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WikiLeaks Affects: Ideology, Conflict and the Revolutionary Virtual

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Introduction

The chapter focuses on the public feelings over WikiLeaks,[1] and demonstrates how affect and emotion, in conjunction with digital culture and the social media, enabled shifts in the political. I am using the WikiLeaks controversy, and the storm of public feelings it generated, in order to demonstrate how affective flows can snowball into a revolutionary shift in reality. The order of theoretical sampling and analysis begins with a philosophical discussion of the role of affective structures in mediating the actual and the digital virtual. It then moves on to the interface between ideology and organization in WikiLeaks, as an example of ideological tensions producing affect in relation to that organization. Further, I discuss the interface between hierarchy and networks, such as activist networks against states and global institutions, in order to examine the interfaces between emotion and affect, as the expressive[2] (Shaviro 2010:2) causes and the driving engine behind revolts and uprisings.

Coincidentally, in an effort to map the affective processes involved in the reactions to WikiLeaks, I stumbled upon the more philosophical problem of conceptualizing the spectrum and mechanisms of the in-between space of the actual and digital virtual. On a meta-theoretical level, I began by default to conceptualise affective structures, as the

structures residing between the actual and the digital virtual. The digital virtual is to be understood as technologically simulated, while the term virtual is used in the Deleuzian sense, as a potentiality for change (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987). The Revolutionary Virtual, is devised here, as the materialized mass of potentiality for change. When these affective structures, residing on the interface between the actual and the digital virtual, enable revolutionary moments, I view this as an actualization of the Deleuzian virtual --the virtual full of potentialities that may or not happen. I use the term 'Revolutionary Virtual' to denote the result of this process. In that sense, the Revolutionary Virtual is different form the Deleuzian virtual, in that the 'blocs of affect', Deleuze and Guattari refer to, are materialised in the Real.

The chapter also unravels other issues surfacing every time an incident, which is attributed to information communication technologies, and particularly the Internet, ends up disturbing the hierarchies in the global system. In that sense, I discuss cyberspace as another topos, a time-space compression spectrum, which exists in the interface between the spiritual and the material, the imaginary and the actual, digitally enabling virtuality as a potentiality for change. I view cyberspace as a playground for affective movements, of the active or the reactive type in the Nitzschean sense, the way Deleuze qualifies our relation to power (Deleuze, 2006: 40; Karatzogianni and Robinson 2010). From that theoretical platform, I explore the public feelings expressed through hacktivism, or other ethically and politically blurred digital methods of dissent. The focus is more on the tensions and the psycho-political formations that digital movements and antagonistic organizations tap into, in order to produce and inspire virtualities of hope, truth, freedom, revolution, and equally paranoia, suspicion, hatred and fear.

In accordance to nomadic science (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987), I am poaching concepts from a variety of systems of thought, as I do not adhere to notions of fixed ideological or disciplinary purity. Nevertheless, this approach is necessary to help us theorise how affective structures mediate actual and digital experience, and begin to understand how affective structures of the active and reactive type can have a revolutionary effect in the Deleuzian sense, especially, when digital affect is present as a regular feature of all contemporary history-in-the-making.

Philosophical platform

Affect theory has been used in recent years to 'illuminate the intertwined realms of the aesthetic, the ethical, and the political as they play out across bodies (human and non-human) in both mundane and extraordinary ways' (Gregg and Seigworth, 2010). In their introduction to *The Affect Theory Reader,* Gregg and Seigworth identify no less than six approaches in relation to the emergence of affect theory, summarized briefly here according to my own understanding of their categorization: phenomenologies of embodiment and investigations into the body's capacities for extensions; the hybridization of human with the non human in bio-informatics and bio-engineering; work found in feminist studies, the Italian autonomism, and philosophically inflected cultural studies; in psycholanalytic inquiries focusing on desire; political work undertaken focusing on people leave under the thumb of normativizing power, by queer, feminist, subaltern and disability activists; and work

aiming to move beyond the linguistic and representational (Gregg and Seigworth 2010).

In my own discussion, the use of affect theory is employed, in order to illuminate the hidden interface between the actual and the digital virtual, as a necessary ontological resolution, before mapping the affective structures involved in the WikiLeaks example. Drawing from Deleuze and Guattari (1987), Massumi (2002) and Clough (2000; 2007), I argue that the strong active and reactive affective flows directed for or against the two actual personalities, Julian Assange and his organization WikiLeaks, and Bradley Manning as his source, their biographies, and their actions, snowballed eventually beyond the digital virtual to a Revolutionary Virtual, helping to actualize the potential of what are still modernist revolutions in the Middle East, and to inspire postmodern desires across wider revolutionary plateaus, already in the making (for a first glance at the emerging issues in the Middle East, and the role of social media, see Al-Zubaidi et al., 2 May 2011).[3] Although it is obviously critical to take into account, as the key underlying systemic causes for the revolutions, both the oppression by the regimes in these states, and precarity as a permanent feature in the logic of global capitalism,[4] I argue for the importance of the expressive causes in this process, the affective fabrics and affective structures[5] and flows, which interface between the actual and the digital virtual. It is an interface beyond the semiotic and the representational, which can help us explain how affective flows unite to a collective movement for revolution, resulting eventually to a Revolutionary Virtual.

To begin with, historically, as Rob Shields argues in *The Virtual* (2003) there was a continuation of the dichotomy between spirit and matter in the mapping of cyberspace

by the first generation of cyberspace theorists. He argues that the digital virtual offers only a technique of simulation and memory, which is being used to model and anticipate the future. Nevertheless, 'the rapid pace and fluid stability of digital simulations pose a challenge to attempts to fix and institutionalize culture, to develop and propagate norms of behaviour which are seen as legitimate and to stabilize values by embedding them in concrete forms, such as monuments, buildings and cities' (Shields, 2003:78). Similarly, Pierre Lévy (2005) predicted that '[n]o reference, authority, dogma or certitude will remain unchallenged by the future which awaits us. We are now discovering that reality is a collective creation. We are all in the process of thinking in the same network. This has always been the case, but cyberspace renders it so evident that it can no longer be ignored'.

In more practical terms, affecting empirical analysis, Shah and Abraham (2009) in 'Digital Natives with a Cause?' rightly point to false dichotomies and binaries of discourse around technologically-mediated identities with a division of the physical and the virtual, with peer-to-peer networking communities, for example, portrayed to reside only within the digital domain. What is frenzily consumed and produced in social networking sites is discussed only in terms of their online presence, thus neglecting their embodied presence. Shah and Abraham argue that such vision in dangerous and futile: 'It is necessary to overcome the physical-virtual dialectic when speaking of Digital Natives and to consider them as techno-social identities who straddle, like Donna Haraway's cyborgs, the realms of the physical and the virtual simultaneously' (ibid).

The digital virtual poses challenges to the actual world, through the Deleuzian virtual, as the place of potentiality, which encompasses the revolutionary window for change, in the sense of movement, affect and sensation, as described by Massumi in his *Parables for the Virtual*.[6] Massumi understands emotion as subjective, the sociolinguistic fixing of the quality of an experience, qualified intensity into semiotically formed progressions, into narrativizable action reactions circuits. Emotion is intensity and by that Massumi means affect, which is owned and recognized (2002: 28). As Shaviro helpfully notes: 'Subjects are overwhelmed and traversed by affect, but they *have* or *possess* their own emotions' (2010: 3). What occurs with our interaction with contemporary media is operating beyond the representational, beyond the semantic and semiotic level, so it is not emotion, but affect that is our socio-technical subjectivity's response to the digital environment. As Clough argued in relation to television, '[r]ather than calling for the subject's unconscious identification through a narrative representation, television hopes for a continuous body-machine attachment' (Clough, 2000: 70).

Further, Massumi views this virtual as lived paradox, 'where what are normally opposites coexist, coalesce, and connect; where what cannot be experienced cannot but be felt—albeit reduced and contained…The organization of multiple levels that have different logics and temporal organizations, but are locked in resonance to each other and recapitulate the same event in divergent ways, recalls the fractal ontology and nonlinear causality underlying theories of complexity' (Massumi, 2002: 30).

What are then these affective structures of the virtual? For Massumi, the levels at play could be multiplied to infinity: already mentioned are mind and body, but also

volition and cognition, at least two orders of language, expectation and suspense, body depth and epidermis, past and future, action and reaction, happiness and sadness, quiescence and arousal, passivity and activity, and so on (ibid. 30). Massumi understands affect itself as a two sidedness:

> the simultaneous participation of the virtual in the actual and the actual in the virtual, as one arises from and returns to the other…Affect is the virtual point of view, provided the visual metaphor is used guardedly...The autonomy of affect is its participation in the virtual. Its autonomy is its openness. Affect is autonomous to the degree to which it escapes confinement in the particular body whose vitality, or potential for interaction, it is… Actually existing, structured things live in and through that which escapes them. Their autonomy is the autonomy of affect.

> (ibid. 35)

It is this Massumian affect, which can be found on the interface between the actual, and the digital virtual. This notion could be taken further, if one implicates Deleuze and his understanding of history, whereby Lampert argues zones of intensity on the body without organs, the body becomes a pure past, and makes decisions on a libidinal future, and so the virtual body becomes the place that takes up the place of the concept of history. Lampert (2006) takes the Deleuzian philosophy in its logical conclusion when he writes:

> After all, when an event enters into the storehouse of virtual possibilities, it

enters into a realm of meaning, even if the event as such was not fully actualized. Events that were on the verge of occurring in history, effectively become a part of history or put it simply, an event takes place in phases: as virtual potential, as activity, and as fact.

And elsewhere: 'Adding strategy to sense – i.e. adding power to knowledge – begins to explain how "time is auto-affection" (Deleuze, 1986: 114–15 quoted in Lampert, 2006: 110). But to turn auto-affective time into history, we need to add the third category of outsideness, namely the fold, the "inside of the outside" (Deleuze, 1986: 104 quoted in Lampert, 2006: 110). Robinson in his 'Deleuze and Theory of Time' (forthcoming) argues that

> Deleuze seeks a type of history, which gets between points in time 'by way of an anti-memory that deterritorializes what happened in between' (Lampert, 2006: 10). It constructs a type of memory, which is non-representational. Memory becomes not recollection but rather a way of relating sheets of the past to layers of reality. Contemplating something long enough can make it part of one's affective past (ibid. 62).

This is the affect, its structures and the understanding of history that informs my analysis. I argue that the digital virtual offers a zone of intensity or affect, a system of affective structures, which enable the Revolutionary Virtual and actualize Revolution. Governments, movements or social media in the centre of emotional turmoil and on the surface of ephemeral politics, are engaged through affective structures in enabling and disabling this revolutionary virtual. Thus, it is becoming less and less necessary to experience actuality first, before the potential for revolution is felt and materialized.

The digital virtual is becoming more and more necessary for the revolutionary virtual to materialise than the necessity of the actual. The digital virtual then becomes in a characteristically Baudrillardian (1994) turn, more real, than the reality it simulates, and thus enables the transformation of the Deleuzian virtual into the Revolutionary Virtual.

WikiLeaks as an Organization

WikiLeaks was launched in 2006 as an international non-profit organization, founded by Julian Assange, with members from a wide variety of professional backgrounds to publish material, which is private or classified and coming from anonymous sources, exposing trespasses from governments, multinational corporations, and individuals. The material published by WikiLeaks has ranged from leaks involving multinational companies, political institutions, governments and even cults, however the more extensive and global effect the organization had was in relation to U.S. diplomatic cables exposing the American view on the Afghan and Iraq wars, and the inner-workings and thoughts of individuals in the apparatus of U.S. diplomacy and government in general. The organization started as a wiki,[7] but later followed a more traditional model to cope with rapid growth, collaborating with mainstream media to enable professional journalistic and examination of material in its possession. In the most controversial case, deemed Cablegate,[8] the WikiLeaks whistle-blower, former U.S. military Bradley Manning based in Iraq, was arrested by authorities after confessing his exploits to a hacker online, who reported him to U.S. authorities. WikiLeaks has won awards for exposing state and governments secrets and

empowering citizens through greater government transparency (i.e. Amnesty International, the Economist, nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize, and its founder Julian Assange was Reader's Choice for Time's Person of the Year in 2010). Understandably, it has been also criticized for endangering the lives of individuals due to irresponsible publishing of names in the Afghan related leak, harming diplomacy, and compromising national security through releasing communication which was intended for internal governmental consumption.

Several themes both in the WikiLeaks coverage and the reaction by individuals, institutions, governments and organizations have emerged which should not go unexplored by anyone interested in the political formations of nation, race, empire, population and generation in the digitalised and actual everyday. The WikiLeaks story has a lot of affect in it. For instance, the WikiLeaks founder's mother was in his own words an activist who was threatened with her son standing next to her by authorities for taking part in activities protesting the Vietnam War. The distrust of authorities is an affect, which is crucial to the formation of subjectivities of this type. The source of the leak, Bradley Manning, is portrayed as a gay soldier who was initiated to hacker culture through one of his relationships. His biography is riddled with confused affect and unrecognised emotions. For example, the desire for belonging, which resulted in his engagement with usually contrasting communities, the military and hacker culture. Further, it was affect, which forged the allegiances and collaborations of WikiLeaks with other movements. It was affect, which accelerated the emotional and reactive cyberattack responses to banking and ecommerce institutions that stopped offering their services to WikiLeaks and their supporters. And it was affect, which inflamed disproportionate calls for Julian Assange to be executed as a traitor by mainstream

right-wingers in the U.S. All these actions and reactions point to a rich ecology of digitally simulated affect.

But this is not all. The threat and fear by governments cultivated by certain ideologies to crack down on internet freedom and freedom of expression and the difficulties of negotiating transparency, open government and privacy are also part of this story. The allure of the betrayed Assange, and the traitor Assange, the liberator and revolutionary Assange, has a baggage of affective flows, which one can read through the affective perspective, which enables a dialogue between 'cultural studies of affect, public feelings and the politics of emotion, on the one hand, and scholarship on digital culture, new media and information-communication technologies, on the other' (Kuntman's Introduction, this volume). I argue that examining the affective structures involved in the interactions of the main protagonists can explain a lot about the events following the leaks and the sociopolitical uprisings coinciding with these revelations, causing unprecedented expressions of dissent and protest in socially mediated revolutions in the Middle East.[9]

Ideological Tensions

Julian Assange, the founder of WikiLeaks, in various interviews and in the WikiLeaks site,[10] has expressed the ideology behind WikiLeaks as an amalgam of principles,

those underlying the Founding Fathers and the American Revolution, freedom of expression, open government, and the right of the people to hold accountable their leaders in a democracy. In his own words, 'So as far as markets are concerned I'm a libertarian, but I have enough expertise in politics and history to understand that a free market ends up as monopoly unless you force them to be free. WikiLeaks is designed to make capitalism more free and ethical' (Greenberg 19 November 2010). Assange himself is arguing that there is 'a deliberate attempt to redefine what we're doing not as publishing, which is protected in many countries, or the journalist activities, which is protected in other ways, as something which doesn't have a protection, like computer hacking, and to therefore split us off from the rest of the press and from these legal protections' [11] (ibid.). Despite Assange's effort to distance WikiLeaks from the hacker movement, in order to promote it as a publishing outlet with the legal cover that provides, it is obvious that it has had a wide influence on Assange's own ideology. Therefore, add to libertarianism the baggage of free culture, hacker culture where Assange is coming from, and you have the ideology of many plateaus and systems of thought ranging from liberal, to libertarian to elements of anarchist thought and free culture all really comfortably attuned to what has been called information age ideologies.

The free culture movement and hacker culture encompass different types of ideology: some political, others apolitical, some truly revolutionary in both philosophy and practice and others less so, which have been examined extensively especially over the last decade (Castells, 2001; Weber, 2004; Lovink, 2007; Taylor and Jordan, 2004; Raymond, 2001; Williams, 2002). There seems to be an issue with attaching any online collaborative project, whether it would be a software project, a free culture offering, or a social media-enabled protest movement to a specific ideology. One the one hand, there are ideologues who deliberately seek to realise the revolutionary

potential of technology and enhance the effects in the political economic, social and cultural process to change the system as a whole, such as the ideology of free/libre software movement (Stallman 2009). Nevertheless, often, the commercial viability of a project means that the ideology of activism is played down to create focus on the value of the product offered. In this sense free-software was revamped as open-source to dissociate from the ideological components[12] (ibid.). Currently, ideology is often mixed with activism, with activist entrepreneurs and entrepreneurial activists, an obvious example would be China and social activism mixing with internet companies, and riding the band wagon of activism to attract more hits on commercial sites for profit purposes (Yang 2009; Karatzogianni, 10 March 2010).

There is a wide ideological spectrum in information age ideologies, ranging from neo-liberalism to cybercommunism, to libertarianism and to anarchist thought. In a way, ideology is almost transferred through those old lenses of the traditional political thought and applied to the political economy, culture and society of the digital virtual. In *The Politics of Cyberconflict* (2006), I argued that in many ways although the medium is postmodern, the aims and desires are still of the modernist variety. The groups engaging in cyberconflicts are still fighting for power, participation, democracy, but are using an accelerated process and a postmodern medium that enables asymmetries, empowering the previously marginalised or repressed, causing shifts in our understanding of identity and community, accelerating feelings and political attachments to foster unprecedented social and political change. The internet encourages networked organization and mobilization, a version of the commons that is ungoverned and ungovernable, either by corporate interests or by leaders and parties. We have seen the empirical confirmation of this trend to include social

networking in the revolutions currently taking place in the Middle East. Some of these groups, which are informed by a more postmodern reading of ideology are calling for the transfer of some of the features of the digital virtual to the actual world, and they are doing this by mixing and matching several elements of traditional political thought to express this affect for change. It seems that WikiLeaks is part of that creed.

Organizational Tensions

In close proximity to problems stemming from the ideological platform are organizational problems in FLOSS communities, which have been discussed extensively (Dyer-Witherford, 1999; Weber, 2004, Benkler, 2006; Karatzogianni and Michaelides 2009). Assange admitted that the growth of WikiLeaks was too rapid to allow for adjustments in organizational terms. This is where the initial failure to support Manning with funds, or to respond to global attacks actual, mediated or digital can be partially explained.

We know from social movement theory (Snow et al. 1980: 790-797), that the fewer and weaker the social ties to alternative networks, the greater the structural availability for movement participation and, movements which are linked to other groups expand at more rapid rate than more isolated and closed movements (Snow et al. 1980: 790-797). This is why the network effect is responsible for WikiLeaks and Assange being supported by such diverse actors. Various celebrities helped pay his bail in the sexual assault case, a former soldier offered him residence in the UK, and

Daniel Ellsberg, a whistle-blower of international status spoke in his defense. Journalists and media organizations, politicians and academics from various fields reacted almost emotionally to Assange and his organization, as did social movements, NGOs, human rights protesters, hacktivist groups, such as Anonymous, various file-sharing communities, and information age pioneers and ideologues. All these individuals and groups adhere to different ideologies and have a wide-ranging race, class, gender and nationality backgrounds. They are, in a bizarre way, the multitude in Hardt and Negri's sense (2004) of players, which have to express their particular affect, nevertheless, drawing from their individual causes and systems of belief. Through diametric opposite flows of affects, they either render Assange a hero or villain and his organization a revolution in the media ecology or an anathema to global security. In a way, Assange and his organization are this empty signifier filled ideologically to reflect the discursive mood of the movement or the individual, supported by different forces which outpour their feelings on different facets of the WikiLeaks story, be it digital rights, freedom of expression, internet censorship, international legal issues, national security, civil rights, privacy, whistle-blowing against multinational corporations and governments, and the list is endless.

This was the difficulty of adhering to an organizational model for WikiLeaks that would satisfy the image and ideology of such disparate forces. Assange has called himself the 'boss' that fired Daniel Domscheit-Berg, although it is obvious that WikiLeaks started with an information age philosophy, which according to some, was compromised, when it all went global and mainstream, with mainstream media given leaks and deals made by the 'Leader', often without consent or knowledge from his WikiLeaks base.

To continue with my examinations of affective structures in the responses to the WikiLeaks saga, the leadership and organizational tensions evident in WikiLeaks is witnessed since the advent of the digital. In other groups, the threat of forks[13] forced organization choices to be made to solve structural chaos and force sustainability by either forking or creating crypto-hierarchies or open hierarchies (Karatzogianni and Michaelides 2009). An Icelandic parliamentarian and former WikiLeaks spokeswoman Brigitta Jonsdottir --the U.S. subpoenaed Twitter to hand over her personal details-- has tellingly described the organizational problems thus and notice how her affect and emotion is pouring from that account:

> There is not enough transparency within the organization about decisions and not good enough communication flow and in order for a good communication flow, you have to have good structure and know whose role is appointed to each other. I just wanted to have a debate about this with sort of the core group of volunteers and I couldn't. I tried for a long time and it didn't happen. One of the biggest criticisms on WikiLeaks, just like WikiLeaks criticizes government for their lack of transparency, there was a big criticism of WikiLeaks for not being transparent enough about their financial system, their donations. It would have just been so easy to make that just completely open instead of defending it all the time and having these speculations.
>
> (McMahon, 15 January 2011)

The OpenLeaks fork was caused by disagreements over Assange's leadership style and the centralization of the organization, although his trouble with Swedish authorities over sexual assault allegations did not help either. It is often a charismatic leader who can inspire the community involved, and we have seen the failure to inspire positive affect in forks across software communities with threatened forks in Linux, and actual forks elsewhere.[14] The OpenLeaks is in fact very close ideologically to the open source movement, in that it keeps the traditional ideological constraints out of the picture to concentrate on improving the process and the product. It is projected as a neutral conduit of people interested in exposing injustices: 'Our intention is to function, as much as possible, as a mere conduit (akin to the telephone exchange and the post) between the whistleblower and an organization of their choice. This means that OpenLeaks does not accept submissions or publish leaked material directly' (opeanleaks.org). In the WikiLeaks' case, Assange has a broad spectrum of ideological influences and he is very careful not to alienate by alluding to more radical systems of thought, even if his hacker culture background might mean he has certain beliefs which point to non-mainstream influences. Nevertheless, it is partly the concentration of leadership in his hands that caused the OpenLeaks fork: 'OpenLeaks is based on a more decentralized concept. We do not seek to publish information ourselves, but rather to enable third parties to do so' (openleaks.org).

Smári McCarthy has been involved in various socio-technical initiatives (for more see http://www.smarimccarthy.com/ and http://planet.fabfolk.com/), and was recently a candidate for the Icelandic parliament. He was initially involved in WikiLeaks, and in his own words had to spend 'a lot of time trying to clear up the unfortunate aspects of his erstwhile connection to them'.[15] He had this to say about the ideological issues:

The stated ideology of WikiLeaks has very little in common with its organization. One of the reasons the Openleaks fork is important is because it allows the localization of the information politics, where WikiLeaks has been attempting to amplify itself and go for global impact, but falling very short of that due to the fact that their group's skillset is very western-biased.

(Email interview with the author, 15 February 2011)

So far, the focus has been the WikiLeaks ideological and organizational tensions which caused difficulties in the perception of WikiLeaks, in terms of what it was officially meant to be representing and with its dealings with other protagonists, its base of supporters; its inability to address the issues as they were arising, due to organizational tensions; a too broad and confused ideological platform that could not reconcile ideology, philosophy, and organisation of the founding organization with the more centralized approach, whereby the personality focused on its leader, Julian Assange, his personal life story, and his trouble with the sexual assault charges in Sweden.

Media Movements and Radical Politics

Can one make a wild wager that the dynamics of postmodern capitalism, with its rise of new eccentric communities, provides a new opportunity here? That, perhaps for the first time in history, the logics of alternative communities can be grafted on to the latest stage of technology?

I argue here that the logics of alternative communities can be indeed grafted on to the latest stage of technology. WikiLeaks is part of a process taking place in cyberspace particularly the last decade or so and has snowballed considerably to actualize what was digital virtually possible for online collaborative communities. In a way, WikiLeaks is only the tip of the iceberg in terms of digital activism. More than a decade of digital activism has been mostly invisible to the general public. For instance, there are virtual communities comprised by thousands of individuals, where the formulation of alternatives to capitalism, proprietary software or systems of knowledge are daily debated and there is considerable attachment affect and love for both the community and the future they ascribe to.

WikiLeaks is part of a tradition of an overall information age ideology adhering to 'information wants to be free',[16] wanting to change the world through making government open and accountable, through fostering some kind of alternative to capitalist relations, and through peer production and collaborative networks. There are dozens of groups others political and others less so. The peer production and open source groups have given us an array of beautiful products and have proven that human collaboration outside and in parallel with the capitalist system is both possible and sustainable. You could say there is a longer tradition of civil disobedience, political dissidence and social movements in the historical narrative, which various hacktivist groups might be drawing from as well. The extent to which WikiLeaks adheres to the peer production philosophy is not an issue I have space for here, but it is worth exploring in the future.

Nevertheless, the criminalisation of protest and hacktivism, cracking down on the freedom of expression, their portrayal as threats to global security and as terrorism, is a tactic, which serves the logic of the current capitalist system and the hierarchy of the world system as we know it. The state form and capitalism are threatened, and not necessarily human security. Uninformed observers and individuals which are not aware of military targets or how diplomacy works might have found some moderate value in the Cablegate documents or other revelations, but for those in the intelligence game or those who are engaging in large scale violent attacks this is part of what they know in order to succeed in their operations (On the reconfiguration of power in global politics and other cyberconflicts see Karatzogianni 2009).

Evident in the anti-globalization and the anti-capitalist movements which are networked is an alternative programme for the reform of society, asking for democracy and more participation from the 'underdogs', be they in the West or in the developing world. In the anti-war movement, which is a single-issue movement, the demand was for a change in power relations, in favor of those that believed the war to be unjustified. In new social movements, networking through the internet links diverse communities such as labour, feminist, ecological, peace and anti-capitalist groups, with the aim of challenging public opinion and battling for media access and coverage. This is enabling civil society actors to the extent that a reformatting of politics is taking place (Dean, Anderson and Lovink, 2006). It is at the interface, the spectrum and the clash between hierarchies and networks that revolutionary change occurs. In complexity theory terms, this happens when a system is at the edge of chaos. It is herein that networks/rhizomes fight against hierarchies/arborescent systems to disrupt the closure of space in the global system in the fields of

governance, knowledge production, digital culture and the mediated public sphere (Karatzogianni and Robinson 2010).

Affective Structures Overflow and the Spirit of Resistance

The reactions to the WikiLeaks in terms of content, but more importantly I think in terms of what the organization itself stands for, are swamped by strong feelings and by intense flows of affect, which eventually over-spilled to cause revolutionary change in countries in the Middle East and the potential of more change elsewhere.[17] If you are to discuss the psycho-political formations digital movements and antagonistic organizations tap into, you only have to look at the reactions to the WikiLeaks saga: Authoritarian leaders urging their subjects not to listen to Assange portraying him as a western stooge; liberal democratic governments talking of threats to national security and fear for soldiers' lives; the call by mainstream conservatives in the US for Assange to be trialled as a traitor and executed; in other left wing and radical quarters to be treated as a hero and an icon for the digital revolution for some, and criticism regarding his leadership style, for not being accountable, decentralized or rhizomatic enough for others.

The feelings which are at stake are entangled in the media narratives created around Assange and Manning. An analysis of the affective structures involving the biographies of both protagonists in this story, and how these affected their portrayal in the global media should be briefly discussed here. During all this affective razzmatazz, the source of the leaks, Bradley Manning, is equally a cause for even

more affect, instigating a stir of public feelings since he is a gay soldier, who turned

hacker, who subsequently turned into a disobedience actor with a moral

consciousness, reminiscent of other whistle-blowers, such as Daniel Ellsberg, who has

defended both him and Assange. Manning had a lonely childhood of displacement

(not as extensive as that of Assange who changed 37 schools) and homophobia, and

he also found in the hacker culture a community to belong, very much following a

unsuccessful attempt at belonging in the military. His psychological state when he

found another hacker to communicate his anxieties, who turned him to the authorities,

speaks volumes of his naivety, helplessness, confusion and his bravery in overcoming

all these:

> Manning: if you had unprecedented access to classified networks 14 hours a
>
> day 7 days a week for 8+ months, what would you do? ive been so isolated so
>
> long… i just wanted to be nice, and live a normal life… but events kept
>
> forcing me to figure out ways to survive… smart enough to know whats going
>
> on, but helpless to do anything… no-one took any notice of me.
>
> (The Guardian 1 December 2010).

The politics here are also of gender and sexuality and the inclusion of gays in the

American military under the no tell policy during the Clinton years (Leigh and

Harding Leigh, 1 Februaty 2011). In Adi Kuntsman's (2007) *Figurations of Violence*

and Belonging, a whole chapter, 'The Soldier and the Terrorist', is devoted to

unpacking the relationships between violence and queerness, hatred and belonging,

contested borders of, and 'homecoming' to the nation. Kuntsman argues that literature

has predominantly focused on the ways in which gays, lesbians, bisexuals and transgenders were excluded from citizenship, national belonging and/ or mobility across national borders, or on the attempts to queer the nation, for example through various practices of citizenship such as marriage, military service, or consumption, but rarely accounted for the queer sexiness, violence and hatred embedded in nationalism – in particular and the national manifestations of sexual, racial gender hierarchies (Kuntsman, 2009: 102). The analysis of Manning's treatment in the different media should take this and similar analysis into account.

In Assange's case, the mainstream media narrative followed a spectrum which coincided with the initial portrayal of Assange by his chosen partners in leaking Cablegate to the world (The Guardian, New York Times, Der Spiegel), only to shift like a pendulum in the opposite direction, with criticism of his personality and personal life, when the reactions by governments, especially the U.S. and the hunt for his demonization started by mainstream media and governments around the world. This shift in the narrative produced even stronger affective reactions, polarizing the feelings around Assange and creating instant enemies and supporters, some of whom demonstrated their feeling with a wide variety of actions, from asking for his death penalty, to hacking banks and online outlets for not enabling Assange's financial support. Undoubtedly, it is difficult to tell whether affect creates the events and the subsequent media coverage, or it is the original media coverage of WikiLeaks and the Cablegate scandal, which created the feelings which impacted on the digital virtual and enabled the upsetting of the status quo around the world, thereby acting not as a cause, but as an accelerating factor along with social media to the Middle East revolutions. It is these affective flows toward WikiLeaks and Assange played out by

individuals, governments and organizations, both in the actual and the digital virtual, which when overflown, accelerated the overthrow of authoritarian leaders in Tunisia, Egypt, Libya, Yemen, Syria, and elsewhere in the Middle East.

Conclusion

This chapter takes the WikiLeaks as an empirical example from where to explore the Revolutionary Virtual, which Routledge and Simons describe as 'revolutionary moments of politics that can be most appropriately described as spiritual moments'. Spiritual because they are manifestation of an inner experience which is felt during these are the irreducible moments 'when people are willing to risk their lives while resisting oppressive power', so Routledge and Simons 'focus on moments of resistance' and not in the political movements within they frequently occur, because they believe that 'they cannot be tamed by co-option or coercion' (1995: 472). Meanwhile, 'spirits of resistance are tamed intellectually by turning the poetry of transgression into the prose of rationality…On one level, an effort is made to explain the action of those engaged in resistance in terms of instrumental rationality' (ibid. 475). This, Routledge and Simons call, a 'teleological taming' which 'operates by determining in advance the path that revolutionary change must take in order to realize the principle (Reason or Freedom)… all insurrection and resistance can thus be assessed according to it a progress along this unwinding sameness, this consensus-approved trajectory, this pre-calculated curve of history' (ibid. 477). In this sense, it is not surprising that the revolutions in the Middle East have already had this teleological taming in the public sphere, especially in western liberal democracies.

In conclusion, this chapter opens up the possibility of theorising the interface between the actual and the digital virtual, by situating that interface within affective structures, while defining the result of the overflow of affective structures as the Revolutionary Virtual, 'the plane of consistency, or the field of virtual and affective forces, in which new zones of affect can be created, or old ones reactivated and brought into the present'.[18] It also, opens up the potential to analyse affective aspects of resistance by moving beyond the representational and the semiotic. With the impact of the WikiLeaks on global politics still ongoing, it is compelling to theorise in future studies the contribution of new media publishers and social networking platforms in enabling revolutions all over the world, by taking into account the affect structures and politics of emotion produced, and not by merely applying the resource mobilization theories, identity paradigms in social movement theory, or network analysis, which has been the case in the past.

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Notes

[1] A specific historical example of a digital organization enabling whistle-blowers to unleash material and thus, enforce a more decentralized and deterritorialised government, commercial institutions, and other organizations, to effect a more open public sphere. WikiLeaks and its founder Julian Assange were attacked on their tactics, ideology and ethics behind their operations, but equally supported by various civil society organizations and various well known individuals alike. The revelations are still ongoing at the time of writing in April 2010 (i.e. the Guantanamo files were released at the time of submitting the chapter to the publisher). I explain briefly some of the particulars of WikiLeaks later on in the chapter.

[2] I use the word 'expressive' here, in the same way Steve Shaviro (2010: 2) in his excellent *Post-Cinematic Effect* uses it: 'that is in the way they [films and video works] give voice (or better give sounds and images) to a kind of ambient, free-floating sensibility that permeates our social today, although it cannot be attributed to any subject in particular'. Shaviro thinks the expressive works he is analyzing are

productive and symptomatic. Symptomatic, because they 'produce indices of complex social processes, which they transduce, condense and rearticulate…' and productive, as they do not just represent social processes, but actively participate in them, and help to constitute them.

[3] Assange himself hailed WikiLeaks' role in the Middle East revolts.

[4] See Neilson and Rossiter, 2008, for an insightful account of precarity and its conceptual centrality for social struggles in Europe.

[5] Wissinger who interviewed models and fashion professionals to understand how affective systems operate, has argued that the flow between bodies, released in social interaction, are being picked up and circulated in processes of capitalist production. She believes that the concept of affect resolves some of the difficulties encountered when contemplating complexities of the postmodern body: 'Viewed as an affective system, the body is understood as more than a mere product of meaning systems or of how it is represented; the concept of affect also encompasses the flows of energies that move in and through them' (Wissinger, 2007: 253).

[6] He draws from Spinoza, who defined the body in terms of relations of movement and rest: 'This capacity [Spinoza] spoke of as a *power* (or potential) to affect and be affected. The issue, after sensation, perception, and memory is *affect*. "Relation between movement and rest" is another way of saying "transition"… The Spinozist problematic of affect offers a way of weaving together concepts of movement, tendency and intensity in a way that takes us right back to the beginning: in what sense the body coincides with its own transitions and its transitioning with its potential' (2002:15).

[7] In the usual neutral-point-of-view- style, the Wikipedia entry on WikiLeaks, rushed to dissociate themselves from WikiLeaks: 'WikiLeaks was launched as a user-

editable "wiki" site and still uses MediaWiki as the content management system, but has progressively moved towards a more traditional publication model, and no longer accepts either user comments or edits' (wikipedia).

[8] See The Guardian (30 November 2010) 'Cablegate Roulette: diplomatic dispatches like you've never seen them'. Online available at:

http://www.guardian.co.uk/media/pda/2010/dec/03/cablegate-roulette-wikileaks

[9] Thucydides has made a crucial distinction in his classic analysis of the Peloponnesian war between *aitia* (charge made), *aition* (necessary cause) and prophasis (an external cause, or occasion, or antecedent event correlated with an outcome). The purpose of this work is not to examine the actual effect of WikiLeaks on global politics, however it is necessary here to make a qualification. Although it is ridiculous to think of WikiLeaks as the *aition* of these revolutions, it is not as ridiculous to think of them as providing evidence for the *aitia* and therefore becoming partly the *prophasis* for the revolutions in the Middle East. Other social media also played an enabling role. It is also not the purpose of this work to debate how responsible social media and the internet may be for regime change and social and political revolution. This has been debated extensively by optimists and pessimists alike (for example Rheingold, 2002; Mozorov 2011).

[10] (WikiLeaks.org, 1 Dec 2010 21:31:37 GMT): 'WikiLeaks is an independent global group of people with a long-standing dedication to the idea of a free press and the improved transparency in society that comes from this. The group includes accredited journalists, software programmers, network engineers, mathematicians and others…. Our track record shows we go to great lengths to bring the truth to the world without fear or favour. The great American president Thomas Jefferson once observed that the price of freedom is eternal vigilance. We believe the journalistic media plays a key role in this vigilance.

[11] It is worth noting that new media platforms, such as Twitter are eager not to be seen as publishers, but as software tools, in order to avoid legal suits stemming from their users' content. OpenLeaks, which forked from WikiLeaks is similarly eager to be in the non-publisher category for obvious reasons.

[12] Althusser (1970) on his part, has also written that the most ideological gesture of all is denying that something is ideological.

[13] 'In software engineering, a project fork happens when developers take a legal copy of source code from one software package and start independent development on it, creating a distinct piece of software'. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fork_(software_development). For more see Dafermos work 'Division of labour in free & open source software development: the FreeBSD project' http://www.oekonux.org/list-en/archive/msg05772.html

[14] For instance OpenBSD forked from NetBSD, Open SSH from SSH, DragonFly BSD forked from FreeBSD 4.8, NeoOffice from Office.org, GoneMEforked from Gnome, and Ubuntu from Debian to state some examples.

[15] When I probed McCarthy regarding the link between Wikileaks and the unrest in various countries in the Middle East, he replied: 'To be honest, and speaking as somebody fairly more aware of the situation in Wikileaks and many of these "social media enabled evolutions" than many others, I'd be careful not to make assumptions - there is absolutely no evidence to suggest that the revolutions we've seen are in any way related to the data that Wikileaks has been publishing, although it's a favored theory by many of the hype-mongers out there, in particular the Wikileaks people themselves. There is however overbearing evidence of social unrest due to poor economic conditions and general frustration over the social structure. Further, there's no evidence that these uprisings couldn't have been conducted without the help of

social media, although there's a lot of evidence to suggest that these uprisings have been aided significantly by the existence of social media, and further, been amplified in terms of global awareness.' (Email Interview with the author, 15 February 2011)

[16] The phrase has been attributed to Stewart Brand. In the end of 1960s, Stewart Brand founded counterculture Whole Earth Catalog with main idea that technology could be liberating rather than oppressing. The first modern recorded occurrence of the expression was at the first Hackers' Conference in 1984, when Brand told Steve Wozniak: 'On the one hand information wants to be expensive, because it's so valuable. The right information in the right place just changes your life. On the other hand, information wants to be free, because the cost of getting it out is getting lower and lower all the time. So you have these two fighting against each other'. (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Information_wants_to_be_free)

[18] Andy Robinson's comment on my proposed Revolutionary Virtual concept (Email correspondence 21 April 2010).