BARCELONAN OKUPAS

SQUATTER POWER!

STEPHEN LUIS VILASECA

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Excerpts of poetry by Vicente Escolar Bautista:

"Áscesis delicada sobre un abrelatas." From *Libro de un 8/1 tumbado en el espejo (ocho cuartos de gasto…partido por uno)*.Vicente Escolar Bautista. 2003. Twitter: @barbarroja_.

"Visión dinámica." From *Libro de un 8/1 tumbado en el espejo (ocho cuartos de gasto…partido por uno)*.Vicente Escolar Bautista. 2003. Twitter: @barbarroja_.

Interview with Dionís Escorsa. May 24, 2009.

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Introduction

Okupas and the Entanglement of Word and Body in Barcelona

In order to fully grasp the contemporary dynamics of social transformation, an understanding of the creative production and activity of Spanish squatters, known in Spain as *okupas*, is essential. This book combines close-readings of representations of *okupas* with a study of urban experience in Barcelona, the squatter capital of Europe, in order to shed light on the innovative way *okupas* modify people's worldview through the linking of word, art, body, and built environment. *Okupas* have proven that positive societal changes are possible when city and art interrelate, not through capital or the urbanization of consciousness, but through an embodied cognition more powerful than consciousness. By refusing to accept its notions of ownership, *okupas* resist capitalism. However, the *okupa* movement is far more than a particular type of protest against property speculation; it not only resists capitalism, it provides an alternative to it. *Okupas* evince a specific attitude toward life, the approach of which is tied to a social and political world organized on the basis of cooperation and sharing. They are not politically represented in the Spanish government, at least not directly, but their voices are heard in Spanish society as they are represented in other ways. Their politics have been explained by others, at times negatively, at times in flattering ways, in political discourse, print media, film, comic strips, literature, and even a television soap opera. These interpretations need to be set apart from *okupas*' own accounts of their aims and motives. They speak for themselves in blogs, film, and poetry. In order to understand *okupas*' true political agenda, and in an attempt to distinguish this from the agenda others understand or purport them to have, I have studied the ways in which *okupas* are represented, by themselves and others, in all the various texts mentioned above. However, I have not limited myself to a study of these written or textual representations, as

Barcelonan *okupas*' ability to effect change has not come via the written word alone. Rather, they have joined word with the body. *Okupas*' power derives from the power of affect.[1] They have imagined a different, better society, and this imagined society has been a catalyst for their own political action. Moved to make manifest their imagined society, they not only write, but they live what they write. They write against capitalism, and they have physically, bodily, disassociated themselves from capitalism by rejecting traditional, capitalist, notions of property, for example, by refusing to pay rent or take on a mortgage. *Okupas* push Spanish society to reconfigure the way thoughts, words, images, and bodily responses are organized by the closed, internal logic of capitalism. They do this by evoking and communicating the idea of free exchange and openness through art (poetry, music, performance art, the plastic arts, graffiti, urban art, and cinema) and by acting out and rehearsing these ideas in the practice of squatting. In this way, the symbolic (the written word and art) and the material (the physical space and *okupas*' bodily actions within physical space) have become entangled. It is precisely this combining of word, art, and body that is what *okupas* present as a potential way out of the problems caused by capitalism.

THE WALL POEM

> Ya que tenemos que morir / que sea pues / después de haber vivido / no solos y / desesperados / como viejos / románticos / sino como hombres y mujeres / híbridos de ser mortal / e inmortal que somos.

Given that we have to die, / may it be after we have lived, / not alone and /desperate, / like old people / like romantics, / but as men and women, / hybrid beings that we are, of mortal / and immortal essence.[2]

Sardenya, 43. Miles de Viviendas
Vicente Escolar Bautista

Near La Barceloneta Beach in Barcelona at the corner of La Maquinista Street and Joan de Borbó Avenue, there is an empty lot where the squatted social center Miles de Viviendas [Thousands of Houses] once stood. Before the demolition of the building on June 12, 2007, the squatters had gone from room to room and floor to floor of the five-story edifice writing in oversized letters the verses of Vicente Escolar Bautista's poem, seen in the epigraph above. The interior walls, where the verses were written, became

the exterior walls of the adjacent apartment building after the demolition. However, the towering wall poem was soon covered with metal siding by city employees (see Figures intro.1-intro.2).

Just five months after the razing, on November 23, 2007, journalist Agustí Fancelli noted in the Spanish newspaper *El País* that the poem had been concealed. He lamented the disappearance of the poem, and wrote the newspaper article in order to prevent the poem, its author, and the circumstances surrounding why it was penned from being forgotten. He explained that the building had been the property of the Port of Barcelona, where customs officers used to inspect the shipments that entered and left the city. Customs clearance had been moved to a different location years ago, and from that time on the building had remained abandoned. On November 25, 2004, the public property was squatted. Two years and seven months later, the squatters were evicted, the building demolished, and the parting words of the squatters soon concealed.

Figure Intro.1. Miles de Viviendas wall poem before the placement of the metal siding. Courtesy, www.escritoenlapared.com/2007/11/informe-barcelona_07.html, 2007.

Although Fancelli was interested in remembering the poem and the events leading up to the eviction, he does not ask why the Barcelona City Council would be so concerned about the poem as to consider it worth the trouble and expense of putting up metal siding. I do. The shared walls of demolished buildings are usually left exposed. Empty lots, or *solares*, are notorious for being filled with graffiti and urban art because these abandoned sites are often the result of exploitative practices of property speculation, and, as a result, are ideal spaces for urban artists to critique such practices. Some examples in 2009 include the empty lots in Barcelona on Carrer de les Floristes de la Rambla (see Figure intro.3) and the future site of the Plaça de la Gardunya (see Figure intro.4).

Figure Intro.2. Miles de Viviendas wall poem after the placement of the metal siding. Stephen Luis Vilaseca (2009).

In the second case, the Barcelona City Council erected a sign announcing the renovation and, by doing so, recognized that it had been in the space and had seen it. Nonetheless, the Barcelona City Council did not even bother to paint the graffiti gray, let alone put up metal siding. What made this site different? As mentioned, the demolished building had been squatted, but more important than this fact alone was who the squatters were, namely a group of politically motivated squatters known as *okupas*. The *okupas* from Miles de Viviendas on Joan de Borbó Avenue were evicted because of the threat they represented against capitalism and the notion of private property. But it was not just their physical, bodily presence that was threatening. Their words were also deemed (apparently) just as threatening. City officials clearly considered it necessary to erase any trace of the *okupas* that might serve to remind, or worse, inspire neighbors or passersby.

Figure Intro.3. Empty lot on Carrer de les Floristes de la Rambla. Stephen Luis Vilaseca (2009).

The massive wall poem on Joan de Borbó Avenue brings to my mind the imagery of a famous Simon and Garfunkel song in which graffiti, sprayed on subways and inside housing projects, is a "sound of silence." Those who write graffiti are marginalized and have no authoritative voice. Similarly, as explained by theorist Gabriel Rockhill, French philosopher Jacques Rancière's notion of a writing that introduces lines of fracture into the norms of society "is the silent speech of democratic literarity whose 'orphan letter' freely circulates and speaks to anyone and everyone precisely because it has no living *logos* to direct it."[3] Normally, orphanhood does not carry a positive connotation. However, in this case, when the "parent" is the dominant discourse of politicians, economists, and multinational corporations, writing and speech that is emancipated from the constraints

and predetermined rules of free market capitalism and social and linguistic laws enjoy a freer and less abusive environment.

Figure Intro.4. The future site of the Plaça de la Gardunya. Stephen Luis Vilaseca (2009).

Escolar Bautista's verse, as it stood on Joan de Borbó Avenue, served as an example of orphaned words. What made these orphans more threatening (read: more able to effect change) than the random graffiti and urban art that one finds in empty lots was that these orphans formed a family. These orphans combined with one another according to the rhythmic patterns produced by bodies that learned to be with one another in a different way, and that imagined a different style of life and urban environment. This different style of the *okupas* gives abandoned houses poetic space. In other words, squatted houses and social centers are not spaces of belonging, but

spaces of continually repeating encounters. They are spaces in which to share experiences and to participate in a "doing with," a commoning.[4] During the process of commoning, the inner space of the *okupas*' consciousness empties into the world space of squatted houses and social centers, and overspills the limits of not only the physical space but also the limits of what can or cannot be said, thought, believed, desired, made, or done within society. The power of expansion characteristic of poetic space generates new virtualities that have the potential to be actualized in reality. In squatted social centers, new words, sounds, writings, images, and bodies drift and disconnect from the pre-established program of free market capitalism and consumption-based strategies of urban growth and design.

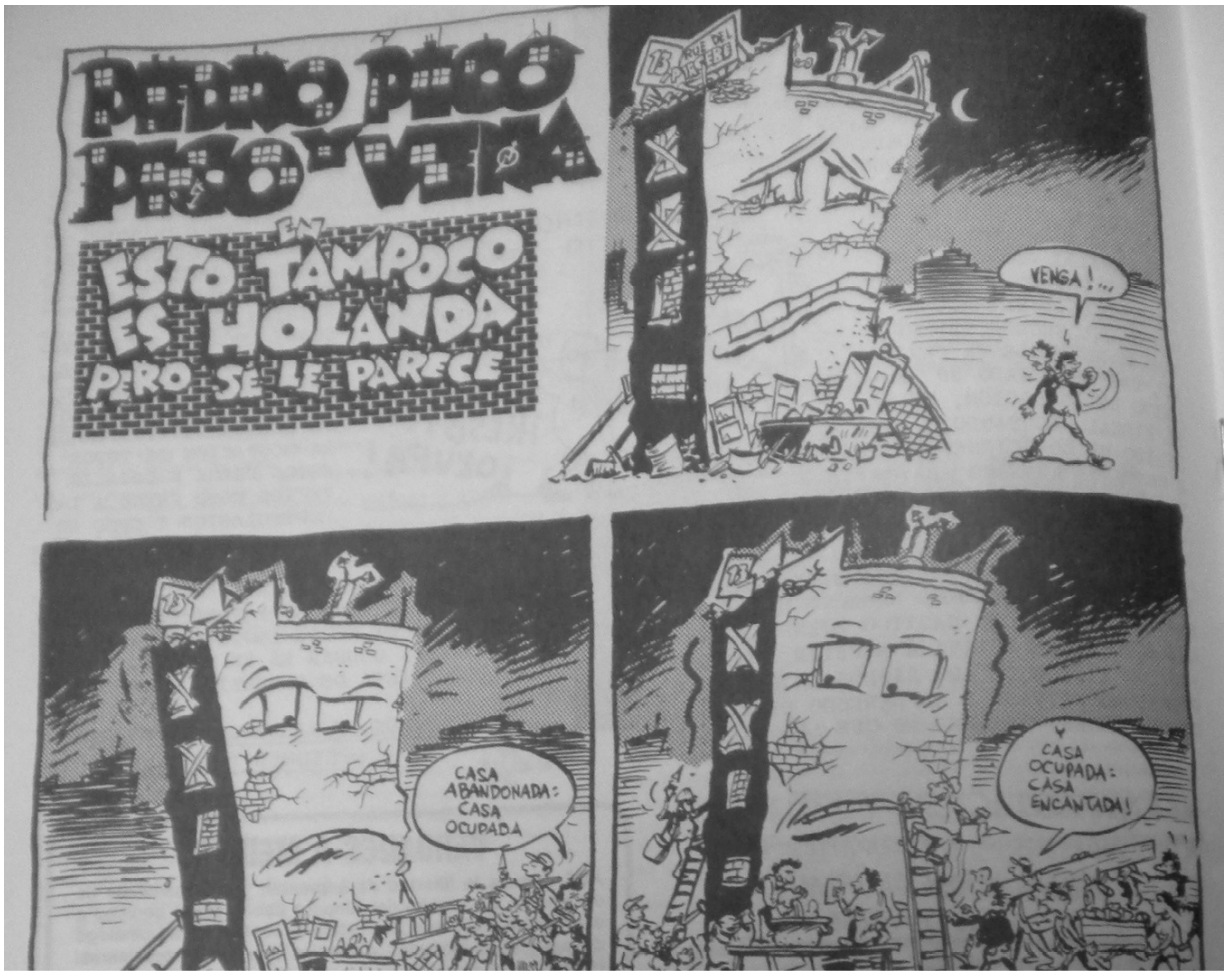

Figure Intro.5. *Pedro Pico y Pico Vena* comic strip. Carlos Azagra, *Okupaciones en Madri* (1987), 20. Photo by Stephen Vilaseca (2009).

The transformation of an abandoned building into a poetic space is visualized by cartoonist Carlos Azagra in his comic strip *Pedro Pico y Pico Vena*. In a story called “Esto tampoco es Holanda pero se le parece” (“This Isn’t Holland Either, But It Seems Like It”), published in 1987, Azagra depicts a three-part process from *casa abandonada* (abandoned house) to *casa okupada* (squatted house) to *casa encantada* (enchanted house) (see Figure intro.5). During the transformation, the house’s frown becomes a smile. In one frame, while the house affectionately looks at the *okupas* participating in some sort of commoning on the roof, it says “Que bien que alguien me quiera” (How great it is that someone loves me) (see Figure intro.6). As the house becomes appreciated, it opens up and grows into something more than just a house; it becomes a site (or space) with a purpose. It comes alive.

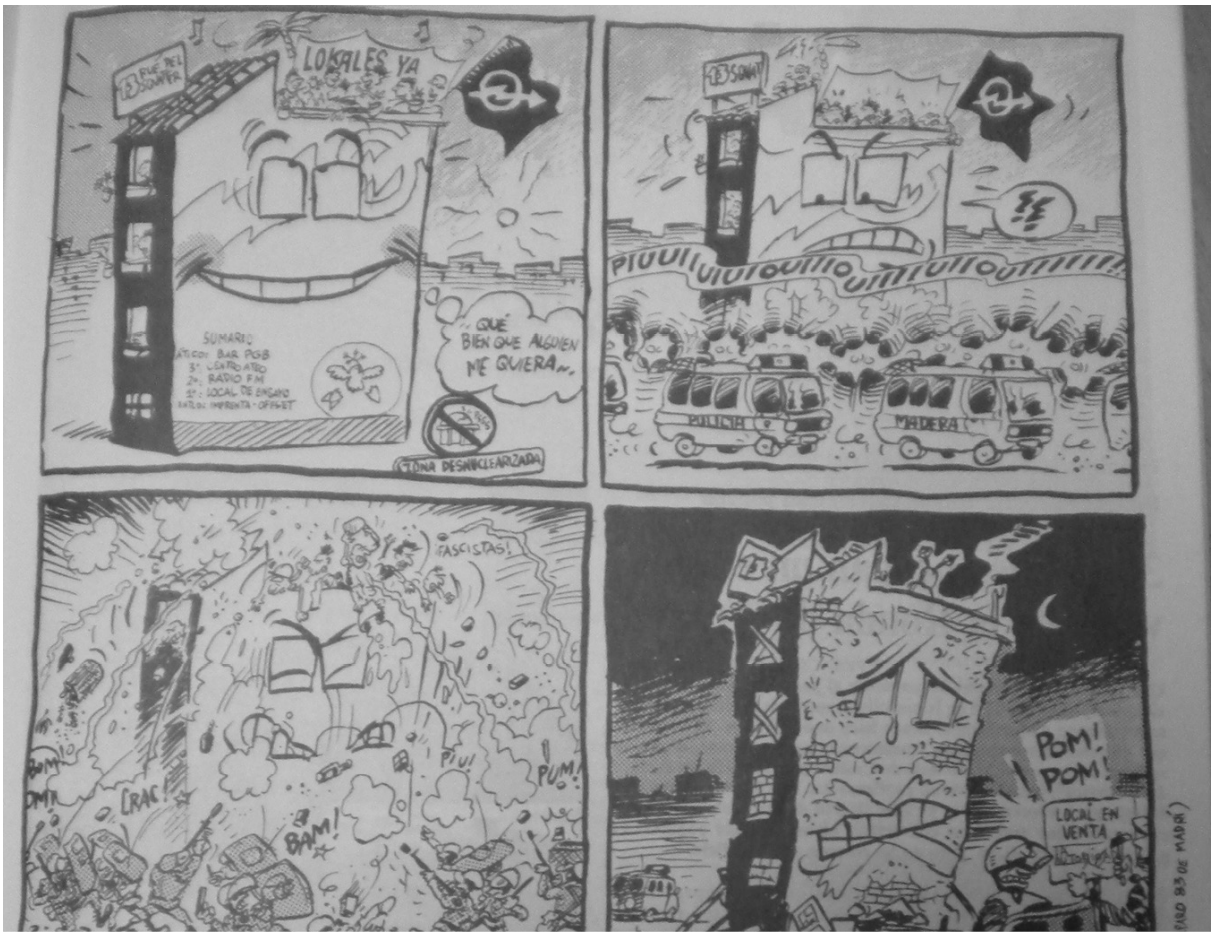

Figure Intro.6. *Pedro Pico y Pico Vena* comic strip. Carlos Azagra, *Okupaciones en Madri* (1987), 21. Photo by Stephen Vilaseca (2009).

The vision of squatted buildings as enchanted houses that Azagra imagined in this comic strip still resonates today. There is a common belief that this "something more" that goes on in squatted social centers may be contagious. There is a fear among politicians, financiers, bankers, and corporations that we may fall under its spell, that contact with squatted social centers will produce unwanted mutations in the social body. This is what made the Miles de Viviendas situation different. To prevent such a contagion, the Barcelona City Council opted to contain the "virus" with metal siding. It brings to mind the old adage "if walls could talk." The Council has said, essentially, when walls can talk, muffle them. However, the metal siding is, at once, a gag and a blindfold, for, by covering the wall, the Barcelona City Council is covering the public's eye and imposing a type of blindness. William James argues in *On a Certain Blindness in Human Beings* that people live in different interpretive communities. They tend to see things from only their own point of view. The Barcelona City Council is interested in maintaining this blindness. By keeping the wall poem out of sight, it is keeping it out of mind, and the mind is the current political battleground. The Barcelona City Council's decision demonstrates that it recognizes the potential of the word to lead to new actions.

A closer look at the wall poem reveals that it is a critique of the current precarious living that takes place in urban cities like Barcelona. ("Given that we have to die, /may it be after we have lived, /*not alone and/ desperate*, /*like old people/ like romantics*, /but as men and women, /hybrid beings that we are, of mortal/and immortal essence" [my emphasis]). Similar to literary Romanticism's focus on the individual, neoliberalism frames life as a personal project made up of private interests and fantasies that one experiences individually. The continual privatization of experience in a world of increasing uncertainties makes us feel "alone and desperate." Unlike the "old romantics" who looked to this isolated existential state for creative inspiration, and unlike the neoliberalists who see productive potential in fomenting a world of egotistical competitors, the *okupas* believe in a style of living and creativity that is shared.

The concealment of the Miles de Viviendas wall poem speaks to the relationship between the material and the symbolic within the specific

practice of *okupación*, or squatting, in Barcelona, Spain. How does the material come together with the symbolic?[5] How does urban space interact with the written word? These questions lay at the heart of the current debate within Spanish cultural studies over how to approach the study of the urban in Spain. Malcolm Compitello, professor of Spanish at the University of Arizona, and Susan Larson, associate professor of Spanish at the University of Kentucky, propose that there exists a materialist/symbolic divide and that this marked division is "most probably a remnant of the modern/postmodern debates of the 1980s and early 90s" whose present manifestation "stems from varied interpretations of the work of Henri Lefebvre."[6] I read Lefebvre's *The Production of Space* not as a rejection of the material significance of language, but quite the contrary. I believe, like Lefebvre, that what will lead us "beyond discourse," "beyond philosophy," and "beyond the theory of discourse" back to the material and back to the body is precisely language.[7] It will not be Saussure's language as totalizing system of rigid and formal relations, but, rather, the language "of the vast store of non-formal knowledge embedded in poetry, music, dance, and theatre."[8] If we are to understand the relationship between the social creativity and imagination of *okupas* in Barcelona of the twenty-first century and what a body is capable of in the context of post-Fordism and cognitive capitalism, we must turn to Lefebvre's call for "an uprising of the body […] against the signs of non-body" but more specifically we must turn to an "uprising of the body" that comes in the form of unmediated communication.[9]

The *okupas* demonstrate that social transformation is possible when the material and the symbolic interrelate, not through capital, but through bodily thought. As Rancière says, what one can see, speak, think, believe, and desire is created and updated in order to incite the body to action. This is the principal motor of cognitive capitalism. This very same mind-body encounter that strengthens contemporary capitalism will be used to weaken it. The sensible world is updated and socially actualized such that the sets of constant relations that capitalism culturally constructs are made to appear natural and self-evident. Capitalism is a semiotic system, a mode of perception, which determines "what presents itself to sense experience."[10] It is a "distribution of the sensible" that intuits and exploits the relationship between the imagination (what can be expressed in verbal or visual

statements) and the body (what can be done).[11] For example, additions to the sensible in the form of advertising jingles and slogans incite the body to buy. Sony explicitly acknowledges this relationship in its 2011 advertising campaign entitled "SONY make.believe." Its tagline is "Believe that anything you can imagine, you can make real." On its website, Sony explains that "the dot that links make and believe is the place where imagination and reality collide."[12] This corporate recognition of the relationship between mind and body has also been a staple of Johnnie Walker scotch. Since 1999, the Johnnie Walker "Keep Walking" global branding project has filmed international celebrities explaining how they have overcome adversity to become successful. The "Keep Walking" campaign landed in Spain in 2010 and interviewed such Spanish celebrities as actor Luis Tosar, photographer Chema Madoz, ballet dancer Ángel Corella, chef Mario Sandoval, and fashion designer Juanjo Oliva. The common theme of all of the interviews is that imagination and dreams condition reality. The "trick" of capitalism is that they make you think buying Johnnie Walker scotch is part of making the dream a reality.

Through the management of the sensible world, the kinds of actions that can be imagined and, eventually, realized in the material world can be limited. Whoever or whatever is able to control how an event is perceived has power. Aesthetics becomes political. As a result, a shift to cognitive capitalism and a technological economy is forcing political scientists, political economists, and academic institutions to rethink the traditional privileging of the material over the symbolic, the sciences over the humanities. Likewise, literary critics like Jean-Jacques Lecercle are realizing that the separation between the material and the symbolic does not make sense anymore. He posits that "the task for twenty-first-century literary criticism is a return to the political" because language is much more than "a system in the Saussurean sense of *langue* (from which we can derive a formalist concept of literature)."[13] It is "a conception of the world."[14] The question is no longer how to bring together the material with the symbolic, the urban space with the written word, but why they were ever thought to be separate. Cognitive capitalism does not separate the material and the symbolic or privilege one over the other, but, rather, joins economic-urban processes with communicative processes. In this way, the symbolic serves state or capitalist form. That is, the urban consciousness

from which the symbolic emerges is organized according to the closed, internal logic of capital.

The *okupas* have learned from cognitive capitalism that imagination does have material consequences. However, the *okupas*' thought does not emerge from urbanized consciousness, but from the body.[15] As a result, their imagination has the power to defy capitalism. Poetry, music, performance art, the plastic arts, graffiti, urban art, and cinema that have detached from the totalizing structure of capital have the potential of coaxing bodies out of their comfort zones to reconnect in new ways. My assertion is supported by a recent approach to information processing in the fields of psychology and neuroscience known as theories of embodied cognition and affect.[16] Thoughts, words, and images, according to these theories, can trigger physical responses. For example, seeing a picture of an airplane may evoke memories of strong turbulence, which evoke the fear experienced, which triggers the corresponding physical response of a racing heart, sweaty palms, and a stiff posture. The process of associative memory, the linking of thoughts, words, images and bodily responses, occurs all at once, automatically and unconsciously. Current research shows that the spontaneous connections made between ideas can be influenced. Daniel Kahneman, winner of the 2002 Nobel Prize in Economic Sciences, describes several neurological experiments involving a technique known as priming. It has been found, as Kahneman explains, that:

> If you have recently seen or heard the word EAT, you are temporarily more likely to complete the word fragment SO_P as SOUP than as SOAP. The opposite would happen, of course, if you had just seen WASH. We call this a *priming effect* and say that the idea of EAT primes the idea of SOUP, and that WASH primes SOAP.[17]

Not only can words prime other words and thoughts, but thoughts can prime behavior. This is called the ideomotor effect. To illustrate, Kahneman retells an experiment conducted by the psychologist John Bargh. He gave college students the task of descrambling sets of five jumbled words. In each set, they had to create meaningful phrases using four of the five words. One group of students was given words related to old people. After completing the task, the students were asked to walk down the hall to participate in a second experiment. Bargh recorded the time it took the participants to go from the first room to the second. The students who were exposed to the words associated with the elderly walked more slowly than

those who were not. Kahneman points out that the ideomotor link is reciprocal. Just as thoughts (in this case, the idea of old age) can unconsciously influence how a body reacts (walking slowly), gestures (acting old) can also unconsciously influence thoughts. He cites a study in which students, after walking around a room more slowly than normal, were able to quickly identify words linked to old age.

Figure Intro.7. The Gràcia district of Barcelona.

The *okupa* wall poem "primed" the *okupa* style of life or would have if left exposed. Because words have the power to affect behavior, the City of Barcelona concealed the wall poem on Joan de Borbó Avenue with metal siding. The *okupas* believe that discussing the notion of sharing has the power to consciously influence people to share more, but, much like how the idea of old age unconsciously influenced the students to walk slowly, the *okupa* acting out of sharing will as much, or more so, influence people

unconsciously. The *okupas*' style of life is one in which the practice of sharing, instead of the exchange of money, is central, and they make their practice public by announcing their presence on banners and graffiti outside of squatted houses and squatted social centers. A now iconic image is the "Okupa y Resiste" [Squat and Resist] graffiti on the roof of the squatted social center Blokes Fantasma in the Gràcia district of Barcelona (see Figure intro.7). Hanging from the squatted house at 20 Creu Coberta Street in the Sants district is the following banner: "El dret a l'habitatge i la llibertat no te preu. Hi ha coses que els diners no poden comprar" [The right to housing and freedom is priceless. There are things that money cannot buy.] (see Figure intro.8). A couple of doors down, on the same street, another squat displays the international squatters' symbol, a circle with a bent arrow pointing diagonally to the top right, and a sign that reads, "Si la vivienda es un lujo, okupar es tu derecho" [If housing is unaffordable, squatting is your right] (see Figure intro.9).

Figure Intro.8. A squatted house at 20 Creu Coberta Street in the Sants district of Barcelona. Stephen Luis Vilaseca (2009).

Changing the way one physically moves in the city changes the way one thinks, and changing the way one thinks ("primed" by the above-mentioned messages) influences the way one physically moves in the city. The key to social transformation is to think with your body, to allow thought to function affectively instead of according to capitalism, a predetermined, closed system. One way to think with your body is to minimize dependence on capitalist relationships by creating non-capitalist ones.[18] That is possible through the creation of communities and the treatment of knowledge, language, technology, science, and culture not as private property but as common goods.


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Figure Intro.9. A squatted house at 24 Creu Coberta Street in the Sants district of Barcelona. Stephen Luis Vilaseca (2009).

In post-Fordism, the intellect, the faculty of language and thinking, is made to appear so that it can be put to work. It is brought out into public space for the purpose of exploiting it financially. The reduction of the publicness of *social* cooperation to the publicness of *labor* cooperation essentially paralyzes the possibility for political action in the public sphere. In other words, public space is no longer a political space because collective speech (speaking in the presence of others) is now the primary source of the production of wealth. Collective speech serves the corporate and state form. The public space of cognitive capitalism is not a space in which to voice dissent, but an orderly, safe, privatized space in which to produce and consume. It has been emptied of conflict, and a space without conflict is not a political space.

The question then becomes: How can we wrest the publicness of language and thought from the claws of wage labor and return it to political action? The answer involves the ways in which autonomist Marxist theory appropriates elements of the anarchist tradition.[19] The concealment of the wall poem on Joan de Borbó Avenue highlights a "struggle between community (not civil society!) and state and corporate forms," which is, according to Richard J.F. Day, "*the* struggle of the (post)modern condition."[20] Unlike traditional Marxists who believe that social change is only possible through the "violent usurpation of state power,"[21] the anarchist tradition asserts that social change occurs "*alongside*, rather than inside, existing modes of social organization."[22] Borrowing from the anarchist notion that the mediation of state or corporate forms is unnecessary for social change, autonomist Marxist Paolo Virno argues that the publicness of language and thought and political action may be united through the creation of a "*non-state run public sphere*."[23] This non-state-run public sphere is a creative space in which to share and produce knowledge, language (collective speech), technology, science, and culture as common goods for self-enrichment. The only group providing both a non-state-run public sphere and new expressions that detach from the totalizing structure of capital in order to incite the body to act in new and unexpected ways in Barcelona is the *okupas*.

The reason Barcelonan *okupas* seem anarchist is because they are. They are rooted in that tradition. Although political squatting takes place in all of the major cities in Spain—Madrid, Barcelona, Valencia, Seville, Zaragoza, Málaga—as well as in some rural settings, Barcelona has a much greater presence of *okupas* due to its long history of anarchist activity. The politically motivated squatter movement in Barcelona of the twenty-first century is directly related to the predominantly anarchist workers' movement of the nineteenth century. Beginning with the Barcelona section of the First Workers' International founded in 1869, anarchism flourished in Barcelona and grew to play a significant part in mainstream political thought. Barcelona has been the site of many anarchist general strikes, including those that led to the Tragic Week in 1909.[24] It was a stronghold of anarchism against the Primo de Rivera dictatorship (1923–1930). Due largely to its strong anarchist presence, this Mediterranean city was also one of the last metropolitan areas to fall to Franco during the Spanish Civil War. Barcelonan *okupas*, following in this tradition of anarchist thought but having moved on from it to develop post-anarchist thought, constitute not so much a threat as an alternative to the Catalonian and Spanish corporate and state form.[25]

The anarchist discourse that continues today in the politically motivated squatter movement of Barcelona rejects the state form as a tool for achieving social change. The first decade of the twenty-first century has been one of post-political impasse in which social transformation with a true will to change has been continually blocked. As a result, many young Spaniards feel that the political parties are unable to represent them, and for this reason, participation has decreased. Squatting offers an alternative way to create social change. Beginning with Barcelona Mayor Joan Clos's socialist administration in 1997, the relationship between socialist politicians and the *okupas* has been a complicated and contradictory one. That is, a dual response to the *okupas* has been created in the socialist Catalan Imaginary, one of critique and compassion at the same time. This book follows the complexities of that relationship over two socialist mayoral administrations: Joan Clos's (September 1997–September 2006) and Jordi Hereu's (September 2006–July 2011). In order to ascertain whether capitalism will continue being the existential motif that determines what a body is capable of in Barcelona as well as in Spain in the twenty-

first century, there is an aesthetic war raging over the representations of *okupas*.

Chapter 1 provides the framework necessary to understand the phenomenon of the *okupas* in Barcelona. It places squatting in its social, cultural, and political context by, first, exploring whether the "Barcelona Model" of city planning from 1992 to 2011 led to urban success or social crisis. Second, it documents the origins of *okupas*, and discusses who they are, and what they want. Third, the chapter clarifies the role of squatted social centers in Spanish society. Fourth, it compares and contrasts *okupas* with one of their principal antecedents, hippies in the United States, and the squatted social center with the hippie commune. Finally, it discusses the real and perceived tensions between the *indignados* of the so-called Spanish Spring of 2011 and the *okupas*, and what this means for Spain's future political landscape.

In order to understand why squatting became a crime in Spain in 1995, Chapter 2 documents how a model of urban planning based on the practice of property speculation and a strategy of State-assisted capitalism in the form of public-private relationships made huge sums of money for real estate developers, construction companies, banks and savings banks, and politicians in Spain beginning in the mid-1980s. It explores the case of La Caixa, the largest savings bank in Catalonia, and examines what role it played in converting Barcelona into a global city able to attract capital and tourists. After describing the reasons for the criminalization of squatting in 1995, I provide an explanation of the laws' treatment of the squatting of public property versus the squatting of private property and the judicial interpretation of Article 245.2 of the Penal Code. Chapter 2 also follows the complexities of the relationship between socialist politicians and the *okupas* over two socialist mayoral administrations, Joan Clos's (September 1997–September 2006) and Jordi Hereu's (September 2006–July 2011), and documents how, through constant accusations in the press of the socialist administration's permissiveness of *okupación*, the PP and the CiU undermined the socialists' credibility and popularity by playing up the *okupas* as uncontrollable and violent delinquents. I examine specific cases of *okupación* in Barcelona between 1997 and 2011 in order to investigate the question of whether squatting is a crime or a form of protest.

In Chapter 3, I acknowledge that the relationship between the Catalonian socialist politicians and the *okupas* in Barcelona has been a complicated and contradictory one. The dual response to the *okupas* that has been created in the socialist Catalan Imaginary—one of critique and compassion at the same time—highlights the political limits of a dogmatic stance against politically motivated squatting. The argument of Chapter 3 begins by affirming that the contemporary Catalonian Left's public representation of the *okupas*—political youth with admirable ideals but whose politics, ultimately, is ineffectual and harmless—functions as a poetic figure that leads to political inaction. I compare the everyday life and identity formation of real *okupas* with close readings of the representations of *okupas* in visual media and novels. Part I begins by showing how the soap opera *El cor de la ciutat* [*The Heart of the City*] (2007–2008) depicts the *okupas* as good, idealistic, and civic-minded Catalanists. However, despite this positive representation, it also provides examples of social transformation that occur while following the rules of the game instead of by challenging them. The socialists maintain that the way to transform industrial factories into cultural spaces that most benefit Barcelona's citizens is not through political squatting but through private sector and public-private collaborations. Part II investigates how film director Pau Martínez reduces the complexity of revolutionary desire by boxing it into the romantic comedy form of expression. Because he applies the rules of this genre to the characters and their relationships, the *okupas* in his film *El Kaserón* [*The Big Old House*] (2009) must be good-natured, playful, creative, spontaneous, and fun-loving free spirits, and their revolution is necessarily a harmless dance revolution free of political and social conflict. Part III compares the treatment of *okupas* in novels written precisely for children and young teenagers (Manuel L. Alonso's 1995 *Las pelirrojas traen mala suerte* [Redheads Bring Bad Luck], Juan Noriega's 1997 *El okupa* [The Squatter], Care Santos's 1997 *Okupada* [Squatted], Andreu Sotorra's 2003 *Korazón de Pararrayos* [Heart of Lightning Rod], and Emilio Calderón's 2005 *Los okupantes* [The Occupiers]) with those written for adults (Roc Casagran's 2008 *Austràlia* [Australia], Aixa de la Cruz's 2009 *De música ligera* [About Light Music], and Johari Gautier Carmona's 2009 *El rey del mambo* [The King of Mambo]). In this section, I explain that children's and young adult literature about *okupas* does not seek

political change but a regeneration of persistent optimism and the belief in noble goals. Through an analysis of the novels, I show that the message to young people is to be idealistic and experience *okupación*, but only literarily, at a safe distance. There are positive descriptions of *okupas'* qualities for youth, but there is no call to political action. Adult literature is more critical and highlights the hypocrisy that has infiltrated the core values of the *okupas*.

Chapter 4 picks up the theme of the *okupa* as poetic force that does lead to political action. I argue that the Barcelonan *okupas* are real subjects of social change. The task of Part I is to explore Spanish director Jo Sol's art film *El taxista ful* [*The Taxi Thief*] (2005). Members of a radically leftist Barcelonan collective Dinero Gratis, some of whom are *okupas*, are forced to reexamine their own political thought regarding money and work after they cross paths with an unemployed man who steals taxis at night in order to make money. Sol's idea for the film was inspired by his reading of *Por una política nocturna* [*For a Nocturnal Politics*] (2001), an antiestablishment text that makes the case for the force of anonymity to create social transformation. I argue that the character of the false taxi driver, much like the *okupas*, is a poetic-political figure who adds poetic power to the political questions surrounding work and money. Part II is an analysis of former squatter Vicente Escolar Bautista's book of poetry *Libro de un 8/1 tumbado en el espejo (ocho cuartos de gasto…partido por uno)* [Book of 8/1 Knocked Down in the Mirror (eight fourths expenditure… divided by one)] (2004). Escolar Bautista's poetry provides the methodology with which to achieve social transformation. I assert that through the continual rehearsal and performance of his poetry, bodies are primed to respond to Barcelona not according to the idea of money but according to friendship and sharing.

At a time when people are less happy, there is more poverty and hunger, and the distribution of wealth is increasingly unjust, the sustained viability of capitalism is being put to the test worldwide. How the entanglement of imagination and reality, word and body, is managed will determine the world's future economic, political, and social landscape. The interactions in Barcelona between politicians and *okupas* serve as a precursor of what is to come. It is to this specific mix of capital, politics, and creativity that I now turn.

NOTES

1. The work of Deleuze and Guattari on affect underlies my own understanding of the concept, in particular their critique of a traditional reading of Karl Marx and the totalizing structure of the signifier in linguistics. See Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, "November 20, 1923—Postulates of Linguistics," in *A Thousand Plateaus* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987), 75–110. Deleuze and Guattari's work on affect has important implications for the understanding of the power of the symbolic to create social or political change. A sign is no longer the union of two distinct entities: content as signified and expression as signifier. Instead, the Deleuzian sign is now "the effect of the action of a body on another body, and therefore *affect*." Paolo Fabbri quoted in Franco Berardi, *Félix Guattari: Thought, Friendship and Visionary Cartography* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), 94. Brian Massumi describes affection as "an encounter between the affected body and a second, affecting, body." Brian Massumi, "Pleasures," in *A Thousand Plateaus* by Deleuze and Guattari (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987), xvi. The affecting body (expressions) can be any type of art—poetry, music, performance art, the plastic arts, graffiti, urban art, or cinema.

2. All translations are those of the author unless otherwise noted.

3. Jacques Rancière, Slavoj Žižek, and Gabriel Rockhill, *The Politics of Aesthetics: The Distribution of the Sensible* (London: Continuum, 2004), 92–93.

4. I am employing Louis Wolcher's concept of the commons as he defined it in his talk "The Meaning of the Commons" given at *The Law of the Commons* conference in Seattle, 2009. As he explains, commoning is an unscripted form of life in which people take their rights into their own hands instead of waiting for them to be granted.

5. I disagree with Marx that the material moving forces of society are the tools of production. Rather, what takes precedence over tools and goods is the interaction of bodies, not only with tools and goods, but with other bodies and the world. See my definition of *body* in note 9.

6. Malcolm Alan Compitello and Susan Larson, "Cities, Culture… Capital? Recent Cultural Studies Approaches to Spain's Cities," *Journal of Spanish Cultural Studies* 2, no. 2 (2001): 234.

7. Henri Lefebvre, *The Production of Space* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1994), 407.

8. Ibid., 407.

9. Ibid., 201. I use the term *body* to mean not only a physical organism but also a multitude of networked relations connecting the material with the immaterial. This definition is related to the work of Félix Guattari. To rethink the relationship between mind, body, and world as that of a machine is helpful, explains Guattari, because "machines are not totalities enclosed upon themselves. They maintain determined relations with a spatio-temporal exteriority, as well as with universes of signs and fields of virtuality." Félix Guattari, "Remaking Social Practices," in *The Guattari Reader* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers Ltd, 1996), 267. Being in the world, for Guattari, is machinic, which is another way of saying that it is relational. The production of subjectivity follows the logic of machines because it is produced through the interaction between self and exterior forces.

10. Rancière, *The Politics of Aesthetics*, 13.

11. Ibid., 12.

12. *SONY make.believe*. http://www.sony.net/united/makedotbelieve/index.html (accessed November 11, 2010).

13. Jean-Jacques Lecercle, "Return to the Political," *PMLA* 125, no.4 (2010): 916.

14. Ibid., 918.

15. Lefebvre favors thinking with the body, which is his method of "rhythmanalysis" because it produces social space as opposed to static space. Benjamin Fraser points out that "Lefebvre's approach to space" may be summarized as one that "places bodily knowing before intellect, rhythms

before blueprints, and life before analysis." Benjamin Fraser, *Henri Lefebvre and the Spanish Urban Experience: Reading the Mobile City* (Lewisburg, PA.: Bucknell University Press, 2011), 13. I extend the ideas of rhythmanalysis to affect. There are many similarities between the method of rhythmanalysis and that of affect, but there are also many differences. Both are ways to question the static nature of representational thought and, in so doing, create social change. However, Lefebvre, a self-proclaimed Marxist, believes, like Marx, that social change occurs within a totality that is the state form. Also, the constant movement between the material and the symbolic is dialectical, that is, interdependent. An affective approach, on the contrary, is not Marxist, but anarchic in the sense that social change occurs not within a state-form but alongside it. In addition, the relationship between the material and the symbolic in affect is independent, that is, not dialectical, but, nonetheless, related.

16. See, for example, Brian Massumi, *Parables for the Virtual: Movement, Affect, Sensation* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2002); Teresa Brennan, *The Transmission of Affect* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2004); Patricia Ticineto Clough, *The Affective Turn: Theorizing the Social* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2007); Nigel Thrift, *Non-Representational Theory: Space/Politics/Affect* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2008); and Jo Labanyi, "Doing Things: Emotion, Affect, and Materiality," *Journal of Spanish Cultural Studies* 11, no. 3–4 (2010): 223–33.

17. Daniel Kahneman, *Thinking, Fast and Slow* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2011), 52.

18. Italian "workerism" (*operaismo*), a radical offshoot of the labor movement of the 1960s and '70s in Italy consisting of semi-skilled assembly-line auto workers at Fiat, experimented with the possibility of creating non-capitalist relationships through the separation of labor from capital. These workerists were considered dissident even within the labor movement because they disagreed with traditional Marxism over what makes work alienating. Instead of capitalist exploitation, as Sylvère Lotringer explains in his foreword to Paolo Virno's *A Grammar of the Multitude*, "operaists realized that it (the cause of alienation) is rather *the reduction of life to work*" and as a result "workerists pressed for the reduction of labor time and the transformation of production through the application of technical knowledge and socialized intelligence." Sylvère Lotringer, foreword in *A Grammar of the Multitude* by Paolo Virno (Los Angeles, CA: Semiotext, 2004), 7. The social labor fought for by the Italian workerists and then theorized by the autonomists was one whose process was cooperative and whose product was a commons, an unscripted form of life predicated on sharing. Instead of reducing life to work, they found enrichment through the unpaid labor of self-valorization through social interaction. Dyer-Witheford makes the operaists' argument clear: "Ultimately, capital needs labour, but labour does not need capital. Labour, as the source of production, can dispense with the wage relation: it is potentially autonomous." Nick Dyer-Witheford, "Autonomist Marxism and the Information Society," *Multitudes*, June 3, 2004, http://multitudes.samizdat.net/Autonomist-Marxism-and-the.

19. Italian workerism served as a catalyst for a new school of thought within Marxism known as autonomist Marxism. Italian intellectuals such as Mario Tronti, Antonio Negri, Franco Berardi, Maurizio Lazzarato, and Paolo Virno began theorizing a Marxism that focused on the power of labor instead of on the power of capital.

20. Richard J. F. Day, *Gramsci Is Dead: Anarchist Currents in the Newest Social Movements* (London: Pluto Press, 2005), 38.

21. Ibid., 56.

22. Ibid., 123.

23. Virno, *A Grammar of the Multitude*, 68.

24. The Tragic Week of 1909 refers to a weeklong general labor strike during which the working class of Barcelona, consisting of anarchists, socialists, and republicans, violently protested against the

redeployment to Morocco of working-class reservists who had already completed their active duty to fight in the Second Rif War.

25. The *okupas* form part of the autonomist category of immaterial laborer because they aspire to become living unpaid labor.

Chapter One

Meet the Barcelonan *Okupas* (1997–2011)

There did not exist a verb “to squat” in Spanish until the late 1970s. The closest approximation was the verb *ocupar*, to occupy. The noun to describe a person who squats is *ocupa*. The origins of *okupa* with a “k” and its variant *okupación* (occupation) stem from the 1980s, during which Spanish anarchists, influenced by British squatters of the 1970s, began to squat uninhabited, empty buildings in order to critique the “system.” Any time squatting is used as a means to denounce certain practices, such as property speculation, or to highlight political and social deficiencies, such as the lack of self-governed, autonomous cultural spaces in the city, the term *okupa* is used instead of *ocupa*.

Despite the differences between the two types of squatting (political and apolitical), instances of both have increased in recent years in Barcelona due to the city’s strategies for urban growth and design. Since the early 1990s, initially motivated by the (then upcoming) 1992 Summer Olympics, Barcelona has focused on promoting tourism and foreign investment and creating a “Barcelona brand,” rather than on heavy industry. In order to attract capital, this Mediterranean city began to market itself as modern, innovative, and cosmopolitan, offering tourists and investors design, culture, high-end products, and cutting-edge technology. The obsession with “selling” Barcelona and converting it into a global city changed the whole urban space into one big investment scene. Surplus properties resulting from de-industrialization were turned into luxury apartments and office spaces for technology-based companies in Poblenou. Buildings in historic, working-class neighborhoods such as Ciutat Vella, la Barceloneta, el Raval, and Sants were razed, and hotels, apartments, transportation, and museums for tourists were built there instead. Property became a huge moneymaker and fueled a fantastic building boom. The potential money to be made in real estate led to property speculation and the negative

consequences associated with it, specifically, rising housing prices, real estate mobbing, and an excess of uninhabited housing. Barcelona became a playground for the rich, while the combination of increasing housing costs, stagnant wages, and high unemployment caused many of those who were less well-off to decide to squat.

DEFINING *OKUPAS*

Before anything can be said about the Barcelonan squatters, it is necessary first to define them. There are four types: 1) youth in search of independence (*ocupas*); 2) the poor (*ocupas*); 3) drug dealers and users (*ocupas*); and 4) activists (*okupas*). Regarding the first category, young Spanish adults, those roughly between the ages of 18 and 35, who would like to leave the parental nest and live on their own, find it very challenging. The cost of housing has risen more than 150 percent since 1998 while salaries have risen only 35 percent, and apartments for rent only make up 15 percent of the housing market.[1] As a result, 63 percent of Spaniards between 18 and 25 years old live with their parents. Although still high, the percentage drops to 30 percent for those between 30 and 35.[2] One way for Spanish young adults to gain their independence is to squat buildings that have been abandoned. In Barcelona, there are approximately 300,000 empty apartments, and many of these have been vacant for years.[3] In many cases, the motivation among the Spanish youth to squat is based less on need than desire. Most middle-class young adults who squat are not choosing between homelessness and squatting. They could just continue living with their parents. Within this group of *ocupas*, there are those who individually squat empty apartments and those who collectively squat whole buildings. In either case, there is no attempt to make political statements or to change society.

Regarding the second group of squatters, many of the poor people who squat choose to squat, not for independence, but for solely financial reasons. These are people who would be choosing between homelessness and squatting. Public housing in Spain has failed to meet the social demand for rent-controlled apartments. Low-income housing makes up only 7 percent of the housing market.[4] Even if poor people are lucky enough to find public housing, many are still unable to afford it because the price does

not take into account the cost of living or falling salaries. The government simply prices these apartments a little lower than market value. Also, many of these rent-controlled flats are built in parts of the city where people do not want to live because they are dangerous and/or because they are far from the city center. María de los Ángeles, an unemployed 46-year-old widow, whose only income was her widow's pension of 570 euros a month (approximately $700/month), squatted, along with her two daughters, an apartment in the Raval neighborhood of Barcelona in 2010 because she could not afford to pay rent. She maintained that "estamos aquí por necesidad, no por gusto" [we are here out of necessity, not because we like to squat].[5] Immigrants in similar dire straits often ignore the number of occupants allowed in apartments and cram anywhere between 6 and 40 people in tiny spaces of 60 square meters. These apartments, known as *pisos patera* [small boat apartments] after the small boats (*pateras*) that many African immigrants have used to cross the Strait of Gibraltar to enter Spain illegally, are in some cases squatted. Many of these squatted *pisos patera* are found in the Raval neighborhood, specifically, on two streets: Robador and Sant Ramon.

In the third category of squatters, *costras* are junkies who sell drugs during parties in squatted social centers. Oftentimes *costras* are foreigners who travel to Barcelona to vacation in squats. This type of traveling is known as *ocupa* tourism. Drug trafficking by non-nationals in squatted social centers is a theme in Care Santos's novel *Okupada* (1997), which is discussed in chapter 3, and appears in newspaper articles in socially conservative papers as addressed in chapter 2. Unfortunately, the *costras*, a minority of *ocupas*, strips the *okupas* of political content and the possible positive social impact that such content may have on the neighborhoods of Barcelona because conservative print media stress the negative social effects.

Activists, the fourth category, are the squatters I am most interested in. They are the only true *okupas*. However, this is not a homogeneous group. There are those who feel more connected with the anti-globalization movement, those who promote organic agriculture, or those who are active in anti-war campaigns, to name a few. In the early '80s and '90s, the politicized young people who squatted had their roots in the punk tradition. Those who have squatted for political reasons since the late '90s differ in that they tend to identify with the need to create commons in the city.

Despite the fact that *okupas* are heterogeneous, the core commonality that links them all is their anarchist sensibilities. Out of the approximately 150 squatted houses in Barcelona, 10 percent are also social centers.[6] The subset of *okupas* who are connected with squatted social centers is the focus of my analysis. These *centros sociales okupados* (CSOs) designate certain floors for housing and others for a variety of activities that are open to the public and offered free of charge. These include the following: a wide range of classes on topics ranging from how to run open-source software on your computer, to yoga, to art; legal consultation for immigrants; documentary and movie screenings; live music; and seminars on topics such as free software, free culture, urban space and responsible consumerism, among others. The thread that ties these diverse activities together is the desire to foment social relations and exchanges other than and distinct from those that occur within the market. In other words, the idea is to create an autonomous space, one that lies outside the realm and influence of capitalism and in which people are brought together to share informal knowledge, creativity, and culture. In these spaces, these products are not commodities but common goods.

The Barcelonan squatted social centers' focus on autonomy and self-government, which is a conscious exodus from work and capitalism, is influenced by the Italian autonomy movement, the French Situationists, and the theories of Félix Guattari. The Autonomia philosophers, among them Antonio Negri, Franco Berardi, Maurizio Lazzarato, and Paolo Virno, advocated a strategy of refusal. The French Situationists criticized modernist urban planning, and Guattari promoted a concept of creativity as a leap or line of flight that escapes state form. Under the umbrella of anti-capitalism, the work of squatted social centers is the following: 1) to create a network of social solidarity and, ultimately, to change social relations by encouraging the practice of commoning; 2) to change how daily life is lived; and 3) to change the mental conceptions of the world through an assault at the ideological level. Squatted social centers in Barcelona are, just as David Harvey says cultural producers should be, "transgressive" in relation to the capitalistic system "more generally."[7] However, their goal is not to defeat capitalism, but to increase the power of the people. They seek to create a better life *despite* capitalism. Short-term projects include improving the quality and affordability of housing, fomenting free culture

and knowledge, democratizing urban space, practicing responsible consumerism, and improving the environment. Squatted social centers attempt to reduce social and economic instability by striving to meet human needs better than capitalism does, to establish social justice better than the free market is capable of, and to transform society through social creativity. In sum, squatted social centers have identified the social as key to quality of life. The questions that they continually ask are: How is the present system working for you? How do you want to live your life? Are you happy?

THE ORIGINALITY OF *OKUPAS*

Why are the *okupas* important? Have we not seen this before? Why do they deserve our attention? The politically motivated *okupas* have had as their antecedents other social and intellectual movements that in many ways influenced and shaped their beliefs. In addition to the autonomist Marxists and the French Situationists, perhaps the most influential pre-*okupa* movement was the hippies, and, more specifically, within this movement the following three groups: the Diggers of San Francisco, the Yippies of Greenwich Village, and the hip communalists.

The political *okupas* in Barcelona follow in the genealogy of radical activists like the Diggers and the Yippies who believed in the transformative power of imagination to anticipate a communal world. The Diggers, a self-defined guerrilla theater group headquartered in San Francisco from 1966 to 1968, created, according to founding member Peter Berg, "theater that described everything being free hoping that [it] would lead to a social movement."[8] Inspired by composer John Cage's notion that anything with a frame around it is art, the Diggers' only requirement for people to receive the now legendary daily distribution of free food in the Panhandle of Golden Gate Park was to walk through a twelve-foot by twelve-foot yellow wooden frame known as the "free frame of reference."[9] By walking through it, people performed "a symbolic crossing over to a different way of life based not on money but on cooperation and participation."[10] True to this new frame of reference, the Diggers opened the Digger Free Store in the Haight-Ashbury district in which all of the products were free.[11] The Digger Free Store was an experiment in anticipating a future society without money by performing and creating the

conditions for such a society in the present. For Berg, “theater is about becoming something new together.”[12] The “ticketless theater” that was the Free Store taught bodies to interact in new ways.[13] The new gestures created in the interactions between Diggers and those who entered to acquire products for nothing primed the idea of sharing. Original member of the Diggers, Peter Coyote, in a discussion of fellow Digger Emmett Grogan’s book *Ringolevio* at the Book Passage bookstore in Corte Madera, California, recounted the following: One day at the Free Store he, Coyote, confronted a woman who appeared to think she was stealing. He told her that she could not steal, not because it was wrong, but because everything was free. Incredulous, she responded that if everything was free, he should just leave her alone. He did, and she “stole” what she wanted. The next day, the woman returned with a flat of day-old donuts.[14] Her experience at the Free Store turned her would-be stealing into sharing. For the San Francisco police and capitalism, the Diggers and their “diggers do,”[15] ranging from their street theater to their Free Store, were a public nuisance, but just as “stealing” becomes “sharing” when everything is free, their acts of public “nuisance” were refigured (reimagined) by the Diggers as “Public NewSense.”[16] This play-on-words reveals, as Berg observes, that “art, politics, and theater can all be the same thing at the same moment.”[17]

Like the Diggers, the Yippies, on the other coast, in New York, harnessed the potential of imagination, specifically theater-in-the-streets, to create change. The Yippies did not believe that they could push the apathetic and complacent middle class to become involved in their movement through the construction of a logical argument. In place of reason, Abbie Hoffman, co-founder of the Yippies, saw power in what he termed the “blank space, the interrupted statement.”[18] Instead of relying on a formalized, rigid program of demands written on picket signs to draw in the spectator, a signature Yippie street event appealed to the irrational and the weird. For example, the Yippies threw real dollar bills onto the trading floor of the New York Stock Exchange, burned five-dollar bills on Wall Street, attempted to levitate the Pentagon, and nominated “Pigasus the pig” for president at the 1968 Democratic Convention in Chicago. By interrupting the expectations of what a political demonstration should be, the Yippie theater-in-the-street became more memorable and powerful. The logic behind keeping the field of interpretation open was to get people to see the world differently.

The hippies promoted the use of psychedelic drugs like LSD to help individuals reach altered states of consciousness in which the dominant reality was temporarily disrupted. Some hippies, like the Diggers and the Yippies, extended the value of a personal mind-blowing on drugs to a collective consciousness-raising achieved through art. However, unlike their predecessors, the political *okupas* reach altered states of consciousness not through drugs, but simply through theory and practice. Digger Vicki Pollack, responding to journalist Erick Lyle's question of whether the hippie utopian vision was sustainable, mentions drug use as one possible reason for a loss of commitment in the 1970s.[19] To avoid a similar trap, the political *okupas* do not use drugs as a principal catalyst for experimentation. Instead, the impetus is the *okupas'* belief that their promotion of the idea of free exchange has the power to unconsciously influence people to share more.

The Diggers created community around their distribution of free food in the Panhandle of Golden Gate Park and their Free Store. Although they provided products for free and in that sense were exploring ways of living outside of capitalism, they were, at the same time, still playing by the rules in one very important aspect. They paid rent. An article that appeared in *The New Yorker* in 1967 points out that the Diggers constantly worried "about such relatively long-range problems as how to raise enough money to pay the rent (a hundred and seventy-five dollars a month), meet the gas, electric, and telephone bills, and buy vegetables for the famous Digger stew."[20] Yippie Hoffman, in *Fuck the System* (1967), printed under the pseudonym George Metesky, and, later, in *Steal This Book* (1971), explains how to get products and services for free like food, clothing, transportation, education, medical care, and housing. Squatting is mentioned in *Fuck the System* under the heading "Free Rent" and in *Steal This Book* it appears under "Free Housing," in which he states "squatting is not only free, it's a revolutionary act."[21] However, despite advocating squatting, Hoffman and fellow Yippie Jerry Rubin rented apartments in New York. Community building for the Yippies had to do less with squatting and more with an attachment to an aesthetic. Unfortunately, some alienated members of the dominant culture might have been more sympathetic to the Yippies' ideas if they had toned down their long-haired, acid-dropping, foul-mouthed aesthetic.

Many Diggers and hippies, tired of city life, dropped out of dominant society in search of a simpler life. They created community by forming

autonomous, rural communes in which sharing and cooperation were valued. The hip communalists experimented with a nonhierarchical, anti-bureaucratic way of relating to one another based on "the collective consensus system for decision-making."[22] However, despite the basic tenet that private property should be abolished and replaced with the free exchange of all goods, the land on which these communes were formed was originally private property that was legally acquired in one of three ways: it was donated, loaned, or purchased. The Morningstar commune and the Wheeler Ranch, both located in Sonoma County, north of San Francisco, were donated by the property owner. According to Ron E. Roberts, "in the spring of 1966, Lou Gottlieb proclaimed his thirty-acre Morningstar property 'open land'" and "in 1967, a year after the opening of Morningstar, Bill Wheeler declared his land 'free' for all who wished to drop out of the larger society."[23] A commune a few miles north of Los Angeles known as the Hog Farm was loaned to a group of hippies by the owner "with the stipulation that they care for his pigs."[24] Without an open-minded and generous landowner, however, the most common way to start a commune was to pool the financial resources of a group of hippies. Drop City in southern Colorado was formerly a goat pasture purchased for just $350 by three counterculturalists Gene and Joan Bernofsky, and Clark Richert.[25] The amount spent by hippies on land for communes was not always so little. Roberts relates that "one realtor in Taos estimated that hip communalists had spent between $300,000 and $500,000 for land in the area."[26]

Squatted social centers are a similar experiment in communal, alternative living with a decisive difference: they are squatted. *Okupas* do not enter into the capitalist system in which ownership of land is exchanged for money. For the political *okupas*, squatting is not a secondary by-product of a radical way of thinking. Squatting informs theory just as theory informs squatting. They necessarily go together. Squatting is a day-to-day bodily acting out of the idea of free exchange and openness. How a body experiences the city (as co-author that can alter the city) and how a body reconfigures its associative memory through both positive interactions (commoning) and negative interactions (evictions) contribute to elaborations of the free frame of reference. Freedom as a one-time payment to the Man in order to drop out and disengage seems inauthentic and hypocritical to the political *okupas*. The Barcelonan squatters advocate a

more complete break with the capitalist system but a closer connection with the greater community.

Even though the rhetoric of the long-haired hippies was one of openness, their alienating aesthetic created a closed counter-community. In time, many of the open communes, according to Curl, “decided to set population limits, declared the land closed and began taking in new members by invitation only.”[27] While some floors of squatted social centers are dedicated to housing, the majority serve social projects. As a result, the physical limitations of space become less of an issue because the scheduling of events can be staggered to allow for the greatest number of public participants. With regard to an attachment to an aesthetic, the political *okupas* of the twenty-first century are abandoning the typical *okupa* aesthetic of the smelly punk with a Mohawk or the flute-playing environmentalist with dreadlocks. As a result, *okupas* are marked less by what they look like and more by what they do.

OKUPAS AND *INDIGNADOS*: A STRATEGY OF ALLIANCE

Within the present context of post-Fordism and cognitive capitalism, the driving force behind what politically motivated *okupas* do is the desire to make political action possible again. The only way to reach that goal is to bring back into the public sphere a form of cooperation and communication, the aim of which is social and not economic. This is why, when thousands of young Spaniards decided to occupy public squares in various major cities across Spain on May 15, 2011, to protest the ineffectiveness of the two-party political system (the PP versus the PSOE), while at the same time modeling and publicizing a way of making decisions based on the method of social cooperation and consensus, many politically motivated *okupas* participated.

The protagonists of this event, which came to be known as the 15-M movement, were the *indignados* (the indignant ones). There are many similarities between *okupas* and *indignados*. For example, both groups believe that political action is possible only when collective, public speech is separated from financial gain. The following words of a manifesto released by ¡Democracia real YA! [Real Democracy ALREADY!], one of

many continually evolving groups of *indignados*, could be found in any squatted social center website:

> Las prioridades de toda sociedad avanzada han de ser la igualdad, el progreso, la solidaridad, el libre acceso a la cultura, la sostenibilidad ecológica y el desarrollo, el bienestar y la felicidad de las personas […] Es necesaria una Revolución Ética. Hemos puesto el dinero por encima del Ser Humano y tenemos que ponerlo a nuestro servicio.[28]
>
> [The priorities of any advanced society should be equality, progress, solidarity, free access to culture, ecological sustainability and development, the well-being and happiness of people […] An Ethical Revolution is necessary. We have put money above the Human Being, and we have to make it serve us.]

Not only are the values the same, the *okupas* and the *indignados* share a methodology that has social transformation as its goal. They have a similar way of proceeding. In fact, through the use of Twitter, the oftentimes misunderstood creativity of the *okupas* is made visible by the 15-M movement. That is, a new speech act, the hashtag on Twitter, has become the predominant catalyst of political action. Susan Orlean explains in *The New Yorker* that hashtags are "those little checkerboard marks that look like this #" and they are "used to mark phrases or names, in order to make it easier to search for them among the zillions and zillions of tweets."[29] For example, if you wanted to start a conversation about what real democracy should look like in Spain, you could make a comment and follow it with "democraciarealya" [realdemocracyalready] marked by a hashtag. In other words, you could tweet, "¡Necesitamos reformar la Ley Electoral! #democraciarealya" [We need to reform the Voting Law! #realdemocracyalready]. You could also add to the same tweet, "¡Reúnete con nosotros en la Plaza Catalunya a las 2 para protestar el bipartidismo! #spanishrevolution" [Meet at Plaza Catalunya at 2:00 to protest the two-party system! #spanishrevolution].

Once a hashtag is created, it takes on a life of its own. It can either act like a magnet, attracting continually repeating encounters around the same topic, or it can function like a virus constantly mutating into other hashtags. A characteristic of the hashtag-as-magnet and hashtag-as-virus is that both are examples of Hoffman's "blank space."[30] In both cases, the hashtag is a field open to self-reflection and collective questioning, for it is filled with not one but multiple viewpoints. In the second case, the hashtag-as-virus not only facilitates open dialogue but also avoids premature irrelevancy:

> Las movilizaciones no tienen un único hashtag que les sirva de bandera, sino varios, que van cambiando cada pocas horas. Así el algoritmo que decide los Trending Topics no les penaliza y la información se mantiene fresca. Un ejemplo de guerrilla informativa moderna: #democraciarealya, #spanishrevolution, #acampadasol, #nonosvamos, #yeswecamp, #notenemosmiedo, #juntaelectoralfacts, #esunaopcion, #tomalaplaza, #pijamabloc.[31]
>
> [The mobilizations do not have only one hashtag that serves as a flag, but various, that change every few hours. In this way the algorithm that decides the Trending Topics does not penalize them and the information stays fresh. An example of modern information guerrilla warfare: #democraciarealya, #spanishrevolution, #acampadasol, #nonosvamos, #yeswecamp, #notenemosmiedo, #juntaelectoralfacts, #esunaopcion, #tomalaplaza, #pijamabloc.]

Hashtags are like molecules of information that are continually crashing into one another and recombining to form flows of new meaning. Twitter, an innovation in technology, can be thought of as a newfound energy source that is energizing these molecules of information to move faster and more fluidly. According to the inventor of the hashtag, Chris Messina, the power of Twitter resides in the fact that it "turned a private communicate channel (SMS) into a public broadcast channel" and in so doing, made group collaboration easier.[32] With smartphone in hand, protesters worldwide, from the Arab Spring to the 15-M movement in Spain and the Occupy Wall Street campaign in the United States, recognize and harness Twitter's ability to facilitate flows of social communication and cooperation in real time. What Guattari theorized as the "molecular revolution," the constant combining and recombining of messengers of information that move people to political action, has materialized in the practice of tweeting.[33]

Although it was not until after the 15-M movement that the politically motivated *okupas* added Twitter to their tool box of resistance, the methodology of social transformation that Twitter illustrates so well is predated by the *okupa* process of political and social becoming. What hashtags do on Twitter, a virtual space, is what thoughts do in the mind, another sort of virtual space. Hashtags are fields of virtuality that are not organized by sets of fixed rules. Any thought in the form of poetry, music, performance art, the plastic arts, graffiti, urban art, and cinema (to name a few) that also defies totalizing structures has the ability, like hashtags, to incite people to take action in the material world. Social communication and cooperation heightened by the hashtag is the same as a relating to other people and the world intensified by affect.

Despite the similarities between the *okupas* and *indignados*, some members of the media would like you to think that there are irreconcilable differences. For example, after approximately three weeks of occupying la Puerta del Sol in Madrid and la Plaza Catalunya in Barcelona, a debate emerged among the participants over how to best extend the 15-M movement: to stay in the public squares or to leave, but continue the fight using other means and venues. Some of the headlines of the day were: "A la acampada de Sol le salen 'okupas': Grupos sin interés en el movimiento 15-M arruinan la convivencia en la plaza" ['*Okupas*' Appear in the Sol Encampments: Groups Without Interest in the 15-M Movement Ruin the Camaraderie in the Square],[34] "Los antisistema y okupas ponen en peligro el movimiento 15-M de Barcelona" [People who are Anti-System and *Okupas* Put in Danger the 15-M Movement of Barcelona],[35] and "Anarquistas y okupas 'capitalizan' desde el 22M a los 'indignados'" [Anarchists and *Okupas* "Capitalize" on the *Indignados* Since May 22].[36] The headlines clearly accused the *okupas* of taking advantage of the good intentions of the 15-M movement and of damaging the goodwill that the *indignados* had generated among the general public. It was argued that the debate over whether to keep occupying the public squares or not divided the movement between the *indignados*, who maintained that only by leaving the plazas could the fight continue, and the *okupas*, who refused to capitulate. Daniel Borasteros of *El País* was the first to report on the polemic. On June 4, 2011, he wrote:

> Son los *okupas* del Movimiento 15-M.
> Un grupo de gente que no trabaja, no hace nada y nada le importa. Y que genera problemas de inseguridad al resto, según se lamentan. La paradoja, aunque solo sea lingüística, es que una parte no anecdótica del resto proviene del movimiento de autogestión y de los centros sociales *okupados*.[37]
>
> [They are the *okupas* of the 15-M movement.
> A group of people that does not work, does not do anything and does not care about anything. And causes insecurity problems for the rest, according to those who have complained. The paradox, even if it is just linguistic, is that not an anecdotal part of the rest comes from the self-management movement and the squatted social centers.]

Borasteros made a distinction between homeless people who had squatted the plaza because they probably had nowhere else better to go and, as a result, were in no hurry to leave, and the politically motivated *okupas* who,

like the rest of the *indignados*, supported the abandonment of the squares. Unfortunately, because Borasteros mistakenly used the term *okupas* to refer to *ocupas*, the key difference that he highlighted in the text ran the risk of being lost if the headline were only read or worse, purposefully distorted. For example, the online Spanish newspaper *Periodista Digital* picked up the same story and wrote an editorial based on Borasteros's comments. However, the editorial team horribly misquoted Borasteros, likely purposefully in order to support its anti-*okupa* editorial bias. Compare the above-mentioned quote in Borasteros's original article with its paraphrase in the following: "Son un grupo de gente que no trabaja, no hace nada y nada le importa. Y que genera problemas de inseguridad al resto. Son cada vez más, tiene cada día más fuerza, actúan como si fueran los dueños del corral *y proceden, casi todos, del movimiento de autogestión y de los centros sociales okupados*" [They are a group of people that does not work, does not do anything and does not care about anything. And causes insecurity problems for the rest. They are growing, each day they have more power, they act as if they were the owners of the corral *and almost all of them come from the self-management movement and the squatted social centers*.] [38] Suddenly, with a sleight of hand, the troublemaking squatters who were stubbornly refusing to accept the assembly's decision to leave the squares were no longer principally homeless people but rather the politically motivated *okupas*.

The question that emerges is: Why is there a tendency to vilify the *okupas*? The answer is related to two broader questions: How does one live a political life? What does it mean to be political? The *indignados* want to reform representational politics and capitalism. They recognize that the system is broken and desire to fix it. For the *indignados*, real democracy is possible only by working within the state form and rebuilding it. *El País* columnist Fernando Vallespín talking to Guy Hedgecoe of *Iberosphere* describes the *indignados* as "very interventionist": "So if you want to translate all their proposals into political measures, the first result would be a stronger state. They want stricter controls on politicians, stricter controls on what's going on in business, stricter controls on practically everything."[39] The *okupas*, on the other hand, take the 15-M slogan "No one represents us" to its radical end and completely reject representational politics. They are post-anarchists who believe that true political, social, and economic

change is not possible through the mediation of the state form. As a result, while the goals are the same ("We want to change how people think and then we want to change the way in which we live together"), the means are different.[40] The *indignados* seek to reform the State whereas the *okupas* look to foment change outside of institutions.

For Spanish politicians, the less threatening protesters are the *indignados* because they are reformists and not anarchists. It behooves the politicians to stir up controversy and create the illusion that even the *indignados* do not get along with the *okupas*. However, the reality is that the *indignados* and the *okupas* have agreed on a strategy of alliance. Unlike rigid political ideologies that uncompromisingly stick to a single stance, their alliance sees its form of struggle as having many centers and not just one.

Politically motivated *okupas* do matter. Through squatted social centers, they offer a social safety net that the Spanish government is struggling to provide. Theirs will not be a failed project like that of the hippies because the *okupas*, unlike the hippies, do not want to disengage from society and live in a utopian commune in the hills, but, rather, desire to work with neighborhood associations to improve quality of life in the city. In a strategy of alliance that permits reformist and anarchist approaches to social transformation, the *okupas* work with the *indignados* to improve social solidarity. Bringing people together in the public sphere to talk about their frustrations as well as their joys without any ulterior financial motive is the beginnings of living a political life.

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Chapter Two

Okupación: Just Crime or Justifiable Protest?

The Spanish Constitution of 1978 recognizes that every Spaniard has the right to private property.[1] However, it also stipulates that every Spaniard has the right to decent and adequate housing and mandates that public entities ranging from the Spanish State to city councils regulate real estate practices to avoid speculation.[2] Despite the fact that property speculation is clearly unconstitutional, it has been one of the primary motors of the Spanish economy since the mid-1980s. It is against this property speculation that *okupas* protest. In response to their protest, their actions have been criminalized.

It is nothing new that the principal beneficiaries of urban development plans are banks and construction companies. Francisco Franco's push for modernization in the 1950s and '60s made many bankers, businessmen, and politicians very wealthy. However, at the same time that Spain was building up its coastline to attract tourists, it also passed a law in 1964 to protect renters from being easily evicted from their housing. This law gave renters the right to indefinitely extend their rental contracts and to pass this right on to their relatives.[3] This protection changed in 1985 when the Socialists passed the Boyer Decree, which eliminated the indefinite rental contracts.[4] The Boyer Decree opened the door to other laws that would allow unlimited increases in rent and an accelerated eviction process.[5] These changes in the legal framework converted housing, previously a socially protected right, into merely a product that could potentially generate great wealth.

Since the death of Franco in 1975, the connection between banks, construction companies, and politicians not only continued, but deepened and tightened due to the strategy of State-assisted capitalism in the form of public-private relationships, an example of which is the *cajas de ahorros* [savings banks]. When determining whether to deposit money in regular

banks or in *cajas de ahorros*, the deciding issue for many Spaniards is the fact that *cajas de ahorros* are not-for-profit institutions. Eighty percent of the money that *cajas de ahorros* generate is not paid out to stockholders but, rather, is used to make new investments. The remaining 20 percent is legally required to fund social projects.[6] As a result, many Spaniards choose *cajas de ahorros* over regular banks because they feel that they are being socially responsible citizens. This positive feature attracted enough account holders to eventually enable *cajas de ahorros* to loan even more money than regular banks during the period 2000 to 2010.

The staggering wealth that is generated by savings banks comes principally from the buying and selling of buildings and land. The decisions over where, with whom, how, and how much to spend are not dictated by stockholders, but by a board of directors composed of twenty-one members, one of whom is always a member of the city council. Urban plans, funded by savings banks and contracted out to construction companies that also have representation on the board or companies owned by the savings bank, produce huge profits not only for these companies but also for the city councils by way of the value-added tax on the construction of new housing (*Impuesto sobre el Valor Añadido*), the tax on the sale and purchase of a home (*Impuesto sobre Transmisiones Patrimoniales*), and the sale of public land and buildings. The political and economic interests of city councils and private companies converge on the savings bank board of directors. Savings banks are also allowed to contribute to political parties and campaigns. It is not difficult to imagine how deep these connections run.

The largest savings bank in Catalonia is called La Caixa (Catalan for “caja”). La Caixa played a major role in converting Barcelona into a global city able to attract capital and tourists. The oft-mentioned “Barcelona Model” of urbanization was made possible, in large part, by La Caixa, since its funds were used to buy real estate companies like Inmobiliaria Colonial and stakes in public-private construction companies like FOCIVESA, which carried out the urban plans of the City Council. Ironically, an institution whose principal mission is to contribute to the public good actually worked to its detriment. Instead of spreading goodwill and fomenting social well-being, La Caixa displaced thousands of working-class Barcelonans in order to make the city beautiful for upper-class citizens, foreign investors, and tourists. Graffiti in the Escocesa Art Factory

denounces the “social work” of La Caixa as an example of “cinismo urbanístico” [urban cynicism] (see Figure 2.1). Related complaints are the following graffiti and sticker art I found in the Raval neighborhood during the summer of 2009: “La cultura de crear cultura” [The culture of creating culture], “Gente presa mercado libre” [Imprisoned people free market], and “No dejes que el egoísmo urbanístico lo haga por ti” [Don’t let urban egotism do it for you.] They reflect the mounting frustration with a consumption-based strategy of urban growth and design that values financial returns over social ones. The “Barcelona Model” of urbanization depends on culture to produce monopoly rents and, hence, falls prey to a “culture of creating culture” at the expense of creating much-needed social programs. Investments in built environment and culture are forms of “urban egotism” that do not take into account how rising housing costs coupled with low-paying jobs and high unemployment are affecting the daily life patterns of the middle and lower classes, immigrants, and young people.

Figure 2.1. Graffiti at Escocesa Art Factory. Stephen Luis Vilaseca (2009).

Eight people from a pool of those with the most money deposited in savings banks are represented on their boards of directors. One upper-class citizen who used his wealth to secure a position on La Caixa's board of directors was Javier Godó Muntañola, the Count of Godó. He is also owner of *La Vanguardia*, Barcelona's second highest circulating newspaper in 2006–2007.[7] According to the Asociación para la Investigación de Medios de Comunicación [The Association for Media Research], it is the preferred newspaper of the Catalonian upper-class and executives. By being on its board of directors along with the Barcelona City Council, the Barcelona Chamber of Commerce, the National Department of Commerce (Fomento de Trabajo), and trade unions, Godó Muntañola was not only able to shape policy, but also public opinion in support of that policy. In fact, the Count of Godó utilized his newspaper to champion the restricting of several uses of public space in 2005 that favored the wealthy at the expense of the poor.

Politically motivated squatters are the most visible group to denounce Barcelona's model of urban planning based on the practice of property speculation in which real estate developers, construction companies, banks, savings banks, and city councils across Spain collude in order to make huge sums of money that rarely get reinvested to construct desperately needed, low income, rent-protected housing. In order to safeguard a system in which property rights require more defense than the social function of housing, politicians in 1995 passed a new penal code that criminalized squatting. Even though politicians describe *okupación* as a social phenomenon and not a political one, the elimination of squatted social centers reduces the number of meeting spaces for radical political movements. As a result, the criminalization of squatting protects both economic and political interests.

Before squatting became a crime in 1995, disputes between private property owners and *okupas* were civil law cases. The constant complaint of property owners was that the time between the initial filing of the grievance and the eviction of the *okupas* was long, sometimes years. Evictions are produced more quickly in the criminal courts. With reference to the laws' treatment of the squatting of public property versus the squatting of private property, the police are currently able to evict *okupas* from public property without a court order, or in cases when the *okupas* demand a court order, the administration is able to obtain one within forty-eight hours.[8] Regarding private property, the police are able to evict without a court order only during the first twenty-four hours and with the following two conditions: 1) the property owner must be able to verify with all the proper documentation that he/she is the legal owner; and 2) witnesses must be able to testify that the *okupas* have been in the property for less than twenty-four hours.[9] This last stipulation is referred to colloquially as the *ley de morada* [the law of domicile]. According to the Sentencia del Tribunal Supremo [Supreme Court Ruling] from May 29, 1992, freedom and intimacy within a home does not stem from property right but from personhood.[10] Therefore, if you can prove that you have been living in a place for more than twenty-four hours, the Spanish Constitution recognizes that place as your home even if you are not the rightful owner and, as a result, prohibits anyone from entering and searching without a court order signed by a judge. After 24 hours, the property owner is required to settle the dispute in the civil law courts or has to charge the *okupas* with the crime of usurpation. For the first

time since the Primo de Rivera dictatorship (1923–1930), squatters can now be charged with this crime, and be fined various sums of money. Article 245.2 of the Ley Orgánica of 1995 states: “El que ocupare, sin autorización debida, un inmueble, vivienda o edificio ajenos que no constituyan morada, o se mantuviere en ellos contra la voluntad de su titular, será castigado con la pena de multa de tres a seis meses” [Anyone who occupies, without due authorization, real estate, housing or a building that are not presently serving as living quarters, or stays in them against the will of the holder, will be punished with a daily fine lasting between three to six months.][11] With a stroke of the pen, squatting was instantly transformed from a noncriminal act to a crime. Squatters, who previously could only be sued, were converted into criminals who might face not just fines but jail time for their actions, specifically between a three- to six-month fine of between two to four hundred euros per day, based on the judge’s discretion (Article 50.4), and for every two daily fines left unpaid, a sentence of one day of jail time or community service (Article 53). For example, if a squatter were punished with a three-month fine and were unable to pay, he or she would be condemned to either spend forty-five days in jail or an equal amount of time doing community service.

From the perspective of the *okupas*, however, this crime, that is, the act of “occupying” or moving into an abandoned space owned by someone else without the person’s permission, has always been a protest. Always a political, anti-capitalist action, it is now, as a crime, an act of civil disobedience. The battles over whether *okupación* is just or unjust (justifiable protest or just crime) are waged in a war of words between, on the one hand, politicians, real estate developers, construction companies, regular and savings banks, and on the other hand, *okupas* and those who sympathize with them. The punishment, classified in the penal code as “less serious” in Article 33.3, is relatively mild and thus might seem to be inadequate deterrence. However, of interest to the politicians who created the 1995 law was neither the punishment nor the speed of the process, but semantics. Having legally empowered themselves and others to call politically motivated squatters “criminals,” the legislators moved the true trial against *okupación* out of the courtroom and into the realm of the media and public opinion.

The criminal persecution of squatting, as sociologist Martínez López maintains, is part of a national policy against radical movements.[12] However, specific political interests in Barcelona made the context in Catalonia unique. After the elections of 2007, the conflictive and partisan political climate became even more divisive. A coalition of three ruling parties—the Socialist Party (PSC), the Esquerra Republicana de Catalunya (ERC), and the Iniciativa per Catalunya Verds-Esquerra Unida i Alternativa (ICV-EUiA)—was pitted against two opposition parties—the Partido Popular (PP) and the Convergència i Unió (CiU). The ruling parties, led by the PSC, were collectively known as the Tripartite. Most Catalonians favored the expansion of Catalonia's administrative autonomy, via the Statute of Autonomy of Catalonia; the main opposition party, the PP, did not. As a way of sidestepping its unpopular position on regional politics, and thus hopefully finding a way of appealing to the Catalan electorate, the Partido Popular (PP) sought to exploit the real and perceived deterioration of public safety, blaming the decline on the *okupas*, and accusing the Tripartite of enabling the *okupa* phenomenon. The PP allied itself with the CiU, a Catalan nationalist party, as they shared a socially conservative worldview. The political strategy of both the PP and the CiU was to emphasize the socialist-led Tripartite's inability to manage the insecurity, incivility, and lack of public order in Barcelona. Among socially marginalized groups like prostitutes, the poor, immigrants, skateboarders, and graffiti artists, the *okupas* were targeted as the principal reason for the increase in violence and incivility on the streets of Barcelona, known as the squatter capital of Europe. There have been cases of violent evictions in which *okupas* respond aggressively to a forceful police attack, like the Cine Princesa in 1996, and instances of premeditated sabotage of public property in response to eviction notices like La Fera in 2006. So the politicians' argument that *okupas* are violent, further fueling the negative public opinion, is not completely unfounded. However, as Martínez López points out, "Las acciones habitualmente denominadas 'violentas' (sabotajes y disturbios) no constituyen un alto porcentaje dentro del repertorio total del movimiento" [The actions habitually called "violent" (sabotages and disturbances) do not constitute a high percentage within the movement's total repertoire].[13] The majority of *okupas* in squatted social centers view

squatting as a nonviolent way to protest property speculation and the lack of autonomous spaces in the city.

Nonetheless, public opinion is, for the most part, against *okupas*. People have bought in to the negative portrayal. In Spain, where the percentage of homes that are owned and not rented is the highest in the world (89.1 percent) and where owning an apartment other than the one in which one lives is not exceptional, the Spanish public tends to identify more with property owners than with *okupas*.[14] According to Ángel López García-Molins, professor of language theory at the University of Valencia, "El ciudadano teme que ese parásito indeseado que entra en las viviendas sin ser invitado podría elegir un día un piso suyo" [Citizens fear that this undesired parasite that enters homes without being invited could one day choose his or her very own apartment].[15] The threat is perceived to be very real. A good strategy for those personally profiting from real estate speculation is to cultivate this public fear of *okupas*. In reality, occupying a home in which people currently live, from the point of view of political squatting—*la okupación política*—does not make any sense, because one of the points of *okupación política* is to denounce the abandonment of property for real estate speculation. If the property is not abandoned, the *okupas* have nothing to condemn.

NEWSPAPERS

In a war of words, a powerful ally is a newspaper. *La Vanguardia* has become the principal venue through which to perpetuate the perceived threat to private property by *okupas* because its owner, Count Godó, and his fellow La Caixa board members—all of the Catalonian upper class—have a financial interest in using the newspaper to sway public opinion against the *okupas*. Albert Gimeno is the chief editor of the *Vivir* section of *La Vanguardia*, which is devoted to human interest stories. Any coverage that *La Vanguardia* dedicates to the *okupas* is relegated to his section of the newspaper, namely, the *Vivir* insert. The editorial decision to place all references to *okupas* in a part of the newspaper devoted to entertainment news and popular culture is not an innocent one. It is a way of framing the *okupa* movement as a social phenomenon and not a political one. Gimeno uses his *Vivir* section as a platform from which to "educate" the citizens of

Barcelona that the type of public space that appeals to the upper-class tourist and investor is an orderly, safe, privatized public space, and that among the uncivil members of society who threaten this type of public space are beggars, prostitutes, skateboarders, urban artists, and *okupas.*

In order to regain control of public space, the Tripartite proposed a set of laws known as the Laws of Communal Living. These new laws would criminalize, among other things, graffiti and urban art, make it illegal to put posters in public spaces, prohibit the practice of acrobatics and skateboarding in public space, and forbid sleeping in public space, day or night. Leading up to the vote to pass the Laws of Communal Living on December 23, 2005, several articles were published in the *Vivir* section in support of the proposal. Among them was a four-page spread on July 10, 2005, about "los okupas incívicos" or the uncivil *okupas*.[16] This report documents the infiltration of the *okupa* movement by individuals that "make incivility their flag" and "don't supply any value added to the alternative society to which they say they aspire."[17] According to one of the headlines, these new, uncivil *okupas* (many of whom are foreigners participating in *ocupa* tourism), do not respect the neighborhood or the neighbors and "se drogan, mean y cagan en los portales" [take drugs, pee and defecate in building entrances].[18] Neighbors complain not only of the filth but also of the loud *okupa* parties.

One incident in particular, an illegal *okupa* party in Sant Pere Més Baix on February 4, 2006, supplied the PP and the CiU with the building blocks to begin constructing their political critique of the Socialists. The two irrefutable facts of the case are that a party occurred at the Anarko Penya Cultural on Sant Pere Més Baix Street in the La Ribera neighborhood of Ciutat Vella and that a policeman of the Guardia Urbana, while patrolling the street in front of the building, received a blow to the head that caused him to go into a coma. The circumstances leading up to and immediately following the assault are not as clear. The neighbors had complained several times about the loud parties that took place almost every weekend at the Anarko, and the partygoers' use of the street as a public bathroom. After representatives of the district received word from the neighbors that an especially big party was being planned, four policemen of the Guardia Urbana were sent to monitor the situation. According to the official version, two young Chilean immigrants threw rocks at the policemen after being

denied entry into the party by the party-organizers. The building was too full and it would have been unsafe to admit more people. A riot ensued.

This case is steeped in violence, hypocrisy, and disrespect for community. However, the violence runs deeper and begins before the brutal blow to the policeman. The neighborhood of Sant Pere in the historic center of Barcelona is slowly being gentrified. Since the late 1990s, the PERIs (Pla Especial de la Reforma Interior or Special Interior Reform Plan) of Ciutat Vella had demolished many buildings in the Sant Pere neighborhood and had displaced thousands of neighbors.[19] Several buildings between Metges Street, Sant Pere Més Baix Street, Carders Street, and Jaume Giralt Street were originally razed in 1999 to create a "green" space. After the initial bulldozing, work at the site was halted, and for weeks, all that marked the territory was a hole filled with rubble and debris. The neighbors referred to the hole as "*el forat de la vergonya*" or "the hole of shame." Adding insult to injury, the City Council amended the PERI and re-categorized the land as buildable so that, instead of a "green" space, they would be able to build a parking lot. This spurred the neighborhood, along with many *okupas*, to resist the City Council's plan by converting the "forat de la vergonya" into a community garden and park.

During the resistance, a new squatted social center, the Anarko Penya Cultural, opened in the abandoned space of 55 Sant Pere Més Baix Street. According to counterinformation sources such as the Advisory Service for Squatters,[20] Presos 4 Febrero,[21] and the Represión Barcelona blog,[22] the Anarko Penya Cultural was an illegal discotheque masquerading as a squatted social center with no ties to the *okupas* involved in the "forat de la vergonya" project. The squatted social center may have begun with good intentions, but had fallen to the control of a few who used it to throw huge moneymaking raves and to sell drugs.

Chief editor of the *Vivir* section of *La Vanguardia* Gimeno's coverage of the Sant Pere case equates the whole *okupa* movement with *costrismo*. For Gimeno, *okupas* are drug addicts and drug dealers who squat buildings in order to convert them into illegal discotheques. The photos of the interior of the Anarko Penya Cultural document the excesses and the decadence of *okupa* parties. The floor is cluttered with beer bottles and beer cans, and the walls are covered with graffiti.[23] Gimeno wants the general public to believe that what *okupas* leave behind is nothing more than trash and destruction.

During the Plenary Meeting discussion of February 24, 2006, the PP and the CiU argued that the severe injury that the policeman suffered during the illegal *okupa* party obligated the City Council to reflect upon the violence and why it happened. The CiU proposed that a special commission be created to investigate the *okupa* phenomenon, and the PP submitted an anti-*okupa* plan outlining measures on how to rid Barcelona of *okupas*.[24] The political opposition's use of the Sant Pere case to paint all *okupas* as violent, hypocritical, and disrespectful is very mischievous at best and immoral at worst, for the same accusation could be waged against the City Council. The destruction caused by urban planning and the lip service paid to the importance of public participation were certainly very disappointing for the neighbors of Sant Pere. The "Forat de la Vergonya" back story, so conveniently absent in the Plenary Meeting discussion and in the media, but so obviously pertinent to the debate, is replaced with demagoguery on the part of the PP. Their objective is to make the term *okupa* synonymous with violence, and to stress the Socialists' tolerance of such groups.

Feeling defensive with regard to its ability to maintain public order, the Tripartite sought to shift the blame after another violent incident in the Gràcia neighborhood. On June 28, 2006, some *okupas* barricaded the entrance to La Fera, the house they had squatted on Santa Àgata Street, in order to protest an eviction notice. They smashed traffic lights, broke windows, and caused a power outage that left 1,500 families in the neighborhood without power for two hours.[25] Because the Mossos d'Esquadra, the regional police force, took forty-five minutes to respond to the neighbors' calls, and were unable to locate or detain any of the *okupas*, the damages caused to public property went unpunished.[26] Before the PP had time to point its finger at the ruling parties, socialist Mayor Joan Clos faulted Montserrat Tura, Minister of Home Affairs of the Generalitat of Catalonia and director of the Mossos d'Esquadra, for the embarrassing display of governmental ineffectiveness. According to Clos, the onus did not fall on the City Council, nor by extension on the Tripartite, but on the Department of Home Affairs.

The topic of violence and *okupas* reached its boiling point with the cancellation of the European Summit of Housing Ministers that was to be held in Barcelona on the 16th and 17th of October, 2006. The summit was called off because of concerns over Barcelona's ability to maintain security

and public order in the event of possible violent protests by the *okupas*. Shocked and scandalized, the PP and the CiU convened an extraordinary Plenary Session on October 23, 2006, in order to discuss the postponement and the "irreparable and grave damage to the international prestige and image of the city."[27] The PP stated that Barcelona suffered from three problems: insecurity, incivility, and public order. The PP accused the PSC of canceling the Summit during an election campaign for two reasons: 1) because they did not want to suffer the embarrassment of not being able to control violence in the streets; and 2) because they did not want to talk about housing. The ERC charged the PP and the CiU of opportunism when it placed the blame for terminating the Summit with the City Council because they knew that the Spanish State is the only institution with the power to withdraw. The ICV-EUiA chastised the PP and the CiU for convening the special session, calling the move "electoral vaudeville," and argued that the real fault lay with the Spanish State, for the City Council was against the postponement and did not agree that there were security issues.

No matter how one spun the cancellation of the European Summit of Housing Ministers, the perception was that *okupas* were to be feared, and that the ruling parties were unable to control them. One group that felt that the public sector was not doing enough to protect them was property owners of unoccupied housing. The private sector has responded by creating new products. In May 2006, the Swiss insurance company Winterthur sold the first anti-*okupa* policy specifically designed to protect owners of unoccupied housing from the legal costs associated with evicting *okupas*. To insure a property of approximately 100 square meters in Madrid or Barcelona, the annual premium is between 90 and 100 euros.[28] Collection agencies are also capitalizing on the *okupa* phenomenon. For 4000 euros, they will "clean" a property of *okupas* "in a little less than two weeks."[29] Despite the questionable methods used to threaten the *okupas*, this service is quite appealing because obtaining an eviction order through legal channels may take months to years. Another method some owners have used is to simply hire bullies armed with metal bars to violently threaten the *okupas*.[30]

Political scientist Javier Alcalde Villacampa has observed that the mass media is attracted to exceptional events, especially violent ones that disrupt

public order.[31] Confrontations between the police and the *okupas* have more spectacular appeal than the day-to-day life of a squatted social center. Ivan, an *okupa* from Sants, complains: “Construimos positivamente los 365 días del año y nos conocen por un desalojo violento al defendernos de la policía” [We do positive things 365 days of the year and they know us for a violent eviction on having defended ourselves from the police].[32] The media only talks about the *okupas* when there are brutal evictions, giving the illusion that a defining characteristic of all *okupas* is violence. A sympathizer of the *okupas* points out: “Nunca se habla de la violencia que comportan las injusticias de nuestra sociedad; en cambio, la quema de unos contenedores o los destrozos en un banco siempre son noticia” [The violence that the injustices of our society endure is never talked about; on the other hand, the burning of a few garbage containers or the damage to a bench are always news].[33] There is also a tendency on the part of politicians as well as the media to blame the *okupas* for the ills of Spanish society. During a march to protest the criminalization of the *okupas*, a biting poster with an image of the World Trade Center Twin Towers in flames and the phrase “Minister of Home Affairs: It was the *okupas*,” parodies the absurd extremes to which politicians and the media go to use the *okupas* as political scapegoats.[34]

El País seems to offer more balanced coverage of the *okupas*. David Casals reported the neighbors’ reactions to the violence and destruction caused by the *okupas* of La Fera in Gràcia on June 28, 2006, with the following headline: “Los vecinos de Gràcia, divididos sobre su apoyo al colectivo” [The neighbors of Gràcia, divided over their support for the collective]. In the article, he quoted Toni Ramón, the vice president of the Neighborhood Association of la Vila de Gràcia:

> En el distrito ‘conviven dos sensibilidades sobre el colectivo okupa’ […] ‘Gràcia es un barrio que se está transformando brutalmente: deja de ser un barrio popular’ y se convierte en una zona ‘de diseño y *fashioned*’ […] Genera simpatías hacia los okupas, porque son vistos como los grandes opositores contra la especulación urbanística. Ramón también añadió que en la asociación de vecinos las quejas sobre los okupas son constantes.[35]
>
> [In the district “two sensibilities coexist about the *okupa* collective” […] “Gràcia is a neighborhood that is being brutally transformed: it is ceasing to be a popular neighborhood” and becoming a zone “of design and fashion” […] It generates sympathy for the *okupas*, because they are seen as the big opponents of urban speculation. Ramon also added that in the neighborhood association the complaints about the okupas are constant.]

Casals and *El País* attempt to give both sides of the story. *La Vanguardia*'s coverage of the neighbors' reactions is quite different. According to its interviews, the opinion that the *okupas* are a legitimate social movement "is not an opinion that is shared very much on Santa Àgata Street nor en Torrent de l'Olla."[36] There is no mention anywhere in the article of property speculation. Ester, a neighbor, is quoted in the *La Vanguardia* as stating that "we saw it coming" and "we all feared it" whereas in *El País* she is reported saying "they were peaceful until Wednesday, I haven't had any problem, although they did make a lot of noise."[37]

In addition to sensationalizing the relatively infrequent cases of violence, another strategy implemented by *La Vanguardia* has been to conflate politically motivated squatting with other forms of squatting, namely, housebreaking, deprivation-based squatting, and squatting as an alternative housing strategy. For example, on January 18, 2007, *La Vanguardia* discovered a case involving the alleged squatting of a private residence. According to Carles Veiret, he was unable to enter his own home one day because four Chilean immigrants had allegedly squatted it and changed the locks. For the following two weeks, *La Vanguardia* featured and exploited this story in their *Vivir* magazine insert in order to launch a misinformation campaign against the politically motivated *okupas* and in favor of property owners. Vicente Escolar Bautista argues in "La verdad sobre el caso Veiret —*La Vanguardia*" [The Truth About the Veiret Case—*La Vanguardia*] that the newspaper preyed on small property owners' feelings of defenselessness against the *okupas* in order to maintain public support for the speculative practices of "big" property owners or huge real estate companies. By erroneously equating "small" property owners who simply make personal use of their homes (they may have a second home that stays empty during the majority of the year) with "big" property owners like Inmobiliaria Colonial, who make huge amounts of money from keeping houses empty until the property value increases, *La Vanguardia* was able to manipulate public opinion in favor of policies that benefit those big companies. In fact, the newspaper argued that empty apartments are prevented from being put on the market, not, in large part, by the speculative practices of "big" property owners, but by the *okupas* who refuse to leave once they squat. By conflating housebreakers (in this case, four Chilean immigrants who squatted due to poverty) with politically motivated squatters, that is, by

describing the Chileans as *okupas* with a "k," the newspaper was able to use a case that had nothing to do with political squatters to condemn, precisely, political squatting, which is more threatening to real estate companies.

Politicians are very aware that their words are repeated the next day in the press. The meetings, therefore, are not only a venue in which to debate and vote on policy, but also a vehicle through which to influence public opinion. In other words, political content produces media content. Likewise, investigative reporting by radio, television, print, and online journalists impels the topics discussed during the Plenary Meetings. Oftentimes politicians discover in what activities their own administration is engaging, not through internal reports, but through outside sources. As a result, media content, too, has the power to produce political content.

The Valldonzella case is one that was brought to not only the public's attention but also to the City Council members' attention by the radio station *Cadena Ser* on April 21, 2006. According to this radio station, Fomento de Ciutat Vella, S.A. (FOCIVESA), a mixed, public-private company, 60 percent of which is owned by the City Council and 40 percent of which is privately owned, offered public money and public housing to two *ocupa* families so that they would leave a building that they had been squatting at 12 Valldonzella Street in the Raval neighborhood. On April 5, the Barcelona City Council had raffled 184 rent-protected apartments among 11,029 applicants.[38] In other words, only 1.7 percent of those who had applied for public housing received it. While the remaining 10,845 law-abiding Barcelonans who had been denied accessible housing would have to wait for the next draw, two families who engaged in illegal behavior were awarded the coveted prize of rent-protected living space. This sparked a heated debate in the Plenary Meeting one week after the radio airing of the story. Outraged that the City Council would reward illegal behavior, the opposition leaders of the Partido Popular (PP), Alberto Fernández Díaz, and the Convergencia i Unió (CiU), Xavier Trias, asked for the resignation of those who were responsible for FOCIVESA, namely, Xavier Casas, first deputy mayor, and Carles Martí, city councilor of Ciutat Vella, and demanded that a commission be created to investigate the case.

There was no mention in the discussions in the Plenary Meeting or in the print media that the building in question, Valldonzella 12, had been expropriated by the City of Barcelona in 2001 and formed part of an

urbanization plan, Pla Especial de la Reforma Interior (PERI) del Raval that would demolish it. In its place was to be built a new library for the Communication Sciences Department of the Ramon Llull University. There was also no mention that this building was one of the last examples of industrial architecture in the neighborhood. The lone, tall chimney of this old factory stood proudly as a reminder that the Raval had historically been a working class neighborhood. Also absent from the discourse was the fact that the *okupas* of Valldonzella 12 had presented an alternate urban project. The *okupas* argued that the City Council, rather than destroy part of the historic and industrial patrimony of the Raval, should allow the neighborhood to convert the factory into a social center with a space for cultural and artistic production, an auditorium, and a space for children. The City Council rejected the proposal. FOCIVESA sent eviction notices pressuring the *okupas* to abandon the building. However, the *okupas* threatened to sue the administration because they found it highly irregular that a company had the power to evict without the backing of a judge. Presumably to avoid months and possibly years of paperwork that an eviction through the civil court system would require, FOCIVESA agreed to negotiate a deal with the *okupas*. The main objective of the assembly of neighbors of Valldonzella 12 was to secure housing for a particularly vulnerable *ocupa* family that would have ended up homeless. The bargaining resulted in not one, but two public homes and 3,000 euros for the remaining *okupas* who were not granted housing. As stated in a press release, the assembly of neighbors of Valldonzella 12 accepted the rent-controlled housing for the family but rejected the money offered by the City Council through FOCIVESA because they felt the money was dirty: "L'atorgament arbitrària de pisos per raons, exclusivament polítiques i/o econòmiques, evidencien la pràctica mafiosa d'aquesta administración pública, que actua en funció d'interessos polítics, econòmics i privats" [The arbitrary granting of flats for purely political and/or economic reasons, reveals the mafia-like practice of the Public Administration, which acts according to political, economic and private interests].[39] The critique was that FOCIVESA and the City Council wanted to buy silence. The proof, according to a spokesperson for the *okupas*, stemmed from the fact that "Hay gente en el barrio que lleva años pidiendo un piso, y aquí han dado dos en siete meses. Está claro que querían tapar bocas" [There are people in

the neighborhood that have been asking for a rent-controlled apartment for years, and here they have given two in seven months. It's obvious that they wanted to shut people up].[40]

Instead of fanning the flames of popular indignation against a form of urbanization that forces low- and middle-class neighbors to abandon the city center, the opposition parties PP and CiU exacerbate negative public opinion against the *okupas*. Their strategy is to accuse the ruling Tripartite PSC, ERC, ICV-EUiA of giving the *okupas* preferential treatment. In this way, the PP and CiU paint the Socialists as facilitating *okupación* and as being politically responsible. The *okupa* phenomenon becomes a political wedge with which to divide the public. As a result, because the word *okupa* with a "k" is more inflammatory than *ocupa*, it is in the interest of the PP and the media not to distinguish between the different forms of squatting and, in fact, to conflate the varieties into the one word *okupas*.

JUDGES

In answer to the question of what should be done about the *okupas*, the PP and the CiU argue that they need to be evicted and penalized. For the PP and the CiU, and according to the law, squatting is always a crime. The 1995 Penal Code criminalizes both violent (housebreaking) and non-violent squatting. However, there are those who, within "the system," defend nonviolent squatting. Among the most prominent advocates are judges. The Barcelona High Court distinguishes between different types of squatters. Since the passage of the new penal code, squatters' fates have been subjected to judicial interpretation. In 1998, two judges of the Girona High Court, Fátima Ramírez and Hernán Hormazabal, pronounced that squatters could not be charged with the crime of usurpation in cases in which the squatted houses in question had been abandoned for a long time prior to occupation.[41] According to these judges, the correct forum in which to resolve such conflicts was the civil court system and not the criminal one. In 2000, judge Montserrat Comas agreed that Article 245.2 of the Penal Code was not applicable when the squatted property had been abandoned for years and had not been maintained. In such cases, the property owner had not been denied his or her right to reside in the property because, for all intents and purposes, the building was in ruins. In her judgment, she

explained: “Una mínima diligencia de conservación y preservación es exigible que haya sido demostrada por quien exige del Estado el ejercicio de su máxima potestad, que no es otra que la punitiva” [It’s required that a minimum diligence of conservation and preservation be demonstrated by those who demand of the State the exercise of its maximum legal authority, which is none other than the punitive one].[42] Despite the precedent set by the previous three judges, the Terrasa Criminal Court Number 2 did not take into consideration the physical state of the property, and in 2000, for the first time in Catalonia, seventeen *okupas* were found guilty of the crime of usurpation. Each one was sentenced to pay a fine of 40,000 pesetas, approximately 300 U.S. dollars.[43] This verdict, however, was exceptional. In 2002, the Barcelona Criminal Court Number 3 ruled in favor of five *okupas*, and based its decision on the fact that the squatted building at 100 Zaragoza Street in the Sant Gervasi district had been abandoned for ten years and was in ruins.[44] This Court also questioned the constitutionality of the crime of usurpation, and condemned the use of the criminal court system instead of the civil one to decide squatting cases. The year 2002 was also the year of the highly publicized Can Masdeu controversy. Even though Judge Josep María Miquel allowed ten *okupas* to be tried, he also questioned the use of the criminal court system: “Ubicar la acción de los acusados en el Código Penal supondría criminalizar la oposición ideológica al sistema económico que se encuentra tras la ocupación, chocando frontalmente con el pluralismo político” [To locate the action of the accused in the Penal Code would suppose criminalizing the ideological opposition to the economic system that is behind the occupation, hitting squarely against political pluralism].[45] The judge recognized that the impetus for squatting Can Masdeu was to critique capitalism. He argued that the criminalization of *okupación* that is ideological in nature criminalizes political pluralism and jeopardizes democracy. The right to be able to ideologically oppose capitalism should be at the core of a democratic society. In a later sentencing that year, the High Court of Barcelona denied the authorization to evict the *okupas* from Can Masdeu, and stated that “España no sólo es un Estado de Derecho, sino también un Estado democrático, y sobre todo, es y debe ser un Estado social” [Spain not only is a Constitutional State, but also a democratic State, and above all, is and

must be a social State].[46] This Court brings up the important point that laws may not always sufficiently respond to social reality.

DIVISIONS WITHIN THE TRIPARTITE

Imma Mayol, third deputy mayor of the Barcelona City Council and member of ICV, has publicly agreed with the judges. When asked on January 18, 2007 by radio talk-show host Antoni Bassas on *Catalunya Radio* if there are good *okupas* and bad *okupas*, she replied: “Puede que sí. Es la manera más simple que tengo de contestar a su pregunta” [Possibly, yes. It is the simplest way that I have of answering your question].[47] For Mayol, the good *okupa* is a socially conscious, politically radical pacifist/activist/artist who squats buildings that have been abandoned for years in order to denounce urban speculation. The bad *okupa* is a violent, opportunistic usurper with no political agenda who squats property simply for a place to live. Although she does not propose to legalize squatting, she does want to decriminalize it, and believes that disputes between property owners and squatters should be resolved using the civil court system. She has also declared on TV3 that she is “anti-system.”

The multi-party ruling coalition in Barcelona complicates the crime versus justifiable protest divide. Differing reactions to a highly publicized eviction at the end of 2006 in the Poblenou neighborhood highlighted the Tripartite’s love-hate relationship with *okupación*. A group of circus artists known as the Makabra collective was evicted on November 20, 2006, from an old factory that they had been squatting for six years on 46 Tànger Street in Poblenou. At the eviction, among the many protest signs denouncing the action was “Tus hijos serán artistas okupas” [Your children will be artist squatters].[48] The message was mainly directed toward the Mossos who were dislodging the squatters, but also toward any and all who would see the posters in the media coverage including the City Council members. This “threat” that sons and daughters born into “the system” will rebel against it is by no means empty or unrealistic. Several politically motivated squatters are children of politicians. The poster raised the issue of how parental love affects policy, most specifically, that concerning squatting. It was a last attempt to stop the eviction by appealing to parents’ compassion. One example of how family involvement influenced political statements was

detailed a few weeks earlier on September 3, 2006, in an article in the newspaper *El Mundo.* It revealed that the son of Joan Clos, ex-mayor and then Minister of Industry, Tourism and Commerce, was an active member of the *okupa* movement in Barcelona and famous for his radical ideology.[49] This would provide a possible explanation for Clos's contradictory stances with regard to squatting during his mandate as mayor. There were times when he would defend the *okupas*. For example, in 2001, when Mariano Rajoy, Minister of Home Affairs, accused some *okupas* of having ties with ETA, the Basque terrorist group, Clos requested that the Spanish State not jump to "unjust conclusions" and criminalize the whole movement.[50] However, there were times when he would attack the *okupas*. In 2002, he and the City Council attempted to evict squatters from Can Masdeu, an agrarian squat on the outskirts of Barcelona. During the highly publicized resistance to the eviction, the *okupas* of Can Masdeu brought attention to Mayor Clos's contradictory messages with regard to squatting by acting out a scene in front of the City Council building in the plaza Sant Jaume. In the scene, Clos had two heads that represented his two dueling discourses.[51] The *okupas* of Can Masdeu were able to block the eviction.

The acrobat squatters of Makabra did not have such luck. However, after Makabra's eviction from 46 Tànger, the collective squatted the Can Ricart factory also in Poblenou just eight days later on November 28. The circus artists joined the neighborhood fight against the 22@ Plan, the City Council's project to convert the industrial neighborhood of Poblenou into Barcelona's new technology district. As Urban Studies critics Libby Porter and Kate Shaw explain, included in the plan was the demolition of Can Ricart, "one of the biggest industrial sites in Poblenou and a key element of both Barcelona and Catalan industrial heritage."[52] The circus artists joined forces with the platform *Salvem Can Ricart* [Save Can Ricart] to take a stand against speculation and the erasure of historic memory.

The headline on the front page of the December 4, 2006, edition of *La Vanguardia* announced "The Taking of Can Ricart Reopens the Debate about the *Okupas*."[53] Underneath the headline were the following three bullet points: 1) The occupation represents a new challenge to the laws and the administration, 2) The judge denies the eviction order upon not seeing any motives for urgency, and 3) The Mossos raise a fence around the old Poblenou factory complex. These bullet points were accompanied by two

photos of the *okupas* in front of the factory. Nowhere on the front page or in the three-page spread dedicated to the *okupación* in the *Vivir* magazine section was there any mention of the 22@ Plan. The one oversight in this carefully orchestrated attempt to make invisible the political demands and critiques of the *okupas* was graffiti that appeared on a wall behind the *okupas* in one of the two pictures on the front page: 22@=Speculation. It was only through an editorial mistake that the *okupas* were allowed to "speak" and escape mediation.

Jordi Pujol, former president of the Generalitat, when asked about the circus artists who squatted Can Ricart, referred to his past efforts to stop squatting: "Hablé con el alcalde de Terrassa y con Clos para ver si desocupábamos todo esto […] Una vez me dijeron que no era tan fácil. Parece ser que dos okupas de Terrassa eran hijas de un diputado socialista" [I spoke with the mayor of Terrassa and with Clos to see if we could get rid of all the squatters […] Once they said to me that it was not so easy. It seems to be that two Terrassa *okupas* were daughters of a socialist deputy].[54] Pujol suggests that squatter children of politicians use their influence to hinder the eviction process.

The Can Ricart occupation ignited passionate reactions from the public. Opinion pieces and editorials in print and online newspapers were flooded with comments. As an example, Federico Jiménez Losantos, an extreme right-wing journalist known for his controversial and defamatory statements (Spain's version of Glenn Beck), wrote in his ironically entitled "Liberal Commentaries" column for *El Mundo* a reaction to the support given to the Can Ricart *okupas* by Miloon Kothari, the United Nations Special Rapporteur on Adequate Housing.[55] Kothari, who had been invited by the Spanish government to analyze the housing market, declared that the Can Ricart *okupas*' critique of the Barcelona City Council's urban planning policies was legitimate. In typical fashion, Losantos begins his commentary with an ad hominem attack. He states with obvious sarcasm that he likes this man with the look of "a Pakistani taxi driver from New York" who has been "sleeping in his clothes for a week."[56] In an attempt to discredit Kothari, he exploits his extremely conservative readers' resentment toward and distrust of immigrants. Losantos paints him as a "typical immigrant," poor and in a low status job. He also capitalizes on the image of the immigrant taxi driver in order to compare the absurdity of asking an

outsider who is not familiar with the streets of a certain city to locate your ultimate destination in the city with the absurdity of asking an outsider (a U.N. advisor) to locate the solution to the Spanish housing crisis. Losantos suggests Kothari feels a "natural" attraction toward the *okupas* of the Makabra collective because there is nothing more "macabre" (a play on the collective's name *La Makabra*, which means macabre) than corruption, and, according to Losantos, the United Nations is rife with corruption. In fact, he states the tattered outfit that Kothari wears is nothing more than a calculated move to fit in with "the criminal urban landscape" of the *okupas*, for, normally, he wears expensive suits like those of his "corrupt" colleague Kofi Annan.[57]

In opposition to Losantos's and *El Mundo*'s socially conservative stance, *El País* printed Josep María Deop's more sympathetic take on the squatting of Can Ricart in the Opinion section of *El País*, in which he argues that it is possible to side with the *okupas* without being an *okupa*, that those who work in the system are not necessarily pitted against *okupas* nor against what *okupas* are fighting for. He believes that the right-wing pundits try to cajole the public into viewing *okupas* as Others, unlike themselves. Arián Crespo Ortiz agrees, and maintains that many editorials describe the *okupas* as the enemies and rogues (*pícaros*) of Spanish society using over-the-top adjectives like "borrachuzos de Xibeca" [the great drunks of Xibeca], "terribles porretas con perro" [terrible pot heads with dogs], and "sanguijuelillas de salon" [little bloodsuckers of high society].

Barcelona's third deputy mayor Imma Mayol's statement that she is "anti-system" also elicited many responses, the majority of which were critical. Many wondered how anti-system Mayol could be when she receives over 18,000 euros a month from the very system she criticizes. *El Mundo* points out this contradiction as well as others in its headline "Contradictions/Demagoguery from Power. The Anti-system Politician that Earns 100,000 euros…And has an official car, dresses in name brands, lives in a penthouse…has an apartment on the Costa Brava and wants to be mayor."[58] Mayol's romantic relationship with a colleague, Joan Saura, also feeds the criticisms. Both Mayol and Saura are members of the ICV (Initiative for Catalonian Greens), the political party made up of ecologists and communists. Saura, the son of a militant anarchist, developed his political beliefs within a political party that celebrates collectivism and

questions private property. In 2006, he was named successor to Montserrat Tura, Minister of Home Affairs of the Generalitat of Catalonia and director of the Mossos d'Esquadra, the Generalitat's principal tool of repression against the *okupas*. Given his communist background, the conservatives doubted Saura's conviction to enforce the law. The liberals, meanwhile, condemned him as a political traitor. Félix de Azúa, in his opinion piece in *El Periódico*, expressed disappointment in Mayol's anti-system remark. He argues that both Mayol and Saura should not confuse ideology with law. Their job is to apply the law even if it goes against their ideology. The spokesman for the *okupas* in Barcelona, Albert Martínez, was quoted as saying that Mayol's anti-system confession was a well-thought-out and calculated "marketing operation to defend Joan Saura from the criticisms that he has received from directing the Mossos d'Esquadra."[59] Losantos weighs in on the debate, writing in his "Liberal Commentaries" column, again with intended sarcasm, that he does not understand everyone's dislike for the Saura-Mayol partnership. He compares Mayol's function within the Catalonian socialist government to José Antonio Girón de Velasco's function within the Franco government. Girón de Velasco, as would have been well known to his Spanish readers, was a leader in the late Franco regime, a radical falangist who, after the dictator's death, formed part of the most radical falangists who did not want to politically reform during the Transition. Girón de Velasco said what Franco did not dare to say. For Losantos, Mayol similarly represents the most radical views of the Catalonian Left, and says what Montilla, the president of the Generalitat, does not dare to admit.[60] Mayor Hereu responded to the backlash that both Mayol and the administration have received for her comment by stating that he believes that it was just a question of poor word choice and that what Mayol was really trying to say was that she is a "nonconformist."

The final eviction of the circus artists from Can Ricart on December 13, 2006, had also inspired other members of the ruling parties to speak out. A few days after Mayol's declarations, second deputy mayor Jordi Portabella (ERC) said on January 23, 2007, that he supported transferring unused spaces to the *okupas* in exchange for a symbolic fee, and Ferrán Julián, councilor of Security, affirmed that he was in favor of dialoguing with the *okupas* despite Hereu's official stance against negotiations.[61] Hereu felt that the *okupas* became inflexible and acquired an attitude that the deal was

already done once they were in the space. The eco-socialists of ICV did not share that opinion, and believed that negotiations should begin right away.

In order to control the damage that these divisions caused to his credibility as an effective leader, Mayor Hereu appeared on January 29, 2007, on *Els Matins* [Morning], a popular morning television news show. He attempted to set the record straight by stating that his administration would not tolerate *okupas*. Simply put, Barcelona, once known as the squatter capital of Europe, "ja no és xauxa" [is no longer paradise] for *okupas*.[62] With the city elections only months away, set for May 2007, Hereu wanted to appear to be a strong leader with a clear vision that appealed to both the left and the right. In order to do that, he carefully crafted a political project that combined law and order, a concern of the right, with social transformation, a value of the left. He promised that his response to the *okupa* phenomenon would be a "strict, demanding and efficient application of the law."[63] His critique of the *okupas* was that they do not follow the rules of the game. "You can have social transformation," explained Hereu during the television show, "while following the rules of the game."[64] The difference between Hereu and the PP, the traditional guardians of law and order, is that Hereu believes that some of the *okupas*' claims are legitimate.[65] For example, the complaint that numerous flats remain uninhabited while masses of people look for housing is a valid one. The Socialists proposed a law in early January of 2007 to expropriate flats that had been uninhabited for more than two years in order to place them on the rental market.[66] The owners of empty housing, however, accused the Socialists of hypocrisy, reminding the government that its public housing sits empty for months, too.[67] Critics of the proposed law questioned whether politicians' summer homes would be the first to be expropriated. They argued that expropriation was squatting by the government, and that such a law would put into question the right to property. The charge was that politicians in favor of the law would be viewed as *okupas*, in effect appropriating people's savings that had been invested in real estate.

Despite criminalization, despite evictions, fines, and jail time, despite denigration, the politically motivated *okupa* way of proceeding has expanded and multiplied. The squatted social center is an intensifier whose concern for free and equal access to urban space is continually being stimulated and magnified in other urban activities like graffiti. According to

the authors of the Laws of Communal Living, graffiti and urban art do not fit with the cosmopolitan image of Barcelona, and are in fact “visually degrading” when they scare off the upper-class tourist or investors, for the type of public space appealing to the upper class is an orderly, safe, privatized public space as area for consumption.[68] Would graffiti and urban art still be considered “visually degrading” if they were temporary, virtual, and did not damage the property in any way? Graffiti Research Lab has developed the technology to tag buildings with lasers that are emitted by mobile projectors. TXTual Healing incorporates the same technology to project speech balloons and/or graphic content onto buildings. Passers-by then send text messages from their cell phones that appear in the speech balloons. In both cases, user-driven technology promotes urban communication. An example from Barcelona is Telenoika, a collective of DJs and VJs who specialize in creating audiovisual urban interventions. Armed with a shopping cart containing two projectors, a generator, a video mixer, and a personal computer, members of Telenoika project videos onto the Barcelonan cityscape in order to denounce certain urban injustices. One injustice that Telenoika has helped to make visible is the Spanish government’s control of television space.[69] Spain is moving from analog television to digital television and with this move, new licenses to operate the channels have to be solicited. Social movements and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) have been denied licenses. Working with the platform “*Okupem les ones*,” Catalan for “Squat the airwaves,” a group that has created a pirate television, Telenoika created an audiovisual attack denouncing the restriction of the public sphere. They went with three projectors and a small sound system to the plaza of the MACBA (Museo de Arte Contemporáneo de Barcelona) and projected a video against the museum’s white façade explaining that digital television equals censorship, and reclaimed the right to not just receive information, but to emit it. Because the projection took place within the spatial context of the MACBA and because of its spectacular, artistic nature, it seemed as though the museum organized the event that lent authority and legitimacy to the performance. The museum was the screen, and, hence, formed part of the content. Telenoika appropriated the museum as sign of authority and manipulated it without drawing attention to the artifice. As a result, the police could not “read” the performance as an illicit use of public space.

The members of Telenoika essentially became invisible to authority through an excess of visibility.

All of the aforementioned examples (squatting, graffiti, laser graffiti, text messaging, and video projection) indicate that urban space and the body are connected by the same practice (the performance of the city as open code, as co-author who can alter the city) and that this practice originates, first, in a virtual space, be it the mind, Twitter, a computer-generated laser tag or a SMS text message, and then is reactivated in material reality. A new possibility of virtual defiance with tremendous potential is Second Life, an online virtual world. The 2005 Laws of Communal Living in Barcelona expressly prohibit the placing of posters in public space without the authorization of the Barcelona City Council.[70] Any group wanting to organize and publicize a protest event must attain the Barcelona City Council's approval. As a result, the Barcelona City Council has the power to restrict the potential outreach of certain groups, organizations, and social movements whose interests conflict with its own. Second Life is a possible way to circumvent this limitation. In an address given at the 53rd Annual Midwest Modern Language Association Conference, Compitello and co-presenter Juliana Luna Freire introduced Cibola, a virtual community inside Second Life that recreates well-known buildings in the Hispanic world and the public spaces surrounding them. One of the iconic sites is the Café Gijon in Madrid, Spain. While moving within the virtual space of Madrid in Second Life, Compitello was approached by an *indignado* of the 15-M movement and was asked if the movement could place posters announcing an upcoming event in Cibola. Compitello allowed it.[71] What this means is that as more and more real spaces—including those of Barcelona—are re-created in Second Life, the activities that are restricted by municipal governments—like the placing of posters in public spaces by the Barcelona City Council—can actually be performed in the corresponding virtual spaces.[72] Masses of people can be mobilized, first, in virtual Barcelona free from the grips of the Barcelona City Council, and then, second, they can execute their ideas in real Barcelona. This is another example of creativity in virtual reality motivating bodies to act in material reality.

Figure 2.2. People sitting on the window sills of stores. Stephen Luis Vilaseca (2009).

The commoning that squatting inspires can be lifted and incarnated in other mediums such as street theater and acrobatics. +Art, a collective of young street theater and circus artists formed at l'Ateneu Popular de Nou Barris in 2008, teaches bodies how to interact with urban/public space through social circus. The coexistence in public space that the Barcelona City Council promotes is one that excludes and separates on behalf of consuming individuals. The streets are no longer for the people but for tourists and investors. Barcelonans feel alienated from their own public space. In fact, there are very few public spaces in the Barrio Gótico and las Ramblas of Barcelona that are for non-consumers. For example, if you want to sit to rest, you have to sit at a bar's terraza and pay. Those who do not want to pay to relax are forced to sit on the windowsills of stores that line the street (see Figure 2.2), on the edges of fountains, and on steps that lead to cathedrals (see Figure 2.3). If you stop under a tree near a plaza and stand there resting, drug dealers think you are waiting to be approached and make the "psst-psst" sound and then the gesture of smoking or the touching of the nose. Even drug dealers force you to be a consumer or to keep on moving in the public space. If there are seats, they are stone blocks with no back supports like on Avenida Portal de L'Angel or they are designed to keep homeless from sleeping on them.[73]

Figure 2.3. People sitting on steps. Stephen Luis Vilaseca (2009).

+Art takes the circus to the streets and public squares in order to generate "un espai acollidor, compromès i participatiu" [a cozy, committed and participative space].[74] The social circus that they learned at l'Ateneu Popular de Nou Barris and that they practice "és un treball educatiu i de transformació social a través de l'art que provoca que l'espai públic es converteixi en un lloc d'inclusió, de respecte, de diàleg i de visualització social del seus participants com a membres de la comunitat" [is a didactic work and a social transformation through art that makes the public space become a place of inclusion, respect, dialogue and of the social visualization of its participants as members of the community].[75]

Wearing red clown noses and wigs, they perform acrobatics and invite the public to participate. They also provide chalk for kids of all ages to draw on the sidewalk. Both activities are illegal uses of public space according to the Laws of Communal Living.[76] However, the interactions that take place

create a festive atmosphere full of life and passion that is absent in the public space of the Laws of Communal Living. For a brief moment, the commoning that occurs is a playful, joyous “doing” during which bodies learn to be together in new and different ways.

Figure 2.4. BCN-neta spraying Plaça Sant Jaume. Stephen Luis Vilaseca (2009).

I observed all of this firsthand on May 29, 2009, during one of +Art’s interventions, which began at the Plaça Universitat and moved on to the Plaça Sant Jaume in front of the Barcelona City Council’s headquarters for a circus cabaret. Instead of following +Art’s protest parade through the streets of Barcelona, I decided to go directly to the Plaça Sant Jaume and await the circus artists’ arrival. What I found astonished me. I had heard rumors from several activists of the Barcelona underground of the City

Council's use of BCN-neta to manage not only the city's actual dirt and grime but also its "unclean" inhabitants like the *okupas* and homeless people who "dirty" Barcelona's image of an orderly global city.[77] Nevertheless, I was shocked to witness firsthand workers of BCN-neta, who usually work at night to inconvenience the fewest number of people, spraying an important thoroughfare with water in the late afternoon (see Figure 2.4). *Why would they do that?* I wondered. The official answer was that the street needed to be cleaned, yet it was clearly an attempt to discourage the performance. Any acrobatic performance on slippery concrete would be much more difficult and dangerous. In this way, the Barcelona City Council would be able to disrupt the protest event without calling undue attention to itself. +Art seemed to anticipate such a Machiavellian move and brought brooms to clear the water (see Figure 2.5). Even though the event proceeded as planned, the Barcelona City Council's flooding of the square was more of a psychological play to let +Art and similar groups know that it is serious and will defend its conservative and individualistic model of coexistence.


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BCNeta!

Figure 2.5. +Art circus artist using broom to remove water. Stephen Luis Vilaseca (2009).

Central to the war of words waged by politicians, print media, and the judicial system is whether to distinguish between different types of *okupas* and *okupación* or to lump all squatters into one category. The Barcelona High Court makes distinctions and clearly favors political squatting. For the conservative political parties (the PP and the CiU) and the conservative media, all *okupas* are criminals. The move to homogenize an obviously heterogeneous group is to naturalize a negative representation. Like the Barcelona High Court, some members of the socialist-led Tripartite differentiate between "good" *okupas* (those who squat buildings that have been abandoned for years to denounce property speculation or the lack of self-governed, autonomous cultural spaces in the city) and "bad" *okupas* (poor Barcelonan families and illegal immigrants who squat empty housing simply for a place to live). By constructing this dichotomy, the Socialists recognize the good *okupas* at the expense of the bad *okupas*. In this sense, they, like the PP, CiU, and the print media, also homogenize a heterogeneous group. However, the Socialists homogenize the *okupas* to be good and not bad.

NOTES

1. Spain, Ministry of the Presidency, *Constitución española 1978* (Madrid: Boletín Oficial del Estado, 1978), Article 33, <http://www.boe.es/boe/dias/1978/12/29/pdfs/A29313-29424.pdf>.

2. Ibid., Article 47.

3. Spain, Ministry of the Presidency, *Texto Refundido de la Ley de Arrendamientos Urbanos: Decreto 4104/1964* (Madrid: Boletín Oficial del Estado, 1964), Article 57, <http://www.boe.es/boe/dias/1964/12/29/pdfs/A17387-17405.pdf>.

4. Spain, Ministry of the Presidency, *Real Decreto Ley 2/1985* (Madrid: Boletín Oficial del Estado, 1985), <http://www.boe.es/boe/dias/1985/05/09/pdfs/A13176-13177.pdf>.

5. Spain, Ministry of the Presidency, *Ley 29/1994 de Arrendamientos Urbanos* (Madrid: Boletín Oficial del Estado, 1994), <http://www.boe.es/boe/dias/1994/11/25/pdfs/A36129-36146.pdf>.

6. On July 13, 2010, the new *Ley de cajas* appeared in the *Boletín Oficial del Estado*. In addition to the consolidation of a number of *cajas de ahorros* from different autonomous communities in order to increase the sector's efficiency, the new law allows an individual savings bank to become a capitalized foundation by ceding all of its financial transactions to a self-controlled bank and by selling more than 50 percent of its patrimony in stocks. It allows a group of consolidated savings banks in a SIP (*Sistema Institucional de Protección*) to become a capitalized foundation if it does the same. Savings banks that choose to become foundations cease to be not-for-profit institutions. However, there is nothing stopping them from using some of their profits to still fund social projects. The savings banks that do not sell more than 50 percent of their patrimony—that is, those that choose

to make new investments and fund social projects instead of paying stockholders—will maintain their status as savings bank and not-for-profit. Nevertheless, the new reform now places a maximum limit of 50 percent to be invested in social work.

7. I cite 2006–2007 because this was a year of heightened *okupa* activity (see note 4 in chapter 3). The *okupa* movement was a topic that dominated not only print media but also the Plenary Meetings of the Barcelona City Council.

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9. Nando García, "Propietarios barceloneses contratan a 'matones' para echar a okupas de sus pisos," *El Mundo*, September 9, 2008, http://www.elmundo.es/elmundo/2008/09/09/barcelona/1220938408.html.

10. "Allanamiento de morada," *Enciclopedia juridical*, March 17, 2011, http://www.enciclopedia-juridica.biz14.com/d/allanamiento-de-morada-domicilio-de-personas-juridicas-y-establecimientos-abiertos-al-publico/allanamiento-de-morada-domicilio-de-personas-juridicas-y-establecimientos-abiertos-al-publico.htm.

11. Spain, Ministry of the Presidency, *Ley Orgánica 1995* (Madrid: Boletín Oficial del Estado, 1995), http://www.boe.es/boe/dias/1995/11/24/pdfs/A33987-34058.pdf.

12. Miguel Ángel Martínez López, "Squatting in the Eye of the Storm: Social and Legal Frameworks in Spain" (address, Squatting in Europe, Berlin, March 29–31, 2011).

13. Miguel Ángel Martínez López, "Para entender el poder transversal del movimiento okupa: Autogestión, contracultura y colectivización urbana" (address, *VII Congreso FES*, Salamanca, 2001).

14. Barbara Kiviat, "The Case Against Homeownership," *Time*, September 6, 2010: 46.

15. Ángel López García-Molins, "'Ocupas,'" *El País*, February, 23, 2007, http://elpais.com/diario/2007/02/23/cvalenciana/1172261891_850215.html.

16. "'Preokupación' ciudadana," *La Vanguardia*, July 10, 2005, Vivir sec: 1.

17. Ibid.

18. "Se drogan, mean y cagan en los portales," *La Vanguardia*, July 10, 2005, Vivir sec.: 2.

19. Maria Mas and Toni Verger, "Un forat de la vergonya al Casc Antic de Barcelona," in *Barcelona marca registrada. Un modelo para desarmar* (Barcelona: Virus Editorial, 2004), 312.

20. "Barcelona Squat Repression," *Advisory Service for Squatters*, February 10, 2006, http://www.squatter.org.uk/?option=com_content&task=view&id=69&Itemid=2.

21. "What Happened on 4th of February 2006?," *Presos 4 Febrero*, March 21, 2006, http://no-racism.net/print/1605/.

22. *Represión en Barcelona: Libertad para Alex Cisternas Amestica, Juan Pinto Garrido y Rodrigo Lanza Huidobro – Detenidos injustamente el 4 de febrero de 2006*, 8 March 2006, http://represionenbarcelona.blogspot.com/.

23. Enrique Figueredo and Aitziber Azpeitia, "Agresión en una fiesta 'okupa'," *La Vanguardia*, February 5, 2006, Vivir sec.: 1.

24. Barcelona, *Plenari del Consell Municipal*: *Actas, 24 Feb 2006* (Barcelona: Ayuntament de Barcelona, 2006), http://w3.bcn.es/V61/Home/V61HomeLinkPl/0,4358,200713899_200723291_2,00.html.

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26. "Tura admite errores y anuncia que Interior actuará de otra forma con los 'okupas'," *El País*, July 1, 2006, Barcelona ed., Cataluña sec.: 32.

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29. Ferran Sales, “‘Limpiar’ un piso cuesta 4.000 euros,” *El País*, February 4, 2007, Barcelona ed., Cataluña sec.: 38.

30. García, “Propietarios barceloneses.”

31. Javier Alcalde Villacampa, “La batalla de los medios: La definición de la problemática okupa en los medios de comunicación de masas,” in *¿Dónde están las llaves?: El movimiento okupa: Prácticas y contextos sociales* (Madrid: Los libros de la Catarata, 2004), 230.

32. “Ocupación todos los días del año,” *El País*, July 22, 2001, World Media, Barcelona sec: 4.

33. Miguel Noguer, “Barcelona, capital de la ocupación,” *El País*, August 6, 2004, España sec.: 24.

34. “Un centenar de ‘okupas’ se manifiestan en Barcelona en protesta por la ‘criminalización’ que se hace de ellos,” *El País*, September 14, 2001, World Media, Barcelona sec: 4.

35. David Casals, “Los vecinos de Gràcia, divididos sobre su apoyo al colectivo” *El País*, June 30, 2006, Barcelona ed., Cataluña sec.: 33.

36. Lluís Sierra, “Gràcia se indigna,” *La Vanguardia*, June 30, 2006, Vivir sec.: 1.

37. Another socially conservative newspaper, *El Mundo*, echoes *La Vanguardia*’s presentation of the *okupas*. It, too, provides a biased view by giving voice only to those who are against the *okupas*. Neighbors describe them as dirty and smelly. They urinate in public spaces and wash their clothes in public fountains. See Carol Alvarez, “Vecinos de Poblenou denuncian la ocupación de las fincas abandonadas,” *El Mundo*, November 2, 2002, Catalunya sec.: 3.

38. Xavier Trias, “Cuando se pierden los papeles,” *ABC*, April 25, 2006, Cataluña ed, http://www.abc.es/hemeroteca/historico-25-04-2006/abc/Catalunya/cuando-se-pierden-los-papeles_1421277984012.html.

39. “Comunicat de premsa dels veïns/es de Valldonzella 12,” *Valldonzella 12*, April 27, 2006, http://valldonzella12.blogspot.com/.

40. Àlex Gubern, “El Ayuntamiento insiste en que cedió pisos de protección a <<okupas>> sólo por razones sociales” *ABC*, April 29, 2006, Cataluña ed, http://www.abc.es/hemeroteca/historico-29-04-2006/abc/Catalunya/el-ayuntamiento-insiste-en-que-cedio-pisos-de-proteccion-a-okupas-solo-por-razones-sociales_1421336766374.html.

41. “Dos sentencias estiman que la ocupación de viviendas abandonadas no es delito: La Audiencia de Girona clarifica en que casos debe perseguirse la acción de los ‘okupas’,” *El País*, August 4, 1998, Sociedad sec.: 20.

42. “La juez critica al dueño que abandona un piso y luego denuncia a los ‘okupas’,” *El País*, April 23, 2000, World Media, Barcelona sec.: 5.

43. Cristina Andreu, “Condenados 17 ‘okupas’ de Terrassa por usurpar dos veces un inmueble; los detenidos deberán pagar una multa,” *El País*, May 19, 2000, World Media, Barcelona sec.: 12.

44. “Un juez afirma que una finca abandonada hace 10 años puede ocuparse,” *Cinco Días*, September 19, 2002, Gestión sec.: 25.

45. “Diez de los okupas de Can Masdeu irán a juicio por vivir en la masía,” *El Mundo*, June 21, 2002, Catalunya sec.: 6.

46. “La Audiencia no autoriza el desalojo de Can Masdeu,” *El Mundo*, September 27, 2002, Catalunya sec.: 8.

47. “El Ayuntamiento de Barcelona apuesta por despenalizar la usurpación de viviendas vacías,” *Libertad Digital*, January 18, 2007, http://www.libertaddigital.com/sociedad/el-ayuntamiento-de-barcelona-apuesta-por-despenalizar-la-usurpacion-de-viviendas-vacias-1276296990/.

48. David Casals, “Desalojada una fábrica donde residían un centenar de ‘okupas’ y artistas callejeros,” *El País*, November 21, 2006, Barcelona ed., Cataluña sec.: 33.

49. Pilar Eyre, “El hijo ‘okupa’ del ministro,” *El Mundo*, September 3, 2006, Crónica sec.: 15.

50. “El PSC e IC-V exigen que no se criminalice a los grupos ‘okupa’,” *El País*, September 12, 2001, World Media, Barcelona sec.: 8.

51. “Can Masdeu parodia la esquizofrenia del gobierno municipal,” *Contr@Infos 204*, May 21, 2002, http://www.sindominio.net/zitzania/cas/2002/cas204.txt>.

52. Libby Porter and Kate Shaw, *Whose Urban Renaissance?: An International Comparison of Urban Regeneration Strategies* (London: Routledge, 2009), 121.

53. “La toma de Can Ricart reabre el debate sobre los okupas,” *La Vanguardia*, December 4, 2006, Front Page.

54. Israel Punzano, “Todas ‘las Juanis’ de Jordi Pujol,” *El País*, December 6, 2006, Barcelona ed., Cataluña sec.: 34.

55. Losantos never refers to Kothari in the article by his real name. He calls him Jotari, a reference to Mohammad Ayub El jotari, the president of Pakistan from 1958 to 1969.

56. Federico Jimenez Losantos, “El ‘okupa’ de la ONU,” *El Mundo*, December 8, 2006, Opinión sec.: 4.

57. According to the Council on Foreign Relations, the Iraqi oil-for-food program was established in 1996 by the UN Security Council “to allow Iraq to sell enough oil to pay for food and other necessities for its population, which was suffering under strict UN sanctions imposed after the first Gulf War. But Saddam Hussein exploited the program, earning some $1.7 billion through kickbacks and surcharges, and $10.9 billion through illegal oil smuggling.” See Sharon Otterman, “Iraq: Oil for Food Scandal,” *Council on Foreign Relations*, October 28, 2005, http://www.cfr.org/un/iraq-oil-food-scandal/p7631. A UN Independent Inquiry Committee criticized UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan for mismanagement but not corruption. His son Kojo Annan, however, did profit from a business relationship with Swiss-based Cotecna Inspections S.A., a major Oil-for-Food contractor, between 1995 and 2004.

58. Silvia Taules, “Contradicciones/Demagogia desde el poder. La antisistema que gana 100.000 euros…y tiene coche oficial, viste ropa de marca, vive en un atico con su compañero, un conceller, tiene un apartamento en la Costa Brava y quiere ser alcalde,” *El Mundo*, January 28, 2007, Crónica sec.: 4.

59. Ibid.

60. Federico Jimenez Losantos, “De Girón a Mayol,” *El Mundo*, January 25, 2007, Opinión sec.: 4

61. J. Bauzá, “El concejal de Seguridad, a favor de ‘dialogar’ con los ‘okupas’,” *El País*, January 25, 2007, http://elpais.com/diario/2007/01/25/catalunya/1169690842_850215.html.

62. Jordi Hereu, Interview by Josep Cuní, *Els Matins*, TV3, January 29, 2007, www.tv3.cat/videos/220208730#.

63. Albert Ollés, “Hereu augura un final pròxim del fenomen okupa” *El Periódico*, January 30, 2007.

64. Hereu, Interview by Josep Cuní.

65. “Hereu cree ‘imposible’ negociar con los ocupas de Barcelona porque sería ‘la peor pedagogía,” *Libertad Digital*, http://www.libertaddigital.com/php/imprimir_pagina.php?cpn=1276294196>.

66. “Solución ‘okupa’,” *El Mundo*, January 19, 2007, Opinión sec.: 3.

67. Public housing has also been squatted directly as an alternative housing strategy by young people because rent-protected flats in Catalonia sit empty for months. In 2010, there were 4,000 empty public apartments. See Silvia Angulo, “La Generalitat abre la puerta a ‘expropiar’ viviendas vacías mientras no entrega sus pisos sociales” *La Vanguardia*, April 28, 2010,

http://www.lavanguardia.com/vida/20100428/53916933343/la-generalitat-abre-la-puerta-a-expropiar-viviendas-vacias-mientras-no-entrega-sus-pisos-sociales.html.

68. See Barcelona, *Ordenanza de medidas para fomentar y garantizar la convivencia ciudadana en el espacio público de Barcelona, 23 Dec 2005* (Barcelona: Ayuntament de Barcelona, 2005), 18, http://w3.bcn.es/fitxers/ajuntament/ordenansacivismecast.189.pdf. When the city becomes a product to be constantly sold to tourists and investors and, as such, undergoes a beautification process to become an even more idyllic seductress—in the case of Barcelona, the campaign was known as *Barcelona, Posa't guapa* [Barcelona, Get Beautiful]—that which is unsightly (*okupas*, the homeless, prostitutes, graffiti) must be removed and that which attracts should be enhanced (gentrification). The result is an idealized, artificial body unrecognizable to the citizen. A group of musicians denounced this artificial body that Barcelona had become by releasing a CD called *Barcelona postiza* [The Artificial Barcelona]. The decision to use *postiza* instead of *falsa* [false] or *artificial* [artificial] was not accidental. *Postizo/a* is used to describe body parts like an artificial limb or artificial eyelashes or hair extensions. Barcelona's authentic body is slowly being replaced by prosthetics and fashioned into a monster, albeit a beautiful monster. And this monster demands controlled and forced movements within its city-body. A monstrified environment begets zombie-like inhabitants. The sanitized, controlled public space is in fact a dead space void of spontaneity.

69. Telenoika, Personal interview, May 25, 2009.

70. See Barcelona, *Ordenanza de medidas*, 20.

71. Malcolm Alan Compitello and Juliana Luna Freire, "Real Places, Virtual Spaces: Constructing an Hispanic Urban Island in the Second Life Virtual Reality Environment" (address, Midwest Modern Language Association 53rd Annual Convention, St. Louis, Missouri, November 5, 2011).

72. I understand that the developers of virtual communities like the developer of Cibola, the Department of Spanish and Portuguese at the University of Arizona, have to permit the activities that take place in their communities. What is certain is that the reach of municipal governments like the Barcelona City Council does not extend into Second Life.

73. Joel Albarrán Bugié, "Ciutat Vella instala bancos anti-indigentes, esquinas anti-pipís y superficies anti-botellón," *La Vanguardia*, September 29, 2009, http://www.lavanguardia.com/ciudadanos/noticias/20090929/53793014183/ciutat-vella-instala-bancos-anti-indigentes-esquinas-anti-pipis-y-superficies-anti-botellon-barcelon.html.

74. Comissió de Formació i Circ Social a l'Ateneu Popular 9Barris, "Espai públic i circ social," *L'Ateneu popular 9Barris* 116 (2010): 7.

75. Ibid.

76. Barcelona, *Ordenanza de medidas*, 23, 18.

77. BCN-net is a company contracted by the city that power-cleans its streets with water at night.

Chapter Three

Representations of *Okupas* by Non-*okupas*

Due to the unique political power configurations in Barcelona in 2006–2011, the Catalonian Socialists walked a thin line, one fraught with political, social, and economic pitfalls. The Socialists felt a need to present the *okupas* as not violent in order to convince the electorate that they—the Socialists—had been able to control the *okupas* and maintain public order, and yet at the same time, many remained interested in maintaining the image of the *okupa* as threatening in order to generate support for, and continue the lucrative model of, urban planning based on property speculation. By showing how the city of Barcelona has treated *okupas* in real life and then comparing that interaction with how cultural products represent Barcelona's treatment of the *okupas*, this chapter highlights the disparity between what is said and what is done, between what is imagined and what is actually allowed to occur. The texts analyzed are the soap opera *El cor de la ciutat* [*The Heart of the City*] (2007–2008), the film *El Kaserón* [*The Big Old House*] (2009), the children's and young adult literature novels *Las pelirrojas traen mala suerte* [Redheads Bring Bad Luck] (1995), *El okupa* [The Squatter] (1997), *Korazón de Pararrayos* [Heart of Lightning Rod] (2003), and *Los okupantes* [The Occupiers] (2005), and the adult literature novels *Okupada* [Squatted] (1997), *Austràlia* [Australia] (2008), *De música ligera* [About Light Music] (2009), and *El rey del mambo* [The King of Mambo] (2009). It is at this crossroads between the symbolic (the textual representations) and the material (the actual treatment of *okupas*) that the battle for the future city of Barcelona is being waged.

PART I: *OKUPAS*, CATALANISM, AND CULTURE-PRODUCING FACTORIES IN *EL COR DE LA CIUTAT*

On September 25, 2007, television history was made in Catalonia when for the first time Spanish squatters were represented on the small screen

anywhere in Spain.[1] TV3, a regional, Catalan-language, government-owned television station, launched an *okupa* storyline in the eighth season of the wildly popular soap opera *El cor de la ciutat* [The Heart of the City]. During the show's seventh season from 2006 to 2007, an average of 525,000 viewers per episode faithfully tuned in to watch the half-hour program. For five days a week at 3:50 p.m., 29.8 percent of the television sets in use in Catalonia were tuned to the soap opera.[2] Guillem Clua, the head writer of the show from 2005 to 2008, explained to me in a personal interview the show's success:

> For the ten years *El cor de la ciutat* was on TV, the show always tackled social issues with which the audience could easily find a connection or a close referent. This was one of the key factors that turned this soap opera into a phenomenon. The problems in the fictional neighborhood on TV were the same problems regular people faced in their lives, and the issue with squatters in Barcelona is quite common, and it had been quite controversial the years before that particular storyline aired. Thus, it was just a matter of time that a show like *El cor* would talk about all of this.[3]

Fueling the controversy to which Clua refers were, first, the overwhelmingly negative image of the *okupas* fomented by corporate media, which tended to cover violent evictions and not the peaceful day-to-day life of squatted social centers, and second, the manipulation of these negative representations by politicians.[4]

In contrast, the soap opera *El cor de la ciutat*, broadcast on TV3, depicted them as not only good, idealistic, and civic-minded, but more importantly as Catalanists. One might imagine that the idea for the storyline came from the TV station's owners, the Generalitat de Catalunya, the autonomous Catalonian government, given that it would benefit the ruling Tripartite to combat the notion that they were incapable of controlling the "unruly" *okupas*. Nonetheless, Clua emphasized in his interview with me that the Generalitat de Catalunya and TV3 gave both him and the rest of the writers on the show "absolute freedom" to tell the story that they wanted. They "were not influenced or advised in any way by any political representative of any kind." Clua described his political leanings as "center-left", stating: "I don't agree 100% with the squatters' claims" but "I can understand and share some of their ideology."[5] Even though there was no political pressure, Clua's mostly sympathetic stance toward the *okupas* effectively converted the show into a mouthpiece for the ruling Tripartite of the Generalitat de

Catalunya. The writers rendered the *okupas* of *El cor de la ciutat* both socially and politically harmless first, by representing them as favoring Catalanism, as do the majority of Catalonians, and second, by representing Can Sarró, the fictional industrial factory that the *okupas* squatted on the show, as a hollowed-out, politically sanitized version of a squatted social center.

In *El cor de la ciutat*, various twentysomething young people squat Can Sarró, an abandoned factory in the Sant Andreu neighborhood. Eli Cadenes, one of the *okupas*, sets up a meeting with the neighborhood association in order to give the neighbors the opportunity to voice their concerns. She explains the *okupas*' philosophy and the activities that Can Sarró will offer. Her sincerity and pleasant demeanor gain the neighbors' support to the dismay of Ivan Crespo, a handsome young CEO of a private real estate company. The *okupas* also organize a neighborhood Castanyada party[6] in order to introduce themselves to the rest of the community. However, the City Council does not grant the *okupas* the necessary permit to hold their party. Eli does not want to celebrate the festivity without the permit because she does not wish to alienate the neighbors. Ros, her brother and the most radical, anarchic, and politically motivated *okupa*, disagrees. The *okupas* vote to have the party and Eli is worried. Ivan calls the police to arrest the *okupas* during their illegal Castanyada celebration in Plaza del Pont, at the intersection of Pont Street and Cinca Street in Sant Andreu. The Mossos d'Esquadra[7] physically remove the *okupas* from the square.

This event anticipated the complicated and oftentimes contradictory characteristics of the *okupas* in *El cor de la ciutat*. It seems that they valued Catalan culture and traditions like the Castanyada while, at the same time, remaining antiauthoritarian and anarchic. These initial indications of Catalanism and anarchy were solidified when Ros and Pachu, two of the Can Sarró *okupas*, wore their political beliefs on four of the ten T-shirts made by the real cooperative Catalan Roots Culture for its 2008 Collection. Catalan Roots Culture, cofounded by Àlex Bagant Pascual, Èric Estany, and Roger Flaquer, is a cooperative that designs T-shirts, posters, logos, and web pages as well as edits videos for social movements in the Països Catalans [Catalan Countries].[8] According to the cooperative, its objective is twofold: 1) to help social movements in the Països Catalans distribute their political messages; and 2) to offer these social movements a tool with which

to self-finance and self-manage their projects.[9] The Catalan Roots Culture website does not specify which social movements they target. However, one of the cofounders, Àlex Bagant Pascual, declares on his personal blog *Bandera Negra* [Black Flag] that he is a member of *l'esquerra independentista* [The left for Catalonia Independence], a political party whose political agenda includes the reunification of the Països Catalans, a referendum for self-determination, the nationalization of Catalan resources and infrastructures, a guarantee that all Catalonians will have access to a quality education, a national decree in favor of the Catalan language and traditions, the use of Catalan in businesses, and amnesty for Catalan political prisoners.[10] He also makes comments publicizing Catalan Roots Culture on several blogs in favor of Catalonia's independence such as *Document l'esquerra independentista!* [The Left for Catalonia Independence Document][11], *Ìndex de Blogs Independentistes* [Index of Blogs for Catalonia Independence][12], and *El bloc de n'Isaac Farré* [Isaac Farré's Blog],[13] which is pro-independence for Catalonia as well.

Catalan Roots Culture shirts are sold on *Productes de la terra* [Products of the land] website, an online market that specializes in merchandise and products from the Països Catalans. Some of the members of *Avellana Digital*, the multimedia and Internet services company that designed and manages the site, are actively involved in the defense of the Catalan language and culture on the local level in their hometown, Reus (Baix Camp). On the regional level, part of the profits generated by *Productes de la terra* have been used to finance Catalanist media web sites such as *Racó Català*, *El Punt*, and *VilaWeb*.[14] The *okupas* on *El cor de la ciutat* are also shown wearing T-shirts made by Quòniam samarretaires, a company formed by a group of caricaturists that design T-shirts in order "to make known a Catalan way of living specific of the people who live from Salses to Guardamar and from Fraga to l'Alguer who are proud of their Catalan language and culture…"[15] Quòniam samarretaires attempts to bring Catalan culture to the streets via T-shirts that include phonetic transcriptions, historical-geographic interests, word games, and traditional celebrations.

Along with the Catalanist and pro-independence for Catalonia T-shirts, Pachu wore one with the anarchy symbol. The use of the T-shirts strongly suggested that the *okupas* of Can Sarró, at least the male *okupas*, were anarchists who defended the Catalan language and culture and fought for

autonomy for the Països Catalans. According to Vicente Escolar Bautista, a real former squatter of the now defunct squatted social center Miles de Viviendas and author of the wall poem in the introduction to this book as well as the book of poetry to be analyzed in Chapter 4:

> Hay un sector mínimo de okupas 'anarco-independentistas' (!!?), sí, sí, un delirio. Más que nacionalistas diría Catalanistas, personas que por entorno familiar, por historia personal, son más sensible a la *posición* de la cultura y la lengua catalanas, y que de alguna manera coquetean con la idea de 'independència i socialismo.' A parte hay algunos casales independentistas okupados**,** que normalmente no son vivienda, y la verdad es que suben los más jóvenes bastante fuertes en la 'esquerra independentista.'[16]
>
> [There is a minimal sector of anarcho-independentist okupas (!!?), yes, yes, a delirium. More than nationalists I would say Catalanists, people who because of family environment, personal history, are more sensitive to the *position* of Catalan culture and language, and that somehow flirt with the idea of ' independence and socialism.' In addition there are some squatted houses for independence, which normally are not housing, and the truth is that they bring up the youngest and strongest in l'esquerra independentista, the Left for Catalonia Independence.]

Out of all of the possible *okupas* that the creators of *El cor de la ciutat* could have chosen to represent (squatters who are poor and truly homeless, Spanish youth who would like to leave the parental nest and gain their independence, squatters of rural buildings who practice self-sustainability, and political squatters of various ideologies who create social centers), they chose to portray a small percentage of political squatters known as anarcho-independentists. This depiction was necessary because anarcho-independentists are the only *okupas* who are Catalanists. However, it was also extremely risky because they are, first and foremost, anarchists. To manage this fine line, the link with anarcho-independentism was not created by what the *okupas* said, but by what they wore (their T-shirts). In this way, the writers of the show distanced the politics of anarchism, a position that the ruling Tripartite did not support, from the aesthetics of Catalanism, a characteristic that would make the *okupas* more likeable and relatable, and, hence, which had the potential of decreasing the Tripartite's political damage caused by being associated with the *okupas*.

To compare and contrast how the Barcelona City Council interacts in real life with anarcho-independentists with how it interacts on the show with the *okupas* of Can Sarró, it is necessary to discuss the Can Vies case. Negres Tempestes [Black Storm], one of the most active collectives in Barcelona that defends anarcho-independentism, works side by side with the Centro

Social Autogestionado Can Vies, the former headquarters of the workers of the Transports Metropolitans de Barcelona on Jocs Florals Street in the Sants neighborhood that was squatted in 1997 by members of les Joventuts Comunistes [Communist Youth] and les Joves Independentistes Revolucionaris/es [Revolutionary Youth for Independence].[17] The building, owned by Transports Metropolitans de Barcelona (TMB), 50 percent of which is, in turn, owned by the Barcelona City Council, had been abandoned for seven years.[18] Despite the abandonment of the edifice, the presence of Transports Metropolitans de Barcelona has been felt in the neighborhood ever since it built the Sants Train Station (Estació de Sants) in the 1970s. The name of the squatted social center, Can[19] Vies, makes reference to the eight tracks (*vies* in Catalan), six of which are train tracks and two of which are subway tracks, that cross the neighborhood and divide it in two. This division has been a point of contention between the Sants neighborhood and the Barcelona City Council. For years, neighborhood associations have been pressuring the City Council to put the tracks underground in order to restore unity to the area. In 2005, when Mayor Joan Clos announced that new underground tracks would be built to allow the French high speed train TGV to connect with the Sants Train Station, neighbors saw an opportunity to bury the other tracks as well. However, the City Council refused, and instead of burying the tracks, the plan is to enclose them in a concrete box 700 meters long and seven to fourteen meters tall. The neighbors call the box the “calaix de la vergonya” or the drawer of shame because, when completed, it will look like a giant inverted drawer. The project also includes doubling in size the Sants Train Station. A multiscreen movie theater, offices, and a huge shopping mall to serve the passengers of the high speed train are to be built. The remodeling requires the demolition of several housing buildings, especially on Vallespir Street.[20] These neighbors will be forced to leave their homes in the name of speculation because it is more lucrative for the TMB and the Barcelona City Council to build hotels and office space than to respect the personality and historical value of the neighborhood.

Can Vies has offered itself as a base from which many different neighborhood organizations and collectives organize themselves to resist the TMB, the Barcelona City Council and their top-down plans for Sants’s urban growth. As a result, after a failed attempt to convict the *okupas* with

the crime of usurpation and to evict them from Can Vies in 1998, the TMB and the Barcelona City Council on April 18, 2006, filed a second lawsuit, this time a civil one, to reinitiate the eviction process. After two years in the civil court system, the judge ruled in favor of the *okupas* on January 25, 2008. A month later, *La Burxa*, a free neighborhood newspaper headquartered in Can Vies with which the members of Negres Tempestes often collaborate, lashed out at the *okupas* of *El cor de la ciutat*. It is not surprising that one of the astonishingly few reactions to the show by the *okupa* community appears in *La Burxa*, for the contributors to the newspaper associated with Negres Tempestes must intuit, on some level, that the *okupas* depicted on *El cor de la ciutat* are anarcho-independentists, and are modeled after them. *La Burxa's* headline summarizes the difference between the real *okupas* and the show's *okupas*: "De l'okupació 'cívica' i de disseny a l'autogestió guerrera i real" [From 'Civil' and Fashionable Squatting to Real and Embattled Self-determination].[21] After "being on the warpath" with the Barcelona City Council for two years in the civil court system in order to prevent it from taking Can Vies, *La Burxa* criticizes the "false okupas" of the soap opera for deciding "to talk with whomever it is necessary to keep Can Sarró," namely, with Ivan Crespo, the owner of Can Sarró, and with the City Council. Any sort of negotiation with institutions is seen as jeopardizing the values of autonomy and self-organization (*autogestión*).[22]

The question of negotiation and legalization arose a few months later in April 2008 when an opinion piece that appeared in Info-Usurpa, a weekly calendar that lists the activities of squatted houses in Barcelona, criticized a talk that took place in Magdalenes, a squatted social center and headquarters of *Promoció d'Habitatge Realment Públic* (PHRP) [Promotion of True Public Housing][23], about the good relationship that exists between the City Council of Rome and squatted houses. According to the authors of the commentary, the legalization of squatted houses is a ploy by democracy in the form of the State and the so-called free market to co-opt dissidence. As the title of the critique suggests, "Cuando la democracia okupa en la casa de al lado" ["When Democracy Squats the House Next Door"], democracy is considered an unwanted occupier of squatted houses. It has no place in such spaces because:

> Querer la regulación por parte del Estado (en cualquiera de sus administraciones) de la problemática de la vivienda es abrir camino a la desaparición de aquellas formas de vida que encuentran en la okupación una manera de desarrollarse, ya que se basan en el aprovechamiento de las grietas que existen entre el mercado y el Estado. A su vez, aquellos que negamos con la okupación la santa propiedad privada no dejamos de ver en el Estado a un propietario, incluso más peligroso que cualquier inmobiliaria. Quien crea que ante el capitalismo se necesita un Estado más fuerte, no sólo es ingenux, sino peligrosx.[24] Es más, no sólo es peligrosx sino que se convertirá en nuestrx enemigx, y como a tal le trataremos.[25]
>
> [To want the State to regulate (in any of its administrations) the housing problematic is to open the way for the disappearance of those forms of life that find in squatting a way of developing, since they are based on the utilization of the cracks that exist between the market and the State. In turn, those of us who deny holy private property, through squatting, do not stop seeing in the State a property owner, even more dangerous than any real estate agency. Anyone who believes that in front of capitalism a stronger State is needed, not only is naive, but dangerous. What is more, not only is he or she dangerous but will become our enemy, and we will treat him or her as such.]

The anarchists of Sants have recognized that there is a disconnect on the TV show between the aesthetics of the Can Sarró *okupas* (they look like anarcho-independentists) and the content of their actions (they negotiate with the City Council). *La Burxa* attributes this disconnect to the influx of upper and middle class youth (in Spanish *pijos*) to the *okupa* movement. These *pijos* masquerade as *okupas*. *La Burxa* dismisses the *okupas* on the TV show as middle-class posers by labeling them "false *okupas*."

The risk connected with playing the anarko-Catalanist card was tempered by the government-friendly storyline. In the TV show, Ivan Crespo and his business partner, Fèlix Bergen Cabré, offer to buy Can Sarró for more than 1,000,000 euros ($1,466,957.06).[26] The owner refuses to sell the building because it has been in the family for a long time. Two months later, Ivan notices in the obituary section of the paper that the owner of Can Sarró has died. He and Fèlix seize the opportunity to renegotiate with the son and convince him to sell Can Sarró. The neighborhood association would like Ivan to make Can Sarró meet the social needs of the neighborhood. He plans instead to build luxury apartments. As a result, the neighborhood association stages a protest against Ivan. It hopes the City Council will expropriate Can Sarró and build the installations and services that the neighborhood needs. The *okupas* are not going to support the protest because they prefer to stay in Can Sarró. In an effort to get rid of his uninvited tenants, Ivan offers the *okupas* money to abandon the old factory.

They decline the proposal. Frustrated, Ivan makes a call, and two men dressed in black with masks enter Can Sarró and attack Ros. Because of Ivan's strong-arm tactics, the *okupas* decide to participate in the neighborhood protest against Ivan, but the association rejects the offer. Only a few neighbors participate in the protest. Francisco is about to call it off when the *okupas* come with 300 other activists from around Barcelona. Grateful, the neighborhood association invites the *okupas* to participate in their meetings. Ivan tries to win over the neighbors by promising that he will negotiate with the City Council to build installations and social services on the first floor of Can Sarró. However, Beni, a neighbor that Ivan made partner of his real estate company only for his money, finds out from Félix that the contract with the City Council does not exist and tells the neighbors at the meeting. Eli hears it and breaks up with Ivan. (Yes, Eli, the beautiful, idealistic *okupa*, had fallen in love with the money-loving real estate mogul. More about that later.) In order to win back Eli, Ivan wants to create a space for the neighbors. Félix disagrees and blackmails Ivan with a recording of him admitting to having set fire to a building in order to get rid of the occupants, which resulted in the death of a man. The son of the deceased owner of Can Sarró reveals that a document exists that verifies that Can Sarró has patrimonial interest (i.e., is a National Historic Landmark) because it was designed by the famous nineteenth-century architect Josep Puig i Cadafalch.[27] This designation would protect Can Sarró from being demolished in order to build luxury apartments. However, Félix buys the document from the son and destroys it so that no one will find out about Can Sarró's status as a National Historic Landmark. He is able to proceed with his plans to convert the factory into high-end lofts and apartments.

It was no accident that the writers of *El cor de la ciutat* chose to have the *okupas* of the show squat an abandoned industrial factory instead of an abandoned apartment building or an unoccupied school or a deserted police station or a neglected rural building, to name a few possible spaces. The two issues that most shaped the Can Sarró storyline, the rehabilitation of industrial factories for social and cultural installations/services, and the declaration of industrial factories as Cultural Properties of National Interest, stemmed from the debates surrounding what to do with Catalonia's industrial past, and the role of social creativity in the construction of cities. Should the Barcelona City Council follow a form of urbanization that

respects the historical value of Catalonia's industrial past or should it participate in property speculation? Are the two mutually exclusive? Clua explained his decision to have the *okupas* squat an abandoned industrial factory by stating the following: "Once again, we were inspired by reality. In Barcelona there are lots of abandoned warehouses and factories (especially in Poblenou and Sant Andreu) that have been empty for decades. In the mid-2000s some 'occupations' of that kind of spaces [*sic*] were very famous."[28] The most famous of these occupations to which Clua alludes but does not name in the interview with me was the squatting of Can Ricart, a former factory that mechanically printed cotton fabrics. The Can Ricart case, one that received massive media attention a little less than a year before the first *okupa* storyline of *El cor de la ciutat* was aired, and, hence, very present in the minds of Catalonians, highlighted the Barcelona City Council's participation in property speculation and its abuse of the designation of Cultural Property of National Interest. The first plan in 2005 for Can Ricart was to protect only one of the many chimneys, just two of the industrial spaces, and the clock tower. The rest was to be demolished. Almost 50 percent of the conserved industrial space was to be privately owned and, as a result, inaccessible by the public. The private space was to be converted into lofts and offices, thereby completely altering the interior spaces. In addition, a new frontal tower fifty-two meters tall was to be built along with a wall that was to surround Can Ricart.[29] The neighbors of Poblenou wanted the Barcelona City Council to conserve Can Ricart in its entirety. In a show of solidarity with the neighbors of Poblenou, *okupa* circus artists of the Makabra collective squatted the industrial space within the Can Ricart complex that was privately owned by the marquis of Santa Isabel on December 2, 2006.[30] The Barcelona City Council's PERI (Pla Especial de la Reforma Interior) Parc Central had approved this space for its conversion into future lofts.

After months of negotiations (April 3, 2006), the Barcelona City Council proposed a second plan that would conserve 67 percent of the industrial space and would include the following: a neighborhood social center, the Casa de las Lenguas or the House of Languages (a culture center focused on the promotion, use and development of languages), Hangar (studios for the visual arts), public housing, and private lofts and offices. Outside of the

conserved, patrimonial space would be 79,474 square meters of offices for private businesses.[31]

To prevent the demolition of Can Ricart, the neighbors successfully convinced the Generalitat to initiate on March 13, 2007, the proceedings to declare Can Ricart a Cultural Property of National Interest or Bien Cultural de Interés Nacional (BCIN). While the Generalitat's decision was still pending, the Territorial Commission of Cultural Patrimony [la Comisión Territorial de Patrimonio Cultural] permitted the Barcelona City Council to begin work to prepare for the demolition of parts of Can Ricart on October 24, 2007. The neighbors considered this not only a huge contradiction but illegal. They invoked the Catalan cultural patrimony law of September 30, 1993, which dictates that it is illegal to demolish buildings within the perimeter of protection decreed by the Generalitat.[32] The Generalitat argued, however, that the demolitions were legal precisely because the buildings to be torn down were outside the perimeter of protection.[33]

The circumstances surrounding the squatting of Can Ricart and the Barcelona City Council's response to the squatting were completely altered and rewritten for the show. The essential polemic that played out in the headlines and which made the occupation of Can Ricart "famous," namely the Barcelona City Council's participation in property speculation and its abuse of the designation of Cultural Property of National Interest, was ignored. In the case of Can Sarró, the Barcelona City Council was shown to have nothing to do with speculation. The conflict that the *okupas* and the neighbors had was not with the City Council, but with Ivan Crespo's and Fèlix Bergen Cabré's small private real estate company, and even that conflict resolved itself when Ivan, in order to win over Eli, brought a document to Can Sarró that proved that it was designed by Josep Puig i Cadafalch and verified that it was a National Historic Landmark. With the newly found document, the City Council agreed to build the installations and social services, and the *okupas* agreed to voluntarily leave when the City Council would begin construction. Unlike in Poblenou where Can Ricart is located, in Sant Andreu of *El cor de la ciutat*, the *okupas*' interests and the City Council's interests coincided. Of course, a soap opera is not a documentary. Clua never intended to faithfully reproduce the politics surrounding de-industrialization in Catalonia, and he had every right to exercise his poetic license. Nevertheless, half truths presented in a

verisimilar package are oftentimes taken at face value. When dealing with such a politically charged and socially controversial issue as is squatting, any change is a significant change. In other words, to paraphrase Lévi-Strauss who was originally referring to history, representation is never representation of, but representation for.

Along with the portrayal of *okupas* as Catalanists, Can Sarró's representation in *El cor de la ciutat* also strengthened the Tripartite's social agenda. Contrary to Clua's perception that "the core of the *okupa* community of Can Sarró was very culturally active" and that because "they wanted to get involved in the social problems of the neighborhood, they provided social and cultural services that the neighborhood lacked," the fictional cultural center was actually a stripped, hollowed-out, politically sanitized version of a squatted social center.[34] The only workshop given at Can Sarró was a music workshop for children taught by la K, one of the female *okupas*. There were no computers in Can Sarró, let alone a hack lab. With the absence of hackers, the issue of free software and the philosophy of sharing were not addressed. Likewise, the topic of free access to culture and information and knowledge was ignored. The piracy of music, film, and texts, the p2p file-sharing issue, and the polemic over the control of the Internet were not mentioned. Can Sarró did not house a free university. It did not organize free seminars on topics such as free software, free culture, urban space, responsible consumerism, the environment, and globalization. There were no free screenings of movies or documentaries. It did not offer legal consultation for immigrants or participate in the planning of EuroMayDay. Even the notion of self-organization [*autogestión*], a defining characteristic of squatted houses, was misrepresented. El Paso Occupato and Barocchio Occupato define self-organization as "the possibility for establishing the order of one's existence in accordance with the principle of individual responsibility and the method of unanimity."[35] Unlike in most squatted social centers and houses, decisions were reached at Can Sarró not through unanimity but through the democratic method of the majority. Far from being radical, Can Sarró functioned much like any organizational entity.

In comparison to the relative lack of social services provided by Can Sarró, other apparently more promising alternatives to squatting are public-private collaborations like the Centre Cultural CaixaForum in Barcelona

that offers exhibition rooms, media libraries, rooms for workshops and conferences, arts laboratories, gift shops, and restaurants.[36] Another example is the *Fábricas de Creación* project. A day after evicting the *okupas* from Can Ricart, the Barcelona City Council publicly presented its new Strategic Plan for the Cultural Sector known as *Nuevos acentos 2006* [New Accents 2006.] Part of the plan included the *Fábricas de Creación* project whose objective was to transform six industrial factories—Fabra i Coats in Sant Andreu, Hangar and La Escocesa in Poblenou, La Seca in Ciutat Vella, Illa Philips in La Marina, and La Central del Circ at the Fòrum—into spaces for artistic creation. Each factory was to be dedicated to one of the following cultural sectors: circus (La Central del Circ), theater (La Seca), dance (Illa Philips), visual arts (Hangar and La Escocesa), and music (Fabra i Coats). The factories would provide social centers, spaces for artists, public housing, private lofts, and offices. Can Sarró was eventually transformed into one of these culture-producing factories by the Barcelona City Council. In fact, Can Sarró became what it always was, a *Fábrica de Creación*, for all the exterior shots of Can Sarró were those of an actual *Fábrica de Creación*, Fabra i Coats. Can Sarró was Fabra i Coats and Fabra i Coats was Can Sarró. Thus, there is no doubt that the message that the TV show conveyed was that the way to transform industrial factories into cultural spaces that would most benefit Barcelona's citizens was not through political squatting but through private sector and public-private collaborations.

The first time *okupas* appear on the show they are juggling and playing bongos on the street in front of a bar at night, a stereotypical image. The owner of the bar complains about the noise. The Laws of Communal Living [*Ordenanza de medidas para fomentar y garantizar la convivencia ciudadana en el espacio público de Barcelona*] passed on December 23, 2005, prohibits the practice of acrobatics in public space as well as the playing of musical instruments after 10:00 p.m. The real collective +Art [More Art] denounces the Laws of Communal Living precisely by juggling, playing bongos, making chalk drawings on the sidewalk, and riding unicycles, among other acrobatic endeavors, in public space. According to the propaganda that the group hands out during its public protests:

> […] estamos hartos de la *cínica ordenanza cívica*, que pretende limpiar las calles de artistas, trabajador@s sexuales, etc. Barcelona quiere ser de la gente y la gente quiere sentirse libre de poder utilizar la vía pública como espacio de ocio y arte. No hacen falta tantas restricciones policiales ni económicas. ¡NECESITAMOS UN ARTE EN LA CALLE LIBRE DE IMPUESTOS! Por eso os invitamos a uniros a nosotros para poder reclamar lo que es nuestro, los derechos de cada un@ de l@s ciudadan@s. ¡ÚNETE A NOSOTROS! ¡RECUPEREMOS LA CALLE! Finalizará en plaza St. Jaume, con más actuaciones y más música. Para que NO FALTE ARTE EN LA CALLE![37]
>
> […] we are fed up with the *cynical civic ordinance*, which tries to clean the streets of artists, sex workers, etc. Barcelona wants to belong to the people and the people want to feel free to be able to use the public thoroughfare as space of leisure and art. So many police restrictions and economic restrictions are not necessary. WE NEED AN ART IN THE STREET FREE OF TAXES! As a result, we invite you to join us in order to be able to claim what is ours, the rights of every citizen. JOIN US! LET'S RECOVER THE STREET! It will finish in St. Jaume square, with more performances and more music. So that ART IS NOT ABSENT IN THE STREET!]

In *El cor de la ciutat*, the Laws of Communal Living are not mentioned. Juggling and playing bongos are not linked to democratizing urban space. Again, form is severed from content. It does not behoove the Tripartite to mention the Laws of Communal Living because that would only draw attention to the constant questioning of the ruling parties' ability to manage the disturbances of public order in Barcelona.

The focusing on aesthetics that results in the depoliticizing of squatting and its reduction to a purely social phenomenon seems to be a TV3 channel-wide directive, for one of the topics of discussion during an interview with actors Orila Vila (Ivan) and Aida Oset (Eli) on *El Club de TV3* [The TV3 Club], the program that follows *El cor de la ciutat*, is the street language that the *okupas* use on the show. The hosts created a manual of how to talk like an *okupa* with words and phrases like the following: "Estan d'un mal rotllo que t'hi cagues" [They're in such a bad mood], "una mani" [a political demonstration], "molará" [to like], "És per flipar, tius" [It is to flip-out, dude] and "quina canya!" [Wow!][38] Anyone who has spent any time with Catalan youth will realize that the above-mentioned words and phrases are not specific to *okupas*, but shared by young people in general. The message is clear. The *okupas* are not any different from the sons and daughters of the homemakers who watch *El cor de la ciutat* five days a week in the afternoon. They are not any different from the adolescents who watch it after school. In fact, the Tripartite wants the television-viewing audience to believe that the *okupas* are not any different from average

Spaniards. The number of scenes in which the *okupas* are shown doing completely mundane and harmless activities like drinking coffee, eating, hanging out, smoking, reading books, sleeping on the sofa, playing music, singing, painting, and doing housework borders on the comical. They are never shown setting fire to trash cans or writing graffiti on public space.

At the heart of capitalism is the issue of private property and access to it, or lack thereof. The problem is the imbalance of power between the owners of capital equipment and laborers. If one believes in capitalism, private property must be honored and protected. If one is anti-capitalist, the value of private property is questioned. As the magazine *Terra Cremada* reminds us, political *okupas* before they became *okupas* were anti-capitalists.[39] It is not surprising, then, that the topic of stealing plays a prominent role in the *okupa* storyline on *El cor de la ciutat*. What is surprising, however, are the various contradictory *okupa* stances on stealing portrayed on the show.

Ros and Markus steal building materials from one of Ivan's construction sites. As an anarchist, Ros would more than likely be familiar with Pierre-Joseph Proudhon's text *What is Property? Or, an Inquiry into the Principle of Right and Government*, in which the author asserts that property is theft. Yomango, a civil disobedience project launched in 2002 in Barcelona, proceeds from the notion that property is theft in the sense that those who have property have gained it at the expense of the weak, and promotes "shoplifting as a form of disobedience and direct action against multinational corporations."[40] Yomango does not incite stealing in order to accumulate private property, but to encourage the free circulation of goods and desires.

Eli, on the other hand, is against stealing. She (like the Tripartite) struggles to distance the *okupa* movement from being equated with delinquency. She wants to dispel the notion fomented in the newspapers that being neighbors with *okupas* is a disrupting, annoying, and dangerous experience. However, the rocks thrown at Can Sarró accompanied by shouts of "leave the neighborhood" are evidence of some of the neighbors' distrust of the *okupas*. Ros does not help the situation when, in retaliation, he throws a rock through a bar window. La K takes money from Ros's room at Can Sarró to give to Peris, the bar owner, to pay for the window. Ros, not knowing that it was la K who had taken the money, accuses other *okupas* of

stealing from him. Such an accusation paints Ros as hypocritical, and "robs" him of ideological credibility.

Eli also has a problematic relationship with stealing. When the *okupas* plan a concert, Ivan breaks into Ros's van and destroys all of the musical equipment. To dissuade Ivan from doing something similar again, the *okupas*, including Eli, steal Ivan's car. Eli's participation may be explained by the fact that, in this case, the stealing was a temporary "misplacement" of Ivan's car because it was eventually returned to him.

In another instance, a local pharmacy is robbed and the neighbors blame the *okupas*. Francisco, president of the neighborhood association, finds drugs from the pharmacy in Ros's bongo drums. Ros says someone else put them there. However, because Eli had seen Ros stealing construction material from Ivan before, she does not believe him even though he is telling the truth, for Ivan pays Markus, one of the *okupas*, to plant the drugs in Ros's bongo drums. Devastated by Eli's and his girlfriend's lack of confidence in him, Ros leaves Can Sarró and the neighborhood. Even though the show recognizes that the *okupas* do not share one position with regard to theft and that, in fact, individual *okupas* oftentimes experience slippage between seemingly contradictory stances, Eli's and La K's resounding condemnation and judgment coupled with Ros's self-imposed banishment overshadow and soften any sort of anti-capitalist agenda.

When Eli, the beautiful and idealistic *okupa*, falls in love with Ivan Crespo, the money-loving real estate mogul, the theme of the *okupas* retreats to the private sphere. The plot's core is reduced to private acts of love. The writers use the love story between Ivan and Eli to completely eclipse and discipline the *okupa* storyline to the point that Eli's identity as an *okupa* is slowly erased. In order to make their relationship work, Eli and Ivan avoid talking about politics and their worldviews. They strip their relationship of political, social, economic, cultural, in short, material context so that, as they put it, there can be just Eli and Ivan.

After Ivan saves Can Sarró by providing proof that it is a Cultural Property of National Interest, the topic of Can Sarró is dropped. We do not find out what happens to the other *okupas* except for Ros. He, as a character, is the most difficult for the writers to control. As a result, they neutralize Ros by writing him off of the show at the beginning of the last season. He is found murdered in Amsterdam.

The television audience easily recognized that *El cor de la ciutat* represented the *okupas* as good, idealistic, and civic-minded. However, the reactions to said representation were varied. On the one hand, legions of fans tuned in from week to week. On the other, critics ranging from disgruntled neighbors who actually lived in Sant Andreu to radical *okupas* voiced their discontent. For example, a neighbor in the Sant Andreu neighborhood once wrote:

> A més a més, i com a apunt subjectiu, estic farta que per snobisme, la gent defensi el que no és defensable, m'agradaria veure a alguns que m'he trobat per la vida, que m'han defensat a mort els Okupas, vivint en un carrer on sovint dormir és una aventura, i veure el carrer ple de gent borratxa tirada per les voreres és una cosa ben normal, i que les cagarades dels gossos d'aquests individus decorin el camí cap a la porta de casa seva.[41]
>
> [In addition, on a subjective note, I am tired that, because of snobbery, people defend what is indefensible. I would like to see some of the people that I have found in my life who have defended the *okupas* to the death live on a street where sleeping is an adventure, and see that a street full of drunk people strewn on the sidewalks is something quite normal, and I would like to see the poop that the *okupas'* dogs leave behind decorate the paths to their doors.]

The real Sant Andreu neighbor views the motivation for the idealized representation of the *okupas* to be snobbery on the part of the writers of the show who have no real-world experience with *okupas*. Nevertheless, a radical squatter also criticized the show's representation of the *okupas* as good and idealistic, not because of snobbery, but because he believes it to be a reflection of a trend among real *okupas* to manage their image in order to win over the population:

> A mí no me interesa ser un buen okupa ni caer bien, yo sé lo que quiero y lo que defiendo, no tengo ninguna intención de ser bueno o malo, y aún menos de dejar de hacer algo en lo que creo para crearme una imagen aceptable. ¿A qué viene tanto paripé? ¿Acaso no somos okupas? ¿Nos avergonzamos de algo de lo que hacemos y reivindicamos? ¿Por qué tenemos que rebajar nuestro discurso para caer en gracia? ¿Por qué tenemos que renunciar al nombre "okupa" (o "okupa malo") para que no nos tengan miedo?[42]
>
> [I'm not interested in being a good *okupa* or being likeable, I know what I want and what I defend, I have no intention of being good or bad, and even less of quitting something that I believe in in order to create an acceptable image. Where does all of this pretension come from? Are we not *okupas*? Are we embarrassed by what we do and fight for? Why do we have to lower our discourse in order to be liked? Why do we have to renounce the name *okupa* (or bad *okupa*) so that people are not afraid of us?]

The same criticism comes from two vastly different positions. In the first, a person who is adversely affected by squatting wants to emphasize the

okupas' dirty side to condemn the practice whereas, in the second case, a radical supporter desires to highlight the *okupas*' physical and political messiness because they both play integral parts in the anti-capitalist critique. However, it is not the writers or the *okupas* who need to win over the population but the Tripartite of the Generalitat and the Barcelona City Council. If *El cor de la ciutat* was used as a vehicle through which the Generalitat de Catalunya orchestrated and disseminated an alternate representation of the *okupas* as Catalanists in order to combat the opposition leaders' and the newspapers' efforts to naturalize the image of the *okupa* as violent delinquent, did the effort work? A recent survey conducted by the Centro de Investigaciones Sociológicas (CIS) [Center of Sociologial Investigations] asked a total of 2,487 Spaniards to rank their levels of sympathy for politicians and for various social movements including *okupas* on a scale from 0 to 10, 0 meaning no sympathy to 10 meaning complete sympathy. The *okupas* and the politicians were rated the lowest with rankings of 2.45 and 2.87 respectively.[43] One must take into account that the survey was not limited to Catalonia. Nonetheless, the numbers did not bode well for the Tripartite. In fact, the autonomic, parliamentary elections on November 28, 2010, revealed that the Tripartite was unable to mitigate the political damage caused by being associated with the *okupas*. Artur Mas of the CiU defeated the socialist incumbent José Montilla to become the new president of the Generalitat de Catalunya, thus ending the socialist control of the presidency since 2003. The more devastating blow came during the Spanish regional and local elections six months later on May 22, 2011, when Xavier Trias of the CiU defeated socialist mayoral incumbent Jordi Hereu. It was the first time in thirty-two years that a socialist was not elected mayor of Barcelona. The defeat cannot be solely attributed to the Tripartite's association with the *okupas*, but it, no doubt, played a part.

Like Spanish television, Spanish mainstream cinema has, for the most part, ignored the phenomenon of the *okupas*. However, there is one exception, *El Kaserón* [The Big Old House] (2009) directed by Pau Martínez. Part II analyzes how Martínez makes a potentially unpalatable subject digestible to a mainstream audience.

PART II: LIVE, LAUGH, LOVE: SQUATTING AS ROMANTIC COMEDY AND PROBLEM-FREE PHILOSOPHY IN *EL KASERÓN*

In some Spanish blogs and product testimonials by Spaniards on the Internet, the word *squatter* is used quite negatively as a metaphor for "fat" or "cancer." For example, a 2003 L'Oréal Perfect Slim product testimonial[44] and a 2009 blog entry criticizing the cosmetic industry[45] refer to extra body fat as "okupas de tu cuerpo" [squatters of your body]. Daniel Hernández speaks in 2010 of his cancer as "okupas hijos de puta" [the squatter sons of bitches].[46] However, in literature, comic strips, and songs, squatters are more frequently associated with love. In the songs "Un okupa en tu corazón" (2000) ["A Squatter in Your Heart"] by Raimundo Amador and "Okupa de tu corazón" (2005) ["Squatter of Your Heart"] by El sueño de morfeo, love is a Cupid-like squatter that causes love sickness or love at first sight. In Azagra's comic strip, which I mentioned in the introduction to this book, the *okupas*' love for the abandoned building transforms it into an enchanted house. However, love is sometimes a more tyrannous squatter in literature and blogs. Beatriz in Care Santos's *Okupada* (1997) describes the woman who steals the love of fellow squatter Alma "la usurpadora del amor de su vida" [the usurper of the love of her life].[47] Carmen Posadas in her personal blog illustrates in the following way the power of unwanted love to emotionally blackmail: "Se trata de los que podríamos llamar okupas sentimentales, esos que se invitan ellos solos a nuestras vidas y no hay manera de que desalojen. Ya ven: he ahí otro tipo de tiranía del amor de lo más inesperada" [It has to do with those that we could call sentimental *okupas*, those that invite themselves into our lives and there is no way to evict them. As you see, I have here one of the most unexpected types of tyranny of love].[48] Director Pau Martínez's film *El Kaserón* [The Big Old House] (2009) situates itself within and contributes to the current cultural conversation surrounding the figure of the *okupa* as psychic catalyst of the transformative power of love.

Following the examples set by "Un okupa en tu corazón" ["A Squatter in Your Heart"] by Raimundo Amador in 2000 and "Okupa de tu corazón" ["Squatter of Your Heart"] by El sueño de Morfeo in 2005, the movie poster tagline for *El Kaserón* is "cuando el amor okupa tu corazón" [when love squats your heart] with the word *okupa* in bold. The purpose of taglines is

to generate interest by quickly summing up the themes of a film. After looking at the poster, one can rapidly surmise that *El Kaserón* is about love and squatting. Developing a love story within the context of squatting has the potential to emphasize love as an uncontrollable force that overcomes rigid norms. However, *El Kaserón* takes its cue from Ivan and Eli's formulaic love story in the television soap opera *El cor de la ciutat* (2007–2008) and Care Santos's novel *Okupada* (1997). In the latter, Kike, one of the squatters, argues that the practice of squatting is actually quite scripted. He states: "Una okupación es como una historia de amor con principio y final" [Squatting is like a love story with a beginning and an end].[49] It should be noted that this is an opinion with which many *okupas* would take issue. Nevertheless, director Pau Martínez builds on this idea in his film and entrenches squatting in the closed space of a specific type of scripted love story, the romantic comedy. This genre adheres to a fixed structure of predetermined rules that dictate how the hero, the love interest, and the rest of the cast of characters relate to one another.

In addition to the tagline that appears on the movie poster, the following one turns up in the trailer: "Si quieres reírte de un tema muy serio…no te la pierdas" [If you want to laugh about a very serious matter…don't miss it]. The ambiguity of the sentence makes it impossible to determine the "very serious matter" to which Martínez refers. Is it the issue of squatting or the topic of love? In an interview with the online version of the newspaper *Levante-EMV*, Martínez identifies some of the themes in his film as "la especulación inmobiliaria, los políticos corruptos o la crisis económica" [property speculation, corrupt politicians or the economic crisis], all of which are very serious themes related to squatting.[50] He points out that he treats these serious topics with humor and implies, but does not directly affirm, that the role of laughter in his film is, like Bakhtinian laughter, to stimulate dialogue.[51] However, in a contradictory move, Martínez admits to Abelardo Muñoz that: "En *El Kaserón* me interesa más la historia de amor. En realidad la comedia romántica de chico busca chica es el todo del cine. No sé quién dijo que las películas son siempre una historia de amor; si acaba bien es comedia, si mal, drama" [In *El Kaserón* the love story interests me more. In reality the romantic comedy of boy seeks girl is what cinema is all about. I don't know who said that movies are always love stories; if it ends well it is a comedy, if badly, a drama]. [52]

On the one hand, one could categorize the film as belonging to what Bakhtin called the "serio-comical" genre[53] in which "Socratic laughter (reduced to irony) and Socratic degradations […] bring the world closer and familiarize it in order to investigate it fearlessly and freely."[54] That is, Martínez fancies his film as one that will stimulate audiences to think critically about squatting in Spain. As a result, he dresses the opening credits of the film in the zine aesthetic and, in so doing, builds a set of expectations for the rest of the movie based on all of the assumptions that go along with zines, which, according to Stephen Duncombe, associate professor at the Gallatin School and the Department of Media, Culture and Communications of New York University, "are noncommercial, nonprofessional, small-circulation magazines" that are produced, published, and distributed by their creators.[55] These self-published magazines, as Janice Radway, the Walter Dill Scott Professor of Communication Studies at Northwestern University, emphasizes, are examples of "a democratic approach to political intervention, a do-it-yourself, from-the-ground-up practice with the potential to challenge the institutions of mainstream society."[56] Because the zine aesthetic consists of "collaged pamphlets with chaotic, cut-and-paste layouts that defy linear scanning, sometimes resist traditional narrative sequencing, and even refuse pagination altogether," Radway describes zines as "decidedly not reader-friendly," whose contents outline "their disaffection from the mainstream."[57] In this case, the expectation is that the film will challenge mainstream society's notions of squatting. However, on the other hand, Martínez seems to intuit, as does journalist Juan Pedro Yániz of the newspaper *ABC*, that serious political issues like squatting scare off mainstream moviegoers if they are not packaged in a commercial-friendly format like a romantic comedy. After briefly summarizing the movie, Yániz quickly reassures his readers to not be frightened ["Pero que nadie se asuste"] because everything "se resuelve en clave de humor" [resolves itself with humor].[58] In reality, the laughter of the film is not a laughter that stimulates dialogue, but, rather, a laughter that avoids conflicts. *El Kaserón* is like the middle child who wants everyone to just get along. Using the elements of romantic comedy as identified by Michael Hauge, the rest of Part II will concomitantly explore Pau Martínez's crystallization of revolutionary desire into a form of expression with fixed rules and relations, examine how this move forces the *okupas* in

El Kaserón to signify categorically as good-natured, playful, creative, spontaneous, and fun-loving free spirits whose revolution is, principally, a harmless dance revolution free of political and social conflict, and compare the fictional *okupas* of *El Kaserón* with the real *okupas* of Can Masdeu.

It is not surprising that Martínez, far from being transgressive, stuffs his film within a mainstream form, for he is also a supporter of SGAE, la Sociedad General de Autores y Editores [General Society of Authors and Publishers], an institution of mainstream society that manages the musical copyrights of songwriters, composers, and music publishers as well as the intellectual property rights of playwrights, choreographers, and screenwriters. Despite SGAE's relentless campaigns against piracy, the unauthorized copying of copyrighted content, Spaniards legally have a right to make private copies of copyrighted content as long as they are for private use and not for profit.[59] SGAE recognizes that new technology makes it easier to reproduce copies of copyrighted material and to share those copies, and views the new technology as a threat to the future revenue streams of copyright owners. As a result, it has countered with protectionist and controlling measures. In 2007, it extended the canon, a tax paid by the manufacturers of analog media, to the manufacturers of digital media.[60] SGAE has also been instrumental in condemning p2p file sharing on the Internet. After years of attempting to close down pages on the web containing one or more links to downloadable copyrighted material, the Ley Sinde was passed on January 24, 2011, and it allows SGAE to do just that. In addition to being hated by digital media consumers and Internet users, SGAE has a bad reputation among the general public, as well. Because it collects royalties even from charity events, popular festivals, hair dressers who play music in their salons, and weddings, SGAE is cultivating the public perception that it has a single-minded, ferocious appetite for money.

Martínez, along with his business partner, Gabriel Ochoa, runs a production company called 2manyproducers that, according to its MySpace page, "Ha desarrollado su ámbito de actuación en productos artísticos imaginativos, arriesgados y creativos en el sector audiovisual" [has developed its range of action in imaginative, risk taking, and creative artistic products in the audiovisual sector].[61] In collaboration with la Fundación Autor de la SGAE, 2manyproducers organized the second edition of 2manyclips in 2009, the same year as *El Kaserón*'s theatrical

release. 2manyclips is a contest to find the best original song created by a group or soloist living in Spain. Pau Martínez and Gabriel Ochoa, with the financial backing of SGAE, produce a music video of the winning song. The impetus of 2manyclips is "potenciar la creatividad artística de miles de músicos que carecen de medios para dar a conocer su saber hacer" [to promote the artistic creativity of thousands of musicians who lack the means to introduce their know-how].[62] However, the contest is not open to all Spanish musicians. In order to be able to participate, the song must be registered or in the process of being registered with SGAE, or be from a musician who is a member of SGAE or who is in the process of becoming a member. Martínez forces the musicians to agree to a one-size-fits-all copyright issued by SGAE instead of allowing the creators the freedom to customize their own copyrights through initiatives like Creative Commons.[63]

Martínez's rhetoric that he takes artistic chances with his production company 2manyproducers while siding with the rigid, controlling SGAE is completely coherent with the contradictory juxtaposition of squatting in *El Kaserón* with romantic comedy. Such a move causes Martínez to distance himself from both politicians and *okupas*. By not taking a definitive stance in support of or against squatting, his film suffers from an unanchored quality. That is, the squatted social center in *El Kaserón* is not very anchored in reality or the reality of rural *okupación*. It seems to float in an unrecognizable Neverland in the mountains. The film does not make it explicit where in Catalonia it is located. However, the parallels between *el kaserón* in the movie and Can Masdeu, a real-life *kaserón*, are undeniable. The squatted, filmic farmhouse, abandoned since the 1970s whose owner is the town council, is situated in the mountains, but it is very close to the city. The squatters cultivate organic, non-transgenic food, manage a bar, and offer art classes to retired women. Can Masdeu, a squatted, former hospital for lepers abandoned since the 1950s owned by the Hospital Sant Pau Trust Fund whose three board members are the Barcelona City Council, the regional government, and the Catholic Church, is located in the mountains of the Collserolla National Park in Barcelona, but is only a ten-minute walk from the closest subway station and a twenty-five-minute bike ride from the city center. The squatters of Can Masdeu also cultivate organic, non-transgenic food, manage a bar, and offer many workshops. The similarities

between *el kaserón* and Can Masdeu are obvious, but the differences within the similarities are more revealing. My analysis focuses on four concerns of rural squatting: the combination of squatting with organic agriculture, the social function of the project, its involvement in the urban political network, and the question of remunerated work.

In the film, bread is portrayed as and linked to work as its goal. That is, one works so that one can eat. Pau Martínez taps in to this relationship between work and bread in the opening two scenes. Alfredo, the hero of the romantic comedy, enters an industrial bakery. Freshly baked croissants sit on a table. He calls out to see if anyone is there, but no one responds. Seemingly alone, he picks up one of the croissants and begins to eat. Suddenly, the lights turn on and Alfredo's mother, sister, Elisa, and brother, Martín, as well as Isidro, the owner of the industrial bakery, jump out to surprise Alfredo. Startled, he begins to violently choke. Isidro applies the Heimlich maneuver and the croissant flies out of Alfredo's mouth. In the following scene, still in the industrial bakery, all are celebrating Alfredo's passing of the bar exam and his new job as a lawyer. Alfredo states that his father, when he was still alive, used to say: "El trabajo es todo lo que tenemos. Dignifica al hombre y le da carácter" [Work is everything that we have. It dignifies man and gives him character].[64] Since the loss of his father at adolescence, Alfredo has been tirelessly working at the industrial bakery to pay for his studies and support the family. The death of his father forced him to take on the role of the responsible bread winner. He had to work at a young age to secure a future for himself and his family. Alfredo's mother suffers from Alzheimer's disease. Because of her faltering memory and disorientation, she cannot be left alone. Her distancing from the past keeps Alfredo chained to it. His mother's current illness deepens his sense of responsibility.

These two initial scenes set the stage for the rest of the movie. They raise several key questions. What is Alfredo's "daily bread"? What fulfills Alfredo? Is it work, as he says? Or is it love and an alliance of friends? At the party, he does express a belief in work, but, the initial scene of the movie, in which he nearly chokes on his croissant, seems to foreshadow that his expectations may not be met, that he may be disillusioned about the fruits of his labor. The question of work in the film sets up a dichotomy between *okupa* as lazy, adolescent free spirit versus responsible,

disciplined, organized, hardworking adult. The *okupas* of Can Masdeu are far from lazy. Ainhoa Roca explains in the television program *El escarabajo verde*:

> Antes, cuando vivía en un piso y tenía una vida más convencional, a lo mejor no trabajaba tanto como trabajo ahora y ganaba el doble de lo que gano ahora. Es cambiar de paradigma. A lo que te dedicas es el tiempo. Si no vas a trabajar no quiere decir que no estés trabajando. No trabajas para ganar dinero pero sí trabajas para llevar adelante este proyecto. Son pequeñas cosas pero en lugar de trabajar para tener dinero para comprarte el pan y tener verduras pues estás trabajando en el huerto o estás trabajando haciendo el pan o si se te estropea la electricidad te dedicas al tiempo en aprender a arreglarla en lugar de trabajar para pagar el dinero a alguien que sabe.[65]
>
> [Before, when I lived in an apartment and had a more conventional life, perhaps I didn't work as much as I work now and I earned double what I earn now. It's a question of changing paradigms. What you dedicate yourself to is time. If you are not going to work doesn't mean that you are not working. You don't work to earn money but you do work to carry out this project. They are little things but instead of working for money to buy bread and have vegetables well you work in the garden or you work making the bread or if the electricity goes out you spend time learning how to fix it instead of working to pay money to someone who knows how.]

The *okupas* of Can Masdeu have figured out how to prioritize working on the things that they are passionate about instead of feeling chained to jobs that do not fulfill them. They work, but they do not work solely for a paycheck.

Unlike the *okupas* of Can Masdeu, Alfredo is still in search of his passion. After completing his degree, Alfredo begins employment as a lawyer for a city council, the name of which is never mentioned (however, the viewer can assume it is a city in Catalonia since the license plates on the cars carry the "B" for Barcelona). One of the most striking sequences of the film is the presentation of the city council headquarters. It is a very large, modern building with an expansive plaza that leads to the front doors. The plaza's expansion seems infinite because its straight lines are not obstructed by anything. There are no fountains or monuments; just one smooth, flat, unhindered slab of concrete. It is a hyper-urban, artificial, constructed space. There are no trees, flowers, or vegetation of any kind. It is completely void of nature, color, artwork and people. It is lifeless, a veritable dead zone. Alfredo is visibly uptight and nervous by his surroundings. Inside, the space has been completely gutted. Exposed cables hang from the ceiling and masking tape on the floor delineates where desks

once were situated. Alfredo's work station sits in the middle of this sea of underutilized space.

The first case that Alfredo receives as a lawyer for the city council involves *okupas*. The city council has developed plans to convert an old farmhouse in the mountains on the outskirts of town into a social center. However, for the past ten years, the farmhouse has been squatted by *okupas*. Even though the city council legally owns the farmhouse, the politicians refuse to evict the *okupas* because they want to avoid any possible political fallout that might cost them their positions in the coming elections. Since the *okupas* boast that they already provide social services for the community, the city council has decided to give the *okupas* the opportunity to present a formal project. If they do, the city council will allow them to stay in the farmhouse and manage the future social center. Alfredo's job is to negotiate with the *okupas* and convince them to develop a plan. Similar to the town council's desire in the film to convert *el kaserón* into a social center, Jordi Hereu, in his 2007 campaign for mayor of Barcelona, promised to install an institutional access point to the mountains of the Collserolla National Park and a youth hostel in Can Masdeu, two services that the *okupas* of Can Masdeu already provided.

The farmhouse is the polar opposite of the city council headquarters. It is located in the mountains surrounded by a forest of trees. A huge black guard dog wearing a red leash is painted on the front exterior wall with the Latin warning "Cave Canem" or "Beware of the dog" written in capital letters. The image of the guard dog is a copy of a Roman mosaic found on the floor of the entrance hall to the House of the Tragic Poet in Pompeii. The placement of the dog on the wall of the farmhouse to the left of the entrance recalls a quote from the Roman novel *The Satyricon* by Petronius in which Trimalchio invites Encolpius and his companions to his estate for a banquet: "For there on the left as you entered, in fresco, stood a huge dog straining at his leash. In large letters under the painting was scrawled: BEWARE OF THE DOG!"[66] The food that Alfredo will feast on at the *okupa* banquet will not be food that money can buy but an ethereal food that will fill him with passion. The first words that Alfredo shouts upon entering the farmhouse—"Hello! Is anyone there?"—are the first words he says when he enters the industrial bakery, thus creating a connection between the two. The squat is an anti-bakery of psychic sustenance.

The first meeting between Alfredo, the hero, and Eva, the romance character, establishes relations between love, marijuana, and *okupa* as worldview-altering substances. The marijuana smoke that Alfredo first sees and then inhales is quickly followed by the sight of a beautiful, bare-breasted artist named Eva. According to Michael Hauge, the rules of romantic comedy dictate that "the audience must fall in love with the romance character" and "must root for the hero to win her love."[67] Because Eva is an *okupa* and because of the overwhelmingly popular disdain for *okupas* (documented in Chapter 2 of this book), this requirement poses a major hurdle. In order to play by the rules of the genre, Martínez does the only thing he can do: distance Eva and the rest of the *okupas* from the unsavory political reality of *okupación*. Instead of a confrontational, political practice, squatting is reduced to enjoying life, and *okupas*, instead of violent rabble-rousers, are good-natured, playful, creative, spontaneous, fun-loving free spirits. It is on this sleight of hand that Martínez builds the film. That is, the insurmountable obstacle separating the two lovers is not that Alfredo is a lawyer and Eva an *okupa*, but rather Alfredo's inability to enjoy life without feeling guilty or anxious that he should be working instead.

After being intoxicated by Eva's beauty, Alfredo meets the rest of the *okupas*: Axel, a middle-aged, struggling musician; Ventura, a radical anarchist; McGuffin, a Scottish foreigner; and Marc, a graphic designer. Martínez frames this first exchange as a confrontation. The *okupas* sit opposite an uptight, nervous Alfredo, who lays down a handkerchief before sitting on the ground so as not to soil his suit. The *okupas*, on the other hand, are relaxed, self-confident, witty, and charming. They listen to Alfredo's proposal, but are not interested. Eva escorts Alfredo to the door. As he is leaving, Eva tells him in a coquettish way that she would like to hear more about the details of the proposal, and invites him to return. He does. He familiarizes himself with the physical squat, explores what motivates the *okupas* by investigating the phenomenon on the Internet, and discusses the proposal individually with each member. As per the rules of romantic comedy, "the romance character must be intertwined with the hero's outer motivation," in this case, Alfredo's desire to convince the *okupas* to develop a formal project, and "the romance character must create obstacles to both the hero's desires," that is, to Alfredo's wish for project

approval and to his need for Eva's love.[68] This leads to Eva's rejection of the proposal along with the rest of the *okupas*' dismissal. However, inspired by his mother's recollection, whether true or not, of his father's refrain that one should never surrender because without perseverance, one never gets anywhere, Alfredo does not accept defeat. He decides to attend a party thrown by the *okupas* at the farmhouse and pay Eva another visit.

While searching for Eva at the party, Alfredo once again finds himself alone in a kitchen tempted by baked goods. Like he does in the opening sequences of the film in the industrial bakery, Alfredo picks up the food, this time cookies, and starts to eat. He consumes several. The surprise, in this case, is Eva's abrupt entrance to announce the secret ingredient in the cookies, marijuana. The two surprises do share a common element: they both mark new beginnings and foreshadow expectations not being met. The scene also solidifies the connection between Eva and marijuana. She will have the same effect on Alfredo as does the drug. Alfredo's reaction to Eva's revelation is to run out of the kitchen, onto the open-air patio, and grab someone's beverage to drink. Whereas at the surprise party, Alfredo had sipped champagne, scolding his sister Elisa for drinking too much too quickly, at the *okupa* party, he guzzles what turns out to be an infamous, and highly alcoholic, "McGuffin cocktail." The alcoholic beverage and the marijuana transport Alfredo to the Neverland of his lost adolescence. He parties heavily doing all of the things that normally terrify him emotionally like losing control, having fun, and being uninhibited. The party's musical soundtrack is Axel's freestyle song about squatters. According to Axel, one of the older squatters, squatting is about freedom and fun. He sings that squatters are "buena gente, buena gente de verdad" [good people, truly good people].[69] Indicative of his transformation, even if temporary, from responsible adult to free-spirited adolescent, Alfredo wakes up the next morning in one of the rooms at the farmhouse wearing nothing but his underpants and an Iron Maiden T-shirt.

The *okupas*' revolution at the farmhouse is presented as a dance revolution. The principal social function of *el kaserón* is a rural discotheque where the young people of the community can dance, drink, and consume marijuana. The squatted social center as front for an illegal discotheque is a negative stereotype that appears often in print media (see Chapter 2 of this book, and will be referenced again in Chapter 4). Unlike the *okupas* of Can

Masdeu who foster a “symbiotic relationship between young and old people in the barrio”[70] and whose “dedication to permaculture and self-determination” energize them to bring “the issues of autonomy and ecology into the political agenda”[71], Eva is the only one out of the five *okupas* of *el kaserón* who tries to reach out to the community with her sculpture class. It is true that Eva’s students are older, retired women. However, the driving discourse of the movie is that *okupación* is a young person’s practice. In contrast, during the eviction attempt of Can Masdeu in 2002, the older neighbors who worked in the community gardens chanted to the police that they were *okupas* also because they, too, used the space. Vital to Can Masdeu’s project (the *okupas* could be evicted at any moment) is its social legitimacy. As a result, Can Masdeu continually reaches out to both its neighborhood, Canyelles, and to its district, Nou Barris. Can Masdeu connects with its neighbors in several ways. First, one hundred neighbors work side-by-side with the *okupas* to cultivate community gardens. Second, the *okupas* invite groups of schoolchildren to Can Masdeu the first two Fridays of every month to learn about the environment, organic agriculture, sustainability, and responsible consumption. Third, every Sunday at noon, the *okupas* organize free tours of Can Masdeu as well as activities and workshops.

With the pretext of showing Alfredo the house’s garden, Eva provides him important background information, and, in so doing, weaves squatting and organic agriculture into one discourse. She, referring to the old farmhouse, explains: “It was old and unused, a bit like this basket. Without the tomatoes, it’d just be a dusty piece of junk.” She tosses in a tomato and says, “Now it’s a basket.”[72] Eva attempts to take the basket from Alfredo to continue picking tomatoes, but Alfredo resists and replies, “I think the owner has arrived and wants to use the basket.”[73] She throws up her hands, and takes a step back as if she were surrendering (but this gesture, as we will see, is really indicative of her refusal to debate), and shows him to another part of the garden. While in front of a lemon tree, she picks a lemon and explains that “this doesn’t have anything to do with the transgenic crap that supermarkets sell” to which Alfredo responds by accusing her of being elitist because, first, not everyone has the luxury of being able to grow their own food and, second, genetically modified crops facilitate mass food production “which is the only thing that allows people to eat.”[74] Instead of

defending her point, she just dismisses Alfredo. He tries to enter into a conversation with Eva about her and the rest of the *okupas*' principals, but instead of accepting Alfredo's challenge and viewing it as an opportunity to elaborate, she sidesteps the issue. She chooses, rather, to attack Alfredo on a personal level by remarking, "You believe less in us than we believe in the city council."[75] Harsh words considering how much they distrust the administration.[76] Alfredo does not lash out with his own criticism. He simply offers up that he is trying desperately to understand. Unlike Eva's unwillingness to defend her position, Can Masdeu, on the other hand, argues that the connection between squatting and organic agriculture is the desire for self-sufficiency or autonomy. By squatting, you are no longer beholden to the banks in order to pay back a mortgage, and organic farming allows you to grow your own food while at the same time being kinder to the environment.

In another part of the house, Ventura is planning a demonstration with ten other activists. The system that they are planning to attack, namely a capitalist one in which the mixing of public policy with private finance results in governmental campaigns like "fewer immigrants, more car parks" is, hypocritically, the same system that the activists embrace when Marc interrupts the political assembly to sell T-shirts for 10 euros that "will offend your mothers."[77] The activists, unhesitatingly pulling out their wallets, swarm around Marc to pay for their antiestablishment identities. The T-shirt that Marc is selling has the image of Pope Benedict XVI smoking a joint with the words "Ratzinger Peta." *Peta* is Spanish slang for joint. The shirt is a direct reference to the campaigns to protest the papal visit to director Martínez's hometown, Valencia, in 2006. While wearing a shirt that uses the non-papal name, Ratzinger, and not Benedict XVI, shows a lack of respect and rejects the belief that the pope is closer to God, it is a far cry from a direct action protest like the anti-papal naked bike ride *Jo no t'espere vestit* [I am not waiting for you dressed] that occurred on July 8, 2006, in Valencia. These activists protested precisely the contradiction between the ostentatious displays of wealth of the Catholic Church and the poverty of many of its believers, denounced the use of public funds to pay for the costly papal visit instead of dedicating the money to social programs, and emphasized the Church's uncomfortable relationship with the naked human body. Ventura explodes with anger and yells at the

activists to take their T-shirts and get out of the house. True to his anarchist tendencies, Ventura does not believe that there is any room in the squat for "traitors or religions."[78] Marc counters by calling Ventura a "second-rate Bakunin."[79] Unfortunately, Eva rushes in to break up the fight before they are finished discussing their differences. The argument is a necessary and valid one. How should the *okupas* use the house? Should it be a space completely free of market relations? Should they sell T-shirts? Should they throw parties during which they sell alcoholic beverages and food in order to have money to pay for future fines or court costs? Or, is that hypocritical? Should the *okupas* give back to the squat as much as they take from it? That is, in return for living rent-free, should they give back to the community by being politically active, by creating community gardens? Or is squatting just a personal party? It seems that Eva does not want to engage in this type of conversation.

With regard to involvement in Barcelona's urban political network, Can Masdeu was one of the sponsors in 2009 of INnMotion, a biennial festival of performance and applied visual arts organized by Conservas, a think tank of cultural criticism in Barcelona. It was at this festival that Derivart, an interdisciplinary art group based in Barcelona that explores the relationship between art, technology, and finance, presented two of its newest computer programs that highlight SGAE's hypocrisy, *El inspector* [The Inspector] and *El manager* [The Manager.] These are two programs that SGAE should have created, but did not because, as Derivart maintains, piracy actually provides it with a huge revenue stream. For example, SGAE has a very rudimentary search engine to find out if a song is registered or not. It only allows you to search one song at a time. Derivart has created a program, *El inspector*, which facilitates searches using SGAE's own database. You type in a word in SGAE's search engine and the program in conjunction with SGAE's repertoire will produce a list of all of the songs whose titles contain that word. Plus, the program creates a link where you can download the song. Derivart transforms the web page of SGAE into one that contains links to downloads. Derivart argues with a wink that they have created this program as a tool for the inspectors of SGAE so that they know exactly where all of the links are, and can prosecute.[80] The other program, *El manager,* is useful when organizing a party or a wedding. In order to determine if the *zarzuelas* that a friend will sing are protected by SGAE, a

folder can be created containing all of the songs. *El manager* removes the songs that are registered with SGAE and places them in a separate folder. In this way, *El manager* cleans the set list of copyrights. Derivart argues that this is what SGAE should provide if they really do not want people to use their songs at parties.[81]

I doubt that Alfredo was concerned with creating a set list for his mother's funeral, for her sudden death was no party. Instead of freeing him from the past, her passing enchains him even more because the narrative he uses to make sense of her death is that his desire for freedom and fun has killed her. He now feels shame and guilt for having spent so much time with the *okupas*, for it eventually cost him his job with the town council.[82] He blames Eva for leading him astray and, ultimately, for the death of his mother. Allowing social norms to speak through him, he judges Eva by telling her that "she should visit it someday" referring to the "real world" of responsibilities.[83] This hurtful criticism is Eva's eviction notice to abandon his heart. For weeks, Alfredo refuses to return Eva's calls. Fed up, she finally confronts him in the industrial bakery where he is currently working. A key verb in Alfredo's conversation with Eva when he refers to his mother's death is *despistarse* (to get lost, to lose one's way). The ramifications of Alfredo's phrase "me despisté un momento" [I lost my way for a moment] are many and require an unpacking of *despistarse* and its related words *despistado(a)* and *despiste*. The "momento," his time spent away from his mother's side at the squat during which he indulges his inner *okupa*, is, as the verb *despistarse* indicates, a moment *de despiste*, or a moment of inattentiveness.[84] Martínez carefully leads up to the death of Alfredo's mother and his sense of responsibility by inserting a scene in which his absence puts his mother at risk. One day, Alfredo returns to the smell of gas in his family's home. His disoriented mother, alone, forgets that she has turned on the gas stove. When Alfredo receives the call, it is not explicit how his mother has died. Did she turn on the gas again? Did she fall? The details are unimportant. What is important is that, in Alfredo's mind, his inattentiveness (*despiste*) led to his mother's death. Eva reassures him that it was not his fault. Regardless, in his opinion, he cannot "seguir siendo el tonto" [continue playing the fool].[85] For Alfredo, *okupas* are fools who need to grow up like everybody else. Eva disagrees. "La gente no madura. La gente crece, se hace vieja, se le cae el pelo. Pero no madura"

[People don’t grow up. They grow, get old, go bald. But they don’t grow up.][86] In other words, people do not acquire superior sensibilities just because they jump through the hoops of society. Growing up does not have to mean giving up your passions and sacrificing your desires. Both the discussion and the relationship reach an impasse.

Alfredo is lying to himself about his feelings, and he is choking on the false memory of his father. His body cannot seem to swallow the notion that work was so important to his father because the daily bread of work is not fulfilling for Alfredo. As in the first scene, when Isidro performs the Heimlich maneuver and dislodges the croissant from Alfredo’s throat, it is Isidro again in the industrial bakery who frees Alfredo’s blocked mind. He reveals to Alfredo that: “Tu padre era un golfo. Trabajaba lo justo y disfrutaba de la vida para el disgusto de tu madre. Tenía un montón de deudas. Lo que te diría tu padre es que sólo se vive una vez y ahora es cuando tú puedes decidir cómo” [Your father was a lazy bum. He worked as little as possible and lived life to the fullest, which used to upset your mother. He had loads of debts. What your father would tell you is that you only live once and now is when you can decide how].[87]

Isidro releases Alfredo from the chains of a misleading past. Alfredo’s static mind opens up to enjoying life as do the *okupas*, and to the articulation of collective speech against the domination of the town council and capitalist exploitation. Alfredo goes to *el kaserón* to fight the eviction, and to win back Eva. However, Alfredo only finds Ventura chained to the house awaiting the police and the bulldozers. Axel, Marc, McGuffin, and Eva choose to leave voluntarily because they do not see any possible way to stop the eviction. On their way out of town, as McGuffin is lamenting the fact that the party that has been the ten-year squat has ended (“Se acabó la fiesta”), Eva sees a sign in front of a building across the street from the headquarters of the town council that catches her eye. It reads: “Centro Cívico Municipal: Obra y Construcción de Nuevos Espacios Culturales” [Municipal Civic Center: Work and Construction of New Cultural Spaces]. She smiles. Eva and the crew return to *el kaserón*, free Ventura and Alfredo, and hand over *el kaserón* to a bewildered town council. They all, including Alfredo, proceed to squat the new site. Alfredo’s emotional journey is completed when he confesses to Eva that what he is doing is not very adult, and kisses her, embracing both his inner *okupa* and his love.

While the *okupas* in both *El cor de la ciutat* and *El Kaserón* have similar admirable qualities, the *okupas* in novels are not as homogeneous. The differences in representation occur generally between children's and young adult literature novels, and adult fiction. Although this split, too, gets muddied. Part III analyzes how the *okupas*' creativity is represented in literature by non-*okupas*.

PART III: BETWEEN THE CAPITALIST MONSTER AND MONSTROUS CREATIVITY: LITERATURE ABOUT *OKUPAS*

Even though *okupación* has been a part of the fabric of everyday social reality in Spain since the 1980s, it is not a particularly popular topic among literary writers. As of 2012, only eight novels have been published in which squatting takes place or squatters appear: *Las pelirrojas traen mala suerte* [Redheads Bring Bad Luck] (1995), *El okupa* [The Squatter] (1997), *Okupada* [Squatted] (1997), *Korazón de Pararrayos* [Heart of Lightning Rod] (2003), *Los okupantes* [The Occupiers] (2005), *Austràlia* [Australia] (2008), *De música ligera* [About Light Music] (2009) and *El rey del mambo* [The King of Mambo] (2009).[88] Despite the infrequency of the topic, when it is treated, it inspires noteworthy writing. Three of the eight novels have won literary prizes (*Las pelirrojas traen mala suerte*—the Jaén Prize for Children's Narrative in 1995, *Korazón de Pararrayos*—the Edebé Prize for Children's Literature in 2003, and *Austràlia*—the Pin i Soler Prize in 2007). Half of the novels are set in Barcelona (*Okupada*, *Korazón de Pararrayos*, *Austràlia*, and *El rey del mambo*), and two of the eight were originally published in Catalan (*Korazón de Pararrayos* and *Austràlia*), likely because squatting is more prevalent in Barcelona than the rest of Spain. The most telling commonality among the novels about *okupación* is that five of the eight are categorized as children's and young adult literature (*Las pelirrojas traen mala suerte*, *El okupa*, *Okupada*, *Korazón de Pararrayos*, and *Los okupantes*), and out of these five, three come with a reading guide and/or activities for the classroom (*Okupada*, *Korazón de Pararrayos*, and *Los okupantes*). There are two possible explanations: 1) Squatting is an activity, principally, of young adults and, hence, would be a topic in which the youth would be more interested; and 2) the *okupas*

possess certain ideal qualities that should be taught in school and emulated, despite the fact that politically motivated squatting is a crime.

All the presses that have published novels with references to *okupas* that have been categorized as children's and young adult literature (Grupo Edebé—*Korazón de Pararrayos*, Planetalector—*Los okupantes*, Edelvives—*El okupa*, Alfaguara Juvenil—*Las pelirrojas traen mala suerte*, and Alba—*Okupada*) have very clear didactic mission statements, with the exception of Alba.[89] For example, Grupo Edebé is a publishing house whose aim is to provide teachers and professors with high quality reading materials as well as online reading guides, class activities, and grading rubrics. The reading materials are chosen to foment the following values: friendship and/or love, respect for the environment, responsible consumption, equality between the sexes, moral and civic responsibility, peace, healthy living, sexual health, drivers' education, respect for the elderly, tolerance and solidarity, and respect for traditions and cultures. Cuatrovientos is one of several collections that forms part of Planetalector, a publishing house owned by the Grupo Planeta, a multimedia company that, in addition to directing more than fifty publishing houses in Spain and Latin America, runs the newspapers *La Razón* and *ADN* in Spain and *El Tiempo* in Colombia, the radio station Onda Cero, the television station Antena 3 TV, and the book distributor Casa del Libro. The objective of Planetalector is to produce, according to its slogan "libros que forman lectores" [books that form readers][90] and the collection Cuatrovientos, more specifically, treats "situaciones conflictivos, realidad social y diversidad cultural" [conflictive situations, social reality and cultural diversity] with the aim of creating "argumentos que, en definitiva, motiven a los jóvenes y les hagan tomar parte en el mundo en que vivimos" [storylines that, in short, motivate the youth and makes them take part in the world in which we live].[91] Planetalector, like Grupo Edebé, has created an online forum from which teachers are able to download reading guides and classroom activities. The Edelvives publishing house has 120 years of experience providing books that speak to "humanismo cristiano, educación en valores, cultura solidaria, desarrollo sostenible, consumo racional" [Christian humanism, education in values, a culture of solidarity, sustainable development, rational consumerism].[92] Alfaguara Juvenil is one of eight publishing houses owned by the Grupo Santillana in Spain. Grupo Santillana, in turn, forms part of

PRISA, one of the leading companies in the creation and distribution of cultural and educational content as well as news and entertainment in the Spanish- and Portuguese-speaking markets. In addition to the Grupo Santillana, PRISA maintains the world-renowned Spanish newspaper *El País* and the radio and television music show *40 Principales*. Each of PRISA's four areas of commercial activity, publishing-education, press, radio, and audiovisual, adhere to the same self-professed objectives, such as "la defensa de los valores democráticos, el pluralismo, la tolerancia y la protección del medio ambiente" [the defense of democratic values, pluralism, tolerance and the protection of the environment][93] in order to build "sociedades más libres, justas y solidarias" [freer, more just and solidary societies].[94]

These values (social solidarity, ecological sustainability, responsible consumerism, social justice, and the importance of an alliance of friends, and by extension, cooperation and sharing) are embraced by the *okupas*. As a result, *okupación* as a topic fits well in the aforementioned publishing houses. In addition to the values expressed by the presses, *Korazón de Pararrayos* and *Los okupantes*, two of the three children's and young adult literature novels that have accompanying reading guides and/or class activities, are specifically marketed to encourage the following values: tolerance and solidarity, friendship and love, family and respect for the elderly. In other words, the presses Edebé and Planetalector and the authors present politically motivated *okupas*, criminals under the law, as role models for the youth. This is possible because the novels do not contain specific calls to political action, but, rather, are vehicles through which to celebrate the idealism of the *okupas*. The message enclosed in these books is to be idealistic and to experience *okupación*, but only literarily, at a safe distance.

Korazón de Pararrayos forms part of Edebé's Tucan Rojo collection, a series of fourteen books for children 12 years and older that showcases stories about tolerance, solidarity, friendship, and family. Within this series, educators are free to choose the novel that they feel most exemplifies the value to be modeled in class. According to planlector.com, since December 14, 2008, the class activities for *Korazón de Pararrayos* have been downloaded from the Internet 218 times (only one other book had fewer downloads, but this can be attributed to its more recent publication date of

2010). In comparison, the class activities for the most popular book in the series have been downloaded 1,878 times. These numbers were recorded on April 30, 2012. The implication is that many educators do not agree with Edebé that *Korazón de Pararrayos* should be used in the classroom, despite being an award-winning text.

On the other hand, *Los okupantes* is as popular as the other offerings within the collection Cuatrovientos, a series of thirteen books for adolescents 14 years and older published by Planetalector. The average downloads, also calculated on April 30, 2012, for the reading guides among the thirteen novels was 220. The reading guide for *Los okupantes* was downloaded 240 times. One explanation for the difference in acceptance between *Los okupantes* and *Korazón de Pararrayos* might be that the latter is based on real events, the squatting of Can Masdeu in Barcelona, and, hence, makes more of a political reading of *okupación* without simultaneously defusing the political implications of that reading. *Los okupantes* is a horror story, and, as a result, much more fantastic and distanced from political reality.

As opposed to the mission statements of the presses that publish children's and young adult literature in which squatting takes place or squatters appear, the mission statements of those that publish adult literature concerning squatting are not, principally, to strengthen certain ethical and moral values in society, but to simply produce "great literature." One of these, Ediciones Irreverentes, was established by five young writers—Miguel Ángel de Rus, Antonio López del Moral, Jordi Sabaté, José Luis Cantalejo, and Juan Pedro Molina—who decided to form their own publishing house unbeholden to outside influences. Ediciones Irreverentes bills itself as Spain's and Spanish America's first independent publishing house. The irreverence referred to in the name as well as projected in its symbol, a flatulent dog, is a nod to the values of the Cynics. Like the Cynics, whose name is derived from the Ancient Greek *κυνικός (kynikos)* meaning "dog-like" and *κύων (kyôn)* meaning "dog,"[95] Ediciones Irreverentes does not respect the dominant, societal norms dictated by those in power. Not only does the content of its books challenge the traditional conventions of literature, its commercial practice questions the standards of the publishing industry. In other words, unlike in the larger publishing houses, the writers contracted with Ediciones Irreverentes have complete

control over the publishing process from beginning to end. However, even though the publishing house is seemingly rebellious and boasts that its books avoid simplistic stereotypes, the treatment of *okupas* in *El rey del mambo* is very stereotypical. *Okupas* are described as punks with tattoos and piercings who wear tattered clothes and walk the streets with their mangy dogs. *El rey del mambo* describes the *okupa* movement as full of hypocrites. In this novel, even the *okupas* do not believe in their ideals and have become totalitarian. *De música ligera*, of the publishing house 451, offers a more neutral portrayal (squats are places to crash, venues to play music, and places to practice prostitution—although this use of the squat is rejected by the politically motivated *okupas*) whereas *Austràlia*, although adult literature, shares some of the content of children's and young adult literature.

According to autonomist Marxist Antonio Negri, two "monsters" exist in the dynamics of class struggle engendered by capitalism: the owners of capital, because they establish relations of production that are oftentimes exploitative and violent, and, from the point of view of the capitalists, the laborers who question the capitalists' entitlement to power. Within the context of post-Fordism and cognitive capitalism, class struggle "has now shifted on the paradigmatic alternatives of *bios*," that is, of life.[96] In other words, the two alternatives of *bios* are the capitalist alternative, the domination of life and power upon life, and the socially cooperative and autonomous alternative, the power of living life as a unique person dedicated to the constant and immanent process of the unpaid labor of self-improvement through social interaction, communication, and cooperation. For Negri, the immaterial laborer has the potential to become living unpaid labor, to become *bios*, by separating itself from capital:

> These new intellectual multitudes, whose pleasure and productivity lie in the possibility to communicate and in collective interaction, will not become empire's *demos* but will exist in their resistance to any attempt to manipulate their power: besides the power to resist, they reclaim also the plenitude and the richness of the passions of life.[97]

In this sense, anyone who dedicates his/her life (his/her *bios*) to creative productivity and shares his/her creative productivity as a common good instead of a proprietary one and, thus, resists the capitalist paradigm is a "biopolitical monster."[98]

A monstrous creativity is being unleashed that has the potential to take hold of bodies and make them act in new ways that defy prescriptive models of being, valuing, and signifying. The power of art to move people in unexpected ways is often times compared to the suggestive powers of hypnosis or to an embodied cognition in which thoughts unconsciously influence how a body reacts. Even though the automatic reaction may seem zombie-like, the new body of the biopolitical monster is not an empty container with no mind but, rather, a networked information system more powerful than consciousness. Nevertheless, *Los okupantes* compares the new body produced through monstrous creativity with that of zombies or automatons. In the novel, six witnesses, all *okupas* (Pepe Cólera, Tania, Marx Madera, Cora, el Kurba, and Celeste), fill out questionnaires from an insane asylum explaining the strange events that led to the mysterious disappearance of two of their fellow *okupas*, Orson Santillán and Sara Bolarín. The form of the novel is a police dossier compiled by the sergeant assigned to the case. Each testimony is followed by the sergeant's comments in which he tries to offer a rational, scientific explanation for the seemingly paranormal events, which can be summarized as the following: two *okupas* suddenly and inexplicably disappeared after having squatted a house in Valdemar, an abandoned, rural town in central Spain whose inhabitants had all been shot by Francoists during the Spanish Civil War. The connection between *okupas* and the supporters of the Republic in Spain is solidified when Marx Madera, one of the squatters, declares that "haremos de Valdemar la primera república independiente okupa de España" [we will make Valdemar the first independent *okupa* republic of Spain].[99] Before the arrival of the eight *okupas*, the only inhabitants of Valdemar were three old men—a writer, a painter, and a composer. According to Sergio Laguna, the sergeant investigating the case, "los tres artistas se dedicaban a la exhumación de cadáveres, cuyos cuerpos eran ocupados por entidades del más allá a través de la escritura, de la música y de la pintura" [the three artists dedicated themselves to the exhumation of corpses whose bodies were occupied by entities from the beyond through writing, music and painting].[100] Once these dead bodies were revived by art, they moved like zombies. A father of a reanimated victim lamented that "era como si una extraña hubiera usurpado el cuerpo de mi pequeña" [it was as if a stranger had usurped the body of my little one].[101] Under hypnosis in

a state not unlike that of the sleepwalker in Edgar Allan Poe's "The Facts in the Case of M. Valdemar"—a horror story from which Calderón, the author of *Los okupantes*, lifts the name for the town—Cora, one of the traumatized *okupas*, reveals that:

> Cada treinta segundos más o menos, el escritor y el músico leían o interpretaban una pieza compuesta en una lengua ininteligible para cualquier habitante de este mundo, pero que el nuevo ser—no sé de qué otra manera podría calificarlo—devoraba con la avidez de un recién nacido. A medida que ingería aquel alimento de palabras y sonidos, su cuerpo se retorcía como si estuviera siendo objeto de una mutación interior.[102]
>
> [Every thirty seconds more or less, the writer and the musician read or interpreted a piece composed of an unintelligible language for any inhabitant of this world, but that the new being—I do not know another way I could describe it—devoured with the eagerness of a new born. As it ingested that nourishment of words and sounds, its body writhed as if it were being the object of an interior mutation.]

Much like the food for thought that Eva supplied Alfredo in *El Kaserón*, new words, sounds, writings, images, and bodies that drift and disconnect from the pre-established program of free market capitalism serve as ethereal food that fills the new being with passion and life, and in so doing, produces a radical metamorphosis. The new beings and the three old men are frightening to the *okupas* in the novel, but in real life, the *okupas*' monstrous creativity is very similar to that of the three artists. They both attempt to connect the imagination with reality, the mind with the body. Valdemar, as Max Madera, one of the *okupas*, observes is "uno de esos lugares donde el mundo visible y el invisible se dan la mano" [one of those places where the visible world and the invisible one shake hands].[103] In other words, Valdemar is like the dot in Sony's 2011 ad campaign mentioned in the introduction to this book. It is "the place where imagination and reality collide."[104]

Austràlia continues the conversation about the function of creativity, and provides two responses, that of Petra Masmajor, a twenty-year-old *okupa* who was eventually fired from her job, and that of Àgata, a thirty-year-old poet who, in order to obtain the economic freedom to write poetry, quit her retail job to become a high-end call girl. Petra's task at the local TV station, before being unfairly fired because of her appearance, was to monitor real-time responses to video clips. The live conversation appeared at the bottom of the screen and the video clips at the top. Because the local TV station

was relatively new, participation in the conversations was low. The creative part of Petra's job was to invent a series of people who would partake in the conversations in order to incite more participation. Much like the role of the three artists as intermediary in *Los okupantes*, Petra entered the minds of her false characters and made them talk.[105] Petra's imagination, like the three old men's creativity, was to make bodies act in new ways. However, the type of participation that the manager wanted—the spending of money on text messages—did not occur. Nevertheless, another unexpected participation happened, one that spilled over into the personal lives of each of the television viewers. The narrator explains: "La gent no participava, ningú no enviava missatges, però tothom estava enganxat al món d'aquells quatre individus que només buscaven algun lloc per deixar la seva motxilla de tristesa […] un món d'horitzons infinits i somriures possibles" [People did not participate, no one sent messages, but everyone was glued to the world of those four individuals who were just looking for somewhere to leave their backpack of sadness [...] a world of endless horizons and possible smiles].[106] The modeling of an alliance of friends like the one shared by Petra's four invented characters, one that the reader of the novel assumes is based on Petra's own alliance of friends with Calamarsa, Códol, and Àgata, unconsciously primed the television viewers to form their own alliances of friends in order to overcome loneliness, unhappiness, and precarious living in Barcelona.

As opposed to Petra's stance, Àgata has a different take on creativity. She compares poems to bizarre vibrators and dildos. Referring to sex toys, she explains:

> Alguns, però, eren veritable poems d'aquests que no s'entenen en una primera lectura, i havia d'esforçar-se a llegir-ne els prospectes o les tapes per esbrinar quina funció tenien, i com calia aplicar-los correctament. Tot a la vida pot ser llegit en clau poètica, es repetia ella sovint, quan agafava el posat de poeta que va pel món amb ulls literaris, que tot ho veu com una metàfora o com qualsevol altra figura retòrica de nom difícil de recordar.[107]
>
> [Some, however, were veritable poems that are not understood at first reading, and required the reading of the prospectus or the box to find out what function they had, and how to apply them correctly. Everything in life can be read poetically, she often repeated, when one took the position of a poet who moves through the world with literary eyes, who sees everything as a metaphor or as any other difficult-to-remember rhetorical figure.]

Àgata does not understand that there is no absolute difference between proper sense, between instructions like those included with the sex toys, which are imposed models of behavior, and figurative sense, metaphors. They are both types of representations. The goal of poetry, and any other affect, should not be sense but non-sense. Sense should be actively neutralized, according to Deleuze and Guattari, in favor of "a becoming that includes the maximum difference as a difference of intensity."[108] Àgata is right that life should be lived poetically. However, to live life poetically does not mean to view everything from a metaphoric point of view, but, rather, from a metamorphic point of view. That is, in praise of Kafka, Deleuze and Guattari agree that "metamorphosis is the contrary of metaphor" because "there is no longer any proper sense or figurative sense, but only a distribution of states that is part of the range of the word."[109] For Àgata, "un poema és com un orgasme onanista" [a poem is like an onanist orgasm].[110] In other words, Àgata views poetry as a way to self-complete, to masturbate to orgasm, instead of to self-become.

Nonetheless, Àgata aspires to be like Clara Alzina, a well-known poet among the Barcelona underground in the fictional world of *Austràlia*, who breaks down walls instead of maintaining or hiding behind them. For Clara Alzina as well as for real-life squatter poet Vicente Escolar Bautista, discussed in length in the next chapter, poetry ruptures order, subverts norms, breaks rules, and, more importantly, overcomes self-imposed limitations. However, Àgata admits that when she writes poetry, she wears masks so that she does not have to talk about her feelings. Her masks are not to hide from others, but from herself. As opposed to the anonymous masks of political protesters whose purpose it is to visually emphasize the experience of the common, her masks isolate herself from others as well as from herself. Àgata's need to hide behind self-imposed emotional walls stems from the trauma of being raped by a taxi driver when she was twenty, a taxi driver whom she later finds out is the father of Calamarsa, one of the three friends of her new alliance of friends consisting of, in addition to Calamarsa, Petra and Còdol. In order to start knocking down walls, Petra suggests that Àgata write about her life, not through her own voice, but through the voice of her rapist. By "squatting" the body of her rapist through her writing and by making her rapist talk, her rapist will suffer an interior mutation like that of the exhumed bodies in *Los okupantes* when the

three artists occupied them with writing, music, and art, or like the false characters that Petra squats and makes talk on the TV. In the process, not only will Àgata's rapist change, she, too, will change, thus eliciting a dual metamorphosis. Her writing will finally become a continual process of becoming, instead of a mode of expression with a beginning and an end like a self-completed orgasm. Àgata erroneously once said "els okupes no hi entenien de poesia" [the *okupas* do not understand poetry].[111] But Petra, an *okupa*, is the one who actually teaches her the true meaning of poetry and creativity.

The four friends of *Austràlia* feel lost in the world. The focus of their discussions quickly centers on moving to Australia because they believe that such a move will be "la solució a tots els mals—l'enfocament global a la problemàtica vital—, […] que només així podrien trobar el seu lloc al món…" [the solution to all their troubles—the overall approach to the problematic of life—, [...] that only there they just might find their place in the world ...][112] Going to Australia functions much like a grand narrative. They believe that by changing one thing—where they live—the world will become a perfect place, a utopia. Of the four friends, Petra senses that seeking a totalizing utopia is a mistake. Instead of fleeing the anxiety that precarious living in Barcelona produces, they should embrace it. Petra compares the fear and angst of precarious living to *perlerorneq* or the Arctic Hysteria, a condition that causes the Inuit people of the Arctic Circle to suffer severe depression during the long winters. Petra has told her friends that they need to accept "la tristesa com una motxilla que havia de carretejar" [sadness like a backpack that you have to carry].[113] Her advice is the following: "Agafa el *perlerorneq* i fes via" [grab the *perlerorneq* and make way].[114] At the end of the novel, connecting again with the theme of the wall, Petra spray-paints a door on the bricks of a wall that protects an empty lot where one day apartments will be built. Inside the door that opens to the other side of the wall, she writes "Australia." It is a space that opens to, as she says, "un espai on és possible conviure amb el neguit vital, i ser feliç, malgrat tot" [a space where you can live with the anxiety of life, and be happy, in spite of everything].[115] Happiness for Petra is an alliance of friends on which she can rely when those in power and positions of authority throw up walls and various blockages. She has already found her "Australia," and she is attempting to convince her friends that they have,

too. Petra's urban art is very much like that of real-life graffiti and urban artist Escif, who paints primarily in Valencia but whose street art can be found in various cities worldwide including Barcelona. His murals contain repeating images of walls, road blocks, and fences. In an interview with me in 2009, he explained:

> Yo creo que la ciudad se puede construir desde abajo más allá de esas limitaciones o esas barreras que desde arriba nos intentan poner y que nosotros aceptamos totalmente. Claro llevo pintando doces años y nunca he tenido un problema. Pinto en espacios que parece que no se puede pintar. Entonces, esa valla que el sistema te pone, al final, no existe. Es una valla que nosotros nos generamos muchas veces.[116]
>
> [I believe that the city can be constructed from below beyond the limitations or blocks that from above they attempt to impose on us and that we totally accept. Sure I have been painting for twelve years and I have never had a problem. I paint in spaces in which it seems like one cannot paint. As a result, that wall that the system imposes on you, in the end, does not exist. It is a wall that we generate often times.]

The social restrictions that frequently seem fixed, absolute and natural are really fluid, relative, and cultural. Both Petra and Escif argue that there are ways to break through the walls or to get around them. Escif shares Petra's image of the door that opens to the other side of the wall (see Figure 3.1 "Across the Wall").

Figure 3.1. "Across the Wall." Escif (2009).

Even though both Josep Casals and his son Fernando, members of the Catalonian upper class, are described in *El rey del mambo* as monsters because of the arrogant and despotic way they run the family business ["a ferocious monster,"[117] "a beast"[118]], they are physically very attractive. According to classical eugenics ["'Eugenia' means that one is 'well born,' that one will be 'beautiful and good'"[119]], the claim to power and the entitlement to command are only for those who are born into rich families and who are beautiful. When Fernando, the promising heir to the family empire, inexplicably becomes an *okupa*, Josep laments that his "hijo tan bello y hermoso unos meses atrás" [son so handsome and good-looking a few months ago] is "ahora desfigurado por varios agujeros y aretes en los labios y en las orejas" [now disfigured by various holes and rings in his lips and ears].[120] Because Josep functions according to the eugenic claim of power and form of domination, in order to contain the biopolitical monster

that his son has become, a monster that is increasingly being perceived as possessing certain positive qualities, Josep must, as Negri would argue, re-monstrify the monster.[121] As a result, he does so by stereotyping *okupa* aesthetics as ugly and by characterizing his son's transformation into an *okupa* as a fall from grace. The manager of the TV station in *Austràlia* shares Josep's view. He fires Petra Masmajor because, he argues, "la imatge que desprèn no és la millor, per a la companyia, no ens enganyem, vol dir… aquests pírcings, aquestes rastes" [The image that emerges is not the best for the company, make no mistake, this means...these piercings, these dreadlocks].[122] Her appearance invalidates her claim to the job.

Related to the questions; what is the function of creativity?, and what is poetry?, is the following: What is a complete and happy life? According to the *okupas*, monstrous creativity or the "expression of the common" produces happiness.[123] In *El rey del mambo*, Josep, a highly successful Catalonian businessman, in order to determine why his son, Fernando, decides to reject the family business and become an *okupa*, disguises himself as a Costa Rican immigrant and begins to live in the same squatted social center as his son. In the process, Josep recognizes the values of sharing, solidarity, and the rejection of predetermined models of being, valuing, and signifying. However, he attributes these values, not to the *okupas*, but to a high-end Brazilian prostitute named Mariela.

I find it plausible that the author of *El rey del mambo* Johari Gautier Carmona, in order to open Josep's eyes to other realities in Barcelona like the difficult conditions of the immigrant, would have him meet an illegal immigrant and have an extramarital affair. However, I find it problematic and unbelievable that Josep would learn certain life lessons, like that there is more to life than money, from a high-end prostitute. The desire to work less and have more time for other endeavors, one of the reasons that Mariela gives for becoming a prostitute[124] as well as Àgata in *Austràlia*, can be achieved by one of two ways: 1) by making a great deal of money in a short period of time, usually an illegal activity but one that still functions according to capitalist relationships, or; 2) by really rejecting capitalism and forming communes like the Diggers and other hippies did in the '60s and '70s, or by collectively squatting abandoned spaces like the politically motivated *okupas* do in the present. Mariela chooses prostitution and argues that prostitution is a desirable way to make a living, a statement born more

out of male fantasy than reality, for, according to Amelia Valcárcel in an opinion piece in *El País*, "en España más del 90% de las mujeres dedicadas a la prostitución son inmigrantes en situación irregular" [in Spain more than 90 percent of the women dedicated to prostitution are immigrants in an irregular situation].[125] In other words, less than 10 percent of Spanish women "choose" to be prostitutes. However, as Inmaculada de la Fuente, blogger of "España, 'capital' de la prostitución europea" [Spain, capital of European prostitution], notes, even if a woman like Mariela freely elects to be a prostitute: "No puede generalizarse tal decision. Ni olvidar las ramificaciones de un negocio que, en buena parte, se nutre de la indigencia y la desesperación de tantas mujeres inmigrantes o en situaciones vulnerable" [One cannot generalize such a decision. Nor forget the ramifications of a business that, on the whole, feeds on the poverty and desperation of so many immigrant women or women in vulnerable situations].[126] Nevertheless, despite the human and drug trafficking that oftentimes accompany prostitution, Josep finds inspiration in the fact that Mariela "aún teniendo un puesto privilegiado en un departamento de marketing, decidió distanciarse de la falsedad de un mundo calculador para entregarse a los placeres de una vida en un prostibulo" [even though having a privileged position in a marketing department, she decided to distance herself from the falsity of a calculating world to surrender herself to the pleasures of a life in a brothel].[127] To describe working in a whore house as pleasurable feels just as forced and false as Mariela's hypocritical judgment of the *okupas*. She warns Josep, before going undercover as an *okupa* in the squatted social center where his son was staying, "no quiero que acabes como un Okupa, oliendo a marihuana y apoderándote de mi espacio" [I do not want you to end up like an Okupa, smelling of marijuana and taking over my space].[128] The same disdain could be directed toward Mariela because she is not only an immigrant, but an immigrant without proper papers.[129] Mariela entered Spain like politically motivated *okupas* enter abandoned houses, criminally. Mariela's self-righteous superiority and self-worth stem from money. Prostitution has made her rich. Both Josep and Mariela are delusional if they think that they have broken free from the psychological consequences of money. Josep admits that he is "demasiado pijo" [too upper-class] to become an *okupa*.[130]

If the “monstrous creativity” of the *okupas* is recognized but assigned to a different social group, namely high-end prostitutes, in *El rey del mambo*, it is recognized but rejected in *Okupada* because the ideals of the *okupas* devolve into the same power relations that they criticize and do not effect social change. Jason E. Klodt, professor of Spanish literature at the University of Mississippi, commenting on *Okupada*, argues that:

> The okupas replicate the same dream of purity that drove them from their previous spaces (the streets, broken homes, intolerant families, Cuba, Iraq) […] By creating a utopia for Barcelona’s strangers, they reproduce the project that necessitates the drawing of boundaries, the establishment of order, a “clean” space free from the stranger. Their rigorous cleaning evolves into a crusade to rid their microsociety of its unwanted, the disorders among the strangers themselves. Namely the presence of Inge, the German drug pusher, represents a fault line along which the okupas divide themselves.[131]

A squatted social center is not a utopia but a truly public space in which people from different social classes and different points of view may come into contact. As with any truly public space, conflicts will exist. It will have its tensions and its violence. It is not the sanitized version that the Barcelona City Council tries to foment. The public space of the Barcelona City Council is empty of conflict, and, hence, not a political space. The fact that Inge is unwanted by some of the *okupas* (Begoña, Oswi-Wan, Alma) does not signify their abandonment of the ideals of tolerance and acceptance, a point of view that Klodt affirms, but, rather, demonstrates an adherence to the value of creating non-capitalist relationships in the house, a value that Inge breaks by selling drugs. Inge’s rejection is not a fall from key *okupa* ideals but their affirmation. She is a *costra* and not a politically motivated *okupa*.

While the *okupas* of *Okupada* kick Inge out of the squatted social center for being more interested in making money than in sharing and producing knowledge and culture as common goods for self-enrichment, the *okupas* Juanjo and Petra of *El rey del mambo* participate in moneymaking illicit activities, and reject anyone from the squatted house who jeopardizes their objectives. They do not believe in their ideals and have become totalitarian. They function more like a ring of organized crime than *okupas*. The hypocrisy that infiltrates *El rey del mambo* is clearer than in *Okupada*. However, that is not to say that there are no signs of disillusionment with the *okupa* movement in Santos’s novel.

Female *okupas* are often portrayed as *femme fatales*. Love gone wrong is a tyrannous squatter. Whatever seems to bring the squatted house down is feminized. In *El rey del mambo*, Fernando, before leaving for London to attend business school, wanted to add some female *okupas* to his list of exotic sexual conquests, which included a maid that he had drugged and raped when he was fifteen, and three prostitutes—a Russian, a Cuban, and his father's Brazilian high-end call girl, Mariela. Like the 39 percent of Spanish men who have paid for sex, the highest percentage in the European Union,[132] he fell prey to the fantasy of exoticism. Partly to take revenge on Fernando's lack of respect toward the *okupa* women, partly to satisfy her own insatiable sexual desire, and partly to swindle Fernando out of a great deal of money, Petra played on Fernando's weakness and agreed to have sex with him, for she knew that one night of devouring and dangerous sexuality would not be enough. The next day Fernando begged her to spend another night with him. Like a true *femme fatale*, seizing her opportunity to knock Fernando from his place of power and humiliate him, she said (when recounting the story to Josep): "Si quería *otro* noche conmigo, tendría que convertirse en *una* autentico Okupa, aceptar nuestras costumbres e integrarse en *nuestro* comunidad, como cualquier otro Okupa…" (emphasis is in original text to demonstrate Petra's errors in agreement when speaking Spanish because she is from Austria) [If he wanted another night with me, he would have to become an authentic Okupa, he would have to accept our customs and integrate into our community, like any other Okupa…].[133] Fernando agreed and it was in this way that he went from being a coldhearted, unscrupulous businessman who was able to fire hundreds of workers because it made him richer to a die-hard *okupa* who condemned the capitalist system. However, unbeknownst to Fernando, he was just one of many *pijos*—upper and middle class youth—that Petra had lured into the *okupa* movement in order to craftily entice away from them huge sums of money. Petra and Juanjo are examples of "los okupas incívicos" or the uncivil *okupas* against whom the article in *La Vanguardia* "'Preokupación' ciudadana"—mentioned in Chapter 2—warned the citizens of Barcelona. According to the article, squatted social centers are susceptible to the control of these uncivil *okupas*, many of whom are foreigners participating in *ocupa* tourism. These *okupas*, in literature, principally women, give the movement a bad name because they hide rings of organized crime in

squatted social centers or they sell drugs. In *Okupada*, Inge, a German drug trafficker who spent several nights at the squatted social center Bákinjam, enticed Kifo, one of the *okupas*, to shoot heroine and snort cocaine. To the dismay of Alma, Kifo's girlfriend, the drug-induced encounters with Inge became sexual. Alma's love of her life was usurped from her by a tyrannous squatter.[134] Not only did the drugs destroy his relationship with Alma, they also made Kifo, normally a pacifist, aggressive and violent. High on cocaine, Kifo resisted the eviction of Bákinjam by throwing flaming Molotov cocktails out the windows and by launching fire cracker-like rockets at the hovering helicopter from the attic. He eventually fell through the corroded floor boards of the attic and plummeted to his death. Along with Petra and Inge, Celeste, one of the *okupas* in *Los okupantes*, can also be added to the list of *femme fatales* who wreak havoc in squatted houses. Celeste confessed to killing fellow *okupas* Orson and Sarah because of her obsessive, unrequited love for Orson. She allegedly stabbed both and started a forest fire to burn the evidence. While Petra and Inge left behind real emotional destruction [Fernando's disillusionment and loss of (perceived) love and Alma's broken heart] and death (Kifo's as well as the evictions of Bákinjam and the squatted social center in *El rey del mambo*), Celeste's confession was deemed a psychic invention because, first, the bodies and the murder weapon were never found, and, second, the other *okupas* contradicted her testimony. The medical explanation for Celeste's self-implication was some sort of mind control via hypnosis whose objective, according to the sergeant, was to offer the police "una solución convencional al <<caso Valdemar>>… de manera que todo encajara en nuestra forma de concebir la realidad" [a conventional solution to the "Valdemar case"… so that everything fit with our form of conceiving reality.][135]

Even though the writers of the soap opera *El cor de la ciutat* and the director of the film *El Kaserón* had never squatted, they had been given the task of representing the *okupa* experience. Likewise, the authors of the novels had no direct knowledge of the events experienced by the *okupas*. However, this did not discourage many of them from writing in the first person from the point of view of the *okupas*. Even if they did have some "direct" knowledge (e.g., knew people), it is especially likely that writers will misrepresent—get aspects wrong—if they pretend to speak directly as

okupas. Ironically, the fictional *okupas* of *Okupada* criticize such false narrators: “No estamos de acuerdo con esos narradores cretinos que a menudo aparecen en las novelas, que son uno solo y que fingen saberlo todo de todo el mundo, narradores oligárquicos, manipuladores y fascistoides. Y tampoco queremos delegar la responsabilidad de los hechos en nadie ajeno a ellos” [We do not agree with those cretinous narrators who often appear in novels, are only one and pretend that they know everything about the world, oligarchic, manipulating and fascist narrators. And we do not want either to delegate the responsibility of the facts to someone who has nothing to do with them].[136] The affirmations of the “collectively” written introduction are undermined and ring hollow because Santos, the author of *Okupada*, is precisely a manipulating narrator who has nothing to do with *okupación*. The question of representation or misrepresentation is important because whenever the *okupas* are supposedly allowed to speak directly, their accounts are mediated by a third party and, as a result, are potentially compromised.

NOTES

1. The first representation of *okupas* on the big screen occurred in 2005 in the film *El taxista ful*, which I discuss in Chapter 4.

2. Josep M. Orta, “‘El cor de la ciutat’ se despide hasta septiembre para regresar a Sant Andreu” *La Vanguardia*, July 13, 2007, Vivir sec.: 12.

3. Guillem Clua, Personal Interview, October 14, 2010.

4. The years 2006 and 2007, leading up to the airing of the first *okupa* episode of *El cor de la ciutat*, provided ample material with which to develop a negative representation. For example, on February 4, 2006, an illegal *okupa* party took place at the Anarko Penya Cultural during which a police officer of the Guardia Urbana was brutally attacked; on June 28, 2006, public property was destroyed in anticipation of the eviction of *okupas* from the squatted house La Fera on Santa Àgata Street in the Gràcia neighborhood; the European Summit of Housing Ministers that was to be held in Barcelona on the 16th and 17th of October, 2006, was cancelled because of the fear that the *okupas* would violently protest; on December 13, 2006, *okupas* from the Makabra Collective of circus artists were evicted from Can Ricart; and on January 18, 2007, the case of Carles Veiret, who was unable to enter his own home because *okupas* had allegedly squatted it and changed the locks, was made public.

5. Clua, Personal Interview.

6. The Castanyada is the Catalan equivalent of Halloween, and is celebrated on October 31. However, instead of wearing costumes and eating candy, Catalonians eat roasted chestnuts.

7. The Mossos d’Esquadra is the regional police force of Catalonia.

8. The Països Catalans include Catalonia, “La Franja de Ponent” of Aragon, the Balearic Islands, Valencia, Carche of Murcia, Andorra, parts of Southern France in the Pyrenees Mountains, and the Italian city of Alghero on the island of Sardinia.

9. Àlex Bagant Pascual, Èric Estany and Roger Flaquer, *Catalan Roots Culture*, June 12, 2008, http://catalanrootsculture.blogspot.com/.

10. Àlex Bagant Pascual, "Condicions Programàtiques," *Bandera Negra*, June 20, 2007, http://banderesnegres.blogspot.com/.

11. "El PSAN celebra els seus 40 anys," *Documentant l'esquerra independentista!*, June 26, 2008, http://centredocumentacio.blogspot.com/2008/06/el-psan-celebra-els-seus-40-anys.html.

12. "Catalunya no és Espanya," *Índex de blogs independentistas*, March 1, 2008, http://blogsindependentistes.blogspot.com/2008/03/catalunya-no-s-espanya.html.

13. Isaac Farré, "El nou fosar," *El bloc de n'Isaac Farré*, September 29, 2007, http://noibaliarda.blogspot.com/2007/09/el-nou-fossar.html.

14. *Racó Català* (Catalan Corner) is an alternative source of information on the web about the groups of people and associations that promote Catalanism in the Països Catalans. It includes forums in which to comment on the most important issues surrounding the various Catalanist social movements. This site, which declares that "on the Internet, we can be what the laws do not permit us to be: a free people!" is supported by the Department of Culture and Mass Media of the Generalitat de Catalunya. *El Punt*, one of the most subsidized newspapers in Catalonia (in 2008 it received more than 1.8 million euros from the Generalitat), won the National Prize for the Social Projection of the Catalan Language in 2010. See "'El Punt', Premio Nacional de Proyección Social de la Lengua Catalana," *La voz de Barcelona*, April 13, 2010, http://www.vozbcn.com/2010/04/13/14935/punt-premio-lengua-catalan/. The National Council of Culture and the Arts (CoNCA) of the Generalitat de Catalunya awarded *El Punt* the coveted prize "for being a brilliant and successful business example of a journalistic adventure in the Catalan language [...] For 30 years, *El Punt* has contributed with firmness to the so-desired linguistic normalization […] *El Punt* and its satellites form an indisputable part of the Catalan linguistic and cultural patrimony." See Generalitat de Catalunya, Departament de Cultura i Mitjans de Comunicació, *Premis Nacionals de Cultura per disciplines (des de 1995)*, http://www20.gencat.cat/portal/site/CulturaDepartament/menuitem.4f810f50a62de38a5a2a63a7b0c0e1a0/?vgnextoid=fde7627347362210VgnVCM1000008d0c1e0aRCRD&vgnextchannel=fde7627347362210VgnVCM1000008d0c1e0aRCRD&vgnextfmt=default. Up until 2009, the digital version of *El Punt* was hosted on *VilaWeb*, a Catalan language web portal that includes its own digital newspaper, Internet Protocol Television channel, subscribers' blogs, and directory of more than 40,000 web sites in the Països Catalans. *Racó Català* and Catalan Roots Culture can be traced to *VilaWeb* through its blog section. On October 17, 2008, *VilaWeb's* blog section announces that *Racó Català* will raffle off five t-shirts designed by Catalan Roots Culture promoting singer/songwriter Cesk Freixas' latest album *El camí cap a nosaltres*. See "Sorteig de 5 samarretes del darrer disc de Cesk Freixas 'El camí cap a nosaltres'," *VilaWeb*, October 17, 2008, http://blocs.mesvilaweb.cat/archive/view/dia/17/mes/10/any/2008/page/6.

15. *Quòniam samarretaires*, http://web.archive.org/web/20050226050021/www.quoniam.info/quoniam_qui.html.

16. Vicente Escolar Bautista, e-mail message to author, July 10, 2010.

17. Three months before Ros and Pachu squat Can Sarró, the real collective Negres Tempestes re-edited in June 2007 *Anarquisme i Alliberament Nacional* [Anarchism and National Liberation], a canonical text within the anarcho-independentist movement originally written by the collective Ikària (de Vargas Golarons). Ros and Pachu would have been familiar with both Negres Tempestes and the text. They may have even been members and helped with the re-edition. In an interview with A Las Barricadas, Negres Tempestes defines itself as "a collective that appeared on the scene with the objective to foment the debate about national liberation within the context of anarchism as well as the

debate about anarchism within the independentist movement." See Negres Tempestes, "Hablando con Negres Tempestes," *A las barricadas*, July 13, 2008, http://www.alasbarricadas.org/noticias/?q=node/8111. The re-edition of *Anarquisme i Alliberament Nacional* and the subsequent book tour were tools to do just that: to promote debate in libertarian athenaeums [*ateneos libertarios*], houses for independence [*casales independentistas*], squatted houses, and the meetings of the anarchist trade union CNT [*Confederación Nacional de Trabajo*.]

18. "Can Vies és del barri!," *Associació d'Estudiants Progressistes*, http://www.aep.cat/spip.php?article172.

19. *Can* is the contraction in Catalan of the word *ca* or house with the article *en* or in.

20. "El gran negoci de la nova estació," *Plataforma pel soterrament de les vies i contra el Pla de l'Estació*, http://www.sants.org/noalcalaix/VIES.PDF.

21. "De l'okupació 'cívica' i de disseny a l'autogestió guerrera i real," *La Burxa 115*, (2008): 11, http://issuu.com/laburxa/docs/burxa115febrer08.

22. The anarchists of *La Burxa* follow in the tradition of El Paso Occupato and Barocchio Occupato, the two anarchist occupied spaces in Italy that wrote the influential text *Against the Legalization of Occupied Spaces.*

23. *Promoció d'Habitatge Realment Públic* (PHRP) or Promotion of Truly Public Housing refers to the political squatting of two buildings owned by Hotels Catalònia on Magdalenes Street and Amargós Street in the Ciutat Vella. Both squattings were a direct response to the call for civil disobedience made in the "Cartas de medidas contra la violencia inmobiliaria y urbanística."

24. An "x" is used instead of an "o" in order to create a language that is gender neutral and, hence, more inclusive and less sexist. An "@" is often times utilized to the same effect.

25. "Cuando la democracia okupa en la casa de al lado," *Info Usurpa 522* (2008), http://usurpa.squat.net/arxiu/2008/usurpa%20522.pdf.

26. I applied the exchange rate given on XE Currency Converter (www.xe.com) for November 14, 2007, the day that the episode aired.

27. It is significant that the architect of Can Sarró was Josep Puig i Cadafalch (1867-1956) because he is, along with Antoni Gaudí and Lluís Domènech i Montaner, one of the three most well-known architects of Catalan Modernism (Modernisme) as well as was one of the leading figures in the Catalan nationalist movement at the beginning of the twentieth century. Puig i Cadafalch built such recognizable buildings in Barcelona as Casa Amatller (the building next door to Gaudí's Casa Batlló on the Passeig de Gràcia) and Casa Martí that houses, on the ground floor, Els 4 gats, the bar that first exhibited works by Picasso. Puig i Cadafalch fits perfectly with the "Barcelona Model" of urbanization that depends on culture to produce monopoly rents and jobs. The Minister of Culture Ángeles González-Sinde in her address that opened the Second European Forum on Cultural Industries in 2010 stressed the importance of culture for economic growth. She explained that "Gaudí continues generating employment in Barcelona, it can be verified easily. And he will continue doing it for a long time. Certainly, Gaudí alone generates more employment in Barcelona during one day, that those who despise creators." Like Gaudí, Puig i Cadalfalch keeps on selling. Tourists buy coffee in El 4 gats and pay seven euros to visit the Amatller Institute of Hispanic Art on the first floor of the Casa Amatller.

28. Clua, Personal Interview.

29. "Can Ricart és un prototip de la invenció de la modernitat industrial a Catalunya que s'ha de conservar íntegre com a patrimoni nacional," *SOS Monuments*, January 10, 2007, http://sos-monuments.upc.es/patrperill/excavadores.htm.

30. The *okupas* would eventually be evicted on December 13, 2006.

31. Grup de Patrimoni Industrial del Fòrum de la Ribera del Besòs, “Patrimonio, ciudadanía e innovación – Barcelona: ¿Por qué conservar íntegro Can Ricart?” *root.ps*, April 2006, http://root.ps/textes/otros_autores/Can%20Ricart,%20patrimonio,%20ciudadania,%20innovaciin.pdf.

32. “Escándol urbanístic en Can Ricart,” *A las barricadas*, October 27, 2007, http://www.alasbarricadas.org/noticias/?q=node/6104.

33. “Comencen a enderrocar una part de Can Ricart,” *VilaWeb*, October 26, 2007, http://www.vilaweb.cat/noticia/2605431/noticia.html.

34. Clua, Personal Interview.

35. El Paso Occupato and Barocchio Occupato, *Against the Legalization of Occupied Spaces*, http://zinedistro.org/zines/87/against-the-legalization-of-occupied-spaces/by/el-paso-occupato-and-barocchio-occupato.

36. In 1999, the same year that the Barcelona City Council passed the Plan Estratégico del Sector Cultural [The Strategic Plan for the Cultural Sector], “la Caixa” savings bank decided to restore La Fàbrica Casaramona, a textile factory originally built by Puig i Cadafalch, to its original modernist glory and convert it into a social and cultural center now known as the Centre Cultural CaixaForum. On January 9, 1976, La Fàbrica Casaramona, one of the most important examples of industrial Catalan modernism, was declared a *Monumento Histórico Nacional* or a National Historic Landmark. See Martín Manuel Checa Artasu, “Geografías para el patrimonio industrial en España: El caso de Barcelona,” *Scripta Nova* 11, no. 245 (2007), http://www.ub.edu/geocrit/sn/sn-24532.htm. Although the rehabilitation of la Fàbrica Casaramona for social and cultural installations and services was completed by “la Caixa” savings bank, “la Caixa’s” interests aligned with the public sector’s desire to convert industrial factories into cultural spaces. The “la Caixa” Foundation, headquartered in the CaixaForum, funds social programs that help handicapped people, immigrants, children, the elderly, sick people, prisoners, and young adults.

37. Colectivo +Art, *Colectivo +Art* (Barcelona: +Art, May 30, 2009).

38. Aida Oset and Orila Vila, Interview, *El Club de TV3*, TV3, May 16, 2008.

39. “De la magnalenofobia a la creación de espacios autónomos,” *Terra Cremada: Publicació contra la derrota* 1 (2010): 27, http://terracremada.pimienta.org/terra_cremada_1_cas.pdf.

40. Yomango, “10 Style Tips for a Yomango Life,” *Yomango*, March 17, 2006, http://www.yomango.net/node/126.

41. Gemminola, “El cor de la ciutat,” *Strawberry Fields*, October 17, 2007, http://gemminola.bloc.cat/post/2762/193880.

42. hijoputaconclase, “Adoptemos sus clichés, sí, y luego metámonos un tiro en el entrecejo,” *Underave*, May 12, 2008, http://underave.net/blog/2008/05/adoptemos-sus-cliches-si-y-luego-metamonos-un-tiro-en-el-entrecejo.

43. Albert Ollés, “El CIS revela que políticos y okupas son los colectivos más antipáticos,” *El Periódico*, April 1, 2010.

44. L’Oréal Perfect Slim Opinion, “Combate los okupas de tu cuerpo,” *Ciao!* July 17, 2003, http://www.ciao.es/LZOreal_Perfect_Slim__Opinion_705549.

45. Panteras Rosas, “La industria cosmética,” *Panteras Rosas*, March 9, 2009, http://panterasrosas.blogspot.es/1236595920/la-industria-cosmetica/.

46. Daniel Hernández, “Mi cuarta quimioterapia,” *Mi operación de cáncer de colón-rectal*, July 8, 2010, http://www.espondilitis.net/foro/viewtopic.php?p=25222&sid=ab68821313313f5d3755d78c172d6ca8.

47. Care Santos, *Okupada* (Barcelona: Alba Editorial, 1997), 111.

48. Carmen Posadas, “Cuando el amor es chantajista,” *CarmenPosadas.net*, http://www.carmenposadas.net/articulos-ficha.php?articulo=31.

49. Santos, *Okupada*, 25.

50. “Pau Martínez: ‘El humor logra que la gente reflexione sobre muchos temas serios’,” *Levante-EMV*, June 22, 2008, http://www.levante-emv.com/secciones/noticia.jsp?pRef=2008062200_39_463490__Cultura-Martinez-humor-logra-gente-reflexione-sobre-muchos-temas-serios.

51. M. M. Bakhtin, *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1981). 21-26.

52. Abelardo Muñoz, “Habría que poner a 15 euros la entrada de las películas yanquis,” *El Kaserón: Todo Sobre La Película de Pau Martínez*, http://www.enriquevictoria.com/EL%20KASERON%20Levante%20EMV.htm.

53. Bakhtin, *The Dialogic Imagination*, 21.

54. Ibid., 25.

55. Stephen Duncombe, *Notes from Underground: Zines and the Politics of Alternative Culture* (London: Verso, 1997), 10-11.

56. Janice Radway, “Zines, Half-Lives, and Afterlives: On the Temporalities of Social and Political Change,” *PMLA* 126, no. 1 (2011): 140.

57. Ibid., 141.

58. Juan Pedro Yániz, “La ‘okupación’ salta al cine en un rodaje en Barcelona y en clave de humor,” *ABC*, December 7, 2007, Cataluña ed, http://valencia.abc.es/hemeroteca/historico-07-12-2007/abc/Catalunya/la-okupacion-salta-al-cine-en-un-rodaje-en-barcelona-y-en-clave-de-humor_1641458417919.html.

59. See Spain, *Ley Orgánica 1995*, Article 270 of the Penal Code and Spain, Ministry of the Presidency, *Texto Refundido de la Ley de Propiedad Intelectual* (Madrid: Boletín Oficial del Estado, 1996), Article 31.2, www.boe.es/boe/dias/1996/04/22/pdfs/A14369-14396.pdf.

60. As decreed in the *Real Decreto Ley 20/2011* in the *Boletín Oficial del Estado* on December 31, 2011, the canon was abolished and will be replaced with a new payment that will be regulated by the State. See Spain, Ministry of the Presidency, *Real Decreto Ley 20/2011* (Madrid: Boletín Oficial del Estado, 2011), http://www.boe.es/boe/dias/2011/12/31/pdfs/BOE-A-2011-20638.pdf.

61. 2manyproducers, http://www.myspace.com/2manyproducers.

62. Ibid.

63. In an effort to promote the free exchange of culture on the Internet, Harvard Law Professor Lawrence Lessig, MIT Professor of Computer Science and Engineering Hal Abelson, and independent scholar Eric Eldred founded in 2001 Creative Commons, a non-profit organization that provides copyright licenses that, according to its website, permit the creators to “retain copyright while allowing others to copy, distribute, and make some use of their work—at least non-commercially.” Creative Commons, “About The Licenses,” *Creative Commons*, http://creativecommons.org/licenses/.

64. *El Kaserón*, DVD, directed by Pau Martínez (Barcelona, Spain: Just Films, 2008).

65. “Una ‘Kasa’ en las afueras,” *El escarabajo verde*, RTVE, May 16, 2011.

66. Arbiter Petronius, *The Satyricon* (New York: Meridian, 1994), 40.

67. Michael Hauge, “Writing Romantic Comedies,” *Michael Hauge’s Screenplay Mastery*, http://www.storymastery.com/articles/29-writing-romantic-comedies.

68. Ibid.

69. *El Kaserón*.

70. Luke Cordingley, “Can Masdeu: Rise of the Rurbano Revolution,” *Belltown Paradise: The Belltown P-Patch, Cottage Park, Growing Vine Street, Buster Simpson; Making Their Own Plans : City Repair, Resource Center, Park Fiction, Can Masdeu* (Chicago, Ill: WhiteWalls, Inc, 2004), 55.

71. Ibid., 61.
72. *El Kaserón.*
73. Ibid.
74. Ibid.
75. Ibid.
76. To determine if the town council will honor the contract, Eva breaks into the office of Modesto Martínez, the councilor of urbanism, who, the viewer and Alfredo discover, is her father, a nod to the number of politicians' children who are *okupas* (see Chapter 2 of this book).
77. *El Kaserón.*
78. Ibid.
79. Ibid.
80. Derivart, "El inspector," *Derivart*, http://www.derivart.info/index.php?s=p10&lang=en.
81. Derivart, "El manager." *Derivart*, http://www.derivart.info/index.php?s=p9&lang=es.
82. In order to pay off a huge debt, the town council was in negotiations to sell the land to a contractor who was interested in building a golf course. However, the contractor refused to close the deal if the *okupas* were not evicted. Charging the *okupas* of breach of contract in the courts would guarantee an eviction. Alfredo was to be the litigation lawyer trying the case. However, instead of fighting to win the court battle, he purposely attempted to lose it by sabotaging the town council's strategy. He stole a fax outlining the deception and gave it to the judge. Asunción Sánchez, the leader of the opposition and Eva's mother, found out about Alfredo's illegal practice, and denounced him. The case was cancelled so that it could be tried again by a different lawyer with another judge, and Alfredo lost his job and his license to practice law.
83. *El Kaserón.*
84. "Despiste," *Larousse Gran Diccionario* (Barcelona: Larousse, 2000).
85. *El Kaserón*.
86. Ibid.
87. Ibid.
88. I do not discuss at length *De música ligera*, *El okupa*, *Okupando la nada* or *Esta casa está okupada* because of the following reasons: 1) The principal character of *De música ligera* is not an *okupa*; 2) squatting is not the focus of *El okupa*, but, rather, child abduction is; 3) despite the title, Roma González Caicoya's *Okupando la nada* [Squatting the Void] (2010) does not address squatting but addiction; and 4) *Esta casa está okupada* (2006) by M. Luz Cruz is not a novel, the focus of this section, but a play and, hence, outside the scope of Part III of Chapter 3.
89. Nevertheless, Alba includes a reading guide in the appendix of *Okupada*.
90. "¿Qué es?" *Planetalector*, http://www.planetalector.com/que-es/.
91. "Cuatrovientos +14," *Planetadelibros.com*, http://www.planetadelibros.com/infantil-y-juvenil-coleccion-cuatrovientos-14-0000305305.html>.
92. "Quiénes somos," *Edelvives*, http://www.edelvives.com/quienes-somos.
93. "Nuestro compromiso," *Santillana*, http://www.santillana.com/es/pagina/nuestro-comrpomiso/.
94. "Nuestros valores," *Santillana*, http://www.santillana.com/es/pagina/nuestros-valores/.
95. "Cynic," *The American Heritage Dictionary: Second College Edition* (Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1985).
96. Antonio Negri, "The Political Monster: Power and Naked Life," in *In Praise of the Common: A Conversation on Philosophy and Politics* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2008), 217.
97. Ibid., 216.
98. Ibid., 214.
99. Ibid., 103.

100. Ibid., 152.
101. Ibid., 134.
102. Ibid., 115.
103. Ibid., 87.
104. *SONY make.believe*, http://www.sony.net/united/makedotbelieve/index.html.
105. There is a children's science fiction book called *L'okupa de cervells* [The Squatter Brain] (2007) by Miquel Pujadó in which a boy has the power to enter other people's brains and control their actions.
106. Roc Casagran, *Austràlia* (Barcelona: Columna, 2008), 196-97.
107. Ibid., 26.
108. Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *Kafka: Toward a Minor Literature* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1991), 22.
109. Ibid.
110. Casagran, *Austràlia*, 29.
111. Ibid., 111.
112. Ibid., 137-38.
113. Ibid., 165.
114. Ibid., 166.
115. Ibid., 197.
116. Nacho Magro, Personal interview, June 26, 2009.
117. Johari Gautier Carmona, *El rey del mambo* (Barcelona: Ediciones Irreverentes, 2009), 13, 29.
118. Ibid., 14.
119. Negri, "The Political Monster," 193.
120. Carmona, *El rey del mambo*, 84.
121. Negri, "The Political Monster," 212.
122. Casagran, *Austràlia*, 193.
123. Negri, "The Political Monster," 218.
124. Carmona, *El rey del mambo*, 53.
125. Amelia Valcárcel, "¿La prostitución es un modo de vida deseable?" *El País*, May 21, 2007, http://elpais.com/diario/2007/05/21/opinion/1179698404_850215.html.
126. Inmaculada de la Fuente, "España, 'capital' de la prostitución europea," *Mujeres*, October 31, 2011, http://blogs.elpais.com/mujeres/2011/10/my-entry.html.
127. Carmona, *El rey del mambo*, 102.
128. Ibid., 60.
129. Ibid., 52.
130. Ibid., 60.
131. Jason E. Klodt, "Strangers in a Strange House: Spanish Youth, Urban Dystopia, and Care Santos's *Okupada*," *Letras Hispanas* 4, no .2 (2007): 64.
132. "Los españoles son los europeos que más contratan los servicios de prostitutas," *Libertad Digital*, October 27, 2011, http://www.libertaddigital.com/sociedad/2011-10-27/los-espanoles-son-los-europeos-que-mas-contratan-los-servicios-de-prostitutas-1276439565/.
133. Carmona, *El rey del mambo*, 126.
134. Santos, *Okupada*, 111.
135. Calderón, Los okupantes, 151.
136. Santos, *Okupada*, 14.

Chapter Four

Representations of *Okupas* by *Okupas*

Many *okupas* are performance artists and adhere to the belief that the goal of real-time interaction is the interaction itself. They are less interested in recording events or having indirect communication than direct face-to-face interactions and communication. Hence, very few cultural products exist that document *okupas*' point of view. Nonetheless, I have found two compelling texts: director Jo Sol's film *El taxista ful* [The Taxi Thief] and former squatter Vicente Escolar Bautista's book of poetry *Libro de un 8/1 tumbado en el espejo (ocho cuartos de gasto…partido por uno)* [Book of 8/1 Knocked Down in the Mirror (eight fourths expenditure…divided by one)], hereafter *Libro*. *Okupas* have been criticized by intellectuals and fellow activists for being too theoretical, for putting thought above action, for focusing on the mind (on ideas) to the detriment of the body. However, as the analyses of these texts show, it is precisely the bodies of *okupas* that take center stage not only in their actions but in the texts themselves. A bodily thinking, not a pre-structured consciousness, moves *okupas* to act in Barcelona in new and unpredictable ways.

One group of Barcelonan activists called Dinero Gratis (Free Money), some of whom are *okupas*, has been producing radical critical theory since 1999. In their work, they ask, "What can be done to counter economic and personal depression, and inequalities linked to precarious living worldwide?" *El taxista ful* and *Libro* propose the same solution: we must think with the body. Thought must be allowed to function affectively instead of according to predetermined systems of valuing, signifying, and being. The goal should be to maximize an embodied cognition that responds to the city before and against the fixed relations of capitalism. The way thoughts, words, images, and bodily responses are linked must be reconfigured. Such a rearrangement requires two concomitant moves: 1) evoking and communicating the idea of free exchange and openness, as

opposed to the idea of money, through art (poetry, music, performance art, the plastic arts, graffiti, urban art, and cinema); and 2) acting out and rehearsing these ideas, such as in the practice of squatting.

A bodily thinking that does not conform to a set of fixed rules is for some uncomfortable, even inconceivable. Nevertheless, if new meanings and actions can never be imagined, they can never be realized in the material world. It is prudent to be wary of the abuse of art to distract and manipulate for political or financial gain rather than for social gain. However, one should be equally careful not to dismiss all artistic forays into the nonsensical as too theoretical and impractical. The *okupas* challenge society to differentiate the images and representations instituted by state domination or capitalist exploitation from the subversive potential of imagination. The *okupas* unify theory and practice, word and body, in pursuit of a positive, social vision that might serve humanity and lead the way out of the current problems caused by capitalism.

PART I: NOCTURNAL POLITICS IN THE SPANISH FILM *EL TAXISTA FUL*

After film director Jo Sol read the radically leftist political manifesto *Por una política nocturna* [For a Nocturnal Politics], he felt compelled to approach some of the activists who had participated in writing the book with an idea for a film.[1] Authorship of the manifesto is attributed to Mar Traful, a pseudonym used to refer to a group of Barcelonan activists from four separate social projects: Espai en Blanc, La Oficina, Dinero Gratis, and Miles de Viviendas. Although each of these collectives collaborated with the motion picture, Sol wanted the members of Dinero Gratis to act in the feature since this group had been the most engaged, of the four, in physical interventions in the city. Sol's proposal consisted of creating and at the same time filming something closer to performance art than studio film. The idea was to force the members of Dinero Gratis to examine their own political thought. The catalyst would be an unexpected encounter with an unemployed man who steals taxis at night in order to make money. Sol explained that, unlike a typical film, his would be an extemporaneous performance because, first, there would be no script (everything would be improvised), and second, the actors would be the actual members of Dinero

Gratis. This filmed performance would be the sharing of an unscripted experience and would have the goal of producing new thought. The place from which the innovative ideas would emanate would be the lived space of practice, that is, the intermingling of bodies, and not the space of theory. Dinero Gratis agreed to participate, and the result of its collaboration with Sol was the film *El taxista ful* (2005), winner of the Julio Verne Prize for the Best Film in the 2006 Nantes Film Festival.

On first viewing, the Spanish film *El taxista ful* may seem like the simple telling of a story about an unemployed Spanish citizen who steals taxis, or on just a slightly deeper level, it might be read as a social representation of political activists, most notably the *okupas*. However, it is much more than either of these reductions. It is a sociopolitical experiment that tests and, ultimately, proves the possibility of a radical way of relating to the world and to others that is dictated not by the market, work, or the State, but by the body's response to precarious urban living at a preconscious, precognitive, and pre-linguistic level. The film produces new speech acts that split from the totalizing structures of capital to create a new system of valorization that is centered on friendship and sharing rather than on economic profit. In order to attempt to construct a political life with the potential to create social transformation, Sol and the activists of Dinero Gratis question the standardized categories of work, capital, and property imposed by the Spanish State and the neoliberal market.

The film functions on multiple registers. It contains both a visible and an invisible element. The technique that Sol employs is similar to the literary device of a story-within-a-story and, at the same time, radically different. The main story is the encounter between Dinero Gratis and José, *el taxista ful*. The Spanish word *ful* is slang from the 1970s for false. Barcelonan urban legend tells of a man who poses as a licensed taxi driver and steals taxis at night to work. The myth refers to this man as *el taxista ful*, or the false taxi driver. It is important to note that while most of the members of Dinero Gratis play themselves, there is one important exception: José (Pepe) Rovira, who interprets the role of the false taxi driver. Sol created a backstory for this character. However, it is necessary to emphasize that this motivation is never revealed to the moviegoer or to the activists of Dinero Gratis within the film. The backstory is this: José, the character, is an anarchist only acting like the false taxi driver in order to see how other

anarchists will react to a direct challenge to their political thought. Hence he takes on the role of Jo Sol as the instigator for challenging the group's ideology. José takes advantage of the Barcelonan urban legend in order to conduct a sociopolitical experiment using the unknowing members of Dinero Gratis as participants. I only discovered this hidden backstory after speaking with Sol in a personal interview. When I asked him why this was not made explicit in the film, he replied that the movie is not about explaining, it is about constructing a new political discourse. I am fully aware that by bringing to light and analyzing the backstory I am doing precisely what the film does not and what the director was purposefully avoiding. However, I hope that my explanation of the film will serve as a catalyst for activists to attempt similar experiments.

The creation of a better life in the present finds itself at a moment of political impasse. In *Por una política nocturna*, the authors posit the notion that political recognition through representation is in crisis.[2] They argue that the political force that will be able to resist oppression and domination will reside in the force of anonymity. Santiago López Petit, member of Espai en Blanc, La Oficina, and Dinero Gratis, as well as professor of philosophy at the University of Barcelona, promotes this idea, asserting that effective politics now means disappearing, rather than appearing, in front of other people.[3] Individual and collective identity, rooted in the self and the group, respectively, is ripped out by activists in order to create a common experience of sharing. Instead of producing a political subject, López Petit advocates a new type of political activist who is invisible. He calls this new type of political agitator *el hombre anónimo* (anonymous man).[4] There is general agreement among Barcelonan activists that by becoming invisible, that is, "hombres anónimos," they can make public meaning out of their performances again. Invisibility and anonymity are being sought as conditions to denounce. By maintaining anonymity, they focus attention on their message and aesthetics rather than on themselves.

Unfortunately, the concept of "el hombre anónimo" is completely sexist and gendered. Universalizing this new type of political activist using a masculine noun erases the presence of women. This move is surprising and contradictory given that López Petit and Dinero Gratis are concerned with fighting for social justice and equality. They profess to distrust and dismiss totalizing systems of rigid and formal relations, two of which are capitalism

and language. Nocturnal politics, as the name suggests, is a critique of a way of relating to the world that brings reality to light and makes it intelligible through the mediation of representations anchored in the self. However, the term “hombre anónimo” perpetuates exactly what the concept attacks, that is, the logic of negation in which the world is organized dialectically into fixed, binary oppositions (self is not other, man is not woman, good is not evil, etc.) as well as according to the logic of identity in which a *Cogito*, a thinking subject, apprehends reality and the multiple others in reality as extensions of the self. Many might dismiss my critique of López Petit’s word choice as bowing to political correctness, especially in Spain, as feminist critiques have been poorly received there. However, the imposed order of language has historically been used in the Western world to guarantee a political and social order. The mere use of the term “hombre anónimo” suggests that the inventor of the concept does not believe in the power of women as political actors. I doubt that this is true because his theoretical sparring partner and sounding board is a woman, Marina Garcés. Nonetheless, López Petit has a responsibility to be more careful with word choice. He should insist on creating written language that is gender neutral. A possible alternative phrase for “hombre anónimo” might be “persona anónima.” Gender specific Spanish nouns ending in “o” to indicate men and in “a” to indicate women, or the privileging of masculine nouns in plural to refer to a group of mixed company, should be rejected. In order to employ more inclusive language in written text, many activists, including *okupas*, have replaced the “o” or the “a” with an “x” or an “@.” For example, “amig@s” is substituted for “amigos” or “amigas.”

Various texts, most notably, *Appel* [*The Call*] by Tiqqun, a collective of radical contemporary French theorists, have recently been published in Spanish as *Llamamiento y otros fogonazos* [The Call and Other Flashes] (2009). Included at the end of the book is a collectively written chapter by several Barcelonan activists analyzing the content of Tiqqun’s texts. In *Appel*, Tiqqun criticizes traditional activism, contending that conventional protests in public space are not working, and argues that political action, which takes place through speech in public, is no longer able to make concrete social changes in society. Unfortunately, Tiqqun suggests that violent insurrection is the means to social change. A potential risk that I see with embracing anonymity is precisely the lack of personal responsibility or

accountability that may lead to an increase in violence, particularly at the hands of secret societies. Within the anarchist tradition, this has happened before. Mikhail Bakunin, a Russian nineteenth-century theorist of anarchism, was both utopic and guilty of authoritarian politics.[5] Bakunin advocated a non-statist social revolution that would lead to the complete emancipation of society, a utopia. However, he believed that the revolution could only be achieved through the totalizing guidance of secret societies consisting of professional revolutionaries. I am critical of the use of violence to elicit social change not only because the loss of life is tragic but because it is ineffective. The biggest insurrection ever, May ’68 in Paris, was crushed in a matter of days.

Instead of a physical attack, I argue for an attack of the imaginary. Fortunately, so do most of the *okupas*. There is little threat of a violent *okupa* insurrection because, unlike Bakunin and Tiqqun, both advocators of violence, the *okupas’* goal is not utopian. They do not pretend to completely and definitively defeat capitalism in the future, but they do hope to create a better life in the present. They identify with the notion of constructing alternatives here and now instead of waiting for some future revolution. As a result, *okupas* reject traditional anarchism’s belief that institutions of domination and exploitation have to be destroyed. Instead, *okupas* embrace the post-anarchist idea of no-future in conjunction with the construction of affinity groups like squatted social centers.

The point of departure for a “nocturnal politics,” such as is advocated in *Por una política nocturna* and in the film, *El taxista ful*, is the emptying potential of nihilism. In an attempt to answer the question of how to create an alternative to capitalism when capitalism is everything and everywhere, *Por una política nocturna* follows the logic of a Jewish mystic who replies to a similar quandary in religious thought. In answer to the question “¿cómo puede Dios crear algo de la nada si Él es todo en todo y en todas partes está Él?” [How can God create something from nothing if He is everything in everything and He is everywhere?], the Jewish mystic responds, “al principio Dios crea una nada para poder crear” [at first God creates a nothingness in order to create].[6] In other words, the authors believe that before establishing an alternative space within ubiquitous capitalism, it will be necessary to, first, produce an empty space alongside capitalism free of market relations, power relations, closed, linguistic binary relations, and

notions of identity. The most practical example of this type of adjacent space is a squatted social center. Another is the film in question. These emergent, empty spaces are filled with new expressions that incite the body to political action, or affects.

I argue that José's backstory of really being an anarchist is a ghost that haunts the film because his true, anarchist identity goes unnoticed by his fellow anarchists as well as by the moviegoers. Through his performance, this character becomes a poetic-political figure who adds poetic power to the political questions of work and money. By incarnating the *taxista ful* as representative of the common sense of dominant reality (he believes in work), this secretly anarchist character pushes fellow anarchists to question their own political thought and, through that self-reflection, become stronger. Because there was no script involved, the original project was more immediate than mediated. It consisted of a false, poetic, oral performance (that of José) within a more encompassing spoken performance. The impetus of this dynamic was to create a catalyst for the release of affects and, in so doing, to produce an emergent, virtual space to be filled with new ideas that anticipate the material.

This emptiness, the nothingness that precedes creation, is portrayed in the first shot, which is a black screen. From this blackness emerges the voice of José, the false taxi driver. He is talking about the misery that forced his family to emigrate to Barcelona from southern Spain when he was twelve. In order to be able to live in a tiny sixty-square-meter apartment (approximately 645 square feet) in Barcelona, he and every member of his extended family, consisting of twenty people, had to work. He complains that life cannot possibly be only "this," which can be taken to mean this state of precarious living caused by poorly remunerated work. However, at the moment when José says "this," a giant frontal close-up of his face appears on the screen. The correspondence between the utterance of "this" and the appearance of José's face transforms the aforementioned phrase into "life cannot possibly be only a face." Deleuze and Guattari theorize that the face is the composition of order produced by the dominant reality. The face is not an image but the organizing logic of power. "The face is a politics" that consists of the intersection between subjectification and significance, that is, between the black hole (referring to the eyes) of pre-established models of being and the white wall (the surface on which the eyes are

placed) of a closed system of meaning.[7] A face can be subjected to a state and linguistic order to a greater or lesser degree. Deleuze and Guattari categorize a face as seen from the front as the most subjected and the face in profile as the least subjected. Therefore, José's statement juxtaposed with the image of his face can be read to mean that there must be something more to life than a set of normalized codes of conduct.

Almost as immediately as José's face appears in the first shot, it disappears, only to be replaced by the image of José in profile, driving a taxi. Now unemployed, José has been moved to take action less out of a desire to earn money than a fear of social rejection. He does not choose to pay for job-training classes or to hire a company to place him in temporary positions, which are the official ways to ease social unrest and to transition from unemployment to employment, because they are moneymaking endeavors in themselves. Rather, he decides to work as a taxi driver by "borrowing," without permission, unused taxis at night. José's face in profile ruptures the organizing logic of the face as seen from the front, and in so doing, creates a "line of escape," such as Deleuze and Guattari would call it, down which José flees in the taxi. The close-up of José in profile occupies one half of the camera frame; the other half shows moving images of Barcelona's cityscape as José drives past. This framing, along with José's facial tic, a compulsive, seemingly uncontrollable movement of the mouth, in which he moves his lower jaw out repeatedly, creates the impression that there is a constant tension between José and the city.

The incessant struggle between what the market demands of a person (work) and what it currently offers (fewer jobs, the majority of which are with short-term contracts) produces the urban experience of precarious living. José responds to his state of precarious living by inventing a new use for taxis that moves it (the new use) away from traditional work toward free action. He converts the taxi from a tool for work into a weapon against the new regime of flexible accumulation of capital, which demands not only more easily replaceable employees, but also emphasizes rapid turnover time in consumption in order to stimulate economic growth.[8] Paradoxically, José bemoans that there must be more to relationships than what the market dictates at the same time that he reduces his contact with his passengers to a purely economic exchange. That is, he does not engage his clients in conversation. José is still mistakenly working within the neoliberal frame of

life as a personal project made up of individual competitors. Instead of seeking an alliance of friends, he attempts to solve his problem alone. José's relationship with his clients is indicative of all relationships that are commercially mediated. The market that brings people physically close together, like a cab driver with a person wanting to get from one place to another or a supermarket cashier with a person desiring to purchase a food item, is the same market that keeps them emotionally distant. The only thing that they have invested in their brief encounter is a monetary exchange. What the film shows is that taxi drivers and other workers like them share a fixed destiny ordered by a neoliberal project in which they live unstable lives full of fear and anxiety.

José's loneliness is emphasized when, after a long night's work, he returns to an empty apartment. The audience learns that his wife, after finding out that he was stealing taxis, had moved to Madrid, taking their son with her. The only traces of them left in the apartment are photographs of them on the shelf. When José enters his bathroom, the viewer observes that the mirror is cracked and the faucet leaks. Both details suggest that José is economically underprivileged, as he apparently lacks the money needed to fix these things. As he contemplates himself in the mirror, he fights to control his facial tic. Again, we are presented with a frontal close-up of his face, as at the beginning of the film when the face is equated with the organizing logic of power. However, in this scene, we see the image of José reflected in the mirror. This doubling suggests that José, like most, mimics the norms of society. José is both a subject of pre-established ways of speaking (the close-up, frontal reflection of his face in the mirror) and an individual person struggling to find his own voice. He is a subject nailed down to a closed system of meaning. However, that closed system of meaning, represented by the mirror, has cracks. The notion that one can productively contribute to society only if one has a job is beginning to break along the lines of non-sense, like the cracks running across the mirror.

After being caught and subsequently charged with stealing a taxi from an underground parking lot, José seeks the help of Mar, a member of Dinero Gratis (not to be confused with Mar Traful). He advises him to talk with Francesc Arnau, a real lawyer dedicated to the defense of the politically and socially marginalized, also playing himself. Francesc counsels José in the presence of Mar. He suggests a political line of defense in which he would

argue that José is a political delinquent who exercised his right to react to social and economic injustice. However, after the meeting, José confesses to Mar that, while he does not want to go to jail, he is not willing to be labeled as a political delinquent. José, instead of justifying his crime and calling attention to himself through the mediation of the lawyer's category, opts to remain outside predetermined definitions. He asserts that he is able to defend his own dignity by himself without the help of the lawyer.

The scene immediately following this rejection of legal representation shows José's descent into the Barcelona subway system. The transition should be read metaphorically: José's descent is a flight from the light of day, from the light of representational thinking and Enlightenment, to the penumbra of the underground and nocturnal politics. The authors of *Por una política nocturna* argue that resistance to state domination and capitalist exploitation is rendered as invisible and as ineffective as a lit lantern used in the midday sun, such as Nietzsche describes a madman carrying in an anecdote in *The Gay Science*.[9] Since the nature of the light surrounding a lit lantern determines its visibility or lack thereof (and hence its effectiveness), the authors argue that it is time to exchange the midday light of representational thinking for the half light of nocturnal politics:

> En la apoteosis capitalista la resistencia, como el comunismo, se vuelve ridícula: no una antorcha en la noche sino una linterna invisible, encendida bajo el sol de mediodía. Como la de "el loco". (Demasiada luz, sin embargo, en esta imagen de Nietzsche, demasiada ilustración. La del mundo es al fin una claridad velada, un fondo neutral, indiferente, mortecino, como la luz del metro. "El loco": una resistencia súbita, abrasadora, invisible, sobrevenida dentro del metro. Los demás se ríen. A nosotros *nos quema*.)[10]
>
> [In capitalist apotheosis, resistance, like communism, becomes ridiculous: not a torch in the night but an invisible lantern, lit under the midday sun. Like the lantern of "the madman". (Too much light, nevertheless, in this image of Nietzsche, too much enlightenment. The light of the world is in the end a veiled clarity, a neutral, indifferent, fading background like the light of the subway. "The madman": a sudden, burning, invisible, untimely resistance in the subway. The others laugh. *It burns* us).]

Instead of attempting to resist the system in the light of day, that is, in court, José's resistance escapes to the half light of the subway, and in this way, it will become more effective.

The subway is also a site of imperceptible movement. Because what one sees when looking out the window of a subway car is blackness with periodic flashes of light, movement is very difficult to detect. As a result, a

subway ride often feels like a stationary flight. It moves, but its movement seems to take place elsewhere. Likewise, the real movement of José's use of the taxis is not the physical movement in the city, but the movement that defies the semiotic system that is capitalism. José begins to move at a preconscious and precognitive level in the sense that he challenges a predetermined, socially accepted way of thinking dominated by the logic of capitalism. His reaction to steal taxis may also be considered a bodily response that comes before he has time to process and condemn it. Much like a person who hears a loud noise and instinctually ducks or crouches, José's response to steal taxis is more a knee-jerk reaction to precarious living than a carefully thought-out plan.

The court system attempts to block José's real movement by sentencing him to spend an undisclosed amount of time in a psychiatric ward, and in so doing, by labeling him as a mentally unstable person. The court's measurement of José's resemblance to its standard of sanity or normality motivates José to take his own measurement. He remembers his life in the country in southern Spain when he was younger and his emigration to Barcelona with his family, an occurrence that was not particular to him or his family, but an experience shared by many.[11] In the movie, his memories take the form of home videos, which lead the viewer on a trip from farmland to small town to Barcelona. Along the way, we see footage of José's wedding, his wife and baby boy, street parties with clowns and marching bands, hot summers at the pool, and fun at an amusement park, a neighborhood soccer game, and children playing in the park. José comments, in a voice-over accompanying the videos, that what he wants is a normal life like the one he had, one in which he was able to work, make money, and take his son to get an ice cream cone. Ultimately, he refuses to enter the psychiatric ward and runs away. He flees from society's category of insanity. However, society has branded him insane precisely because of his unswerving belief in the norm of work.

Even though José still moves within the system (he still values work), he undermines it because he does not alleviate his sense of insecurity by paying for job-training classes or by hiring a company to place him in temporary positions. The system absorbs people like José who resist absolute integration by blaming them for all of its problems, sending them down escape routes already drawn by the system, and giving those lines of

resistance negative values. Albeit the idea to steal taxis may have been José's, it is just one of many possible predetermined passages of extrication that society draws in order to allow for calculated pressure releases. By condemning José's actions as those of a mentally unstable person, he is transformed into a scapegoat and, thus, neutralized.

José's second attempt with Mar and Dinero Gratis to escape state domination and capitalist exploitation is a more successful movement that defies binary oppositions. José attends a meeting with Dinero Gratis in order to explore the commonalities between his case and the beliefs and actions of the collective. Mar suggests developing a campaign against precarious living using José's case as an example of the extremes to which one is forced to go in order to survive in a neoliberal society. José, however, is resistant because he maintains that he and Dinero Gratis are, in reality, opposites. He is driven to work while Dinero Gratis is against work. In the film, López Petit counters that José's stealing of taxis, even if done for the purpose of working, constitutes a radical and provocative anti-capitalism gesture. It was an absurd response to an absurd society. Because José's actions did not comply with the possible options offered by capitalism, his practice of stealing taxis was a new expression never before seen in the social body. This is the point of contact between José and Dinero Gratis, for Dinero Gratis also performs radical gestures as well as produces new political expressions that appear on posters, logos, and other graphic material. Some of Dinero Gratis's subversive ideas that materialize in the film on various posters are the following: "Darse dinero libera del dinero" [Giving Yourself Money Liberates You From Money], "No queremos trabajo queremos dinero" [We Don't Want Work We Want Money], "Pasta ya" [Money Already], "Treballar és assajar la mort" [Working Is Rehearsing Death], and "Dinero Gratis es entre amigos una delicia" [Free Money Is Among Friends a Delight]. As the posters reveal, the members of Dinero Gratis attack the primacy of economic and monetary value over all other values. Dinero Gratis's currency is not the euro but self-valorization through social interaction. The circulation of friendship and a sense of sharing produce value or, as they say, money that is free.

Unlike José, whose interiority is still ordered by the norm of work, the members of Dinero Gratis, who do not believe in work, do not treat labor as an enclosed given, but, rather, place it in a relation with an outside, with a

spatiotemporal exteriority. In this sense, Dinero Gratis does not think in terms of intrinsic binary relations but, rather, in terms of relations that are always external to themselves and that can be affected by outside forces. According to the Merriam-Webster online dictionary, the third definition for passion is "the state or capacity of being acted on by external agents or forces."[12] The external agents of Dinero Gratis's passion may take the form of expressions that are virtual in the sense that they are not yet in existence but are, nonetheless, real because they already move within the minds of the members of the collective. This allows Dinero Gratis to not only create its own "lines of flight" instead of following the ones predetermined by the market (what José was forced to do), but also to enter other relations that occur before the distinctions made by a closed, semiotic system, in this case, capitalism. Dinero Gratis effectively drops out of the dominant normality and functions at a prelinguistic level. In other words, it thinks outside of the box.

In addition to the posters, Sol shows real footage of some of Dinero Gratis's radical gestures. In June of 2001, the adhesive tape and stickers emblazoned with the words *Dinero Gratis* were placed at the disposal of many anti-globalization organizations who participated in protests against the World Bank's Conference on Development Economics scheduled to be held in Barcelona at the end of that same month. Because the short, powerful message "Free Money" was a perfect departure point from which to criticize the World Bank, members of these groups took to the streets wrapped in the Dinero Gratis adhesive tape. Those two words were widely disseminated in Barcelona in June 2001 and served as catalysts, mutant affects, and orphan letters that moved people to action. Those actions pressured the World Bank to eventually cancel the conference. The images of the World Bank protest were accompanied in the film by Catalonian group Jalea Real's song "13M." Although what one hears in the movie is an instrumental version of the song, it is likely that the absent lyrics drove its selection. "13M" suggests that when one is alone, one is emotionally poor, whereas when many get together (13M or 13 million), everyone involved acquires a relational richness. Instead of being continually rooted in oneself, it is necessary, as another member of Dinero Gratis, Marina Garcés, has written, to come "out of oneself to enter a no-man's land in which a common world can be created."[13]

In a society that separates intellectuals from manual laborers, José is awestruck by Miguel Ángel because he is a brick layer who is also a philosopher. For Miguel Ángel, the connection is clear. There is no difference between ideas and bricks. Both can be used to build or destroy depending on the circumstances. Miguel Ángel, as a brick layer–philosopher, challenges simple binary oppositions and opts to explore the dynamic of multiplicity. However, Miguel Ángel and the rest of Dinero Gratis argue that the type of brick a thought should be is sandstone, rather than paving stone. The following passage in *Por una política nocturna* clarifies:

> Pero quizá lo primero que deba romperse es la piedra misma: quizá la piedra deba estallar en mil pedazos. Será entonces cuando, adquiriendo el carácter de piedra arenisca, resulte más difícil capturarla y codificarla. Pues no se encierra en una identidad, sino que, esa multitud de granitos de arena es arrastrada por el viento: coge fuerza y se disgrega.[14]
>
> [But perhaps the first thing that should break is the rock itself: perhaps the rock should explode into a thousand pieces. It will be then when, acquiring the character of sandstone, it ends up being more difficult to capture and codify. It does not enclose itself in an identity, but, rather, that multitude of grains of sand is dragged by the wind: it builds up force and disperses itself.]

Thought as sandstone is anonymous, and therein lies its power. When an idea cannot be attributed to one person, when it cannot be given a name, it is very difficult for the dominant political groups to reappropriate it, manipulate it, and deactivate it.

At one point during the conversation at Miguel Ángel's house, Mar asks José what he wants out of life. José cannot respond. A close-up of José is quickly followed by a cut to a scene on Miguel Ángel's rooftop in which Mar and José discuss squatting. This is the volatile juncture at which three forces, José, Dinero Gratis, and the squatted social center Miles de Viviendas, crash into each other to form a common movement. The song that ties the three forces together is "Curre curre guagliò" ["Run, Man, Run"] by 99Posse, an Italian rap group formed in the squatted social center Officina 99 in Naples in the early '90s. 99Posse sings that "if a satisfied need […] is worth more than a pretty jacket with a cellular phone, man, then the moment has arrived and you need to surpass it whether you like it or not. This is the moment to occupy the space. Run, man, run."[15] 99Posse equates squatting with a movement that follows one's desires. Instead of conforming to predetermined modes of being (a subject on whom a state

order and a capitalist regime are imposed), one must liberate one's own desires. José must come to terms with what he wants and, like a squatted social center that becomes an emergent space free of market and power relations, he must become an emergent subjectivity free of fixed notions of identity. In order to do that, José must determine what he is not willing to tolerate in his life anymore and redirect that frustration and anger against himself. 99Posse describes this anger as one that "burns hot and quivers/and it transforms your life, you can't explain it/a type of obvious illogic/it makes you live a life that others think is absurd/but you're doing the right thing, I told you that anger burning in your chest is anger moved by love/by love, man/Run, man, run."[16] López Petit of Dinero Gratis agrees and conceptualizes that anger as "odio libre" [free hate.][17] He argues that "resistir es cada vez más resistir (se)" [resisting is more and more resisting oneself].[18] An example of this is the social laborers' attempt to separate labor from capital, which has actually resulted, ironically, in a tighter coincidence between capitalism and life. By moving away from the Fordist assembly line to a networked organization, capital provides social laborers the creative space for self-valorization. In a network where social laborers are given the freedom to manage their own projects, they tend to take their work home with them. To advocate hating our lives seems strange and potentially harmful. However, López Petit explains that "free hate" liberates us from the capitalistic life to which we are subjected. It is a way of moving that makes capitalism and its representation take flight. The movement is an entering into a becoming that escapes sovereign organization. In the last line of "Curre curre guagliò," 99Posse reveals that the power of the *okupas* resides in this way of moving. "And you send us riot cops to kick us out/But the Billy clubs aren't enough and I'll tell you why/because you can't hurt me anymore, I've learned to fall."[19] In other words, the *okupas* have learned to move (fall) at the level of the perpetually indeterminable, in which they relate to the world in a continuous, open, self-valorizing fashion instead of one limited by the totalizing structures of capital.

The transformation and movements of the mind occurring within both José and Mar are like the movements of a type of creature that José imagines running along the rooftops of the Ciutat Vella at night. He describes the animal as something between a human and a cat that emerges from the air-conditioning tubes in order to explore the other world of the

rooftops. The unrestricted movement of the cat-elf transforms the roofs of Barcelona's Gothic neighborhood into an interconnected, elevated, public space adjacent to the controlled space of the world below. Barcelona-based video artist Dionís Escorsa and RoTor in 2004 in their project *Vincles Alt-Terrats* [Alternative Roof Connections] investigated the feasibility of creating pedestrian transit between the connected roofs of the Ciutat Vella. During their initial, exploratory steps, they discovered and mapped possible routes by jumping railings and passing from one roof to another. Given that the roofs of apartment buildings are communal spaces, their idea was to link these communal spaces in order to expand the area.[20] Dionís Escorsa described the project to me in a personal e-mail:

> La utopía de una evolución en este sentido, podría proporcionar una ciudad soñada, autogestionada, libre del control institucional, con espacios de uso y tránsito elevados, verdes y libres de coches, que constituyen uno de los mejores paisajes de la ciudad, pero que hoy en día están simplemente parcelados, y son inaccesibles para casi todos.[21]
>
> [The utopia of an evolution in this sense would be able to provide an imagined, self-determined city free of institutional control with elevated, green, usable spaces of pedestrian transit free of cars that constitute some of the best landscapes of the city but today are simply parceled off and are inaccessible to almost everyone.]

Vincles Alt-Terrats is an example of the physical transformation of built environment through unrestricted movement. Like the cat-elf, radical imagination consisting of innovative ideas makes connections that normally are unable to be made between binary divisions like social classes, men and women, rich and poor, private and public space. José's thought is constantly oscillating between the prelinguistic multiplicity of the cat-elf and the binary thinking indicative of capitalism.

José's psychic transformation is cinematographically illustrated in the scenes in which José, Mar, and Vicente (author of the wall poem in the introduction) try on clothes in front of a mirror in the free store in Miles de Viviendas. These images are alternated with footage of Dinero Gratis's street theater and protest. Instead of facing his double in the mirror alone, José is now accompanied by Mar and Vicente. With the strength that an alliance produces, José is able to challenge his reflection. He begins to realize that if you have friends, you don't need money. Through creating a life in common with others, one is able to weather the precariousness of urban living. Friendship produces *dinero gratis*, or "free money." For

example, if an unforeseen expense arises one month, friends with whom you are living in community will cover the cost. Like the activists of Dinero Gratis seen in the real footage wearing white masks that make them indistinguishable from one another, José stops producing an identifiable political subject by beginning to empty out his identity and filling it with a life in common.

After spending time with the members of Dinero Gratis and after living in the squatted social center Miles de Viviendas, José recognizes the importance of living a political life. He admits that something needs to be done, but he is unsure what that "something" is. He doesn't know if the next idea he will have will be even crazier than his first, stealing taxis. It is also unclear whether his political life will continue to be a collective one or if it will return to being a personal one. The contact between José and the members of Dinero Gratis and Miles de Viviendas certainly unleashed affects that initiated the schizo process in José in which he begins to move outside of himself and outside of capitalism to share a no-man's land with others. However, it is uncertain whether the plateau reached between José, Dinero Gratis, and Miles de Viviendas was, as Massumi would say, "sustained long enough to leave a kind of afterimage of its dynamism" for José to reactivate at a later date,[22] for just when José begins to drop out of his own dominant normality, he reverts back to the discourse of majority standards. José complains that living in a squatted house isn't normal. Having to go to the public square to fill plastic bottles with potable water because the squatted house doesn't have running water isn't normal. Asking merchants at the end of the day if they have food to recycle because you don't have enough money to buy the food you want and need isn't normal. Being estranged from your family because you don't have a job, not because you don't want to work, but because the market provides fewer and fewer positions, isn't normal. In a type of exit interview with Dinero Gratis at the end of the film, Marina Garcés reminds José that he should not measure the success of his life against society's standards.

What José takes away from his experience with Dinero Gratis and with Mar is the anarchist notion of no-future. Instead of waiting for a nonexistent better future, José begins to construct the future he desires in the present. The first thing he does is call his son. The second is to suddenly and mysteriously leave Miles de Viviendas early in the morning without saying

good-bye to Mar. Like the apparently stationary flight of the subway, the movement of which seems to occur elsewhere because it is imperceptible, José's initial encounter with Dinero Gratis and with Mar continues even though it would seem to have ended long ago. For example, during José's absence, Mar thinks about how his encounter with José has changed his life. Mar begins to formulate some ideas about how to be anonymous. A voice-over of his thoughts is accompanied by an intermingling of images of him with those of José's home videos. The images of José's home movies depict the experiences of everyday life. Because they are common occurrences, they could belong to anyone. They are, at the same time, everyone's and no one's. It is in this sense that the home videos have the potential to be the anonymous memories of an anonymous person. Sol revealed to me in a personal interview that some of the home videos were his and those of Dinero Gratis, and some were found in Dumpsters around Barcelona. Ironically, the imagined ideals portrayed as José's in the movie consist of other people's actual eliminated past. Sol is postulating that it is much easier to observe how normality is constructed from the position of the abject.

After months of hiding and also of reflecting on his relationship with Mar and Dinero Gratis, José reappears in an assembly organized by various social movements in Barcelona. He addresses the assemblage, first, by stating that he is not bitter. He believes anger and happiness can coexist in life. Second, he encourages them to continually ask the following question: How can we make holes in reality? In other words, how can we continue to challenge how people think in order to change the way in which we live together? José does not, however, divulge to the crowd or, by extension, to the viewers of the film that he has not been truthful with regard to his identity. He does not explain that he is an anarchist only posing as the *taxista ful*. José's decision not to unmask his true identity to the activists at the assembly suggests that his experiment continues even though the movie ends.

At the beginning of the film, José, as the *taxista ful*, lamented that life could not possibly be only a face, that is, normalized codes of conduct. José's identity as an anarchist was rendered invisible in order to dismantle the face. José went unrecognized by his fellow anarchists. He was a stranger to his co-activists. He became simply an unemployed *precario*. His

movement of disappearance allowed him to disrupt reality. Sol's hope that there is more to life than just a face translates into his desire to develop processes and experiments like *El taxista ful* that are capable of generating new mental categories that permit a complex understanding of reality, rather than a simple one based on binary reductions. Vicente Escolar Bautista, former squatter of Miles de Viviendas, author of the controversial wall poem, member of Dinero Gratis and participant in *El taxista ful*, also imagines and performs a post-utopian, post-identitarian and post-dogmatic Barcelona in Part II.

PART II: JUMP OUT THE WINDOW WITH VICENTE ESCOLAR BAUTISTA IN *LIBRO DE UN 8/1 TUMBADO EN EL ESPEJO (OCHO CUARTOS DE GASTO…PARTIDO POR UNO)*

In the June 2009 issue of *Relevant BCN*, a free magazine produced in Barcelona and dedicated to describing the state of street art, hip-hop/skater culture, and squatting in Barcelona, the following question was posed by author Lady EMZ: What happened to the creative, multicultural Barcelona of the '90s? Barcelona used to be a place where graffiti and urban artists could paint openly, without fear of being fined, and was even considered the graffiti and urban art capital of Europe. In fact, the City of Barcelona supported urban art as a way to foment its image as a progressive and modern city. Arte Bastardo, an international group of street artists, points out that "la imagen de graffiti, se unió con la idea de que Barcelona se ha promovido como la ciudad más Europea y cultural de España, y se ha tomado como estandarte de esta reputación la imagen del graffiti que prevalece en toda la ciudad" [The image of graffiti was connected with the idea that Barcelona has promoted itself as the most European and cultural city in Spain, and took as a banner of this reputation the image of graffiti that prevails in the whole city].[23] However, according to urban artist Nacho Magro (Escif), the exponential increase in graffiti caused the City of Barcelona to feel that it had lost control of public space. Some *okupas* also contributed to that sense of loss of control. In addition to destroying public property during violent evictions, like that of the cinema Princesa in 1996, some uncivil *okupas* failed to respect neighborhoods or neighbors during occupations. They took drugs, urinated, and defecated in building entrances,

and threw loud *okupa* parties. In order to regain control, the Socialist government passed the Laws of Communal Living on December 23, 2005. These new laws criminalized, among other things, graffiti and urban art, made it illegal to put posters in public spaces, prohibited the practice of acrobatics and skateboarding in public space, and forbade unauthorized activities like the reading of tarot cards in public space. The answer to the question "What ever happened to the creative, multicultural Barcelona of the '90s?" is clear and simple: The Laws of Communal Living happened. Perhaps the better question, and what Lady EMZ meant to suggest, is: How do we get back to a creative, multicultural Barcelona? It seems to me that a way to regain Barcelona's former creativity is to reconnect art (word and images) and body in the city.

Artists and *okupas* who work for social justice, equality and equal access to public space view the Laws of Communal Living as an institutional capture of urban space. Vicente Escolar Bautista, poet and squatter of Miles de Viviendas, seeks to break with these laws and to keep the interpretive field open. Toward this end, he developed, along with other activists, a deck of tarot cards known as Tarot (del Present-Per-Venir) de Barcelona [Barcelona's Tarot (of the Present that is to Come)]. The figures, actions, and objects depicted on the tarot cards were taken directly from Barcelonan reality. However, these building blocks of life in Barcelona were combined not according to the rules of the market (as they are in the Laws of Communal Living, for the type of public space that these laws promote is an orderly, privatized public space in which the upper-class tourist and investor can safely consume), but, rather, according to chance in order to demonstrate that one should open life to fortuitous encounters with other people and other ideas. The compositional elements of Escolar Bautista's book of poetry *Libro de un 8/1 tumbado en el espejo (ocho cuartos de gasto…partido por uno)* [Book of 8/1 Knocked Down in the Mirror (eight fourths expenditure…divided by one)] (2004) function in the same way as do the tarot cards. They resist the closing down of words, images, and desires to one totalizing interpretation.

A major concern of Escolar Bautista is the way in which word and body come together in the city of Barcelona. His book of poetry cannot be separated from his bodily practice of squatting at Miles de Viviendas. Both began in 2003. The Miles de Viviendas experiment, one that lasted four

years (2003 to 2007) in four different squatted social centers, grew out of the Espais Alliberats contra la Guerra [Liberated Spaces against the War] project, in which several buildings near the Plaza del Pi were squatted from February 2003 to the spring of 2003 to protest the Spanish involvement in the war against Iraq. In a personal interview with me in 2009, Escolar Bautista explained the development of his understanding of the importance of both word and body, that is, of both theory and practice:

> Cuando era más joven, era muy mental, muy mental. Tenía que reencontrar el cuerpo, ponerlo en una disposición, en un encuentro, en un trabajo común, en cosas que no sabía que hacer, era un aprendizaje […] Cuando entré en Miles, estaba con el Dinero Gratis y con la oficina 2004 y hacíamos una crítica teórica radical. Algo que reclamábamos era que necesitábamos poner el cuerpo. Es que necesito poner el cuerpo. No solamente estar haciendo una crítica teórica, que es súper importante la palabra, pero a la vez necesito poner el cuerpo para que ese discurso se adecue y tome potencia y me atraviese.[24]
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> [When I was younger, I was very cerebral, very cerebral. I had to re-encounter the body, place it in the service of a disposition, of an encounter, of a common project, in things I did not know how to do, it was a learning process […] When I entered Miles, I was with Dinero Gratis and with la oficina 2004 and we were developing a radical, theoretical critique. Something that we were demanding was that we needed to put the body in the service of something. I need to use the body. Not only do I engage in theoretical critique, which the word is super important, but at the same time I need to put the body in the service of discourse so that this discourse becomes appropriate and acquires power and passes through me.]

Escolar Bautista links word and body by living his life poetically. Similar to the way poetry breaks the rules of the language system and takes risks, Escolar Bautista takes chances by participating in Espais Alliberats contra la Guerra, by squatting Miles de Viviendas, by collaborating with Yomango, Mayday 2004, *El taxista ful*, and Tarot (del Present-Per-Venir) de Barcelona [Barcelona's Tarot (of the Present that is to Come)]. Escolar Bautista is at once poet and poem. Both he and his verses rehearse alternative practices within the confines of state order and capitalist exploitation. Escolar Bautista's image of "a caged bird practicing flight"[25] to refer to his poetry reminds me of a remark made to me by urban artist Nacho Magro (Escif). When I asked him to comment on how it feels to have his artwork on display simultaneously in museums and on the street, he replied that it was a bit like being an ornithologist and at the same time a caged bird. In his work in the museum, he investigates and reflects upon street art, much like an ornithologist studies birds, and the street art he contemplates is his own. When exhibiting in museums, he uses his real name (Nacho Magro), and

when he paints on the streets, he signs with his alias (Escif). As a result, Nacho Magro is the ornithologist and Escif the caged bird. Escolar Bautista, too, uses both pseudonyms and his real name. He contributes texts under collective pseudonyms, as was the case with *Por una política nocturna,* and writes his blog "Hacking Social" under his own individual pseudonym Barbarroja. However, additionally, he has been known to appear on television programs such as *Catalunya opina* [Catalonia expresses its opinion] on Canal Català using his real name, Escolar Bautista, to talk about squatting. Even though one could say that Escolar Bautista is the ornithologist and Barbarroja the caged bird, in the end, the ornithologist is also in a cage because he too works within the framework of capitalism.

If I were to reduce Escolar Bautista's book of poetry to a slogan (writing with slogans is encouraged by Deleuze and Guattari in their introduction to *A Thousand Plateaus*, and, as an avid reader of theirs, Escolar Bautista would most probably be receptive to such a reduction), it would be: Take risks, be open, and multiply connections. Through the continual "rehearsal" and "performance" of the ideas expressed in his poetry, *okupas* learn to respond to Barcelona according to the pragmatics of prepositions, that is, *before* the establishment of the self/other and subject/object binaries, *before* the construction of predetermined psychic laws in the form of consciousness, and *before* and *against* the fixed relations of capitalism.

The interpretive event that Escolar Bautista repeatedly analyzes in his book of poetry is the moment of daybreak and one's response to it. Within the constraining framework of labor time, he selects the Barcelonan neighborhood El Raval at dawn as the setting for his poems. Daybreak is the ideal moment to ponder the infinite possibility of the new day, and El Raval is the perfect place to foment chance encounters between various compositional elements of Barcelonan reality. The book is divided into eight sections, each of which consists of four poems. Hence, the eight quarters of the title, *Libro de un 8/1 tumbado en el espejo (ocho cuartos de gasto…partido por uno),* refers to the organization of the book. There is a grouping of four poems at the end of the book not included in the previous eight, which functions as concluding statements that proliferate and accelerate the conversion of Escolar Bautista's life from that of an identical subject (a person like others—subjected to the unifying norms of society) to a unique and different one. My analysis focuses on five compositional

elements that repeat in the poems; the logic of desire, daybreak, the sun, bodies (the work body, the drugged body, the empty body of nothingness versus the emergent self), and spaces (the rooftop, El Raval, windows, a junkyard, and the Expohogar). These elements randomly interrelate, much like his tarot cards. Running throughout his poetry is the underlying tenet that, in order to contest precarious living, life must be lived as a daily repetition of a series of randomly interconnecting people and events. Life, for Escolar Bautista, should be lived as a pursuit of newness and differences. We are chained to our desire for the identical, the fixed, the same, but these chains need to be deliberately loosened through purposeful forays into difference.

Escolar Bautista engages with autonomist Marxism's critique of alienation in everyday life. He agrees with the autonomist Marxists that alienation is caused, not by capitalist exploitation, but by the reduction of life to work. The autonomists argue that, in order to combat alienation, one must work as little as possible and, instead, cultivate the unpaid labor of self-valorization through social interaction. Escolar Bautista equates this process of social production, which is, for him, the process of the production of desire, to the birthing process. According to Joan Corominas's *Breve diccionario etimológico de la lengua castellana* [*The Brief Etymological Dictionary of the Castilian Language*], the Spanish verbs *parir* [to give birth][26] and *partir* [to divide, to separate][27] are etymologically related verbs. The connection is not difficult to understand. The child, at birth, is separated from the mother. There are various Spanish words that emerge from this relation that Escolar Bautista continually employs in his poetry. For example, the Spanish noun *parto* [giving birth] comes from the Latin noun *partus*, a derivative of *pariō* whose Spanish equivalent is *parir*. *Partera* [midwife] also stems from *pariō*. The Spanish noun *parte* [a share, part, portion] emerges from the Latin *pars* with the same meaning. The verb *partir* is a derivative of *parte*. Central to Escolar Bautista's critique of alienation in everyday life is the privileging of a capitalist mode of production that separates [*que parte*] over social production that unites and multiplies [*que pare*]. Escolar Bautista mobilizes the play between *parir* and *partir* in order to emphasize that the birthing process may result in a sharing or distribution of desire open to multiple connections or may result in the birthing of image, that is, desire trapped within the confines of representation. The way Escolar

Bautista weaves his critique of work with image-making is to show that capitalism, in an effort to co-opt the autonomist Marxist category of social labor, pays workers to engage precisely in creative social production. The predominant job in the context of cognitive capitalism is the image and language maker. The social laborer, once theorized as a way out of capitalism, now serves capitalism. For Escolar Bautista, the co-opted social laborer is a midwife that assists the birthing of images for economic gain. Capitalism has twisted that original open relationship, and to reflect the perversion, the midwife is a child who matures prematurely to a life of a working pseudo-adult, which not only conjures up images of the abuses of child labor, but also emphasizes how abnormal, manipulated, and distorted such a figure is. The conversion of the midwife from adult to child is the conversion of something familiar and comforting into something grotesque and monstrous.

In the first two verses of his book's dedication, which is made to the assembly of Miles de Viviendas, Escolar Bautista summarizes the two coexistent movements of desire, one that attempts to detain desire within fixed psychic, social, political, and economic structures that will be represented in his poetry by the child midwife, the sun, and Medusa, and the other that continually questions all of those very situations. "La captura sin fin/puesta en cuestión sin fin/con los amigos en la fuga de la muerte. /Miles de prácticas piratas/barren metrópolis oceánicas" [The infinite capture/placed in infinite question/with friends in the flight from death. /Thousands of pirate practices/sweep oceanic metropolises].[28] In contrast with the emphasis on the individual and the privatization of experience in twenty-first-century capitalism, the third verse indicates that this book of poetry advocates the alliance of friends and the creation of community as a way to minimize the deathly repetition of work. He advocates creating relations based on love for humankind and a love of life and not on the market (things). In order to understand the pirate practices to which Escolar Bautista refers in the fourth verse, it is necessary to consider his blog *Instinto PreKario y Prácticas Piratas*. In it, he champions hacking or pirating one's instinct. Instinct for Escolar Bautista consists of information that exists before cognition and before consciousness. Like the act of hacking, which produces new information from already existing information, the practice of pirating one's instinct is the practice of gaining

access to already existing precognitive and preconscious information, that is, information not located in an unconscious, but, nevertheless, understood by the body. Because the already existing information to which one gains access by hacking or pirating one's instinct is not located in Freud's unconscious, it is not repressed information, but, rather, information stored in a different medium, one that is not structured by predetermined psychic laws. In order to subvert society's normalized code, Escolar Bautista's call to "pirate" code is a call for bodies to respond to their environment at a precognitive and prelinguistic level, in other words, in ways that lay outside of options established by the capitalist system.

Before elaborating his methodology to achieve social transformation, Escolar Bautista explains his qualifications for authoring such a call to action. His credentials are the pain and suffering shared by all who live precarious lives. Escolar Bautista, realizing that he will die, confronts his nothingness with a desire to live. "Porque amo la vida/porque quiero vivir,/porque el vivir me duele/y el dolor me grita/que vivo, y que voy a morir" [Because I love life/because I want to live,/because living causes me pain/and the pain shouts to me/that I am living, and that I am going to die].[29] No longer fearful of the death that is work and normalized living, he decides to be spontaneous and take risks. Because it is precisely his life that is at stake, he takes a gamble, rolls the dice, draws tarot cards, puts his mind/body into something, squats, writes poetry, and in so doing, reinvents his life. It is important to note that the poetic voice is that of Escolar Bautista. The "I" is not a character. In the poem entitled "Al lector" [To the Reader] Escolar Bautista invites the reader to take risks with him. The imaginary fragments of his poetry, like the tarot cards, will be recombined, not according to resemblance, but according to desire, that is, according to a continual process of becoming. He declares that "un látigo se agita,/soy yo o es mi cuerpo/es lo mismo" [a whip is cracked,/it's me or it's my body/it's the same].[30] In these three verses, he blurs the boundaries between mind, body, and world. For Escolar Bautista, one cannot separate what thoughts do (the "I" of the above verse) and what the body does because the practice carried out by a moving body (whatever that practice may be) is initiated by thinking. However, there are two types of thinking: one is instinctual, at the level of the body, and the other is conscious, at the level of a reasoning mind. Escolar Bautista explores the former because of its potential to defy

logical systems like capitalism. By comparing himself to a whip, to a thing, he also breaks down the subject/object divide. What Escolar Bautista thinks, what his body does, and what things like the whip do are all practices that have the capacity to affect. He writes to his readers as friends, inviting them to descend with him (this section of four poems is entitled *Descent* and refers to the act of free falling after one has jumped from a window) because his whip "se agita lo mismo que el tuyo" [cracks the same as your whip].[31] In other words, the same experience of being subjected to a state order and a capitalist semiotic regime is shared by everyone.

The jump or descent consists of exploring the affective states of becoming that occur during a sleep-wakefulness that Escolar Bautista terms "duermevela," and which is the title of his third poem. This is an emergent state consisting of pre-cognitive, preconscious, prelinguistic (anti-system, anti-capitalist) chaotic components. The mix of virtual fragments in this emergent state has the potential to interact according to an auto-referential and auto-valorizing logic instead of according to the logic of closed, fixed discursive relations of binary oppositions. It is within this state of sleep-wakefulness where "el hilo del cerebro es ahora una pluma al viento,/una cometa cortada del rodillo/surcando el espacio a la deriva" [the brain's thread is now a feather in the wind,/a kite cut from its roller/drifting through space][32] that Escolar Bautista wants to reconsider daybreak in El Raval. However, when Escolar Bautista opens his eyes and becomes conscious, the compositional elements of his poetry in the form of "bandas sonoras" [musical scores] that have been floating around in the sea of his preconscious are smashed to pieces by the deadly waves of mechanical time. In an effort not to drown, fragments of the musical scores "bandean la luz de foco de/la atención y el vaivén/de un péndulo tritura/los restos del naufragio con/la duración" [pursue the spotlight of/attention, and the swinging back and forth/of a pendulum crushes/the remains of the shipwreck with/duration].[33] In other words, Escolar Bautista's exploration of his body's response to dawn in El Raval, which occurs at a level in which desire fills itself and is not fixed to a form, runs the danger of continually being blocked by notions of time as a constant, consistent mechanical repetition and by the return of the beam of light of power that categorizes and divides according to binary logic.

Nevertheless, poised to make the leap out of the window, Escolar Bautista and the reader approach the windowsill armed with the last poem of this section. It is a checklist of all the tools that will be necessary to make a successful jump. “La cabeza despejada/el deseo despierto/el andar felino/el escribir sentado/el concentrado duro, /y la aleación fría” [One’s head clear/one’s desire awakened/one’s gait cat-like/one’s writing seated/the extract hard, / and the alloy cold].[34] As Escolar Bautista states in his “Manifiesto del Instinto Prekario 0.2,” “nosotr@s afirmamos ser movid@s por pasiones e inteligencia” [we affirm to be moved by passions and intelligence].[35] In other words, Escolar Bautista and the reader will leap with a combination of a cold, level head [la cabeza despejada…el escribir sentado/el concentrado duro, /y la aleación fría] and a fiery passion [el deseo despierto]. Given Escolar Bautista’s interest in Deleuze and Guattari, one can read the catlike gait [el andar felino] as indicative of a movement of continual becoming and not of static being. It also brings to mind the unrestricted movement of the cat-elf in *El taxista ful* that, by running along the rooftops of the Ciutat Vella at night, crosses boundaries that are not normally crossed.

The repetition of mechanical labor time is represented by daybreak and the sun. Daybreak has the potential for being an inviting, tranquil, balanced moment. However, it is more a hectic time triggered by the sound of the alarm clock beckoning us to work. The daily repetition of the emergent beauty of a rising sun pregnant with the promise of the new and of difference is reduced to the repetition of the rising of an identical sun cursed with the generation of the same. Time is bound by the chains of labor-time. Impelled by an interiorized work ethic, we wake up five days a week to work. “Amanece en el distrito tres” sets the daybreak scene to which we will continually return, and introduces aesthetic points of connection that we will grasp in order to catalyze the greatest number of affective transformations. The first imaginary fragments to be put into play are the deserted rooftops [los tejados desiertos] and the color blue [El azul] that, normally considered cool, acquires a warmth [es ahora más cálido] due to the red of the rising sun.[36] The blinding light of dawn “cuando el sol es imposible de mirar” (21) [when the sun is impossible to look at] anticipates the themes of looking and the petrifying stare of Medusa.[37] It is a time when “los hombres corren” [men run] to get ready for work or “corren sus

dientes” [their teeth run] or “corren sus ojos persiguiendo/un movimiento o un destello/un reflejo justo un espectro” [their eyes run chasing/a movement or a flash/a reflection just a spectre].[38] The precipitation of teeth, eyes, flashes, reflections, and ghosts as compositional elements of Escolar Bautista’s aesthetic experience of dawn without immediately providing the full range of the intensive states that will make up each of the words creates a perception that is not instantaneous, but delayed. This is not the delay of hesitation and indecision but the delay of anticipation during which multiple connections may be made before being nailed down to a specific meaning. This is the time of dawn, that moment of entanglement during which the boundaries between night and day do not hold. This is the deferment before which the qualitative aspects of the sun are eclipsed by its quantitative role to measure work time. In an effort to rebel against such a reduction, the unique, singular sun throws itself out of a window [Ha saltado el sol/de la ventana] and, in so doing, detaches itself from the identical, desingularized, universalist Sun.[39] By crossing the window, a threshold of intensity, the sun strives to transform itself from sun as indicative of labor time into sun as full of the possible “porque parece tener vergüenza/de esta loca confusión nuestra” [because the sun seems to be embarrassed by this crazy confusion of ours].[40] The confusion to which the sun refers is humankind’s mistaken notion that the function of the sun is to divide the day into easily measured units of work time. By jumping out the window, the sun attempts a type of partial suicide in order to kill that part of itself that we have abstracted and overcoded with our own notions of mechanical time.

The first reference to the sun [sol] following its partial suicide attempt is with a capital “S,” [Sol]. In Escolar Bautista’s poetics, the capitalization of a word not normally capitalized transforms the word into a universal equivalent. The sun with a capital “S” is the identical sun gathered up in its universal image. This way of categorical or representational thinking is dominant and can be found in the “mundo que se disfruta a sí mismo,/Naturaleza que se goza REFLÉJAMENTE” [world that enjoys itself,/Nature that rejoices in itself in a REFLECTIVE WAY].[41] We make sense of reality by reducing that which is different to the same. Every person, animal, and object in the world is a mirror that reflects back to us the image of ourselves. For example, I see myself reflected in my

interlocutor so that I can find a way to relate to her/him. I project myself and all of my mental categories onto my interlocutor in order to make him/her understandable to me. In other words, we do not relate to the world or to other people directly, but, rather, through fixed, discursive sets of equivalents. This self-serving nature of representation results in a "Masturbación Mundial y/Gigante, /que conduce a la Tierra/hacia el límite roto/de un Sol Corrido…/…de una Corrida del Sol Amarillo que hoy inunda lo Gris aquí/en este desierto ensordecedor de azoteas." [Worldwide and Gigantic Masturbation,/ that leads the Earth/toward the broken limit/of a Sun Set (an Ejaculating Sun, an Embarrassed Sun)…/…of a Running of the Yellow Sun (of an Orgasming of the Yellow Sun)/that today inundates that which is Grey here/in this deafening desert of flat roofs].[42] In this quote, Escolar Bautista plays with the verb *correr*, for in Spanish, the verb *correr* has several meanings. It can signify to run, to set or to orgasm. Our relationship to the world is essentially egotistical in which we privilege ourselves over other people. The broken limit to which Escolar Bautista refers is the idea that representations, once they are expressed, are self-consuming. The culmination point of an image is its expression, and, like an orgasm, once the culmination point of expression is reached, it dissipates. In other words, representation is not a continual process of becoming, but a mode of expression that has a beginning and an end. *Corrido* also means embarrassed or confused which echoes the original embarrassment that causes the sun to jump out the window.[43]

In addition to the movement to fix desire through the repetition of mechanical labor time as represented by daybreak and the sun, desire is fixed through the entrapment of representation as embodied by the child midwife and Medusa. "Septiembre" [September] is the first revisiting of the daybreak scene since "Amanece en el distrito tres." The object of the gaze in "Amanece en el distrito tres" is the sun and in "Septiembre" it is a little girl. The looking that takes place in both unites the two objects, the child and the sun. The child also appears as a midwife in "Frío de agosto," a poem that I will analyze in the last half of this chapter. The sun, child, and midwife can be read as one and the same. Therefore, the sun in "Septiembre" is a child midwife who, like in "Frío de agosto," is a sort of inexperienced gatekeeper who botches the birthing process which, in Escolar Bautista's imaginary, is the process of the production of desire. The

child midwife captures desire in order to neutralize it. It assists in the birthing of image. Desire is uprooted from its field of immanence and attached to a form of content or crystallized in a form of expression. A sun-child midwife is not a conductor of desire, but a maker of images. "…y otra vez/cuando miras sólo es una niña *¡horror…!*/-me deslumbra una manzana/reflejada en una curva/de una Sérpiente ADORABLE" […and again/when you look it is only a child *horror…!*/-an apple reflected in the curve of an ADORABLE Serpent dazzles me].[44] The fact that the midwife is only a child produces horror because we do not want to believe that a child, normally associated with innocence and goodness, may actually be manipulative, seductive, dangerous, and, above all, responsible for tricking us into eating the forbidden fruit whose consequence has been the pain of work.

Medusa, along with the child midwife in "Frío de agosto" and "Septiembre," and the sun in "Amanece en el distrito tres" and "Septiembre," is another incarnation of the figure that fixes desire. In "Húmedo suelo" [Moist Ground], Escolar Bautista writes that "el cielo está mojado/sobre la medusa incrustada en la cabeza/de una mujer joven,/y pálida y amarillenta" [The sky is wet/over the medusa incrusted in the head/of a young,/and pale and yellow woman].[45] The pale and yellow woman is the sun. Medusa, like the sun, is impossible to look at. According to the Greek myth, Medusa, a very beautiful woman, is raped by Poseidon, the god of the sea, in the temple of the virgin goddess Athena. Outraged that such an event occurred within the sanctity of her temple, but also motivated by Medusa's vanity (Medusa had boasted that she was more beautiful than Athena), Athena punishes Medusa by transforming her hair into serpents and her eyes into deadly weapons that have the power to turn any man into stone who dares to look at them. By condemning Medusa to live the rest of her life trapped behind a horrifying mask, Athena transforms desire into a transcendent ideal that can never be realized. As Françoise Frontisi-Ducroux points out, the "forbidden face" of Medusa "is accessible only in the form of images."[46] Like the child midwife and the sun, Medusa traps desire within the confines of representation. Because the ideal is an impossibility, desire is nothing more than "cuerpos de humo" [bodies of smoke] or "impulsadas e inerciales imágenes" [inert and impelled images].[47]

Escolar Bautista argues that we substitute desire for the mask because we can never reach what is behind the mask. He maintains that, by objectifying desire, we fool ourselves into believing that we can fulfill desire by accumulating things. Capitalism taps into image making and desire objectification in order to incite consumption. The images and sounds of a successful advertising campaign trigger a Pavlovian response to buy in potential consumers. Our passive response to external stimulus robs us of agency and we become "un reflejo justo un espectro" [a reflection just a ghost].[48] The transcendental structures of the production of images in which we are trapped are "espejos de la muerte" [mirrors of death] in which there is a "redoblamiento de imágenes tintineantes" [a redoubling of jingling images] and a "convergencia de los ríos intraexternos convocados de Pavlov/a las babas de su perro en el concierto/de compuertas buco-acuíferas y sonidos/como imágenes tintineantes" [a convergence of Pavlov's summoned intraexternal rivers to the saliva of his dog in the joining of oral, water-bearing floodgates and sounds like jingling images].[49] The continual play of reflection in these "mirrors of death" is a continual play between petrification and ghostly bodies of smoke. Precisely because we are the products we buy (the objectification of self), it is impossible to see ourselves (we become ghostly bodies).

Escolar Bautista adamantly denies that long-term social transformation can occur from within the world of finance because of the alienation, both personal and collective, that capitalism produces. But, is capitalism so completely evil? Can one have an ethical capitalism? During the recent string of global economic crisis, it has been repeatedly emphasized that consumption is a good instigator of an improved economy. According to Adam Hersch from the Center for American Progress, "personal consumption accounts for some 70 percent of overall GDP."[50] The implication is that when people make purchases, they are not only doing something for the good of society, they are being patriotic. Hence, George W. Bush encouraged U.S. citizens to go out shopping after 9/11.[51] This is a new twist to capitalism that makes us not quite as passive as Escolar Bautista suggests. In addition, consumers implored to buy can choose to patronage corporations that are committed to socially responsible investing. Stores that contribute some percentage of their profit to benefit a charity convert the economic transaction into an ethical decision. For example,

restaurants oftentimes team up with churches to give a percentage of the purchase price to the churches' food pantries. An example of a company on a global scale that is more interested in social returns than financial ones is TOMS Shoes founded in 2006 by Blake Mycoskie. For every pair of shoes that TOMS sells in the U.S., it donates to needy children around the world in countries such as Argentina and Ethiopia.[52] For those consumers who do not respond to the capitalist equivalent of Pavlov's bell, they might respond, in addition to socially responsible companies, to appeals to ethical financing. Jacqueline Novogratz of Acumen Fund has coined the term "patient capitalism." Her fund attracts investors who are willing to be patient and accept a low rate of financial return in exchange for a high return in social change.[53] Although it is certainly true that there are companies and funds that take their surpluses and use them in a completely different way toward more social justice (in the Spanish context, COOP 57[54] functions in much the same way as Acumen Fund), it is also true that there are many more that do not. According to Novogratz, most public innovation begins with private sector innovation, and that is why it is important to invest in private companies.[55] My own view is that this is not so in Barcelona of the twenty-first century. The innovators of social change in Spain are the politically motivated *okupas* of squatted social centers who are constructing an alternative to capitalism. This can be seen in Mayor Hereu's adoption of the *okupas'* concern for the social in his campaign for reelection in 2007. After presiding as interim mayor of Barcelona from September 8, 2006, to May 26, 2007, to replace the then presiding mayor Joan Clos who had been nominated to the position of Minister of Industry, Tourism and Commerce, Jordi Hereu was re-elected mayor and inaugurated in June, 2007. The central focus of his successful campaign was social policies to improve the quality of life of every Barcelonan, and to bridge the gap between the rich and the poor or, in other words, between the global city of investors and tourists and the lived city of the lower to middle class. Hereu sensed a growing popular dissatisfaction with a predominantly consumption-based strategy of urban growth and design, and redirected the political discourse from the "Barcelona Model" and the image of a showcase city to social justice and the image of a city of and for the people. His discourse approximated that of squatted social centers. He spoke of the value of collaborating and cooperating, and the importance of creating a

network of social solidarity and social cohesion in order to improve quality of life. Social creativity was heralded as what would overcome the current economic crisis in the *Programa d'Actuació Municipal* (PAM 2008–2011), the document that outlined the administration's plan of action for the four years of its mandate. One of the City of Barcelona's obligations highlighted in this text was to reduce precarity [reduir la precarietat], a term used extensively by antiglobalization activists and *okupas* to describe the present political, economic, and social situation.[56] The term *precarity* originates from the EuroMayDay parades organized in various cities in Europe including Barcelona. These parades denounce the new flexible economy of predominantly short-term contracts and temporary employment because it creates insecure incomes and uncertain futures. To combat social precarity and to better meet the human needs of the citizens of Barcelona, Hereu's philosophy was to create and connect [*crear i connectar*].[57] He vowed to create more cultural spaces for artists, to increase the number of social centers for both the young and old, and to construct more sports complexes in order to connect and build community. In sum, both Hereu and the *okupas* agreed that the social was crucial for quality of life.

Despite the movement to fix desire through the repetition of mechanical labor time and through the entrapment of representation, there is always a counter-movement to undo these processes. As opposed to the engines in cars "arrojando cadáveres" [belching out corpses], there are instances "cuando lo invisible da patadas/en el océano de un mar de aire" [when that which is invisible kicks/in the ocean of a sea of air].[58] That is, the work that converts us into dead men walking is, at times, resisted with poetry, music, performance art, the plastic arts, graffiti, urban art and cinema that pass from one body to another as invisible contagion. The "mar de CO_2" [sea of CO_2] spewed from car engines is compared to death, the ultimate by-product of the engine of work.[59] However, regardless of this toxin, "el cielo es azul aún" [the sky is still blue].[60] The color that Escolar Bautista associates with moments of intensity that have the potential to create change is the color blue. In "Amanece en el distrito tres," the warm blue of the sky during the rising of the sun is a heightening of energy in which the promise of the new and of difference reaches a pitch of intensity. The blue sky is both a measure and a conductor of the dynamism of chance. In

“Septiembre,” this vitality is continually being challenged by the belching of CO_2 into the air. However, “Una ventana del Raval” reveals that “la luz azul” [the blue light] is still filling the apartments in El Raval.[61] The placement of “Azul” [Blue] as the last poem in the four poem series *Ruina de Tiempo* [*The Downfall of Time*] suggests that the barrier of labor time will be crossed by threading together a sequence of blue intensive states. “Azul,/el aire,/azul,/se estira/y se condensa./Y así/la tierra así excede/cualquier barrera/en una son/risa sin fin” [Blue,/the air,/blue,/stretches/ and condenses./And thus/the earth in this way surpasses/any barrier/in an infinite smiling].[62] Before the Arab Spring of 2011 with the fall of Ben Ali in Tunisia, Mubarak in Egypt, and Gaddafi in Libya, and before the encampments in the squares of Spain in 2011 by *los indignados* as well as before the Occupy Wall Street movement in the U.S., I would not have been as optimistic as Escolar Bautista that horizontal creativity facilitated by the use of social media and online activism would have been powerful enough to string together the blue intensive states needed to ignite social transformation. However, these recent events, all achieved in 2011 through creative activism, support Escolar Bautista’s methodology for social change developed in 2004.

Nevertheless, there are hazards involved in overzealously following Escolar Bautista’s approach. The objective of Escolar Bautista’s poetry is to transform the fearful body exposed to precarious living into a political one via imagination. The trajectory of this transformation from the work body to one that is more radically open to the world, that is, to the emergent self, is not without its pitfalls. If forced, the work body may result in the drugged body or the empty body of nothingness. Escolar Bautista equates work as a form of asceticism in which the body is constantly disciplined and broken down, and which therefore causes sadness and fear. “La carne almacenada en cárceles industriales/drogados de infelicidad obesa los cuerpos que nos alimentan/trabajan” [Warehoused flesh in industrial prisons/drugged with obese unhappiness the bodies that feed us/work].[63] The accompanying depression is managed through the consumption of antidepressants like Prozac. “Dinero en las vigas de una columna vertebrada/soportando quilos de código con tranquilizantes” [Money in the beams of a spinal column/supporting kilograms of code with tranquilizers].[64] The normalized

social codes that dictate that work is necessary in order to be a respected and productive member of society are tolerated because we are medicated. While I agree that work can be oppressive, being unemployed is also stressful and depressing. Escolar Bautista seems to overlook the notion that, because of the high unemployment rate, many Spaniards would be happy if they had a job. To convince these Spaniards that they would be better off dispensing with the wage relation and seeking non-capitalist relationships that separate labor from capital is very difficult. The Spanish film *El taxista ful* attests to this fact. Nevertheless, Escolar Bautista argues that the day will come when we will be so repulsed by our life that we will be moved to change it. "Un día el cielo se cierra a tus espaldas,/mas todos los motores de grasa temblorosa impasible el beso de escarcha recalienta" [One day the sky will close upon your backs,/but the emotionless kiss of frost reheats all the trembling fat engines].[65] On this day, like the sun, we will throw ourselves out the window, shattering the work-barrier, in order to die to our emergent self:

El cerebro corre sobre su límite,
desplazando melodías estropeadas defenestrando
voces conocidas…

un
estre
meci
miento.[66]

[The brain breaks through its barrier,
moving damaged melodies throwing out the window
known voices…

a
shud
der
ing].

The form that the word "un estremecimiento" takes in the text, on the page, visually performs the jump and descent out of the window. It also breaks the word up like shuddering breaks up one's movements. This is important because the words are showing the body what to do.

The junkyard where exhausted bodies work at night in "Experiencia laboral 2.3" [Labor Experience 2.3] is the wasteland to which we have been exiled from the Garden of Eden. Work is "nuestra condena bíblica" [our

biblical sentence] and our “cárcel” [prison] because our “antepasados comieron manzana prohibida” [ancestors ate the forbidden apple].[67] We are “chatarra llena de salario” [scrap iron full of salary] among the rest of the trash.[68] Escolar Bautista asks, “¿Cuánta tristeza sube hecha ácido desde el estómago para mezclarse a dos gotas de saliva, sobre la lengua, como en un campo de golf de un sólo hoyo?” [How much sadness converted into acid rises from the stomach to mix with two drops of saliva, on the tongue, like in a golf course with only one hole?][69] Sadness forms not in the mind but in the body and, more precisely, in the work body, the physical support of a universal, static being. Escolar Bautista contrasts the space and movement of the subway with the work body in “Poema al metro.” The work body is not “espacio elástico” [elastic space] through which “espasmos de flujos cósmicos” [spasms of cosmic flows] pass.[70] We have the potential, at the beginning of the day, to metamorphose the work body into “los zócalos negros de la aguda agonía/sin un grito” [black plinths of sharp agony/without a shout].[71] As Guattari observes so well in *Chaosmosis*, “beneath the diversity of beings, no univocal ontological plinth is given.”[72] Escolar Bautista implies that we should embrace the “black plinths” that we are and to pass on top of them a continuously varying experience of life.

Nevertheless, we may, instead, try to escape, if only momentarily, the prison house of work for William Burroughs’s Old Ice House, the drugged body, in order to numb the sadness. In Escolar Bautista’s “Frío de agosto” [The Cold of August], a nod to Burroughs’s novel *Naked Lunch*, a child midwife assists the birthing of a pendular movement of the present in which nothing really circulates. We are like the cold, empty bodies of drug addicts whose organs have shut down. The intensities of cold in a drugged body prevent the waste from moving through the intestines. “TERMINAL addicts often go two months without a bowel move.”[73] We are static figures trapped in the deathly repetition of work that blocks us from being radically open to chance. We are emptied of agency and force. Instead of multiplying connections, we conform to an imposed organization of time and to imposed sets of social relations.

In “Cha ange lus,” Escolar Bautista warns us not to become butchers of our own bodies.[74] Changing fixed social, political, and economic systems entails softening solidified binary relations and blurring rigid divisions. In short, it requires modeling a way of being that slowly and temporarily

disconnects the standardized ties of order. These momentary disconnections may be considered fleeting bouts of delirium, for the word delirium comes from the Latin *delirare*, to disconnect.[75] We briefly cross over from the cognitive, conscious, and linguistic to the precognitive, preconscious, and prelinguistic in order to explore new, unforeseen interactions. However, exploration does not mean self-destruction. Tearing the unconscious away from pre-established psychic models should not entail a complete destruction of the unconscious. Ripping the conscious away from the identical subject of a closed, linguistic system does not include the total elimination of the conscious. Severing the body from order does not imply cutting or removing the body's organs but, rather, rejecting the order. In "Cha ange lus," Escolar Bautista alerts us to the dangers of recklessly participating in the above-mentioned practices. He equates wild, impatient, and unrestrained passages from sense to non-sense with "*la autodestrucción de una larva de mosca*" [the self-destruction of a fly larva].[76] "Cha ange lus" is an experiment gone horribly wrong in which the imaginary fragments of Escolar Bautista's poetry (I've also referred to these fragments as compositional elements, as chaotic components, as virtual fragments, as mutant affects and orphan letters) violently collide producing, not healthy change, but pus that the larvae re-eat. "Su violencia rezuma el pus que realimenta/larva en una red de cemento y de plástico" [Its violence oozes pus that refeeds the larvae in a network of cement and plastic].[77] Through the uncontrollably accelerating collision of his virtual fragments, Escolar Bautista self-destructs. Instead of facilitating multiple connections, it short-circuits and blocks them. The poem demonstrates that affects are not inherently good or bad. "Un anzuelo mordido por un pez" [a fishhook bitten by a fish][78] in "De la Tierra del íbero" resonates with hopeful anticipation whereas "el anzuelo de un pescador" in "Cha ange lus" is used to hook Escolar Bautista. He laments "soy yootro sacrificIO pescado" [I am an Iother sacrificE fish].[79] Like most caught fish, his head is severed from his body. "La cabeza es lo primero que se corta de un pescado" [The head is the first thing that one cuts from the fish].[80] He is cut off from all his connections and becomes an empty body of nothingness. In fact, the compositional element "una casa de hielo" from "Frío de agosto" repeats. Unlike the sun in "Amanece en el distrito tres" that does not hesitate to jump through "una ventana" in an attempt to commit partial suicide and

unlike the brain in “Áscesis” that leaps through the window to die to its emergent self, Escolar Bautista freezes in front of the window. “Junto a una ventana de luz azul demuero” [In front of a window of blue light I die/delay].[81] *Demuero* is a neologism, an apparent combination of *demorar* [to delay] and *morir* [to die]. This is not the delay of anticipation that was discussed at the beginning of Part II during which people, objects, and ideas that normally do not have contact are brought together, but, rather, the delay of hesitation and indecision that leads to death. In front of the window, Escolar Bautista loses agency and seems to be overwhelmed by fear. Instead of moving with the lightness of air, he is heavy with the weight of a rock. He is fixed, captured, and consumed as if he had looked directly into the eyes of Medusa. Even the color blue is no longer the warm blue of the sky indicative of intensive states but the “Azul/como el mar de frío” [Blue/like the sea of coldness].[82] He is nothing more than a sacrificial, cold-water fish trapped in the nets of expression and of work. His violent attempt to break free of these nets has resulted, not in the interaction of virtual fragments according to an auto-referential and auto-valorizing logic, nor in a return to the logic of closed, fixed discursive relations of binary oppositions, but in a wild proliferation of virtual fragments that simply go mad.

The last compositional element to be discussed is spaces, more specifically, the rooftop, El Raval, windows, a junkyard, and the Expohogar. Spaces in Escolar Bautista’s poetry, like affects, are not inherently good or bad but reflect how bodies act in them. For example, Escolar Bautista experiences the rooftop as a transformative space in which to imagine a different world. It is an ideal location from which to ponder the infinite possibility of the new day. The geography of the rooftop is a virtual geography exploding with the quality of “as-ifness.” Escolar Bautista lives the rooftop and its domes “as if” they were a space free of State control. The domes remind him of the planets in Antoine de Saint-Exupéry’s *The Little Prince*, and he imagines these planets, where close-mindedness and prejudice reign, to be enclosed in the crate (rectangle) that the Little Prince had asked the pilot in the story to draw for him. “Cúpulas entre las antenas,/cúpulas familiares,/cúpulas como planetas de Principitos encerrados en un rectángulo/*como si* un tablero fuera el Universo/y no el Estado” [Domes between antennas,/familiar domes,/domes like Little

Princes' planets enclosed in a rectangle/*as if* a gambling house were the Universe/and not the State].[83] The Little Prince delights in the pilot's simple drawing of a crate (rectangle). Escolar Bautista suggests that if the planets populated by closed-minded and judgmental adults were enclosed in the pilot's drawing, life would be more enjoyable. In other words, we should remember how children take pleasure in the simple things of life. In this case, Escolar Bautista is not referring to freaky children like the child midwife who mature prematurely to lives of working pseudo-adults, but, rather, to innocent children who play during leisure time. Instead of nailing down our existence to pre-determined norms, we should remain radically open to all possibilities and allow our lives to be swept away by chance as if the world were a casino.

The death that flatters Escolar Bautista on the rooftop [la mort/al terrat m'afalaga] is not the negative death of delay, but the death of the notion of existence as dialectical (Being-being).[84] The melting away of the existing being [el desfer-se del ser estant] gives Escolar Bautista a newfound lightness [lleugeressa], not unlike the feeling one has after cancelling a credit card or jumping out of a plane.[85] In place of the weight of Being of ontological existence, he experiments with a lightness of being that opens itself up to the prelinguistic terrain in which the self/other and the subject/object binaries still have not been established. He participates in "una cursa cap a la gola del llop" [a race to the throat of the wolf] in order to produce sounds until now unheard and unknown like "cridanses, i cruixents electrics sons" [shouting and crunchy electric sounds] from dreams "de terra i de sort,/de terrat i sol ixent,/de lluna plena i cul lluent" [of land and luck,/of roof and the rising sun,/of a full moon and a shining ass].[86] Escolar Bautista values this terrain of the emergent, machinic self as "una bogeria càlida" [a warm craziness].[87] However, in "Una luna gigante" [A Giant Moon] the rooftops are deserted at sunrise because the experience does not produce monetary value (the value of capitalism), but only a use value, the emerging beauty of a new day. "Y ante la bella siniestra obediencia/exterminando poblaciones enteras/dejamos al amanecer los terrados de la ciudad vacíos,/porque resulta inútil la belleza parturienta de un nuevo día" [And before the beautiful sinister obedience/exterminating entire populations/we leave at sunrise the rooftops of the city

empty,/because the emerging beauty of a new day is useless].[88] Instead of marveling at the beauty of the sunrise, we race to go to work.[89]

The location for the possible encounters between the imaginary fragments of Escolar Bautista's poetry during sunrise is the Barcelona neighborhood, El Raval. If the politics of affects is, as Thrift argues, "to widen the potential number of interactions a living thing can enter into," then there is no better place in Barcelona than El Raval to attempt such an endeavor.[90] Historically, El Raval has been a working-class neighborhood with a seamy underside. The southern part of El Raval known as Barrio Chino [ChinaTown] is infamous for prostitution and drug dealing. That reputation continues today. However, the demographics of the neighbors have changed drastically. El Raval is now home to Moroccan, Pakistani, Eastern European, Indonesian, and Filipino immigrants. Walking down its narrow, winding streets, you will hear multiple languages as well as both eastern and western-style music, you will see women wearing burkas mixed with those wearing business suits, and you will smell the traditional *churros con chocolate* [churros with chocolate] combined with samosa. It is a multicultural world in which the possibility for encounters is heightened.

A window in El Raval can serve as threshold through which you pass in order to accelerate states of intensity like in "Áscesis" [Self-Discipline] or through which the sun commits partial suicide in "Amanece en el distrito tres." Or it can serve to frame a way of looking that fixes, captures, consumes, and commodifies. Peering out a window in El Raval, it is very probable that you will see "una gigante pared-de-fachada-gris al sur" [a giant gray- façade-wall to the south] like the poem "Una ventana del Raval" [A Window of El Raval] describes.[91] Because the southern part of El Raval known as Barrio Chino has been the focus of urban plans determined to eliminate prostitution and drug trafficking through gentrification, this Barcelona neighborhood is full of temporary construction walls that are up during construction but later torn down. In order to attract upper-class tourists and investors to the area, the "Barcelona Model" of city planning dictates that, first, the public space must be transformed into an orderly, safe, privatized area for consumption and, second, design, culture, and luxury must be offered. As a result, the Barrio Chino of El Raval has suffered massive demolitions in order to make way for a central avenue known as la Rambla del Raval (completed in 2000) and la Illa Robadors

development (still in progress) that includes the construction of Barceló Raval, a four-star hotel, and the new headquarters of the Filmoteca de Catalunya. Both projects are displacing thousands of neighbors.[92] Such institutional appropriation of urban space aimed at attracting upper-class tourists and investors reduce the mobility of the local working class by fixing them more and more to greater physical, social, economic, and political peripheries. The public sector-private sector company FOCIVESA (Foment de Ciutat Vella, S.A.) responsible for the urban transformations in El Raval is the face with "ojos fijos, ojos fijos/amontonando piedras como catedrales/correteando, trizahechas por el suelo" [fixed eyes, fixed eyes/piling up rocks like cathedrals/loitering about the streets, smashed to pieces along the ground].[93] The collateral damage associated with FOCIVESA's vision for El Raval is the accumulation of petrified people, static figures, trapped in a system that separates them.

Nevertheless, in "Una ventana del Raval," the capture of space is countered with "metralletas imaginarias/más reales que los llantos de los niños" [imaginary submachine guns/more real than the cries of children] that have resulted in the growth of "trigo del alma en los tejados" [wheat of the soul on the rooftops].[94] Escolar Bautista expands the constant movement between fixed eyes and wheat germ as affect in "Visión dinámica" [Dynamic Vision]:

> También, también los ojos ellos también
> en ese vaivén
> siempre corriendo,
> encaramándose de un lado para otro
> como quien andara buscando
>
> *inútil mente*
>
> una superficie respuesta
> donde ralentizarse el deslizar.[95]
>
> [Also, also the eyes they also
> in this swinging
> always running,
> climbing from one side to the other
> like someone looking
>
> *mind lessly*
>
> for a surface reply
> where the sliding is detained.]

The movement involved in this way of seeing is a superficial movement. The "dynamic vision" is really not dynamic at all. Instead of real movement, a movement that follows one's desires, it is the false movement of representation. The swinging back and forth [*ese vaivén*] is a reference to the pendulum, an oft repeated image in Escolar Bautista's poetry. The pendulum's movement is one that goes nowhere. The English translation does not capture the meaning of the Spanish in which each element (*inútil* and *mente*) can stand alone, *inútil* being useless, and *mente* being mind (as well as "ly"). Escolar Bautista visually divides the Spanish word *inútilmente* [uselessly] between its two components *inútil* and *mente*, and places them on opposite ends of an underlined verse. The readers' eyes perform the swinging of the pendulum moving from *inútil* to *mente* and back again. Life is a constant, mechanical movement from that which is useless, the fixing of desire, to the mind or the imagination in which new expressions have the potential to incite the body to act in unexpected ways.

"Experiencia 0.6", the secondary title of "Nocturno de expo-hogar," appears within parentheses, and brings to mind the previous poem "Experiencia laboral 2.3." Unlike "Experiencia laboral 2.3"which describes a junk-yard full of discarded objects, "Nocturno de expo-hogar (Experiencia 0.6)" depicts the Expohogar, a trade fair that the Fira de Barcelona organizes every year in September which, according to the website, "brings together companies and trade professionals specializing in the world of gifts, interior decoration articles and fashion jewelry and accessories."[96] Small and medium-sized retailers from Catalonia attend the trade show in order to buy new products to sell during the Christmas season. Escolar Bautista argues that the Expohogar is as much a wasteland as the scrap heap. Living in this world leads to "Desequilibrio," "Imbalance," in which what we disproportionately feel in our bodies is a weight "arrastrándose sobre esta tierra baldía" [dragging itself along this wasteland.][97] In "¿Dónde está la muerte?" this weight that we feel in our bodies is equated with "captura aparatosa y parásita" [showy and parasitic capture].[98] Showy, image-making that captures and fixes ethereal desire to material objects makes us slaves to consumption. We buy things in order to fill the lack that we feel in our lives. The Expohogar exhibits "montañas de fantasmas objetados" [mountains of objectified ghosts].[99] The petrified desire is peddled by "payasos" [clowns] who, like stone statues themselves,

“miran fijamente” [look fixedly] and “coagulan gestos bizarros” [coagulate bizarre gestures].[100] In other words, the new products for the new Christmas season “se exhiben […] con una exuberancia de plástico” [are exhibited… with the exuberance of plastic].[101] Not unlike the mask of Medusa, the sellers hide behind the make-up or a plastic false face of a clown. The sellers’ masks should not be confused with the anonymous masks of political protesters. In the case of activists who wear masks, the purpose of the masks is to empty out identity in order to create an experience of the common. Anonymous, an international movement involved in promoting the free circulation of culture and information on the internet as well as protesting against the Church of Scientology, is known for wearing the Guy Fawkes mask. Dinero Gratis, the Barcelona-based collective seen in *El taxista ful* that combines anti-capitalist radical theory with street action, also wears masks. However, theirs is not the Guy Fawkes mask but a white, nondescript male mask with the Dinero Gratis logo. In the case of the sellers, the mask is an image-maker that tricks people into believing that the desire that their products purportedly satisfy can actually be reached. These sellers make it their mission to do the following: “Hacer la imagen cuidando de no aguar el desnudo en el hueso” [Make the image being careful not to dilute the flesh on the bone].[102] That is, because the satisfaction of desire is an impossibility, desire is, once again, a body of smoke, a reflection in the mirror. The sellers do not want this to become common knowledge because it would take importance away from the material world, from their products, and “dilute the flesh on the bone.”

Instead of living according to a market that separates and divides us based on our material wealth, Escolar Bautista in “Porque somos” [Because we are] stresses the importance of a community of “distancias cortas” [short distances] that founds itself on friendship.[103] Communities of friends that share and create a commons are the gambling houses of life that oppose the State. These communities embody ways of relating to the world and to others that are dictated not by the market, work, or the State, but by chance that opens up new relational possibilities. These unforeseen combinations fomented by the alliance of friends are the short distances that “no debería ganarnos nadie” [nobody should take from us].[104]

Some of the friends found in these communities, in these gambling houses (an example of which are squatted social centers) are hackers and jugglers.

These poetic figures like the pirate mentioned in a previous article are affects or intensive states that move the body to action.[105] According to the User's Manual for *Tarot (del Presente-Por-Venir)*, *El Malabarista* [the Juggler] of the corresponding tarot card "mantiene en el aire a toda velocidad los contactos fugaces" [maintains in the air at full speed fleeting contacts].[106] Pins, flaming torches, balls, rings, and other objects are all juggled at the same time and come into close contact in unpredictable ways. These "fleeting contacts" move around, not in one's conscience but in one's precognitive, preconscious, prelinguistic instinct. What the tarot card *El Hacker* hacks is precisely this instinct in order to extend these virtual contacts of the possible into reality. *El Hacker* uses *El Malabarista*'s virtual fragments in order to construct "otro mapa de este mundo" [another map of this world].[107]

The slash between 8 and 1 in the title [*Libro de un 8/1 tumbado en el espejo (ocho cuartos de gasto…partido por uno)*] is the border that splits Escolar Bautista's life in half. He has to spend his life working in precarious jobs (living is an expenditure of energy) in order to own it, and when he finally has worked enough to pay for his life, he will be dead. Living is a constant working for a future that will never come. The eight-fourths of expenditure may be recuperated only by dividing them by the collective one, for any number divided by one produces the same number. The last group of four poems entitled precisely *Partido por uno—poesía impura* [Divided By One—Impure Poetry] argues that only through sharing and creating a commons will the border that splits our lives in half be knocked down and folded into the transformative mirror that will return to us an image of ourselves that is singular (unique) and multiple, one dedicated to the constant and immanent process of self-improvement and enrichment.

What these verses look like on a practical level are direct actions of protest and civil disobedience that involve risk taking in order to counter the totalizing structure of capital by opening up the interpretive field of value from economic profit to friendship and sharing. Writing poetry is not disconnected from political action. In fact, it is Escolar Bautista's poetry that encourages his body to take action and participate in alternative practices, or pirate practices as he would say, like the *Paterem al Forum* [Small Boats to the Forum] direct action of 2004. In this public protest against the Universal Forum of Cultures, Escolar Bautista, along with his

fellow squatters of Miles de Viviendas and other collectives, constructed makeshift *pateras* (the use of the word "pateras," the small boats and rafts navigated by Northern Africans to cross the Strait of Gibraltar, was very deliberate because it was a direct reference to the precariousness of African immigration to Spain) and set sail from the beach Playa de la Nova Mar Bella in the direction of the Universal Forum of Cultures. This aquatic protest was to denounce the contradictions between the everyday practices of many of the corporations who were sponsoring the 2004 Universal Forum of Cultures and the values of peace, sustainable development, human rights and respect for diversity that the Forum was supposedly to celebrate.

In addition to direct actions of protest like the *Paterem al Forum*, Escolar Bautista also reads his poetry in public, or, better said, screams his poetry while accompanied by electronic noise. He makes no distinction between poetic action and political action. For him, both are rule-breaking practices. However, Escolar Bautista's poetic-political actions are affected by social and political context, and, hence, constantly run the risk of being co-opted by the capitalist world-economy. His poetic-political performance "Hacking social: ciudad, palabra y cuerpo—NOISE DREAM RECITAL" [Social hacking: City, Word and Body—NOISE DREAM RECITAL] that took place on Thursday May 15, 2008, at la Xina A.R.T. Gallery, an experimental, autonomous cultural space, formed part of the yearly poetry festival *Semana de poesía de Barcelona* [Barcelona's Week of Poetry] sponsored by the City Council of Barcelona. As the title indicates, Escolar Bautista envisioned the performance as a social hack, a break with social norms, because it connected city and word, not through capital, but through the body. However, the City Council's sponsorship of the event raised several questions: Did Escolar Bautista's speaking in the presence of others generate wealth for the state? Did his speech serve both corporate and state form? Or, did it mark a break with social norms? Maybe a little bit of both. The ornithologist and the caged bird are still in the process of becoming autonomous.

It is not surprising that the complicated, often times contradictory and indeterminate relationship between the mind and the body, between a thinking with the brain and a thinking with the body, between a calculating conscious and the automatic response of instinct/intuition is discussed in

terms of the figure of the zombie. For *okupas*, those who live precarious lives have been reduced to zombies by the "zombie culture" of capitalism as described by the collective identity Boris Karloff because, like zombies robbed of collective speech, they mindlessly follow the dominant ideology whereas for the PP and the CiU, *the okupas* are the true "political monsters," borrowing Antonio Negri's term, because, like zombies, they short-circuit conceptual order and mark its limits.

The same "zombiefication" and "monsterification" of bodies is extended to the urban space that they create or occupy. *The Wall Street Journal* refers to the "some 1.5 million unfinished, unsold or unwanted residential units" in Spain as "zombie buildings."[108] The *Universidad Nómada*, a mobile autonomous space for informal education that organizes various political seminars in Spain, highlights the connection between squatted social centers and Deleuze and Guattari's "body without organs":

> For a long time, and in many cases still today, squatted social centres (Centros Sociales Okupados in Spanish) have used the abbreviation CSO or CSOA (the "a" stands for "autogestionados", or "self-managed") as a differentiating element in the public sphere, as a kind of semiotic marker of the radical nature of their project. And inevitably, some of us who participated in them were bound to notice the virtuous coincidence between this label and the Spanish for Deleuze and Guattari's "body without organs", "Cuerpo sin Organos" or CsO.[109]

Deleuze and Guattari's "body without organs" refers to the body that responds to affects. Unlike the politicians, financiers, bankers, and corporations who reject the term "zombie" as negative, the *okupas* embrace the category of the undead and that of the monster as repeating iterations of the poetic figure of the outsider that continually questions supposedly self-evident and closed systems of thought. Sol's dismantling of the face in *El taxista ful* and Escolar Bautista's birthing of desire open to multiple connections in *Libro de un 8/1 tumbado en el espejo (ocho cuartos de gasto…partido por uno)* celebrate the ambivalence of the zombie as a central value for the construction of new post-utopian, post-identitarian, and post-dogmatic mental categories that will lead to new social practices.

NOTES

1. Jo Sol is a Catalan film director whose other films include *Tatawo* (2000) and *Fake Orgasm* (2010). In 2005, he won the Best New Director Special Mention Award at the San Sebastián

International Film Festival for *El taxista ful*. In 2010, *Fake Orgasm* was awarded the Silver Biznaga for Best Film at the Málaga Spanish Film Festival.

2. In Spain, the paradigm of political recognition through representation stems from the bourgeoisie liberal modernizing project of the last third of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth century. See Helen Graham and Jo Labanyi, *Spanish Cultural Studies: An Introduction : the Struggle for Modernity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995). Literary realism and journalism flourished during this period precisely because they supplied the new political power, the bourgeoisie, with the representations of everyday life it needed to create the modern Spanish nation-state. According to Juan Oleza, "el realismo es […] la respuesta a la demanda de información de la nueva clase en el poder, anhelante de conocer la realidad sobre la que se instala para mejor instrumentalizarla" [realism is…the response to the demand for information about the new class in power, eager to know the reality upon which this new class settles in order to better manipulate it]. Juan Oleza *La novela del siglo XIX: Del parto a la crisis de una ideología* (Barcelona: Editorial Laia, 1984), 6. Understanding the social reality of the masses was essential to nation-building and the formation of the political subject (a subject subjected to a bourgeoisie social and state order). The Enlightenment's ideal of illuminating reality was not only celebrated by the bourgeoisie as a means of subjecting citizens to state rule but, contrarily, was theorized by Marx as a way to resist the bourgeoisie, the class most closely connected with capitalism. By illuminating consciousness, workers would be motivated to unite and fight against the forces that subjected them. The politics of representational thinking continues today in the Barcelona City Council. In 2006, a special commission was created to investigate the *okupas*.

3. Santiago López Petit, "La interioridad común y la nueva politización," in *Espai En Blanc: Materiales para la subversión de la vida : Vida y política* (Barcelona: Edicions Bellaterra, 2006), 173.

4. In one scene in the film, the question of anonymity and visibility is posed to autonomist Marxist Antonio Negri, who is shown giving a lecture. In response to Negri's affirmation that we need to join forces in order to change the work paradigm and to affirm the rights of the new proletariat, López Petit maintains that changing the work paradigm presupposes changing mental categories, and one of the categories that would need to be changed or at least nuanced would be the category of visibility. Instead of constantly making social problems like precarious living visible, López Petit counters that we should make ourselves invisible in order to attack better.

5. Day, *Gramsci Is Dead*, 116.

6. Traful, *Por una política nocturna*, 78.

7. Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, 181.

8. For an in-depth analysis of the flexibilization of capital see David Harvey, "From Fordism to flexible accumulation," *The Condition of Postmodernity: An Enquiry into the Origins of Cultural Change* (Oxford, England: Blackwell, 1989).

9. Friedrich W. Nietzsche, *The Gay Science* (New York: Random House, 1974), 181–82.

10. Traful, *Por una política nocturna*, 93.

11. Teresa Vilarós in "The Passing of the *Xarnego*-Immigrant: Post-Nationalism and the Ideologies of Assimilation in Catalonia" states that "throughout the sixties until the 1973 global oil crisis hundreds of thousands of impoverished peasants, unemployed rural Spanish men and women from Galicia to Andalucía, left behind farms, land, and petrified towns and villages […] The city of Barcelona served as the main destination" Teresa M. Vilarós, "The Passing of the *Xarnego*-Immigrant: Post-Nationalism and the Ideologies of Assimilation in Catalonia," *Arizona Journal of Hispanic Cultural Studies* 7 (2003): 229.

12. "Passion," *Merriam-Webster*, Def. 3, http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/passion.

13. Marina Garcés, “The Experience of the Us,” *Zehar: Revista de Arteleku* 60-61 (2007): 47.
14. Traful, *Por una política nocturna*, 79.
15. 99Posse, “Run, Man, Run,” Translated by Virginia Carlsten, Vito DiLena, and Joe Sciorra, http://www.italianrap.com/artists/artists_bios/99posse/lyrics/curre_curre_english.html.
16. Ibid.
17. Santiago López Petit, “Entrevista a Santiago López Petit por el Colectivo Situaciones (Buenos Aires),” *Traficantes de sueños*, July 16, 2009, http://www.traficantes.net/index.php/trafis/editorial/entrevista_a_santiago_lopez_petit_por_el_colectivo_situaciones_buenos_aires>.
18. Santiago López Petit, interview by Verónica Gago, “Tenemos que liberarnos de lo que la realidad nos obliga a ser,” *Página 12*, August 31, 2009, http://www.pagina12.com.ar/diario/dialogos/21-130911-2009-08-31.html>.
19. 99Posse, “Run, Man, Run.”
20. Dionís Escorsa and RoTor, *Vincles Alt-Terrats*, 2004, *Rotor*, http://rotorrr.org/terrats/index.html.
21. Dionís Escorsa, e-mail message to author, May 24, 2009.
22. Brian Massumi, “Pleasures of Philosophy” in *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia* by Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987), xiv.
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Conclusion

Sharing Ideas: *Okupas* and the United States

Recent research by Kathleen D. Vohs of the Carlson School of Management at the University of Minnesota on the effects of money on human behavior shows that "money makes people feel self-sufficient and behave accordingly."[1] She, along with Nicole L. Mead of the Department of Psychology at Florida State University and Miranda R. Goode of the Saunder School of Business at the University of British Columbia, conducted nine experiments that demonstrated the following:

> Reminders of money, relative to nonmoney reminders, led to reduced requests for help and reduced helpfulness toward others. Relative to participants primed with neutral concepts, participants primed with money preferred to play alone, work alone, and put more physical distance between themselves and a new acquaintance.[2]

This research is both disheartening and promising at the same time. It is disheartening because it confirms that a frame of reference centered on the value of money results in the conception of life as an individual project made up of private experiences. Self-interest trumps cooperation and sharing. The world of egotistical competitors in which we live is making us feel "alone and desperate" as the wall poem from the introduction suggests. However, Vohs's findings are also promising because they scientifically support the premise of this book, that thoughts (in this case, the idea of money) can unconsciously influence how a body reacts. Words can lead to new actions. If the priming of money causes enhanced individualism, the priming of free exchange and openness will have the potential to increase cooperation and sharing. The problem is how to make this priming happen more often, because money is everywhere. We are constantly bombarded with reminders of money much more than we are with reminders of sharing. One group counteracting the money message is *okupas*.

As a model for cooperative behavior and free exchange, squatting has passed beyond its own borders. Its influence is now being felt worldwide, and, particularly, in the United States. Much like the wall poem in the introduction, the following text highlighting the revolutionary and hopeful quality of "occupation" appeared on the wall of the French pavilion occupied by the EXYZT collective at the Venice architectural Biennalle in 2006:

> The occupation of a palace by a jubilant crowd is a common image of revolutionary excesses. It has been witnessed in various forms throughout the ages, depending on the historical context. The fact that the image keeps recurring makes it a ritual and necessary representation, an ingredient of the revolution itself. It embodies the hope for justice through the fair redistribution of space. Occupation is the architectural expression of a social vision.[3]

It is no accident that both the "social vision" of the politically motivated *okupas* and the practice of occupying have expanded to the United States. For the first time since the Great Depression, unregulated capitalism is creating a growing divide between the rich and the poor.[4] Historically, the belief in the American Dream and upward mobility has diffused social tension. However, because that belief is eroding, fewer and fewer Americans are willing to remain silent and passively accept the inequality, as was seen in the occupation of Zuccotti Park in New York, which began on September 17, 2011. The sudden appearance of the 99 percent and the use of the model of self-organization and decision-making based on the assemblies found at Spanish squatted social centers cemented the link between the *okupas* and the U.S. protesters.[5] Nevertheless, the Occupy Wall Street movement did not mark the beginning of the relationship nor was it the culmination of a one-time involvement, but, rather, simply the most visible interaction recorded by the media.

For years, U.S. and Spanish activists have been sharing creative experiences of political action in the city. One example is KRAX, the Barcelonan branch of City Mine(d), a Belgian NGO interested in the development of participatory, public interventions in cities and the free exchange of the knowledge gleaned from such encounters. In 2007, KRAX began organizing the Jornadas KRAX, an annual international meeting in Barcelona whose purpose is to debate the impact that creative urban initiatives have on cities. The topic for the 2008 meeting was the question of autonomy, more specifically, whether negotiating with institutions

jeopardizes the values of self-organization. In order to help many Barcelonan squatted social centers and art spaces grapple with the question of legalization, KRAX invited ABC no Rio, a U.S. community center for art and activism located on the Lower East Side in New York City that was initially squatted in 1980 but, through negotiation with the City of New York, eventually acquired the title to the property in 2006. Participants in the initiative, Eric Goldhagen and Rick Jungers, explained that the words *autonomy* and *institution* may seem antithetical but that ABC no Rio has managed to stay faithful to its original core values of "social justice, equality, anti-authoritarianism, autonomous action and collective processes" by separating the collective, which still has the power to define ABC no Rio's direction, from a board whose principal task is to oversee the administrative day-to-day logistics like building maintenance, funding, and dealing with the city bureaucracy.[6] The example of ABC no Rio highlights the fact that the transversal relays between Spain and the United States go in both directions, not just from Spain to the United States, and predate the Occupy Wall Street movement.

The following year's Jornadas KRAX brought together Jason Jones, founding member of the U.S. artist group Not an Alternative, based in New York City, with Leónidas Martín Sauras, Professor of Media, New Technologies and Political Art at the University of Barcelona and member of Enmedio, a collective dedicated to creative urban interventions. It was at this 2009 meeting about the need to create commons in the city where the friendship between these two activists deepened. In the fall of 2011, at the height of the occupation of Zuccotti Park and during a period of rising foreclosures in the United States, Martín Sauras, at the behest of Jones, gave a talk at New York University as part of Creative Activism Thursdays, a series of lectures organized by Not an Alternative, The Yes Lab, and the Center for Artistic Activism. In his lecture, Martín Sauras described several creative interventions that have taken place in Barcelona in the past ten years, one of which was the "No vas a tener una casa en la puta vida" [You are not going to own a house in your fucking life], a campaign for decent and adequate housing. The intensifier of free and equal in the United States is not the occupied palace mentioned in the writing on the wall of the French pavilion or the squatted social center, but an occupied square. However, the energy generated in Zuccotti Park, like that of the occupied

palace and the squatted social center, has both channeled the afterimages of previous projects as well as created images that are being reactivated in other projects. The “No vas a tener una casa en la puta vida” campaign is a case in point. This initiative began in Barcelona in 2006–2007 to protest the rising cost of housing fueled by property speculation. The design of the protest signs, cardboard shields, banners and fliers was very unique and marked: black capital letters on a bright yellow background. Similar protest signs appeared on November 16, 2011, one day after the eviction of Zuccotti Park, reading *I WILL NEVER OWN A HOME IN MY LIFE; I WILL NEVER PAY OFF MY DEBT*; *I WILL NEVER GET A JOB IN THIS ECONOMY.* Another Occupy reactivation of Barcelonan creative activism was the zombie walk to protest against the World Bank’s Conference on Development Economics scheduled to be held in Barcelona at the end of June, 2001. In similar fashion, the Occupy protesters dressed as corporate zombies on October 3, 2011, and marched passed the New York Stock Exchange.

The influence of the *okupas* in the United States, multiplied and intensified by the Occupy Wall Street movement, did not end with the eviction of Zuccotti Park. Some may say that the fascination with the *okupas* has been short-lived. However, the aftershocks are only beginning to be felt. One of the offshoots of the allure of the *okupas* was the gathering, for the first time ever, of the Squatting Europe Kollective (SqEK), a group of activist researchers from the European squatting movement, in New York City for four days in February, 2012, just five months after the initial occupation of Zuccotti Park. Members of SqEK participated in a special session of the Socialist and Critical Geography Group at the Association of American Geographers Annual Meeting. They spoke about politically motivated squatting in Europe as a practice of resistance to the neoliberal production of urban space. Alan Moore, co-founder of ABC no Rio, member of SqEK, and a pivotal conduit of the transversal relays between European and U.S. squatter/activists, facilitated the organization of the SqEK meeting in New York. Interested in introducing the European movement of political squatting to the U.S. public, Moore developed the “House Magic” project, a continually expanding archive of information about squatting that is part fanzine and part art exhibition. The SqEK meeting was the intensifying intersection at which “House Magic” and

SqEK, along with the Interference Archive, a depository of objects documenting social movements in Brooklyn, came together to form a common movement whose permanent, material impression is the SqEK Library, a collection of over 250 publications focusing on squatting and autonomous social movements in Europe, now housed at the Interference Archive.

Alan Moore has also been involved with Organizing for Occupation (O4O), a group whose genesis in the summer of 2011 grew out of the need to respond to the growing number of foreclosures in the United States and to defend the right to housing. O4O, which is allied with the homeless advocacy groups Picture the Homeless and Take Back the Land, is, according to its website, "a collective of NYC Housing activists from the legal, arts, homeless, and grassroots organizing communities who are using the direct occupation of vacant spaces to create housing and stop evictions."[7] To date, the direct action strategies employed by O4O include foreclosure auction blockades and an Eviction Watch campaign. However, the original catalyst and eventual goal of O4O, the moving of homeless people out of shelters and into homes through the occupying of vacant spaces, has yet to be realized on a grand scale. Nevertheless, this is the future of squatting, not only in the United States, but in Spain as well. The next phase of squatting is mass occupations of abandoned buildings directed by politically motivated squatters for families who have been evicted from their homes. Just as the Occupy Wall Street movement joined forces with the squatters of Organizing for Occupation to occupy foreclosed homes,[8] the *indignados* of the 15-M movement have teamed up with the *okupas* to do the same. Two of the most publicized examples have been the squatting of the Hotel Madrid on Carretas Street next to the Puerta del Sol in Madrid[9] and the Edifici 15O on Almagro Street in Barcelona.[10] Both buildings were squatted by contingents of *indignados* and *okupas* in favor of evicted families. This new phase of squatting, one that has resulted from a mutual cross-pollination of ideas between Spain and the United States, points to the ever-increasing pull of squatter power in the future.

NOTES

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