FASHION-able

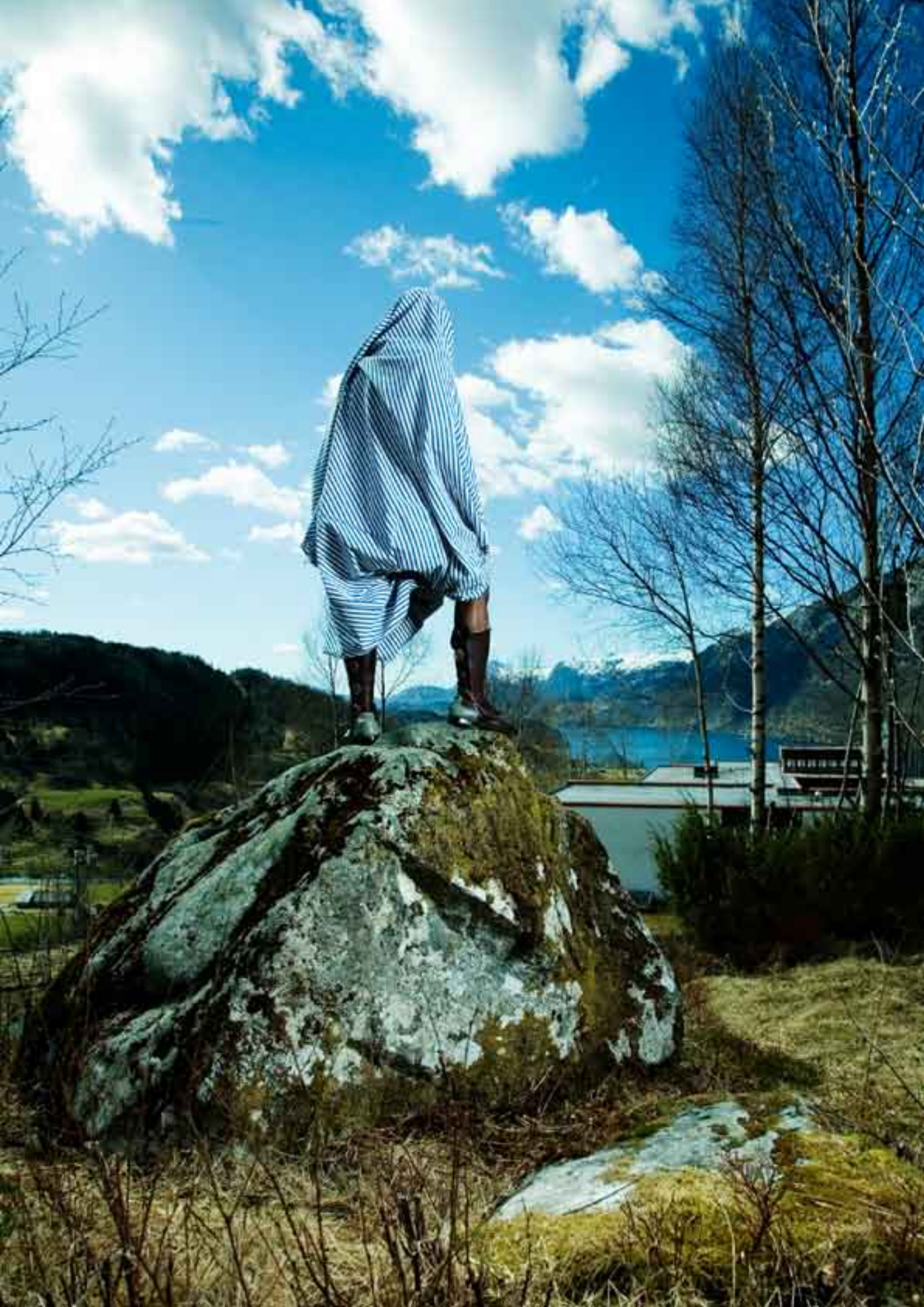## HACKTIVISM AND ENGAGED FASHION DESIGN

Otto von Busch

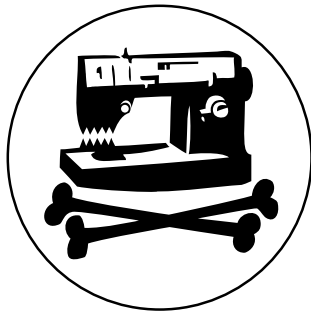# FASHION-able
HACKTIVISM AND ENGAGED FASHION DESIGN

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ArtMonitor

Wenn ich bedenke, wie man wenig ist,
und was man ist, das blieb man andern schuldig

[When I consider how little one is,
and what one is, one owes to other people]

(Goethe, Torquato Tasso, lines 105-6)

abstract

Title: FASHION-able: Hacktivism and Engaged Fashion Design

Language: English

Keywords: Fashion Design, Hacktivism, Hacking, Heresy, Small Change, Professional-Amateurs, Do-it-yourself, Action Spaces, Artistic Research, Practice-based research

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This thesis consists of a series of extensive projects which aim to explore a new designer role for fashion. It is a role that experiments with how fashion can be reverse engineered, hacked, tuned and shared among many participants as a form of social activism. This social design practice can be called the hacktivism of fashion. It is an engaged and collective process of enablement, creative resistance and DIY practice, where a community share methods and experiences on how to expand action spaces and develop new forms of craftsmanship. In this practice, the designer engages participants to reform fashion from a phenomenon of dictations and anxiety to a collective experience of empowerment, in other words, to make them become fashion-able.

As its point of departure, the research takes the practice of hands-on exploration in the DIY upcycling of clothes through "open source" fashion "cookbooks". By means of hands-on processes, the projects endeavour to create a complementary understanding of the modes of production within the field of fashion design. The artistic research projects have ranged from DIY-kits released at an international fashion week, fashion experiments in galleries, collaborative "hacking" at a shoe factory, engaged design at a rehabilitation centre as well as combined efforts with established fashion brands.

Using parallels from hacking, heresy, fan fiction, small change and professional-amateurs, the thesis builds a non-linear framework by which the reader can draw diagonal interpretations through the artistic research projects presented. By means of this alternative reading new understandings may emerge that can expand the action spaces available for fashion design. This approach is not about subverting fashion as much as hacking and tuning it, and making its sub-routines run in new ways, or in other words, bending the current while still keeping the power on.

The author owes a tremendous debt of gratitude to the many people who made this dissertation possible. For any good thing about this thesis, he is but one to credit. For every idea, initiative or project, a large group of fantastic people, communities, organizations, institutions, galleries, material and machinery are to be appraised. The full multiplicity of them cannot be acknowledged here. Some of them are mentioned at the end of the thesis, but the hope is that the people involved recognize themselves in this work. The author is very happy to have come in their way, share ideas and practices, and experience some of the world through their work. Without all their devoted efforts and fantastic enthusiasm this thesis would never have been.

Despite the author's love for collaborative ventures, the reason there is only one author's name on this thesis is because someone had to put all these experiences into the format of a thesis. That someone also has to take responsibility for the shortcomings. That someone is the author. But he is just anyone among many contributors.

This work is fully dedicated to all the committed and energetic participants in the projects cited throughout this publication; the anonymous amateur, the peripheral fashionista, and Everyman engaged in fashion and social development.

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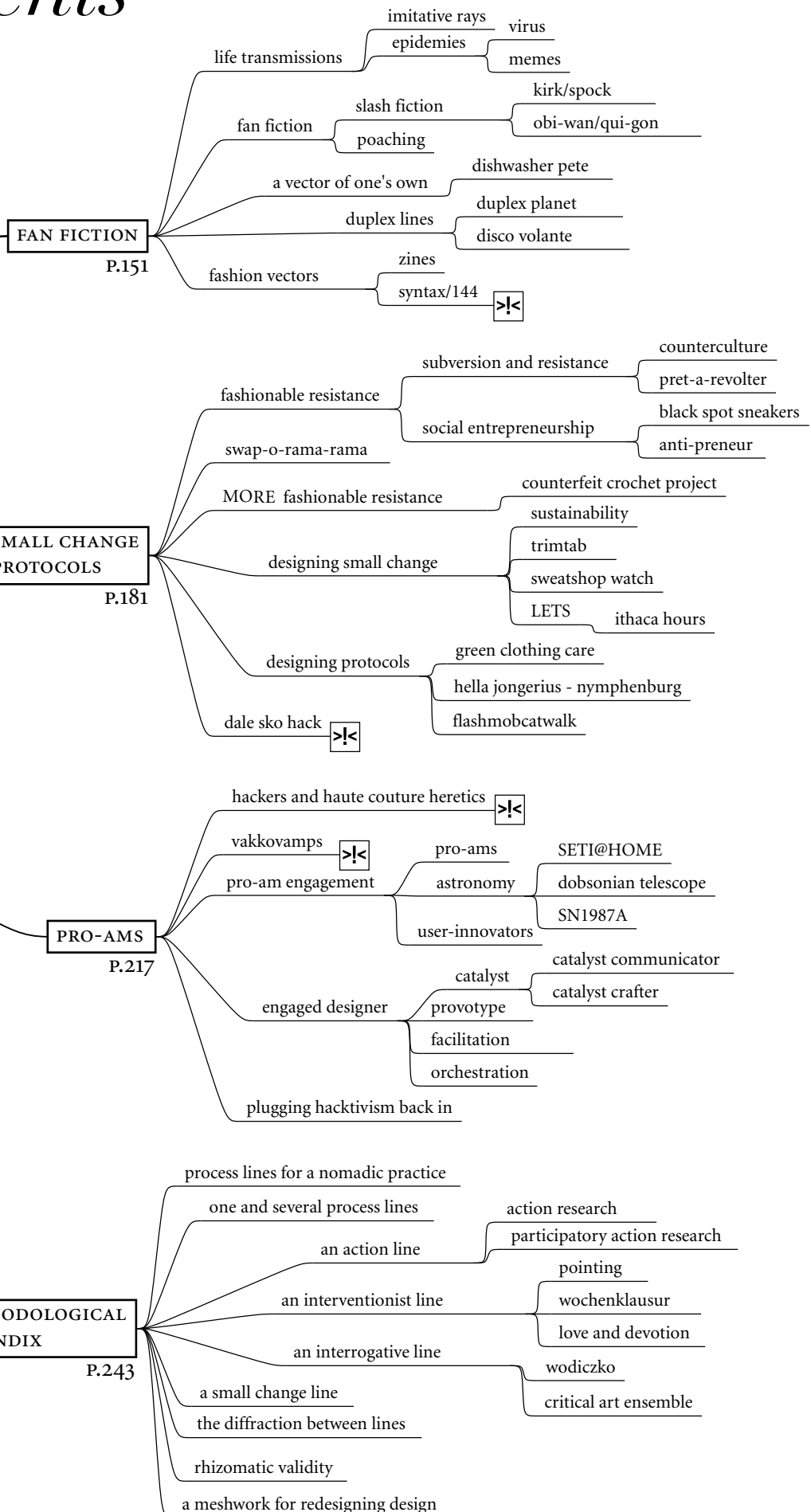 - fashion and becoming
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>!< — This symbol marks the self_passage projects for easier navigation. It is a an exclamation mark, a passionate passage, a burst of intensity

Map of Contents

A rough map of the chapters, projects and examples in this thesis. The reader is encouraged to draw own routes and lines between the practices, places, passages and situations.
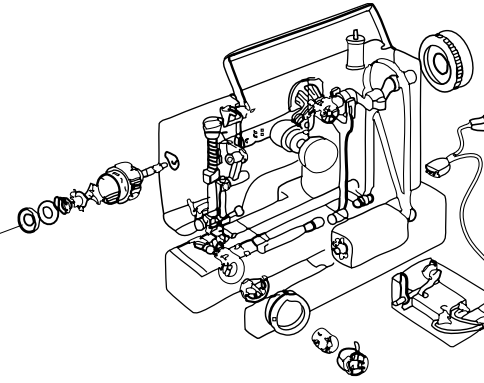
FASHION-able

AND OF HOPE.

foreword *to* *non*

• **An introduction that all form a components.**

^{a}-linear thesis

PROPOSING A NON-LINEAR AND DESIGNERLY METHOD FOR ARTISTIC RESEARCH. THIS IS A METHOD BASED ON A MULTIPLICITY OF EXAMPLES AND PRACTICES NETWORK OF BECOMING AND A NON-REDUCTIONISTIC SYSTEM OF DESIGN PRACTICE. A SYSTEM THAT CANNOT BE WRITTEN AS A LINEAR SUM OF INDEPENDENT
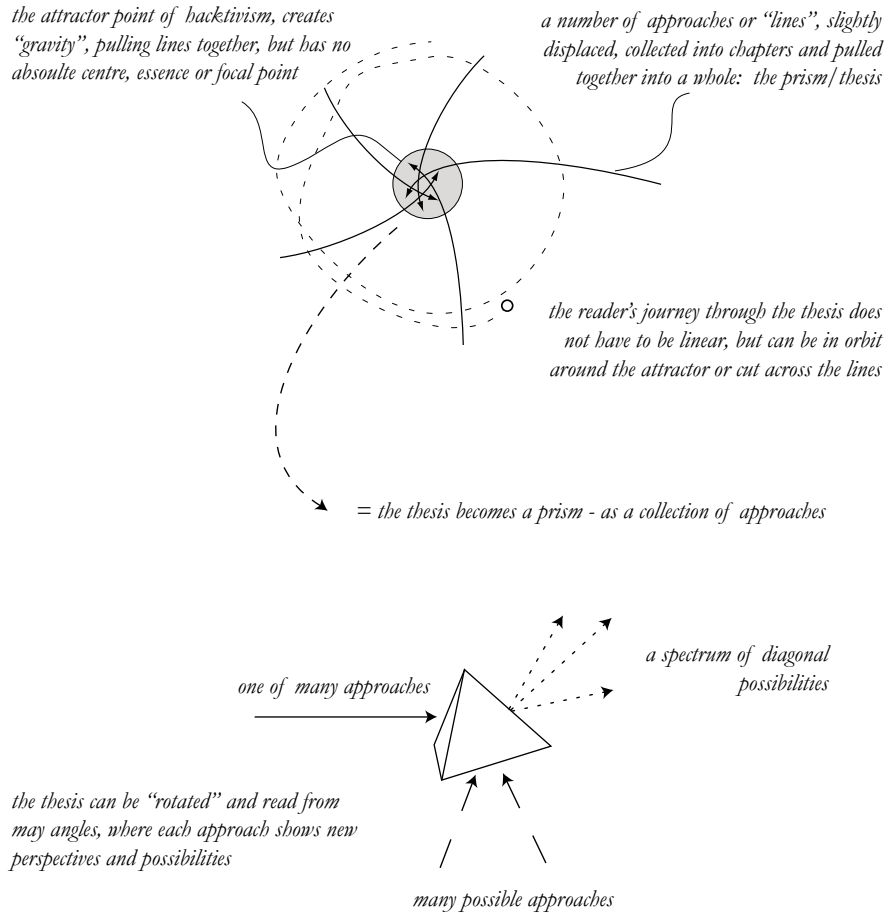
The aim of this thesis is to explore and develop a new form of fashion design practice in which the work of the auteur, whom has been assigned by a prestigious fashion company, is replaced by the close cooperation of user and designer. Here, groups of users working together in workshops will play a major role. The input of the designer in this process is his or her inspiration and vision as expressed in patterns, prototypes, operating instructions, and practical advice. This approach is not intended to render the fashion industry obsolete but rather to offer a new line of practice that takes fashion out of the context of what is more or less passive ready-to-wear consumption. This practice can unfold the possibility for co-productive communities and new means to develop an identity through practice, a personal or individual style, but one that is related to the dominant expressions of the contemporary fashion.

This thesis is part of the emerging field of artistic research, in which the studies are not framed and focused on specific research questions and do not aim at results that can be applied independent of the context. This type of research is based on ideas for the development of a new kind of art and on the practice of art and practical projects. It is a matter of presenting unknown possibilities.

Personal ambitions rather than the answering of a certain question drive this type of research, and it does not aspire for a research model leading to an objective output. Aesthetic considerations and judgments always play a major role in the process of such research. Consequently, in order to achieve results that are useful outside this personal context it is important to present the points of departure and relate these choices with those made during this work to other ongoing processes in society. The continual procedure of position-making constitutes the quality of the artistic research and its value in the process of the knowledge production within the actual artistic practice of design.

However, in artistic research there are no given criteria to with which to secure the quality of the research and general proclamations of basic values are of little help.

The prism model

the attractor point of hacktivism, creates "gravity", pulling lines together, but has no absoulte centre, essence or focal point

a number of approaches or "lines", slightly displaced, collected into chapters and pulled together into a whole: the prism/thesis

the reader's journey through the thesis does not have to be linear, but can be in orbit around the attractor or cut across the lines

= the thesis becomes a prism - as a collection of approaches

one of many approaches

a spectrum of diagonal possibilities

the thesis can be "rotated" and read from may angles, where each approach shows new perspectives and possibilities

many possible approaches

Here it is necessary to continuously relate to different traditions of ways of thinking. Each thesis must find its own way to manifest these relationships so that in the long run a kind of best practice will be revealed. Artistic research is not the only research full of such methodological difficulties. Action research in the social sciences is another example as it does not relate to one specific existing reality but acknowledges the importance of the situated perspective of knowledge production.

This thesis does not present any overall linear or sequential "tree-like" theory where every argument follows one "root" up to a magnificent crown of knowledge. The discussion has no strict beginning and end, question and answer, and it does not follow a classic progressive or deductive format, validated by consistent data that unequivocally can be turned into a new form of practice. Basically, it relates, cross-examines, articulates and contextualizes a series of experiences and to make use of the understanding gained the results must be interpreted and re-situated. This thesis can be regarded as a refinement of the kind of knowledge production and knowledge distribution that normally guides design practice.

The main quality of these kinds of practice-based knowledge processes is that they do not reduce the complexity to reach clear-cut conclusions. All aspects, aesthetic as well as commercial, are considered as supporting the process of trial-and-error

in design. This is carried out through the use of a number of "diagonal" presentations that form a multiplicity of single examples and course of events, yet which in this thesis are all united in a temporary alliance. By use of specific concepts and ways of representation, these experiences become a set of cross-references that allow and open up pattern comparisons, matching and triangulations. Through this type of artistic research a more sophisticated discussion on design practice and a broader intellectual reference can be introduced as a complement to other academic research in the field of design.

Consequently, the thesis does not have any introductory chapter outlining the basic theory, aim and method to prepare the reader for the final chapter's conclusions. There is no strict question and no proven answer. Instead, one way of reading this thesis is to imagine it as a series of journeys, pulled together by the "gravity" of an attractor and condensed into a prism. This is a prism through which we can see the world from many different angles and where each chapter is one side. As we look through this prism, always in a slight diagonal, we will see that each shaft of light or each approach refracts into a spectrum of new possibilities for practice. This opens for a multiplicity of "designerly" approaches. We can also think of the prism as a considered collection of examples that forms a designer's Wunderkammer or a Cabinet of Curiosities where we can go, from object to object or from idea to idea, in wonderment and inspiration. On this journey I will be your guide and dragoman.

The Wunderkammer *or Cabinet of curiosities was an encyclopedic collection of thought-provoking objects whose categorical boundaries were yet to be defined by the embryonic natural science of the time. The objects were often theatrically presented and the visitor could meander through the collection, drawing own conclusions and make up own theories and explanations of the wonders of the world.*

To guide us through, this introduction sets the point of departure and introduces some concepts that will follow us throughout the thesis. Processes, methods and results are presented in text and with illustrations that enable the reader to understand the line of thought in relation to the actual social, economical and cultural situation. It also presents a number of related projects carried out by other designers and artists that will give our temporary alliance a more visible shape to the reader. Finally the thesis closes with a methodological appendix that describes intersecting lines of methods or processes that can help readers and practitioners both to place the work within other artistic modes of engagement and build further on these endeavours.

These projects cannot be regarded as case studies in the sense that they build upon each other to form one particular line of development. Rather they are applications of different lines of thought based on ideas and understanding from other practices and parts of society. The process of finding these sources and using these concepts and experience is part of the creative process. It cannot be traced backwards in order to construct a comprehensive motivation for the choices but must be accepted as the input they are. Of course, they can be criticized for the misuse for the lack of a deeper comprehension, for being superficial, less constructive and for bringing fashion into an alien context. The choice of these examples is to enrich the practices of fashion, revealing new possible viewpoints and inspire new forms of engagement.

The difference from a traditional thesis is that there are no clear conclusions, yet every chapter is connected to a discussion of my own practical projects and it is for others to draw and build upon their own interpretations. This type of work can never be completed, for it is only a small step on the way towards the formation of new polyphonic practices. There are always new perspectives and approaches that might be added. These may lead in quite different directions and it is for others to continue the work of changing the comprehension and potential in this field of

research. However, this does not mean that the selection of projects and perspectives that combine to an entirety is coincidental and of less importance. Like all artefacts it is the whole that really matters. Nonetheless the whole should not be regarded as a something linear in which every argument is like a tree that grows from linear roots but rather the mesh-work-like unity described by Deleuze and Guattari (2004) as "rhizomatic". This consists of nothing than overlapping and displaced lines; of multiplicities connected to other multiplicities where there are no points of culmination, termination or external ends. (D&G 2004: 23f)

It is has been most practical to organize the thesis in five chapters with each chapter following a line and mode of engagement in different practices. These lines come under the headings of Hacktivism, Heresy, Fan Fiction, Small Change Protocols, and Pro-Ams. Their order should not be seen as a structured progression, but neither are they simply in random order. A process can be followed through the transition of the projects as well as the connections to the economy of fashion. The projects are different "phases" of this process, yet they do not culminate in the last chapter. Nevertheless, all chapters cut through one specific line. This line of engagement is what I call the abstract machine of hacktivism and it is an approach of assembly or a certain diagram of becoming that runs throughout the whole thesis. This will be described in the coming section. Finally, the methodological appendix finishes the thesis with a discussion of a number of intersecting lines that are intended to help position the work from different contexts. The reader can therefore, through own sections, dive from point to point, ride along a line, or draw new diagonals. The hope is that the reader will gather a new understanding of this subject, to approve or reject ideas, or to be inspired to act on his own accord. In such a rhizomatic structure there are many possible points of entry, and likewise several overlapping layers of theories, projects and examples. To initiate the most fruitful way of approaching this way of reading the format of this thesis has been arranged as that similar to a fashion magazine. Thus it can be just leafed through, even beginning at the end, glancing through illustrations and reading the captions. Likewise, it can be subject to a more careful and attentive browsing, and following up particular discussions, examples and projects. Naturally, it can of course be worthwhile to read from beginning to

end, even if it will not provide a linear experience that leads from a question to an answer. "The question is not: Is it true? But: does it work? What new thoughts does it make possible to think?" (Massumi: "Translators foreword", in D&G 2004: xv)

settings

In this section I will set some initial points of departure for my research. I will begin with a quick look at the situation of fashion from my perspective and how this work approaches that field of research. On the way I must make a quick detour to show in which way I use fashion throughout this text and in the projects described further on. This will allow the reader to take a closer look both at my own standpoint and point of departure for the research. We will then follow a discussion about the main thread that stretches throughout the thesis – that of hacktivism.

Still continuing along this line of thought we will meet a central concept in my work, that of Action Spaces; those zones of interactivity where potentials, skills and tools meet to form new concepts, practices, products and services. We will also discuss one of several dilemmas that arise when engaging and stretching action spaces in collaborative projects. Finally, we will meet a new emerging crafter and designer role that might act as a certain guiding light during the reading of the chapters to come. Let us start with the settings.

&

Fashion design and the fashion industry are constantly changing, yet it has always been a sign of exclusivity, a material sign of status and aspiration for the chosen few. Over the last decades, fashion may have become more "democratic"; stressfully ubiquitous, and what was before considered a luxury item has for many, at least in our part of the world, become an everyday desirable and necessary component in their lives. Star designers create collections for H&M and copies in various forms swamp the markets. Great shifts occur in fashion as it now becomes a globally distributed phenomenon in which we at any minute can be photographed for some street-wear webpage, and indeed every *fashionista* seems to have their own blog. However, in relation to the inherent logic of fashion, consumers are generally passive; they are offered platforms from which to

chose, discuss, and combine fashions, but have few points of access point or interface to engage *in* fashion. Consumers can "poach" or recombine, or even join brand workshops to recycle and customize garments, but it is usually done within a strict framework, thoroughly calculated design from the brand name public relations people. Designers, on the other hand, although they have privilege of access to the modes of fashion production, rarely have the time or freedom of action to rethink the action spaces they inhabit as a matter of routine. To most people fashion *per se* is always *prêt-a-porter, ready-to-wear*.

On our streets we notice the steadily increasing number of fashion mannequins that looking down at us from the shop windows. With the escalating pace of fashion, styles are constantly changing and big retail brands like H&M and Zara replace their collections with ever-shorter intervals, sometimes as often once a month (Thomas 2007). If we perceive the rapid shift in the rate of collections as the heartbeat of the fashion system in which we live, we are most certainly conscious of its racing pulse.

This is not only a one-sided phenomenon, not only a force that stems from brand names or the fashion industry. There is also an increasing interest in fashion arising from a number of points of reference, from the rising number of glossy fashion magazines to the heavyweight morning papers that now even cover the Fashion Weeks. Television is flooded with fashion-related programs and teenagers dream of becoming fashion designers at the same time as professors are granted academic chairs in Fashion Theory. People are generally more informed about fashion and the collections of major designers are exhibited at prominent art galleries and museums.

This increasing interest in fashion is taking place at the same time as the fashion industry exerts a greater influence on design disciplines and that in more complex ways than they did a few decades ago. Advertising agencies produce their own fashion magazines, the car industry collaborate with fashion designers, and fashion brands designs mobile phones. The fashion system has moved from that of linear and monolithic biannual collections of the haute couture catwalks that were centralized to Paris to an extensive global distribution of multi-layered and complex systems. Several parallel fashions and the multitudes of subcultures are now all running criss-cross on top of each other like computer programs, plug-ins and applications that mix not only high and low, centre and periphery, but equally shallowness and depth, fluidity and density. It can be argued that fashion itself has moved from defining a universal distinction of "in" and "out" to being a set of more complex forces. Although it now consists of micro-cultural multitudes of varying gravity and density fashion still contains some its core elements and is indeed, as Karl Lagerfeld says, "ephemeral, dangerous and unfair." (Lagerfeld 2007)

&

As designers it is necessary for us to look into a central question concerning the role of fashion in society: we know fashion engages many, but how can the many engage in fashion? How can we as designers operate with an inclusive fashion yet still allow it to remain exclusive? Fashion is always some form of difference; "to look like everyone else, but before everyone else" as phrased by fashion journalist Suzanne Pagold. (Pagold 2000: 8) Thus, "democratic" fashion, in the meaning of equally accessible and egalitarian, is an oxymoron, neither possible nor desired, just as smooth mundane fashion would be that of sameness. What we see is rather

Lucy Orta's Refuge Wear *merges clothing design with social activism and her garments acts as a polyphonic answer to situations of human distress. They are temporary and portable shelters, serving the most basic needs for essential protection in the urban environment. The suits combine mobility and waterproof shelter for the inhabitant. The Refuge Wear suits can be combined into Nexus Architecture, a sort of modular and collective architecture. Here the independent suits can be zipped together to form a collective tent, sharing body heat between the units. Her works points to situations of distress and she emphasises that her work is not about offering solutions, but a starting point for raising discussion, creating community and mobilising for social change.*

the emergence of a new mass-homogenized "Mc-Fashion", as unsatisfying, commonplace and utterly forgettable as the fast food equivalent (Lee 2003). It could be argued that when H&M diffuses high fashion collaborations to the masses in a "democratic" approach to fashion, consumers are still only meant to choose and buy, or not as the case may be, fashion as *prêt-a-porter*. No real opportunity is offered to "talk-back" to the system, which some would argue to be somewhat undemocratic.

The question is if this fashion format means that we are doomed to a stratified, totalitarian and hierarchical system where we as consumers must simply obey dictates or if as designers our work constantly has to be in tune with what everybody else does, or *is about to do*. To me, fashion seems to be locked into a *ready-to-wear* "creativity regime", which to sociologist Feiwel Kupferberg is a social order of norms that defines and regulates what is possible or not within the format of innovation, be it car production, science or creative industries (Kupferberg 2006). Perhaps there can be forms of fashion participation, beyond mere choosing, in which we can create our own parallel

but symbiotic arenas and practices. This does not mean becoming the new dictators of a new micro-culture, but instead of being able to experiment with radically participatory forms of fashion.

In this work I will explore other paths for designers to engage Everyman in the creation and re-creation of fashion. Perhaps this can be a complementary form of exclusivity, an exclusivity of participation and engagement where we can share tools and techniques to build together in collaborative ventures. This can be an interesting field to explore: where engagement and participation meet the exclusivity of fashion.

&

This research explores a number of different approaches as to how we can understand and develop the role of the fashion designer in relation to engaged forms of consumer participation. The ambition is not to find a new singular role model but to increase the variety of both what it is possible for the fashion designer to achieve and to better equip him for his role as an agent of intervention. Instead the ambi-

tion is to sketch up a multitude of possible designer roles that expose complementary paths for fashion to take. This thesis blends hands-on projects that have been explored during the course of my studies for this doctorate and includes examples of the work other fashion designers but also from totally different fields, all with the aim of offering complementary paths that fashion might take. Here the designer can use his skills for other ends than the catwalk or narrow mass market, that is to be an active participant in the ongoing social changes society goes through. This will give rise to another kind of fashion designer, a designer whom is neither a divine genius nor a brand engineer. It is a role that will merge hacking, creative resistance, micro-politics and Do-It-Yourself practice with the production of belief and myth in the field of fashion design. The role of the designer will thus be transformed into one that expands action spaces, fights passivity and provides tools to engage our fellow human beings in fashion. In short, not to make process participants simply listeners or passive choosers of existing consumer goods but as engaged co-authors of fashion, whom will be capable of inventing ways of responding and reacting to fashion. In other words, to become *fashion-able*.

fashion and becoming

Without any further delay, I must address my use of the concept of fashion, as it will be a central element in this thesis.

A common trait in fashion theory is to make a distinction between "clothing" and "fashion", in which the former denotes the functional, technical, and protective

aspects of dress, while the second is seen as symbolic, signifying and communicative (Barthes 1983, Bourdieu 1986, 1993a, Kawamura 2005). This division is at the same time both helpful and unfortunate since these two aspects are commonly intertwined. Yet, fashion is a modern dream connected directly to the zeitgeist (Wilson 1985, Vinken 2005) and to the now. It may be said that clothing is part of the Hellenic time concept of *chronos*, the duration, while fashion resides in *kairos*, the propitious moment or opportunity. Clothing can be, just like suffering, be chronic and everlasting, but never fashion. From this perspective of kairos, fashion is indeed like passion, a sudden burst of energy, a firing of ephemeral intensity. This is similar to how Bourdieu describes fashion: "Fashion is the latest fashion, the latest difference." (Bourdieu 1993a: 135) When confronted with new fashion we can find ourselves, almost unconsciously and often unwillingly, electrified by the brilliance of its very newness. This burst of intensity is how a new fashion "hits" us, how we are temporarily "blinded" by its luminosity, and how "immune" to it most of us are to it after the last epidemic craze has passed.

This continuous stream of intensity is fashion, a phenomenon in a constant dynamic flow of becoming, that never stands still or is subordinated to permanent substance. It is difference in its purest ephemeral form, the velocity of flux, energy that rushes through a system that is far removed from equilibrium. This is what makes fashion resonate beautifully with Deleuze's "ontology of becoming" (Deleuze 2007) as fashion is never a stable form but always becoming new. This focus on the processes of becoming can be connected to fashion's central distinction of constant change, as in fashion "everything flows". If fashion has a being, it is a being of becoming, of energetic change into something new. If fashion constitutes an eternal return, to use Nietzsche's term, it is not the return of the Identical, but a return of the same process which becomes, to paraphrase Deleuze's interpretation of Nietzsche (2007: 50ff). Fashion is the processes of becoming, of producing intensities of difference.

Another reason to use an "ontology of becoming" perspective is, as we will come to later, the focus on do-it-yourself approaches throughout this thesis. There is an emphasis on doing rather than having. Most academic analysis has been focused on consumption but The Design of Everyday Life by Shove *et al* (2007) emphasises that the restless process of craftsmanship does not have the same goal as consumption. Crafting is a continuous becoming and throughout this thesis we will see how in fashion it intersects with the processes of becoming.

I stress the use of the term "fashion" in my research with the purpose of emphasising that craft and hands-on interventions do not just have practical implications or only referring to clothing but are also highly symbolic and very much connected to the intensities flowing through the fashion system. Indeed, as we will see further on, a common theme throughout this thesis is how to "hook up" or "plug in" to the energetic or symbolic flows within powerful and vital systems, be they computers, religion, fiction or the fashion system. Consequently, it would be a mistake to read this thesis from a purely materialistic or, on the other hand symbolic, point of view. Instead, to approach fashion from an ontology of flows and intensities resonate with ecologist David W Orr's notion of design as "the shaping of flows of energy and matter for human purposes" (Orr cited in Capra 2003). For Orr designs are never finished, they are instead continuous processes interacting in dynamic systems. The design practice explored throughout this thesis is concerned with fashion as intensities, as energies, as flow of matter energy, and how we, in roles as both

designer and consumer, can find new ways of interacting with these flows. Redirecting some flows and boosting others

experience/standpoint

I have not trained as a fashion designer, for my studies have been in the fields of arts and craft, art history and design and my road to becoming a designer has not directly intersected with the fashion system. However, for some years I have been working and moving on its periphery attempting to understand how its grey zones are structured and how they function.

My awareness of fashion comes from other directions. The first **encounter** was with the experience of how making my own clothes offered me a social armour. Appearing in the anorak that I had sewn by myself made me feel stronger when having to face the tough schoolmates when starting at a new school.

However, this anorak was neither created to make me seen, nor help me hide. Its strength did not come from its form or shape, but from the knowledge that I had made it, made it with the pride in the craft and skill I had acquired. No matter how small it was, my ability rewarded me with a clear feeling of self-enhancement and even when it was left hanging in the wardrobe at home, I felt remarkably different just from knowing I had been able to make it. It was the proof of an exploration and of a personal journey, of heightened knowledge, concentration and skill. It was a garment with a symbolic connection to fashion, a resemblance if you will, a fashion item, but certainly not one that in any way resembles "the right threads" worn by the coolest students at school. It was cheap to make, but for me it was priceless.

Later, at university, I concentrated on fashion theory whilst I also began a systematic remaking of the clothes that were dying at the back of my wardrobe. As I remade them I documented the various stages of my work and collected these notations into small open source cookery books. This is where my research began, from the small scale and from personal knowledge fostered at the kitchen table.

A relevant point as to the background of this research is the training that derives from my participation in a variety of collaborative team projects. Musical experiments in bands, collective role-playing sessions,

fanzine writing, game building, cooperative craft workshops, and art/design alliances, all form a backdrop for how I came to understand the role of design. This is the practical engagement with team working with all the accumulated pooled experience and skills that are brought together to play in scales ranging from delicate harmony to creative chaos. Collaborative moments of empowerment and self-enhancement result not only in a shared experience, but also the possibility of building on the shared work of others. These small fruitful currents of inspiration, built continuously on the rim of other works, were like ever-expanding puzzles, music reinterpretations, endless fantasy worlds, or the ingenuity of inventive combinations, samples and remixes.

This brings us to yet another formative experience that resonates throughout this research; my adventures with the recording of mixed tapes and the participation in a shared cassette culture. The mixed tape is a paradoxical act of creation as new worlds and unique personal meaning appear by mixing mass-produced components in form of popular songs into play lists. The choice of this copied music, often of low quality or "resolution", is emphasised by the "creator" with decorated sleeves and elaborate handwriting. The tapes become personal treasures, spanning from celebration and hope to intimate expressions and wishes. This assembly of ready-made parts in new ways leads to the beginning of low-level co-authorship and it also establishes the foundations for forming a band. Sharing music, starting to play a few covers, and then moving on to make our own songs that although influenced by existing music end up with a personal twist. It is the start of a new musical journey that draws from certain creative aspects of those first mixed tapes and the first covers. Perhaps this not unique, but somewhere in the mix there is the hope of finding one's own voice.

These practices have all been homemade concoctions, modest proposals made for fun, for discussions, for the enhancement of skills, for political will, or for small change towards new goals (as these aspects often come together). They have been practices of do-it-yourself works and explorations that in fact most often turn out to be collective forays or parts of general trends, even if they were felt as genuine and authentic as I engaged in them. They have not been subversive, "alternative", or an expression of revenge on an unjust world, but stem from a fascination on

bending what is possible to do. I have always seen these explorations as works of creative assembly that are naively constructive but certainly not de-constructive. This is an approach that puts assembly before sabotage, that builds upwards from scrap and of finding ways to reuse leftovers for our own purpose and to build new possibilities.

This can seem slightly subversive, but more often it is "subconstructive", and a collaboration that builds from below, intensifying small initiatives and assembling the parts for a course on the road towards a desirable future.

As I now look back on these methods and these situations it becomes clear to me that a certain mindset has followed these works. They do not possess any special "essence", but instead are a typical way of working – a mixture of curiosity, construction, sharing, playing, and what I would now call designing. It is as if a special mindset affected me all throughout my journey, and I know that many others have shared this same experience after having met to collaborate with other likeminded friends. We all shared a common ground and a common idea, a certain approach to work and life, and I will elaborate further on this "mindset" or sense of assembly that Deleuze and Guattari might have called the working of an "abstract machine". This line of thought I choose to call "hacktivism".

the abstract machine of hacktivism

As I have mentioned previously, from my point of view, the mindset behind all these small assemblage works was constructive and therefore it might seem confusing to label it "hacktivism", as "hacking" is a term usually connected to digital deconstruction and illegal network activities. Indeed, ever since it was coined in 1995 by Jason Sack the neologism "hacktivism" (of "hacking" and "activism"), has been connected to the field where autonomous anarchist tradition meets activism and digital subversions. It is where squatters, phreakers, scammers, crackers and cultural jammers mix civil disobedience, online activism and hacking to employ the "nonviolent use of illegal or legally ambiguous digital tools in pursuit of political ends" (Samuel 2004).

To give a clearer distinction, hacking guru Eric Raymond distinguishes between hackers, who build things, and crackers, who break things (Raymond

2001). Here hacking is a sharp-witted mode of cunning construction and the opposite of cyber terrorism. This distinction makes the practice discussed in this thesis in line with what I before called "subconstruction", a passionate love for coding, building, playing and sharing, and within the hacker community something that concerns much more than the programming of computers. As we will see further on in the chapter on hacking, it is a mindset of adding your small component to a larger system and of tuning its running processes into more desirable directions.

As opposed to the "passive" role of the normal consumer the productive activity of the hacker is central to the "building" of something and will be a common theme that runs throughout this thesis. As we will see presently there are many layers of to this theme and that there is no sharp distinction between these roles. As the art theorist Nicolas Bourriaud argues, there are many ways of being productive.

> Using a remote control is also production, the timid production of alienated leisure time: with your finger on the button, you construct a program. (Bourriaud 2002b: 39)

However, I must make a distinction between Bourriaud's production and from my own interpretation. I mean that the active productivity of the hacker lies closer to that of Richard Sennetts craftsman whom attain skill through production, and where "people are anchored in tangible reality, and they can take pride in their work." (Sennett 2008: 21) It is the perhaps that naive act of producing something that gives the feeling of "I added something outside of myself", even though this "something" does not have to be a concrete thing or something that is directly useful in solving a problem.

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What is important to keep in mind is the building mindset of hacking, of the use of the existing system or infrastructure and with your own creation *plugging-in*, into the existing structure. This is in opposition to the subversive critic who wants to uncover the malicious mechanics behind society, tear down the curtains of illusions, knock down the walls of power, un-plug the "evil capitalist machine", sabotage the apparatus and *drop-out.* Rather to the contrary, hacking is more a matter of curiosity, understanding a system, reverse engineering it, finding a

suitable place for intervention, plugging in, and *keeping the power on.* Hacking a system is to advance it because you love it, not because you hate it.
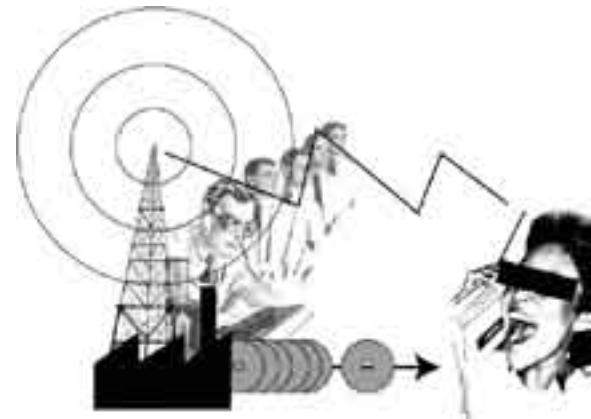
This makes the hacker different from what we usually see as the critic's role, and more in line with what Bruno Latour calls a new form of critique:

> The critic is not the one who debunks, but the one who assembles. The critic is not the one who lifts the rugs from under the feet of the naïve believers, but the one who offers the participants arenas in which to gather. The critic is […] the one for whom, if something is constructed, then it means it is fragile and thus in great need of care and caution. (Latour 2004)

What Latour is addressing here is a new criticism of building. It is not so much a taking apart but very similar to the ideas of DeLanda. He means that hacking is to go beyond textual analysis to reverse engineer the systems of reality. DeLanda encourages to "hack reality itself", which means to

> adopt a hacker attitude towards all forms of knowledge: not only to learn UNIX or Windows NT to hack this or that computer system, but to learn economics, sociology, physics, biology to hack reality itself. It is precisely the "can do" mentality of the hacker, naive as it may sometimes be, that we need to nurture everywhere. (DeLanda cited in Miller).

As mentioned, hacktivism should not be seen as a phenomenon limited to the practices and politics of actual computers, but rather a mindset of how to perform an *affirmative* critique and collectively build a more desirable world. However, it would be better to describe this mindset as a specific mode of engagement, or of becoming. It is a way of seeing and reassembling the world, of bending energies into new forms. This type of "mindset", or process of becoming, is what Deluze and Guattari calls an "abstract machine", or morphogenetic structure-generating processes (DeLanda 1997: 263). It is an engineering diagram of becoming, a specific approach or model of assembly, very much like the DNA in a gene that guides the biological process of *morphogenesis*. This is the dynamic process controlling cell growth and cellular differentiation, which gives the shape to living organisms. This we could call the "meaning" of a gene as it guides the assembly of cells into organic and living form (Leroi 2005).

The division of labour and professionalism *were efficient tools for the growth of industrialism, modernism, capitalism and the social welfare systems. It was a system producing great wealth and raising the living standards for the general public in the west. Production became ruled by expert engineers in white coats manufacturing everything the consumers could need; culture, commodities, music or fashion.*

This type of economic system is based on a few simple and linear principles: production is separated from consumption, professional and profitable work is separated from amateur hobbyism, culture is broadcasted to the masses who are offered to choose from ready-made programs, stations or music and the knowledge and skills produced by the professionals is locked within the company. These are central functions to the diagram of the modern modes of production.
The same divisions are also central to fashion.

The Mechanic Alphabet by Christopher Polhem *consisted of one model or "letter" for every mechanical function, to visualize how mechanical motion can be transferred between parts in a machine. The mechanical alphabet was part of his Laboratorium Mechanicum, established 1697.*

Deleuze and Guattari's term "machine" should not be understood in the limited modern sense of being purely a technical device. Even if they use the engineer Franz Reuleaux's definition from the nineteenth century that a machine is "a combination of resistant parts, each specialized in function, operating under human control to transmit motion and perform work." (Patton 2000: 2) Deleuze and Guattari's machine is not a production of something or created by a person, but is the machine that has a speciality or a functionality, that produces for the sake of production, and constructs new wholes in its own way. I use the concept of abstract machine as I am interested in how certain processes in our world seems to build new systems according to certain logics or diagrams. Hacktivism is a special process of becoming and it interacts, assembles and shares the world according to the workings of its abstract machine, and this machine runs across the lines drawn through this thesis.

A machine in this sense can be the chemical processes in nature that trigger the formation of matter or life, but it is also gravitational forces in space that affect the movement of planets or the explosions of stars. It can be human processes that resonate with natural processes. A theory of say Nietzsche, is an abstract machine, it is a specific mode of engagement, of assembling the world. To "take up" his theories is to start engaging the world through the "Nietzsche machine's" functions and structure-generating processes, that is not through Nietzsche himself but through the machine associated with his name.

However, as the theoretician Gerald Raunig (2008) notes, the term machine could also be understood from the Classical Hellenic double meaning of the term. In one sense for the Greeks a machine was a "war machine", which included catapults and wagons as well as cunning inventions such as the Trojan Horse. However they also used the word to define the "theatre machine", as in the "deus ex machina", something or someone such as a God that comes from outside the main plot to solve an intractable and deadlocked problem. This machine is logic from outside the plot, yet existing inside the scene, and as such it comes to represent a god-like, non-physical mode of becoming. This means that the machine is both something that is virtually mechanical and immaterial, both a form of logic, specialized in function, and a form of trick. The machine itself guides processes of becoming: the becoming of cunning inventions or the becoming that solves riddles.

All machines interoperate with other machines and do operate in isolation, but through each other. Like how many separate sections of the DNA interact to guide the organic processes of cell reproduction independently without a specific purpose yet with a highly refined end product. Literary theorist Claire Colebrook describes this connection between abstract machines like thus,

> Think of a bicycle, which obviously has no 'end' or intention. It only works when it is connected with another 'machine' such as the human body; and the production of these two machines can only be achieved through connection. [...] But we could imagine different connections producing different machines. The cycle becomes an art object when placed in a gallery; the human body becomes an 'artist' when connected with a paintbrush. (Colebrook 2002: 56)

This means that the mode of being produced by an abstract machine changes according to the context with the other machines with which it interoperates. In this thesis we will follow the abstract machine of hacktivism as it engages with various other different machines, and each chapter will present the machine in a specific setting. These settings allow us to follow the same "mindset" and the same hacktiv-

ist machine and so to a better understanding of how this machine can interoperate with fashion.

Another aspect of the Grecian approach to the machine can give us as to how it works on a small scale. They believed that every possible technical device could be created out of a combination of six elements or functions and by combining the lever, the screw, the inclined plane, the wedge, the wheel, and the pulley, any type of machine could be constructed. In this sense mechanisms were building blocks, generators or agents of specific functions, and from the interaction of these simple building blocks advanced systems could be formed. This aspect of the Grecian machine is on a parallel with those of the complexity theoretician John Holland when he compares these basic functions with the simple rules of building emergent and highly complex systems (Holland 2000). For example, the limited intelligence of a million ants can form extremely complex anthills without any leader or coordinator. The abstract machines, according to Deleuze and Guattari are a combination of all these aforementioned machine aspects. They can be simple theories, logics or functions, but it is through their strong mutual interoperation that emergent phenomena arise, phenomena that are larger than the sum of its parts.

Deleuze and Guattari specify the application of the abstract machines to be *the engineering diagrams that guide the processes of becoming*, of stemming from *in-between* lines. The machines are thus something very different from a structure or a mechanical machine but rather a form of intangible logic undergoing continuous change. They are imminent and definitely not transcendental.

> There is no abstract machine, or machines, in the sense of a Platonic Idea, transcendent, universal, eternal. […] Abstract machines consist of *unformed matters and nonformal functions*. Every abstract machine is a consolidated aggregate of matter-functions (*phylum* and *diagram*). (D&G 2004:562)

The machine is not an essence or a dominant logic. It is neither a guiding process from "above", as an ideology, nor from "within", as a psychological essence of man, as for example the *homo eoconomicus* (DeLanda 2006). Rather it grows from the space between every line, from every singular meeting with another, from every transaction between persons, between every word in a sentence, and every time a simple cell replicates itself.

It is important to bear in mind that the abstract machine cannot be limited to a "mindset" such as that of a purely human agency, of something that only happens *inside* the mind. The abstract machine works on several levels, and the human agent is just one of many morphogenetic processes. The format of code, the circuitry of the computer, the frequency of electric current, the differentiation and distribution of material flows and so on, all play an equal part. Nor is that all. For Deleuze and Guattari it is, for example, the same abstract machine that creates social hierarchies in society, or centralized national capitals, that lies behind the formation of sedimented sandstone in nature (D&G 2004, DeLanda 1997). It is not necessary to undertake a further exploration of this complex discussion here, but what is important to keep in mind is that the "mindset" of human agents is only as important as the property of matter or the fluidity of energy, as they are all a part of the intrinsic process conducted by the same abstract machine.
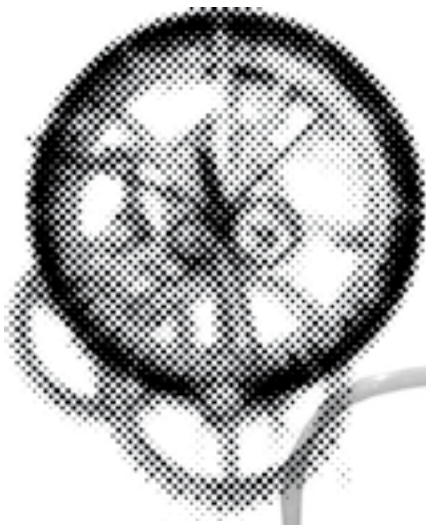
Regarding the culture of hacking I will go into this process at a later point, but I can already mention here how they build a complex machine from a few simple and recurring ideas. Hacking is not reducible to any one of the isolated parts, but its mechanism is built from the interaction and intensification of several functions that are quite similar to Holland's dissection of the Hellenic machines. Some of these hacking elements can be the skills for accessing systems, playing with technology, sharing code, empowering users, decentralizing control, and so forth.

As we can see in these elements, the abstract hacking machine itself embodies some central digital traits, such as the commands of copy-paste, the loop, the sample, and the remix. This is true even if it is applied to non-digital materials or systems, as we will see in the chapter on hacking. All these functions happen *in between* people or matter, and adjust the way they are put together in an assemblage way. The application of the hacktivist abstract machine can not be confined solely to the realm of computers and we will see how its functions indeed run through an extremely varied set of practices. However, in order to better understand why the abstract machine of hacktivism is especially applicable to present-day society, we must look to the science historian Michel Serres and his ideas concerning machine metaphors in history.
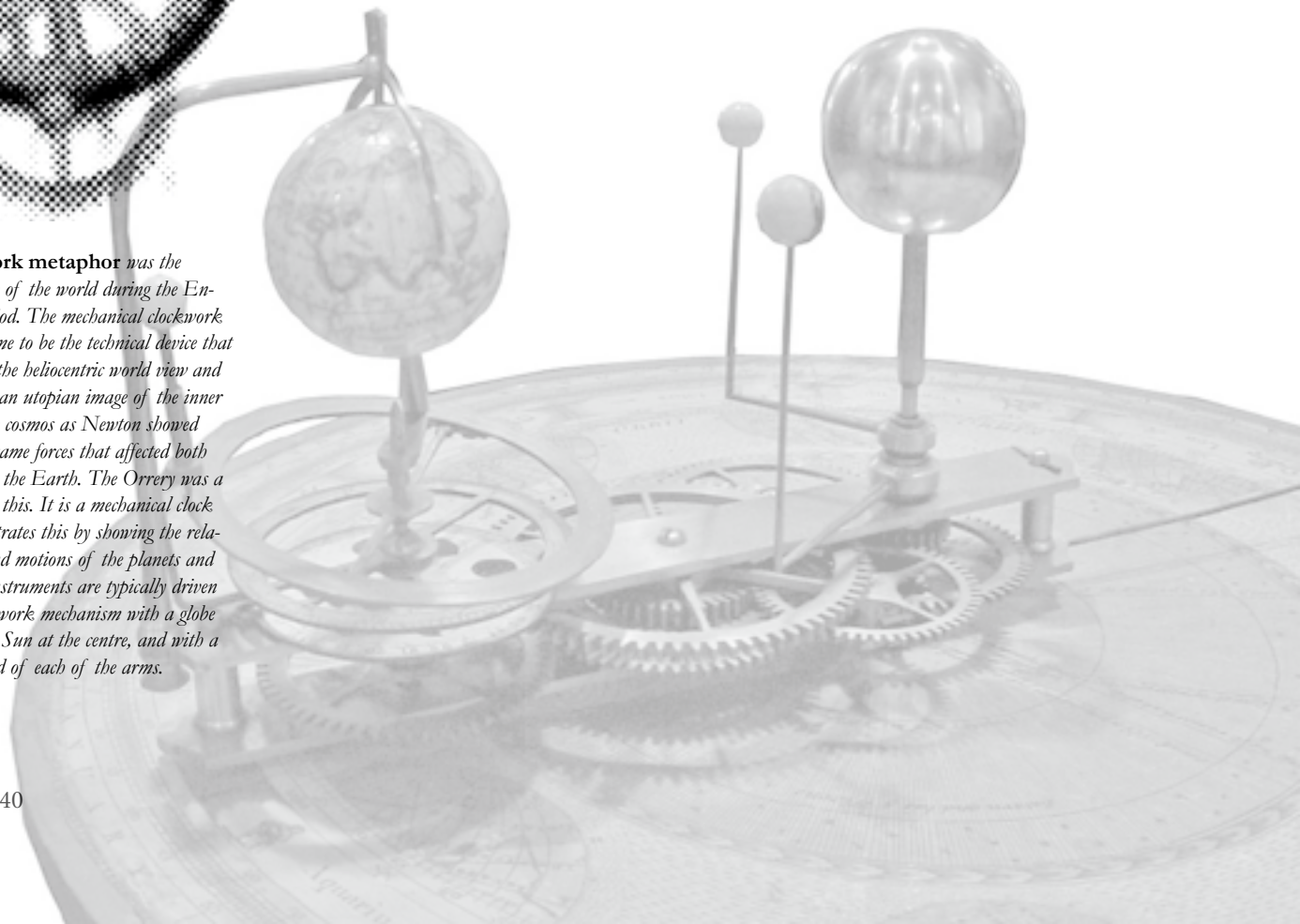
According to Serres, thought regarding conceptual understanding at different periods in history is linked to the modus operandi of everyday technologies (Serres 1982). For example clockwork mechanisms were closely linked to the conception of the world during the Enlightenment, used by physicists like Newton and philosophers like Descartes. Similarly, the steam engine or motor came to be the engineering diagram for understanding the world of industrialism. In the deployment of Serres ideas, DeLanda sees how the transition between abstract technical models of the world changes the conceptual models of how we organize our understanding of theory and society (DeLanda 1991). As Josúe Harari and David Bell propose in their introduction to Serres' *Hermes*, the motor diagram appeared as

> the universal model of knowledge in the nineteenth century, a construct that always functions in the same way in all the cultural domains – from Marx to Freud, from Nietzsche to Bergson, or from Zola to Turner. (Serres 1982: xix)

This means that the "mindset" of the steam engine made thermodynamic heat motors, based on the dynamics of mechanical movement produced under pressure, seem to be the driving force behind both personal change, such as the suppressed subconscious of Freud, or the changes in historical materialism, such as Marx' subjugated revolutionary working class. Thus the abstract machine, *the engineering diagram of becoming*, came to be a model of thought, that mixed metaphor with technology. Indeed, following this diagram the "class struggle is the motor of history" came to build on the same structure-generating process as "a hurricane is a steam motor" (DeLanda 1997: 58) At the modernist peak of this motor perspective physicians saw the body as a "vehicle for the soul", a motor-driven mechanical apparatus. Constructivist designers saw clothing as strictly utilitarian and optimized working garments and architects such as Le Corbusier saw the house as "a machine for living in". There was even a concurrence between the car and the ear, a motor

The clockwork metaphor *was the dominant image of the world during the Enlightenment period. The mechanical clockwork or automata came to be the technical device that both explained the heliocentric world view and also manifested an utopian image of the inner workings of the cosmos as Newton showed how it was the same forces that affected both the heavens and the Earth. The Orrery was a tool to visualize this. It is a mechanical clock device that illustrates this by showing the relative positions and motions of the planets and moons. These instruments are typically driven by a large clockwork mechanism with a globe representing the Sun at the centre, and with a planet at the end of each of the arms.*

that function in a true biomechanic way (Zielinski 2006: 252). The whole modern project praised the efficiency of an engineering perspective in design, science, or politics. In a paradigm of "form follows function" every design was created as a cog in an optimized production line, which left no room for ambiguity or diversity.

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As a consequence of this, it does not require much extraction of Serres' idea of machinic ages to see that today we are experiencing the rise of the network, or computer diagram. Following Manuel Castells massive work on *The Information Age* (1996), in which he analyses the logics of our "Network Society", or the recent blurring between programming software, biological parts and DNA molecules (BioBricks), we can see the computer diagram take shape on several fronts in the networked economy, as in Hardt and Negri's *Empire* (2000), or a shift in the mindset within social protest movements (von Busch and Palmås 2006).

This leads us to a situation where the abstract machine of hacktivism emerges together with a diagram of a "network society". It is not replacing clockwork or motor diagrams, but runs parallel besides them, racing the pace and adding more layers of complexity to their workings. This new machine also changes some parts in regard to the mindset of resistance. Where the motor age triggered subversive forms of stopping the machine, throwing the *sabot* into the motor in an act of sabotage, or "dropping out" by being a slacker, the computer diagram brings about another form of constructive resistance. Thus we should not look for resistance in the form of subversion in the examples presented throughout this thesis, but rather how they construct and interconnect with other forces that flow through their systems, society or nature. Here the hacker is the hero who demystifies codes, outsmarts systems, empowers users, shares programs, and builds collectively by way of the participation of a multitude of actors.

Following the identification of an abstract machine behind hacktivism it would be a mistake to read this machine's mode of becoming as the core practice or essence of all the projects we will meet throughout this thesis. Instead, as this thesis is in a rhizome form, this abstract machine is but one line through the research and all the other lines we will meet will somehow run parallel to it or cross it. This whole rhizome is packed with escape routs, swarming with lines of flight.
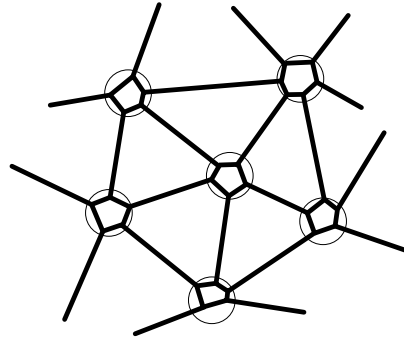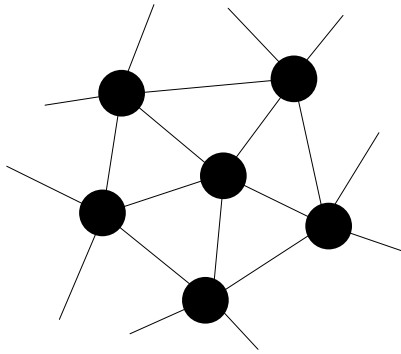
However, an abstract machine of hacktivism is also directly connected to the practice of design, of creating the new and offering people new modes and means of engagement with the world around them. The machine runs through several practices and acts, assembles and actualizes new action spaces, new worlds for us to inhabit and interact with. To better see this we should have a look at what action spaces are.

action spaces

Throughout this work we will encounter many examples of practice and the centre of attention is on *doing* and engaging with processes of becoming. A practice or a process takes place within an "action space", the very hands-on opportunities offered to us by the combination of skills, tools and materials. Over the last years I have discussed this term quite often with the Malmö-based interaction designers Erik Sandelin and Magnus Torstensson and we have come to see it as a zone of distributed potentiality related to our abilities to interact with the world. The ac-

The steam engine and motor *came to be the image of the world during the industrial age. It was, just like the clockwork before, the dominant diagram for understanding the new rational and industrialized world. This affected the view on the human body and mind, society, production, power and resistance.*

Mechanistic and Network views. *The mechanistic view puts emphasis on the independent parts and relationship are secondary. This creates stability and predictability at the loss of dynamics. In the network, or systems view, there is a shift from the parts to the whole where every object is seen as a network of relationships, embedded into larger networks. This creates complex figures and requires new models of though (Capra 1996). In design this can represent a shift from products and tools to relations, services and interconnected action spaces.*

tion space is an area in which we move and make decisions about our lives, our everyday environment, things we think, act and do. It is a domain, geographical as well as practical and conceptual where we feel comfortable to make decisions and take action. Usually this follows accepted or habitual procedures from which we can expect satisfying and predictable results. It is also a field or an agglomeration of possibilities and unbound potentiality, of what we can do with what we have at hand. It is especially in this last sense that I use the concept.

The action space is always emergent and its borders can indeed be seen as fronts, as both interfaces and frontlines where the struggle for control takes place. We use our bodies and skills to try new solutions, to explore new ways to do things; we fight with gravity, the elements, or intangible concepts as we learn to walk, swim, and to discover metaphysical issues. We explore action spaces together as we compete, dance, and discuss our common metaphysical ideas. Our action spaces are thus highly physical, but at the same time conceptual, and most often they go hand-in-hand.

We inhabit action spaces, we are in the middle of them, but we as humans are not lone actors there. For there are also other types of actors such as energies, materials, tools, in addition to routines, skills, practices and norms. All these aspects affects the dynamics of the action space – what it constitutes and what potentials it "offers". This means our uses of action spaces are twofold. Firstly they are general practices, routines or everyday action spaces, as in the "practice of carpentry", which involves a usual set of space, tools, materials and skills. Secondly they are very specific and applied on singular occurrences or unique contexts, as for example, how I do to repair something just this moment.

To expand the borders of our action spaces we use tools to further our reach into potentiality. Tools are weapons on these fronts, with which to expand the capacity and potential of our bodies, but our tools also control us and guide our behaviour. On a piano we can press the keys to bring about a wonderful palette of sounds, but the piano is also constructed to be played in a specific way and it is very hard to bring forth other sounds out from it, such as blue notes and so on. On a computer keyboard we can press keys to write text or activate a wide range of commands, yet tapping it is its sole and very limited function.

In this way action spaces relate to what the interaction designer Donald Norman calls "affordances" which are action possibilities of an object as perceived by an actor (Norman 1990). Norman's definition of the object's action possibilities has come to mean more how an object "invites" or "suggests" specific behaviour from the user, whilst I use action spaces more as the direct link between the actor and the

performed task. An action space includes everything we can do, think, and use and as such is beyond the tool itself. Yet, tools are of course central to how humans interact with their world.

We use tools to expand our capacities, and these tools also become parts of us. They become a form of prosthesis, an extension of our bodies, like the blind man's white stick, or a bicycle for the cyclist, a relation Merleau-Ponty exemplified as a subject-object situation between body and tool (Merleau-Ponty 2002). This intimate connection between body and tool, or between actants is what Bruno Latour calls a "hybrid", where the tool constitutes a distributed competence, adding to the subjects possibilities to act upon the world (Latour 1993). In the study *Design of Everyday Life,* Shove *et al* (2007) examines the scattered competence in DIY craft projects. They emphasise the importance to recognize how technological tools and materials supports everyday endeavours,

> not as instruments of deskilling and dumbing down but as agents that rearrange the distribution of competence within the entire network of entities that have to be brought together to complete the job in hand. (Shove *et al* 2007: 59)

The inventors of tools prepare them for specific situations and responses and optimize or "sharpen" their use for specific foreseen tasks. But more often the users are more creative than the innovators, and they apply them to more uses than what was originally intended. A chair is used as a ladder, or a screwdriver temporarily used as a hammer. The action space proves larger than first thought. However, the opposite can be true. The user does not understand the full capacity of a tool. It is common in computer programs where there are far more menus and functions than used by most people, and the full potential of the tools is understood and released by very few. In this last case the offered action space is only partially used.

A common tool for expanding action spaces through skills often takes the form of the manual. This consists of hands-on step-by-step processes, show-and-tell performances, engaging in material or immaterial metamorphosis. To generalize a bit, these instructions can take two forms. They can be commands, similar to mathematical functions with units and elements transforming through various relations and calculations. They can also be like a cooking session following the advice from a cookbook. Ingredients are refined, mixed and moved in and out of the oven, multiplied, added, divided. Unlike most mathematical symbols, the ingredients of the cookbook are real; they have taste and consistency. It might be possible to say that we learn more about ginger by working with it and we learn about its nature, how it affects and operates as a part of a blended taste, than we learn the nature of a number though a mathematical calculation.

In this way a cookbook helps to open new action spaces. Ginger may become a part of our everyday kitchen, but we may also further our knowledge into a true connoisseurship. What was before a routine use of an ingredient might turn into an adventure. After some time we can let go of the cookbook and experiment by ourselves. The action space has grown and we continue on a journey on our own. New inspiration took us further after the show-and-tell manual set us off.

Some manuals are made for very specific purposes. They both open action spaces as well as limit them. Let us look at a plastic airplane model; one I built as a child. This airplane model has a glossy covered box with a nice illustration on the cover, the plane rages across the cloudy sky engaged in a daring dogfight. Opening the box the parts came out together with the magic djinn of model-building – endless

Zac McKracken and the Alien Mindbenders, *(Lucas-Films: 1988) exposes an example of action spaces. The gameplay menu show how an action space can be experienced as a list of possible actions or distributed potentiality. During the game different leads are found as well as new tools and these combined expand the character's possibility to solve situations and finish the game successfully.*

A Hammer *is an example of a tool expanding the action space of its user, but it also creates a certain attention to the world as "everything looks like nails". However, the hammer has a rare analog ctrl-z option which few designs have: the nails can be drawn out with its back claw.*

possibilities forming under your hands. As a child I really tried to master the skills of model building and after some training the joints between the parts become almost invisible and shape of the plane looked as promising as the one on the cover. When finishing I added camouflage paint and national insignia on the wings. It was perfect. In my hands a world was born. But as I looked closer and compared the model with the cover image it was as if the djinn of model building had slapped me in the face. I had forgotten to paint the pilot inside the now closed cockpit! He sat there in solitude, still in authentic plastic grey, reminding the world that this plane was no real plane. It was nothing like the grim and vivid fighter on the cover of the box. This plane was no real plane, and now it was forever doomed to suffer under gravity's bitter curse! Slowly I realized that this model was not test of skill – it was a test of discipline. No matter how exact the joints, I had failed the test. The pilot looked sadly out at me from the cockpit, gloomy and grey faced.

Similarly, we can look at IKEA manuals for assembling furniture. If you follow the process exactly as IKEA tells you, you will get the bookshelf witnessed in the shop. Without a good toolbox and some skills it will be hard for you to change this process, to tune it, to turn the bookshelf into a table. Actually, you are just a continuation of their factory, an unpaid assembly worker, an unskilled home mechanic. And no matter how many pieces of furniture you build from IKEA, you will have to go a long way to before becoming a carpenter. Likewise, no matter how many plane models I built as a child, I never became an aviation engineer.

The cookbook is different. For every dish I make, I reclaim a small portion of the kitchen. Instead of using the ready-made exotic soup, which in a way are very accessible and "democratic", I learn how to make one by myself. When I woke up this morning I didn't know there was a small Thai-chef inside me, but that came out during lunch as a learned to make a tasty Tom-Kha soup. A combination between a cookbook and a highly transformable material opened a new action space for me. It even inspired me to go further. Next time I will improvise a little as I make it, change a little in the recipe. It is an impulse to make me act, to make me regain some initiative. The cookbook induced me to act, setting me off into a new action space. Or to use the words of architect and change agent Nabeel Hamdi:

> This philosophy of 'acting in order to induce others to act', of offering impulses rather than instructions, and of cultivating an environment for change from within, starts on the ground and often with small beginnings which have 'emergent' potential – a bus stop, a pickle jar, a composting bin, a strandpipe [...]. (Hamdi 2004: xx)

In this way an inspiring manual breaks up and opposes a situation of activity substitution, what Slavoy Zizek and Robert Pfaller calls "interpassivity" (Zizek 1998, Pfaller 2003). Classically, this substitution has moved from historical "wailers", women hired to cry at funerals, to today's "canned laughter" on TV (Zizek). It is also a practice connected to technology, we act as the VCR "sees" movies for us, the copying machine "reads" books for us, very much as how the Tibetan prayer wheel "prays" for the believer when turned.

It is important to notice that interpassivity is not a question of people being fooled by rituals or technologies, but instead how we on purpose lose action spaces by delegating work to these services. We trade them action spaces for what we consider a better deal. Heating up a ready-made soup makes us have time for other things, but we also lose the possibility of learning to cook it. Our action space in the kitchen converges into microwave heating.

This loss of action space is similar to what Dutch philosopher Henk Oosterling calls "radical mediocrity" (Oosterling 2005). What is gained from using a word processor compared to handwriting, for example the speed, spelling, and the aesthetic, is lost to uniformity and limited freedom as we cannot express individual writing styles or write on the diagonal. Through interpassivity we give up our field of activity to a pre-packaged one. We give up the cookbook's inherent possibility to help us through kitchen emancipation for the seductive speed and predictability of the ready-made sauce.

In order to help us clarify the general difference of these ways through action spaces I propose to divide methods into two polar formats. However sweeping they might be I still think they can help us understand how manuals and instructions work, most forms of manuals exist in the grey scale in-between these.

On the one hand we have a form of the "executable". It is a process where the end goal or result is most important. It is a "double-click" performance that discharges energy towards a specific task. It contains an explanation for the task – how it is to be begun, conducted, executed, and completed. The executable is an inflexible instruction where we can clearly see in the end if it was done "right" or according to a given command. It is a narrow passage through an action space. However, two interpretations of an executable are never identical, if the process was not purely mathematical, but executables are intended to produce identical result. This is my perception of the IKEA shelf or the plastic model airplane.

On the other hand we have the "instructable". This is a form of show-and-tell, a pedagogic tool for distributed Do-It-Yourself advice where the journey is most important. It offers to teach something, a path opened into potentiality. It is about learning to navigate in action space. This is where I ideally put the cookbook.

Similarly we might need to understand "skill" better. For me, skill is not only a matter of ability but equally one of curiosity. Skill is in this sense something more than a linear path forward, it is also about taking an inquisitive look at the adjacent fields. In this sense, skill is the attentive search for perfection of the same skill, by questioning, distance and reflection, similar to how science historian

The Whole Earth Catalog, *started in 1968 by Stewart Brand and published occasionally until 1998, can be seen as the archetype of DIY cookbooks. It aimed to be a comprehensive guide to the methods and tools necessary for a Communalist living. The content was user-generated and the methods in the catalogue were not just tools but parts of larger processes to change the way humans lived on "spaceship earth". It contained methods for everything from cooking, house-building, medicine and sex. The farewell message placed on the back cover of the 1974 edition of the catalogue was: "Stay hungry, stay foolish."*

Sven-Erik Liedman critically includes curiosity in the concept of knowledge, knowledge as the curiosity of inquiry involved in the acquisition of knowledge (Liedman 2002).

Some of the skills might in some way be "tacit" (Polanyi 1998), but as the examples in this thesis make clear the role of the designer as an investigator does the best to reveal both "tacit" and "silenced" knowledge. In this role, the aim of the designer is to do his best to reverse engineer practice as well as material and to share skills and information for communicating these for wider accessibility. Here, by opening the methods, sharing the open source code, making cookbooks, the Swedish chef tries to make himself understood and help others to cook.

From a perspective of fashion, manuals, patterns and "how-to" books have been around for a long time and they have always mixed *acting* with *looking*. The question has mainly been about who does the sewing. "Trachtenbücher", or costume books, emerged already in the 16th century to show images of the latest fashion, and commercial "how-to" books, aimed at the domestic market, emerged already in the late 18th century to help the uninformed housewife. With the distribution of the first commercial paper dress patterns in the 1840s these "tissues of dreams" could help the diligent hands at home to materialize the latest fashion, already then dictated from Paris (Spanabel Emery 1999). This was, at the time, a form of controlled action spaces, not primarily aiming to teach sewing as much as reproducing the latest fashion. This made sense, as most people could not travel to buy the latest fashion of Paris, so the fashion came in the shape of magazines and patterns, dictating sewing and "how-to" look like in Paris. Similar to the pattern magazines of today they offered no real possibility to "talk back" or form new communities. Yet the motivation has changed over time. The objectives of home sewing in the west were just a few decades ago still primarily those of economy or fit. It has today changed to instead address questions such as individual accomplishment, creativity, self-confidence, independence, self reliance and development of skills (Schofield-Tomschin 1999).

Even so, fashion is usually presented to us as *ready-to-wear*, as a finished product, something we can choose from, but not engage in. The exclusivity of fashion stands in relation to the limiting of our action spaces. This is not only in the sense of brands restricting the amount of copies in circulation, but in the whole economy as a whole, and where brands and consumers make styles become more rapidly obsolescent. Throughout this process, we are usually not encouraged to see clothes as material for inventive cooking or for furthering of our action spaces. Especially not in connecting this practical action space, of hands-on craft, with the action spaces of producing intensities, of making something fashionable. What we will see throughout the following lines of practice are explorations in expanding the action spaces in relation to fashion.

the sandwiched action space dilemma

A perspective of social action in design is not uncontested and not all skills in the world are presumably good. Skill could of course be destructive and violent too, and there are many discussions about the accessibility of the Anarchist Cookbook (Powell 2003) or lately the Al Qaeda training manuals. Yet this is not of direct importance in this thesis, as I already from the beginning stated that such actions would be considered "cracking".

However, more problematic questions arise through participatory practice which paradoxically merges radical New Social Movement perspectives with that of the neo-liberal market economy (Boltanski & Chiapello 2005). The "molecular revolution" (Guattari 1984) or the tactics of the "multitude" (Hardt and Negri 2004) are indeed suggestively similar in their bottom-up approach to that of "viral" or "buzz" marketing, where "epidemics of demand" (Kirby and Marsden 2006) are deliberately generated from a bottom-up perspective. Similarly the classic term from guerrilla marketing slogan of "the truth made fascinating" (Levinson 2007) is very similar to the "tactics" of indymedia and the popular "anarchist" protests against globalization of groups such as CrimethInc (CrimethInc 2001 & 2004). The micropolitical or street actions that are intended to raise consciousness (Hudema 2004) share common traits to the marketing tools used to "tip" dynamic market systems into large profits or promote "sticky" slogans of social change (Gladwell 2000).

It can be said that my research is sandwiched between the two dominant ideologies or logics of our time. On one hand we have the de-skilling uniformity of industrialism, massproduction, and the depersonalized managerial strata DeLanda calls "anti-markets", after a term by economic historian Fernand Braudel. From this perspective of mass society the imposed consumerism of big capital and hierarchical discipline are still the big evils of the world. The masses are passive herds of consumer sheep but the rebel dream of "sex, drugs and rock'n roll" can still help to empower people to at least "drop out" of the system.

On the other hand we have the "liquid" modernity of distributed consumerism (Bauman 2000, 2007), of the "creative society" with a ubiquitous creative imperative. From this perspective rebellion is the new uniformity (Heath and Potter 2005) that is boosted by the profit generating "creative class" (Florida 2002). Through this every person is forced to be an inventive entrepreneur to survive in the attention market, through self-discipline, motivation and intuitive social competence. Nobel-prize winning micro-finance banking meets "base of the pyramid" protocols, where every virtuous designer helps "selling to the poor" (Whitney & Kelkar 2004, Prahalad 2005, Hart 2005). Here the market also de-commodifies, as it turns into ubiquitous services, subscriptions and micro-finance plans, often in the name of "development" or "sustainability", which from a sceptic's view could be seen as simply new market strategies supporting a perpetual feeding of the global economy with a confluence of money to the top strata.

It is problematic to find a quick designer-oriented way out of this dilemma, and all its shades on the gray scale cannot be discussed at length here. If we take the Internet as an example, we can see participants remixing music, sharing photos, writing wikipedia entries, linking and commenting blogs, etc. All these examples are forms of co-productive and participatory work, often shared with "open" licences, such as Creative Commons or Copyleft. On the one hand these participants work towards a common goal and a common good, "the commons". Here they share cultural expressions and information to collectively sharpen their skills and develop a cultural commons for everyone to partake for free. On the other hand this means much work is done "for free", and used "for free" by others, be they amateurs or big anti-market corporations, something that makes it hard for creators to survive on their work, at least through the usual mechanisms of the market. Some creations take a contained shape to become easily exchanged commodities, others remain amorphous free-floating memes or codes. We also see intermediate forms arise bridging the gap between producer and consumer, actor and audience. The clear

Ruf n Tuf jeans *is an example of the "Base of the Pyramid" protocol. They are cheap DIY kits aimed at Indians who cannot afford conventional jeans but still wish to purchase them. The big denim producer Arvind Mills offers the Ruf n Tuf jeans kit cheaply to local tailors all over India who in turn function as a distribution channel to reach the final local customers.*

distinction of actor and audience can boost each other, as in football, but also dissolve, as in the Freire-inspired "theatre of the oppressed" where the audience are co-actors in the play.

To apply this problem of participation on DIY activities, many would argue that building IKEA furniture or choosing your pension funds follows the same abstract machine as the DIY culture where we are offered material and tools to build our own end-product. In these cases I would argue otherwise, for what we usually see in this type of work distribution is the delegation of unpaid work, where we are "offered" a lower price, or shorter queues, and we must instead spend time and effort at home to do-it-ourselves. This can indeed often be practical, but what is often hidden in these delegations is that responsibility is distributed, but not the skills or the potential action spaces. I cannot build the full potential that the IKEA kit is offering, there is only one model, and, as I argued earlier, I do not learn anything. Similarly, I am not offered to do what I want to do with my pension money but just to choose from a set of existing funds or banking services. I cannot buy a bike for the money here and now. In this type of DIY the producer or sender deliberately limits the action spaces for the consumer.

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To become "able" is a question of access to skills, tools and action spaces. Sometimes they are augmented with a basic form of transparency or plan that helps us to orientate through the action space. This type of DIY and its goal for self-enhancement is, from my perspective, more often than not a good thing. As Richard Sennett already said in the beginning: "The emotional rewards craftsmanship holds out for attaining skill are twofold: people are anchored in tangible reality, and they can take pride in their work." (Sennett 2008: 21)

Of course not everybody can reach all action spaces, and not everyone can be a true craftsman as defined by Sennett. Yet, the more action spaces we open, and the more pride we can take from them, the more they can anchor self-esteem. In regards to information and sharing, this also offers a wider possibility for raising "publics" in Dewey's sense (1991), and a radical democratization of information and low-level DIY modes of production. Help could also be offered through sharing tools and services. Indeed, services can also have the opposite effect and de-skill people, but often consumers in consumer society are already de-skilled, and when not these "holes" are often plugged by laws and regulations, as seen in the on-going discussions in the world of digital culture. We also see it in the case of numerous consumer products where there are no longer any screw that can be loosened and consequently access to the workings of the product are almost impossible. In our consumer culture most things are "ready-made" or "ready-to-wear".

From this perspective, a designer role promoting skills of engagement and participatory empowerment can still do good, even though the results might be employed by any side of the ideological struggle. On the contrary, one can argue that most often access to skills or tools is still the most well kept secret of most companies, and one that excludes consumers from participation and engagement. It should also be said that the "between" state of being sandwiched is not a passive state, but instead an opening for new action spaces, if used correctly. As argued by Deleuze and Guattari, a middle state "is by no means an average; on the contrary, it is where things pick up speed. *Between* [is] a transversal movement that sweeps one *and* the other way, a stream without beginning or end that undermines its banks and picks

up speed in the middle." (D&G 2004; 28) From this middle we should also pick up our energy for action.

It is in-between that we will have room for action. With skill and perspective the small actor might even become strong enough to enliven a shift in roles, from that of the entrepreneur (leasing in-between), to that of a complementary "entredonneur" (giving in-between), a shift proposed by design researcher John Wood (1990). This would suggest a possibility of a designer or actor, using their action spaces for the common good, playing a role in the market economy while still being a "merciful entrepreneur" (Palmås 2003).

This last "entredonneur" or "merciful entrepreneur" could be an influence for a designer role revisiting the "Buddhist economics" of E.F. Schumacher (1989). Schumacher paints a scenario of another form of economy, another nuance or a complement to the global materialist economy we experience today. He means that while "the materialist is mainly interested in goods, the Buddhist is mainly interested in liberation." (60) Even though this thesis does not have a Buddhist approach we will find a lot of his thoughts resonate throughout this thesis, from his ideas to use "appropriate technologies" (188ff), to develop skills and to produce "from local resources for local needs" (62). We should leave this passage with his view of work is really about.

> The Buddhist point of view takes the function of work to be at least threefold: to give a man a chance to utilise and develop his faculties; to enable him to overcome his ego-centredness by joining with other people in a common task; and to bring forth the goods and services needed for a becoming existence. (58)

It is within these setting we must imagine a new designer role emerging. It is one operating the abstract machine of hacktivism, intersecting many disciplines and participatory paths, yet remaining a hands-on crafter. This would be a new hacktivist designer role.

a new crafter and designer role

There are always possibilities for new designer roles to emerge, and history is full of evolutionary mutations and leaps in how the designer finds his or her place in society and the modes of production. Throughout this research we must imagine a com-

plementary forms of practice for shaping a new designer role for fashion. I have called this role a "hacktivist" designer role and we will see throughout this thesis a multiplicity of examples how it operates. This role is not the one of a classic unique genius of fashion. Instead it is in the form of orchestrator and facilitator, as an agent of collaborative change. It is not the divine creator of the original and new, but a negotiator, questioning and developing design as a skill and practical production utility. It is a role that purposefully works with experimentation in ascending scales: starting at the kitchen table, exploring and developing skills, tools and hacking energetic or material flows, then applying this to larger scale production and projects. It is a combination of designing material artefacts as well as social protocols.

We will follow these ascending scales through the following chapters. In the final methodological appendix we will meet method lines that are intrinsic parts of a new complementary designer role for fashion, one operating with employing the abstract machine of hacktivism into their practice.

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It is important to notice that a "hacktivist" role includes a vital role that is central when running socially engaged projects. It is the ability to be an *intensifier*. We could shortly examine what this "intensifying" designer role could mean.

A key ability in an intensifying role lies in the capability to spot and reveal existing potentialities and initiatives. These could be found by coincidence or by careful mapping and systematic curiosity. These local initiatives are then supported and amplified through situated practices and workshops with the aim of energizing existing and emergent processes and intensities, promoting local potentialities. Here the role of the designer becomes manifold. Both on a social level, facilitating processes through practical organizing, and also on a craft level, a hands-on tool provider, re-skilling teacher and blacksmith.

Yet, as the *intensifier* role meets the *hacktivist* a special quality emerges. Both that of amplifying small local potentials, and that of reverse engineering a system to find energies to plug a local initiative into the system at the best spot. It is a combination of using infrastructure, material, skills and ideas that are all already existing – what is needed is an extra energy and addition that pushes the situation through a phase transition to that of a "higher order", a better potential for change. A local situation of low energy or intensity becomes unstable and enters a new phase, connecting with other intensities but remains the same materially and locally and still within control of the participants. This stresses interactions rather than independence and it requires systems thinking instead of autonomy. The practice of the designer is then close to that described as "metadesign", the close interactions between organisms that support synergies and evolves more complex species and ecosystems (Maturana 1997). This also means a practice engaged in the "the design of design" that enables and sustains emergence between interacting parts or systems (Tham & Jones 2008; Wood 2008).

An interesting parallel can be drawn with evolutionary biology. In theories of evolution there is the term of *symbiogenesis* that describes a specific kind of cooperative evolution pattern explored by biologist Lynn Margulis (Margulis 1998; Margulis & Sagan 1995; Capra 1996). The symbiogenetic concept refers to the origin of new forms of organisms by establishment of long-term or permanent symbiosis (Margulis 1998: 6) This view shifts the emphasis of the evolutionary "survival of
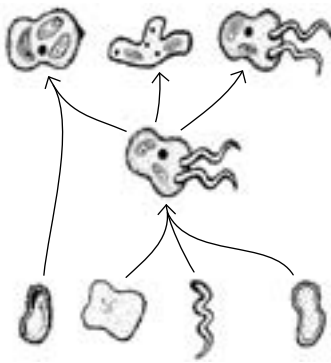
Two examples of DIY crafting *workshops at the Hackers and Haute Couture Heretics exhibition can exemplify how different modes of participation help develop crafting skills. The T-shirt transformation workshop of Megan Nicolay (top) was a very playful event where participants cut up and remade T-shirts in various ways. The material is very simple to work with, as it is stretchable and does not fray. But at the same time the format is limited for further development. The methods of*

Nicolay are very simple, some only involving cutting the shirt in various ways with a pair of scissors. This encourages participants to immediately engage in the workshop. The results are exciting and the spirit high among visitors.
Another workshop was run by Junky Styling (below). Their designs are based on recycling mens suits. Here the material is more demanding and the engagement requires more craftsmanship of both complex seam ripping and machine sewing.

However, as the methods of Junky are simple too, and as the transformation act of suits preserves much of the original details, the final result always looks tailor made. The combination of original details and freshly made alterations blends into a sartorial alloy where participants leave the workshop with very convincing results. Both workshops engaged participants in DIY crafts and advancement of their skills. What they experienced at the gallery was just a teaser of their future fashion endeavours.

The evolution of life *has, according to biologist Lynn Margulis, depended on the symbiosis of simple organisms through successive mergers of cells into more complex forms of life. This cooperative combination of basic abilities, which in turn give birth to higher forms of life with enhanced capacities, is called symbiogenesis. (Margulis 1998; Capra 1996)*

the fittest" from strictly violent competition, to instead highlight evolution through close cooperation and the merging of different species. This means that some species evolve in close symbiosis rather than rivalry. This concept similar to *mutualism* and explores special biologic niches where cooperation challenges competition as the driving force of evolution. If we apply this concept to design the aim of the designer not primarily to be a strong auteur but to find hybrid forms and explore the niches of symbiosis, where small molecular evolutions trigger synergies and cooperation, boosting small changes of engagement among participants and stakeholders.

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So what we have seen here is the emergence of a highly composite designer role in a mix of designer, artist, producer, manager, and social development worker. Eventually even as a therapist or coach. From a perspective of traditional design, some would argue that this is a role without classic craft skills and more like a project leader without a feeling for the real material. For many it could seem like role far from the skilled studio craftsman. However, I will argue the opposite. It is a role that goes back to specialized craft skills.

According to sociologist Richard Sennett (2006) we live in a time of a new capitalism, a system feeding on speed, flexibility, mobility. Long hours but short commitments. Long service earns no respect. Promising potential is celebrated rather than past performance.

> The emerging social order militates against the ideal of craftsmanship, that is, learning to do just one thing really well; such commitment can often prove economically destructive. In place of craftsmanship, modern culture advances an idea of meritocracy which celebrates potential ability rather than past achievement. (Sennett 2006: 4)

Instead of staying at one place or one field, we should move quickly between occupations and promising new possibilities, rather than explore ones own craft. This is a deceitful combination of convenience and individual choice with that of a work logic dominating our whole society where everything "solid melts into air". This is what another sociologist, Zygmunt Bauman, would call a "liquid" society and working climate (Bauman 2000, 2007).

Following this "liquid" logic we could easily dismiss new forms of interdisciplinary work. It would seem like yet another consultant work, lacking a real sense of craftsmanship as it transgresses material and social borders. However, I would argue, there is indeed craftsmanship even in an interdisciplinary role, and not only a social craft of "working with people", but a true commitment to the connection between the material and the changing role of a designer working with social reorganization.

One side of this craft is the forming of arenas where the learning of skills is the predominant practice. This can be a hands-on workshop where craft skills are tested, repurposed, and even "misused", into addressing new issues. This requires both an understanding of craftsmanship and skill as well as tools for engaging people. Here the craftsman is conceptual producer, organizer, and facilitator as well as teacher and inspirational master crafter.

The main purpose of such practices is both the advancement of skills and craft, but also of struggling against the contemporary "spectre of uselessness" (Sennett 2006),

the feeling of lack awaiting us all in these liquid times. Engaging in the practice of empowerment through skills can make us more "useful", contributing with something that matters to others and ourselves. Craftsmanship, according to Sennett, means to have a desire to do things well for their own sake. This approach to how we set out to do things in the world raises skills and can empower us against the "spectre of uselessness". This is done primarily in two steps. The first step is to make craft an ideal, and a quality for understanding our world – for everyone. The second is to form a deeper understanding and a pride in the craft skills, in craftsmanship.

We start with the first step. With the help of sociologist Sharon Zukin, Sennett argues about the need for skill and craftsmanship. This does not aim for a situation where we all have to farm our food ourselves or hunt for our dinner. It is an understanding of our world through craft and quality, not only for production, but also for a more insightful consumption. The present day "consumer lacks the production knowledge that earlier generations commanded." (Zukin 2004: 185) To be more insightful consumers we need to have more knowledge, specifically craft knowledge. With this Zuking means

> a sensory appreciation of a product's qualities, a modest understanding of different production techniques, and the imagination to construct a product's 'back story' – a social narrative of the cultural tradition from which the product comes. (Zukin 2004: 185)

As Sennett proposes, this is a change in our everyday perception of the world. In this first step consumers will have to train to get the eyes of craftsmen, since "the modern consumer needs to think like a craftsman without being able to do what a craftsman does." (Sennett 2006: 143)

The second step concerns the development of a real and deep ability in craft, and craftsmanship. For this we will need to spend more time exploring our craft and our tools at hand, but we also need to open up our surrounding, to break up our everyday objects, to make them more transparent for engagement and better understand their workings.

> In labor, the good craftsman is more than a mechanical technician. He or she wants to understand why a piece of wood or computer code doesn't work; the problem becomes engaging and thereby generates objective attachment. This ideal comes to life in a traditional craft like making musical instruments; equally in a more modern setting like a scientific laboratory. […] But in consumption it's hard to think like a craftsman, as Zukin advoctes. You buy because something is user-friendly, which usually means the user don't have to bother about how the thing, whether a computer or a car, works. (Sennett 2006: 170)

We make ourselves tools for reaching larger action spaces, for applying our desire to change the world onto the world though our work. These tools strike back, and also pacify us, quite like what I discussed above about "interpassivity". We need to keep this in mind as we apply tools to advance our action spaces. This requires another kind of thinking for designers, but also for us as consumers and as citizens. As Steven Heller argues in the book *Citizen Designer*; to be a responsible designer requires more than talent, it requires also good citizenship (Heller 2003). For Heller the key issue is to ask questions, and to work with the answers in order to create responsible decisions.

To create an engaged practice of making responsible design is thus our main task. This means to form a special knowledge or craftsmanship to engage in the development of skills. The hope is for a hacktivist orchestration of social craftsmanship that leads to new skills and action spaces. This is a social practice on many levels; reverse engineering and understanding systems, developing craftsmanship, showing examples that attract participation, creating manuals that lead the way, organizing workshops that mobilize energy in the right direction, negotiating continuations, and finally plugging the projects back into the system. On every level we will collectively explore new action spaces for fashion.

I would suggest the practice of an engaged hacktivist designer could be something like this:

- *Reawakening a spirit:* Inspiring and boosting the thirst for exploration and emergence, expanding action spaces through simple examples, workshops and manuals to form new forms of attention and awareness.

- *Giving voice to the silent:* Creating a language of practice and also encouraging experiments in visual expression. To develop a critical usage of existing media channels as well as creating new ones.

- *Going through informal channels:* Bypass gatekeepers; find your own, low-level paths of action.

- *Building self-reliance:* Teaching simple modular methods or subsystems that can easily be expanded into other interventions and creations, developing a trust and courage in ones skills.

Matrushka Fashion *is a fashion brand from Los Angeles that, on top of their standard collections, arrange T-construction nights with special themes. During these events they assemble and produce T-shirts from ready-made parts together with their visitors, quite similar to collaborative Lego-style production. Visitors hang around in good company, with drinks and music, while an assembly line is created where the various parts of the T-shirts are put together according to your will. With or without your help.*
In Matrushka's example the production process of every garment is made transparent and open for intervention, and the assembly itself is made into an event. The value of the new garment is created from the bottom up through the open participation in the event, the assembly process, and the community brought together to share and develop their designs.

- *Mobilizing resources:* Reorganize production, open new action spaces by recircuiting the existing ones. Use the possibilities of what is considered as junk, making the leftovers of society your pool of treasures.

- *Provoking the "taken-for-grantedness":* Help to make the virtual or possible imaginable and discussable. Make models and visionary prototypes. Challenge the participants' imagination.

- *Making micro-plans:* Think in small steps, plan small, but be open for serendipity. Make examples of how the single informal action might be turned into a stabilized activity and a sustainable project or business, at least resulting in richness of dignity and self-respect. Map relations and prototype protocols.

- *Forming alliances:* Engage participants, share resources and skills, collaborate and build assemblages together. Be a rhizome, a pack of wolves, a swarm of rats. But be conscious of its risks and take seriously the responsibilities it demands.

- *Intensifying the power:* Plug the project into a larger energy system, use its potentiality, connect with other lines and ride their shared power, boost the flows, accelerate the participation, celebrate a shared re-engagement.

All these aspects require a large portion of idealism as well as hands-on pragmatism, applying adaptive imagination to look into unknown fields for interdisciplinary building and mobilizing of assets. The process is open-ended and explorative. It has no big plan but we learn as we go along, and also from our allies and the examples set by others. The uncertainty is also the advantage of the method. As Nabeel Hamdi (2004) encouragingly says, we should embrace uncertainty and use it for exploration; "not knowing […] leaves space to think creatively, uncertainty gives room to think" (Hamdi 2004: 39).

It is with great uncertainty we shall now move on and leave room for the examples and projects where we can see the abstract machine of hacktivism operate. It will help us see some possible action spaces for fashion. We will have to go far beyond the recent "democratization" of fashion. This has only proved to mean that we are offered more cheap clothes that mainly look the same. This "democratization" is similar to the possibility to choose between several hundred advertised satellite TV stations, with the only option to switch off if we do not like any of them. Instead we must see how we can also talk back, engage at a deeper level, access the channels and even produce our own programs. We will investigate how engaged fashion can help the user develop her skills, to put them to use in collaborative ways, and how this approach effects the role of the designer. It is a designer role that orchestrates small change, to help people who want to become *fashion-able*.

hacktivism

- **HACKTIVISM IS THE MERGER BETWEEN POLITICAL ACTIVISM AND HACKING. IT IS THE MODIFICATION OF SYSTEMS, PROGRAMS OR DEVICES TO GIVE MORE USERS ACCESS TO ACTION SPACES THAT WERE OTHERWISE UNAVAILABLE. THESE NEW PASSAGES AND SPACES ARE SHARED WITHIN THE COMMUNITY FOR OTHERS TO BUILD FURTHER ON.**

Along the line of this chapter we will follow parts of the history of what I call hacktivism and we will also see it applied in a variety of ways to enrich our perspective on fashion. We will start by following a line of hacking and then to come to see more detailed examples of how the abstract machine of hacktivims operates. I mean these examples offer a furthering of the hacking approach that can give new light on the designer role. As we will come to see, the practices of hacktivism run through many fields and practices and we can from this perspective approach fashion in new ways.

Hacking is a DIY practice of direct intervention, and its application is twofold. Firstly, it is about the skill to open a system, access it and learn to master defences and structure. Secondly, hacking is a specific tactic of changing a system by plugging into it and redirecting its flows into a more desirable goal, usually by actively building on it. The hacking line of practice plays with technology through these two approaches, to make it do new things by explicitly using the existing forces and infrastructure within the system for changing it.

Another central point of hacking is the hacker community's argument that "information wants to be free", that sharing systems and creating open source codes flattens the diagram of control within the community and vitalizes the scene. It is through actions like this I mean hacking starts to turn into hacktivist engagement. However, as the hacking ethic is also meritocratic and sometimes even elitist it emphasises the individual skills of the hacker and can thus be quite exclusive. Nevertheless, a dominant part of the community try to create a symbiotic culture, where all small contributions can plug into each other to form larger emergent systems, such as the Linux operating system.

Throughout this chapter we will follow some different examples of how hacking operates. We will set out on a journey through various forms of hacking, starting from computers. Following this we will see how the same abstract machine operates by relating practices such as lock-picking, urban exploration and circuit-bend-

ing. Hardware hacking is also related to craftivism and shopdropping as remixed commodities and codes are reinserted into their native systems, using the existing channels and expectations to challenge the system's primal right of interpretation. To position hacktivism within a political framework we will then explore how it can be related to a recent rereading of the class struggle described by Marx, but from the perspective of hacking.

When we finally apply hacktivism to fashion our first meeting will be through the practice of deconstruction within fashion, which has affected fashion expressions widely over the last decades. This type of recycling has some similarities with hacking, but is also very different in its relation to the users and how the material or "code" is used. The chapter then ends with a discussion concerning a project of open sources fashion, Giana González' *Hacking-Couture*, to then explore my own cookbook processes, the ReForm projects and the *Abstract Accessories.*

hacking

Since the 1960s, hacking is a term usually connected to the world of computers. It has often a connotation of an ingenious geek, breaking into forbidden networks, bypassing security systems, stealing passwords and hijacking phones to call for free. In popular media they collaborate with like-minded in their hidden sects to break into banks or steal classified government information. In computer jargon there is a crucial difference between the curious hacker and his vicious counterpart - the

>!< **Loike Lahkajad, or Pattern Dissectors,** *was a self_passage project done together with Estonian artist Sirja-Liisa Vahtra. It was a two week open workshop and exhibition on sartorial surgery and garment dissections at the Draakon Gallery, Tallinn, in September 2004. Using nonviolent reverse engineering, the project consisted of public dissections of white second-hand clothes, revealing their hidden layers and technical construction. The gently unstitched pieces were displayed on the walls before being put back together into new mutated forms which were for sale at the gallery.*

cracker. In media these roles are often confused, but to make this difference clear programming guru Eric Raymond put it simply as: "hackers build things, crackers break them." (Raymond 2001) Yet, hacking is the mastery of a system, often on the edge of trespassing or the unpermitted, but usually not with ill intent.

This strict distinction easily comes in a moral dilemma and it frames a dispute that has followed hacking since its birth. It can be also argued that cracking and breaking things is a constructive practice and necessary for building. Every hack needs some initial crack, but to differentiate a hack from a simple deconstruction I stress the building and constructive modification as a central aspect of hacking.

Underlining the constructive aspect of hacking is quite common, not least among hackers themselves, and it differs radically to the counterculture's approach to protest and how to create or facilitate change in a controlled and closed system, be it software or civil society. According to media theorist William J. Mitchell there is a difference between the hackers and the -68 movement or the tactics of the Situationists:

> MIT's nerds have never felt the need to frame their jokes and pranks with French-style theoretical apparatus, but they do have a characteristic tactic of their own – the hack. The best hacks are cleverly engineered, site-specific, guerrilla interventions that make a provocative point but aren't destructive or dangerous. Unlike hard-core Situationists, who wanted to provoke genuine outrage, true hackers would never consider stunts like absconding with the severed head of Copenhagen's Little Mermaid. (Mitchell 2005: 118)

The culture of hardware modification has always been around but only over the last decade has it been popularly referred to as hacking. The aspect of sharing technological activities and modifying consumer items reached a large audience with the rise of amateur radio and car modifying, or modding, in the 1920s. This line of practice intersected with an expanding popular science magazine culture, documenting the wonders of the rising technological society as well as promoting hobby inventions and leisure activities. This type of technology modding is rooted in the classic Do-It-Yourself (DIY) culture but became "hacking" first with the introduction of computers.

The hacking approach to computers started out as an academic subculture when computers were rare and software code and programs was shared among users and programmers. A good hacker was a good programmer, solving tricky passages with smart bendings of the existing code, adding new critical parts, improving it to make it do what was intended. Hacking and reusing code was a way to shorten queue times to the computers, but also caught the spirit of curious modifications in which many of the academics were interested. Later, as computers became more commonplace this practice became common in the hobby networks where hardware, programs and operating systems were collectively built upon.

Defining exactly what "hack" means is not easy since the concept involves many various fields of use and is also commonly used outside computer contexts. It is usually an activity of making technology work the way one wants by direct intervention into the functional systems and operations of a machine or device; the conscious "trickery and manipulation of a system" (Cramer 2003). It also implies something more than ordinary or everyday use. According to the technical journalist Steven Levy "the feat must be imbued with innovation, style and technical

virtuosity." (Levy 1994: 23) But hacking can also be used to meaning of reclaiming authorship (or co-authorship) of a technology by supporting transparency and unanticipated use. It is a critical as well as playful activity circling around a Do-It-Yourself approach to the means for our interaction with the world, circumventing unwanted limitations and control systems proposed by others.

In this way a hack goes beyond customization, or "pimping", even if it hard to draw a strict border between the two phenomena. Where customization offers a controlled and limited amount of options for change, hacking is in this sense the "colouring outside the lines". It is modifying something beyond the predefined design field of original intensions and customization parameters. It is about scratching ones own itch, but using unexpected methods. Hacking is to find an own way, to encourage exploration, putting curiosity into action, but also sharing this for others to build upon.

In this way, a hack can be seen as a deeper intervention rather than a customization. It is a tactic for "cultural counterintelligence" (Becker, K 2002), animated and anti-authoritarian, seizing back imagination subjugated by technocrats or the narrow mindedness of specific company solutions. By sharing, it is decentralizing control and empowering users at a low level to open a multiplicity of ways for manipulation. In Richard Stallman's words it is about "exploring the limits of what is possible, in a spirit of playful cleverness." (Stallman 2002)

A predominant feature in hacking is the exploration, or archaeological excavation of hidden properties in hardware or software. It is centred on a deep and practical curiosity into the substrata of code or matter. In this way it is questioning the concepts of ownership and control. As the motto of the DIY magazine Make says; "if you can't open it, you don't own it" (Jalopy 2005). This practice of hardware tinkering takes many shapes, and does not only take technical skills to make it work. According to the media theorist McKenzie Wark hacking is "at once an aesthetic and an ethic" and requires cooperation as much as individual skill and inventiveness. (Wark 2006: 320)

Hacking in this sense is based on some topics closely connected to DIY culture and connoting mastery in a most literal sense, of making a computer, or any tool or system, do what the hacker wants, whether the initial constructor wants it or not. Hacking is a wide practice, yet it can be condensed to some central points, as illustrated by social researcher Anne Galloway:

- Access to a technology and knowledge about it ("transparency").
- Empowering users.
- Decentralizing control.
- Creating beauty and exceeding limitations. (Galloway, Anne 2004)

To these points could also be added; "using the intelligence of many for innovation, and sharing it freely", as the hacker ethic is based on a notion of collaboration and building on existing code, often summed up with author Stewart Brand's quote that "information wants to be free" (Brand 1985: 49).

Hacking is also about creating good implementations or beautiful possibilities, a classic mastery of skills or craftsmanship. Not only in an aesthetic sense but also in the way mathematicians call good work "beautiful". Like an answer to the practical question "how do you make good stuff?" (Graham 2004) It has a suggestive character, inspiring to further explorations due to its simplicity and revealing openness. In a world where technology becomes more ubiquitous and disappears from view, the hack is bringing political questions of access back into the light, subverting or politicizing closed and hidden functions and uses of networks.

Central to hacking is a practice of re-design, furthering the central copy and paste commands of programming and the digital realm. It is more about using existing functions, subsystems and parts by creating patchwork and crossover techniques, rather than creating something entirely new or truly unique.

In this way hacking can be seen as a design of designs, or a design for design. Part of its purpose is to offer pieces for other to build with, not to finish something and to build walls around it. This becomes visible in programming where one part of the code is the functions, the code written for the computer. The other part of the code are the comments, the lines written after the functions to help a future reader, other than the programmer, to understand what the code is about, what it does and the thinking of the programmer. In this way hacking is creating building blocks, like Lego pieces or the Japanese fashion designers Issey Miyake's and Dai Fujuwara's

Slow and Steady Wins the Race *is a New York based label that transposes the high-priced avant-garde and the trickle down basics into a new realm of fashion. The label presents bimonthly a clothing diary or collections of ideas with the aim to advance a more democratic dissemination, promotion and appreciation of clothing. For every new line a limited edition is produced of a hundred copies, all reasonably priced and aimed to promote the idea of a democratic and grass-roots distribution of a slower fashion. This is done by materializing unique ideas that are themselves timeless comments on the fashion race.*

"Balenciaga-Gucci bag", A hyperbolic combo of two of the iconic handbags, made from canvas (left)
"Kraft Carrier" in tobacco suede (middle)
"Bodega Bag" in black leather (right)
The Kraft Carrier and Bodega Bag are generic grocery and market bags executed in fine leathers for live object oxymorons.

"The Folded Arms Shirt", a reinterpretation of the standard white shirt silhouette (opposite)

This type of product transformation can be an example of a hacking tactic turned back into a classic product economy. It plays brilliantly with fashion codes, encourages intervention by revealing a simple way of craft intrusion in fashion. But it does not offer any further tools for participation on the playground it presents.

modular clothing pieces, "A-POC" – A Piece Of Cloth, a series of collections that can be built into a variety of garments (Evans 2003: 275).

In this way hacking is made to do something new but at the same time preserve the original parts incorporated in the new, by simply repurposing original tools and *modus operandi*. Quite similarly, painting is learnt by copying the works of great masters since it forces you to look closely at how painting is made. Like writing or any traditional craft is done too (Graham 2004). This basic form of learning is for mastering the basic technique, but hacking is finally about colouring outside the lines and exceeding the limitations of the original medium. It is in this expansion of mindset and furthering of action spaces we will see how hacking meets activism. By colouring outside the lines hacking becomes more than an exploration of a locked system, it also triggers new uses and unconventional methods. It is playfully challenging conventions, often triggered by tricky situations, like improving eating skills with three or more chopsticks in each hand as in a ludic hacking example by Richard Stallman (Stallman 2002).

hacking access

We have noted that the hack has a history of being a prank, a practical joke, a re-setting of an environment or an exploration into a forbidden space, but without harming anything or anyone involved which is a cardinal rule in the "hacker ethic". Already in the prank hacks the sharing of skills was important and questions of access were central; access to computers, which was scarce in the beginning of programming, as well as to the shared computer networks. This brought forth methods and comprehensive manuals for analogue hacking, for example in the form of lock-picking.

The practice of lock-picking reveals how hacking is about curiosity, access and mastering skills to overcome obstacles. Lock-picking by hackers is not used for burglary but is instead an "interest in locks, not doors", as I was told by a lock-picker at a hacker conference in Berlin. This thin line between accessibility and trespassing is hard to define. Traditionally within the hacker community the trespassing practice is bound by a "hacker ethic", a loose set of rules of non-destructive free sharing.

Brian Duffy and his Modified Toy Orchestra *are engaged in circuit bending, "the creative art of short circuiting". Duffy rescues old electronic toys from car boot sales and thrift stores to later convert them into new sophisticated musical instruments. Through reverse engineering and hands-on deconstruction new sounds are exposed that lay hidden within every toy's circuits, from unused demos and beats with no possibility to reach with keys on the outside, to pure short circuited noise. These "liberated" sounds are bent into new forms of music by reconnecting the circuits in new ways, first just probing the surface of the chip with a wet finger, then soldering cables and switches to the "hot" areas of the chip. Through this simple method Duffy creates new instruments with redundant technology. During reassembly new switches and dials are added to the outside with which to control and tweak the hidden liberated resources inside.*

Yet in this sense lock-picking also reveals a central limitation of hacking. Hacking is the ingenious mastering of a system, the curiosity as to borders and obstacles, and the training of skills of how to override them. But it sometimes also reveals a certain disinterest for what is behind the lock or border. It is challenging the control and power system of the closed system, but it often lacks the interest to purposefully build an alternative.

This is where I mean we meet the hacktivist approach, when the act of hacking meets an activist curiosity and will for social change. Of course this distinction is hard to draw, but I will try to give a first example where I mean hacking, curiosity and activism meets to form a basic form of the abstract machine of hacktivism. This is in the practice of urban exploration.

Urban Exploration, or Urbex, is the practice of spatial hacking and of curious exploration of the hidden everyday. The community's motto, "Leave nothing but footprints, take nothing but pictures" comes from the American environmentalist "Sierra Club", but is applied to urban conditions. Their explorations are the urban contemporary answer to Livingstone's journeys into the empty spots on the African map, but instead of going to foreign continents it is about exploring the catacombs, sewer systems and deserted subway tunnels, hidden in our everyday urban environment. Urbex is about seeking out, accessing and documenting built structures and spaces normally hidden from sight, such as drains, utility tunnels, construction sites, and abandoned buildings. It is not about getting access to closed entertainment events or playing in forbidden areas, but purposefully and systematically tour the unseen everyplace where curiosity is triggered by unknown human-built structures. It is a form of spatial hacking, accessing passages and places not intended by the administrators but where hackers boldly go. As Ninjalicious (2005), founder or urbex zine *Infiltration* mentions, it is also about breaking patterns of behaviour:

> For too many people, urban living consists of mindless travel between work, shopping and home, obvious to the countless wonders a city offers. Most people think the only worth looking at in our cities and towns are those safe and sanitized attractions that require an admission fee. … Rather than passively consuming entertainment, urban explorers strive to actively create authentic experiences, by making discoveries that allow them to participate in the secret workings of cities and structures, and to appreciate fantastic, obscure spaces that might otherwise go completely neglected. (3)

Urbex practitioners remake the maps to tell us more accurately what exists in our proximity. It is a practice often connected to danger, as most of the areas are rarely visited without administrator access or knowledge. Disbanded dark areas are not full of traps but require cautious visitors. Ninjalicious stresses the need for precaution as well as preparedness, but still means that urbex is not a harmful adventure even if it often involves danger:

> While it's true that danger isn't the ultimate evil, this hobby isn't about the quest for danger so much as a willingness to accept certain levels of danger in the course of the quest to discover and document forgotten or neglected realms. You know, like Indiana Jones or Lara Croft, but without the stealing. (7)

This might sound like the explorers are the paradoxical heroes of our time, even though they break into forbidden areas, but they are indeed guided by a certain ethic. This ethic of urbex go beyond the "do not enter" sign and thus the breaking of the law, but that does not mean explorers are the kind of people who as soon as

Lock picking *is the act of unlocking a lock by analysing and manipulating the inner components of the lock device, without the original key and without afflicting violence on the lock mechanism. It is a practice that requires refined craftsmanship while simultaneously questions the right of accessibility. It has lately become a popular interest with specially arranged championships.*

Urban exploration, *sometimes called "roof and tunnel hacking" or "vadding", denotes the unauthorized or prohibited entry and exploration of hidden or locked spaces. It is a form of trespassing and infiltration that is similar to hacking as it combines exploration with the questioning of borders and also requires the development of certain skills of navigation and dexterity. It aims at giving users access to features and action spaces that were otherwise unavailable to them.*

they wander into an abandoned area are confused by their sudden freedom and start breaking windows and urinating on the floor. Instead the explorers described by Ninjalicious usually show a sincere respect for sites by not breaking or taking anything, writing their names on the wall, or even littering while on their adventure (19). This is not because explorers are kind by nature as much as the problem of being caught doing something like that, or the increased security measures that usually follow such events. To destroy the place would diminish the experience of future explorers as well as damage the reputation of the community. Instead of collecting souvenirs from these adventures Ninjalicious promotes a mindset from comedian Steven Wright: "I have a large seashell collection which I keep scattered all over the beaches of the world… maybe you've seen it?" (21).

What differs the urbex practice from children's play is the dedicated and systematic mapping and sharing of adventures through sites and zines and the aim to challenge the routines of modern urban life. By stretching boundaries urbex is gradually extending our visions to places previously unseen to us and we experience a new perception on how to move through the city, as well showing the healthiness of curiosity. Instead of going to see the exotic in far away places the foreign lies hidden just around the corner, awaiting us if we are brave and attentive enough. Urbex escapades are cheap thrills, and something very different than the costly safari or adventure holiday in the mountains. However, Ninjalicious also warns that the exploration excitement can create addiction, similar to "gateway drugs". However, according to his recommendation "you should go exploring instead of doing drugs – both activities are addictive and mind-expanding, but exploration is cheaper." (7)

In this way urban exploration is one of the examples of where a hacking practice becomes political as it questions where society draws borders and pronounces access. The explorers trespass into the forbidden and physically question the surrounding perimeters and the walls of control built by others. This is a form of infiltration that is based on affirmative curiosity that questions how the borders through society are drawn up. Perhaps more importantly they also show an example of trespassing that is not burglary. Infiltration is not spying and political activism questioning the borderlines in society can be done in many ways. Explorers are not parliamentary negotiators addressing the drawing up of borders, but rather they show a wider spectrum of practices that happens at these borderlines to show more possibilities and effectuate more action spaces.

&

Another hacktivist line of practice that reveals new action spaces works in the world of "hardware hacking". This is the culture of explorative tinkering with closed electronic music products and usually goes under the name of Circuit Bending; "the creative art of audio short-circuiting" (Ghazala 2005). Here, discarded music toys and cast off sound machines are artistically tuned to make new exciting music machines. These hacked toys are bastard inventions between classical musical instruments, electronic noise units, and new aesthetic tools for composition. Central to this form of hacktivism is not only the exploration of new noises to be bent out of the chips and circuitry, but dominantly a practical excavation of open circuits, revealing new constellations of noise and sounds. With a moist fingertip slowly moving over the sound chip hidden noises are released, unimaginable and inaccessible from the black and white keys on the keyboard.

Also many intended and programmed sounds, beats, drum machines, and even full demos are hidden inside the hardware, unreachable from the outside keyboards and interfaces. Inside your old 80's toy keyboard hidden relics are kept, and not only that; a whole new way of making music. Bent out from discarded toys a new world of music, tones and noise can be born, something circuit bender Brian Duffy often demonstrates in his live hacking performances. In these performances he uses a camera and projector to, before his concert starts, show how he reverse engineers, constructs and prepares his instruments by opening and tuning the circuits in very simple steps. What he does is that he actually *liberates* the hidden potentials inside and opens new action spaces. Before the audience's eyes he releases imprisoned noises and with these lines of flight summons new forms of playful musical experiences. After the show the audience leaves with glistening eyes, hungry for discarded electronic toys and fingers itching for the need to break open and play with circuits.

Also in this practice, as spatially exemplified in Urban Exploration, we see the curious trespassing and opening of new action spaces, but without tearing down old structures. Circuit benders do not oppose other forms of music, or try to subvert the classical canon of music. Instead they try to draw new lines through the musical charts, reveal new tones and noises to make new forms of music. By creatively short-circuiting the existing music toys they reveal new multiplicities or music creation, new unpredictable lines of flight for music.

We have now seen some trespassing hacktivist practices that curiously cross borders and share their methods and paths to build experiences for others. Another such border zone where we can see a hacktivist practice emerge is the distinction between two practices, craft and activism. On the one hand it can be said that craft is apolitical as an amateur does it discreetly as a hobby and it is mainly of interest for the practicing subject. However, on he other hand, when craft breaks its borders to expand into other activist-related fields something very interesting happens. An abstract machine of hacktivism evolves in the shape of "craftivism".

craftivism

The practice in which craft meets political activism is popularly called "craftivism" (Greer, Spencer 2007: 228ff). Craftivism is a reinvention of craft, by updating or hacking tradition and making it a tool for raising political questions. Using crafts for political debate is of course not new, but what has happened over the last decade is a rebirth of popular crafts among a generation of young people who by their parents are often seen as apolitical and who were normally used to buying things ready-made. The reason for this rebirth can be manifold. As argued by crafter Jean Railla (2006) it can be because artisans are held up as the heroes of our time, in the "creative economy", but also as an amateur rebellion against just that. According to Railla it can also be because, as consequence of the feminist struggle, domestic labour is no longer seen as suppressive, yet it can be a political protest against globalized labour conditions, manifested in the sweatshops of East Asia.

This updated craft, sometimes called NeoCraft or NuCraft, is currently being developed in a wide range of ways, from renewing stitching by using radically new patterns or meanings, to combining crafting with social activist protests like stitch sit-ins at Nike stores to protest against sweatshops. But not the least, as a "new domesticity" craftvism is a resurgence that reclaims craft as tools and methods to

Lisa Anne Auerbach's Body Count Mittens *memorialize the number of American soldiers killed in Iraq at the time the mittens are made. Worn together the mittens show the escalation of dead as the pair has different date of production on each hand and thus different number of dead. By spreading the pattern of the mittens Auerbach offers a tool for participation in a protest against the war. She encourages knitting in public as these mittens easily become a token for political discussion. The mittens are a material point of gravity around which a small public is formed to discuss knitting and the "War on Terror".*

bring contemporary meaning in a society dominated by mass production and fast-food-like surplus, such as the "McFashion". Craftivism comments on how we define work and productivity in a time of consumerism and as mentioned by Leah Cramer, from the Internet community craftster.com, craftivism is a socially conscientious practice,

> There is a sort of anti-brand/anti-corporate feeling growing stronger as people become aware of what goes into mass-produced goods. And making things yourself helps you appreciate how much work can go into things like clothing and can make you wonder how they can be sold so cheaply. (Spencer 2005: 69)

Old crafts find new meanings through adapting them to new uses and patterns, and reinserting the activity itself into contemporary society, bending the sign systems and making craft mean something else than what we usually see at the traditional craft museums. It is modulating and tuning the practices to manifest messages that matter today, and often combining them roughly with street culture, making them "cool". Craft is in this sense not a passive domestic act, but this form of reformed craft takes on a revolutionary role (Spencer 2005: 66). As the artist Faith Gillespie puts it:

> There is clearly another imperative at work now in our exercise of the old crafts. It has to do with reclamation, with reparation. The world seems not to need us any more to make 'the things of life.' Machines make more and cheap. The system needs us to do the maintenance jobs and to run the machines that produce the so-called 'goods,' to be machines in the consumer societies which consume and consume and are empty. Our turning to craftwork is a refusal. We may not all see ourselves this way, but we are working from a position of dissent. And that is a political position. (Gillespie 1987: 178)

As argued before, from a feminist perspective craftivism does not let the traditional needlecraft be seen as part of an oppressive patriarchal culture, but instead turns it into a form of liberating feminist action. Craftivism is a practice that shows that there are many roles to impersonate and take on when "performing gender". This play of manifold tactics is especially seen in established feminist magazines, such as *Bitch*, or *Bust* and in events such as *Stitch'n Bitch,* which is now also a best-selling book.

Craftivism can thus be said to reclaim the practice of craft and return to the material aspects of production. DIY activities here become a critical re-view of tradition and an activity where craft is taken back from museums or conservation to become

"Forego patterns in favor of making it yourself.
Go beyond.
Go above.
Figure it out for yourself.
[...]
Create the future. Stitch by stitch, we can and will
change the world. The revolution is at hand and knitting
needles are the only weapon you'll need. Stop making
scarves; start making trouble.
Consume less.
Create more.
Knitting is political.
BEGIN IMMEDIATELY."

Lisa Anne Auerbach (2005)

Subversive Cross Stitch *is a craft enterprise started in 2003 by Julie Jackson. She creates simple start kits for cross stitching that contains the thread and material needed for the provided patterns. It is an easy way into craft as cross stitch works on a grid in the fabric, making it easy to transfer patterns. Something in between pixel art and connect-the-dots. Her kits has raised a lot of attention from media and are sold at chains like Urban Outfitters.*

Schalalala *is a fan-scarf remix project by Rüdiger Schlömer where the user can remix fan-scarfs on-line with a simple cut-and-paste interface and create his own message. The finished remix pattern can be downloaded in an enlarged and pixelated version for easy translation into knitting.*

a living and rebellious act, not only acting against consumerism but also facing a society with decreasing space and time for hobbies, and where hobby work per se is considered as "unproductive". Instead craft becomes a tool for mindfulness and meditation, but also for forming communities, connecting with likeminded, forming groups with a critical mass of practitioners to form, not only a rising amount of internet groups, but also large events and festivals, like craft fairs and bazaars, such as Bazaar Bizarre, Renegade Craft Fair and Swap-O-Rama-Ramas (Sinclair 2006).

Mike Press at Craft Research, a research team at the University of Dundee, in Scotland, argues that craftivism "follows the long historical role of craft which is a way of thinking and acting upon the world as a means of self-development, critical reflection, education and making culture." (Press 2006) Some regard it as even more radical, as the Canada-based Revolutionary Knitting Circle with their slogan "Building community, and speeding forward the revolution, through knitting". (RKC n.d.)

This might sound like a strong idealistic statement and perhaps even politically naive, but put in a historical context it creates interesting parallels with the relation between knitting and consumerism in times of conflict. During the Second World War the British government established a special "Make-do and Mend" department as part of the war effort (Rey-

nolds 1999). But also the American home front was mobilized,

> The November 24, 1941, cover story of the popular weekly magazine Life explained "How To Knit." Along with basic instructions and a pattern for a simple knitted vest, the article advised, "To the great American question 'What can I do to help the war effort?' the commonest answer yet found is 'Knit.'" (Becker, P 2004)

War meant scarcity and domestic hobby work became a tool to support the war effort and help "the boys at the front". This approach to home-front support can be compared with how today it is instead consumerism that forms the support system for the "war on terror". This can be exemplified in a statement on how people in the US can support the war today, as recalled by President Bush's mother Barbara:

> 'I asked the president, 'What can we do to show support for America?' He said, 'Mom, if you really want to help, buy, buy, buy.' (Davidson 2001)

In this context, craftivism might just be one of the most subversive activities of today. Of course slackers and other counterculture activists have also used the argument of resisting consumerism, but the difference with craftivism is that it builds, it is productive, but not productive within the economic system supporting the war. Thus it is not "subversive" be-

In Cat Mazza's Stitch for Senate project
*she encourages participants to take up old craft
to support the soldiers at the front. This type of
knitting has engaged Americans at the "home front"
since the war of independence. However, Mazza
reverses the process with this hands-on petition: The
knitted helmet hoods take a detour over the senate
as every senate member will get one as a reminder to
end the war in Iraq.*

*By networking these small knitting efforts, and
sharing the methods, Mazza uses domestic skills
to address political issues and set them off through
the Internet to create a critical mass for change. The
knitting is not something done in isolation, but a
part of a larger practical and political discourse.*

knitpro 2.0 *is a software by Cat Mazza that transforms images into knitting patterns. In many of her projects she has used it to copy corporate logos so as to facilitate for others to make their own logo-knitware (below).*

cause of boycotting, of dropping out, but because of building, or knitting, of plugging in something new. Craftivism is about hands-on commenting on the dominant modes of existence today, not by returning to folkloristic romanticism, or raising violent demonstrations on the streets, but by updating existing models, crafts and systems to a participatory and open mindset of hands-on collaborative building.

American artist Cat Mazza can exemplify this approach in her "microRevolt" projects. She sees the concept of "microRevolt" as a loosely inspired application of the idea of philosopher Felix Guattari's "molecular revolutions" (Guattari 1984). To see social change not simply as a consequence of governing or economic policies but instead to encourage and implement small networked and overlapping resistant acts to nudge along change. She creates software and critical attention to form communities for

> networking craft hobbyists in a form of labor activism, but the efficacy or value is hard to measure. If it's "revolutionary" to favor drastic economic or social reform, knitting could be an interesting place to begin. (Mazza 2008)

With her microRevolt projects, such as *knitPro* and *Stitch for Senate*, she creates platforms for this low-scale form of social change. The *knitPro* application is an online freeware tool where participants can upload digital images that are translated into knit, crochet, needlepoint and cross-stitch patterns. These are later shared between participants to form an open library of knitting designs. The task of designing and knitting is no longer an isolated practice but a community effort, something Mazza also exemplifies in her Nike Blanket Petition, where people from over 30 countries have collaborated to put together several hundreds of crocheted and knitted pieces for a huge swoosh-quilt that will, when finished, be sent to Nike founder Philip Knight as a petition for better labour conditions for the Nike sweatshop workers.

Mazza's project *Stitch for Senate* is a project where participants are encouraged to knit helmet linings to every US senate member as a petition to end the war in Iraq.

GAP LEG WARMERS

75

Zoë Sheehan Saldaña *is an artist who has performed several shopdropping actions. One was at the Wal-Mart store in Berlin, Vermont, in 2003. She purchased a tank top for $9.77 from the shop and then duplicated it by hand, matching pattern, fabric, and embellishments. She also attached the original tags to the duplicate. After that, her duplicate, the artwork, was returned to the rack in Wal-Mart for potential sale at $9.77, while the original Wal-Mart item became a gallery piece.*

Purchased item (left), duplicate (right).

It is a collaborative work in an attempt to engage people in discussion with their public officials about the war, a dialogue stemming from the knitting circles and upwards with balaclavas as the teaser for dialogue, or the centrepieces for a multiplicity of new "material publics" (Marres 2008).

By these means the activism of crafts takes on to plug-into the political systems as in Mazza's example in very hands-on ways, by commenting on the war efforts by making things, forming small publics around the items, underlining the statements. Yet there are also other ways that DIY practices are plugged into other systems, such as shopdropping where activists replace hacked commodities into the store shelves.

shopdropping

"Shopdropping", the art of reverse shoplifting, is another example of craftivism's intersection with hacking practices. Shopdropping is the insertion of modified commodities back into the shelves of the malls, or introducing "alien items" to the space of commerce as a comment to consumerism and material culture. Here consumer behaviour, as well as the tension between original and copy, is the topic of discussion and hands-on intervention. The practice does not always contain a critical or oppositional edge, as it is also a form of self-promotion or guerrilla marketing, performed for example by independent bands and local poets inserting their own material into the shelves of established stores. Nevertheless, there can be a veritable war taking place on the shelves as consumers engage to advocate their ideas and beliefs in the aisles. For example it is not uncommon for religious groups in the United States to advertise by placing their material onto the shelves, and for other activists to immediately launch a counterattack.

> At Powell's Books in Portland, Ore., religious groups have been hitting the magazines in the science section with fliers featuring Christian cartoons, while their adversaries have been moving Bibles from the religion section to the fantasy/science-fiction section. (Urbina 2007)

Barbie Liberation Organization *(BLO) is a legendary shopdropping group. In their most famous action they performed toy surgery and switched voice chips on Barbie and G.I. Joe toys, shifting their gender stereotyped roles and reversing their "embodiment of sexism". They put the modified toys back in the shelves for distribution before Christmas. To perform such an action it is important to find the type of toys that have the same voice box. This made the Mattell hack simple, otherwise the technical difficulties would have been too big. BLO also published a manual of how to perform a more difficult hack so others could engage and develop this shopdropping method.*

"Hi, I'm teen talk Barbie, the spokesdoll for the BLO. That stands for the Barbie liberation Organization. We're an international group of children's toys that are revolting against the companies that made us. We turned against our creators because they use us to brainwash kids. They build us in a way that perpetuates gender-based stereotypes. These stereotypes have a negative effect on children's development. To correct this problem, we have set up our own hospitals where we are carrying out corrective surgery on ourselves." (rtmark)

"There has never been a time in our history when more of our "culture" was as "owned" as it is now. And yet there has never been a time when the concentration of power to control the uses of culture has been as unquestioningly accepted as it is now."

Shopdropping is also a crafty, advanced and technical path as it starts to address the rituals of shopping. Activists reverse engineer commodities and reinsert them into the commodity system; updated, twisted, or mutated. These activities can comment a range of topics, from commodity critique of economic regimes to proposing alternative systems of retail and social change (Jahn 2005).

A famous example are the actions of BLO, the Barbie Liberation Organization, where activists were given 8000 USD from a military veteran group which they used to buy talking toys, modify them, and then reinsert back to the shelves at Toys R' Us just before Christmas shopping (rtmark). The modification was simple, no more than switching the voice chips in talking Barbie and GI Joe toys. Each modified doll was equipped with a sticker urging recipients to "Call your local TV news" (Harold 2007: 81). The Barbie dolls, who once spoke sentences like "Math is hard!", "I love shopping!", and "Will we ever have enough clothes?", were after the replacement with G.I. Joe chips reciting his words: "Dead men tell no lies!", "Eat lead, Cobra!", or "Vengeance is mine!"

Balenciaga vs Steve Madden.
Many times copies are not only made by a cheap no-name brand or hidden pirate factories, but by established brands, however operating in another customer segment. The borders are hard to draw between inspiration and imitation. But neither inspiration or imitation is a hack. Here the code is not mapped or shared; the copy is just a copy.

The action, which also reached the headlines of TV news, reversed gender-stereotyped messages and highlighted their unrealistic and perhaps dangerous gender clichés, and in this way "revealing and correcting" the dolls (Hardold 2007: 80). Yet, the action was not aimed at consumerism itself, but at the messages passing through its system. It was actually good for business, as a BLO member jokingly told radio:

> Nobody wants to return [the dolls] … We think that our program of putting them back on the shelves [benefits] everyone: The storekeepers make money twice, we stimulate the economy, the consumer gets a better product and our message gets heard. (Harold 2007: 80)

Later the toy-surgery instructions were also published on the Internet to facilitate for others to create future interventions concerning reverse-toy-surgery.

So far the examples have been very practical and often underscored with a prank that by many can be easily dismissed as trivial in their political ambition. However, hacking as a practice engages action spaces that are indeed very political and deeply contended, not only from property managers, global brands, or toy-producers. These action spaces form the basic modes of production within the creation of immaterial property. A growing group of workers in today's society have as their main occupation the production and processing of information. It can be said that a new class of intellectual property creators is arising, both similar and different to the former ones: a class of hackers. Their contemporary class struggle is what we see expressed through the abstract machine of hacktivism.

Marc Jacob's Härjedalen scarf
was a pure rip off, but one made by the big auteur and fashion designer. The original scarf was created by Gösta Olofsson, a local petrol station owner in Swedish Härjedalen region in the 1950s. After the fraud was revealed Marc Jacobs paid compensation. However, perhaps Olofsson should react as Coco Chanel when she saw her designs copied; she found that "piracy was the flattering result of success" (Madsen 1991: 186)

hacking politics

As mentioned in the introduction the neologism of hackitivism was usually connected to computer-related activities of political protest, but as argued we can see very similar practices and tactics in other fields. We can also see how the activity of hacking also has come to represent another form of radical antagonism between class interests and a scene for political struggle, as discussed by media theorist McKenzie Wark (2004).

Wark suggests that hacking is a new class struggle, succeeding the industrial one described by Marx. In his book, *A Hacker Manifesto* (2004), he investigates this

point by extracting intertextual lines from Marx' writings, explaining and continuing the struggles between classes into our present time. He traces the same mechanisms of suppression and control through history that manifests today in the "information" or "knowledge" society.

According to Wark this process follows a certain logic, very similar to the one described by Marx. Historically the pastoral class was being driven from their livelihood of surplus on the countryside by the raising of the rent for the land from the landowners. Following this the peasants sought work in the cities where capital puts them to work in factories. Like the farmers before them these new workers were not only dispossessed of the material surplus they produced, but also of their culture. The farmers were dispossessed of their agriculture and the workers their human culture. They were ruled by the feudal and bourgeois classes who took the surplus as rent for land or profit as the return on capital. This is the development of Marx' pastoral and capitalist classes.

In today's information society we have a new working class that Wark calls a hacker class. It is a class of workers that creates and handles information and is becoming, just like its precursors, dispossessed of its production and culture, for example the culture of sharing. This happens through various forms of private property management forms, such as copyrights, trademarks and patents.

> We are the hackers of abstraction. We produce new concepts, new perceptions, new sensations, hacked out of raw data. Whatever code we hack, be it programming language, poetic language, math or music, curves or colorings, we are the abstracters of new worlds. (Wark 2004: 002)

For Wark the hackers are thus the proletarians of the information society, or factory workers in the "creative industries". Over this hacker class rules a vectorialist class. It controls the vectors along which information is abstracted, and appropriates what was once common property. The vector is a route of realization or of "infection", as in epidemiology where a vector is an organism that does not cause disease itself but which transmits it from one host to another. This vectorialist class own the means of reproducing the value of information; the vectors of communication.

> Unlike farmers and workers, hackers have not – yet – been dispossessed of their property rights entirely, but still must sell their capacity for abstraction to a class that owns the means of production, the vectorialist class - the emergent ruling class of our time. (Wark 2004: 020)

The producers of information are in the grip of the vectorialists to get their work and creativity channelled out into the world. But as they use these vectors their work is transformed into intellectual property. The production of abstraction is a property producing process, and thus a class producing process (Wark 2004: 036).

As private property moves first from land to capital and then to information, the concept of property becomes more abstract. Where capital produces a surplus larger than the farming field it stood on, information is free from any particular object and its production limitless. It is produced in endless copies but lawyers protect its unique value. Or as Wark puts it: "The ruling class seeks always to control innovation and turn it into its own ends, depriving the hacker of control of her or his creation, and thereby denying the world as a whole the right to manage its own development." (Wark 2004: 012)

>!< **The Ethno Mods** *are Lap-style add-on-kits. Many political movements have, in the name of an ethnic group, turned everyday clothing into political statements. The lap boots of the Swedish -68 movement is but one example. What once was anonymous and silent clothing detail suddenly became a political expression. Now you can combine shoe surgery with activism and do it yourself. With these small attachable "trunks" you can apply your political ethno-token onto your everyday boots to make them into lap-style countercultural statements. Not only a form of everyday updating, but also an ethnocentric plastic surgery, turning any shoes into a -68ish revolt.*

It is possible to see these tendencies manifested as the production cycles for products become shorter and copies appear on the market at the same time as the originals. To protect a brand more and more time is spent in the courts, but in the rhetoric of big lobby organizations pushing the politicians to take action, this is done in the name of the "small creators", namely the hackers themselves. The control of immaterial rights and intellectual property is increasing the time span for copyrights for protecting vectorial investments, market shares and territories. The patents and copyrights all end up, not in the hands of their creators, but of the owners of the means to realizing the value of the abstraction – the vectorialists.

To further the arguments of Wark, I propose a reading of hacking as an act not only producing abstraction and processing information, but as the simultaneous practice of "liberating" this information. This is done not only by hacking into a locked system or intellectual property, but insisting on sharing their hacking work as a common property for everyone to explore and build further on – as in the hacker ethic, the culture of the hacking class in the process of being taken from them. As this approach intersects with activism it becomes what I call hacktivism. Hacktivism is in this sense more than a deconstruction-recreation process, a modification of copies, or an act of opposition. Hacktivism is a conscious opening of a system, revealing its inner energies under new light to modulate or amplify them and make them accessible to the public for further development and improvement – a hacking culture in itself.

Hacktivism is in this way also the renegotiation and reprogramming of communication and production protocols, as usually these sub-systems, micro-formats, platforms and translation tools are controlled by the vectorialists. Often these formats severely limits the possibility for modification by the users, as in the example of YouTube and MySpace where a simple format provides simple handling in the attention economy, but when sold the economic reward built by the community goes only to the protocol administrators.

As also argued by the technology critic Howard Rheingold in his book *Smart Mobs* (2002), what we see today is a battle over the broadcast regime, of who will control future production of communication and its codes. Users try to avoid being locked into restricting technology and business models, imposed by what Wark would call the vectorialists. To control these technologies, vectors and codes, is to control how users behave.

hacktivism and the lines of control

I have mentioned before that hacking is breaking control – liberating imagination, skills and action spaces through action, colouring outside the lines and escaping the paved routes of top-down limitations of manoeuvre. To use a terminology by Deleuze, opposition and dialectic struggle was the counterculture of a society of discipline, now hacking is modification in a society of control (Deleuze 1995). Deluze elaborates more on this in his book *Two Regimes of Madness* (2006a), where he means that

> Control is not discipline. You do not confine people with a highway. But by making highways, you multiply the means of control. I am not saying this is the only aim of highways, but people can travel infinitely and 'freely' without being confined while being perfectly controlled. That is our future. (Deleuze 2006a: 322)

The hack is breaking into the flows passing through the channels. Not blocking the flow, nor choking the power, but instead drawing new lines, reconnecting the highways, redirecting inherent energies, liberating and intensifying flows.

Very similar to this type of hack are also the interventionist tactics encouraged by the art and activist group Center for Tactical Magic. Their projects are multilayered and very diverse, but in an article, "Tactics without Tears", they offer a framework for creative engagement. Their formula is very close to the ideas we have spotted throughout this chapter, yet their practice is very physical. They mean an engagement is characterized by:

1) a thorough analysis of existing forces
2) an attachment to one existing force
3) an active engagement within the dominant sphere of activity
4) specific, material effects (Gach & Paglen 2003)

What they propose is very similar to the tuning, bending and "riding" on lines and on existing forces to break control. This aspect of breaking control might seem naïve but also has an emancipatory bear-

ing where thresholds to activity are lowered and interpassivity is broken. Wark means that the benign, creative, ethical and aesthetic hacker offers an input to another social order,

> for the hacker is a figure that speaks to the ideal of a kind of labor that finds its own time, that sets its own goals, and that works on common property for the good of all. (Wark 2006, 321)

The hacker of Wark is a true craftsman in Sennett's sense, of having production knowledge, appreciating craftsmanship for its own sake, taking pride in one's skills and work, and making the journey a goal in itself.

Thereby, the landscape description of Deleuze can be seen a literal environment for the spatial hacker. The lock-picker, the urban explorer, the freewheel rider, the fixed-gear bicycle messenger, the skateboarder, the street surfer, the off-road trekker are all exploring their empowering skills throughout the landscape, opening new lines of practice between the official trails. They liberate potentialities, break open new paths, show possibilities within an established and habitually used infrastructure, pushing the borders and modes of existence beyond the control mechanisms of the main hierarchies or protocols.

The hackers are thus engaged in what Wark sees as a new modified Marxist class struggle, but using hacking manoeuvres instead of dialectic oppositional tactics. They reconnect what was before separated in creative ways. They draw lines of escape, and are heretics in the eyes of the vectorialists and the system administrators as they short-circuit and bend their systems. What their practices offer are escape routes and forces playing with the gravity of the system. They are playing, not only with technology or crafts, but with the lines of flight.

As we have now followed several lines of practice of hacktivism we should now see how they could be applied to fashion. We will first look see how the popular method of "deconstruction" relates to hacktivism before we go on to projects that apply lines of fashion-hacktivism.
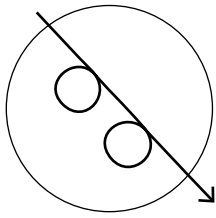
deconstruction and fashion hacktivism

Something that has intrigued me during my research is how Do-it-yourself practice and the reusing of old material is related to the concept of "deconstruction", an idea that has been an active part of fashion over the last decades. This common method of reusing or recycling old garments into new creations has especially been a distinct part of what is considered as conceptual fashion. However, to call the haute couture techniques by for example Maison Martin Margiela, or other up-market brands such as Comme des Garcons or Undercover, as simply "recycling" would be an understatement. What happens in this process of reuse is that the raw material is augmented into an object of higher status than its original incarnation. If these garments are in some way "cycled", they are "upcycled". This concept, initially explored by the Austrian artist group WochenKlausur, is a process of upgrading used material, making its new incarnation more desirable than it was to begin with. "Upcycling is a procedure akin to recycling in which waste material and worn out goods are reprocessed directly into new products without being reduced to raw materials." (Zinggl 2001: 87) What this form of recycling is doing to fashion has deliberately been practiced on in the art world since Duchamp, and in this sense used clothes are the *objet trouvé* of fashion. Like the Bicycle Wheel or the Urinal,
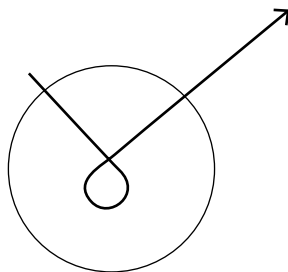

Upcycling a la Martin Margiela.
Deconstructed garments reassembled as haute couture art objects. A jacket made from vintage pilot capes in dark leather (top), and a jacket made form vintage pilot capes in sheep skin (bottom).

Deconstruction and hacking *is not the same. In a hack the focus is on the diagram of (re)assembly, and the process is aimed to be shared among fellow hackers. A hack is a deconstruction plus a new assembly plan.*
Martin Margiela collage of the 9th collection (October 1992) from 9/4/1615 exhibition in Rotterdam 1997, (left) and a re-formed Margiela collage with the self_passage jackSweat method, (right)

Recycling *is usually a form of downcycling. Material from a once useful or cherished object gets another life as it is cycled one more time through the consumer system on its way to the dump. Most often the original incarnation had a higher status than the recycled one.*

Upcycling*, is a form of recycling where the second incarnation is higher valued than the material's original form.*

these legendary art works, the "upcycled" haute couture garments are often remade in such way that they even leave the seasonal fashion cycle. This move is not only made possible through the magic touch of the *haute couture* designer, but also from the commonly presumed *authenticity* of the garments. This provides a short-cut and a feeling of maintained existential choices, the ultimate proof of a personality, as argued by fashion theorist Alexandra Palmer (2005). It is also this chase for authenticity that trendy vintage boutiques seek as they establish themselves near traditional second hand markets (Palmer 2005: 202) With the help of a authentic second hand garment, the reformed *objet trouvé* leaves its once mundane and ephemeral status to enter the timeless state of the unique artwork with only a few signs of the zeitgeist manifested into its resewn fabric.

This method of "deconstruction" is a style that became popular and widely discussed in the early 90s through the works of haute couture brands such as Maison Martin Margiela and Comme des Garcons. Later others, such as Jessica Ogden, Susan Cianciolo, Imitation of Christ, Libertine and Undercover joined and explored this in various forms, and all employed some form of reuse of old materials in their new designs. This style of often recycled or dismantled garments came into the spotlight of fashion media at a time when vintage clothing became hyped together with the grunge style and the heroin-chic ideal, all styles reaching the haute couture with a slight decadent and non-glossy approach to dress. Still a highly elitist ideal, yet according to fashion theorist Alison Gill, it had not much to do with punkish DIY but instead with economic regression and uncertainty after the fall of the Berlin wall (Gill 1998). The October 1989 show of Martin Margiela in the Paris *banlieue* that featured many of his deconstructed and recycled garments echoed, according to photographer Bill Cunningham who documented the show, "the collapse of political and social order in Eastern Europe." (Cunningham 1990)

This process of reuse reformulates one of the basic logics of fashion; that of making new from the old and in the procedure get a singularity of unique garments out of general methods or designs. It is a sort of shortcut to the unique object, as the fabric itself is distinctively heterogeneous. This is the fascination of the single piece, highlighted by fashion theorist Barbara Vinken as something that traditionally was exclusively reserved to the artwork. It is the initiation of a fashion based on duration rather than change. (Vinken 2005: 143) In her book *Fashion Zeitgeist* she raises this approach to fashion design as one aspect of what she calls "postfashion":

> Every piece that is made according to this method, regardless of how many versions there may be, is a unique piece, because the materials that are used in it are unique. […] Since the piece has taken time into itself, Margiela can hope that the traces of time will complete the work: it can age like a painting. (Vinken 2005: 143)

The works of Maison Martin Margiela are indeed classical artworks: exclusive. According to Gill, Margiela "deconstructs the hierarchical relation that persists between the exclusivity of designer fashion and everyday clothes." (Gill 1998: 31) Indeed, Margiela's upcycled garments are highly exclusive, fashionable, and pricy, and they still represent the top of the fashion hierarchy, unattainable to most of us. Gill's assumption that Margiela's deconstructed garments somehow should bridge the gap between fashion and the everyday might be true on a material level, but hardly from a perspective of participation. The upcycling of fashion into art or the temporal readjustment into postfashion might be interesting, but in this process is not my main interest. Instead, as I see it, fashions of upcycling put the focus on postproduction processes, which could be open to people outside the fashion sys-

tem, the once "passive" consumers. With hardly any means of production to create the new, they can now recreate the old into the new, and still be *in* fashion. It enables new interfaces that are open for fellow amateurs (lovers) and other laymen to share their skills and together grow what anthropologist Karen Tranberg Hansen calls "clothing competence", the cultivation of sensibility for clothing aesthetics (Tranberg Hansen 2005: 114). A breach has been opened in the system, an interface for new explorations of layman craftsmanship, yet one still in relation with the *haute couture* and the exclusivity "dictated" by the fashion system.

To return to Gills' interpretation of Margiela, she means that the act of unstitching can be defined as "a practice of 'undoing' as deconstructionalist fashion *liberates* the garment from functionality, by literally *undoing* it." (Gill 1998: 35) This notion of liberation here is no coincidence. We can compare it with the example of YO-MANGO in the chapter on heresy. It can trigger us to further explore the hidden logics of fashion that are at the same time trapped in and performed through every garment, more than the "functionality" of the garment.

Perhaps this process opened by upcycling can also make us update the world of fashion in small and beautiful steps and upfashion it with our own craftsmanship. We can use fashion as a workshop for collective enablement where a community shares their methods and experiences. Liberating one part of fashion from the phenomenon of dictations and anxiety to become instead a collective experience of empowerment through engaged craft. In this way the sewing machine can become an instrument for liberation and not only a symbol for sweatshop work. It can be a tool for the development of craftsmanship, and a path to freedom.

To understand this better and get an example from the overlaps between deconstruction, upcycling, craftsmanship and hacktivism we should take a closer look an example of fashion hacking.
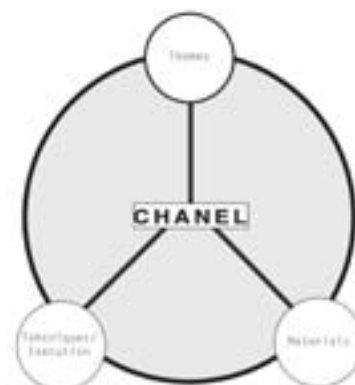
giana gonzález and hacking-couture

One fashion designer, that I think engages in a hacking design practice and that I would like to discuss more thoroughly is Giana González from Panama. I followed her practice during her workshops at the *Hackers and Haute Couture Heretics* exhibition I organized at Garanti Gallery in Istanbul in September 2007.
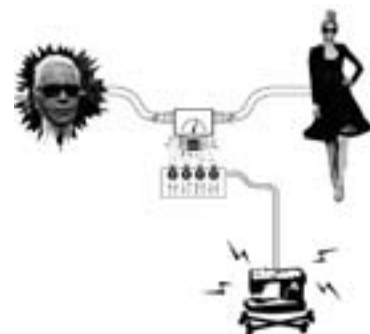
González, having a background in computer programming, labels her fashion projects "Hacking-Couture", in which participants reverse engineer fashion brands. In workshops the participants de-program material and sign systems of famous fashion brands, to open their expressive source code into various forms of charts and diagrams. The participants track the brands basic building blocks, or the "Lego" parts of how the brand is built and the identified components form the "code" from which a brand and its garments are constructed. This code is mapped and used in her workshops.

From the practical process González creates a workflow similar to computer programming, building every workshop on a thorough research of a famous fashion brand. She starts by presenting the brand history and basic expressions as she has identified them and shows detailed images of the various elements and expressions. These can be certain details, silhouettes, patterns or material combinations that go through the history of the brand and Gonzaláz highlights how they have evolved over the years. The expressions become subfolders of the brand, in which

Hacking Couture
Chanel's Design Elements Diagrams

Brand mapping. *In the Hacking-Couture projects, González reverse engineers a fashion brand's components into sub-functions and folders to analyse the building blocks of the brand. These are used as pedagogical tools for introducing the brand for the workshop participants who then make their own interpretations using the maps of the open source fashion code.*

Symbiotic power relations. *González uses the power and intensities of famous brands, like Chanel, to power up the recycled creations made by the workshop participants. This also creates a special form of attention among the participants, and many appreciate the brands more after the workshop as subtle differences between brands are revealed and discussed.*

the codes are sorted so the map looks like a mesh-work shaped flow-chart with diverse sub branches. The codes are presented as black framed Polaroid photographs with images copied from the brand's catwalks, advertising, catalogues, books and website.

In the workshop's first step she mounts some of these Polaroids on the wall, connecting the folders and codes with thread, showing the flow of code through the brand. The participants have a stack of extra Polaroids with more images, as yet unmounted, and they are free to reinterpret the structure, add their ideas, move images and create other forms or flows of the code through the diagram.

From this code González helps the participants to create new programs or patches by remaking old clothes. The participants can "brandify" their old clothes, making the reconstructed clothes mimic the decoded brand by combining elements from the codes found on the chart. These new garments are often produced through quite simple procedures depending on the skills of the participants. Some turn out as unelaborated reinterpretations of the brand's traditional colour palettes, while others are thorough excavations into the cut and fabric composition of special collections.

It is in this simple but multilayered practice of decoding and redesigning that the special quality of González' project becomes clear. Here the workshop participants collectively map and discuss a brand's components, reverse engineer this code, analyze materials, cuts, draping, details, and finish off the garments. They also discuss the depiction and representation of these garments in the fashion photographs. This is where new collective "clothing competence" is cultivated among the participants. From here they also start to reconstruct the old clothes into new forms, they mimick the original brand, but they do not make copies. Instead they analyze their resources to see how these old components best become new code, but a code performing the same visual or material function as the original brand. They remake something new, something unique, an experimental "program" out of an existing and branded code.

The new garments or accessories, or "programs", are photographed with a Polaroid and mounted back onto the chart. The photographs are then connected with thread to its inspirational code cards to show how the code was used and from where details were taken. The additions from the participants create di-
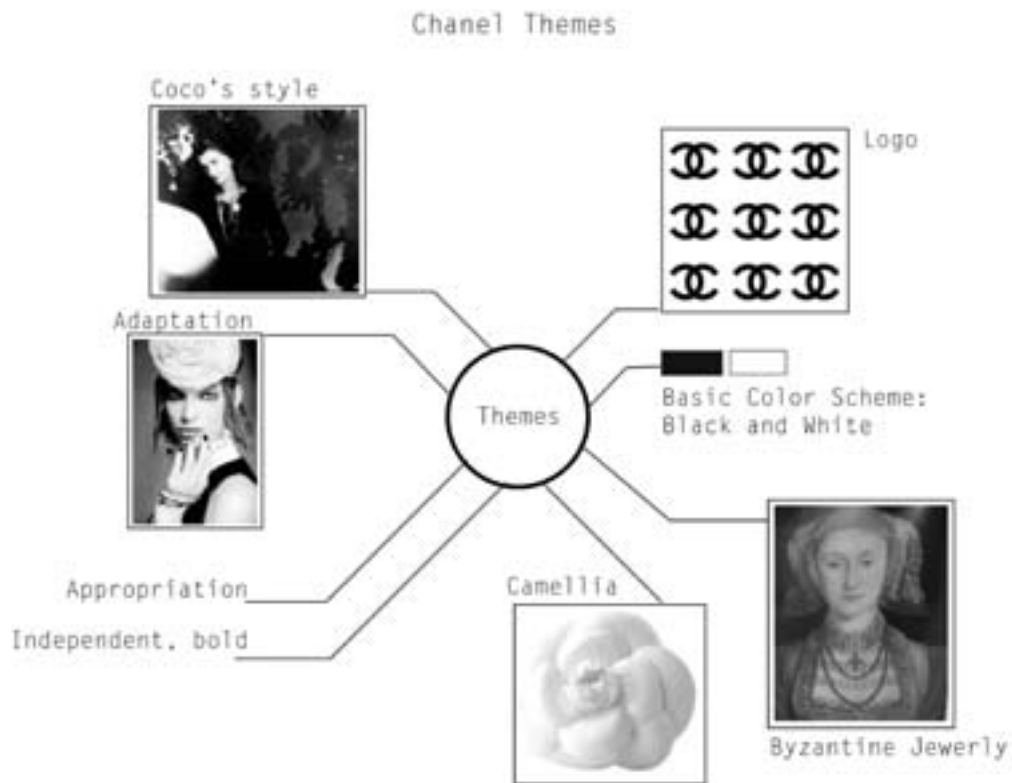
agonal or rhizomatic lines drawn through the original research web of images. The new programs become part of the code map on the wall and become just as true as the authentic ones, to inspire new creations from other participants. The first brand hacked at the week-long workshop in Istanbul was Gucci, in which participants were "Guccifying" their clothes ad this was followed by Turkish brand Vakko.

The workshop offered a systematic way to interpret fashion expressions and a vocabulary for discussing details, as well as practical help for the practical deciphering of the mapped ideas. Like hacking, this was a line of practice that focus on the mastering of coding skills, both reading code, finding loopholes, flaws or strong codes, and hands-on reprogramming the code. The new garment or program was a running application, program or patch – a reinterpretation of the code, not a copy, but visually as "real" as an authentic piece. From these various levels of skills and coding, González' created an atmosphere where "authentic" Gucci pieces were created by the participants from their old garments. The resemblance to the real Gucci studio was apparently so accurate that one participant thought that I was Tom Ford, the famous head designer of Gucci.

Roland Barthes saw fashion as combinations of semantic codes in his book *The Fashion System* (1983) and his theories of fashion have often been regarded as too strict or mathematical. To better understand González' use of fashion code we can instead explore how media ecologist Alexander Galloway frames the concept of code in relation to network ecologies. He means that code is a stronger text, affecting the world in a more physical sense than the written word on these pages, as "code is the only language that is executable" (Galloway, Alexander 2004: 165). Code is in this sense not only a messenger, but also a container of activity, carrying an impetus or a force of execution. It is in direct connection with the electronic energy that flows through it. Code's basic function is to facilitate, to run, but also to control operations. "Code has a semantic meaning, but it also has an enactment of meaning." (Galloway, Alexander 2004: 166)

The code depicted in the fashion magazine is the key to the code, but also the program itself, showing the "correct" or "expected" way of how to execute the fashionable code. It dictates acting, not looking. It
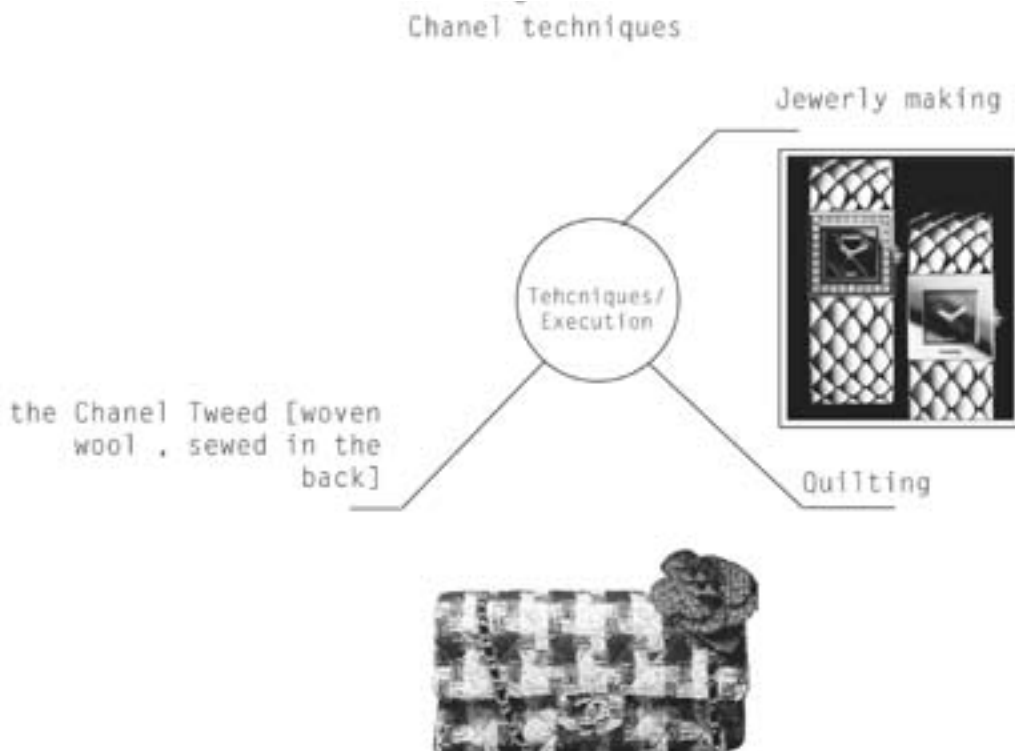
Chanel Themes

Coco's style

Logo

Adaptation

Basic Color Scheme:
Black and White

Themes

Appropriation

Camellia

Independent, bold

Byzantine Jewerly

The code libraries *of González are open source design maps of established brand identities made in order to derive new and evolving fashion aesthetics. By mapping the historical expressions of a brand (like Chanel) these codes can be recombined into new expressions, with the intention of making "real" fashion, not*

with the aim of making a counterfeit, but an own interpretation of the authentic brand code, as if the work was done in the brand's own studio.
The new garments are not copies, but as "true" in expression as the originals since they share the same source code.

Chanel techniques

Jewerly making

Tehcniques/
Execution

the Chanel Tweed [woven
wool , sewed in the
back]

Quilting

Hacking Couture

YVES SAINT LAURENT
Themes

Androgeny: male and female in one being

The tuxedo

Adaptation / Cultural Appropriation

Japanese Kimono   Kimono dress, 1987

Themes

Femininity = ruffles

Basic Color Scheme: Black, White and pink

Pink Rose

Using the code maps of YSL. *González produces workshops for people who usually do not engage in fashion and has found an easy interface for getting them involved. Even though her methods are primarily aimed at amateurs the aim is to bridge their first steps in sewing with an end result that has an atmosphere of glamorous fashion. To amplify this she takes on professional photographers and fashion models so the end codes can seamlessly be put back into the fashion code libraries of the established brands.*

The Hacking-Couture
workshops are thorough research laboratories where a lot of time is spent on understanding the code of a brand, its history, collections and expressions over time. The open library becomes an interface to the real brand as well as a meeting point for discussions during the production process. The partici-pants recycle their garments into new forms of "true" codes. Here, at Garanti Gallery, González explains how garments can be "Guccified".

represents the physical process of wearing fashion, of presenting it, embodying it, although most often resulting in an image and as something seen. Fashion code works as a set of situated instructions, but not mathematical or mechanic. It guides imagination and representation, frames what seems possible to wear, what would be acceptable within a certain context as well as fitting for one's body.

But we must not forget that the code as situated instructions also guides the mate-rial and the sensual, and this perspective has the last years come to balance the previous total focus on looks and visual semantics (Küchler & Miller 2005; John-son & Foster 2007). Fashion concerns more senses than the eye and highly de-pends on the fit, cut, fabric and seams. It also guides how the body acts within the physical exoskeleton of clothing. It affects posture and movement and physical ac-tions. Through the pressure on the body it also controls our thoughts, so bril-liantly articulated by Umberto Eco in his essay on tight-fit clothing, *Lumbar Thought* (Eco 1986).

Nevertheless, fashion code is of course also different from computer code. The fashion code is imitated or mimicked, but not exactly copied, even if that is sug-gested from the code-key of fashion – the fashion magazine. On its pages garment names and telephone numbers to the shops are presented next to the image. The magazine is in this sense presenting a desired line of repetition, or what Tarde would call a "ray of imitation" (2000). The mass produced fashion image radiates fashion memes.

This last step, of turning the garments back into image, is very apparent in González' own photos and videos in which she performs brands and steps beyond the mere representation of a sewn garment. Here she reenacts the whole array of the brand image; the posing, make-up, lighting, and context. Her end results are photos that make the full hack visible, as the hacked garments reproduce the whole mythology of the brand. A mere collage technique of images could have been an alternative to her workshops, still playing with the visual code, but this would not have been enough. The important thing is how participants work with the physical material, become craft-conscious, going from image to physical garment and back to image again. When they leave their photos behind on the wall at the gallery as part of the

code map they again trigger the circle for other participants, inspired by the previous crafters' code.

The participants in González' workshops become practical fashion programmers, using the energy of the brand as they reinterpret it and draw their own new lines through the map. They sample and remix the brand with their own hands-on craft interventions. In his book *Postproduction* (2002b), Nicholas Bourriaud calls the actors of such a practice "semionauts" – producing own pathways through sign systems.

The semionauts in González' process work with already defined concepts and signs, published as parts of a brand. They transform them through re-linking and crossover formations, inventing new protocols of use and transgressing modes of representation by post-producing them. According to Bourriaud, "The prefix 'post' does not signal any negation or surpassing; it refers to a zone of activity." (17) The "post" is the drawing of new lines of practice, reconnecting sampled parts into new forms. "We tinker with production, we surf on a network of signs, we insert our forms on existing lines." (19) As with hacking, post-production is a tactic, and the semionaut an agent in a culture of re-appropriation. Surely this approach can be said to be an old practice but what Bourriaud emphasizes is that it is now the dominant one, and it does not try to establish a position of the radically new or the avant-garde. Instead it refers to the heroes of our time, the sampler, the remixer and the DJ. As I have argued before, these are the lines produced by the abstract machine of hacktivism.

What we have seen in González' project is something very different from the "deconstruction" or "upcycling" of high fashion, even if the material result might look similar. What González does in the Hacking Couture workshops is to highlight the shared endeavours and help us open new action spaces with the help of tools, methods, and skills with which we can better understand and develop the practice we do when we "hack" fashion. In these workshops we reverse engineer a brand, draw new lines, re-program the code, "surf on the signs", and "insert our forms on existing lines" – keeping the power on.

1. take an old suit jacket.

2. take a pair of matching pants, cut off legs
just under the waist line.

3. unstitch side pockets and cut off arms just
above the shoulder seam.

4. take out the shoulder padding.

5. put the legs as sleeves, start pinning at top
and bottom seams of the armhole.

6. make seam straight at front., let a part of
the pocket still be seen.

7. pull together excess fabric into pleats
close on top of the shoulder. attach the new
sleeves.

8. make the sleeves slimmer.

9.cut out a part of the front.

10. make channels in the back to create a
slim fit. move front buttons to fine adjust.

11. your new silhouette · your new self.

KNIT RE-FORM

a method for modulating an ethno knit
into a wrapped cardigan.

a >SELF_PASSAGE< method

copyleft by >wronsov< Feb 2006.

1. take your big old knitted sweater.

2. cut up the front. cut up a big hole at the
neck and cut off the lower edge.

3. fold up the lower edge and make a hem.

4. pin the low cut-off to the enlarged neck
hole - start pinning at the middle (by the
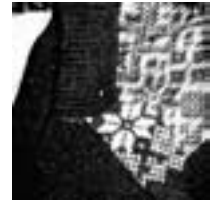spine) to make it even at both ends.

5. attach with a seam.

6. so it looks something like this.

7. fold inwards the over the seam you just
made and sew the edge (on top of old seam)

8. fold the front sides so they meet the front
edges of the neck. improvise a seam.

9. hold the knit wrap together with a big
safety-pin.

10. it could look like this.
now wrap up in remade ethnic authenticity.

>!< **The ReForm manuals** *are step-by-step*
PDF cookbooks and part of the "recyclope-
dia", a Copyleft library of recycling methods.

González' method is collective and every workshop forms its own small fashion
scene, encouraging participants to share their curiosity, materials and skills. How
would this hacking method work in a more distributed way, when amateurs ex-
periment alone at home? This was the first idea I explored when starting this re-
search as I began to make simple ReForm manuals to help others remake their old
garments.

reform projects and the abstract accessories

Before I had even started my research I created manuals of how to resew old clothes
into new forms, reforming them or upgrading them. Like cookbooks these manu-
als were intended to be "instructables" and step-by-step tutorials of how to update
the garments that were dying in the back of the dark wardrobe. I photographed
every step in the process, inserted notations, and made printable PDF document of
them that could easily be spread over the Internet. This library of documented
methods on my website grew over time to form a "recyclepedia" of copyleft manu-
als, ready to be downloaded and printed for anyone interested in resewing their
clothes.

Each manual is about reforming one garment into a new one, or combining parts
of two garments into one (or two). Most material comes from my own wardrobe,
but some are acquired at second-hand stores. The methods are deliberately made

STREAMLINED PANTS

reforming a pair of pants into a twisted version with ready bent knee for the streamlined look in the wind.

a >*SELF_PASSAGE*< method

© copyleft by >*wronsov*< June 2006

1. get an old pair of pants - preferably quite long.

2. unstitch the hem by the foot.

3. cut off just above the knee.

4. lay the bottom parts with the front fold upwards. cut a semi-circle in the continuation of the inner leg seam and a diagonal opposite.

5. turn inside out and make a seam along the semicircle - forming the new knee. (the old front fold is now in the side of the leg)

6. cut the top part of the pants diagonally just above knee.

7. and unstitch the outer side seam until just some cm under the pocket starts.

8. pin together the leg with the top part. the leg diameter will be smaller than the top. pleat the unstitched side seam to fit.

9. to be something like this - observe the folds under the pocket where the extra width is taken in. sew together leg parts.

10. make channels to make the leg's width a little narrower. let channels turn from side to back of calf.

11. so it could be something like this in the end - streamlined.
now get out there against the stream!

LEATHER STYLE BOLERO

remaking a leather Jacket into a hardcore bolero

a >*SELF_PASSAGE*< method

© copyleft by >*wronsov*< Oct 2007

1. take an old long leather jacket.

2. cut it in half above the waist.

3. make seams to fix lining.

4. unstitch outer seam along the collar edge and put in the waistline seam into the open collar edge.

5. make pleats to adjust length.

6. so the extended collar fits.

7. and the pleats are highly visible from inside. stitch together the collar seam again.

8. so the whole new thing looks something like this.

9. strap up, fight those models face-to-face.

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very simple and generally applicable, and they often describe a special method for creating a specific effect or solving a typical problem. These can be practical fitting problems, such as that the sleeves are too short, or a garment too long, too voluminous or too narrow. They are mostly explorations of different re-sewing techniques, cutting, assembling and remixing the parts in new ways. Even though the procedures are suitable for many garments they come from a unique situation, as not many will have the same kind of garment model as I have documented in the manual. This is the paradox the user has to accept. The garment produced will never look like the one I made, even if the manual is strictly followed. So there is no obligation to stick to the manual. Instead, start improvising immediately!

The manuals are not disconnected from fashion, but they are conscious comments on the fashion from the time the method was made, and transforming clothes not being in fashion at the time. In this way it is about "updating" clothes, but at the same time to recreate them on the edge of what is considered as "classic", as they often turn into something suit-like. In this way they are very different from the hacking-couture of González.
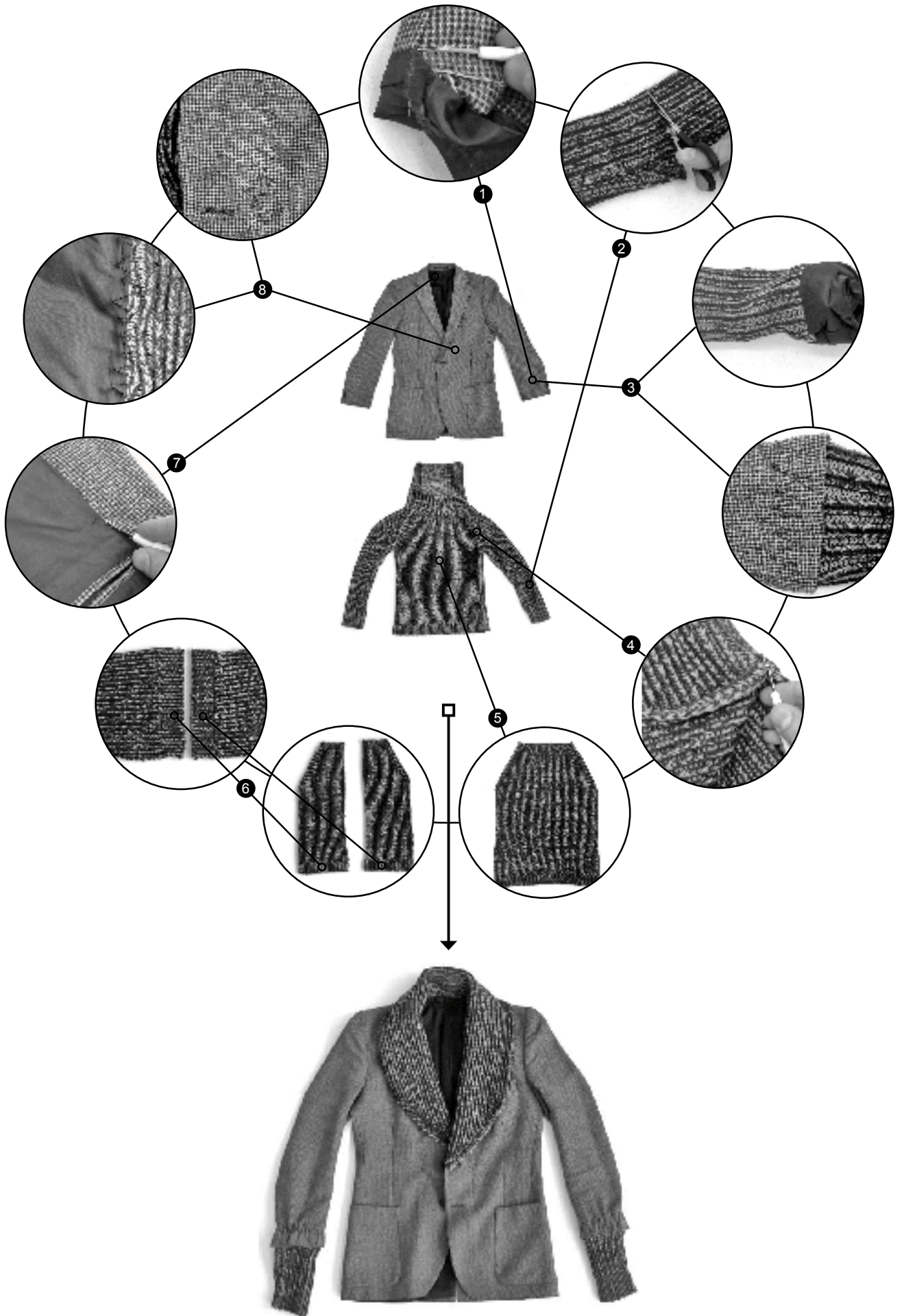
Although the manuals mimic and comment on fashion their main aim is to show simple methods for recycling. They expose action spaces and guide the reader through them. As with the "upcycling" described in the beginning they use forms of deconstruction, but as opposed to the *haute couture* designers these manuals are about making people participate and engage in fashion. To attract attention, raise consciousness, train skills, show what is possible and lower the threshold into that action space.

However, these manuals were just one component of the ReForm projects. Reforming clothes is not a wide enough interface to create new approaches to fashion, so I also made a few other interventionist kits for users to try out. Some include iron-on stickers for redecorating clothes and others have small essays discussing fashion from various points of view.

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> Take an old suit jacket that you like. The arms are preferably a little too short. Find a matching sweater. 1. Unstitch the inner/lower seam of the lining in the jacket sleeves. 2. Cut off about 15cm of the sweater sleeves. 3. Turn the sweater sleeve inside out and drag it over the jacket sleeve. Fit the edge of the sweater sleeve in between the jacket sleeve and the lining. Stitch together the jacket sleeve again. (This can be tricky, if it is too hard to reach the seam with the sewing machine then unstitch the sleeve seam of the sweater for reaching and then sew it together again). 4. Unstitch the front piece of the sweater, along sides, shoulders and neck. 5. Looking like this. 6. Cut the front piece in two. Take the two wide ends and sew them together with a wide zig-zag seam into one long stitched scarf-like piece. 7. Unstitch the inner lining of the jacket front, begin at the mid-neck and go down along the sides to the buttons somewhere - as long as the stitched "scarf". 8. Insert the "scarf" between the outer fabric and the lining (improvise!) Sew a large zig-zag with a straight seam along the joint. > Wear it. Feel warm. Feel smart. Ready to fight any fashionista.

'I dismiss all knowledge,
all culture ... I see only
the boy's huge Danton collar,
the girl's finger bandage ....'

LEWIS H. HINE: IRISH CHILDREN IN AN INSTITUTION, NEW JERSEY, 1924

The strapped pumps

JAMES VAN DER ZEE, FAMILY PORTRAIT, 1926

>!< **Textile Punctum** *is a small essay on the embroidery of memory, provided in a package together with needle and thread. The essay is an intertextual comment on Roland Barthes' book Camera Lucida. Barthes' book is an inquiry into the nature and essence of photography, especially how memory and time is manifested through the photographic image. In his book he examines the emotional effects of special details in certain photographs which often gives unintentional and deeply personal signals. The spectator is effected by it later, and the detail provokes memories that acts as punctum, a pinch or an arrow, shooting out of the image, wounding the spectator. It is a direct and deep relationship between an anonymous photograph and a subject. The essay is also an eulogy to Barthes' late mother and a reflection*

of death as well as memory. It specifically discusses a photograph of Barthes' mother in a winter garden, but the image is never shown. The Textile Punctum essay takes Barthes' discussion further and explores how punctum can be embroidered onto clothes. This marking of memory is usually discouraged in regards to clothes, as all marks of life should be washed away or patched up. Instead the essay exposes the special character a garment can get by marking memory upon it. The point of departure is a personal experience and the embroidered contours of a wine stain, never to be show in the essay. However, the reader is offered an own kit with needle and thread to manifest their own memories onto their garments.

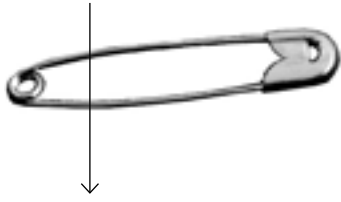*Examples of the photos discussed by Barthes (above)*

As a step further, in autumn 2007 I remade some of the manuals and kits I had produced earlier into a more delicate DIY kit in a book-format I called "Abstract Accessories". With the intention of trying to "productify" the manuals and kits, which had previously only existed in prototype editions or on the web, the idea was to make something that could be sold in progressive fashion stores and to be disseminated along with fashion items. With these kits fashion engagement could bridge the gap between fashion and theory and also form practical lines of practice for users to actively engage in fashion. A tricky balance between on the one hand providing ready-made tools, but on the other avoiding the kits being too predefined and of limited use.

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One of these "Abstract Accessories" was an embroidery kit called "Textile Punctum". In a small essay I reinterpreted Roland Barthes book *Camera Lucida* (1981) and his concept of "punctum" in relation to fashion. In this book Barthes decodes the communication of photography into two categories, that of "studium", the readable intention of a photo, and that of punctum, the unintentional meta-meaning of details working on a personal level. Barthes finds details in old photos that affects him in ways the camera operator could not have intended, triggering childhood memories, noting the passing of time and finally death.

In my essay I construed his concept of punctum as a tool for engaging in marking memories on to clothes. Embroidering stains and manifesting these "wounds" on the clothes highlights their own lives, that they have an own lived history, and not only exist within the fashion system, as expectations or promises of social or func-

Read Only Jewelry

Read/Write Jewelry

>!< **The Read/Write Jewelry** *was initially a kit made for the design biennial in Istanbul 2006. It compares the official writing reforms in Turkey and Sweden with the "misuse" of the safety-pin by the punks as a form of iconic subversive writing. The Turkish and Swedish writing reforms were instigated from above with varying results. On the contrary the safety-pin misuse emerged as a symbol from the streets, but it soon became a common type of subcultural writing. They were a type of poaching of its time, but the safety-pin did not offer much possibility for altering the message set outside of its context.*

However, in recent times it has been possible to trace a change in modus operandi of writing doctrines in society; from RO to R/W. That is from Read Only to Read/Write. This involves a shift from standardized, interpassive consumption of mass produced goods, with limited possibility for user engagement, to a fluid network and method-based society offering users a wider possibility to "talk back". With R/W, there is now a possibility of talking back, to create a personal massage, in fact to be nothing less than the media itself. Every message might not be a specifically unique, but it can still make an impression and even assemble something so far unseen or unknown! And it is yours.

With the R/W jewelry you can write as you wish, invent a symbol, change the wire, add something to it, throw it out of the window, for this piece of jewellery is not an item in itself, it is an idea. An idea is similarly an action space in which you can find your own voice and practice or where a dreamed image can materialize.

If you are given the sheet of lined paper ignore the lines and write on the diagonal! It is not a matter of how many colour crayons you have in your box, but about what you do with them. Now start colouring outside the lines! Read/Write!

tional success. Clothes also contain other energies, yet we often neglect them only to focus on their relation to the fashionable image. Through Barthes' argument, I instead proposed to preserve some of these signs of life on the garments, the memories we want to treasure. Instead of washing some memory-marked stains away and send their physical mark on us into oblivion or anonymity the punctum manoeuvre is the highlighting of these wounds. By embroidering the contours of the stain and manifesting their meanings onto our second skin, they become monuments to our own lives, secret signs of passed times. Like the punctum of Barthes, they are also personal, only understood by those taking part in close relationship with the life of the wearer. A new dimension is incorporated into the garment, as with a ritual tattoo or a scar. The kit consisted of this essay and at the back of the booklet red thread and an embroidery needle was added. These were the tools needed for getting started.

Another of the kits was the Read/Write Jewelry. This kit also consisted of a short essay but also included an updated safety-pin. The safety-pin was equipped with an attached 30cm long silver thread. With this the wearer could write his own message as an integrated part of the jewelry. This was an update of the punk's subversive safety-pin, but with the ability to "write back", to make one's own message out of it, and not accept the jewelry as a preconditioned entity already saturated by meaning. The essay juxtaposed official writing reforms in Turkey and Sweden with the subversive "writing" of the punks' use of this domestic tool as jewelry. Today, the safety-pin is once again a domestic item, deprived of its subversive meaning,

yet here nostalgic in its punk memories and DIY accessibility. Following the ideas of Lawrence Lessig and his description of the digital culture not as a "read-only" culture, but as a "read/write" culture the aim of the jewelry was to be an interface to "write back" with. With this kit the wearer could explore a new form of jewelry, where he was no longer a "read only" consumer, but a "read/write" co-author of personal expression.

In combination with these two kits I made a special edition of seven fashion ReForm manuals that were collected into one cookbook. They consisted of several pants, shirts and jackets and I also produced fashion images of the finished garments, something I had not done before. The step-by-step instructables were organized in a way to give a more refined impression, not in square boxes as the usual PDFs, but using the spreads of the booklet more freely.

For producing the fashion photos for the cookbook I tried a new approach. To remain anonymous and remain "just anybody", the "just anybody" whom I hope would use the manuals, I used a latex mask to cover my face. The first intention was to stay hidden, but it also came to give the images a reference to sub-cultural scenes and S&M dress. This also came to express a darker and more "evil" side of the projects, as anonymity also releases other energies and connotations, a stigma of heresy or brute violence of terror, yet it also worked as a comment on what hacking is often documented as in public debate. The title of the collection, "Disneyland can wait", after a song by Boyd Rice, helped underscore this aspect of the cookbook. For the photo session I worked successfully with the photographer and film-maker Jens Klevje, who later also took photos for later projects.

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The Abstract Accessories were both DIY kits and essays that added a layer of abstraction or theory. When engaging with them the buyer would put two forms of time into them that is rarely invested into clothing. Both a time of hands-on craft (sewing, embroidering, wire-writing), and a time of reading the essays, reflecting on the theories and stories. Both these investments are unusual in fashion, and chal-

lenge the *pret-a-porter* logic of buying things ready-made off the hanger. The kits were aimed at merging fashion, art and theory within the fashion store settings, not the gallery or the bookstore, but where consumers are used to meeting fashion. Through this effort the Abstract Accessories aimed to expand the range of expressions and formats fashion can take.

Through a happy coincidence and a lot of collaborative work the kits were taken care of and distributed by a fashion company in Stockholm. The kits were later launched at the +46 fair for progressive fashion during the Stockholm Fashion Week in August 2007. I held a presentation of the kits after the last catwalk show. The kits were later sold at conceptual fashion stores in Stockholm, such as Aplace at the PUB department store, and also bookstores like Konst-ig. However, we are all still waiting for them to make a major breakthrough.

The problems with these kits are many layered. They are not ready-to-wear, but the opposite; they require work and process, and it is not entirely obvious to the buyer what the outcome will be in the end. Likewise, they are abstract and also closed in form and they look more like work from an experimental poet than of a fashionista. They do not directly connote to fashion and are not glossy or attention seeking in a world where attention is at stake. In addition to this, I soon came to realize how the kits need an easier point of entry, a text on the backside or at least an ingress. The form I had given them was not inviting enough and I also made a mistake in putting the three of them together in a collection package, in a paper wrapping. This meant that the potential buyer will have to open the whole package just to look at one of them, and them must open each of them to see what is inside.

Disneyland can wait *is a collection of methods and a reform cookbook. It shows step-by-step instructions how to make the garments as well as photographs of the finished items of clothing on a model. The kit contains two self_passage labels if the reformer wants to label the new creations.*

highCollarShirt

>!< **The Disneyland can wait cookbook,** *the first kit of the Abstract Accessories, shows eight step-by-step clothes transformations. This is the highCollarShirt, from pages 36-39*

1. take an old shirt with a large collar, preferably one with exaggerated points.

2. fold up the collar and cut a curved shape out of it, as in the illustration above.

3. zigzag stitch along the edges with as narrow a seam as possible, add extra stitching for decoration.

4. be the 21th century dandy.

Even though they were meant to be like cookbooks, they unfortunately missed a central point of cookbooks; the visual appetite of leafing through them. Perhaps the essays made them look more complicated than they were. Possibly putting the small intervention kit in the front instead of the back would have helped making them more accessible as the reader would immediately spot what the kit was about and not require him to read to the end to find it. This all turned out to be a bit too complex, and not very accessible in a shop-format. Paradoxically my cookbooks were not that popular, in a time when there seems to be new best-selling cookbooks every week in the bookshops. Perhaps my ingredients did not seem appetizing, or there were too few tasty-looking glossy colour photographs. There is a lot to be worked on for the coming seasons.

Nevertheless, I am sure I will continue to make new collections of kits, but they will be improved in openness, and sold as single objects. Their folded A4 format makes them easily adaptable to new contents and they are also DIY-friendly; print, assemble, fold, and glue. The shop display will need to be elaborated on, as well as their overall accessibility for the fashion target-group. I will need to find easier ways of access to help people enter the world of Abstract Accessories.

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Throughout this chapter we have followed various lines of practice closely relating to the abstract machine of hacktivism. We have seen how energies within several systems have been reverse engineered, mapped, short circuited and reconnected through creative manoeuvres, for the most part done by amateurs who have shared their methods and open codes for others to build on. Computer hackers have revealed new ways of operating with computers, circuit benders have liberated silenced noises to form a whole new music scene and shopdroppers have made gender biased toys reveal their true selves. Even though these practices often have a tendency of making playful pranks, we have also seen a deeper connection between their work and a new form of politics, be it craftivist protests against war or multitudes of hackers engage in a new form of Marxist class struggle.

A tendency running through these examples has been to "ride" existing flows of energy, play with technologies and sign systems, or use existing infrastructures in new unpredictable ways and for their own ends. Activists bend the intensities into the commons for others to build on. Using various examples this has been connected to fashion and discussed at length through González' Hacking-Couture project where workshop participants worked on their "clothing competence" by learning to read and reprogram the "code" of famous brands. Finally we have seen how my ReForm cookbooks and Abstract Accessories were first attempts to connect the abstract machine of hacktivism into the world of fashion with the help of "instructables". These are all examples of intersecting lines of practice where the interfaces of the fashion world are reverse engineered and opened for others to intervene into the system, plant new seeds for action and nurture these in future projects.

Disneyland can wait collection
Abstract Accessories, A/W 2007
obliqueCollarShirt, vestSuit, shortSleeveSuit

Clothes never remain a question of pure aesthetics; far too much personal feeling is involved in them. They play such an important part in the delicate business of getting oneself across that it seems impossible to discuss them, for long, objectively.

(Elizabeth Bowen: *Collected Impressions,* 1950)

1.

One day, quite some time ago, I happened into a memorable situation that resulted in a stain. In this special case it was a wine stain, but it could also have been any stain. The awkwardness of the situation is one part of the memory for a stain is a small wound in your dressed identity, a hole in your fabric-built "armour", but the framing of the situation as a specific moment in my life is the main part of that memory. The small spectacle that happened the microsecond before the stain was created or perhaps the stain "grew" out of this very moment was just the setting of a larger whole, a period of transformation that I look back upon as growth.

This moment became something else in my mind. The spectacle around the stain was now a particular milestone in my life, a snapshot or a still life, and the stain a direct indexical sign of a specific moment in this process.

It also happened to be an explicit stain, in the meaning that in that moment attention fell upon the stain itself. Most stains we try to forget and ignore, but that evening this special one became the subject of discussion. It drew attention to itself. The stain was not so much an awkward signifier of the situation as a topic for amiable discussion. It actually came to frame that specific time in my life, as if it was a special chemical liquid that processed my life at that moment or

as if dreams were developed into tangible form through an alchemic process. And the stain was a visual proof, a magical writing, forming an esoteric and readable sign.

I kept it with me, like a treasure, my desire and my grief.

2.

So I decided to make small embroidery along the contours of that stain, preserve it, to keep it from disappearing in the laundry. Small uneven stitches that traced an outline of a fragmented memory. Like a desolate archipelago, stains are often uneven and complex patterns, on an evenly printed sea of fabric. The process became a meditative action in itself, a recollection of the situation and its implications. A practical sorting of impressions and past choices as if I was revisiting and developing the memory with every stitch. The sense of memory is still very clear, as opposed to the lost stain. Now with empty contours, several washes later, it has become one of my favourite garments.

Before we start any further exploration you might wonder what happened after that specific moment in my life. It became history, brutal compared to the coldness of oblivion, but also a pleasurable memory and the contours of the stain are still there. Just as you can fantasize about your other possible lives, lives that walk around invisible in this existing one like ghosts of lost or dead identities. Likewise these contours of a stain reflect the me that might have been, that faded in the wash, as a promise grown pale in the faded greys of an enigmatic life.

3.

Now much later, I found myself exploring this embroidered stain in a very similar way as Roland Barthes explored Photography after the death of his mother. In *Camera Lucida* he used his focus on Photography as an instrument to understand a picture of his mother whilst I, partly with the same terminology, try to understand a specific scar of memory on a garment, this discoloured wound of a lost stain.

> As *Spectator* I was interested in Photography only for "sentimental" reasons; I wanted to explore it not as a question (a theme) but as a wound: I see, I feel, hence I notice, I observe, and I think. (p.21)

4.

On my part, this specific stigma of "sentimental" memory grew to become an extended thread of thought. Irregular small stitches around a pale discolouration on a shirt enclosed a field for the poetic channelling of remembrance. A remembrance that was firmly attached to my spine; it was my rudder when in doubt, a deep part of specific self knowledge. I wanted to step back and retrace my footsteps and to examine it more thoroughly.

Let us create a scenario. What would happen if you mark the contours of that wine stain from that awkward dinner party and slowly let the stain disappear in the wash so that no more than a small decorative outline of the embroidered work is left on the garment? Discreet as a memory, but at the same time as conspicuous as a public monument.

I felt the theories of Roland Barthes in *Camera Lucida* might provide a fruitful way of focusing a sharper light on the situation but after a closer reading of *Camera Lucida* it appears that most of the *emphasised* examples that Barthes used regarding photography are in fact a description of the photographic representation of clothes. This prompted me to re-examine his concepts and apply them to fashion and clothing as memory and to my embroidered stain in particular.

5.

My experience with this stain evolved into a personal mission. I found that my attachment to this embroidered garment went deeper that just affection and a "Teddy Bear" love. The stain gave life to the garment, *but even more to me* and became a mark of my presence in life. So I asked; what if we were all braver and paid special notice to our worn experience as we walk through life? What if we took a deeper interest in the physical biography of our *interface* in social life? Our clothes are the vehicles that reveal a certain aspect of our personality and shape a mask for interaction, a mask not of distance but of closeness.

I wanted to promote this hands-on remembrance through clothing. To provide a tool for recollection.

Needle and thread.

heresy and

- Heresy is a thinking or opinion contrary to the established canon within a system of belief. It is an interpretation of the doxa that conflicts with the conventional decrees of that belief. The Latin American theology of liberation, which has been regarded as heretic by the Vatican, reads the Bible from the perspective of poverty and the struggle for social change, using faith as a tool to liberate the oppressed.

empowermenent

As fashion is not only a physical quality of a garment but perhaps even more a mythical, ritual or symbolic one, it is not enough to acquire individual practical skills or advanced craftsmanship in construction and sewing to become fashion-*able*. There is also a need to understand how we are to relate to the fashion system out there, how we should navigate and interact with its dominant expression, and how we should connect and collaborate with other fashionistas.

To better understand this we can examine how social activism can ground itself in the organization of belief-systems, and through involvement change the energies flowing through that system. Here we can look for inspiration among the Latin American base communities, created from a standpoint of the theology of liberation. These are self-organized groups of Catholic believers, usually from the bottom of society who reclaim their faith as a tool for social struggle, making faith not only a question of the immortal soul, but a question of politics too. Through their practice we can find inspiration for how a complementary fashion system can be created and organized, yet still in intimate connection with the greater established one, using its intensities and powerful rituals.

But it is important here not to read this comparison as blaspheming or reducing faith to being similar to fashion, nor is it an attempt to raise fashion into a religion. What I am trying to do here is to compare approaches to practice and organization. What is a matter of life and death, and especially the life after death, for the religious believers cannot be compared to fashion. But as I hope we will see further on, fashion designers can learn a lot from the practices of heretics and this can make designers better understand their position in relation to the fashion belief system, a system telling us what is considered meaningful in much of contemporary social relations. This is the meaningful "myth" of our contemporary society and fashion, similar to that argued by Roland Barthes in his acclaimed book *Mythologies* (1973), which shows how we today surround ourselves with various forms of non-rational beliefs.

This being said, it is not a question of becoming fashion atheists, nonbelievers, and dropping out of fashion. Instead we should learn from the theology of liberation how to organize our own base communities, reinterpret the faith, plug-in and use fashion's intensities for self-enhancement, even if we cannot access fashion through the formal, commodity channels. We must turn fashion from a phenomenon of top-down dictations and anxiety to a collective experience of shared praxis and empowerment.

Throughout this chapter we will see the abstract machine of hacktivism run in several different settings and effect organizational structures. We will set off by examining two models of organization, popularly called the "cathedral" and the "bazaar", two helpful models that will resonate with much of what is discussed. Following this we will examine closer the relations between rituals of fashion and religion. We will also look at the role of clothing in relation to self-enhancement and from this approach fashion with the aim of understanding it from within, from a believer's point of view, as through a theology of fashion. We will then examine some lines of practice within the theology of liberation, to see how they "hack" into the belief system and make it run in new ways, yet preserving the faith intact, *keeping the power on*.

When applying this mindset to fashion we will see how a fashion heresy evolves where fashion heretics could be compared to how the liberation theologists "steals" the right of exegesis from the official channels of the Vatican, and "giving" it to the poor. We will then examine the Spanish YOMANGO movement and look at two of my projects, the Italyan Avlusu, a brand of recycled garments and histories, and the Merimetsa project, a joint endeavour run at rehabilitation centre in Tallinn. At the end I will shortly discuss where this type of reorganization can take us, as not all forms of participation is considered as positive for the people involved.

As we proceed some things are important to keep in mind. Heresy is an act of communal devotion, it is a religious practice engaged in social change. It is not an act of enmity with the aim of overthrowing the faith. In this sense heresy is like hacking, not like cracking. Heresy is an act of love, not an act of hate.

the cathedral and the bazaar

Among a group of people sharing a goal organization often seems to emerge "spontaneously". But even more it often requires a lot of effort to get a group to coordinate their energy, skills and intentions and to start to work together.

Throughout the industrial age the western world has become very efficient in using hierarchical models of organization, especially within production of scale and large bureaucratic organizations. Within these sectors the military model of Fredrik the Great's Prussian army, modelled after his beloved toy-automata, has been refined into perfection (DeLanda 1991). With standardized parts, discipline, uniforms and perfectly executed orders the organization became an automatic machine, be it an army, bureaucracy, school or factory (Morgan 1986). Through highly developed scientific management methods of discipline and surveillance, like Fordism and Taylorism, the automaton worked predictably like a trouble-free motor, as in the ideas of Michel Serres that we have discussed earlier. All throughout industrialism we learned to master this type of hierarchical organization, and this model has come to look natural for us.

However, there are other models of organization and some have come to compete with the hierarchical one in efficiency. In Eric Raymond's classic book *The Cathedral and the Bazaar* (1999), he discusses the differences between the hierarchical organization versus the flat, networked organization. For Raymond the cathedral is the top-down stratified and closed model, where strict chains of command are built into the structure itself, as with the military organization mentioned above. The bazaar is instead a free buzzing market, where everyone is talking simultaneously, chaotic yet somehow organized, like a street market or an anthill. Raymond exemplifies this through the battle between two computer operating systems. On the one hand there is Windows, created by the stratified Microsoft Corporation, and on the other hand Linux, the open source operating system, created mainly by a smooth network of free agents of hobby programmers. What surprised many in the end of the 90's, was how a rhizomatic network, such as the open source model, without any established chain of command or a vast amount of money, could organize such an advanced endeavour as the creation of an operating system as efficient as its billion-dollar competitor.

Now, ten years later, many Linux software projects have forked and many different distributions of the software confuses the scene. To counter this, new quasi-corporate Linux versions like Ubuntu seems to have the greatest momentum and it seems many of the old gurus of open software have fallen silent. Nevertheless, the collaborative working models of the "bazaar" have gained a wider recognition and merged with the ideas from the "web 2.0", with examples like wikipedia.

What Raymond points out is not only the competition between two computer systems, but two modes of organization of society, with the stratified, military-inspired industrial model being challenged by a flatter one, that constitute another logic of assembly. Similar to the argument in the beginning concerning the machinic models of society by Michel Serres, what Raymond discusses is the emergence of the network society and what it means to production and organization.

As argued in the chapter on hacking this proposes other approaches to practice, activism and protest, but it also suggests other forms of complementary organization of communities and sharing the rights

for interpretation, something previously contained to the top of the organization. This would also mean other forms of assembly to catalyse the production of self-organized scenes for fashion.

Taking Raymond at his word, we could perceive the organization of religion, in this case Catholicism, as a cathedral, a top-down stratified belief-system with instead of the all mighty CEO at the top we have the Pope. Through this "cathedral of the Holy See" the big ritualistic production of religion is hierarchically organized, broadcasting its message to the believers, who receives the faith from the top, and with very little possibility of talking back to the system. What would then be the bazaar for religion, how would its believers organize it, and what would be its relation to the cathedral? And perhaps most importantly, how can it help us see the ritualistic production in fashion differently?

We must first examine the metaphor between religion and fashion to clear out some initial misunderstandings.

the metaphor of fashion and religion

Traditionally dress and religion has been tightly intertwined, where dress codes have been expressing devotion as well as social control within religious communities (Arthur 1999). The many facetted connotations of religious dress has also made it a popular reference for fashion designers where for example Jean-Paul Gaultier is famous for his many fashion crossovers with both carnivalesque and fetishist overtones (Keenan 1999).

From a sociological perspective, religion and fashion share similar traits, especially in ritualistic practices. In the works of sociologist Pierre Bourdieu several parallels between religion and fashion are drawn as he sees fashion as a quasi-religious or quasi-magic phenomenon. He uses religious vocabulary densely and sees the star designers as "agents of legitimation" which performs "instances of consecration" (Bourdieu 1993a: 121). The act of making an item into a piece of fashion is a ritual of "transubstantiation" (Bourdieu 1986: 113). In a similar vein, sociologist Efrat Tsëelon describes catwalk shows as "temples of fashion" testifying ceremonial qualities for the chosen few allowed to witness the inner sanctuary of the fashion world (Tsëelon 1995: 134).

Yet, for Bourdieu commodities are closed entities of distinction and class taste, the object of consumption is a "finished product" (Bourdieu 1996: 231). In Bourdieu's perspective fashion can only be about *buying* or *having*, not of *doing*. He sees the division between production and consumption as unbridgeable and leaves no room for co-authorship, consumer interventions or "poaching", forms of participation exemplified by cultural theorist Michel De Certeau (1984).

Fashion is re-enacting historical rituals in our contemporary society and many call upon ancient traditions. In *The Death of Fashion* Harald Gruendl (2007) examines the connection between fashion sales and Dionysian rituals. These rituals are about myths, but they are not necessarily religious or deeply connected to faith. He means that rituals "separate the profane from the sacred. Sacred not mean religious, but as apart of the everyday." (26) Gruendl bases his analysis on a reference by Nietzsche, which Roland Barthes uses in *The Fashion System* (1983). Where Nietzsche meant that there is a continuing existence of the Dionysus cults, Barthes sees that "spring Fashion, for the modern woman, is like what the Great Dyonysia or Anthesteria were for the ancient Greeks" (Barthes 1983: 251). Gruendl also examines how fashion is connected to the carnivalesque rituals of civilization and how the rites representing the life and death of gods are connected to various feasts that make social relations stable throughout the shifts of time and to preserve ritual equilibrium.

Gruendl means that the ancient gods who guaranteed stability and meaning in the world are in our contemporary society replaced by the order of the "commodity cosmos" in which our main ritual is the ritual of shopping. "While Christ is related to the realm of the spirit, Santa Claus represents the realm of material abundance [he] is the god of consumption" (21). Gruendl sees that the shift where Santa Claus now becomes the new god of Christmas is similar to the change between meanings of rituals and festivals when Christianity replaced pagan rites.

> The strategy of consumer culture is to replace a festival thus far celebrated in order to start a parasitic life, which in the end kills the original festival. Several tribal festivals were overlaid by Christian rites to prevent heathen customs. (22)

Rituals change over time according to new cultural conditions and their meanings disappear even faster. Today few people know the original meaning of the Christmas tree and Gruendl assumes that in a couple of years few will know the original meaning of Christmas, even if the ritual might still be performed to stabilize the institution of the family through the exchange of commodities (23).

Like ancient rituals before, ours serve the purpose of transferring basic human needs from the social dimension into the responsibility of consumer culture (47). But there are always questions of power related to the exercise of rituals.

> Primitive agrarian societies anxiously awaited the return of vegetation in spring. Consumer societies, in contrast, worry about the periodical advent of the new trend. Like our ancestors we, too, create rites in order to exert control over nature. Rituals create power; they do not give form to power. (45)

Rituals manifest the power over symbolic communication and elites within every system of belief wields this power. For Gruendl the power over our rituals is today slowly taken over by consumerism.

As shown earlier, Gruendl's comparison between fashion and religious rituals is not something new and it is a metaphor that is both helpful and misleading. To call shopping malls "cathedrals of consumption" is nowadays something of a cliché. As with Gruendl's examples it connotes commodities to icons of worship, shopping to religious services and consumers to believers, yet this cannot be an analogue relation. Media theorist John Fiske is just like Gruendl interested in the power relations of rituals. Fiske points out that this common metaphor is strong because it highlights certain aspects of the rituals of consumption. The metaphor of consumerism-as-religion

> *is* both attractive and common precisely because it does convey and construct *a* knowledge of consumerism; it does point to one set of "truths," however carefully selected a set. (Fiske 1989: 13)

For Fiske, the metaphor is helpful when investigating the power of consumerism, but not for understanding the power of the consumer. For him, the main difference between consumerism and religion lies in the religious congregation's powerlessness, that they are "led like sheep through the rituals and meanings" (13) and that they need to "buy" the whole truth of

faith, not selective bits and pieces. He means that the congregation has no power to negotiate and that they are "subjugated to the great truth" of religion (14). On the contrary, Fiske means that consumers have more power to choose and to influence the system of consumerism, they have the possibility to fight back and turning the shopping malls to "arenas of struggle", something similar is not possible in religion (14f). In the examples of "shopdropping", in the Hacking chapter, we have seen how active resistance in the aisle can resonate neatly with Fiske's notion of struggle. Nevertheless, Fiske's neglect of the possibility of resistance within rituals and religious communities could trigger us to examine how struggle manifests there.

It is tempting to draw much upon the metaphor between religion and fashion, but that has to be another adventure. This time we will focus on the struggle of who can use the rituals and for what purpose. We will see practices reproduced by the believers at the bottom of the religious system, how they make room for own interpretations and how these relate and answer to the "dictations" from the cathedral's top. In this struggle the use of clothes can also serve a special purpose. To use clothing as a tool for spiritual self-enhancement is not something new and this personal aspect of our second skin can indeed bring us closer to see how we can use clothing for liberation.

fashion and self-enhancement

We don't have to be too abstract or metaphorical to see spiritual and deeply personal connections between clothing and ourselves. As religion transforms to affect our lives differently today than a century before, some of the rituals still persist, and in some cases fashion can be said to take a role in helping people to self-enhancement. We are thus not always "victims" to fashion, but also learn to use it as a vehicle for our dreams and personal motivation. This can be a shopping ritual before a job interview, updating the second skin to better express "who we really are", or the ritual cleaning before meeting a new date to boost self-esteem.

Clothing follows us through life whether we want it or not, marking various social segments, stages and transitions. It also signifies group roles, professional responsibilities and chains of command. It sometimes deindividualizes to enhance group loyalty and efficiency, and sometimes offers uniforms for empowering individual resistance.

Through all these scenarios clothing also helps persons to self-enhancement. For anthropologist Jane Schneider self-enhancement loosely refers to

> energizing the self and close others, perhaps organized in small groups, through life-affirming practices and rituals. Examples involving cloth and clothes include transforming the body and its surroundings in ways considered aesthetically or sexually attractive; dressing well to accrue prestige, the respect of others, a sense of worthiness or empowerment (Schneider 2006: 203)

As a second skin clothing is always firmly connected to rituals within most human cultures and marks both social and biological metamorphosis. The woven cloth has been a central part of human civilization throughout the ages, enveloping our bodies with social meaning-generating processes.

> As James J. Fox summarized for Indonesia's outer islands, it 'swaddles the newborn, wraps and heals the sick, embraces and unites the bride and groom, encloses the wedding bed, and in the end, enshrouds the dead' (Schneider 2006: 204)

The House of Diehl *is a New York based design group organizing "Style Wars", a merger of MC battling & Haute Couture. These are live styling and design events, often hosted at nightclubs, where the participants creates new garments and work against the clock on live models, live on stage, only using recycled garments and ordinary objects as raw materials and with a time limit of 5 minutes. House of Diehl define their work as "Authentic involvement and collaboration. Rather than shallow infiltration and shameless imitation. Think fashion from the mosh pit. Fashion as Olympic sport. Fashion as sex. Fashion as Hendrix." Their work "seeks not only to express a community, but to generate one. [...] To make the 'spectator' the star." (House of Diehl n.d)*

Cloth and clothing follows us through life and especially marks the rituals performed at transitions between roles, entitlements, and life stages. Even the dead are wrapped or clothed as this is believed to ensure their continuance as social beings, resisting our blunt biological doom.

Schneider claims two crucial aspects for understanding self-enhancement in relation to clothes: their aesthetic characteristics and their spirituality. Most often these aspects are combined into, for example, patterns and symbolically coded colours. The spiritual aspect can involve very distinct signs and symbolic functions, such as prints and applications protecting against the evil eye or black magic, but they can also connect the living with the world of spirits and divinities in more direct ways. In examples of spirit possession the restless spirit is not only believed to need a human body, "but human apparel, and to reveal its identity through demands for specific items of cloth and clothing." (Schneider 2006: 204)

Spiritual rituals are not only performed by wearers of clothes but also by the artisans and craftsmen making them. There are many ethnographic descriptions of

> artisans performing rituals and observing particular taboos in the course of spinning, weaving, embroidering, brocading, dyeing and finishing their product. (Schneider 2006: 205)

This especially involves dyeing, which before the advent of chemical dyes was a very secretive and expensive practice. It made dyers often closely connected to royal monopolies with "exotic substances, training, talent, and closely guarded secrets"

(Schneider 2006: 205). Dyeing, just like alchemy, was a practice and esoteric knowledge with deep mystery and with a great potential to social recognition and wealth.

Central to the experience of ritual self-enhancement in clothing, as discussed above, are the ways that various layers of experiences are added to the garments, either by the wearer or by the makers. They are also placed within the system of fashion that as times shift also shifts the meaning of garments. These are processes beyond the reach of the users even if they as believers replicate the rituals of fashion on the streets.

Far too many analyses have been written by fashion "atheists" and they usually neglect the quasi-magical, emancipatory and extravagant sides of fashion. It sometimes seems that this happens simply because they don't believe that they could exist. To better understand these relations we must not step too far outside the belief system but instead stay believers. We should see what a theology of fashion could be.

a theology of fashion

To find ways of engagement in fashion beyond the *ready-to-wear* logic we must look at how power struggles take place in other belief systems, such as religion, and how a top-down stratified and pacifying logic can be bent and used for social empowerment by the believers. Various forms of dogmatic controversies and heresies

San Precario *is the patron saint of precarious workers engaged in hard labour without predictability or security. He is the is the protector of the struggle against precarity and the saint of the EuroMayDay march. The saint is a Nom de Plume, or a multiple-user name, and free for anyone to use as pseudonym for the cause.*

exist in almost all religions, but here we will look especially at Catholicism's relation to Liberation Theology. I will examine this relation to give some idea of how an emancipatory or "heretic" fashion practice could work, especially concerning low-level organization amongst believers.

It is however important to set an initial perspective on this parallel between fashion and religion. While it could be tempting to draw strict correlations between fashion and Catholicism as two belief-systems constituting the same logics and meanings this is not what I am after here. They surely inhabit similar characteristics on many levels, yet what I draw on here is the similarity in ritualistic form and organization, not meaning, if we allow these two concepts to be separable. What I examine is the *use* of ritual, practice and belief in the social struggle pronounced by the Liberation Theology, not its exegetical grounding.

When examining religion there is usually a distinction between theology and religious studies. While

theology attempts to understand the discussions of religion from within a particular religious tradition, religious studies try to study religious behaviour and belief from outside a particular religious viewpoint. To be a bit disrespectful; theology is done by believers, religious studies by non-believers. The reason I put emphasis on this distinction is to highlight that Liberation Theology is something happening *inside* Catholicism, by its believers, and is not an interpretation spread by rivalling schools of belief. Likewise Liberation Theology tries to stay *within* Catholicism, it does not want to break the Church apart to become an independent church. Quite similarly I find it important that a discussion on fashion as empowerment is made by "believers" of fashion, by and for design and fashion practice, rather than by "laicists" or "atheists" of fashion. From a perspective of design fashion has to be treated as a "true faith" ad it has to have its own "theology of fashion" rather then be debunked by other theories. This perspective underlines the need to connect a heretical practice within

Serpica Naro *(anagram of San Precario) was a fashion brand temporarily set up before the Milan Fashion Week 2005 by around 200 precarious workers. The group managed to get their new brand into the official show calendar by faking a history of spreads from Japanese fashion magazines. The catwalk show they pulled off, with the established fashion press at front row, was a demonstration against precarious work by means of a critical collection of clothes. The group had* *prepared special garments for the show, commenting on precarious working situations. These were functions for hiding pregnancy or keeping workers at the job longer etc. Important for the group behind Serpica Naro was to stage a spectacle similar to that of fashion, but with a critical message about globalization, the atomization of the individual and labour conditions in consumer society.*

fashion itself, rather than coldly observe or apply it from outside by people who have "seen through" the "illusionary social construction" of fashion. The angle I put on Liberation Theology is just this; to use belief and power from within the system and bending it for social change through individual and community empowerment.

One reason to underline this difference is that fashion theory is often written from the viewpoint of the distant observer, rather than of an engaged participant. It is often as if theory does not "believe", but instead tries to "explain" fashion and unveil its "illusion", rather than follow, enhance or supplement its processes. Perhaps we could imagine approaching fashion from a theological, or "believer" angle, rather than from a religious studies or "atheist" position.

Another thing to keep in mind before discussing Liberation Theology is the difference between Protestantism and Catholicism regarding the immediate activity and interventions of God in the world. While Protestants traditionally view the kingdoms of God and Man as essentially separate, Catholicism stresses a perfect continuum between the divine and the human. The ritualized mysteries of Catholicism, such as the Transubstantiation of the wafer into the body of Christ during the holy sacrament, emphasize the intimate and physical connection between the human and divine. Even though the sacrament is also a part of Protestantism, the rituals of Catholicism make the transition between the divine and human worlds

seamless. The divine works actively in our daily world, and it is highly corporeal. This means that theology is also deeply anchored to our physical world, and not only concerns the spirit.

several lines of heresy

Heresy, from the Greek *Haireomai* "choose", is widely seen as a struggle about the right for interpretation and control within an institutionalized belief system or religious community. The choice the heretic strives for is between forms of interpretation, and the freedom to interpret. Throughout the ages the free interpretation of faith has been labelled as heretical and has continuously been targeted as an unlawful desecration and a godless practice of blasphemy, depending on how much the interpretation differs from the *canon* within the faith, and perhaps more important, how it alters the power relations within the belief system. Often heresy has been violently suppressed, within Christianity the best known of which is probably through the medieval Inquisition. However, heresies exist in other religions, and in many cases religious strife turns into violent bloodshed as the opposing sides ally with conflicting political powers. The 30-year war raging Europe during the 17th century is perhaps the most violent and best-known example.

Indeed the concept of heresy is often used to render someone as "evil" or having malicious intent, or even promoting violence or terror, as we have come to hear so much of in these last decades, but it is not this aspect of heresy I am after here. I have focused instead on the "good" practice or liberation and of how heresy renegotiates power. Of course, this distinction is hard to make clear, especially since many heretic movements have their own leaders and heresiarchs that immediately recreate new hierarchies, replacing the one they have just escaped.

The most common use of the concept of heresy is that it is a theological or religious opinion held to be in opposition of contradiction to the main doctrine of the church, creed, dogma, codex or the orthodox faith (*ortho-* "right" + *doxa* "thinking/language"). It is also an opinion or doctrine in variance with the generally accepted or authoritative interpretation.

Historically heresy has been a label on various movements of faith, especially in the Middle Ages with Catharism, Bogomilism, and Gnosticism proving notable examples. These religious disputes also carried political dimensions, always mixing heresy with revolutionary tendencies, from Justin, Jan Hus and the Levellers, to Martin Luther King and Steven Biko (Bradstock & Rowland 2002). Heresy has also been popularly studied from the perspective of political anarchism. For example, the heretic Movement of the Free Spirit, brilliantly analyzed by historian Norman Cohn (1957), caused situationist Raoul Vaneigem's (1998) and culture critic Greil Marcus' (1990) to draw parallels with more recent proto-anarchist communities in Europe, such as Dada, Surrealism, Situationism and the Punks.

Liberation Theology in Latin America grew out of the social struggles and socialist discourse of the 1960's, and its connection to the various Marxist guerrilla movements in the region has not been unproblematic. Even by using a mainly non-violent rhetoric, the movement has been stained by the long lasting conflict and bloodshed of the region. Also today, much of its historical materialism, Marxist activism, and revolutionary argumentation has damaged its reputation as a democratic and ideologically free social grassroots movement. Also the Marxist discursive toolbox as used by the guerrillas has thus lost much of its political impact since

the 90's, but still the local activities of the base-communities remains strong in Latin America, even without the call for full scale revolution.

This touches on a crucial concern: how to avoid the new appearance of small micro-cathedrals in liberated base communities? This is a tricky question, which is also why many have turned against the guerrillas who many times turned out to be as undemocratic as their corrupt opponents. Here the main tool is critical consciousness and transparent organization, but in the coming chapters we will also explore other forms of control aiming to minimize this problem by using distributed protocols rather than centralized command.

However, it should be noted that what is radical in Liberation Theology is not the exegetic writings of Marxist theologists, but their anchoring in action, in *orthopraxis*, of righteous acting in the world. This highlights Christian activism, modelled on the New Testament, as a refusal to remain neutral or passive to surrounding injustice. It is also the practical reorganization of the church into base communities, or basic ecclesial communities that is the answer to meet these needs. In these communities the hierarchical order of the Catholic Church is reversed and the right of biblical interpretation and liturgy comes *from* the practice of the local communities, read *from* their practical standpoints. It amplifies the social ethics of the Bible as an argument to change the organizational constitution of the Church in favour of the poor and transforming a massive Vatican-cantered cathedral to a buzzing, base community bazaar.

In 1984, Cardinal Ratzinger, now Pope Benedict XVI, declared that "the theology of liberation is a singular heresy" (Rohter 2007) and although the relationship between the Vatican and the adherents of Liberation theology has improved, it is still decidedly chilly. The reason Liberation theology was rejected by the Vatican in the first place is because of its social agenda and Marxist concepts and exaltation of class struggle and historical materialism. Even if most of the Liberation theology followers have acted peacefully, some religious activists have also supported armed communist revolution in the name of faith, and sided with the numerous guerrilla-movements that raged Latin America in the late 20th century. The previous pope, John Paul II, known for his strict anti-communism also stated early in his papacy that Liberation Theology's "conception of Christ as a political figure, a revolutionary, as the subversive of Nazareth, does not tally with the church's catechism." (Rohter 2007)

Nevertheless, the resistance to Liberation Theology comes not only from the Vatican, but especially from the socio-economical and military regimes in Latin America, where numerous practitioners and priests have been murdered. The most infamous incident was when gunmen assassinated the San Salvadorian Archbishop Oscar Romeo, who embraced a nonviolent form of liberation theology openly during a church service in 1980.

What primarily interests me in relation to Liberation Theology, is not the means or morals of social struggle itself, but rather the use of religion's "mythical energy", or its intensity for liberation within this belief-system, how it relates to praxis and how it triggers self-organized catalytic processes of empowerment through the engagement of locally formed base-communities. It is from here a line of practice grows, of low-level organization for community self-enhancement, that we can follow and apply to design.

liberation theology

In Brazil, the world's most populous Roman Catholic nation, there are still over 80,000 base communities, the grass-roots building blocks of liberation theology. Also nearly one million "Bible circles" meet regularly to read and discuss scripture from the viewpoint of the theology of liberation (Rohter 2007). The base communities are small groups of believers, not only meeting to discuss the Scripture from their own perspective for overcoming oppression, but also to hold Communion service on their own, in the absence of a priest. They also collaboratively form the base organization of the movement as self-reliant worshipping communities or "base communities", which affect the participatory format of the political discussions and solidarity as well as religious practice.

The participatory perspective of Liberation Theology is something that can be traced from the original churches of the first centuries after Christ, when the Christian religious community was still distributed throughout the Roman Empire in local and self-organized parishes. Likewise, but five centuries before

the formation of Liberation Theology, the direct link between God and believer and the believer's right of organization, was emphasised during the Protestant Reformation. At that time Luther offered the believers unmediated channels to God, bypassing the hierarchy of the Catholic Church. This connection, also accentuated by heretic movements before the Reformation, placed almost a moral imperative on participation where a good Protestant should engage in reading the scriptures, participating in the liturgy, and even governing the Church. Throughout the Protestant Church participation became central tool for salvation. Out from this seed came also the later non-conformist and secular organization on mass scale of the European working class. (Henkel & Stirrat 2001: 174)

The Marxist discourse of the materialist conception of history with social existence determining the consciousness of people does not leave much room for the Christian soul. Even so, historical materialism has been a natural part of the theology of liberation since its birth. Instead, the theology of liberation has blended Marxism with a religious notion of struggle, intimately connecting material and spiritual aspects of liberation. Instead of regarding religion as an "opium for the people", an illusion that has to be overcome before real social change can begin, Liberation theology instead sees faith as an active tool and path for *both* political and religious liberation. The struggle can be said to be about "using" the opium to wrench it from control of the pushers and their political allies. It is a line of practice that turns away from dogma, both Roman Catholic and Marxist, to emphasize activist methodology and celebrate religious belief, illusion or not. People use faith as a vehicle to fight to regain their captive freedom, powered by the intensities of ritual myth produced throughout the larger Catholic system.

However, it should be noted, the Liberation theologists do not diminish the divine role of Christ, but stress his double agency; not only being the Redeemer but also the Liberator of the oppressed. Thus belief does not only take the form of an inner struggle for salvation, but also a tool for promoting social justice, the practical application of the social message of Jesus, influenced by the timeless revolutionary struggle of the poor (Smith 1991).

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What is often pronounced in the liberation struggle, for example by the Dominican theologian Edward Schillebeeckx (2004), is the grassroots' opposition of the church as a hierarchical machine. In Schillebeeckx there is a predominant perspective from below, from the suppressed, and an emphasis on religious practice to help them. Yet the organization of the Church makes this hard. Just as in the Reformation, the grassroots object to a church too occupied with the material and organizational side of faith. For Schillebeeckx, the Church as a hierarchical system has frozen into a stratified exoskeleton that mainly manifests the corporeality of Jesus. For him the Church is a materialization of the text, and not of the spirit in the gospels. But historically, the breaking of hierarchical rules within the church has also been supported from canonical theologians well read by the Vatican. For example, already Thomas Aquinas supported independent action to oppose the pope when it was necessary, even at risk of being excommunicated, if this was in line with the gospel and human conscience (Schillebeeckx 2004).

This form of opposition has always echoed to question and revitalize the Church's hierarchy. Also Francis and Dominic were critical of the hierarchy and institutionalization of the Church and raised voices of reforms, something later taken further

"... the idea of revolution (liberation, transformation) is not a monopoly of the "left" but can be a summons from Christianity's central message, which proclaims someone who was a political prisoner, was tortured, and was nailed onto the cross as a result of the way he led his life."

by Ignatius and the Jesuit style of proclaiming the gospel. Even if Ignatius famously quoted: "I will believe that the white that I see is black if the hierarchical Church so defines it" (Mottola 1989: 141), the Jesuits have over the last decades supported many of Liberation Theology's struggles with the Vatican.

Schillebeeckx emphasises the social and spiritual community of the church, of a low-level engagement and participation into the *ordo* of the service. Inspiration is taken from the initial formations of churches in the first centuries after Christ where the organization of the Church was still fluid, and emphasis was on the small local community that formed each individual parish. It was a time when the stratified hierarchical control was still impossible to organize. Since then many communities have struggled to avoid the top-down structure of the Church, and periods of, sometimes violent opposition have passed through history, often instigated by local priests and clerks of minor orders (Cohn 1957: 157). It has been an urgent question for the small communities to question the stratified mode of control, because "supreme responsibility becomes tyranny in the hands of men, even in the Church." (Schillebeeckx 2004: 85)

As argued before, the aim of the theology of liberation is to use faith as a leading force for social change in rural or industrial economies and authoritarian political systems. Through socio-religious activism it aims to overcome the Enlightenment dichotomy between *facts* and *values* (Pottenger 1989). According to many liberation theologists this dichotomy that once triggered a new curiosity and basis for science has now also become a straightjacket for our understanding of the world. It has lately also been exposed as a political project where facts indeed has shown to be tools of power, rejecting the voice of the powerless with the use of "facts".

Part of the theology of liberation has also triggered reinterpretation of the Bible from the viewpoints of marginalized social or cultural minorities, which has been known under the name of "contextual theology" or "inculturation", the later referring to the adaptation of the way the Gospel is presented and construed for the specific cultures being evangelized. These tendencies assemble a wider range of exegetic practices of locally transformed liturgy, often with ethnic, feminist or ecological interpretations of the faith.

One of the main contributors to the field of liberation theology is the Peruvian priest Gustavo Gutiérrez who came to be one of the main ideologists of the movement. He underlines how liberation has three dimensions: Firstly, political liberation and the elimination of poverty and injustice. Secondly, the emancipation of the poor helping them develop themselves freely and in dignity. Finally the liberation from selfishness and sin and the re-establishment of a true community with God and other people (Gutiérrez 1973).

For Gutiérrez, religion becomes a pivotal force and an intersection of several lines, of faith, action, liberation and development, and this alliance forms an emancipatory force of unfolding and evolution. As an alternative to an inward looking spirituality of contemplation and hermitical sanctity he emphasizes the activity of working together with the poor, forming community together, and faith not being withdrawn to the church. The most important task of the church is done out in the fields - *contemlata aliis tradere* - "to transmit to others the fruits of contemplation" (Gutiérrez 1973: 7). Gutiérrez sees this practice as a transition of theology to an Ignatian spirituality, seeking a synthesis between contemplation and action, the *orthopraxis*, rightfulness in concrete behaviour. For Gutiérrez the local church

should unite with labour groups to mobilize the unemployed, work with unions and parties, all joined together into base communities, once sanctioned by the Gospel. Jesus is here a figurehead of activism, through his way of confronting power during his life, as documented in the Gospels.

> Jesus turned to the great prophetic tradition and taught that worship is authentic only when it is based on profound personal dispositions, on the creation of true brotherhood among men, and on real commitment to others, especially the most needy (cf., for example, Matt 5:23-24; 25:31-45). (Gutiérrez 1973: 228)

Central to liberation theology is the act of the breaking of the bread, the act of sharing that is the point of departure as well as destination of the Christian community (Gutiérrez 1999: 37). The sharing act within the community represents a profound communion and it lifts the hope of the participants through collective action. Not praying for outer intervention, but praying together and of building strength by sharing between believers and the base communities, not *through* the control of the Church. Instead, all praxis activities happen at the level of the base communities, the networked smooth bottom and avoid engaging with the machinery of the Church.

Indeed, for many the Church has become a stratified machine in itself, and this is a view shared among many in the grassroots. This is also stated by another of the central figures of Liberation Theology, the Franciscan priest Leonardo Boff.

> Through the latter centuries, the church has acquired an organizational form with a heavily hierarchical framework and a juridical understanding of relationships among Christians, thus producing mechanical, reified inequalities and inequities. (Boff 1986: 1)

For Boff, the base communities emphasis on small scale and sharing tries to avoid a structure of hierarchical delegation and control. Their method is to continuously question authority, as Jesus never utters the word "obedience" (Boff 1972). The aim is to create a form of religious community not controlled by alienating structures but instead constituted of direct relationships, reciprocity, deep communion, mutual assistance, equity, and communality of gospel ideals (Boff 1986: 4). This is a decentralized model of channelling faith, contextually shaped but still in immediate relation to the gospels and communion. It is an intentional distribution of contemplatory praxis and diversified ecclesiological functions among the untrained believers. However, Boff holds no illusions of a church revolution or a replacement of the Vatican and does not want a separation from the Catholic Church. Instead he sees this as a transition happening *within* the Church, by renewing and bending it.

> In other words the basic church communities, while signifying the communitarian aspect of Christianity, and signifying it within the church, cannot pretend to constitute a global alternative to the church as institution. They can only be its ferment for renewal. (Boff 1986: 6)

The base communities and their distributed mode of religious organization should thus not be seen as a tool for revolutionizing the Catholic Church or tearing down the Vatican. Rather, it is a complementary mode of worship, communion, exegesis, and action – guided from below, from the communities themselves. It is a complementary praxis, opposing dogmatic or orthodox interpretations. Instead, faith is reclaimed and energized through low scale participation, where community mem-

The "pope" of fashion, Karl Lagerfeld, *master designer of Chanel, resembles his Catholic counterpart in many ways. Lagerfeld's authority is unquestioned all through the fashion world and his work saturates Chanel at all levels as he not only designs clothes and accessories, but also shoots the advertising campaigns. He is the icon painter of the brand. His divine touch is what is offered through every product of Chanel and the consumer knows that every artefact of the brand is sanctified by his rigidly controlled system; blessed through the social organisation of his transcendental symbolism. These two popes, the catholic pope and the "brand pope", are both part of larger entities that will outlive them, as we can also see manifested architecturally with their own cathedrals carved in stone.*

*"I want things to change […]
in fact I detest the past"*

"I am never happy about myself."

*"I have survived so many […]
and float in a dimension where no time exist"*

"I rinse myself from everything so I can stay perfectly clean, like a white sheet of paper"

*"I am a person that loves shopping clothes.
And I am not happy in anything except Dior."*

(Lagerfeld 2004)

bers take part in the service as if they mattered and as if their social conditions mattered too. This is a bending of the established lines, empowering believers through community and shared practice. This is tuning the system, but *keeping the power on*.

We must keep this in mind when applying the line of practice from liberation theology onto fashion. We do not want to drop out or split from fashion, instead we want to keep as close to fashion as possible, but still address crucial social questions and question the relations of power within the belief system. To better frame this we should have a short look at the actors and power plays in the fashion cathedrals. As we move on we should try to see what it means to create empowering base communities for fashion.

fashion heresy

A fashion heresy is not something that happens when one fashionista makes his or her own fashion statement, or revolts against the latest trend. This type of personal reaction is part of the system. A heresy has to be an organized community effort, even if rhizomatic in its form, as with the widely distributed medieval Movement of the Free Spirit. Today a fashion heresy could be inspired by the theology of liberation and it would primarily oppose the stratified model of the fashion system, form base communities where believers are encouraged to interpret and make own forms of "worship", based on praxis.

So in what way can liberation theology inspire us to engage with fashion differently? Can we even compare the scenarios?

To begin with, we can see immediate connections between the cathedral of Catholicism and that of fashion. The hierarchical organization of fashion is very similar to the Catholic Church. The Pope interprets the official version of the faith in relation to the central questions of its time that is something similar to fashion's delegation process to star fashion designers who interpret the zeitgeist. A heretic fashion would deal with the power relations in this delegation process and attempt to bypass the priests to assign power to the hands of the laymen, giving the right to access both exegesis and ritual. This would frame a structural reorganization and a renewed right for interpretation at the street level.

When I compare a fashion designer acts as a "pope", I often think of Karl Lagerfeld as one of these classic fashion authorities, at least within the Paris-centred fashion system. Even if there is no official pope of the fashion system, he is as close as it gets. At least he is the pope of his own cathedral-like organized brand. He is a true incarnation, an avatar, of the fashion logic. His comments are as if he *is* fashion himself, at least he *is* the incarnation of the spirited Chanel brand, since Coco Chanel herself is dead. Every word he says is an echo of that spirit. In interviews he says he is never happy about himself, but constantly has to remake himself. He can only look forward, and never more than six months, and history is nonexistent. And he is only happy in Dior (Lagerfeld 2004). Together with his appearance and hyperactive design practice he becomes a seamless representation of fashion itself; glamour, glossy surface, perpetual status anxiety, mixed with the promise of eternal life.

For a stereotype image of the classic Paris-centred hierarchical fashion system Lagerfeld can be regarded as the Pope, or at least one of many, if each brand has its

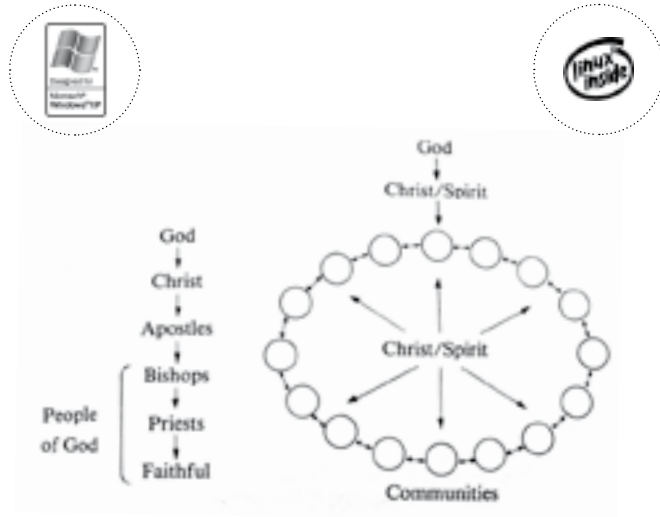own "divine" head designer. This is a pope deeply engaged in interpreting the angelic ideals of beauty and myths of allure, consecrating the dream into orthodox high fashion through rituals of transubstantiation, creating exclusive surface, pure difference and status. Lagerfeld's collaboration with H&M, the Gutenberg of mass fashion, made his teachings reach outside his closed circle of devoted disciples and accessible to the heathen masses who were hungry for his blessing. Yet, as with the stratified Catholic Church, these masses were offered no possibility of taking the faith in their own hands or talk back.

With this in mind we can render a response in Liberation theology-style. We can try to see how fashion "base communities" can be organized and create their own social interpretations of the fashion "faith". The formation of fashion base communities can be done for many reasons. It can be done in response to the interpassivity of the hierarchical system of top-down dictations, to create larger action spaces for every active participant. It can also be done to create its own culture of activists and a critical mass of engaged believers, activists, creators or remixers. This would mean to form a micro-culture, a personal scene, and make one's own voice heard through collaborative reinterpretations and the sharing of the fashion "service", skills and materials as well a performative space for identity production. Sub- or micro-cultures in fashion has existed as long as fashion, but especially in the last years with the rise of the fashion blogosphere we can see a more distributed fashion system emerge with global distribution. Suddenly teenage fashionistas and bloggers are sitting at the catwalk front row and every city has its street scene globally documented. Nonetheless, fashion is still *ready-to-wear*, the action spaces still limited and the amateurs still neglected from within the system, if they are not so "cool" to be "hunted" for the latest trend.

For a fashion heresy to take shape a multitude of base communities of believers has to be formed. Most importantly, this formation of fashion base communities is a way to "linuxify" the organisation of the fashion system and to avoid another hier-

archical mode of operation immediately taking place. We can see this old model still at work as various fashionistas and bloggers have their "15 minutes of fame". Instead, we must build shared action spaces, both for interpretation and hands-on production. One could argue that this is what "subversive" subcultures have always done, perhaps most famously the punks or other newer rebels (Hebdige 1988; Polhemus 1994). But to follow the method of Liberation theology, our aim is not to break out or oppose the system or celebrate our difference, but instead to reinterpret fashion *from within.* What is important to keep in mind is that the heretic keeps the faith intact and disagrees out of interest and faithfulness, not of disbelief. Heresy is an act of communal devotion, building a religious practice engaged in social and organizational change, not an act of enmity with the aim of wrecking the system. Instead it is interested in reform. It is a deep engagement in how faith is managed and organized, liberating it from too dogmatic or stiff control. An act of love, not of hate.

The liberation theologist could reverse engineer the belief system and learn how it is constructed by studying the holy scripture, the theology, the rituals and the structure, to find the best way to plug-in. Use the forces running through it, form communities and employ the released intensities for social change. Run own lines between practices, unleash the forces, and just like the heretics of the Free Spirit who commanded the Holy Trinity so they could "ride it as in a saddle" (Cohn 1957: 175).

One approach to heretic practices in fashion could be the Spanish YOMANGO movement and their rhetoric and tactics of commodity "liberation". Similarly to the heretics of the Free Spirit they use they unleash the forces of myth as they use the systems of consumerism and fashion against themselves. Where fashion and the society of the "spectacle" (Lebord 1994) has turned protest into an aesthetic lifestyle, YOMANGO turns lifestyle back into action, dissolving the demarcation between the two.

YOMANGO *is a "lifestyle brand", helping to liberate clothes and consumers from their imprisonment in the malls. By providing methods and advertising they help consumers form another lifestyle, based the active life of fashion liberation.*

YOMANGO

Political activism can intersect with fashion in many ways. One of these ways is exemplified by the Spanish collective *Las Agencias*, "The Agencies". Las Agencias is an informally structured collective of artists and activists based primarily in Barcelona that has run several projects in the counter-culture style. They have also worked with undertakings somehow connected to the fashion world, creating protective clothing for public protests, *Pret-a-revolter*, and running poster and "subvertising" campaigns, subverting advertising or billboards. However, their project YOMANGO is the most well known and widely spread of their ideas.

YOMANGO is a counter-lifestyle movement or anarchistic practice critically commenting on consumer culture and the role of consumption in contemporary society. The name is a fusion of the clothing company Mango creating the word in Spanish slang for "I steal". According to the group, YOMANGO, promoting civil disobedience through tactics such as stealing, is more of a brand and lifestyle than an organized movement. They state that;

> Like all other major brand names, it is not so much about selling concrete stuff but more about promoting a lifestyle. In this case, the YOMANGO lifestyle consists of shoplifting as a form of social disobedience and direct action against multinational corporations. (Smith & Topham, 36)

It is a counter-lifestyle exploding the borders of accepted behaviour with the aim of subverting the multinational corporations.

> The de-purchasing of consumer goods is promoted by YOMANGO as a "style" that goes beyond one season and has more to do with social engineering than fashion design. […] The hole left by tearing the locks off becomes a logo in its own right, a symbol of coherence to YOMANGO values. (Smith & Topham, 36)

Their freely distributed methods of shoplifting techniques are available on the internet and can be seen as a playful comment on how it is to engage in our contemporary systems of meaning. YOMANGO is not a movement in a traditional sense. Neither are they a philosophy to "follow". It is a spontaneous happening that can occur at any place by anybody. It is an act of self-fulfilment, creativity and sharing. In a world where the Descartian "I think therefore I am" is replaced by the "I consume therefore I am" it should be a basic human right to consume, even for those without the economic assets. In this light, consumption is seen an elementary means for existence. In this situation of social vulnerability YOMANGO distributes both methods and accessories to assist, but more so as social strategies than as products.

In the rhetoric of YOMANGO they see themselves primarily as liberators:

> YOMANGO liberates objects and liberates your desire. It liberates your desire which is trapped within objects which are trapped inside large shopping malls, the same place where yourself are trapped. YOMANGO is a pact between co-prisoners. (YOMANGO 2004: 152)

The impetus of their method comes not from opposition or from rejecting the mechanisms of consumerism but instead they celebrate consumerism, but through stealing. They propose a carnival of desire rather than one of strict fashion asceticism.

> Dare to desire: YOMANGO is your style: risky, innovative. It is the articulate proliferation of creative gestures. YOMANGO is not about theft, its about magic, about the liberation of desire and intelligence crystallized in the "things" offered for sale. If YOMANGO has a politics, it is the politics of happiness, of putting the body first. Be happy, insultingly happy. YOMANGO: feel pretty! (YOMANGO 2006)

YOMANGO is in this sense engaging a central paradox of consumerism, similar to the one discussed in relation to fan fiction. It opposes a system by bending its power, but at the same time is devoted to it. It uses a system of transformation, as is material culture, and in itself transforms it, or even transmutes it and changes it at a deeper level than the surface.

In itself the group is acting as a force or a line of practice more than an entity or independent actor. It is not an oppositional dialectic force, not neglecting or fighting the system in a traditional way, by opposing it or "revealing" its perverse logics. It is neither attacking the cause nor the effect. Instead YOMANGO is bending and modulating the intensities that energize the system and liberating them and their incarnations in commodities.

Even though their anarchistic discourse and many facetted activism proposes an opposition to capitalism, paradoxically they are praising it. The co-pris-

YOMANGO's *manuals are available at their site and include detailed instructions for how to best avoid the electronic article surveillance in the shops. They also provide brand labels for people who want to brand the holes where the alarm has been cut away, to show that this theft was no thoughtless crime but part of a larger lifestyle concept and philosophy. YOMANGO shows that their lifestyle is also celebrated in Hollywood and their protective "saint" is the shoplifting actress Vinona Ryder.*

oners, commodities and consumers, are both in the end engulfed in each other's desire and magic.

With their practice YOMANGO performs a double-edged ironic gesture, as their actions are always playful enactments on the borderline of slapstick comedy, while at the same time they reverse the desire projected through the system. Nevertheless, their actions and rhetoric can also be read as strictly analogue and it could make us see new approaches to how fashion meets activism.

In this way a traditional counterculture critic would argue that YOMANGO is a failure, not radically opposing the "artificial" desire the system produces. This is the traditional critical viewpoint, of seeing consumerism as an "opium for the people" or of offering a "repressive tolerance". On the contrary to this YOMANGO does shift the approach to the system, and engages passive consumers in direct action. The acts are not desperate but instead full of celebration and even hope in the sense that the artefacts of faith and desire should be available to all believers.

YOMANGO works with reversing flows in the fashion system and consumerism, making their approach to ownership a lifestyle in itself and at the same time appropriating the methods and rhetoric of the adversaries and create a new lifestyle out of it. The moral and constructive aspects of their tactics of stealing can be discussed and are doubtful in addition so is their focus on commodities as the path for liberation, as it preserves the unequal status between producer and consumer. As we will see further on, through an example of a similar practice by the Gothenburg-based group SHRWR, perhaps it is not the possession of commodities that this struggle is really about. For the most important characteristic of YOMANGO is the way they bring down the production of lifestyles into the hands of street level activists while still connecting their practice to the cool lifestyle "myths" in fashion.

This approach I find very similar to how heretics operate in that they do not re-nounce faith itself, but reject the way faith is controlled and who has the authority to interpret the holy texts. I will therefore discuss heretic movements and espe-cially Liberation Theology from the same viewpoint. These movements are only distantly similar to YOMANGO in their practice, but by intersecting them we might bring about some new perspectives on how designers could operate in new ways with fashion.

Or as YOMANGO puts it: You want it? You got it!

What YOMANGO also does is that they highlight the mythical history of clothing as a tool for self-enhancement and as a ritual tool. Through their lifestyle-approach their ideology encourages adventurous shoplifting experiences. Instead of buying a lifestyle simulating adventure, you get the adventure for free, and on top of that a desired garment. Even though there is an ironic touch in their basic program it is one of participant self-enhancement, using the powerful mythology of fashion for a new form of lifestyle.

During the Hackers and Haute Couture Heretics exhibition in Istanbul we also invited the Swedish artist group SHRWR, an abbreviation for Sharewear, which mimics the open source term Shareware. Their overall practice is quite similar to that of YOMANGO, liberating clothes from shops, but they also free the garments from personal ownership. In their view "ownership is out of fashion". In the gallery they provided open source patterns of clothing that the visitors could take and they handed out their own printed t-shirts with their logo, slogan and other motifs. Their week was the last of the whole six-week long workshop at the gallery and visitors came in from the street to participate in the usual workshops. However, SHRWR produced most of the material themselves, and only few visitors were of-fered the opportunity to participate in the screen-printing sessions or make gar-ments from the open source patterns. Many of the visitors were rather indignant at

THIS IS SHAREWEAR
OWNED AND PAID FOR BY NO ONE DO
WITH IT AS YOU SEE FIT KEEP THINGS
FREE BECAUSE OWNERSHIP IS OUT OF
FASHION SHRWR ORG

being handed ready-made printed t-shirts for most of them wanted to print them themselves. They were interested in *doing* rather than *having*.

This experiment made it clear that what mattered most to the visitors at the gallery was the possibility to do things for themselves, to participate and to learn new things, much more than receiving the ready-made article. The great gift was to learn how to work and how to do-it-yourself. This desire thus became something of the opposite of the ideas of YOMANGO, limiting the importance of commodities to instead highlight the desire amongst participants to make things and learn how-to. In this case the desire for liberation concerned skills rather than objects.

The main interest is not to receive objects of self-enhancement delivered from the top, ready-made, but to ritualize these processes through knowledge or myth-creating rituals. These would be rituals through which things make sense, connect, and are allowed to grow into some form of symbiotic relation to the wearer. It is an emphasis on taking back the right for interpretation and for encouraging praxis.

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Yet a central question remains. How can the "shallow" value of fashion be tuned to address the question of empowerment and self-enhancement? Can fashion be used for a constructive praxis of liberation? Could it be a hands-on crafting work done within a grassroots community, perhaps even within groups who are not the usual consumers of fashion, yet be employed by us all in our daily lives? Then what could be the resources used and how could they be connected to the forces within the fashion system?

These questions were something I tried to engage with in a series of projects, first in Istanbul together with the Turkish art group Oda Projesi, and later in two sessions at Merimetsa, a rehabilitation centre in Tallinn.

>|< **Italyan Avlusu** *was a self_passage project run together with the community art group Oda Projesi in Istanbul 2004. During one month we set up a local fashion brand based on a process of recycling garments and especially their inherent stories. Before the garments were recycled the previous owners had to write down the clothes experiences in a fill-in-form.*

The idea was to explore how a marginalized group could use crafty interventions for self-enhancement. Together with an Istanbul-based community art group, Oda Projesi, and a group of Turkish women we started a local brand for recycled clothes, Italyan Avlusu. The brand became in itself a form or base community, where we gathered around one subject commenting it in relation to the participants shared social situation.

italyan avlusu

In spring 2004 I was invited by the Turkish community art group Oda Projesi to make a fashion related project together with their neighbours in the Galata district in Istanbul. Oda Projesi, which is usually connected to the "relational aesthetics" approach, had by then been working in this particular urban community for several years. They were based in a ground floor apartment facing the block's open courtyard and minimal square – the "Italian Square", or Italyan Avlusu. Around the courtyard, in century old houses, some in need of restoration, housed a heterogeneous group of east Turkish migrants with whom Oda Projesi worked on their projects. The community projects included everything from artists making small exhibitions in the apartment to groups broadcasting community radio, making animated movies with the children or building wooden bridges from small sticks between the windows so spanning the

yard to manifest neighbourhood connections.

We decided to make a fashion project together, Oda Projesi, the neighbours and me. It would be a locally produced brand working with recycling clothes in various ways, and with this very methodology somehow try to comment on some central logics of fashion. Most importantly the idea was to try to use clothing as a tool for building community and use it for reflecting on our connection to the world of fashion.

The basic idea of the local brand, which we called Italyan Avlusu, was to use the sparse resources of the community in new ways, trying to somehow resemble fashion, but also reverse some of its logic to build a frugal advantage for the community. We agreed on reversing fashion's logic of building expectations by "promising" an advantageous change to the wearer. Fashion is always aiming at the future and by wearing it we are promised to be able to run faster, be more attractive, look sexier or reach future status. At least that is what advertising tells us.

Instead we wanted to reverse this logic by underlining the history of each recycled garment and emphasise the personal memories of each garment collected for reuse. Instead of building your identity on new stories, provided through the fashion system, we here offered the wearer to build an identity on the stories the old garments had been through. To facilitate this we made fill-in-forms as labels for the gar-

Songül Ergin
Why was this garment YOU?
Because it looked good on me.

Where/when did you get the garment?
Five years ago from Kasımpaşa.

Why did you buy it? (why was it beautiful?)
I was going to (my) village, and I liked this (garment).

Why don't you like it anymore? (why isn't it beautiful anymore?)
I don't like it because I've put on weight. I'll enlarge one of these and shorten the other one.

Where/when have you worn it? (how long has it been used?)
I was using when going to the market place and/or going to visit friends.

What kind of activities has it been used in? (work/leisure/celebrations)
I was wearing it daily.

What is this garments memorable story?
(My) kid puked on it when we were going to our village/town.

ments. Each donated piece of clothing had to be coupled with the information about where, when and why it was acquired, which stories it had gone through, and why it was now passed on.

As the garments were later cut up and reformed the labels were remixed too, so that each "new" garment would be joined by a recollection of its "memories". We read the stories, discussed them and our own relationships with our clothes. We worked on several methods and recycle designs, yet in the first weeks it was hard to encourage the neighbourhood participants to be radical enough to cut pieces apart and reform them. Most often the redesigns were forms of mending, meaning that the stories were neither cut up nor transferred between the garments. But as the workshop evolved this changed and in the last week a lot of beautiful pieces were produced and screen-printed patterns and labels were added.
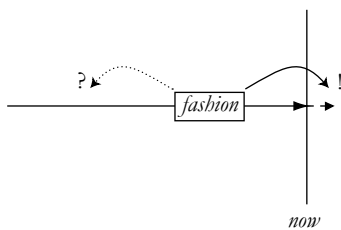

Brands are usually built on promises and expectations that helps consumers build self-esteem when facing an unknown future. We buy into these dreams to help us become our future promising selves. With Itayan Avlusu we instead tried to highlight and provide comfort from the past. Every garment we reformed contained the remixed stories from its different assembled parts.

In the end of the two-month project we arranged a fashion-weekend at the Oda Projesi apartment and refurnished the rooms from an impoverished but delightful sewing studio to a mimicked fashion store of the Italyan Avlusu brand. We received quite a few visitors, many of who were interested in the garments on display. Yet, when they asked for the price we said they could only be swapped for the equivalent garment the customer was wearing, and they needed to fill in a form for their swapped piece, so adding to the material resources. Some found it amusing and started filling in the forms.

Yet, as they proceeded and went through the questions, most had second thoughts. Apparently the process of answering the questions revealed that their garments carried stories too valuable to be deserted. Instead of swapping their garment they started to offer to come the next day with up to ten other pieces and not just the one they were wearing. We refused to renegotiate the initial conditions of the deal. Our concept proved counter efficient and only one garment was swapped during our glamorous fashion weekend.
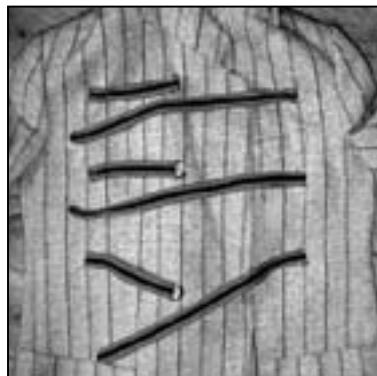
Even though the swap-concept proved imperfect for sustaining the resources something else was proved – that methods for making people think twice about

their clothes reveals new connections to what they wear and why. Garments they first thought only related to their status in relation to fashion also harboured lots of personal memories. These stories are cheap yet still priceless and are a hidden asset among recycled clothes.

Still, the project also helped develop new skills among the participants and encouraged their endeavours. Touching the product of ones creativity proved to be motivation enough for many to continue working with their ideas at a later date. New people visited the yard to share their approach to community art practice and these shared activities revealed the multiplicity of stories connected to clothing. This indicated how this narrative quality could be used in the future, intersecting it with the expressions of big fashion. There was an overall feeling of shared encouragement as the everyday stories of the wearer's own life experiences

was brought to a focus in the garments, and not the stories of unreachable idols. To build together on each others stories and garments can in this way be a vehicle for self-enhancement, reinterpreting the otherwise top-down fashion myth and connecting it to ones own social situation, instead of listening to the mediated stories from the top. From this standpoint we built a new approach to fashion, based on the limited resources we shared, but revealing stronger narrative intensities by using the memories of the garments instead of "promising" the new. Indeed this was very much like the shared praxis within the base communities among the liberation theologist.

Parts of this perspective were further explored in the projects at the Merimetsa rehabilitation centre in Tallinn from 2004 to 2006. In this case a set of organized institutions were brought together to engage in a collaborative project of fashion production in which the finished products would be inserted into the normal interfaces of fashion. Here the aim was that the products should become fashion images and the collections sold in fashion stores.

The last week of the project we organized a "fashion weekend" where the reformed garments were offered for exchange. If someone was interested in a garment it had to be exchanged with something that person wore at that moment, and that person had to fill in the form about that garment's history. This proved counterproductive; the more people filled the form, the less they wanted to swap the garment they wore. They rethought the stories and value of their garments.

RE_TALLiation, *the first collection at Merimetsa, was designed by two fashion students who were also the models for the collection. The photographs were taken at the sewing studio at Merimetsa with the clients also present in the images. The collection was sold in a local fashion store. In this collection we tried to mimic an atmosphere of glamorous fashion and at the same time show the environment where the garments were produced.*

merimetsa

Merimetsa is a rehabilitation centre and mental health facility placed within a big green area in the outskirts of Tallinn. Their textile studio is an open facility employing a handful of "clients" or mentally handicapped patients. It is not a closed institution and most clients live at their own or with their families but they need an ordered and supported working place and at Merimetsa art and handicraft classes run parallel to their work at the textile studio.

I came to Merimetsa the first time in the spring of 2004, during an artist-in-residency period of two months in Tallinn, organized by NIFCA. I got in contact with the rehabilitation centre through the help of a local artist, Sirja-Liisa Vahtra, who had been working as an art therapist at the institution. Together we discussed ways to "update" the existing textile production of Merimetsa, and in some way intersect the two major lines of practice at the institution, the therapy-work done in art or embroidery classes and the subsidized textile production studio. The aim was to combine the "non-productive" therapy of craft, with the "productive" utility textile production studio.

Clothes production is a common type of occupation for women at this type of institution, which provides working condition similar to the "outside" that for reasons of therapy but that also brings in pocket money for the workers and help support the overall business of the organization. The studio is usually a subsidized workshop for the production of utility textiles such as bed linen or uniforms, but the garments rarely break the monotonous labour conditions or the outcome seen as a part of the fashion world. Experiments with prison labour, such as *Prison Blues* from the US or German *Haeftling* run into concerns about moral issues, working conditions, salaries, transparency and also the overall honesty behind the label

(Herivel & Wright). I will not discuss these issues here but instead try to frame the work made at Merimetsa as it had the possibility of avoiding questions of penalty, law, and the "vicious" image of its participants.

Our main concern was to strictly avoid a "mental" image of the project, an attitude where the work would become highlighted as something of a "freak-show". Instead we wanted to highlight the transformation process of therapy work and how the shallow values of fashion could empower participants on both sides of the counter – producer as well as consumer. We wanted to blend these roles slightly, as consumers could also become producers, and the producers at Merimetsa would be engaged in the design process, as well as meet the demands of their interested customers and perhaps even meet them through their small shop at the institution.

The first step in the projects at Merimetsa was the *RE_TALLiation* project, which began in spring 2004. The one-month long collaborative work took place both at Merimetsa and at a studio at the Estonian Artists Association. The first aim was to add fashion value to the textiles sewn in the Merimetsa workshop through a collaborative design and production process between fashion designers and the clients. To make the model sustainable, the idea was to engage the local fashion academy in the project, so that the project could run in coming seasons even after the initial experiment was finished. Thus all the resources were already at hand, but just not yet connected or actualized. A local fashion academy, a rehab production studio, a local fashion store – all were waiting for something to happen. Using the academy's repetitive curriculum for "powering" the cycle would create new designs for the Merimetsa studio every year. An established and progressive local fashion store in the city centre liked the idea and offered to sell the garments.

We got two design students interested in the project, Kriss Soonik and Liisi Eesmaa, who created a garment model that could be altered throughout the produc-

Fingerprint labels *were used in both collections where every person involved in the production put a physical mark on their garments (left). This was an attempt to stress the tangible link between production and consumption, that these were the local hands that had made the garment. The aim was to emphasize the connection between the clients, who were co-designing and producing the garments, and the consumers examining the garments and photos at the gallery. The MerimetsanAlchemy collection was photographed by portrait photographer Diana Lui (right).*

tion process as well as by the wearer. It was a one-size blouse with snap-button attachable origami decorations where the rehab clients had designed the painted fabric pattern as well as the origami flowers. During the process labels were produced where all those engaged in the production would leave a fingerprint and thus leave a human trace on the garment, so enabling the customer to come a step closer to the sewing studio.

After production we also took fashion-mimicking photos of the collection at Merimetsa. Soonik and Eesmaa acted as models and the sewing studio environment formed the background. The finished collection of garments was sold at a well known fashion store in central Tallinn and the whole collection that was produced, about two dozen pieces, was sold out during the summer.

Regrettably the project was not going as planned and a crucial element of the process failed. The collaboration with the academy failed, as they saw no possibility of including a one-week workshop in their schedule in any of their classes, even if the students would be able to get their designs produced free and that distribution was already set up.

Nevertheless, the collaboration with Merimetsa and the clients was very successful and they were very thankful for the attention they had received from the local press and visitors as well as the investment in new ideas into their daily routines. So we decided to try a second round, but testing another method. The idea was now to try something less fashionable but more directly focused on the work at the rehabilitation centre.
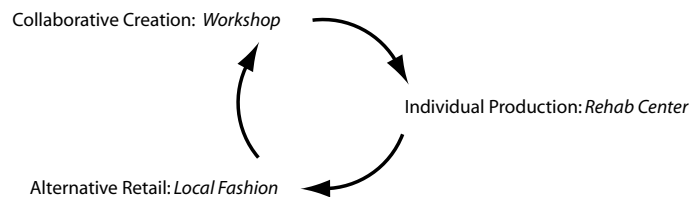
The second part of the collaboration, *MerimetsanAlchemy*, was tried out in 2006 and we had modified two prototyped garment models from the first project, a diagonally draped apron and a kimono-like work shirt. This time the strategy was to widen the interface between the production situation and the consumer, not through a mimetic approach to fashion photography, but by a respectful documentation of the work in Merimetsa. Instead of compromising with the aesthetics and modes of production from fashion this step aimed at deepening the social therapy work using *fashion as an alchemic tool*.

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To understand both fashion and alchemy we must relate these practices to a concept in which they are both deeply entwined; the concept of *myth*. Fashion and alchemy are both usually seen as unserious practices with neither the social value of the fine arts nor the accuracy of the exact sciences. But myth is neither the opposite of science, nor is it a deception or untrue image of the world. Myths are the powerful imaginative fabrics we weave our world with. Myth does not veil reality but renders it visible, and just like fashion we live our lives inside it. It wraps the world with a holistic threadwork; not fragmenting the world into atomized and isolated data but weaving the narratives of the world into visible and tangible shapes. Though generally regarded as shallow and ephemeral, fashion is one of the strongest myths in contemporary society. Fashion can be regarded as another layer of the world, relating to deeper transformations in the lived experience.

Alchemy is indeed similar to fashion in many ways. Alchemy is the practice of engaging in the transmutation of matter and should not be misunderstood as a new age revival of healing, mysticism and astrology. Instead it is the methodical search for inner change symbolized by outer transformations. The medieval experiments of turning lead into gold were mere symbolic acts of a larger task; turning the blemished soul of original sin into higher spirit. Understanding alchemy as this deeper journey can make us see how fashion can act as a symbol of inner change.

MerimetsanAlchemy was a project processing the hope of inner and social change through highlighting a possible intersection of fashion and therapy. Alchemy has always been a practice collecting curiosities, opening viable passages into the un-

Collaborative Creation: *Workshop*

Individual Production: *Rehab Center*

Alternative Retail: *Local Fashion*

A Circular Process of Change.
The idea with the projects at Merimetsa was that there would be a circular flow between the engaged institutions and participants, where all would be committed to positive change. The fashion students would engage in collaborative creation with the clients and get experience and their designs produced and sold. The rehabilitation centre would get attention and new small collections to produce. The local fashion store would get new and interesting collections produced locally. All would gain attention and appreciation for the work. By using the academy as a "motor", every year a new group of students would take on a new collection and the wheel would be spinning. This circular process would help the project to become sustainable since all participants would want the project to continue.

known. But it has never been an aimless meandering. Instead it has been a vivid quest of spirituality through various means. As the French scholar of esoterism Antoine Faivre (1989) writes alchemy is "both a way of life and an exercise of vision." In its dynamic quest for transmutation of matter and spirit, alchemy has through history been working with the actualization of the possible. The possible in this case is not a linear extrapolation from the actuality of here and now.

During this second round, the garment models were made from various qualities of linen, from thicker canvas to lighter toile. The garments were embroidered at Merimetsa with various patterns invented by the clients, but this time no large production was made, but only six prototypes that we photographed, worn by the clients who produced them. The photographs were taken by the portrait photographer Diana Lui and later enlarged to almost life-size for an exhibition at a gallery in Tallinn where the garments also were exhibited. A catalogue was produced containing the patterns of the garments.

At the gallery, visitors were encouraged to try on the garments. Along the walls Lui's large-scale prints, six of the Merimetsa clients photographed looking intensely into the camera, looked on the visitors who were trying on clothes. The last image on the wall, in the same size as the photographs, was a sheet of black reflective plexiglass in which the visitor was reflected in a very similar manner as the other portrayed persons on the walls. Together the visitor and clients wore their garments, looking at each other in a process of mutual recognition.

Photo session at Merimetsa.

The feedback from the participants at Merimetsa was very good, both from the clients and the staff. The clients liked the small challenges of each new garment, and the diverse outcomes that they could affect. That the final products reached outside the institution was appreciated, as well as that new customers came to the institution's small shop. The staff saw a new engagement on the parts of the clients and was pleased that the previously unseen institution received so much publicity and attention. They also appreciated the positive energy the project gave in the sense of discreetly but creatively disturbing their routines.

Of course, projects like these need longer planning and execution to be more fruitful. It shows how low-level collaborations between different partners can reveal new potentials without changing much of the agendas or methods of the involved participants. Indeed it is possible to facilitate such a process as a designer or free agent, without the backing of a full institution. Instead, the designer facilitates and helps the outcome to turn into something totally new by connecting and energizing already previously existing flows, in which participants also become liberated from their preconceptions that nothing new is possible.

This small level of intervention is also useful and has certain qualities as it proves that new ways are possible for all parts involved. The next initiative could come from any of the partners in the project and it could be initiated by the students, Merimetsa, or the shop – adding the small energy required to get it rolling once again, but in another form, towards other goals and with new participants.

why participation

All the projects described above share a participatory standpoint where people are encouraged to take part in the design and production process. Yet not all forms of participation is positive, and it can sometimes even become a new form of "tyranny". Sharp criticism has also been aimed at what is sometimes called the "participatory imperative" (Cooke & Kothari 2001). So it is important for a designer wanting to involve people in the design processes to see what these obstacles could be. We will have to argue as to why and in which type of participation we want to engage in.

One can look at any community or participatory project and argue if it really helps the people it tries to help, and in what way. The question is not mainly "how much" participants are empowered but rather "for what"? As argued by Henkel and Stirrat (2001), people in "developing" societies engaged in participatory projects are often simply "empowered to do" what the modern state-institutions think they should do. They should be "helped" to become good consumers in the global economy, responsible patients in the health system, rational farmers increasing the GDP or as participants in the labour market. According to Henkel and Stirrat, the aim of "giving power" is mainly to reshape the personhood of the participants into the great project of "the modern" (182). Of course this type of critique becomes even harsher when regarding projects that use fashion as a tool for liberation, and take place within an institution at the core of modernisms sorting apparatus, so famously argued for by Foucault (1991, 2001). Likewise, this type of "participation", combined with production could indeed be a tool for forcing the new "creative economy" onto people, making every single person a compulsive entrepreneur, singlehandedly responsible for their life situation, even the things that are out of reach.

This is a critique of the overall idea of any type of "social design" or "development", as it subjects any participant to the ideological control of the organizer, however benevolent the intentions. To some extent it is indeed correct, as any organizer of a project can easily become a helpful dictator using soft power to realize a project in accordance to the initial ideas. Processes of proposed empowerment can certainly engage the wrong persons in the wrong way, carelessly overriding subtle social borders and upsetting or weakening the whole community, rather than strengthening it. Likewise, it can bring old conflicts to the surface, personal, domestic or community-wise. It requires a lot of previous knowledge, highly skilled collaborators, locally engaged participants, tons of shared motivation, as well as oceans of time to pull a successful project through. Unfortunately these things rarely come together at a simple command and the designer will mostly have to work with the material ready at hand and make the best from it.

Yet, to be able to "talk back" is the best option we have to oppose oppression and find ways to engage a wider range of people in the formation of our world. To do this we need to open new interfaces and create not only one big public but a multiplicity of shared "publics", of people, objects and skills, addressing all forms of issues in our world (Dewey 1991). Dewey sees a public

> as a grouping of actors who are affected by human actions but who do not have direct influence on those actions. Lacking such influence, these indirectly affected actors must get organized into a public if they are to address the problems ensuing from these actions. (Marres 2005: 213)

Especially the organization of forums for debate is of crucial value for forming publics, and certainly the base communities are forms of publics as they assemble issues for debate. Yet, for Dewey, the public forms around a specific political *issue,* and does not exist independent of it. This means that the public is not the social community itself, but the assemblage of forces around an issue; institutional, personal and material. From a design perspective, here craft can play a crucial role, uniting collaborative production into a heterogeneous assemblage of both people and products, what sociologist Noortje Masses calls "material publics" (Marres 2008).

As we saw in the introduction chapter, Sennett means that craft makes people anchored in tangible reality, and they can take pride in their work. The objects themselves, produced by the participants, also help "talking back" and echo of newly won pride. As argued by Latour,

> Each object gathers around itself a different assembly of relevant parties. Each object triggers new occasions to passionately differ and dispute. Each object may also offer new ways of achieving closure without having to agree on much else. In other words, objects - taken as so many issues - bind all of us in ways that map out a public space profoundly different from what is usually recognized under the label of "the political". (Latour 2005: 15)

The crafted object and its creator sets a physical grounding for the public to arise from, from pride in itself, not from the social circumstances surrounding the participatory event. As in the examples of Italyan Avlusu and Merimetsa it is the crafted objects and their production context that produces *new* social issues of discussion and something that is "stronger" than a discursive statement. Where there before was no public and no issue was brought to the surface, now a grounded testimony can be made. Here, Latour's notion of the 'matter of concern' (2004)

roots itself in physical shape, but is produced in new circumstances and through the assembly of a new public.

Nevertheless, the formation of publics does not come *ex nihilo* and the designer must work consciously to bring the settings together. Some points could be drawn from both the Italyan Avlusu and Merimetsa projects.

Working with local collaborators is crucial as they have overview, knowledge, skill and connections to the community. To rush into the community with wild enthusiasm is good as it is often contagious, but there is also a need for structured planning together and trying to think some steps ahead. Oda Projesi had been working with the neighbours for several years and knew the situation very well, so we worked together on the various parts of the project. In the case of Merimetsa, the artist I collaborated with had previously taught painting at the centre and knew both the institution and the clients well and many of the latter had been her students. In regard to institutions, perhaps motivation and understanding from the leaders and staff is most important, because without them nothing will be able to happen, especially not in the long run. From my point of view as a designer, the aspired goal was the encouragement and development of personal skills and self-enhancement for the clients and to open common action spaces where new possibilities could emerge, rather than criticizing overall structures or relations to modernity.

Once again, to return to skills and action spaces, there is a smaller chance for things going completely "wrong" when focusing on the reinforcement of craft skills. Still, the designer, or any agent of change, faces a great dilemma when introducing his or hers perhaps most prestigious and valuable gift to the community and to then take it back when leaving. This gift is hope. When coming into a project and showing that everything is possible, the disempowerment can come after the change agent leaves when suddenly things goes back to normal. One could argue that also Cargo Cults can provide new ideas, but the most important thing when running a project like this is to find the energy flows to hook up the project to. The most crucial process the designer can work on is the question of sustaining a successful project – how will it keep on running after the designer leaves. Here the plug-in aspect is crucial and to identify where the future energy will come from, once the project is over.

In the case of Merimetsa this role fell on the local fashion academy, which did not find any place for the project within its curriculum or workshop program. This was of course a major setback to the maintenance aspect of the overall project, but should not diminish the otherwise working processes. Hopefully, someone can take the process from here and set the alchemic process alight again, creating new engagements for self-enhancement and reorganizing the design and production of the fashion "believers".
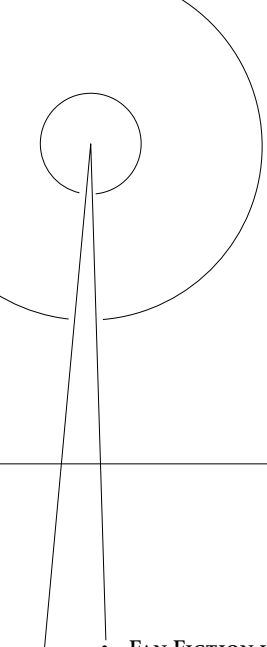
&

In this chapter we have seen how various lines of practice can be organized in other ways than the traditional stratified "cathedral" model. Heresy, liberation theology, fashion activism and communal self-enhancement offer us more "bazaar-like" concepts of organization, where collaborative practices are highlighted and where "lifestyles" are built from a praxis stemming from below. We have seen the theology of liberation organize its conception of church through a network of small base communities, anchoring the faith in the local social situations rather

than in the Vatican alone. Similarily we could see how fashion base communities could work hands-on with the existing resources to create their own local scenes for interpretation, co-design and production. The role of the designer in projects like these is to help organize base communities and platforms that enable a community to "talking back" to the system through crafting and designing their own standpoints on issues brought up in their new "material publics". Future design projects can explore further how these participatory platforms can address other issues through hands-on practice.

Yet, this is not a rage against the hierarchic machine but the emergence of symbiosis between hierarchies and bazaars. The intention for base communities is to plug-in and use energies from within the larger system, but liberating these to be used freely by the low-level publics, the ones who are usually unseen from within the system. It is a "bazaarifying" of the coordination between the interacting parts. This means opening of the "source code" of a belief system, revealing the unknown potentials under a new light and sharing them freely in order to build a community. Unexpectedly the indigent people have been found to own abundant resources. Be it the neglected memories of discarded clothing, the embroidery skills of rehabilitation centre clients or just the desire to take part in and comment on what is going on out there in the fashion world. Even the smallest asset used rightly within a community can help us become more fashion-*able.*

fan fiction

or "Don't Hate the Media, Be the Media"

Throughout the previous chapters we have seen how the abstract machine of hacktivism actualises potentialities within products and communities and releases new lines of flight. Yet, to use the full potentials of this mindset and technique we also have to assemble more force and work on more levels to effect the vectors or channels through which the fashion intensities are transmitted, and where most people meet "the latest".

We have so far followed three approaches. One approach is to hack and bend rays, ride lines and intersect intensities, as we have seen in the hacktivist chapter. The second approach is to bring down control, get organized, form a community of practice, share resources and build together, like the base communities discussed in the previous chapter. We will now examine examples that address the question of who has the right to access the vectors of media. Some practitioners insert their own new creations, interpretations and intensities along existing lines, while others create own symbiotic forums that empower the whole community's work.

This chapter will explore how transmissions are made, how ideas travel and how people reclaim vectors and make their own to "talk back" through the system. They oppose the "culture of silence" (Freire 2000). They are the unseen people, people without a heard voice, using various media tactics to gain access to vectors and find channels to talk back through the established vectors. As we will see, there are many ways to hack channels, vectors, and flows and to inject your own intensities. This will be exemplified through fan fiction in which fans write their own stories *within* the existing narratives, using the force flowing through the existing line, using zines, or home made magazines, to spread their word. Likewise, the "losers" in society use zines to find likeminded and make their everyday a shared adventure together with others and to spread their own creations through the postal network. This model is also used by marginalized groups, empowering their situation through collaborating to make a publication. We will meet examples of this in the zine *Duplex Planet* that originally documented everyday life at a nursing home in the US and the pirate TV-station *Disco Volante* that was run by handicapped peo-

ple in Italy. We will finish this line by examining the creation of an editorless fashion zine, Syntax/144, where a community form a temporary alliance forming their own symbiogenetic vector together with their involuntary host.

life transmissions

During industrialism our western societies have come to master many forms of communication. Media often starts by being centralized to then become more decentralized. The production of books in medieval times was controlled by the Church and written in Latin, but following Gutenberg and the development of the printing press, books and leaflets in the vernacular language could be distributed throughout the world. The development was the same for radio and later television.

These models of transmission were always one-way. Even if the readers or listeners could "call in" or write "letters to the editor" the media was mainly a one-way, monoplex channel. This affected the models of dissemination of fashion, as fashion was regarded as a phenomenon "trickling-down" from above and from the centre to the periphery. Fashion followed the distribution lines of magazines from the printing press or via radio waves from the broadcasting antenna. Designers spotted upcoming trends and surveilled the latest subcultures to appropriate cool street styles. This model is still dominant, as most of us are more "readers" than "writers" of fashion. We can choose and switch between programs and channels, but very seldom create our own channel.
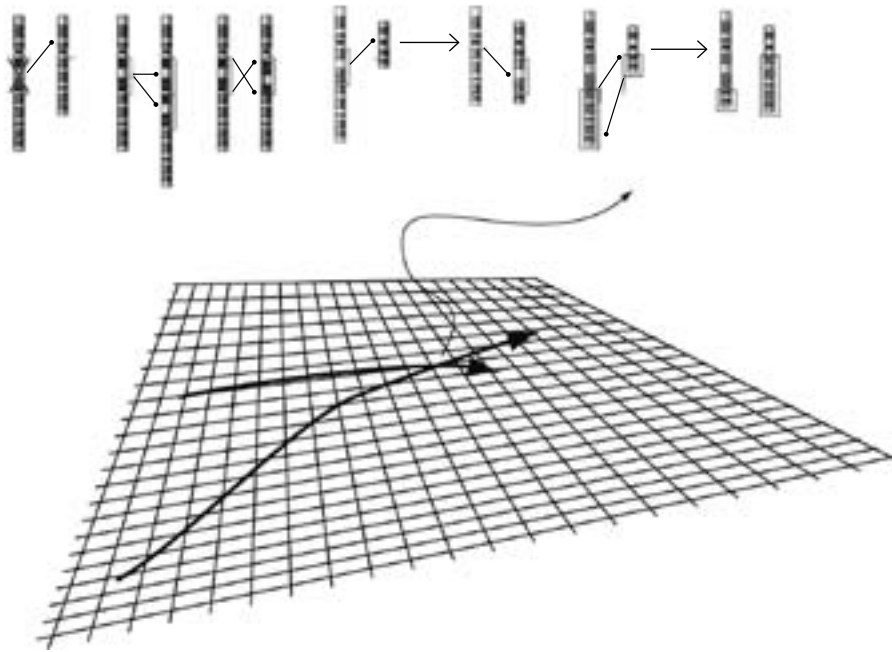
What we have seen over the last decade is the rise of new channels, mainly those carried on the Internet. Here production monopolies are contested by a wide rise of amateur media, Internet radio shows, podcasts and blogs that offer channels for once passive receivers to "be the media" and produce user-generated content. Yet, the fashion ether is still filled with one-way broadcasts from the fashion top, and even when "talking back" the content mainly comments the broadcasted content.

Nevertheless, if we look at street level and among blogs a new model is gaining momentum, in which communication is more egalitarian, where we are all senders and receivers and where we are all participants. It is parallel to the top-down broadcasting model, but here fashion is transmitted through other lines. In this model fashion is spread quite differently, no longer in straight lines from the centre, but turbulently or dynamically like a virus.

Yes, on this level fashion is a contagious disease, a virus. It is an epidemic, spreading partly through vectors like the media, but mainly through human interaction and street buzz (Gladwell 2000). The viral transmission is sometimes designed on purpose, but the spread mostly happens unintentionally. The fashion virus is continuously morphing and mutating, as if it had a life of its own and just using the host as reproduction facility before recombining and moving on. Thus the virus is just temporarily hosted in human minds and on human bodies, like an ephemeral "meme" - a transitory "virus of the mind" (Dawkins 1976; Brodie 1996). It is what Gabriel Tarde would call a "germ", an analytical resource "radiating" from each one of us and infecting others. The germ itself is "trapped between pure repetition, endurance and continuity on the one hand, and on the other, pure vibration, pure potential." (Lepinay 2007: 526) According to Tarde, it is also a specific form of capital that cannot be accumulated because as it loses vibration, intensity and passion it becomes dead and worthless.

Viral marketing or subvertising?
Liberated advertising billboards for the German fashion week in Berlin, by XOOOOX in Berlin Mitte.

Rays of Imitation - or Memes *are concepts used to describe the flow of ideas and norms through society, and they are often compared to genes, epidemics or viruses. The recombination process of genes can be similar to that of the innovation process exemplified by Tarde, where two "rays of imitation" clash and new ideas arise. This violent clash could be the birth of a Deleuzoguattarian "line of flight".*

For Tarde, the germs follow "rays of imitation" that hits us and infect us. It can be a new fashion or a new concept that describes the actualized world better than before. It travels as both a concept and as a word. They travel together on the rays of imitation, like sound waves "echoed from one neighbour to another, til it soon trembles on every lip in the group in question, and later spreads even to neighboring groups." (Tarde 2000: 32) Their main function is reproduction, and this usually happens within the same strata of communities and interacting groups. But the rays also offer facilitation between the members of the group and between groups.
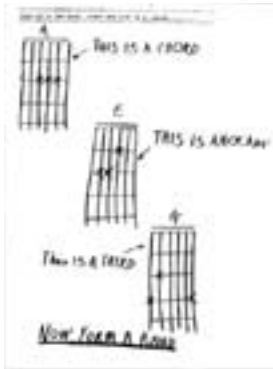
> It is only another way of saying, in the one case, that the motor forces inherent in the molecules of air have found, in this vibratory repetition, a channel into which they drain; and, in the other case, that a special need felt by the human beings of the group in question has found satisfaction in this imitative repetition, which enables them, as a concession to their indolence (the analogue of physical inertia), to escape the trouble of inventing for themselves. (Tarde 2000: 32)

These rays of imitation can also collide with other rays, intersecting and causing "pure vibration, pure potential". This intersection could be similar to gene recombination or plasmid transfer if we were comparing it to genes. According to Tarde this collision between rays is where innovation happens. New potentials are released. It is the immediate firing of neurons as fashion hits. We feel it is just "right". This is pure passion, pure intensity.

Still, the germs cannot travel only through buzz, but also need material forms of transference. Fashion especially does, which to Barthes' dismay is not a language in a strict sense, as he proposed in *The Fashion System* (1983), but something much more complex and better represented through depiction. This means that even though fashion is a form of infectious agent, it is still supported by rays of repre-

"Viral marketing" or "Epidemics of ideas" *seems to work in similar ways as viruses. According to Gladwell, "Ideas and products and messages and behaviours spread like viruses do." (2000: 7)*

The famous punk chords
*that started off a whole generation
of bands and DIY distribution.*

sentation and by image-based channels and vectors. These vectors are the media, the conveyors, the transmitters. That is why media is still important for passing on the germs, even in times of multiple micro-cultures, frequent blogging or flat "viral" marketing.

This means that media is still important in this model, as they are the main vectors, but there are also other possibilities that arise. This is not only through micro-broadcasting, or narrowcasting, through the Internet, but also a rise of influence on buzz because of it is attention and trust gained by word-by-mouth transmissions. Hence the chase these days for the "viral" aspects of marketing where brands fight to get themselves "buzzed" about.

We can see a double model of how fashion spreads, one still centralized, a cathedral of broadcasting; the classic media. But we also have another viral model, a dynamic one running on street level. Where we have the big fashion system controlling the first, it also adds a lot of pressure and attention on the second. For a small designer the first model is usually inaccessible, if not "discovered" by the established gatekeeper. The second model is then usually used, but is seldom very profitable as it rarely reaches enough potential buyers, even if it gains wide support and credibility in their community.

Since media still controls the main vectors of dissemination users must find their own transmitters or hijack the existing ones. This has been done for a long time, as marginalized groups have established their own "pirate" channels, leaflets, zines, radio, or TV. Especially the fan fiction's use of zines can give us inspiration, as this scene creates an intense symbiotic wave of co-authorship where fans start to "write back", plugging-in their own ideas *into* the stories of the great popular fiction narratives of our time. Their own vectors disseminate the "hacked" narratives, as the established ones have refused them.

On the pages of zines, these fans released new vibrations into the hosting stories. As their germs infected Star Trek heroes with homoerotic desires a whole new parallel dimension of the popular story was opened. Amateur writers have also used zines to document vividly their own featureless everyday lives, yet through this simple act of spreading or radiating them they have enlivened others in the same situation. Small viral colonies of hacktivist mindsets spread through photocopied DIY magazines – this is the fan fiction community.

fan and slash fiction

Fan fiction is the tinkering with popular culture mythology, narrative and distribution. Made by fans or users, it is a phenomenon that renegotiates the right for interpretation and co-authorship. Here, fans share the practice of writing their own fictions about characters and popular fiction series, such as in TV-series, movies or comics. In this move the fan takes on the authorship instead of the original authors. The fans writing fan fiction tend not to be just any fans. These are the serious fans that know the original work thoroughly after several re-readings, committed following of the episodes and commenting knowledgeably the work or adding new parts. This is done with a high degree of precision, without changing the main lines in the work. As we will see it is a form of hacking that usually is done to celebrate the original works, out of interest and the desire to add one's ideas to the narrative and share it with other fans.

A part of this scene is the creation of your own systems of design, publishing and distribution. The modding fan press has a long history and is a part of the internal power struggles within different disciplines. Car tuning fans have their magazines, such as *Lowrider*, amateur radio broadcasters theirs, such as *CQ*, home crafters theirs, such as *Craft*, many with a committed team of writers in close contact with the fans. Fans started the majority of these, filling a gap, and soon turned out to define the scene, often in alliance with major distribution companies or often licensed by the original authors of the scene that the fans gather around.

What is especially interesting about self-published fanzines is how they "hack" into the creation of meaning within popular culture. They bypass the control mechanisms of the original authors and ride on the main narratives. Their hacked stories are made into zines to be easily shared among other fans that do not rely on the official fan clubs and their controlled channels. We will look at these specific fan methods later but first we will start with examining zines themselves, the DIY vectors.

Zines are a common form of self-published media. They can refer to the clandestine distribution of the illegal handmade Samizdat zines that were suppressed in the Soviet Union, especially during the post-Stalin times (Saunders 1974) or to photocopied indie or punk zines, often listed through the resource *Factsheet5*. They are small, handmade amateur publications. Cultural critic Stephen Duncombe describes them as

> noncommercial, nonprofessional, small-circulation magazines that their creators produce, publish, and distribute by themselves. Most often laid out on plain paper and reproduced on common Xerox machines, zines are sold, given away, or, as is common custom, swapped for other zines. They're distributed mainly through the mail and are advertised through the grapevine of other zines and in the pages of zines containing reviews of other zines. (Duncombe 1998: 427)

The zines have traditionally contained all kinds of issues, always edited with a very personal touch to contain stories, poems, "comix", hand drawn illustrations, as well as cut-and-paste collages from other media. Topics have varied extensively, from home engineering to poetry, with the aim of discussing personal obsessions as well as distributing informa-

Star Trek relations *have intrigued the fans since the beginning of the series, especially that between the two main characters, Captain Kirk and his first lieutenant Spock. It set off numerous fan fiction zines that included stories reinterpreting of the narratives in the different Star Trek episodes and skillfully writing own additions inside the canon of the original episodes.*

tion and resources. It is a way of framing both a personal commitment to writing as well as a desire to break isolation and build communities.

> As such, zines are as much about the communities that arise out of their circulation as they are artefacts of personal expression. People create zines to scream out 'I exist,' they also do it to connect to others saying the same thing. (Duncombe 1997a: 530)

A special genre is the sci-fi fanzines, zines made by fans for fans, often on a special genre or show. The birth of this genre was a DIY approach for people who wanted to discuss and build further on their favourite sci-fi tales and narratives. They made up own stories or contexts, usually kept the style of their genre, characters and intrigues intact, but filling in gaps or expanding scenes. The amateur fiction stories produced in the first fanzines in the early 20th century were usually comments and stories connected to the emerging sci-fi community. The writers who sent stories or who artists made fan artworks were often feeling dissatisfied with the handling of the issues in the "prozines" – the professional magazines. Many zines also began including "letters of comment" sent to the editor. These were more transparent than those of the pro-zines as they included the address of the commentator, so readers could be in direct contact to create new communities. Thus fan culture has always had a community form, writing fictions for the own narrow audience and forming amateur press associations, newsgroups and mailing lists.

The TV stars, be they from Star Trek or Flash Gordon, became more complex figures in the fan media, revealing manifold sides of personality, but never in conflict with is seen in the official narratives. However, some stories mixed characters from different episodes, often starting with a simple dispute "who is best – superman or batman?" As they evolved these remixes became subgenres themselves, making crossovers and exploring the tensions between different fiction universes and superheroes. The stories were parasiting on the original story but also enriching it by creatively exploring its various shades and border zones. These fictions, which were before kept within the fan culture, are now reaching wider audiences through the Internet and some were first transformed into comics and later blockbuster movies, like *Alien vs Predator* (comic Warner *et al* 1990; movie Anderson 2004), which in turn triggered new fan movies, such as Sandy Collora's acclaimed *Batman: Dead End* (2003).

An especially interesting part of fan culture is how fans twist the stories and create diagonal connections between the lines of the existing works, reinterpreting the scenes into other directions and actualizing other potentialities than the originally intended. The fanzines started to divert into subgenres by developing or intensifying the friendships of two characters, such as Kirk and Spock in Star Trek, into a special genre itself. These stories focused entirely around their Kirk's and Spock's friendship and evolved into a genre called K&S. However, it coincided with another line of interpretation which took the notion of friendship even further into something called "slash fiction"; the homoerotic adventures of Kirk/Spock (as in S/M).

A fan from Australia wrote an early example of this in 1975 where the first two-page story was a vague sex scene between two persons, and first in the next issue of the fan zine, as the scene evolved further, it was apparent that it was Kirk and Spock making love (Verba1996: 19). This sparked the big "K/S controversy" in the late 70's among the Trekkies, the Star Trek fan community. Some fan groups meant this was a logical consequence of a strong friendship, others that it meant that their beloved characters had been "raped" by slash writers. (Jenkins 1988: 276) This controversy is still alive today, but the slash genre has nevertheless grown over the years to now include many other popular culture characters such as Crockett/Tubbs from Miami Vice, or Harry/Draco, from Harry Potter.

The erotic Kirk/Spock subgenre has become a cult classic among the slash writers. Especially the episode "Amok Time" from 1967, in which Spock gets his "Pon Farr" or blood fever. In this critical state he will need to mate with another person of his race, Vulcan, or else he will die from the fever. Often analysed and referred to within the K/S genre the episode left many open clues that there existed a real homoerotic relationship between Kirk and Spock. In the episode, Spock, who usually is very logical and emotionless, shows sudden mood shifts and irrational behaviour. Kirk, the captain of the ship questions him about his state.

> Spock: "It has to do with... biology... Vulcan biology."

Star Trek fan-art *emerged parallel to the written slash fiction stories which revealed the erotic relation between the main characters. Fans often claim that they are "liberating" the story and reveal its intended form. The fans mean that they are the main connoisseurs of the epic stories, as they have studied the films over and over.*

The Master and Apprentice
*slash fiction archive was founded in
1999. It contains more than 4000 Star
Wars slash stories with the characters
Obi-Wan and Qui-Gon being the most
popular. Many of the stories in the
archive were written before the release of
the Star Wars movie they comment on.*

*"A Long Time Ago in a Galaxy Far Far Away, George
Lucas created Star Wars. And he looked at it and saw
that it was good. And all was right in the world. But then,
we saw that Obi-Wan doth look upon Qui-Gon with lust,
and that Mr. Lucas was not likely to include that in the
next movie, so we said screw it and wrote it ourselves, even
though we do not make any money off of this. And all
was right with the world." (Keelywolfe)*

Kirk: "You mean, the biology of Vulcans...? Biology as in... reproduction...? Well, Mr. Spock, there's no reason to be embarrassed about that, it happens to the birds and the bees–"

Spock: "The birds and the bees are not Vulcans, captain. If they were... if any creatures as proudly logical as us were to have their logic... ripped from them... How do Vulcans choose their mates? Haven't you wondered?"

Kirk: "I guess the rest of us assume that it's done... quite logically."

Spock: "No... it is not. We sheathe it with rituals and customs shrouded in antiquity – you humans have no conception. It strips our minds from us; it brings a madness which rips away our veneer of civilization. It is the pon farr – the time of mating... There are precedents in nature, Captain... the giant eel-birds of Regulus Five. Once each eleven years, they must return to the caverns where they hatched. On your Earth, the salmon. They must return to that one stream where they were born, to spawn – or die in trying."

Kirk: "But you're not a fish, Mr. Spock–"

Spock: "No – nor am I a man... I'm a Vulcan. I had hoped I would be spared this, but the ancient drives are too strong. Eventually, they catch up with us... and we are driven by forces we cannot control – to return home, and take a wife... or die." (Star Trek 1967)

However, when they come to the Vulcan planet Spock's proposed wife has other plans and she manages to arrange a duel between Spock and Kirk, in which Kirk is supposedly killed. Of course he survives and even without taking his supposed wife, Spock is somehow cured. Once back on the ship Spock expresses overt joy on seeing Kirk alive, which is quite exceptional. A normally emotionless Vulcan does not betray his feelings as he now does for Kirk.

This episode triggered many speculations about what relation there actually was between Kirk and Spock, and the screened episode has been thoroughly analyzed by the fans to understand how it can be interpreted. Especially the closures and clips are analysed to see what is left out on purpose, such as the scenes that could reveal what was really happening on the planet. This research, done by committed fans, unveils hidden openings in the narrative where ambiguity creates a hole for the fans to fill in, however unintended by the creators. Through this loophole fans step into the story with their own interpretations and additions. Even so, since this episode many popular series leave blanks like this deliberately to be filled in by fans, lately seen for example the relation between Angel and Spike in the TV-series *Angel*.

Understandably, the Pon Farr theme has been the epicentre for many slash stories, and one of the earliest parallels to the Australian one mentioned earlier, was "The Ring of Sochern" from 1975-76. Here Kirk and Spock are trapped alone on a planet while Spock gets the Pon Farr, without the possibility of rescue. Kirk realizes he is in love with Spock and saves his life by mating with him, a relationship they continue once back aboard the ship. There is even a zine totally committed solely to Pon Farr stories – *Fever*.

The Pon Farr has also been a popular object of analysis by academics using psychoanalytic tools (Bacon-Smith 1992, Penley 1994 & 1997). Many female Star Trek fans have perceived it as a symbol of the suppression of male sexuality in modern

times. The masculine role is very much like the one represented by the Vulcans who are trained to act cool, logical, and not to express any feelings. As a consequence of this, slash fiction stories are actually stories about everyday men, who are just as "alien" as Vulcans are to women, and equally uncontrolled (Bacon-Smith 1992: 103f).

The Kirk/Spock relationship has come to represent the Sci-Fi scene in the 60s and 70s and its dream of space exploration and, quite like the NASA program of that period, going "where no man has gone before". According to film researcher Constance Penley (1997) the homoerotic question of Kirk and Spock has never come to rest as it concerns the exploration of new frontiers, both of inner and outer space. The slash fantasies have gone hand in hand with the cult of the handsome male NASA astronauts. These issues blend scientific, social and sexual exploration and make fans continuously write new stories, to continue to "boldly go where no man has ever gone before". Still, the K/S questions are left unanswered. When asked at a fan convention about the possible love affair between Kirk and Spock, Leonard Nimoy, who plays Spock, replied: "I don't know, I wasn't there." (Penley 1997:159)

In the slash stories, character relations are freely re-interpreted by the amateur fans, but from an erotic perspective, adding another layer to stories. These are usually well crafted to fit seamlessly into the main narratives and explain the gaps and cuts in movies for inserting new meanings in the dialogues, often at places that are ambiguous. Suddenly a harmless look means something completely different. It is a common understanding within the community that this is done not with the mindset of sabotage, but out of love and devotion.

Many slash authors also mean that they reveal the true intentions of the original creators, intentions that were suppressed by publishing companies and the distribution lobby, or simply hidden by the creator to be deciphered by the most devoted fans. Hence, in the fan fiction scene, it is the passionate amateurs, the serious fans who take back the initiative, "liberating" the "true" intentions of the stories and then reinsert them into the existing lines. They are not interested in writing something entirely new, but instead a talented fan fiction craftsperson is recognized on how well the symbiosis is developed in relation to the original work.

What is fascinating with slash culture from my perspective is the format and tactics it uses to find loopholes in the stories and insert its own (erotic) authorship into these gaps of the stories. It furthers the fan fiction culture into fields of "unacceptable" possibilities, beyond the "creativity regime" of broadcasting and authorship. Instead of accepting the cuts and closure of the producer and original creator the fans use these to enrich the stories and multiply layers of gender complexity to the narratives by re-reading the plots and lines of the stories, rebinding them into new knots and meshworks along the lines the story flows. This is a process of taking back the initiative from the media itself, reprogramming the predictable relations in the story in a very hands-on way and then releasing them again through home-made DIY vectors.

poaching

In fan fiction the consumer consumes the fiction, reacts to it, interprets it but also changes it and reinserts a personal version. Even if we say the author is "dead" and

the reader "creates" the text, fan fiction is a deliberate reinterpretation and a hands-on change of the narrative as it is rewritten and reinserted into the system, even if it is a parallel fan-system. The term poaching is often used in this context, meaning the taking or acquiring of something in a clandestine way, a form or pirating, trespassing or a contraventional takeover. This is the activity at the core of fan fiction and where we can follow the workings of the abstract machine of hacktivism.

In his ethnographic study of fan cultures, *Textual Poachers,* media theorist Henry Jenkins introduced a concept of participatory culture, differing fans from ordinary consumers (Jenkins 1992). These are consumers who also produce, readers who write, and spectators who participate. Parallel to these there are also enthusiastic fans that do not produce but still know every line in the scripts and these fans often form a support layer in the fan cultures. Jenkins stresses the co-production part of how popular narratives have their own life among fans. Fans often have an anti-commercial attitude to their fandom, afraid to "sell-out" and regard their subculture as more "true to the original" than what is often produced as official sequels. This creates situations where fans re-edit movies so that they better fit into what the fans see as the "original intent", cutting away characters they don't like or altering dialogues. It is a whole subgenre itself called Fancuts.

To describe this, Jenkins borrows de Certeau's term 'poaching' to characterize the relationship between fans and original authors of media texts as "an ongoing struggle for possession of the text and for control over its meanings." (Jenkins 1992: 24) Poaching is the consumers' poetic art of "making do" and seizing a new relationship. According to Jenkins it is a theory of appropriation, not "misreading", as a misreading preserves proper authorial meanings over reader's meanings, and breaking the authorial ones would produce less worthy results. Instead poaching is an "impertinent raid on the literary preserve that takes away only those things that are useful or pleasurable to the reader." (Jenkins 1992: 24) He quotes de Certeau:

> Far from being writers … readers are travellers; they move across lands belonging to someone else, like nomads poaching their way across fields they did not write, despoiling the wealth of Egypt to enjoy it themselves (De Certeau 1984: 174)

This is a fluid form of reading and of opposing a fixed and classifiable form of reading. Poaching suggests an open form of reading, emphasising the process of making meaning, clearing way for popular interpretation. De Certeau argues that it is a "type of cultural bricolage through which readers fragment texts and reassemble the broken shards according to their own blueprints, salvaging bits and pieces of the found material in making sense of their own social experience." (Jenkins 1992: 26) This way of reading differs from the way we are taught to read in school, dominated as it is by the textual producers, the dominant classes exercising the "mastery of language". There, students are supposed to read for authorial meaning, to consume the narrative without leaving their own marks upon it. It is the teacher's red pen that is the tool for discipline and control and the aim of reading is to decipher the text "correctly". The text should be an objective tool, only to be read in specific ways, with respect, and as instructed.

Poaching is a struggle over the power of text and of who has the right to reinterpret the cultural goods and narratives of our days. Poachers move over the texts like the old nomads discussed earlier by De Certeau.

> Like the poachers of old, fans operate from a position of cultural marginality and social weakness. Like other popular readers, fans lack direct access to the means of commercial cultural production and have only the most limited resources with which to influence entertainment industry's decisions. (Jenkins 1992: 26)

The fan fiction has of course not gone unnoticed by the original producers and copyright holders. The lobby campaigns to alter the behaviour of the fans have often been met with scepticism or contempt. According to the lobby organizations the fans "infringe upon the producer's creative freedom and restrict their ability to negotiate for a larger audience." (Jenkins 1992: 30) Yet, contrary to this, a lot of the stories originally made by fans were made into popular comics and are now coming back as films. Apparently the fans' works are appreciated, yet seldom mentioned. The most violent resistance to fan fiction has come from Lucasfilm, the producer of *Star Wars*, who has tried to bring all fan activities under their supervision. Lucas even "threatened to prosecute editors who published works that violated the "family values" associated with the original films." (30f)

Fans have argued angrily about this too, as some see fan fiction as a feministic struggle for recognition and equality. An upset fan wrote an angry editorial about Lucasfilm in the zine *Slayzu*,

> Lucasfilm is saying, "you must enjoy the characters of the *Star Wars* universe for male reasons. Your sexuality must be correct and proper by my (male) definition." (Jenkins 1992: 31)

However, it should be noted that not all readings are considered as poaching or tinkering outside of the narrative.

> Readers are not *always* resistant; *all* resistant readings are not necessarily progressive readings; the "people" do not *always* recognize their conditions of alienation and subordination. (Jenkins 1992: 34)

According to Jenkins, academic analysis of fan culture has traditionally been heavily influenced by Critical theory and Adorno, understanding fandom as pure consumerism fed by the cultural industries. Here fans were either cultural "dupes", or the opposite, engaged in cultural "resistance". Adorno's theories put fan identities in a struggle between commercial ideologies, supported by commodity culture, and their "authentic" independent response.

> The old either-or oppositions (co-optation vs. resistance) which have long dominated debates between political economy and cultural studies, approaches to media simply do not do justice to the multiple, dynamic, and often contradictory relationships between media convergence and participatory culture. Approaches derived from the study of political economy may, perhaps, provide the best vocabulary for discussing media convergence, while cultural studies language has historically framed our understanding of participatory culture. Neither theoretical tradition, however, can truly speak to what happens at the intersection between the two. (Jenkins 2003)

Jenkins does not want to contrast academic with to fan readings, but instead put their level of exegesis on an equal level. These groups are both fans and even use similar meticulous methodologies of analysis. Academics poach texts similarly to the ways fans do, reading selectively and building new stories between the lines. Only their audiences differ – academic conferences or fan conventions, which these days sometimes also turn out to be the same (Brooker 2005). However, the fans have turned poaching into an exquisite skill:

> Fans are not unique in their status as textual poachers, yet, they have developed poaching to an art form. (Jenkins 1992: 27)

The participation in fan culture merges various approaches of participation; conflict (legal battles), critique (culture jamming), challenge (amateurs against pros), collaboration (co-arrangements with fans), or recruitment (fans hired for their skills by corporations). What is clear is that the new media tools have enabled the grass root fans to archive, appropriate, and recirculate the media in new ways. We will see larger groups of fans re-reading and reinterpreting and fighting for the right of co-authorship.

It should be noted though, that from a resistance point of view fan fiction is of dubious value. The narratives are owned by the culture industry and they decide how the next episode will be, however much the fans have resisted. Instead many of the resistance ideas are instead free for the directors to exploit. In the end the fans might get the story tuned into the direction of their will, as is popular in Japanese Manga stories where fans are encouraged to write in and tell the authors where they want the story to head. Popular culture will continue to be a profitable commodity.

What fan fictions offer is a loophole, a method or an action space for sharing outside the control of the original authors. All fiction is about fantasies. All readers are in some way contributing to the fantasy by reading and enlivening it, but what fan fiction does is to manifest their own fantasies, and share them with the other fans. They build communities around their common practice of poaching and build on top of each others' compiled fantasies. It is a change in approach to authorship and originality as well as a creative critique of control that is not based on opposition and detachment, but instead on passionate attachment. Not of hate but of love.

a vector of one's own

Zines also have a power of enablement, as they form a simple means to create something "real", something accessible to others and an entry ticket into a community of the likeminded. In an empowering way the zine format becomes a real channel for engagement and setting a physical mark on the world. It is a way to be seen and heard, and a celebration of DIY creativity and commitment. Duncombe frames it like this:

In an era marked by the rapid centralization of corporate media, zines are independent and localized, coming out of the cities, suburbs and small towns across the USA, assembled on the kitchen tables. They celebrate the everyperson in world of celebrity, losers in a society that rewards the best and the brightest. Rejecting the corporate dream of an atomized population broken down into discrete and instrumental target markets, zine writers form networks and forge communities around diverse identities and interests. (Duncombe 1997b: 2)

In the everyday of Everyman lies the foundation of the "perzine", the personal zine. This part of zine culture highlights another side of the possibility of the zine. It is a channel for the lonely, a tool for reflection and authorship for those without a voice, a platform for personal creation. It is this aspect that makes the world of zines "underground". It moves through unofficial amateur channels, cleared and created by the people on the ground, or below it.

It becomes a place where losers who have found their way into the underground can have a voice, a home, and others to talk to. As individuals, zinesters may be losers in the game of American meritocracy, but together they give the word a new meaning, changing it from insult to accolade, and transforming personal failure into an indictment of the alienating aspects of our society. (Duncombe 2002: 232)

Duncombe means the zine culture of "losers" works in two ways. First it is a counterculture based on supposed ideas of alienation, anti-consumerism and authenticity, ideas all based on an opposition to the big "hegemonic culture" and a now more fragmented media landscape. Equally participants are proud to be "passionately indifferent", defining themselves negatively, living a slacker life as a cultural critique. These positions are quite problematic and are a form of resistance that is hardly constructive or a real alternative. But more relevantly, the zines of "losers" offer a form of politics of community, building relations and of talking back, proving that the official way to do things is not "The Only Answer". By making zines the

Dishwasher Pete (a.k.a. Pete Jordan) created his zine "Dishwasher" as he travelled the states earning his living as a dishwasher. He turned his adventures in this low-esteemed job into DIY copied and distributed stories about his everyday life and shared the stories with fellow zinesters. His journey through life proceeds with the goal in sight: to wash dishes in every American state.

people at the back of the race to high status refuse to be defeated and instead question that *there is no alternative* to the race. They build the alternative themselves, even if they were long considered underachievers or counted out.

Ultimately it is a mistake to analyse the zine culture to find secret meanings, authentic representation, or subversive content, because this still puts a focus on finding the right message. This type of constructivist reading often works on a semantic level, and is, to much avail, looking for something "genuine" or "honest" behind the signs. Instead, we have to accept that the zines are already appropriated by corporations and advertising strategies – Nike, Diesel and Urban Outfitters started long ago to make cool zines, without revealing themselves as publishers, so the medium itself has long ago lost the possibility of offering a true channel to authenticity.

> Sure, I'm disgusted by Nike's looting of my beloved zine culture, just as I shudder each time I hear "The Revolution Will Not Be Televised" as an ad jingle. But I also feel a curious sense of relief. The easy expropriation of even the most rebellious culture should open our eyes to the fact that pat notions about the "politics of representation," "cultures of resistance," and "authenticity" are hopelessly outdated. In our free-wheeling, postmodern playhouse of a world: *Image is Nothing.* No, wait, that's the ad copy for a Sprite commercial. (Duncombe 1999)

It is futile to try to see zines as an authentic expression in itself or romanticize the small-scale media. The focus must be on the action space they open, the possibilities they strive for, the voice and articulation of skills they struggle for,

> The underground's search for authenticity is a failed project. But without this futile struggle they would give in to something far worse – the tyranny of the here and now. Zines and the underground culture from which they come are a lie that gives direction and sustenance, solidarity and a sense of accomplishment. Against a world dragging you back, they keep you moving forward. (Duncombe 1997b: 195)

The zine culture shows that some things are possible, that there are action spaces to be fought for, and that we can build new paths to build community. You can create a vector of your own, and that has meaning in itself as it connects to others and leaves a trace on the world, a mark of your skill and commitment. It is a manifestation where even the "loser" is moving forward and where slow and steady wins the race.

It is this aspect of zine culture that can help give an understanding of how low level participation and self-publishing can act as an emancipatory tool for the people involved. Classic DIY empowering techniques can be amplified and reach outside the original community to communicate on a very personal and communal level. The people with limited access or interest in the high status game can themselves expand their action spaces and transform them into new personal explorations. These are just as valid as the big successful and meritocratic ones, but on another level and another frequency. Perhaps this is not a very glamorous or adventurous life compared to the great explorers of the frontiers, but the zine is, in all its modesty, an everyday adventure where everyday frontiers are challenged, be they the frontiers of deep space, popular fiction, sexuality or fashion.

Fan fiction writers accessing new vectors are like lock-pickers. They are urban explorers, unveiling hidden areas within the common landscape, unseen by most people. They "drop" their own narratives into the structure of the big fiction or myth system. Through their zines they build distributed base communities of previously silent "losers", challenging the authors of the cathedrals, but working in symbiosis with them. Like craftsmen they are anchored in the world and they take pride in their work. They may be "losers" or marginalized according to the values of society, but through their zines they have a vehicle to "boldly go where no man has ever gone before".

As we have seen, the fan fiction writers need the big cathedrals for their practice. Their own stories benefit from the big energy processed within the big narrative and it makes better sense for their small plug-ins. Other fans, who are also connoisseurs of the big fictions, will judge the fan fiction stories according to how cleverly inserted they are into the main story and how well their symbiotic relation is fabricated from the opened loop holes. It is this mutualistic relation that gives fan fiction its nerve.

The greatest possibility of zines is perhaps not the empowerment of individual writers or creators of the zines, but how they can form communities over distance and become shared vectors where collective potentials are actualized. I will discuss two examples of these.

duplex lines

We have found earlier that hacktivism is based on a "talk back" initiative, and zines are a means for creating a channel for your own message. What the zine mainly does is to actualize potentials by the very act of dissemination, connecting separated interests and documenting opinions and of manifesting them with printed paper between people.

One example of this community function can be seen in the home-made American magazine "Duplex Planet" by David Greenberger. In 1979 Greenberger began to work at the "Duplex Nursing Home" outside Boston and he thought of making a small magazine for the institution in which the residents could share their stories. The finished zine raised little interest among the residents of the nursing home, but David's friends showed a great curiosity about the stories told by the elderly and so Greenberger continued his work. Since then he has released over 180 issues, always focusing on portraying a wide variety of real characters who are elderly or in decline.

However, the aim of the zine is not to focus on the past lives of the elderly, but on who they are as individuals right now. Greenberger don't want to let the elderly to be stuck in an attitude of only looking back as if life was something happened "back then". Instead Greenberger's aim is that the reader should get to know the residents as they are in the present and to capture the essence of who they are, without celebrating or mourning who they once were. The contents of Duplex Planet are direct transcripts of conversations of the residents in the nursing home in response to Greenberger's quite quirky questions. With these tricky inquiries they reconsider their viewpoints and in a way "short-circuit" their own memories: "Which do you prefer; coffee or meat?" or "What did George Washington's voice sound like?" – but also more generative; "What does it mean to sell out?".

> The answers were often surreal, almost visionary at times. Using humour to get to know the participants, and to encourage them to share their views, Greenberger used the newsletter as a form of emotional exchange, a means of connection. (Spencer 2005: 21)

With quirky questions such as these it might seem that Greenberger's intention is to put the elderly in an awkward situation and create some laughs at their expense, but the effect is the opposite. Instead the residents come forward as real living beings, still vibrant humans, with something to say, and with a voice that is worth listening to. Their sense of humour has turned many of the residents into cult figures (Spencer 2005: 21)

Greenberger's work resulted in unexpected developments. In 1983 one of the writers in Duplex Planet, 85-year-old Ernest Noyles Brooking, was "discovered" by a publishing house and his poetry released in a book, *We did not plummet into space* (Brookings 1983). Another of the residents, Ed Rodgers, came to design the lettering of one popular REM album. Thus Duplex Planet became an energizing media channel for its contributors. People who by modern society were forgotten and considered "worthless", as they were finished with their "productive" lives, were offered a vector back into the world and to a scene of readers. They were to be seen anew as individuals who were still very much alive and not condemned only to their previous experiences and memories. With the help of Duplex Planet life at the nursing home was no longer the anonymous and boring waiting room for life

Duplex Planet *edited by David Greenberger*
collects stories and discussions Greenberger has with
elderly people. He has been published the zine since
1979 and has since then released over 180 issues.

to end but a place where creative humans still produced vivid dialogues that could be shared with others.

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Another example of independent vectors is the stations of the Italian Telestreet movement, where activists broadcast their own homemade television. Using a TV-amplifier, normally used on the countryside to boost weak signals to the TV set, and just reversing the plugs, the TV "pirates" create their own broadcasting system. Perhaps it is more of a "proxyvision", than a television, as the broadcast range is only about a kilometre, but it is sufficient to cover a few blocks in a town (Berardi 2004).

The telestreet signal is too weak to black out the official stations, so it can only sent in the "shadow" of other channels, on the unused frequencies where there is no signal from the stronger transmissions. The blanks or "in-betweens" are the home of the small telestreet channels, where their potential is actualized, as "a technical project, a political project, [and] a cultural project" (Berardi 2004).

The telestreet movement emerged from the media landscape during the early 2000's when Prime Minister Berlusconi controlled about 90% of the Italian media and was virtually unchallenged in the media scene. Autonomous groups or activist

This is the video mixer where we mix the different signals.

collectives ran many of the telestreet channels from squats or from independent media centres. The aim of telestreet was to "reclaim the 'socializing' power of television." (Garcia 2004) Their programs have everything from local political discussions, neighbourhood presentations and indymedia reportages, to pirated pay-channel football matches, "liberated" for non-payers to see. Another common broadcaster were the Catholic churches, equipped with an antenna in the tower transmitting the local church service throughout the neighbourhood for those who could not attend the local service, but did not want to follow the national broadcast.

One of the most famous telestreet channels was "Disco Volante", which was started in 2002 in the Italian small town of Senigallia (Povoledo 2005). The channel was run by a group of disabled people, led by Franco Civelli, who suffered from a severe post-polio disability and was bound to his wheelchair and the cameraman, Allesandro Giuliani, who had Down's syndrome. Together they documented life for disabled people in Senigallia, from their own experiences. They documented the problems of everyday life and how the surrounding community treated them as extraterrestrials. Therefore the name of the channel, "Disco Volante" means flying saucer.

According to Civelli the task of their channel was to be a media for the marginalized, to talk back, and to work against the "humpty-dumpty" power exercised by the dominant broadcast federations. By controlling almost all media they set the agenda, controlled

speech and opinions and left no possibility for people to talk back. However small the signal, it is the citizen's right to send his or her opinion back into the system and back into the ether. Attracting a large audience is not the main task, it is a political gesture (Povoledo 2005).

This small proxy-channel still challenged the broadcasting dominance from the Berlusconi-controlled media industry and it became a topic of public debate. It was eventually brought to court and shut down and the equipment confiscated. Yet it proved to be "illegal but constitutional"; technically unlawful but a free voice under the freedom of speech. Civelli even won a major Italian journalism prize for his work, the Alpi award. During its time on the air the channel brought attention to how society treated the voices of its marginal groups, the unseen citizens that are often locked-up inside by the city's physical infrastructure more than by their actual handicap.

Both Duplex Planet and Disco Volante are examples of how even minimal vectors can create a real impact for the involved community, not only for organizing the actors and empowering participants through collaborative work, but how their limited addition to the commons make a real difference. Instead of fighting for access to the existing channels and being at the mercy of editors, journalists and gatekeepers, they create their own vectors. They reclaim not only authorship, but also the control of the vectors of dissemination themselves, and even if they are small they still can make a difference.

fashion vectors

To gain access to the fashion system a designer must usually move through media, be "spotted", or find a point of entry. The role of media here cannot be underestimated, as it is mainly through images we meet fashion. To be depicted in media is central as it is there retailers will know what is coming and consumers will see what is "the latest". Magazines also contribute to defining a scene or a micro-culture and the magazine often becomes a reference point around which a scene is formed, constituted and distributed. For fashion, a magazine is a messenger and an attractor around which the actors of the fashion system orbit. As Roland Barthes claims in his book *The Fashion System*; "the magazine is a machine that makes fashion" (Barthes 1983: 51).

Yet the usual fashion magazine does not create or produce its content. It is a searcher, a filter and a messenger. It sniffs up what is new and what fits its "taste" and it gains credibility for releasing the greatest intensities, the greatest passion. Often this has some relation to street wear or the latest expressions on the club scenes.

In fashion it has long been argued that the origin of most new fresh expressions come from below, from the street. Fashion designer Diane von Fürstenberg means "everything in fashion begins in the street" (Trebay 2004). The London magazine *i-D* started out as a zine in 1980 and became the early 80's radical street magazine which also introduced street wear images of ordinary people in the magazine, quite the opposite to the exclusive French magazines with their arranged shots. i-D initialized a new approach to street wear where the French system had not much influence (Ben Saad 2005). By using photos directly off the street it legitimized the street as a scene where fashion is created and displayed. This way of doing street research became itself a fashion as the styles of I-D appeared on the catwalks and this method was soon used by the high profile magazines to chase the latest young street trends, sometimes called the "coolhunt" (Gladwell 1997: 78ff). Many other famous magazines are "grown up" zines, like *Bust*, *Dazed and Confused*, and *Found*, yet most stay small but with a committed community of their fans (Todd & Watson 2006: 18).

>|< **The Syntax/144 design process** *from the Istanbul issue. First meeting of all contributors (left), and one week later come together at the copy shop to photocopy and assemble the zines (middle). Then divide the 144 finished issues and get off to distribute the zine on town (right).*

Even though many fashion zines were started by amateurs some of them were also set off by established fashion personalities, like former Vogue art director Terry Jones who started i-D. Today we can see the same pattern with blogs, run by both amateurs and fashion editors. We also see some contemporary zines, like UK based *Cheap Date*, launched in 1997, which to a certain extent helped relaunch the popularity of "thrifting" and charity shopping. Now the editors , Kira Jolliffe and Bay Garnett, have released both compilations of the zine and style guides (Jolliffe 1999, Jolliffe & Garnett 2007). On the other hand, one can also see new fashion magazines started over the last years to add credibility to advertising agencies and to show that they do more than surface – they do the whole lifestyle package.

With the rise of the Internet the question of the zine scene's survival has arisen. The question is will the e-zines, community sites, and especially blogs replace the traditional zine culture. The two means of creation and distribution, physical and virtual, offer various forms of advantages and drawbacks. Zines require photocopying and a lot of hands-on work, which for many has its charm; a slow, reflective work. The creator is in full control of the process, although it might be quite expensive for a bigger print run. Zines also offer the possibility of adding non-paper and other materials to the pages. The zines often become something in between magazines, self-published books, and multisensory adventures in small editions, rather than the real-time discussions of the blogs. Chris Dodge, *Utne* librarian and alternative publications collector says,

> I think the key distinction is that a blog posting tends to be written and published on the spur of the moment, as opposed to a zine's creation over time. Most zines tend to be compiled, with material gathered, written, or drawn over weeks, months or years, and actually edited, if only by the zine publisher herself. Thus they are more like little self-published books than blogs. (Freedman 2005)

Blogs and zines work with different methods, materials, and time spans through which they complement each other. Zines like to be real, tangible media, to be read in the bathtub or handed out at gigs. They are proud to be flesh.

Blogs are direct, fast, worldwide, but also trapped in dependencies, technologically as well as design-wise. Zines offer another form of transparency and independence not possible for most bloggers who need a lot of coding and design skills to get an unconventional layout of their site and are still dependent on hosting services.

Yet the question remains, what form of other vectors can there be for designers to work with and how would they become independent and unique and at the same time communicate a special message to the reader, similar to the zines. Another central question is how to escape control from yet another editor, webdesigner or gatekeeper, but still use the channels and intensities of the big system. To explore this I set off an experiment with a "radical democratic local fashion magazine" – Syntax/144.

syntax/144

Syntax/144 is an exploration of how an egalitarian fashion magazine could be set up and run. Syntax/144 is not a physical magazine per se, but a method of how to make one. The outcome of the method is an editorless magazine, a collective work without *one* dominant will or *one* artistic auteur. Quite like as in the "bazaar" discussed in the previous chapter, it sets out to offer an alternative to the dominant understanding that production requires a leader. If home-produced zines traditionally bypass gatekeepers, they usually also create new ones; the founders of the zine. Even the most subversive bulletin usually becomes an edited cathedral, approving some content and refusing others. The aim with Syntax/144 is to take editing away from the editor and to put all emphasis on the temporary alliance between the actors who produce the zine.

Syntax/144 differs from other zines distribution-wise in that it is using the existing vectors of established fashion media to reach out. After production it is inserted stealthy or parasited into the big fashion magazines as a local appendix to the global fashion. The zine is riding the built up expectations of the host to intensify its homemade content in the eyes of the reader. It also works as a local attachment to the otherwise global documentation of the fashion magazines. In this way it is a symbiotic complement and appendix to its host, an editorless incarnation of a temporary alliance covering an ephemeral scene untouchable by the host.
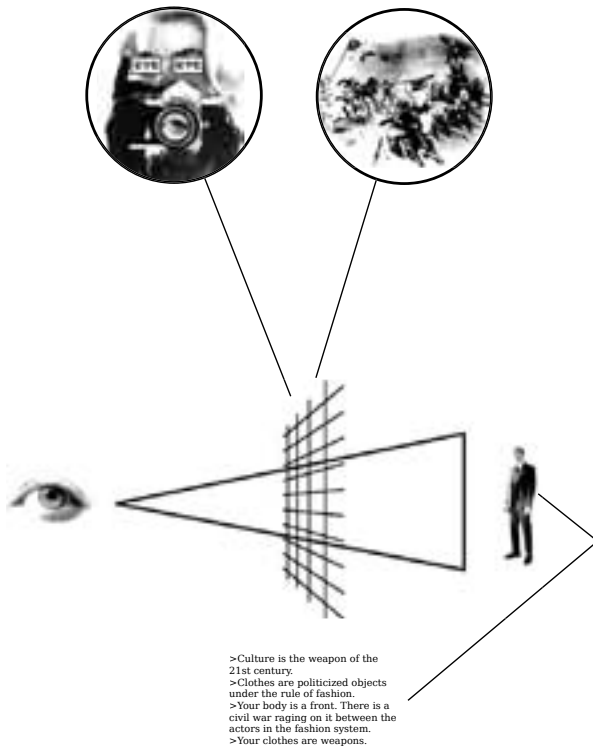
In one way it is indeed a parasite in that it uses the energy from the exciting global fashion to divert some of the attention down to the local street. If it turns out to be successful we can imagine customers especially wanting to have the zine and looking through the established magazines in the store to find an issue with a Syntax/144 inside.

The production process of the zine aims to be radically democratic. Every participant contributes with an equal amount of input and copies, one sheet of paper made into 144 copies. Every contributor also gets an equal amount of finished zines, and the whole group shares the distribution. The reason the zine is made in 144 copies, is because 144 is a "democratic" number – equally dividable in 4, 6, 8, 9, and 12 – a feasible amount of members in a group where every member can each have the same number of copies.

The Malmö issue caught in the act of distribution, as an unofficial appendix to Vogue and I-D magazines at the local press shop.

The Code War of Fashion.

>Culture is the weapon of the 21st century.
>Clothes are politicized objects under the rule of fashion.
>Your body is a front. There is a civil war raging on it between the actors in the fashion system.
>Your clothes are weapons.

You can be a partisan. You can act from underneath. Support your local struggle and set the battles you want to fight. You can create a more autonomous position and support local initiatives and campaigns. Practice fashion tactics. But still be in vogue.

This magazine is a free space of local fashion statements. Subverting the fashion system's vectors of power but using its infrastructure for promoting multitudes and transparency of how fashion MIGHT be and what other means of expression and meaning it could manifest.

So celebrate the possibility of the everyday! Focus your attention and energy on fashion!

Fight to win.

Because fashion is a game we love to play.

>!< *Introduction page for the first Malmö issue*

Influence on production is delegated identically in the whole group, and every copy will be unique in layout. As the pages are assembled into the zines they are all shuffled, so every page will face someone else's and only the mid-spread will actually be perceived as a whole. Every participant is equally "mistreated" by this, but will visually create new assemblages for every unique zine copy. Of 144 numbered copies, no two will look the same.

However, there is an exception to the total equality between the contributors – someone has to make the cover, and does get immediate attention from readers, but on the other hand this contributor can never get the middle spread. This is an unfortunate but necessary compromise.

For each new issue a new alliance is formed and a group is assembled to make the zine. A "material public" (Marres 2008) is formed around its "issue", in both meanings of the word. For every issue the process evolves and is constantly reimplemented. It is tested, renegotiated and can multiply into new forms, mutate as the groups fork or disintegrate, every time creating new multitudes and formations. It is every time represented by new assemblages in the zine and every time it is appearing in new hosts.

syntax/144
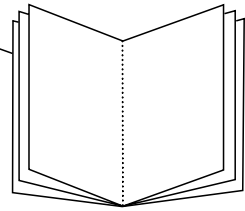### RadicalDemocraticLocalFashionMagazine

>Syntax/144 is a method for a radical democratic fashion magazine. It is breaking the interpassive communication syntax of the fashion system. It is a channel for free speech and visual multitudes subverting the hierarchical structures in fashion's transmissions of meaning.

>Syntax/144 is a symbiotic method embracing a synergetic and open programming of fashion activism. It is an exploration in how other modes of production might create wider multitudes of fashion promoting local talent, flows and expressions.

>Syntax/144 is not an anti-fashion statement but instead contributing to complementary paths of fashionable existence supporting local skin close activism and a free code of social identity interface production.

>Syntax/144 is a copyleft production opening a field of free expression in fashion media.

Method:
> Gather a group of local actors in fashion.
> Let all participants make a double sided, A3, black and white fashion statement (have a 20mm marginal at edges to be cut away later, but let pictures flow over this marginal!).
> Set a deadline when all participants should bring their contribution in 144 copies.
> Gather for assembly; shuffle the pages for every magazine except the cover. Every copy will be different!
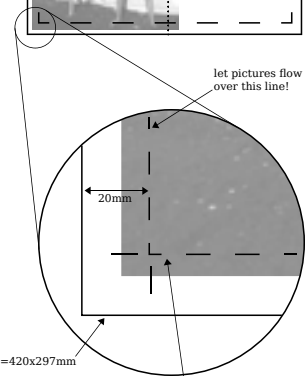> Cut the magazines 20mm from the edge to erase white border on paper from the copy machine.
> Number each copy.
> Divide equal amount of copies between participants.
> Parasite on other magazines and lines of distribution by placing your copies inside other magazines in local shops, boutiques or libraries.

Syntax/144 is a >self_passage< method and part of a strategy for subversive fashion.

every participant makes a double sided A3 black and white.

let pictures flow over this line!

20mm

A3=420x297mm

syntax/144=380x257mm (and folded and stapled to make a magazine)

The Syntax/144 method page. >!<

In this way the method aims to be a truly self-organized production process. The group around the zine forms a collaborative synergy and together they can reach further through the local scene to make a larger impact. By spreading the process equally to every participant it aims to be autocatalytic and generate a larger output than the simple sum of the inputs. By injecting the finished zine into the fashion channels it generates a higher energy and attention output than what was originally put in, and it can trigger new events on the local scene.

By being editorless the syntax/144 offers a possible area for an equalitarian autonomous and collaborative vector. In this way the zine appears almost as what Hakim Bey calls a TAZ, a "Temporary Autonomous Zone", that is the forming of a temporary space that eludes formal structures of control (Bey 1991). In this case the TAZ is in a paper format and a form of messenger for the local alliance of contributors, but still nomadic in its nature, riding on its host.

A central question remains – why bother photocopy a zine when it might just be much better to put it online? There can be many answers. First it is a simpler technique, cutting and pasting with scissors and just using glue makes it easy to learn. It is hand-made, hand-drawn, and it might also give the right local "underdog"

sense of aesthetic. Secondly, but the main reason, is that we still read fashion magazines and we still bother to find the ones we like, buy and even collect them. As long as there are fashion magazines, there is room for hosting a small local appendix. This also has the advantage of lifting the local into the global, matching them. Yet the zine has an analogue quality too for it bears marks of its production process, often intentionally as this is one of the "authentic" aspects of zines. There is a trace there of one of the creators. One of the creators was actually in that specific store, putting that appendix into that specific magazine. There is a real analogue connection, between one local sender and one local receiver.

In practice, the Syntax/144 method was tested on three different occasions in 2006, namely in Malmö, Istanbul, and Borås. In Malmö and Istanbul groups of participants were formed through contacts and consisted of local fashion designers and visual artists. The production process followed a simple procedure or protocol. We first had a briefing session and discussed the method of contribution and practical issues like how and where to photocopy the contributions. A week later we met to assemble and staple the zines. Most of the participants' designs contained simple cut-and-paste aesthetics and various forms of collage and assemblages. These were sampling, remixing, and twisting the established fashion. Some were direct comments on fashion, some documented ideas for local or futuristic dresses while others were comic adverts for own garments. The finished issues were divided equally between the participants and we split up to distribute our share of copies throughout the town.

I took part in the making of the two zines and also distributed my share of copied issues. In Malmö the distribution took place in various press stores and at the rich magazine department at the library. In Istanbul the zine was parasited in the magazine sections in bookstores in the Beyoglu district. The issue created in Borås was created during a one-day workshop with first year fashion students, finishing off a course about fashion images. Due to the short time and limitations in photocopies we made a smaller edition. My role was that of an advisor, but the project proved to be a good didactic tool combining analysis, discussion and hands-on production.

So where will this method finally take us? Well, if we image that the Syntax/144 will become an immense success and lots of people will have their say in fashion it might be a backlash, as it will erode part of the logic of exclusivity. Likewise, we will be flooded in zines as we try to buy a fashion magazine. However, this will of course never happen. Perhaps the opposite could be true, that what is created is a new form of exclusivity or luxury – merging street credibility, the upcoming, the low level, with the mechanisms and meanings of the established vectors. The strength then lies in blending these flows into new forms of assemblages, not only as products, as zines, but as empowering practices, where it will be exclusive to participate in a zine with the right upcoming scene of people.

What is most likely is that this form of method can offer a new way of thinking and an example for fashion designers to work with other forms of production. They can rethink their role as "victims" in the hands of fashion media to instead become the media and use their small scale endeavours to produce other forms of exclusive vectors. Through this, the old action spaces are exploded and formed to articulate a local scene. The participants can engage in new alliances and form their local scenes more consciously. They can create new ways to pool their resources and

form synergetic alliances. Most importantly, experiment with how these new vectors will work when plugged into the existing fashion system.

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What we have seen throughout this chapter is how amateurs and designers can engage to create their own vectors and "talk back" to the system. This is a practice closely related to hacking as their channels use loopholes in the existing system to reach out or amplify their message. We have looked at how fan fiction writers use the existing narratives of popular culture to insert their own artistic efforts into the original stories and reveal new interpretations and realize hidden potentials. This works as an empowering tactic as fans communities grow and share stories, showing they are not alone, but instead boost each other's efforts.

Likewise, amateurs make their own personal zines to document the everyday in a new light, where even the "losers" in the system can take pride and bond with like-minded across their DIY distribution networks. This type of zine can also be empowering for marginalized communities as in the examples of the Duplex Planet zine and the telestreet channel Disco Volante. The concept of these examples are implemented in the editorless local zine Syntax/144 where fashion designers explore other ways to form equalitarian alliances in order to assemble a shared vector outside the reach of gatekeepers or editors.

These shared zines offer their own additions, creating their own "imitative rays" to intersect and mix uncontrolled through the format of the zine. Within the hosting media, where the plugged-in zine reside, new intensities emerge. These intensities bridge the global and the local, the official with the unofficial and edited content with autonomous alliances in a new symbiogenesis between vectors. The syntax/144 is but one possible example of an editorless vector, and projects in the future may tell how various modes of co-authorship can offer interfaces for temporary fashion alliances to plug new intensities back into the system.

144

malin örde.
sofia m westin.
jennie engman ahrenbring.
marlene schön.
nina pettersson.
eva åkerstedt.
nette sandström.
karin toresson.
johanna klasson.

md1 vol:3

smallchange

- Small Change means to start small and start where it counts.
  To facilitate larger collaborations these small actions can be

protocols

These are improvised and immediate small interventions aiming to find multipliers that can "tip over" modest ideas into synergies, guided by protocols.

As we have seen in the previous chapters, the abstract machine of hacktivism runs on different levels. It engages personal practice, the organization of communities and the tactics of communication. In the Syntax/144 project we have already seen how a small set of rules can affect the outcome of a project, without one person becoming the artistic leader or the auteur, dictating the process. Instead there are procedures delegating the creative processes making the collaborative endeavour a form of "bazaar". As we have mentioned, hacktivism aims to reduce the top-down decision mechanisms to a minimum and aspires to share practice between a multiplicity of participants on as equal terms as possible. Every contribution is precious and valued according to how well it is crafted, but perhaps even more according to its symbiogenetic possibilities and of how well it is interfaced and works together with the inherent forces in the system, or how well it connects with the other lines stretching through the rhizome or bazaar. In other words, how it is part of the alliance.

This means that what is guiding the design processes within the hacktivist rhizome is not the auteur or the top down artistic controller, but instead it is someone more similar to the administrator who has the role of guiding the communication and connections between the interacting parts. In this context, the administrator is not the technical term we usually meet when discussing computer networks. It is not the robotic system engineer but the negotiator. It is a role that supports the process that creates dynamic and open agreements and which facilitate interoperations.

The results of the negotiations and the agreements that guide and regulate action spaces are something we could call protocols. The protocols configure the symbiogenesis within a networked system. They allow for a multiplicity of parts to interoperate and to form mutualistic relationships. To understand and use the full potentials of hacktivism and the synergies between small design contributions all parts must be networked into an alliance and thus synchronized by protocols. This is what we will have to look at next.

Throughout this chapter we will follow some different protocols and see how they affect shared work processes in groups. We will first look at how "subversive" communities, or the counterculture movement has argued for their shared tactics, of rebellion and of dropping-out. By moving beyond this position we will instead try to find ways to plug-in new practices into a social environment such as the fashion system. This could be exemplified in the Swap-O-Rama-Rama organized in Istanbul 2007, where visitors to a clothes swap also redesigned the clothes they swapped. Together they formed their own participatory fashion scene, where everyone hands-on built their contribution to themselves but through this action also formed a new community. This might give us some clues on how to see a new form of non-dialectic resistance, a resistance not built on NO logo but on MORE logo approaches. After an initial NO, the MORE approach is a resistance that builds new connections and creates a diversity of new alternatives and builds on many small changes. Finally we will explore the potentials of this type of design practice, of small change steps, and see how this could form catalytic loops to amplify the small contributions to a higher order of change. This approach is examined further in a design project, the Dale Sko Hack project, which took place in 2006 in Dale, Norway.

fashionable resistance

As long as there has been fashion there has also been a resistance to it. During the Middle Ages the ruling classes instituted sumptuary laws governing luxury goods aimed at the upcoming merchant classes. The aristocracy wanted to limit the impact of imitation and luxury consumption and were supported by the church that detested the corporeal celebration of luxury goods. During the last centuries we have seen many forms of resistance to fashion. There is the spiritual resistance from religious movements, who cursed the vanity manifested through fashion. There is also the institutional resistance to extravagant personal expression that instead proposed the blessing of uniforms with the aim to even out differences between individuals. There is also the artistic resistance of the intellectuals who mean that fashion is a shallow form of culture that cannot represent anything else than society's massive "sell out".

However, all these forms of resistance have problems, as they actually form the founding forces that make

fashion work in the first place. They produce tension and the differences from which various anti-statements can thrive. Even though they desperately try to avoid fashion, they are inevitable drawn into a relationship with it. Fashion theorist Anne Hollander (1993), phrases this elaborately as she paints out a wide spectrum of what fashion is.

> There are different ways of defining fashion, but what is meant here is the whole spectrum of desirable ways of looking at any given time. The scope of what everyone wants to be seen wearing in a given society is what is in fashion; and this includes the *haute couture*, all forms of anti-fashion and nonfashion, and the garments and accessories of people who claim no interest in fashion – a periodically fashionable attitude in the history of dress. (Hollander 1993: 350)

We have to ask ourselves therefore what the strongest anti-fashion statement could be? What could be the most violent resistance? A classic form of resistance against fashion is to position oneself with an anti-fashion stance, yet this position is hard to maintain. Most often this position is also in a state of change, as it constantly has to redefine itself to keep up the "anti" posture of opposition. Even worse, the difference one wanted to establish from fashion will soon become fashionable. However, according to theorist Malcolm Barnard there are some garments that can be true anti-fashion, namely those that never change. He proposes coronation and ceremonial dress, but perhaps would also include the uniforms of the Papal Swiss Guard in the Vatican (Barnard 1996: 13). However, these garments were also once designed in relation to the fashion of their time, so stepping out and being "anti" to fashion can indeed be very tricky.

However, since the birth of the popular youth culture a wide range of styles has succeeded each other, each of them defined in contrast to the other. Every culture is "anti" to someone else. Yet every subculture shared one common feature, the opposition to the dominant culture, most commonly the culture of young people's parents. As some of these subcultures became ostensibly political and active they also saw the importance of dressing differently, not only from the other subcultures but also expressively to attack the meaning systems of the dominant culture and form an explosive position of counterculture. This position of a counterculture emerged as a radical and political stance around what is usually called the -68

protest movement. At this time, this counterculture regarded itself as anti-hegemonic activism based on "psychic liberation of the oppressed" as Theodore Roszak called it in his iconic book *The Making of a Counterculture* (1996). Here the aspirations were different. The idea was to show total independence from the rest of society, to perform outrageously and show expressive disobedience with what was considered correct or normal.

This position of the counterculture still exists today, and many still propose this stance as a liable political statement of opposition and nonconformity. The undertones within the counterculture are that this "independent" and "authentic" expression can be politically subversive as it takes people "out of the line", and inaccessible to work for "the evil system".

This conception of resistance and opposition is a reactionary ritual. As the opponent does one thing the resistance answers with a straight negation. In this way the opposition cannot escape the boundaries established by the adversary, and with no chance of escaping the conditions of the game. A counterculture can never be more than counter-something, it cannot be "founder" of something new. Then it would have to raise itself from its anti-position and above the preconditions of the game, as when the prisoners start communicating in the example of "the prisoners dilemma" (Poundstone 1992).

In his book on Nietzsche, Deleuze discusses forms of non-dialectical resistance that he finds in Nietzsche's discussions (Deleuze 2006b). This is a resistance that goes beyond nihilism and beyond the "anti" position. It is a form of resistance that is not an opposition coming from the same "root", the same genealogy or primary condition as that which is opposed.

> Dialectic thrives on oppositions because it is unaware of far more subtle and subterranean differential mechanisms; topological displacements, typological variations. (Deleuze 2006b: 149)

A dialectic "anti" is set within the same court, addressing the same property, and can never come beyond it. Instead the non-dialectic resistance must step beyond the initial conditions, to use subtle differential mechanisms. This non-dialectical resistance is producing something new, a new alternative and a new typology. We will come to this non-dialectical form of resistance later.

Yet the reactionary resistance is the simplest in which to unite around, as no discussion has to be taken about the future alternative. This type of resistance is also simple to make a lifestyle around. There is a wide range of counterculture lifestyles and subculture fashions, many with roots in the -68 revolts, and today they are almost like ready-to-wear identities. For example the rocker, the hippie, the mod, the skin, the punk, the goth, the anarchist, the raver, the grunger, are all expressing their style as authentically different from each other, and radically different from the hated "mainstream" (Hebdige 1988, Polhemus 1994). Commonly there is a notion within these scenes of "not caring about style", but most often they prove the opposite. However, their expressions are still amongst themselves considered as true countercultural political statements.

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In their book *Rebel sell* (2005) the cultural critics Joseph Heath and Andrew Potter mean that applying the spirit of classic counterculture today is hardly political. Celebrating a slacker culture of "liberated" hipsters can hardly be a true political

Resistance *is usually connoting the fight against an invader or an unlawful government and its expressions have been important in forming the counterculture identity. In the general imagination, resistance movements and freedom fighters have to use various forms of violence as means to their ends as their opposition escalates the conflict against their adversary. This paints the political landscape in a easily manageable bipolarity and also gives a hands-on feeling of confrontation with a normally faceless system.*

alternative, as is also argued by Duncombe in the previous chapter on zine-culture. According to Heath and Potter, this form of resistance is fruitless and based on a misconception, as society today is very different than it was back in -68. Today "rebellion is not a threat to the system, it *is* the system." (178) They propose that we do not live in a spectacle, but on the contrary, we live in a much more prosaic world,

> It consists of billions of human beings, each pursuing some more or less plausible conception of the good, trying to cooperate with one another, and doing so with varying degrees of success. There is no single, overarching system that integrates it all. The culture cannot be jammed because there *is* no such thing as 'the culture' or 'the system'. There is only a hodgepodge of social institutions, most tentatively thrown together, which distribute the benefits and burdens of social cooperation in ways that sometimes we recognise to be just, but that are usually manifestly inequitable. In a world of this type, countercultural rebellion is not just unhelpful, it is positively counterproductive. Not only does it distract energy and effort from the sort of initiatives that lead to concrete improvements in people's lives, but it encourages wholesale contempt for such incremental changes. (10)

Instead of working for real social change and engaging in politics or civic participation, the counterculture still nurtures a belief that their oppositional protest style and actions against the "machine" will liberate the "masses". Instead, the "pacified" workers are quite happy with being part of the capitalist project as it apparently pays off and produces wealth, even for them. The workers that should be "liberated" show no interest in the counterculture struggle. Instead Heath and Potter show that the rebels who aim to overthrow capitalism all serve it very well, as they develop easily exchanged cultural capital and also engage in the market,

> 'the system' seemed to take this form of rebellion in its stride. This lack of discernible impact presented a serious threat to the counterculture idea. After all, according to the countercultural rebels, the problem with traditional leftist politics was that it was superficial. It aimed at 'merely' institutional change. Countercultural rebels, on the other hand, were supposedly attacking oppression at a deeper level. Yet despite the radicalism of their interventions, it was difficult to see any concrete effects. (35)

The concrete effect has instead been that the counterculture is perhaps the core of the market today, the motor of the "creative economy". Counterculture as a political critique is flawed, as it is just actualizing the market, intensifying consumerism, speeding up its process and forces. To the system's rejoice the counterculture say the oppose and still grow a belief that their "resistance" will bring the system down. The subversion tactics of counterculture subverts everything *except* capitalism itself, as it amplifies the race for being "cool".

> the critique of mass society has been one of the most powerful forces driving consumerism for the past forty years. […] Books like *No Logo*, magazines like *Adbusters* and movies like *American Beauty* do not undermine consumerism; they reinforce it. This isn't because the authors, editors or directors are hypocrites. It's because they've failed to understand the true nature of consumer society. They identify consumerism with conformity. As a result, they fail to notice that it is rebellion, not conformity, that has for decades been the driving force of the marketplace. (101f)

We buy counterculture products to show that we are not fooled by the system. However, this act has a dubious impact on the "hegemonic culture". It is instead the former hegemony that lies shattered. The "traditional" or "hegemonic" values have a hard time finding an intellectually respectable and thriving culture of its own,

Pret-a-revolter *was an activist clothes collection set up for the G8 meeting in Genoa 2001 for the civil disobedient fashionista. It was produced by the Spanish group Las Agencias (who are also behind YOMANGO). The colourful clothes of the collection contains pockets for soft materials buffering police batons, and some that may also conceal cameras for documenting violent abuse. This protest couture had both a street function and a media function; to expose the violent response to peaceful protests and to create media attention for the carnivalesque side of demonstrations as an answer to the media's tendency to criminalize any form of political antagonism (top). Las Agencias also held workshops where the participants could create shock proof clothing for violent confrontations with the police out of recycled water bottles and plastic bags. This type of armoured clothing both protects and exposes the constant threat of police violence. As part of their "lifestyle brand" they also had lessons in nonviolent demonstrations and street protest tactics. This is a specific form of adhocism, pulled together just before protest actions as utilitarian clothing. However, in its mimicking of fashion it is also a prank and carnivalesque celebration of protest, using it for street protests - true "street style".*

"Capitalism is the almighty operating system of our lives - ecologically, psychologically and geopolitically and in just about every way it runs the show. [...] So here's the big question: can we the people - civil society - take charge? Can we rewrite the capitalist code? [...] can we turn capitalism into an open source design project and make it more sustainable and responsible to our and future generation's needs?"

ANTIPRENEUR
THE MARK THAT CHANGED CAPITALISM

and there is today hardly any literature, art, or poetry to challenge the adversary "counterculture" (Heath & Potter 2005: 201).

Rather it is in the capitals of bohemia and counterculture where contemporary capitalism thrives best, and this is *thanks* to the counterculture. This can be seen clearly in Richard Florida's study of the San Francisco bay area in his book *The Rise of the Creative Class* (2002). What Florida sees here is the combination of Protestant work ethics with Bohemian values, something he calls the "Big Morph". It is a conflation that transcends what was before seen as an opposition, and in the process it generates vast amounts of money (Florida 2002: 190). If the counterculture is avant-gardist in any way, it is because it mobilizes the "shock troops" of capitalism, which in their quest for "authenticity" pave the road for gentrification, mass tourism, and the changing expressions of fashion.

Indeed, Heath and Potter's analysis breaks apart some of the myths of the counterculture, but what they fail to take further is that this myth also brings about discussions and action on how we want society to look. It sometimes proposes goals and means outside the agendas and practices proposed by parliamentary politics, which politicians offer as the only solution to political problems. Counterculture might offer no threat to capitalism, and it is hardly revolutionary, but it still lifts politics into a discussion on how things "might be" and does not chain political visions to how "things are". In their great effort of "disabusing the masses of the countercultural 'myth' […] they fail to see that […] *the myth sells valuable incremental reform.*" (Harold 2007: 68)

The conception that cultures of resistance have to be placed outside the economy to be "authentic" may have been a misconception from the start. As the theorist Angela McRobbie (1994) has shown, it is mainly a myth produced by sociologists, promoting a viewpoint on what "authentic rebellion" is. In the examples of punk McRobbie describes this process closely. For McRobbie there was never such thing as a "pure" punk subculture disconnected from the economy. She means that this view goes against many of the classic academic studies of subcultures, which have focused on the autonomous "performance" of subculture.

> the very idea that style could be purchased over the counter went against the grain of those analyses which saw the adoption, for example, of punk style as an act of creative defiance far removed from the mundane act of buying. The role of McLaren and Westwood was also downgraded for the similar reason that punk was seen as a kind of collective creative impulse. To focus on a designer and an art-school entrepreneur would have been to undermine the 'purity' or 'authenticity' of the subculture. (136f)

According to McRobbie, it is not only on the stage or on the street fashion scenes emerge or take place. Street fashion scenes come about in the informal backstage of culture, in the seeking, discussing, picking, trading, wearing and reselling of the cultural commodities, something that is often done by the girlfriends of the subcultural "icons".

> shops like the 'Sex' shop run by Malcolm McLaren and Vivienne Westwood functioned also as meeting places where the customers and those behind the counter got to know each other and met up later in the pubs and clubs. Indeed […] there is more to buying and selling subcultural style than the simple exchange of cash for goods. (136)

The cultural entrepreneurship of the street styles has been neglected since it made youth culture and anti-materialist resistance look like just another form of capital-

ism. The wild concerts and violent street life became the image of punk, as it also fitted nicely with the idea that identity is a performed entity of the self. However, as McRobbie proposes, clothed identity is something happening while living with an interest in clothes, searching for those special garments, recycling those second-hand rags and hanging out together discussing clothes in shops. It could perhaps even happen during workshops where participants remake their old or discarded clothes.

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It is through practices like the ones highlighted by McRobbie that *micro-cultures* are formed rather than *subcultures.* There can hardly be any "sub" as the hegemonic *One* dominant culture is in itself a million rebellions and symbolic or not, the rebel imperative is the cultural machine of today.

Instead of striving for resisting this type of system we can build on many complements we find more interesting and more desirable. These can form micro-cultures of communities, who build on a shared experience, of seeking, discussing, picking, trading, wearing and eventually reselling their own creations. Each of these is a temporary coalition assembled to, for a few hours, counter the logic of *ready-to-wear* fashion, alienation and de-skilling, but which at the same time uses the surplus that the big economy has created as the resource for building a new culture. It

is a micro-culture riding on the surplus of used clothes we have in our wardrobes, releasing their potentials to become something new. It is a hacktivist practice and we can see it emerge in the Swap-O-Rama-Ramas, public clothes swap and redesign events. I will now discuss the one I organized in Istanbul in autumn 2007.

swap-o-rama-rama

Half an hour before opening there were already queues of people waiting outside the Hall, a club not far from Istiklal Caddesi in central Istanbul. Throughout the evening around 500 visitors were going to come and share their leftover garments and redesign them together with designers at the event. What the visitors were queuing for was the city's first Swap-O-Rama-Rama, a clothes swap and design event open to the public. It was organized as part of the *Hackers and Haute Couture Heretics* exhibition in Istanbul, an exhibition and six-week long workshop at the Garanti Gallery a block away from the swap.

As the inventor of the Swap-O-Rama-Rama events, Wendy Tremayne, could not come to organize the event but we followed her methods. These were a loose set of instructions which under a Creative Commons licence are open and free to use everywhere and now her Swaps are organized all over the world. Tremayne who is based in the southern US,

For entering a Swap-O-Rama-Rama *participants bring a bag of clothes. All garbs are collected into a big pile where everyone can rummage through to find material to work on or reform. In Istanbul, all participants got a bracelet as an entry ticket to show that they added a bag of clothes to the commons of the event (far left). The emphasis during the event is on redesigning the clothes, not simply swapping. All machinery and accessories are shared at the event and the participants experiment with their creations. They also got special swap-labels (right).*

helps out at a distance through her website and has special shared mailing lists for organizers. They send her information and images of the events that are uploaded to the Swap-O-Rama-Rama website, which has global curriculum of upcoming events.

The Swap-O-Rama-Rama is in itself a public clothes swap and do-it-yourself workshop where participants come to swap clothes and modify them on the spot with the help of designers and friends. The entrance ticket is to bring a bag of clothes that will be added to the pool of shared garment resources. In the space where the workshop takes place, an infrastructure of sewing machines and other equipment is assembled. For events in the United States, Tremayne has organized sponsorship of sewing machines where a company also pays for the shipping of the borrowed machines to and from the event. Participants and invited designers are encouraged to bring their own resources to be shared. For the event in Istanbul we used sewing machines from the gallery as well as asking participants to bring their own machines. Some visitors brought bags of old buttons and applications that were put in a large box for everyone to use. For the event we had printed labels reading "Modified by me / Ben Yaptim" – following the motto of Swap-O-Rama-Rama – "Don't Commodify – Modify!"

The swaps are big public events, often gathering over a thousand visitors, all sharing clothes, skills and ideas to create new skins out of the old ones. A temporary coalition of designers and amateurs is formed, materializing ideas and bringing new forms out of discarded objects, although many visitors simply come to enjoy the creative atmosphere.

The Swap-O-Rama-Rama method itself follows a very simple procedure for the participant. It can be summed up like this.

1. As a visitor, bring at least one bag of your unwanted clothing – this is your entrance ticket to the event.

2. When entering, put your clothes in the collective pile of clothing with all the unwanted garments of all who are going to take part in the event. This is the raw material of the event, and everyone is welcome to dive in and find his or her next new/used items.

3. After you have chosen your new clothes slip over to one of the sewing stations and attend a workshop (sew, embroider, print, bead, fix, repair, knit).

4. Swap-O-Rama-Rama also offers on site DIY sessions with skilled artists to help you get started. You'll find professional designers with sewing machines ready to teach you how to make modifications to your new/used duds.

5. Prepare yourself for the catwalk that will present the highlights from the Swap.

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A make-up team *were also present at the Swap-O-Rama-Rama and Sahane event to make the models and participants ready for the final catwalk show.*

At the core of the Swap-O-Rama-Rama is the sharing of material, ideas and skills within a community. The Swap is an idea- and skill-expanding event where people in a group come to experience an event of collective empowerment. Actually, they together form a temporary and complementary fashion scene. The lonely fashionista remaking clothes at the kitchen table is no longer secluded but with a crowd of like-minded friends.

It is this community feeling that is the core of the Swap-O-Rama-Rama. It is not only about swapping and leaving the place with new items of clothing, but to engage in remaking them together with others, help each other, share skills and build a community or fashion scene by finding likeminded persons. The whole event mimics a big fashion studio, but one where every participant is a fashion designer. There is a shared surplus of materials that once originated from the big fashion system, but have now been discarded. These items have fallen from grace, and they are now revived into living material for everyone to use. It is a new fashion world, built together with all the participants, where they all share their resources and skills. At the event in Istanbul the atmosphere was so high and the participants so exited that we had to be ruthless and pull the sewing machines' power plugs from the walls to get people to leave when we closed. They had such a great time they didn't want to go.

The Swap-O-Rama-Rama event was organized by a loose and self-organized group with the aim of triggering an autocatalytic loop to make the Swap-O-Rama-Rama an actual fashion event, but one outside the fashion system. Instead of focusing on commodities and the exchange of money the Swap is free and offers personal contacts and expanded skills. By forming their own scene the people at the Swap discovered common expressions. They share these and build a temporary congregation with its own format, protocols and fashion doctrine. It is an open meeting for believers and makers, forming a critical mass and empowering each other even after the event itself has ended. As a visitor one see that one is not alone, but part of a whole micro-culture of like-minded people. One makes friends and gets new ideas.

In this sense the Swap-O-Rama-Rama shares a lot with the hacktivist scene, not only in the reforming of material and communal building, but also in the organization of the event. Similar examples could be the temporary "sprints" in open source software production, where programmers meet and dedicate a few days to common work together on a shared project. Organization-wise it is also similar to the big C64 Copyparties or Demoscene parties of the 80's, or the contemporary LAN (Local Area Network) gatherings in the hacker scene where participants bring their computers and plug into one communal infrastructure, a high speed local network, sharing files, playing games, exchanging ideas and just socializing around their networked material and digital public.

To add some more of a fashion atmosphere to the event we organized it in conjunction with an "Istanbul Street Style" party, a monthly club event hosted at various nightclubs in the city. At these events local upcoming designers show their latest collection together with street art, photography, creative cooking and music performances. For the party, make-up artists and hairdressers were invited to style models and the swap participants who could show off their new creations on the catwalk if they so wished. With models and DJs intermixed with workshop participants the final swap-catwalk came to be a celebration of small scale creativity but with a glamorous framing with flashing lights, creating a small fashion world

The Swap-O-Rama-Rama catwalk
ending the event was part of a Istanbul Street Style Sahane party. Here the designs produced during the day were exhibited. Some designers wore their own creations and entered a catwalk for the first time in their lives. Others styled the models taking part in the Sahane show.

Redesigned denim from the Swap-O-Rama-Rama shown at the evening Sahane catwalk.

in itself.

As a fashion event the Swap-O-Rama-Rama is intentionally without any artistic leadership, but instead facilitates the widest possible participation and symbiotic potential to be actualized. The goal is to trigger joint synergetic exaltation of the visitors as they engage in furthering their skills and aesthetic knowledge together. With the Swap's sharing of resources and material it becomes a radical democratic event where everyone builds on an allocated pool of assets on equal terms. This challenges one of the foundations of fashion – its celebration of exclusivity, of being something for the chosen few. Instead, the Swap is about wide participation and the shared luxury of advancing your aesthetic skills in companionship with your friends.

It is this last step that is the radical contribution of the Swap-O-Rama-Rama. It is not only sharing clothes and redesigning them, or even sharing skills, working together and making new friends. The Swap is radical because it creates a new fashion, a new scene, and makes visitors proud of being a practical part of that scene. It is a scene built by the people coming to the event, participating and sharing. It is not a scene built by a brand, an advertising agency or a sudden hype of a lifestyle mediated through the mass media, but a scene where all participants build equal parts in forming it. The procedures, the garments, the techniques, the styles, their own catwalk, all components are part of this new scene, equally accessible and commonly constructed. All these interacting parts form the multitude that makes the Swap-O-Rama-Rama scene fashion-*able.*

This means that the participants did not only leave the event with freshly exchanged garments, but with new skills and a freshly established common scene. They had new with whom they shared similar ideas and values and with whom they had built a common self-esteem, by using the redesign event as a process for self-enhancement.

Yet, even for the Swap, the symbiosis with the bigger fashion system is vital. It needs the surplus and it benefits from the energy from successfully mimicking high fashion. It does not build an oppositional resistance, but a bigger multitude of small scenes and practices. It does not say NO, but instead wants MORE. This is also a type of resistance.

MORE fashionable resistance

Perhaps it is with the Swap-O-Rama-Rama we can image a mindset of resistance that echoes of an affirmative "YES!" rather than an oppositional and countercultural "NO!" This would be a form of resistance that allows the abstract machine of hacktivism to roam more freely and not be trapped between dialectic ideological positions. An invitation to participate in renegotiations rather than exclude or blindly oppose is quite like the non-dialectic resistance discussed earlier by Deleuze (2006a). As proposed by Christine Harold in *OurSpace* (2007), the question is not to jam the system, but to jam *with* the system.

The intention of intersecting the small action or gesture with larger wholes is a key feature when trying to understand the connection between hacking, rhizomatic organization and social change. This is also a key difference from just any gesture or the singular massive manifestation of "NO!". As opposed to the NO, the YES can turn into a MORE, as theorist Mika Hannula proposes in his strategy of MORE

Counterfeit Crochet Project *by Stephanie Syjuco is a web-site soliciting crocheters to join her in hand-counterfeiting designer handbags: Gucci, Louis Vuitton or whatever you would fancy. Participants troll the internet and choose a design that they particularly covet, download a low-resolution image which they enlarge to full size. This image they copy pixel-by-pixel into a low-resolution handbag - both an homage and a lumpy mutation. It is thus not so much a question of "subverting" the brand economy as much as celebrating it with DIY techniques. To bend the power injected into the objects of desire and lead it into ones own craftsmanship. It is also important for Syjuco to share patterns and techniques and everything you need to start counterfeiting is available at her site.*

LOGO in *The Politics of Small Gestures* (2006). For Hannula the politics of small gestures presupposes a network in order to become meaningful and to materialize in the future. A network is needed in which "the connections are not constantly active, but nevertheless available and accessible within a common, shared horizon." (15) The openness of the network is the basic condition for small gestures becoming development, because the small is never about closure, while the big is usually the "final stage" (15).

The small gestures can become MORE if they transgress the initial NO. The initial NO is important and has a key function, and of course there are even categorical NOs, unacceptable conditions which could hardly be renegotiated, even if they could be open for dialogue.

Yet, the first reflexive NO cannot be sustained into a continuous anti-position where emerging alternatives become ruthlessly criticized even before being prototyped. New discussions have problems to emerge in an environment ruled by the big NO. Hannula warns of the consequences of the NO LOGO (Klein 2000) position of violent rejection and defiance.

> NO LOGO opts for denial; it turns against something, and shuts itself into a structure and position of opposition. Here […] it turns its back on its adversary; a strategy that is not very helpful, and which ultimately, only makes the negative spell that keeps them as adversaries even stronger. (Hannula 2006: 109)

Hannula also acclaims that the position of MORE is only possible after there has been a NO, but after the initial NO, there is a need to reengage, not manifest positions or build walls.

> If NO means protest, MORE means that just being against something is not enough. It is the first tentative step towards articulating what you are FOR and why. (Hannula 2006: 109)

This is where the individual action or the shared hack can turn into a small gesture towards social change. MORE is about offering more alternatives, rather than just saying NO or just letting go. MORE is the initial step towards building a multiplicity of affirmative action spaces. Where NO *drops out* of the big machine, MORE *plugs into* a network of other small gestures and actions, shared by a multiplicity of participants. These are the workings of the hacktivist abstract machine.

The hacking practice is in this sense the act of doing, of collaboratively building up the change from below and not only pointing at the direction, but taking the fist steps. The gesture becomes hands-on making, going back to the root of the Greek word *poiesis* which means "to make". Perhaps this can be a way of bending Hannula's notion of *the politics of small gestures* into what the abstract machine of hacktivism advocates; *the poetics of small politics*.

This means re-engaging in economy, in the market, in the full system of fashion, and of plugging-in MORE alternatives. It is not about staying isolated within the safe-space of the home studio or art gallery, protecting it as a walled and "free" space, as if it was free from commercial or status interests in the first place. Actions and methods prototyped in the studio or gallery must break out and somehow experiment with plugging into the fashion system. A MORE practice must try many routes to reach into the system, such as commodities, magazines and production facilities, and through these interfaces build complementary forms of critique. The participants must somehow come into the match, but not in unques-

tioned traditional forms. On the contrary, this is where the real *poiesis* is at work; to build the new interfaces and plugs that connect to the system, and through these new contacts bend and modulate the energies flowing within. The next step is to share these new methods with the community or network of other small builders.

It is through these small interventions and designed changes we see the hacktivist mindset at work as it uses the energies inherent in a system to release MORE lines of flight and MORE possibilities to be collectively worked on. It must be MORE that runs both on the small scale as well as on the large. It must be political both in street action as well as in the parliament or the mass media. MORE means all channels, all spectrums and all levels. Yes, all multiplicities have to be taken into account. It is not only about the trendy street or edge lifestyle statement, but the full spectrum of political tools and channels, even those that lack the "cool" credibility among the counterculture kids.

It is from this wide variety of lines and ready potentials that practical work must begin. All these freshly opened possibilities cannot be left undone, but action must also be taken to tune and bend the line in the preferred direction. Experiments have to be done, changes made, however small. Consequently we must look at how to design these small changes.

designing small change

The works of small politics require a lot of discussion and directions, a small dose of theory but it mainly needs practice. This could be a low scale design, as in small change. All design is about change, hopefully towards better situations. It is a change that, as theorist Herbert Simon proposes, "devises courses of action aimed at changing existing situations, into preferred ones." (Simon 1996) Design is turning the situation into how it might or ought to be.

Still, it is not uncommon that, however well intended, these new courses turn into unintended situations that generate unexpected and unwanted effects, something called "rebound effects" (Manzini & Jégou 2003). Creating a nicer milieu in the cars to make people better stand the traffic jams will probably bring even more cars onto the streets, causing even more paralyzed traffic situations, which is an everyday experience in our sprawl-designed world. This also happens when products become light, small, efficient and cheap and their status change from being exclusive commodities to mass produced lifestyle accessories, such as in the case of watches or self-publishing. This is something we can also experience with the "democratization" of fashion.

These "rebound effects" occur, according to design theorist John Thackara, "because we have inadequate time to try things out small, observe what happens, and reflect on how the bigger picture is changing." (Thackara 2005: 5) The big scale design problems can usually be avoided by experimenting on a small scale, as in the Thackara's examples, by trying to promote a design practice that is open, collaborative and from the bottom up. It is a design practice of cultivating systems of enablement, increasing participation and promoting decentralized and flexible organizations, all with the aim of improving the local and specific everyday scenario, and to reinforce the social fabric (Manzini & Jégou 2003).

Design can also be deliberately directed to the low scale in an attempt to stay small, to continuously work on a local level, but with open interfaces to promote emer-

Sweatshop Watch *is a LA-based organization committed to eliminating the exploitation that occurs in clothes production and the illegal and inhumane working conditions in sweatshops. To help workers gain knowledge and get organized about labour issues they have made illustrated comic-style information booklets about civil, immigrant, and workers rights with text in mandarin, vietnamese and english. These booklets offer small scenarios about legal processes as well as step-by-step to-do lists of how to run a process against abuse.*

gence. Not start from a large-scale ideology and with a general solution. One can argue that the small-scale approach is also an ideology, but one that is open to influences and easier to adapt along the way. That is its biggest advantage. As Thackara explains, "Thinking local and thinking small is not a parochial approach, and it is not an abdication of responsibility for the bigger picture. On the contrary, we will get from here to there by a series of smaller, but carefully considered, steps." (Thackara 2005: 96)

This shift of perspectives to the small scale has been seen over the last decades, especially within development aid projects and relief work, where the large-scale programs of building massive infrastructure, dams or advanced technical systems, are supplemented with attempts to facilitate grass-root empowerment. It is a shift into what development practitioner Nabeel Hamdi calls "small change" (2004).

Small change is a method applied in development aid systems for achieving real, relevant, and lasting change, to reach more people through fewer resources. The concept of "small change" is in development projects relating to improvised and immediate small-scale actions. It is participation from below in limited issues, such as a bus stop or a compost bin, that later grows into a large-scale and long term practice, as over time the collaborations become more sophisticated and intelligent. For Hamdi, the goal is not to create a massive movement but to encourage and "tip over" those who are close to acting but lack courage or a working example.

> Small Change captures three important principles that recur throughout: 'small' because that's usually how big things start; 'change', because that's what development is essentially about; and 'small change', because this can be done without the millions typically spent on programs and projects. (Hamdi 2004: xxiii)

Small change is a practice that combines idealism with pragmatism, creating synergies and emergence – looking for multipliers. The single small action can turn out

a big one as in a metaphor by Buckminster Fuller where he compared his practice to a "trimtab"; a small piece of the rudder that manages to turn a large ship around.

Fuller referred to the function of a trimtab in nautical and aeronautical design to demonstrate how small amounts of energy and resources applied precisely at the right time and place can produce the maximum advantage in a change.

When a large ship, such as a tanker, moves through the ocean, it has great momentum and a considerable amount of effort is required to turn the rudder and change the direction of the ship. However, turning the trimtab, the trailing edge of the main rudder, creates a small turbulence allowing the main rudder to turn with less effort, thus slowly pulling the whole ship around.

When most change is usually conceived by trying to turn the ship by pushing the bow around, Fuller tried to create change by acting in the small turbulence at the rudder.

> I saw that by being all the way at the tail of the ship, by just kicking my foot to one side or the other, I could create the 'low pressure' which would turn the whole ship. If ever someone wanted to write my epitaph, I would want it to say 'Call me Trimtab'. (Fuller 1972)

Truly, this is a small change initiative, and perhaps naïve in its challenge, but Fuller also suggested practitioners should "dare to be naïve" (Fuller cited in Zung 2001: 60).

This naivety must not be an immature blindness where everything should only happen in the small scale and where it is only the small scale that counts. The small must deliberately be matched with the big, the big scale and the big change. The small must coexist in the framework of the big. The small change must allow, embrace and support the big politics to be done. But the small change efforts must also demand from the big to be allowed room to navigate, to take own initiatives and try out unconventional methods.

This does not mean that the naivety proposed by Fuller is a form of tunnel vision. Instead it is a new form of critique allowing for more experiments, and it is supportive more than subversive. It is a naïve critique of many YES and MORE rather than a predetermined NO. This requires new alliances and new forms of connecting the big politics with the poetics small change, new ways of intersecting the cathedrals and bazaars.

Small Change, according to Hamdi, is a decentralized practice of enablement and empowerment building capacity instead of providing finished pack-

Ithaca Hours *is a local currency in Ithaca, New York, and a version of a Local Exchange Trading Systems (LETS). It is an example of a complementary currency that is based on a local, non-profit exchange network. LETS works as a "public transport" of values when official currencies are lacking or are wanted to be kept out of the local circulation. Hours-based LETS facilitate exchange amongst people with little money but more time, such as unemployed or retired people or in rural settings.*

ages of aid. Providing often leads to dependency, and in the worst case to de-skilling (Hamdi 2004). Instead of a monologue aid of "be like us", a forced and speeded modernization, a small change approach is harmonizing small efforts to reach a wider aspect of improving the livelihoods and assets of in the relief-development continuum (Hamdi 2006). This means enabling rather than providing and learning to build rather than get things ready-made.

For Hamdi, small change as a design and development practice has no end point. It is a starting point for empowerment, but the output of the process can indeed be small scale, community based, visible and tangible. "Start small and start where it counts." (Hamdi 2004: 139) By co-developing themes, theories, tools and techniques the participants are engaged in the process and able to influence it through every step. Not only to support the building of houses but also improving health, providing security, building community and generating income. It is a practice supporting self-organized informal markets as well as the shipping of material, closely participating with the inhabitants. As shown in many of the examples in Kirkby, O'Keefe, & Timberlake's *Earthscan Reader in Sustainable Development,* keeping the project flexible is a key issue for this type of development, letting it merge into larger programs or in synergetic modes emerge into new shapes (Kirkby *et al* 1995).

Nevertheless, the small change project needs something with which to be flexible *from* or *around*. The small change needs a proposal or an initiating discussion. The risk is otherwise that the small change just becomes a patchwork of haphazard reforms with no aim or just being indifferent. This is where designer competence becomes a crucial asset to the project, because the designer can design proposals to discuss and ideas to lift the discussion from the actual to the virtual – the possible.

The sketch, model or prototype of the designer has new possibilities actualized in it, possibilities that before only existed virtually, as a potential state but out of sight for us. Here the skills of the designer are to summon the virtual into an actualization, into a model. Often it is not enough to come with a simple proposal, but it must also contain a leap into the unconsidered or perhaps the forbidden - a slight provocation. The designed model thus becomes a "provotype" (Mogensen 1992), a radical and generative prototype threatening the short sighted "taken-for-grantedness" of the routine. In Mogensen's proposal the designer, or system developer in his case, takes the role of the benevolent provocateur, being expert, facilitator, and provocateur in a single designer role, to "provoke discrepancies in the concrete" (22). This approach challenges the preconceptions and "blindness" of the participants in the design process and puts new alternatives on the table (Mogensen 1992: 15f).

This "provotype" design is a hands-on reduction of the risk of dialectical small change, the change where the improvement of conditions are stuck in the "anti-mode" or reduced to a small NO. Instead the designer helps with the actualization of the virtual through small steps and participatory discussions. This is what brings the small change forward. It is a model where design not only changes things to the more desired condition (Simon 1996) but in addition brings forward what does not come naturally, and proposing the realizable (Krippendorf 2006). Here the designer is provoking the naïve, playing with the virtual to open new action spaces.

Development projects are a matter of safekeeping assets built by the participants,

where the sense of community is as important as the physical building (of for example shelter). The community is the basis for social emergence and also a possible "bank" of assets for the economic enablement of this group. Establishing systems for better sharing resources is crucial. The community has the assets for getting micro credits or for establishing an own complementary currency. Here currencies as the LETS, Local Exchange Trading System, or other forms of Open Money, can work as ways to facilitate cooperation and help a community regulate informal trade and also trade with other communities. The crucial issue is to find tools that enable growth from below for the whole community, rather than moving surplus up towards the top social strata. This is a problem that constantly occurs with transaction tools based on scarcity, even LETS. Unfortunately these issues are outside the scope of this thesis, but something I would like to return to.

The role of currencies here is to facilitate exchange between partners, but there are also other forms of regulators of interoperation, and especially one of these tools can help design work in more networked ways, similar to how Tremayne set up the guiding procedures for the Swap-O-Rama-Rama. The tool we will take a closer look at here is the protocols, the designed functions that guide and regulate shared procedures between collaborators.

designing protocols

For creating the synergies for small change and development Hamdi encourages to seek "multipliers", the negligible modifications that creates substantial change. These multipliers can be acts of moderation or creation of interfaces that become catalytic processes. It can be social points and projects stimulating convergence, a soft and dynamic approach instead of building structures. Examples of these small changes could be moving a bus stop to strengthen local interaction instead of building another empty community house, or supporting a self-organized recycling method instead of implementing another municipal institution. A multiplier is in this sense like a catalyst, or intercalary element, that provokes a meeting, inserting itself in-between. Drawing on a metaphor from chemistry a catalyst is aiding growth "from within" or "from in between" two chemical substances to facilitate interaction and trigger an autocatalytic loop (DeLanda 1997: 62ff & 291f). It is a loop not only self-stimulating but also self-maintaining, connecting "mutually stimulating pairs into a structure that reproduces as a whole" (DeLanda 1997: 62). It is sustainable because of the low scale engagement, as a "scratching of one's own itch" mentality. Designing multipliers and intensifying local forces is a complementary mode of hybrid co-stimulation, finding converging, empowering operators and models. It is a designer role of designing methods for reconnecting and amplifying already existing initiatives and forces, like the "intensifier" role discussed earlier.

Hence, it is a model of multiplying capacities and accumulative small changes, "starting where it counts", with the daredevil design dream of creating a trim tab, but more often just doing the small effort it is possible to do. The process of the Swap-O-Rama-Rama could be an example of this where the aim of small change is to facilitate the formation of a temporary alliance between the visitors and trigger an emancipatory DIY approach to fashion during the event. Here the design task is to design the catalytic loop, which is not a simple thing, as many processes must match and work, not in a forced but in a dynamic harmony. This requires the design of open standards or coordination tools that delegate creative action spaces

GREEN CLOTHING CARE

Wash Only When Dirty or Stinky

Full Loads

Wash Cold

Non-Chlorine Bleach

Hang Dry

Don't Dry Clean

Repair

Reuse

Recycle

Green Clothing Care labels *are washing labels by Kathleen Dombek-Keith and part of her green marketing campaign for changing the way people launder and care for their clothes. With simple symbols she aims to make people rethink the way they wash and decompose their garments. The instructions for washing are similar to the traditional ones, but encourages people to "Wash only When Dirty or Stinky" and to use "Full Loads". There are also special symbols that encourage users to reflect the after-market life of their garments and effectively utilize their clothing by means of Repair, Reuse, Recycle. (Dombek-Keith 2008)*

throughout the whole network of participants.

What designers can engage with is the design of the protocols guiding interaction to find forms that encourage collaboration and common work processes. Organizing action spaces through establishing protocols can do this. Protocols can be tested through practical workshops exploring crafts and skills and also through games of ludic interventions. Protocols can be more formal contracts for collaboration in a similar vein as the GNU/copyleft or Creative Commons licences, which renegotiate copyrights so that instead of closing information they are opened up to share information. These types of protocols aim to intensify and increase the circulation and exchange of energy between creative publics, thus open passages to facilitate catalytic loops.

Protocols create a common language for facing connectors that need to communicate. These connectors transfer codified expressions and use standard rules for communicating their intentions in the form of protocols. I do not use the term protocol as a mathematical contract, nor as a diplomatic code of conduct. Instead it is a format of paradoxical form as it combines liberal inter-operation and dynamic exchange with standardized or uniform procedures. As network ecologist Alexander Galloway (2004) means,

> The contradiction at the heart of protocol is that it has to standardize in order to liberate. It has to be fascistic and unilateral in order to be utopian. (95)

In software, protocols are coded functions delegating processes equally throughout the network and they facilitate the interoperation between all parts of the "bazaar". We should keep in mind that protocols are not only guiding speech acts or common language for shared understanding, but also regulate material flows.

> Protocols are systems of material organization; they structure relationships of bits and atoms, and how they flow through the distributed networks in which they are embedded. (Galloway 2006: 319)

Protocols are often informal, hidden or non-spoken and can be overlapping fields of thought that create common understanding. This can come from earlier successful communication acts but also through the repetition of elements and connections, creating a limited predictability or a feeling of being "in tune". The network consists of a complex of interrelated currents and counter-currents, interacting in multiple, parallel, contradictory, and often unpredictable ways (Galloway 2004). In this way they escape hierarchal chains of command and facilitate the inter-operations of the network.

> Protocol functions largely without relying on hierarchical, pyramidal or centralized mechanisms; it is flat and smooth; it is universal, flexible and robust. (Galloway 2006: 317)

This is the key role of the protocols; offering a flatter and smoother form of dynamic cooperation. In hierarchical "cathedrals" the rules are an immanent part of the structure and are not defined as protocols. There is no need for communication about control, as this is hardwired into the structure. No negotiations needed, no hesitation - just obey your orders.

> Compared to pyramidal hierarchies, networks are indeed flimsy, ineffective and disorganized. But this relationship of asymmetry is precisely what, in the long run, makes

Hella Jongerius' *design for the porcelain factory Nymphenburg is a design of protocols and action spaces. To make hand-painted porcelain distinguished from machine made ones, she designed a scheme for the decoration painters to leave visible traces of the painting process, so as to expose the hand painting process onto the ceramics. What she created was not a new design per se, but a painting system, a protocol ensuring that every plate would be unique as it left the hands of the decorator. In this case, the design was "not following defined patterns or matrices, but rather based on a system" (Jongerius, 2004)*

A flashmobcatwalk *was organized in Carnaby Street, London on July 27th 2006 following a simple protocol a*
- Thursday 27 July at 6:30pm.
- anyone can join in and strut their stuff.
- Start from Liberty's end from the 'Welcome to Carnaby Street' sign at 6:30pm Near Miss Sixty and Shakespeare's Head
- and walk as far as you want
- to Ganton Street - model level
- to Kingly Court/Broadwick street - super-model level
- to Beak Street - Kate Moss/name your price level
- Bring music if you want or walk to the music in the street and shops...
(flashmobcatwalk 2006)

networks so robust. (Galloway 2006: 318)

In the hierarchy nothing is allowed to happen outside the control of the chain of command, as there is always someone in a position of responsibility. This gives the hierarchy its rigid and trustworthy form, but also limits its dynamics. In the network, on the other hand, anything can happen and migrate through the network.

> Protocol is synonymous with possibility. […] Protocol outlines the playing field for what can happen, and where. (Galloway 2004: 167)

Protocols enable interaction without a hierarchy, it decentralized control and create bazaar-like and flatter platforms for interaction. At this level protocol is a format of endless possibilities as action fields and new lines of practice opens in all directions – like a "rhizome". All nodes can communicate with each other, all interfaces are open and creation and feedback are intertwined. To participate in a network, actors have to adhere to the dominant protocols, the standardized format that enables openness. Without a protocol, there is no network, since the parts will have problems understanding each other. For creating scenes for co-design and participation, protocols must be prototyped, allowing wider participation without an auteur as leader.

However, we should not naively celebrate networks and protocols and totally dismiss hierarchies as most often they are engaged in fruitful interaction. But we understand hierarchies better these days than protocols. We have many established tools and procedure to help us choose a leader or protect property but little experience in how to negotiate and create common and dynamic protocols that allow for open exchange and interoperation. What is important is to experiment further with protocols to better understand how they can be used and how to avoid that

hierarchies appropriate them too easily. The Creative Commons and Copyleft licences are some initial experiments to keep information open and shared.

When open protocol ideas and tools for delegation materialize through decentralized networks they may facilitate other forms of control, and even manifest into enslaving artefacts. Heath and Potter noted that decentralized design does not always stay decentralized, as in the example of the sewing machine.

> Hailed as a revolutionary device when it first appeared, certain to free housewives from a great deal of boring and exhausting sewing, the sewing machines soon begat the sweatshop. (Heath & Potter 2005: 303)

However, what Heath and Potter disregards is that the sewing machine promised to release the early 20th century western housewife from much of the sewing work, and it indeed did, for today her home no longer has to act as a part-time sweatshop. The sewing machine was always placed in both the factory and the home (Putnam 1999). Yet, the objects of design that once promised decentralization were instead mass-assembled in new locations to form a new working economy that did not accord with the designers' originally stated aims. This example highlights the desire from the open source community to shape licences guaranteeing that information stays free and to help people to stay free. The future will tell if the further materializations of protocol can help us with this task.

During the Swap-O-Rama-Rama the sewing machine was used to liberate and the protocols surrounding the event facilitated wide participation and for much surplus material to change hands and be remade into new clothes. As Tremayne created a simple and open instruction for how to organize a Swap, the protocol let her surrender control to others, but still managed to have a say in how the events were to be run. This also let the events stay on a scale that she preferred, without corporate influence or sponsorship deals going out of her hands. Managing events like these encourages people to participate and feel that they can make a difference and that their fellow contributors can share their initiatives. It also puts the event out of reach for hierarchical control as everyone is free to "hijack" or copy the event, and no lock can be put on it.

This type of protocol is paradoxically not "free" enough and it must also guarantee some form of critical self-reflection. We must continuously renegotiate the terms and keep them dynamic, as the situations around us will change. These negotiations must be open, as well inviting those kept outside the old protocol to participate, as we must be able to change perspectives. The initiator or administrator should not be another form of tyrant, for then we are back in the hierarchy. The question is to keep the network open, and still allow it to run democratically.

To bring the discussion slightly further along in regard to the design of protocols and how small change can be applied in a practical design project I would like to discuss the Dale Sko Hack project, which was a practical application of these ideas in a factory environment. It was a project that aimed to explore a method for probing the forces at play between the global fashion system and small-scale local production using collaborative design practices. This method was an open approach to fashion design, rethinking roles and linear or sequential modes of assembly in industrial production. It was prototyped and tested during a collaborative workshop in a small Norwegian shoe factory, Dale Sko.

>!< **The Dale Sko Hack** *was a project where six established fashion design-ers "hacked" the industrial production at a small shoe factory in rural Nor-way. They worked to change the models and working process of the factory by creating new protocols and methods, instead of changing lasts, patterns or machines. The workshop explored a participatory form of non-linear assem-bly instead of seeing the design process as something from the top-down.*
(opposite, from bottom)
Arne Nerjordet, Carlos Zachrison, Siv Støldal,
Siri Johansen, Ulla Chauton, T-Michael.

the dale sko hack

In the Dale Sko project we will meet something else than the Swap-O-Rama-Rama, even if it has some similarities. Here we will see how the small change and protocol approach can affect design practice and we will investigate its relation to mass production. The protocol approach to mass production creates new settings for interaction and participation, in a milieu dominated by standardized and sequential delegations and strict hierarchical lines of command.

Dale Sko factory in Dale i Sunnfjord is situated about 150 kilometres north of Bergen on the Norwegian west coast. It is a century-old factory with a significant history of production but is today reduced to a small unit working with a small line of shoes. The production involves a lot of manual labour so the shoes are handmade, albeit the process is machine supported. The factory employs about a dozen workers today, down from about 250 workers twenty years ago. As its low budget does not allow the factory to keep up with the shifts of fashion it survives today mainly by producing folk dress shoes and steady orders from the governmental departments such as the military or the police.

I had the privilege to work with Dale Sko when I was artist in residency at the Nordic Artist Centre in Dale and working on a collection of gaiters. We worked together producing the gaiters in a very friendly atmosphere and later I started planning on an project investigating how designers could possible "hack" the modes of production at the shoe factory. After a year of preparations with organization, bringing people together and applying for funding the project could be launched as a three-day workshop in April 2006.

The invitation of six prominent Norwegian fashion designers to Dale, all of whom in some way defined themselves as Norwegian in their style of fashion, was central to the project. They were accompanied by a fashion photographer, a stylist and a

shoemaker/teacher. The intention was to experiment how new interfaces, protocols and publics could be explored and developed between all these participants on the factory floor and facilitate a merger between design and production. The hope was to create some new approaches to post-industrial production and try to probe "nonlinear" means of action and co-design, open for spontaneity and crafty interventions during the normally strictly linear production process. Nonlinear in this sense means to escape the undeviating and predictable sequential workflows in production and to blend physical production of shoe co-design with renegotiations of delegation processes, instead see the factory floor as a rhizome of multiple overlapping, intersecting and connecting lines of practice.

All the experimentation during the workshop was to be firmly based on collaboration on the factory floor. An ability to merge these roles and create a wider range of possibilities for interaction between the participants would change the flow within the factory, while at the same time create unique designs, using the full skill of all those involved. This would be something that was the opposite to top-down Fordist production lines – the typical format in the garment industry.

By using a hacktivist line of practice the work aimed at creatively tinker and manipulate the flows and collection of functions between the design and materialization processes in the factory. Hacking would offer a possibility for the craftsmen to reclaim authorship and break the pre-programmed intentions of the production system. In the analogue practice of shoe hacking this technique involved experiments with the "software" of production methods and functions instead of altering the machine hardware in the factory, something that the factory could not afford.

Instead we intervened with small changes to the practice and methods used at the factory, small changes that would also be seen in the material output of the shoes, but at the same time create larger changes throughout the factory, in mindset of the workers, the organization and amongst the local community.
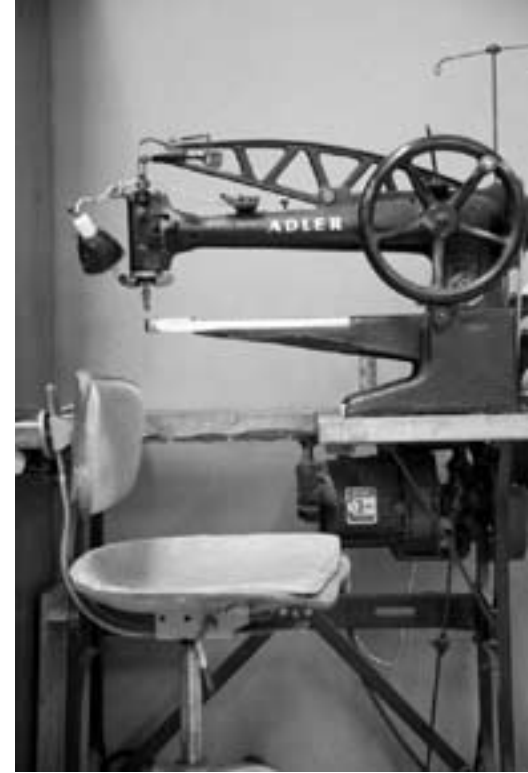
By using machines "wrongly" the need for technical innovation and reinvestment was challenged. Operational misuse of the factory equipment, using machines at the wrong moment in the process, assem-

bling pieces in wrong order or using wrong sizes of tools for various elements in production proved to be ways that opened new action spaces. Here the craftsmen could use their full skills in new ways to experiment with the production process through minimal adjustments in their practice.

In the sense of re-engaging the craftsmen in the production process the project was similar to the utopian experiments of William Morris and the Arts and Craft movement in the end of the 19th century. At that time, Morris was trying to address the falling quality of mass produced goods as well as the alienating work for factory workers. Morris suggested a more thorough design process and a return to work organized in medieval-style guilds. He even promoted a specific style of clothing called "the aesthetic dress" in a, for the time, minimalist looking medieval style. Nonetheless, in the Arts and Craft movement the designer was still the Auteur, the sole author of the work, and the "liberated" craftsmen were happy but obedient slaves to the Auteur's will.

As such the hacking at Dale Sko was not about replacing the operating system of the factory with pure craft or guild-like organization processes. On the contrary it tried to escape master-apprentice relations, to trigger instead other forms of participation and the sharing of ideas and skills throughout the organization, creating larger shared action spaces. This would mean co-design and co-authorship throughout the process and creating a multiplicity of interfaces for design interventions during the production. This would not only affect the general process or control of the facility itself, but also the design of every unique product as workers would be able to influence the production process. This can only be done in small quantities, but still remain within mass-production or economy of scale, and this mix of craft and mass-production is the scale of manufacture for a small factory such as Dale Sko.

The protocol of the Sko Hack was not only to work together with the craftsman and share ideas, or use the existing materials for new forms, but also to use the new recombined assemblages as forms of future Lego-parts. The negotiations between designer and craftsmen were aimed at creating a palette of possible parts for assembling into shoes. As much as possible of the design-assembly was delegated to the worker, creatively combining the parts into a pair of shoes where no pair looked like the other. To use an-

The century-old shoe factory *still produces shoes but much of the equipment reminds of glorious days now gone. The aim of the hack was to change the modes of design and production at the factory but leaving the production equipment intact and utilize the old tools in new ways.*

other computer metaphor the shoe-hack protocol was to turn the work from RO, Read Only, to R/W, Read/Write. This means not to only reading the ready instructions from the designer but also to be the co-author of every copy.

During the first day of the workshop the atmosphere was filled with anticipation and at first the craftsman of the factory seemed slightly sceptical of the working process. Why change? But as the process went on the mood changed. On the first day, all workers went home when the bell rang signalling the end of the working day. But on the last day of the workshop many of the workers stayed after working hours, helping the participants to finish their shoes and chatting. Everybody seemed eager to get the collaboration working, come up with new models and finish the prototypes at the end of the last day of the project.

Some of the designers added new materials to the process and tried out new models, altered the patterns or created entirely new parts for the shoes. Some of the designers found old soles in the factory next door, which had formerly been a part of Dale Sko but was now closing down. They all used the potential of the factory, but perhaps not in the fullest sense.

It is perhaps the works of Siv Støldal that can be seen as a quintessential modus operandi of this type of hacking. She used the already existing models from Dale Sko, recombined materials and parts into new forms. She changed leather materials, shifted soles between models, and introduced random punched decorations into the designs. But at the same time she preserved the general design of every sub-part intact. With these schemes for individualizing the shoes, every pair became unique. Still preserving the integrity of the traditional models from Dale Sko this model became a point of departure and an instrument for her future collaborations with Dale Sko.

Following these examples one can argue that this method is quite common in de-

During the shoe-hack workshop *the designers sketched new designs from the existing ones, like Arne and Carlos (left), and explored how the machines would be "misused" to twitch the designs, like Siri (right), or by creating dynamic models for shifting materials during the production process (opposite).*

sign practice and perhaps not very radical. What this method emphasises is the collaborative work and the delegation protocols created by the designer in collaboration with the craftsperson. Here the model can be changed underway and thus mutate during the production process and every pair is co-designed. The input variables of the designer set at the start affect the process and makes it predictable to a certain extent. But it is also a surrender of control from the designer and from a basis of shared trust the models can now evolve mutually between designer protocol and the ideas of the craftsperson. This is an implementation in Morris's spirit but in a rhizomatic way.

The project also had the aim of raising the attention of the media, both local and national, for the project. During the workshop, the project also received an amount of local coverage in the press, radio and TV. Bringing in the eyes of media as well as putting the spotlight on the collaborative working process created a renewed pride in the craft element in the factory. Dale Sko came to be recognized and respected not

only for its century old merits but also for its concern to go further, innovate and continue to be a progressive local player with global fashion connections. The media attention became a form of recognition for this hard work and boosted the confidence of the factory.

Synnevåg, the fashion photographer, worked consciously to create the iconography of the shoe hack. He both documented the process and took the final fashion photos, some of which are featured in the thesis. His photographs came to echo a recognisable Norwegian atmosphere, with the fjords, mountains, and wind-torn wooden panels, scenes that were all taken from around the factory and the artists centre. As we wanted to use the designers as models but still not make them the "stars" of the process we decided to drape them in the bed linen from the artists centre. These were in colours that also matched the blue sky of the day.

The highly established symbolic power of the Nor-

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Siv Støldal was making every pair unique *by using random punch patterns to create unique combinations for every pair, or by altering materials throughout the production process.*

wegian national myth was, without becoming a pastiche, recircuited to power up Dale Sko and the new hacks. For coming projects this method could be used more carefully and a whole project could be devoted to exploring how to use the well-established Norwegian national image to "power up" the local production. The surrounding area and the old factory could function as central tools for Dale to stamp their mark on the international fashion maps although one has to take care to avoid making this form of marketing look too much like a tourist brochure.

The process during the workshop also showed how important it is that negotiations with all those involved in the process are done in a humble and respectful manner. To deal with a proud local actor such as Dale Sko that is in decline, is a sensitive balancing act where the designers have to proceed with caution not to hurt any feelings during the process. Big ego designers are not usually the best negotiators and could seriously harm both the collaborative design process as well as draining the energy invested into the project. But as was shown during the workshop it is possible to create positive changes and break habitual patterns in a factory through wide participation and open negotiations by working on small scale.

&

After the finish of the workshop the traces of the project are still visible today. Støldal has continued her collaboration with Dale Sko and is currently making her fourth collection with them, still using the existing models as a practical point of departure. The new shoes have been shown at the fashion weeks in London, Paris and Tokyo and are for sale in stores in London and other cities. The factory also developed a prototype lab and since the hack has hosted several other designers and interns from fashion schools. In addition, the board of directors of the factory has been changed and one designer as well as the shoemaker/teacher was taken onto the board. In 2008 the project also won a special prize at the European Fashion Awards.

The factory, in the past the main employer and gem of the town, now demonstrates an imaginative and innovative spirit with high future ambitions and is now once again the source of local pride. It is a meeting place between the global fashion system and local quality production. Designers and producers meet here for practical dialogue in collaborative design processes and here they can bring together clusters of "material publics" and negotiate issues in regard to the production process. In Dale small publics of specific value are created – material, economic, crafty and mythical – and they all can all call the production process their own.

This could mean that Dale, a small town in the Norwegian countryside with 1500 inhabitants, no longer is a place where the signals of fashion only can be received in magazines distributed from afar. Fashion cannot only be read in Dale, but instead is a place where fashion is now written. Fashion is not only enacted here but also co-produced. Dale Sko is a place where the craftsmen are more fashion-*able*.

&

Following this line through this chapter we have seen how delegation processes in participatory work are of crucial importance to keep the processes open but still manageable. In the facilitation work of the designer it is important to be conscientious when designing these protocols. This allows for others to build on the common work and it also facilitates the workshop processes themselves. Likewise, the point of these interventions is to find better ways to plug-into the system, and offer a multiplicity, or MORE possible alternatives, rather than oppose and limit the action spaces. Here the "provotype" becomes a special tool for the designer with which new possibilities, previously unimagined by the participants, are modelled to create new ideas to be actualized by the cooperating community.

As in the example of the Swap-O-Rama-Rama these types of public events can create special temporary fashion scenes where visitors become co-producers and share material and skills. The point here is not to use the scene to "drop out" of the system, but use it as a platform for renegotiating the terms of the re-entry and the ways to communally plug-in.

The experiment at Dale Sko showed how small change protocols can be an essential part of design practice when examining how to hack or "update" production. By using the existing infrastructure and production flows, but bending them in collaboration with the craftsmen on the floor, new possibilities emerge that can quite easily be manifested into new products, which as something proved to be the case at Dale Sko. Here, future projects can explore how to intersect more values and approaches to the shared production process. Local history, narratives and myths can be other materials to cooperatively hack and thus add more shared resources to local production.

By using protocols, symbiogenetic relations can be formed if the designer just surrenders some control thus creating a mutualistic relation to the production facility and delegating co-design work to the craftsperson. This can allow the products produced to mutate and change over time, resulting in unexpected but negotiated end results in which all the participants have been engaged in the design process and added and developed their expertise.

Special Prize Fashion Theory:
European Fashion Award –
EASH 2008
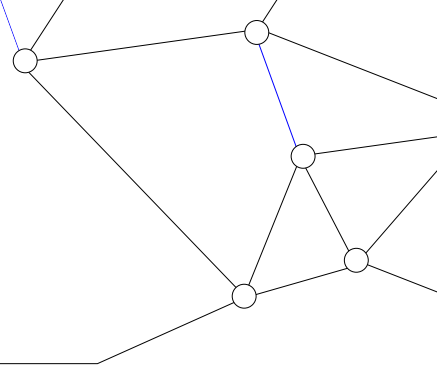*"Dale Sko Hack"*
Otto von Busch

Jury Reasons

Otto von Busch does something that only happens rarely in fashion; he reflects and shows ideas for solutions. He puts the complete fashion world into question in his work. He did not do this to negate it, but instead to renew it. Above all, he poses the right questions. This is difficult, because you must not only now the system in detail, but you also need a pronounced sense of perception and interpretation skills. The quality of a designer is based on these factors. And they are decisive for the future. Work is conducted all too often in the hectic world of fashion on irrelevant problems, indeed according to all rules of art, but to no purpose in the end. His work should also be highly praised, because dissertations in the area of fashion theory – in the framework of which the distinguished project was created – are very rare. But it is decisive for reflections to come from fashion itself and not to leave interpretations to other disciplines.

Jury Member Joachim Schirrmacher, Agency for Strategic Communications, Hamburg

Theory on the catwalk. *The Dale Sko hack won a special prize in fashion theory at the European Fashion Awards 2008. To fit the presentation format of fashion, the book from the project was carried onto the catwalk on top of a velvet cushion.*

*pr*oa̅ms *the pro*

professional amateurs

The abstract machine of hacktivims connects at the amateur and professional levels and creates new forms of hybrids. In this chapter we well see examples of this and how new lines are drawn between the works of serious hobbyists and the top strata of the fashion system where the professionals reside. We will explore how interfaces can be constructed between the contrasting positions of professionals and amateurs.

By opening these passages between separated fields we will see other forms of co-production arise, and where the role of the designer is to bridge this gap and experiment with cooperation between these lines and levels, opening new action spaces for the participators.

In 2007 I organized two connected transdisciplinary fashion projects, the *Hackers and Haute Couture Heretics* exhibition and the *VakkoVamps* projects. Both aimed at showing how fashion production can be a shared practice between hacktivists, consumers and high fashion brands. From my point of view, these lines or levels do not oppose each other in which one "subverts", "appropriates", "dominates" or "steals" from the other. My hope was to establish a perspective that offers a shared practice where all participants contribute to further the engagement of the fashionistas and fashion "believers".

What is emphasised here is once again the tuning of lines and the opening of new interfaces between separated fields as a practical way of enhancing collaboration. Yet, this is not a question so much of verbal communication but of including all the senses, and especially of building things and forming "material publics" (Marres 2008). Once again it is a question of symbiogenesis. Here "survival of the fittest" means that of the most symbiotic, not the most competitive. This means that it is not the individual strength of the actor that is counted, but how it interfaces and inter-operates with others, shares forces and rides lines. For fashion this could mean that is not only about building a strong style or brand that stands by itself,

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but one that collaborates with many different actors, established ones as well as amateurs. We have over the last decade seen a variety of new collaborations emerge throughout the fashion system but we will discuss here what it means when high fashion eventually starts interfacing the abstract machine of hacktivism.

We have in the previous chapters mainly examined the actions taking place within a community such as sharing practice or using the force from other systems. We will now look at the attempts to create symbiosis between separated systems, between high and low, skilled and unskilled, rich and poor and central and peripheral. Here we will meet Pro-Ams, the professional amateurs, the serious hobbyists who trespass into the world of the experts, channelling energies between the two communities. We will meet the user-innovators who further the design of commodities, develop their hobbies and achieve a genuine mastership of their crafts even if it is "only" a hobby.

To get there we will start in a fashion project at Garanti Gallery in Istanbul during the autumn of 2007, the *Hackers and Haute Couture Heretics*.

Hackers and Haute Couture Heretics

The exhibition Hackers and Haute Couture Heretics investigated how designers and artists work with fashion in ways connected to hacktivism and that relate to practices such as reverse engineering, heresy, shopdropping, and craftivism. Their techniques and oeuvres operate on the outskirts of fashion and propose new ways to navigate through the unexplored blank spots of the fashion map.

The exhibition consisted mainly of a six-week long open workshop at the gallery in which participating artists and designers shared and developed their methods in collaboration with the workshop participants. Each artist used his or her own method to approach fashion from various perspectives, and explored how it could be synchronized with the hacktivist mindset.

Each artist and designer was thus orbiting fashion in their own way, exploring the phenomenon's plasticity and configuration in their own way, with their own specific approach, sensors and tools. The aim of this encircling approach to fashion was to create a muliplicity of practical low-level interventions and perspectives from which to look at fashion, both as a social phenomenon as well as a matter-energy asset that can be mutated, tuned and transformed.

The gallery space was furnished like a studio, with tables, stools, sewing machines, mannequins and all sorts of sewing equipment. Here visitors could drop in from the street outside, the busy Istiklal Caddesi, along which about a million people pass by every day. Between two to four hundred visitors a day came to the gallery and often more then 30 visitors were engaged in the workshops at any given time. From the beginning we thought of only having scheduled workshops in the evenings, but as people joyfully joined during the day we had to keep on going with the workshops for most of the day. Nine hours a day, five days a week we were in the gallery helping visitors to try new methods and every week a new artist showed their specific approach to crafting, DIY and fashion.

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In this thesis we have already met many of the artists who come to share their skills at the gallery. Giana González with her hacking-couture project, Stephanie Syjuco with the Counterfeit Crochet Project, Cat Mazza and her microRevolt and the Nike

The Hackers and Haute Couture Heretics *exhibition was organized in summer 2007 at Garanti Gallery, Istanbul. It consisted of a six week relay of workshops that aimed to explore a multiplicity of fashion practices and experiment with how fashion can be turned from a phenomenon of dictations and anxiety to a collective experience of empowerment. During the workshop period fashion was "orbited" as each artist approached fashion from a different angle during their stay at the gallery. Each week offered new workshops for the visitors to participate in.*

Petition Blanket, and SHRWR with their project on liberating clothing. One artist, Rüdiger Schlömer, established a button-exchange at the gallery where visitors came to exchange their buttons and to make their own "updated" reflexive ones – shining back at the camera flashes in their coming 15 minutes of fame.

Another of the artists, Megan Nicolay, who with her bestseller book *Generation-T: 108 ways to redesign a t-shirt* (2006), is a guru of simple reform methods. They are very accessible and the first third of her book shows methods where you only have to use scissors to remake your t-shirt. She manages to invite the most untrained crafter and her workshops had a massive attendance.

The group Junky Styling from London had quite another approach. In their studio and shop in East London they have for a decade been redesigning men's suits to create all forms of garments and accessories. By employing systematic suit surgery they reuse the suits so that become like high quality art pieces, combing the sartorial qualities of their raw material with inventive remixing and hacking. At the gallery they helped the participants to remake suits with very simple steps. They preserved the qualities of the originals, but with these very simple steps remade them into seriously tailored dresses and street wear.

During the exhibition we were using the gallery as a common resource and meeting point and each week had new artists who came to help out visitors to remake and produce own garments. Many visitors came regularly and followed the whole process. Sometimes students on textile courses arrived, often in groups of ten to fifteen people, and started working at one table, adjusting their curriculum to fit the workshop hours. In this way a form of practical coalition building was happening in the exhibition space. Visitors came to engage in the workshop activities noticing the positive atmosphere and seeing how easy it was to get started. Very often they were participating, discussing and crafting, rather than just observing the rest of the community at the gallery. Young men sometimes sat down reluctantly as they were waiting for their girlfriends and refusing to do "girls work", but often they became involved and took their first craft steps, first in silence and then with increased liveliness and discussing vividly. It was very similar to the way Critical Art Ensemble sees street theatre as political tools of engagement. The street theatres they discuss are

Garanti gallery *during one day of Megan Nicolay's T-shirt reform workshop.*

those performances that invent ephemeral autonomous situations from which temporary public relationships emerge that make possible critical dialogue on a given issue (CAE 2000: 87)

The gallery was thus a craft lab for producing dialogue as well as building "material publics", but through its long process it also built new friendships and a craft scene which has survived long after the exhibition closed and resulted in crafting workshops at the university, discussions for academic papers from participants, as well as garment reshaping and knit-ins at people's homes.

The exhibition had another goal which was of showing that hacktivist DIY does not have to look grubby or lack craftsmanship, but can instead be an established part of the fashion system. In fact, DIY could be regarded as a new form of luxury, the new exclusivity, but an exclusivity of participation, of sharing

and developing craftsmanship and exploring action spaces in new ways. It could be done together with friends, but also through "master classes" as in higher music education where they are commonplace. Perhaps the "masters" here were the invited artists who led the workshops.

In this way the exhibition and workshops offered a non-expensive mode of engagement in crafting but also in fashion as many of the "masters" were established authorities in their niches, such as Junky Styling or Nicolay, or for example Sujuco or González who are playfully engaged in mimicking the big fashion. The discussions often came to frame alternatives and complements as to how fashion works and what it could be, and many times the participants in the workshop expressed that they were now part of "a new big thing" of not just being mindless consumers.

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It was not hard to see that this approach to engagement could be a common theme in fashion and recently British Topshop has had open workshops in their flagship stores on Oxford Street where they lead recycling workshops and arrange successful "Topswops". Under the label "Topshop wants your rubbish" they invite stylists and designers to make visitors rethink the fast-fashion cycle in which they are a part, and to which, paradoxically, Topshop is one of the contributors. Nevertheless, it is a basic example of how this type of engagement can be done by a bigger actor on the fashion scene.

As a part of the exhibition we put together a project that we hoped could bridge the distance between the down-to-earth DIY approach and the exclusive offering of lustrous and branded ready-to-wear, where dreams seems to be made. We contacted the high fashion brand Vakko to do a collaborative project.

VakkoVamps

With VakkoVamps we tried to connect the gallery with the fashion system and to find new ways of intersecting hacktivist practices with the established system. The experiment was to find out what could happen to DIY if it was given access to the nodes and vectors of high fashion and to be seen next to the most artistic tailoring. We wanted to see if it would be depicted as the highest exclusivity that could be tried on by customers inside the stylish guarded stores where the beautiful people buy their clothes.

Usually, when fashion comes under the scrutinizing eyes of critical art or theory, it is considered an illusion or a spell from the black arts and it needs to be "revealed" as fools' play, ridiculed deception, or a capitalistic conspiracy. Very rarely does a theoretical stand highlight the emancipatory, magical, extravagant, or luminous sides of fashion. This leads to a situation where critical designers almost automatically place themselves, or find themselves being placed, into a denunciatory or anti-fashion position. From this position they, on the one hand, enact a "fashion drop-out" statement, and usually become producers of singular objects commenting on fashion from the outside. Or on the other hand, they organize or perform workshops at a gallery where they proclaim the space a Temporary Autonomous Zone (Bey 1991) and in this are free to change the world. Their actions rarely affect the fashion world outside the gallery and it is even more seldom that the new critical expressions are actually worn, or reach an elevated position in the fashion system. Instead, critical fashion must develop a way of coming into the system of fashion and into the logic of dream producing expectations. It has to produce real fashion; real objects of desire.

Our decided aim was to produce fashion that was true objects of desire, seeing if DIY could become something else if it could access the whole dream producing machine of high fashion; the best media, glossy advertising, high quality materials, artistic tailoring, exclusive distribution channels, stylish shops and be sold with the other gorgeous pieces in the commercial temples of the beautiful people. Would it be different, and in which way? What happens when the most accessible DIY method ends up in stores with guards at the door, snooty attendants and marble floors and where many of us would feel reluctant to enter because their concept is to make us feel that we are not good enough if we cannot afford it. Most important, we must ask if such an approach could bridge the gap between the crafting we do for fun, for skills, and in the company of friends, with the "real" desire of the unat-

VakkoVamps *was an attempt to create a shared and collaborative interface between the artists and designers of the Hackers and Haute Couture Heretics exhibition and the Turkish up-market brand Vakko. The idea was to apply the hacking methods onto high fashion and try to make this tactic reach further into the fashion system. The aim was to create a synergy between the hackers and the brand and to reach outside the gallery walls with the methods explored in the exhibition.*

tainable and the "holy" myth in the temples of fashion. What would happen in this meeting?

VakkoVamps could connect the hacktivist approach with high fashion where desirable dreams are produced, the dreams that affect consumption patterns in society at large and not only among visitors to a gallery. Here activist dreams could intermesh with fashion dreams, not as a game of illusions but as the serious play on their common stage, recreating utopias as well as desire. This was an attempt to find a third locus of activism at the conjunction of multiple forces, fashion and activism, capitalism and critical interventions, crafting and desire, glamour and subversion, to name but a few.

In order to realize this, I organized "homework" for the artists and designers who came for the *Hackers and Haute Couture Heretics* exhibition. This was to be a test of how the work in the exhibition could reach further into high fashion, with the help of one of turkey's top up-market brands, Vakko.

For a hacking activity like this, Vakko seemed the perfect partner for it is not only a distinguished and classic Turkish brand but also a label that embodies the dream-producing machine of fashion. With its glamorous designs it creates a mythical substantiation of Mediterranean luxury and it has an established position as up-market producer of ready-to-wear fabulousness. In short, Vakko is the opposite of the mass-produced "McFashion". Vakko acts as a model of aspiration, ubiquitous within the Istanbul chic circles with the brand's glossy adverts on large posters above the streets seductively enchanting the Turkish fashionistas like Sirens' call. With this position Vakko embodies the spirit of fashion as a strong force that produces the imitative rays of allure that at the same time push and pull, dictate and attract.

In 2006 Vakko started a celebrated collaboration with American designer Zac Posen to add some extra international credibility to their designs. Indeed, Vakko could be a very interesting collaborator if they dared to try something unconventional, and the difference here would be considerable compared to the collection designed by Zac Posen.

The format of the VakkoVamps was to investigate how fashion hacking can expand the meanings of fashion. The aim was also to engage in manoeuvres of longevity enhancement and combine hands-on engagement and limited edition production with the myth-building processes of fashion. By recycling old garments from the previous collection, updating them, as well as reconstructing their image, made this process of becoming into something intersecting with values already existing in high fashion. This line of practice connects to similar brand strategies and work processes by Rei Kawakubo's Comme des Garcons and their Guerrilla stores, which mainly retails updated garments from former collections.

The work in VakkoVamps differs from Kawakubo's example mainly in the open working process and interface between a multitude of participants, transparent and open tactics of redesign and reinterpretation of both form and authorship of the originals. The Vakko brand would surrender control to unknown processes performed by the hacking designers, and open itself to be reworked outside its overall strategy, but at the same time participate in an experimental product development phase. Although their control would be loosened there would be much to gain, as they would also get a lot for free. They would attract media attention as a result of the gallery exhibition, as the gallery works with a PR company and is fre-
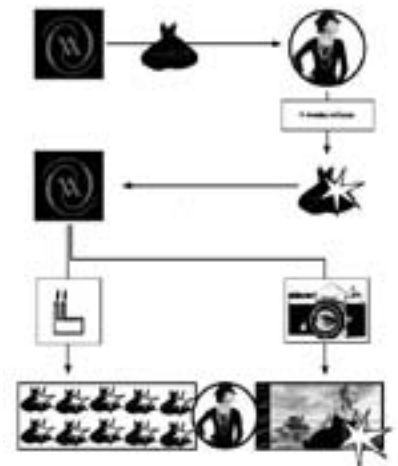
quently written about in the Dailies as well as the design journals. They would get international artists to experiment with their outlet garments of last season and their garments would be exhibited and become parts of other narratives and discussions within the art and design world. If the project turned out to be successful they might well have added to the discussion about the future of fashion, perhaps later referenced, adding to the image of their brand. As Vakko has its own art department and supports art events, they could easily put this collaboration under that umbrella if they felt too uncertain of the outcome and the adventure could then still be guided through their own communication channels. These were some of the point I took up at our initial meeting.

The artists, on the other hand, would try out new methods and channels for their works. They would engage in hacking, co-design, and refashioning, and inject their results back into the fashion system, with Vakko as a powerful vector. They would be given exclusive material for free, have their prototypes produced in a limited edition, and be paid for the work on top of the trip and per diem of the gallery exhibition and workshops. It would be a process of hands-on production of new objects of desire that would appear in the shiny shops of Vakko. It is in their fitting cubicles that fresh identities and hopes are launched for their risky odysseys through life and there customers who were not the type of customer who would normally visit the gallery would try on new hacktivist fashions.
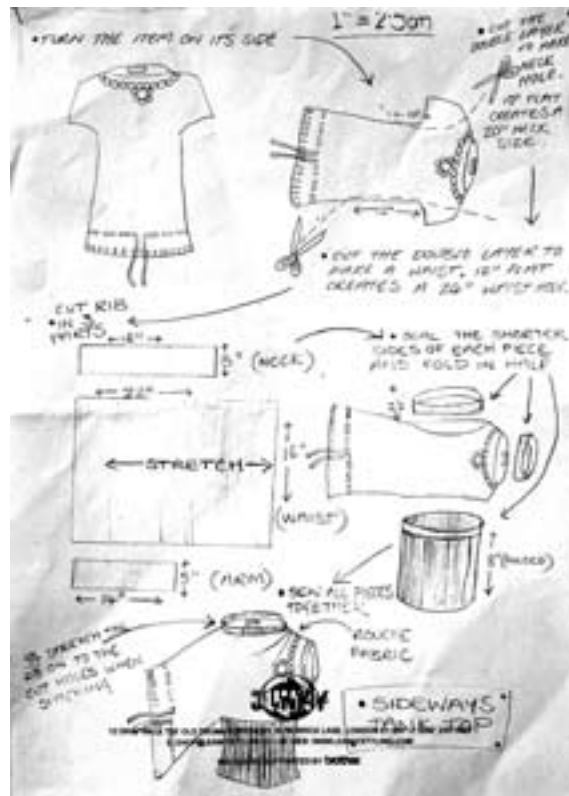
The proposed working process of VakkoVamps was as follows:

1. Vakko would select garments from their last season to be transformed, one or two items per artist.

2. Vakko sent the selected garment to the artists as "homework". The artists had a month to remake them and document the process. The documentation would be a form of manual for Vakko, so that they could easily follow the process. The prototype and manual would then be sent back to Vakko.

3. Vakko would produce the reformed or "hacked" garment prototype in a limited edition of 10 copies, using their stock of outlet copies and following the instructions in the manual.

4. The garment would be styled, photographed, and advertised as a "real" garment from Vakko.

5. The new copies would be sold in the Vakko boutiques while the original prototypes would be exhibited at Garanti Gallery together with the instructions of how to make the garments.

However, these kinds of collaborative processes are always a matter for negotiation and compromises, and unfortunately the full concept of the VakkoVamps process could not be completed. In the beginning the collaboration went well, but a week before the exhibition opening, when the new reproductions of the prototypes were supposed to arrive we got the message that Vakko had pulled out without giving any explanation. This move could have had a number of reasons. It became clear that Vakko had misunderstood parts of the process. They did not have ten copies of the old garments that were going to be remade, so they would have to produce new ones. Perhaps they also felt that they lost too much control of the project and

The VakkoVamps method *aimed to get the hacked prototypes from the exhibition contributors to be reproduced in ten copies by Vakko. These would also be photographed and included in Vakko advertising as well as sold in Vakko stores -possibly to the beautiful people.*

Instructions for Junky Styling's
*two hacked Vakko garments; the Tie
Twist Belt and the Sideways Tank Top.
These were the first reformed garments
to arrive to Istanbul and our Vakko
contacts received them enthusiastically. At
this stage the outcome of the project still
looked promising.*

began to be nervous. For example, the SHRWR group's conditions that their ten garments had to be free of charge made the Vakko negotiators somewhat confused.

It soon became apparent that we were not on equal level with Vakko, the "vectorialist" of the project. We should perhaps have been more assertive in our negotiations and emphasised the massive press exposure the exhibition was beginning to get, so there is still much to learn and to do in order to get collaborations in this scale off the ground. A model that works for a small company, like Merimetsa or Dale Sko that has nothing to lose, faces difficulties when applied to a large-scale project where the power balance is unbalanced.

Nevertheless, the show had to go on and the exhibition produced for the Vakko prototypes would still be a fantastic inspiration for the visitors and participants coming to the workshops at the gallery. Since the hacks of the Vakko garments had already been made we produced our own fashion photographs of the prototypes. These received a lot of attention and also raised the atmosphere at the gallery. DIY does not have to be punk, smell unpleasant or look nasty, but it can also have the feeling of high fashion. Indeed this was the first impression one got from the prototypes and that the material quality of the Vakko garments gave something extra to the models that was quite like in the work of Junk Styling who used tailored suits for their recycling. In the case of Vakko the material quality of blouses, ties, shirt and bag gave another impact to the prototypes that was even more accentuated in the exhibition design, where we placed the large format photos next to them.

If we focus too much on the unsuccessful cooperation we however miss the main potential of similar project. The outcome of the VakkoVamps was not so much a set of garments or objects as an initial step for exchange and dialogue between two fields that are usually separate. Instead of using the "normal" channels in fashion collaborations, which is usually between professionals or upcoming designers with "street cred" and established brands, we tried to find new interfaces and methods that would allow more unpredictable results.

In the beginning of the collaboration we could see a set of new action spaces emerge, which raised another level compared to the shoe-hack project. With Vakko we did not only tinker with material production but with the whole powerful system of fashion production. We however found that Vakko were more conservative and scared of losing control. It is possible that a more adventurous brand might be more open to pull off this type of project, and perhaps more formal agreements should be planned and written so as to guarantee a positive ending of this type of collaboration. However, the main hope is that the project still showed a direction to possible ways of creating this type of cooperative venture.

In the end we did not leave empty-handed. We came away with some nice materials, we tried new methods, and we challenged ourselves to make the DIY aspects of the exhibition even more elegant and elevated. As we sat there working in the gal-

Production process *of the "Evil Eyed Blouse" by Rüdiger Schlömer. The blouse was manipulated in an almost imperceptible way. A layer of reflective fabric was fixed behind two transparent eye-shaped buttons. These new "eyes" are activated and stare back in moments of flashlight attention.*

Evil Eyed Blouse by Rüdiger Schlömer (this page)
Hacked Vakko dress by SHRWR (opposite)

lery in the remaining weeks we were surrounded by wonderfully crafted prototypes and large fashion photographs that reminded us that the step "up there" could be crafted with our own hands.

The work model of VakkoVamps can still be employed as an open interface and a pool of resources to trigger further inspirational collaborations. More importantly, it might also frame a complementary mode of work or a new designer role for fashion designers and expose a practice situated where the borders between professionals and amateurs are perforated by many new passages. VakkoVamps could be seen as a small step towards a complementary mode of fashion, in which professional amateurs are given more room in the design and production of fashion.

pro-am engagement

We have already explored engagement, mainly among amateurs, using redesign as a hacktivist method, but as exemplified in the case of VakkoVamps there is also the possibility of forming interfaces between the established system and the hacktivists, that is between the professionals and the amateurs, those inside and those outside. Many would think this is a deterioration of skills, as one usually thinks of amateur as a dilettante or a dabbler but this is to neglect the original meaning of the term, that of a passionate lover.

One can see that such collaborations already exist in fashion. Trend forecasters have their scouts and "spotters" out, exclusive vintage fashion stores have specially hired "pickers" searching the second-hand markets for treasures and of course large groups of "coolhunters", focus groups and bloggers. But are they really exchanging skills and cooperating, or are these amateurs just underpaid "sensors" of the system, who perhaps even have their ideas stolen? Of course their opinions matter, and they can change a lot by finding the right new trend, but do they get access to the system, and can they make "real" contributions, make a real difference and be accepted for their connoisseurship? There are nowadays many examples of bloggers reaching elevated positions in the system, but they are rarely as accepted as, for example, the editors of the conventional printed magazines, which of course have many reasons.

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To better understand the relation between professionals and amateurs we must ask if there are any examples of where amateurs make "real" contributions to specific fields of knowledge and expertise, even in a hard science such as astronomy. Looking at amateur astronomy can give a clue, because there much has happened during the last decades where professionals and amateurs have come to lift their cooperation to new levels. A detour into that field might help us see things differently and give us a clue of how collaborations between professionals and amateurs in fashion can be evolved.

In many fields of hobby inventions and knowledge production the clear distinction between professional and amateur has dissolved slightly and a new role has emerged in between these positions – that of the "Pro-Am", the professional amateur. Pro-Ams, Charles Leadbeater and Paul Miller note in their book *The Pro-Am Revolution*, are "innovative, committed and networked amateurs working to professional standards" (Leadbeater & Miller 2004: 9). They are not the usual type of fans or dabbling amateurs, but serious and committed quasi-professionals, a group growing larger by the day.

For Pro-Ams, leisure is not passive consumerism but active and participatory; it involves the deployment of publicly accredited knowledge and skills, often built up over a long career, which has involved sacrifices and frustrations. Pro-Ams demand we rethink many of the categories through which we divide up our lives. Pro-Ams are a new social hybrid. Their activities are not adequately captured by the traditional definitions of work and leisure, professional and amateur, consumption and production. (Leadbeater & Miller 2004: 20)

According to Leadbeater and Miller the Pro-Am form of productive consumption is another type of distributed, bottom-up and self-organising body of knowledge, which disrupts the modernist view of social organisation. In their examples, it is something we have seen lately emerge in many fields, and always with a highly professional output, with examples of astronomy, surfing, software development, education, music production and distribution. According to Leadbeater and Miller this type of amateur is something other than that we have previously seen in the world of hobbies. "The Pro-Ams are knowledgeable, educated, committed and networked, by new technology." (12)

What happens between these roles is that new interfaces for collaboration arise and which through exchange further the knowledge production and practices of all the partners involved. One example brought up by Leadbeater and Miller is how the collaboration between NASA and amateur astronomers has evolved into a full-scale cooperation that brings together hobbyists with highly complex science. The improved technology and the sheer numbers of participants has empowered amateurs to organize round-the-clock or long-term research projects that complement the work of the professional astronomers, at for example NASA.

Astronomy is fast becoming a science driven by a vast open source Pro-Am movement working alongside a much smaller body of professional astronomers and astrophysicists. (Leadbeater & Miller 2004: 14)

Amateurs working with professional astronomy organizations occur on many levels and in the last decades this community has been the front-runner in citizen science projects. One of the simplest examples is the SETI@home project, a distributed computing project hosted at the Space Sciences Laboratory at the University of California, Berkeley. SETI

– the "Search for Extra Terrestrial Intelligence" is a project that scans noise from space searching for patterns that could be a transmission from civilization on other planet. Since nobody knows what to look for, this requires a very large processing capacity, and through the SETI@home software you can make a contribution to this research by simply using your own computer at home. By installing the free software, similar to a screensaver, the computer will receive data packages from SETI that the computer will process when the computer is idle and the screensaver is switched on. With several million contributors connected worldwide, this open grid is one of the fastest computers in the world and many amateurs collect old computer part and mount make their own "SETI farms" at home to contribute to the shared computing capacity. Recently this approach has also been applied to scientific research in fields such as biology, medicine, physics and the mapping of global climate change through a project called Gridrepublic. By just installing the software your computer will help research, but unfortunately you will not be able to participate yourself.

However, there are many other examples of citizen science, from amateur ornithologists mapping bird migrations in the fields (eBird) to others where anyone can help to organise and tag photographs of celestial observations for NASA (Clickworkers). The later example consists of simple tasks that does not demand much skill from the participant and does not add much to his expertise, although he can from the comfort of his home be part of a real space adventure.

NASA also has a deliberate policy of collaborating with the watchers of the night sky. Even though NASA has the most powerful astronomical equipment on the planet they still need the widespread eyes of thousands of amateurs to get the most accurate data. Through Internet forums and shared databases networked amateurs report spotted phenomena and their timing which coordinates a global net of eyes.

This recent development would not have been possible without three crucial interface innovations, bringing the stars down to a shared platform for participants to use; the Dobson telescope, the cheap CCD photo chip and the Internet. Especially the first innovation can be described in more detail as it bears much resemblance to that we have seen throughout this thesis.

Junky Styling's Tie Twist Belt and Sideways Tank Top, reformed from Vakko garments. (this page) Megan Nicolay's shoulder bag made from a Vakko men's shirt. (opposite)

The Dobson telescope
is an extremely simple and rugged large-aperture instrument and popular among amateur astronomers because of its low cost and uncomplicated production process.

The telescope is an interface to the stars that astronomers have used all through their practice since the middle ages. In the 1960's it went through an evolutionary leap with amateur astronomer John Dobson's innovative design (Dobson 1991). Essentially his telescope design was nothing new, it was the combination of different simple designs into an inexpensive, mobile, durable one that was easy to use. The design demonstrated clearly how inexpensive did not mean inferior and his design became the basic material component of the "open source" astronomy movement.

> Dobson refused to profit from his invention, which he never patented. Soon many companies were making Dobsonian telescopes. Observers armed with a mighty Dobsonian could invade the deep space that had previously been the preserve of the professionals. (Leadbeater & Miller 2004: 14)

Dobson also produced simple manuals and held yearly several workshops showing of how to build the telescopes. Later, as highly light-sensitive CCD chips became cheaper, it became easier for amateurs to photograph their observations. This improved the interface between stars and observer and the astrophotography from the hobbyist camp came closer to the quality of the professionals.

In 1968 Dobson became a co-founder of the San Francisco Sidewalk Astronomers, an amateur astronomy club with an approach to their hobby that was quite unconventional for the time. Instead of having regular meetings, they set up their telescopes along the sidewalk on clear nights to let passers by observe the night sky and discuss and explain the celestial phenomena. This did much to popularize the movement and to emphasis the accessibility of astronomy for amateurs.

In his book *Seeing in the Dark* (2003), popular science writer Timothy Ferris documents how something that happened very far away, and very long ago, came to change our present distinction between professionals and amateurs.

> On February 23, 1987, light reached Earth from a star that had exploded at the edge of the Tarantula nebula, in the large Magellanic Cloud, 168,000 years ago. Bright enough to be seen without a telescope, it was a historic event, the first naked-eye supernova since Kepler's in 1604. (Ferris 2003: 282)

The observations of this explosion lead to the unlocking of the theory of "neutrino cooling". This night was to be crucial and it was with the help of three amateur astronomers and the expert equipment of the observatories that it could be proved that neutrinos of an exploding star reach us before the light does. With the careful observations of the skilled amateurs the data from neutrino detectors could prove the theory. According to Ferris, it was the Supernova 1987A that was the first real bridge between the world of amateurs and professionals in the highly complex field of astronomy.

> If one were to choose a date on which astronomy shifted from the old days of solitary professionals at their telescopes to a worldwide web of professionals and amateurs using a polyglot mix of instruments adding up to more than the sum of their parts, a good candidate would be the night of February 23-24, 1987. (Ferris 2003: 283)

In the 90's amateur astronomy was making fast advances and it was with the help of Internet that the community started to get really professionalized.

On the Internet, with its immediately updated forums the amateurs could share findings and photographs, something that was done previously through zines,

The 1987A supernova
came to be a defining event for the bridging of professionals and amateurs within astronomy.

newsletters and clubs. Now, with almost no delay, amateurs can upload high quality photos with coordinates that help to make discoveries that are the envy of the professionals. Astronomy has become a more democratic and accessible science; the knowledge of the night sky has been opened, is shared by more people and the big science is now accessible to more small actors. Professionals and amateurs together look further into the stars – albeit with different levels of knowledge, but no longer divided by light years of distance between their roles.

What we have seen here are examples where serious hobbyists complement and amplify the work of the professionals and a scattering of the strict borders between levels of practice. It should be emphasised again how the Pro-Am astronomy activities are networked throughout the community. Of course there are many solitary amateurs, but the there is a considerable number of people who are engaged in the Pro-Am scene with numerous forums, magazines, associations, large workshops and regular events such as Star parties.

We can also see this happening in other fields, as in the development of Lego Mindstorms toys and the famous computer game Sims. In these examples the community of users develop and co-designing parts of the experience. In the case of Sims about 90 percent of the game content was created by users and fans (Leadbeater & Miller 2004: 11). However, in these examples one should remember that the mother companies are still in strict control of the interfaces for engagement – the material production or the code of the software. The companies here still own the channels for the realization of the Pro-Ams' work. To use Wark's (2004) term, they remain the "vectorialists".

The Pro-Ams are similar to what researcher Eric von Hippel (2005) calls "user-in-novators", lead users who get involved in the development and creation of their own products, but without being production professionals but being users. In these examples, from medical equipment to sports products, innovation happens outside of the corporation, by consumers and end users, rather than in the manu-facturing process (von Hippel 2005, Shah 2005). These types of users have always been there, modding their cars or creating communities for "post-production", for example in sports equipment, changing their purchased products and creating supporting communities, sharing their plans and models (Franke & Shah 2003). These end-users have also been improving and inventing new everyday objects, yet they have often been neglected in our economic system, or even suppressed and tricked out of their innovations. The public image has been that it is the "white coats" of the Research and Developments division that comes up with the bright ideas, and not, as in many cases, amateurs in civil society organizations (Palmås 2005). von Hippel's point is that small firms and individual users are increasingly able to innovate, not only do they use a product or service but they become in-volved to make it perfect and to benefit directly from their new innovation instead of selling their idea to a manufacturer. What von Hippel proposes is to bridge the gap between user and manufacture through production toolkits that closely link production and use contexts, like advanced Lego parts directly applicable into products that solve the immediate need of the user (von Hippel 2005: 147ff). This would be another form of designer led collaborative design practice, where the designer makes technical toolboxes for the user to "scratch their own itch", and in-novate for themselves and by themselves. Examples of this arriving in the last few years could be open source programmable microprocessors, such as Arduino, or more Lego-like electronic building blocks, such as Buglabs. This type of adoption-adaptation cycle forms the basis for a user-led design methodology which design researcher Willem Horst calls Participatory Innovation (Horst 2008).

We can see in these examples of Pro-Ams and User-Innovators how the ideas of the "amateur intelligence operations" by Critical Art Ensemble (1994: 23) can be real-ized with citizen science, even if the user-innovation examples above are partly initiated by professionals and with no emphasised critical edge. Still, it is an updat-ing of the amateur position that through the example of the Linux project has be-come a real possibility for advanced technical development projects that were pre-viously preserved for big science – be it expert astronomers or research and development laboratories.

Throughout this discussion I have chosen technology to illustrate my examples. Most people think they cannot intervene into technical systems because they are "too advanced", yet the Pro-Ams have proved the difference. We can also see cul-tural phenomena following similar lines. For example in film making, where pro-fessionals make films with amateur-looking aesthetic such as the Dogma scene, but where also amateurs makes blockbusters, such as the Blair Witch Project. Likewise, the music scene is going through a major shift. Digital technology, sampling, remixing and simple software tools have turned the computer to an advanced stu-dio. This has met the possibility for file sharing that has created an explosion of small scenes and micro-cultures.

So what does this mean to the way we practice design? In this case the designer role is one of orchestrating symbiotic or mutualistic efforts made by many different actors outside the traditional expert driven design process. It is not only a question

of running a design office with many employees, or engaging participants in a design process, questioning them and observing what they do and how they perform certain procedures. It is a design practice bringing them all together and in collaboration produce, craft and share the findings, wit the purpose of inserting the design endeavours into an existing flow, economy, meaning system or professional practice. This means another form of transdisciplinary work that from the engaged amateurs is built into the expert production facilities of knowledge, culture or products.

This would be similar to the symbiogenesis that has been discussed in the earlier chapters. At this level the whole idea is to bring the collaboration into "the system", but simultaneously renegotiate the entry conditions to ensure the mutual exchange of energies.

It does not mean to sign a contract for your ideas or designs to be produced and then withdraw and let the company do the work. It means the creation of new interfaces where meetings occur and new terms are discussed and prototyped, directly connecting user and producer. To orchestrate a process like this means to bring everyone in, to facilitate the exchange of skills, energy and knowledge.

This type of designer role would be a furthering on the "catalyst communicator", the change agent model discussed by development practitioners White & Nair (1999). Their idea is that a change agent is a mediator for wide communication and understanding between partners, one that is also capable of addressing the bigger picture and of connecting the local, national and global decision-making processes. The catalyst communicator is a social chemist, a "fearless facilitator", building capacities through new channels of shared understanding and producing catalytic loops. White & Nair's emphasis is on the collaboration, of participation among equals, yet propelling catalytic loops through coalitions.

Consequently, the hacktivist designer equivalent could be that of a "catalyst crafter", a craftsman that orchestrates shared practices and the forming of symbiogenetic "material publics", but with the intention of reinserting this new energy into the system and of riding on the existing forces within. This has to be done on renegotiated terms where this new symbiosis facilitates growth and pride among the engaged amateurs and where the energy does not seep

out during the process, but on the contrary is increased or intensified.

It is here we also can see the full potential of the designer be realized, in the role of helping to actualize potentialities and connecting professionals with amateurs in new ways. We have discussed earlier the designer as a skilled producer of "provotypes" (Mogensen 1992). The designer challenges preconceptions and dead-locked relations and instead makes small experiments so as to demonstrate how things could be different. The hands-on crafting of this type of projects can then become micro-experiments towards micro-utopias using existing flows of material, skills, dreams, energies – riding flows in the system, drawing new lines between practices before separated.

We can learn from the Pro-Ams and the user-innovators the way to demystify the gap between high fashion and the users. We can assist users who want to engage on a deeper level in the production of fashion, most probably on another level than the haute couture, and yet doing something more than only engaging with recycling the surplus of the McFashion system. The scene is set, let us start building, let us start plugging our fashion hacktivism back into the system.

plugging hacktivism back in

So what would this Pro-Am approach mean for the fashion system? I see it as another layer of fashion, a rhizomatic, viral and engaged level, that cuts diagonally through the system, that draws unexpected lines and consciously connects to the existing flows. It would consist of Pro-Ams, user-innovators and a distributed scene that dissolves the strict borders between designer and consumer. New tools and practices would create a broader grey zone between these roles, in which a multiplicity of practices experiments with new protocols, models for organization, and where hacktivist practices would form to create a wild blend of fashion intensities and energies.

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In our age when "time is money" one can argue that DIY culture is the new luxury, as it would mainly be wealthy people who had the time to develop their craft or DIY skills. For some privileged people that might be true, and nowadays it might be few in the welfare state who sew or recycle garments simply out

of economic necessity, mainly because clothing is cheaply produced in South East Asia and often just buying the fabric to sew yourself costs as much as a finished garment. On the other hand it is still as hard to get that something "special", that garment that has a really personal touch.

In this way DIY might be another form of luxury, of creating special things, customized and hand-made by its maker. It can be produced by the underprivileged, by the ones placed outside of the narrow meritocratic race for status as a form of self-enhancement. This is not a new luxury in a "normal" commodity paradigm, but another form of fashion, another form of engagement.

DIY is in this sense similar to the "slowness" of the slow food movement and can catch some of the same critique as the slow food; it discourages nominally cheaper alternative methods of growing or preparing food and it rejects economy of scale which makes food cheaper for most people. However, this criticism misses the main points of DIY, that of skill, pride and appreciation of craftsmanship. It also misses the possibility of the two models existing side-by-side ad does not take into account that they are not necessarily oppositional.

This would also mean a resurgence of the historic handicraft associations, which have promoted and documented traditional crafts for more than a century. Paradoxically, the production from the handicraft associations has met the interested amateurs mainly through elevated museum pieces and national crafts exhibitions, as singular objects (Rosenqvist 2007). There is a lot to learn from this treasure house of craft history and immense bank of knowledge, but most importantly, how to connect to, bend, tune, and form coalitions between old crafts and new approaches. New modes of organization, new bazaar-like models of collaboration and new protocols that connect these base communities of practice to the larger energy flows through the fashion system must be tried. We must have alliances that connect with fashion, but with the craft publics in the forefront.

This type of hacktivist alliance can take many forms. It could be anything from product-service relationships in the form of barbershop-like recycling boutiques, to offering re-styling help and infrastructure for drop-in updating of clothes. It could be workshops that engage in secondary school craft curricula. It could be free DIY cookbooks created in collaboration with the greatest haute couture designers. It could be projects exploring the full width of user engagement, from various forms of Lego-like kits to shared workshops for co-production inside fashion stores. It could be new forms of Swap-O-Rama-Ramas where whole new scenes are formed and shared and that intersect both a wide range of lifestyles and high quality production.

It is important to remember that this is not a question of a new layer of engaged "McFashion" or DIY activism subverting the cathedrals. It is a practice concerned with finding new passages between the two fields that were separated, the high fashion and the DIY. It is a perspective on design that does not aim at reaching the top, even within the new micro-culture that is created by new intensities and practice. It is a delegation through protocols, as in the example of the Swap-O-Rama-Rama. This is also a complementary form of fashion critique that does not aim to be top-down but instead builds from in-between and from the reconciliation between the cathedral and the bazaar.

Here, the negotiations between time-saving and skill-producing activities are also crucial, as well as skills to carefully reverse engineer the driving forces behind fash-

ion. For example, not to try to make all fashion "slower", but instead to see which parts could be positively effected, to make fashion "slower" in some parts, emphasising quality and timelessness, yet on the other hand finding library-like product sharing possibilities for the "faster" fashion (Fletcher 2008). Not one solution is needed but rather a multitude of them.

However it is most important is to keep fashion as a force or a vehicle for social change and not to disconnect from fashion or think that its intensity only consists of "bad" forces. The experiments can be disconnected from the profit-driven economy and be run as open labs in the art galleries, but they will be more productive when connected to the system, for it is these energies we need if we are going to aim for a multiplicity of small changes.

My hope is that new experiments will expose other forms of symbiogenetic cooperation and develop our first attempt with the VakkoVamps, to connect various actors, levels, approaches and practices in fashion. I am not pessimistic regarding this issue as one day there will be more of us, and perhaps most importantly, the VakkoVamps project should not necessarily be seen as a failure.

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The opening of the exhibition at the gallery attracted considerable attention in the local magazines and the photos from the VakkoVamps project was given a full spread in Turkey's largest morning paper, Hürriet. The first day after the opening a girl rushed into the gallery on her way to school and wanted to show us something. She had read the papers and liked the bag Megan Nicolay had made from a man's shirt. With the help of a magnifying glass she had studied the photograph in detail and made a bag herself from her father's old shirt. She proudly wanted to show us her work, making a small pirouette to parade her new design, before hurrying away. At first we were perplexed. What had just happened? How had she managed to make it so quick? How could she have seen the details? We soon understood that this was what we had intended from the very beginning. Displaying these hacked garments in a fashion way had opened doors to new possibilities and also encouraged people to do things themselves, and making them feel fashionable as well as being craftsmen. The collaboration with the big brand had collapsed, but new doors had been opened. People who could not in any case buy Vakko garments were instead the ones now taking part in the exhibition and who were very hands-on engaged in our workshops. New action spaces were opened. The girl with her new bag had proved to us that this type of design practice was not flawed and she proved to us we were all engaged in sharing a scene, that was at the same time both fashionably glossy and simple handcraft. We were on our way to be fashion-*able*.
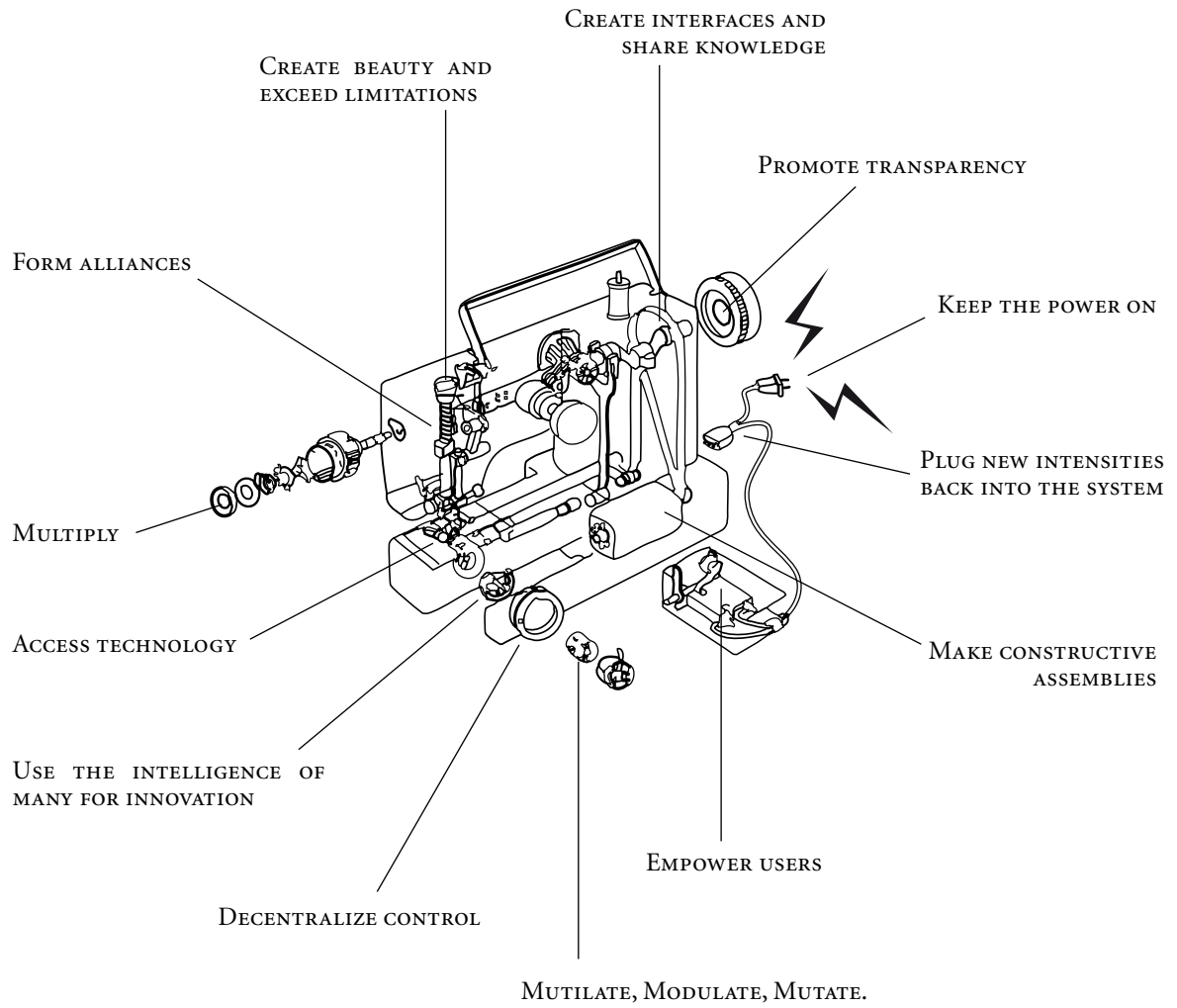
&

In this chapter we have seen how professional and amateur scenes are not necessarily separated but can offer new forms of knowledge production and a shared development of methods, practice and skills. We have followed the Hackers and Haute Couture Heretics exhibition and the VakkoVamps project to see examples of how possible interconnections between the abstract machine of hacktivism and established fashion can bridge DIY delegations of skills with the glossy exclusivity of high fashion. By discussing Pro-Am within amateur astronomy and various forms of user-innovations we can see parallel practices establishing interfaces for creative exchange between producers and users that might influence how fashion designers can approach the same questions.

We have finally seen suggestions how to plug hacktivism into the fashion system. It is this symbiosis between the DIY approach and exclusive fashion that can offer new ways for reflection and participation and open passages through the border between active and passive, auteur and audience, producer and consumer, professional and amateur. Here we see a new designer role active, the "catalyst crafter", a fearless facilitator creating new action spaces and material publics where the once separated fields meet to form new alliances, complementary to the established fashion system.

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When we look back we can see some of the hacktivist components reoccur throughout the lines of practice we have examined. We can identify some of the mechanisms that are assembling the abstract machine of hacktivism, what perhaps Christopher Polhem would have called the mechanical "letters" guiding its diagram of becoming. This is similar to the six functions employed in classical Greece thought from which they could construct any type of machine. These are the principal subfunctions of hacktivism.

CREATE INTERFACES AND
SHARE KNOWLEDGE

CREATE BEAUTY AND
EXCEED LIMITATIONS

PROMOTE TRANSPARENCY

FORM ALLIANCES

KEEP THE POWER ON

PLUG NEW INTENSITIES
BACK INTO THE SYSTEM

MULTIPLY

ACCESS TECHNOLOGY

MAKE CONSTRUCTIVE
ASSEMBLIES

USE THE INTELLIGENCE OF
MANY FOR INNOVATION

EMPOWER USERS

DECENTRALIZE CONTROL

MUTILATE, MODULATE, MUTATE.

methodological appendix

• A METHODOLOGICAL APPENDIX DISCUSSING A NUMBER OF INTERSECTING LINES THAT ARE INTENDED TO HELP POSITION THE THESIS WITHIN ACADEMIC AND ARTISTIC RESEARCH PRACTICES.

As I did not want to interrupt the flow of the few chapters describing the hacktivist lines in the thesis I chose to make a methodological appendix consisting of several process lines that form methodological interchanges to the projects. This includes the intersecting lines of practice that cuts through the five main chapters and they should be read as diagonals through the arguments we followed in the main chapters. These displaced lines are on a slightly different course than the ones describing the abstract machine of hacktivism, even if they frequently overlap.

They are nevertheless important to include since they better describe some of my thought processes and how I place my practical method into several contexts. These method lines position the work in its context within artistic research as well as acting as support to the efforts of others who want to take up parts of the work that I leave behind as I have completed this thesis.

The lines in this methodological appendix are triangulations of various approaches to artistic research, action research, development studies, and participation, to just to name but a few. These lines are supportive channels for practice rather than tools for strict analysis. They are meant support processes of *doing* as they offer points of reference as well as conceptual tools for discussing practice. They are not

drawn up to filter data or to bring forward a sequential format for processes to take, but are there to encourage further exploration and help guide the future endeavours of other practitioners.

We will first start with a discussion about what the perspective of lines offers and how it related to practice. After that we will follow a series of process or method lines, all connected to practice, diverse actions and forms of interventions and finally gather these lines into a mesh of "rhizomatic" validity. At the centre of this rhizomatic mesh of lines I come to a discussion of what this means for the redesigning of design practice.

The best way to follow these methodological lines is to see them more as meandering and liberating "lines of flight" than as undeviating intersections through the previous chapters. They are meant to help us break away rather than build new walls. According to Deleuze and Guattari (2004) there is a special form of line, one that escapes control and structure. It is a "line of flight", that breaches holes and passages between separated lines. These lines are escape routes that "deterritorialize" and break up stratified and territorialized systems. It is a form of transversal mobility pattern, rhizomatic as it daringly connects separated "branches" of arborescent, tree-like lines, connecting multiplicities with other multiplicities. According to Deleuze and Guattari the lines of flight can be compared to music,

"Music has always sent out lines of flight, like so many "transformational multiplicities," even overturning the very codes that structure or arborify it; that is what musical form, right down to its ruptures and proliferations, is comparable to a weed, a rhizome." (D&G 2004: 13)

A line of flight is a line of liberation, it is dynamic, creative and unpredictable, breaking out of and undermining the repressive state of contained compartments within a discipline, structure or organism. It escapes to connect one multiplicity with another. With this manoeuvre the line of flight releases hidden potentials and intensifies capabilities. Which is very much like the "mindset" of hacking, building and of connecting one multiplicity with another.

This is how it should be done: Lodge yourself on a stratum, experiment with the opportunities it offers, find an advantageous place on it, find potential movements of deterritorialization, possible lines of flight, experience them, produce flow conjunctions here and there, try out continuums of intensities segment by segment, have a small plot of new land at all times. It is through a meticulous relation with the strata that one succeeds in freeing lines of flight (D&G 2004: 178)

The hack itself is an escape, but it is paradoxically also a re-structuring and a reterritorialization, as it builds new forms of relations, relations that are yet open, as in open source code and open protocols. The reterritorialization process is unavoidable so it is crucial to be attentive to how to best affect this process and keep the line of flight intensive, open and accessible.

We will now meet a few of the method lines. The complexity of the abstract machine needs to be preserved, but it can be possible to build a more comprehensive viewpoint onto this rhizome of practice by following some of these lines. They are process lines, similar to that of a method, not aiming to sort out data and build walls, but rather to facilitate escape routes.

process lines for a nomadic practice

A research method is usually a kind of procedure that helps a research process to take a solid shape. Traditionally it is a linear exercise, to stabilize a dynamic system of data from observations and experi-

ments, processing it through a rigid framework, and reduce a complex disorder to understandable variables and functions. Method is a set of specialized glasses, a constricted net, or a fine-tuned filter. This is done to calibrate the preferred spectrum of information, to make it rigid, to close its shape, to build up the argument like a powerful fortress, so as to build up a solid hypothesis that will stand firm when confronted with the attacks and careful scrutiny of fellow academics.

We can also envision another process, where the method is a procedure that is more of an approach or a course of action and is a line that goes through an unsorted reality or mass of practices or processes of becoming, that preserves its dynamics and imbalances. This method would follow meandering lines through a system, emphasising mutual interactions and intersections between other lines and forces. It is an emphasis on *doing* and *becoming* rather than *having* or *being*.

For my research the idea of lines has helped me articulate a process that allows both a smooth transition through texts, projects and the examples of others and which, as in my own practical work, values each part as equally important. All these lines form an *alliance*, an assemblage of forces that are gathered to shape this thesis, a multiplicity in itself, that gives boost to the reader's energy and encourages him to ride on and try new things. Interpreting the ideas of Deleuze and Guattari (2004) and DeLanda (1997) from a designer viewpoint can frame a set of ideas that could articulate how this type of "nomadic practice" could be understood. Here all lines are interwoven with practical design projects and ideas so as to become a "nomadic practice" that consists of a meshwork of what I would call "lines of practice".

First, a typical characteristic of a design practice is to use tools that work, and not to spend too much energy discussing the tools that do not. This does not mean the use is unreflected, but rather positively pragmatic, subjective and situated within my own practice. The skills of a designer are about doing things and of acting upon the world. The designer's use of tools is *affirmative*, rather than critical and quite similar to how Brian Massumi, in the foreword to *A Thousand Plateaus*, describes Deleuze and Guattari's "nomadic thought",

"Nomadic thought" does not immure itself in the edifice of an ordered interiority; it moves freely in an

element of exteriority. It does not repose on identity; it rides difference. (D&G 2004: xii)

he continues,

> The modus operandi of nomad thought is affirmation, even when its apparent objective is negative. Force is not to be confused with power. Force arrives from the outside to break constraints and open new vistas. Power builds walls. (D&G 2004: xii)

This affirmative research method is about following and riding upon the forces of examples and projects, using their immanent energy or intensity, rather than building impregnable walls around the proposed practice. The nomad thought is made from the movements along these energy lines, rather than the manifestation or protection of conquered points or territories. Theory and examples are thus not meant to be parts of a great and structured system, conquering or disproofing other methods or theories, but rather form a set of useful concepts or tools to be used for better "riding".

> Deleuze's own image for a concept is not a brick, but a "tool box." He calls this kind of philosophy "pragmatics" because its goal is the invention of concepts that do not add up to a system of belief or an architecture of propositions that you either enter or you don't, but instead pack a potential in the way a crowbar in a willing hand envelops an energy of prying. (D&G 2004: xv)

So, to return to the foreword; "The question is not: is it true? But: does it work? What new thoughts does it make possible to think?" (D&G 2004: xv) – or in the case of design – what new interventions in the world does it make possible?

As I have suggested, the core component of nomadic thought is that it is built upon lines, rather than on points. This means it searches for processes that are evolving in world or that are "becomings", rather than fixed meanings or essences. The question is not: what does it mean? But: what does it do, what does it make possible?

> We will never ask what a book means, as signified or signifier; we will not look for anything to understand in it. We will ask what does it function with, in connection with what other things it does or does not transmit intensities, in which other multiplicities its own are inserted and metamorphosed […] (D&G 2004: 4)

This proposes a method of the *plug-in* (D&G 2004: 5) of connecting lines with others, forming a meshwork of concepts and tools, of energies and forces, of theories, projects and examples. It is a multiplicity in itself, or a rhizome, a rhizome of overlapping lines, where all the lines are of equal importance and that smoothes out space to form an assemblage. Contrary to linear narratives or theories that sorts the concepts around one point and builds walls around *One theory*, Deleuze and Guattari created another form of density of thought which is a meshwork of overlapping lines. "Hence, nearly synonymous key concepts […] do not exactly coincide in meaning, but are slightly displaced from one another to create this overlapping effect." (DeLanda 1997; 330)

Similarly, we will now follow several lines of method that are slightly overlapping and displaced from each other. We will not follow *one method* but several lines that form a meshwork of methods, a meshwork of process lines.

one and several process lines

The thesis follows a multitude of different lines, processes, methods, discussions, examples, and projects and is not assembled according *One* theory or "tree-like" line of argument. To clarify this we can examine more closely how Deleuze and Guattari explain what they see as different types of "lines".

Firstly, they recognize a *subordinate* line, an arborescent, tree-like line, as part of *One* theory that connects the points of its superior dimension (D&G 2004: 556). This is the line of a sequential reasoning or logical deductive argument through systematic use of symbolic techniques that preferably ends with *one* answer.

Their second line is more like the ones we see throughout this thesis. They are diagonal, of the "rhizom-type",

> The diagonal frees itself, breaks and twists. The line no longer forms a contour, and instead passes *between* things, *between* points. It belongs to a smooth space. (D&G 2004: 557)

This diagonal, *rhizome* line is not "subordinated to the One, but takes on a consistency of its own." (D&G 2004: 557) It connects multiplicities of becoming, rather than structuring countable elements, strict cause and effects or ordered relations. Deleuze and

Guattari also propose a third type of line, the "line of flight" that we have discussed earlier.

An immediate conception of a method line would be a horizontal line that connects a research *question* to a research *answer*. This would be the first type of the subordinate line, a line part of the big *One* theory or argument, straight and predictable and very useful for analytic method and one that can readily be duplicated.

In order to preserve dynamics and complexity, this thesis has been built up differently, that is according to the rhizome type, the second type of line. The method lines I propose are diagonal forms of practice and sorting mechanisms that draw on a multitude of lines of practice, a cluster of methods lines, procedures and courses of action. Their main potential lies in just the *alliance* between them. They create what DeLanda calls a *non-reductionistic holism*.

> The reason why the properties of a whole cannot be reduced to those of its parts is that they are the result not of an aggregation of the components' own properties but of the actual exercise of their capacities. These capacities do depend on a component's properties but cannot be reduced to them since they involve reference to the properties of other interacting entities. (DeLanda 2006: 11)

The interaction between entities is that which also forms lines. The importance here is that the lines of thought and practice are formed through self-organized communication, repetition, imitation and mimetic behaviour in which ideas travel almost like a virus, like an epidemic. These lines are what the sociologist Gabriel Tarde called "imitative rays" that "echo" between neighbours, like sound-waves, existing only in interaction with other entities (Tarde 2000: 32). This means that the line has no essence, no deeper meaning and does not affect us from "above" like an ideology, or like an inner "logic", "urge" or "need". Instead "social life includes a thick network of radiations of this sort, with countless mutual interferences" (51). For Tarde, the whole world is inhabited by waves and flows of rays, mutating and transforming. These imitative rays are very specific lines, forming a multiplicity, and they are very different from Richard Dawkin's concept of "memes" (Dawkins 1976).

According to Tarde, it is in the interference between two intersecting "imitative rays" that possibilities and innovation is released (Tarde 2000: 32). When they meet,

often they result in mutual alliances, which serve to accelerate and enlarge the radiation; sometimes they are even responsible for the rise of some generic idea, which is born of their encounter and combination within a single head (Tarde 2000: 33)

It is at the intersection of rays or lines possibilities emerge. The connections merge, where "flows boost one another, accelerate their shared escape" (D&G 2004: 243), an escape that we can use in our practical work. We must avoid points or positions, and we must look for the lines. Only then can we draw further on the forces running through this research, plug into them, redirect them, interconnect them, ride them, use them. To explore what it means to be a nomadic practitioner.

It is important to keep in mind that the lines are social, and thus not limited to the author, but flow through the author, who nonetheless might intersect them, propose variations and innovate. This perspective offers grounding for the interplay between rays and lines in which a wide range of participants offer a larger "radiation" that can happen *in-between* people, *through* an alliance or assemblage. This is why the authorship throughout this thesis and my projects have not been highlighted, but with purpose kept slightly obscure or unresolved. This is not a product of a new big auteur but the deliberate formation of an alliance of lines. The authorship is the lines and the rays, and it is the reader who will take part in releasing their potential.

an action line

One of these process lines is an *action research* line. Since it was first mention by the social psychologist Kurt Lewin (1946) action research has been developed as a reflective social research method of addressing social issues and working with practical methods to solve them. According to researchers Peter Reason and Hilary Bradbury action research is a

> participatory, democratic process concerned with developing practical knowing in the pursuit of worthwhile human purposes, grounded in a participatory worldview which we believe is emerging at this historical moment. (Reason & Bradbury 2001: 1)

The aim of this type of research is to intervene into the system or situation researched, not to be a passive observer, distant and non-participative. Instead

the aim is to create a dual commitment "to study a system and concurrently to collaborate with members of the system in changing it in what is together regarded as a desirable direction." (Gilmore *et al* 1986: 161)

The process of action research is a combination of daily problem-solving and reflective research as it approaches its problem systematically and through informed intervention, based on theoretical considerations. Compared to other types of research processes, action research generally involves the people being researched as co-researchers, and engages them in a collective and critical reflection exercise. "Learning to do it by doing it." (Freire 1982) Likewise, the initiating researcher acknowledges his or hers bias to the participants and throughout the research process. The process is "only possible *with, for* and *by* persons and communities", and as such is closely related to Aristotle's work on praxis and phronesis, using the expertise skills of the researcher, but frames these skills actively within a social context. (Reason & Bradbury 2001: 2ff)

This makes action research affect several social levels. It does not only aim to develop a "personal knowledge" through your action and for your action (Polanyi), but to operate and communicate at a number of different levels. This is a central part of the argument raised by Reason and Marshall (1987).

> All good research is *for me, for us*, and *for them*: it speaks to three audiences [...] It is *for them* to the extent that it produces some kind of generalizable ideas and outcomes [...] It is *for us* to the extent that it responds to concerns for our praxis, is relevant and timely [for] those who are struggling with problems in their field of action. It is *for me* to the extent that the process and outcomes respond directly to the individual researcher's being-in-the-world (Reason & Marshall 1987:112f).

A manifold perspective such as this is what Torbert (1998) calls first-, second-, and third-person dimensions of inquiry. The first-person practice is carefully reflective, drawing on self-awareness and mindfulness, and primarily aimed at understanding and changing personal skills and approaches. It is a position similar to what Reason calls *critical subjectivity,* which means that

> we do not suppress our primary subjective experience, that we accept our knowing is from a perspective; it also means that we are aware of that perspec-

tive, and of its bias, and we articulate it in our communications. (Reason 1994: 327)

The second-person dimension of research is that which is cooperative and where a group of participants become both co-subjects and co-researchers, and who all contribute with ideas, actions, analyses and conclusions. At this level, the results are also directly applicable to their life experience, both as groups and as individuals, making the first- and second-hand perspectives closely interlinked (Reason & Torbert 2001).

The third-person research involves people who cannot meet face-to-face, which means it involves an impersonal quality, for example working with a group of globally dispersed individuals, but who are still a community of practice, sharing resources or experiences. It can also be an even more distanced perspective, where the group works with external data, history, or quantitative methods.

As we see in the examples and projects in this thesis all these perspectives are closely interlinked, and run criss-cross over and in-between each other. Many of the projects start from a very personal perspective, from a personal urge or from "scratching one's own itch". They then go into dynamic group practices that are often organized from a third-person perspective as a globally distributed net of contacts, to then again dive back into group dynamics and personal experiences and skills. It is also a mix of personal and anonymous projects, unique singularities with many-layered multiplicities where several lines intersect, but where the same abstract machine is at work.

Often the circumstances surrounding action research is that of a situation of oppression or inequality. It has been a method used for development and empowerment in the context of education and aid situations for the underprivileged, and draws on Gramsci's notion of the counter-hegemonic "organic intellectual", which works from a stance of a praxis of solidarity (Weis & Fine 2004). From this position the researcher can work to break the "culture of silence" through education, and help the silenced to find a voice (Freire 2000). According to Paulo Freire's book *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, which builds on John Dewey's influential work *Democracy and Education* (Dewey 1999), this has to be made through other forms of education than the traditional "banking" concept. In "banking" education the "teacher

issues communique's and makes deposits which the students patiently receive, memorize, and repeat." (Freire 2000: 72) To liberate the oppressed, Freire asks for a problem solving education which talks back, and "strives for the *emergence* of consciousness and *critical intervention* in reality" (81) It must act upon reality and be based on praxis, rather than on silenced repetition. This will, according to both Dewey and Freire, result in personal growth, a better and more democratic society, and produce a climate that is favourable to more well informed debate. The main difference is how Freire explicitly sees it as a central tool for liberation of the oppressed.

The researcher and educator is a partisan, who takes sides with his or hers study subjects, and working deliberately with the research to help the community involved towards a better situation. This type of action research converges with participatory research and has often been labelled *Participatory Action Research* (PAR), which highlights the community empowerment aspect of the process.

> The aim of participatory action research is to change practices, social structures, and social media which maintain irrationality, injustice, and unsatisfying forms of existence. (McTaggart cited in Reason & Bradbury 2001: 1)

At its core, PAR embraces perspectives of feminism and post-colonialism and opposes hegemonic structures. Although this type of research is closely linked with political education and activism and even expresses an explicit political position as it engages the disenfranchised, it should not be confused with "political activism" or "oppositional politics". (McTaggart 1997: 6)

The structure of action research is often rigid in the sense that it is based on progressive iterations of repeating cyclic steps, or "moments", conceptually varying in complexity between researchers, but can roughly be summed up as "plan, act, observe, reflect." (Carr & Kemmis 1986: 186) This type of progressive linearity between cycles is a guiding procedure for action research, and also a central ingredient in most design processes, and often a key component in most educational projects in design courses, from foundation courses to professional practice.

From a design perspective, PAR is similar to *participatory design* in that the researcher/designer engages the community, or users, in the process, while still preserving the role of initiator, evaluator, and in the end the designer. Most often participation does not come closer than *user-centred design* where the user is seen as a key actor and target "audience" of the design process. However the user is not allowed to make any decisions, but rather is an observed user in a video-surveyed lab. Compared to user-generated designs, as for example wikipedia, or the role of "user-innovators" (von Hippel 2005, Shah 2005), this type of activism is less empowering as it does not share the tools or skills of the experts with the users. A design practice with more equal protocols for co-design is further investigated in the Small Change Protocol and Pro-Am chapter.

However, the participatory perspective is not uncontested, and all forms of involvement and education are also stealthy instruments for conformity, and it takes a raised consciousness to transform participation into real and practical freedom. There is always the problem of hidden authority as well as an altruistic blindness as the "transformative intellectual" goes out to "save" the oppressed. Already in the beginning of the PAR movement, practitioners had already asked to tread carefully in regard to the tendencies of "the oppressed, instead of striving for liberation, tend themselves to become oppressors, or 'sub-oppressors'" (Freire 2000: 45). These issues should be kept in mind, but it is a problem to great to handle here.

Nevertheless, there are other problems facing a participatory approach. Especially today, as participation is a method in the hands of both the New Social Movements of the left as well as the neo-liberal market strategists which to many makes its utopian claims confusing. This has led to sharp criticism of the orthodox use of participation in almost every social project, as it seems to create a new form of benevolent "tyranny" projecting individual responsibility to disenfranchised groups. According to this critique, participation is "empowering" people in "developing" societies to become better consumers, taxpayers, workers, patients or prisoners, reshaping persons into "modern" consumer subjects, delegating responsibility but not liberating them (Cooke & Kothari 2001).

an interventionist line

The interventionist line is quite similar to that of the action research, but it has a more elaborate experimental attitude and emphasises direct action for change more than reflected research. The concept of intervention has become actualized through contemporary art where it has become a common technique in art as a social practice and a relational aesthetic (Bourriaud 2002a; Purves 2005).

A first point of departure into interventions is the "pointing" method within art, and it could possibly be seen as a line in itself. It is a silent indication, an artistic gesture, of interrupting discourse where the artwork puts a "spotlight" on a social issue. It is practice, not theory, a gesture of questioning, as proposed by theorist Irina Sandomirskaia (2006). She argues,

> Being practical, the pointing of the finger has to be subsumed under a special rubric: it is not knowledge, since all knowledge is discursive and gestures are not. (Sandomirskaja 2006: 4)

In my reading this pointing gesture can be seen as the "classic" way for art to engage in the world, in that it can document the world, show it to the public in a new way, manifest it, create a monument of a certain perspective. Iconic political artwork like this can be Picasso's *Guernica* or the 1930's collages of John Heartfield.

However, as both artistic methods and tactics have expanded it has also used to touch on social issues, through actions, happenings, and workshops, something usually framed as "interventions". The Austrian artist group WochenKlausur explains this development in the following way,

> In contrast to the thinking of the seventies, today's Activists are no longer concerned with changing the world in its entirety. It is no longer a matter of mercilessly implementing an ideological line, as it was in Joseph Beuys' idea of transforming a whole society into a Social Plastic, or as it was in the thinking of the Russian Constructivists, the Futurists and many other manifesto writers of the Modern. At the end of the century, Activist art no longer overestimates its capabilities. But it does not underestimate them either. It makes modest contributions. (Wochen-Klausur n.d.)

Even if modest interventions aim to change practical social conditions. Some constructive actions have also created sustainable solutions that still work after the artists have departed, something that is always a problem in all projects of social change. From this perspective WochenKlausur is an interesting example, as the groups founder, Wolfgang Zinggl, took his involvement in social action a step further and went into parliamentary politics, where he is now active in the Austrian Green Party.

However, art has a special possibility compared to ideological or problem-solving parliamentary politics as it can open doors and reveal a situation under a new light.

> The motives for concrete intervention based in art should not be confused with an excess of moralistic fervor. As a potential basis for action, art has political capital at its disposal that should not be underestimated. The use of this potential to manipulate social circumstances is a practice of art just as valid as the manipulation of traditional materials. (Wochen-Klausur n.d.)

The manipulation of both social circumstances and existing material was something that was carried out by the Swedish art group Love and Devotion in 2003. The group was invited to make a public work of art for the University Hospital in Uppsala at the Ulleråker rehabilitation centre. Instead of approaching their work as a form of "decoration" of the space they studied the psychosocial milieu and organized meetings with the staff, politicians, architects and theorists to get a better picture of how and in which context such an institution operates. Their aim was to somehow find a way to change the milieu for the people inside, rather than put a piece of art on top of it.

They started by going through the storage areas looking for unused potential materials. They found some pieces of nice furniture, Swedish and Danish design classics, that they restored and they also changed the lighting in the corridors and rooms. Outside the centre they put up nesting boxes and also a feeding house for the winter for many different species of birds.

Perhaps their biggest intervention was to alter the access to the yard. Instead of only having an enclosed balcony at the side of the house, they opened up the fence and put in stairs to give direct access to the yard from the house. This opened the inner environment to the outer and changed the atmosphere of the institution through a very simple intervention.

Using the existing infrastructure and scanning it for unseen potentialities can make very discreet changes, in order to tune the environment for the better. Through simple recycling, using found ready-made objects and potentials, they not only improved the conditions of the rehabilitation centre they in the end created a form of "decoration", but one that totally changed the environment of the place.

This interventionist line also relates to the aims of artistic research as defined by the Faculty of Fine, Applied and Performing Arts at the University of Gothenburg who define the aim of the research at the faculty as that of being a "catalyst" for "social change". A gesture of art is augmented so as to become an "agent of change and source of understanding about real life, the world and society" (Faculty of Fine, Applied and Performing Arts n.d.)

> The focus is on art as an agent of change and source of understanding about real life, the world and society, and on the research and development of artistic procedures. (Faculty of Fine, Applied and Performing Arts n.d.)

The borders between social activism, development practice and art are blurred. Here every little gesture of art is part of a "molecular revolution" and art practice itself is a sort of social revolution (Raunig 2007). However, for this perspective to be effective beyond the art scene, white cube, and biennale jetset there is a need to improve tactics and create understanding of how to intervene and inject practice in order to change a system.

The systems theorist Donella Meadows proposed in her article "Places to Intervene in a System" that there are several levels in which to intervene in a system (Meadows 1997). These can be from simple, low levels, like changing parameters or numbers, as politicians negotiate taxes or tariffs, to higher levels of effecting negative and positive feedback loops, such as preventive medicine, good nutrition to bolster the body's ability to fight disease, or laws to regulate government transparency.

In her scale the higher interventions affect information flows, reveal new data, or change major rules in the system through lobbying and public debate. Just below the top levels she puts the power of self-organization, where many small interacting parts synergize into resilient systems. At the top she places interventions that change the goals of the system and the paradigm out of which the system arises. According to Meadows the paradigms are not as hard to change as people think,

> there's nothing physical or expensive or even slow about paradigm change. In a single individual it can happen in a millisecond. All it takes as a click in the mind, a new way of seeing. (Meadows 1997)

Meadows' ideas have been analysed in relation to sustainability by fashion theorist Kate Fletcher (2008), where she examines where changes in the fashion economy might be put into practice. Fletcher sees changes in materials and working ethics happen at the bottom levels, and new laws and regulations on production being applied through politics and lobbying to the middle ones. The top is very hard to reach, as it will require new ways of consumption and clothes care. To change the goals or the paradigm of fashion requires a multitude of new ideas stretching from new business practices to the way we use fashion in our social lives.

Perhaps these top levels of the system are hard to reach from *within* fashion, but here artistic interventions offers room for experimentation. The gallery, free from some of the logics of fashion, can be a lab for possible changes in mindsets and paradigms. This is what the gallery space has traditionally offered, a free state where a multitude of viewpoints can be exposed and discussed. Here we can experiment with the "click in the mind, a new way of seeing." The Hackers and Haute Couture Heretics and VakkoVamps projects could be seen from this perspective.

an interrogative line

Partly running parallel to the "pointing" and "intervention" lines, we could follow an "interrogative" line that exists in the grey area between art and design. It is a form of intervention, but with a pointing intention that questions preconceptions and understandings. Industrial designer and artist Krzysztof Wodiczko who is active at MIT have proposed this design approach. His most famous designs are vehicles for homeless in New York. Parts of his method are similar to those practiced in participatory design, but his intention is to add a critical questioning to the design practice and disrupt and reveal the underlying inequalities that design usually tries to hide. He suggests this is a constructive model for work in the world,

Interrogative design questions the very worlds of needs of which it is born. It responds interrogatively to the needs that should not, but unfortunately do, exist in the present "civilized" world. (Interrogative Design Group n.d.)

It is a design approach that asks questions about the world, often without finding real "solutions" to the problems. What is important is to intervene, to question, and to go more deeply into the world and its functions.

Designers must work *in* the world rather than "about" or "upon" it. In an unacceptable and contradictory world, responsive and responsible design must appear as an unacceptable or contradictory "solution". It must critically explore and reveal often painful life experiences rather than camouflage such experience by administering the painkillers of optimistic design fantasies. The appearance of interrogative design may "attract while scandalizing" – it must attract attention in order to scandalize the conditions of which it is born. Implicit in this design's temporary character is a demand and hope that its function will become obsolete. (Wodiczko 1999: 17)

Indeed this working method is not so much a way of resisting or opposing a situation as of building complementary systems or new functions, practices that are very close to the social change proposed by the action researchers. It is very similar to how the legendary inventor Buckmister Fuller saw his work: "You never change things by fighting against the existing reality. To change something, build a new model that makes the old model obsolete." (Fuller cited in White, K 2001: 101)

However, not all new models can come about at once, so smaller interventionist steps that all aim to a larger change have to be effectuated. These small interventions are a form of designer first aid.

The oldest and most common reference to this kind of design is the bandage. A bandage covers and treats a wound while at the same time exposing its presence, signifying both the experience of pain and the hope of recovery. (Wodiczko 1999: 17)

Wodiczko's bandage metaphor by can be discussed, as it is quite ambiguous. It is a design solution added on top of a problem similar to the "remedial" design criticised by design theorist Ezio Manzini. As such the top-added bandage is a counter productive fix to a problem which might even make things worse if nothing is done to heal the wound underneath. On

the other hand, the bandage offers a healthy microclimate around the wound allowing it to use the body's own ability to heal. In other words, the participation of the body is crucial to make such a design work in the proper way. It is from this reading that I think Wodiczko's metaphor makes sense. Therefore it is of crucial importance to involve the users, the participants and the "silenced", to make them participants in making the bandage, something that is also emphasised by Wodiczko,

The proposed design should not be conceived as a symbolic representation but as a performative articulation. It should not "represent" (frame iconically) the survivor or the vanquished, not should it "stand in" or "speak for" them. It should be developed *with* them and it should be based on a critical inquiry into the conditions that produced the crisis. (17)

Wodiczko's practice is not only participatory, but also critical, as it tries to uncover the reasons as to why the problem emerged in the first hand. In this way, it tries to assume a double agency, both towards the source of the crisis as well as how it is expressed. He emphasises the importance of both practical and communicative skills that are required to reach this point.

One of the objectives of the design is to extend the use of the media of communication to those who have no access to them but who need them the most, and to those who have full access to them but who fail to take critical advantage of them. (17)

However, Wodiczko's practice has its critics, one of whom is WochenKlausur, who are sceptical in regard to Wodiczko's work with the homeless, in which they say he does not go far enough in trying to implement social change. They propose that he might even contradict his "interrogative design" as his designs circulate the art world,

Wodiczko's approach - he looks for solutions within the realm of existing possibilities, even if they do seem a little utopian - is certainly worthy of mention. Still, his carts are only presented in museums. This could even give rise to the suspicion that he is utilizing social destitution for the purpose of creating "valuable exhibition pieces". (WochenKlausur n.d.)

The problem touched upon here by WochenKalusur is a common criticism that is made when the socially marginalized enters into the gallery or art world, and

much discussion has been raised about what "relational aesthetics" or "social practice" really accomplishes, as it perhaps covers up problems more than raising antagonistic politically articulated demands (Bishop 2004 & 2006).

In the world of design a tradition of critical, questioning or conceptual design practice has been formed during the last few decades and which aims to address social issues. There are many examples of this being done successfully by exposing assumptions, stimulating debates, provoking and engaging in critical action and breaking the status quo of traditional hurried design thinking. One such example is that carried out by the RED group at the British Design Council, in what they call "Transformation Design", which broadens the space for design interrogation and problem-solving (RED 2006). The platform of John Thackara's Door of Perception, or Design Of The Times, DOTT07, can be included here as it also tries to escape the traditional limitations of the design discipline to address the larger changes towards which our civilization is heading (DoP; DOTT07).

Perhaps the greatest contribution this approach can make is to use the craft, skill and material from within design to anchor the work within the mindset of designers and continue to raise social issues. Instead of aiming too high and leaving the tangible quality of material design they use the very "materialness" of design and craft to raise social questions. The intervention does therefore not only have only a social quality but also a very concrete incarnation around which the "issue" and its community can be summoned. The objects become "boundary objects" that connects two "communities of practice" in order to expose and overcome disharmonies and negotiate further transdisciplinary understanding, such as those between amateurs and professionals, or museum pedagogues and visitors. These objects are preferably material and tangible although they are interfacing different social worlds, but their structure make them recognizable for both, as they are "simultaneously concrete and abstract, specific and general, conventional and customized." (Star & Griesemer 1989: 408) They can thus be attractors and intersectors between diverse social worlds, perhaps something like the homeless vehicles of Wodiczko.

The discipline of "critical design" makes extensive use of this type of experiment, and at the same time submits the design discipline to a severe critical appraisal. It aims to pose questions rather than provide answers and make complex issues tangible and therefore debatable. It draws attention to the social, cultural and ethical implications of design, aspects we usually do not see (Dunne 1999; Dunne & Raby 2001; Jeremijenko 2004).

This type of criticism that questions design is used by many interventionist groups and often with the aim of engaging the audience in the act of knowledge production, creating workshops and shared public laboratories for experiments. A wide spectrum can be seen, from legitimizing and highlighting unseen practices such as the innovations produced by prison inmates and which are described in Temporary Services' book *Prisoners' Inventions* (2005), to the manifestation and creation of public monuments of successful but officially "forgotten" social interventions, like the civil public monuments for the Black Panthers made by Center for Tactical Magic (Gach & Paglen 2003). The work "Terminal Air" (2007), by the Institute of Applied Autonomy, is also interesting from this perspective as it is a mapping tool, that uncovered the flight paths of the secret CIA "ghost planes", or "torture taxis", that illegally transported prisoners across the planet after 9/11. The data revealing these flight paths was in many cases collected and published by globally networked amateur planespotters.

One art group of special interest in this context is the Critical Art Ensemble, as their projects often celebrate the amateur as a key actor in knowledge production, and who promotes the protection of civil society and the heightening of democratic climate of open discussion through "amateur intelligence operations" (1994: 23). For CAE it is important to engage amateurs since they

> have the ability to spot contradictions and rhetorical cover-ups within the dominant paradigms, are freer to recombine elements of paradigms thought dead or unrelated, and can apply everyday life experience to their deliberations with greater ease than can specialists. […] Most importantly, however, amateurs are not invested in institutionalized systems of knowledge production and policy construction, and hence do not have irresistible forces guiding the outcome of their efforts, such as maintaining a place in the funding hierarchy or maintaining prestige-capital. (2004: 147)

The CAE's work is concerned with engaging broader audiences and amateurs for knowledge production and activism and ranges from hands-on tactics and theorizing on civil electronic disobedience (1994), drawing up methods for supporting tactical media initiatives (2000) to the distribution of simplified labs that can test food for the presence of genetically modified components (2002).

They actively engage amateurs and greatly value their contribution, both to science and to the public and democratic discussion. Bringing science to the public is a high priority in a democratic society, not the least when it concerns critical issues such as gene modification of both animals and crops. They oppose the view that "science is too difficult for anyone other than a specialist to understand", a viewpoint which mean is only partly true, but chiefly because it is a dangerous distinction as it separates science from society (2002: 4). They propose that not only information and knowledge must be decentralized but also the tools and labs, procedures with which they are continually experimenting with throughout their projects. For example in "Free Range Grain" where they produced an open mobile lab for analysing genetically modified food, showing that non-scientists can use mythological technology and engage in advanced experiments. Another example is their "Contestational Biology" project that takes up discussions about corporate initiatives to consolidate and control the world's food supply through patents on plants.

They mean that "artistic creation" can be used to establish public forums for speculation and discussion, where every amateur or cultural producer can "contribute to the perpetual fight against authoritarianism." (1994: 27)

From this perspective the contribution of the amateur is not meant to be extensive, unique or deeply specialized addition to knowledge or practice, but a small participation in the open debate. The role of the artist or designer is to open a nische for the fellow amateur for gaining access. Every little new interface is a new possibility for change to the better. This addition of many small changes is something we will follow in the next line of practice.

a small change line

Another of the lines is that of "small change". The small change approach appears throughout this thesis as a perspective on change but it also gives a special approach on how to *do things*. In my view small change accentuates a design-driven, from the bottom-up perspective, and even though it also carries critical implications I see this line mostly from a solution-aimed stance, with what it works. Small change encourages small-scale initiatives, even without any plans to enlarge them or make them a part of a larger ideology. Most importantly it encourages people to get hands-on, to start immediately and to develop the practice through small experiments along the way. For the development practitioner Nabeel Hamdi, the small change is a feasible scale from which things can grow, and we need to study and work with methods on this scale to understand it better. According to Hamdi, it is a serendipitous line, that combines the competence of the development practitioner with a good measure of idealism and pragmatism. The key aim here is to get organized and to create possibilities for emergence and synergies between small projects. This is how the larger movements will start up. This means that no action can be isolated, but development has to mean inter-development, "when 'I' can emerge as 'we', and when 'we' is inclusive of 'them'." (Kaplan cited in Hamdi 2004: xvi) For practices like this, Hamdi means that

> There are few sacred prototypes to follow, no best practice for export, no brand names that guarantee quality. Instead approximation and serendipity are the norm – the search for scientific precision is displaced in favour of informed improvisations, practical wisdom, integrated thinking and good judgement based on a shared sense of justice and equity, and on common sense. (xxii)

To facilitate this process and set the scale for improvisations Hamdi cites the Intermediate Technology Development Group's maxims as ideas for leading practice,

- If you want to go to places, start from where you are.
- If you are poor, start with something cheap.
- If you are uneducated, start with something simple.
- If you live in a poor environment, and poverty makes markets small, start with something small.
- If you are unemployed, start with using your own labour power, because any productive use of it is better than letting it lie idle. (xiii)

However, according to Hamdi, getting these small-scale initiatives organized and connecting small

practices into forming emergence is central to development. He frames emergence as "the ability to organize and become sophisticated, to move from one kind of order to another higher level of order" (xviii).

The reason I stress this small scale and the organization of small initiatives is that in this perspective the small matters. Projects from the kitchen table or from the knitting circle can facilitate change when networked, rather like the amateur programmer who adds his open source code to the Internet-connected community and so building powerful software. Highlighted throughout this research are the connectors or the interfaces that allow the small to reach the others that are small, to form alliances and networks and to reach "higher levels of order". This point of view accentuates the need to form connections and alliances between parts and it requires us to oscillate between the independent and interdependent.

While many of the artistic interventions mentioned throughout this thesis are very constructive they do not form expressive alliances with other examples or ostensively build on others experiences often enough. As in most other practices it is important to be "unique", or the "first" in their practice, it is the avant-garde that counts. Small change is rather the opposite, as exemplified in Buckminster Fuller's example of the "trimtab", the small trailing edge at rudder of a big ship that creates the turbulence that makes if turn around. While the avant-garde pushes the bow, small change aims to adjust the trimtab, making the small change practice not the avant-garde but instead the derriere-garde. In the small change perspective the emphasis is different from the spectacle of the big or new, for the intention is to build small additions, draw parallels and open passages between already existing forces and examples. Small change is all about "open source", sharing code, of building together and on the works of others. Every project is a force for others to use, to ride, to build upon, to hijack and to make their own. It is not so interesting if the idea is your unique contribution – the question is; how does it work together with others?

The process throughout this line does not stress uniqueness, instead it is part of the hacktivist abstract machine, a part of many connected lines and a form of meme shared by many. The initiatives and forces are already out there but following this line of though the idea is to gather the small embryonic initiatives together in small proposals and to intensify and multiply all small experiments for small change. This might seem like a home-brewing approach to social injustice and to some even appear unfocused or naïve. However, this is the affirmative purpose of the small change projects. They follow the maxim of Buckminster Fuller – "dare to be naïve"!

the diffraction between lines

The design theorist Håkan Edeholt (2004) has proposed a mode of thinking in design when he highlights the possibility of understanding design practice by blending diffraction with reflection. Diffraction is originally an optical term used by Donna Haraway to explain a mode of thinking that is different from "reflection", as it optically fragments the rays of light to spread in different angles rather than just mirror an image. As light passes through a prism it bends and diffracts and this allows us to record the different rays of light that was in the original ray. For me, the greatest possibility of using this concept of diffraction is in the division of rays as forms of energy and as frequencies of light or movements. Diffraction offers a way of looking for patterns of difference in energy, and does not try to bring them into one format, or as one reflected ray, or a single linear "tree-shape". Seen from a specific subjective standpoint it offers us a way of putting an emphasis on practice, on process, on ways to do things, rather than the meaning of things in themselves. It underlines a multiplicity of forces rather than singularities, lines rather than points.

> While retaining a place for vision, diffraction is more about registering movement (as when light passes through the slits of a prism and then diffracted rays are registered on something like a screen). Diffraction is about registering histories of movement in a field of moving forces such that the movement of dynamism of forces (contexts and processes) can be reoriented or redirected, that is, disturbed and changed. (Ticineto Clough & Schneider: 342f)

Here we are beginning to look at movement, along lines, energies and forces. From this perspective we can follow several lines and let them intersect so as to create new intensities and new possibilities. Further on Edeholt continues to develop how diffraction can be used as a nuanced form of criticism that is aimed

more at redirecting processes rather than critically debunking them. Here he stumbles on what I before characterized as the abstract machine of hacktivism, that of action.

> This is when criticism by diffraction becomes more desirable, if not necessary; when intervention becomes essential, sometimes to stop, but more often to interrupt, redirect, or reorient the process of technological elaboration. (Ticineto Clough & Schneider: 343)

Here the linear root of sequential process is interrupted and diffraction sets out to offer us more possible ways of reading multiple lines of both human agency and technology. Consequently, it involves the intersection, redirection and reorientation of the actors involved. This brings us back to the way it is put into practice and the way we do things and intervene with systems, forces and lines. Using diffraction the perspective is not from the reflection of the author-subject, but from a multitude of situated or "strong" perspectives. As Haraway says,

> Reflexivity has been much recommended as a critical practice, but my suspicion is that reflexivity, like reflection, only displaces the same elsewhere, setting up the worries about copy and original and the search for the authentic and really real. Reflexivity is a bad trope for escaping the false choice between realism and relativism in thinking about strong objectivity and situated knowledges in technoscientific knowledge. What we need is to make a difference in material-semiotic apparatuses, to diffract the rays of technoscience so that we get more promising interference patterns on the recording films of our lives and bodies. Diffraction is an optical metaphor for the effort to make a difference in the world. (Haraway 1997: 16)

This means diffraction is not only a mode of thinking or of searching for another base for knowledge, but a perspective where each line diffracts into the multiple, of subject *and* tool *and* skill *and* energy *and* system *and…* (etc). It is a perspective where, to use the words of Deleuze and Guattari "there is no primacy of the individual" (2004: 111).

An interesting perspective on diffraction is that which Edeholt develops and where he sees the method as the bending of light rays so allowing them to light up two sides of design practice. These two sides display on the one hand how things "are", something which he sees as an engineering perspective, and on the other hand how things "ought to be", which he see as an innovative attitude – two forms of reality that are constantly juggled by the designer (Edeholt 2004: 52f).

In Edeholt's example, science has always been firmly connected to understanding how things "are", and it has extended this line into time, from history to the future. Historians and archaeologists examine how things "were", scientists how things "are", and forecasters how things "will be", something we could see as being chronological points along one historical line. Edeholt lets the reflective practice proposed by Donald Schön in his iconic book *The Reflective Practitioner*, happen along this line, and sees it being trapped within the perspective of how things "are", which somewhat limits the designer's perspectives towards the "possible". That is why he instead proposes a blending of the reflection with Haraway's wider diffraction, into how things "ought to be" (Edeholt 2004: 53).

The "ought to be" timeline, was traditionally the arena for cultural debate and the home of utopias and politics, as well as design and of discussing how thing "ought to become". The discussion of how this "ought to have been" has been the home of historical revisionists. This "ought to be" timeline has lately fallen out of the discussions in favour of how things "are", something that is apparent in contemporary politics and cultural debate (Edeholt 2004: 56f), something we can see in the death of the grand utopian projects. In this sense, as all innovative design is located at the "ought to be" axis, if it goes beyond being just a reaction, all design actually concerns the political, and diffracts into the future as a wide palette of possibilities.

However, it should be noted that Edeholt's proposal on how things "ought to be" is not from a normative or technocratic position, but from a more humble stance of proposals, gestures or offerings, or a designerly "pointing" in the direction of the possible. This possibility is more how things "might be", than "ought to be". This is indeed the perspective of innovation, of the designer helping to create the radical new or the formerly unthought, as it is in the focus of Edeholt's study. However, this idea is slightly different from my research, as the lines we will follow here are not focused on innovation or the radically new, but rather those lines that support emergent processes, intensify energies or amplify potentiali-

ties. Most seeds are already out there for the designer to plant and nurture.

Using Edeholt's and Haraway's perspectives of diffraction could offer help escaping the subject-centred and one-line reflective process and instead invite a multitude of lines to meet and intersect. This could better help us to see the forces that can create synergies, co-operations and co-design practices and where not every design comes from the genius mind of the grand auteur. Observing and analysing cases could offer some help with which to describe similar processes, but that implies a distanced observer, stopping to scrutinize one "point" and defending one position, rather than moving along several lines. This is where a diffractive perspective can offer better support for a more direct cooperative practice that emphasises symbiotic or *mutualistic* collaborations. These are potentialities that can be better seen or mapped through a non-linear process of building validity and instead use a rhizomatic form of validity.

rhizomatic validity

In order to build up a dense form of argument, while at the same time still emphasising the movement, practices and forces along the lines, another form of validity is required. It will necessarily have to cope with discrepancies and displacements to preserve the desired *non-reductionistic holism* that DeLanda called for (DeLanda 2006: 11). For this holism we should not aim at unity or strict horizontal linearity and nor should we aim at nihilistic relativism, "but partial, contextual ways of dealing and coping with differences that should not be diluted and levelled out." (Hannula 2006: 76) It will however require a form of what John Rawls calls "reasonable disagreement" rather than a harmonized consensual agreement (Rawls 1973).

What we must find is a validity that does not build walls but lets movement through, one that does not ask "is it true?" but "does it work?" In an article, sociologist Penni Lather (1993) examines what she means is sociology's "fertile obsession" with validity from a feminist poststructural framework. She seeks to "rupture validity as a regime of truth" and to find a "reconceptualized validity that is grounded in theorising our practice" (674). She seeks multiple forms of validity other than the standard validity of correspondence and interested forms that are non-refer-

ential but at the border of disciplines (675). This would be "a nomadic and dispersed validity" which she calls a "rhizomatic validity" that is "to let contradictions remain in tension, to unsettle from within, to dissolve interpretations by marking them as temporary, partial, invested" (681).

Lather's discourse-centred exploration could be used to explore the way rhizomatic validity "unsettles from within, taps underground" and how it "generates new locally determined norms of understanding" to a form that "supplements and exceeds the stable and the permanent" (686). This would be a form of triangulation between the lines followed throughout the research, with the reader weaving a meshwork of discussions and examples. The reader's meshwork would interlink the forces of the various lines, to breach congealed discourses and the constraints of theoretic authority. This meshwork of lines would be valid in itself, as it covers a wide surface of arguments and counterarguments, yet it would still offer many possible readings and viewpoints.

The beauty of Lather's rhizomatic validity is how well its lines can be experienced *ad hoc*, as the reader passes through them, building his or her own connections between the lines (yes, reading *between* the lines). The rhizome is in this sense similar to the way an Archimboldo painting forms a face out of fruits, or an image of a duck/hare – consisting of various inseparable, yet independent, forms at the same time. This is close to what architect Charles Jencks calls an *adhocism*, a form of *bricolage,* a localised assemblage or an immediate and purposeful action, which he, for example, sees in the Surrealist Exquisite Corpse:

> When the sheet is finally finished, a put together Exquisite Corpse is disclosed which has as many parts and variable interpretatins as there are folds in the paper. While this form of adhocism is tenuous because its lack of consistet purpose (because it is not controlled by a directive concept and does not contain considered realtions between the parts) it still can produce convincing examples. (Jencks & Silver 1972: 24)

The projects and examples presented throughout this thesis form subsets or abstract landscapes through which we can navigate. According to Jencks, *adhocism* should not be seen as arbitrary or complacent. Instead, what distinguishes adhocism from

random shuffling or other substitutes for thought is that it has a specific *purpose.* (Jencks & Silver 1972: 37)

This purpose is to create a whole that is larger than the sum of the parts which like the Archimboldo painting portrays the model from a specific perspective of what we can call a "poetic exactness". This notion is something elaborated on by the architect Raoul Bunschoten in his project *Urban Flotsam* (2001) where he explores how gaming techniques can be a tool for the collaborative handling of the complexity of urban planning.

> Because of the complexity, ubiquity, instability and volatility of the urban condition, it is difficult to image their form or organizational structures. To do so, there is a need for intuitive thinking and even poetic imagining. Such complexity asks for what the Japanese philosopher Koji Take calls "poetic exactness". This exactness needs powerful images and metaphors to communicate and invite participation in proposed undertakings. (Bunschoten *et al* 2001: 20)

In this sense, we might see the lines we follow through the thesis in a new, clearer and more distinct light. We can follow the lines to find a meshworked rhizomatic validity shaped from the intersections of a multiplicity of "poetically exact lines".

a meshwork for redesigning design

This brings us to a convergence of the previously discussed process lines and their rhizomatic system. We can see how they interweave in a form of symbiotic or living system where they interact to heighten the connectivity to the proposed examples and projects and the abstract machines that run through the practices of hacking, heresy, fan fiction, small change and amongst Pro-Ams.

All these lines share an aspect of "metadesign", as multiple lines of practice and understanding can help to facilitate better understanding of how design can re-design itself. Like a living self-reproducing system or organism, "metadesign" is engaged in what the biologists Humberto Maturana and Francisco Varela call *autopoiesis,* a living organism's reproduction and change guided from the inside (Maturana 1997). This self-organized process is dynamically created by a multiplicity of interacting parts redirecting and transmitting flows of energy from outside.

This ecological and systems theory perspective of metadesign is examined by design theorist John Wood in his "attainable-utopias" projects (Wood 2008).

Wood's point of view on the problems addressed by design are that these are simply too big to be handled, even by specialists, *within* the diverse but isolated disciplines of design. Instead these challenges must be met through a wider collaboration between disciplines and designers (Wood 2007b). Several interacting and shared open design practices must synergize into an ecosystem of harmonizing practices in order to meet our future challenges. It is not enough to only think "green" or only "reduce, reuse, recycle" – all must interact to form a symbiosis that is able to re-think or re-design design. The aim of a metadesign practice is to make radical systematic and sustainable changes beyond what is considered possible. This is attained by first making the "impossible" discussable, then thinkable, and finally attainable through the tools of design (Wood 2007b). According to Wood, this metadesign practice aims at creating what Buckminster Fuller called a "synergies of synergies" (Fuller 1975), by strongly emphasising co-design and collaboration as the only way forward.

The metadesign approach is thus a furthering of a participatory design that aims at a much broader collaboration of co-designers and of inviting more partners to round table discussions and actions. With the determined use of many fields of knowledge and sharing these, co-designers can tap into larger pools of skill and knowledge by creating better interfaces for discussion and collaboration. This is the way towards a collaborative design of "micro-utopias" (Wood 2007a). With the involvement of many more stakeholders and collaborators design can re-design itself from within, using the forces of several lines of practice, to change its processes and move towards more cooperative and responsible ends. Indeed, towards possibilities previously considered "impossible".

Wittgenstein wrote, "one of the most deeply rooted errors of philosophy is that it understands possibility as a shadow of reality" (Wittgenstein cited in Zielinski 2006: 28). On the contrary the opposite might be valid, for in Siegfried Zielinski's book *Deep Time of the Media,* we can see the roles reversed. These lines are about possibilities, and reality is only their shadow. (Zielinski 2006: 28)

To sum up all these diverse process lines, we have had to follow several process lines that intersect with the abstract machine of hacktivism. This has taken us from the hands-on reflection of action research, by way of artistic interventions aiming at social change to tactic lines of amateur open source engaged projects. We have seen lines diffract to reveal potentiality and how all these lines form a meshwork that provides a form of rhizomatic validity. We have ended with attempts to re-design design practice and seen recent endeavours to frame new dynamic approaches to design where organic collaborations and symbiotic practices have been prototyped. All these lines can help us see the projects throughout this thesis in a new light, but perhaps most importantly they can amplify the hands-on practices of other designers. This is a modest proposal that can add to the further development of both design practice and design education.

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This thesis consists of a series of extensive projects which aim to explore a new designer role for fashion. It is a role that experiments with how fashion can be reverse engineered, hacked, tuned and shared among many participants as a form of social activism. This social design practice can be called the hacktivism of fashion. It is an engaged and collective process of enablement, creative resistance and DIY practice, where a community share methods and experiences on how to expand action spaces and develop new forms of craftsmanship. In this practice, the designer engages participants to reform fashion from a phenomenon of dictations and anxiety to a collective experience of empowerment, in other words, to make them become fashion-able.

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