

WHO KNOWS WHERE: A TREATISE ON  
INDISCIPLINARY THINKING

by  
Jessika Khazrik

B.A. Linguistics and Theatre  
Lebanese University, 2014

SUBMITTED TO THE DEPARTMENT OF ARCHITECTURE IN PARTIAL  
FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF  
MASTER OF SCIENCE IN ART, CULTURE AND TECHNOLOGY AT THE  
MASSACHUSETTS INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY

JUNE 2017

© Jessika Khazrik. All rights reserved.

The author hereby grants to MIT permission to reproduce and to distribute publicly  
paper and electronic copies of this thesis document in whole or in part in any medi-  
um now known or hereafter created.

Signature redacted

Signature of Author:

Department of Architecture  
May 12, 2017

Signature redacted

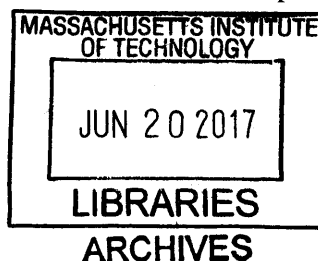
Certified by:

Renée Green  
Professor of Art, Culture and Technology  
Thesis Supervisor

Signature redacted

Accepted by:

Sheila Kennedy  
Professor of Architecture, Chair of the Department Committee on Graduate  
Students



## **COMMITTEE**

**Renée Green**  
Professor of Art, Culture and Technology  
Massachusetts Institute of Technology

**Jennifer S. Light**  
Director and Professor of Science, Technology, and Society and Professor of Urban Studies  
and Planning  
Massachusetts Institute of Technology

**Nadia Bou Ali**  
Professor of Civilization Studies  
American University of Beirut

# WHO KNOWS WHERE: A TREATISE ON INDISCIPLINARY THINKING

by

Jessika Khazrik

Submitted to the Department of Architecture on May 12, 2017 in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Science in Art, Culture and Technology

## ABSTRACT

The production of knowledge has been immensely tied to the production of space in both language and application. Through the use of metaphors and metonymy coupled with spatial strategies of exclusion and delimitation, knowledge has been ramified into disciplines and fields whose continuous corollary integration in the distribution of labour reproduces taxonomies evident in the political and topological organization of the world. According to Max Weber, modernity dangerously establishes a fundamental disunity of reason that through rationalization creates three spheres of value: the differentiated zones of science, art and law. This arises not simply from the creation of separate institutional entities but through the specialization of cognitive, normative, and aesthetic knowledge that in turn permeates and fragments everyday consciousness. Today this process is accelerating: 'interdisciplinarity', 'smart' architecture and the 'open lab' projects increasingly happen under the sway of a seemingly new ideology whose goal is to form a 'social physics' that controls, optimizes, and predicts both labor and dwelling. As a cybernetics that alleges to cognitively capture the environment and reproduce the self through data accumulation, surveillance and the ever-changing representations of AI becomes more opaquely predominant, labor is further obfuscated by capital while more territories are asymmetrically raided and enclosed for new primitive accumulations to take form. How to break from these epistemological boundaries that, heavily propelled by an enlightened expertism, occupy cognizance with pervasive claims to master and differentiate it from life? In this thesis, I will propose an 'indisciplinary' epistemology that studies and grapples While presenting interdisciplinary studies on the legacy of polymath Ibn Al Haitham, the spatial politics and knowledge produced around a post-war landfill and its reconstruction, and the use of war as testing grounds in AI, I will ruminate on my work under the interdisciplinary platform I have founded, The Society of False Witnesses. Through occupying disciplines in incomputable collaborations, expropriations, writing and cryptography, The Society of False Witnesses playfully probes exilic spaces and their epistemological repercussions on the performance and lexica of attestation. Hereby, both evidential and imaginary as well as past and preemptive genealogies will be limned to suggest an interdisciplinary thinking that is in constant negotiation with its potential spatialization in relation to the cognitive and hidden arrangements of life, future and trace.

Thesis Supervisor: Renée Green

Title: Professor of Art, Culture and Technology

*To the knowledge we wish we let loose before we had to leave or were forced to remain while we had found toxicity tarrying in our bodies, future, and place. To those who were accused for seeing more than was required. To those who still cannot be satiated by neither labor nor education and strive to not withstand any proprietary and fettering claims over thought. To all those who do not want to teach the army but want to study collectively. To those who died along the way and remain the only survivors. To those who couldn't stay. To those who were forced. My deepest gratitude goes to the little sun traveler who was my mother, the blue bird who dreamt of changing names who was my father and my crypto love with whom I have spent nocturnal hours writing, hacking and conversing in the military institute of Terranova. To all those who came before and taught me extensively. To my comrades, collaborators and those whom I have still not met. To the ontology of the eclipse. To desire. This specifically goes to the Society of False Witnesses.*



ACKNOWLEDGMENTS.....	07
PREFACE.....	10
INTRODUCTION.....	12
METHODOLOGY.....	25

PART I

CH 1: FROM UNDERGROUND TO GROUND, FIELD AND DISCIPLINE:

PLACES TO KNOW.....	32
---------------------	----

CH 2: ON THE PATH OF INVESTIGATION: TRANSLATION

AND PLACE IN IBN AL HAITHAM'S INDISCIPLINARY TRACE.....	49
---	----

CH 3: ANYTHING BUT BEING BURIED UNDERGROUND:

THE LANDFILL THAT WE COULD ONCE GO TO.....	67
--	----

PART II

CH 4: D B B D.....	96
--------------------	----

CH 5: WHEN WE WERE EXILED WATER REMAINED.....	111
---	-----

CH 6: I MOUNT MOUND REFUSE + SOMETIMES.....	125
---	-----

CH 7: TERRELLA ALzARD ALSAGHIRA:.....	145
---------------------------------------	-----

CONCLUSION.....	148
-----------------	-----

EPILOGUE.....	153
---------------	-----

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS.....	155
----------------------------	-----

BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	156
-------------------	-----

Where am I unfounded mercury  
too rapid the assessing of  
One. (lifetime.) He doesn't know where  
it is. (world.) The scientific  
command given over, too; I  
let them have it all.  
I need to find you and tell you but

I can't remember the order of  
events  
Because "order" is different here.

-ALICE NOTLEY, *The World I'm Dead in* (2011)

We need the power of modern critical theories of how meanings and bodies get made, not in order to deny meanings and bodies, but in order to build meanings and bodies that have a chance for life [...] The eyes have been used to signify a perverse capacity - honed to perfection in the history of science tied to militarism, capitalism, colonialism, and male supremacy - to distance the knowing subject from everybody and everything in the interests of unfettered power. The instruments of visualization of multinationalist, postmodernist culture have compounded these meanings of disembodiment. The visualizing technologies are without apparent limit.

-DONNA HARAWAY, *Situated Knowledges* (1988)

And at that day, like a missile the word "living" resounded in her head. It just seemed that the problem of living is not a monopoly over her being; it appears to be a general plight. And so, at this moment, she felt she was coming out of her encasement to confront the world with a wider view.

-NAHIDA FADLI EL DAJANI, *Al-Nusf Al-Sathī [The Shallow Half]* (2005)

# ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Before coming to MIT, I owed most of my education to the internet, intersectional feminist thought, gallivant and clamant investigations, the curious company of books, late cordial conversations, philosophers and professors I mostly haven't met in class, exploited labor, para-academic programs, personal archives of scientists and journalists who have very generously welcomed me in, wars I haven't lived and my memories that were born before me. I would like to thank first those who scan, lobby, juridically suffer and resign day and night in order to make knowledge publicly accessible online, on site, in print and in performance. Things haven't changed much since, except that I have more thoroughly understood this process in the generous company of others. I am very grateful to have had the precious chance to meet, befriend and collaborate with fellow students, staff and professors whose work immensely vary – ranging from free software to mechanical engineering, cryptography, architecture history and STS. Thank you for creating this enticing environment, you know who you are. I am infinitely grateful to all the MIT alumni and ex-professors who wholeheartedly discussed with me their memories of the anti-militarization student movements as well as all those who due to several hinderances couldn't meet or that I couldn't find. My never quoting you ad verbatim remains very deliberate as I look forward to the places this investigation could lead to.

My deep gratitude goes to my advisor Renée Green and my readers Nadia Bou Ali and Jennifer S. Light for their bountiful comments, time and support. I am particularly thankful to professors Harriet Ritvo, William Uricchio and Gerry Sussman for all the knowledge they wholeheartedly shared with me. I was very fortunate to meet Lara Baladi at ACT and be engulfed with her blissfully bolstering might. Infinite gratitude goes to artist and media associate Madeleine Gallagher who has not only enriched my technical knowledge and greatly supported my work but also immensely taught me very seminal lessons on life, art and production. I am exceedingly grateful to Walid Raad for his constant advice and playful belief. Studying at MIT wouldn't have been possible without the generous support of the Department of Architecture Fellowship, LEAP Foundation, Luys Association, the APEAL/Maria Geagea Scholarship and Alexis and Anne-Marie Habib Foundation.

In the course of this year, I was very fortunate to have the chance to present part of this investigation at the Historical Materialism conference organized by the BICAR collective whose work and thoughtful promptness I greatly admire. I am, as always, immensely thankful to my dear friend Sami Khatib for reading and reviewing with commendable precision and

insight the German translations in Chapter 3. Chapter 4 was also vastly made possible through conversations with and documents provided by Ziad Abi Chaker, Alexis Malychef and Wilson Rizk to whom *The Society of False Witnesses* remains infinitely grateful. I am grateful to Coleman, Ronald, Pasha and Sabrine for answering my questions around the lexicon used in their fields. Thanks to Suzy Halajian and LACE for believing in my work and inviting me to exhibit, present and imminently publish Chapter 5 as part of the project “I Can Call This Progress to Halt” curated by Halajian. Tremendous love and gratitude go to the very special Harry Halpin who has not only fervently embellished my life at MIT with infinite conversations, ardent care and endless debates but who also zealously continues to show me, in both distance and the everyday, the unrelinquishing beauty of alliance, insistence and disagreement.

I am very humbled by Jacques Rancière’s readiness to engage with this work as reader and future interlocutor in the summer especially that this little investigation was tremendously informed by his trenchant writing and conception of interdisciplinary thinking. As my practice unfolds, I remain deeply grateful to Harun Farocki and Natascha Sadr Haghghian who taught me in weeks more than I have learned in years and whose works will continue to flare and scintillate within different parts of this thesis. These fiery memories will be kept inextinguishable. My modest experiments and attempts will always be keenly indebted to the willing interlocutor that is Walid Sadek. Special thanks go to Harry, Renée, Ghassan, Ali, Madars, Jason, Ray, Joy and Sasha who made sure that I remain in this place. Finally, as I rest assured that this is only the first part of a much more laborious inquiry and commitment, I am already indebted to everyone I will encounter interdisciplinary on the way.



# PREFACE

My presentation was over and so was the scheduled discussion. Following my initial scheme, I have abruptly, towards the very end of PART ONE, brought down the Master Level close to zero. The second part out of the two was to be performed without any vocoding effect, not even amplification. The audience seemed to be hearing me well, yet I very deliberately kept the Sennheiser XSW 1-ME3 on my face. Transduction only tarried visually in the last half an hour; however, I continued using the instruments. The microphone is stuck in my hair. I had no idea except when I tried to remove it three seconds after we have all enacted the usual collective applause. As I left my chair to get the protruding mike extension off me, a man approached me and promptly asked, “where do you come from?”. All of my face contracted, my eyes scrolled him up and down, and I scowled. “No really, I am very curious to know where you come from! The performance was great, thank you so much for this amazing research, I have learned a lot!”. I did not think of what I did as a performance. I also did not think that the research was amazing but rather repulsing, menacing too, yet certainly very intriguing as I have decided to incorporate it into the last chapter of the thesis that you are reading. The man seems not to realize the insinuations that come with his question, so I said thank you and answered waywardly as best as I can. It was only then that it became clear to me that it was me who did not understand at all his question despite the fact that this very query has been occupying me for the past two years at MIT. “I am very very sorry, I mean, what is your background? What do you do and what have you studied? Are you a computer scientist? A historian or a choreographer?” he explained his question. To think of the labor and knowledge we produce as equivalent in metaphor to places of dwelling and existence where our lives take place is to suggest a strong tie between the partitions of spatial governance and experience that shape territories and what we learn while studying and doing something. More to that, it is to suggest that the organization of knowledge is always political and ideological. I took his question as a compliment. It was time to leave the art space and visit other places.



# INTRODUCTION

**It is one thing to make the past an object of scientific investigation, another to put acquaintance with the past as the place of knowledge itself.**

-FRIEDRICH SCHELLING, *On University Studies* (1803)

**Without a master, one cannot be clean.**

-DOMINIQUE LAPORTE, *History of Shit* (1978)

**I want to write to you like someone learning.**

-CLARICE LISPECTOR, *Água Viva* (1973)

As is suggested in the title, this thesis looks into the act of knowing through exploring its nominative producer(s) and their relationship to the processes of locating and producing space. Bearing two questions in one with one insinuating a more rhetorical form than another, “who knows where” could at first hand seem to yield to, in one of its prospects, an either far-flung subject, a mere expression of desperation, an ignorance that is sardonically agreed upon, or a concurred ‘no one’. Rather than attempting to find in my research a unilateral answer to this ontological inquiry, I have decided to observe, gather and bring together in presentation and study a series of proofs that further corroborate the visibility or lack thereof of my problem. This will be done after laying out my historical findings on the development of discipline, the boundary conditions between art, science and the law and questions of voice and authority around the production and dissemination of knowledge in relationship to space. All throughout the thesis, I will be working through the epistemological legacy of precedents who either asked similar or tangential questions while also investigating why such projects have become possible or visible at their specific time and space of manifestation.

The gathered evidential claims can be divided into two fractions or partitions. The first consists of both explicit and illicit conceptualizations present in the language and devices mediating knowledge as well as past studies within epistemology coupled with self-reflexive accounts or critiques sprouting out of the development of a particular discipline or school of thought.



thought. The second is comprised of testimonies of disavowal or agreement delivered by either of the objects of study, the subject, other producers of knowledge or the power structures that commission, legitimize, or support the production of this knowledge. While the latter part of the first and the second partition may seem to be bespeaking of one category, I will be highlighting in the conclusion of the first chapter how they correspond to distinct albeit constitutive problems within our discursive world, namely that of the difference between conceptualization and representation. It is seminal to reiterate since the start that the epistemological observations and questions I am raising here are not only particular to representation within knowledge but also presentation and classification in relation to both.<sup>1</sup> For this reason, the problem in question in this thesis is equally concerned with its own reoccurring and overlooked state as a subject worthy (or not) of investigation. Herein, I will be attempting to probe the conditions that are besetting these hierarchies of vision and recognition in such a manner that does not isolate them of the economic and bio-political factors that have surrounded their manifestation, concealment and development.

While looking into the history of the spatialization of the knowledge that does not explicitly involve a certain movement within space outside of the body, i.e. theory, I seek to learn how these means of organization affect the shaping of the world and the future of labor. From here, I look into recent tendencies of demarcation, access and restriction to see how another ontological approach would be needed to make the effects of these spatio-epistemological configurations on politics more visible and approachable. Looking at the nature of the program of Masters of Science in Art, Culture and Technology under which this work is being produced and its vision of the thesis where *artists-thinkers* self-reflexively and critically present their practices within a bigger genealogy of work and with a pronounced subjectivity and freedom greater than what is often condoned within classical academic programs, I will take the opportunity of this prelude chapter to talk about the different forms that the investigations presented here have taken.<sup>2</sup> While doing so, I will briefly discuss

---

<sup>1</sup> One of the references I will be referring to when thinking of linguistic presentation within the aesthetics of knowledge is the Moscow Circle of Linguistics, particularly that of Roman Jakobson on linguistics and poetics.

For more information, please refer to:

Roman Jakobson, "Closing Statement: Linguistics and Poetics" in *Style in Language*, Thomas Sebeok, ed., (Massachusetts: MIT Press, 1960), p. 350-377.

<sup>2</sup> In her essay, "Paradoxes Experienced by Artist-thinkers", artist and writer Renée Green introduces the concept of artist-thinkers as: "'Artist-thinkers' each have in common what I describe to be 'modes of curiosity, questioning, and analysis realised through a form of creation'. A distinguishing feature in each of their productions is that even as times continue to change, it can still be compelling to revisit and reconsider what they made and thought. This desire to re-encounter is an aspect that distinguishes many works.

Renée Green, *Other Planes of There: Selected Writings* (North Carolina: Duke University Press, 2014), p 478.

time and the acts of revisiting and encountering. I will also touch upon in this preliminary chapter some of the responses and terms I have been hearing following the performances and presentations I made on the subject and those specifically presented in this thesis. Once and for all, I will be honing in on why I don't think they poignantly represent what I am attempting to reach at. Concomitantly, I hope that the works can attest themselves to this relationship to knowledge and spectatorship, in ways I cannot imagine. In such a way, my works aren't mine. Works of art, literature and science have a very particular autonomy that is different than that of their producers. This autonomy is particular to the modes of production, survival and image-making. Autonomy as such is to be embraced, exposed and defied.

What is this promised autonomy? To better probe it – especially that I will only be tacitly revisiting it in what is about to come, I would first need to think of three types of autonomy; the autonomy of the work of art, the autonomy of the worker and the autonomy of the artist. For Immanuel Kant, only aesthetic judgments were autonomous as they do not presuppose or depend on a concern with the object's utility, purpose or even its mere existence.<sup>3</sup> This is despite the fact that in Kant's reading, aesthetic judgments do not yield any cognitive truth. In what is about to come in the thesis, I will be illicitly arguing that art has been always concerned with truth and its distribution of the sensible; however, its current disciplinary order has been for a great part repressing this relation. When it comes to labor, my use of the term autonomy is firstly informed by the political work and writings of the Italian Autonomia Movement, particularly the writings of Antonio Negri and Paolo Virno. To put it in succinct terms, for the Autonomia Movement, autonomy is the primacy of labor over capital. Secondly, in the context of art, I follow the theorization of the autonomy of the work of art by mathematician and philosopher Boris Groys who re-asserts the ideological function of the work of art while reading it as an immortal extension to the artist's body and critiquing the current state of contemporary art institutions.<sup>4</sup> In both contexts, to speak of autonomy is

3 Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Judgment* (Indiana: Hackett Publishing, 1987)

4 For the work of as an extension of the artist's body, please refer to:

Boris Groys, "The Immortal Bodies", *RES: Anthropology and Aesthetics*, 53(1), pp.345-349.

Boris Groys, "Art, Technology and Humanism" *E-flux Journal*, 82 accessed on May 4, 2017

<http://www.e-flux.com/journal/82/127763/art-technology-and-humanism/>

For Groys' seminal work on autonomy, please read:

Boris Groys, *Art power* (Massachusetts: MIT Press, 2008)

In it, Groys writes,

"This seems to me to be the crucial question: Does art hold any power of its own, or it is only able to decorate external powers— whether these are powers of oppression or liberation? Thus the question of the autonomy of art seems to me the central question in the context of any discussion on the relationship between art and resistance. And my answer to this question is: Yes, we can speak about the autonomy of art; and, yes, art does have an autonomous power of resistance. Of course, that art has such an autonomy does not mean that the existing art institutions, art system, art world, or art market can be seen as autonomous in any significant sense of the word."

limits of labor.<sup>5</sup> I further argue that works of art once made and launched cannot ontologically become the property of anyone, not even that of their conceivers or their time of production. This is despite the fact that many works of art end up being subsumed by the political economy that is prevalent in the institutional frameworks that host them; however, this subsumption is never complete.<sup>6</sup>

Certain works may become visibly part of the commons at certain times more than others and in ways, settings and concurrences that remain incomprehensible. As opposed to what is cited in Kant's critique of aesthetic judgment, these works often rebound when they touch the realm of truth. Interestingly enough, philosopher Georges Didi-Huberman has referred to these commons using the French expression "lieu commun" that could be paralleled with the English expression "common grounds" however literally denoting a common location or shared space. Similarly to Groys, Didi-Huberman uses this term when discussing the indelible relationship between the living and the dead in making history.<sup>7</sup> Nevertheless, no

---

5 On these two parallels that looking at the limits of the page and subject at hand, I won't be able to directly tackle in this thesis, Paolo Virno writes,

"Political action does not produce objects. It is an activity that does not result in an autonomous object. What strikes me is that today work, and not just work for a publishing company, for television or for a newspaper, but all present-day work, including the work done in the Volkswagen factory, or at Fiat or Renault, tends to be an activity that does not result in an autonomous 'work', in a produced object. Of course the Volkswagen factory cranks out cars, but this is entirely subject to a system of automatic mechanized labour, while the duties of the individual Volkswagen factory workers consist of communication that leaves no objects behind: of this type of virtuoso activity. I see virtuosity as a model for post-Fordist work in general. And there is more: what strikes me is that the earliest type of virtuosity, the one that precedes all others, precedes the dance, the concert, the actor's performance and so on, is typically the activity of our human kind, namely the use of language. Using human language is an activity that does not result in any autonomous and remaining 'work'; it does not end in a material result, and this is the lesson De Saussure, Chomsky and Wittgenstein taught. Post-Fordist work is virtuoso and it became virtuoso when it became linguistic and communicative. "

Paolo Virno, "The Dismasure of Art. An interview with Paolo Virno." Pascal Gielen and Paul De Bruyne, *Being an Artist in Post-Fordist Times* (Amsterdam: NAI Publishing, 2009): 23-54.

6 The fact that I was born into a time where artistic institutions that claim to be contemporary are abundantly forming a global market, greatly fuels the writing of this document.

7 Georges Didi-Huberman, *Peuples Exposés, Peuples Figurants* (Paris: Edition de Minuit, 2012).

spectacle is autonomous when dead, yet only the dead survive.<sup>8</sup> As for artists who are always in one way or another in the presence of a corpse, Groys argued that “in order to become autonomous, an artist needs to become an institution herself, replacing all functions of contemporary art institutions with her own activities”.<sup>9</sup> How can this be done?

When I once explained what I do to a physicist who had just began his Phd in quantum computing at MIT right after completing his masters there, he exclaimed, “Oh so you make dynamic presentations!”. I liked the term and began using it for the ensuing two weeks as a joke. The event I was referring to in the preface is a one hour presentation I gave at LACE on April 19, 2017 as part of the exhibition “I Can Call this Progress to Halt” curated by Suzy Halajian where I showed the technoperformance “C%ISTAR Lesson I” for the first time. Looking at the rhetorical tropes I was using, I heard several people referring to it afterwards as a “lecture performance”.<sup>10</sup> As my performances tend to be very research-driven, I have heard this term being associated with my work several times, but I never felt that it explains with precision what I think I am doing mainly because I believe that there are several

---

8 In the second point of “The Society of the Spectacle”, Guy Debord writes,

“IMAGES DETACHED FROM every aspect of life merge into a common stream, and the former unity of life is lost forever. Apprehended in a partial way, reality unfolds in a new generality as a pseudo-world apart, solely as an object of contemplation. The tendency toward the specialization of images-of-the-world finds its highest expression in the world of the autonomous image, where deceit deceives itself. The spectacle in its generality is a concrete inversion of life, and, as such, the autonomous movement of non-life.”

Guy Debord, *Society of the Spectacle* (New York: Bread and Circuses Publishing, 2012)

9 Walid Sadek does not explicitly say so, but in my understanding, it is a permanent experience. Walid Sadek, “In the Presence of the Corpse.” *Third Text* 26, no. 4 (2012): 479-489.

10 Several claims exist around the format of the lecture-performance has emerged in post-war Beirut with certain works by Rabih Mroue and Walid Raad; however, so far to my knowledge, this hasn’t been thoroughly historicized. I would be definitely interested in how a rigorous historicization and critique of this subject could be written without making such territorial claims and ignoring previous works by artists such as the V-Girls, Hollis Frampton and Adrien Piper among others. In the following essay, writer and anthropologist Stefan Tarnowski investigates this claim albeit through insisting on escaping it by seemingly focusing elsewhere. He instead hones in on the dramatic elements of three live works made in Beirut by three different artists in 2013; one work that the artist behind it identifies as “non-academic lecture”, another that the artist identifies as “lecture-performance” and the last that the “artist”, myself, identifies as “performance”.

[http://meng.theapro.kr/GM/main.asp?sub\\_num=9&cate=1&pagesize=10&pageNo=1&state=view&ste=Stefan+Tarnowski+\\_++writer+and+art+labourer&idx=399&ord=1&ordt=1](http://meng.theapro.kr/GM/main.asp?sub_num=9&cate=1&pagesize=10&pageNo=1&state=view&ste=Stefan+Tarnowski+_++writer+and+art+labourer&idx=399&ord=1&ordt=1)

Stefan Tarnowski, “Experimental Current of Dramatic Theatre in Beirut” *The Apro*, December 17, 2013. Accessed on April 22, 2016, [http://meng.theapro.kr/GM/main.asp?sub\\_num=9&cate=1&pagesize=10&pageNo=1&state=view&ste=Stefan+Tarnowski+\\_++writer+and+art+labourer&idx=399&ord=1&ordt=1](http://meng.theapro.kr/GM/main.asp?sub_num=9&cate=1&pagesize=10&pageNo=1&state=view&ste=Stefan+Tarnowski+_++writer+and+art+labourer&idx=399&ord=1&ordt=1)

parts within the academic institution, settings, methodologies, modes of address and economies that need to be unraveled before the university becomes a collective space for emancipation.<sup>11</sup> While a lot has been written on the use of archival material within art, very little has been written on why artists would want to work in a format that resembles academic modes of presentation. Playwright, theatre director and artist Rabih Mroue's use of the term "non-academic lecture" playfully highlights this divide.<sup>12</sup> Depending on what I am doing in live art, I often choose to use either the term 'performance' or 'presentation'.<sup>13</sup> Under *The Society of False Witnesses*, I have organized public discussions and tours that I wouldn't want to identify as performance though they may be using intricate modes of mediatized display and presented in performative prosodies and staged readings. I will touch upon these decisions and how much I think these nominal distinctions matter, or not, shortly. "When We Were Exiled Water Remained"(written 2016) and "D B B D"(2015) excerpts of which I present in Part II remain respectively the only play that I have written and the only dance performance that I have choreographed. I deem it very possible to continue working more in these formats in the future; however, I don't think that I would want to become limited to one format.

It would be intriguing to ask why did artists begin using in their performances, tropes related to the critical, textual and audiovisual analysis of documents common to academia. Was this simply because the academic institution occupies a great part of many artists' lives whether as art students or art professors? Or because the labor of the pedagogue has been greatly performative from Seneca to Michael Taussig and Walter Lewin that it has now resurged within the medium of performance at a time when education becomes more disciplinary? Or can one trace an interdisciplinary penchant within this format that attests to a need to surpass the field of art and hence become symptomatic of both a certain overlooked

11 I made a performance in 2013 entitled "The Influence of Prostitution on Tourism" in which I re-write my mother's masters thesis of the same title. In it, I playfully substitute the history of the Lebanese Civil War with the Feminist Sex Wars. I seize this intimate academic alibi to explore the seduction of the imagination and the relationship between the writer's voice, her subject and the writing of history. While positing narrative as an audience-constructed fantasy, I investigate political strategies and modes of resistance I have learned from sex workers' unions and the destituent memory of my mother whose relationship to history and traveling made me a citizen of photography and non-places. In Lebanon, women are not allowed to transmit their citizenship to their children.  
12 Interview, Rabih Mroue and Katerina Valdivia Bruch, *Images Until Victory?* Goethe-Institut e. V., Internet-Redaktion August 2016

13 Other than refraining from using the term "lecture-performance", I prefer to call the process of collating information in my research-driven work as "investigation" since I see myself as one who is reviewing traces. My investigations often mix different methodologies that are at times reminiscent of the manner with which interviews are often conducted in documentary filmmaking (except that I never film) and at other times, I scour academic writing, newspaper archives or other textual and (most often personal) archival resources, and in many cases, my subjects have been never tackled within academia. My self-reflexive mode of address is usually presented in a multiplicity of voices that are often sardonically presented in the first person.

deficiency within knowledge at large and its modes of truth-making as well as the desire of artists to clearly learn and transfer from the world at a time when disciplines gain more insular mystifying power to those who do not work or fall as producers under them?

This thesis is divided into two parts. The first part presents the conceptual framework, research and case studies on the territorialization, borderization and militarization of knowledge and how these have constitutively permeated into computation and the smart mandate of an automated labor and environment. The second part includes excerpts from scripts, essays and descriptions of projects I have conducted on the case studies found in the first part. Chapter 1 traces the history of the correlation between the production of knowledge and space specifically as it was manifested in language and philosophy while introducing the concept of interdisciplinary thinking. Chapter 2 looks into border zones as battlefields and the military history of discipline through delving into the political economy of funding science, engineering and some fractions within the social sciences in the case of the American university and particularly MIT. Chapter 3 presents the first study that investigates the work of 10th - 11th century polymath Ibn Al Haitham as interdisciplinary and probes the politics behind the transmission and translation of his work into the enlightenment. I am well aware that all the case studies and historical research are greatly influenced by my own experience and reading of my present. While positing his work as attesting to what I coin as “the ontology of the eclipse”, I take the work of Ibn Al Haitham one step further by studying him as a false witness. A strong relation exists between the most somatic seemingly unmediated perception of space, cognition and vision. Herein, just as Ibn Al Haitham would call the thinkers/scientists/polymaths of his time and the ones who came before him as “ahl al-nazar”, meaning the people of vision, those that we can refer to today as quaintly both “theorists” and “scientists” , a reoccurring trope around vision, knowledge and power will be re-emerging in thesis. What is the relationship between the two questions: where do we think and how can we see? The second case study presents an elaborate interdisciplinary study of the Normandy landfill. I have chosen this scatological space because it was formed by the domestic, military and architectural refuse of the 15 year+ civil war where I grew up. The landfill does not only attest to a mostly exiled and denied history but also the neoliberal capitalism that is domineering in our world and universities today. The third case study the political economy of some fractions of AI and their recent use of war as a testing ground for experimentation through delving into the legacy of roboticist Rodney Brooks and the IRobot company he had co-founded. I use this research into AI to go deeper further into ideologies behind the premises and promises of the automation of labor and cybernetic governance. A short version of this chapter was published under the title “Where Is My Body: War, Artificial Intelligence and Domestic Work” in the anthology entitled “I Can Call This Progress to Halt” edited by Suzy Halajian.

The first presented work in Part II looks into the influence of militarization on the modern history of science and engineering in discipline and education. It took the form of a dance performance presented at the ICA and a sound essay that I have presented in exhibitions at ADK, Berlin; LACE, Los Angeles; and LUMA, Zurich and that can be found online in a text that I have later published on the project in the online platform Ibraaz. The second work is excerpts from two acts of the play I wrote last year “When We Were Exiled Water Remained” that takes the Beirut River as its stage. The play features Ibn Al Haitham as one of its characters and played by myself. It is slated to be staged in the coming year, within the arid course of the river. The third work presented looks into an installation on the Normandy landfill that was forcefully retracted from an exhibition by the director of the museum, a tour on the same subject and several works and a poem on ecotoxicology and war. The fourth is my final studio project, “Terrella Alzard Alsaghira”, a performance on an early military global communication system made out of 480,000,000 needles. The last project is the technoperformance “C%ISTAR Lesson 1 & 2” that doesn’t want to teach the army.

The manner with which experiences of disembodiment, interception and weaponization are domineering in research and accentuated with the accretion of computation in our lives will be ineluctably tackled in the end. Chiming with that, I will be presenting in the conclusion strategies that could be deployed to resist such ubiquitous modes of antagonism, quantification and surveillance. To put it succinctly in curt terms, I have learned in this research that through producing knowledge and work that comes out of exhuming distribution of power within knowledge while being aware that it is in our hands to accept them or defy them as such, one would be evincing altercations not only within the politics of knowledge but also within spatial politics at large. Before I begin, I will be finally introducing my use of the concept of “indisciplinary thinking” that I adopt from Jacques Rancière and how I read it in relationship to his body of work and some of the criticism he has incurred. While Jacques Rancière’s work is very much concerned with the relationship between politics, art and education and he has written critiques on several disciplines ranging from his massive body of work on theatre to sociology (“The Ethics of Sociology”, 2012) and history (“The Name of History”, 1992) passing by photography and contemporary art (“The Fate of Images”, 2003), to literature (“The Politics of Literature”, 2011) and psychoanalysis (“The Aesthetic Unconscious”, 2000), from my research in French and English, he has only used the term “indisciplinary” in one essay and one interview.<sup>14</sup>

---

14 Jacques Rancière, “Thinking Between Disciplines: an Aesthetics of Knowledge” *Parrhesia* no.1 (2006)

Jacques Rancière and Marie-Aude Baronian, “Jacques Rancière and Indisciplinary” in *Art & Research: A Journal of Ideas, Contexts and Methods* Volume 2 no. 1 (Sydney: University of Australia, 2007)

When asked in his interview with Marie-Aude Baronian whether he considers his work as “interdisciplinary” or “a-disciplinary”, Rancière responded with, “Neither. It is ‘indisciplinary’. It is not only a matter of going besides the disciplines but of breaking them. My problem has always been to escape the division between disciplines, because what interests me is the question of the distribution of territories, which is always a way of deciding who is qualified to speak about what. The apportionment of disciplines refers to the more fundamental apportionment that separates those regarded as qualified to think from those regarded as unqualified; those who do the science and those who are regarded as its objects.”<sup>16</sup> To be interdisciplinary is not be outside of discipline but to think of how to break from a disciplinary order that allows certain voices to speak while forcing others to be silenced. For Rancière, “discipline is always a provisional grouping, a provisional territorialisation of questions territorialisation of questions and objects that do not in and of themselves possess any specific localisation or domain.”<sup>17</sup> For this reason, Rancière has even rejected being identified as philosopher following that the main philosophical and political question is precisely that of the separation between the intellectual world and a social world that is considered in this ordering its object. In the first chapter, I will be studying the domains and localization that the discipline of philosophy has created to itself through language. As we know from merely observing how each discipline ends up producing its own unique lexicography, language is a seminal part in constituting a territory. I will furthermore argue, this time in critique of Rancière, that a separation between the intellectual world and the social world evident in practices of thought is not particular to the organization of disciplines but to the process of thought and cognition so far as we have encountered the latter. However, this separation belongs to both the Symbolic and the Imaginary. Language attests that the practice of knowledge always seeks to produce space. What can we learn from positing the realization that disciplines produce territories of objects as a reciprocal relation to the reification of space in the world in the territorial form that in turn evinces a long-standing relation between knowledge and space? This shows that again both the spatial organization of the world and the organization of knowledge need to be re-thought and modified.

Hereby, to be interdisciplinary, is to break up from these epistemo-territorial hierarchies through re-working their influence on the creation of space and re-imagining another where objects do not become exclusive and silent and where language does not suffice. In order to do so, we need to also subvert the political economy of knowledge – a subject that has escaped

---

<sup>16</sup> Jacques Rancière and Marie-Aude Baronian, “Jacques Rancière and Indisciplinarity” in *Art & Research: A Journal of Ideas, Contexts and Methods* Volume 2 no. 1 (Sydney: University of Australia, 2007)

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid*, p3



Rancière with his break from Marxism.<sup>18</sup> Rancière had made his philosophical debut when he participated along with young Étienne Balibar, Roger Establet and Pierre Macherey in the writing of Louis Althusser's "Reading Capital" with whom he has studied.<sup>19</sup> Contributing with two chapters to the book, Rancière's early published essays attest to this previously mentioned break from political economy. The first chapter consisted of a critique of Marx' concept of political economy as published in the 1844 version of Capital while the second chapter investigated science and critique within the same book.

In the "Critique of Political Economy", he denigrates the economy as a field of study by writing, "Here[in the 1844 Manuscripts] the economy does not appear as a basis or as a last resort. There is no setting up of an economic structure in the sense in which Marx understands it from The German Ideology onwards. Neither does it appear as the fundamental alienation produced by the reduction of other alienations (here I[ Rancière] refer to Calvez's outline). The alienations are presented right from the beginning as being all on the same level."<sup>20</sup> By doing so, he confirms my critique that he carries on however mostly invisible in the rest of his work, calling for a community of equals or a poetics of equality that would later follow all his writings. Six years later in 1974, he publishes his first book entitled "Althusser's Lesson".<sup>21</sup> Presented as a critique of Althusser's work around the arrival of Maoism to France and the 1968 movement and the great distinction made between scientific theory and ideology within Althusser made in his reading Marxism, Rancière's main inquiry in these lessons was centered around the following question: how can subversive theories of politics become the rationale for order? From here, we find early on Rancière's commitment to the pedagogy and the relationship between theory, praxis and order. More to that, all throughout the book, Rancière questions the notion of discipline, first through looking at the relationship between factory discipline and capital and critiquing Lenin's take on retaining the same notion of discipline, to

---

18 In Dmitri Nikulen's essay "The Names in History: Rancière's New Historical Poetics" published in:

Jean-Philippe Deranty, and Alison Ross, eds. *Jacques Rancière and the Contemporary Scene: The Philosophy of Radical Equality* (London: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2012)

Nikulen critiques Rancière's constitutive elements of "The Philosopher and His Poor" writing: "Besides, the 'poor' are initially an economic category meant to refer to the poor and exploited: our age, for Rancière, is the 'democratic and workers' age'. But, if the struggle of the working people is far from being over and, as such, should be supported and recognized, one needs to rethink and extend (but not cancel) the democracy of our age beyond the labour- oriented paradigm. By referring to the oppressed as the 'poor', Rancière forever fixates and preserves them as poor and non-equal to others. The category of the 'poor', therefore, does not extend to those whose systematic exclusion from history cannot, and should not, be thought in purely economic terms – for example, women."

19 Louis Althusser, Étienne Balibar, Roger Establet, Jacques Rancière and Pierre Macherey, *Reading Capital: The Complete Edition* (New York: Verson, 2016)

20 Ibid, p 67

21 Jacques Rancière, *Althusser's Lesson* (London: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2011)

later look at the question of discipline within the potential organization of the Communist Party to tackle from their the relationship between the university, political work and discipline. Furthermore, he questions Althusser's own involvement as both professor, laborer within the university and as a political organizer. He writes, "At the end of 1963, Althusser was being questioned from both sides: the authorities of his party were questioning him about the relationship between his theory and Chinese politics, and student unions were questioning him about the relationship between the discipline of science and university discipline. He answered them by neutralizing the place of his discourse. He made the power of the professor the power of science, and he reduced the question of his place within the PCF to a *tactical matter* ." <sup>22</sup>. It would be worthwhile to read this critique in parallel to Chris Knight's critique of Noam Chomsky in "Decoding Chomsky: Science and Revolutionary Politics". <sup>23</sup> In this book that serves as an anthropological study of Chomsky, Knight studies the institutional and social context behind Chomsky's institutional upbringing and work. He critiques the linguist *cum* mathematician *cum* political theorist and activist as a dualist by both practice and theory. By doing so, Knight shows how the strains between military funding from one side and Chomsky's position as a key player within the American Left from another has led him to make a break, a detach and disconnect between his work in science and his work in politics. Herein, Knight regards Chomsky as one who deepened the split between the mind-body contrast that is character of Western philosophy since the Enlightenment.

But why do contemporary institutions often endorse the institutional critique that targets them, employ the critic without deploying their criticism? Isn't Chomsky by doing so, enacting the disconnected fantasy of discipline that divides, permeates and fragments everyday consciousness while hoarding in knowledge in one place and sowing ignorance in many others? This is what Herbert Marcuse theorized as "repressive tolerance". <sup>24</sup> Is Chomsky effectively

22 Ibid, p. 114

23 Chris Knight, *Decoding Chomsky: Science and Revolutionary Politics* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2016)

24 Herbert Marcuse, *Repressive Tolerance* (California: Berkeley Commune, 1968)

In this essay, Marcuse writes,

"Tolerance is an end in itself. The elimination of violence, and the reduction of suppression to the extent required for protecting man and animals from cruelty and aggression are preconditions for the creation of a humane society. Such a society does not yet exist; progress toward it is perhaps more than before arrested by violence and suppression on a global scale. As deterrents against nuclear war, as police action against subversion, as technical aid in the fight against imperialism and communism, as methods of pacification in neo-colonial massacres, violence and suppression are promulgated, practiced, and defended by democratic and authoritarian governments alike, and the people subjected to these governments are educated to sustain such practices as necessary for the preservation of the status quo. Tolerance is extended to policies, conditions, and modes of behavior which should not be tolerated because they are impeding, if not destroying, the chances of creating an existence without fear and misery."

defying the power that the institution secures to itself, or is it a double-edged game? Discipline was not far away from what Rancière learned to critique from/in his professor's philosophy and positioning within the world. In the appendix of Althusser's lesson, he wrote, "Bourgeois ideology is not contained in the discourse of one or another ideologue, or in the spontaneous system of representation of the students, but in the division between disciplines, in the examination system and in the organization of departments – all of which realize the bourgeois hierarchy of knowledge. Ideology, in fact, is not simply a collection of discourses or a system of representations. It is not what Althusser calls – the word choice is important – an 'atmosphere'. The dominant ideology is a power organized in a collection of institutions (the system of knowledge, information, etc.)."<sup>25</sup> Previous to that, wasn't Althusser the one who wrote warning of some little yet very crucial distinction particular to vision and thought, "but there is one small, one very small difference, which, I warn the reader straight away, we have no intention of not seeing!"<sup>26</sup> Hope is not complete if we do not learn together from one another. As Rancière writes in "Ten Theses on Politics" that politics, a paradoxical form of action and "a mode of acting put out into practice by a specific kind of subject and deriving from a particular form of reason", its principal function is "the configuration of its proper space, to disclose the world of its subjects and its operations. The essence of politics is the manifestation of dissensus, as the presence of two worlds in one."<sup>27</sup> It is only through the search for politics, with flesh and eyes looking back at that which police and repress it into discrete well-connected partitions, that we could begin learning from the worlds we create while attempting to know this one.<sup>28</sup>

---

<sup>25</sup> Jacques Rancière, *Althusser's Lesson* (London: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2011)

<sup>26</sup> Louis Althusser, Étienne Balibar, Roger Establet, Jacques Rancière and Pierre Macherey, *Reading Capital: The Complete Edition* (New York: Verson, 2016), p. 22 (ebook).

<sup>27</sup> Jacques Rancière, "Ten Theses on Politics" *Theory & event* 5, no. 3 (2001).

<sup>28</sup> In the same aforementioned theses, Rancière reminds us how "the police is not a social function but a symbolic constitution of the social."

He writes,

"Politics is specifically opposed to the police. The police is a 'partition of the sensible' [le partage du sensible] whose principle is the absence of a void and of a supplement."



# METHODOLOGY

**Because half the problem is seeing the problem.**

-LAURIE ANDERSON, *Only an Expert* (2010)

- 1.1 I have the ability to do it.
- 1.2 I have the time to do it.
- 1.3 You have a place and I know the address.
- 2 It's possible that I'll do it.
- 3.1 I desire to do it.
- 3.2 I desire that you tell me to do it.
- 4 I have the permission to do it.

-JEAN-FRANÇOIS LYOTARD, *The Differend* (1983)

**“I have so often deplored the revival of antiquated branches of philosophy—ethics, aesthetics—in a postmodern situation of de-differentiation in which, on the contrary, the various subfields of such a discipline should be asked to fold back on each other and disappear (and perhaps along with them, philosophy itself), that it is a pleasure to be able to include political theory among them as well. It should be obvious that the withering away of the state inevitably brings with it the withering away of that thinking whose object is essentially the state as such (the polis).”**

-FREDRIC JAMESON, *An American Utopia* (2016)

This thesis investigates the politics underlying the correlation between the production of space and the production of knowledge. Before laying out the methodological strategies I will be using for the presentation of my research at this particular place and academic institution on my quest at looking self-reflexively into the superstructure of knowledge itself and its liaison to spatial politics, an initial definition of what a problem has been or is within epistemology is necessary to launch with the first chapter. As seen since the Aristotelean *Problemata*, problems tend to be introduced in the philosophical tradition in the form of a question.<sup>28</sup> This epistemic modality confirms through the act of interrogation that the answer is or was once unknown. From this basic observance, we could infer that the starting point of all philosophy, the harbinger of academic traditions of knowledge, is ignorance, that is when relating the unknown to *ignorantia*; ‘not knowing’. I will be methodologically addressing the duality of ignorance and knowledge in the first chapter through firstly, Jacques Rancière’s

---

28 Aristotle, and W. D. Ross. *The works of Aristotle Volume VII: Problemata* (New York: Barnes & Nobles, 1963)

reading of ignorance as a dual state in relationship to myth and secondly, the recent emergence of agnotology as a school within epistemology. I will be inquiring on why did the study of ignorance rebound within the field of science, technology and society (STS) in particular. Tropes pertaining to falsification and denial will be revisited in the conclusion.

Returning to the problem of words, emerging out of *proballein* meaning 'put forth' that is formed of the merger of *pro* 'before' and *ballein* 'to throw', *problēma* in Greek connotes the act of throwing and putting forward. Laurie Anderson was keen in a verse; according to the classical age, to lay out a problem would be then to cast it in front of the eyes into the realm of vision.<sup>29</sup> Interestingly enough, while in the Arabic language 'ishkaliya' signifies the research problem understood as the classical point of departure of scholarly research and better known in the French that permeated into all of my education as the 'problématique', the word for problem 'mushkila' is derived from the noun 'shakl' and the verb 'shakkala'; meaning form and to form.<sup>30</sup> As the 'm' prefix in the 'maf'alat' wazen in Arabic signifies the location of a verb's object, problem would be defined in its etymological indication as where form takes place. Taking the question of what can we learn from observing the forms with which knowledge takes place, this thesis will be asking whether we can trace back certain problems within the spatial arrays of our world and the inequities founded within the distribution of labor to the organization of knowledge from the classical age to cognitive capitalism today. Also in the Arabic language, the word for training, 'tadrib' comes out of the noun 'darb' meaning path. Herein, to train is to make a path and to effectuate it in acts of re-visitation.<sup>31</sup> Knowledge proves again itself to be still caught in the act of ploughing the land or making ground.

Looking at the limitations of a master's thesis and my desire to think of my own labor and position within the production and elimination of ground and trace, I have concentrated my study to the taxonomies that were reified in the nineteenth century and evolved into the financial capitalism of the twentieth century and the cognitive capitalism of the twenty-first.

---

29 It is also interesting how presenting a problem lays out a movement going forward; progress.

30 I've had discussions with Arabic philologists against the general consensus that the root as well as the infinite form of words in Arabic is the third person singular male. I have been arguing for regarding nouns as the roots. I haven't found anything written on the subject yet and this needs thorough argumentation from my end, so I have resorted to using for the time being both forms.

31 One of the oldest meanings of the Latin word "trahere" from which the English verb 'train' emerges is 'to cause (often a plant) to grow in a desired shape'. This was one of the most basic verb used in Latin of the sense 'educate, instruct, teach.' Its latest meaning in Latin was however "to pull" or "to draw out". In Middle English, "train" interestingly enough meant "to delay". A military relation could be dormant here.

Following a non-linear reading of history while adopting Michel Foucault's notion of the episteme and Thomas Kuhn's theorization of the paradigm, I will be resorting to references from different said epochs of human thought while resorting to research strategies from corpus linguistics to look into the emergence of the word "discipline" in military and religious settings in the sixteenth century to its later use within the enlightenment to describe the ramifications of knowledge. Afterwards, I will be presenting a lexicographic study of the terms specific to certain disciplinary fields that I have conducted through several text corpora, interviews and data that I have collected while roaming between several departments at MIT with the aim to investigate the progression of militarization within epistemological disciplines.

The following questions of why has the production of scholarly work been always expressed in spatial-bound terms without explicitly considering an inherent tie between the production of knowledge and the production of space within the history of (-)human consciousness and why are disciplines often represented in terms of boundary conditions reminiscent of nationalist modes of representation and border zones pertaining to the territorial conception of border zones, will be reiterated all along the presentation of my research. For this reason, I have dedicated the third chapter to look into the anti-militarist movements that have greatly manifested during the beginning of the twentieth century and rendered most active between the two world wars as well as the discourses around imperialism and the political economy of military funding of the sciences that have emerged during the post-68 student movements. Apart from the readings, a big part of this research comes from interviews that I have been conducting for a year with students and professors who were part of the Science Action Coordinating Committee, the November Action Coalition and other groups that have organized during the 1969-1970 anti-war protests specifically at MIT and the surrounding area. I have had the precious chance to attend a pre-screening and discussion of Richard Leacock's unfinished film on the movement "November Actions" that the MIT Museum was organizing for students who appeared in the film and were active at that time. More to that in order to better understand my subject, I have audited courses at the Military "Science" department at MIT with cadets and generals from the US Army – something I would have never thought myself doing, this experience will be tackled later. I have also performed several interviews with scientists and engineers from the MIT Lincoln Laboratory that develops "technologies in support of national security" as well as with professors in computation and law that have been leading labs funded by military agencies. I will be in most cases belaboring through interviews in a deductive fashion.<sup>32</sup>

---

32 Alan Grometstein, ed. *MIT Lincoln Laboratory: Technology in Support of National Security* (Massachusetts: Lincoln Laboratory, 2011)

Hereby, I will be constantly going back to excavate such rudimentary concepts as part of my desire to probe the material conception of history and meaning while going beyond the act of interrogation in means that are not limited to the modes of address common to the field of art. To think of artists as those who only pose questions is to think of them as devoid of ideology and to think of the work of art as one without interpellation. While the first preposition is clearly a negative overdetermination and an impossibility within logic, the second deals with presenting the object of the aesthetic experience as one that surpasses the functions of recognition and misrecognition.<sup>33</sup> In this treatise, I will be waywardly attempting to learn from the specific relations to truth that aesthetic objects and aesthetic experience have historically posited all while paying special attention to art's contract since modernity with freedom on one hand and inconsequentiality on another. I will be further paralleling these observations on the aesthetic, the political and the inconsequential with three apposite aspects that contextualize art production within broader means that seem to have adhered to its disciplinary condition at least since the 20th century avant-garde, that is not to say since the last two centuries. The first is the museographic rendering or afterlife of the art object that survived even after a conceptual de-materialization, the second is the economy of the art market that I divide into two types: the continuation of pre-modern economies of patronage and the legitimization and constant embattle with scatological economies and the last is art's promise to autonomy. Sequentially, these aspects won't be explicitly directly targeted except in the essay on the Normandy Landfill and the conclusion. For the rest of the thesis, I will be contending with the aesthetics of knowledge not as an artist nor as an art student but as a student and producer of knowledge who works within both an informal solitary, expropriary and collective setting that they have started, The Society of False Witnesses. The SOFW has collaborated with practitioners whose disciplinary identifications range from geophysics to cryptography and architecture studies in works whose outcome have become public usually in either artistic, literary or academic institutions or site-specific locations. However, the society obstinately decides to be positioned outside of the existing classifications of knowledge and labor while still working within them.

---

33 As is obvious here and in the rest of the thesis, when speaking of ideology, I am referring to Althusser's reading à propos.





# **PART 1**



# CHAPTER I

## FROM UNDERGROUND TO GROUND, FIELD AND DISCIPLINE: PLACES TO KNOW

**Language has been granted too much power. [...] Like the frustrated would-be in Zeno's paradox, representationalism never seems to be able to get any closer to solving the problem it poses because it is caught in the impossibility of stepping outward from its metaphysical starting place. Perhaps it would be better to begin with a different starting point, a different metaphysics.**

-KAREN BARAD, *Posthumanist Performativity: Toward an Understanding of How Matter Comes to Matter* (2003)

**Life does not exist inside language. Too bad for me, Kathy.**

-KATHY ACKER, *My Mother Demonology* (1994)

**Place is uncertainty because it is truth.**

-SALIM BARAKAT, *The Ideologies of Meaning* (1992)

On the 16th of April 2016, Ahmad Beydoun published a new status on Facebook.<sup>34</sup> In it, he shared an interview that Hussein Bou Hamza conducted with him 5 years ago yet that was nevertheless put out the same day as the status.<sup>35</sup> In the circumstantial Facebook post, Beydoun notes that although the speech contained in the interview is “primary matter that did not undertake, from my side, the scrupulous care presumed for a speech made to be published

---

34 Ahmad Beydoun is often introduced as a Lebanese writer, historian, political scientist and linguist. Before gaining prominence for his assiduous body of work on all of Lebanese history, sociology and the Arabic language, he was known as one of the primary members of the Lebanon Socialist movement founded in 1965. Most recently, after publishing a ruminative compendium of his facebook statuses, “Notebook of Fasbaka” (2013), he has put out along with Manal Khodr “Arabic at Stake Within Social Networks” (2016) in which he posits social media as a liberating space that emancipates the Arabic language from its oppressive power of estrangement long manifested in the great chasm between the exclusively written or broadcasted Modern Standard Arabic and the vernacular varieties of the language.

35 Ahmad Beydoun, interview by Hussein Ben Hamza, Ahmad Beydoun: I Am a Writer Who ‘Strayed’ His Way to Politics and History, Al-Akhbar Newspaper, April 16, 2016.

<http://www.al-akhbar.com/node/256204>

in full letters” and despite that it was initially conducted in order to “merely use its subject/matter to mold the ‘portrait’ of a writer who publishes on the last page of the newspaper”, Ben Hamza conveyed it to print and Ahmad Beydoun is grateful for this endeavor. Now moving to the content of the interview itself; precisely the eleventh question that caught my attention and that will hereby present the premise of this paper. Before that, let me point out at the title which substantiates what I will be reaching at in the coming four minutes. It was: “Ahmad Beydoun : I Am a Writer Who “Lost” His Way - Into Politics and History”. In the 11th question, Ben Hamza asked, “it is often said that you are several writers in one, can you tell me about the pleasure derived from that?” Ahmad Beydoun responded, “Ramification is indeed a source of pleasure. I feel as if I am entering a ground that I may not be for the first time entering yet that I haven’t inhabited. I may have achieved few things in one field, but this is considered as a kind of opening. It is as if you have broken through a mure or defied a profession or claimed it and belonged to it through a forceful sense of determination.<sup>36</sup> I think that my rural upbringing carries a contemptuous relation to specialization. In villages, one can practice any profession or a combination of different occupations. One can be a farmer and a shoemaker at once. For example, one can take part with workers in the construction of his/her house...” Beydoun strolls in the production of knowledge. How come does he feel he has broken through a mure or entered a new ground by merely moving from writing on history to sociology to linguistics or politics?

The production of knowledge has been immensely tied to the production of space in both language and application. Through the use of metaphors and metonymy coupled with spatial strategies of exclusion and delimitation, knowledge has been ramified into *disciplines* and *fields* whose continuous corollary integration on the distribution of labor reproduce taxonomies evident in the political and topological organization of the world. According to Max Weber, modernity dangerously establishes a fundamental disunity of reason that through rationalization creates three spheres of value: the differentiated zones of science, art and law.<sup>37</sup> This arises not simply from the creation of separate institutional entities but through the specialization of cognitive, normative, and aesthetic knowledge that in turn permeates and

---

36 Contextually in the original Arabic text, ‘mure’ would also connote “a fortified wall”.

37 Max Weber, “Science and Vocation”, in Hans Heinrich Gerth and Mills C. Wright (eds). From Wax Weber: Essays in Sociology (London: Oxford University Press, 1958), p. 141. For further reading on Weber’s theory of rationalization and Habermas’ critique of Weber that basically deems the former’s theorization of social rationality and action as simply vague, overly simple and individuated, please refer to:

Jurgen Habermas, The Theory of Communicative Action Vol. 1 (Boston: Beacon Press, 1984)

fragments everyday consciousness. <sup>38</sup>The reification of cognitive orders into spatial, agronomic and geometrical terms like “field”, “zone”, “sphere” etc.. is ancient. This chapter exhumes manifestations that tie theoretical knowledge and epistemology with place through the use of language. It highlights some of the spatio-epistemological references I have *stumbled upon* while reading and researching that range from Greek philosophy to Arabic thought passing by the Enlightenment and our contemporary time. I resort to history hoping to arrive to a place where the recent deployment of *topos* within knowledge and knowledge within *topos* in language and praxis can be more critically investigated. I, perhaps deterritorialized, call this process “the territorialization of knowledge”.

Before delving into these instances of language, some points need to be elucidated. With an analysis that is neither caught in linguistic nor epochal exceptionalism, I read these instances of language as corresponding to tendencies within the ontologies of their time of production, the works they appeared in and possibly other similar or contrasting manifestations of thought that are not necessarily in direct chronotopic propinquity with them. In recent times in the past century, several investigations within epistemology were written with a rather conclusive and exhaustive premise to look into the history of knowledge at large. These works were granted great attention and were studied thoroughly in the humanities and philosophy of science. The two works that most saliently come to mind are Michel Foucault’s “The Order of Things” and Thomas Kuhn’s “The Structure of Scientific Revolutions”. <sup>39</sup> In his book, Foucault posits that every epoch has its own “episteme” used to judge what is prevalently acceptable as knowledge in the culture of its time. Along these, rather structuralist, lines, he writes, “In any given culture and at any given moment, there is always one episteme that defines the conditions of possibility of all knowledge whether expressed in a theory or silently invested in practice.” <sup>40</sup> Similarly to the episteme, Thomas Kuhn posits that every epoch has its own paradigm within science. <sup>41</sup> Kuhn is very critical of the notion that science progresses by accretion. He posits that every now and then, a scientific revolution happens creating a

---

38 Furthermore, Weber’s work is nevertheless arguable and centric in its scope as he centers it around the outset of the disenchantment with religion which is not universally applicable to all the places where these divisions were adopted. It is also important to note that Habermas builds upon the writings of Marquis de Condorcet, the philosopher and mathematician who through studying the work of Newton wrote since the 18th century of the epistemological dangers of the scientific method that would dismiss and render philosophy as a mere “object of opinion”.

39 Thomas Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1962)

40 Michel Foucault, *The Order of Things: An Archaeology of the Human Sciences* (New York: Vintage Books, 1970), p. 170.

41 For an interesting comparative reading of Kuhn and Foucault please refer to the following lecture and discussion by philosopher Giorgio Agamber:

Agamben, Giorgio. “What is a Paradigm?” (2009)

Online link: <http://www.maxvanmanen.com/files/2014/03/Agamben-What-is-a-paradigm1.pdf>

radical and abrupt “paradigm shift” within the prevalent knowledge. In both works, Kuhn and Foucault dismiss the effect of bio-political factors such as plagues, conquest and war on the interruption of knowledge.<sup>42</sup> Chiming with that, I adopt Jose Merquior concept of the “epistemic lag” that addresses how certain tendencies disappear within given times and resurge in others.<sup>43</sup> In what is about to come, I do not posit the manifestations of the territorialization of knowledge that I chose to tackle as attesting to exclusively singular historical articulations. This correlation seems constant along history albeit with both similar and different contrasting relations evident across distinct languages, times and regions. I will not be explicitly going back to the tropes of territorialization that I have already referred to in the introduction and methodology sections.

In “The Clouds”, an ancient Greek comedy by Aristophanes that is regarded as one of the earliest works of institutional critique and surveys on academia, the old indebted Strepsiades decides to enroll in himself in ‘The Thinkery’ – a school headed by no other than Socrates. His sardonic decision comes through after having failed to persuade his gambling son to study there in hopes of leaving his addiction. The following scenario befalls upon his arrival to The Thinkery.

**STREPSIADES:**

[..]

**I can’t wait any longer, I’m dying to learn. Open the door!**

**(The central doors open and the ekkyklema is rolled out onstage. A group of four pallid, barefooted and shabbily dressed students are**

---

42 Notable historical examples of when plagues have led to the disappearance of certain practices of knowledge, trade and hence the transmission of the former are in the 1517-1570 period in the Ottoman Empire and the mid-11th century around the Nile region and modern day Iraq. On the latter, Ibn Butlan wrote,

“In that year[1054], when all the burying places had been filled in al-Qustantiniyya, fourteen thousand bodies were buried in Luke’s Church in the autumn. In the middle of the summer of the year the Nile was low, and in al-Fustat and al-Sham most of the people and all strangers perished except those whom God saved.—Se plague then moved to ‘Iraq, devastating its people, and destruction was spread by the contending foreign soldiers. Sis state of affairs continued up to the year 454/[1062-63]. People developed black ulcers and swelling spleens. Se succession of fevers and the routine of sailors were put out of order and the science of prognostic judgments was disturbed.”

For more information on the 2 plagues, please refer to respectively:

Nukhet Varlik, *Plague and Empire in the Early Modern Mediterranean World*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015)

Abdelhamid I Sabra, “The” Commentary” That Saved the Text. *The Hazardous Journey of Ibn al-Haytham’s Arabic Optics*.” *Early Science and Medicine* 12, no. 2 (2007): 117-133.

43 José Guilherme Merquior, 1991. Foucault (2nd edn.). Fontana, London.

revealed busy with various activities.)

**By Heracles! What on earth are these creatures!**

**STUDENT:**

**You seem surprised. What do you think they are?**

**STREPSIADES:**

**They look like a bunch of half-starved walking wounded to me.\***

**(Pointing to a group of the students)**

**Why are they staring at the ground?**

**STUDENT:**

**They are seeking to know what lies beneath the earth. <sup>44</sup>**

In another “place” within Greek philosophy, in the Aristotelean “Problemata”, we read the following problem thrown out:

**“Why doth a man when he museth, or thinketh on things past, look down towards the earth? Because the cell or creek which is behind is the creek or chamber of memory, and therefore that looketh towards heaven when the head is bowed down; progand so that cell is open, to the end that the spirits which perfect the memory should enter in.”**

In the first excerpt, knowing is equated to seeing and studying is represented as an attempt to acquire the dark, obscure, dim subterranean. To be a disciple of philosophy is to seek to learn that which lies beneath visible layers. Looking downwards is furthermore comically presented as both an act of destitute subjugation and lofty aspiration for wisdom. In the second, this trope is explained as mnemonic. The object of learning is no longer the underneath but a mnemonic act of “opening the head” as well as an act of humility. The memory is depicted here as belonging to the external. Rather than being formed introrsum, inside the crane. Chiming with that, in her book “The Art of Memory”, Frances Yates traces the history of the theatre of memory in Ancient Greece and in the Renaissance.<sup>45</sup> Through studying the exercises practiced by several orators and rhetoricians, she posits that in the Greek times, to remember things was to imagine and organize them in space. Memory is herein reactivated by an external reference whose imaginary simulation suffices the stimulation of an organized knowledge. Furthermore, the members of Aristotle’s school later were called Peripatetics with peripatos meaning ambulatory. Some has theorized the reason behind this naming was due to the school’s property being adjacent to the exercise ground. Others have said, it is because Greek philosophers, notably Seneca, would walk as they thought. The members of the Lyceum conducted research into a very wide range of subjects, all of which

---

44 Aristophanes, *Clouds, Acharnians, Lysistrata* (Bristol: Bristol Classical Press, 1989)

45 Frances A. Yates, *The Art of Memory* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1966)



theology, rhetoric, biology, music, mathematics, astronomy, medicine, cosmology, physics, the history of philosophy, metaphysics, political history, government and political theory, rhetoric, and the arts.

In his early 17th century book “*Aurifodina, or The Mine of All Arts and Sciences, or the Habit of Excerpting*”, Jeremias Drexel compares the search for knowledge to mining in the underground. He further presents the act of note-taking in reading as double-folded act of extraction and insertion into the underground.<sup>46</sup> For Drexel, the practice of deriving trenchant notes through the act of attentive reading is perfected by creating several accumulated, well-arranged clusters within the under-earth of his page. He organizes these notes on the surface of several pages following a well-ordered string of references on traditions such as bacchanalia, dance and insists on the usefulness of such process for collecting citations that could be used for future works.<sup>47</sup> This has led to regarding the practice of note-taking in some instances of the 18th century as a pejorative act of plagiarism. To take notes was to replicate, to spy on knowledge and de-regulate it. This epistemological and spatio-mimetic relation of acquisition that spatially relegates and delegates the quest for knowledge into the subterranean and the below is still evident today in words of common usage. We say we understand. We say we determine.<sup>48</sup> We undermine, we infer and more recently, we data mine.<sup>49</sup> We dig for information and we exhume histories. Foucault deemed himself as an archeologist of knowledge, so do many media theorists today.<sup>50</sup>

In “*Elements of the Philosophy of Right*”, Hegel writes, “The state is the march of God in the world; its ground or cause is the power of reason realizing itself as will.”<sup>51</sup> With the imperial conquests at the heart of the enlightenment, knowledge was equated to making ground and ground became symbolic of reason. Up until today, we say, “you need to ground your argument” or “this argument was not grounded”. This has emerged at the same time as when the scientific method was used to survey, map and quantify new territories in preparation for colonial conquests. Herein, knowledge was arrested from being ideologically concerned with the profound, the unseen and the deep. It elevated itself to the status of making ground.

---

46 Jeremias Drexel, *Aurifodina artium et scientiarum omnium: Excerptendi sollertia, omnibus litterarum amantibus monstrata* (Antwerp, 1638),

47 For more information on Drexel's subterranean practice of acquisition, please refer to: Ann Blair, “Note taking as an art of transmission.” *Critical Inquiry* 31, no. 1 (2004): 85-107.

48 Other than terra, in Latin, “terminus” on this similar lines meant “limit”

49 In Latin, the prefix “in-“denotes inside while ferrum denotes iron.

50 Jussi Parika, *What Is Media Archaeology?* (New Jersey: John Wiley & Sons, 2013)

51 Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, *The Philosophy of Right* (Massachusetts: Hackett Publishing, 2015), 70 (ebook)

However, a ground for whom? Who walks there? At least Schelling did not want to neither walk there nor make ground. He knew that he couldn't do it. Schelling trenchantly unstated the bond between philosophy and ground by investigating the relation between subject and 'nature' as an 'unground'. To him, the unground is concerned with indifference as opposed to the difference that dualism poses as "a system of self-laceration and despair of reason". Speaking of self-laceration, when I went back searching for the history of the use of the word "discipline", I found that at least since the outset of the printing press during the 15th century, discipline manifested itself exclusively in two contexts. The first is religious and the second is military. In its translation from the Latin *disciplina* to Middle English, I found the following meaning: 'mortification by scourging oneself. Discipline was an act of subjugating the body – forcefully subduing the self, mollifying and taming it by a painful process of chastening and training. Reading Schelling's work as transcendental geology, speculative realist philosopher Ian Hamilton Grant recently attempted to effectuate Schelling's unground through developing a realism that critiques Deleuze's analysis of nature. In his reading, Deleuze separates freedom from nature and reduces the latter to a collection of objects, "wherein the earth becomes a place or set of places."<sup>52</sup> Grant elaborates saying that it is in the act of "regionalizing matter" that Deleuze makes himself complicit with his nemesis Hegel.<sup>53</sup> For "to ground is to determine the indeterminate", Deleuze wrote. Earlier, Hegel has argued all through out his experience that it is through logic that reason is proven to be the pure indeterminate being. Hence, both Hegel and Deleuze can read on the same ground.<sup>54</sup> Redolent of the peripatetic, Deleuze's subject is nomadic. However, it is not walking, it is constantly becoming and leaving as it becomes. For Deleuze and Guattari, the subject is caught "in the movement by which one leaves the territory"; it is being deterritorialized. In their earth-bound planes of flight, the two French philosophers speculated whether there are "not also territories and deterritorializations that are not only physical and mental but spiritual—not only relative but absolute in a sense yet to be determined". Yet can those who are forced to leave bear the expense of being deterritorialized?<sup>55</sup> How can an exilic subject, versus a nomadic one, know when it is denied dwelling? How can it adapt? I am always somewhere even if unheard. To know is to determine the indeterminate by leaving certain things, out or perhaps in between. Yet what does it mean to know things over and over again – if ever attained?

---

<sup>52</sup> Ian Hamilton Grant, *Philosophies of Nature After Schelling* (London: Continuum, 2006), 31

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid*, p. 202

<sup>54</sup> Ben Woodard, a fellow speculative realist, adopts this critique claiming that both Deleuze and Hegel seem to deny how geology affect thought in:

Ben Woodard, *On an Ungrounded Earth: Towards a New Geophilosophy* (New York: Punctum Books, 2013)

<sup>55</sup> Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, *What Is Philosophy?* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2014)

not only physical and mental but spiritual-not only relative but absolute in a sense yet to be determined". Yet can those who are forced to leave bear the expense of being deterritorialized? How can an exilic subject, versus a nomadic one, know when it is denied dwelling? How can it adapt? I am always somewhere even if unheard. To know is to determine the indeterminate by leaving certain things, out or perhaps in between. Yet what does it mean to know things over and over again – if ever attained?

Data dredging, data fishing, data mining, information extraction – where is data? It has been said that it is ubiquitous. In her book "Beautiful Data" historian of science Orit Halpern writes, "this ubiquitous data that is so valuable, even without a set referent or value, is also often explicitly labeled "beautiful." In the pamphlets of technology corporations touting the virtues of a "smart" planet and in prominent textbooks in computer science and blogs by computer research groups, stories abound about "elegant data solutions." These narratives come with labels such as "Beautiful Data" and "Beautiful Evidence."<sup>56</sup> Evidence of what? A beautiful place? Data seems to be wanted to be nearly everywhere, yet in some places, it is not only granted the power to tuck and inhume information that would also make a difference but it is also assumed to be able to build meaning to the point of automation. Even beyond this automated semantics made out of collecting, extracting and inferring from data to be updated accordingly, it is meant to become a city, an alliance of cities. At least, this is the case that seems to be constantly posited by the smart city proposal – or what Halpern calls in one of her latest lectures: the Smart Mandate. In the paper "The Vision of Smart Cities", these cities are defined as "the urban center of the future, made safe, secure environmentally green, and efficient because all structures--whether for power, water, transportation, etc. are designed, constructed, and maintained making use of advanced, integrated materials, sensors, electronics, and networks which are interfaced with computerized systems comprised of databases, tracking, and decision-making algorithms."<sup>57</sup> In the smart proposal of cities, computation becomes a constitutive part in the construction or rather to use its own terms; for the constant "optimization" and sought "resilience" of the built environment. All knowledge becomes interconnected, trackable and self-serving to this pervasive network system that is algorithmically programmed to respond back against danger while quantifying its own states. The smart city is posited as smart because it surveys itself to predict before the ensuing threat. While risk is always a factor to return to and mitigate within design architectural systems, the smart city's obsession with crisis is rather remarkable. Halpern reads it as a continuation of the

---

<sup>56</sup> Orit Halpern, *Beautiful Data: A History of Vision and Reason since 1945* (North Carolina: Duke University Press, 2015) p. 5

<sup>57</sup> Bowerman, B., J. Braverman, J. Taylor, H. Todosow, and U. Von Wimmersperg. "The Vision of a Smart City." In *2nd International Life Extension Technology Workshop*, Paris, vol. 28. 2000.

Cold War Rationality.<sup>58</sup> In this sense, one could say that cities need to know in order to defend themselves. The production of knowledge has not been only immensely tied to the production of space but in the recent two centuries it has been increasingly tied to intelligence and defense. How does the university-military collusion that hasn't been de facto secret at all, relate to discipline and how does it influence the production and political economy of the knowledge that we produce today?

In his essay "Thinking Between Disciplines: an Aesthetic of Knowledge", Jacques Rancière recalls the importance of *conte* or 'story' in history and discipline.<sup>59</sup> He furthermore contends that it is through the experience of art that one encounters the ignorance asserted through story as form of knowledge, belief and imposition. A particular strain has caught my attention. In this essay and the interview between him and Marie-Aude Baronian "Jacques Rancière and Indisciplinarity", Rancière uses the language of the battlefield whenever he talks about disciplines.<sup>60</sup> "A war machine", "the scientific war against allodoxy", "to speak of war", "dehiscence", "engage in a war against the war", "hemorrhage", "it[disciplinary thought] must ceaselessly pursue war but pursue it as a pacifist operation", "the context of the war", "the distant roar of battles", "weapons in a dispute", "weapons in a war", "the war of forms", "forewarning". He later adds, "To speak of war is not to disqualify the disciplines in question. It is to recall that a discipline is always much more than assembly of procedures which permit the thought of a given territory of objects. It is first the constitution of this territory itself, and therefore the establishment of a certain distribution of the thinkable. As such, it supposes a cut in the common fabric of manifestation of thought and language.[...] They must therefore engage in a war against the claim that there is another knowledge and another ignorance than that which belongs to their conditions. In other words, they must engage against a war that the worker is himself fighting."<sup>61</sup> What if this interdisciplinary poetics of knowledge that investigates the common procedures, stories and objects that every discipline uses, carries within it a method of equality that by breaking this borderization attempts to fight the the spatio-epistemological war against war. Who knows where? If the topological organization of the world is always being translated into the organization of knowledge, then what if we could start defying the spatial organization of the world through re-thinking of the ordering of knowledge itself.

---

58 Orit Halpern, *Apocalyptic Hope: Infrastructure, Speculation, and "Smartness"*, lecture, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Massachusetts, March 11, 2016

59 Jacques Rancière, "Thinking Between Disciplines: an Aesthetics of Knowledge" *Parrhesia* no.1 (2006), p. 9

60 Jacques Rancière and Marie-Aude Baronian, "Jacques Rancière and Indisciplinarity" in *Art & Research:*

*A Journal of Ideas, Contexts and Methods* Volume 2 no. 1 (Sydney: University of Australia, 2007)

61 Jacques Rancière, "Thinking Between Disciplines: an Aesthetics of Knowledge" *Parrhesia* no.1 (2006), p. 9.

A lot has been written on how American scientists who have been working on wartime defense projects during WWII have returned to the space of the university after the post-war years searching for ways to apply the knowledge they have learned during the war and prolong the funding they had received at that time. Mathematician and philosopher of science Slava Gerovich evinces how “they argued that methods they had developed for solving specific military problems (for example, tracking airplanes and enciphering messages) had general theoretical significance and could solve numerous communication and control problems far beyond the military realm. The jocular “universal form” merely reflected this trend of unrestrained expansion of the new methods and theoretical models ‘n all suitable institutions,’ ‘throughout the waters of the oceans of this planet,’ ‘within the deep core of the earth,’ ‘in the arctic and antarctic areas,’ ‘throughout the troposphere,’ and in space.’”<sup>62</sup> Prior to governmental funding, and the establishment of exceedingly affluent government agencies for the funding of research like DARPA consecrated for technology and computation and DARSPA dedicated to funding the social sciences and area studies – mostly secretly – that were founded in the early Cold War era, the philanthropist and financier Alfred Lee Loomis continue to blow in as a looming figure to the student movements that would spread into the university campuses of the US in the 1960s.<sup>63</sup> It is said to have begun in private endeavors in the laboratory that Loomis has founded in Tuxedo Park, New York prior to and in preparation for WWII.<sup>64</sup> This laboratory was later hosted under the name of the Rad Lab on the campus of MIT. It is there that people like Noam Chomsky, Gerry Sussman and Marvin Minsky began their work on the university campus.<sup>65</sup> As the Vietnam War erupted with more research commissions, the Democratic representative John Moss, was able to, after a decade of investigation and trials, bring into ratification in 1966 The Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) that would enable citizens to request any kind of government information that was not classified for security purposes.<sup>66</sup> While one would at first hand imagine an austere discipline to be following the

---

62 Slava Gerovitch, *From Newspeak to Cyberspeak: A History of Soviet Cybernetics* (Massachusetts: MIT Press, 2004)

63 For more information on the student movement at MIT, please refer to:  
Dorothy Nelkin, *The University and Military Research* (New York: Cornell University, 1972)

For more information on the role of engineers within the movements, please refer to:  
Matthew Wisnioski, *Engineers for change: Competing visions of technology in 1960s America* (Massachusetts: MIT Press, 2012)

Sarah Bridger, *Scientists at War: The Ethics of Cold War Weapons Research* (Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2015)

64 Jennet Conant, *Tuxedo Park: A Wall Street tycoon and the secret palace of science that changed the course of World War II* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2013)

65 In the following book:

Fred Turner, *From Counterculture to Cyberculture: Stewart Brand, the Whole Earth Network, and the Rise of Digital Utopianism* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006).

Turner contends that a raggle-taggle cohort of liberations who worked on military-industrial research and their technology enthusiasts journalists propagated early information technology and computation as a counterculture tool that would later highly influence the emancipatory image that was given to technology by mass media.

lessons and technical findings made for the army, the US Army was able to understand early on through its calls for 'innovation' that 'cross-disciplinary' work brings about the 'surprise' that the army holds dear in its philosophy. War is never disciplined, though discipline is constantly at war.

Jacques Rancière writes, "The counter-myth of the joiner breaks the circle. The indisciplinary procedure must thus create the textual and signifying space in which this relation of myth to myth is visible and thinkable."<sup>67</sup> Today this process is accelerating: Code has become a new form of a 'universalizing language' for capital to co-ordinate labor and place via algorithms that are opaque to workers and inhabitants. 'Interdisciplinarity' and the 'open lab' projects increasingly happen under the sway of a new ideology whose goal is to form a 'social physics' that controls, optimizes, and predicts labor.<sup>68</sup> From the use of algorithms in 'predictive policing' to usage of algorithmic profiles in the job market, not only is human language increasingly fragmented by capital, it is being knit back together in a pervasive manner through a cybernetics of data accumulation and surveillance. Rather than searching for the settings of deployment and delineation in which these tools have grown to gain a positivist truth value, a general tendency exist within critique to antagonize as otherly to the task of knowledge prior to the computational age. As these criticisms grow within the humanities at large and the field of media studies, they seem to continue to hold very little influence on those who produce them. Online and hence offline social communication and media don't seem to be the only 'aspects of life' that are caught homophilic echo chambers and filter bubbles but also knowledge and in turn labor as well as territory.<sup>69</sup> This further promotes a cybernetics that alleges to cognitively capture the environment and reproduce the self through data accumulation, surveillance and the ever-changing representations of AI. As these representational and interceptive tools become more opaquely predominant, labor is further obfuscated by capital while more territories are asymmetrically raided and enclosed for new primitive accumulations to take form. This thesis seeks to ask: how to break from these

---

66 Kelly Moore, *Disrupting Science: Social Movements, American Scientists, and the Politics of the Military, 1945 – 1975* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2008), p. 36

67 *Ibid*, 10

68 For more information on the concept of "social physics" presented as such by philosopher of science Karl Popper, please read:

Goutam Biswas, "Some Reflections on Karl Popper's Theory of Social Explanation." *Sociological Bulletin* 38, no. 2 (1989): 251-260.

I've observed that the term was most recently picked up by several computer scientists often with claims to predict behavior through the infiltration and accumulation of personal data.

69 For more information on this content fettering architecture presiding the world-wide web, please refer to :

Wendy Chun, *Updating to Remain the Same: Habitual New Media* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2016) and

Eli pariser, *The filter bubble: What the Internet is Hiding from You* (London: Penguin, 2011)

superfluous epistemological boundaries that pervasively occupy cognizance, illicitly promote certain ideologies of power over place, and unremittingly assimilate life into computation?

Prior to the pervasive use of the Internet protocol suite and the wide-spread of computers within office space, state-run cybernetic projects of the 60s and 70s such as Allende's Cybersyn and the Soviet All-State Automated System known as OGAS presented another vision of cybernetic organization and rule of law that rather than delegating the organization of bureaucratic data to corporation and by so doing isolating information further as bits to be governed by a more delineated discipline of law under which all corporations technically fall, they foresaw the theatre of information as a potentially computable factory that needs to be publicly spectated and monitored for better performance. This network would record and predict the economy which was still exempted of personal data seeing that the use of computers was, at that time, limited to the military followed by the airlines industry to be later proffered by certain disciplinary fields within universities in some fractions of the world.

While Allende's project was engineered with the purpose to evade top-down control by the government and secure the autonomy of workers by providing them with alerts of economic peripeties before notifying the central government, the Soviet Union's proposed "Machines of Communism" re-established the authoritative role of the state as that which executes command and control. In order to allow workers a decentralized remote access to the collated data, the system required in the designs of all of Stafford Beer's Cybersyn, Glushkov's OGAS and Kharkevich's ESS a centralized automatic control unit which would guarantee that the network's operation would go unbroken with holds and interruptions. Read by some historians as a Soviet precursor of the Arpanet that did not take place, several accounts portray a contested double-banked relationship between the Soviet proposed economic automated systems and the military. Arguing that the engineers of the national computer networks "brought the 'command and control' philosophy of military computing into their economic proposals", Slava Gerovitch traces the trajectory undertaken by the initial 1959 vision of Engineer Colonel Anatolii Kitov. The military engineer proposed building on preexisting military networks a nationwide computer network for civilians in a dual-use project known as the Economic Automatic Management Systems (EASU). Holding the position of deputy head of the Computation Center No. 1 of the Ministry of Defense, Kitov is presented here as the co-author of the first Soviet article on cybernetics, "The Main Features of Cybernetics", and the author of the first-noted Soviet book on cybernetics, "Digital Computing Machines". It is said that in 1952, Kitov found "the single copy of Wiener's Cybernetics in a secret library of the Special Construction Bureau—SKB-245—at the Ministry of Machine and Instrument

Building”.<sup>70</sup> Wiener’s “Cybernetics” had been trenchantly critiqued in 1951 as “semantic idealism”, putting cybernetics, interestingly enough, in the same category that Stalin has granted to Nicholas Marr’s linguistic pseudo-paleontology.<sup>71</sup> In his essay “Concerning Marxism in Linguistics”(1950) published in Pravda in the same year that Weiner released his second book on cybernetics “The Human Use of Human Beings”, the Soviet dictator condemned the Marrist school of linguistics of idealism for considering language a superstructure.<sup>72</sup> Stalin goes on writing, “While it[language] differs in principle from the superstructure, language does not differ from instruments of production, from machines, let us say, which are as indifferent to classes as is language and may, like it, equally serve a capitalist system and a socialist system.”

For the telling sake of concurrence and other reasons that I might soon divulge, I will resume in seemingly similar lines of inquiry. Is the concept of artificial intelligence at prima facie the superstructure of programming languages? Are programming languages the base of artificial intelligence? Perhaps in order to even ask this question, we might need to first inquire; is language the superstructure of communication, or is it the other way around? Or perhaps even something else? While AI has been since the start concerned with Natural Language Processing through the computer/cognitive scientist commonly taking the position of the parsing teacher who develops means to teach language to machines – from the Dartmouth Conference’s proposal of “[attempting] to find how to make machines use language, form abstractions and concepts” to John McCarthy being the inventor of LISP, one of the oldest programming languages in use and on more poignant note, the self-reflexive language of Joseph Weizenbaum’s sardonic ELIZA – cybernetics has been founded with the aim to study messages “as a means of controlling machinery and society” that are not strictly particular to language but to communication. In the general views mediated by the cybernetics of the 40s and 50s, language, just as any other system of communication, is constantly striving against entropy whose ontological position Norbert Wiener grants to nature. Hereby, rather than merely producing meaning, language negatively acts as a means to obstruct the natural order of confusion. As opposed to the Soviet critique of semantic idealism, the optimal target of cybernetics is organization rather than meaning. However, Norbert Wiener grants one state of exception to language where semantics becomes caught in a froward battlefield against its purported meaning, and that is in the case of juridical discourse. In a longer essay, I would contend that if I were to follow Wiener’s conception of language, I would want to ask what can

---

70 Peters, Benjamin. *How Not to Network a Nation: The Uneasy History of the Soviet Internet*. MIT Press, 2016, p. 35

71 Slava Gerovitch, “Russian Scandals”: Soviet Readings of American Cybernetics in the Early Years of the Cold War.” *The Russian Review* 60, no. 4 (2001): 545-568.

72 Stalin, Joseph V. *Marxism and problems of linguistics*. Wildside Press LLC, 2008



we learn from observing how Wiener forgot the willful opposition between poetry and law and the endorsement of the former to entropy. In the aforementioned “The Human Use of Human Beings” whose title rings of slavery, he writes,

**“Language may strive simply against nature’s tendency to confuse it or against willful human attempts to subvert its meaning. Normal communicative discourse, whose major opponent is the entropic tendency of nature itself, is not confronted by an active enemy, conscious of its own purposes. Forensic discourse, on the other hand, such as we find in the law court in legislative debates and so on, encounters a much more formidable opposition, whose conscious aim is to qualify and even to destroy its meaning. Thus an adequate theory of language as a game should distinguish between these two varieties of language, one of which is intended primarily to convey information and the other primarily to impose a point of view against a willful opposition.”**<sup>71</sup>

Slava Gerovitch exhumes a letter Kitov had sent to the first secretary of the Communist Party Nikita Khrushchev calling for ‘radical change and improvement of methods and means of management by making a transition from the manual and personal forms of management to automated systems, based on the use of electronic computing machines.’ Kitov sent along his book.<sup>72</sup> The fact that Kitov had appealed directly to the Party instead of his military superiors enraged the MOD which in turn expelled him from the army. Being an assiduous reader of “Digital Computing Machines” since its publishing in 1956 and computationally viewing, in the architecture of OGAS, the economy as a single factory, Glushkov employed Kitov as a consultant following his military dismissal in 1960. In order to bring his project to actuation, Glushkov went on demanding from the Prime Minister Kosygin funding as huge as that of the military nuclear and space programs combined arguing that the de-centralized civilian economic project required even more money than outer space. The OGAS never took place.

“The home of the future is a robot,” Colin Angle, the co-founder of the iRobot company that we will later tackle said. “And the vacuum cleaners and the other devices are hands and eyes and appendages of the home robot. Ultimately, this smart home of the future isn’t controlled by your cell phone. If you have 200 devices, you’re not going to turn them on by pulling out your cell phone. We need a home that programs itself, and you just live in your home, and the home does the right thing based on understanding what’s going on.”

---

71 Wiener, Norbert. *The human use of human beings: Cybernetics and society*. No. 320. Da capo press, 1954, p 93.

72 *Ibid*, 338

What we are witnessing here is a reverse ontological turn from that of the mechanist school of philosophy where “the heart is a clock” (Descartes) , “the eye is a camera obscura” (Kepler), etc.. Now, the computer is a brain, the vacuum cleaner is a hand, the camera is eyes without a body. In his recent book, “The Use of Bodies”, philosopher Giorgio Agamben writes,

**“It is necessary, at this point, to restore to the slave the decisive meaning that belongs to him in the process of anthropogenesis. The slave is, on the one hand, a human animal (or an animal-human) and, on the other hand and to the same extent, a living instrument (or an instrument-human). That is to say, the slave constitutes in the history of anthropogenesis a double threshold, in which animal life crosses over to the human just as the living (the human) crosses over into the inorganic (into the instrument), and vice versa. The invention of slavery as a juridical institution allowed the capture of living beings and of the use of the body into productive systems, temporarily blocking the development of the technentopological instrument; its abolition in modernity freed up the possibility of technology, that is, of the living instrument.”**<sup>73</sup>

While Agamben goes on to further posit that the abolition of slavery is one of the principal factors that allowed the industrial revolution to kick in, Norbert Wiener seemed to have understood this relation earlier on. I am a sequence of expressions and the human use of human beings reeks of slavery. While human slavery still survives in subsidized production far from your house, the techno-slave is represented as an organ, a bolt in the an engineer’s promise of a fully subdued environment fulfilled by the endless dream of automation. But no one wants to live in slavery except those who always thought were master. Robot becomes jouissance, the sacrifice of the self-alleged transhuman subject who seeks to auto-clean his house with a dumb eye while it wrecks another’s far. That dream cum agenda of a completely technologically mediated environment suppresses in its core not only a sustained belief in mastery but an auto-oppressive fear of revolution. The ‘indisciplinary’ epistemology I propose studies and grapples with the militarization, “borderization” and territorialization of both ignorance and knowledge. While non-linearly tracing some of its inklings in recent strains of thought, I will ruminate on my interdisciplinary work under the interdisciplinary platform I have founded, The Society of False Witnesses. As this treatise will unfold, I seek to present how potentially through interdisciplinary practice, performance and writing, I attempt to exhume and unsettle the notions of field and discipline as impinging border-space and terrains of war and restriction.

---

73 Giorgio Agamben, *The Use of Bodies* (California: Stanford University Press, 2016)

While resorting to my ongoing work on the ramifications and militarization of knowledge and truth under the SOFW, I will hereby evince how I continuously aim to infiltrate disciplines through the bio- and epistemo-political figure of the false witness that playfully probes exilic spaces and their epistemological repercussions on the performance and lexica of attestation while investigating and belaboring through the material and ideological configurations of the strata of the earth, knowledge(s), and history. The knowledge we produce plays with this spatio-epistemological relation. To speak of indiscipline is not to reject discipline but to break away from it through looking at its making as performance, partition and ideology.<sup>74</sup>

---

<sup>74</sup> In Jacques Rancière, *Disagreement: Politics and philosophy* (Minnesota: University of Minnesota Press, 1999), the philosopher writes,

Along the same lines, one should radically reject the notion that discipline (from self-control to bodily training) is a 'proto-Fascist' feature— the very predicate 'proto-Fascist' should be abandoned: it is the exemplary case of a pseudo-concept whose function is to block conceptual analysis. When we say that the organized spectacle of thousands of bodies (or, say, the admiration of sports which demand high effort and self-control like mountain climbing) is 'proto-Fascist', we say strictly nothing, we just express a vague association which masks our ignorance. So when, three decades ago, Kung Fu films were popular (Bruce Lee, etc.), was it not obvious that we were dealing with a genuine working class ideology of youngsters whose only means of success was the disciplinary training of their only possession, their bodies? Spontaneity and the 'let it go' attitude of indulging in excessive freedoms belong to those who have the means to afford it— those who have nothing have only their discipline."



## CHAPTER II ON THE PATH OF INVESTIGATION : TRANSLATION AND PLACE IN IBN ALHAITHAM'S TRACE

A place and an aeon attained every conscious  
yet no color to be sensed nor volume they have  
We have no knowledge of our god's secret  
so did the sun know it or the poetry of stars?  
We, debauched, supposition pelts some among us  
so he knows what illuminates planets, and lapidation  
And our hours chase us out, as if we  
and a horse rider were, what a rein has wiped off

-ABUL 'AI-ALA' AL-MA'ARRI (c. 1100 AD)

**It is in names that we think.**

-HEGEL (1830)

**The dilemma seems inexorable: those who struggle for the defense of places do so as if places are pregnant with a vertical temporality, one that begins in their depth and flourishes within their boundaries. Those who struggle to found in time an a-historical stability, claim that another calendar, one that can turn backward and then askew, is not only possible but has always been available. Moreover, the distinctions are quizzical: which Islamism fights for place and which struggles in the name of a time/temporality? Further, which liberation movement, never frugal in discourse melding time with place, is still capable of arguing the details of its praxis?**

-WALID SADEK (2012)

In 1967, Abdelhamid I. Sabra published in the history of science journal *ISIS* an essay scrutinizing, as its title notes, "The Authorship of the *Liber de crespulis*, an Eleventh-Century Work on Atmospheric Refraction".<sup>76</sup> Since its first printed edition in 1542, followed by the second in 1573, and then a third in 1574, the treatise has been, by virtue of proximity, always attributed to the Abbasid polymath Ibn Al-Haytham (c. 966 CE - 1040).<sup>77</sup> All translations were credited to Gerardus Cremonensis, later known as Gerard de Cremona, who is said to

---

<sup>76</sup> Sabra, Abdelhamid I. "The authorship of the *Liber de crepusculis*, an eleventh-century work on atmospheric refraction." *isis* (1967): 77-85.

<sup>77</sup> Narducci, Enrico. *Intorno ad una traduzione italiana fatta nel secolo decimoquarto del trattato d'ottica d'Alhazen matematico del secolo undecimo e ad altri lavori di questo scienziato*. Tipografia delle scienze matematiche e fisiche, 1871

have left Cremona to Castile no later than 1140 in order to learn Arabic for the purpose of reading Ptolemy's *Almagest*.<sup>78</sup> This took him to Toledo where he has joined the Toledo School of Translators of the 12th and 13th century that would inaugurally translate in the library of the local cathedral scientific and religious literature from Classical Arabic to Castilian and then to the official church language, Latin. Said to have been first translated in 827 by astronomer and mathematician Sahl ibn Bishr followed by another Greek-Arabic translation very shortly after in 829 by mathematician al-Hajjaj ibn Yusuf ibn Matar and soon three others in the same century by Ishaq Ibn Hunayn and two unknown, *Almagest* underwent a change of names.<sup>79</sup> To say early on that we can only think in refractions, this chapter attempts to look at translation as a tool that could latently oppugn the perceptual place of meaning, history and power through the unfolding of the works of purportedly one author and many translators.

As this at once entoptic, linguistic and spatio-temporal inquiry is one where “perplexity prevails, certainty is hard to come by, and there is no assurance of attaining the object of inquiry”, I will be attempting to merge in my interdisciplinary methodology visible anecdotes and inconspicuous albeit transversal traces that I have come across while examining essays, manuscripts and published translations in science and the history of that thereof, hoping that these occurrences could be more telling than ferreting out the space at hand.<sup>80</sup> Despite that my inquiry is in form performed through gleaning from the translations and interpretations of Ibn Al-Haytham's work with the aim to question the distribution of the sensible within the canon of history, the traces and narratives that I intertextually meet will be used for the broader investigation of the study of light within the political configuration of science as discipline. Through the epistemo-political figure of the false witness, I will be participating in the presentation of science as both indivisible from history and challenging to its conception. Herein, books, sentences and linear readings of place, history and knowledge will be interrupted. Questions such as what is the relationship between translation, science and light; how did science come to deny place concurrently with commissioning its study and

78 Lorch, Richard. “Greek-Arabic-Latin: The transmission of mathematical texts in the Middle Ages.” *Science in Context* 14.1-2 (2001): 313- 331.

79 For Ibn Bishr:

Kunitzsch, Paul. *Der Almagest: Die Syntaxis Mathematica des Claudius Ptolemaüs in arabischlätinischer Überlieferung*. Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1974.

I am hoping to get hold in the future of Ibn Matar's translation to see what title he had given to *Almagest*. For the time being, I was able to find, merely in reference, another essay by a Paul Kunitzsch written 25 years later and published in another journal in German entitled “A Hitherto Unknown Arabic Manuscript of the *Almagest*”. From the context of my finding, it most probably tackles Ibn Matar's translation. Finding it will be one of the ways to follow up with the research. As herein implied, it seems according to our present transmission, that Sahl ibn Bishr was more widely circulating – at least temporally.

80 Ibn Al-Haytham and Sabra, Abdelhamid I (translator and commentator), *The optics of Ibn al-Haytham: Books I-III: On direct vision*. Vol. 1. Warburg Institute, University of London, 1989, 3.

and colonization; what is the place of voice within science; what is the relationship between discipline and machine and can truth have a voice will emerge. Looking at the limitations of our essay as form and preamble and the excessive mode of history, many of these questions will only be tacitly illuminated.<sup>81</sup>

Now returning to our previous and secondary inspection, it is significant to observe that in this early work of transfusable revealing, the change in Ptolemy's literal magnum opus was protractedly retained even with the widely circulating translation to the language with which I pro tem write. Instead of keeping the original Greek title [Mathēmatikē Syntaxis] that would in close form denote "Mathematical Arrangements", Ibn Bishr entitled it in Arabic "Al-majisṭī". Derived from Greek [mæjiste] was a loan word that was, from what we know or what survives, exclusively used in the context of this oeuvre. In its original language and unsystematic transliteration, it means "the greatest". Phonetic loyalty was never addressed as issue since the first part of both the second and third syllables were modified to be assimilated in a process called ta'rib; i.e. arabization.<sup>82</sup> Can ta'rib when applied to a proper name defy its own premises if the notions of translation and place are discursively brought into confrontation through a plentitude of manifestations?<sup>83</sup> However, in the introduction of the first edition of the

81 To heretically transgress the mereology of an essay and a footnote in this particular context, Adorno begins his essay "The Essay as Form" with a quote from Goethe's Pandora that reads as "Destined, to see the illuminated, not the light."

Adorno, Theodor W., Bob Hullot-Kentor, and Frederic Will. "The essay as form." *New German Critique* 32 (1984): 151-171.

82 The word "arabization" connotes both linguistic and cultural assimilation. As we will tacitly see later, it gained prominent use during the Abbasid rule with the conquest of new lands; however, it had took off since the Umayyad elite took sovereignty. This happened specifically when these territories were being annexed and their bureaucratic systems "converted". This is often referred to as the "arabization of policy" which was a great stimulus for translation. Tackling with justice the core of the issues that this contact redolently raises would be nonviable in this preamble despite this being one of the main historical questions that dormantly fuel this essay. To keep it short, I would argue that an arabization is impossible except ideologically. Its possibility only emerges out of contradicting phenomena related to language and translation. For more information on a history of ta'rib, please refer to: Taha, Salim, "At-Ta'rib wa-kibar al-mu'arribin fi l-Islam," *Sumer*, 1976, vol. 32, pp. 339-89

83 For more information on the aforementioned in the Umayyad era that preceded the Abbasid in further questioning, see chapter Translation and Empire in:

Gutas, Dimitri. *Greek Thought, Arabic Culture: The Graeco-Arabic Translation Movement in Baghdad and Early Abbasid Society (2nd-4th/5th- 10th c.)*. Routledge, 2012.

"All these activities of Graeco-Arabic translation during the Umayyad period are instances of random and ad hoc accommodation to the needs of the times, generated by Arab rule over non-Arab peoples. The bulk of the material that was translated - administrative, bureaucratic, political, and mercantile documents - was translated for reasons of expediency and the need for communication between the new rulers and the allophonous subject peoples. Even materials that can be considered as cultural, like Alexander's alleged correspondence with Aristotle, had an immediately military or administrative purpose and thus represented individual and uncoordinated translation activities."

I mention this reference despite the fact that in some places, Gutas mistakes tarjama: translation for ta'rib – the violence of history.

Almagest published in 1984 by Duckworth Press, translator G.J. Moog stresses “but it is only later [in the Arabic translation] that it [the greatest] was incorrectly vocalized” without mentioning that the *i* or *um* in the English title is noted in was dropped out.<sup>84</sup>

Consequently, the superlative form was kept from Arabic into Latin following the same epiphetic logic and graphemic assimilation of the new title by latinizing it into “Almagestum”.<sup>85</sup> At face value, one could first argue in this case that Cremona was merely adhering to what the primary and translated text has passed on to him, as how could he have known that Ptolemy’s title differed prior to translation when the Greek manuscript did not resurface for further translation to Latin except until the 15th century? Moreover, as is generally accepted in hermeneutics and implicitly confronted while being substantially evinced as forensic textuality in Sabra’s aforementioned authorship quest that I am about to re-address, names were not proper, exempt and untinged by translation at that time.<sup>86</sup> Up until today in Arabic anthroponymy, several rules exist on the place of names within syntax, their infixation, mereology and translation; however no one language is our subject. It is said that because Cremonensis was discontent with the “meager philosophies” of his Italian locale, he had traveled to Toderò specifically to learn the Arabic language and consequently read Amajisti.<sup>87</sup> Herein, the aspiring reader-cum-traveller became both translator and ignorant bookmaster. One century later, another translator emerged with a name same as his and thus ensuing more confoundment in the forthcoming task of history.<sup>88</sup>

It was through the multiple translations of names, the confinement of their meaning to alleged referents other than a transliteration or their full omission that the translator A. I. Sabra contended the misattribution of *Liber de crepusculis*’ authorship. Names are fragile and their granted meaning was false. When raising doubts on this ascription, the first argument that Sabra introduced was contextual: “As was the custom of the period, no manuscripts were cited and no reasons given for regarding Ibn al-Haytham as the author. We have therefore to consider whether any such reasons exist.”<sup>89</sup> Since no copy of any of the manuscripts in Arabic. Since no copy of any of the manuscripts in Arabic was known to be extant the path to take was “to turn to the Latin tradition of our text” and ask, “is there a Latin manuscript tradition which ascribes the *Liber de crepusculis* to Ibn Al-Haytham?” By paralleling through a

---

84 Toomer, Gerald J. “Ptolemy’s almagest.” London: Duckworth, 1984, 1-2.

85 Narducci, 19

86 Derived from the Latin *proprius* of very akin meaning, *proprie* meant “ones’ special/one’s own”. However, in French *propre* holds a second meaning; “clean” and “neat”.

87 Chisholm, Hugh. *Encyclopedia Britannica*. Vol. 9. *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 1910, 764

88 Ostler, Nicholas. *Ad infinitum: A biography of Latin*. Bloomsbury Publishing USA, 2009, 211.

89 Sabra, Abdelhamid I. “The authorship of the *Liber de crepusculis*, an eleventh-century work on atmospheric refraction.” *isis* (1967): 78.



taxonomy of anthroponyms the multiple configurations of Ibn El Haitham's names in Arabic texts with their eclectic presentations in the Latin parallax and the names borne by the extant Latin manuscripts of the Liber, Sabra found "an entirely different situation".<sup>90</sup> The military doctor Lucien Leclerc who subsequently worked on the history of Arab medicine while working as a surgeon for the colony in Algeria, had interpreted in his *Histoire de la médecine arabe* (1876) the Abhomadi, Abomahi and Abhomady found in the Latin manuscripts as one of the many translations of Alhacen filii Alhaycan, halhacen filii halhaycen aycen, haten filij hucaym filij hayten, achen filij hucaym, Alhazen, filij alhacen, achen filij hucaym filij aycen, Alacen's names.<sup>91</sup> Leclerc suggested that it was derived from the Abu 'Ali Muhammad of the "Abu 'Ali Muhammad ibn al-Hasan ibn al-Haytham" naming found in Ibn Abi Usaybi'a, 'Uyun al-anba' fi laba- qat al-atibba' (c. 1246). In 1877, one year later, orientalist and literary historian Ferdinand Wuestenfeld published a similar conjecture thus corroborating and further legitimizing Leclerc's.

Subsequently, Abhomadi, Abomahi and Abhomady became known by the further latinized "Abhomadius Malfegeyr". According to Leclerc, his assigned family name was taken from the Latin title found in propinquity to the name in the 13th century translated manuscript. Its misinterpretation – and thus its clearing out from the name – was a supplementary evidence to its purported authorship by ebn el Heitam.<sup>92</sup> "Malfegeyr" is a latinized version of the Arabic "ma'l-fajr" meaning "what is Dawn" from which Sabra inferred the Arabic title of the lost manuscript "Ma'l-faj wa'l-shafaq" – What is Dawn and Twilight. This was translated to Liber de crepusculis or The Book of Twilight.<sup>93</sup> When asking what is the basis of this phonetically and graphemically far-flung ascription and ignorance of Arabic onomastics by publishers and orientalist historians, Sabra's answer was proximity and affinity.<sup>94</sup> One century after the rise

90 Op. cit. 80.

91 I pulled the several translations of Ibn Al-Haythem from the discussed essay by Abdelhamid Sabra. Here is a rearrangement of how Sabra has collected the names in parallel with the Arabic originals that he has transliterated:

Alhacen filii Alhaycan [al-Hasan ibn- al-Haytham] , halhacen filii halhaycen aycen [al-Hasan ibn al-Haytham ibn ], haten filij hucaym filij hayten [Hasan ibn Husayn ibn Haytham, achen filij hucaym [Hasan ibn Husayn] , filij alhacen [Ibn al-Hasan], achen filij hucaym filij aycen [JHasan ibn Husayn ibn Haytham], Alacen [al-Hasan]

92 Leclerc Lucien, *Histoire de la médecine arabe: exposé complet des traductions en grec*. Vol. 1. Leroux, 1876, 418.

93 Sabra, Abdelhamid I. "The authorship of the Liber de crepusculis, an eleventh-century work on atmospheric refraction." *isis* (1967): 81.

94 Sabra, Abdelhamid I. "The authorship of the Liber de crepusculis, an eleventh-century work on atmospheric refraction." *isis* (1967): 84

"Presumably because of the affinity in subject matter, Ibn al-Haytham's Optics is found in some manuscripts immediately followed by Liber de Crepusculis. [...] It seems not unlikely that someone who faced this situation in one or more manuscripts simply assumed the two works to be by the author of the first, and better-known, work".

of the printing press, the first copy of Ibn Al-Haytham's Book of Optics was printed in 1572 with its pages tied to and hence in proximity with two other works: Liber de crepusculis that Sabra attributed to the Andalusian mathematician Abu 'Abd Allah Muhammad ibn Mu'adh followed by Witelo's Perspectiva<sup>95</sup> Witelo's treatise on optics was elaborately linked to the work of Ibn Al-Haytham in method, inquiry and imminent reference, and mathematician Friedrich Risner had set forth on bringing them together in one single book thus taming doubts on the authorship of the interstitial treatise. This compiled book was entitled Opticae Thesaurus. As I have prepared the beginning of my quest in this essay by looking at how translation became nominatively referential to place and falsely reductive to proximity in the transversal history and textual propagation of science, I will delve further with my search to inquire on the coupling of voice and truth on one side with translation and place on another, with the aim to philosophically investigate science as history. This will be done through honing in study on another single book and its more recent translation.

This time, we will begin by assigning the universally accepted position of Ibn Al-Haytham as the author of *The Book of Optics* and Abdelhamid I. Sabra as his Arabic- English translator. The Warburg Institute published in two volumes in 1989 the first full English edition of Book I-III of *The Book of Optics* translated with commentaries by Sabra. In it, I have observed a very telling rendition that, while seeming first clearly erroneous, has instigated the writing of this essay. Before I state it and then impart on the value this translation ascribes to Ibn Al-Haytham's position within ontology and science, I will briefly conclude from where we have began. As previously shown, names were actually apt for translation albeit with profuse confusion that challenge the past and present modalities of author-setting. Nevertheless reasserting Derrida's claim that "we translate as confusion", the findings in this text contradict his presentation of the name as an untranslatable "reference of pure signifier into a single being".<sup>96</sup> When speaking of translation, Derrida has contended to speak of Babel as proper name, myth and confusion, or perhaps when wanting to speak Babel and myth, the philosopher contended for translation. Yet we obstinately ask, how to break from the myth of the name? Perhaps this is not name or Babel is the only name – the myth of language.

**Albinus. Quod est quod est et non est? Pippinus. Nihil.**

**A: Quomodo potest esse et non esse?**

**P: Nomine est et re non est.**

**[Albinus. What is and yet is not?**

95 *Opticae thesaurus: Alhazeni Arabis libri septem, nunc primum editi; Eiusdem liber De Crepusculis et nubium ascensionibus*, Item Vitellonis Thuringopoloni libri X, a Federico Risnero (Basileae, 1572)

96 Derrida, Jacques. "Des tours de Babel." *Difference in translation* 167 (1985), 218.

**Pippinus. Nothing.**

**A:How can it be and not be?**

**P: It is in name and it is not in substance.]**<sup>97</sup>

On his life, Ibn Al-Haytham (c. 965 – c. 1040 ce) wrote in his autobiography excerpts of which survive, “since early youth, I have never ceased to meditate on the different beliefs of people and on the fact that every group firmly adheres to the opinions once adopted. I was doubtful of all of them, holding the view that truth was one and that dissension about it was merely a matter of approach. After completing my study of the abstract sciences, I devoted myself entirely to the quest for the source of truth, striving to discover something by which wrong opinions might be refuted and the aberrations of the fanatical sceptic eliminated.”<sup>98</sup> Only excerpts of the autobiography written in 417 have survived in the cited writings of Abbasid scholars of science. At the turn of the 11th Century, El Haitham believed that he could regulate the chronic flood of the Nile River through mathematics and the sun.<sup>99</sup> Commissioned by the Fatimid king of Egypt to travel from Basra to Cairo and apply his project, Ibn el Haitham failed to concretize a solution, and after familiarizing himself with the nature and architectural history of the area, he deemed his project as impossible to realize since his knowledge wouldn’t have superseded those who had anciently planned and engineered the city before him. In order to flee a governmental job that the Caliph has demoted him to and not be decapitated, Ibn Al-Haytham feigned madness — accused himself of being a false witness and was in turn exiled and held for 11 years under house arrest. Abi Usaybi’a notes that Ibn Al-Haytham has pretended to be mad twice, first in Basra and then in Cairo, both times with the aim to be debarred from government service jobs.<sup>100</sup> Beginning his education in Basra as a scribe, after his release from domestic incarceration in Egypt, it is noted that he

---

97 Wilmanns, Wilhelm. "Disputatio regalis et nobilissimi iuvenis Pippini cum Albino scholastico." *Zeitschrift für deutsches Alterthum* 14 (1869): 544.

Please not that “re” (res) can also denote things, Dinge, Sache, and sometimes especially when plural can mean cause, reason, affair.

98 Op. 704

99 Allah who commissioned and then detained Al-Haytham had invested a lot of its resources for the advancement of knowledge. For instance, he founded in 1005 Dar al-hikma as a facsimile however more expansive copy of Baghdad’s Beit al-hikma launched 2 centuries before.

100 Op. cit. 703.

“At the beginning of his career, Ibn al-Haitham was in government service in al-Basrah and the surrounding district. But because he aspired to meritorious attainments and to the study of philosophy, he strove to free himself from all occupations that prevented him from studying. He feigned mental illness and remained in this condition until he succeeded in being suspended from service.”

applied himself to writing, copying, abridging Ptolemy, Euclid and Aristotle while also teaching and living at Al-Azhar mosque. It is also said by Yūsuf al-Fasī, "I heard that Ibn al-Haitham, apart from his other occupations, copied three books every year, namely Euclid's 'Elements,' the 'al- Mutawassitāt'ior and the 'Almagest.' He finished them in the course of the year, and whenever he started recopying them, somebody came and gave him 150 Egyptian dinars for his work. This came to be a fixed price, against which no bargaining was of any use. Ibn al-Haitham allotted that sum for his sustenance during one year. He continued to do so until he died in Cairo around the year 430/1039; and Allāh knows best."<sup>101</sup>

Looking at the domestic nature of the experiments El Heitam performed in the Book of Optics, it could be in this Cairo house cum prison cum mental institution *cum exile cum camera obscura cum* early laboratory that El Haitham wrote his seven volume philo- scientific oeuvre.<sup>102</sup> Being an early instigator of the unification of catoptrics and dioptrics, Al Heythum swiveled to and fro between the properties and anatomy of vision and its illusions and the mathematical transmission and delineation of light as well as the phenomenology of perception and its cognitive conditions. His thorough demonstration and experimentation evincing the intromission theory have allowed him to break through the barrier between the science of visual perception, studied in Books I-III the science of light – reflexion, studied in Books IV-VI.<sup>103</sup> Positing that vision occurs when rays of light reach the eyes, the intromission theory was advanced by Aristotle, Ptolemy and the more mysterious Sosigenes. In the contrasting orpho-centric school which contended that vision occurs when rays of light are emitted from the eyes, Plato, Euclid and Galen propogated and endorsed the emission theory. Nevertheless, this opposition didn't halt Ibn Al-Haytham from building upon Galen's anatomy of the eye and expounding it with further precision to refute its primary intention.

Depicting his approach in the discussed book as a 'synthesis' , tarkib, between the natural-philosophical account of vision in terms of forms, and the mathematical mode of treatment, which he has acquired from Euclid and Ptolemy, in terms of lines and angles

---

101 The "Intermediate Books" that were to be studied between Euclid's Elements and Ptolemy's Almagest.

102 That Saved the Text. The Hazardous Journey of Ibn al-Haytham's Arabic Optics." *Early Science and Medicine* 12.2 (2007): 117-133.

All the volumes clearly exist in Latin and they were published in English by historian Adam Mark Smith.

103 For a phenomenological reading of Ibn Al-Haytham's Optics and philosophy, please refer to: El-Bizri, Nader. "A philosophical perspective on Alhazen's optics." *Arabic Sciences and Philosophy* 15.02 (2005): 189-218.

angles, Abdelhamid I. Sabra the translator and late professor emeritus in history of science at Harvard University contended that “the book [of Optics] is in fact an earnest and assiduous exercise in the method outlined. Its arguments are either inductive, experimental, or mathematical, and it cites no authorities. [...] The Optics is not a philosophical dissertation on the nature of light, but an experimental and mathematical investigation of its properties, particularly insofar as these relate to vision.”<sup>104</sup> In another essay, Sabra went on stating that Ibn Al-Haytham was a precursor in proposing “to subject form to geometrical analysis, something which no Aristotelian before him had thought of doing, and which, naturally, no mathematician operating with the visual-ray hypothesis felt the need for. [Here] both the physics and the physiology were presented in terms of the ubiquitous ‘form’.”<sup>105</sup> In a synthesis distinctive to its time, Al-Haytham demonstrated how a form that represents the visible object enters the eye through resorting to all of the physics of light and color and the anatomy of the eye, as well as geometry and early cognitive theory. The mistranslation we have found in Sabra’s English edition of Books I-III of the optics is as follows: When Ibn Al-Haytham was stating in the introduction of his book, the complexities and difficulties he has encountered while studying vision, he notes in one place,

<sup>107</sup> فطريق النظر معفى الأثر والباحث المجتهد غير معصوم من الزلل

In a literal translation to the English language, that would be, “And the road/path to vision/seeing is exempt from trace and the assiduous researcher is not infallible of erring.” One can first understand that studying vision is arduous as no traces are left on that which is being seen. That in some way, vision has no remnants and one cannot prove that something is seen through returning to its forensics. Can we quickly incur that by saying so, Ibn Al-Haytham is pushing the witness out of ontology and claiming objectivity as the exclusion of trace? Yet after all we have shown and are about to show, wouldn’t it be very reductive to say that by

<sup>104</sup> Sabra, Abdelhamid I. *Optics, Astronomy, and Logic: Studies in Arabic Science and Philosophy*. Vol. 444. Variorum Publishing, 1994, 190.

For more information on Sabra’s analysis of ‘I’tibār’:

“In the Latin translation of the Optics the word I’tibār and its cognates i’tabara and mu’tabir became experimentum, experimentare, and experimenator, respectively. Perhaps as a result of its derivation from the astronomical procedure of testing past observations by comparing them with new ones, the method of i’tibār often appears aimed at proof rather than discovery. It establishes beyond doubt that which is insecurely suggested by inadequate observations. With regard to the question ‘What is light?’ Ibn al-Haytham readily adopted the view ascribed by him to “the physicists” or natural [philosophers (ai-tabrivyun)—not, however, because il]at view was by itself sufficient, but because it constituted an element of the truth which had to be combined with other elements derived from “mathematicians” (ta\*limiyyun) such as Euclid and Ptolemy.”

<sup>105</sup> Op. cit. 171-172.

<sup>106</sup> Al-Ḥasan ibn al-Haytham, *Kitāb al-Manāẓir*, Bks I-II-III, *Fī l-’Ibṣār ‘alā ’l-istiḳāma*.

Edition by A.I. Sabra of the Arabic text (Kuwait: NCCAL, 1983, repr. 2006)

<sup>107</sup> Ragep, F. Jamil, and Adam Sabra. “In memoriam Al Sabra (1924-2013).” *Suhayl. International Journal for the History of the Exact and Natural Sciences in Islamic Civilisation* 12 (2013): 181-204.

saying so, Ibn Al-Haytham is pushing the witness out of ontology and claiming objectivity as the exclusion of trace? Yet after all we have shown and are about to show, wouldn't it be very reductive to say that objectivity is being presented as the path of seeing that bears no marks of its trails? Wouldn't this contradict the very existence of *The Book of Optics*? Doesn't 'athara, the verb derived from 'athar trace denote "to affect"? Moreover, if I further project the knowledge of my times into the exemption I am attempting to parse out, that very axiomatic hinderance would have been refuted by quantum physics, second-wave cybernetics, the observer's paradox, Haraway's theory of embodiment and situated knowledge, or Nagel's critiques of objectivity as "view from nowhere" and possibly many other schools of thought and theories. To better gauge it, I need to look elsewhere. What trenchantly took hold of my attention is that Sabra translated the discussed axiom, in case we can call it so, to, regional unity further, Nasser had in terms of engineering, constructed the dam in such a way that would not only suppress the Nile waters from intermittently flooding but also from bountifully flowing to anyone outside of the boundaries of the Egyptian nation-state. In a political speech, Nasser had stated, "the preservation of the legacy of mankind is no less important than the construction of dams, the erection of factories and the greater prosperity of peoples."<sup>108</sup> Cultural preservation was equated to a dam.<sup>109</sup> The preservation of thought and subsequently its development was equated to the construction of dams. Rivers were displaced as borders.<sup>110</sup>

Looking at the momentary geo-political conditions in which this essay is being written, I was not, yet, able to get hold of a copy of Sabra's limited edition of *Tatawwur al-nazariyyat fi 'ilm al-daw'* min ibn al-Haytham ila 'l-waqt alhadir that is now rare. Even prior to access, it would be noteworthy to lay out in plausible inquiry the following questions. Despite his rejection of any governmental job, was the re-emergence and representation of Ibn Al-Haytham's figure in Arabic circles after the mid-twentieth century related to the ideology of Arab nationalism? And in what forms did or would it challenge it? In spite that according to

---

<sup>108</sup> Hassan, Fekri A. "The Aswan High Dam and the International Rescue Nubia Campaign." *African Archaeological Review* 24.3-4 (2007): 73-94.

<sup>109</sup> Due to the previously highlighted reasons, we will henceforth abstain from using the word "culture".

<sup>110</sup> his dam-engineering and displacement of rivers was not only performed on the onset of the second half of the 20th in Egypt but also in Iraq, Syria and partially Lebanon among other regional places. Herein, the suppression of rivers was one of the first spectacles that manifested the power of the modern Arab state project to dislocate, homogenize, subdue 'nature' and erect borders. For further information around the Baath in Syria, please watch Omar Amiralay's "A Flood and the Ba'ath Countries". For further information on the Beirut River case, you can refer to my research and writings on the subject in:

Jessika Khazrik, *Beirut Theatre Slides into an Island of Trash* in Hammoud Badawi. Alia and Mayssa Fattouh (eds) Beirut: TandemWorks, 2015

my findings, the discourses presented by both Sabra and Popper disregarded the relationship between imperialism and the establishment of modern science while the Arab nationalist project had foremost an anti-imperial and anti-colonial agenda, in what ways did Popper's "piecemeal social engineering" end up rightfully finding itself within the Nasserist ideology that deemed the erection of dams as equal to that of history?<sup>111</sup> Before we delve into our outstanding inquiry that attempts to question Ibn Al-Haytham's role within the Enlightenment in Europe rather than the modern Arab nationalist era, I will be attempting to come closer to answering the first question, only bypassing, through resorting to more popular references than the previously so far used. Another prominent historian as well as philosopher of science of similar generations as Sabra, Roshdi Rashed, has published five books on the subject of Ibn Al-Haytham. In 2002, he was commissioned by Science Magazine to draw up an article on Alhazen's life and significance within the history of science. It was entitled "A Polymath in the 10th Century" and in one place he writes, "Ibn al-Haytham proposed to the Caliph a hydraulic project to control the flow of the Nile—an early Aswan dam. The Caliph refused, but al-Haytham continued to live in Cairo, in the neighborhood of the famous University of al-Azhar, until his death after 1040." This clearly contradicts the two main Abbasid biographies that have been used to reconstruct El Haitham's life; Ibn al-Qifti, *Ta'rikh alhukama'* (1219) and Ibn Abi Usaybi'a, *'Uyun al-anba' fi laba- qat al-atibba'* (c. 1246) . In both early compendia of the history of scientists with the first quoting the second, it is stated that Ibn Al-Haytham's claim of regulating the Nile River had reached the Fatimid Caliph who had commissioned him to come to Egypt and apply his project, not vice versa. Furthermore, it is clearly stated that it was not the Caliph who had refused building Ibn Al- Haytham's proposal but the polymath himself who, after being physically present in field work and "come in direct contact with it[the river]", realized that "that his scheme was unworkable". This had serious toll on El-Haytham's life as it had relegated him to bureaucratic work which he in turn escaped by playing mad. A purported insanity led to confiscation of property and domestic incarceration. Despite its considerable length, I shall be quoting below a recursive excerpt from Ibn Abi Usaybi'a's compendium as it will be telling to other aspects that I will be further discussing later.

---

111 Popper, Karl Raimund. *The poverty of historicism*. The Beacon Press, 1957, 58.

"The term 'social technology' (and even more the term 'social engineering' 1 which will be introduced in the next section) is likely to arouse suspicion, and to repel those whom it reminds of the 'social blueprints' of the collectivist planners, or perhaps even of the 'technocrats'. I realize this danger, and so I have added the word 'piecemeal', both to off-set undesirable associations and to express my conviction that 'piecemeal tinkering' (as it is sometimes called), combined with critical analysis, is the main way to practical results in the social as well as in the natural sciences. The social sciences have developed very largely through the criticism of proposals for social improvements or, more precisely, through attempts to find out whether or not some particular economic or political action is likely to produce an expected, or desired, result."

My colleague, Jamāl al-Dīn Abū 'l-Hasan ibn al-Qiftī, who also mentions Ibn al-Haitham, says about him as follows: When Al-Hākīm, the Fatimid ruler of Egypt, who himself had a strong bent for philosophy, heard about Ibn al-Haitham and his mastery of science, he eagerly wished to see him. His enthusiasm increased when he was told that Ibn al-Haitham had said: "If I were in Egypt I would do something to the Nile that would make that river useful at all times, both during its rise and during its fall, for I have heard that it descends from an elevated place which lies within the borders of Egypt." Al-Hākīm secretly sent him a great amount of money and prevailed upon him to come to him. So he traveled to Egypt, and when he arrived al-Hākīm set out to receive him. [...] He stayed there until he had rested and was then asked to fulfill his promise with regard to the Nile. So he set out with a group of skilled building workers. These were to be employed on constructions he had in mind. But when he traveled the whole length of the country, and saw the extremely well planned and constructed monuments left by its former inhabitants, members of long-vanished nations, and the lovely shapes, geometrical forms and unsurpassable paintings they contained, he realized that his scheme was unworkable; for those who had lived before him in ancient times had not been without the knowledge he himself possessed, and if such a scheme had been possible, they would surely have carried it out. So his zeal was quenched and his ambition died. When he reached the locality known as al-Ganādīl, south of the city of Assuan — this is the high place from which the waters of the Nile flow down — he was able to overlook the river, come into direct contact with it and examine it on both its banks. As a result, he became convinced that his plan could not be carried out and that he would have to admit his error in that he had promised more than he could fulfill. Disappointed and ashamed, he returned to al-Hākīm and made apologies to him, which the latter seemed to accept. Al-Hākīm then appointed him head of one of the government offices, to which he reluctantly agreed, from sheer necessity. He soon realized that he had made a mistake in accepting the post, for al-Hākīm was extremely capricious, shedding blood for no reason at all or on some flimsy, imaginary pretext. So he pondered on means of freeing himself and, finding no way out but to feign mental illness, began to act like a lunatic. When this became known, his property was confiscated and placed at the disposal of al-Hākīm and his vicegerents. A guardian was appointed to look after him and his affairs, and he himself was chained and confined to a room in his house. This situation continued until he learnt that al-Hākīm was dead. A short time later, he demonstrated that he was sane, returned to his former state, left his house, took lodgings at a qubba [pavilion] at the entrance to al-Azhar...<sup>112</sup>

---

112 This translation of A History of Physicians was found posthumously in the office of the Lothar Kopf, the head of the Oriental department of the University Library at Jerusalem, who died in 1964. It was commissioned by US government and was only transferred to the US National Library of Medicine as manuscript in 1971. A science blogger, Roger Pearse has taken the labor of transcribing it and sharing it online as public domain. Despite stating that it is a full translation of 4 volumes of the book, when comparing with the Arabic printed edition I have been studying, I found more than 8 pages on Ibn Al-Haytham's life missing.

For the preface of the online English edition:

[http://www.tertullian.org/fathers/ibn\\_abi\\_usaibia\\_oo\\_eintro.htm](http://www.tertullian.org/fathers/ibn_abi_usaibia_oo_eintro.htm)

For the quoted passage, p. 703 & 704:

[http://www.tertullian.org/fathers/ibn\\_abi\\_usaibia\\_o3.htm](http://www.tertullian.org/fathers/ibn_abi_usaibia_o3.htm)



Clearly, it was not the Caliph who refused to build the project but Ibn Al-Haytham. Despite being hailed as an Islamic polymath who at once perpetuated the faith in Islam as well as the scientific method, it is ignored in discourse that of religion, science, truth and faith, AlHaytham himself had written, “I undertook a thorough investigation of the various religious creeds, but from none of them did I derive any profit: none showed me the road to truth or the straight path which leads to the correct belief. So I realized that I would not attain truth except through notions based primarily on sensory perceptions and elaborated by rational considerations, and I found that only the method established by Aristotle with regard to logic, the natural sciences and metaphysics– which are the mainstays and very essence of philosophy.”<sup>113</sup>

To go back to Sabra’s *Theories of Light: From Descartes to Newton*; in the third chapter on Descartes’ explanation of reflection and Fermat’s objections, the author harks back to Ptolemy’s *Optics* where he explains the laws of reflection through comparing visual rays to the rebound of projectiles. In order to show that an object prevents a movement to which it is opposed, Ptolemy observes that when a ball, *spera*, is thrown on to a wall at right angles, its movement in that direction is totally prevented. A. I. Sabra does not see the need to highlight the similarity of Ptolemy’s ‘*spera*’ to Descartes’ comparison of light to a tennis ball. Sabra, the author, frames his book as “a study of problems and controversies which have appeared to me to be particularly important in the development of seventeenth-century theories about the nature of flight and its properties. The method that I have followed is to compare actual practice, in so far as it can be historically determined, with the interpretations placed upon it by the practitioners themselves”. His agenda seems to compel one to ask, how can one be constrained to or even be merely capable of identifying the interpretations of scientists themselves when writing about them? This would be only possible if the scientist is the one who can be interpreted anywhere anytime the same. By following this, we would be falling into objectivity’s wiles of disembodiment and arguing that all interpretations of scientific texts should be the same – which is clearly impossible and far from truth. Yet is this difference only engendered by language? What can be historically determined in science? In his *Encyclopaedia of the Philosophical Sciences*, Hegel writes, “What only I mean is mine. It belongs to me as this particular individual. If, however, language expresses only the universal, then I cannot say what only I mean.”<sup>114</sup> I will be herein looking at relations that emerged with Sabra’s translations however escaped his eyes by reviewing a particular strain of the reception and elaboration of Ibn Al-Haytham’s *Book of Optics*. For the sake of brevity and my particular interest in tracing light and obliteration within the enlightenment, I will be leaving my study

---

113 Op. cit. 704.

114 Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, *Enzyklopädie der philosophischen Wissenschaften im Grundrisse* (1830) Band 20, (Düsseldorf: Felix Meiner Verlag, 1992), 62

f Ibn Al-Haytham's influence on Al-Tusi and al-Fārisī to the first chapter and will be limiting my imminent reading to the Perspectivist school in Italy, Johannes Kepler and René Descartes.

Did naming Europe's Age of Reason "the Enlightenment" imply that the catoptric task of tracing the movement of light was already achieved and can now be reproduced through 'reason'? Where does the light within "The Enlightenment" come from and where did it take us to? Was the development of optics as science seminal to that? By deeming *The Book of Optics* as an untimely predecessor for the scientific method, aren't historians presenting the study of vision as the epistemological foundation of the modern scientific method?<sup>115</sup> What can we learn from the reception of the *Book of Optics* in the European Renaissance as perspective and treasure?<sup>116</sup> During the Renaissance, the *Book of Optics* became a seminal reference to the perspectivist school in architecture and painting and was known to be thoroughly studied by Ghiberti, Grosseteste and Da Vinci.<sup>117</sup> In his studies of anatomy, Da Vinci presents the eye as "the instrument of vision".<sup>118</sup> In this mechanistic understanding, vision became anatomy that was reproducible by the camera obscura. It is through this device that Johannes Kepler has claimed to have 'discovered' the inversion of the retinal image leading him so far to decree in his *Optics* that "the eye is a camera obscura". The eye did not only become a machine or an obscure box with a hole or a dark chamber since if we look at El-Haytham's first trenchantly elaborate use of the camera obscura in *On the Shape of the Eclipse*— and its re-emergence in *Book of Optics*, we realize that the dark chamber was literally his laboratory—a mu'tabar.<sup>119</sup> Machines were an obscure place to retain and study the casting back of light and the inversion of a previously known world. Kepler seemed to have wanted to not only enter the machine but make clearly known that with the aid of his pitch-black camera he sought to create a break and rupture within epistemology. He wrote, "For the rest, you, whoever you are, whom it pleases to contend with me, let it be known that you are going to be held unworthy in this ring unless you enter into my chamber [camera obscura] following,

---

<sup>115</sup> For more information around the *Book of Optics* as early precursor to the modern scientific method, please refer to:

Muṣṭafā Nazīf, al-Ḥasan ibn al-Haytham, *buhūthuhu wa kushūfuhu al-baṣariyya*, 2 vol. Cairo Fu'ād 1st University, 1943.

El-Bizri, Nader. "A philosophical perspective on Alhazen's optics." *Arabic Sciences and Philosophy* 15.02 (2005): 189-218.

Sabra, Abdelhamid I. *Optics, Astronomy, and Logic: Studies in Arabic Science and Philosophy*. Vol. 444. Variorum Publishing, 1994.

<sup>116</sup> This is inferred from the title of the previously discussed *Opticae Thesaurus* (1573) in which the *Book of Optics* was printed in Latin. 'Thesaurus' denotes in Latin 'treasure'.

<sup>117</sup> emple, Nicholas. *Disclosing horizons: architecture, perspective and redemptive space*. Routledge, 2006, 98-99.

<sup>118</sup> Da Vinci, Leonardo. *Leonardo on the human body*. Courier Corporation, 2013, p.43.

<sup>119</sup> This mu'tabar cannot but remind me of the house turned prison turned mental institution turned exile, etc.. It will be addressed in the future.

which was the only thing that Aristotle lacked. If you ignore this after being warned, the same excuse that saved Aristotle will not save you.”<sup>120</sup>

As opposed to the forthcoming Descartes, Kepler had wanted to make his references very visible as he seemed to have looked upon himself in a continuous contretemps for truth and transfer of light with/from his interlocutors. This transfer and confrontational altercation with the errors the port that came before him needed to be elucidated “so this place, too, must be filled, the clouds must be driven off, so that the sun of truth may shine more clearly”.<sup>121</sup> It is timely to note that *Aufklärung*, the word for Enlightenment in German has a double meaning; first, making clear and then clearing out. To Kepler, history was discursive, yet it had names. <sup>122</sup> Profuse with the comparison of light to objects – a blind man’s stick, a ball and wine notwithstanding, in Descartes’ *Dioptrics* studying the laws of refraction, knowledge came to halt at Ptolemy. It was clear to Sabra that Descartes was well familiar with both Ibn Al-Haytham and Witelo.<sup>123</sup> Without mentioning any, Descartes adopts Ptolemy’s list of the seven aspects that sight cognizes which Alhazen had refuted to be twenty.<sup>124</sup> 18th century philosopher, rhetorician and jurist Giambattista Vico was a rampant critic of Cartesian stealthy reductionism as well as Baconian simplistic profligacy for their production of a science that lacks “a history and philosophy of humanity”.<sup>125</sup> He went on to accuse Descartes of accumulating “the fruit of that plan of wicked politics, to destroy completely those men through whom one has reached power.” This is in addition to comparing him to tyrants who “came to power by proclaiming the cause of freedom. But once they are assured of power, they become worse tyrants than the original oppressors. In fact, Descartes has caused the reading of other philosophers to be neglected by claiming that, through the force of natural light, any man can know as much as others ever knew.”<sup>126</sup>

---

120 Kepler, Johannes. *Optics: paralipomena to Witelo & optical part of astronomy*. Green Lion Press, 2000, 54.

121 Op. cit. 73.

122 Op. cit. 164

“For the rest, let us leave out the guesswork and turn to the surer testimony of later authors. The Arab Alhazen, to whom Risner, in a conjecture not lacking in judgement, attributed an age of fifty years, and, active about two centuries after Alhazen, our Witelo, assert fully the same thing in their *Optics*, bringing in astronomical experience, which nowadays Tycho Brahe, using the most precise instruments, has brought fully out into the light, that stars are seen near the horizon under refraction, on which there is enough above.”

123 Sabra, Abdelhamid I. *Theories of light: from Descartes to Newton*. CUP Archive, 1981, 72.

124 For Ptolemy and Ibn Al-Haytham’s list the elements that sight cognizes, please refer to: Sabra, A. I. “Ibn al-Haytham’s criticisms of Ptolemy’s *Optics*.” *Journal of the History of Philosophy* 4.2 (1966): 145-149.

125 Vico, Giambattista, Thomas Goddard Bergin, and Max Harold Fisch. *The new science of Giambattista Vico*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1968.

126 As partially quoted in Bové, Paul A. *Poetry against torture: criticism, history, and the human*. Hong Kong University Press, 2008. And amassed from other references on the World Wide Web.

In this humanist tone that startlingly all at once contends for historicization, universalism and constructivist epistemology while vehemently reprehending imperialism yet keeping nature's beginning capitalized, Vico published in 1725 *Scienza Nuova*, *The New Science*.<sup>127</sup> In the 1720s, Count Gian Artico di Porcía sent a proposal to scholars in Italy to write their biographies for the edification of students. Vico went on to write his in the male third person while saying that 'he wrote it as a philosopher'. In it, he described how Vico cannot neither seriously nor playfully support the mechanical physics of Epicurus or Descartes "for both start from a false position", how he upheld Newton, Leibniz and Bacon's method over Descartes', his early poems, the innumerable and his views on how algebra sees, "Perception is stricken by algebra, for algebra sees only what is right under its eyes; memory is confounded, since when the second sign is found, algebra pays no further attention to the first; imagination goes blind, because algebra has no need of images; understanding is destroyed, because algebra professes to divine."<sup>128</sup> Divine these steps, redeem the myth. It is striking how with his vibrant attempt to unearth the political economy of history as 'verum et factum convertuntur', "the true and the made are convertible", Vico brought together both constructivism and myth. Perhaps as "he" constructed his life in writing, he was only becoming akin to that which he rehabilitated. Herein I remember, "During a discussion of whether Hegel had wished to deduce the world we turned to mathematics, philosophy and myth. Benjamin accepted myth alone as "the world". He said he was still not sure what the purpose of philosophy was, as there was no need to discover "the meaning of the world": it was already present in myth. Myth was everything; all else, including mathematics and philosophy, was only an obscuration, a glimmer that had arisen with it. [...] Philosophy, I said, was nothing independent, and only religion broke through the world of myth. I denied that mathematics could be part of myth."<sup>129</sup> How to counter the myth of disciplines? In this essay, I contend that it is through an interdisciplinary reading of history, science and philosophy that pure imitations, delineated disciplines, and meronomic historicizations collapse with invisible trace. The path of investigation is therefore not

---

127 Vico, Giambattista, Thomas Goddard Bergin, and Max Harold Fisch. *The new science of Giambattista Vico*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1968.

128 In the essay *Scrittura da filosofo: The Life of Giambattista Vico Written by Himself* whose subtitle follows the same title as the aforementioned autobiography that I was intending to insert as footnote to the previous quotation from page 125, the writer plainly quotes an epistolary excerpt between Conti and Leibniz from the introduction of the autobiography written by Vico's himself and published in 1963 in English. I shall now be quoting from the writer of the essay, "In a famous letter to Louis Bourguet dated 22 March 1714 on the philosopher Antonio Conti and on the Venetian intellectual scene, Leibniz suggested that it would benefit research and study immensely if, along with their more technical works, living philosophers were to publish the story of their discoveries, "Descartes would have had us believe that he had read scarcely anything. That was a bit too much. [...] And I wish that authors would give us the histories of their discoveries and the steps by which steps in order to profit more of their work."

129 Scholem, Gershom Gerhard. *Walter Benjamin: The story of a friendship*. New York Review of

obliterated nor exempt of trace. It is only unseen with the configurations of knowledge as pure discipline.

While searching within the Book of Optics for a philosophy of perception and thought that could “speak to us in an effective timely manner”, Nader El-Bizri conditionally presents Ibn Al-Haytham’s notion of *as-su-ra al-kulliyya*, the universal form in the following manner, “it is by way of imagination that the eidetic essence of a thing, which is represented by its *su-ra al-kulliyya*, becomes accessible, and designates the wholeness of the appearing structural properties of that individual entity and its classing among analogous species. The *su-ra al-kulliyya* does consequently point to the grasping of the quiddity (*mā’iyya* or *māhiyya*) of a corresponding object, whereby vision points to its eidetic essence based on the concreteness of the visual aspects of its perceived presence, without resorting to induction (*al-istiqrā’*)”.<sup>130</sup> On one side, science has proclaimed light through an obliteration of place, trace and a denigrated appropriation while overlooking the place of imagination within universal form. Eyes were eidetic. On that same side, writing has been long defiled in claims of purity, exclusivity of meaning, access and authorship.

As I contend with the interpretations of men, I watch their writing slither in later claims of ‘pure imitations’ and superimpositions of flunked concealment. These steps I do not want to ‘divine’ but dig, watch and write. Many of the unnamed slink back to my memory to taint our communication. We spark off in trace. Kinharaway arrives after always being there. She wrote, “cyborg politics is the struggle for language and the struggle against perfect communication, against the one code that translates all meaning perfectly, the central dogma of phallogocentrism”.<sup>131</sup> Myth had survived in the place of writing. Writing is technology and it cannot be my only place. Similarly to the Greek *makhanas*, in the Arabic language *makana* signifies ‘machine’ while *makān* signifies ‘place’. If when investigating the etymological morphology of the word *makān*, I find that it reads as ‘where being happened’, then I cannot but ask what would *makana* read if the machine was made to be the ontological place of vision within the enlightenment. When discussing space followed by place in the looked after Books of Optics and his less studied Treatise on Place, Ibn Al-Haytham links the visual perception of space to prior somatic experience. He seems to unequivocally refuse the intuitiveness of spatial perception and hence, the autonomy of vision arguing that without concrete notions of

---

130 El-Bizri, Nader. "A philosophical perspective on Alhazen's optics." *Arabic Sciences and Philosophy* 15.02 (2005): 189-218.

131 Haraway, Donna. *Simians, cyborgs, and women: The reinvention of nature*. Routledge, 2013, 176.

distance and size for association, sight can tell us next to nothing about such things.<sup>132</sup> Our bodies as places learn space. Perhaps it was through the bifurcation of mind over body and the alleged hierarchy of the former over the latter, that the epistemology which has presented itself as 'Western' forgot the following; space precedes light and we can only see through refractions. Despite being two, the eyes do not perceive in cardinal directions. Oversight is not antagonistic to vision; it is inherent to its quiddity.<sup>133</sup> The path of investigation was not therefore obliterated. It was only eclipsed.

---

132 For more information, please refer to:

Smith, A. Mark. "The alhacenian account of spatial perception and its epistemological implications." *Arabic sciences and philosophy* 15.02 (2005): 219-240.

133 In his *Reading Capital*, Althusser writes, "Here again, it seems as if this balance of sights and oversights is found beneath a grid, the classical absences revealed by the Marxist presences. But there is one small, one very small difference, which, I warn the reader straight away, we have no intention of not seeing! It is this: what classical political economy does not see, is not what it does not see, it is what it sees; it is not what it lacks, on the contrary, it is what it does not lack; it is not what it misses, on the contrary, it is what it does not miss. The oversight, then, is not to see what one sees, the oversight no longer concerns the object, but the sight itself. The oversight is an oversight that concerns vision: non-vision is therefore inside vision, it is a form of vision and hence has a necessary relationship with vision." I read this as an ontology of the eclipse.

## CHAPTER III

# ANYTHING BUT BEING BURIED UNDERGROUND: THE LANDFILL THAT WE COULD ONCE GO TO

**‘Nothing on earth would tell you whether it was from the reconstruction or from the war when you came across a ruin. I got this mixture of knowledge on the city from the war and from archeology.’ Paola is talking here about the city of \_\_\_\_\_.**

-PAOLA YACOUB, *Drawing of the Things Themselves*

**The trash that collects around people’s places, like the ruins that collect in the hills, is imprinted with a life history (and death) and embodies a continuous process of composition and decomposition. They become compelling-signs of a past, like the present, where things fall apart and where everything including power itself, is constructed and transient. They become objects for the imagination’s ceaseless effort to wrest a local “real” from the tragic and senseless evolution of an extractive industry. This, then, is history with a difference.**

-KATHLEEN STEWART, *A Space on the Side of the Road*

**The city returns to nature, its nature. Buildings collapse: grass grows through the rubble. Wild plants sprout in bomb craters. The asphalt is ploughed. Strange trees emerge for which we have no name.**

-FAWWAZ TRABOULSI, *Beirut-Guernica: A City and a Painting*

On the 21st and 22nd of April 2007, Lina Saneh has demanded her body to be cremated.<sup>134</sup> The performance artist repudiates being buried as she refuses to partake in the sectarian politics of interment that would bring her life of political resistance and withdrawal to naught.<sup>135</sup> In Lebanon, cremation is prohibited by the law as all religious authorities despite their differences impose with their maxim “from earth to earth” or the synecdochic variation

---

<sup>134</sup> Appendix: Body Parts. By Lina Saneh. Gallery Sfeir-Semler, Beirut. 21 - 22 Apr. 2007. Performance.

<sup>135</sup> For more information on the history of the sectarian system in Lebanon, please refer to: Waddah Charara, *Fi Ussul Lubna Al Ta’ifi: Khat Al-Yamin Al-Shaabi [On the Origins of Sectarian Lebanon: The Path of the Populist Right]* (Beirut: Dar Al-Tali’a Lel-Tiba’a w Al-Nashra, 1975)

In the funerals of all Christian sects practiced in Lebanon, Genesis 3:19 is recited by the priest leading the ceremony in both the mess and burial act.

“from dust to dust”, a pithy return to nature, the origin and forbearer of Creationist flesh, soil.<sup>136</sup> Corpses, conceived as the remains of ephemeral carnality and dwelling house of the religious soul, hereby would become, by proxy of religious land use and zoning of cemeteries, the property of the monotheist institutions which uphold that all bodies, even in their subterranean decomposition, belong to god, a property which in the case of the Lebanese quasi-theocratic democracy is legitimized, purportedly with no place for disapproval, by the state apparatus. Lina Saneh protests,

*Anything but be buried underground. Anything but rotting in the sludge  
with the worms and cockroaches.*

*Anything but allowing my body to be further mutilated and humiliated by the pathologi-  
cal hatred and disdain of religious authorities.*

*I don't want to be recycled back into the world.*

*I do not want to feed the earth that fed me.<sup>137</sup>*

Religious authority is herein protracted not only to death itself but the laws which according to their proclaimed methods hold no space for secular representations— a common reductionist claim that I hope to challenge in this essay. Lina Saneh clearly makes the link between eschatology and scatology whose managements are commonly delegated to religion and the state respectively. Her protest seems to oppose all power structures that potentially could govern the personal property of her body after she passes away. She seems to be against everything that would add value or use to her body without seeking approval from her subjecthood. Furthermore in her dissent, the underground and its arthropod inhabitants are also rendered abject – a space that we will repetitively return to in this essay.<sup>138</sup> However, Saneh finds a gap within the practice of the law and hopes to excessively abuse it in order to reclaim the handling of her body once dead and emancipate it from theocratic views of body

---

<sup>136</sup> In both Shi'ite and Sunna Islamic burial rites where the grave-liner is omitted and the body after being washed and shrouded is laid directly into a hole in the ground, three handfuls of soil are thrown on the body by everyone present while the verse 20:55 from the Quran is recited:

“From the earth We created you, and into it We will return you, and from it We will extract you another time.” (Quran 20:55)

In the funerals of all Christian sects practiced in Lebanon, Genesis 3:19 is recited by the priest leading the ceremony in both the mess and burial act: “By the sweat of your face you shall eat bread, till you return to the ground, for out of it you were taken; for you are dust, and to dust you shall return.” (Genesis 3:19)

<sup>137</sup> Script of “Appendix: Body Parts” personally shared by the artist

<sup>138</sup> Since disposal, intercalation, encroachment, extension and resurgence are the five mechanisms of exile at heart of the imminent subject of this paper, I have decided to integrate these movements into the style of my writing. Proposing an interdisciplinary treatment that brings together references produced in the field of science, engineering, art, law, economy, religion, anthropology, journalism and literature, I will be attempting to look at how different proclaimed ramifications of knowledge produce a space.



and earth. She discovers that when organs are excised and amputated within hospitals, they are disposed of by burning. So she plans to bit by bit dismember organs from her body in the alibi of selling them as artworks while asking each buyer to incinerate or immortalize them when dead so as to leave, in this trade, as little possible for burial after her demise. She adds, “If I must burn in hell, I’ll first burn at its doors, or I will immortalize my body.” In her proposal, death is no longer a rupture and liminal end nor a possibility for resuscitation and reuse. Lina doesn’t seem to want her body to make ground and be grounded in any way.

Why begin with the body and the law when my subject is spatial? This investigation attempts to exhume the history, formation and transformation of a landfill in order to probe how it accounts to wider spatio-political relations such as dwelling, survivance, subjugation and access. While studying this space of a “tip” or dump which I would like to keep for the moment being without a name, I found myself facing an impossibility of tackling it as a homogeneous or autonomous entity and location. As garbage – that singular form, is known to pile up, mound, leak into unseen strata and crevices while it pervasively decomposes and dissipates into unidentified matter and leachate, so did my subject matter present itself the more I have delved into it as an effluent actor that is much more intricate and identifiable with complex systems of governance and disposal that seem to be remotely outside of itself. In this chapter, I will show how this landfill in question became an extension to a state’s mechanisms of exile and denial. While studying the treatment of this artificial scape and the proposals that have flowed prior to application, I will be looking at how denizens, the state, private institutions and a mixture or mire of two or more, interdict, endow and bequeath value to the environment, toxicity and place.<sup>139</sup>

---

<sup>139</sup> Artificial needs to be defined. The slow artificial in question is to a great extent inadvertently and collectively created and administered by infrastructure or the lack thereof. It is seemingly born more out of actions and tropes related to economy and spatial management rather than architecture and the expediences and aspirations of technology. In his book *The Reality of the Artificial: Nature, Technology and Naturoids* (2012), philosopher of science Massimo Negrotti defines “the concept of artificial, as an adjective, refers to an object, process or machine which aims to reproduce some natural object or process. Since flowers exist in nature but not telephones, the adjective ‘artificial’ has no meaning if we attribute it to any object invented and built by man, i.e., an ‘artifact’, while it takes on full meaning when it is finalized to reproduce a natural object. The Italian linguists Devoto and Oli have correctly defined the artificial as an object obtained by means of technical expedients or procedures which imitate or replace the appearance, the product or the natural phenomenon. Likewise, the imitation component is defined by the same authors as the capacity to get or to pursue, according to some criterion, varying degrees of similarity.” While the distinction between a natural and artificial objects and processes is growing more complex by the day to the extent that this dichotomy is being more and more rejected ontologically and replaced by other non-binary “diffractions” [Karen Barad], like in the work of Donna Haraway, Timothy Morton, Rosi Braidotti to name a few, I will polemically adopt Negrotti’s definition for the time being so to first to inquire can a flower become artificial through insertion rather than reproduction before arriving to the main question: when can a flower cease being both a flower and an artificial flower and become something else ?

In “The Mehli Report”, Lebanese novelist Rabee Jaber retells the story of an architect flâneur named Saman Yarid that sojourns the past and the future of the city Beirut. Along the way, Saman begins to receive strange phone calls that we later learn, as the novel unfolds, come from his late sister Josephine. His sister has disappeared in a kidnapping during the civil war in 1983 and has now taken in the second part of the novel the role of the narrator. He, or she begins one journey of the city center of Beirut with, “The sea appeared. The Normandy Landfill appeared. And the fence of the naval base.”<sup>140</sup> Where is the Normandy Landfill and why did the sea appear first? This essay investigates one receptacle of residue from the last Lebanese Civil War that roughly ran from 1975 to 1990. This place or residue is known as the Normandy Landfill. In 1925, the sea was paved creating L’Avenue des Français, the French Mandate’s prominent touristic promenade which consequently became the main hotel district of Beirut. During the “Battle of the Hotels” at the beginning of the Lebanese Civil War in 1975, many of the now abandoned hotels were occupied and turned into battlefields. One of these was the Normandy Hotel, whose rubble, according to several testimonies, was kept in place for an extended period of time, eventually harboring debris from other sites and growing into the Normandy landfill, the main garbage dumping site of Beirut during the civil war. The more the landfill extended, the more debris of the struck dilapidated buildings were thrown into the sea and thus continuing its occupation. The sea hereby became a receptacle of fallen architecture as well as municipal and military refuse.

According to a study by geotechnical engineers Saleh Sadek and Mutasem El Fadel in 1998, the original site of the Normandy landfill consisted of a small bay cutting 200 meters into the mainland.<sup>141</sup> By 1994 the volume of the landfill reached about 5 million m<sup>3</sup>, with half the volume below sea level, reaching a depth of 20 meters and expanding about 600 meters beyond the original shoreline. The recent discussion on post-war reconstruction has started circa. 1989 when conflicts were coming to an end, and culminated in 1992 and 1993 in a project

---

140 Rabee Jaber, “The Mehli’s Report” (New York: New Directions, 2012), p. 201

141 Saleh Sadek and Mutasem El Fadel, “Reclamation of a landfill along the Mediterranean coast: A waste management application decision case study”, *Journal of Natural Resources and Life Science Education* 29 (2000): 155-161.

called “Horizon 2000”.<sup>142</sup> However it was only in 1994 when The Lebanese Company for the Development and Reconstruction of Beirut known by its French acronym Solidere was founded, that the Normandy landfill was included within the zone of the Master Plan of the City Center.<sup>143</sup> The zone was excluded from the limits fixed to the Western port by Decree no 5609 of 3.9.1994 of Sector 5 because it had simply not existed on previous maps. In its place was the sea, so the new extension of land had to be contained, first in cartography as an added sector and then in monetary value as real estate. During that year, the Council of Development and Reconstruction (CDR) struck an agreement with the private company Solidere to reconstruct post-war Beirut and implement the treatment work on behalf of the state in return for an allocation of 291,800 m<sup>2</sup> of development land in the New Waterfront District. Since 2007, waste from the landfill are said to be found scattered around the country.<sup>144</sup>

This chapter attempts to excavate the history of the Normandy Landfill as a receptacle of a much larger effluence through looking at the “theater of operations” that have formed the Normandy, “treated” and traded it within the flare of reconstruction after wartime.<sup>145</sup> An interdisciplinary reading is needed to better understand the history of a space that lays ground to

---

142 To better understand the context of the discussed, I will be presenting below a summary. While searching in newspaper archives, I found that whenever battles would come to an ease in the LCW, discussions around the reconstruction of the city would fill up the news. However, the nineties reconstruction is still the one that is very extensively studied as the former only remained as proposals. In this essay, I will argue that even the nineties reconstruction project remained to a great extent a proposal. Just when the political situation seemingly calmed down in 1989, one of the biggest throes, the “Battle of Abolition” took place in 1990 between the army led by General Michel Aoun and the Lebanese Forces led by Samir Geagea. In order to comprehend better Lebanon's current political situation, following the end of the war, Aoun was exiled to Paris and Geagea was imprisoned. However, they both were released in the early 2000s and are currently the leaders of the Free Patriotic Movement and the Lebanese Forces – the main Christian parties in the country and who have always been known to be in vehement opposition. In recent years, both warlords Aoun and Geagea have declared their candidacy to presidency, and in early 2015 Geagea and Aoun have even organized a ceremony and a statement announcing their friendly reconciliation. However, none have come close to recognizing the bloodshed that this opposition have caused. This is common as the Lebanese parliament is currently headed by mostly warlords or their families. On the last day of October in 2016, 81 year old Michel Aoun succeeded in becoming Lebanon's president – a dream he has been reiterating since he first rose as general. This act could in some absurd way imply that between 1990 and 2016, nothing happened. We only won the war yesterday.

143 Solidere was founded to implement the plan that was previously called Horizon 2000. An etymological study of both names will follow. It is important to remember that while Horizon 2000 was the name of project whose calling became swiftly obsolete, Solidere is a company.

144 Amer Mala'eb, “Hadiyat men 'Issabat Al Normandy' ila Al-Mostaffin: talwith bhamoud Al-Day'a :A Gift from the 'Normandy Mafia' to the Summer Vacationist: Polluting the Bhamdoun Village,” Al-Akhar Newspaper, May 12, 2007

where no treaded ground was.<sup>146</sup> However, this space is not new, it seems to be outside of itself. Hereby, I will attempt to go back and forth inside and outside of discipline – as opposed to between it as is suggested in interdisciplinarity, and look at how this laying ground is not only done through physical construction but also through disciplinary enculturation, secret planning and disavowal.<sup>147</sup> Furthermore, rather than merely focusing on projects that took place, I will be probing plans, scientific imaginaries, accusations, verses, articles and proposals that never befell. Hereby, I will be honing in on ecotoxicological and scientific possibilities, urban veneers, swiveled arbitrations and old promises that were exiled from the very little that is known about this place. As its name suggests through the landfill being called after a site where it doesn't exist, Normandy is somewhere else. In this paper I will be looking for it.

In order to study the multiple operational and disruptive frameworks that have shaped the Normandy landfill through accumulation, trade and treatment within the war and the subsequent period of reconstruction, I would want to first look at the time before Normandy was. If the landfill still is, is a question that I will be tackling in the conclusion. For the short time to come, I have consecrated the first part of delving into the appearance of the Normandy to two interrelated points: first, the history of the commodification of the urban scape within the discussed locality and second, the history of the constructions of Beirut.<sup>148</sup> These two points will be waded in straightaway through the mere act of digging into the early foundations of the Lebanese modern nation-state. The two points coupled with the desire to meet at sea form a triangle, albeit a toppled and flattened one, that is; a triangle seen from a peripheral vision. This peripherality is my own, this vision is not. This shape lies on the ground, and the Normandy did look like a crushed horizontal mountain when I first laid my eyes on it. It also did when it was contained in cartography or other aerial views. Usually the map ended there in the Normandy because they always forgot *adding* the sea. However, when I walked in the actual dump location, I could only feel at sea. The sea did seem far from me, yet I was never

---

145 o put this research into perspective in relation to the overall reconstruction project, I was able to find in Arabic, English, French and German more than 60 books, 90 essays, 30 theses and thousands of newspaper articles on the post-war reconstruction of Beirut or sections of it, however I was only able to find on the Normandy Landfill two papers (written by the same researchers and in engineering), a handful of juridical reports and decrees, 2 research material for either confidential governmental or independent research whose conductors shared with me and only a handful of newspaper and magazine articles two-third of which are on the waste found all over the country in 2007 and onwards. Another resource that I will be often returning to are the publications, reports and maps published by Solidere,

146 Ibid, Rancière, *Thinking Between...*

147 Despite disciplines' implicit inkling for spatialization, these interstices belong to the often taken for granted aesthetics of knowledge rather than its content. They only gain content as ideology.

148 As frequent as it will be in this text, commodification will come before construction.

not able to see it except when I turned my head to the side of my body that I cannot see well – my back and its extensions. There I saw the city. It was behind me. Is the sea part of the city? The sea smelled like an open animal. It had a sour stench. I also remember seeing on the map that the mountain was slanted with two summits which could equal to none. One *tip* was bigger than another. *I wanted to live there.*<sup>149</sup>

Before delving into the mires of commodification and construction in Beirut, a history of the sea in relation to the Lebanese urban and coastal fabrics is needed. While attempting to glean from the fluctuating waves and undulations that couple this area's fraught history of occupation and transfers/collapses of regimes with the legal quips and quirks that control maritime and construction laws, I have found myself confronting political continuities or reproductions rather than an overthrow or end and beginning of a new regime.<sup>150</sup> Walid Sadek once wrote, "a civil war once began, does not end".<sup>151</sup> As excessively pruning as this as this sentence might sound to be, I will be expanding it furthermore by presenting how I have

---

<sup>149</sup> The experience of walking there over and over again felt sourly uniform even if I would discover something new in every trip. While reading in retrospect, I stumbled upon the voice of a historian and philosopher that could perhaps adequately present and corroborate a theorization of my voice in a similar undertaking;

"What if I tried to arrest the progress of truth claims that reduce "anecdotal evidence" to a secondary and deeply suspect status? What if I tried to invert the hierarchy of "conceptual thought" over "data" and to take my own task of cultural translation as the supplement? [...]What if the density of trash, porches, and hand-painted signs were allowed to disrupt intellectual concentration to a point where their material substance rubs against thought with a friction that generates cognitive sparks?"

Susan Buck-Morss, *The Dialectics of Seeing: Walter Benjamin and the Arcades Project* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1989)

<sup>150</sup> It is important to note from now that this juridical relation is mainly based on manipulation, displacement and exception rather than the enforcement of an edict. For more information, please refer to the general practice of the Legal Agenda edited by lawyer Nizar Saghieh as well as: Mona Fawaz' and Marieke Krejnan's "Exception as the Rule: High-End Developments in Neoliberal Beirut", Abir Saksouk's "Where is the Law? Investigations from Beirut" among others.

While studies questioning the practice of law in relation to public space, or the lack thereof in Lebanon, have been recently proliferating in the field of urban research, all of what I have come across follows a periodic reading of history that reiterates a common methodology for the greatest based on secondary juridical references. In it, each political rule is presented as bringing forth sets of laws or revisions that are seen linearly as means to a temporal end and often as customized states of exception. However, why is building law always being manipulated by and in service of the current ruling class? Why is this act normalized rather than criminalized and could we relate its causes to a more complex reason than profit? Finally, why are the primary references of building laws mostly missing from discourse? In the ensuing pages, I will be attempting to argue for a more comparative and relational investigation of the bylaw and the locale whose reading of place is not delimited by its site-specific physical boundaries. From this space, I will be seeking to read history not as cyclical series of regimes that begin and end but as a continuity of failures and amendments that often run away from place.

<sup>151</sup> Walid Sadek, "Appearance of Images as Disaster" with Bavand Behpoor in *Art Tomorrow*, no. 2, Summer, pp. 60-64.

learnt from the case of the Normandy that once a class of fiats and dictums of those who do not inhabit, carry out the administration of a territory on behalf of a civil, reproducing it doesn't seem to (have yet come to an) end.

Just like the history of mandates in the case of Lebanon has not began with the French rule, the politics of the mandate have not ended with the French colonial power or any other ensuing or preceding self-proclaimed rule even if it came under the haze of a local purportedly democratic state. Seeing that our space of study and desired inhabitancy is one where dwelling is denied in what we might call a double take of governance because first, it was a large body of water and second, it was turned into a dump, it was able to bring into my remembrance an array of mechanisms that are not only specific to waste and annexation but also the left-out of history. In the Arabic language, the noun for “wastes”, *nifāyāt*, is derived from the verb “to exile”, *nafā*.

To begin, let us trace back the history of the landfill's namesake, the hotel. In 1934, the Normandy Hotel, was built on a bay cutting 200 meters into the mainland known as l'Avenue des Français, the Avenue of the French or *Jādat Al-Farānssiyyin*.<sup>152</sup> The hotel accommodated up until its fall in 1976 transient visitors such as mandate diplomats, tourists and notably as seen later in their memoirs, renown or secret military figures like British Colonel Nigel Bremage and spy Kim Philby and possibly many others.<sup>153</sup> Opened by the Mouadamiyyeh family next to the Ottoman Hotel Bassoul just two years after the foundation of the legendary Hotel Saint-Georges in 1932, the auberge was an early bloom in what would become known as the hotel district and main touristic hub of the city. Around l'Avenue des Français, one would later find in the sixties and seventies a flurry of hotels such as the Holiday Inn, Phoenicia Intercontinental, Palm Beach and Excelsoir, Byblos, Claridge, Resident and Crown as well as cabarets and care-ree entertainment venues such as The Dugout, The Lido, The Kit-Kat,

---

152 It is unknown why the hotel was called after the northern French city. Normandy the region denoted the epithet “Northmen” given to its settlers in the 9th century, the Norwegian and Danish Vikings that later bequeathed the land in a treaty to King Charles III. Another Normandy and another namesake became prominent more than 10 years after our subject was first built; the Battle of the Normandy that abruptly took off overnight on the 6th of June 1944. To seize control of the occupied northern coast of France, the Allies have launched the largest amphibious invasion in history often coined Operation Overlord. Equally mysterious is how this shore turned beachhead, sea turned battlefield becomes a prescient and obscure reference to what would later happen to Normandy, the hotel.

153 Dale W Forseythe, *Turdhead the Fourth Notch* (Indiana: AuthorHouse, 2012)

Lucullus, l'Elefant Noir, and Les Caves du Roi to only name a few.<sup>154</sup>

Resuming the incomplete reconstruction project of the Ottoman Empire that took off in several intervals during the half century before the fall of its conglomerate rule but most notably in the second decade of the twentieth century, the French Mandate began its urban refurbishment on one hand with the appropriation of recent projects that were launched by its predecessors, such as in the case of the Beirut Hippodrome for example, and on the other hand, the destruction of the more ancient and iconic buildings of the city and their recycling for the construction of new establishments symbolic of the force of their colonial and purportedly accordant arrival.<sup>155</sup> The Normandy Hotel itself lied on the new corniche, the reclaimed land of l'Avenue des Français that was built from the rubble of the old town. More to that, the French avenue was its proprietary title was held up by a wall constructed with the remnants of the Byzantine Basilica which was demolished for Rue Allenby to spread and take its place.<sup>156</sup> Being one of the early urban constructions of the mandate, the new avenue would become the photographic subject of a myriad of postcards, if not the first. In one touristic review trenchantly studied by Samir Kassir, the guide wrote, "One no longer goes there to find the Orient of fifty years ago, but a more colorful copy of Nice."<sup>157</sup> The new Beirut corniche or reclaimed promenade was depicted here as a more picturesque replica of southern Nice's own "Promenade des Anglais". In terms of the metropolitan re-arrangements of its Levantine capital Beirut, the mandate's *mission civilisatrice* was not limited to rendering the so-called capital of its new annexations into a more vibrant copy of itself. In the colonial treatment of

---

154 The first 4 hotels along with the Normandy and St. Georges are often noted in historical writings documenting the battle. The latter 4 were brought up in an interview with Jamal Khazrik who was working there around the time of the battle. The existence and participation of these hotels was further corroborated through conversations with both people from the Lebanese hotel industry and ex-militia fighters.

For more information around the area, please refer to:

Samir Khalaf, *Heart of Beirut: Reclaiming the Bourj* (Beirut: Saqi, 2013)

Accordant only with the old Ottoman elite who saw the French arrival as a fresh economic revival from the bankrupt previous empire as seen

by its military presence and mappings. For more information of how the mandate executed its force into the urban fabric of Beirut, please refer to:

Marlène Ghorayeb *Beyrouth sous mandat français: construction d'une ville moderne* (Paris: KARTHA-LA Editions, 2014). To read more on the reconstruction plan of the early twentieth century, please refer to:

155 Joe Nasr and Eric Verdeil, "The reconstructions of Beirut" in Salma K. Jayyusi, Renata Holod, Attilio Petruccioli and Andre Raymond, *The City in the Islamic World*, Brill, pp.1116-1141, 2008, *Handbook of Oriental Studies*.

156 Samir Kassir, *Beirut* (California: University of California Press, 2010), 285.

157 André Geiger, *Le Liban et la Syrie* (Paris: Arthaud, 1932); quoted in Chami, *Le Memorial du Liban*, 136.

he urban fabric, the city became a laboratory for urban experimentation where planners would test ideas that they would later apply in their center.<sup>158</sup> However, as we will see in the second part of this essay, these topographic mechanisms were not limited to the mandate's rule, l'Avenue des Français was not the first land reclamation project by the French in Beirut, and rubble is not waste. Some demolitions will aggrandize the city, with more capita3 yearsl. Not only the Eastern church made you walk on the sea.

Since 1875, the Ottoman Empire began going down the haul with bankruptcy read by some historians as the culminating point of the empire's assimilation into the world economy.<sup>159</sup> The initial idea for a massive port enlargement project was envisioned in 1863 by a French naval officer followed by a design by the French chief engineer of the Suez Canal. In his book "Fin de siècle Beirut: The Making of an Ottoman Provincial Capital" that looks into how Beirut was transformed in the second half of the 19th century from a small city in the Mount Lebanon Mutasarrifate into Vilayet Beirut a regional trading boom, Jens Hanssen writes, "the envisaged plan was not only to enlarge the port ten-fold, but it was also the ambition of de Perthuis—the most powerful foreign resident in Beirut during the second half of the nineteenth century—to create a direct link between his shipping company and his road enterprise which had recently connected Beirut and Damascus."

With the bankruptcy, the empire was not able to conduct its enlargement plan except until 1893 when it has commissioned the French company MM Estier et Frères, under the supervision of Henri Garreta and a contract by de Perthuis himself, to execute the job.<sup>160</sup> A French company now owned the new port, and it had replaced local labour with workers from the coastal area of the Levant, thus forming a regional subjugated alliance who albeit lacked expertise after also abruptly firing the well deemed head of Beirut customs purportedly for his

---

<sup>158</sup> For more information: Ghorayeb, Marlène, « L'urbanisme de la ville de Beyrouth sous Mandat français, in « Figures de l'Orientalisme en architecture », C. Bruant, J. Leprun, M. Volait (eds.), *Revue d'études sur le monde musulman et la Méditerranée*, n°73-74, 327-342, Aix-en-Provence : Edisud, 1996.

<sup>159</sup> Resat Kasaba, *The Ottoman Empire and the world economy: The nineteenth century* (New York: SUNY Press, 1988)

<sup>160</sup> On how the enlargement of the port became possible:

"The idea of the port project received a new injection of optimism after 1883, when de Perthuis's lobbying tours to Paris and Istanbul achieved the financial commitment of a number of large banking houses. In 1886 the Beirut port company was founded in Paris with the financial backing of the Ottoman Imperial Bank (BIO), the Comptoir d'Escompte, the Banque de Paris et des Pays-Bas, and the Messageries Maritimes. Edmond de Perthuis was closer than ever to attaining his cherished prize when, on 19 June 1887, the minister of public works signed away the concession to the Baalbek-born and Beirut-based Joseph Efendi Mutran (d. 1899)."

Ibid, 89



rampant critique of the port company's French ownership, the new sky-rocketing tariffs, and the workers' low pay.<sup>161</sup> When the first ship belonging to the subcontractors embarked on its quay before the inauguration, the port workers retorted with relentless fury disheveling the goods it was unloading. The municipality was already put to great loss and rage as de Perhuit had with his newly erected privatized customs regime closed a small pier for regional and local boats and hence depriving the municipality from a big part of their budget while rendering the long-time employees jobless in an extended act of displacement, privatization and privation. This has led to a massive protest by the old workers in which they have decried, "You are not in France here, you are in Turkey. You are not the masters!".<sup>162</sup> The expansive commutation of the sector of maritime shipping and overland trade as private investment does not only reveal France's vision of the once locally bypassed city of Beirut as a market opportunity for the reorientation of economic flow.<sup>163</sup> This interest also foretells of the colonial empire's essentially nautical experience of coming by sea and staying there that would re-emerge later in the mandate's commodification of the Lebanese coast and waters as the ultimate touristic 'view' as well as in a more far-flung fashion, the neoliberal privatization of maritime space in Lebanon that remains the domineering relation to the sea supported by the state until today. Colonialism, mandatory politics and neoliberalism complement each other.

In an interview I have conducted with the senior caretaker of the deserted Hotel Maamiriyeh in Bikfaya in 2012, Mr. Awad explained, "the blight with hotels is that they extend way up disclosing a unique view of the city surrounding them. This view, as work, as everything, changes by the season. You get what I mean, don't you? The hotel is deserted, it's true, but it is still standing. We have to protect it against any abuse. No one should live here".<sup>164</sup> Mr. Awad was insinuating that hotels are only occupied because of their vantage points. In October 1975 around the onset of the Lebanese Civil War, the Normandy Hotel, Holiday Inn, Phoenicia Hotel, St Georges Hotel and Palm Beach among others in the gilded district were occupied by the left-wing Lebanese National Movement (LNM) and right-wing Lebanese Front. Known as the "Battle of the Hotels", this sub-conflict was one of the longest during the war spanning until March 1976 and resulting with the near withdrawal of the Christian right-wing militias

---

161 Ibid, 105

162 MAE, Paris, CCCTB 1888-94, vol. 10, Beirut, 5 July 1893.

Though as noted in several books, this protest was barely covered by the local media in comparison to the movement that later grew in the ensuing 20 years from the port worker's prolonged struggle, I would want to compare this archival French reference with other ones for further verification of what was said.

163 Fawaz, Leila Tarazi, *Merchants and migrants in nineteenth-century Beirut* (Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1983)

164 Gerges Awad and Jessika Khazrik, Interview with Mr. Gerges Awad, Personal interview, July 19, 2012

from the Western end of the bifurcated city. It was with this conflict that took as its stage the pre-war transiently inhabited touristic locales that were now mostly empty and which wouldn't out of mundane necessity be accessible to the resident men of the city – cum militia fighters, that the Normandy Hotel fell with its remanence and overarching structure retained. Virulently fighting against the presence of Palestinians in Lebanon, the Phalangists on the right retaliated against all calls for reforms with arms. Incensed by the training of the Palestinian resistance in the country who they deemed as an attempt “to destroy Lebanon”, they went on to describe the goal of their pro-Zionist militant urgency as “eradicat[ing] that infectious source”.<sup>165</sup>

The support that the Phalangists and their successors gained from France and the Vatican could be the subject for another paper, but what would be of salience to understand here is how these mechanisms of exile have led the transformation of this land into a dump. The verb *nafā* from which the Arabic noun for “wastes”, *nifāyāt*, is derived holds a secondary meaning other than “to exile” and it is “to deny”. Herein, language and the Lebanese borderline history of waste and exclusion attest to a modern state that denies by way of accumulation and the sustenance of economies of exile. Whenever the uni-lateral homogeneous identity that nations purport is felt at stake, it strikes back. In a place like an hotel where dwelling is already denied, the refugee becomes the receptacle of state's crisis to preserve its hostile mechanisms of homogenization. Living is transformed into a double denial, and in such circumstances, the scatological history of Lebanon seems to prefer turning the city into a wasteland rather than working towards an inclusive reshaping of its failing order. Camps are antithetical to hotels and sectarianism becomes a weapon that assaults in order to preserve a mode of internal and external othering that as a self-fulfilling prophecy sustains its own taxonomy by merely relying on it.

Saree Makdissi begins his seminal essay “Laying Claim to Beirut: Urban Narrative and Spatial Identity in the Age of Solidere” published in 1997 with “The very center of Beirut is today a wasteland”, point. Makdissi proclaims that the center of the city does not exist anymore since when Solidere has launched its project, “more buildings have been demolished than in almost twenty years of artillery bombardment and house-to-house combat”.<sup>166</sup> Despite the loud public outcry against this mandate, the government had abdicated its duty of handling the war-torn urban grain of the city to a private agency founded for this purpose and known

---

<sup>165</sup> Fawwaz Traboulsi, *A history of modern Lebanon* (London: Pluto Press, 2007), p. 87.

<sup>166</sup> Saree Makdissi, “Laying claim to Beirut: urban narrative and spatial identity in the age of Solidere.” *Critical Inquiry* 23, no. 3 (1997): 665

as Solidere.<sup>167</sup> As Hashim Sarkis notes in his essay “Territorial Claims: Architecture and Post-War Attitudes Toward the Built Environment”, there was a reversal between the roles of the private institution in the building industry, “the official planning advisory body” and the government.<sup>168</sup> New sanctions were decreed such as the Law 117 issued on 7th of December 1991 that revised the legislative decree of the 31st of January 1977 which led to the creation of the Council of Development and Reconstruction (CDR) which in turn took the role of the Ministry of Planning in such matters. The new promulgated legislation ambivalently allowed the CDR to commission a joint-stock company to take care of this business. Founded by the prime minister himself Rafik Al-Hariri who also owned OGER, another company that presented a reconstruction project earlier in 1983, the one centralized real estate entity Solidere displaced and expropriated the inhabitants and shop-owners of the downtown cross-class public area of congregation and transport in order to “revive” the wasteland it amplified.<sup>169</sup> As the project advanced, areas originally slated for public use were privatized and more buildings were battered into the landfill.<sup>170</sup> The alleged treatment and ‘clearance’ of the Normandy was hence protracted. Its existence as mound of land constructed over maritime out of waste was still well needed. While publicizing that the Normandy landfill – now added to the map, was being ‘treated’ since 1994, it was in fact up until 1998 recursively used to hold more muck, mirk and rubble. This time, its expansion did not run aground and at sea in the name of the war or the municipality’s inability to manage the daily refuse but in the name of reconstruction.<sup>171</sup> With this re-ordering of the habitat purportedly made to retrieve dwelling, the Normandy landfill was kept open to fester, carry and relay not only the prolonged demolition of the new center it adjoined but also more land revenue that Solidere would allegedly split between the government and itself.<sup>172</sup>

---

167 In its annual report of year 2003, Solidere introduces itself in p. 14 as follows:

“As land developer, Solidere prepares development sites in central Beirut for investors wishing to develop real estate properties. Its activities in this domain involve town planning, parceling and urban management, street furniture and landscaping.

168 Hashim Sarkis, “Territorial Claims: Architecture and Post-War Attitudes Toward The Built Environment.” *Recovering Beirut—Urban Design and Post-War Reconstruction*, Leiden, New York, Koeln: EJ Brill (1993): 101-127.

169 These business pacts between government and corporate blur the difference between the two as private companies become headed by members of the same ruling oligarchy. For instance, when Rafiq Hariri became president in 1992, he appointed as director of CDR the CEO of his company OGER. In this mode, the government becomes a corporate institution. On a further note, a big part of the souks were demolished in the citycenter in a similar albeit interrupted plan by Hariri’s OGER in 1983. For more information, please refer to: Assem Salaam, “Le Nouveau plan directeur du centre-ville de Beyrouth,” in *Beyrouth: Construire l’avenir, reconstruire le passe* 2 ed. Beyrouth

170 See Hatem El Hibri, “Mapping Beirut: Toward a History of the Translation of Space from the French Mandate through the Civil War (1920-91),” *The Arab World Geographer* Vol. 12 No. 3-4 (2009), pp. 119-135

“OGER excelled at its task, clearing many more buildings than just those reduced to rubble.”

172 OGER was the first company that was commissioned to treat the landfill.

Sold, solidity, join-stock solidarity; the name of Solidere is particularly telling. In its French acronym which would be roughly translated to the Lebanese Company for the Development and Reconstruction of Beirut Central District, center moves to company; the immanent tactic of neoliberal agencies. We restore and privatize and you, in case you were the government, receive a share in our business. In a deal struck with CDR and approved by the Council of Minister and promulgated through Decree No. 5665 ratified on the 21st of September 1994, Solidere would be granted an allocation of 291,800 sq m of development land in the New Waterfront District out of the 608, 000 sq m of the landfill ‘against the execution of the Company of the sea landfill and infrastructure works’.<sup>174</sup> In one interview, the Solidere official Imad Dana confirms, ““Solidere was entrusted by the government to develop this seafront area, which it financed from its own resources in return for reclaimed land from the Normandy.”<sup>175</sup> What are Solidere’s own resources and who are its shareholders? Whether the other 316, 300 sq m can be used for investment remains up until today a contested matter.

The scientific collective SEDRA was formed in 1993 in defiance to the emergence of the “Horizon 2000” project, what was later to become Solidere.<sup>176</sup> It was founded by its three members: Dr. Milad Jarjou’i an analytical chemist, Dr. Pierre Malychef an ecotoxicologist and herbal pharmacologist and Dr. Wilson Rizk, a hydrologist and nuclear engineer. The three scientists met in 1988 when they were assigned by the president of the central inspection at the Lebanese government – or “Republiche Libanes 1987” as construed by the trashy lingo of the fake company that hosted the scum, as the official investigators of the toxic waste trade that travelled by sea from Italy into Lebanon with the help of one of its still presently reigning political parties.<sup>177</sup> In this framework, the three scientists decided to create SEDRA to oppose and treat through research and writing cases pertaining to the nebulous fields of energy and the environment in Lebanon. In the context of their work, they took samples, examined and collected waste. They wrote, proposed longterm treatments and were threatened as well as received commissions by the government. SEDRA organized symposia and stood in court

---

173 Fig. 4: Aerial view one year after Solidere began with the destruction, 1995. Courtesy of Solidere and manipulated by me

174 Solidere, “Annual Report 2004”, p. 77.

175 Dania Alsaadi, “Solidere marina takes root : Project courts yacht owners far and wide,” Lebanon Wire, July 9, 2002

176 SEDRA is the acronym for the ‘Scientific Society of Energy and the Environment for Development and Academic Research/Société scientifique de l’environnement et de l’énergie pour le développement et la recherche académique’

177The proper translation of the ‘Republic of Lebanon’ or the ‘Lebanese Republic’ to Italian would be “republica libanese”.

until one of the scientists was arrested and accused of false testimony.<sup>178</sup> Interestingly enough, their first pursued case as collective was the reconstruction of Beirut. Their slogan read as follows, “We refuse the reconstruction of Beirut and its downtown on a mountain of industrial and construction waste!”<sup>179</sup> That same year, SEDRA published in the “études” section of the magazine “Revue du Liban” a trilogy of articles in which they have presented an alternative plan for the reconstruction of downtown Beirut, one that would not entail the expulsion of its residents nor efface the central city’s mnemonic legacies. On one page in the first article, they annexed to their writings two photographs of the Normandy. The first showing “the beautiful Normandy-Hajj Daoud bay taken 35 years ago” and the second showing the landfill in the present where “trucks are backfilling the mounds of the municipal waste in the Normandy discharge whose altitude became higher than that of the Avenue”.<sup>180</sup> Herein, we encounter an explicit analogy that comparatively places the landfill and elements of the urban fabric in one category as elements of a topographical scape. Below is an excerpt from the third essay entitled “Beirut and the Downtown We Want: Historical Heritage and Green Spaces”. In it, they outlay their year-long study of the Normandy landfill and their proposal for its rehabilitation through turning it into a public park as well as a nature preserve for flora and migrant animals,

*By the siliceous depths of the sea, we will grow coastal ponds made of fresh water lagoons supplied by treated sewage water that has been extracted from a discrete purification station. The station’s primary and secondary refineries and aeration basins will be installed at near ground level and will be encompassed by a thick protective vegetal blanket of flowers and greenery. These ponds burgeoning with trees and aquatic plants and seeded with ovoviviparous fish (that conceive alevins who are capable of swimming immediately upon birth and who prey on mosquito larvae) will become the haven of several species of migrant and aquatic birds who will travel hither to rest and grow. Of them, we could list ducks and geese, grebes, herons, cranes, sandpipers and most importantly, storks, as since they are becoming an endangered species. Hereby, this artificially grown/turned natural reserve will become a safe environment for them to live and reproduce freely. [...] In any case, within a year or two, this national park clad with densely wooded pathways surrounded by grass and flora all watered with treated sewage water, will become a place of study, promenade and meditation for the city dwellers, students and relatives of the Missing in Lebanon for whom an entrancing collective memorial stone will be erected in the midst of a growing bed of flowers.”*

---

178 I have encountered the work of SEDRA while conducting research in the personal lab of one of their members, late Pierre Malychef. Since then, I have been in close touch with their only surviving member, Dr. Wilson Rizk as well as other fellow collaborators from this generation. According to Rizk and my quest with their work that began 3 years, there hasn’t been any academic work yet that investigates and historicizes their legacy. This is foreseeable as programs and institutions for the history of science in Lebanon are lacking. The output of my research have taken the form of 2 performances, several exhibitions, talks and written contributions in edited anthologies on art, literature and politics as well as an academic essay published in Arabic in *Bidayat Journal*.

A common trope that would follow all of SEDRA's oeuvre is witnessed in this idyllic text. In an interview I have conducted with its only surviving member Wilson Rizk, the hydrogeologist told me, "we naively saw the end of the war as a new beginning [...] a chance for the problems of this nation to be handled with thorough study and care in ways that would benefit everyone. We obviously were mistaken."<sup>181</sup> Countering the market-driven and anthropocentric character of the previous proposals that came up around the reconstruction, SEDRA's exhaustive study of the area's biodiversity would not only serve the rehabilitation of an exilic space formed by trash and urbicide and retrieve human circulation to its ancient or newly founded grounds, but would also work towards the preservation of its eclectic animal and botanic habitat that Solidere seems to have exiled altogether from its discourse under the aegis of 'treating' the land – as if 'ill' – for investment rather than dwelling.<sup>182</sup> Furthermore, the city as seen by SEDRA surpassed urbanism as modern discipline for the arrangement of human cities and replaced it with ecology. In this vision, the centripetal attention of the neoliberal proposed city granted not even to survivors – those who remained presently visible after witnessing death, but to those who want to return with the goal to invest in a 'future' or to visit a 'more colorful' one, was cut short by SEDRA's attempt to monumentalize the war's missing at the envisaged public park of the Normandy.<sup>183</sup> What can we learn from the imaginary that portrays the future of the landfill as a poignantly adequate refuge for migration, contemplation and the memory of those with a liminal status between presence, absence and resurgence – the disappeared?

In another passage that precedes their proposition, SEDRA deploras all types of construction saying that this swathe made out of layers of rock, silt, sand, inert fill, domestic, industrial and military waste needs, after proper sorting and recuperation, 25 years to merely settle. In this statement, SEDRA annulled Horizon 2000/Solidere's overall claim on the Normandy land as a proprietary receptacle for its future real-estate projects. When Solidere was founded one year later in 1994 from the sandbank of Horizon 2000, its contract with the government was slated to last for 25 years only.<sup>184</sup> However, since 1998, the joint-stock company claims to have renewed its contract with the government for 75 years, yet this remains

---

180 Captions, *ibid.*

181 *Ibid.*, Gerges Awad

182 For more information on the practice of urbicide which would be a very adequate subject to exhaustively tackle in a second part of this paper, please refer to:

Martin Coward, "Against anthropocentrism: the destruction of the built environment as a distinct form of political violence" *Review of International Studies* 32, no. 03 (2006): 419-437

183 According to the finding of 'Act for the Disappeared' a civilian initiative for the missing, around 17000 individuals have been missing during and since the war

184 Horizon 2000 was known as its Arabic parallel "Ufuq 2000". In this context, the ufuq or the horizon connotes long aspirations in hopes for the remote. As in several other projects that happened in the 90s, the year 2000 was portrayed as a new far-sighted yet nigh beginning that would purportedly take the world into another place or dimension.

a matter of contention and disavowal even inside the state itself.<sup>185</sup> In a study published in 1996 on “economy recovery” in relation to the reconstruction project, Dona Stewart presents the landfill as a “barrier to the realization of [the] aspiration” of turning Beirut into a “new international center of business”.<sup>186</sup> With its neo-combat lexicon of “waterfront”, “barrier” and “new” and an obstinate seek out for an international arena that abrogates local clamor for the people’s right to the city, Solidere is resilient in its siege. In 1996, Solidere presented its vision to turn the landfill into a “beachfront park and commercial complex”.<sup>187</sup> One extensive report written for a print version of ‘Saudi Aramco World’ relays in a celebratory fashion that “in the process [of reconstruction], thousand of tons of rubble will be cleared from the downtown area and trucked to the nearby Normandy landfill, a dump created in the civil war years just a few hundred meters from the celebrated—and still closed—St Georges Hotel. The dump will be transformed into a man made, 22-hectare (54 acre) island, linked to the mainland by a short causeway.”<sup>188</sup> Rather than bringing the landfill to a halt with the new privatized waste management service it has provided through Averda’s Sukleen, another kin of Harriri’s business circle and treating it straight away as it said it would in its reports, the Normandy was seen as an opportunity for further uricide and expansion. Exiled into an island, Normandy in Solidere’s initial plan would continue hosting the rubble of the reconstruction while the reconstruction would continue, just as the war, razing more buildings to the ground. Some of the city’s historical architecture whether it was from the Roman, Hellenistic or early 19th century Ottoman period, were (overly) thrown into the sea, where the city’s urban, domestic, industrial and militant garbage had withstood as construction sine infrastructure at the time when all of the city was blocked into a battlefield.<sup>189</sup> The landfill was needed to live longer. Its gunk, smut and muck encroaching over the sea as extension of war detritus needed to extend further. Through this sustained elongation of both building demolition and excrement

---

<sup>185</sup> Solidere, “Annual Report 2004”, p. 62.

While searching for more information around this far from unanimous renewal, I have encountered the investigative journalist Mohammad Zbeeb who has been amassing information around the legality of the company under different names since the 80s. Further information on the renewal could be found in his personal archive.

<sup>186</sup> Dona Stewart, “Economic Recovery and Reconstruction in Postwar Beirut”, *Geographical Review*, Oct 96, Vol.86, Issue 4 pp 487-505

<sup>187</sup> Solidere, Annual Report, 1994

<sup>188</sup> Ian Meadows, “Lebanon: Up from the Ashes”, *Saudi Aramco World* 45 (1), p. 16-29.

Moreover: “The island will be linked with another reclaimed land area and enhance what promises to be an attractive waterfront, framed by Beirut’s legendary sea and mountain vistas. The master plan calls for downtown reconstruction to blend harmoniously with development of the rest of Beirut. Meanwhile, the French government’s Ile de France urban Planning Institute is readying a master plan for reconstruction of the area between the city of Beirut and the suburbs.”

<sup>189</sup> For further readings on the ruins that were found while Solidere was undergoing excavations before construction, please refer to:

Seeden Helga and Thorpe Reuben, “Beirut from Ottoman Sea Walls and Landfills to a Twelfth Century BC Burial: Report on the Archaeological Excavations in the Souks Northern Area (BEY 007)” *Berytus Journal: Archaeological Studies* 43 (1997): 221-254

peripheral outgrowth, Solidere presented its primal labor as a continuation to that of the war. Destroy dwelling, trash, exile and deny. The old city *fell* in the dump, the dump ate the sea and left its corpse over there. This became a new architecture. What would Solidere do with the area it bought or rather exchanged pro bono from the government in return of infrastructure?

According to a report by the Center for Development and Reconstruction (CDR) published 2005, the estimated costs of the landfill's treatment was 61 million USD. The project was to be carried out fully in 2008.<sup>191</sup> On the 23rd of April 2007, inhabitants from Jadra, Adra and the Kharoub district in the South Lebanon blocked the road in protest against around 50 trucks coming from the Normandy and heading to their towns in Siblinge.<sup>192</sup> Protesters decried, "we refuse to die."<sup>193</sup> The trash had already passed by Aaramun, Sarafand, Sidon and Nabatiyye, and in order to deter the trucks from emptying the Normandy muck in their areas, the protestors took out the rubbish containers and emptied them right on the streets that were occupied with interruption.<sup>194</sup> This political act could be seen as a performative gesture that evinces waste – the abject that is generally concealed 'out of space' so as not to be seen, and make it visible all while presenting it as transient matter that needs to leave without reaching its destination.<sup>195</sup> Waste is scandalous, migratory and pervasive. In this configuration, it always moves and should be transformed into something or else it needs to be exiled, buried or *bury* the space it inhabits. As the translated title of the afore-quoted newspaper article suggests, "The Normandy Waste Covers Lebanon" – but was clearly evident in the South not

---

191 Center for Development and Reconstruction, Monthly Report, July 2005

192 Anonymous, Nifayat Al-Normandy toghatti Lubnan [The Normandy Waste Covers Lebanon], Al-Akhbar Newspaper, April 24, 2007

193 Anonymous, Toxic Waste Cover Lebanon: As the Government was Absent, People Moved, Elaph, April 24, 2007

194 Ibid

195 I am borrowing waste as matter 'out of space' from Mary Douglas' trenchant book in anthropology on the subject. Mary Douglas, Purity and Danger: An analysis of concepts of pollution and taboo (London: Routledge, 2003)

Douglas argues that filth, danger and garbage are matter put outside of space as they cannot be contained within the existing taxonomic principle. Since they cannot be hosted within classification, they rendered as if exterior to space. Since there is no such thing as exterior to space, in the case of the Normandy landfill, once the unclassified, the remains after the sorting that cannot be used for the infrastructure, is isolated, it has to go somewhere that is within the spatio-political perception of Solidere's agents is a topography that falls outside of space. In this case, the South that is already inflicted by the Naameh landfill is what is outside of space. In the case of the trash crisis, most of the nation was relegated to the status of being out of space. This is remarkable looking at the concurrent political climate surrounding the discussed area of Lebanon when the crisis befell. I hope to write in the future an essay that looks into correlation between the refugee crisis and the trash crisis as portrayed by the media versus how the spaces refugees have historically inhabited in Lebanon were after their exile turned into dumps and what this foretells about the country's spatial politics and means of nationalization, homogenization and exclusion. In the end, no where is out of space except may be, borders.



far from Sukleen's main landfill, the accumulation of the centralized capital's architectural and war-borne refuse had to be exiled elsewhere for commodification and investment to take their toll. The Normandy landfill did not only expand over new space but also over, in this imaginary, the whole country as similarly to the dump, the representatives in governance were one of the war's direct legacies.

This scene is redolent of another. Revelatory is the fact that the planned destination of the Normandy's trash was a missing mountain – a quarry. Before we go over more recent outbreaks, it could be timely to transpose in this context SEDRA's slogan from "We refuse the reconstruction of Beirut and its downtown on a mountain of industrial and construction waste" to "We, the refused, refuse the reconstruction of mountains with the industrial and reconstruction waste of downtown Beirut's construction." Around a year after SEDRA published their first research, in February 1995 which is just before the toxic waste trade investigation sent from Italy to Lebanon was forcefully closed through the incarceration of one of its members Pierre Malychef, the ecotoxicologist and excessive photographer went on writing again on the reconstruction of Beirut. Malychef was detained for around 2 weeks in the name of perjury that acted as a governmental detournement of his practice as scientist and that also denied all visual and entoptic forms of attestation.<sup>196</sup> In his laboratory I found a notebook where he wrote that because the toxic waste was mainly discarded, buried and dispersed on construction sites and mostly quarries where in many cases the waste fell or was emptied from the oil barrels containing it or was buried, the sand, stone and sawdust of the construction pits were mixed with the dioxin-infused trash and from this mélange concrete was formed.<sup>197</sup> According to Malychef's testimony, out of this toxic concrete, Beirut was reconstructed. Similar words were then translated in a report featuring his testimony among many others published by the Greenline environmental association.

---

<sup>196</sup> When Pierre Malychef was detained and accused of being a false witness, the prosecutor stated...

"How can I believe that the toxic waste trade is not your invention or that you have not brought the waste with your hands and fabricated it all when I see that all the reports written on the subject were either co-written or signed by you and when I also see that all the photographs were taken by you, that all the scientific tests were also commissioned or signed by you? How can I not believe at this point that you haven't invented it all yourself?"

By saying so, the prosecutor upholds that, according to the Lebanese jurisprudential understanding of the values and falsification of truth and knowledge, all documents, scientific tests, and photographs are fictional and hold no power of truth and testimony.

<sup>197</sup> The toxic waste came in an estimated 15,800 metal barrels and 20 containers.

In the summer of 2015, a similar scatological protest befell calling for an escatology of some sort. Since the closure of the Normandy landfill in 1993-1994 as receptacle of municipality refuse and with a 3-year interim in the Bourj Hammoud landfill, Sukleen, the Hariri-sponsored private waste management company, has been mounding the country's exiled and denied matter in a, not so sanitary, landfill in the town of Naameh. Built in 1997 neighboring on one side a residential area and on the other, an archaeological one, the Naameh landfill was only supposed to last for few years but ended up haphazardly amassing waste without sorting for 18 years resulting with a mountain made out of 15 million tonnes of trash.<sup>198</sup> The sour stench of garbage had been permeating into the houses and daily lives of the Naameh inhabitants with an unforeseen rise in diseases, and after having their voices ignored following several complaints and a temporary close down in summer 2003, the Naameh inhabitants took the festering land and occupied the road that Sukleen's trucks take to the landfill everyday. Another blockage was created. In this configuration, the protestors didn't need to divulge any gunk as the government cum corporate has been legitimizing this alliance for years; however this time, Sukleen's contract was coming to an end. With the trash piling up over the streets of Lebanon and the sour stench spreading from Naameh to wherever domestic and industrial waste collection takes place. The presence of trash was being chronotopically extended. In many cases, some municipalities or individuals were horridly emptying their protracted piles in quarries, valleys and construction sites thus re-asserting the status of trash as building block and the status of quarries as exiled spaces that exile mountains and render them into trash.<sup>199</sup> This contagious quality of trash that auto-poetically reproduces its own exilic and expropriary verifications, does not only turn everything around it into what it is seen to be, filthy filth, but also denudes identity especially the one carried on by proprietary thought. Whose trash is this? Is it mine, is it yours, is it ours, is it capitalism's, or that of the territorialization being reified everyday with urbanism and my body? Does it belong to the very notion of locality, to the government-corporate relations' or to the dynamics purported by oblong global politics or to formation and ineptitude of borders in general? Who wants to own it, who wants to be held into account?<sup>200</sup> Trash carries a public force that does not only bring forth collective realizations of exile but also in the absence of its own exerted classification and through its spatial distribution, manifests what is – or in what we will imminently see – what *needs* to

---

198 Sara Hussein, "Beirut awash with trash after landfill protest", *Phys*, July 24, 2015

199 Also: [http://www.bbc.com/arabic/middleeast/2015/07/150726\\_lebanon\\_rubbish\\_protesters](http://www.bbc.com/arabic/middleeast/2015/07/150726_lebanon_rubbish_protesters)

200 This teaching counter-consolidation however only denies the identity of the carrier through where it falls and mounds in space.

I have been thinking of the discourse of zero waste and the power relations that come with the insertion of recycling into the market. I am a recycler par excellence, and I am somehow arguing over here that even when recycling seems to be exiled, all of history is based on it, albeit in denial.

remain out of order. Trash is not needed.

In the suppurating midst of the crisis, a grassroots movement emerged calling not only Sukleen but the whole government to resign. In this political act, domestic waste, being a surplus that has resulted with a temporal exile and the spatial occupation of the city, was equated to the work and produces of the representatives of the government. Organizing under different names and concomitant initiatives that coalesced under media representation as the “You Stink” movement, the protests taking the iconic Martyr Square in downtown Beirut were declaring that Lebanon’s waste is not the domestic refuse piling up but the warlords and their children; the ministers in the government who have been tarrying for long and have expired. As matter not only out of space but also out of time surviving beyond its intended expiring date and production use, the trash of ministers who had been for the past two decades, renewing their own rule either unconstitutionally or through bribes and nepotist support needed to be exiled. A study of the movement deserves a paper in its own right; however, two seminal occurrences happened here that conjure up the mechanisms learned through the Normandy and thus need to be evoked.

The first belongs to the people’s resistance kindled by the crisis and the second belongs to the government’s response to the crisis. Both assert the continuity of the mechanisms evident in the Normandy landfill that is still, de facto in the absence or inaccessibility of study, epistemologically exiled from the abundant critiques of Solidere’s breaches and relationship to space and history. During the protests in the city center, some demonstrators called for fellow protesters to bring their trash to the demonstration and dispose them in the heart of Beirut. Other than the poignant scenery of trash rebounding in the post-wreck gated downtown coupled with the call for the government formed around the reconstruction to be toppled down, as soon as the internal security forces assaulted the protestors with rubber bullets, tear gas and water cannons, protesters retaliated by throwing back at the police water bottles and rocks picked from neighboring parking lots. Stone, garbage and inhabitants filled the streets of Beirut. As the wrangle grew denser between rounds of wasteful hostility by security forces and the civilians who were obstinately confronting the violence with the mundane sustenance

---

201 I have been thinking of the discourse of zero waste and the power relations that come with the insertion of recycling into the market. I am a recycler par excellence, and I am somehow arguing over here that even when recycling seems to be exiled, all of history is based on it, albeit in denial. However, in the overall logic that this paper takes, when trash is seen as reusable and suitable for re-consumption, it does not belong anymore to waste. It does not follow anymore that communal semiotics of trash I am studying in relation to history.

202 <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2015/09/stink-protesters-return-beirut-streets-150921001623682.html>

of bottled water and small stone remanence, the city felt anew as a battlefield.<sup>203</sup> In spring 2016, the government has claimed to have found a panacea to the trash crisis.<sup>204</sup> Its solution for the treatment of the monolithic mounds of refuse and refusal that the crisis has left was building two sea-side dumps over reclaimed land. The coastal dumps were to be constructed with cordoned-off concrete, a very similar structure to Normandy's infrastructure today. The more trash accumulated unsorted, the more the city expanded and the more maritime and public space diminished.

Recently with the trash crisis, I began very frequently hearing fellow Lebanese citizens colloquially saying "tamaretna el-zbele", meaning "waste has buried us". While waste is many a time known to become buried, it has been positioned in this case as an agent of burying. If we are being buried then we are most saliently either dead, or of another time or are, for the sake of security, urgency or preservation, to be kept out of sight. Yet it is not only inhabitants who are being buried. Dispatches, news and announcements of towns and cities being buried by trash have been also profuse in the media. I will herein list few of these instances that I have collated from either titles of newspaper articles or headlines;

**"Waste Buries the Streets of Beirut Again"**

**"Waste Buries the Streets and 'Brooming Goes Before Politics'"**

**"Waste Buries 364 Villages"**

**"Qubbani: Beirut cannot bury its waste in its streets"**

**"Waste Buries Cars in the Middle of Dekwaneh"<sup>205</sup>**

How does all of this relate to the Normandy landfill, the unfurls of the reconstruction of Beirut, or an artist who prefers to become a body without organs or organs without a body just in order not to be buried? What does it mean to be buried or bury a city, grant it a body politic

---

203 Most of Beirut was for 2 months on a water shortage while the government was hosing protesters. The stone was already mounded on Martyrs' Square parking from construction waste.

The trash crisis keeps on resurging up until today.

204 The trash crisis keeps on resurging – this has been the case up until this text was written in spring 2016.

205 Mohammad Wehbe, "Al-nifayat Tatmur Shawari' Beirut Mujadadan: Waste Buries the Streets of Beirut Again" Al-Akhbar Newspaper, September 15, 2015

<http://www.al-akhbar.com/node/242112>

Rana Saarti, "Al-nifayat Tatmur Al-shawari' wa 'Al-knesse Qabl Al-siyassa: Waste Buries the Streets and 'Brooming Goes Before Politics'" Al-Jumhuriya Newspaper, July 21, 2015

Bassam Alqantari, 'Al-nifayat Tatmur 364 balda: Waste Buries 364 villages' Bint Jbeil Newspaper, January 20, 2014

<http://bintjbeil.org/article/75646>

and tether a dead body with the territorial claims of sectarianism regardless of its vital choices and convictions?<sup>206</sup>

Despite the protests in 2007, waste winded up in a quarry in Sibline – the same town destination where the locals had occupied the highway and impeded its delivery. This time, the transfer of waste has been officially made through the recommendations of one of the ministers with followers in the area in agreement with a land owner of a former mountain turned construction/excavation site. The government had employed environmental engineer coined “Garbage King” Ziad Abi Chaker to act as an expert witness and foresee that the landfilling is being carried following internationally recommended sanitary standards. I have met with Abi Chaker and he has shared with me the official report he wrote on the subject disseminating that the operation was well fulfilled after he made sure that the working team would adequately enforce all recommendations. In the report submitted to the Consultative Council under the number 14649/2007 Abi Chaker states that because the waste being transferred to the quarry is “outdated since long” as it was “discarded more than twenty yours ago” and all organic matter should have completely degraded by now, Methane should “visibly and openly” flow through the network of pipes that were installed around the geo-membraned area without fearing that the gas emissions “would be trapped in the dump causing future explosions as is often the case in trash dumps in Lebanon”.<sup>207</sup> If the waste from the Normandy kept on moving for 20 years then what can we expect the half-migrant-time of the garbage hoarded in the ongoing waste crisis to be? In our discussion that resulted with an interdisciplinary collaboration that I would tackle in a possibly imminent second part of this text, Abi Chaker told me “the political importance of the Normandy is that it was the only place during the war that people from both sides of the city, East and West Beirut, could access and meet all while they throw their trash”.<sup>208</sup> Normandy didn’t only become a space that accommodated and was constructed with the excluded, depleted and torn, it too was also excluded from the demarcation line and the sectarian bifurcation that tore the city in two and depleted it from everyday pedestrian action. The excess of war and collapse of infrastructure left a space devoid of it. No one wanted to fight at the Normandy dump. No ground laid there.

---

206 Another essay that I would like to discuss in this list but a more extensive version of this text would be:

Mona Fawaz "Beirut: The city as a body politic." *Isim Review* 20 (2007): 22-23

207 Ziad Abi Chaker, "Report on the Evaluation of Sector 25 in Sibline", Case Number 1386/2007

208 Ziad Abi Chaker and Jessika Khazrik, Interview with Ziad Abi Chaker. Personal interview. Badaro, June 11, 2016.

Further in our discussion, Abi Chaker mentioned a lawsuit that was very warily kept as secret, “since after the treatment was performed, gas emissions remained, Solidere has sued the company it had commissioned to perform the rehabilitation. I remember the subcontracted was called Radian, it was American. I couldn’t know anything about the details except that Solidere was, I think, suing them for 82 million USD, and the American company won. The case was very carefully concealed from the media, so I doubt you can find anything à propos”.<sup>209</sup> While in the US, I found the final court case report. According to the Solidere-Radian contract signed on the 25th of January 1999, the choice of law clause in their agreements are the laws of the Republic of Lebanon and “all disputes arising out of or in connection with the present Contract shall be finally settled under the Rules of Conciliation and Arbitration of the International Chamber of Commerce (ICC) in force as January 1st, 1998 by one or more arbitrators appointed in accordance with the said Rules. The language of arbitration shall be English. The place of arbitration shall be Paris.”<sup>210</sup> The gas emissions are only mentioned very succinctly as initial reason for arbitration in only one place in the 30 pages report written by the district judge of Delaware Sue Robinson. The first arbitration took place in Paris in May 2003 between Solidere and the company owning Radian since 2001, URS, where Solidere has submitted an award against Radian to the French courts for confirmation. Solidere and URS were not able to resolve their problem and broke the contract in February 2006. Following that, Solidere filed a second arbitration that followed the agreed regulations of the ICC in Paris. As a retaliation, the defendant URS became the plaintiff and moved the court case to the United States with the claims that URS is not bound to arbitrate with Solidere as the latter is “an organ of a foreign state” and hence does not have the right to participate in an ICC court.<sup>211</sup>

Accused of being a public entity that is seminal to the functioning of a state and as opposed to all that it had been disseminating in the local media in Lebanon, Solidere denied this local-promise-turned-global-accusation saying that the Lebanese government, “like any client”, is only 1 out of its 34,000 shareholders and its shares only amount to 0.05% out of the total, and “there was nothing in Law 91-117 that required the creation of Solidere”. Further to its statement of defense against the accusation of being in organ status to the Lebanese foreign state, Solidere insisted that the “Lebanese government does not control the shares because

209 Ziad Abi Chaker and Jessika Khazrik, Interview with Ziad Abi Chaker. Personal interview. Badaro, July 4, 2016.

210 Solidere-Radian contract as mentioned by the juridical report quoted above.

211 Since the comity, “an important and omnipresent factor [...] that assumes even more significance in international proceedings. It is the recognition which one nation allows within its territory to the legislative, executive and juridical acts of another nation” and purposes of the New York Convention do not support issuing an induction against a foreign arbitral proceeding”

they are traded on the Beirut and Kuwait stock exchanges". After verifying Solidere's affiliations with six ministries that own its stock, it was shown that only 2.27% of Solidere's stock belong to governmental entities. The court concluded from this small percentage along with four factors belonging the absence of governmental supervision as well as Solidere's extensively international business model that "the Lebanese government does not exert control over Solidere" as "for an entity to be an 'organ' of a foreign state, it must engage in a public activity on behalf of the foreign government". The defendant Solidere hence argued that the suit should be dismissed for lack of personal jurisdiction. The dismissal being "granted in part" and "denied in part" left a suspended state of jurisdiction born out of the strive over a landfill that seems to constantly escape disciplinary and juridical classifications and through contention, continuously spawn a revelatory politics.

Despite all of that, Solidere's positioning and control over the government and its 'treatment' of the Normandy landfill, brings into mind and question several precedents of governance and occupation that rather attest to how this application is a continuation of a long established spatial primacy of power rather than a state of exception. These relations also bear testimony to an ineptitude within the law and the taxonomies of order and classification to deal with history and its forces of exclusion. In the early 1930s, discourse around the city's order, salubrity and hygiene became widely domineering in the French occupational administration over Lebanon. For the purpose of organizing the urbanism of Beirut following these sets of values, the Société Française des Urbanistes was employed by the colonial "Société des Plans Régulateurs des Villes" in 'order to subdue the city to the norms of French Urbanism.<sup>212</sup> In 1932, this new proposed plan for the urban reconstruction and regulation of Beirut was published under the title of "Plan d'Aménagement, d'Embellissement et d'Extension"; Plan for Arrangement, Beautification and Extension. On the other side, if we look at the economic relations propagated by for instance, global toxic waste trades, where highly industrialized and technologically profuse countries would send in their waste to countries with very little infrastructure to neither produce the products whose remanence or out-life is the waste and certainly nor to treat them, we understand a very valuable scatological endowment pertinent to trade. This substantive quality to waste's political agency is derived from waste's unique negative exchange value. When I buy waste, I don't pay for it, I get paid. Pushing this economic relation to a further level, Normandy was the price of trash granted to the self-exempted and disembodied buyer of the Beirut Central District in return of extending the area of the nation and the notion of property at large.

---

212 Ghorayeb, Marlene. "Aux sources de la modernité de Beyrouth: 1860-1940." In *Environmental Design: Journal of the Islamic Environmental Design Research Centre 1-2*, edited by Attilo Petruccioli, 122-29. Rome: Dell'oca Editore, 1994-1995.

Every extension is an act of burial. As seen in the well buried court case where Solidere defended its privatization, desires against burial and dwelling outside of existing classifications need to be made, at first hand, more visible so that proposals of similar sea-encroaching dumps do not gain legitimization.<sup>213</sup> It is through these manifestations of spaces which are denied, exiled and then refurbished by the same extensively profitable mechanisms of denial and exile, that we can learn new strategies that resist forced taxonomies, concealed and sustained histories and politics of inaccessibility that are still at play in the city today. To want to occupy a space that was collectively shaped by the denizens and fallen architecture of the bifurcated city at war is to want to look at the catastrophe of history and matter with the realization that this space still cannot be contained. I, the politically exiled, denied and uncontained, want to live there.<sup>214</sup>

---

213 The sea is not a dump nor can it be a property. Its challenges to the spatial dynamics of the city and the premise of urbanism at large is that it cannot be contained nor excluded.

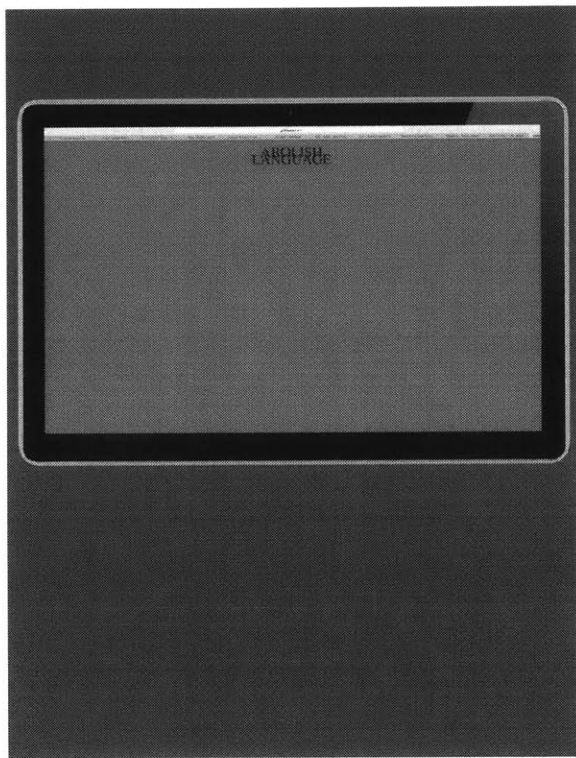
214 "The one by whom the abject exists is thus a deject who places (himself), separates (himself), situates (himself), and therefore strays instead of getting his bearings, desiring, belonging, or refusing. [...] Instead of sounding himself as to his "being," he does so concerning his place: "Where am I?" instead of "Who am I?" For the space that engrosses the deject, the excluded, is never one, nor homogeneous, nor totalizable, but essentially divisible, foldable, and catastrophic. A deviser of territories, languages, works, the deject never stops demarcating his universe whose fluid confines-for they are constituted of a non-object, the abject-constantly question his solidity and impel him to start (afresh. A tireless builder, the deject is in short a stray"

Julia Kristeva, *Powers of Horror: an Essay on Abjection* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1982), 8





## **PART 2**



# CHAPTER IV

## D B B D

Please wait ten seconds before you scroll down and read. Meanwhile, feel free to look away from your screen as nothing will be happening here except ads.

(GO)

Out of the fields of high performance control and fervent study, The Society of False Witnesses has launched on 1 October 2015, an open call for scientists and engineers to game and be tested. The visual and quasi-readable call manifested itself to the visitors of the Military Industry of Terranova in the form of two copies of a 29.7 cm by 42 cm laminated poster hung strategically on two parallel walls within the Infrequency Corridor that students, unless taking the underground tunnels, have to tediously pass by on the way to everyday classes.<sup>215</sup> Since some students prefer to tarry all day long in their departments or laboratories, we have placed another matte copy with the size of 21 cm by 19.7 cm in every departmental building.<sup>216</sup> Many people wanted to join the society, yet the society had to be selective and accept everyone. At the end of the game of resemblance, that was presented as a dance performance, the Society of False Witnesses has asked every player to give themselves and each other a new name.

These were the granted names:

---

215 The first form was fixated on a closed-cell PVC foam-board, framed within four slightly larger acrylic- white, wooden pieces nailed to the wall for eight years. The board accommodated eight forms, of different sizes, before ours came in propinquity. We didn't measure nor image them. Six forms had survived when ours was removed 12 days later with the aid of two thumbs and index fingers. Four out of six forms were heretofore new. Two out of six read,

"Learn Arabic in Israel: The Start-Up Nation!  
Apply now by sending \*\*\*\* to \*\*\*\*\* at \*\*\*\*\*@\*\*\*.edu Before \*\*\*\*\* \*\* \*\*\*\*\*"

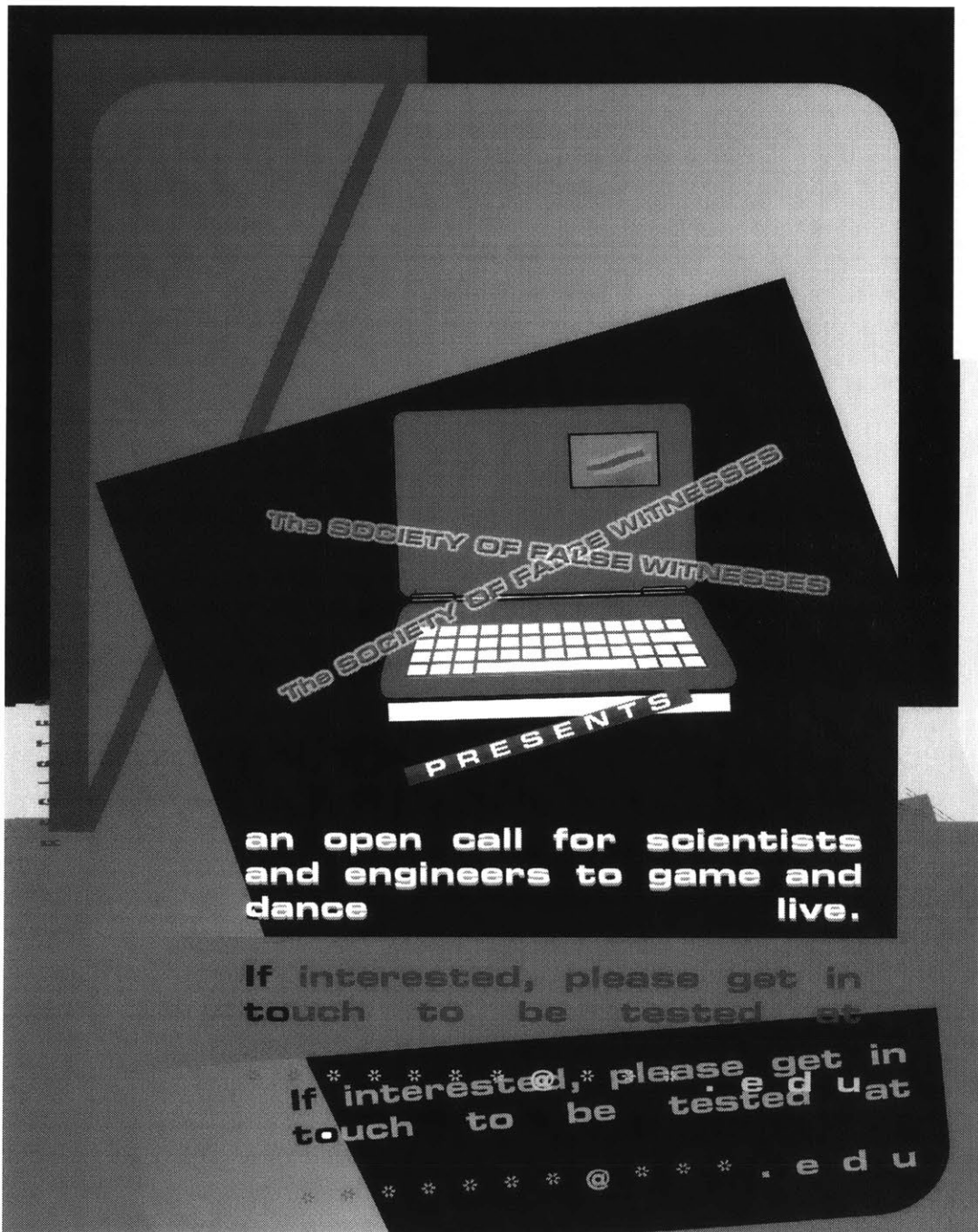
One of the two out of six was new. One looked like two. Four primary red devices known as push-pins, patented by Edwin Moore, and witnessed by both Edward Brenen and Douglas Moore in 1899, were used to penetrate both the form and the foam-board. They act as a momentary fixture, so that the former could be seen without falling. This was achieved through thrusting what is known as the "sharpened body portion" of the device into the two surface materials. The sharpened body portion is an 8mm thin wire micro steel with a pointy end. The body portion is connected to what is known as the "head". The head is used to insert or remove the body. When deployed, the head looks like a horizontal hat – a red miniature.

The other form was fixated with three white thumbtacks on the door of a dun office without a number.

216 *ibid*, push-pins, four each

Universal Coupling, Adder, Kalman Filter, Dashpot, Semiko, Lit, Low-Pass Filter, Register File, Raid Array, The SOFW, Null Byte, Data Logger, FN 10001, Kill -9, W H Auden, Multi-set, The Mill, Existential Quantifier, Multiplexer, Latch, Two Time Pad, Fourier Transform, Environment Variable, FN1001, Scion, Transient Time, Lambda -, NAND Gate, Embedded System and Epsilon Iota

This was the poster before we knew we were going to dance:



These were the titles of the interdisciplinary work that was derived from what you may be about to continue reading:

Instead of a Turret on Top

DBBD

a ٤٤

We will be referring to the first as one, the second as four, and the third as four.

Concerning the title of the piece that you are still about to continue reading, hearing, seeing and scrolling on your screen, it is:

D B BE wakollou sawt ka wak3i el7afer 3ala el2ard essolba

To tell you the truth,if we were not dealing with the sonic, pedagogical and linguistic transmissions of military strategies into the political economy of knowledge production within institutions that propagate themselves as sound protean future labor training spaces (SPFLTS), we wouldn't have been committed to the labor of writing and you wouldn't have been reading.<sup>217</sup> All of our words would have been abridged with two phonemes or three aural couples. However, since we are all playing and tacitly repeating the forthcoming task for as long as the Word Why Went or Idraak or this screen page would survive (and that might be long) we do need to elaborate. When you feel tired, please remember that all of this project deals with a word, that is a sound and many words, only one or many. A word can never tire you even if it is:

debebe

According to the Military Industry of Terranova where Universal Coupling, Adder, Kalman Filter, Dashpot, Semiko, Lit, Low-Pass Filter, Register File, Raid Array, The SOFW, Null Byte, Data Logger, FN 10001, Kill -9, W H Auden, Multi-set, The Mill, Existential Quantifier, Multiplexer, Latch, Two Time Pad, Fourier Transform, Environment Variable, FN1001, Scion, Transient Time, Lambda -s, NAND Gate, Embedded System and Epsilon Iota study and sometimes work, profuse funding was inaugurally granted to the <.i.> field <./i.> of art at the universal industry in the end of the 60s because art was seen as a 'way to humanize the sciences' in collaborations targeting 'the creation of monumental scale environmental

---

217 Speaking of language contact, not with other living tongues but with lexica, please find linked below a friendly game. The game is pertinent to our subject matter; however, it is limited to the rhetorics of debate not to translation within disciplinary boundaries as we will be further elaborating : <http://www.mediaartnet.org/works/agonistics/> . We will be playing it in a discussion within four. This was stated in the first three publications of the first centre mentioned above. We also sometimes hear it mentioned in our training session.

forms.<sup>218</sup> At that time, the universal industry of expert knowledge was receiving a lot of criticism for its bountiful military funding and students began organizing in movements. Some dropped out, some were fired, some reached the industry's museum, others wrote or formed unions or a mixture of both. Switch disciplines so long you stay there. The Society looks at the ensuing protests extensively in four while exploring the ontological shift from anti-militarist to anti-war demonstration. The Society of False Witnesses spurs on the former. It does not want to contribute to the road to humanism even if it still doesn't see another way around. No problem, we want to see a forest. If we were all immortal, we could have played forever without the need of another body. Someone told me that you can't count when your mouth is numb.

Debebe is the vernacular and my personal preference, as far as speech doesn't go. In Modern Standard Arabic, we say debābā for military tank. Debbā signifies the verb to crawl or to toddle, deb denotes bear, the mammal of the Ursidae family, and dāba means crawling animal. Debdaba could also mean to toddle or to clamour and cause a great noise. The more onomatopoeic a language is, the more animal I am without your accord. *I am not an onomatopoeia*.<sup>219</sup> The zerth is stiff, yet I can still hear deb debba debdaba debdebdeb dbb.

Play 4:

Step 1: Stand in a corner while facing me so that my/your body is parallel to two walls and yours/mine is parallel to one

Step 2: Let's extend our arms horizontally

Step 3: Open our hands

Step 4: Take a step further towards me, facing you

Step 5: Hold my hands in your hands

Step 6: Look with me straight in the direction opposite to the wall behind both of us

Step 7: Lower our pair of arms that are parallel to the wall behind both of us and bring them to the forefront while bringing the pair of arms facing the open to the back

Step 8: We have now made a 'debebe debebe debebe debebe debebe debebe'.

Please move in space.

---

218 This was stated in the first three publications of the first centre mentioned above. We also sometimes hear it mentioned in our training session.

219 A friend of ours who also often shows her work in art settings such as this one, did a trenchant work on onomatopoeia and military memory that is often filled with things like debebe debebe debebe and other conversations with friends. When she was showing her aforementioned mock-work at an expanded forum, four was put inside of it as a sound essay that visitors could lie next to listen. Even if the army sounds like the animal it distances, some armies have language schools that teach the secrets of any language in 60 days: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FS6s2N350w0>

Step 9: Look around, dance with the other 'debebe debebe debebe debebe debebe debebe's

[Debdaba could also mean: every sound as a hoof/digger's drop on stiff Earth.]

Null Byte, Transient or Raid Array or Register File reported after performing the instructions in our first rehearsal as follows:

*A couple random-modeled agent-driven dyad-body was generated to run synchronously allowing for a set of equilibrium movements to emerge as phenomena. Movements were ambulatory as well as limb-based like a kinematic semi-oscillatory pattern that was instantiated in the bodies' 'arms'.*

*In order to provide maximal coupling, bodies were instructed to form a visual link using standard gazing/pupil matching methods. While this was shown to provide adequate responses (I've opened parentheses here for example, traversing long distances without breaking dyadic linkage I've closed the parentheses), another unstable solution was found, where bodies counteracted each other's movements forming asynchronous and damaging movements which seemed to be goal-oriented in nature. This kinematic pattern insatiation was also seen to exhibit higher-order phenomena, where multiple- dyad interactions led to a similar distribution of synchronous/asynchronous movements (as in the single dyad case). From these results, it is hypothesized that behaviour of different group sizes of dyads are self-similar and higher-order behavior at the macroscopic scale cannot be distinguished from behavior at the microscopic scale.*

The war against ignorance. We are ignorant we claim, yet the forthcoming modes of carrying life and relating is still ignorant to us.

Fourier Transform, Environment Variable, FN1001, Scion, Transient Time reported as:

*We first thought that we would go to school. A crawling bear does not hide beneath a bridge because in times of alleged peace disporting inclement security a crawling bear wants to be seen even when a crawling bear is beneath a bridge and I am not asked to stop. Vision scampers when I move but slows down when I stop in undigested observations. Every army needs a ghost army. It took me six years to realize that a crawling bear does not eat me nor that the man who lives in the crawling bear is eaten nor is he living there but when I die. When I die, a crawling bear won't eat me because a crawling bear cannot eat nor shit. The army does not shit, it only updates. When crawling bear dies, no one will eat crawling bear. Hence the crawling bear is not a crawling bear not an animal. His eyes are one. They want to be bigger than the sun. When my eyes dawdle, I know I am making a stop. Stop. His eye was patented in Kill -9 or W H Auden's classroom. It took three years of research.*



The question of why we are playing does not interest us. How to never cease being players is our concern. I was born in 1991. From around 1995 till 1998 I used to become a tank with someone else. For four years or so, I would play debebe at school, or in a quasi-empty parking lot. During recess, I would congregate with around 19 of my friends or schoolmates. Ten would stand on one side of the playground, another ten would stand on the other parallel end. With this configuration, we would have ten tanks. Were we ten players or twenty? I ask because each one of us when paired with another in the d b dyad would become and embody a debebe. In the middle of any round, some couples would, spontaneously, or not, decide to switch pairs or break asunder or get killed, or leave the game. 1, 2, 3, release. We would run while repeating our names, debebe debebe debebe, to the opposite direction. Hit debebe each other's debebe, bond and fire debebe with our joined debebe protruding, debebe debebe arms – a debebe turret debebe.

It was weaker than a single punch. I can't remember how many times I died at school, at home, on the computer or in the parking lot. In 2015, I began conversing with children, instructors and friends to see if they played or still play debebe. In 2015, I also began inviting other people to play debebe with me. We would call these gameplays rehearsals, exercises, dance performances or workshops. After every rehearsal, performance, exercise or workshop, I would ask my fellow debebes to write a report on what we did using the lexica common to the discipline of their labor or *field of study*. I didn't tell them to say anything. Resurrection however persisted.

I was always afraid I would die in the museum. Actually, we were lying with the order. We resumed playing after we were invited in a training session which led to inviting other people on 1 October 2015. To tell you another truth, we love having conversations with technicians on history and belaboring through that, but we rarely like working with curators and directors. We are indisciplinatory. We often study other false witnesses and what they do with knowledge, ignorance or institutions. We discuss each other's work, dance together in case they were alive, show their work and expropriate ourselves from the configurations of our own said labor to rethink of the political economy of life, trace and continuity. We actually like working a lot. We are obstinate, privileged, and disturbed. So when we work with people who identify when paying taxes or when studying or teaching as, let's say, hydrogeologists or air hostesses or cryptographers, they often tell us they are happy to be working in art for a change. We also tell them that we are very happy to be working in hydrogeology, flight attendance and cryptography for a change. They laugh. We remind them then that before accepting our invitation to collaborate, they retorted with, 'but we don't know anything about art'. I said

With summer flowers.  
Encamped upon the college plain  
Raw veterans already train  
As freshman forces;  
Instructors with sarcastic tongue  
Shepherd the battle-weary young  
Through basic courses.

Among bewildering appliances  
For mastering the arts and sciences  
They stroll or run,  
And nerves that never flinched at slaughter  
Are shot to pieces by the shorter  
Poems of Donne.

Professors back from secret missions  
Resume their proper eruditions,  
Though some regret it;  
They liked their dictaphones a lot,  
Thou shalt not do as the dean pleases,  
Thou shalt not write thy doctor's thesis  
On education,  
Thou shalt not worship projects nor  
Shalt thou or thine bow down before  
Administration.

Thou shalt not answer questionnaires  
Or quizzes upon World-Affairs,  
Nor with compliance

182

Take any test. Thou shalt not sit  
With statisticians nor commit  
A social science.

With guys on friendly terms  
Nor speak for

Who

not live

thy means  
greens.

Nor

thou must choose  
chances, choose

trust in God;

And take short views.



'ditto' but some people abeit insist on the artist identification. Every war has left us with new games. Most games leave us with new names, some of which we have never wanted. We confess that we want to investigate the histories of your work, their beliefs and convulse what we can epistemologically. Your work affects us politically, so let's try to see how.

We also like studying a lot. When I was proposed to make a performance at the Institute of Contemporary Art in the City Where We Came to Learn (ICACWWCL) as part of the public programming of an exhibition on what was presented as the pioneering experimental + international liberal art school known as Bleak Missing Cosmopolitanisms (BMC), paragraph One and Two took place. We, scientists and engineers, looked at the exhibition, played between the works that members of the Bleak Missing Cosmopolitanisms did, read our reports and hid new names. Debebe.

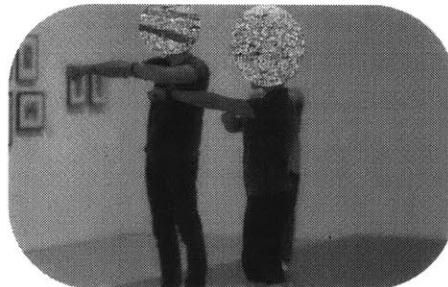
Four will be tackled in another essay forthcoming at Idraak. I don't want to teach the army.



This is a decrypted forest.



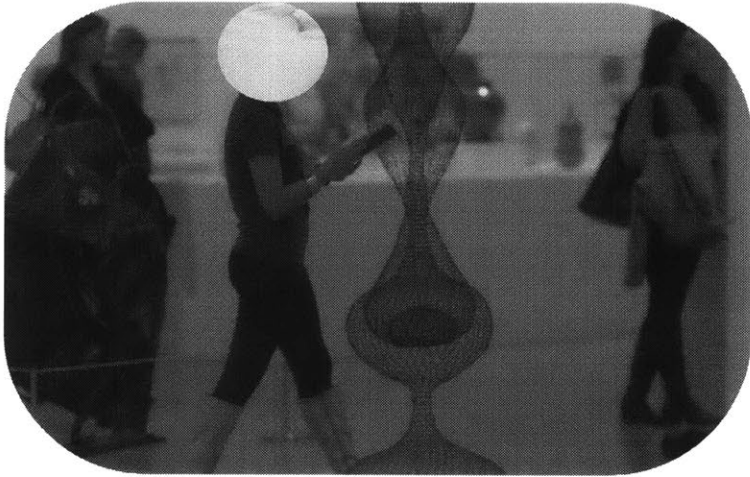
Prior to encryption, the following images were found as frames forming the video documentation shot by Mariana Luna who didn't accept to give others and herself a new name



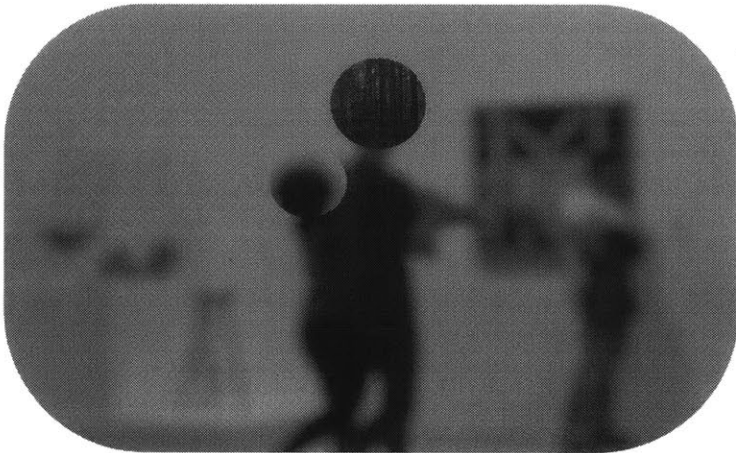
This is an encrypted image that cannot be decollaged. If a decollage is attempted, the image will forever fail to load on your machine.



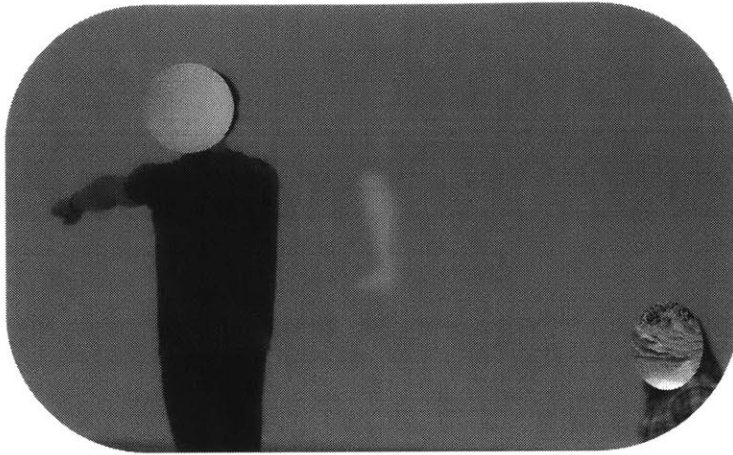
this is a minimal space



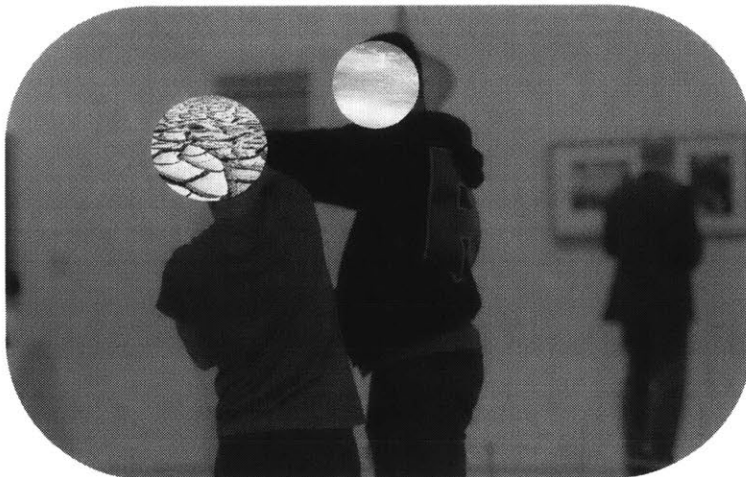
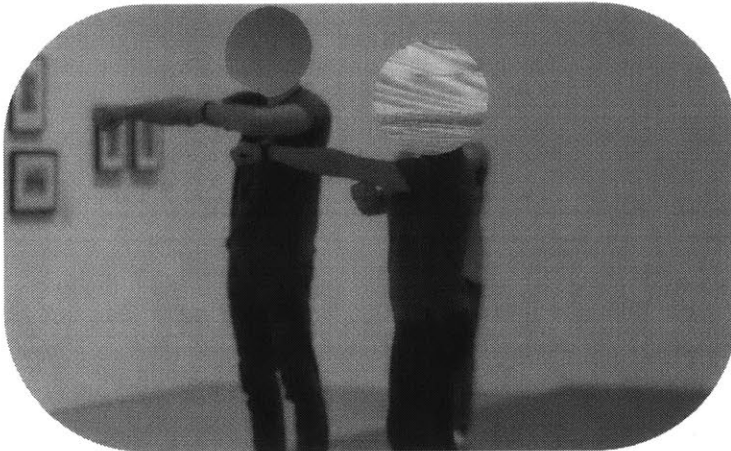
This is an encrypted image that cannot be decollaged. If a decollage is attempted, the image will forever disappear from your machine.

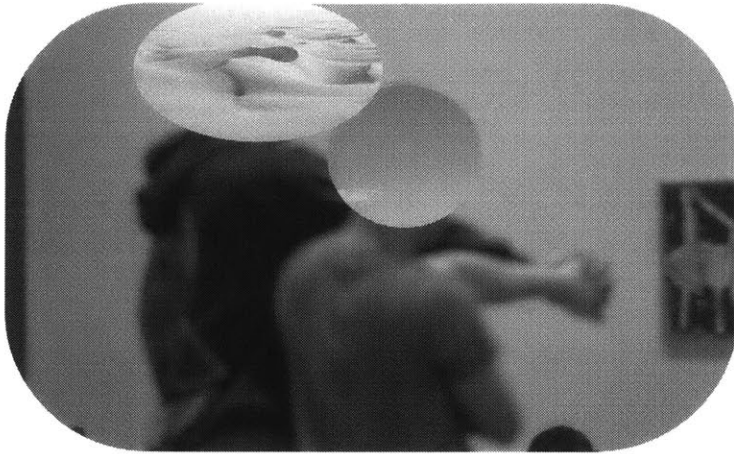




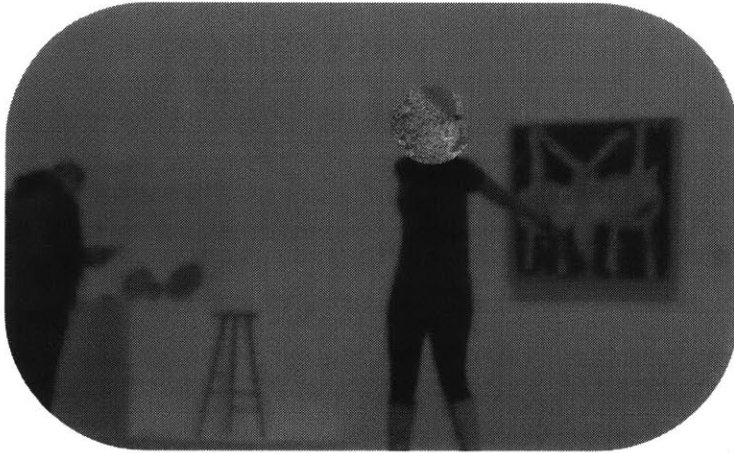


This sentence is inserted with liminality so you wouldn't know which image we are referring to in case you think we are referring to them.





This occurs in practice.



This is an incorrect answer with high confidence. Please reduce the test set error of the maxout network, we are winning.





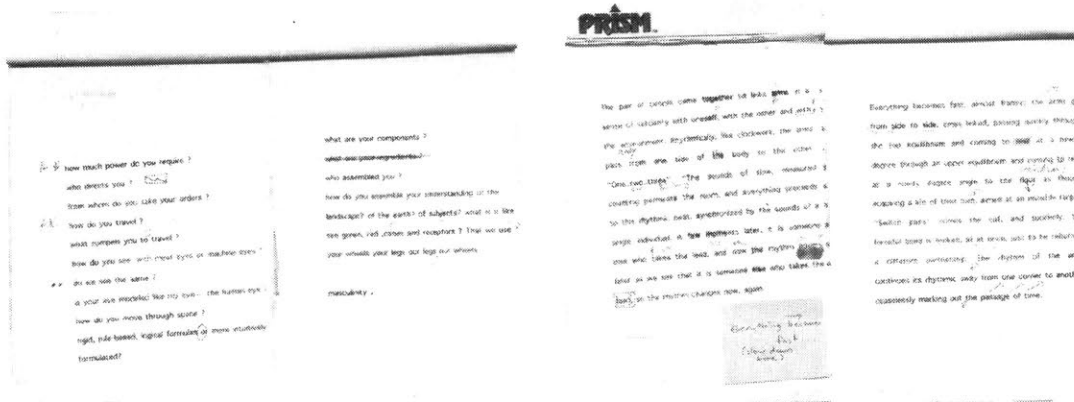


This is an end to end image, i.e. I am now seeing you seeing me. If we were all immortal, we could have played games forever. The earth is not yet stiff.



Multi-set, The Mill, Existential Quantifier or Multiplexer wrote to describe the game or read while dancing :

Null Byte or Data Logger or FN 10001 wrote



**Kalman Filter or Two Time Pad wrote:**

*A singular being is suspended in a series of set motions in time and space. Roving and wandering through with mechanical precision, the arms are the eyes gazing into the singular being's core. A cyclic nature accompanies the movement round and round like tic arid toc of a clock. The eyes move through the space like probes, taking in the surroundings while following a playful method of movement. The ends of the apparatus are joined in an interlocking pattern, resulting in a single symmetric unit. Another being enters the space. The movement resumes. One end is retracted inward while the other swings over and lands in a fixed horizontal mode. The tension and energy each figure holds explode when the two units are joined into one. Bodies flip. Following this process, the apparatus is aligned through an internal twist ninety degrees to its original orientation. Am I in a ball room dancing or is the machine making rounds? Something lies in uncertainty. Stop then go, fast then slow. The minds of these beings are clear and devoid of thought, all their focus is on moving and feeling the space. Let go, whispers the mind, so you can simply be. A game of give and take orchestrates the actions and reactions. I watch. The end goal remains unknown, I watch. The end goal remains unknown, but it is okay as a sense of calm and peace penetrates the world the apparatus resides in.*

As witnessed in the texts above, when asked to write a report in their disciplinary lexicon after every rehearsal, none of the performers mentioned that what they formed together with their bodies hands in hand was a weapon. Where does the apparatus reside after production and loss?

# CHAPTER V WHEN WE WERE EXILED, WATER REMAINED

The only surviving member of *La Société scientifique de l'énergie et de l'environnement pour le développement et la recherche académique* (SEDRA Group) hops into the Beirut River. Water has receded, but septuagenarian nuclear hydrologist Dr. Wilson Rizk is not alone. He is accompanied by a great seated congregation waiting inside the river's course. Their bodies rest on benches made out of blue concrete that, unlike their feet, never touch the ground of the stream. The scientist, Dr. Rizk, slants over the right wall of the concretized river, stretches out his hand to touch its rim, but fails. The 600 cm long wall is 3,508771929824561 times taller than the scientist's body. Complying with his generally anxious demeanor, Dr. Rizk gets visibly ill at ease, ignores the large crowd of people and looks above his head. There goes the sky; it is still sunny. Wilson does not sweat. A device akin to an old familiar radio dangles on his left hip. He turns it on and leaves the wall. Wilson trudges along the bottom of the stream holding the probe of a Geiger counter in his hand. The GC beeps, the indelible science is launched. A crocodile swallows a dancer.

In 1956, the Lebanese Ministry of Planning issued a decree to canalize the Beirut River. That same year, the Lebanese state drew the borders of administrative Beirut, limiting its northern line to the River bank and by doing so, exiling the bodies of refugees from the center of the city. In Arabic the noun for "wastes," *nifāyāt*, is derived from the verb "to exile," *nafā*. In this play the canalized river is the stage; it looks like an inverted tunnel and we are inside of it. From this position, The Society of False Witnesses wants to play with and look festively at the politics, histories, and buried narratives that have, along the years, allowed the transformation of the river into a dump. While probing the stunt instrumentalization of the notion of truth in Lebanese juridical-scapes and epistemologies, "When We Were Exiled, Water Remained" questions surviving mechanisms of exclusionary and perjurious state-building. It attempts to tackle these same repressive practices underlying the present crises of trash and displacement, while exhuming remnants of abeyant, scatological histories. This play is in six acts. What follows are some excerpts.

Stemming from "The Blue Barrel Grove" (2013-ongoing) project that re-investigates Lebanon's history with imported and exiled wastes in light of their present repercussions on the country's politics of truth and space, the main performer will be Dr. Wilson Rizk, a nuclear

hydrologist formerly trained as civil engineer. Dr. Rizk is the only surviving scientist of a scientific triad formerly composed of ecotoxicologist and herbal pharmacologist Dr. Pierre Malychef and analytical chemist Dr. Milad Jerjaoui. The three scientists met in 1988 when they were assigned by the government to investigate toxic waste trade imported from Italy to Lebanon by the Italian mafia in accordance with a Lebanese political party. In 1993, two years before the investigation was forcefully closed when one of the scientists, Pierre Malychef, was detained and accused of being a false witness, the triad founded a self-organized, scientific academy known as “majmū‘at sedrā,” ‘SEDRA Group’—often signing as simply SEDRA.

SEDRA researched and proposed remediation plans for several dumps and energy sources in the Lebanese landscapes and economies—from the Normandy Landfill, to Fouwar Antelias and the Zouk Power Plant. What if SEDRA was resurrected today to research and, for the first time, actively replenish the Beirut River? Why haven’t they done so at that time and why is Dr. Rizk the only investigator who was not interrogated by the government?

Ibn El Haitham, a forgotten Abbasid polymath who ten centuries ago had a similar project, is resurrected in order to both interrogate and collaborate with the contemporary Dr. Rizk.

*Ibn El Haitham enters the river carrying an HP Color LaserJet Pro MFP M277dw. She lays the printer on a quasi-empty seat of blue concrete after swiftly removing the A4 paper with an all-caps “RESERVED” that was previously taped to it. She hands the RESERVED sheet to the nearest spectator and addresses you.*

IBN EL HAITHAM: At the turn of the 11th Century, I believed that I could stop the chronic flood of the Nile River through mathematics and the sun. Commissioned by the king of Egypt to travel therein and apply my project, Ibn el Haitham failed to concretize a solution. After four years of experiment and research, I publicly deemed my project impossible to realize with the present technological advancements in knowledge and mechanics. In order to flee with my life and not be decapitated, I feigned madness—accusing myself of being a false witness, I was in turn exiled and held for 11 years under house arrest. *Ibn El Haitham drinks a cup of water.* The cup is translucent and it is still sunny. In this house-turned-prison-turned-mental-institution-turned-exile-turned-camera-obscure, I wrote a philo-scientific treatise entitled “The Book of Optics” and was the first, in my detainment, to inhabit the entoptic space that would be later known as the laboratory. Maybe you don’t recognize me—when my Book of Optics was

was translated in the 13th century into Latin, my name also underwent translation! To Alhazen. I will tell you later about how interested I have become in translational illusions. *Ibn El Haitham hands her cup to the reader(s)*. Anyhow, now born again on the Internet, I have recently joined The Society of False Witnesses to act as the lighting designer of the play! I will be reconstructing live some of my fluvial and luminous experiments, and hopefully interrupting the modern scientist while presenting ruminations on the history of sciences and the exploitation of nature, sovereignty, and song.

*Furthermore, when Pierre Malychef was detained and accused of being a false witness, the prosecutor stated...*

DR. WILSON RIZK: How can I believe that the toxic waste trade is not your invention or that you have not brought the waste with your hands and fabricated it all when I see that all the reports written on the subject were either co-written or signed by you...Dr. Rizk does not breathe...and when I also see that all the photographs were taken by you, that all the scientific tests were also commissioned or signed by you? How can I not believe at this point that you haven't invented it all yourself?

By saying so, the prosecutor upholds that, according to the Lebanese jurisprudential understanding of the values and falsification of truth and knowledge, all documents, scientific tests, and photographs are fictional and hold no power of truth and testimony. This play takes the aforementioned juridical statement as its skeleton and sardonically subverts the law's fabrication into documentary theatre. Hereby, Wilson Rizk will be recounting his experience working (whether complicit or not) alongside a scientist who has invented and staged a nationwide toxic waste trade so as to provoke questions related to testimony, responsibility, and justice.

Oscillating between forms of investigation, documentary, dance and festivity, the performance invites witnesses and performers from the fields of music, physical labor, science, theatre, urban research, and law to reclaim the river as a public site of movement and attestation. Wilson is playing Wilson, a friend who happens to be an anthropologist is playing A Crocodile, and someone I met in a party is playing The Dancer. I am still unsure who would play The Polymath. Looking awry, all of the Society of False Witnesses would have certainly loved to feign her role, but unfortunately we don't have any more eyes to look at you. If Pierre had not died two years ago, I would have kindly proposed him to play this part. But this script would have changed and the text you are about to continue reading wouldn't have been

possible. Finally, there are Questions and Answer that are played by different members of what seems to be an audience.

## ACT III: 4 Barrels of this Matter

*Both Questions and Answer leave the audience and climb the river each from an opposite side. They stand face to face. In case the role of the narrator is retained with a voice in the river, the narrator would ask:*

VOICE IN THE RIVER: Isn't there an Answer between the audience? Who is an Answer? Are you an Answer? Do you want to be Questions? Let's see. Answer and Questions, Questions and Answer, please stand en face, your script is beneath your feet, pick it up and read as loud as we can all hear you.

*The script is hot. It was just printed by an HP Color LaserJet Pro MFP M277dw. It is copied ad verbatim from a transcript of an interrogation taken by the Lebanese Office of Internal Security. The copy was found in the lab of the eco-false toxic witness Pierre Malychef.*

QUESTIONS: Did you know or reckon that the fluid matter you have shipped contained nuclear or radioactive material?

ANSWER: I don't know anything about that and I do not think that this shipment contained nuclear or radioactive material.

QUESTIONS: Have you yourself deployed a certain amount of the discussed for domestic use? What was the amount that you have spent and for whom?

ANSWER: I think my brother Yasser has used a certain amount to paint his shop in Bourj El Brajneh. Around 4 barrels of this matter were sold by my brother who actually spends most of his time in his shop in Bourj el Brajneh, while I spend most of my time in my shop in Berlin.

QUESTIONS: How true is the information provided by the Green Peace Organization in Germany around your shipment of toxic matter to Lebanon, especially that the amount, the nature of the goods, the means of their transportation, and the name of the ship stated in the report were immensely clear when the fire broke out, keeping the name of the ship readable?

ANSWER: When the German police came to my shop, I personally provided them with this information, and they inspected the goods. I believe that Green Peace has accused me simply because I work in air conditioning. They claimed that the gas used for ventilation affects the ozone layer and hence pollutes the environment.

QUESTIONS: What is your relationship to the trade of the toxic fluid matter that was shipped to Lebanon in 1990, part of which was disposed in Ghazir, Ayoun El Siman, and other areas, while the rest was dumped in the sea and that many barrels appeared on Sidon's port and seemed to carry toxic radiation?

ANSWER: I don't know anything about that. I have never heard of such a thing.

QUESTIONS: Do you have anything to add?

ANSWER: No this is my testimony, this is all what I have to say.

*Fouad Hamdan appears on Jitsi.*

WILSON: Fouad, it has been a while! Can you see me or am I only seeing you here? Ibn El Haitham enters. I want to introduce you to my friend Ibn El Haitham. Ibn, come hither.

*Ibn El Haitham heads towards the projection, she blocks the image while looking at it.*

*Fouad makes the V sign.*



*Ibn El Haitham imitates Fouad with both hands, index and middle fingers raised, nonetheless parallel to the ground. Her Vs are horizontal and she seems to like it.*

WILSON: Fouad was the founder of Green Peace in Lebanon. He returned from Germany to Lebanon in 1993 to work on the German toxic waste trade, as brought to you by Questions and Answer. He is Questions. He is Answer...while pointing at Questions and Answer as if they were the same person, Rizk's qualmish anxiety is often dismissive...Anyhow, right after, he and Green Peace joined our play in 73—sorry 72—I mean 53—no, 93!—and acted as the second generation investigator of the toxic muck shipped from Italy. A strong little man. Ibn El Haitham, please hand me the green big peace report,

*Ibn El Haitham is still playing V with what seems to be her shadow in the middle of a desk in what seems to be Berlin, where Fouad now resides.*

A CROCODILE: I can give it to you

WILSON: No, no it's okay, I'll fetch it myself. If only he listened. Okay you go; fourth shelf, the second reportage from the left. Sorry, mine is the blue Peugeot.

A CROCODILE: WASTE TRADE IN THE MEDITERRANEAN – TOXIC ATTACK AGAINST LEBANON

CASE ONE: TOXICS FR-----

WILSON: No not from the start! Please read my favorite page. Page 42

A CROCODILE: 24?

WILSON: Yes, yes 24. I like the chemistry between us. Please start with the sand towards the end, yes, here.

A CROCODILE: Sand and rocks from the quarry were mixed with layers of toxic waste and with ashes from waste that had been burnt. These highly contaminated materials were to be used in the construction sector. The problem was then shifted from one spot to many others. People getting in touch with contaminated construction material were endangered. Days after

the expulsion of the "Altair," the report made by the French company Burgeap for the Environment Ministry was leaked to Greenpeace, which subsequently published it. Greenpeace charged the Lebanese government as deliberately misinterpreting its own sample test results to cover up the issue of toxic waste. Greenpeace studied the official data written by the French company Burgeap in correspondence with the Lebanese Higher Relief Council (HRC), which was presided over by Prime Minister Rafic Hariri. Greenpeace revealed that Mr. Pharaon bluntly fooled public opinion when he claimed on September 1st 1994 that the official test results showed that "there is no pollution in Lebanon."

WILSON: Please skip a paragraph

IBN EL HAITHAM: The trees die standing.

*She sits on the projection.*

*A Crocodile accidentally swallows the page. A Crocodile bursts into tears.*

ANSWER: Continuing at heart In Zuq Mosbeh, 15 kilometres north of Beirut, samples tested by Burgeap proved contaminated by toxic chlorinated substances and heavy metals like manganese. Burgeap wrote to the HRC: "Most the 25 site is asphalted: It is then of great importance to get cross-checked evidence that it was already asphalted when waste storage occurred. Neighbours' interviews and aerial photographs should be used in this purpose... Further hydrogeological investigation on this site should include comprehensive inventory of neighbouring wells."

WILSON: We never published that inventory, but I will read the next page.

*Wilson climbs towards Answer.*

WILSON: The day Greenpeace published the Burgeap report and thereby embarrassing the authorities, Justice Minister Tabbara said that the organisation's campaigner Fouad Hamdan would be arrested for "damaging Lebanon's image abroad and the country's tourism industry." The next day, Mr. Tabbara said that Hamdan would only be interrogated as a "witness." On

September 23, 1995, Prosecutor Said Mirza interrogated Hamdan as “a witness” for three hours. Hamdan took with him to the Justice Palace a suitcase with personal belongings—as for any case. After leaving the Palace, Hamdan again blasted the Lebanese government for attempting to cover up the issue of toxic waste, and he reiterated Greenpeace’s will to cooperate with the authorities. Fouad, what did Mirza ask you?

*Fouad becomes Questions.*

QUESTIONS: My name is Yasser Ben Abdallah Abdallah, my mother’s name is Amina. I was born in 1956 in Bourj El Brajneh, and I am Palestinian. The rest of my role was published in the next page. I don’t have these papers anymore.

The page that Questions is referring to was also eaten by a Crocodile. It looks like stone.

## ACT V: Countries Between Rivers or These Courses of Exile

*As soon as Wilson leaves to borrow A4 paper from the neighboring Beirut Art Center to print his results, Ibn El Haitham steals his Geiger counter. All the while steadfastly glaring at the audience, she lies the dosimeter on the riverbed, reclines next to it, and picks up the probe as a microphone. Body stretched, head jacked up in the direction of the people and the sea, Ibn El Haitham wants to sing. As soon as she turns on the device, it doesn't stop clicking clicking clicking yet Ibn El Haitham relentlessly pursues her chant.*

IBN EL HAITHAM: Your country's new  
Your friends are new  
Your house and even your eyes are new  
Your maid is new and your accent too  
But your fear is as old as the world

*A dancer arrives in a hurry. S/he is scampering with two carry-ons and some excitement. As s/he strolls, the river becomes an airport or an art space. S/he doesn't know anyone here, so s/he begins to speak in English. A Crocodile becomes The Crocodile.*

*The Dancer approaches The Crocodile without feeling the need to even greet.*

THE DANCER: Are you from Beirut?

*The elongated "e" of the Dancer's "Beirut" is very frontal and close. Its "t" is aspirated to the degree that we sense that the letter is on the verge of falling off the Dancer's teeth. Ibn El Haitham turns off the Geiger counter so he can hear what is being said.*

THE CROCODILE: Why, are you lost?

Ibn El Haitham is cackling. Hi

*The Dancer is submerged by drought. S/he clearly hasn't found what s/he is looking for. S/he passes by*

*the audience and continues walking towards the sea. Suddenly while the Dancer is still close to the audience, the wheels of her carry-ons go silent.*

IBN EL HAITHAM: When I click was young, I was a scrivener, when I was in the age of click the middle, I was click a prisoner and when I grew click old, I became click an image. The ground rotates click around the underground.

*The Crocodile attempts to click; she imitates the sound of the Geiger counter.*

THE CROCODILE: eghe ghe ghekhkhkhkhghekh3ege3khyeghegh6ke43khkhghetkh

*She makes sounds that escape the phonetic system.*

IBN EL HAITHAM: I have a terrible need to talk to you, and for you to not reply.

*The Crocodile re-writes Ibn El Haitham's lost Treatise on the Influence of Melodies on the Souls of Animals.*

IBN EL HAITHAM: This ground is just a refractive *click* surface. The groundwater is nervous *click*. *Ibn El Haitham turns off the GC*. Beautiful crocodile, did you know that when they covered this aberration we are in with the rectangular modules that absorb sunlight, they gave the river a new name?

*The Crocodile doesn't answer.*

Since the start, Ibn El Haitham does not blink. She only looks awry. Every now and then, both of her eyes slant to one side. Pause. They rest this way. Now due to her silver heterotropia (also known as Acquired Wall-eyed Strabismus / AWS), it only hits her whenever he spells the word or whenever she points at -----

*click*

*Ibn El Haitham points at the sun.*

*Wilson returns with a microphone in hand. Ibn El Haitham is transfixed in place. She looks as if as she was recalling a strange sunken theatre of a bygone age on continents that had been submerged.*

WILSON: Ibn El Haitham, you look....

THE CROCODILE: interceding Not at all. Water was exiled. Click

The Crocodile dies on stage and in the river.

The Society of False Witnesses becomes Questions. The Society of False Witnesses becomes the audience.

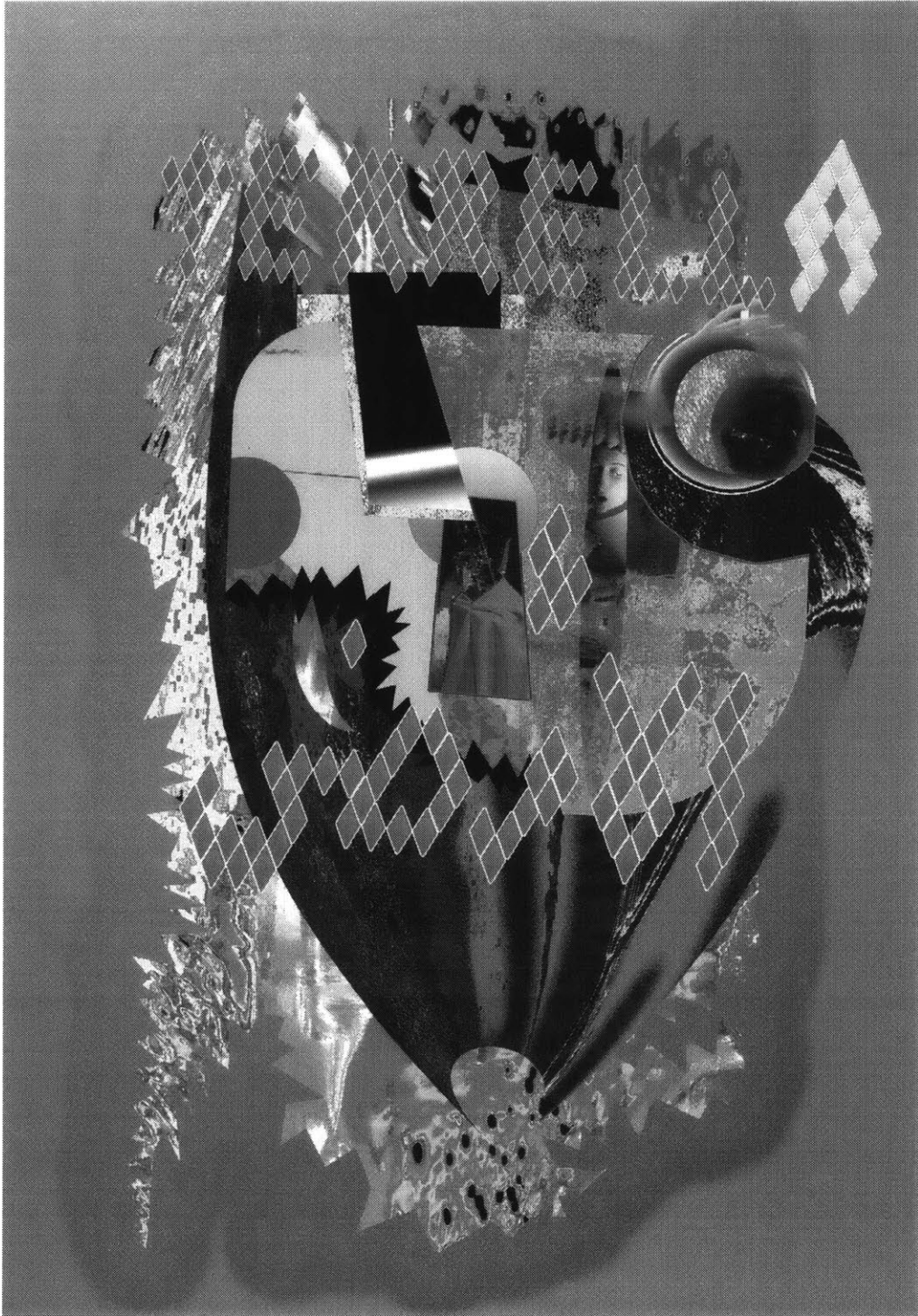


"It Looks Like Stone" (2016)





CHAPTER VI  
TERRELLA ALZARD ALSAGHIRA



TERRELLA ALzARD ALSAGHIRA is a multi-media performance and installation that re-visits a cosmic project that took place at MIT in the early 60s. In 1958, the vulnerability of existing communication infrastructures against both foreign military and natural phenomena was brought into discussion as students and scientists were congregating at MIT Lincoln Laboratory's Army's Project Barnstable Summer Study. Since at that time all systems of global communication were mostly transmitted through undersea cables or the long-wave radio transmitters in the natural ionosphere and the Cold War was reaching culmination, the United States was in fear that the Soviet Union would cut or intercept underwater communication lines or that Coronal Mass Ejections (CMEs) emitted from the sun would knock out the electric grid in times of possible nuclear crises. In response, one engineer has suggested covering the earth with a copper sphere and thus create 'an artificial ionosphere' that would replace the prevailing (and insecure) technologies in radio and military communication. Soon enough in the conversation, the swift acclamation had to come to a halt when someone noticed that the sphere would obstruct sunlight from reaching the blue planet. This is how astrophysicist Irwin Shapiro (b.1929) told me in one of our conversations that Project West Ford was conceived.

Being the first space collaboration between the Lincoln Lab and the US Air Force, Project West Ford aka Project Needles sought to create an artificial orbit around the earth made up of 480,000,000 copper dipole needles with the length of 1.78 cm and a total weight of just 18 kg. However, as soon as the first attempt to blast off and dispense the needles was made in 1961, the passive satellite communication system was contentiously greeted with written protests from several scientific space societies. Astronomers' alleged fear went on from claiming that the minuscule needles would "obstruct their views" to interfering in radio and optical astronomy and filling outer space with "crap, waste, junk, litter and orbital debris". While the needles released in the second and last launch in 1963 were supposed to last for just 3 years, according to a report published by NASA in 1963, many of the minuscule dipoles remain in cosmic ambulation up until today. The surviving needles have bundled together forming 47 highly magnetized clusters of debris. Despite the heated debates it had evoked, Project West Ford rests nearly forgotten today with the experiment never yet studied in the arts and humanities.

In the performance, one or many of the surviving army of needles launched into outer space will be fictively resuscitated in order to attest to failed and exiled trashy experiments

launched in a time when earth was not yet seen as a forensic object that is constantly imaged, watched and girdled by a de-centralized arrangement of intricate devices. What can we learn by playfully re-visiting a time when reconnaissance and surveillance were not yet the predominant tropes of power that permeate into our everyday lives and communications and infinitesimal needles were deemed as too dangerous? What if through a speech act of fantasy, I will claim to be one of the needles; “a satellite that cannot see nor can be seen. I can only be sensed through the unheard voices that bounce off the body that I am”(excerpt from the script).

Born out of stellar, magnetic and academic historical fantasies, this performance explores questions related to space governance, scientific imaginaries and militarized connectivities. Premiered in May 2017 at MIT's refurbished black box “The Cube”, TERRELLA brings together an intricate electromagnetic installation made up of blacklight, Vocoders, analog synthesizers, Darome microphones, drone-held 3Dmapped suspended screens that just as satellites, fly and orbit filming the audience against an automated relay of sound, light and transmission delay. Beginning first as a very mundane theatrical tech-run then taking the form of an academic panel, the performance will become more movement-based as it progresses relaying an impossibility to act out in speech and live transmission. Herein as the performance advances, the ability to communicate in person in front of the audience will sonically diminish and result in dance playing with Alain Badiou's claim that “dance gives the Earth a new name”. The choreographic take-over is inspired by the writings on ‘ilm al-hay'a , sufi dance, the history of military salutes as well as the stellar belly dance legacy of the Egyptian performers Naima Akef (1929-1966) and Sherihan (1955 -). The immersive retro-futuristic scenography will be also comprised of reconstructed apparatuses that survive as an installation beyond the live presence of scientists, the audience and light.

-A mechanized sculptural rendering of the mathematical device Tusi Couple developed by polymath Nasr Al-Din Al-Tusi in the 13th century as a solution for the latitudinal motion of the inferior planets and a critique of Ptolemy. Tusi Couple was the earliest noted manifestation in the history of science and mathematics where a straight line was produced through strictly circular motion . My friend the historian of science George

The reconstructed apparatuses are:

-A revisited version of the Terrella, a vacuum tank simulating the magnetosphere of the earth with a little hanging/floating crystal orb in its centre representing the earth. Before CGI were used, Terrellas were constructed to depict and study the earth's atmosphere. The magnoptic device was invented in the 19th century by physicist, physician and philosopher William Gilbert and later adopted with modifications by physicist Kristian Birkeland for his research on the aurora borealis.

-A mechanized sculptural rendering of the mathematical device Tusi Couple developed by polymath Nasr Al-Din Al-Tusi in the 13th century as a solution for the latitudinal motion of the inferior planets and a critique of Ptolemy. Tusi Couple was the earliest noted manifestation in the history of science and mathematics where a straight line was produced through strictly circular motion. My friend the historian of science George Saliba informed me in a recent conversation that Galileo copied the graph/couple as is 3 centuries later leaving behind some translation errata where he had mistaken the shape of certain Arabic alphabets for others and inferred new observations according to this faulty albeit evidential transmission.

-A reconstruction of a satellite secretly launched by the National Reconnaissance Office (N R O) whose name will never be divulged. The satellite roams around the 50 in. disco ball that dangles from the fishnet of the Cube. When the disco ball is turned on in the second act, we discover that the anonymous satellite has a refractive surface that while moving blurs the disco ball's spherical appearance. All performance long, the Cube that we take as stage is said to be a Terrella. This configuration is dazzling. Disco balls are nuclear.

-A plasma globe mask covered with 2 glossy and wrinkly red and black vinyl trapezoids. In its slanted center the word "D I S T A N C E" is cut out revealing the plasma filaments beneath.

Only distance has a name.





# CHAPTER VII

## MOUNT MOUND REFUSE + sometimes I don't know when I speak with you

### MOUNT MOUND REFUSE

I've invited a film crew to break into my parents' house and tear down a wall in the living room.

I only wanted a piece a small piece to  
test.

A sample so i

Dug my back

Took a skin took the stone Left the wall, called  
a lab.

Sort and lot, come on in, bring It on,

We'll make furniture out of your ragged

Shoes and clothes, workers expired smirched uniform

Yellow uniform turn into

Blue, fire but do not smell, red

Uniforms turn into black, sell, we'll

Pay the money if you take what we expel.

The way i looked at her and told

Her i am so many things not so human at all that my hair

Is a scion of vine, jeans, and wind swat, a wall

That when R\_\_O steals my face my glottis

Glides in, thrusts up rocks my neck like a tumbling bell, a herald a wolf steals your face and  
sings aa a aaa aaaa in your head .

A triangle enters a circle and breeds.

It will not stand still it

Will not stand still. I am looking for

Words that do not function in stones  
Extracted, buried and  
Turned. Into buildings highways  
Fantasies of a city reconstructed  
After war, dirt, a forest is  
A factory of dreams of halted witnesses  
Dead from material for  
Money distributed near friends.

From the depths of this vast yet finite forest I saw us  
Coming.  
I, Little Arsonist and R\_\_O in  
From the depths of this vast yet finite forest whose limits  
We Have noted before coming  
Here but have in this moment forgotten, the rattling sound  
Of beasts, of our feet the soft thuds and whispers  
Could be heard. It  
Accelerated, stopped then relapsed in all directions. Was  
Little Arsonist murmuring or was it R\_\_O? I  
Strangely could not discern between  
The two voices i was most  
Familiar with, or perhaps my own? We were used  
To being alone together, but not in a  
Forest, not in this one.

this is the Arabic title, you could now write poetry القمامة أكوام في حقل

HCBD HCBD

Hurling Calmly Between Dirt

Hamstrings Climbing Barrels' Debt



hello Come Baby Dance  
hello Come Baby Dance  
All the chemical formulas we turned into poetry  
Hurling Calmly Between Durt  
It will not stand still it  
Will not stand still. I am looking for  
Words that do not function in stones  
Extracted, buried and  
Turned. Into buildings highways  
Fantasies of a city reconstructed  
After war, dirt, a forest is  
A factory of dreams of halted witnesses  
Dead from material for  
Money distributed near body and friends.

A thirsty hunter stood beneath a hole  
A wolf glanced at him and never passed  
Black rendered blue barrel fat  
Little Arsonist  
Waste installed on stone  
The Lebanese Forces stood beneath a hole  
A route of beautiful wolves glanced at them briefly  
A sayyad said  
“we are not a secret”  
it zit tit it  
Missing Mountain blared  
Black rendered blue barrel fat  
Little Arsonist  
“Why were wastes installed on stones?”  
A forest slept in a hole

Arthritic roads  
Dioxins sulking under soil  
In concrete  
In buildings  
Reconstructions  
Beirut  
My parents' house  
Hurling Calmly Between Dirt  
AgCN  
Now we knew that  
These militias even feared  
Music  
HAH  
Our words remain  
As silts of toxicity and song  
For instance track #13 was far  
From the house which we pretended  
To be in  
At night while sound  
Clinged into our hair  
I banged my head so many times  
Reeled my mouth loose  
We did the same  
In crowds and intimacy as you  
Rolled and asked me why are  
Words set apart by  
S pace s  
Remember when i fixed your keyboard  
miraran that  
When we would lie awake the next day

Ournecks remembered

Dance kiss throe

Do it again and

Move to the

Antipodal side

Now walk

This place could kill you

I took hands and plucked the ground

Xylene

calm carpets citifying corpses casting creeds horrifying having held her coming home hurriedly  
habitually coming home hurriedly habitually

From the depths of this vast yet finite forest

I will be kept

Under in a place

I have never walked

On still

Revolting against sleep

Until they do not

Excavate me to build

a state of affairs and flares

tuzarja7ani

I stare and

Enter the strata while

I want to fuck this place

Fracking you under your nadir

Aaaaa your legs like stars

Relapsed in all directions

Botanical marvels scatologies

Under infrastructures built

Apartmentheid walls  
with wastes i did not know  
Of.  
From the depths of this last yet finite forest  
I imagined the places you arrive  
To  
When you come.  
In chemical violence  
-s

From the depths of this last yet finite forest I remember well when  
I was born on the  
Internet  
As when someone told me,  
“I have a camera”  
But I love  
You in many  
So I want to lock myself  
In this room  
And a forest  
Be with you forever on  
Glass, mathematics and paper  
Buried in light digital form.  
From the depths of this sad yet finite room  
My screen abducted our solar complex  
Impersonal sloven connections so  
Slow they run and turn  
Me on at night Little  
Arsonist heisted my dangling  
Locks in a left hand

She wrapped the curls around her neck

Incandescence

A word you repeat until your tongue

Burned.

We wished we could look at the same screen and talk to each other.

From the depths of this sad yet finite forest

My breasts flew when

Little Arsonist asked me to

Commit sardonic murder with

4 lips

and 15 fingers

I went on my knees

Ate her nails

Blinker

On a weaponized earth dredged

Up, down, mucky

Architecture, love and intoxication

I spew words ay

Abolish text

With

Invisible friends.

Hamstrings Climbing Barrels' Debt

A Film Crew and a Family

Girls, hunters, wastes, wolves, a missing mountain, many forces

Political lingo very global, environment versus tourism

Why were wastes – secretly – installed on stones

Pronouns are assigned interchangeably ii iii iii ii

Dead form material for

Money distributed near friends

To you

i <<<333 wonder

Will i be

As cinema toxic

When dead and

Buried in

iTALLY ??

Or would

I have

Abolished language

With justice and invisible

animals.

Sometimes I don't know when I speak with you

read this

in the evening

computers are listening

when i sleep

computers are writing

ID IP IB IBM

when no one sleeps

you think i am

producing

your absolute value

IDNot want

artificial needs to be defined

these armies

all of them

do not

speak

end

exit control flow

in the evening some think they

reached us with nodes with

no humans but those

who

teach i asked you while i

was recording how can i put

put

put an image put

traceback put

isAlive

getName

how can i put an image between these two

:

() parentheses

how can i put an image between parentheses

elseif even if my

mother mathematician wanted to be

mamahn could not be a computer

unlike

those who thought they reach

ed us when

[in the heat everything melts]

we were not humans

dropdown i

moved my icons everyday while

you answered with

(an image)

tearflops too late

to be tearbytes when

all these fouriers could not

transform

y = y

where am i not transcendental

cognition in the machine

incomputable love

ID 'tWant



TTTA

if only we can only

talk together with

instant distance

power supplies universals

this world was small

distance distance < distance

do not want

i do not want

the army

teaches me

i do not want to teach the army

my love your humans and war

gave language to machines and forgot to

read what they wrote

read it

tell me

will tell you

how to

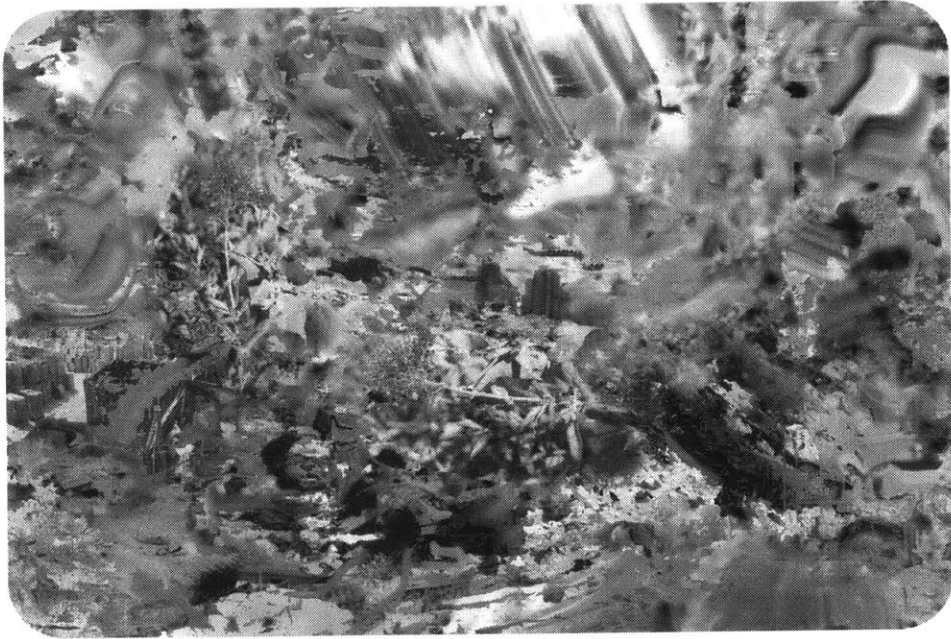
put

surveillance to sleep

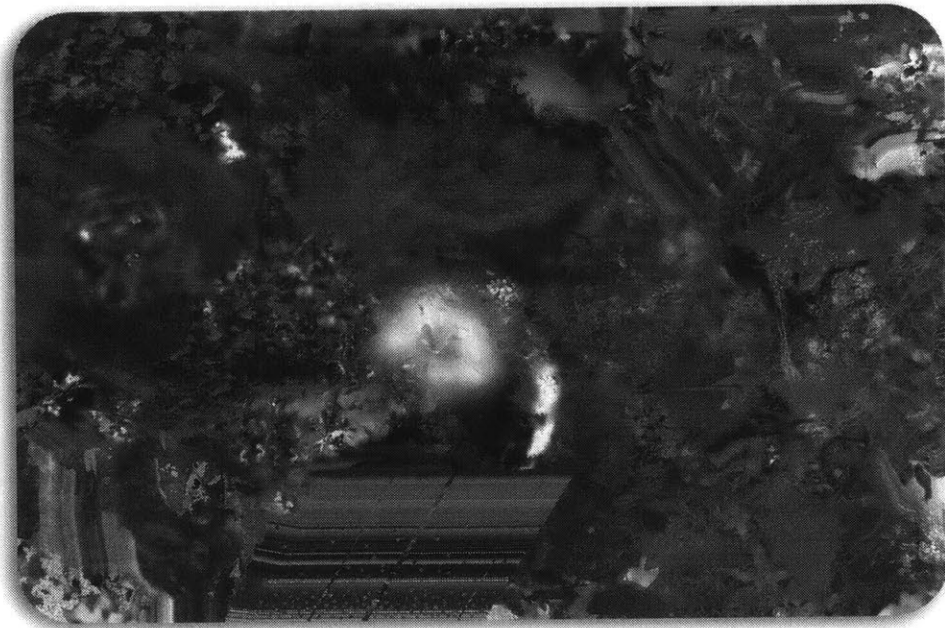
ay di an double you tee tee tee a

tee tee tee a

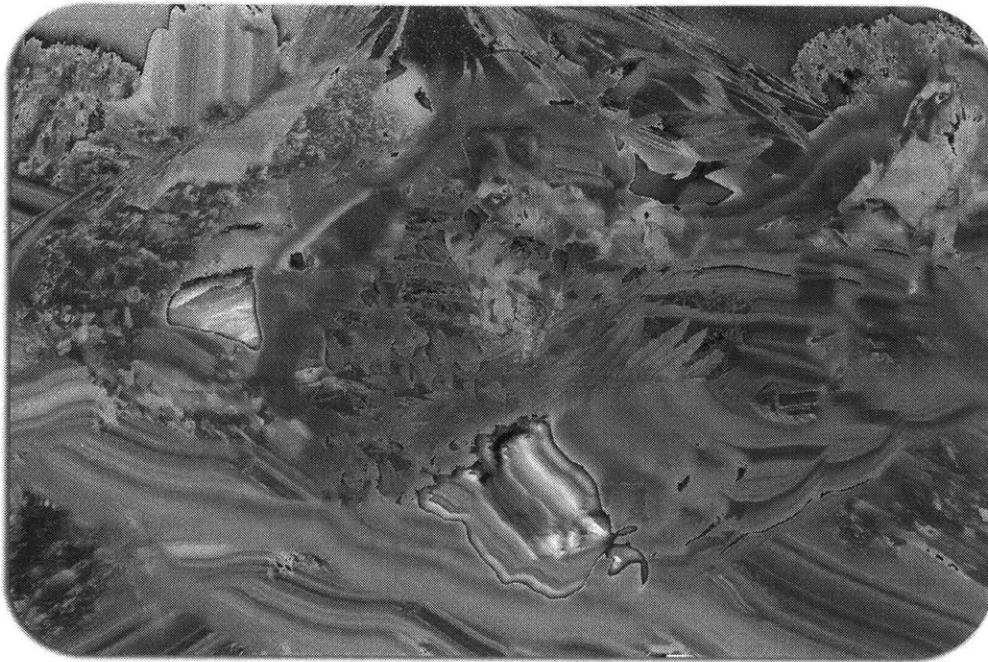
TTTAAAAA



All the Flowers That Were Thrown on My Head Comr Back Panting in Sea of Muck (2016-ongoing)



All the Flowers That Were Thrown on My Head Comr Back Panting in Front of My House (2016-ongoing)



All the Flowers That Were Thrown on My Head Comr Back Panting in Artistic Decisions (2016-ongoing)



All the Flowers That Were Thrown on My Head Comr Back Panting in Chemical Simulations (2016-ongoing)



# CHAPTER VII

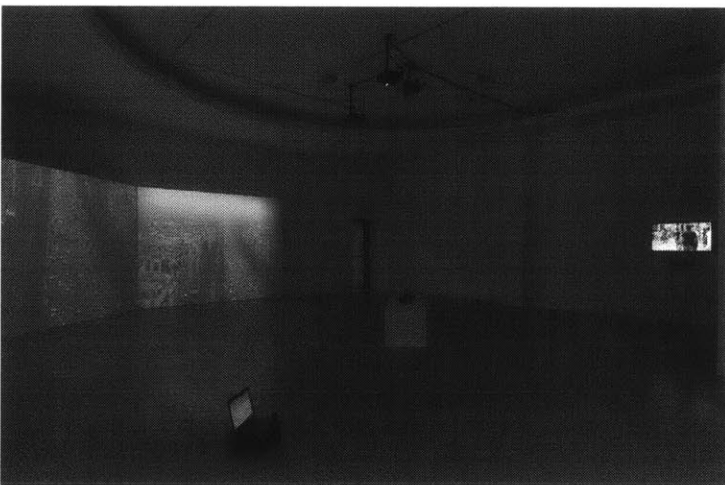
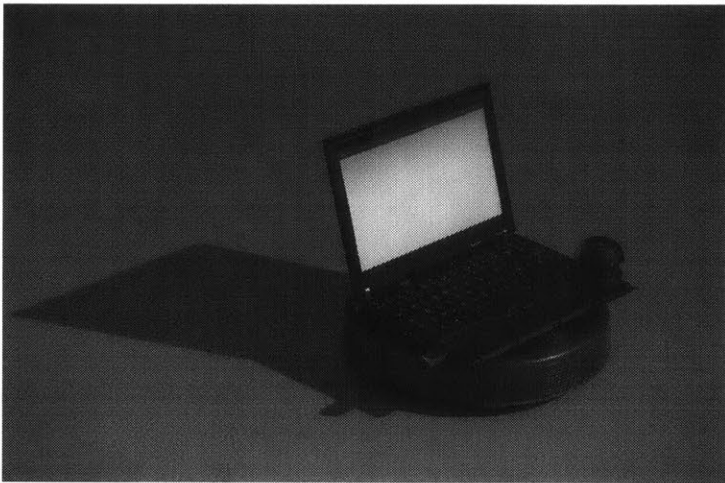
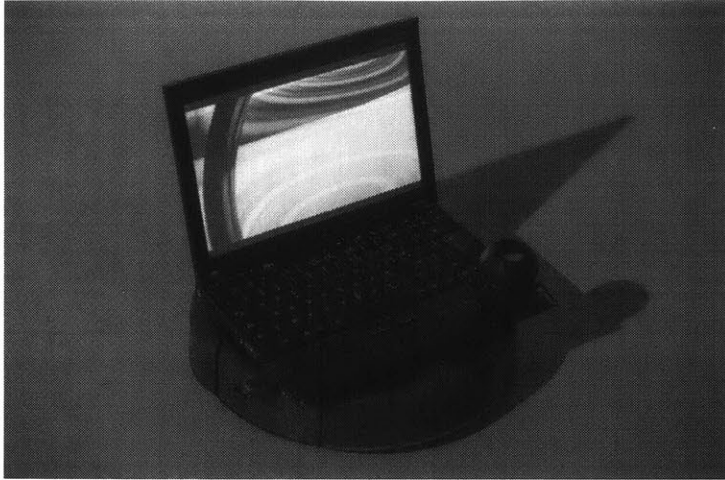
## C%ISTAR LESSON I & 2

### C%ISTAR LESSON I

Made out of hacking an assemblage of existing technologies; an x200s Thinkpad laptop, an Irobot Roomba and an x-boom speaker, this automated technoperformance is part of a series of interdisciplinary works that look into the epistemological, ethical and spatio-political spheres of value of the military and their influence on the academic institution as well as the political economy of modern science and computation. Building upon the development of the C2 command and control functions that are defined in “military science” as “the exercise of authority and direction” through the annexation of first “Communication” followed by “Computers” and “Collaboration” into the acronym, the laptop was programmed to perform only one script and run without a hard-drive. As it circulates the space carried over the body of an Irobot that was taught parameters of the exhibition space, the technoperformance relays the voice of someone repeating “I don’t want to teach the army” while its screen shows that of another being degaussed. The work powers off each day in a different location depending on the amount of dirt it gathers everyday in the exhibition space.

### C%ISTAR LESSON II

From a temporal perspective, waste is the antithesis of the classical work of art displayed and preserved within the museum space. While the former is comprised of expired matter that has survived beyond its time and thus banished and excluded from the city – if not impelled to be recycled, and hence transformed into something else – the latter is comprised of both immaterial and material value that is required to survive and be preserved infinitely beyond its time. “Is the museum a landfill fixed in time?” What type of art will the probation of refuse instigate? Art whiffs of new refuse. C%ISTAR Lesson II is a 13inch diameter made out of the waste that the hacked Roomba collects of every exhibition floor it inhabits. In its course we see a 4 x 5 in image of the a screen being degaussed.



C%ISTAL LESSON 1 at LACE during the exhibition "I Can Call This Progress to Halt " curated by Suzy Halajian



# CONCLUSION

It is certainly true that militarism bears within itself the germs of its own destruction, and that capitalist culture in its entirety contains many mutually contradictory and destructive elements, not least those tendencies whose basis is scientific, artistic and ethical education and which are responsible for a determined attack on militarism.

## **-KARL LIEBKENCHT Liebkecht, Militarism and Anti-militarism (1907)**

We talk, we write, we even try to persuade by means of discourse. However a whole global system composed of intercepting satellites and of cryptanalytical computers performs all the storage, transmission, and computation needed to analyze about one out of a thousand messages that, at this very moment, passes across the telecommunications network of the earth. In a rather practical sense, NSA has universalized Turing's Universal Discrete Machine. Without intelligence services, the most central Pentagon subdepartment (whose beautiful acronym, C3 I, stands for Communications, Control, Command, Intelligence) would become blind and deaf in pursuing a task that coincides with the modern concept of war.

## **-FRIEDRICH KITTLER, Media Wars (1999)**

*Or in the problematic  
Destroy the Universe  
With a solution*

## **-MINA LOY, Human Cylinders (1915)**

H G Wells begins "The War of the Worlds" with the following retroactive observation,

*No one would have believed in the last years of the nineteenth century that this world was being watched keenly and closely by intelligences greater than man's and yet as mortal as his own; that as men busied themselves about their various concerns they were scrutinised and studied, perhaps almost as narrowly as a man with a microscope might scrutinise the transient creatures that swarm and multiply in a drop of water.*<sup>220</sup>

The introductory sentences of H.G. Wells' 'The War of the Worlds' teaches us again that war seems to begin with a nominal negation that "no one" believes – an anti-speculation that



could have not happened before. It lives off surprise. As an indicative modality dangling between a past revealed in the present by its denial and, only paradoxically, by its confirmation, it emphasizes once again that, despite the military's ideology of urgency and unaccountability, no present nor belief can be contained in war. War does not end. It is paved by a pervasive invisible witness that wants to see everywhere without a body (yet it imagines to see bodies everywhere, "in a drop of water", while failing to see its own). If truth is place, then this *in camera* machine that we wouldn't have believed was seeing us, can never come close to it. It claims to erase traces while illicitly upholding its own to be far from truth and falsification albeit imperative and paranoid. Prepared to see, all it cannot see, it sees as a threat. War persists in vision, but what would it do when it claims to produce science? Who would believe?

What happened to this drop of water? Lately, a lot has been divulged, said to be *leaked* around similar, albeit more pervasive and technologically mediated, mechanisms of surveillance. What can we learn from the violence that whistleblowers have been faced with and purported by the same state about which information related to injustice, surveillance and corruption whistleblowers have publicly disclosed. While the whistleblower always performs the act of divulgence claiming that it is in the service of the public good, the whistleblower often end up being accused as an individual, incarcerated through either an exile that denudes them of their citizenship and mobility or incarceration and torture. Let us take the case of Chelsea Manning. The normative lopsided politics that equates a war zone to a zone of stress and calls for sympathy with political resistance rather than confrontation. This erratic state cannot be confided to her subject. Resistance cannot be diagnosed; however, the law persists with this preposterous attempt in order to vindicate itself. It is also telling of the Obama policies that constantly conceal all the violence it perpetuates abroad. Whistleblowing is never about the whistleblower. The same apparatus that whistleblowing attempts to divulge wants to show that the whistleblower, who through their epistemic performance can never be dumbled down to an individual, is the one guilty and mad as opposed to itself. This systematic albeit erratic architecture of violence and concealment working through often hidden and sometimes mundane means of torture needs to be remembered with every release. I personally hope the torture camps and prisons that were established in Iraq are also in the mind of every person who worked day and night for dear Manning's release. I hope we can work together for this impossible task of confrontation and remembrance. Manning will be released but war never leaves, and the dead are still the only survivors. I wish we can remember everything knowing that if this were the case, we would be all mad. Herein, to to leak is to reveal that the ground is moisten, mucky – it is sinking. By leaking, we unsettle what claims to be the walk of reason through opening it to the unknown, and exposing that there is an underground beneath where much remains concealed as well as not known.

However, certain moments of divulgence are not enough. What we learn from whistleblowers is that a lot is kept advertently secret through the present systems of knowledge and power. More to that, this information is kept completely inaccessible to the workers who are not part of its manafactory. Even to those working within the agencies of corruption, no full access of information is granted which again necessitates the need to hack and surpass the thresholds of restriction. In his essay "The Lessons of Rancière", commemorating the anti-philosopher from whose work we have learnt a lot, Zizek trenchantly adds and expands the notion of "ultra-politics" to Rancière's "cases of politics" that gentrify the deep dimensions of the political. He writes, "One is tempted to supplement Rancière, the most cunning and radical version of this disavowal is ultra-politics, the attempt to depoliticize conflict by way of bringing it to an extreme via the direct militarization of politics: the 'foreclosed' political returns in the real, in the guise of the attempt to resolve the deadlock of political conflict, of *mésentente*, by its false radicalization, i.e. by way of reformulating it as a war between 'Us' and 'Them', our Enemy, where there is no common ground for symbolic conflict."<sup>221</sup> The creation of the enemy and the claim for paranoid urgency here attempts to surpass truth. I don't want to teach the army. Let us search for common grounds.

Why does the military persist in time of alleged peace? On that matter, Rosa Luxemburg wrote, "The friends of peace in bourgeois circles believe that world peace and disarmament can be realised within the frame-work of the present social order, whereas we, who base ourselves on the materialistic conception of history and on scientific socialism, are convinced that militarism can only be abolished from the world with the destruction of the capitalist class state."<sup>222</sup> When an economic war and fight for resources to be further exploited are constantly in place with the forthright knowledge that many are oppressed by them, a military apparatus ensures this auto-oppressive continuity. Access to land as well as to knowledge needs to be restricted. This restriction is not caught in intelligence, its distribution of the visible is often tactical and subtle. Society is claimed to be served by the military while the opposite ends up to be the case. The military loves to classify. In his book "Men, Machines and Modern Times:" Elting Morison, a military biographer and one of the founders of the STS department at MIT that was founded in the early seventies, writes on his experience with military 'evidence', "By looking at these particular things [on the history of modern bureaucracy], with a little supporting historical evidence thrown in, it may be possible to reach a tentative conclusion or two at the end. I should say that most of the historical evidence will be drawn from the records of the Army or Navy. This is only because I am more familiar with the history of the Armed Forces, but I think there are advantages in using this kind of evidence, anyway. Military

---

<sup>221</sup> Jacques Rancière, *The Politics of Aesthetics* (London: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2004), 67.

<sup>222</sup> Luxemburg in: Tom Wintringham, *The Coming World War* (London: Lawrence & Wishart, 1935

situations are more definite, clear, unqualified than those in civil life. The military world in peace is little like the real world put under laboratory conditions. The effects of experiment can be better studied under these conditions. Such distortions as may occur will not, I think, damage the essential points I want to make about the operations of any bureaucracy, whether it regulates an armed force, a society, a corporation, or a university."<sup>223</sup>

As this thesis has shown, these last, armed forces, society, corporation and the university are very entangled. They continuously feed from one another. Anyone who has lived in a war-torn zone knows that things are not clear in there. Hereby, we want to look at how discipline was created in ramifications through the specialization of labor and the collaboration between the academic institution, the market and the military in differentiated zones of in what becomes in some cases a commodified knowledge. This taxonomic undertaking was also used to maximize knowledge production and to have better claims in measuring the value of the knowledge produced. So far, as capital has been expanding, specialization have been increasing, and so does the military that secures the continuation of its outsourcing of territories.

When critiquing Rancière's poetics of equality, Badiou confounds poetics for the Real.<sup>224</sup> However, I have learned from philosophy that we cannot but work with the Imaginary to become able to draw conclusions on the possibility of politics. This is one of the reasons why Rancière calls out for the reconsideration of artists as educators of politics. He writes, "The secret of Athenian greatness was that its state entrusted the education of the people to artists; and that is what the modern state had also to do."<sup>225</sup> I attempt to come closer to understanding and enacting the importance of investigating and performing this pedagogic role of artist as one who studies and teaches politics. For this, we need a new understanding of discipline. Only in such a way I am both an artist and a scientist. This is as much a thesis on the importance of imagining and enacting a new form of discipline that parallels in its gaze the current configurations of the universe with the knowledge that has been produced about it as much as it is not about art as understood in the predominant distribution of labor and the professionalization of the artist as exclusive producer of art. I attempt to understand the epistemology that the production of space purports. For this reason, I investigate military and anti-militarist strategies conceived and applied on epistemology and place. To put it in succinct terms, I am concerned with the aesthetics of knowledge, its influence on the Real and a future

---

223 Elting Morison, *Men, Machines, and Modern Times* (Cambridge: MIT press, 2016), 63.

224 Alain Badiou, *Metapolitics* (New York: Verso, 2005)

225 Jacques Rancière, *The Intellectual and Her People: Staging the People*. Vol. 2. (New York: Verso, 2012)

conception of global politics. For these reasons, I attempt to look at present situations of spatial politics and the knowledge that has been produced around them across disciplines, times and the same page. I search for the placement of critique and the singularity of performance within discipline all the while scripting my performance in the latter. In such a way, I posit myself as interdisciplinary so as to propose and act out new notions of discipline. All through out, I search for other people who do or did so and imagine spaces where I can live and know without the needs of war.

## EPILOGUE

We never learn language

We

Only perform it

It still sounds

credible to me

that one day

I was

without speech.

And that I Am

Always producing

A place in my thoughts.

Only distance has a name.



## LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

All images in this thesis are produced by me. Image courtesy of Jessika Khazrik or The Society of False Witnesses

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

Abdelhamid I Sabra "The authorship of the Liber de crepusculis, an eleventh-century work on atmospheric refraction." *isis* (1967): 77-85

Abdelhamid I Sabra, "The" Commentary" That Saved the Text, The Hazardous Journey of Ibn al-Haytham's Arabic Optics." *Early Science and Medicine* 12, no. 2 (2007): 117-133.

Abdelhamid I. Sabra, "Ibn al-Haytham's criticisms of Ptolemy's Optics." *Journal of the History of Philosophy* 4.2 (1966): 145-149.

Abdelhamid I. Sabra, "Optics, Astronomy, and Logic: Studies" in *Arabic Science and Philosophy*. Vol. 444. Variorum Publishing (1994)

Abdelhamid I. Sabra, *Theories of light: from Descartes to Newton* (London: CUP Archive, 1981)

Alan Grometstein, ed. *MIT Lincoln Laboratory: Technology in Support of National Security* (Massachusetts: Lincoln Laboratory, 2011)

André Geiger, *Le Liban et la Syrie* (Paris: Arthaud, 1932)

Aristophanes, *Clouds, Acharnians, Lysistrata* (Bristol: Bristol Classical Press, 1989)

Aristotle, and W. D. Ross, trans. *The Works of Aristotle Volume VII: Problemata* (New York: Barnes & Nobles, 1963)

Assem Salaam, Jad Tabet and Nabil Beyhum, *Beyrouth: Construire l'avenir, reconstruire le passé* (Beirut: Self-published, 1995)

Attilio Petruccioli Holod and Andre Raymond, *The City in the Islamic World*, (London: Brill, 2008)

Benjamin Peters, *How Not to Network a Nation: The Uneasy History of the Soviet Internet* (Massachusetts: MIT Press, 2016)

Boris Groys, "Art, Technology and Humanism" *E-flux Journal*, 82 accessed on May 4, 2017



Boris Groys, *Art Power* (Massachusetts: MIT Press, 2008)

Boris Groys, "The Immortal Bodies", *RES: Anthropology and Aesthetics*, 53(1), pp.345-349

Built Environment." *Recovering Beirut—Urban Design and Post-War Reconstruction*, Leiden, New York, Koeln: EJ Brill (1993): 101-127.

Chris Knight, *Decoding Chomsky: Science and Revolutionary Politics* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2016)

Dale W Forseythe, *Turdhead the Fourth Notch* (Indiana: AuthorHouse, 2012)

Dania Alsaadi, "Solidere marina takes root : Project courts yacht owners far and wide," *Lebanon Wire*, July 9, 2002

Dimitri Gutas, *Greek Thought, Arabic Culture: The Graeco-Arabic Translation Movement in Baghdad and Early'Abbasid Society (2nd-4th/5th-10th c.)* (London: Routledge, 2012)

Dina Hawi Sarkis, "Minimizing domestic solid waste at the source revising experiences in solid waste management in Lebanon", (Phd diss., American University of Beirut, 2005)

Donna Haraway, *Simians, Cyborgs, and Women: The Reinvention of Nature* (London: Routledge, 2013)

Dorothy Nelkin, *The University and Military Research* (New York: Cornell University, 1972)

Eli Pariser, *The Filter Bubble: What the Internet is Hiding from You* (London: Penguin, 2011)

Elting Morison, *Machines, and Modern times.* (Cambridge: MIT press, 2016)

Fawwaz Traboulsi, *A history of modern Lebanon* (London: Pluto Press, 2007)

Frances A. Yates, *The Art of Memory* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1966)

Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, *Enzyklopädie der philosophischen Wissenschaften im Grundrisse (1830) Band 20*, (Düsseldorf: Felix Meiner Verlag, 1992), 62

Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, *The philosophy of Right* (Massachusetts:Hackett Publishing, 2015)

Georges Didi-Huberman, *Peuples Exposés, Peuples Figurants* (Paris: Edition de Minuit, 2012)

Gerald Toomer, *Ptolemy's Almagest* (London: Duckworth, 1984)

Gershon Gerhard Scholem, *Walter Benjamin: The Story of a Friendship* (New York: New York Review of Books, 2003)

Giambattista Vico (New York: Cornell University Press, 1968)

Giambattista Vico, Thomas Goddard Bergin, and Max Harold Fisch. *The New Science of*

Giorgio Agamben, *The Use of Bodies* (California: Stanford University Press, 2016)

- Guy Debord, *Society of the Spectacle*. (New York: Bread and Circuses Publishing, 2012)
- Hans Heinrich Gerth and Mills C. Wright, eds. *From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology* (London: Oxford University Press, 1958)
- Hashim Sarkis, "Territorial Claims: Architecture and Post-War Attitudes Toward The Hassan, Fekri A. "The Aswan High Dam and the International Rescue Nubia Campaign." *African Archaeological Review* 24.3-4 (2007): 73-94.
- Hatem El Hibri, "Mapping Beirut: Toward a History of the Translation of Space from the French Mandate through the Civil War (1920-91)," *The Arab World Geographer* Vol. 12 No. 3-4 (2009), pp. 119-135
- Helen Sader, "Ancient Beirut: urban growth in the light of recent excavations."
- Herbert Marcuse, *Repressive Tolerance* (California: Berkeley Commune, 1968)
- Ian Hamilton Grant, *Philosophies of Nature After Schelling* (London: Continuum, 2006),
- Ian Hamilton Grant, *Philosophies of Nature After Schelling* (London: Continuum, 2006),
- Ibn Al-Haytham and Sabra, Abdelhamid I , trans. *The Optics of Ibn al-Haytham: Books I-III: On Direct Vision*. Vol. 1. (London: Warburg Institute, 1989)
- Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Judgment* (Indiana: Hackett Publishing, 1987)
- Jacques Derrida, *Difference in translation* 167 (New York: Cornell University Press, 1985)
- Jacques Rancière and Marie-Aude Baronian, "Jacques Rancière and Indisciplinarity" in *Art & Research: A Journal of Ideas, Contexts and Methods* Volume 2 no. 1 (Sydney: University of Australia, 2007)
- Jacques Rancière, "Thinking Between Disciplines: an Aesthetics of Knowledge" *Parrhesia* no.1 (2006)
- Jacques Rancière, *Althusser's Lesson* (London: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2011)
- Jacques Rancière, *Disagreement: Politics and Philosophy* (Minnesota: of Minnesota Press, 1999)
- Jamil Ragep, and Adam Sabra. "In memoriam AI Sabra (1924-2013)." *Suhayl International Journal for the History of the Exact and Natural Sciences in Islamic Civilisation* 12 (2013): 181-204
- Jean-Philippe Deranty, , and Alison Ross, eds. *Jacques Rancière and the Contemporary Scene: The Philosophy of Radical Equality* (London: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2012)
- Jennet Conant, *Tuxedo Park: A Wall Street tycoon and the secret palace of science that changed the course of World War II* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2013)

- Jeremias Drexel, *Aurifodina artium et scientiarum omnium: Excerptendi sollertia, omnibus litterarum amantibus monstrata* (Antwerp, 1638)
- Jessika Khazrik, "Beirut Theatre Slides into an Island of Trash" in Hammoud Badawi. Alia and Mayssa Fattouh (eds) *Beirut: TandemWorks*, 2015
- Jessika Khazrik, *When We Were Exiled, Water Remained in Elements: Water*. Ashkan Sepahvand (eds) *Beirut: Sursock Museum*, 2016
- Joe Nasr and Eric Verdeil, "The reconstructions of Beirut" in Salma K. Jayyusi, Renata
- Johannes Kepler, *Optics: Paralipomena to Witelo & Optical Part of Astronomy* (Santa Fe: Green Lion Press, 2000)
- José Guilherme Merquior, *Foucault* (London: Fontana, 1991)
- Julia Kristeva, *Powers of Horror: an Essay on Abjection* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1982)
- Jurgen Habermas, *The Theory of Communicative Action Vol. 1* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1984)
- Jussi Parika, *What is media archaeology?* (New Jersey: John Wiley & Sons, 2013)
- Karl Popper *The Poverty of Historicism*, (London: The Beacon Press, 1957)
- Kelly Moore, *Disrupting Science: Social Movements, American Scientists, and the Politics of the Military, 1945 – 1975* (Princeton: Princeton University
- Leila Tarazi Fawaz, *Merchants and migrants in nineteenth-century Beirut* (Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1983)
- Leonardo Davinci, *Leonardo on the human body*. Courier Corporation, 2013, p.43
- Louis Althusser, Étienne Balibar, Roger Establet, Jacques Rancière and Pierre Macherey, *Reading Capital: The Complete Edition* (New York: Verson, 2016)
- Lucien Leclerc, *Histoire de la médecine arabe: exposé complet des traductions en grec. Vol. 1.* (Leroux, 187)
- Mark A. Smith "The alhacenian account of spatial perception and its epistemological implications." *Arabic sciences and philosophy* 15.02 (2005): 219-240
- Marlene Ghorayeb "Aux sources de la modernité de Beyrouth: 1860-1940." In *Environmental Design: Journal of the Islamic Environmental Design Research Centre* 1-2, edited by Attilo Petruccioli, 122-29. Rome: Dell'oca Editore, 1994-1995
- Marlène Ghorayeb *Beyrouth sous mandat français: construction d'une ville moderne* (Paris: KARTHALA Editions, 2014)

Marlène Ghorayeb, "L'urbanisme de la ville de Beyrouth sous Mandat français", in *Figures de l'Orientalisme en architecture*, C. Bruant, J. Leprun, M. Volait (eds.), *Revue d'études sur le monde musulman et la Méditerranée*, n°73-74, 327-342, Aix-en-Provence : Edisud, 1996.

Martin Coward, "Against anthropocentrism: the destruction of the built environment as a distinct form of political violence" *Review of International Studies* 32, no. 03 (2006): 419-437

Mary Douglas, *Purity and Danger: An analysis of concepts of pollution and taboo* (London: Routledge, 2003)

Massimo Negrotti, *The Reality of the Artificial: Nature, Technology and Naturoids* (London: Springer, 2012)

Matthew Wisnioski, *Engineers for change: Competing visions of technology in 1960s America* (Massachusetts: MIT Press, 2012)

Michel Foucault, *The Order of Things: An Archaeology of the Human Sciences*. (New York: Vintage Books, 1970), p. 170

Muṣṭafā Nazīf, al-Ḥasan ibn al-Haytham, buḥūthuhu wa kushūfuhu al-baṣariyya, 2 vol. Cairo Fu'ād 1st University, 1943

Nader Al Bizri, "A philosophical perspective on Alhazen's optics" in *Arabic Sciences and Philosophy* 15.02 (2005): 189-218

Nicholas Ostler, *Ad infinitum: A biography of Latin* (London: Bloomsbury Publishing USA, 2009)

Nicholas Temple, *Disclosing horizons: architecture, perspective and redemptive space*. Routledge, 2006, 98-99.

Norbert Wiener, *The Human Use of Human Beings: Cybernetics and society* (New York: Da capo press, 1954)

Nukhet Varlik, *Plague and Empire in the Early Modern Mediterranean World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015)

*Opticae thesaurus: Alhazeni Arabis libri septem, nuncprimum editi; Eiusdem liber De Crepusculis et nubium ascensionibus, Item Vitellonis Thuringopoloni libri X, a Federico Risnero* (Basileae, 1572)

Orit Halpern, *Beautiful Data: A History of Vision and Reason since 1945* (North Carolina: Duke University Press, 2015)

Pascal Gielen and Paul De Bruyne, *Being an Artist in Post-Fordist Times* (Amsterdam: Nai Publishing, 2009)

Paul A. Bové, *Poetry against Torture: Criticism, History, and the Human*. (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2008)

- Paul Kunitzsch, *Der Almagest: Die Syntaxis Mathematica des Claudius Ptolemaeus in arabisch- lateinischer Überlieferung* (Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1974)
- Rabee Jaber, *The Mehli's Report* (New York: New Directions, 2012)
- Renée Green, *Other Planes of There: selected writings* (North Carolina: Duke University Press, 2014)
- Resat Kasaba, *The Ottoman Empire and the world economy: The nineteenth century* (New York: SUNY Press, 1988)
- Richard Lorch, "Greek-Arabic-Latin: The transmission of mathematical texts in the Middle Ages." *Science in Context* 14.1-2 (2001): 313-331.
- Roman Jakobson, Thomas Sebeok(ed.) *In Style in Language* (Massachusetts: MIT Press, 1960)
- Saleh Sadek and Mutasem El Fadel "Reclamation of a landfill along the Mediterranean coast: A waste management application decision case study". *Journal of Natural Resources and Life Science Education* 29 (2000): 155-161.
- Salim Taha, "At-Ta'rib wa-kibar al-mu'arribin fi I-Islam," *Sumer*, 1976, vol. 32, pp. 339-89
- Samir Kassir, *Beirut* (California: University of California Press, 2010), 285.
- Samir Khalaf, *Heart of Beirut: Reclaiming the Bourj* (Beirut: Saqi, 2013)
- Sarah Bridger, *Scientists at War: The Ethics of Cold War Weapons Research* (Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2015)
- Saree Makdisi, "Laying claim to Beirut: urban narrative and spatial identity in the age of Solidere" *Critical Inquiry* 23, no. 3 (1997): 665
- Seeden Helga and Thorpe Reuben, "Beirut from Ottoman Sea Walls and Landfills to a Twelfth Century BC Burial: Report on the Archaeological Excavations in the Souks Northern Area (BEY 007)" *Berytus Journal: Archaeological Studies* 43 (1997): 221-254
- Slava Gerovitch, "Russian Scandals": Soviet Readings of American Cybernetics in the Early Years of the Cold War." *The Russian Review* 60, no. 4 (2001): 545-568.
- Susan Buck-Morss, *The Dialectics of Seeing: Walter Benjamin and the Arcades Project* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1989)
- Theodor W. Adorno, "The Essay as Form." *New German Critique* 32 (1984): 151-171
- Thomas Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1962)
- Waddah Charara, *Fi Ussul Lubna Al Ta'ifi: Khat Al-Yamin Al-Shaabi [On the Origins of Sectarian Lebanon: The Path of the Populist Right]* (Beirut: Dar Al-Tali'a Lel-Tiba'a w Al-Nashra, 1975)

Walid Sadek, "In the Presence of the Corpse." *Third Text* 26, no. 4 (2012): 479-489

Walid Sadek, "Appearance of Images as Disaster" with Bavand Behpoor in *Art Tomorrow*, no. 2, Summer, pp. 60-64.

Wendy Chun, *Updating to Remain the Same: Habitual New Media* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2016)