that occur among the seemingly disparate issues and perspectives the collection represents. One of the strengths of the original conference was the readiness of participants to exchange across disciplines, and often exchange ideas across the floor in the discussions that followed each panel. The current book includes a selection of these papers as well as some more recent material, and has aimed to maintain a spirit of interdisciplinary exchange.

The first two papers in the collection, by Ann Deslandes and Kirsten Seale, serve to highlight the range of approaches possible even within relatively similar conceptual parameters. Both papers focus on activism as a form of refusal that tends to combine political and aesthetic concerns. With reference to the web-based discourses of Australian autonomous activists, Deslandes suggests that activist practices operate within a "grand tension" of refusing the dominant order while also being contaminated by this order. The tensions to which this discourse gives rise are subsequently addressed via the concept of "aesthetic reflexivity," a practice which, Deslandes suggests, enables activists to "live with" these tensions and thereby sustain their refusal of hegemonic paradigms.

Autonomous activism is shown to participate in aesthetic reflexivity by means of a tangential and de-centered mode of political activism with an emphasis on individual interpretation and action.

By contrast, Seale explores the notion of political activism through cultural praxis, using the work of Iain Sinclair to suggest that the concept of play may offer a means to resist or circumvent the industrial/capitalist system into which contemporary art (and artists) are inscribed. Drawing on Johan Huizinga's notion of the *Homo ludens*, play in this context refers to a rejection of the hegemonic structures of living and, more specifically, the capitalist conception of work. Rather than merely opposing the mainstream, Seale argues, play offers a totalising alternative to the regulation of everyday culture. Ultimately, Sinclair's "stubbornly non-functional" oeuvre, acknowledged as "unreadable, impenetrable, inscrutable" for the mainstream reader, is seen to operate a double refusal, by refusing to conform to structural and substantive conventions that enable easy consumption.

Caroline Hamilton and Shannon Woodcock explore very different aspects of the relationship between cultural production and political refusal. Hamilton's paper examines the phenomenon of "independent" or "indie" music, deconstructing the notion of refusal that is often presumed to inhere in certain forms of popular culture. Indie music attempts to negotiate the (actual or perceived) commercial nature of popular music through the concepts of "artistic autonomy" and "authenticity," and Hamilton suggests that the rejection of "pop" and popularity within indie music culture may be compared to the Modernist fear of the masses. However, she argues, forms of cultural production—such as recorded music—that are created from within a capitalist system need to recognise their compromised position. In this context, a real or authentic refusal equates to a refusal to buy into a myth of purity and authenticity.

This approach stands in contrast to Woodcock's discussion of jokes under the socialist Hoxha regime in Albania. Joking is shown to be a widespread practice in Albanian society, allowing joke-tellers "to outline regional stereotypes, play on the mountaineer/city-dweller dichotomy, and probe the ways Muslims, Catholics, and Orthodox adherents lived peacefully together." However, unlike other former communist countries, the case of Albania shows an almost complete absence of jokes about the regime itself, a paradox that is attributed to the way in which the regime infiltrated Albanian society, and to the particular circumstances of Albania's isolation.

The attempt to assert and control identity—whether national, cultural, or personal—is a theme that recurs in different places and in different domains. Marion Campbell's reading of Brian Castro's *Shanghai Dancing* tackles the genre of fictional autobiography in contemporary Australian literature, while Elaine Minor explores the refusal of Australian writer Christopher Koch to

relinquish control over critical interpretation of his work. Both papers deal, in different ways, with the cultural politics of Australian identity construction, challenging the notion of a pre-made national or cultural identity based on political and historical origins or on a fixed set of values. Campbell's paper mimics the intertextual practice of allusions to classical mythology in *Shanghai Dancing*, mapping its network of intersecting labyrinths. Campbell argues that the reader, in unravelling Castro's fictional lineage, discovers the monstrous hybridity that lies at the heart of the self; Castro's narratives are seen to undermine the notion of any recognisable national identity. Hybridity is seen not as a cultural tag, but as a way of being. Campbell's treatment of narrative and myth may be set against Minor's exploration of Koch's position: while both Castro and Koch deal with—and refuse—what might be read as a repressive cultural ur-narrative, the former writer's playful engagement with his source texts stands in opposition to the latter's attack on the perceived elitist bias in "academic influence over the minds of the many." Whereas *Shanghai Dancing* links hybridity to histories beyond the Old World of Europe, Koch is concerned with countering what he sees as the imposition of marxist, postmodernist, or deconstructionist ideologies upon the Australian reading public. Minor argues, ultimately, that Koch's "refusal to relinquish control over the critical appraisal of his work serves to subvert rather than reinforce the intentional altruism that he professes to weave into his novels."

Angela Woods' paper deals with problems of identity within a clinical framework, drawing on autobiographical texts in order to explore how schizophrenia might be constituted as a form of refusal. In a critical reflection on various clinical definitions of the condition, Woods argues that schizophrenia both refuses interpretation due to its enigmatic nature, and can in some sense function as a model for refutation of social norms. The concept of refusal is thus seen to present a viable means of interpreting schizophrenia while also offering a lens for analysing the way in which schizophrenia has been conceptualised in medical and psychological discourse.

Woods' essentially textual reading of a clinical condition complements Anthony Cordingley's analysis of the influence of Samuel Beckett's early interest in psychoanalysis on his novel *Comment c'est / How It Is*. Drawing on unpublished transcriptions of Beckett's manuscript "Psychology Notes," Cordingley argues that numerous fragments of this early psychoanalytic "refuse" can be found among the "exclusively scatological" topography of the later novel. Beckett's narrator/narrated persona is revealed as a Freudian anal neurotic, while his "delusions of observation and … sense that his voice is programmed by an omnipotent power accord with [the] sharp, psychotic separation of ego and superego." Within the shifting, bilingual and unpunctuated world of Beckett's novel, psychoanalytic refuse serves as a means

to problematise personal and narrative identity and its expression through language.

Ivar Kvistad and Helen Young explore the relationship between history, politics, and cultural identity, applying broadly postcolonial readings to texts whose roots predate modernity. Kvistad investigates the ways in which Pier Paolo Pasolini's film *Medea* represents and possibly privileges marginal cultural and sexual identities. Drawing on the legacy of Euripides' *Medea*, whose motif of justified maternal infanticide is set up as a challenge to a variety of hegemonic value systems, Kvistad argues that Pasolini's film works to problematise and reject both classical and modern conceptions of heroic narrative. This is played out partly in political terms, as a refusal of the first world's imperial or colonial treatment of, and narratives about, the third world. Balancing this, Kvistad extends the theme of the Other to an interrogation of the sexual and cultural practices the film represents, and of the traditionally male cinematic gaze it appears to reject. The split subjectivity of *Medea* is also foregrounded through Medea's paradoxical identity as both a human and a (super)natural mother-figure.

While Kvistad's reading of the Medea legend is focalised via Pasolini's film, Young investigates the problems and practice of interrelating the postcolonial and the medieval in the Middle English alliterative poem *St. Erkenwald*. This essay is prefaced by the hypothesis that the Middle Ages is a site of difference against which the modern world defines itself. The poem has been variously read in terms of doctrinal issues and hagiography, but Young argues that "when read with a lens of postcolonial theory, it can be seen that the poem is also deeply concerned with English insularity and the imposition of the foreign power of the Papacy in England at the turn of the thirteenth century." A refusal of scholarly conventions of interpretation of *St. Erkenwald* opens up new avenues of investigation, and draws out parallels of the experience of the Other in postcolonial thinking and the Middle Ages.

Shifting from postcolonial reinterpretations of the past to ultra-nationalist propaganda for an unattainable future, Will Noonan reads F. T. Marinetti's *Futurist Cookbook* as a primarily aesthetic refusal of culinary tradition, serving to highlight the relationship between food and Italian identity. Noonan proposes that this unique cookbook offers a refusal of traditional political and national identities through its synaesthetic theory of eating, as well as through its witty critique of modern experience. However, this reading is overshadowed by the *Cookbook*'s complicated and often contradictory relationship to Italian Fascism. While echoes of Futurist cooking can be sought in areas as diverse as experimental music and nouvelle cuisine, Noonan argues that the failure of the *Futurist Cookbook*—both as a culinary treatise and as a political and social

blueprint—is emblematic of how the negative aesthetic of Futurism was itself refused.

In a fitting conclusion to a collection concerned with so many different forms of refusal, Michelle Kelly uses the Generalities (000s) class of the Dewey Decimal Classification system (DDC) to explore the consequences of how information is classified. The Dewey numbering system provides both a framework for the classification of disciplines, and a means of assigning an arbitrary value to any given site of knowledge. It thus serves as the mediator of a "contested space" (on shelves, and between disciplinary categories), functioning as a type of "expandable literary theory" which can be mapped onto the broader process of reading and criticism. The 000s class, combining some of the broadest categories in the DDC with some of the most neglected, is viewed as a case in point of how classification systems can either privilege particular disciplines, or restrict their ambit by being too prescriptive. These processes, arguably, refuse their overarching aim, and seem also to refuse each other—a result that highlights the inevitable but infinitely contestable process of ordering information.

In this spirit, no attempt has been made to enforce a common theme or line upon contributors to this collection, as is evident from the number of different methodologies and the varying points of theoretical focus presented. The sense of "refusal" that emerges is perhaps most easily classified by what it is *not*—namely, a prescriptive, conclusive, or unified account of what it is to reject, react, or work against any particular instance of theory or practice in any given domain. The value of a thematically-oriented collection like this is its ability to work across disciplines, media, and philosophical frameworks rather than limiting its focus to a narrow territory. In taking this approach we hope to have not only traced new ground, but to have provided our theoretical cartographers (all of them emerging scholars) with some well-deserved credit. In this respect, antithetical as it may seem, "refusal" might also be understood to incorporate recognition, reward, and acknowledgement. According to Herbert Marcuse, refusal must not only be the guiding principle for all artistic creation, it must also be a manifestation of artistic creation itself. With this volume, we have attempted to compose a collection which is not only theoretically guided by refusal, but practically informed by it as well. The collection in itself constitutes, we hope, a constructive rejection of the usual constrictions of discipline and approach placed upon new scholars.

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1. Michel Foucault, "The Subject and Power," afterword to *Michel Foucault: Beyond Structuralism and Hermeneutics*, by Hubert L. Dreyfus and Paul Rabinow (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982), 216.

SUSTAINING REFUSAL: AUTONOMOUS ACTIVISM AND AESTHETIC REFLEXIVITY

Ann Deslandes
University of Sydney

> The methods of organising deny the mediation of representatives and instead emphasise direct democracy and direct action. Direct action is taken not as a last-ditch measure or as a form of militant lobbying, but as an ethic in itself, the preferred method of acting within the social terrain. Implicit in this is the rejection of the colonisation of everyday life by both the state and capital, and an endeavour to carve out some degree of autonomy in which to practice revolutionary new social relations, spaces from which to posit a radical reconstruction of society. One of the key markers of this tendency is its rejection of state structures as a means to social change.[1]

Few talk refusal more explicitly than "autonomous activists" such as "Andrew."[2] In the passage above, he delineates a practice that is defined by multiple refusals: not only the refusal of daily oppression by "the state" and by "capital," but also the refusal of traditional representative forms of organisations against this oppression and particularly a refusal of "state structures" as intermediaries in this process. Like all activist projects, this refusal is also an opening of space for alternatives to the realities being contested. As such, these practices of refusal operate within a "grand tension" of refusing the dominant order whilst being dominated by this order. This tension is, at best, highly creative and productive, though it also generates numerous problems within activist practices: problems of "living with the tensions" of activist refusal.[3] In this vein, I discuss the web-based discourse of Australian autonomous activists, which reveals a particular form of reflection on problems and location of solutions within the tension that underscores their practices.[4] Within this, the activists' textual ruminations indicate a further refusal: that of traditional forms of reflection and reconstitution, or *reflexivity*. I suggest that the discourse of autonomous activism is imbued with an "aesthetic reflexivity," a mode of reconstitutive reflection that is wholly consistent with activists' refusal of contemporary cultural logic.

Claims such as those listed by “Andrew” have been enacted at a number of public events in Australia, notably s11 in 2000, Woomera 2002, A30 in 2005 and the Stop G20 convergence in 2006.[5] For these events and the many other activist projects which inform them, such methods manifest themselves in the utilisation of decentralised, non-hierarchical collective organising structures such as affinity groups and spokescouncils, thus demonstrating an active refusal of centralised and hierarchical activist organising. They are notably constituted by amorphous networks promoting a diversity of issues, within a broadly shared refusal of market globalisation and the ideology of neo-liberalism, which implicates them in the broader “global justice movement.”[6]

Consistently enough, researching this phenomenon entailed the refusal of certain methods of social inquiry. Autonomous activism possesses a particularly embedded refusal of external analysis from official institutions (i.e., the academy, mainstream media and state governments). As Vincenzo Ruggiero notes, autonomous activists engage in “a form of sociological *self*-investigation.”[7] He points out that “this self-reflectivity is an implicit critique of official sociology, and its external gaze in respect of the subject it purports to examine.”[8] This refusal by activists is productively mirrored in scholarship “about” activists: here, I refuse to employ traditional sociological analytics of evaluating autonomous activism’s impact on society or developing an entirely external theory of its existence, both of which would chiefly be attempts to “account for” autonomous activism from outside the movement. Instead, I examine the discourse as constructed chiefly by autonomous activists, using the operating principles that autonomous activism sets for itself as far as this is possible within my own tense positionality as an academic researcher “looking in” on an activist discourse.

Activist projects, as public practices of refusal, are often cast as the vulnerable or oppressed playing David to Goliath. They are thereby rendered the less powerful actor, represented as enacting practices *against* power rather than *of* power. This representation is refused and inverted in my study by treating autonomous activism as a discourse in the Foucauldian sense, that is, “not merely a surface of inscription, but something that brings about effects.”[9] The enaction of autonomous activism, therefore, is conceived as an exercise of power. Within this, I draw on an ongoing web-based discourse analysis, using texts from key autonomous activist websites.

Informed by the notion that autonomous activists’ refusal of official interrogation entails a refusal of traditional interrogative research methods, the material for this discourse analysis was drawn not from clientelistic interviews or surveys, but rather from texts appearing on activist websites. This also reflects the importance of the web in autonomous activist organising—the web itself being a site for actualising the refusal of representative forms of

membership and organisation, as a relatively unregulated, diffuse forum enabling particular forms of expression and communication. It is in these texts that problems and solutions are revealed through decentralised reflection—and are related here to particular tensions in the discourse—within the overall grand tension of refusal.

The tensions intrinsic to autonomous activism are manifold and interrelated. For this study I address two in particular: the tensions between notions of "autonomy" and "collective," and between the evasion of, and subjection to, mainstream authorities. Both of these tensions are discussed in relation to a particular problem faced by autonomous activists in enacting their refusal of hegemonic paradigms. Discussion of these problems within the discourse accentuate the importance of reflecting on problems and reconstituting activist practice as required, the sociological interpretation being that activists attribute importance to a process of *reflexivity*.[10] In the discourse of autonomous activism, reflexivity emerges in a particular form: interpretive, collective, sometimes implicit and contributing tangentially to the ongoing revision of the discourse. Here, I illustrate this specific process of reflexivity by detailing these two particular tensions: the problems they can give rise to and the ways in which activists negotiate them, in moving towards the location of appropriate solutions.

In autonomous activism, "autonomy" is understood as a relational autonomy. That is, it does not refer to "the independence of individual subjectivity"[11] but to an "intersubjectivist sense of autonomy-within-solidarity."[12] For autonomous activists, this manifests in decision-making practices that are managed through consensus, in a manner designed to maximise the individual's choice of behaviour. At protest events, therefore, leadership is not centralised in one person, and there is no designated event spokesperson or official propaganda. Tactical organisation of the event occurs through "affinity groups" and "spokescouncils." Herein lies the tension between "autonomy" and "collective," and problems which occur herein, such as representing the protest to the mainstream media:

> Handling the media on behalf of the StopG20 group—whilst recognising that that organisation is, for all intents and purposes, nothing—[the media collective] are the ones who seem to be doing much of the talking to the media, directly and by the editing and transmitting of media statements of other affinity groups … This formed part of an intent to "refocus media attention" onto (what they consider to be) the "real issues within the G20."[13]

For this anonymous contributor to the G20 website, the tension between autonomy and collective is felt to fall on the wrong side of collective, where the aspiration to a decentralised structure simply allows greater centralisation to

take hold. This concern is highly reminiscent of previous debates about autonomous collectives at the height of the second-wave feminist movement. These debates are archetypically represented by Jo Freeman's influential essay "The Tyranny of Structurelessness" (which is consistently cited on autonomous activist sites),[14] though they were also specifically negotiated within European autonomous movements such as Italian Autonomia and the German Autonomen.[15] In this contemporary incarnation of "the tyranny of structurelessness," "Andrew" critiques the possible results of the tension between notions of autonomy and collective, whilst still maintaining the commitment to relational autonomy (i.e., to living with the tension it creates). He suggests:

> The point is not to dismiss [these structures of] collective representation as such but to ensure that they are transparent and democratically accountable and that the representation that does occur emphasises the multiplicity of participation … Calls for some kind of correct line, as touted by authoritarian leftist parties, are obviously to be rejected.[16]

This is echoed by "Dave and Naima" in "Whisper for Mobilisation Against the G20":

> Numerous open processes are needed to work out what is common that allows us to act collectively, and how [we can] affirm our difference and multiplicity in a way that is … effective.[17]

Finally, this reflection is also reinforced by "Notes from Nowhere." Their essay postulates that keeping autonomous spaces open "is essential, as is retaining a balance between the need and desire of groups to operate independently—autonomously. We also need a level of coordination to increase communication flows between ourselves, and to ensure that participation … is participatory and democratic."[18]

A second key tension experienced by activists in this study is that between their marked commitment to evading mainstream authorities (chiefly represented through the state or state contractors: the police, court system, private security forces, etc.) and their inevitable subjection to them. This tension is demonstrated in a number of ways. Actions carried out by autonomous activists are often illegal, subjecting activists to the risks of physical assault, arrest, court proceedings, criminal records and imprisonment. Autonomous activists are actively targeted by the state through laws that increasingly designate their activities as criminal and then through police intervention in their activities. The time since s11 in 2000 (the apparent inception of contemporary autonomous activism in Australia)[19] has been characterised by escalating state

attacks on alleged "anti-state" or "anti-corporate" action. As Verity Burgmann points out, "at s11, police wore riot helmets and garb for the first time in Australian history."[20] Since then, Australian autonomous activists have been assaulted by police at the November 2002 World Trade Organization (WTO) protests,[21] confronted with machine guns at Baxter 2003,[22] and subject to beatings with batons at the G20 protests.[23] The 2005 enaction of laws controlling "seditious" publications and collective organising demonstrates that risks to the physical and emotional health of activists are only going to grow.[24]

As such, a large proportion of activist organisation is devoted to dealing with the consequences of state intervention. This manifests in the development, training and deployment of legal observation teams and workshops on how to deal with police violence, arrest and jail. The amount of attention given to these aspects of activist organisation underlines comments like those from "and" in their reflection on one of A30's street-based protests: "instead of wasting energy fighting with cops as to whether or not we can walk on the road much more targeted and specific actions with a concrete political basis need to be developed."[25] This tension is thereby the subject of constant practical negotiation.

Problems such as those reflected upon by "Andrew," "and," the anonymous contributor to G20, and "Dave and Naima" are not to be resolved utilising the centralised forms of reflection and revision found in traditional social movements. These are traditional practices of hegemonic refusal, the refusal of which by autonomous activists is based on the critique that such practices tend to replicate state-capitalist structures of domination through their hierarchical procedures. They are practices which keep "participants in a limited role—one safely removed from political engagement … [where the] real politics is 'left to the experts,'" in the words of another contributor to *A Space Outside*.[26]

Examples of such forms include strategic planning sessions and the revision of organisational constitutional and membership requirements, typically representative of political parties, trade unions and Non-Government Organisations (NGOs). In these activities, activist practice is measured and projected against the key objectives of the organisation. Procedures like this imply a process of monitoring, and therefore deference to an external authority. Such a process is ultimately aimed at resolving the tensions much more than living with them. This is particularly unsuitable for autonomous activist practice, because tensions such as that between "autonomy" and "collective" remain explicitly foundational to autonomous activism; the problems they cause do not discount this. To resolve the tensions would effectively destroy the discourse.

These "traditional" social movement practices and their forms of reflection and revision can be theorised using concepts of reflexivity such as that of

Anthony Giddens: a "monitoring of action" which would continuously, progressively renew the practice.[27] In response to Giddens, Scott Lash and John Urry refer to these particularly rationalistic models of reflexivity as "cognitive."[28] A cognitive model of reflexivity is one which would ultimately eliminate the tensions of autonomous activism, as it is a model in which subject is subordinate to object through a hierarchical monitoring process. Such a model is ultimately argumentative and binarised, and thus inconsistent with a practice which emphasises horizontal relationality and multiplicity.

In contrast, Lash and Urry develop a notion of aesthetic reflexivity. Aesthetic reflexivity is at play when a phenomenon primarily produces and reproduces itself through interpretation instead of monitoring.[29] It occurs through the simultaneity of subject and object, in situations where the subject is not exclusively judged by the external authority of the object and instead evaluated hermeneutically. Lash and Urry specifically allude to the relevance of this theoretical frame for contemporary forms of activism, which autonomous activism can be said to extend, when they paraphrase Zygmunt Bauman:

> It was and is the task of the hermeneutic tradition in the human sciences not to legislate and explain, but to understand and interpret these most fundamental and unmediated universals.[30]

Lash and Urry then continue:

> This is an aesthetic task in that it corresponds to that taken up by poets, painters and filmmakers. It is also aesthetic in its typical mode of expression … But it is more than this. This same hermeneutic tradition … provides a key foundation, a moral source for contemporary post-organized capitalist oppositional politics … It is reflected in the rejection of abstract, bureaucratic centralisation for the immediacy of locality; in the rejection of the abstract commodity form and of consumer capitalism in general; in the rejection of highly mediated forms of material culture for an empathy with nature; in the rejection of cold abstract logic for feeling and empathy; in the rejection of abstract politics of the public sphere for a politics of the personal.[31]

Aesthetic reflexivity is "aesthetic" in that it is the negotiation of image, symbol or allegory: in the discourse of autonomous activism, the "unmediated universals" referred to by Baumann or the principles discussed by "Andrew" act more like symbols to be aspired to than codes of practice to be implemented. As such, reflecting the principle in action is largely reliant on individual interpretation and the development of intuition, as well as alliances based on affective affinity more than cognitive ideology.

As demonstrated, autonomous activist events are carried out via tangential and decentred means, with emphasis on personal interpretation and action.

Through the lens of aesthetic reflexivity, then, resolution of problems is also discovered through this process—something which is not achieved by using a centralised, systematic monitoring procedure. There are two textual instances that point to a process of aesthetic reflexivity at work in the discourse of autonomous activism: the processes of knowledge-sharing, and the utilisation of emotional affinity.

Reflections on autonomous activist events regularly refer to the collective processes of alliance building, peer support and the exchange of skills and knowledge. These processes emerge from organisation based on a philosophy of non-hierarchical "mutual aid," which values interpersonal affinity rather than formal membership systems and seeks to cultivate affective trust rather than competition for leadership roles.

Activist blogger "and" advocates further work to establish networks within a culture of participation, noting that A30 lacked "good organising and experience" overall, and suggests A30 fell victim to the absence of "a strong political culture where new people have space to learn about self-organisation … any possibility of building a radical opposition means sharing these knowledges and this didn't happen to the degree it should have."[32]

The commitment to, and practice of, knowledge sharing is also reflected in the way that autonomous activists deal with the autonomy/collective tension and its abovementioned problems within "the tyranny of structurelessness." Where Freeman largely repudiates the "structureless" structure in her essay, autonomous activists remain committed to it in many ways. Her text is available on numerous sites dedicated to autonomous organising as an historical record of the potential pitfalls of non-hierarchical organising for contemporary autonomous activist groups to reflect on.[33] It has informed the use of processes such as "open space" conferencing, which is a suggested format for non-hierarchical group organising that deals with these pitfalls. This model has been used by Australian autonomous activists at the annual Students of Sustainability (SOS) conferences since 2003, and is described by them as

> a facilitation model, which retains a (limited) degree of structure but accords primary importance to self-organisation and participation by conference attendees. This means that the organisation and content of the conference's proceedings is largely in the hands of the people attending.[34]

Beyond this, the reflective discourse also considers the emotional connection of activists to problems which occur in autonomous activist organising. "Andrew" reinterprets the problems experienced at Woomera within a personal and emotional framework, saying that "many people are not used to having to organise themselves" in hierarchical liberal capitalist society. He adds:

> this seems … to be more a problem of self-confidence, of actually believing we can achieve social change [through autonomous activist practices], than any particular organisational dysfunction. With a far greater belief in, and enaction of, our abilities who knows what would have been possible?[35]

This is again reinforced by "Notes from Nowhere," who suggest that this form of organising "requires no sacrifice from us except that we sacrifice our fear."[36]

The development of personal emotional resources has been emphasised in recent social movement research, such as Helena Flam and Debra King's *Emotions and Social Movements*.[37] In particular, King notes the importance of "emotional reflexivity" in sustaining social movements. She argues that without the mechanisms for "discharging" emotions, activists are easily subject to burnout, "loss of heart" and striating apathy.[38]

These affective, relational and intimate aspects of autonomous activist organisation are prefigured by the "affinity-based solidarity"[39] of feminist activism and theory, with many of these debates borne out in the literature around consciousness-raising groups and other features of radical feminism in the 1960s and 1970s.[40] This undercurrent of affinity is a discursive force; it buttresses practices of reflection and the process of critical recombination. These continuities find their contemporary manifestation in the "affinity group" and "spokescouncil" forms of organising at autonomous activist events, which underscores the coexistence of "autonomy" and "collective." Affinity groups are formed by individuals who share a general desire to work together. Global justice movement activist "Starhawk" suggests that these individuals "feel the same way about the issue(s) in question. They could be people you see in a tutorial, work with, go out with, or live with. The point to stress, however, is that you have something in common other than the issue that is bringing you all together, and that you trust them and they trust you." She continues: "the emotional support [enabled through an affinity group structure] is not to be underestimated; apart from the offers of hugs, kisses, and phone calls, people feel safe enough to risk themselves when they know that they have emotional support."[41]

Affinity groups are often linked to a spokescouncil for organising a protest event. The spokescouncil is differentiated from "typical" meetings to decide on action and delegate tasks in that each affinity group (and, indeed, each individual) is considered to be autonomous, meaning that no individual or group is bound by the decisions which are made.[42] Furthermore, decisions are effected through consensus between all participants, as opposed to formal representative structures where decisions are made with agreement by the majority.

As Graeme Chesters and Ian Welsh suggest, the problems generated by the tensions of this decentralised activism are "mitigated … by the often unacknowledged diffusion of protest repertoires through 'weak ties,'" such as

those of affinity groups and spokescouncils.[43] In such a mitigation, they note, "symbolic multipliers communicate to, and resonate with, a broader constituency than can be immediately reached by argumentation."[44] Affinity groups and spokescouncils structure this diffusion and generate these oblique, affective resources.

As an interpretive process, sharing and accessing these personal narratives in the wider social context has an alterative effect of its own, influencing activists' understanding of the problems, enhancing their self-confidence and consolidating how they see themselves in relation to the kind of world that is being refused, and the kind of world they would like to see. In aesthetic reflexivity, the use of allegory like this is understood as a source of self,[45] something that we know needs to be strong to sustain participation in social movements.[46] The rhizomatic emergence of these narratives allows negotiation of tension to be finessed through interpretation, something that does not occur via a systematic monitoring procedure.

Autonomous activists use the principles of aesthetic reflexivity organised along collective lines to evoke negotiated, appropriate responses to problems within the discourse, as well as when dealing with external agencies. I use the examples of knowledge sharing and emotional affinity to show how individual voices within the discourse of autonomous activism reflect on their practices within a decentralised structure, allowing them to move towards living with inherent tensions more effectively.

As rendered through discourse analysis, aesthetic reflexivity provided me, as a social movement researcher, with an analytical construct through which to frame and then explore issues of concern and conflict which arise from the tensions of autonomous activism, without necessarily being drawn into resolving these tensions. The ponderous, open style of reflection in the discourse implies that rather than positing concrete solutions (as Freeman did in "The Tyranny of Structurelessness"), space is now left open for discovering specific, local solutions. This ponderous style of reflection, however, still enables a critique of how that space can be misused, and this can also be addressed by the analyst or critic.

For autonomous activists deliberating on the problems illustrated in this essay, the further development of reflection (through processes of interpretation instead of monitoring) intimates a space for activists to develop, as "Andrew" envisioned, "a far greater belief in, and enaction of, our abilities,"[47] and to become ever more attuned to the principles guiding activist practices of refusal.

Indeed, this account of autonomous activist texts and the way they show activists negotiating the tensions of their approach exemplifies the greater philosophical and practical tension intrinsic to any practice which enacts refusal of the dominant social order: the "grand tension" between refusal of the

dominant order and simultaneous domination by it. In the case of these autonomous forms of activism, an explicit contestation of that order can travel right through to its mode of reflection and renewal: it is thus embedded in the very way the discursive practice of refusal sustains itself.

This paper utilises some source material and draws on conceptual work conducted in collaboration with Debra King, 2003–2005. See Ann Deslandes and Debra King, "Autonomous Activism and the Global Justice Movement: Aesthetic Reflexivity in Practice," *Journal of Sociology* 42, no. 3 (September 2006): 310–27. The current paper elaborates on the nature of refusal in autonomous activism's web-based discourse, whereas Deslandes and King focuses on developing the notion of an aesthetic reflexivity.

1. "Andrew," "Shape Shifting," *Desert Storm*, ed. Desert Storm Editorial Collective, http://www.antimedia.net/desertstorm/shapes.shtml (accessed February 14, 2007).

2. The term "autonomous activism" as used in this paper ought to be understood as distinct from its historical political connotations—i.e., Marxist autonomism, primarily associated with Italian radical worker movements such as *operaismo* and Autonomia. Whilst the activists whose voices appear in this paper make some reference to this ideological strand, the terms "autonomy," "autonomous" and "autonomous activism" as constructed by them signifies a distinct discourse specific to their contemporary experience, despite being embedded in previous discursive constructions. For an extended discussion of "contemporary autonomous activism" see "Notes from Nowhere," "Autonomy: Creating Spaces for Freedom," in *We Are Everywhere: The Irresistible Rise of Global Anticapitalism*, ed. "Notes from Nowhere" (London: Verso, 2003), 107–19. "Notes from Nowhere" is the name of an activist editorial collective whose members include Katharine Ainger, Graeme Chesters, Tony Credland, John Jordan, Andrew Stern and Jennifer Whitney. "Autonomy: Creating Spaces for Freedom" is available online at *The Narco News Bulletin* 34, October 28, 2004, http://www.narconews.com/Issue34/article1092.html (accessed March 15, 2007).

3. See Sarah Maddison and Sean Scalmer, *Activist Wisdom: Practical Knowledge and Creative Tension in Social Movements* (Sydney: University of New South Wales Press, 2006).

4. This essay is not intended to problematise the discourse of autonomous activism *per se*. My aim is to provide a discourse analysis that points out some of the mechanisms that so called "autonomous activists" use to live with the tensions of their particular acts of refusal. In doing so I note that future papers on this topic must analyse the discourse from the perspective of geopolitical location, race, class, gender and ethnicity and problematise in particular the claims made within this discourse to multiple subjectivities and "structureless" structures. For existing critiques in this direction with regards to the global justice movement see, for example, Chandra Mohanty, "'Under Western Eyes' Revisited: Feminist Solidarity through Anticapitalist Struggles," in *Feminism Without Borders: Decolonizing Theory, Practicing Solidarity* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2003), 221–53; Andrew Hsiao, "Color Blind," in *Confronting Capitalism: Dispatches from a Global Movement*, ed. Eddie Yuen, Daniel Burton-Rose and George Katsiaficas (New York: Soft Skull Press, 2004), 82–86; Catherine Eschle, "Skeleton

Women: Feminism and the Anti-Globalization Movement," *Signs* 30, no. 3 (Spring 2005): 1741–69. For an allusion to the ethical dilemmas faced by activists within this discourse in the context of Australian autonomous activists and immigration detention protests see Anna Trembath and Damian Grenfell, "No Horizons—Baxter & Beyond: Where Now For the Refugee Movement?," *Arena Magazine* 65, June–July 2003, http://www.arena.org.au/ARCHIVES/Mag%20Archive/Issue%2065/against_the_current_65_2.htm (accessed February 14, 2007). See also Deslandes and King, "Autonomous Activism," 317.

5. s11 was a convergence of over 10,000 participants which succeeded in shutting down the World Economic Forum in Melbourne, September 2000, in protest against the ideology and effects of economic globalisation and global neo-liberalism. Verity Burgmann, *Power, Profit and Protest: Australian Social Movements and Globalization* (Crows Nest, NSW: Allen and Unwin, 2003); Sean Scalmer, *Dissent Events: Protest, the Media and the Political Gimmick in Australia* (Sydney: University of New South Wales Press, 2001). A30 was a convergence with a similar rationale that was conducted at the Forbes 500 conference at the Sydney Opera House on August 30, 2005. Woomera 2002 refers to a convergence of protesters at the Woomera immigration detention centre in South Australia, in which activists broke into the centre and released 52 detainees (eleven remain free). Similar protests were held at Baxter immigration detention centre in 2003 and 2005; both convergences protested the Australian Government's dehumanising treatment of asylum seekers. The Stop G20 convergence in Melbourne, November 2006, protested at the meeting of the Group of 20 heads of financial institutions and national government finance ministers in relation to ongoing global neo-liberal market policies and their social, cultural and environmental costs.

6. See, for example, People's Global Action at http://www.agp.org.

7. Vincenzo Ruggiero, "New Social Movements and the 'Centri Sociali' in Milan," *Sociological Review* 48, no. 2 (2000): 178, emphasis added. See also Lawrence Cox, "Power, Politics and Everyday Life: The Local Rationalities of Social Movement Milieux," in *Transforming Politics: Power and Resistance*, ed. Paul Hearn and Paul Bagguley (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 1999), 46–67.

8. Ruggiero, "New Social Movements," 178.

9. Michel Foucault, "Le Discours ne doit pas être pris comme…" in *Dits et écrits* (Paris: Gallimard, 1994), 3:124, quoted in Arnold I. Davidson, introduction to *Society Must Be Defended: Lectures at the Collège de France, 1975–1976*, by Michel Foucault, trans. David Macey (London: Penguin, 2003), xx.

10. Cox provides a relevant definition of reflexivity within activism: "Reflexivity involves a certain distancing from customary expectations and a greater awareness of alternative possibilities. If it is taken to its logical conclusion, it naturally means making some use of these: rather than reproducing existing social relations (albeit with an 'ironic' awareness of their contingency), experimenting with alternatives, adopting a reflexive attitude not just in theory but also in practice." Cox, 55. The theoretical debates within sociology regarding reflexivity are foregrounded in Ulrich Beck, Anthony Giddens, and Scott Lash, *Reflexive Modernization: Politics, Tradition and Aesthetics in the Modern Social Order* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1994). Here, reflexivity is also a state of being attributed to contemporary western society's social, economic and

cultural manifestation; "reflexive modernization." As will be discussed further along, Lash and Urry make a distinction between Giddens and Beck's "cognitive" theories of reflexivity and their "aesthetic" reflexivity.
11. George Katsiaficas, *The Subversion of Politics: European Autonomous Movements and the Decolonization of Everyday Life* (New York: Humanity Books, 1997), 17.
12. Jason Adams, "The Constellation of Opposition," *The Rise of Theory and the Decline of Ideology*, http://www.geocities.com/ringfingers/constellation.html (accessed February 14, 2007).
13. "Thoughts on Wednesday Nights Spokescouncil," posting to "Visions of Creative Dissent" forum, November 2006, *G20 Convergence*, http://www.stopg20.org/node/165 (accessed February 14, 2007).
14. Jo Freeman, "The Tyranny of Structurelessness," *Ms.*, July 1973, 76. The essay is also available at http://www.jofreeman.com/joreen/tyranny.htm and http://www .bopsecrets.org/CF/structurelessness.htm.
15. See Katsiaficas' *Subversion of Politics* for more information.
16. "Andrew," "Shape Shifting."
17. "Dave and Naima," "Whisper for Mobilisation against the G20," *A Space Outside: Active Interventions Within*,
http://www.aspaceoutside.org/wp-content/uploads/aspaceoutside-publication.pdf (accessed February 14, 2007).
18. "Notes from Nowhere," *We Are Everywhere*, 118.
19. "Aggy k & And," "Autonomous Politics and Organising in Australia," *Interactivist Info Exchange*, http://info.interactivist.net/article.pl?sid=02/05/13/0130213 (accessed February 14, 2007); "Andrew," "Shape Shifting."
20. Burgmann, *Australian Social Movements*, 316. See also Mary Heath, "Police and Protest: Alice's Adventures at s11," *Alternative Law Journal* 25, no. 6 (December 2000): 299–301.
21. University of Technology Sydney Community Law and Legal Research Centre, "Legal Observer Report: No-WTO Protests," *University of Technology Sydney Community Law and Legal Research Centre*, http://www.law.uts.edu.au/clc/publications/ noWTOReport.pdf (accessed February 14, 2007).
22. Trembath and Grenfell, "No Horizons."
23. Human Rights Observer Team, "Preliminary Statement: G20 Protests," Federation of Community Legal Centres (Vic), http://melbourne.indymedia.org/uploads/hro _statement_1.pdf (accessed December 11, 2006).
24. The *Australian Anti-Terrorism Act 2005* placed new restrictions on the right of Australian citizens to express certain opinions including criticism of the sovereign, the constitution, the government and the law.
25. "and," "Reflections on 30A," *Radicalis—Notes on the Roots of Change*, September 3, 2005,
http://radicalis.net/?q=node/123&PHPSESSID=ade887228484c5c73278791e9278ce88 (accessed February 14, 2007; site now discontinued). "and" is the pseudonym under which this autonomous activist posts material on the web.
26. "Make Poverty History versus Direct Action," *A Space Outside: Active Interventions Within*, http://www.aspaceoutside.org/wp-content/uploads/aspaceoutside-publication.pdf