Edited by

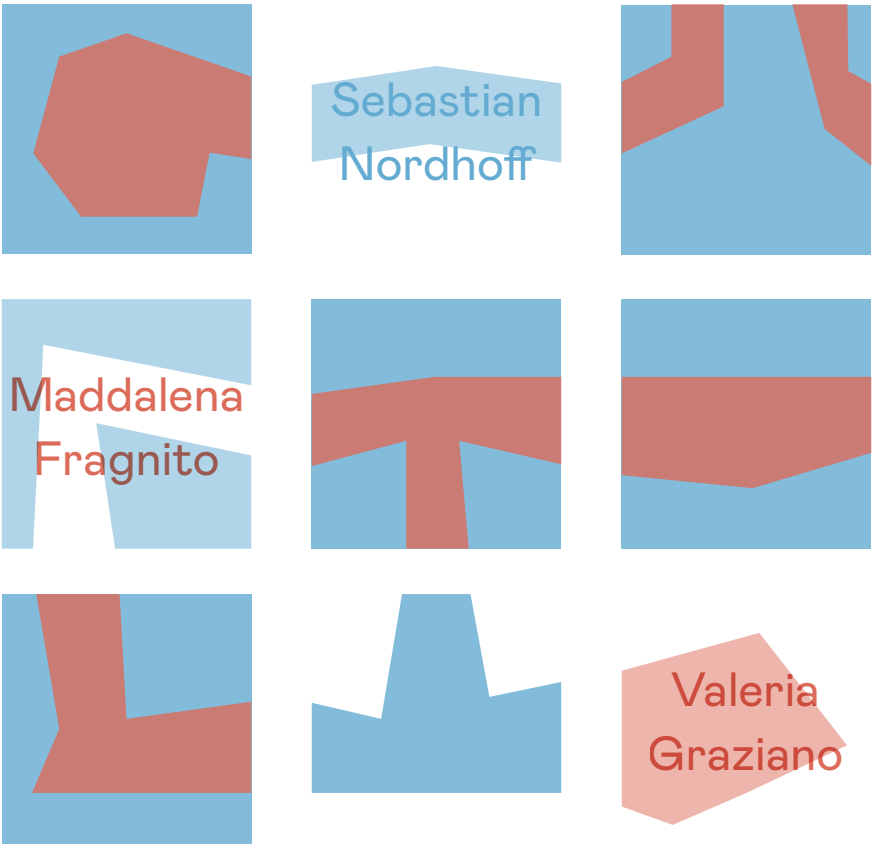
Open Humanities Press

Competition and Cooperation

Sebastian Nordhoff

Maddalena Fragnito

Valeria Graziano



Published by Post Office Press, Rope Press and Open Humanities Press. Coventry, 2018.

© Open Humanities Press, papers by respective Authors.

Freely available at: http://radicaloa.co.uk/conferences/ROA2

This is an open access pamphlet, licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International (CC BY 4.0) license.

Read more about the license at: https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/

Figures and other media included with this pamphlet may be under different copyright restrictions.

Design by: Mihai Toma, Nick White and Sean Worley

Printed by: Rope Press, Birmingham

This pamphlet is published in a series of 7 as part of the Radical Open Access II – The Ethics of Care conference, which took place June 26-27 at Coventry University. More information about this conference and about the contributors to this pamphlet can be found at: http://radicaloa.co.uk/conferences/ROA2

This pamphlet was made possible due to generous funding from the arts and humanities research studio, The Post Office, a project of Coventry University's Centre for Postdigital Cultures and due to the combined efforts of authors, editors, designers and printers.

Table of Contents

Introduction
Open Humanities Press
Page 4

Outcompeting Gold: Sharing the Basics for Collaborative Approaches to Scholarly Publishing
Sebastian Nordhoff
Page 6

Key Concepts For A New Cultural Institution
Maddalena Fragnito
Page 16

Towards a Grammar of the Recreative Industries
Valeria Graziano
Page 26

Introduction

The "transfer of the responsibility of paying for publication to the individual author (or the author's funding agency or institution)" that is brought about by gold author-pays open access is, as Gary Hall notes in *Pirate Philosophy*, a "typical neoliberal move." By placing researchers in a position where they have to compete for the inevitably limited amounts of funding that are available to enable them to publish on an article- or book-processing-charge (APC/BPC) basis, gold author-pays open access serves as a means of introducing yet further competition into the public system of higher education. It also establishes a commercial market for A/BPCs, and with it another way of "inflicting debt" onto the university, to set alongside that achieved by the "imposition of a system of tuition fees in England" (Hall 2016: 193, n60).

It is not surprising then that calls are increasingly being made within the open access movement for non-profit presses, projects and institutions to cooperate horizontally in order to counter the hegemony of both free market economics and commercial publishing. When it comes to actually building non-profit alternatives, however, questions of funding soon come into play. A number of interesting innovations have emerged, not least in the form of library consortium subsidy models that redirect money otherwise used to purchase subscriptions to exorbitantly priced journals. Still, the long-term financial sustainability of numerous open access initiatives currently depends on already overstretched institutional budgets. As a result, even though many non-profit projects wish to work together cooperatively, they find themselves in a situation where they are forced to compete against one other (and against for-profits) for funding from libraries, foundations, research councils and other sources. Regardless of the fact they may consider themselves to have an alternative, even radical, mission, such non-profit publishing initiatives are still being organised according to the logic of the market and its principles of economic competition.

It is this logic that *Competition and Cooperation* seeks to interrogate by posing the following questions: is competition an inescapable fact of the scholarly publishing landscape given the underlying economics of our society? Or are there ways to negotiate the tension in the open access ecosystem between, on the one hand, the need to compete with others for scarce resources – especially money – and, on the other, the oft-expressed political preference for cooperation and collaboration? What is the potential of new forms of "open cooperativism" in which organisations commit themselves "structurally and legally to the production of common goods (the common good, the commons)" (Bauwens 2016)? The idea behind open cooperatives is to bring together the best practices of the coop movement, with those of the open source software communities, and ask their stakeholders to assist with funding, managing and organizing them (Davies-Coates 2017). Is it possible to follow such examples and devise a *grammar* or set of *key concepts* for *competing* open access projects that promote the ethics of care, collaboration and the building of the commons?

Open Humanities Press

References

Bauwens, Michel. 2016. Introduction to the republication of Benoît Borrits, "Cooperative And Common Ownership." *P2P Foundation,* December 5. https://blog.p2pfoundation.net/cooperative-and-common-ownership/2016/12/05.

Davies-Coates, Josef. (2017) "Open Cooperatives." *P2PF Wiki*, March 2. https://wiki.p2pfoundation.net/Open_Cooperatives.

Hall, Gary. 2016. *Pirate Philosophy*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press.

Outcompeting Gold: Sharing the Basics for Collaborative Approaches to Scholarly Publishing

Sebastian Nordhoff

Introduction

The Open Access movement began in the sciences in disciplines with a more or less standardized article format as their main type of publication. The proposed target models for future publication platforms (the Green Road to open access, the Gold Road) are shaped to a large degree by the requirements and usages of these pioneer communities. However, the demands of the humanities and other disciplines where the book (rather than the peer-reviewed journal article) is often the 'gold standard' publishing format are very different. Consequently, the models crafted in the sciences cannot be simply transferred to the humanities. Witness the way the Green Road to open access (i.e., self-archiving in central, subject-based or institutional repositories) has yet to be adopted to a significant extent in the humanities, while uptake of the Gold Road (publishing in OA journals, whether they operate a system of APCs or not-and most Gold OA journals do not) is also slow. In this paper, I will discuss how far the competition introduced by Gold models of author-pays open access is actually detrimental to research. I will then show how collaborative approaches have advantages over the Gold Road in this respect, and argue that sharing business figures between collaborative approaches should become customary.

The Flow of Money in the Traditional Scholarly Publishing System

Under the traditional setup based on the distribution and sale of printed texts, the funding of book publishing is completely opaque and lacking in transparency. Different governments, foundations or companies give money to universities. They then give it to their libraries who in turn use it to buy printed texts or digital copies. Publishers do not typically disclose the total number of copies that are bought by libraries worldwide. The same is true with regard to any discounts or package deals. This means there is no way for an interested researcher, accountant or any other person to know how much money society at large has transferred to the publisher for making a given title available. On the one hand this informational asymmetry allows the publisher to make profits. They can easily justify the higher prices of their titles as compared to the competition by alleging that they are catering to a more specialized audience and so selling fewer copies. That assertion cannot be questioned without access to their data, which they do not provide. On the other hand this informational asymmetry also allows for cross-subsidies between different titles. A bestselling textbook by a leading scholar can generate a surplus that can then be used to help establish an experimental series on a burgeoning new subject which has a more uncertain future.

Competition and the Golden Threat

The obscene profit margins and sales practices in the journal market have led to calls for the introduction of author-pays models to replace reader-pays models. As well as enabling worldwide royalty-free access to the scholarly literature, it is held that the latter model will make it easier to analyse exactly how much is being paid to publish each written piece of research. Instead of 235 libraries worldwide sharing the cost, it will be *one funder* who will pay processing fees for *one publication*. That funder will know precisely what they have funded, and they can check whether that item conforms to their specifications and requirements. Given that they are the unique "customer" for a given work's publication, they can also easily compare its kind, quality, and price to any other items they have funded. Article-based metrics furthermore allow funders to see the uptake of the publications they have financed.[1] This leads to a "processing charge market," where funders can compare offers and prices. In recent years, we have seen a number of surveys and analyses of the costs and quality of different publishers (Schimmer et al 2015). Lists have been put together to differentiate low-quality ("predatory") publishers from high-quality (vetted and approved) publishers from which processing charges can be recovered (e.g., those listed on the Directory of Open Access Journals). Research associations are also monitoring the distribution of fees and their development (mean, median, minimum, maximum, rise), and are extrapolating future costs.[2] (A natural follow-up would be the

emergence of service providers who help scholars to select the "right" offer depending on their budget, funding requirements and desired reach, similar to those specialized search engines that help people organize holiday trips.) This suggests that we are moving towards a developed APCs market, where different players are catering to different customer segments. In the top tier of this market, demand will be more fixed and rigid. This means that an increase in prices by the top publishing brands in a given a field will not lead to a decrease in demand. In the lower tiers demand will be more elastic. If the fees for a publication with one journal become too high, authors will likely opt to switch to another journal that enables them to continue to pay a lower fee.[3]

One necessary precondition for this to work, however, is that the items are substitutable on the side of the publishers as well. Journal article production is done at an industrial scale, with specified workflows, and in this setup a publisher can simply plug in some other manuscript and expect about the same effort to be required. This is where books and the humanities differ. The shortest book with Language Science Press, the OA book publisher I help to run, has 97 pages, the longest over 800. Obviously, the former took less time on our side than the latter, and we could not simply substitute one for the other. There are argumentative books with a lot of prose text in less demanding languages (i.e., those that have a Latin alphabet), and there are books with complex tables and charts in languages that are more demanding because they have special typographic requirements (e.g., special characters, stacked diacritics, non-Latin scripts, or a mix of left-to-right and right-to-left passages). In this respect, many book publishers in the humanities are operating more on an artisanal than an industrial scale, to the extent that every book is made-to-order. This heterogeneity of books implies that they cannot be easily substituted for one another (in the technical/economic sense) in the way that we have seen journal articles can.

What would the consequences be if price-based competition in the book market were ever introduced with a flat fee and a fixed cap? For one thing, publishers would opt for the run-of-the mill books. No more Syriac alphabet, hand-crafted syntactic representations, or adaptation of Hebrew script to the needs of Yiddish, no more labours of love. Instead, there would be a fixed page count of 300. Fit your stuff in there, even if this means distorting or simplifying your argument. For another, there would be many more books! Rather than an exhaustive biography of Humboldt, why not publish one about his youth, one about his early years, and one about his old age? Same work, treble the revenue! The result will be a host of non-distinctive books of equal appearance, all of about the same size, all equally mainstream, and all equally dull. [4]

Following on from the nefarious effects of the Impact Factor, the further introduction of APCs promises to result in journal articles becoming even more a commodity.[5] While such streamlining is already bad for articles and article-based research, the introduction of an equivalent book processing charge (BPC) would be disastrous for books. Indeed, it may well spell doom for those disciplines that operate according to modes of publishing that cannot be made to work financially for the flat fee quoted for the BPC.

Another aspect-psychological this time-is that books require more intellectual effort to produce (to peer-review, copy edit, proof read and so on) than articles, and hence require higher BPCs which can easily end up in the five-digit range (Maron et al 2016). This might be the same cost as for 7 articles, but since the BPC is to be paid in one go, it appears enormous and is generally beyond what can be provided by any funds established to cover the cost of making books available open access. Whereas articles can go unnoticed in this respect, the large body of research that is a book will draw attention, as will the large BPC associated with it, and people will ask whether this expenditure is really necessary.

Collaboration

Every couple of years, German newspapers feature stories about how students of law and students of theology are found to be the top culprits for displacing or hiding books in research

libraries so that their fellow students cannot access them, thus giving the hiders a competitive advantage when it comes to their exams. If your reaction to this is one of bewilderment or repulsion, it obviously shows that your moral compass is well calibrated. What it also shows is that our expectations are actually for researchers to collaborate not compete. At the beginning of their career, most researchers are led by their quest for knowledge, not by a desire to surpass their peers. Only once they enter the modern university the initial goal becomes distorted and competition rears its ugly head. This is partly due to perverted incentive structures that make competition a more promising individual strategy, even if collaboration would be more advantageous for society. In an analogy with the well-known Tragedy of the Commons, this has been called the Tragedy of the Anti-Commons (Heller 1998). Software development has of course been plagued by the same problems for a long time. Yet the success of the Open Source movement as evidenced by the Apache and Firefox software, and the transfer of the movement's principles to other domains such as Wikipedia and OpenStreetMaps, shows that collaboration as a quality of the human being is actually more powerful than reductionist models of *homo œconomicus* would have us believe.

The question now is, how we can set up a system that will help that human instinct of collaboration and cooperation to flourish? I propose such a system should have three main aspects.

Attribution and Recognition

Every small contribution towards a publication should be acknowledged and recognized. A book is a complex achievement. There are very intricate issues, such as typesetting non-Latin scripts, and there are tasks requiring less erudition (e.g., checking whether each table is referenced in the text or not). Researchers at different stages of their careers can contribute to the areas that are most suited to them. This works if the book is seen, not the as work of one author alone, but rather as the joint project of a research community. At Language Science Press, we crowd-source proofreading to the community. There have been books with more than 30 community proof-readers, who are all acknowledged in the book and in our Hall of Fame.[6] Instead of the book being a sword that a sole author wields when competing with rival authors, the book becomes more of a house where different people contribute to the process of building something for the whole discipline. However, this only works because everybody believes they are doing it, not for themselves, but for the greater good, and because they want to be recognized for adhering to this goal.

Brands

After the above, rather poetic, depiction of how books are produced, I want to turn to a more strategic viewpoint: measures have to be taken to ensure that the work of the community remains that of the community and stays out of the commercial sphere. This means that the project has to recognized as having a name that gives it symbolic capital: a brand (Haspelmath 2013). The brand has to be protected by registering it, and this registration has to be done by a non-commercial entity.[7]

Calculations

Journeying even further down the rabbit hole of business administration, in order to stand up to the *golden threat* described above, collaborative projects have to make sure they live to tell the tale. The main risks to be confronted here are commercial bankruptcy due to sloppy book-keeping or planning (or none at all!), and emotional burnout due to self-exploitation. Actually burnout can be directly related to commercial bankruptcy: if your business is healthy, there is no need for you to work overtime. If your calculations and expectations are unrealistic, the desire to compensate by working late hours can arise, leading to burnout. For your own emotional and social well-being, then, it is good to know that your figures are in order.

I am labouring an obvious point here because very often calculations are lumped in one bag along with commodification, neoliberalism and capitalism, and then beaten with the biggest sticks you have. This blurs important distinctions. The ownership

of the means of production (capitalism) is logically independent from knowing your business figures. You could have only state-owned businesses and still need business figures. The philosophy of minimising intervention by the state in the economy (neoliberalism) is also logically independent of business figures. A heavily socialist state can still have business figures. And commodification, finally, is also different from business figures, although less so than the former two and in a more subtle way: business figures relate to one business; commodification is a process operating at the level of society.

Let me provide an example to illustrate why calculations are important for non-profits as well. Suppose you want to finance your project by a mix of donations, paid access to PDF at the rate of 2 EUR per PDF, and print sales. Your figures tell you that the median donation is 2 EUR. But for that, you have to maintain an infrastructure for bookkeeping, promotion, and 'donor support" which costs more financially than the donations contribute. Second, your figures show that paid access to the PDF achieves returns of 10,000 EUR a year, but you have to hire IT staff to get your access control, authentication and billing in order, which costs more than those 10,000 EUR. Your print margin is OK. In which case your project will clearly be better off if you simply disable donations and make the PDF completely free without a paywall, since those two sources of revenue cost more than they contribute.

In accordance with the OpenAire project and its emphasis on "full disclosure: replicable strategies for book publications supplemented with empirical data," Language Science Press releases its business model and figures, a detailed editable spread sheet, and a "cook book."[8] The idea is to show calculations and figures for a sample publisher, and in this way share insights with other non-profit publishing platforms. I term this approach "Open Accountancy." According to Caux (2017), this marks the difference between Gold publishers (with APCs), Platinum publishers (without APCs) and Palladium publishers (no APCs + disclosure of business data).

Our calculations, based on 4 years of operation between 2014 and 2018, suggest that the average cost of a book with Language Science Press is between 3,500 and 5,000 EUR. This is considerably less than the information on the cost of producing books we get from other sources (Maron et al 2016; Ferwerda et al, 2018), even astonishingly so. There might be a reason for this: Language Science Press does not spend money on measures to prevent people from accessing its content (paywalls, logins, and so on), which come with an overhead of authentication, billing, marketing, and user support. This actually makes our operations much leaner, and thus more cost-effective, proving the point Björn Brembs makes with his question: "Are we paying US$ 3,000 per article just for paywalls?"[9]

Outcompeting Gold

In the current research landscape, scholars can choose between different outlets for their publications. They can go with a traditional reader-pays publishing house; they can try to find the funds for Gold open access APCs; or they can opt for a community based publisher such as Language Science Press, Open Library of Humanities[10] or SciPost.[11] The former two types of outlet function according to a competitive mode; the latter type operates in a collaborative one. I have argued that when we pitch the competitive against the collaborative mode, bizarrely enough, the collaborative mode will be more cost-effective, and that paradoxically, collaboration as a principle outcompetes competition.

[1] "Article-based metrics" is a term coined in opposition to the Journal Impact Factor and as such does not apply naturally to books. However, it is used in a wider sense to mean "non-journal-based metrics," including works that are not articles in the strict sense (e.g., contributions to edited volumes, or even books).

[2] See, for example, https://wellcome.ac.uk/funding/managing-grant/wellcome-and-coaf-open-access-spend-2016-17

[3] I do not want to claim that the market for journal articles is in anyway perfect, or that it is actually a desirable setup to begin with. My goal is to contrast journal articles with books, and my review of the 'functioning market" for articles should be interpreted in that context.

[4] I recognise the merit of the standardized presentation of methods and findings in the experimental sciences, which make the appreciation of a novel experiment much easier. But this approach cannot be transferred to the interpretive sciences.

[5] Commodities are defined as goods that are essentially interchangeable ("fungible").

[6] http://langsci-press.org/hallOfFame.

[7] See # 1 of the Fair Open Access Principles: https://www.fairopenaccess.org.

[8] https://github.com/langsci/opendata.

[9] http://bjoern.brembs.net/2014/07/are-we-paying-us3000-per-article-just-for-paywalls.

[10] https://www.openlibhums.org.

[11] https://scipost.org/.

References

Caux, Jean-Sébastien (2017). "Noble Metals For A Noble Cause." Blog post, September 20, 2017. https://jscaux.org/blog/post/2017/09/20/noble-metals-noble-cause/.

Ferwerda, Eelco, Ronald Snijder, Brigitte Arpagaus, Regula Graf, Daniel Krämer, and Eva Moser. (2018). OAPEN-CH - *Auswirkungen von Open Access auf wissenschaftliche Monographien in der Schweiz. Ein Projekt des Schweizerischen Nationalfonds.* http://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.1219172

Haspelmath, Martin. (2013). "Science Publication Should Be Seen as a Public Service (Just Like Science Itself)." *Free Science Blog*, February 14, 2013. https://www.frank-m-richter.de/freescienceblog/2013/02/14/science-publication-should-be-seen-as-a-public-service-just-like-science-itself/.

Heller, Michael A. (1998). "The Tragedy of the Anticommons: Property in the Transition From Marx to Markets." *Harvard Law Review,* 111(3), 621–688. http://dx.doi.org/10.2307/1342203

Maron, Nancy, Kimberly Schmelzinger. Christine Mulhern and Daniel Rossman. (2016). "The Costs of Publishing Monographs: Toward a Transparent Methodology." *Journal of Electronic Publishing* 19, Issue 1, 2016. http://dx.doi.org/10.18665/sr.276785

Schimmer, Ralf, Kai Karin Geschuhn, and Andreas Vogler. (2015). "Disrupting the Subscription Journals' Business Model for the Necessary Large-scale Transformation to Open Access." A Max Planck Digital Library Open Access Policy White Paper, April 28. http://dx.doi.org/10.17617/1.3.

Key Concepts For A New Cultural Institution

Maddalena Fragnito

Introduction

The focus of this paper is on a cultural institution that emerged in 2012 out of a mobilisation of workers in the arts and cultural industries.[1] MACAO is an independent centre for art, culture and research in Milan that considers artistic production a vital process for rethinking social change and for elaborating independent political critique. It is also a place for experimenting with the kind of innovative models of cooperative governance and production that are of interest to the Radical Open Access Collective, as the introduction to this pamphlet makes clear. MACAO promotes research in different fields, including those concerned with labour conditions in the creative industries and cultural sectors; the right to the city; the fight against sexist and racist violence; and new organisational and technological solutions for cultural production. Moreover, MACAO has fostered a transversal public programme that hosts artist residencies, installations, public readings, seminars, workshops and hacklabs, as well as performances of music, film and design.

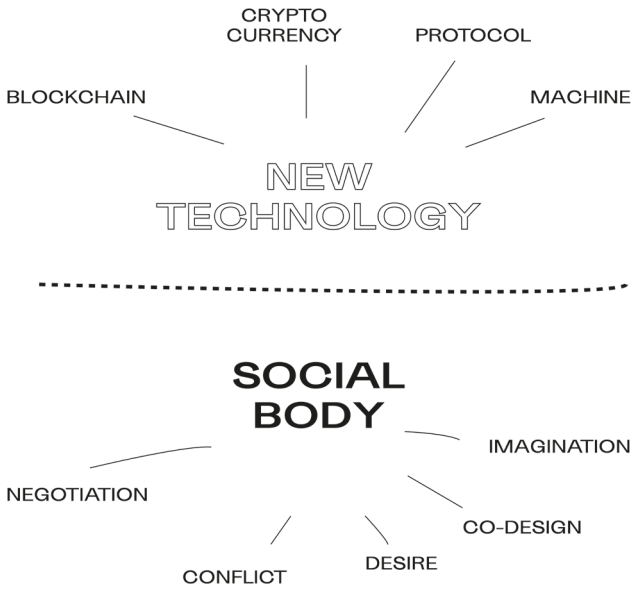
The management of MACAO is horizontal and takes place during a weekly political meeting and a quarterly scheduling meeting. These regular meetings are the principal means through which a changing community of a hundred people governs itself. Aside from these meetings the community establishes relationships through varying conglomerates of people who cooperate on theme-based research projects. The day-to-day organisation of the community is coordinated through specific online channels or by means of simple coexistence.

MACAO is located in Milan's former meat stock market, which is itself in the middle of a vast abandoned area where the city's wholesale market used to be. The people who have run the cultural centre have over the years suggested to local administrations a variety of innovative ways for managing the space. One of these was the drawing of a deliberation written in collaboration with the network of "Italian Cultural Occupations" and groups of activists and lawyers.[2] This deliberation was the outcome of a large citizens movement that asked that informal communities might be allowed to manage spaces and regenerate unused public property throughout the country. It is the latter's "Civic Uses" model, which was behind the launch of the first – and on-going – experiment of *ex Asilo Filangieri* in Naples, that inspired the MCAO deliberation.[3]

Another interesting proposal was the acquisition of MACAO building estate following the well-established example of the German Union Mietshauser Syndikat.[4] Thanks to an ingenious system that shifts between social innovation and traditional bureaucracy, this Union has generated a Commons within private law and reassigned over 140 estates. So far both of the initiatives proposed by MACAO have not been accepted and the centre is therefore an occupied space.

From this point on, MACAO's practice of self-governance and organisation will be described in this paper through a number of key concepts in an attempt to draft a glossary on the subject of how a place of cultural production, born out of the mobilisation of citizens, can be managed. What desires define a new institution? How is an institution designed and how is it used? Who decides? How does a changeable community relate to organisational forms? What is the relationship between a collective that transits through such a space and the technology that is used for its organisation?

If we compare MACAO with pre-existing forms of cultural institutions, I believe governance and organisation are the two aspects that have been marked the most by transformative actions. The aim of this glossary is descriptive and is to account for those relational shifts that have occurred within a context of cultural production, and which stem from the creation of an alternative to the imposition of an ever-increasing precariousness of employment and life. As such this glossary is not an exhaustive instrument; nor the synthesis of a scalable model. Instead, it is an attempt to narrate the constitutive elements of MACAO as a relational and productive space in its struggle against contemporary forms of exploitation. It is important to emphasise that the concepts selected for inclusion in this glossary carry an element of internal variability and that, due to their impact on the living practices of MACAO, their application can be modified in time by means of the decisions taken by the assemblies. Finally, I must state that as a MACAO activist my vision of it as a cultural institution is situated within the practice of militant research (Mirzoeff et al. 2013, 6).



Key Concepts

1. Curami

Curami, which means "Look After Me" in Italian, signifies the collective maintenance of MACAO as a physical space. Every week a spreadsheet is filled in and posted on MACAO's main chat room. Everyone can thus communicate their availability for cleaning, tidying and fixing the place up. In this way the activity of "looking after" is transferred to a public space, named and paid for. Taking on the maintenance of MACAO is something that is paid according to tasks (rather than time spent) with a local crypto-currency (4. Common Coin) that allows access to a monthly wage (5. Basic Income). This shared maintenance is understood as an attempt to overcome the barriers between what is intended as work and what is defined as artwork (Ukeles 1969). Here, the physical nature of the space is seen as an opportunity to stay together, its maintenance as a demand for acceptable living conditions, and the resulting relationships that emerge as an area of artistic and political production. Indeed, the maintenance of MACAO's physical space has a lot to do with the care for the relationships that inhabit it.

Before the procedure was prototyped, maintenance work was invisible and exploitative (Federici 2012, 28), while the inability to overcome personal settings and comfort zones was producing a sharp divide between those who write and those who fix cables, between those who speak and those others who line up the chairs. As a consequence, it was hard to grasp the complexity of what was happening within such compartmentalised dimensions, and the competitiveness between different groups was taking time away from more important aspects of MACAO as a cultural institution. The introduction of a procedure for the shared and explicit maintenance of the place, however, has brought a more profound understanding of the workings of the machine/institution, and has made it possible to collocate every action within a dimension of co-dependency with all the other activities that surround it and give it substance. Those who do not wish to contribute to the maintenance of the place do not access the tools of mutualism that the community has given itself, but take part in the activities and scheduling of the place. Curami, as a tool, has not deprived people of their inclinations; on the contrary, they have benefitted from this instrument in relational terms.

2. Continuous Functions

Continuous functions relate to the normal management of the place, such as communication, office work, finance, technical storage, unscheduled maintenance, Come In! (6.) and Take Care (7.). Each function is run by a group of people who work autonomously. At the end of every month each group receives a total sum in Common Coin (4.) and decides how to redistribute it among the group's members. Taking part in at least one continuous functions each month grants access to the Basic Income (5.).

3. Networks

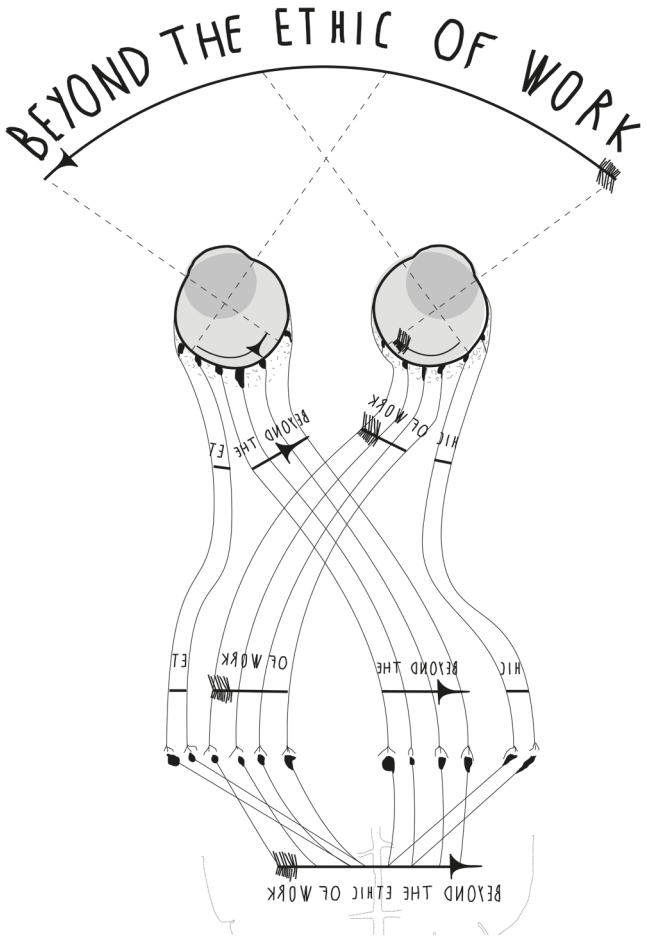
Networks refer to all those relations and political or cultural projects that have been activated by MACAO with other movements, groups or institutions. MACAO began within the Italian Cultural Occupations movement that, after the 2011 referendum on water as a common good, occupied spaces throughout the country to transform them into places of political and cultural production. From the start the opposition to the dominant cultural policies and work ethics seemed to require - rather than a new political form of art - a kind of "unforeseen politics" capable of imagining new forms of interrelation and organisation. MACAO's networks include organisations such as *Non Una di Meno*, FairCoop, No One Is Illegal, and various other institutions willing to gamble with the transformation of productive structures. After an initial assembly discussion, those groups of people that are interested in it autonomously manage every network. MACAO's networks thus operate in terms of the logic of continuous functions described above.

4. Common Coin

In October 2016 MACAO launched an internal experiment for work retribution in the form of a virtual currency: Common Coin. Common Coin is not conceived as something to be spent, but as something to pay and finance the production of use value, be it within cultural networks or productive self-management and self-organisation (Fumagalli & Braga 2015, 55). The idea is to create a currency that can be reproduced independently from capital's value circulation. A currency that is able to rethink value by generating new forms of remuneration that are not connected to the quantification of time. Common Coin is thus a local crypto-currency integrated into a Basic Income (5.) aimed at freeing up time. In this way it makes the development of a series of autonomous productive activities more sustainable, fostering a more active investment in the logic of Commons by doing so. The experiment is based on a techno-political device that yields the prospect of governing a place and its community in accordance with a post-labour ethic. One of the most interesting aspects of this project relates to a collective re-signification of value; something that has led to a remuneration of what one generally tends to disregard: from care for communal relationships to participation in the processes of governance. In this sense, maintenance, leisure and the recreational sectors have become the places for social cooperation and the production of wealth.

5. Basic Income

Starting in 2015, MACAO has been experimenting a new system of internal redistribution – so-called Basic Income – to question the basic principles underpinning political and cultural volunteering and the idea of the wage. To access the Basic Income, participants are required to take part in at least two assemblies, one Continuous Functions, one Curami action and one networking group per month. Basic Income is gathered by subtracting a percentage from every earning of the MACAO space: from parties to bar profits, from tenders to project financing. Two elements of this practice should be highlighted. First, not reaching the required criteria to access Basic Income does not prevent participation in the program, nor the earning of Common Coin from other activities. Second, if someone participates more than is required they do not earn more than someone reaching the basic quota. So it is not the quantity of work that is rewarded but rather the intensity of cooperation. These elements have not diminished the desire to actively take part in projects; they have triggered reflection: on the prevailing ethics of work and how they can be overcome; on the relation between extortion and industriousness: and on the idea of income as a means of emancipating oneself from financial insecurity and gender violence (Non Una Di Meno 2017, 29). How can the work ethics-based approach so deeply embedded in our society, be eradicated? Is taking radical care of a place and the community that engages with it capable of creating a viable alternative and a contagious imagination? A lot of time is required to transform the structures within which we have grown. Still, "to 'have time' is to work less" (Dalla Costa 1971, 15). A Basic Income, established on wealth created by social cooperation, is a first step in the establishment of a distinction between cooperation and exploitation, especially in the age of bio-cognitive capitalism, extractivist platforms and big data, where social reproduction is considered the principal capitalistic value, rather than work as a form of productiveness (Leonardi and Chicchi 2017, 29).



6. Come In!

Come In! is a set of bi-monthly open meetings aimed at facilitating the introduction of new artistic and cultural proposals to the space. To this end the weekly assembly is preceded twice a month by a meeting where new projects are addressed and where MACAO's general guidelines and planning are discussed. This is possibly the most delicate moment of the relation between the cultural centre and the city, in that it represents the main access point for a different way of production. The hardest issue to manage, which is the question of "who's in charge," comes into play precisely at this moment: given there is no art director to contact, nor a venue that is paying for its space and technology, nor a selection process for joining a cultural programme, how should one approach a community and mode of operation such as that of MACAO? Does it offer a chance to relate to one another in a different way? What MACAO does is provide all those involved with an opportunity to assemble a plan. This means there will be a number of production lines that interconnect over time. The length of these production lines depends on how capable they are of being self-managed by the group that has proposed the plan. Art direction hasn't been ruled out entirely here. However, it is directly proportional to the self-organising capacity of those who make a proposal, and their ability to communicate with other groups, people and projects using the space. This mechanism generates conflict on both sides. Those who approach MACAO without being prepared to join a community by embarking on such a process leave feeling frustrated. Those who feel new comers treat them as piece workers can also experience frustration. Expert culture needs to be equipped with new knowledge! Generally speaking, art direction occurs in MACAO in order to satisfy a need (i.e., that of accessing the means of production of the place and its calendar). Coming in to MACAO therefore requires one to have the courage to leave behind well-defined roles such as those of artist, curator or spectator, and to be prepared to move toward the "unexpected alternative" of usership (Wright 2013, 66).

7. Take care

Managing a place that is open to thousands of people demands continuous reflection on the issues of openness and violence: how do we avoid reproducing conventional security procedures while ensuring the place is accessible? Over the last few years many political collectives in Italy have dealt with sexism inside occupied places, making it clear that they are not "islands" immune from society's problems. An awareness of how political communities that share time and space can conform to a code of silence should not be taken for granted. Fighting ignorance and complicit silence, learning how to recognise violence outside and within the community, are political tasks that require time and should no longer be considered as free work (#Stregate 2018).

Take Care is a set of actions inside the space brought about by (a part) of MACAO's community. What fuels it is an open discussion on how to build a safe space within an open and mixed environment. This debate is aimed at preventing situations of violence and abuse. It endeavours to achieve this by contrasting the victimising perception

of women and non-conformist bodies with the idea of a radical ethics of care as the necessary condition for the existence of a political community (Jordan 2003, 268-274). For example, all walls, including the entrance to the toilets, are covered with antisexist and antiracist messages. Meanwhile, the scheduling assembly is encouraged to ask itself what audience is expected and to transgress schedules and modes that might create environmental loops. During events some devices are also implemented such as having entrance stamps with explicit messages like "no means no", as well as a very recognisable group that works to intercept unpleasant situations and act as a point of reference for whoever needs help. Nonetheless, the relation between open space and safe space remains a slippery and complex subject of discussion, one that takes us back to the origin of the term "access", operating as it does in a constant tension between "contact" and "attack" (Fritsch 2017, 28)

[1] My conversations with Valeria Graziano while working on this text, pushed me to look again at a concept used by MACAO and the Italian Network of Cultural Occupations as a way of defining themselves: "new Institutions". This concept refers to the struggle over the Commons and questions the production of the right to the Commons: can we imagine alternative institutions that might go beyond the classic legal dichotomy between public/state-owned and private/commercial? Can we think of a new institution as a changeable and contingent place dedicated to satisfying needs and desires? That said, even though I refer to new institutions and the production of new institutionality here for reasons of cohesion with on-going practices, I believe the concept of "recreative industries" (Valeria Graziano 2018) can define the practices we are writing about in a more intuitive and profound way.

[2] http://www.macaomilano.org/spip.php?article456

[3] http://www.exasilofilangieri.it/regolamento-duso-civico

[4] https://www.syndikat.org/en/

References

Bookchin, Natalie, Pamela Brown, Suzahn Ebrahimian, Colectivo Enmedio, Alexandra Juhasz, Leónidas Martin, MTL, Nicholas Mirzoeff, Andrew Ross, A. Joan Saab and Marina Sitrin. 2013. *Militant Research Handbook*. New York: NYU Steinhardt. http://www.visualculturenow.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/09/MRH_Web.pdf

Dalla Costa, Mariarosa. 1971. *Women and the Subversion of the Community*. December 29, 1971. https://la.utexas.edu/users/hcleaver/357k/357kDallaCostaSubversionTable.pdf

Fritsch, Kelly, Clare O'Connor and A.K. Thompson. 2016. *Keywords for Radicals: The Contested Vocabulary of Late-Capitalist Struggle*. Oakland, California: AK Press.

Fumagalli, Andrea and Emanuele Braga. 2015. *La moneta del comune: la sfida dell'istituzione finanziaria del comune.* Roma: DeriveApprodi.

Federici, Silvia. 2012. *Revolution at Point Zero: Housework, Reproduction, and Feminist Struggle.* New York: PM Press.

Jordan, June. 2003. *Some of Us Did Not Die.* New York: Basic Books.

Leonardi, Emanuele and Federico Chicchi. 2018. *Manifesto per il reddito di base*. Bari: Laterza.

Non Una di Meno. 2017. *Abbiamo un piano. Piano femminista contro la violenza maschile sulle donne e la violenza di genere.* Italia: Non Una di Meno. https://nonunadimeno.files.wordpress.com/2017/11/abbiamo_un_piano.pdf.

#Stregate (@macaomilano). 2018. "WitchOut! We don't want to work for free for anyone anymore." Facebook photo album, March 8, 2018. https://www.facebook.com/pg/macaomilano/photos/?tab=album&album_id=1203587936445371

Ukeles, Mierle Laderman. 1969. "Manifesto for Maintenance Art, 1969." Arnolfini. Accessed May 12, 2018.

Wright, Stephen. 2013. *Toward a Lexicon of Usership*. Eindhoven: Van Abbemuseum.

Towards a Grammar of the Recreative Industries

Valeria Graziano

Coming together
it is easier to work
after our bodies
meet
paper and pen
neither care nor profit
whether we write or not

Recreation, Audre Lorde

In this paper I want to take the Radical Open Publishing (ROA) conference up on its generous invitation to both play with the format of this pamphlet - its modes of production, composition and distribution - and to think about alternative modes of organizing in the cultural sector. I will therefore use my contribution as an opportunity to outline the contours of the pragmatic and theoretical proposition that I call the "recreative industries." To do so I will bring the latter proposition into dialogue with the experience of MACAO, the independent centre for art, culture and research in Milan, as well as the Italian Cultural Occupations' extended network. These cultural centres have, for about a decade now, constituted one of the few living political horizons in the Italian context - where the ruling classes can be extremely violent towards anything that is minoritarian, erotic or opaque (or new, innovative and creative, to put it in neoliberal terms).

The Italian context is not, however, particularly exceptional in this respect (although, the dominant national discourse very much likes to think that it is). This means that many of the points I will be making about the recreative industries can be adapted for use in different contexts, including those of the ROA Collective.

The Italian Cultural Occupations often describe themselves in terms of "new cultural institutions." Yet the hostile environment in which they operate can only be fully grasped if the conditions that turn them into industries of some kind are taken into account. This is because the Italian Cultural Occupations do not enjoy total, or even continued, public support. Consequently, they are forced to preoccupy themselves with questions of how to generate an economy capable of maintaining the existence of the collectives of which they are comprised. Nevertheless, through engaging in the struggle to reorganize the processes of cultural production, these occupations both perform a materialist critique of the capitalist economic environment in which they operate, and actively expose the entrepreneurial mythologies as bogus.

As part of the Italian diaspora, my interest in MACAO and the Italian Cultural Occupations goes beyond any disinterested scholarly inquisitiveness. Instead, I see such concern as implicating me in a form of thinking as care (Puig de la Bellacasa 2012). What I have to say about the "recreative industries" is thus form of a public call to rethink the continuum between cultural production and the regimes of labour, maintenance and property. But it is also a formulation of political love for the potential that the recent Cultural Occupations contain to turn the cultural sector itself into a site for the production of political love.

Anti-work

The recreative industries emerge from my long-standing preoccupation with thinking what a refusal of labour might look like as a generative proposal; one that can then be incarnated in practices, subjectivities and organizational forms understood as collective repertoires. Many of those post-work scenarios that have considered the technological problem of automation and digitalization have addressed the issue of *free labour* quite effectively. They have had noticeably less to say, however, about those forms a workforce *freed from labour* can take. In this respect, I believe the current debates around post-work would benefit from a more granular description of what anti-work activities and ways of organizing might consist of, what their subjects, procedures and objects (in Marxian terms, their political and technical composition) could be.

Prefiguration

The politics of a refusal of labour is an area of reflection that draws from both autonomist Marxism and materialist feminism. Both of these traditions offer a fertile range of concepts and tools for positioning the question of a freed labour force as a key issue when it comes, not only to thinking about what a revolutionized society might look like, but more crucially, when it comes to thinking about the matter of transition in relation to that of revolution. This is one of the main problems with regard to intervening in the production of different, non-teleological futurities today. If, for Marx, the transition prepared the revolution, and for Lenin the revolution prepared the transition, my research explores what can be generated and sustained by the available practices of labour refusal in the process of *working this problem out*. What figures of revolution do we imagine and perform while occupying the terrain of both new and old mechanisms of capture, extraction and depotentiation? In more anarchist-inflected thought, this has been addressed in terms of prefiguration, a theme I have explored in some of my recent work. How we can conceptualize techniques of counter-organization as prefigurative practices capable of intervening in and modifying relations of power as they exist within institutional ecosystems? At stake here is not only how to find viable forms of resistance - and to do so always anew against the constant mutations of capital - but how to make politically available for a revolutionary horizon beyond the particular experiences that generate them. It is in this sense that I explore prefigurative practices: by looking at their current articulation in what I call the recreative industries.

Re-

The prefix *re-* here refers not only to those activities of recycling and reuse that are key to ecological reparation (as in Serge Latouche's 8 R's, 2009), or even the re- of social reproduction, but the question of "re-appropriation, revolt and revolution," too, as inspired by the slogan of the Ri-Maflow occupied factory (Rimaflow n.d.). At the same time, re*creative* points to the way the use of the term *creativity* by much of the current rhetoric around innovation needs to be subject to political critique and reappropriation. Finding ways of freeing creativity from the realm of production is an urgent matter today. Similarly, the issue of *industries* raised by the term re*creative industries* is designed to serve as an ironic marker for rethinking what an "entrepreneurship of the multitudes" could be (Hardt and Negri 2017). Finally, the nod to the *recreational* points to what is crucially at stake in the liberation from work, namely the availability of pleasure as a political factor.

Do you remember how we became so creative?

In recent years the ideology of the creative industries has been subjected to intense critique that has highlighted its processes of gentrification and dispossession, as well as a certain neocolonial posture of extractivism in which countercultural scenes are mined in order to be marketed on the circuits of global copyrighted culture and branded products (Lovink and Rossiter 2009). I will therefore not add to that critique here. Instead, I want to position the recreative industries hypothesis as a way of thinking about what comes after the collapse of the benign horizon promised by the creative industries paradigm, which portrayed them as perhaps the first policy framework to provide an explicit formulation of the libidinal experience of the economic sphere: not only in regard to consumption, but in relation to work as well. The creative economy sold us an original script of emancipation in the guise of social progress. In doing so it managed to re-orientate those practices of pleasure that people invent for themselves as techniques against labour, into a desire for the realization of such pleasures through work itself.

Borrowing from Mierle Laderman Ukeles, who defined maintenance as "keep[*ing*] the dust off the pure individual creation" (1969), I want to remove the dirt from the inheritance left to us by the creative industries. Although I am referring to them here in the past tense, I am aware the creative industries live on in many contexts in the formatting of cultural production. However, the creative industries have been bankrupt for some time now, effectively and affectively. At the level of governance they are largely deployed nowadays as a fig leaf to protect a prudent public consciousness from the pornographic violence of financial speculation. Often their discourse is a broken record that just keeps being played within the cultural and educational sectors, the arts and humanities - all areas under attack and in desperate need of a justification for their existence.

Despite the crisis of credibility, the ideology of the creative industries thus lingers on: as a toxicity tainting the imaginal and what is a stake in the possibility of creation itself, here limited to a productivist proprietary model, rather than a generative and ecological one. At this juncture, another framework is needed if we are to think about what is desirable, possible and usable in the composition of imaginaries (this is, after all, the primary production of the creative industries); and especially if we want to provide a viable alternative to a mounting conservativism that can only dream about "going back."

Creative Reproduction

The recreative industries hypothesis is thus a political framework for reclaiming those organizations that, under the current regime of capital, are primarily dedicated to semiotic, affective or relational production. In this respect the recreative industries refuse to think of the cultural value they generate as content, product or service in a mode separate from how they engage with their own economic mode of existence. They also understand that any production under the current regime of governance is directly cultural, insofar as the object of the productive process is the subject as such: her social relations, her social cooperation and her form of life.

Moreover, and somewhat crucially, the recreative industries refuse to sequester creativity solely in the realm of production, and insist instead on its import for the realm of social reproduction. This apparently innocuous shift has the potential to undo one of the founding, and most persistent, cultural techniques of the western canon: that which separates the event from the conditions of its production in order to shift the latter into the background. By contrast, the recreative industries promote a militant conviviality in which those who prepare the food are also invited to join the *convivium*, to drink wine and discuss with the philosophers.

The recreative industries fight the private property relations with legal, informal, paralegal and illegal means; they articulate "the difference between constructing a common object or just sharing it" (P2P Foundation 2012, 36). By pirating, borrowing, appropriating, practicing "*la perruque*" (de Certeau 1984, 29), and also by means of a patient engagement with the law, the recreative industries emphasise the relation between the construction of commons and their subtraction from private enclosing. By valorising creativity as something that can be applied to regulations, they take commoning beyond its invocation as an ethical effort to a level where its principles become encoded in jurisprudence.

The recreative industries also protect their own commons from the vicissitudes of their immediate collectivities and organisations. They know that processes of disassembly, variations in endurance, and exercises in composition and recomposition are as important as the constituent, initial act of coming together. The recreative industries strive for making what they have learned available as partisan knowledge.

Riparo: Shelter and Repair

Whereas the creative industries ideology focused on ideas of virtuosity, productivity, excellence and disruption, practices that are the handmaiden of "corporatisation, flexibilisation and militarisation" (Holmes 2007, 177), the recreative industries organize dwellings characterized by amateurisation, gestation, eroticism and regeneration.

To talk about the Italian Cultural Occupations in terms of the recreative industries is therefore to understand that this kind of experiment began from something that is already broken, dysfunctional, and unfit for purpose. I am referring not only to the failed promises of the creative industries, promises that a generation of precarious cognitarians trained for, but also the change that has occurred since the 1990s in the relationship between urban life, social movements and the Italian social centres. To echo Stephen Jackson's notion of "broken world thinking" (2014), to coalesce

around the impossibility of forming a harmonious community, or achieving economic prosperity, or obtaining artistic excellence, has ethical and political implications. In a recent text, MACAO offered itself up as a "*rifugio*," a refuge, a shelter (2018). In doing so it was not proposing culture as an escapist realm, away from the horrors of rising social violence and relentless pillaging of our future, but as a zone of momentary respite. In Italian, another word for this concept of temporary shelter is a "repair." This double semantic meaning of *rifugio* establishes a rich and significant connection between a site of respite and rest, and one of mending and regeneration. It also connotes an awareness of the fragility of those structures that are able to offer repair (in both senses of the term).

It's funny and sad that, despite the obsession of management studies with metaphors for talking about organizations[1], we still need to find an image capable of describing the latter as sites of production of the possibility of pleasure; or, more simply, as a *riparo* – a shelter and place of repair – from the underlying violence embedded in most institutional and infrastructural systems under capitalism.

Admin against managers

To be inspired by a word's etymology is to make a traditional (rather than new) gesture in this context. Still, there is an interesting gap in the etymology of *industry* and *enterprise*. While the root of *industry* connotes diligence and zealous care, *enterprise* is an action that takes. One is about the giving of attention and dedication; the other is about laying claim to something as part of an activity.

As artists, as producers, as carers, as lovers, even as patients or the unemployed, we have been told it is of utmost importance that our self-worth and biographical gestures carry an enterprising responsibility. The recreative industries thus find themselves fighting the pressure of managerial rationality. As Schumpeter noted, the essential quality of entrepreneurship is precisely not to really care for the new, but for the game that leads to its possibility: namely, a repertoire that cares only for an incessant re-combination of already existing factors, including subjects and relations, techniques and machines, resources and affects. In order to function, Schumpeter's figure of the entrepreneur (1934) however ends up in a conflictual relation with his big other, the mass of the rest of humanity whose sin is to be too "hedonistic" and thus not proactive enough in seeking opportunities of recombination.

By contrast, it would be possible to play with the notion of recreative industrialists as those who get in the game precisely for, and with, the cultivation of hedonistic regimes of practice: as pleasure-inventing modes of production, where experiencing the control over the rhythm of life is a source of plenitude.

In opposing managerial rationality, they challenge the normalized approaches to the division of labour within organizations, and reclaim the art of administration against that of management. Authors such as Rousseau and Saint-Simon have indeed explicitly counter-posed the former to the concept of government; while more recent theories of the common are now proposing administrators as the custodians of the use of inalienable goods (Dardot and Laval 2015, 213-215).

Recreation

Finally, let's position"recreative industries" as also referring to these organizations opening up spaces of *recreation* proper, including activities of leisure, and of taking time for enjoyment, amusement, fun. It is significant that when the concept of recreation first appeared in the English language by way of French during the 14th century, it actually carried the meaning of "refreshment or curing of a sick person" (Online Etymology Dictionary). And indeed leisure has been considered to be a right of students or citizens more broadly in some legal frameworks (for instance, in the Charter of Human Rights).

By pointing to the political potential of the space that is opened in recreation, I mean to insist on the unique politics that become possible in this interval, when "the relative autonomy" that precarious intellectual labour has "in the acquisition and the enrichment of its linguistic-cognitive competences is destined to be overturned whenever the capitalist enterprise makes real use of them" (Virno 2015, 178). Virno argued that "the divergence between training and contingent execution is a distinctive trait of contemporary forms of life" and operates as "a seismograph of future conflicts." The politics of recreation takes place in this gap between preparation and work. It is during this pause that different activities can be performed creatively and can be codified in our social re-production of pleasures.

[1] The well-known book *Images of Organization* (1997) lists organizations as machines, organisms, brains, cultures, political systems, psychic prisons, flux and transformations, instruments of domination.

References

Dardot, Pierre, Christian Laval. 2015. *Del Comune, o della rivoluzione nel 21. secolo.* Roma: DeriveApprodi.

de Certeau, Michel. 1984. *The Practice of Everyday Life.* Berkeley: University of California Press,

Holmes, Brian. 2007. "Disconnecting the dots of the research triangle: Corporatisation, flexibilisation and militarisation in the creative industries." In *MyCreativity Reader: A Critique of the Creative Industries*, edited by Lovink, Geert, and Ned Rossiter, 177-190. Amsterdam: Institute of Network Cultures.

Jackson, Steven J. 2014. "Rethinking Repair." *Media Technologies*: *Essays on Communication, Materiality, and Society:* 221-39.

Latouche, Serge. 2009. *Farewell to Growth.* Cambridge: Polity Press.

Lovink, Geert, and Ned Rossiter. 2007. *MyCreativity Reader: A Critique of the Creative Industries.* Amsterdam: Institute of Network Cultures.

Macao. 2018. Desire Week. Accessed May 14, 2018. http://www.macaomilano.org/spip.php?rubrique146

Morgan, Gareth. 1997. *Images of organization*. Thousand Oaks, California: Auflage,

Hardt, Michael, and Antonio Negri. 2017. *Assembly.* Oxford University Press.

P2P Foundation. 2012. *A Synthetic Overview of the Collaborative Economy* Accessed May 1, 2018. https://p2pfoundation.net/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/Synthetic-overview-of-the-collaborative-economy.pdf

Puig de la Bellacasa, Maria. 2012. "Nothing Comes Without Its World: Thinking With Care." *The Sociological Review* 60.2: 197-216.

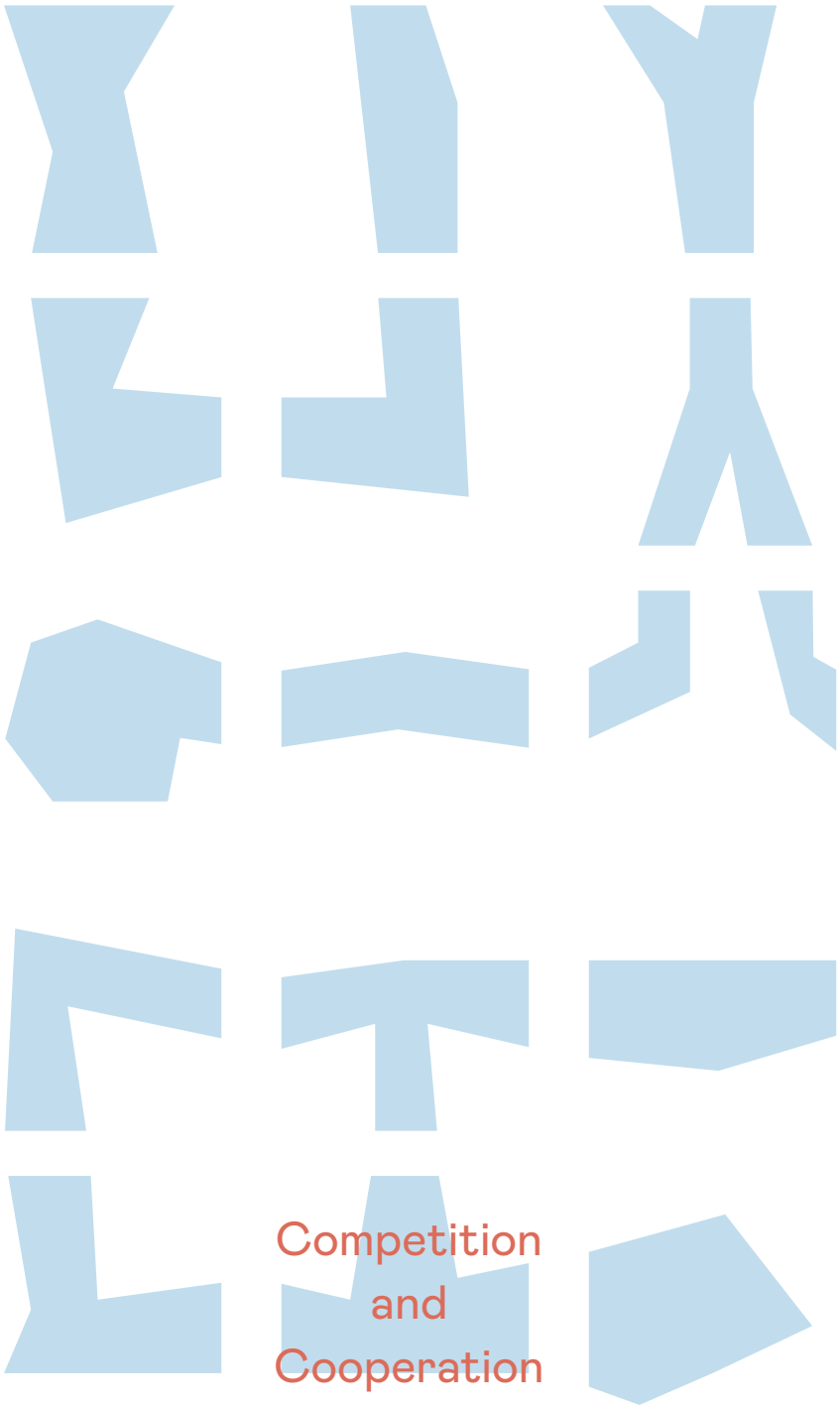
RiMaflow Fabbrica Recuperata. n.d. Accessed May 14, 2018. https://rimaflow.it.

Schumpeter, Joseph A. 1983 [1934]. *The theory of economic development: an inquiry into profits, capital, credit, interest, and the business cycle.* New Brunswick, New Jersey: Transaction Publishers.

Ukeles, Mierle Laderman. 2018 [1969]. "Manifesto for Maintenance Art 1969! Proposal for an exhibition “CARE”." *Journal of Contemporary Painting* 4.2: 233-237.

Virno, Paolo. 2015. *Transaction Publishers, L'idea di mondo: intelletto pubblico e uso della vita*. Rome: Quodlibet.

RADICAL OPEN ACCESS
BUILDING HORIZONTAL ALLIANCES


Competition
and
Cooperation