

Resistance is Futile/ Resistance is Fertile 2020

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What are the conditions for radical and/or revolutionary thought and praxis in the 2010s?
What do you fear from the coming decade?

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Is Resistance Futile? In this moment of Neo Liberal Global Capitalism powerful corporate consortiums and NGOs constitute the instrumental logic of what is referred to these days as Cognitive Capitalism. I would like to expand the definition of Cognitive Capitalism beyond its capacity as the accumulation of assets related to the information economy as it pertains to intellectual rights, the production of soft and hardware for computer programs and surfing the net and its privatization and therefore its restriction of the intellectual commons. I would also like it to include all forms of enterprise that profit from the conditions of thought and its administration and would suggest that it is the future territory that capitalism will attempt to conquer or should I say colonize. Drug companies produce and will continue to make new and ever more powerful mind altering drugs some of which affect attention (Adderall) and memory (Phenserine). Co-opted post-production companies continue to create more and more powerful phatic images, as Paul Virilio has described them, with adobe photoshop and aftereffects that compete with each other for subjective attention and in total constitute fields of meta-attention on billboards, TV screens, computer and Video Walls that adorn designed space that most of us experience in the places we now live. Computer games and virtual simulation environments have proved effective in learning the real world skills used on the battlefield (See *Military Simulation and Serious Games* by Roger D. Smith, Model Benders Press, 2009.) More recently Neuro-imaging techniques have become an essential new form of marketing called Neuro Marketing and will continue to be so, where the patterns of neural excitation become registers for desire driven commodified decision-making processes used by product designers/makers and advertising firms

alike. (Editorial, “A Manifesto for Neuromarketing Science,” *Journal of Consumer Behavior*, Volume, 7, Issue, 4-5, pages 263-271.) Finally through such official proclamations such as the Bologna Declaration, the university system itself more than ever is under siege as it is now administered to create curriculums that refine what knowledge can be taught and to what end. Together these form the new conditions of instrumental logic in the age of information. When furthermore this information is sculpted to concur with preexisting and learned conditions of brain and mind, for instance the way that synchronized dynamic functional connectivity elicits attention and as a result memory I refer to it as Cognitive Ergonomics. (Wolf Singer, *Binding by Synchrony*, 2007, Scholarpedia)

Cognitive Ergonomics is an insidious apparatus of Cognitive Capitalism and has global effect. (Here I mean both in the sense of Global Networks in the brain and Global Networks of the Empire.) Recently Neuroscience has been exploring the very decision making processes used in future determinations by focusing its attention of the workings of the frontal lobe. This has created a switch from its past interest in what was called bottom-up processing to what is known as top-down processing. Instead of organizing how sensations are organized into larger more abstract bundles and concepts the focus today is rather on abstract thinking itself that indirectly affects how sensations emanating from the world are routed in the circuits of the brain. (Engel, A.K. et al., “Dynamic Predictions: Oscillations and Synchrony in Top-Down Processing,” in *Nature Reviews Neuroscience*, October, 2001, page 704.) This as we will see is a condition of Neuropower to be explained a little later. Cognitive Ergonomics is now the conditions of advanced information societies in which the information produced is designed to silently and invisibly co-opt the energy distributions of the brain to affect thought itself. Neo-liberal Cognitive Capitalism directs its energies towards the production of information that in the end is cognitively ergonomic and thus with increasing effectiveness enters the hierarchical and non-hierarchical conditions of mindedness more efficiently. As such it creates the new conditions of the distribution of sensibility or should we call it the distribution of insensibility because the information networks themselves are sublime. No new laws need to be passed and less and less government is needed as the machinic intelligence of this constituted general intelligence does it all. Resistance is Futile as the Borg said.

But maybe Resistance is Fertile! Sure Artists and Art professionals are at times instrumentalized themselves by the power of Neo liberal Global Capitalism and who is to blame them. In fact the system pushes artists to brand themselves in order to be constituted not as a human being but instead a calculated auratic impulse weightlessly distributed according the non-linear logics of the media networks. The Fame Machine reinvented and elaborated by Warhol, the global stardom of the art fair insinuated as one is in the international gossip networks of famous collectors in the VIP lounges of the Basel Art Fair, the chance to appear on the cover of global art and fashion magazines such as *Artforum* and *Vanity Fair* are incredibly intoxicating. As such the financial rewards can be great for a select few. Cognitive Ergonomics and Cognitive Capitalism, as I am introducing the concept here, makes no distinctions between artist and non-artist. But the Power of Art in its most Utopian sense is a powerful agent of change when understood and embraced by Artists and the community that they constitute.

How might this be? We are all born with a pluripotential brain constituted as it is by a widely varying population of nervous elements, called neurons which is constituted by its axons, dendritic spines and synapses. These neurons and the connections they form differ from each other in the amount and type of energy as information that they

can absorb and elaborate. The degree to which this energy effects neural efficiency at the synaptic junction will effect the sustainability of that connection or the network it constitutes and affects the degree to which for instance the dendritic spine(s), can survive, propagate and form alliances. The neuron with its axons and dendrites is a form of matter of the brain and that matter is transformed in different ways by, for instance, different spatial and temporal frameworks some of which culture plays a role in producing. (Quartz, S. & Sejnowski, T.J. (1997). The neural basis of cognitive development: A constructivist manifesto. Behavioral and Brain Sciences 20 (4): 537-596.)

Different cultural dispositions organize, for instance, the visual cultural field in such a way that different neurons and assemblages of neurons are differentially called out-to which has implications within limits for what forms of neural architectures can be produced. This is what since 1997 I have called the Cultured Brain Model. The variation of the population of Neurons, the degree to which they can be modified by either internal or external inputs and their resultant pattern of connectivity is referred to as its Neural Plasticity. It is towards this Neural Plasticity that the energies of Sovereignty are directed. The sculpting of this Neural Plasticity or Neural Potential is the aim of the administration of the subject in the quest to form an obedient people. I call this Neuropower and understand this to be a recent manifestation of Biopower coming as it does on the heels of such ideas such as the disciplinary society (Foucault), the society of control (Deleuze) and Noo-politics (Lazzarato). Extending them beyond their focus upon the administration of man in the present to that of the production of the future man or woman. It is also towards and upon that variation that Cultural Capital, here I mean in the sense of Bordieu, as a cultural/environmental modifier produces subjects whose Eye has been educated in very special other ways. Ways that if nurtured allow them to look at and make things that defy that which is constituted by the instrumental logic.

What effect might this have? Artists using their own histories, apparatus, processes, materials, logics produce works of art and non-art that populate the visual auditory and kinesthetic landscape and thereby mutate the conditions of the distribution of the sensible producing what I have referred to before as the Redistribution of the Sensible. This constitutes the flip side of Neuropower as artists create images static and dynamic that compete effectively for the minds attention and therefore have power to produce a population of neural connections that along side those already elicited by the powers of instrumentalization constitute the image of thought. They are in fact part of the history of the production of the subject. The ratiomatic relationship between the amount of cultural and cognitive capital affective at any particular moment and their concomitant power to produce a variety of epigenetically contrived neural architectures is the essence of the history of the thought image. What a difference it is to walk through a gridded city constituted as it does by a mathematical and preformed logic then that based on the conditions of a city built and designed according to the illogic's of Situationism with its derive, chance encounters and network of psychogeography. What effect does living in such a city have on the growing child whose brain and mind are open and responsive during what are referred to as critical periods for learning? Do different forms of Neural Architecture emerge as a response to this wide variety of conditions that have the potential for different thoughts, that respond to different networks of attention and different immanent gestalts that move like the wind through distributions of sensibility. As such does this artist's brain have the potential to create sublime objects, corrupted and abnormal forms of movement, unthinkable thoughts that are beyond the general intelligence of the police to monitor. That like the scandal of Marcel Duchamp's work of 1917, a urinal signed R. Mutt or the apathy experienced

in the context of the first presentation of The Barcelona Pavillion,1929, of Mies Van der Rohe remain beyond the radar of the self-policing conditions of, in these cases, Modernism until the seismic shifts they created that originally presented themselves as rumbles became earthquakes in the realm of the sensible and produced mutations in the distribution of time and space. Earthquakes that I might add create what Carl Schmidt would describe as States of Emergency. For the new State of Emergency in the eyes of the sovereignty are constituted by changes in the state of the normalizing distribution of sensibility and the apparatuses that tether that distribution together in order to produce a people who share a common Neuroarchitectonics constituted by the experience of a controlled homogenous world picture/cinema. The state of emergency concerns the future generation whose pluripotential brain with all its variability might be sculpted by very different conditions of the distribution brought about through the magic of the sublime object(s), idea(s), movement(s) produced by those who have cultural capital. This is the power of Art! Because it is this State of Emergency that in fact elicits the State of Exception when government itself goes into a seizure that suspends itself. The history of art and political change can, therefore can be seen as a generational and epochal production of a succession of states of emergency and the response to them.