Beyond Resistance: Strategic Art as an Escape from the Political Subject of Violence

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Abstract

Political governance is currently situated within a state of modernity that is dependent upon categorization. This fetish on categorization has resulted in a continuous process of "othering" of people and places that ends in marginalization and ontological exclusion from politics proper making violence the genuine political subject. By employing the genealogical method to four case studies of strategic art, one can see how strategic art challenges current modes of reason to reshape modernity as a part of a "truth process" and likewise begins to altogether abandon reason to completely escape the political subject of violence. May Ayim, Ingrid Mwangi, Princess Hijab, and NiqaBitch all individually demonstrate how various mediums of art can be used as a political process that liberates human political subjects from the political subject of violence within France and Germany. Theses artist's lessons offer constructive feedback on political governance that necessitates the need to approach human identities with enormous specificity while awaiting an epistemic revolution.

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Introduction: Why Art is Needed

A good picture is equivalent to a good deed. –Vincent Van Gogh

Strategic art is an important part of politics as a way of resistance that is able to escape the imbedded, problematic ontology of modernity contributing to "good" governance. Different from mere protest art or resistance art, strategic art is a struggle for everyone's voice to be regarded as legitimate with specific policy goals in mind. One might think of the graffiti on the wall that divides Israel and Palestine as an example. By "protesting the wrong . . . suffered, [the artistic subject] is presented . . . as the immediate embodiment of society as such, as the stand-in for the Whole of Society, in its universality, . . . (we are All against others who stand only for their particular privileged interests)."[1] Simply, strategic art is concerned with governance and is particularly relevant for democratic governance. As part of this, strategic art is often concerned with disrupting bad governance as a way of giving voice to the "unsayable". It even includes humorous examples like sending knitted vaginas to legislators over women's health debates when only one woman was given the chance to testify in the US this preceding spring. Although renowned contemporary philosopher Slavoj Žižek suggest that simply disturbing the visible and proposing different lateral links is elementary to resistance, it remains one of the few forms of resistance that is open to the masses in various forms and is clear fertile ground for continual contestation of modes of being.[2] These are, of course, all themes that will be consistently called upon throughout this paper, but it is imperative to understand in what framework that art (and artist) may be knowingly or unknowingly acting in and with their performances of strategic art. Strategic art offers a way of not only disturbing the sensible, but of providing a way of escape from the crisis of modernity.

One clear example where the crisis of modernity unfolds is within the political arena, especially as politics relates to legitimate governance. For democracies, legitimacy comes in many different forms,

[1] "Afterword," in The Politics of Aesthetics: The Distribution of the Sensible (Continuum International Publishing Group, 2006), 70.
[2] Ibid., 77.

but central to all of them is a foundation of governance based upon the people whom the government serves, and good governments should serve all people. Despite the impossibility of governments representing and enacting all the policies and beliefs of the peoples it serves, there is an ontological assumption of universality in that all people ought to be heard. This is where politics proper, as a process of ethical advancement, begins. Politics begins not in the argumentation of one policy/philosophy/ or logic over another, but with the very recognition of human subjects as legitimate partners within the political process. "Politics revolves around what [or who] is seen and what can be said about it, around who has the ability to see and the talent to speak, around the properties of space and the possibilities of times."[3] Simply put, politics is about the aesthetic- what (or who) can actually be expressed and perceived by the senses. Yet, within modern politics, government "implicitly separates those who take part from those who are excluded, and it therefore presupposes prior aesthetic division between the visible and the invisible, the audible and the inaudible, the sayable and the unsayable."[4] The problem I take up here is not that some people simply are not heard – for it is likely an impossibility to hear everyone. Nor is the problem one of silencing dissidents or citizens – which is a real problem that requires further study but is beyond the scope of this paper. Rather, it is a problem of fundamentally excluding voices that belong to the political debate.

More often than not, those who are generally excluded from the political debate are immigrants or other marginalized peoples, such as racial groups. These people are often, problematically, homogenized into the category of "the other." This is in fact one of the fundamental problems of the current age so obsessed with categorization: namely modernity. How does one relates to "the other" and where is the boundary drawn between "us" and "them"? Moreover, within the context of modernity, resistance as a tool for political change becomes problematic. It is problematic because it often perpetuates the difference between "us" and "them," continuously relying upon the use of borders and

[3] Jacques Rancière and Gabriel Rockhill, *The Politics of Aesthetics: The Distribution of the Sensible* (Continuum International Publishing Group, 2006), 13.
[4] Jacques Rancière and Gabriel Rockhill, *The Politics of Aesthetics: The Distribution of the Sensible* (Continuum International Publishing Group, 2006), 3.

boundaries within political movements to further rights, justice, and other initiatives for one group, but which often come at the expense of another. This type of resistance or politics is unsustainable at best. This is why strategic art is of great importance for politics. Since art is not subservient to the artist, it is not trapped within the human condition tied to politics. It is not a political subject at all, but is something beyond politics. Thus, art's distance from the human condition enables it to speak to the political subject. As such, strategic art becomes a critical component of political governance as a way of escaping the problem of governance and its consistent dependence on the relation to the "other." Indeed, the constant reification of an "other" remains as a fundamental problem of contemporary political governance as easily seen within the current political climate. From the war on terror and ethnic conflicts on the international stage, to citizenship debates and body politics, identity politics are no longer simply a form of political contestation but in fact make up the foundation of the debate itself. This is precisely what Stuart Hall meant when he said that discourse can become ideology as language is used to describe "facts," determining what is true and false.[5] For it is often the very way that problems are framed, perceived, and discussed that perpetuate further problems (ie. asking how many deaths are acceptable in war rather than trying to prevent conflict).

It is because of the problems around identity politics that strategic art is so closely related to cultural studies. Since art is tied to issues of representation and language it is invariably taken up by critical theorists and scholars. As Judith Butler says, "nothing is more fundamental in understanding the world, and for determining how we live together and act in it, than the capacity for thought and language, nothing is more inscrutable, or more difficult to disentangle from its precedent and subsequent conditions . . . and from its current preoccupation."[6] This is, of course, an epistemological problem that all fields must inevitably deal with at some point or another. However, within politics this problem has very real consequences that do not simply confuse language but also has the potential to marginalize peoples by

[5] Stuart Hall et al., eds., Modernity: An Introduction to Modern Societies, 1st ed. (Wiley-Blackwell, 1996).
[6] Judith Butler, Society and Culture Bundle RC: Bodies That Matter: On the Discursive Limits of "Sex", 1st ed. (Routledge, 2011).

continuing to make them "the other." Likewise, the problem of language and expression gets taken up in Media through the means of representation. It is at this point that art, as a particular type of media, and politics collide once more. This is why Payne and other feminist scholars are so critical and involved with media representations, for "forms of media—in the broadest sense of this term—are an invaluable part in furthering the determinate goals and specific demands of a given political movement."[7] Returning to the earlier point about discourse and framing, this insight becomes even more important since media- in its broadest form- does not necessarily have to be cognizant of the political project it is furthering.

> Alternative media can be characterised by the continuous attempts made by researchers to find and refine suitable frameworks as a way of, first, complementing existing media theories which have proven insufficient at understanding the specificity of these media forms in opposition to dominant mass media, and second in a way that takes into account the vast complexity within this subset of media production.[8]

This emphasis on specificity and complexity is ultimately a fundamental critique on the identity politics that so often seek to totalize and essentialize identities. It shows how identities are tied with issues of power and dominance. This is perhaps most visible in ethnic war, which might better be framed as ethnicized conflict, where opposing sides are identities that necessarily eliminate specificity.[9] Rather, strategic art, like certain feminist media, frames itself as counter-hegemonic. This positioning has the benefit of not only clarifying what are forms of strategic art since it excludes apolitical Media (such as sports coverage), but also "provide forums for the 'direct voices' of 'subjugated knowledges' in the Foucauldian sense."[10] Thus, by countering the hegemonic narratives, one returns to governance, not as an excluded voice that ontologically cannot speak, but as a productive and constructive means of keeping democracy open. This counter-hegemonic narrative might be better described as a "truth process" or a means to continually discover truth which is so often hidden or dispelled by hegemony. Yet in order to

[7] Jenny Gunnarsson Payne, "Feminist Media as Alternative Media? A Literature Review" 1, no. 2 (November 2009): 190.
[8] Ibid., 194.
[9] Rogers Brubaker, Ethnicity Without Groups (Harvard University Press, 2006).
[10] Payne, "Feminist Media as Alternative Media?," 199.

demonstrate how strategic art is a viable means for the political goal of open, democratic governance a firm theoretical and ethical grounding must be established.

Methodology

This paper is ultimately guided by the question, "In what way(s) can strategic art be used as a 'truth processes' for open, democratic society?" First, I talk about the inherent problem of reason and modernity with their violent ontologies that result in the closure of democracy. Second, I establish a theoretical grounding framing strategic art as a way to re-think reason an ethical "truth process," and as a way to escape reason altogether. Then, I take an interdisciplinary approach to analyze four different examples of strategic art (two in France and two in Germany), drawing principally upon the fields of cultural studies and political science, but with reference to law and political theory as a means to substantiate my claims. Each of my case studies is a different primary source (ie. form of strategic art), and whenever possible I try to let the art(ist) speak for its/themselves and merely situate the(ir) work within the larger discussion of democratic governance and the politics of violence. The choice of case studies was intentional to show how strategic art can be used within two democratic countries that each has a very different model of governance as it concerns exclusion/inclusion of (dis)privileged peoples. However, both are experiencing similar social crises of "multiculturalism" that are relevant to current identity politics. Then, each country represents one of the largest democratic countries in the world, while what similarities there can be said for sharing an EU identity provides a level of consistency for analysis. Finally the paper concludes with remarks about democratic governance in France and Germany specifically with implications for other "Western" democracies before discussing several potential avenues for further scholarship.

In order to analyze the situation(s) of strategic art I employ the genealogical method by Michel Foucault looking at specific case studies of strategic art out of concern for diagnosing or understanding

the present, regarded as writing "the history of the present."[11] This allows me to look at art not merely as a metaphysical substance with aesthetic importance, but allows me to look at "the constitution of the subject across history which has led us up to the modern concept of the self."[12] As such, I have discovered a unique development of identity politics within France and Germany (where my case studies of strategic art occur) and how access to the political has been based upon such an identity. From here strategic art creates a practical and constructive means of intervention within the political to keep democratic contestation open and escape the political subject of violence. This is in line with the Le Fortian notion of democratic governance that suggests at the center of democracy is a "situated void" where the place of power is empty, since power is to reside with the masses not with an institution or individual(s). The genealogical method is imperative for dealing with strategic art as it is a complex process, which can't be subordinated to some very general narrative. The arts must be dealt with in their specificity and locality, which is why case studies are a necessary unit of analysis. However, despite providing enormous explanatory power of specific political developments and their relation to strategic art, the genealogical method does not provide objective criteria that can be used on a broad basis in other contexts. As a method for specific phenomenon it greatly depends upon context, and thus lacks some transportability, but it is especially helpful for resolving current problems of governance in France and Germany and understanding democratic governance overall. In regards to my use of the genealogical method, I substantiate why my specific texts and contexts are valid examples for analysis. Then given the contextual framing inherent with the method, I have discovered that these "texts" do indeed provide a critical reading of how democracy remains open. This is perhaps the largest contribution of this paper, but this paper likewise demonstrates the utility of strategic art as a political process and contributes to the rich literature on the politics of aesthetics through insightful and developed examples.

[11] Michel Foucault, The Essential Works of Foucault: Ethics, Subjectivity and Truth. Ed. Paul Rabinow. Vol. 1. London: Penguin Books, 1997.
[12]Michel Foucault, "About the Beginnings of the Hermenuetics of the Self: Two Lectures at Dartmouth." Political Theory (1993): 198-227

Chapter 1: Crisis of Modernity, the Political Subject of Violence, and Evil

As previously alluded to, strategic art is important and relevant to the extent that it allows one to escape the political subject of violence. As such, before any proper argument about the state of democratic governance or the place for strategic art within the political, a discussion is needed of what the political subject of violence actually is. Moreover how is the political subject of violence situated within the foundation of politics and accordingly thought and reason: namely modernity? After diagnosing the political situation, this chapter discusses the possibility of disturbing and escaping violence by utilizing strategic art.

Ultimately modernity is a consequent of the historical conditions leading to its intellectual primacy. This of course draws upon the history of feudal Europe and the role of the Church in both life and thought. As theological absolutism began to collapse in Europe, man became incessantly preoccupied with the management of doubt without the ability to depend solely upon Christian theology.[13] The subsequent and often taken for granted disassociation between the political and religious life necessarily resulted in a new means to manage societal development: upon knowledge and a reason. However, the new reliance on modern reason as the construct of political society transformed the subject of politics.

> [The] very constitution as an insatiably passionate rational creature, endlessly preying upon its own kind but capable reflectively of disclosing to itself the determining conditions of its existence and of formulating the laws required to improve upon it was said simultaneously to be the root cause of violence and the foundations of politics.[14]

As such, the political subject became the political subject of violence itself; driven by a desire to dispel doubt through reason. Violence, not necessarily in the physical sense, became the principal means of securing oneself from the existential burden of doubt, a violence based on the fetish of categorization to further intellectual development. This violence is ontologically dependent on the process of "othering"

[13] Howard Caygill, "Violence, Civility, and the Predicaments of Philosophy," in *The Political Subject of Violence*, ed. Michael Dillon and David Campbell (Manchester Univ Pr, 1993).
[14] David Campbell and Michael Dillon, "The End of Philosophy and the End of International Relations," in *The Political Subject of Violence*, ed. David Campbell and Michael Dillon (Manchester Univ Pr, 1993), 7.

inherent to categories. This was managed by "displacing violence to the frontiers or the boundaries between newly emerging political formations, and beyond to the territories that they were colonizing."[15] Herein lays the foundation for the modern nation-state with some of the first seeds sown of the crisis of modernity. For certainty of reason was only found within the very fragile limits of the state: a certainty not self-evident but dependent on the expulsion of doubt.

It is based upon this logic that the consistent reification of nation-states has occurred, for its stability demands constant delimitation. It is as a result of this instability that the political subject of violence becomes obvious. With the advent of globalization and all the inter/cross/trans/border relations and in fact the dissolution of many borders- violence returns to the center of the political as boundaries are constantly in flux. In fact, "reason applied to the political subject of violence – indeed reason as the political subject of violence, in the form of political knowledge and understanding" remains central to any discussion of politics.[16] Reason, in the form of unconditioned knowledge, unconditioned understanding, and a promise of the potential of good governance is the legitimate cause of human oppression in the world, for "the presumption of the idea represented by the unconditioned . . . actually precludes what it seeks to facilitate; namely an understanding of what is."[17] In fact, Howard Caygill further discloses the inherence of violence within reason by revealing the supposed assumption that the world is in fact pre-ordained to be understood by human judgment because such a claim binds one to be violent towards heterogeneity by insisting on absolutes.[18] As such, reason as we understand it is the very destabilizing factor of modernity. For along with globalization, Caygill quotes Conrad saying, "the direct, violent encounter with the colonized other recoils on the colonizer not as doubt, but as the horror of total and

[15] Ibid.
[16] Ibid., 9.
[17] Ibid.
[18] Ibid., 1.

ultimately self-destructive disorientation."[19] Thus the crisis of modernity can, and ought to be read, as much more than a mere problem of governance, but the very underpinnings of intellect.

Yet if there is no reason to believe that the world is able to be read then it might seem that the crisis of modernity has brought society to an even greater impasse. Quickly, since it will be discussed later, this is not to be confused with a defense of relativism- where truth is to be understood on a subjective basis. This is because relativism, despite being a perhaps nuanced difference, is likewise a modern mode of reasoning, and it is reason that is in question here. Moving forward, if it is indeed the case that we, as humans, do not have access to absolutes- and indeed if insisting that reason provides certainty proves to be the principal bearer of violence then "we have to find a way, instead, of acknowledging our indebtedness to the otherness, alterity, and excess which overflows our phenomenological encounter with the world." [20] This remains as the principal goal and contribution of this project.

How does one acknowledge the debt to otherness? In what way is this tribute distinct from modern reason? In order to escape the inherent violence within modern reason, otherness and alterity should be recognized as ineradicable differences that are not only something to be celebrated and not feared, but are also valued for their unqualified ethical appeal that is so central to one's own self.[21] The goal is to create an "open [and] distinct ethical 'space' and 'time' which is not involved with the oppositions of the predicaments."[22] Despite some distinct ontological differences, the same sentiment is similarly expressed in Spivak's notion of radical multiculturalism.[23] But it is not enough to merely privilege opposite concepts (such as difference over identity or the marginalized over the dominant) for this merely perpetuates many of the same ontological problems of modernity but with a different

[19] Caygill, "Violence, Civility, and the Predicaments of Philosophy."
[20] Campbell and Dillon, "The End of Philosophy and the End of International Relations," 13.
[21] Emmanuel Levinas, *Totality and Infinity: An Essay on Exteriority*, 4th ed. (Springer, 1980).
[22] Campbell and Dillon, "The End of Philosophy and the End of International Relations," 16.
[23] Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, *A Critique of Postcolonial Reason: Toward a History of the Vanishing Present*, 1st ed. (Harvard University Press, 1999).

outcome. It is important to stress that this is no mere theoretical or a semantic difference, but is rather the foundation for articulating new predicates of thought. It is *constructive* rather than *deconstructive*, although, as one will later see, a certain level of deconstruction is necessary to reform new predicates.

This escape from the covert and violent ontology of modern reason and accordingly the political subject of violence is achieved through the "end of philosophy" in two senses. First, there is an end to the fetish of categorization that necessitates evil. This is because the "rational is no longer appropriate to the real" as the imposed boundaries of reason collapse in on themselves and civil society.[24] Then second because globalized technology begins to replace philosophy.[25] This is by no means an easy task as the domain of violence has become one of a theater of conflict in which "the representation of violence is integral to the conflict itself in that the representation of violence constructs the audience for, as well as the object of, violence."[26] It is at this point that projects of deconstruction and the politics of aesthetics intervene in the coming chapters. However, this may likewise be the only escape from the politics of violence as "the audience is directly and insistently invoked both morally and politically to be the legitimating and perpetuating subject. It is called-up, . . . ventriloquated."[27] It is not however a matter of a mere complacent public being manipulated, but rather much of the public space, as a product of modernity, must simultaneously overcome the politics of violence. Agents and agencies of representation (politics, academia, print and other media) must be transformed and overcome the fetish of categorization and reason. This escape from the crisis of modernity entails a new debate and consensus on the practices of civility and how one engages with and within politics. But let me be very clear in that there is no simple solution to changing the ontology of modern political thought, as such there is no promise of progress (itself a very modern notion). Rather, I am demonstrating that there is more to politics than an imbued violence, and there is a need for an "understanding of politics which *exceeds* the constraining

[24] Campbell and Dillon, "The End of Philosophy and the End of International Relations," 15.
[25] Simon Critchley, "Re-tracing the Political: Politics and Community in the Work of Philippe Lacoue-Labarthe and Jean-Luc Nancy," in *The Political Subject of Violence*, ed. Michael Dillon and David Campbell (Manchester Univ Pr, 1993).
[26] Campbell and Dillon, "The End of Philosophy and the End of International Relations," 15.
[27] Ibid.

ontological ambitions of the Western metaphysical tradition."[28] This necessarily includes a certain level of resistance- especially against those technologies, frames, and representations that are imbued with violence. It is from this point that strategic art serves as *a* constructive form of resistance that does not fall into the trap of precluding others through categorization.

Yet, although the violent ontology of modernity has been exposed- presenting the potential for intervention, a further clarification about why the politics of violence needs corrected at all needs discussed. The politics of violence, in fact, has even greater repercussions for society other than perpetuating an inadequate philosophy. The politics of violence is so problematic because it has resulted in the very closure of politics- which is no politics at all. This is especially problematic for democratic society that depends upon openness and contestation. This is a return to the second point of "the end of philosophy" as discussed in the preceding paragraph. As modern thinking and technologies seek to develop ontologies of unconditioned certainty (to manage doubt) transcendence becomes impossible (and politics closed). This is because modern thought (which we already saw is in fact the political subject) has become equated with metaphysics and technologies; politics too becomes equated with technologies. Then with the advent of globalized technologies, there emerges a totalitarianism of technology that is realized through politics to its (politics) own end. The end of politics, of course, is likewise a closure. For if you aim to speak the simple truth, and if you succeed, then there is nothing more to be said. The necessitated response to this then is

> "not that of Hegelian overcoming: the 'No: but . . .'. Rather, it is the post-Nietzschean surfeit: 'Well, yes; and . . .'. An affirmation of what is, in the insistence that in fact there is and can be much more to what is currently represented: that there is an excess of (political) being over appearance.[29]

This response of "well, yes; and . . ." then appears to be the only plausible means of conceiving a re-engagement of politics: a re-opening. One may acknowledge what does exists, but simultaneously entertain the notion that more can be known about it (thus the well, yes, and…).

[28] Ibid., 17.
[29] Ibid., 23.

The irony in this matter is that engagement in politics necessitates a participation in the very thing that has led to its closure: namely metaphysics, technologies, and the like to engage in change. This has led some scholars/philosophers to suggest the only possible re-entry is first through withdrawal from politics.[30] But withdrawal is no politics at all, and likewise still leaves the problem of politics as continually relevant. Lacouc-Labarthe and Nancy suggest rethinking the "essence of *le politic*" as a way to re-claim politics.[31] But a mere withdrawal and reconfiguration of political essence still demands some form of re-engagement while simultaneously avoiding the trap of engaging in the Hegelian metaphysical project that perpetuates the closure of politics. It is at this point that the Lefort's mode democracy (not to be confused with liberal democracy in Western countries) not only elucidates the very foundational question of why the politics of violence needs to be changed, but also provides the very window of opportunity to re-engage in politics. For Lefort, the place of power is structurally empty within a democracy.[32] Since the legitimation of power is therefore consistently open to debate, contestation, and struggle it is always open to reinvention, and escapes the politics of violence as it is acephalous thus ametaphysical (or at least altogether different metaphysical construction(s)). Since democracy is a community that becomes distinguished by something without existence it becomes what Nancy calls a "partage" or space where sharing without sublimation becomes possible.[33] This makes it clear that politics must then be configured neither around God (absolutism) nor metaphysics (modern reason) but instead on that which is not there- alterity as Levina suggests. This results in:

> a politics which is neither technology nor violence, but adopts for its career a continuous struggle which defines itself in terms of an ethical insurgency against the ineradicable and manifold

[30] Herbert Marcuse, *One-Dimensional Man: Studies in the Ideology of Advanced Industrial Society* (Beacon Press, 1991).
[31] Critchley, "Re-tracing the Political: Politics and Community in the Work of Philippe Lacoue-Labarthe and Jean-Luc Nancy."
[32] Oliver Marchart, *Post-foundational Political Thought: Political Difference in Nancy, Lefort, Badiou and Laclau* (Edinburgh University Press, 2007).
[33] Critchley, "Re-tracing the Political: Politics and Community in the Work of Philippe Lacoue-Labarthe and Jean-Luc Nancy."

> manifestations of violence and technology which distinguishes the modern political subject of violence.[34]

In simplest terms, this means that politics *is* the struggle (the contestation over the "void" of Lefort) it is something than cannot, and indeed should not, be stable. What then remains to be indicted for the politics of violence and the crisis of modernity? The answer is perhaps so obvious it is overlooked: security. "Security is the foundational value around which the political subject of violence revolves."[35] In fact, security is not just the foundational value, but also generates the formation of the political subject (which is the political subject of violence) which seeks to deny security to its enemy as it pursues its own security. This is because "the enemy of the politics of security is the very heterogeneity, difference, and . . . alterity that cannot and will not be assimilated into rational thought or practices because it simply always exceeds their categories."[36] Of course, this shows the importance of representational technologies for the real only exists to the extent it can be captured or understood through knowledge. This is in fact the link between the crisis of reason and security which has been discussed as the subject being implicated for the violent ontology of modernity. For once again returning to the fetish of categorization of modernity one can see that "the boundary . . . serves here to prefigure the space of, and the participants in, political violence."[37] The boundary of course returns us to the representations and those forms of technology that legitimize the distinction. Thus, it is from here that strategic art and the politics of aesthetics enters here as *a* way to meet the task of politics: namely to keep politics open and insecure- which is ironically the only way to "secure" democracy.

[34] Campbell and Dillon, "The End of Philosophy and the End of International Relations," 28.
[35] Ibid., 29.
[36] Ibid., 30.
[37] Ibid., 35.

Chapter 2: The ethic of strategic art: formulating a truth process

Moving beyond the crisis of modernity and the philosophical choice of employing strategic art as a way to begin to emerge from the cyclical trap already outline, one begins to see the utility of strategic art as a political process. For on some level it is simply a political movement. Yet, Spivak warns, "most political movements fail in the long run because of the absence of [ethical] engagement."[38] However, whereas ethics is an "experience of the impossible" for Spivak since one can never engage with every subaltern, I aim to take up ethics as a truth-process put forward by Badiou. This is to avoid the hopelessness of "the experience of the impossible" and instead reify that "if there is a task *specific* to politics, it must be to find clear and universal principles of justice that *breaks* with the infinite complexities" of alterity.[39] It is from this that one can see the importance of strategic art from two distinct philosophical traditions. One views strategic art not just as a political process, but likewise as a truth process or an ethic that re-works reason and the other seeks to altogether abandon reason.

The first philosophical tradition that I wish to address is that of strategic art as a political process. This tradition does not so much seek to escape the crisis of modern reason, but rather seeks to disrupt current notions of reason while still relying upon logic as a foundational principle. As outlined by Badiou, truth is "the material course traced . . . by the eventual supplementation. It is thus an *immanent break*."[40] Truth is a process that is rooted in specific contexts but breaks from prevailing languages. As such, the process of truth is an event, a fidelity to said event, which finally leads to a new truth. Badiou uses this break down of truth as a process to outline the occurrence of evil from "the convocation by an event of the *void*: the uncertainty of *fidelity;* and the powerful *forcing* of knowledges by a truth."[41] I do not seek to explicitly engage with the subject of evil, but yet it is an important consideration to keep in mind to distinguish between those political movements and forms of strategic art that are "good" (ie. a truth

[38] Spivak, *A Critique of Postcolonial Reason*, 70.
[39] Alain Badiou, *Ethics: An Essay on the Understanding of Evil*, trans. Peter Hallward (Verso, 2002), xxx.
[40] Ibid., 42.
[41] Ibid., 71.

processes) from those that are not (either "evil"- corrupting truth processes or merely a work of art that is justified by its own existence, but is not a specific engagement with truths or politics). Returning to truth as a process, it is situated in an event that's "'happening' cannot be proved, only affirmed and proclaimed."[42] Since events are by nature particular, this results in an ethic of truth that is rather a process of truth*s* or a compilation of events. This is not an argument for Relativity, but again reifies the notion that Truth does exist, but our access to It is limited, therefore Truth can only be understood as a compilation of truth processes. For Badiou, this compilation cannot be based upon "the Other," since it leads to an engagement of the impossible as previously mentioned, which necessitates an engagement with sameness. This is further clarified since "Differences *are*; the Same is what may *come to be*" through fidelity, since Truth clarifies what *ought to be*.[43]As such, truth is a compilation of the Same-through-subtraction of Difference. "Since differences are what there is, and since every truth is the coming-to-be of that which is not yet, so differences are then precisely what truths dispose, or render insignificant . . . for only truth is . . . *indifferent to difference.*"[44] This is why Badiou rejects the deconstructive projects since they are "determined to fold every emergence of the new back into the structure of iterability and repititon," and accordingly do not allow that which will *come to be* to take place.[45] This is where the potential for evil begins to unfold, and this is what strategic art must avoid/escape if it is able to render a new truth process.

Continuing the work of Badiou, it can be understood that evil can emerge in any of the three phases of a truth processes. The event, fidelity, or new truth can all potentially be corrupted, for evil is ultimately subordinate to the Good. And it is only through continuous reification of fidelity to truth processes that evil can be warded off in the potential for an evil with every single truth. The first part, the event, as previously said is situated in a specific context. Yet, as a contribution to the compilation of Same-subtraction-Difference it is likewise an event *for* something: namely Truth.

[42] Ibid., ix.
[43] Ibid., xv.
[44] Ibid., 27.
[45] Ibid., xxx.

However there is a second philosophical tradition from which strategic art draws. In contrast to scholars like Rancière and Badiou- who both recognize that current modes of thinking are problematic and saturated with violence, they never reject reason outright, and in fact depend upon logic to further the development of a "truth process"- others like Nancy who and Derida are suspicious of modernity in its entirety. This is precisely why Nancy and Lacouc-Labarthe suggest that the best form of political resistance is *dis*-engagement, since any form of resistance that utilizes reason is already problematic. Of course, as previously mentioned, this position is limited in that disengagement is no politics at all. But ultimately such a tradition is not considered with the metaphysical substances of politics per se, but is rather trying to re-work the essence of politics. Rather what is important to draw from this tradition is the difficulty, if not impossibility, of ever knowing everything about anything. There is always an excess.

Yet, despite varying philosophical groundings, strategic art simultaneously draws upon both frameworks as an act of resistance. Strategic art connects these two through that which has already been discussed: the "void" or the "excess". For "at the heart of every situation, as the foundation of its being, there is a 'situated' void, around which is organized the plentitude (or stable multiples) of the situation in question."[46] Drawing on the preceding chapter's discussion of the crisis of modernity, the evil here (of the event) is when the void is made to exclude by naming the event. Here Badiou presents the example of the Nazi event, which despite functioning under true universal events (revolution, unity, etc.) was radically incapable of generating any truth from its beginning as the very name of the event (German revolution) was rooted in an absolute particular that sought to exclude: namely Jews. However, the second evil, the corruption of fidelity appears as a form of betrayal. It is a betrayal of truths. Since truth processes require a break, one can leave the break, which essentially has continuity at its core (same situation, etc. no manifestation of what ought to be). This is an evil of preventing that which may come to be, or staunch conservatism. Finally, the third evil is a corruption of the forced knowledge of a truth process. A truth process changes the languages of a situation (rain is no longer the tears of gods); it identifies new

[46] Ibid., 68.

elements from a certain event. From this, evil emerges in the attempt to name the unnameable (for math-contradiction cannot be named, love cannot name sexual pleasure). For politics, the unnameable is community, thus any attempt to name the community results in a disastrous evil.[47] As such, it is these evils that define the parameters to judge truth processes, and it is by these standards that strategic art will likewise be determined to contribute (or not) to ethics.

Yet, even though the ethical grounding for strategic art has been depicted within the contemporary political problem, one final theoretical discussion needs to be addressed before looking at actual empirical cases: namely the politics of aesthetics.[48] Given the very explicit political nature of strategic art, and its inherent connection to the realm of aesthetics, no proper discussion of empirics can be addressed without some grounding. Politics and aesthetics have been consistently yoked together, rightly or wrongly, since "aesthetic judgment has always in the end been understood to effect, somehow, a passage to cognition and human action."[49] Although this connection is deeply contested by scholars such as de Man, Schiller, Arnold, and others, I take up many of the claims held by Jacques Rancière as foundational principles for engaging with my empirical examples. For Rancière, this basic connection is dependent on the upon what he terms "the distribution of the sensible" which is the "system of self-evident facts of sense perception that simultaneously discloses the existence of something in common and the delimitations that define the respective parts and positions within it."[50] In perhaps more simple terms, "Politics revolves around what is seen and what can be said about it, around who has the ability to see and the talent to speak, around the properties of spaces and the possibilities of time."[51] Already this returns us to the earlier problems discussed in the preceding sections and the question of whom is the "who" that has

[47] Badiou, *Ethics*.
[48] Here, it is important to note I am not engaging in the debate between the politics of aesthetics and the aesthetics of politics that is much more closely related to Benjamin and his "age of the masses." The distinction is critical for the claim being made is that there is an "aesthetic" at the core of politics that is sharply contrasted to Benjamin's notion of the anesthetization of politics that occurs.
[49] Marc Redfield, *The Politics of Aesthetics: Nationalism, Gender, Romanticism*, 1st ed. (Stanford University Press, 2003), 1–2.
[50] Rancière and Rockhill, *The Politics of Aesthetics*, 12.
[51] Ibid., 13.

access? This is where the distribution of the sensible plays an absolute integral role in the politics of aesthetics for it is through the distribution that one is granted access to a community of citizens (here it is worth recalling Badiou's evil of politics in naming the community). This distribution is managed by what Ranciere terms the police which accordingly divides the community and that implicitly separates out those who have access to the sensible based upon an *a priori* aesthetic distinction between the (in)visible, the (un)sayable, and the (un)audible.

Given the already presupposed division of a community, something must be done to ward off the evil already warned by Badiou in the naming of the community.

> The essence of *politics* consists in interrupting the distribution of the sensible by supplementing it with those who have no part in the perceptual coordinates of the community, thereby modifying the very aesthetic-political field of possibility.[52]

But how does one who is already *a priori* excluded from a community begin to disrupt the sensible to supplement it and keep it open? This can only be done by returning to Badiou's truth processes with a continued reified fidelity to continue propagating truths.

> Those who have no name, who remain invisible and inaudible, can only penetrate the police order via a mode of *subjectivization* that transforms the aesthetic coordinates of the community by implementing the universal presupposition of politics: we are all equal.[53]

This presupposition of equality is what ultimately makes such a form of democratic governance a kind of truth process. For despite no real promise of absolute elimination of social inequalities, the constant reiteration and reification of equality embodies a fidelity to *what may come to pass* as already mentioned in the discussion of Badiou. As such, the modes of subjectivization can easily be seen in artistic practices, which are inherently a unique way of doing and making with a particular relationship to modes of being and various types of visibility. Art is enacted on a stage, where the artist necessarily subjects themselves to a particular aesthetic space. Following the Platonic paradigm, it is a "stage, which is simultaneously a locus of public activity and the exhibition space for 'fantasies', disturbs the clear partition of identities,

[52] Ibid., 3.
[53] Ibid.

activities, and spaces."[54] Or rather, art disturbs the current distribution of the sensible, and as long as the art embodies ethic of a truth process, contains clear utility by its very expression and reification of an event, fidelity, and new generation of knowledge.

But it is not simply enough to link the potential utility of art to a certain ethic. Rather the aesthetic regimes of arts are the very embodiment of this ethic (which of course can be corrupted and made evil). Yet the "aesthetic regime asserts the absolute singularity of art and, at the same time, destroys any pragmatic criterion for isolating this singularity."[55] This not only liberates art from the already existing ways of doing and making, but innately lends itself to that which is universal and constantly in development. It is in this way that the art is able to "contribute to the formation of political subjects that challenge the given distributions of the sensible. A political collective is not, in actual fact, an organism or communal body."[56] By lending itself to the universal, art necessarily provides an "imminent break" from the segregationist distribution of the sensible. No art does this more readily than strategic art, since it's very purpose serves to reify the presupposed equality of the collective. This is because "arts only ever lend to projects of domination and emancipation . . . what they have in common with them: bodily positions and movements, functions of speech, the parceling out of the visible and invisible."[57] That is why mere art for the sake of its own beauty certainly does lend itself to the universal of beauty, but this does very little to actually disrupt the political.

> As a matter of fact, political art cannot work in the simple form of a meaningful spectacle that would lead to an 'awareness' of the state of the world. Suitable political art would ensure, at one and the same time, the production of a double effect: the readability of a political signification and a sensible or perceptual shock caused, conversely, by the uncanny, by that which resists signification.[58]

[54] Ibid., 13.
[55] Ibid., 23.
[56] Ibid., 40.
[57] Ibid., 19.
[58] Ibid., 63.

This tension has consistently been presented as a tension inherent to strategic art, since the ability to read the political message threatens to destroy the sensibility of the art while simultaneously the reverse occurs: the "shock caused by the uncanny" threatens to destroy its political significance.

As such, the role of strategic art, based upon the politics of aesthetics and upon a certain ethic as a truth process, becomes rather straight forward and simple. It is a struggle for the voice of everyone to be regarded as a legitimate partner in the fidelity to what may come to be. Then by "protesting the wrong . . . suffered, [the artistic subject] is presented . . . as the immediate embodiment of society as such, as the stand-in for the Whole of Society, in its universality, . . . (we are All against others who stand only for their particular privileged interests)."[59] And although Žižek suggest that simply disturbing the visible and proposing different lateral links is elementary to resistance, it remains one of the few forms of resistance that remains open to the masses in various forms and is clear fertile ground for continual contestation of modes of being.[60] These are of course, all themes that will be consistently called upon throughout the empirics, but it is imperative to understand in what framework the art (and artist) may be knowingly or unknowingly acting in with their performances of strategic art. Moreover, it is based upon this foundation that one can judge the utility, validity, and ultimately the morality of emancipatory projects of strategic art. When strategic art does indeed exhibit a truth process, it offers a way of not only disturbing the sensible (with the potential to continue to employ reason), but also provides a way of escape from the crisis of modernity by abandoning reason.

[59] Jacques Žižek, "Afterword," in *The Politics of Aesthetics: The Distribution of the Sensible* (Continuum International Publishing Group, 2006), 70.
[60] Ibid., 77.

Chapter 3: Strategic Art in Context: New Reason or Beyond Reason?

Although it is certainly a positive and beneficial exercise to discuss the role of strategic art within the framework of political theory and philosophy, it is perhaps best to understand the actual utility that strategic art has for real peoples. True to any good analysis of strategic art, context or the "genealogy" is absolutely critical in understanding the role that art can and does play in politics. Here May Ayim's work as an Afro-German artist invites her audience to re-think notions of reason in congruent with the idea of a "truth process" to seek to look beyond the fetish of boundaries and categorization. Then, Ingrid Mwangi, likewise an Afro-German artist, Princess Hijab, and NiqaBitch move beyond notions re-working modernity, but instead aim to move beyond modern reason all together. Each artist's "history of the present" offers unique examples of breaking free from the political subject of violence itself.

Afro-Germans

Both May Ayim and Ingrid Mwangi are rooted in the Afro-German context. Here strategic art is strongly rooted in notions of group conscientiousness and the positions of Afro-Germans within the post-WWII context. Undeniably the positioning of Blacks within Germany has a long and tumultuous history from the fetish of Sarah Baartman (aka the Hottentot Venus) and the story of Amo – the first Black man to receive a German PhD during colonial times. Yet, as Patricia Collins acknowledges, the emergence of Black feminist thought was revolutionary in positioning and reframing their position of oppression from "self-defined" standpoint.[61] This is especially important as a political movement since it shows the defiance and break from the already pre-ascribed political agency that modernity casts on bodies. Such a positioning and political opposition was especially tied to strategic art in the German context. Here one must first understand the context of the development of Afro-German art, then a discussion of May Ayim's poems and Ingrid Mwangi's exhibit demonstrate the "evil" of naming a community and escape the crisis of modernity through the post-Nietzchean "yes; and…".

[61] Patricia Hill Collins, "The Social Construction of Black Feminist Thought," *Signs* 14, no. 4 (1989): 745–773.

Like many societies, Germany has a long and messy history with prejudice and racism. Racism spilled over into almost every part of society, and reinforced boundaries of identity, especially female bodies which have consistently been viewed as the carries of identity. In fact, German identity politics continue today with the tension over Turkish peoples while German citizenship was dependent on having German ancestry for years leading up to naturalization reform in the late 1990s.However, unlike Turkish accommodation in Germany; the Afro-German experience is rooted in a much more convoluted history of domination seeped in identity politics. With Germany's defeat after WWI, not only did Germany "lose" their colonial territories, but the area of the Rhineland was occupied by allied forces. Of those allied soldiers, many were also black, some of which was intentional. The introduction of Blacks into the Rhineland led Germany to denounce the situation as an "act of inhumanity that was dangerous to the German people."[62] This situation resulted in both racist and sexist representations of black men and German women in both the public and political light: including parliamentary petitions. However, it is the fixation on "Black rapists" and "Rhineland bastards" that are most pertinent for this discussion. Whether or not German women were actually raped by French, or US, or any other soldier is not particularly important for this discussion (although it most probably did occur, but certainly not *only* by the Allies' Black soldiers). Rather, any "Rhineland bastard" was regarded as an illegitimate child of a "Black rapist."[63] These children are/were most commonly referred to as *mischlin*g, directly translated as "crossbreed" or "mixed" child. In fact this term was later appropriated by the Third Reich for anyone with only partial Aryan ancestry, including Jews, which was used to justify their sterilization, forced removal from "white" German homes, etc. Of course, there is much that ought to be said about this, but for my purposes it will have to suffice to say that Afro-Germans were an "over-looked" minority, who experienced extreme injustice and were consistently regarded in overt and covert racist manners to explain their behavior, intelligence, appearance, etc.[64] Then, with the atrocities around "the Jewish

[62] May Opitz, *Showing Our Colors*, ed. Katharina Oguntoye and Dagmar Schultz (University of Massachusetts Press, 1991), 41.
[63] Opitz, *Showing Our Colors*.
[64] Ibid.

question" during WWII, and the overall avoidance of minority issues with the advent of the Cold War, Afro-Germans experienced a disproportionate level of silencing that only very rarely warranted any attention. It is this precise form of structural exclusion that is not only further illuminated by strategic art, but is perhaps only effectively countered through strategic art. For in such a situation, the person can in fact only very rarely speak for themselves, but instead the art can speak for itself.

May Ayim – Blues in Black and White

One of the most vocal advocates on behalf of Afro-Germans, and women in particular, was May Ayim. May Ayim, originally named Sylvia Opitz and was an Afro-German whose father was of Ghanaian decent. In her work, she recounts of the difficulties she experienced as a child raised in the all-"white" Opitz family. After receiving her doctorate from the University of Regensburg, she settled as a lecturer at the Free University of Berlin when she began penning with her father's surname: Ayim. Ayim was a strong advocate for Black rights in Germany perhaps best known for her poems.

> blues in black and white
> over and over again
> there are those who are
> dismembered, sold off and distributed
> those who always are, were, and shall remain the others
> the actual others declare themselves
> the only real ones
> over and over again
> the actual others declare on us
> war
>
> it's the blues in black-and-white
> 1/3rd of the world
> dances over
> the other
> 2/3rds
> they celebrate in white
> we mourn in black
> it's the blues in black-and-white
> it's the blues
>
> a reunited Germany
> celebrates itself in 1990
> without its immigrants, refugees, jewish and black people

it celebrates in its intimate circle
it celebrates in white

but it's the blues in black-and-white
it's the blues
united Germany united europe united states
celebrates 1992

500 years since Columbus
500 years – of slavery, exploitation and genocide in the
americas
asia
and africa

1/3rd of the world unites
against the other 2/3rds
in the rhythm of racism, sexism, and anti-semitism
they want to isolate us; eradicate our history
or mystify it to the point of
irrecognition
it's the blues in black-and-white
it's the blues

but we're sure of it – we're sure
1/3rd of humanity celebrates in white
2/3rds of humanity doesn't join the party

1990

(Tanslation: Tina Campt)[65]

If one is not particularly careful, it is all too easy to simply read through the works of May Ayim as simply an art, an expression of emotion, or some other reading with little sociological significance. But in fact, May Ayim quite clearly returns us to the fetish of categorization that has been talked about in preceding chapters. Ayim first reminds us of positionality- of how ones self-prescribed and pre-ascribed identities necessarily effect and affect one's place and perspective in society. This is of course central to any cultural studies work and inherent within art. Those who have been "sold off" are not mere abstract people, nor is the invocation of slavery and colonialism a trope or way of "playing the victim." Instead, the art reminds us of a very real power hierarchy that was historically established and has been

[65] May Ayim, *Blues in Black and White: a Collection of Essays, Poetry and Conversations*, trans. Anne V. Adams (Africa World Press, 2003), 4–5.

consistently reified. She is challenging modern day racism and those questions of governance that sanction racism. Indeed, it is not merely the far-right parties of Germany, France, or any other country for that matter that participate in identity politics, but it is a structure and discourse that reifies itself. For example, Spranger, a CDU (Christian Democratic Union- a centrist German party) representative was quoted saying, "We must take seriously the legitimate concerns of the German population. This is especially true for those who are concerned about their own identity, because they fear becoming a minority in their own country."[66] At one in the same time Spranger reifies the abstract monolith of German society while simultaneously positioning "minorities" as a threat. It is quite simply an act of reverse discrimination that uses an already marginalized populous and legitimizes further action against them to protect one's "own" society. This is the "us" "them" dichotomy that Ayim so strongly criticizes in her work. Within this framing, it is also relevant to draw upon socio-linguistic theories that likewise inform the positionality of peoples. In particular, this imbedded normative connotation of "good" and "bad" mapped onto the colors white and black respectively. This idea is of course prominent within Judeo-Christian traditions with epithets such as "cleanliness is next to godliness". Most prominently one can think of "Soap Imperialism" during colonial times, where white-colonizers were seen to "save" black-Africans from their own savagery by sharing "their" cultural sophistication. This soap imperialism literally included images of black-Africans using soap and "washing away" their "blackness" giving them white skin after adopting European traditions. These examples further situate the place that "Blackness" had in European society. Likewise, they simultaneously represent a clear example of Badiou's "naming of the political community" as previously discussed. The celebration of German reunification was not a celebration of a united Germany (a contradiction in terms) but was a celebration of a white monolith. Before moving onto more "accessible" (ie visible) art, I wish to reproduce another two-part poem of Ayim's that perhaps more adequately reveals the positioning of Afro-Germans.

[66] From Ansprache des Parlamentarischen Staatssekretars im Bundesministerium des Innern. Carl-Dieter Spranger, in betrifft: Auslanderpolitik, ed. Bundesminister des Innern (Bonn, 1983), p. 92.

afro-german I

You're Afro-German?
…oh, I see: African and German.
An interesting mixture, huh?
You know: there are people that still think
Mulattos won't get
as far in life
as whites

I don't believe that.
I mean: given the same type of education…
You're pretty lucky you grew up *here*.
With German parents even. Think of that!

D'you want to go back some day, hm?
What? You've never been in your Dad's home
country?
That's so sad… Listen, if you ask me:
A person's origin, see, really leaves quite a
Mark.
Take me, I'm from Westphalia,
and I feel
that's where I belong…

Oh boy! All the misery there is in the world!
Be glad
You didn't stay in the bush.
You wouldn't be where you are today!

I mean, you're really an intelligent girl, you
know.
If you work hard at your studies,
You can help your people in Africa, see:
That's
What you're predestined to do,
I'm sure they'll listen to you,
while people like us-
there's such a difference in cultural levels…

What do you mean, do something here? What
On earth would you want to do here?
Okay, okay, so it's not all sunshine and roses.
But I think everybody should put their own
house in order first!

1985
(Translation by Ilse Muller)[67]

[67] Ayim, *Blues in Black and White*, 14–15.

afro-german II

…hm, I understand.

You can thank your lucky stars you're not
Turkish, right?
I mean: it's awful the way they pick on
Foreigners,
do you ever run into that at all?

"…"

Well, sure, but *that's* kind of a problem I
have, too.
I feel a person can't blame everything on the
color of their skin, and things are never
easy for you if you're a woman.

Take this friend of mine:
she's pretty heavy,
and does she have problems!
Compared to her, you know, you seem pretty
laid-back.

Anyway, I feel
that blacks have kept sort of a natural
outlook on life.

While here: everything's pretty screwed up,
right?
I think I'd be glad if I were you.
German history isn't something one
Can really be proud of, is it.
And you're not that black anyway, you know.

1985
(Translation by Ilse Muller)[68]

Like the first poem, something rather striking goes on within these poems. Of course, Ayim wrote these poems for various reasons- many of which will remain unbeknownst to me. However in her book, Ayim mentions that these poems are in response to her overall childhood experience, but more specifically when asked questions by Germans such as, "Don't you think you are probably more needed

[68] Ibid., 16–17.

in Ghana, whereas in Germany there are so many unemployed people?!?!" Or the refusal of people to accept her as a "natural" German despite being raised by a completely German family (her father was absent as a child) since "there is no denying blood." The dialogue presented through Ayim's poems are perfect examples of the crisis of modernity and the problem that categorization creates. Many of the questions and comments experienced by Ayim are not meant to be derogatory. But saying, "You're lucky to be born here" or suggesting Africa is her true home, or asking if she ever experiences any of the hardship "they" (Turkish) experience expose the violent ontology of modernity. The questions are not meant to degrade Afro-Germans necessarily, but they do indeed establish a hierarchy. They establish relationships of power, and they shape the criterion and possibilities for resistance. For Ayim, she is able to escape further violence by instead using her own specificity and individual narrative expressed in her art as a stand in for the "universal." This is an example of instead trying to re-work reason itself in society. Ayim is not abandoning modernity entirely, but is instead asking her audience to instead think through logically the ridiculous conclusions drawn about pre-existing boundaries. As such, it is a kind of truth process that very systematically seeks to break down barriers by utilizing reason. This is in contrast to some of the more "radical" forms of strategic art that aim to break from modernity altogether in their attempt to escape the political subject of violence.

Ingrid Mwangi – Static Drift

Ingrid Mwangi , like May Ayim is an Afro-German women who has been extremely active in advocating for and challenging representations of Black Germans. She works closely with her husband Robert Hunter in the production of art work that is typically displayed through exhibitions that engage multiple senses. Her work, also like Ayim's, returns us to the notions of boundaries that have become so crucial to the political sphere; both literally and figuratively.

Static Drift

In one of her more famous works – "Static Drift"- Mwangi recalls historical panic over "race-mixing" by "burning"/"darkening" Germany onto her stomach, and making Africa "light" on her body at a different time. Within the African continent is inscribed" Bright Dark Continent" and within the German borders is inscribed "Burn Out Country". Here the mixing disturbs notions of fixed identities. "The switch also invokes the horrors of colonialism where German 'darkness' is visited on Africa through its colonial savagery, a savagery historically associated with dark skin."[69] Within such a context, once more it can easily be seen how security- with the notion of protecting society from miscegenation and savagery- becomes implicated through the performance on Mwangi's body. However, something much more profound is being done through her work other then another critique on colonialism and critique of "Blackness" as an "other."

Here it is useful to recall Okwui Enwezor's work where she describes modern art not merely as a particular performance, but as a manifestation of an "internalized awareness of hierarchy."[70]For Mwangi, this hierarchy is inextricably tied to notions of identity and in her particular case of race or "color."

> She questions the role of skin colour in determining identity, bringing to the fore how the metaphors of "light" and "dark" are frequently in flux, with one undermining the other, as each is

[69] E.M. Schwartz, "Ingrid Mwangi: Enacting the Body as Stage," *ACRAWSA, E-journal* 6, no. 1 (2010): 3.
[70] Orlando Britto Jinorio et al., "The Production of Social Space as Artwork: Protocols of Community in the Work of Le Groupe Amos and Huit Facettes," in *A Fiction of Authenticity: Contemporary Africa Abroad*, ed. Salah Hassan et al. (Contemporary Art Museum St. Louis, 2003), 53-69.

> historically presented as a unified collective. Both Africans and Europeans are "Others", each with their own tragic histories of collapse and conquest.[71]

However, in the reexamination of identities, especially "hyphenated identities" (ie. African-American, etc.), Mwangi depicts the inherent problematic of racially based notions of identity, but she does not equate the histories or identities of Africans and Germans. For indeed these identities are "real" to the extent that we enact them as real – precisely reflecting Butler's seminal works on performativity. Rather Mwangi undermines specificity of cultural and national identity, indicating that it is more frequently denoted by the signification of skin color and not the myth of national origin. On this level, Mwangi enters into a unique form of body politics. For as Mwangi herself states, "I am the stage." She positions her own body at the center of a discourse based on confused racial signifiers of skin color. "The body politics of cultural framing are enacted in her works, denying any sense of stability or unity."[72] As such, she not only confronts observer's understandings of race through the affirmation/denial of her bodily self, but she simultaneously implicates the audience. The viewer is forced to confront their own understanding of race and identity for themselves and others when Mwangi disrupts the conflation between nation, color, and identity. It is a disruption of the normalization of "whiteness" (disruption of the sensible) and a strategic move to undermine the veracity of origins to define identity. For Mwangi, identity is first and foremost about the flesh, and as such, she offers up/uses her own flesh to disrupt and enter into discourses about the limits of boundaries, the internal/external nature of the "self," the questioned and deconstructed units of one's self perception. This is the second philosophical tradition where logic itself must be suspended or blocked to begin to understand.

By self-objectifying her own body, Mwangi and Ayim through her comments on positionality do something uniquely to the political. Both women collapse the boundaries that so often have served to separate them out from their (German) identity. Both women implicate the audience to make a judgment about the veracity and ability for identities to be defined based on bodily politics. More importantly

[71] Schwartz, "Ingrid Mwangi," 8.
[72] Ibid., 1.

though, they do so in a manner that is progressive and their "security" becomes merited based on their very being, not based on their inclusion/participation in any kind of collective. In essence, they break free from the political subject of violence by allowing their arts to take up the boundaries of modernity and collapsing the boundaries on their own bodies. Then indeed at the expense of giving too much agency to strategic art, one can see that indeed identity politics in Germany have shifted. Despite continued debates around bodily politics, no one can deny that reform of citizenship laws allowing for "non-ethnically German" people to have access to citizenship within the last couple decades is revolutionary and positive.

Politics of Exclusion: French-Muslims

Moving beyond the arguably successful and recent-historical examples in Germany, France too is an interesting "history of the present." Much like the recent German example, the contemporary politics in France are fixated on issues of identity. This point is all too visible in the fetish on Islamic covering practices in the political debates. Perhaps more telling than the German example is the visibility of boundaries of identity as it pertains to governance issues: namely the mobility of citizens and migrants within the public space who are systematically and continuously excluded. Then, it is the politics of exclusion that are regularly confronted and challenged through the deployment of strategic art, but like the German cases and true to the nature of the genealogical method, context is absolutely critical. France has enacted a series of interesting laws that are remarkably interventionist around religion and dress. This has resulted in the emergence of new kinds of "street" art that are more than strategic but are even humorous. This has occurred in the examples of Princess Hijab and NiqaBitch.

At the center of the French debate around covering practices is the notion of laïcité, or French secularism. However, it is rather a unique and presumed universal value of secularism that seeks to remove religion from the public space in general. It is a specific mode of governance that views religion

as an ever more private and individual matter.[73] In theory it is intended "to establish equal protection for all people under a 'neutral,' non-religiously influenced state, while allowing freedom of religious expression and free thinking within state institutions."[74] As a product of resistance against the Catholic Church, it is to provide liberty and freedom from any one dogma. It is supposed to be, at its essence, democratic. However the current tension around Islamic covering practices reveals a major contradiction at the core of laïcité: namely that it is interventionist. Yet, it is not a matter of whether French secularism should or should not be interventionist, rather it is imperative to note the limitations laïcité has created with respect to the politics of exclusion.

In 1989, preceding any prohibitions on religious coverings, French courts actively sought to maintain certain respects for individual and groups rights to religious expression. After a young Muslim girl was expelled from class for donning hijab the French courts issued a statement that such expulsion was unconstitutional and that donning hijab was only a problem if it were associated with proselytizing.[75] Yet in the flurry of political activity that followed along with the sensationalist media coverage of Muslims in France, laïcité began to embody something entirely different with the passage of law 2004-228 that prohibited the wearing of "ostentatious" religious clothing in schools.[76] In the legislative debate leadings to the passage of law 2004-228 it became clear that the public discourse/paradigm viewed (Islamic) covering practices as antithetical to French secularism and that those who donned such coverings were culpable for violating the Republican contract.[77] "The veil is segregationist. That's the finding: inequality and inferiority of women."[78] This makes the overarching claims that the hijab is

[73] Jean Bauberot, "Two Thresholds of Laïcization," in *Secularism and Its Critics*, ed. Rajeev Bhargava (Oxford University Press, USA, 2005), 94-136.
[74] Trica Danielle Keaton, *Muslim Girls and the Other France: Race, Identity Politics, and Social Exclusion* (Indiana University Press, 2006), 178.
[75] Adrien Katherine Wing and Monica Nigh Smith, "Critical Race Feminism Lifts the Veil: Muslim Women, France, and the Headscarf Ban," *U.C. Davis Law Review* 39 (2006 2005): 743.
[76] National Assembly, "N° 1378 - Projet De Loi Relatif à L'application Du Principe De Laïcité Dans Les Écoles, Collèges Et Lycées Publics", 2004, http://www.assemblee-nationale.fr/12/projets/pl1378.asp.
[77] National Assembly, "Assemblée Nationale - Laïcité : Comptes Rendus", 2003, http://www.assemblee-nationale.fr/12/dossiers/laicite_CR.asp#CR1.
[78] Ibid.

always a form of oppression, which is extremely problematic for issues related to agency and female empowerment. Then, ironically, although the law was supported by leftist for its attempt to liberate women and encourage equality, it does not actually challenge issues of gender, particularly within Muslim code, and as such merely hurts the cause of equality.[79] The law makes unjustified assumptions about Islam that has "reduced [Islam] to a glorified dress code, a dry litany of rules and obsessions that belittles women, exempts men from their responsibilities, and offers believers no warmth, camaraderie or genuine spiritual sustenance. This is mockery of Islamic values, as outrageous as it is tragic."[80] Such a debate clearly has negative consequences for the openness and ability of those who do don hijab. Yet the exclusion of Muslims, and other peoples in France, was not limited to just schools but went much further in the passage of law 2010-2520.

In the summer 2010, the French parliament passed bill 2010-2520 "prohibiting the concealment of the face in public space."[81] Like law No. 2004-228, it does not expressly target Muslims, although it inherently restricts religious piety for those who wear niqab. The ban went into effect in the spring 2011 and establishes punishment for women who wear niqab in public by a fine and/or citizenship classes and a fine and/or jail for someone who is found forcing a woman to wear niqab.[82] Much like law 2004-228, it perpetuates the problems of how covering practices are talked about. The explanatory memo on behalf of Prime Minister François Fillon states, "wearing the full veil is a manifestation of a communal rejection of Republican values" and "the concealment of the face in public space is the bearer of symbolic violence and dehumanizing." What is striking about this law is its extension from governmental institutions (i.e. schools) into public space and penalization, which shows the government taking on a paternalistic mentality in attempting to "defend" women from the "oppression" of male figures.

[79] Joan Wallach Scott, *The Politics of the Veil* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2007).
[80] Svend White, "Hijab Hysteria: France and Its Muslims," *Open Democracy* (31 2004): 3, http://www.opendemocracy.net/faith-europe_islam/article_1820.jsp.
[81] National Assembly, "N° 2520 - Projet De Loi Interdisant La Dissimulation Du Visage Dans L'espace Public", 2010, http://www.assemblee-nationale.fr/13/projets/pl2520.asp.
[82] Ibid.

Simultaneously this can easily be read as another example of Badiou's "evil" of naming the political community (ie. French).

Apart from the actual laws, the case of Faiza Mabchour provides unique insight into how France deals not only with secularism and covering practices, but also how it expects visible minorities to behave in society to be accepted. Mabchour is fluent in French, has three naturalized French children, and has been living in France since 2000.[83] Yet, on June 27, 2008, the French Supreme Court denied citizenship to Moroccan-born Faiza Mabchour due to her inability to assimilate into French society because she submits to her husband by covering herself.[84]The court claimed that "her submissive existence is incompatible with French secular and democratic values."[85] This was a milestone in French legal history, since it was the first time an applicant has been denied citizenship based upon their religious values and lack of assimilation. This decision, like law 2004-448, reveals the assumption of hijab as antithetical to French values. The presumption made by the court was that Mabchour "adopted a radical practice of her religion, incompatible with the essential values of the French community, and particularly with the principle of sexual equality."[86] Although the French civil code does allow for denial of citizenship based on lack of assimilation under articles 21-4, Mabchour's case marks the first time "radical" religious practices have been characterized as incompatible with French identity.[87] Instead of reifying identities of exclusion, "Muslims want France to live up to the ideals of its republican tradition and adapt to the times instead of forcing on them utopian norms that are rooted in a bygone, if not mythical, social order," or worse, completely exclude them .[88] It is not exclusion based on race or color per se, but is rather what some refer to as "differentialist racism," where cultural differences are regarded as insurmountable- more

[83] S Bell, "Burka-wearing Woman Denied Citizenship for Being 'Submissive' - News - Scotsman.com", 2008, http://www.scotsman.com/news/burka_wearing_woman_denied_citizenship_for_being_submissive_1_1080133.
[84] Conseil D'Etat, "Arret_Cons_Etat.pdf."
[85] Ibid.
[86] Ibid.
[87] Yael Barbibay, "Citizenship Privilege or the Right to Religious Freedom," *Cardozo J. Int'l & Comp. L.* 18 (2010): 165.
[88] White, "Hijab Hysteria: France and Its Muslims," 2.

famously regarded as a "clash of civilizations."[89] It is precisely this logic that is effectively challenged through strategic art, especially for those who are already excluded.

Princess Hijab – Exploitation of the Body

Princess Hijab is an anonymous graffiti artist in Paris known for her unique form of strategic art that has been coined "hijabizing." As a non-Muslim herself, she claims that her work is not especially about "veiling" at all, but is rather a part of a "graffiti of minorities" that is concerned with cultural integration.[90] Her work is recognized as a unique form of graffiti in which she "hijabizes" or takes "everyday" marketing ads and draws a hijab over faces or otherwise conceals exposed parts of bodies using permanent black market. This could otherwise be regarded as a disruption of the sensible as well. While her work has encountered some resistance from Muslim and non-Muslim activist alike for the "commodification" of hijab as a tool of resistance, she proclaims her work is non-religious. As such, her work stirs up notions and memories of the War in Algeria were hijab was likewise used as a form of resistance by Muslims that was not explicitly religious against French colonial occupation.

[89] Ana Frank, "Rethinking European Past and Future Legacies," *Journal of Contemporary European Studies* 18, no. 2 (2010): 229-239.
[90] "Princess Hijab: Underground Resistance," *The Guardian*, November 11, 2010, sec. Art and design, http://www.guardian.co.uk/artanddesign/gallery/2010/nov/10/princess-hijab-graffiti-france-metro.

Her work, partially as a result of her anonymity, resists simple readings and interpretations. In fact, Princess Hijab is quoted saying, "Some say I am pro-feminist, others that I am antifeminist; some say that I am pro-Islam, others that I am anti-Islam. It's all very interesting, but at the end of the day, I am above all an artist."[91] Her position or lack there-of invokes many connotations. Her images remind one, of course, of the veiling controversy in France, but also of Islamic media censorship in certain Arab countries that filters "sexual" images that re-market Katy Perry music albums and the like. Likewise, her work invokes issues of gender and equality. What is the significance of "hijabizing" men as well as women? How does gender play a role in issues of marketing and advertisement? What is explicitly known from her commentary is that she aims to subvert "visual terrorism" of the advertising industry and reassert her own bodily and physical integrity.[92] This of course does not seem at all striking for a Western audience that is saturated with (over)sexualized products and brands. It becomes a "process of undermining the authority of corporate advertising by tactically turning its own rhetorical tropes and imagery against it, and thereby destabilising their meaning."[93] For Princess Hijab this is perhaps the only

[91] Annelies Moors, "NiqaBitch and Princess Hijab: Niqab Activism, Satire and Street Art," *Feminist Review* 98 (2011): 134.
[92] Moors, "NiqaBitch and Princess Hijab."
[93] Payne, "Feminist Media as Alternative Media?," 203.

way for one, who is a victim of advertising that is "killing her little by little," to be able to subvert the lethal threat the imaginary capitalist beauty poses to female and male bodies alike, as well as the epithet that demonizes Muslims.[94]

Yet something more clearly needs to be said about why one, particularly a non-Muslim, would seek to "hijabize" advertisement. Clearly its charge within French/European/Western society must be stated.

> What is interesting about the niqab is that it isolates the person wearing it, while at the same time, here in the Western world, especially in France, it puts you in the spotlight. That is the contradiction; by wishing to disappear from the public sphere, you are far more visible, you take possession of the public space. It is an empowering piece of clothing, but it can also be frightening.[95]

Indeed this is precisely the situation in the case of Faiza Mabchour as previously discussed. Moreover the imbued contradictions of visibility and invisibility, access and inaccess to public space, empowerment and disempowerment continually reinvoke the tension and terror that is the political subject of violence. What is so revolutionary about Princess Hijab, and what makes her work so "strategic" is her ability to turn the advertisements in on themselves through the simple addition of a cultural symbol. As such, she is not at all attempting to re-work the acceptable limits of society and reason, but is instead very explicitly trying to break from the limits and abandon them altogether. It is rather a fascinating trope indeed, for on one level her work's "tactical turn" ought to be considered as extending the scope of advertising to make products more relevant to another "market audience" (ie. women in hijab). Of course, this is not at all her position. However, this is why the hijab was so strategic, because for one reason or another, its use does not extend the marketing audience, but in fact makes a farce of the images. It shows the viewer just how complacent society has become about advertisers ability to represent bodies and the violence that has resulted from that. One need only think of the constant insecurities around beauty related to bulimia and anorexia that plague contemporary society to understand how images of beauty indeed are violent and

[94] Ibid., 202–203.
[95] *Princess Hijab's "Veiling Art"*, 2010, http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=h0GLv-HzJFc&feature=youtube_gdata_player.

reify violent categories that marginalize. From this position Princess Hijab reasserts that subjects are not mere objects to "be ventriloquated" but are instead people of agency with agency and people that belong for no other reason than their existence.

NiqaBitch- Public Opposition

One of the largest problems for Muslims in France has been the lack of inclusion of their voices and policies relevant to their lives, and especially Muslim women's voices. This is in fact one of the strongest critiques of Princess Hijab, and agency is likewise a central element in the Afro-German movement. In fact, the lack of attention to female voices surrounding laws regulating Islamic covering practices has been one of the most important considerations in critiquing French public policy. This is of course obvious in the case of Faiza Mabchour when government officials made assumptions about her reasoning for donning religious covering, and has consistently appeared in both legal and feminist critiques.[96] Thus perhaps it is even more important to listen to the voices on fringes of society to understand exactly in what way "the Other" so forcibly returns to the center of society. One of the more intriguing acts of resistance has been that of NiqaBitch.

[96] Wing and Smith, "Critical Race Feminism Lifts the Veil."

 [97]

The video "NiqaBitch Takes Paris" follows two Muslim women who wander around the streets of Paris wearing niqab (an Islamic veil), high-heels, and little else. The women visit prominent French governmental offices, such as the Ministry of Defense, Office of Immigration, the Eiffel Tower and are explicitly challenging the French laws regulating religious dress. As the women walk down the streets they are consistently gawked at, approached for pictures, and even at times encouraged by other French bystanders. At the time of the filming, the law "prohibiting the concealment of the face" had not actually gone into force, but even so the women are asked in the video to leave and not hang around government offices for presumably violating some norm, even when they ask if they have broken the law in some way- which they hadn't. Their very presence is a stark contradiction and the visibility of their dress and presence not only effectively undermines many of the tropes and means of marginalizing women, but is simultaneously something "very French." As the girls explicitly said:

> To wear a simple burqa would have been too easy. So we asked ourselves: 'How would the authorities react when faced with women wearing a burqa and mini-shorts?' We were not looking to attack or insult the image of fundamentalist Muslims – to each their own –. Rather, we wanted to challenge the elected officials of the Republic who voted for a law that is believed to be largely unconstitutional.[98]

[97] "La Mode NiqaBitch Va-t-elle Faire Fureur Cet Automne ? (vidéo) » :: Novopress.info France", n.d., http://archives-fr.novopress.info/68572/la-mode-niqabitch-devrait-faire-fureur-des-cet-automne/.
[98] Niqabitch, "Minishort Et Niqab : Balade De « Niqabitch » Dans Paris | Rue89", n.d., http://www.rue89.com/2010/09/30/minishort-et-niqab-balade-provoc-dans-paris-avant-la-loi-168779.

The difficult tension for NiqaBitch and Princess Hijab alike is to what extent does their art perpetuate the marginalization of peoples?

Of course, both artist explicitly apologize and defend that they are not insulting Islam. Rather, that are attempting take what the French government has taken as so insulting (donning hijab) and turn it against those powers that marginalize peoples. In fact, it is perhaps the close proximity of their art to insulting Islam that makes their act so powerful. The claim has consistently been that those women who don hijab are oppressed and in-need of rescuing by the French state- thus the justification for regulating dress in public. Yet in NiqaBitch's video the reverse is scandalously exhibited. The intentionally self-sexualized representation of these two Muslim women donning hijab utterly disrupts and destroys one's ability to make overarching generalizations about the conditions under which women don hijab ever. Then furthermore, it is important to return to early discussions about access and ability for resistance at all. Particularly with the implementation/enforcement the 2010 law, it becomes rather obvious that a "typical" woman who wears niqab; that is a presumably conservative and religious woman, is completely unable to even enter the public space to make an act of resistance without the risk of penalization. Resistance itself is impossible and problematic. For those women who "are breaking the public contract by donning hijab" their very existence within the public space becomes necessarily charged while their bodies become politicized. This is precisely the place in which strategic art becomes almost necessarily utilized as a way of disturbing the aesthetic and political and returning society back to more fundamental questions about existence, liberty, and freedoms in general. For NiqaBitch:

> Their basic argument refers to freedom of expression as a republican value, where people have the right to express themselves by choice of dress and to practice their religion as they see fit, as long as others are not forced to do so. Posing the rhetorical question, 'is dictating the way we dress really the role of the state?', they also highlight the hypocrisy of politicians: "The aspect of this debate that has most annoyed us is the hypocrisy of French male politicians, who wave the holy feminist flag, using the pretext of protecting these poor women forced to veil by their savage husbands."[99]

[99] Moors, "NiqaBitch and Princess Hijab," 130.

These acts of resistance stir up more fundamental questions about the limits to of freedom and order, the erosion of democratic protections, and issues of power related to gender, legal status, and other aspects of identity. These become the critical and necessary issues that strategic art answers by providing an avenue for marginalized peoples to (re)enter democratic debate and addressing some of the more ontologically important issues of democratic governance.

Conclusion: Awaiting an Epistemic Revolution

As the German and French examples demonstrate, epistemology and reason are currently at an impasse due to the violent ontology of modernity. This is because at present, the means of managing doubt has been based upon a continual demand to "other" people and objects and place them into categories. Then as the German and French cases demonstrate, as the boundaries and borders of society have collapsed in on the centers of society, modernity's violent ontology is creating very real negative consequences for citizens and peoples. This is seen by the over extension of politics into the private and the exploitation and objectification of bodies for political ends. Moreover, democratic politics have abandoned the people and the contestation and debate upon which democracy depends. Instead the political subject has become violence in the form of modern reason. Yet, as the case studies likewise show, there are forms of resistance that can indeed escape the political subject of violence. In this case, strategic art is one of the most upon and viable means for the marginalized to (re)enter the debate.

The way in which strategic art is able to overcome the political subject of violence is by returning to the post-Nietzchian surfeit: "Well, yes, and . . ." and attempting to break from the crisis of modernity itself. Not that re-working modern reason is not beneficial, as it is in the case of May Ayim, but rather one can see that an altogether new break is needed. Of course, with our modern minds obsessed with categories, no one can deny that "there is obviously a difference between Black and White bodies," as seen in the violence towards Afro-Germans. Indeed there is a difference; because society has created it is an important boundary and distinction, both to enact racism –such as removing Afro-German's from their "mixed" parentage[100], and at times correct forms of racism (ie. affirmative action policies, anti-discrimination laws, etc.). This is not to suggest that such policies that protect and penalize racism are wrong- in fact I believe they are moral and necessary. Yet, there is something ontologically violent about the need to continue to differentiate bodies that needs to be overcome. This is in fact what the contemporary examples of strategic art in France demonstrate. Of course there is a certain metaphysical

[100] Ayim, *Blues in Black and White*.

difference between peoples- in fact there is a metaphysical difference between each and every person, much like snowflakes. As such, one needs to be wary where one draws the line between "in" groups and "out" groups, because it creates real harm. Indeed, taking this premise to its logical end, delineation between groups should be entirely avoided, but instead people should be approached on their own radical individuality; either with a commitment to Badiou's "truth process" that brings about sameness-minus-difference[101] or an altogether new approach. As such, one can acknowledge the truth of difference in skin-color or religion but by responding, well, yes, and there is much more to representation and being than skin color or religion. This results in an overflowing and excess of political beings over presentation that ensures continued contestation and debate. This is in fact a commitment to democracy, where governance is never final (the evil of conservatism by betraying fidelity to Truth), but is instead something also necessarily open and inclusive: A kind of governance that actively seeks diversity to create a new truth of "sameness-minus-difference." More important, it can ensure not inclusion by avoiding exclusion, but instead guarantee equality from which there is no needed inclusion or exclusion for everyone is already *a priori* equal for the simple fact that they are in existence.

Of course, there is obviously much more that ought to be said about this development of this new kind of governance that is beyond the scope of this paper. Indeed, strategic art is merely *a single* way in which it may at times be possible to escape the political subject of violence to first dis-engage from an ontological violence, and re-engage based a presupposed equality as political subjects. Further research is necessary to uncover existing and new avenues for resistance to political violence that are examples of truth-processes. Likewise, more effort is needed to completely understand the necessary and sufficient conditions under which strategic art is a truth process and when it is an evil by violating this process, but this paper makes a contribution of towards political philosophy and theory by drawing on empirical examples of strategic art that are able to speak to governance issues.

[101] Badiou, *Ethics*.

Ultimately, the "truth process" of strategic art is a form of fidelity to what may come to pass. Indeed, it is a certain kind of radical individualism that goes so far beyond the categories of individuals and poses the questions: Is it necessary to erect the many forms of barriers that in society to categorize each and every quality, character, and attribute of individuals? What does categorization give society that cannot be achieved without it? And is the violence of categories worth the cost to human bodies? Moreover, the potential contributions of "Truth" to governance are vast and numerous, particularly within democratic societies? Recognizing how problematic categories are, "Truth" offers constructive advice from issues of partisan politics, to immigration, and other aspects of policy. Indeed, democracy- presupposes access and openness to *all* people as a societal "void" demands that the voices of "illegal immigrants" be heard in the debates around migration, job access, taxation, health, and the like. Simply because people exist, they *ought* to have full access to the political realm. Any policy that excludes based on aesthetic judgments perpetuates the political subject of violence.

Ultimately the tension lies in trying to force an epistemic revolution, much like how science and reason replaced absolutism (but without the violence). Obviously, such a development in human thought cannot be manufactured but relies on similar values in democracy- contestation, inclusion, and presupposed equality. As such, strategic art is merely a contributing tool to such a development. Yet I shall end with Plato's famous question which is relevant to a broad commitment to "Truth": "Can virtue be taught?"

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