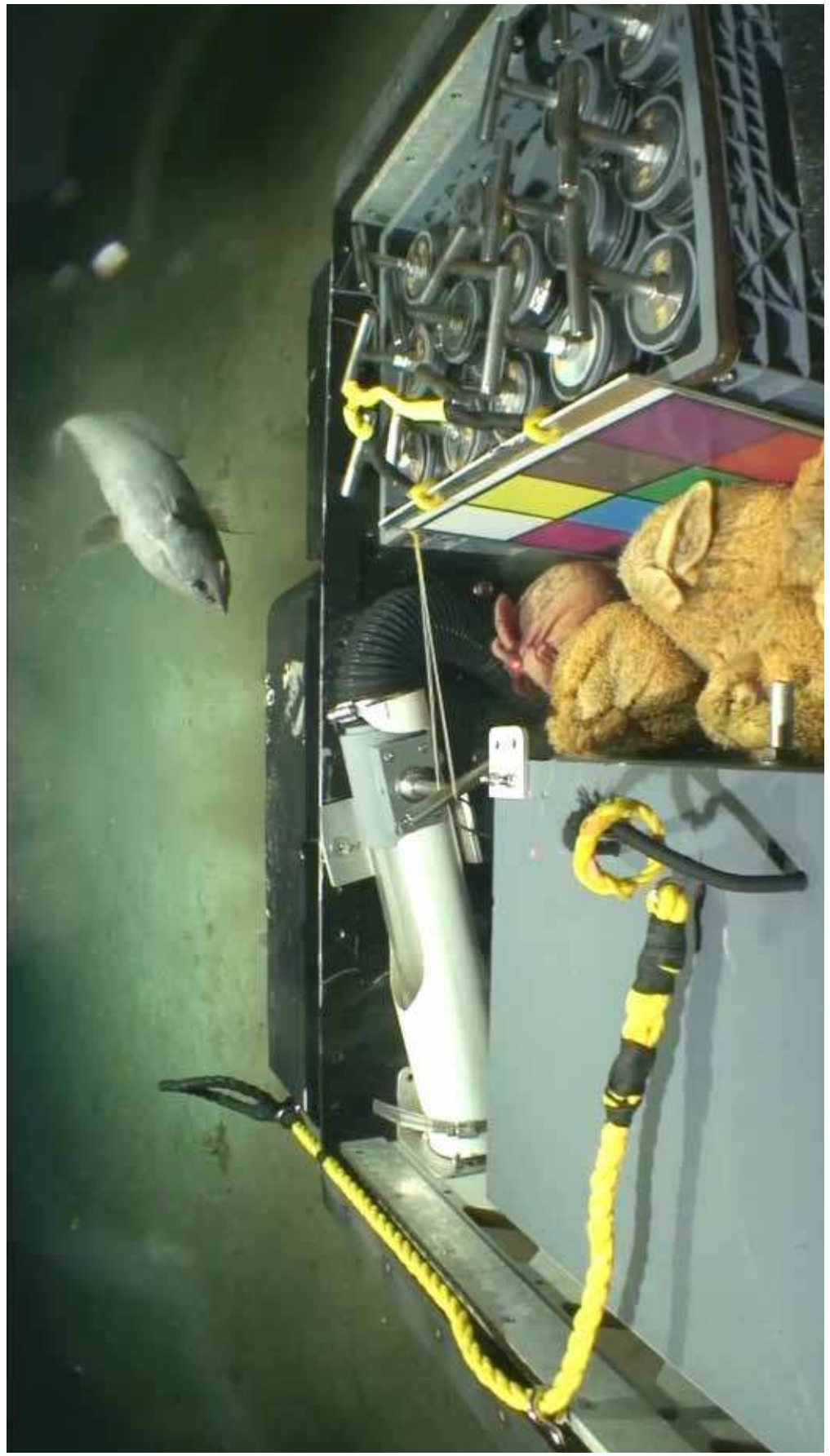

Deep CCZ Expedition: Exploring Abyssal Communities in the Pacific Ocean Before Deep-Sea Mining Begins.

Remotely Operated Vehicle (ROV) Lu'ukai showing interior with video color balance card and rattail fish.

Credit: https://oceanexplorer.noaa.gov/explorations/18ccz/logs/photolog/photolog.html#cbpi=../../media/ccz_video_070518/ccz_video_070518.html

Notes from the Cracks of the Panthéon: On Symbolic Friction and the Possibility of Counterinstitutions

Niklas Plaetzer

The challenge that the common(s) face under contemporary capitalism does not stop at the privatization of state property. As scholars and activists have shown since the Midnight Notes Collective coined the phrase "new enclosures" in 1990,[1] capital accumulation relies on the commodification of shared activities and spaces, even if their terrain can take radically heterogeneous forms: enclosures occur through the practice of logging in Brazilian Indigenous territories, the privatization of water in Senegal or postal services in the United States, and, not least, through the expansion of capital's "new frontiers" into spaces of digital labor and biotechnology.[2] The very "notion of the common is a result of privatizations, attempts at appropriation, and the complete commodification of the body, knowledge, land, air and water."[3] Paradoxically, an especially thorny problem for resistance against these enclosures arises from the fact that *theories* of "the common(s)" are *themselves* continually drawn into processes of commodification. More dramatically, invoking the commons can today operate as a "call to order," in the sense that Fred Moten and Stefano Harney give to the term: a switch from ongoing, opaque, and dissonant forms of cooperation to the mapped spaces of sovereign control, book projects, and research grants—and hence right back into the circuits of profitable knowledge production. "Critique endangers the sociality it is supposed to defend" rings true as a warning for all those who are committed to common worlds beyond the product life cycles that are proper to critical theory.[4]

At a time when the "sharing economy" is recognized by the European Union as a key to future competitiveness, it can hardly be surprising that discourses around the common(s) have been woven into the fabric of neoliberal governance.[5] There is a great risk involved when "minor-key sensibilities are made major, put right there for all to see yet not caring who the hell is doing the seeing," as Marquis Bey has put it. "Fugitive gatherings and devious assemblages draw the attention of forces of governance and control."[6] Emmanuel Macron, for instance, was able to vacuously declare that "the common is created on the level of a city, a town, a country, or a continent. We share the same adventure because we have decided to do so,"[7] even as the streets of French cities were swept by precarized workers in yellow vests and subsequent clouds of tear gas—every Saturday, for more than 60 weeks. In fact, the Yellow Vest movement (*Gilets jaunes*), which began in November 2018 and only found a provisional ending with the caesura of the coronavirus lockdown, appears emblematic for the contested boundaries of political space.

1 Midnight Notes Collective, *New Enclosures* (Brooklyn, NY: Autonomedia, 1990).

2 Sandro Mezzadra and Brett Neilson, *Border as Method, or, the Multiplication of Labor* (Durham, NC, and London: Duke University Press, 2013), 295.

3 Silvia Federici, quoted in Veronica Gago, "Entrevista: Cuentos de Bruja," *Pagina/12*, April 15, 2011, https://www.pagina12.com.ar/diario/suplementos/las12/13-6441-2011-04-15.html.

4 Fred Moten and Stefano Harney, *The Undercommons: Fugitive Planning & Black Study* (London: Minor Compositions, 2013), 19.

5 European Economic and Social Committee, "Collaborative or Participatory Consumption: A Sustainable Model for the 21st Century," *Official Journal of the European Union*, OJ C 177 (2014): 1–8.

6 Marquis Bey, *Them Goon Rules: Fugitive Essays on Radical Black Feminism* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2019), 53.

7 Emmanuel Macron, "Discours du Président de la République au Cirque Jules Vernes d'Amiens," Elysée Palace, Paris, November 21, 2019, https://www.elysee.fr/emmanuel-macron/2019/11/21/amiens-est-capitale-europeenne-de-la-jeunesse-2020-le-message-demmanuel-macron-a-cette-occasion.

The Yellow Vests emerged from an opposition to raising taxes on car fuel, but they later marched with radical ecologists to demand government action against climate change.[8] Their meeting space was not the factory floor but the *rond-point* (roundabout), and their movement resonated in areas where deindustrialization and political alienation have gone hand in hand for decades. The Yellow Vests' revolt also spoke to precarized workers in cities—workers for whom the lifeworlds of traditional labor seemed like an antiquated ideal. Party politicians on the Left and Right, as well as union leaders, were taken by surprise when the Yellow Vests hit the streets, giving expression to a changed economy and unruly visions of the future. But what the *giletsjaunisation* of French politics also demonstrated was that a common *space* of political action did not flow from common *interests* or from the nature of public *goods* to be defended. There was no automatism involved as alliances were forged, cut off, and refigured. Common space turned out to be a fragile achievement as actors engaged in unexpected forms of translation between incongruous viewpoints and tried to give permanence to what at all times risked remaining a riotlike sequence of ephemeral events.

How to give institutional expression to the struggle for the commons if one can never determine the shape of political space in advance? How to engage in political action if what is *political* in the first place is never the *object* per se—a public hospital, the French nation, one's burnout symptoms, or the car used for Uber driving—but ever only the *mode* in which actors gather around it?[9] And what form could a struggle for the commons take that does not inadvertently fall back into depoliticized governance? How, in other words, could one avoid the transformation of "insurgent democracy"[10] into routinized "mini-publics," convened so as to *not* disrupt the workings of smooth administration? The question of an *insurgent institutional form* found a response in the Yellow Vests' experiments with communalism, including an "Assembly of Assemblies" that brought together elected delegations from around France.[11] But even within the movement, the deliberative spaces of Commercy and Saint-Nazaire remained at a distance from the riotous experience of impromptu demonstrations, the *manifs sauvages*. Would it be possible to combine the "'revolutionary' act of beginning something entirely new" with a "conservative care, which will shield this new beginning"[12]—give it a framework, without in the same gesture undermining its newness, its radical plurality, and, above all, its opposition to intractable mechanisms of repression and appropriation?

8 "Acte XVIII: Dans toute la France, des convergences entre 'gilets jaunes' et manifestants pour le climat," *Médiapart*, March 16, 2019, https://www.mediapart.fr/journal/france/160319/acte-xviii-dans-toute-la-france-des-convergences-entre-gilets-jaunes-et-manifestants-pour-le-climat.

9 See Linda Zerilli, *A Democratic Theory of Judgment* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2016), 28–29.

10 Miguel Abensour, *Democracy against the State: Marx and the Machiavellian Moment*, trans. Max Blechman and Martin Breaugh (Cambridge, UK, and Malden, MA: Polity Press, 2011).

11 "The Call of Yellow Vests, Commercy Assembly," *Altersummit*, January 27, 2019, http://www.altersummit.eu/IMG/pdf/call_commercy_eng.pdf. For a particularly lucid analysis of the Yellow Vest movement on this point, see Stefan Kipfer, "What Colour Is Your Vest? Reflections on the Yellow Vest Movement in France," *Studies in Political Economy* 100, no. 3 (2019): 209–231.

12 Hannah Arendt, *On Revolution* (London and New York: Penguin Books, 1965), 202.

Frictional Spaces: *Gilets jaunes* and *Gilets noirs*

If a counterinstitution is to be more than an abstract possibility, it must combine the *permanence* of common space with a *dissonance* that becomes generative for actors from plural standpoints.[13] A counterinstitution of the commons cannot replicate a depoliticized structure of state-administered goods if it aims to challenge an economic system that is very well able to thrive on state ownership and centralized management; neither could such an institution assume the *preexistence* of a common interest or a shared identity, as long as its commitments point beyond national citizenship and the all-too-often violent limitations of "community." Against the logics of administration and identity, the commons as a counterinstitution need to undertake the balancing act of permanence and radical novelty; they become a collective project in need of what José Medina has called "beneficial epistemic friction."[14] Such friction occurs between actors who never assemble around already given objects of concern but constitute these objects *as common* to the extent that their relation also pushes them *to become somebody else*: common space is a space of unsettled selfhood, or it is not common.

In the case of the Yellow Vests, epistemic friction could be observed and experienced when former working-class voters of the extreme right found themselves marching and discussing with feminist and anti-racist activists like Assa Traoré, a leader of the fight against police violence in the *banlieue*.[15] One of the centers of the Yellow Vest movement was La Réunion, in the Indian Ocean, where geographies of center and periphery as much as widely held assumptions about the movement's racial composition became subverted.[16] In the streets of the metropole, too, a yellow safety vest moved from an emblem of sameness to a fluorescent, floating signifier for a constitutively plural phenomenon.[17] It was the simple act of putting on neon-colored, high-visibility clothing that not only meant a shared (though without a doubt racially differentiated) sense of exposure to the physical threat of police control. It also provided a weekly starting point for unscripted encounters with others who were both *equal* and *unlike* one another. At that moment, the yellow vest became a counterinstitution and perhaps the symbol of citizenship itself.[18]

But the most powerful instances of productive dissonance were enacted by those who, in the eyes of the state, were noncitizens: the Black Vests, or *Gilets noirs*. The Yellow Vest demonstrations had

13 The question of the institution has (finally) become a central concern in the most recent debates on the commons, providing a counterpoint to an earlier enthusiasm about extra-institutional flows. Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, *Assembly* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), 37–39.

14 José Medina, *The Epistemology of Resistance: Gender and Racial Oppression, Epistemic Injustice, and the Social Imagination* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 23–26, 50–56.

15 Ludo Simbille and Thomas Clerget, "À la marche pour Adama Traoré: 'Nous sommes des gilets jaunes depuis notre naissance,'" *Basta!*, July 26, 2019, https://www.bastamag.net/A-la-marche-pour-Adama-Traore-Nous-sommes-des-gilets-jaunes-depuis-notre.

16 Christiane Rafidinaviro, "Essor et déclin des 'gilets jaunes' de la Réunion dans l'espace public," *The Conversation*, March 1, 2020, https://theconversation.com/essor-et-declin-des-gilets-jaunes-de-la-reunion-dans-lespace-public-131958.

17 See Félix Boggio Ewanjé-Epée, "Le gilet jaune comme signifiant flottant," *Contretemps*, November 22, 2018, https://www.contretemps.eu/gilets-jaunes-signifiant-flottant/.

18 My analysis draws on Étienne Balibar, who has insightfully discussed the Yellow Vests as a "counter-power" (*contre-pouvoir*). Étienne Balibar, "Gilets jaunes: le sens du face à face," *Médiapart*, December 13, 2018, https://blogs.mediapart.fr/etienne-balibar/blog/131218/gilets-jaunes-le-sens-du-face-face.

begun on November 17, 2018, bringing thousands of mostly white working-class protesters to the streets; nine days later, the *Gilets noirs* emerged on the scene of French politics through the occupation of the National Immigration Museum.[19] Many of the *Gilets noirs* had a long-standing involvement with migrant self-organization in the collective *La Chapelle Debout*, which had itself come up in the context of the social movement *Nuit Debout* in 2016. On July 12, 2019, about 700 protesters stormed the Panthéon in Paris and occupied this symbolic space of the French national imaginary for several hours.[20] Most of them were undocumented migrants from Francophone West Africa, working precarious jobs in the Paris metropolitan area. With the occupation of the Panthéon, they brought their claim to be heard to a new level of visibility. Not only did they "invade" one of the most visited touristic sites of France; they also had the audacity to assemble peacefully for hours, sing "La Marseillaise," and draw on memories of French revolutionary citizenship. Their occupation presented itself as what Jacques Rancière calls a "staging of a nonexistent right"—an enactment of precisely the citizenship that they are denied.[21]

The Black Vests did not petition the French state for legal concessions but cast themselves as the most vivid embodiment of its revolutionary principles; they did not ask the Republic to live up to its unfulfilled promises but immediately *performed* its normative contradictions.[22] Under the dome of the Panthéon on July 12, 2019—two days before Bastille Day, *le 14 juillet*—the speeches of the *Gilets noirs* denounced the violence of borders and recounted crushing experiences of racialized dehumanization. But they also, with a sense of dignified irony, referenced Jean-Jacques Rousseau and Victor Hugo, buried just underneath their assembly space. In denouncing the state's impostrous claim to the revolutionary heritage, they configured themselves as its true heirs.[23] As if in confirmation, the *Gilets noirs* were beaten, tear-gassed, and pepper-sprayed by riot police, with 37 arrests made, some (if not all) of which entailed deportation to their respective countries of legal citizenship in Africa.[24]

On the Brittle Grounds of the Panthéon

The *Gilets noirs* enacted the citizenship they did not have, drawing on the symbolic resources of French republicanism, as in the case of the Panthéon occupation, and consciously linking their struggle to the ongoing movement of the *Gilets jaunes*. But they certainly did not affirm

19 Plateforme Enquête Militante, "'We will go until the end, on lâchera rien!,' interview with Gilets Noirs," *Verso Blog*, October 31, 2019, https://www.versobooks.com/blogs/4473-we-will-go-until-the-end-on-lachera-rien-interview-with-gilets-noirs.

20 Camille Baker, "A 'Black Vests' Movement Emerges in France to Protest Treatment of Undocumented Migrants," *The Intercept*, October 27, 2019, https://theintercept.com/2019/10/27/france-black-vests-gilets-noirs/.

21 Jacques Rancière, *Disagreement: Politics and Philosophy* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1999), 25.

22 See Ayten Gündoğdu, *Rightlessness in an Age of Rights: Hannah Arendt and the Contemporary Struggle of Migrants* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015).

23 A video recording of *Gilets noirs* speeches (produced by the activist news collective Redfish) can be found online at https://www.facebook.com/watch/live/?v=402005627083378.

24 "'Black Vests' protestors storm Panthéon in Paris," *BBC*, July 12, 2019, https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-48969438.

any glorious past that could already define the outlines of an existing, supposedly "common" space. During the Panthéon occupation, the *Gilets noirs* instead made reference to memories of colonialism and enslavement—both to the transatlantic slave trade and to the ongoing enslavement of migrants in North Africa, placing their own fight in a larger, non-Eurocentric lineage of marronage and anti-colonial resistance.[25] One can also complicate the singing of "La Marseillaise" as an echo of previous counter-stagings of French republican symbols by Haitian maroons in 1802, as famously recounted by C. L. R. James in *Black Jacobins* (1938).[26] The *Gilets noirs*, assembled in the Panthéon, pointed not only to the tomb of Rousseau but also that of Aimé Césaire.[27] They claimed the principles of revolutionary fraternity in the same moment that they also highlighted the memory of Senegalese *Tirailleurs*—troops who liberated Paris from Nazi occupation in August 1944 but were never publicly recognized—and their performance staged a form of French republicanism that simultaneously broke away from the weight of *laïcité* when demanding access to prayer rooms for Muslim migrants. Finally, their speeches drew a line between the French participation in the historical slave trade, on the one hand, and the European Union's contemporary outsourcing of border control to Libya, which provides the conditions for the dehumanizing of migrants as commodities to be bought and sold on slave markets, as a CNN report showed in 2017.[28]

Historian Michael Rothberg has offered the notion of "multidirectional memory" in order to account for the ways in which historical events resonate with memories from supposedly distinct contexts.[29] Rothberg's work traces perhaps surprising encounters between memories of the Holocaust and those of colonialism: Memory is here no longer imagined as a zero-sum game between mutually exclusive traditions or events to remember. Instead, the politics of memory comes alive through the unforeseen and self-altering encounters between perspectives that are not only plural in their differences but internally: "The archive of multidirectional memory," Rothberg writes, "is irreducibly transversal; it cuts across genres, national contexts, periods and cultural traditions."[30]

Rights claims of migrant movements have been at their most powerful not when they find the most effective legal argument but rather when their action manages to draw on the ambiguities within the symbolic space of the nation-state. In such rights claims, the figures of *the migrant*, *the citizen*, and *the maroon* merge within a dissonant ensemble: a common space is produced through the *creolization* of subjects

25 Niklas Plaetzer, "Fugitive World-Building: Rethinking the Cosmopolitics of Anti-Slavery Struggle with Arendt and Glissant," in Tamara Caraus and Elena Paris, eds., *Migration, Protest Movements and the Politics of Resistance: A Radical Political Philosophy of Cosmopolitanism* (London and New York: Routledge, 2018), 186–204.

26 C. L. R. James, *Black Jacobins: Toussaint L'Ouverture and the San Domingo Revolution* (1938; repr., New York: Vintage Books, 1989), 317–318.

27 See Redfish video material, fn23. On Aimé Césaire's counter-stagings of French citizenship, see Gary Wilder, *Freedom Time: Negritude, Decolonization, and the Future of the World* (Durham, NC, and London: Duke University Press, 2015).

28 "Migrants Being Sold as Slaves," CNN, November 13, 2017, https://edition.cnn.com/videos/world/2017/11/13/libya-migrant-slave-auction-lon-orig-md-ejk.cnn.

29 Michael Rothberg, *Multidirectional Memory: Remembering the Holocaust in the Age of Decolonization* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2009).

30 Ibid., 18.

31 Édouard Glissant, *Poetics of Relation*, trans. Betsy Wing (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1997).

32 John Drabinski, *Glissant and the Middle Passage: Philosophy, Beginning, Abyss* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2019), 16.

who are pushed to relate differently to others and themselves.[31] Such a creolizing interaction of perspectives "refuses to make either the space between or the material sites of contact legible, but rather keeps the opaqueness of the unknown and chaos in motion alongside the known and the ordered."[32] The *Gilets noirs* are a powerful example of this interstitial process insofar as their Panthéon occupation gave rise to an insurgent excess from the crossroads of memories and brought it to bear on the Yellow Vest movement, which, similarly, drew much of its force from an activating relationship to collective memory.

The possibility of counterinstitutions hence does not arise from the space of a radical elsewhere but within the cracks of supposedly stable institutions—which, it turns out, overflow with *frictional* signification: the Panthéon, the law, "La Marseillaise." Where the democratically generative exercise of *epistemic friction* appears as crucial for the production of common space between differently situated subjects, the permanence of political space relies on the *symbolic friction* between the always noncongruent layers of institutionalized memories and collective imaginings.[33] Epistemic friction concerns the plural undoing of deep-seated ways of seeing and looking away, challenging the blind spots that are limiting the social production of knowledge. Symbolic friction, on the other hand, refers to the always tension-ridden interplay of layers of signification in institutional symbols, which animates the production of political space. Such points of symbolic friction designate the sites at which common space is constructed across plural standpoints, precisely through the non-identity of the object held in common—whether it is the built environment of the Panthéon, a yellow safety vest, or perhaps even the page of a constitutional text, understood not as a legal framework but as an overflowing repository of significations that begin to act up.[34]

"La rue elle est à qui ? Elle est à nous !"
("Whose street? Our street!")

If common political space as a counterinstitution never consolidates into a fixed legal framework or objects in the world (that is, as "public goods," of which the "publicness" would be beyond dispute), it would also be naive to think that the *struggle for the commons* could, in any simple way, operate through the *language of the commons*. Here is the paradox: Just like the struggle for universal rights might not always operate most effectively through the discourse of universalism, the

33 Massimiliano Tomba has proposed the notion of "chronotones" (from the Greek, *chronos*, "time," and *tonos*, "tension") to describe "the friction generated by the sliding of different temporal layers." Massimiliano Tomba, *Insurgent Universality: An Alternative Legacy of Modernity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019), 10.

34 An earlier version of this paper was presented at the Immigration Theory Workshop at the University of Houston Law Center (February 20, 2020), organized by Professor Daniel Morales. My discussion in Houston centered on the generative friction that emerges from the principle of fraternity in the French constitution. I would like to thank Professor Morales for this opportunity and all participants for their generous comments.

struggle for the commons also has to be constantly on the lookout for reversals into domination.[35] The *Gilets noirs* are acutely aware that any demand for "integration" would amount to the consolidation of a nation-state citizenship from which they have been violently excluded. But in publicly staging the excess of citizenship, cracks in the hegemonic imaginary begin to coalesce and open up the space of a counterinstitution. Similarly, the yellow vest was such a massively successful symbol because its signification was both empty and full to the brim: a yellow safety vest with no political meaning up to autumn 2018—but also a symbol of visibility, available to anybody, a symbol that could be interpreted as an homage to the historical sans-culottes.[36]

Where other movements appeared and faded away, the Yellow Vests stayed on and institutionalized themselves as a weekly "fraternal disorder,"[37] laying a claim to common ownership of the streets in French cities. Whereas the excitement about the commons among urban planners in air-conditioned conference rooms might signify danger for popular movements, *Gilets jaunes* and *Gilets noirs* tangled up timelines of collective memory and punctured public spaces. Their appropriation of space was not only a physical takeover but also an act of self-narration in which stories that had silently run parallel now crisscrossed, giving way to multidirectional flows that were experienced as painful and disturbing by privileged actors who had imagined themselves as self-identical and well established. The symbolic friction of *Gilets jaunes* and *Gilets noirs* thereby exposed myths of comfort and tranquility amidst an uprooting whirlwind of political and economic transformations.

"Men fight and lose the battle, and the thing that they fought for comes about in spite of their defeat, and when it comes it turns out not to be what they meant, and other men have to fight for what they meant under another name," wrote the utopian socialist and radical textile designer William Morris in 1886.[38] As the language of the commons is being smoothed out by corporate actors eager to explore the next frontier of a profit-driven "sharing economy," the Yellow Vests can inspire a more serious reflection about the forms that an insurgent practice of the commons might take, so as to resist the seemingly inevitable onslaught of cooptation by a neoliberal governance that runs on "disruption." Building the commons as a counterinstitution is by no means reducible to the exceptional spaces of social movements. Points of symbolic friction also began to form the outlines of a counterinstitution when a curator put up Kehinde Wiley's painting of a black man on a horse entitled "Napoleon Leading the Army over the Alps" (2005) in the

35
In 1997, Étienne Balibar put the challenge as follows: "Can solidarity emerge from "*one single discourse*, or at least a *common discourse*, a *shared discourse*? We must discover the mode of reciprocity not in the abstract but within actual painful experience." Étienne Balibar, "Algeria, France: One Nation or Two?," in *Giving Ground: The Politics of Propinquity*, ed. Joan Copjec and Michael Sorkin (London and New York: Verso, 1999), 163.

36
Sophie Wahnich, "The Structure of Current Mobilizations Correspond to That of the Sans-Culottes," *Verso Blog*, December 9, 2018, https://www.versobooks.com/blogs/4160-the-structure-of-current-mobilizations-corresponds-to-that-of-the-sans-culottes.

37
Abensour, *Democracy against the State*, xxv.

38
See Philippa Bennett and Rosie Miles, eds., *William Morris in the Twenty-First Century* (Bern: Peter Lang Publishing, 2010), 1.

39
"Kehinde Wiley rencontre Jacques-Louis David," *Musée national du château de Malmaison*, September 23, 2019, https://musees-nationaux-malmaison.fr/chateau-malmaison/actualite/c-wiley-rencontre-david-malmaison-du-9-octobre-2019-au-6-janvier-2020.

40
See Medina, *The Epistemology of Resistance*, 309.

41
Decolonial feminist Françoise Vergès engaged with Wiley's painting in her multimedia performance "Les fantômes au musée" on November 17, 2019, putting emphasis on the resonance/dissonance between the figures of Napoléon Bonaparte and Toussaint L'Ouverture.

42
Guy Keulemans, "The Geo-cultural Conditions of Kintsugi," *Journal of Modern Craft* 9, no. 1 (2016): 16.

castle of the notorious statesman who, in 1802, reintroduced slavery in the French Empire.[39] Through this curatorial intervention, institutional space is not undone but subverted insofar as the staging of the piece is experienced as uncomfortable by the museum's visitors. If (and only if) they find themselves pushed toward a "kaleidoscopic social imagination" under the impact of disturbance, the curatorial choice has achieved some measure of success.[40] Common space was hence generated, combining the durational time of the museum with perhaps involuntary shifts in the political imagination of visitors across various standpoints.[41]

Dating back to the 17th century, kintsugi, the Japanese art of broken pottery in which the edges of fragments are not fixed but mended with gold, might serve as an image for the dissonance of counterinstitutions. In kintsugi pottery, brokenness is not plastered over and hidden but itself becomes the starting point for a "transformative repair craft" in which "precious metals [are used] to draw attention to the object and transform the object's appearance, in contrast to other forms of repair that attempt to hide a history of damage."[42] What if we were to picture the *Gilets jaunes* and *Gilets noirs* as practitioners of kintsugi, assembling the fragments of French republicanism? And what if architects and urban planners were to become deserters of mapmaking and reinvent their profession as the production of interstices? They would have to learn how to be attuned to incompletion, consciously (if perhaps secretly) hoping to cut open spaces for politics that can never be planned in advance. Perhaps the question of common space stands itself in need of reformulation—beyond the transparency of a research agenda around the commons, which is at risk of a dialectical reversal, feeding dreams of enclosure among corporate architects and state administrators in the very moment one tries to resist them. Designing for the sake of *politicizing commons*, one would have to learn how to attend to fissures within and across collective memory. If one takes Morris's warning seriously, the construction of common space as unruly and constitutively dissonant might thus have to proceed under another name. Or, perhaps, under the *same name* but in *another color:* neither concrete grey nor green-washed, but more like a fluorescent yellow.