

CROSSING BORDERS

Essays in Honour of Ian H. Angus

Edited by Samir Gandesha
& Peyman Vahabzadeh

ARP Books
Winnipeg, MB

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ARP Books (Arbeiter Ring Publishing)

205-70 Arthur Street

Winnipeg, Manitoba

Treaty 1 Territory and Historic Métis Nation Homeland Canada R3B 1G7

arpbooks.org

Design and layout by Relish New Brand Experience

Cover image: Ian Wallace, *Abstract Painting (Blue on White)* (2011)

Printed and bound in Canada by Imprimerie Gauvin on paper made from 100% recycled post-consumer waste.

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ARP Books acknowledges the generous support of the Manitoba Arts Council and the Canada Council for the Arts for our publishing program. We acknowledge the financial support of the Government of Canada and the Province of Manitoba through the Book Publishing Tax Credit and the Book Publisher Marketing Assistance Program of Manitoba Culture, Heritage, and Tourism.

LIBRARY AND ARCHIVES CANADA CATALOGUING IN PUBLICATION

Title: Crossing borders : essays in honour of Ian H. Angus / edited by Samir Gandesha & Peyman Vahabzadeh.

Names: Gandesha, Samir (Samir Suresh), 1965- editor. | Vahabzadeh, Peyman, editor. | Angus, Ian H., honouree.

Identifiers: Canadiana (print) 20200185551 | Canadiana (ebook) 20200185586 | ISBN 9781927886335 (softcover) | ISBN 9781927886342 (ebook)

Subjects: LCSH: Philosophy, Modern. | LCSH: Philosophers—Canada. | LCSH: Canada—Study and teaching. | LCSH: Phenomenology. | LCSH: Critical theory. | LCSH: Communication. | LCGFT: Festschriften.

Classification: LCC B995.A544 C76 2020 | DDC 190.9/05—dc23

Chapter 19

Toward Critical Topology, or How to Act in the Playgrounds of Being*

Peyman Vahabzadeh

In order to escape the trap the System has become one must divest oneself both of the optimistic notion that it can be reformed, or replaced, and accept the parasitism on, and inessentiality to, the System that this implies. I was struck by the compatibility of this notion of anarchism with a Heideggerian concept of modernity as the scientific-technological domination of the world and also with Reiner Schürmann's construction of an anarchistic self-constituting practical subject as a "protest against busyness" on its ruins.

IAN ANGUS, "SHARING SECRETS, OR ON BURROWING
IN PUBLIC" (2001)

Hegemony works much more by domesticating and absorbing criticism than by repressing it.

IAN ANGUS, *THE PRIMAL SCENES
OF COMMUNICATION* (2000)

If we consider Reiner Schürmann's "hypothesis of epochal or metaphysical closure"—inspired by Martin Heidegger—as speaking to the very history that we are living right now in the West, instead of some esoteric, conceptual plaything for the armchair academic, then we can revisit the cultural, social, and political processes of our time in light of the possibility of the changing principles of intelligibility governing our age—the (changing) *principles that spectrally appear to us primarily through action*.

Schürmann's "hypothesis" dwells in Heidegger's proposition that the age of metaphysics has reached its point of withering away in the West. For Heidegger, this age began with the end of the pre-Socratics in the classical Greek period and it has reached us at this time of the atomic bomb and prevalence of technology in which all beings, humans included, are reduced to resource. Different epochs within the history of the West have shared the domination of seemingly unshakable foundations that hold phenomena as absolute representations under an "ultimate referent."¹ The Greek *physis*, Latin *natur*, Christian God, and modern *ego cogito*, as foundational gestures rising from humble beginnings (*arché*) and growing into universal holds, each moor phenomena to their conceptual-explanatory frames, thus allowing certain and distinct modes of phenomenization in each epoch. As such, acting and thinking in each epoch are conditioned, to say the least, by the horizons of the possible allowed by these ultimate representations. If the age of metaphysical ultimacies is coming to an end—and that remains a "hypothesis"—then the question is how to act in this time that is ours, in this age in which we are able to break away from representations sanctioned by privileged explanatory paradigms. In Schürmann's words, "To the question, What is to be done? when raised together with the question, What is being? a radical phenomenologist can only respond: dislodge all vestiges of a teleocratic economy from their hideouts—in common sense as much as in ideology—and thereby liberate things from the 'ordinary concept'

which ‘captures’ them under ultimate representations.”² But how does this “liberation” translate into the question of acting in our age?

The irony is that while the works of Schürmann himself scarcely attend to concrete and living references to such changing principles, some post-Heideggerian philosophers such as Gianni Vattimo remain engaged with the present-day concrete issues with which the West is grappling. Confronted by the challenge of decolonization in our day, Western thinkers are now facing a crisis of universal legitimation of science and philosophy—a crisis already anticipated by Edmund Husserl in *The Crisis of the European Sciences and Transcendental Phenomenology* (1936), albeit in an immanent way. This crisis reveals itself primarily through human collective action. In my own phenomenological contributions in the past two decades, I have been trying to develop a radical phenomenology that in its descriptive vein could be put into action and therefore an aid to changing the current, repressive arrangements of our otherwise multiversal worlds that are, sadly, bound together by neo-liberal homogenization of the planet and reduction of diversity of lifeworlds to mere resources for the profit for the one per cent.

In other words, while Heidegger unwaveringly declared that his “deconstruction” of the history of metaphysics related only to the history of the West,³ and he found the “Europeanization of man and of the earth” inauthentic and alarming,⁴ the fact of the matter is that it is due to colonialism and the subsequent emergence of the capitalist world-system⁵ that today we witness a (Westernized) global hegemony of isomorphic technology that has led to reducing the earth and its inhabitants (including humans) to “standing-reserve” (*Bestand*), as Heidegger would say, and the nation-state as a uniform political organization governing over hegemonized rights-bearing subjects.⁶ That Heidegger’s radical *Destruktion* of the history of Western philosophy, as the history of the oblivion of the question of Being, did not entail addressing colonialism’s reshaping of the irreducible plurality of life on earth remains disturbing: an indication of his Eurocentrism

naturally but also Heidegger's being trapped in another kind of oblivion, which, as Enrique Dussel shows, was endemic to post-sixteenth-century Western philosophy: that "European expansion ... [had] built a global system on the basis of the continuous exploitation of the periphery."⁷

That history is retrieved, albeit marginally, in Schürmann's work.⁸ In fact, by applying his Heideggerian phenomenology of epochal presence to the Inca, Schürmann opened a new way of thinking about rise, reign, and ruins of epochal codes as captured by empires—an original dimension of his work that is yet to be fully acknowledged and appreciated. Heidegger suggests that because the fate of the West is tied to the decline of metaphysics, which takes a disproportionately long time,⁹ the West's "presupposition of its planetary dominance"¹⁰ will follow suit. Interestingly, this "Europeanization of man and of the earth," quoted above, "attacks at the source everything that is of essential nature."¹¹ In other words, as Europe becomes globalized, it scaphizes itself and becomes hollowed. It reaches the farthest corners of the planet, and with the West its history of metaphysics, only to fold back upon itself and meet its own decline and, with it, the civilizations of the world in an integrated savage-capitalist system that has granted us a seemingly irreversible climate change with catastrophic consequences. This is why I argue that the history (*Geschichte*) and destiny (*Geschick*, mittence or sending) of the West has become inseparable from our shared global destiny as epitomized by global climate change, unhindered neo-liberalism, and the ongoing sixth mass extinction.

Here, at this historic junction when metaphysical solidities are being shaken and truth claims are increasingly questioned, I want to focus on the *one* key challenge of the actors of our time, those who are situated in the *possible* epochal openings afforded to us: *the very acting that defines our diremptive age*. From my personal experience, I have arrived at the realization that, arguably, the greatest threat to the possibility of acting in our age is *exhaustion*, both mental and

physical: a certain exhaustion that reveals itself in the increasingly *noticeable loss of imagining another world* and succumbing, with the increasing professionalization and NGO-ization of social movements, to *realpolitik*. This, I believe, is a by-product of the technological automation of political life and rationalization of activism as purposive activity consumed by short-term plans and goals that are justified, more or less, in terms of self-righteousness (being on the self-acclaimed right side of history), moralization of politics, and political correctness that has enlivened a post-1968 brand of the left. This is a left that has succumbed to the liberal state's hegemonic discourse of reconciliation and multiculturalism, a left that remains bereft of the faculty of imagining the impossible. At this time that is ours, therefore, we need to ponder the ways in which the transgressive actors of our violent age of global, neo-liberal capitalism and nation-states based on technological-institutional regimes of hegemonized subjects can point out and create possible civilizational openings without exhausting themselves!

To this end, metaphysics, grasped as *technological globalization*, represents a certain way of thinking about our common global issues. Metaphysics has become a philosophical code name from a specific reading of the history of the West, a hermeneutical tool, that, despite its particularity, allows for the conceptual convergence of the irreducibly diverse experiences of our common institutionalized life in this age of technicity: global, neo-liberal capitalism; commodity fetishism, reification, and abstract exchange value; Wall Street in Manhattan; staggering class inequalities; five men owning wealth equal to that of half of humanity; austerity plans; skyrocketing military expenditures; large-scale social and economic impoverishments; extract economies; various structural discriminations; CNN and Fox News; societies of surveillance; digitization and pixillation of presence; digital surveillance through Twitter, Facebook, and the like; totalitarian rights-based citizenship regimes; unilateralism and exceptionalism; meaningless democracies; child labour and

sweatshops; privatization of public services; technological liberalism; maintaining meaningless borders; or guaranteed ecological degradation and possibly collapse—to name just a few.

These are manifestations of the institutionalization and universalization of the principles of intelligibility of our age—all linked to technicity's global reach. Irreducibly diverse experiences arise from the phenomena enumerated above, but they can converge, philosophically speaking, through the concept of metaphysics and its decline. The phenomenologist of this time can oppose the above list to another—a list that, contrary to the previous, contains transgression and singularization—that is, the signature mode of action proper to this diremptive age: creative resistances of the poor (especially in Latin America); worker-run factories; public reclaiming of privatized means of survival or the “commons” (water, rivers, forests, land); Indigenous resurgence, uprisings, and exposition of the politics of recognition; collective action of urban movements; participatory democracy; Indymedia and citizen journalism, mutual-aid and anarchist model communities; reclaiming public spaces; the Arab Spring; the Occupy Movement; municipal democracies; use value and objects for loving, cherishing, and keeping; organized labour; public education and universal health care; cities of refuge and new internationalisms; World Social Forum; autonomous rebel zone in Chiapas, democratic confederalism in Rojava, the communist village of Marinaleda, and the communist governance since the 1950s in the Indian states of West Bengal and Kerala.

These actions and experiments are never pure in their performance, but something of a “family resemblance” allows for their coarticulation. Despite liberal promises, conflicts abound. Action is, expectedly, permeated by strife. As such, the two phenomenal bundles offered in my description above should not be taken as Manichaeian opposites—although stark contrasts are at times useful, if not reassuring. Instead, let us look at these sets as the aspects of the “double bind” that permeates phenomenal unconcealedness.

Therefore, the phenomenologist who attends to describing this situation will politically and socially align herself with the left, although this futuristic referent inevitably remains nebulous and defies a positivist's definitions. This position takes me to Schürmann's philosophical anarchism and, for that matter, Vattimo's hermeneutic communism¹²—their serious difference aside.¹³ The stakes are high when we also attend to the fact that transgressive action is constantly denied not only by the institutional forces but also by purposive, goal-oriented activism. Yes, continued friction can potentially lead action to exhaustion. But my concern here is that *action can also be exhausted by its own normative terms*, when purposive activism prevents action as creative playfulness within the field of the serious to flourish.

Critical Topology

I have spoken of action in our *diremptive* age. In order to properly proceed and situate this experience of our age, we need a description of critical topology that sheds further light on my previous reflections.

Schürmann's tripartite topology begins by stating that Being—viewed in relation to the double bind of natality and mortality—reveals itself in a conflictual manner in every act in our age of technicity.

Working under the hypothesis of metaphysical closure, radical phenomenology attends to the “thrust of time” that sets epochs apart through the “reversals in the history of truth.”¹⁴ To this end, Schürmann proposes a tripartite topology—a phenomenological inquiry into the places (*topoi*) in which Being reveals itself at the possible caesura between the epochs. He calls the first a *recapitulatory topology*, dedicated to inquiring about the conflictual, institutive discourses that the philosopher “had both to see and to deny.”¹⁵ The last one, which Schürmann calls *anticipatory topology*, looks into the possible historical openings and their loci.¹⁶ The middle term,

informing my approach, is *critical topology* in which “one topos only asks to be situated and described.”¹⁷ Critical topology describes the place in which the “having-been” stands in conflict with that which is “to-come.”¹⁸ Critical topology is thus a “bifrontal phenomenological thinking”¹⁹—corresponding to the Janus face granted to the phenomenologist by the very epochal caesuras in which she is situated.²⁰ Through critical topology the archic-anarchic strife is preserved.²¹ This is how the normative-institutionalized hold meets the transgressive-subversive pull in every act. In this conflictual *topos*, the existing foundations reveal their violence, but attending to that violence invites a whole different direction, which this chapter cannot accommodate. Thinking and acting from out of a *topos* requires the knowledge that they actually come from a place. To act in this age, therefore, requires “locative thinking,” as Ian Angus conceptualizes it: “Thinking in the locative case is a thinking which is permeated by the awareness of its own place, that will not abandon itself to abstract space, but neither can be restrained within a given place and defines itself in its relation to other places of significance.”²² In light of locative thought, my argument here shows its Angusan streak. Acting always arises from a particular place and grows universal, but its “universality” does not have to be imposing, making transcendental gestures. In fact, calling it “universal” is already misunderstood, revealing contamination of thinking by the European Enlightenment tradition. If thought is locative, then its reach beyond its location must be *multiversal*—that is to say, must remain true to its location, regardless of its global reach. Angus says, “Locative thinking is a thinking that does not simply occur somewhere, but whose location is integral to the meaning of what is thought.”²³

The direction that I take here is this: the creative actors of our age—and I view them as the embodiments of the “phenomenological actor”—are involved so much in their daily struggles against various forms of universalizing, institutional, hubristic, and procedural forms of violence in concrete situations and often under dire conditions that

they do not really care, let alone perceive, if their resistances may have implications for epochal transmutations. Their activities relate to the ontic and the concrete, as they engage with the issues “practically,” so much so that they happily leave the ontological to the armchair philosopher’s gaze. That is why a radical phenomenologist should concern herself with concrete history: as Schürmann says, “Epochal principles are always ontic givens. Each of them opens modalities of possible interaction and forecloses on others. An epoch, then, is ‘reduced’ to the way things, words, and actions are mutually present in it.”²⁴ In other words, the ontic points at the ontological, and politics is where the epochal stamp is revealed. In the ontic lies the conflictual manifestation of our age—the double bind of universalization and singularization, natality and mortality. It is in the concrete that the “*da-*” of *Dasein* reveals both actualities and possibilities. And this “*da-*” is connected to not just my locative thinking but also always already locative acting. Concrete resistances, then, have great implications for an endangered species called the “sociological phenomenologist” such as myself, as these resistances also are the subject matters of various phenomenological inquiries.

Subject, Agent, Actor

In this strife, that which threatens action is its dissolution into activism. Heidegger found it to be a real danger when calculative thinking becomes the only way of thinking.²⁵ To be precise, in relation to releasement and letting-be, the modes of comportment at this age of metaphysical decline, Heidegger makes a distinction between “higher acting” (acting proper to letting phenomena be without imposing normative expectations of them) and activity.²⁶ So *genuine* action, when facing the institutional and structural mandates that have captured us under the law that defines and imposes the rules of the game in this age of persistent but perhaps declining normative-legislative-predicative holds, is arguably exhausted not so much in resisting

power as by resisting being into institutionally sanctioned activity, the hallowed mode of conflict that is positively sanctioned by the rights-granting and reconciliatory liberal institutions.

In this context, the activists of our time inevitably are pulled into the technological-administrative-bureaucratic grids through which they encounter the object of their transformations. As such, "activism," deployed here provisionally, can lend itself to the subject, the agent, or the actor. I have offered the distinctions between these three terms in a previous work.²⁷ The subjects of current hegemonic order remain within the ambits of assigned activities. The card-carrying agents of normative change are trained to know how to maintain the current order or have apparently an enviable knowledge about the future society to the last detail. The subjects of current hegemonic orders, now called the "citizens," are expected to be mobilized and provide their "consent" to the hegemonic master discourse of our age, thus allowing their private lives and potentially genuine (non-hegemonic) experiences to be normatively aligned with the hegemonic master discourse.²⁸

A genuine actor engaging with the existing metaphysical order will have to join a "non-teleocratic movement" (a movement not oriented to any given purpose or end) wherein there is no room for the subject or the agent, strictly speaking.²⁹ Non-teleocratic action, therefore, is clearly and expectedly linked to *transgressive* action, but, perhaps more importantly, it is linked to the actors' ability to *imagine* an entirely different world from out of their own places, *locatively*. Transgression denotes defying the imposed, technological, terms on our being and acting by the hegemonic regimes within which we are inserted and in response to which we act. These regimes constantly try to reduce the actor to subjects and agents and action to the performance of institutionally sanctioned activities—however critical these activities may be. By reducing potentially transgressive action to task- and agenda-oriented activity of hegemonized subjects and zealous agents, the existing regimes draw on the energy and visions

of the actors in order to reform and advance their technological-institutional grip upon the present.³⁰

But here is the subtlety of the situation: since any present-day actor is inevitably born into this hegemonic-technological regime of our age and must respond to this regime within already established domains and parameters of acting, an actor cannot have a permanent embodiment. The actor, rather, is a *moment* when genuine action leaps forth from out of the activities assigned to subjects and agents of the regime. This is the moment when the non-hegemonic, non-teleocratic act of transgression shines forth with the new. The creative acts of the Zapatistas and activists in Rojava—in self-governing, breaking away from capitalism, introducing sophisticated participatory democracies, ending patriarchy and violence, introducing women's and Indigenous rights and the rights of minorities—stand out as examples. Against the silhouette of normative-legislative-predicative being and acting that is constantly managed by the hegemonic regimes, this humble action may shine with disproportionate brightness. But this moment allows us—to be precise, those of us who have not been numbed by the normative requirements of activities and activism—to register how precarious the governing principles of the existing regimes in our age actually are. As such, a genuine transgressive act shows that all principles are in the end non-universal.³¹

Thus, the question remains: Given that this hegemonic-technological age and its normative-legislative-predicative holds are the workings of a metaphysical history—culminating in today's capitalist order and the reign of instrumental rationality—how can acting, being, and thinking escape the many tentacles that ground action in institutionally and rationally sanctioned activity that reduces (potentially transgressive) actors to subjects and agents (of these regimes)? The *provisional* answer, which this chapter invites the reader to consider, is by changing the terrain.

On the Playgrounds of Being

So it remains for the actor, strictly speaking, to participate in possible transgressive modes of action beyond the hegemonic-normative formations. Action is therefore marked by transgression, and the actor is an embodiment of transgressive action, lending his or her abilities to the terms of available transgressive acts. This approach renders the actor secondary to action, since it is our epoch that opens and closes on modes of action in each epoch. Insofar as it is understood as transgressive, action takes place outside of the law and the norms, but certainly in reaction to the dominant laws and norms. For transgressive action, legal and normative impositions are the conditions of possibility. As such, genuine action must by definition always remain “experimental,” while it must also remain sensitive toward, and cautious with respect to, its own consequences, since action, as Hannah Arendt reminds us, will have unpredictable outcomes. Now we can see how transgressive action, as “experimental,” acquires the characteristic of being an-archic—that is, without attempting to found a first principle (*arché*) that would dominate subsequent action. Thus, action most certainly unleashes unpredictability as it transgresses the limits of laws and norms.

But if acting takes place under the existing hegemonic-technological regimes that foreclose on unsanctioned activity, then how is an-archic action possible? If, following Schürmann, the epochal code reveals itself in politics, then the political in our age is the domain of technicized activities. This means that both governance—in the broad sense of the term—and dissent—also in its broad sense—become carriers of assigned roles, necessary functions, abstract proceduralisms, and tunnel-vision plans. This is a serious matter, not just because it is actually “serious” but because it invites a certain seriousness as the attitude of both the regime’s functionary and the dissenter! Stated differently, both functionaries and dissenters develop, under the current regime, a certain attentive comportment that renders them both to largely, though often

solely, focus on the task at hand, on the assigned or perceived activity, although from a detached observer's point of view, in opposite directions. This seriousness refers to a certain epochal attunement—a legacy of our metaphysical age and a stamp of Being's unconcealedness at this specific time. I contend here that such seriousness falls within what Heidegger, in referring to science and research, calls "ongoing activity" (*Betrieb*): that is, the "industrious activity of mere 'busy-ness' (*des blossen Betriebs*)."³² This happens when we lose sight of our methodologies (Heidegger refers to research in his work on the World-Picture), when our activities are transformed—both institutionally and through sanctioned matter-of-factness of life, here political life—into mere procedures and implementations without much reflection. From the phenomenological point of view, I surmise that we encounter such lack of reflection when the dissenter is still caught in a web of activity assigned and sanctioned by rational-technological institutions while in fact trying to undermine them.

Heidegger still reflects, "This is a 'serious' matter occupying time and thus eating into our existential finitude."³³ I am deeply inspired by this line. It tells me that seriousness, or being busy in terms of being constantly engaged in "ongoing activity" without critical reflection, permeates both our technological-administrative powers as well as our doctrinal revolutionaries. Good! Just as it pertains to the process of objectification of the work of art,³⁴ it makes us carry out activities without a meaningful and creative world context. "Originally, busy-ness is that modern scheme of transformation through which 'things' lose their 'world' by becoming 'objects.'"³⁵ Anyways, the busyness in carrying out activities, as my continuing concrete interviews with flesh-and-bone activists have shown, eats into our finitude and it has been the source of exhaustion of potentially transgressive action. These activists, who have dedicated themselves, through various campaigns, often complain about how much energy they should dedicate to win a minor cause and how the changes they help bring about are almost immediately co-opted by the existing rational-technological

institutions. As such, I infer, the activists spent too much time and energy and get too busy (in many cases, to the point of exhaustion) to bring about change. It seems to me, and this is my interpretation, that depriving activism of “time” is in fact the greatest ploy of the powers that be. This busyness is characterized by our “lacking time.” For one thing, we end up becoming aging, romantic revolutionaries witnessing our lifelong dreams gradually withering away (no resemblance to the author intended!).

Here, I would like to return to and extend Angus’s contribution regarding “locative thought,” hoping he will agree with me: if in this age when metaphysical holds are radically questioned, and consequently acting and thinking have become one, then *locative thinking* must always already be *locative acting*—a mode of action bound to a place, and only thus arising, without the normative expectations imposed on it. This mode of acting and thinking does not impose normative parameters to which other thoughts and acts are expected to conform. In the playgrounds of Being, we may end up having to play with the already given and available epochal playthings, but each of us will play in a slightly different way, as each comes from a different location, converging on the field of clearing where Being reveals its diminishment. This reveals that we may not really need universal principles to hold us together: acting and thinking in *multiversal* ways has the “unifying” character without imposing on us or reducing our diversity. We are connected to one another through the very *act of thinking* and *thought of acting* from out of our particular places. We become able to create solidarity without higher, pre-given, and hegemonic-epistemic principles. In fact, I think, and I hope Angus agrees with my interjection, that we are able to conceive of acting and thinking without theoretical or practical expectations is a gift of phenomenology. This is where locative acting shows its transgressive potential, and locative thinking and acting are linked with critical topology.

Critical topology, in linking the “has been” to the “to come,” allows us to see outside of the ambit of seriousness. Transgressive

action—which situates acting between “has been” and “to come”—can hardly be “serious” in the manner explained above: the case with transgression, once properly understood, is that one not only transgresses the law through one’s act, but one transgresses the terms of one’s transgression as well. Action in this age lives the strife between two poles of “isomorphic contextualizing” and “dispersive decontextualization” that correspond to the double bind of natality- mortality. One pole, isomorphic contextualizing, makes us, as Schürmann says, “all equal (*iso*) in [our] forms (*morphé*), that is, uniform,”³⁶ which echoes the technological-administrative logic. The other pole, dispersive decontextualization, captures the idea that as with “every mode of phenomenalization, technicity also singularizes them without any agent of reconciliation.”³⁷ This means that while we are rendered isomorphic and homogeneous, we have the possibility of forcing our imposed, rational-technological identity into a dispersal of heterogeneous identities that would be ungraspable by the technological order.

Acting and living between these poles is a gift of our age—a gift without which my *provisional* reflections here would not have been possible.

If seriousness has been enabled by Being’s specific unconcealedness in our time, and if the double bind permeates every mode of revealing, then Being must have revealed, alongside busyness, its playgrounds as well, except our remiss gazes, being too serious, have probably overlooked it. Instead of dwelling in the “serious” and “busy” grounds enabled by Being’s unconcealedness, we are gifted with the possibility of acting in the playgrounds of Being. This is how we get Occupy Wall Street right in the middle of Manhattan’s financial forced labour camp. In the playground, we act and express ourselves, with a certain innocence, using the implements that have been made available to us without their specific material configurations. In acting, we find ourselves—we *become* our action by *embodying* our role; that is, we lend our bodies to an available act—for the moment

in which our role accommodates us. In this process, we get to know our playmates, our allies, and the playground becomes the field of experimental and experiential acting and thinking, a gift of Being's own exhaustion. We also potentially get a fresh view of the world, experiencing the world in our "phenomenological 'kindergarten,'"³⁸ as Heidegger would say, understanding playthings not merely as mundane present-at-hand but let-be in being out of fun. We might get hurt while playing; we might get a cut on the knee while hitting the ground at the bottom of the slide or we might get sand in our eye while building a sand castle, but hey, a loving and reassuring embrace later, we recover from it all. We go back to playing. Time, this curious time that we lacked and thus chased infinitely when we were "busy," now appears to us in abundance. We go back to our innocence, which is gifted to us by the playground, as we experiment in life.

The seriousness of our epochal busyness does not necessarily invite "serious" responses. The isomorphic pull of technicity is opposed by the singularizing dispersal of anarchic acting and thinking. We have the whole playground of Being to come up with creative responses. From time to time, the playgrounds of Being come to the fore in different *topoi*, under different names: workers' soviets, Chiapas, Tahrir Square, Porto Alegre, Rojava, or Unist'óten Camp, to name but a few.

To act in this world will involve projecting a critical and anticipatory gaze upon the places (*topoi*) in which, through continued strife presented to the actors, acting can transgress the normative holds while simultaneously transgressing its own seriousness. So my response to the question of how to avoid "activist fatigue" (though certainly not satisfactory to serious activists) is this: we do what we do without hanging our hopes entirely on the existing models of resistance, and if in the process (in this playground) we get hurt, or even die, well at least we had fun! Seeing our act as possibly situated within an epochal fissure, we act with detachment (so that what we do would not "eat into our existential finitude") and with a certain

disinterest in the future of humankind, to paraphrase Schürmann,³⁹ so we won't force others into our reality while caring for the future of all—human and non-human. We begin to think not about revolutions but what Claude Lefort called “creative disorder”⁴⁰—and here I emphasize the double meaning of the word “disorder,” most probably against the author's intention, since genuine, transgressive actors, those capable of imagining another world, cannot be fully rational or normal, just like true poets.

This disorder would impede hegemony from integrating and absorbing the critical acts and creative imagination of playful actors. Thinking and acting locatively, instead of writing manifestos, we write memoirs, since anticipatory thinking is inevitably recollective. When we must issue a declaration, we make sure we also publish a children's storybook. When we need to establish an international, we put together a World Social Forum instead of a Comintern (What about a Situationist International?). And when we must liberate our people, instead of a protracted and bloody civil war, we contemplate the Zapatistas of Chiapas or democratic confederalism in Rojava. We create model, transgressive communities, hoping we do not turn them into normative, archic models for future society, which requires us not to get too serious about our experiments, either. Back to the playgrounds of Being!

Notes to Chapter 19:

* The original version of this chapter was presented, as part of a panel, to Canadian Society of Continental Philosophy Annual Conference, held at Simon Fraser University, Harbour Centre, in Vancouver, on October 4, 2014.

The other two panellists were Ian Angus and Samir Gandesha. It is uncanny how this paper returns, in an expanded form, in a volume in which my two friends and co-panellists are also actively present.

1 Reiner Schürmann, *Heidegger on Being and Acting: From Principles to Anarchy* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1990), 41.

2 Ibid., 280.

- 3 Martin Heidegger, *The End of Philosophy* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2003), 90.
- 4 Martin Heidegger, *On the Way to Language* (New York: Harper Collins, 1971), 16.
- 5 Immanuel Wallerstein, "The Rise and Future Demise of the World Capitalist System: Concepts for Comparative Analysis," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 16, no. 4 (1974): 387–415.
- 6 Peyman Vahabzadeh, *Articulated Experiences: Toward a Radical Phenomenology of Contemporary Social Movements* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2003), 103–40. Interestingly, growing economies such as the BRIC nations (Brazil, Russia, India, China), aiming for dominating the global capitalist, technologically driven, and extract-based economy, make it no longer possible to think of this trend as primarily Western. This is where I think Heidegger's point about the West must be viewed as a global issue.
- 7 Enrique Dussel, "Anti-Cartesian Meditations: On the Origins of the Philosophical Anti-Discourse of Modernity," *Journal of Cultural and Religious Theory* 13, no. 1 (2014): 33.
- 8 Schürmann, *Heidegger on Being*, 26–29, 163–67.
- 9 Heidegger, *End of Philosophy*, 85.
- 10 *Ibid.*, 90.
- 11 Heidegger, *On the Way to Language*, 16.
- 12 Gianni Vattimo and Santiago Zabala, *Hermeneutic Communism: From Heidegger to Marx* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2011).
- 13 In *Hermeneutic Communism*, Vattimo and Zabala offer a specific reading of Heidegger and Marx, arguing that the end of metaphysics does not necessarily materialize in the triumph of capitalist, pluralistic democracy but instead in a form of democratic, "weak" communism—a communism without planned economy and authoritarian rule but just like a hermeneutical community—communitarian and dialogical.
- 14 Reiner Schürmann, "Technicity, Topology, Tragedy: Heidegger on 'That Which Saves' in the Global Reach," in Arthur M. Melzer, Jerry Weinberger, and M. Richard Zinman, eds., *Technology in the Western Political Tradition* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1993), 196.
- 15 *Ibid.*
- 16 *Ibid.*, 200.
- 17 *Ibid.*, 197.
- 18 *Ibid.*
- 19 *Ibid.*, 199.
- 20 See: Schürmann, *Heidegger on Being*.

- 21 Schürmann, "Technicity, Topology, Tragedy," 197.
- 22 Ian Angus, *Identity and Justice* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2008), 26.
- 23 Ibid.
- 24 Schürmann, *Heidegger on Being*, 81.
- 25 Martin Heidegger, *Discourse on Thinking* (New York: Harper and Row, 1966), 56.
- 26 Ibid., 61.
- 27 Vahabzadeh, *Articulated Experiences*, 93.
- 28 Ibid., 118.
- 29 Ibid., 93.
- 30 See: *ibid.*, 132.
- 31 Ibid., 136.
- 32 Martin Heidegger, *The Question Concerning Technology and Other Essays* (New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1977), 138.
- 33 Ibid.
- 34 Schürmann, *Heidegger on Being*, 265.
- 35 Ibid., 266.
- 36 Schürmann, "Technicity, Topology, Tragedy," 210.
- 37 Ibid., 211.
- 38 Martin Heidegger, *Four Seminars*, trans. A. Mitchell and F. Raffoul (Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2003), 11.
- 39 Schürmann, *Heidegger on Being*, 273.
- 40 Claude Lefort, "1968 Revisited: A French View, Not Revolution, but Creative Disorder." *Dissent* 35 (1988): 341– 46.