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INCORPORATING CITY
Drawing the Belgrade Protest 1996/97

by

Ana Miljacci

A THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE

MASTER OF ARCHITECTURE

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May 1999.
ABSTRACT

Incorporating City
by
Ana Miljacki

There are two distinctly different ages in Eastern Europe; their distinctions manifest simultaneously in attitudes toward the body, toward communication, toward taking action. My thesis is a beginning of a genealogy of the crowd form: from the military marches and stadium spectacles characteristic of the hard totalitarian era of Eastern Europe to the crowd of the students' and citizens' protest in Belgrade 96/97. The protest persisted for four months and, in its creativity, managed to transcend the self-referential mechanics of a resistance project.

The formal manifestations of the general and specific attitude shifts toward the regime and toward the city make me believe that it is possible to visualize social phenomena and practices as 'drawing machines,' working at various scales, drawing the way that a dancing body describes its kinaesthetic sphere, by intervening in space. I have been drawing the protest event primarily in video, in order that the experience of these mappings always fits the basic definition of an event.
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This work is dedicated to my friends. It is their faith that has been the most productive and the most relentless kind of pressure.

This work is inspired by the courage of the citizens of Belgrade and of Serbia, courage to be affected and to attempt to have an effect on each other's struggle for democracy.

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We need history, tells us Nietzsche, for the sake of life and action.
All demands for justice and all theories of equality ultimately derive their energy from the actual experience of equality familiar to anyone who has been part of a crowd.

Canetti, Crowds and Power, 29.
effect n
1a: purport, intent
1b: basic meaning; essence
2: something that inevitably follows an antecedent (as a cause or agent)
3: an outward sign: appearance
4: accomplishment, fulfillment
5: power to bring about a result
6pl: movable property: goods
7a: a distinctive impression
7b: the creation of a desired impression
7c: special effects
8: the quality or state of being operative

effect vt
1: to cause to come into being
2a: to bring about often by surmounting obstacles: accomplish
2b: to put into effect

effective adj
1a: producing a decided, decisive, or desired effect
1b: impressive, striking
2: ready for service action
3: actual
4: being in effect: operative

syn effective, effectual, efficient, efficacious mean
producing or capable of producing a result. effective stresses the actual production or the power to produce an effect; effectual suggests the accomplishment of a desired result; esp. as viewed after the fact; efficient suggests an acting or a potential for action or use; in such a way as to avoid loss or waste of energy in effecting, producing, or functioning; efficacious suggests possession of a special quality
very close

rhythms

performative

micro-circumstances

elastic limits

inevitable transmissions

disparate communication

play
memory space

1988
protests in support of Slobodan Milosevic

1991
1st protest against the government's role in the media - spontaneous student demonstrations. Later it is linked to the center of Belgrade.

1992
2nd student demonstrations

1st pluralist elections in Serbia since the WW2

2nd student demonstrations
Timeline:
1996
- 1st round of Serbian elections - annulled
- 2nd round annulled - protest starts
- 3rd round fabricated

1997
- March 1997
- Elections for the president of Yugoslavia and the president of Serbia

1998

1999

worse inflation in the history of Serbia
3rd - first round of elections annulled

17th - second round of elections
same night many cities in Serbia celebrate the victory of the opposition

20th - protests start
simultaneously in several larger cities in Serbia, the opposition invites Belgrade citizens to do the same

21st - first protest walk in Belgrade

24th - second round of elections annulled

27th - 3rd round of elections

1st - protest mobile with audio capabilities

3rd - work of the independent radio stations B-92 and Index was interrupted

9th - 13th - US and NATO pressure millennium, to respect the results of the elections as well as the civil rights of the citizens of Serbia

16th - Serbian parliament refused to investigate the election process

20th - OEBS

24th - counter demonstrations

25th - cleaning of the city

26th - strong police forces block the protest route

27th - students came up with a "jail walk" route - using the pedestrian zone of Belgrade

31 - new year's eve
JANUARY

5th - citizens caused a general collapse of traffic
6th - Eastern Orthodox Christmas Eve
8th - Serbian parliament announced the electoral victory of the opposition in the city of Nis
9th - students started the action "cordon against a cordon"
13th - Serbian New Year's Eve

20th - for the first time the police cordon absolutely did not allow students to pass

25th - the citizens walk, the students stand against the cordon

27th - a religious holiday "St. Sava" and a ceremony through Belgrade, the cordon moves

FEBRUARY

4th - Milosevic proposes "lex specialis"

11th - Lex specialis accepted
12th - 19th - students "looking" for the rector of the Belgrade university

21st - the communist red star taken off the city hall

27th - the deans of various schools at the University of Belgrade replaced the rector

MARCH

7th - students are back in school
THE PRESENTATION MATRIX
"All demands for justice and all theories of equality ultimately derive their energy from the actual experience of equality familiar to anyone who has been part of a crowd."
Canetti, Crowds and Power, 29.
INCORPORATING CITY
from spartakiades to forming of the open crowd - the 1996/97 protest in Belgrade

All demands for justice and all theories of equality ultimately derive their energy from the actual experience of equality familiar to anyone who has been part of a crowd (Canetti; 29).

The multiple requires the method that actually creates it; (Deleuze, OL; 50).

The Protest 1996/97 in Belgrade was mobile in its tactics and contingent upon a coinciding of multiplicities both human (social) and historic. At its foundation, it had a desire for and an understanding of the idea of a free, democratic society. It was a performative process on several levels. This is true given that we understand the performative process as creative at its every point. It was also adaptive to the changes in the outside parameters whether these were social, political or hard, city ones. In order to really describe the difference between the performed script and a creative performative, we can focus on the difference between the crowd formation (where formation is a noun) in the hard(er) totalitarian time and the crowd formation (where formation is a verb) of the protest. In Gilles Deleuze’s terms, this will be described as the main difference between a trace and a map. Foucault might say that everything is performed, that everything is constructed, that power is only practiced, and that it does not just exist in the ether. But then, how do we actually perform ourselves or, rather, how could social phenomena play themselves out without following someone else’s abstract or concrete diagram? Where is the space of creating novelty, difference? Where is the space of Lyotard’s rusing but in the act
of performing? Foucault locates it in the more resistance-based transgression.

Serbia is a world in which the economies of history are real. Historicity is tangible. The Protest of 1996/97, which lasted for several months in Belgrade and in a number of other cities in Serbia, was a perpetual event in which the city (at various scales of its morphology) played a great role. The city was not merely a stage for the demonstrations, it was enabling them. In the same process the city was continuously reconfigured through the micro and macro events of the protest. This was possible mainly because the crowd engaged every day city life, in time and in territory. The protest crowd was an expression of the bodies which constituted it.

The map is open, connectable in all its dimensions, and capable of being dismantled; it is reversible, and susceptible to constant modification. It can be torn, reversed, adapted to montages of every kind, taken in hand by an individual, a group, a social formation. It can be drawn on the wall, conceived of as a work of art, constructed as a political action or as a meditation.

Contrary to a tracing, which always returns to the “same,” a map has multiple entrances. A map is a matter of performance, whereas the tracing always refers to an alleged “competence” (Deleuze; OL 26).

Mapping, the way Deleuze defines, it is closely related to his concepts of territorialization and deterritorialization. There is a parallel between Michel Foucault’s concepts of disciplining and constructing and Deleuze’s own ideas about coding and territorializing. These are, in both cases, concepts related to disciplinarian societies. I would argue that the difference in the nuances (between these concepts) might actually be important when it comes to the differences of tactics of the state apparatus in Serbia - the old rigid kind, a still born baby of the totalitarian time - and the tactics of the protest, which is much more fluid and mobile. Both desire to practice power productively in order to construct or code their desire into the present reality.
Multiplicities are defined by the means of the outside: by the abstract line, the line of flight or of deterritorialization following which they change nature by being connected with others. The plane of consistency (grid) is the outside of every multiplicity (Deleuze: OL 17).

Deleuze's multiplicity is far more complex than the literal numbers of different people. If it was taken as a working diagram, it would involve several scales of operation of the protest, all defined by the plane of consistency of the city streets or the plane of consistency of the unanimous goal of the protesters. "Honor the elections" became a clearly defined objective, even for the western observers and supporters.

It is important to understand the protest as an event conditioned by a multiplicity of dimensions: political, economic, historical, and spatial.

As I have mentioned above, the focus of this paper is the difference between "a crowd formation" and "crowd forming." This is part of the historic development of the role of the crowd in Belgrade and is the only way to understand the performative of the protest, in relation to the mere realization of an abstract pattern. Both formation and forming occur on at least two scales simultaneously - that of the pattern and that of the bodies. In the pattern, body becomes a point. However, bodies constitute the crowd and, once their corporeality is effectively influencing the crowd pattern (the relationship which exists during the protest '96/'97) they are realized through the crowd. The difference in crowd techniques corresponds directly to the changes in the relationship between the government and its citizens. Once we view the situation on that level, media becomes an important factor, as a medium through which the regime practices its power (the main reason for the protests of 1991 and 1992). Media is both an abstract and a concrete machine. It is a kind of diaphragm through which communication, or non communication, occurs.
formations

Tracing: "tracing which always refers to an alleged 'competence'" was the modus operandi during Tito's rule (from the second world war until the early 80s). Those who were not part of the ruling bureaucratic class were leveled. The process of leveling, which both Kierkegaard discusses in his critique of the present age and a leveling which Nietzsche (the herd) and Hiedegger (the they) have mentioned in their own ways, was supplemented with leveling as an actively part of the ruling strategy. During this time, the crowd was the crowd of military marches and sports parades; of great celebrations of power and the leader. This was the crowd that would easily be called, in Foucault's terms, a mass of docile bodies. But it is Kracauer who has described it best, in his "Mass Ornament," as a performance of group activities in which everyone's subjectivity is incomplete. He draws a parallel between the Taylorist factory, the tiller girls, and the great stadium celebrations of the Eastern block. More recently it is Paul Virilio who, in his "Essay on Dromology," theorized it as spartakiades:

The spartakiades and gymnastic celebrations are always given a place of honor in the Eastern-bloc countries, just as they were in the time of fascism: the synchronization integrates thousands of individuals into geometric ensembles as did, once upon a time, the "square" of military maneuvers. The crowd's dynamism becomes a kaleidoscopic decoration, voluntarily forming slogans or gigantic portraits of the party leaders, allowing the revolutionary militant to become for an instant a part of Mao's or Stalin's body (Virilio; SP, 32).

Foucault has pointed to the classical age as the origin of the body which functions as the object and target of power. However, it is in a truly totalitarian era that we find a completely transparent attitude toward the body as the object and target of power. This may have happened simply because of the great power imbalance: "someone had to become the ruling-bureaucracy that had the idea of what the new workers' state looked like." There was no space in which one could question or challenge the political anatomy which developed. In Foucault's genealogy of the techniques of power, the example of
"docile bodies" is situated mostly within the structure of the military, where politics is the fundamental means of preventing (internal) civil disorder. He takes the notion of docility from La Mettrie’s *L’Homme-machine*. Docility is already a perfect Foucaultian term joining "analyzable body to the manipulable body. A body is docile that may be subjected, used, transformed, and improved" (Foucault in Rabinow ed.; 180). It is important to remember that Foucault stresses the fact that these techniques which came with the docility paradigm, were micro techniques. The scale of the operation is not *en masse* but working individually. The mass ornament in Tito’s Yugoslavia, the movements of the military regiment, or the formations of the police cordon during the protest 1996/97 in Belgrade were all (*en*) *masse* operations. But the only way we can actually understand the possibility of that scale is through the micro techniques which precede it. This is precisely the crucial part of Kracauer’s argument, that the possibility of the kaleidoscopic formations (in Foucaultian terms) emerges only from the disciplining which occurs on the scale of the individual.

Then there was the object of control: it was not or was no longer the signifying elements of behavior of the language of the body, but the economy, the efficiency of movements, their internal organization; constraint bears on the forces rather than signs; the only truly important ceremony is that of exercise. Lastly, there is the modality: it implies an uninterrupted, constant coercion, supervising the processes of the activity rather than its result, and it is exercised according to a codification that partitions as closely as possible time, space, movement (Foucault in Rabinow ed.; 181).

We have to establish the nature of relationships, on the scale of the bodies, between those who directly constituted the mass ornaments; and their relationship to their own body. Could we ever say that the spartakiades were an expression of the embodied love of the regime? It would seem silly to even attempt this,* but this is more or less the way that the regime wanted to represent it. The reason why Kracauer argues that individuals can never be “complete” again once the mass ornament is disassembled is precisely because their bodily affectivity has been stripped away. The mass ornament had
nothing to do with their actual desires, with their pleasures, or with their selfhoods, other than in the way that it normalized them (levelled them). However, the crowd formation in the stadium or a police cordon do embody, on the scale of the pattern, the indiscriminate control mechanism of the totalitarian techniques. Politics as technique "sought to implement the mechanism of the perfect army, of the disciplined mass, of the docile, useful troop, of the regiment in camp and in the field, on maneuvers and on exercises" (Foucault in Rabinow ed.; 185). Marcel Mauss says, in his "Techniques of the Body," that "Every technique, properly so called, has its own form." It is through this lens that we have to view the difference between the mobile, amorphous protest crowd and the crowd of the mass ornament. In the mass ornament, as a product of the micro economies of power, the individual is only a mathematical point in space or a succession of instants in time. The pattern is, a priori the individualities that create it. When they create it, they realize a pattern, a possibility, without actualizing themselves.

As did a number of Eastern European cities, Belgrade had a May '68, but this was precisely at a time when Tito's power was so great that the '68 protest ended not remembering whether students had spoken of any desires for change or not. Already, the demonstration of support for Milosevic in 1988 was a very different event than the spectacles of Tito's time. Tito's celebrations fall clearly within some of Guy Debord's ideas about the nature of spectacles, both in terms of their economies of time and their ideological basis. "Ideology was no longer a weapon, but an end in itself. But a lie that can no longer be challenged becomes a form of madness" (Debord; 73). The celebrations staged before 1988 were vehicles for the ruling order to discourse endlessly upon itself in an uninterrupted monologue of self-praise.

The individual is no doubt the fictitious atom of an "ideological" representation of society; but he is also a reality fabricated by this specific technology of power that I have called "discipline" (Rabinow; 204).
media

As I mentioned earlier, the most important aspect of the relationship between the government and its people in the interim period, from the mid-1980s until the protest '96/'97, was the role of the media. Together with the general collapse of the Eastern Block (which coincided with Tito's death), the system in power was less able to impose a form of conduct on the human multiplicity in Yugoslavia. Media established itself as the major strategy used to rule the masses. In 1988, through playing his cards safely on nationalism, Slobodan Milosevic had a large population of Serbia in his favor. There was a protest in his support in front of the Yugoslav Parliament. For the first time there was a glimpse of the possibility for a different power structure, one in which the people's voice could be heard. Yet, we must not forget Debord:

The ideological-totalitarian class in power is the power of world turned on its head: the stronger the class, the more forcefully it proclaims that it does not exist, and its strength serves first and foremost to assert its nonexistence (Debord; 74).

The most obvious way for the class in power to proclaim its nonexistence is through the media. It is an entire system established for normalization or coding. It was unquestionably under the control of the totalitarian regime and was powerfully put to use (consider the art in of communist Russia or in fascist Germany which were among the most substantial ways of creating the new world they prophesied).

What characterizes mass media is that they are opposed to mediation, intransitive, that they fabricate noncommunication - if one accepts the definition of communication as an exchange; as the reciprocal space of speech and response, and thus responsibility (Baudrillard; 207).
Noncommunication and the prospect of no responsibility is what a controlling regime thrives upon. It needs the opaqueness of the media to continue to discipline its people. Based in the rhetorical, media throws every social process out of balance. Since speech occurs without the possibility of a return, there is a need to reinvent the possibility of responding. “The restitution of this possibility of response entails upsetting the whole present structure; even better (as started to occur in 1968 and the 70s), it entails an “anti-media” struggle” (Baudrillard: 208).

In 1991, just as Yugoslavia became pluralistic or so the powers in charge claimed - there was (another) large protest in Belgrade. This protest was sparked off by an incident at the Republic Square on the March 9th organized to show peoples' dissatisfaction with the one-sidedness of all media channels. In the freshly pluralistic system, the socialist party controlled all of the media. After a violent attempt to disperse the crowd, Slobodan Milosevic ordered tanks to enter the city. The protest 1991, after March 9th, turned into a protest of the Belgrade University students and a small number of their supporters. It was basically staged on the Terazije Square. Static and continuous, it finally ended with some insignificant compensations of student demands.

The strategy of allowing no response or of giving no response is what the mass media employs. Its dangerous power lies in its insistence in “informing” people. In the previously quoted article, “The Masses,” Baudrillard argues that there is a paradox in the entanglement of the masses and the media.

Is it the media that neutralize the meaning and that produce the “formless” (or informed) mass; or, is it the mass which victoriously resists the media by diverting or by absorbing without reply all the messages which they produce? Are the mass media on the side of power in the manipulation of the masses, or are they on the side of the masses in the liquidation of meaning, in the violence done to meaning? Is it the media that fascinate the masses, or is it the masses who divert the media into showmanship (Baudrillard: 218).
Perhaps, one could talk about this paradox if one could really talk about the media as an abstraction, as not having a political or a social context. However, most knowledge is based in the concrete experiences of media, as it moves from the concrete into abstraction. Everyone's experience of the media is first within its context. Of course, contexts vary, but there can be little doubt about the direction of manipulation when it comes to Yugoslavia in the interim period. Noncommunication as a strategy quickly falls into the category of the unjust, as Lyotard defines it in *Just Gaming*. Lyotard develops his argument about the necessity to judge, the impossibility of having criteria (the way they have been defined so far - as a priori truths) to judge, and the obligation (by the other - the addressee) to continue the rusing and retelling. He sees justice as possible only in the space of the performative:

Absolute injustice would occur if the pragmatics of obligation, that is, the possibility of continuing to play the game of the just, were excluded. That is what is unjust. Not the opposite of the just, but that which prohibits that the question of the just and the unjust be, and remain, raised. Thus obviously, all terror, annihilation, massacre, etc., or their threat, are by definition, unjust. The people whom one massacres will no longer be able to play the game of the just and unjust. But moreover, any decision that takes away, or in which it happens that one takes away, from one's partner in a current pragmatics, the possibility of playing or replaying a pragmatics of obligation - a decision that has such an effect is necessarily unjust (Lyotard; 67).

In fact, justice becomes that space of performance in Lyotard's terms. At the same time as it is being performed, it is being demanded. The protests of '91 and '92 in Belgrade were both culminations of anti-media struggles and sentiments. They did not change anything substantial on the political scene but they had an important role in raising the consciousness about the possibility and need for a free (civil) society.

This is precisely where Herbert Marcuse, in his "Essay on Liberation," places the importance of the '67 student protest in West Germany. In Belgrade, they also marked areas in the center of the city as territory that belongs to the citizens, which would be the first places to be reanimated in the protest.
'96/'97. (Zones 2, 3 and 4 played a great role in the protest of 1991. Zone 2: The Republic Square is where the protest '91 started and became the gathering place in the protest 1996. Zone 5 was established as a student gathering place in 1992 and reemerged as such in 1996.) The tactics of the crowd and the overall strategy of the protest changed substantially from the protests of 1991 and '92 in the protest of 1996/'97. Even when the protest clearly engaged some of the same spaces in the city, this was part of a larger mobile and performative strategy.

Performative strategy, in Deleuze and Guattari's writing, encompasses the earlier mentioned mapping (as opposed to tracing) as well as the lines of flight which come from the real. By tracing them, one can compose the plane of consistency from which or within which the performative can meaningfully occur.

In some ways, these lines, the movements of flight, are what appear first in a society. Far from being a flight outside the social, or from being utopian or even ideological, these lines actually constitute the social field, tracing its shapes and its borders, its entire state of becoming. Basically, a Marxist is recognized by his assertion that a society contradicts itself, that it is defined by its contradictions, notably its class contradictions. We say rather that in a society everything flees, and that a society is defined by its lines of flight, which affect masses of every kind (once again, "mass" is a molecular notion). A society, or any collective arrangement, is defined first by its points of flow (flux) of deterritorialization (Deleuze, OL; 91).

protest
The demonstrations began in the southern Serbian city of Nis after the second round of Yugoslavian local elections on November 17. It became clear that there was severe tampering with the results which initially gave most contested seats to the opposition coalition, Zajedno (Together). A revised count gave the control of the city once again to the Socialist Party of Serbia (SPS), the party of President Slobodan Milosevic.

....
But in Belgrade, the opposition won 70 seats in the City Council while the SPS got only 21. Yet in
Belgrade as well as all the other cities, the SPS declared the elections invalid due to “irregularities” committed in the election process as well as in the counting of votes. In almost every city, they demanded annulment of most of the seats that the opposition coalition had won (Balkan Peace Team).

After the first pro-Milosevic protest, places of gathering changed from sites where the gathering place simply coincided with the destination point, to gatherings in the culturally and commercially vital areas - stretches of street which could accommodate large numbers of people. The first protest in Belgrade took place on 21 November when it became clear that even the Belgrade election results were threatened:

After gathering in the central square, the crowd of 50,000 marched past the City Council building to a planned rally near the Parliament. But because the police had confiscated three sound systems, the rally was delayed, and the marchers moved through the streets in a large circle, returning to the center of town where they were addressed from a working sound system at Zajedno headquarters. This then has become a daily ritual, with the numbers growing larger with each passing day (Balkan Peace Team).

**forming**

The first crowd to form itself during the four months of the protest was the most spontaneous one. Would it be truly possible to define with exactitude any of the dimensions which were part of the first crowd formations? There are two ways of talking about the gathering together of the crowd - one would take us to self-organizing systems and the other to the psychology of crowd phenomena. Both are potentially important to a discussion about the irruption of the crowd form. In his Deleuzian history of the tactical formations in warfare, Manuel De Landa defines the term *machinic phylum*. He uses the term, borrowed from Deleuze and Guattari’s war-machine (in *A Thousand Plateaus*), to refer

both to processes of self-organization in general and to the particular assemblages in which the power of these processes may be integrated. In one sense, the term refers to any population (of atoms,
molecules, cells, insects) whose global dynamics are governed by singularities (bifurcations and attractors): in another sense, it refers to the integration of a collection of elements into another sense, it refers to the integration of a collection of elements into an assemblage that is more than the sum of parts, that is one that displays global properties not possessed by individual components (De Landa; 20).

Extending DeLanda's language, we could compare the society in Serbia before the protest and the protest crowd to a nomadic society which was more or less in a solid state until a singularity liquefied it. It is of course far easier to agree on the fact that the protest is one of the states of a nonlinear dynamic system than to actually pinpoint the singularity which tipped the system. In this dynamic system, one of the dimensions is the city. The experience of the city inevitably entails the memory of other events; even the city's physicality has a psychological aspect (Proustian).

The important thing about dynamic systems is that they change their state as a result of a battle of effects that influence the system at different scales. The form of a snow flake emerges out of a battle between the influence of temperature and water surface tension as the flake is falling through the air. “At the onset of a process of self-organization (when a chemical clock begins to assemble, for example), the mechanisms involved become extremely sensitive to minor fluctuations” (De Landa, Incorporations; 131) meaning that at equilibrium the system does not register external factors very well, but in a state “far-from-equilibrium” the system becomes very sensitive. The only way to derive ethical lessons from De Landa's machinic phylum, according to De Landa himself, would be to look at the self-organizing systems at the level of the society. Data that somewhat testifies about the self-organization of the protest crowds are the general accounts:

There is no sense of latent violence and the crowds are remarkably disciplined. There are virtually no monitors along the route, except at key buildings as mentioned above. A handful of traffic police keep the traffic lanes closed, but for a few days, police stopped doing this, creating small, frustrated traffic
jams. Demonstrators spontaneously stepped in to keep the roads clear and tried to ward off those motorists angry by the delay. Both the bus drivers union and taxi drivers union are supporters of Zajedno, and thus their members have adapted willingly to the congestion (Balkan Peace Team).

The student crowd assembled every day at noon and most often performed a route connecting all the political institutions and the important sites of government run media, as well as the headquarters of B92 independent station (to cheer them). The citizens met daily at approximately 3 pm in the Republic Square. This way, by the time students did their route in one direction and had come back, they could join the citizens' march (more clearly opposition oriented). Therefore, the movements of deterritorialization and processes of territorializations taking place were multiple. The genius of the students demonstration was to create various actions as daily goals. Balkan Peace Team stated, in their article on the web, that: "Marches often follow a regular route, passing by key buildings which symbolize the power of the regime. March routes will also pass through different neighborhoods so that the protest message can reach new people." There were several days when the crowd grew especially large. For example, on the December 3rd, the government disabled broadcasting of the independent radio B92, enraging the citizens, even those who had not until then participated in the demonstrations. The paths became quite intricate once students started "searching" for the Rector of the Belgrade University, whose resignation they had demanded. Having publicly opposed the protest, they accused him of being another regime puppet, which was by definition antithetical to his position in the University. The students looked for the Rector in the Zoo on the 19 of February, tried to catch him in Sava river on the 20th, searched in the underground rail station on the 24th; and looked for him at the peasant market on the 25th. All of these actions occur much later in the process, after the "Lex Specialis," invented by Milosevic, was granted. Lex Specialis was a (legal) way of admitting and instituting the actual election votes without making Milosevic look bad. Through Lex Specialis, Milosevic accepted the election votes of the November 17th. This way the main demands of the crowd
were met, but the student demands for the replacement of the Rector which developed during the Protest were still not satisfied. This enabled the crowd to continue forming and operating until the 27th of February, when the rector was replaced. The University resumed on the 7th of March.

The formal characteristic of the marches were literally and diagrammatically the form of a long train. The passage through some of the denser neighborhoods sometimes took hours, and formed a spatial simultaneity of the crowd event.

The slow crowd is characterized by the remoteness of its goal. It is composed of people who move with great persistence towards an immovable goal, and who keep together in all circumstances. The road is long, the obstacles unknown and dangers threaten them from all sides (Canetti; 39).

One of the significant singular moments of the protest ’96/’97 was the counter-demonstration in Belgrade:

In mid-December, SPS began holding public support demonstrations in small central Serbian towns. Nasa Borba and other independent media referred to them as “counter demonstrations.” Then SPS announced plans for a large counter demonstration on 24 December in Belgrade, predicting up to one million participants. On the given day, the number was closer to 40,000, mostly peasants and workers from rural areas who had been provided with free transportation and instructed to carry SPS banners and signs. How voluntary their participation was unclear; there were reports on Radio B-92 that workers got off the night shift at their factories and were put on buses headed for Belgrade. They arrived in Belgrade with no idea that there were daily protest marches against Milosevic taking place (Balkan Peace Team)

The counter demonstration was scheduled for 3 pm, coinciding with the citizens’ daily protest march, and was to take place at the Republic Square. It was hard not to notice Milosevic’s plan. On the eve of the 24th, when most of his “judges” in the West were celebrating Christmas and were too busy to notice, he staged a great bloody conflict among the citizens in order to create a reason to intervene violently. Besides the two groups of demonstrators, 20,000 police militia were present, creating a
cordon between the smaller Milosevic contingent and 300,000 opposition protesters. This event was crucial from the point of view of the student leaders. It seemed that if citizens did not lose their self-control during this conflict they would have no reason not to come out of the protest victorious. “The flight crowd is created by a threat. Everyone flees; everyone is drawn along. The danger which threatens is the same for all” (Canetti; 53). An excellent example of a self-organizing system, the crowd had a way of resisting the police pressure and the pressure of the counter-demonstrants. Several times everyone sat down, exposing the power of (a nonviolent) crowd. The flight is the moment when the crowd has to continue its sociability in order to prevent panic breakdowns. It cannot allow the single units that make it to “remember” their differences and see the rest of the crowd as their obstacles. The crowd has to keep its collective intelligence strong.

No one knew then that the protest would persist for another three months. This event was important in itself, but also marked a point after which Milosevic tried several police strategies - many non violent (which is not his normal field of operation). The first action, right after the counter-demonstration, was the “decontamination” of the Republic Square. Students brought bottles of soapy water to clean the square.

The highly charged crowd during the counter-demonstrations acted more or less according to Canetti’s idea about the crowd which regards anything opposing its growth as constricting. “It can be dispersed and scattered by police, but this has only a temporary effect, like a hand moving through a swarm of mosquitoes” (Canetti; 23). The only thing which would lead to its un-forming would be the meeting of the demands that led to its formation.
After the counter-demonstrations, the regime banned street walks, stating that the demonstrations were causing traffic jams. Soon after, a cordon of police was placed in such a way as to cut off the Republic Square and the pedestrian zone (therefore the students gathering place as well) from the Terazije place and the rest of the walking routes. This caused students and citizens to resort to the walks in the pedestrian zone. The formal difference between the crowd and the police cordon is an expressive example of the difference between the concrete diagrams of the two opposing ideologies. One is a geometric, rigid formation and the other a mobile distributed network of bodies. The police formation clearly related to the *mass ornament* of the power celebration ceremonies of the old regime.

The various tactics which were developed after the police cordon was placed against the crowd engaged many more levels of city infrastructure and every day life. However, they do not amount to any kind of clear and coherent strategy. Another form of protest started in January, between 7:30 and 8 in the evening, during the broadcasting of news by the government run media, people in their apartments, on the streets, and wherever they happened to be all made noise to “drown out the lies.” This activity took place throughout Serbia. Noise was one of the weapons of the protest established from the very beginning. During the “walks,” whistles were the main instruments and became one of the protest emblems. The protest coded the neighborhoods based on the mobile whistle noise, as well as more sedentary noise, by the people in the neighborhood.

The presence of the police cordon on the street and the banning of street demonstrations inspired several specific street activities, from marching in circles in front of the police cordon (like prisoners); to employing the green light for pedestrians as the time to, for a few frenzied minutes, claim the crosswalk part of the street; to inventing “dog walking in the center” day. The Christmas and New Years holidays were turned into great street parties which allowed citizens and students to occupy the streets despite
the government ban. Finally, the most important space created, between the cordon and the student crowd, was used for “entertaining” the troops. Students started the “Cordon against cordon” action on January 9th. This action engaged the two different formations and used the street more clearly as the space of spectacle. The Balkan Peace Watch described them in their article:

Students stage skits of fights between protesters and demonstrators and read out loud to them from Dostoevski. Protesters stop and speak with the police, bring them flowers and candy, kiss them on the cheeks, and draw hearts and flowers on their plastic shields. On one day, protesters wore their own “uniforms”: medical coats, fire-fighting outfits, graduation robes to match the police’s riot gear (Balkan Peace Team).

Another activity, easily categorized as spectacular, was the creation and display of posters and puppets:

Two large satirical puppets were created to march in the Belgrade protests. One depicting Milosevic’s wife, Mira Markovic, in feudal armor, was designed by Belgrade University art students. The other, also created and carried by an art student, is of Milosevic in prison clothes. It attracted wide popular attention and its creator was picked up by the police one night and badly beaten (Balkan Peace Watch).

Baudrillard claimed that the possibility of spectacle is necessary for revolution to happen. This is actually a point that Kant makes in his answer to what is enlightenment and Foucault stresses in his essay of the same title (based on Kant’s response) - both in relationship to the French revolution. The spectacular was definitely present in the protest 1996/97. The spectacular elements of the protest came out of a level of awareness of the potential of mass media, as well as an understanding that the protesters must send their message out to the world, beyond the streets of Belgrade. Debord’s main argument in the Society of the Spectacle, is that the spectacle is always political. By definition, it involves participants and an audience. The participants are not precisely actors since there is no written script, but the awareness of the act of performing is heightened. The deployment of this possibility of spectacle is perhaps directly related to the fact that one of the archenemies of the
protesters was the mass media with its imminent and deliberately exploited strategies of noncommunication.

The protest was able to persist for four months precisely because of the opposite operation of communication. Communication operated both in very physical terms within the crowd as well as in the use of the internet. After the outer UN sanctions on communication and culture were lifted off Serbia, the number of officially registered internet hosts in Yugoslavia went from none in October 1995 to nearly 1500 a year later. The two most important web sites were probably the radio B 92 site and the Student protest site which was created soon after the elections took place, on the 19th of November. “B 92 has placed the physical location of its web operation in another country, the Netherlands, out of the fear that Serbian authorities might try to shut them down. The students did a similar thing of installing mirror sites in Europe and America.

On December 3rd, when the regime took radio B 92 off the air, the broadcasts were rerouted via the Net using Real Audio. “The Voice of America and the BBC picked up the dispatches, resending them to Serbia via the short-wave” (Bennahum:124). A couple of days later, the broadcasting of B 92 was allowed again.

Perhaps we could invoke Virilio in relationship to the use and efficacy of the internet in the protest. It was the fact that students and citizens utilized some of the potential of the speed distance that made this protest vastly different from the previous ones. “After the spatial and temporal distances, speed distance obliterates the notion of physical dimension” (Virilio, LD; 18). But in this case, Virilio's abolition of the spatial and temporal environments seems far fetched. Without the spatial and temporal territorialization by the protesters, this event would not have been successful at all, no matter how fast the e-mail messages traveled around the world. Without further trivialization of Virilio's points, one has
to relate them mainly and directly to war tactics and, only with great reserve, to urbanism. At least, we must acknowledge that the urban environments, to which his idea of the disappearance of the spatial and the territory as we know it applies, are not the universal image of the city.

Where once the polis inaugurated a political theater, with its agora and its forum, now there is only a cathode-ray screen, where the shadows and specters of community dance amid their processes of disappearance, where cinematism broadcasts the last appearance of urbanism, the last image of an urbanism without urbanity. This is where tact and contact give way to televisual impact (Virilio, LD; 19).

Contact is the point with which Elias Canetti starts his work on the form and nature of crowds. He defines a basic fear in people - fear of being touched - as an affect which changes to its opposite in the crowd. Canetti opposes the open to the closed crowd. In the context of the protest, we can immediately assign open to the protesters and closed to the police troupes:

The open crowd is the true crowd, the crowd abandoning itself freely to its natural urges for growth. An open crowd has no clear feeling or idea of the size it may attain; it does not depend on a known building which it has to fill; its size is not determined; it wants to grow indefinitely and what it needs for this is more and more people (Canetti;20).

The open crowd may not be as spontaneous in its core as it seems, often relying upon a few people for its origination. These people act like the seeds of crystallization in a self-organizing process. Perhaps the most important aspect of the crowd is the essentially democratic feeling that it instills in the participants. Everyone is equal in the crowd or, more precisely, everyone feels equal in the crowd. Crowd is a time-out. People will not be equal once the crowd dissipates but they might feel closer and connected. Their selfhood will be, at least, partially defined by this hyper experience of the Other(s). In this way, the crowd is directly related to the operation of the medieval carnival. Baudrillard refers to the crowd (based on Canetti's work) as more social than the social.
Since we have already made a relationship between the self-organizing systems and the protest crowd, it is important to distinguish between the two different scales of its operation, as well as the already mentioned difference between the initial formation of the crowd and the self-organization when the crowd is put to motion. There is a parallel between the Canetti’s concept of discharge and De Landa’s point at which systems change their state:

The most important occurrence within the crowd is the discharge. Before this the crowd does not actually exist; it is the discharge which creates it. This is the moment when all who belong to the crowd get rid of their differences and feel equal (Canetti; 17).

The protest crowd is different from a carnival in its directionality. From the beginning, it has a goal and, in order for a dynamical system to self-organize, has to be driven far from equilibrium. In his book Out of Control, Kevin Kelly summarizes of the major aspects of self-organizing systems. One example says that a system, because of a redundancy which is part of the self-organizing of distributed networks, will have to have more than one goal in order to be efficient. This was definitely true about the Belgrade Protest.

When everything is connected to everything in a distributed network, everything happens at once. When everything happens at once, wide and fast moving problems simply route around any central authority. Therefore overall governance must arise from the most humble interdependent acts done locally in parallel, and not from a central command. A mob can steer itself, and in the territory of rapid, massive, and heterogeneous change, only a mob can steer. To get something from nothing, control must rest at the bottom within simplicity (Kelly, 469).

If we take this organization of a distributed network seriously, something that De Landa does in his description of the success of the nomadic armies, we actually get down to the scale of the bodies which form the crowd and, therefore, to the scale of the street. If everyone in the crowd is viewed as having
enough power to decide their movements and actions, in relationship to one another then we know that
the crowd will always, at its every part, register - embody the city form and events that it encounters.
Everyone in the crowd knows what is the critical body distance they need to maintain even when they
are not at all sure what is their crowd's specific destination. The crowd can only operate if everyone
takes the initiative to make decisions on their scale of decision-making.

At the scale of the crowd from above - the pattern - we get forms in the city which diagram both the
greater goals and destinations of the crowd which as we have seen were always at least more or less
defined, and some of the pattern is based in the conditions that the crowds ran into. The city life
embodies the imprint of the lived crowd marches. On another level the crowd was able to
instrumentalize a philosophical attitude which is often related to self-organizing systems, and which
Foucault defines as the nomadic in his preface to Deleuze and Guattari's the Anti-Oedipus:

withdraw allegiance from the old categories of the Negative (law, limit, castration, lack, lacuna), which
Western thought has so long held sacred as a form of power and an access to reality. Prefer what is
positive and multiple, difference over uniformity, flows over unites, mobile arrangements over systems.
Believe that what is productive is not sedentary but nomadic. (Foucault in Anti-Oedipus, xiii).

Both the crowd and the nomadic become the most logical and effective strategies of resisting a
system in power, of liberation. Foucault, elaborating on his transgressive (what we are calling
performative), expresses in his interview “Space, Power and Knowledge” his belief that it can never be
inherent in structure of things to guarantee the exercise of freedom:

If one were to find a place, and perhaps there are some, where liberty is effectively exercised, one
would find that this is not owing to the order of objects, but, once again, owing to the practice of
liberty. Which is not to say that, after all, one may as well leave people in the slums, thinking that they
can simply exercise their rights there (Rabinow, ed; 246).
The freedom of which Foucault most often talks about - freedom from (the system) - will by definition never be inscribed in a form; but it may be possible in the performing (in relationship to the form). The form of the Protest crowd in Belgrade was never merely formal, it was always tactical. But knowing where the idea of the democratic partially comes from - from experiencing the other, not only as a mere intangible existence but also as a body, from experiencing the more social than the social, we know that the concrete experience constituted the various scales of the tactical. Bodies were not just mere points in the mass ornament.

Deleuze describes the three folds of Bergson's philosophy which he finds most important:

But these fictions were not simply hypotheses: They consisted in pushing beyond experience a direction drawn from experience itself. It is only in this way that we can extract a whole aspect of the conditions of experience. All that is left now is to ask ourselves what fills up the cerebral interval, what takes advantage of it to become embodied. Bergson's response is three-fold. First, there is affectivity, which assumes that the body is something other than a mathematical point and which gives it volume in space. Next, it is the recollections of memory that link the instants to each other and interpolate the past in the present. Finally, it is memory again in another form, in the form of a contraction of matter that makes quality appear (Deleuze, B; 25).

I believe that the only way we can think of the protest crowd both on the scale of bodies and on the scale of the changing pattern of the crowd, is through their affectivity and through the two kinds of memories, recollection of events and spaces and as “the form of a contraction of matter that makes quality appear”. In his essay “The Reenchantment of the Concrete,” Francisco Varela argues for the embodied and enacted cognitive systems:

At the very center of this emerging view is the belief that the proper units of knowledge are primarily concrete, embodied, incorporated, lived. This Unique, concrete knowledge, its historicity and context, is not “noise” that occludes the brighter pattern to be captured in its true essence, an abstraction, not is
it a step toward something else: it is how we arrive and where we stay (Varela, *Incorporations*; 320).

If we agree that it might be possible to talk about incorporated and embodied knowledge without entering deeply into the realm of cognitive sciences, then the protest ‘96/’97 functioned precisely in those terms, and on several scales. As it unfolded into a historic event, within the context of history and politics, the protest integrated human life forces - physical and affective bodies and attitudes - into a crowd that was an effective social and a tactical organization. On another scale, it was based in embodiment of attitudes, of concrete experiences of the city and the actions of the regime in power.

**post script**

Life can be consciously comprehended only in concrete answerability. A philosophy of life can be only a moral philosophy. Life can be consciously comprehended only as an ongoing event, and not as Being *qua* given. A life that has fallen away from answerability cannot have a philosophy: it is, in its very principle, fortuitous and incapable of being rooted (Bakhtin; 56).
only the everyday
BELGRADE, May 1998
Edited in HOUSTON, Fall 1998

2 HOURS ON THE REPUBLIC SQUARE

MUSIC BY JENS JONELEIT
DRAWING VERY CLOSE

BELGRADE, May 1998
Edited in HOUSTON, Fall 1998

EXCERPTS FROM A METHODOLOGICAL SHORT
STUDENT PROTEST - BELGRADE, 1998

MUSIC BY JENS JONELEIT
A LOOK

BELGRADE, May 1998
Edited in HOUSTON, Fall 1998

IMAGINED AS A SURFACE MAP OF THE PROTEST ROUTE. IT WAS LATER CONCEIVED AND DEVELOPED TO CAPTURE AND SHOW THE "COLLECTIVE EMOTIONAL HIBERNATION" DISCUSSED IN A B-92 RADIO TALK WITH AN EXPERT PSYCHOLOGIST.

MUSIC BY JENS JONELEIT
INSTALLATION/
PRESENTATION

HOUSTON, January 1999
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