

# CURATORIAL BUSINESS

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**Think of yourself as a curator. Think of yourself as a community builder. Think of you as a context provider whereby you encourage people to self organize and to co-innovate value with you.**

**— Don Tapscott at the World Business Forum, Milan, 27–28 October 2010**

## IS THE CURATOR A PROSUMER, OR SHOULD THE QUESTION BE PUT OTHERWISE?

Prosumerism. It is either taken for granted by some or absolutely mistrusted by others, while mesmerising everyone with its ambiguous allegiance both to what feels like late capitalism and to apparently emancipatory struggles.

Unashamed about the transparency of its mechanics, prosumerism draws the consumer voluntarily into the process of production, no longer solely as a tester of products, a behaviour provider or, at its basest level, a smart buyer, but as a true and veritable partner. Yet, to grant powers of persuasion solely to producers would be one-sided. Prosumerism is as much an invitation from the part of producers as from consumers—in fact, given its implications, one can no longer guarantee where one ends and the other begins. Bridging distances (in the production and dissemination process) is the responsibility of both. The post-war psychoanalytical turn in advertisement relied on filtering, channelling and invigorating the projection of consumer desires onto objects and lifestyles. In comparison, with prosumerism consumers intently, and literally, *imbue* the production line with these same desires, but also with insights and usages at construction level.

This reciprocity can only but contribute to the term's ambiguity. The openness of companies in granting a precocious usage of products to consumers (if not raw material itself), in drawing consumers into the conceptual processes, or in promoting critical analysis of products and their dissemination, runs the risk of displacing decision-making from shareholders, with huge costs to companies at the experimental level. Even more, such openness runs the risk of appropriation, of deviation, sharing and viral circulation beyond corporate business and profit making—hence the thin line between the inclusion of consumers into production and its constrain via copyright.<sup>1</sup> Consumers, on the other hand, suddenly find themselves in-between the empowerment of a grass roots sensibility and a capitalist exploitation of personal experimentation, as well as of labour and free time beyond any safety

<sup>1</sup> In this logic, one could see prosumerism accompanying the turn in financial economics towards risk and accountability.

net, ie welfare or income for services (voluntarily) provided. The consequences transcend the production and marketing of goods, impacting on the writing of acclamations and downfalls (be these corporations or national governments), of aesthetics and ethics, and hence of history and culture.

Given the above, one could say that prosumerism implies not only the production of the social, but also the socialization of production itself. In line with the contemporary flexibilization of labour and the intrusion of capitalism into life(style), everything becomes production and the object of economic management. Consequently, it is authorship, and property along with it, that becomes diffuse, both on the side of corporate identity and of individual citizens. Given the mist, it would be hasty to claim a revolutionary potential in deviant prosumerism, that is, the contamination of production processes or the appropriation of source material (be it a Blackberry or New York Times) for other matter (revolution or otherwise). But it would also be counterproductive to obsess on the exploitation or control it may allow, that is, on social engineering. Instead, the task awaits us of embodying the ambiguity of the trend; to understand its timely arrival; its operative cynicism.

The prosumer is not a lone trend—it is only one of several recent figures resulting from the sophistication of the means for social participation, and from the personalization of the social. Alongside it one can find an array of other neologisms, such as ‘nowism’ or ‘ownerless’, to quote just a few.<sup>2</sup> Why the prosumer then? Because prosumerism encapsulates most of the above trends, in its inclusive scope of users and dissolution of hierarchical barriers in the production line—be it the production of commodities, platforms, cultures, lifestyles, and so on. One could even say that the prosumer is the mother ship, conceptually and figuratively, from which contemporary economic management starts. However, it wouldn’t be far from the truth to say that all modes of contemporary revolution, upheaval and collectivity are, in what concerns its forms, not so distant from management: the management of militancy, the management of channels for revolt, the management of anonymity and of convergence.<sup>3</sup> The genealogy (ie etymology) of such figures is more marketing than philosophy, or, as Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari would have it, philosophy hijacked by marketing—and their breeding, their shifts in meaning from field to field, their allegiances and instrumental appropriations, as much spontaneous as clinically orchestrated.<sup>4</sup>

Not surprisingly, from this horizontality of desire production, of lifestyle values and object qualifications, the *curator* is increasingly appearing outside of its usual circles. Out of museology and into marketing, it seems to constitute a partner for the prosumer trend, but also a more substantial ontological condition. Colloquially, though meticulously, expanded beyond its competencies and discussion within the artistic field, it is no longer making its

<sup>2</sup> As presented in [www.trendwatching.com](http://www.trendwatching.com). The notions of Nowism and Ownerless were placed in between the ten top trends for 2011, and possibly the new decade. According to the website, ‘nowism’ stands for ‘consumers [...] feverishly contributing to the real-time content avalanche that’s building as we speak’, while ‘ownerless’, or more precisely owner-less (but why the hyphen?), testifies to the willfulness of users to share property or abdicate one’s own property for the availability of communitarian goods (the examples mostly referring to mobility devices such as bicycles and cars).

<sup>3</sup> 2011, in all its revolutionary singularity, from Anonymous’ DDoS counterattacks on PayPal and Mastercard (in defense of Wikileaks) to the Arab Spring and the Occupy movements, proved an exemplary case of management, with implications to both terms: management; and exemplarity.

<sup>4</sup> Deleuze, G and Félix Guattari (1994) *What is Philosophy?* New York; Columbia University Press, 10.

appearance as the specialist in art and culture (yet still as the master organizer), but rather as the overall qualifier for the introduction of a new form of contemporary ontology, beyond appropriation and circulation and into the personalization of management and historical decision-making.<sup>5</sup> While in the artworld the curatorial is being increasingly professionalized—opening the term and its correlated practice to an intense debate—at large it seems to walk in the opposite direction, being deployed, particularly in management circles, as referring to the supposed prosumerist democratization process. Is this capture? Or is it freedom?

### IS THE MANAGEMENT OF CURATING THE SAME AS CURATING MANAGEMENT?

Going through the writings and lectures of Don ‘Wikinomics’ Tapscott, one finds plenty of references to the curatorial as that which sits alongside the prosumer.<sup>6</sup> In fact, it is by being set in relation to prosumerism that the curatorial is presented by Tapscott as a particularly productive site, but also as the space for a particular kind of production: a space for the production, reproduction or non-production of knowledge (commodities included) through strategies of accessibility, contextualization and the distribution of creative flows. Apparently, the case is not so distinct from its debate within the arts. However, a substantial difference between the use of the term in the arts and in management is its actualization as an *activity* no longer acted out from a given original point or authority, but rather from the confluence between distinct intentions and intensities. Here, the curatorial is a matter of individuality, even of singularity, but more so of a collective connectivity, where none of the authors can be said to have a particular stance on authorship. Given the competition inherent to free markets and free individuals it does not, nevertheless, exclude issues of dispute. It is out of this scenario that the curator is set first and foremost as a prosumer: an engaging agent of knowledge and creativity, both inclusive (in its multiplicity and openness to collaboration) and exclusive (in the selection and variabilities it vocalizes).

Yet, there is a distinction to be made between both figures. A distinction attested by the evolution of the vocabulary used in *Wikinomics* and *Macrowikinomics*. While in the former book (2006) the emphasis is on prosumers, in the latter (2010) it shifts, shyly but with preciseness, to curating. If prosumers are at first posited as ‘consumers [that] actually co-innovate and co-produce the products they consume’, to the extent that they ‘do more than customize or personalize their wares; [that] they can self-organize and create their own’, the curator is suggested as a figure of distribution, mediation and gathering—that is, of management. As such, while the former is framed as an autonomous agent of production, no longer waiting ‘for an invitation to turn a product into a plat-

5 In this text, I will only touch on this ontological quality, or consequence, of the curatorial obliquely. Yet, a more direct speculation is necessarily due.

6 Don Tapscott is the author of the bestselling books *Wikinomics* (2006) with Anthony D. Williams: London: Penguin and *Macrowikinomics* with Anthony D. Williams (2010) London: Penguin, and chairman of consulting agency Ngenero Insight.

form for their own innovations', the latter appears ambiguous, yet instrumental, in regards to the creative position of the prosumer.<sup>7</sup>

In these terms, both figures remain somewhat captive of a dependency: the prosumer—even if past a tester of products—is dependent on pre-given matter, while the curator is dependent on prosumerized contents. It is only when the creative autonomy of both figures is radicalized, that they can be said to blur and overlap politically. The radicalization of the prosumer may be exemplified by its capacity to answer back to consumer necessities and wills beyond pre-given market rules—I guess, not without a pinch of irony, that this is what Tapscott's might mean by 'participating in the economy as an equal'.<sup>8</sup> This endows the curatorial with the basic premise that it is not only an organizational site, but also one of originality and bottom-up creation—instead of being strictly a top-down selective activity.

The curator seems thus to be making its appearance in the discursiveness of management circles not only as an economic figure, but as a true and veritable economist, rearranging the disparate, chaotic, contemporary *oikos* to the infra-level of a personalization—as allowed by prosumerist strategies and the nodal exoskeleton of the www. If this is indeed so, this process is placing the curator one step beyond Michel Foucault's notion of neoliberal economic subjectivation. For Foucault, the intrusion of neoliberal economics into lifestyles has led to the all pervasive notion of homo-oeconomicus, where 'by encoding the social domain as a form of the economic domain, cost-benefit calculations and market criteria can be applied to decision-making processes within the family, married life [and] professional life', shaping henceforth the citizen into an entrepreneurial self-analyst.<sup>9</sup> For the managerial approach to the curatorial, nonetheless, this bio-economics surpasses economic rationalization towards (interpretative) organization and distribution.

From Tapscott's managerial perspective, the curator is the one that is aware of (eco)systemic relays and, attesting to his neoliberal freedom, makes these his own creative conduits. The curator channels accumulated intensities in the direction of knowledge, imagination, power, profit: the making of the past, present and future. Put otherwise, the curator is the one in tune with a regime of equality between radically distinct—though overly confluent—objects, contents, references, all sorts of actors, as well as of—and this has proven the most relevant—production, (self) representation and gatekeeping.

It is at this point that one may perhaps find the distinction between this new curatorial figure and that of the prosumer, or even remix culture. As with the latter, the curatorial still concerns the manipulation of referents, yet it is the character of the manipulation that seems to be other. It is not so much the matter of a formal change, but of distinct contextualizations, of parallelisms and unfathomable proposals on the placing and productivity of

7 Tapscott, D. and A. Williams (2006) *Wikinomics*. 126. Insight.

8 Ibid, 150.

9 Lemke T. (May 2011) 'The Birth of Biopolitics: Michel Foucault's lecture at the Collège de France on Neo-Liberal Governmentality' in *Economy and Society*, vol. 30. 190-207.

referents within the ecosystem. Even in the artistic context this is not so strange. The motto 'everyone's an artist' may very well be soon substituted by 'everyone's a curator'.<sup>10</sup> The difference may be that for the curatorial infosphere, as an ideal, it is no longer Taste nor Art—those two degrees of aesthetic inclusion—but the 'freedom act' of either making something one's own property or of sharing property, that is, to be involved in the continuous (re)making or (re)affirmation of values, matter and codes at each exercise of distribution, that testifies to the egalitarian possibility of 'anyone'. One could go further and affirm it as the act of inviting others onto property. For his part, Tapscott justifies such claims by stating that 'if you make it profitable for costumers to get involved, you will always be able to count on a dynamic and fertile *ecosystem* for growth and innovation'.<sup>11</sup> It becomes clearer now why the curatorial is a privileged, if not exemplary, field for contemporary disputes: the collective is at its core.

Whatever the barricade, the curatorial seems thus to imply more than the possibility of any individual becoming his own context provider, which is the same as saying his own genealogist. It extends this possibility further to any actor.<sup>12</sup> And this is of the utmost relevance if one wishes to comprehend its strategic role *for* and *against* politics. For, it is only in this sense that the likes of Tapscott can bridge the term between any individual and headless or organogrammatic platforms so apparently disparate as Amazon.com or national governments. The curatorial is the form of a hub. A space station. A port. A cluster, extending and retracting simultaneously, open ended and penetrable, but not without interests and intentions—in fact, from this perspective, is it not a plural making or multiplicity of wills?

On the question of governmental structures, roles and competencies, there is an interview where Tapscott replies '[Answer:] they [government] should be a leader, but not to do it themselves. They should be a leader in creating a context whereby society can self organize. [Question:] A platform again? [A:] Yes, they should be a *curator*.' Or, from the same interview—Tapscott is obviously fascinated!—'the new model is government as platform, and what that means is that governments can provide capability or be a *curator of public value* that gets created in new ways.'<sup>13</sup> Undoubtedly, this is a liberal view on the curatorial, as well as on governance, if not a downright neoliberal one. In-this-guise, the curatorial hub is that occupied by governments yielding to the free will of the markets. It is an instigating site, catering to the needs of a managerial economy.

Not surprisingly, from the myriad of corporations Tapscott talks from and talks to, amazon.com or ebay.com are treated in similar vein to governments-as-platforms. Understood as curatorial managing sites, these are creative platforms not for reasons of exclusivity and originality, but rather by their methodologies of inclusion and fostering of the creativity of third partners—this is

10 My question arises from the intuition that the latter's apparent success thrives from that same aesthetic gesture of proposing something *as art*—owing to Thierry De Duve's notion of public judgment and jurisprudence—even if the proposal no longer refers to making art but to a value coming from the centrifugation of heterogeneity.

11 Tapscott D., and Anthony D. Williams (2006) *Wikinomics*, 148. The italics are mine. The authors continue and say 'Don't think communism. Think of the eBay microeconomy instead. Hundreds of thousands of eBay customers make their living there, while eBay takes a cut of their transactions.'

12 For an introduction to the social twists in the meaning and scope of the term actor, see Latour B. (2005) *Reassembling the Social: An Introduction to Actor-Network-Theory*. Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press.

13 Tapscott D. in conversation with Allen Greg on tvo.org. Available at [www.tvo.org/TVO/WebObjects/TVO.woa?videoid?689442659001](http://www.tvo.org/TVO/WebObjects/TVO.woa?videoid?689442659001), accessed 31 March 2012.

14 Tapscott D. and Anthony D. Williams (2006) *Wikinomics*, 198.

15 Guattari F. (1995) *Chaosmosis: An Ethico-Aesthetic Paradigm*. USA: Indiana University Press, 129, and Guattari F. and Suely Rolnik (2008) *Molecular Revolution in Brazil*. USA: Semiotext(e), 183.

16 This would also imply a voluntary or involuntary co-option of Giorgio Agamben's war concept of 'profanation', in one more example of the reciprocity of capture.

17 Evidently, appropriation is not the exclusive game of artists. Also, and also evidently I hope, the purpose of this essay is not to reappropriate the curatorial concept, but rather its opposite: to follow it where it goes, and explode it at each necessary time, at each turn and fold.

18 Alvin Toffler is a notable futurologist and consultant. He is commonly known for having written the books *Future Shock* (1970) Bantam Books, *The Third Wave* (1990) Bantam Books and, more recently, *Revolutionary Wealth* (2006) Knopf. As for contestants to Tapscott's throne, Wired's Chris Anderson (2006) *The Long Tail*. New York; Hyperion or Jeff Howe (2008) *Crowdsourcing*. New York: Random House Inc.

19 The recent documentaries by Adam Curtis, *All Watched Over By Machines of Loving Grace*, are particularly affirmative in this respect, mainly episode two of three: *The Use and Abuse of Vegetational Concepts*. It can be found in the video archive of [www.thoughtmaybe.com](http://www.thoughtmaybe.com).

why these may prove, for neoliberalists, exceptionally productive examples in comparison to governments, weighted down by the debate around their historical legacy. These platforms survey the vastness of the citizen (as consumer) pool, its depth and width, its wastelands and embryos, structuring mechanisms of capture and condensation which mimic liberation unashamedly in the form of user-friendly interfaces and under the excuse of the opportunistic freedom offered by flexible labour. Apps and widgets, fishing for creativity, for attachments and fusion. By comforting associates and marketplace sellers, 'Amazon harnesses the strength and breadth of its developer ecosystems to release updates to its platform frequently and builds in powerful feedback loops.'<sup>14</sup> In this field, the curatorial is a *model*, not a practice.

And as a model, the curatorial might appear as all-inclusive, transversal and traversed by the many, but if taken as a given it proves to be a fallacy. As such, it becomes rather a position to be contested at (and for) the individual level. This position is at the interstice between the equivalence of the banishment of social welfare to the blind spot of society and the appraisal for the connectivity of users via pre-formatted interfaces. It is also between the (porno)graphic fragmentation of citizenship to individual self-indulgence and the synthetic quality of voluntary agents guided by the liberation of space. Between the concentration of imagination in space station servers and the reshaping of solidarity anew. As Guattari once wrote, '[artists and intellectuals] produce toolkits composed of concepts, percepts and affects, which diverse publics will use at their convenience'. Yes, but also 'any micropolitical approach consists precisely in the attempt to assemble the processes of singularization on the very level which they emerge'.<sup>15</sup> That is the ambiguity at the centre of management. It is also at the centre of the curatorial. And this is, in fact, something even Mr. Don Tapscott, along with his optimistic generalizations, would have to agree with.

### CURATORIAL PLATFORMS / CONCEPTUAL CONTESTATION SITES

Once at play in the field of systems management, the curator is unavoidably profaned out of his professionalized role within the arts—in fact, henceforth, the curatorial may well be all about profanation.<sup>16</sup> Notwithstanding the discursive intensity in the arts and curatorial studies about its contours, leverage and reach, the discussion remains to a large extent insular and oblivious to its usage in other fields—the same, nonetheless, should be said of managers who don't really care that much for the complexity of its terminology.<sup>17</sup>

As with several other books of the kind, Tapscott's enterprises read similarly to Alvin Toffler's futurology, inflated here by the guise of a self-help manual for emerging companies, both private

and governmental, as well as all sorts of entrepreneurs interested in adapting to paradigm changes.<sup>18</sup> Simultaneously an action and a position, but also a condition for survival (in late capitalism), for Tapscott the curatorial is affirmed, rather positively, as central to such a paradigm change. Imbued with a sense of (or will for) equality, this change may be traced back to the mid-20th century cybernetic and ecosystemic revolution, but in overall it is economic in shape and results.<sup>19</sup> The correlation has a long and intricate history, extending well beyond my reach here, connecting ecology with capital by way of ecological energetics, ecosystemics with financial markets via systems dynamics, and cybernetics with statistics via pooling and management, all guided by the increasing individualization of society and the personalization of its actors under neoliberalism.<sup>20</sup> In fact, a comparison to ecology's (ecosystemics and cybernetics included) conceptual ambivalence may prove exemplary, if not due to the impact of ecosystemics and cybernetics in contemporary management. Management, so says Tapscott, is what the curatorial is actually all about. Is it? Tapscott may not be wrong, or at least we must take his word seriously. For if so, it may very well be us (in the arts) and not he, that are being conceptually conservative.

Historically, as we can now see it, the dynamics of reciprocity between ecology and economics was (at least) double. On the one hand, it may have been more, or at least as much, from the inclusion of Green issues in the strategies of large and medium size companies and particular lobbyists (mostly translated into the vocabulary of sustainability), rather than by way of activism, citizenship and governmental policies, that ecological discourse entered most effectively (that is, most economically) into mainstream consumer habits. On the other hand, the structural relevance of ecosystemics+cybernetics for the contemporary financial systems and its correlated evaluation mechanisms is unmistakable.<sup>21</sup> While ecosystemics and the postwar ecological revolution may have been consciously working towards socio-planetary equality and a cybernetic emancipation of the cosmos, undercurrents were already, if not from the beginning, structuring the basics for what was to become the contemporary management of capital, of life and of corporate development.<sup>22</sup> While the latter example testifies to the ambivalence of concepts in regards to any ideological loyalty, the former example (that of the Green economy) highlights their shapelessness, that is, their volatility, extension and contraction, according to given needs. Selling ecology as Green may have its benefits, but it has mostly, though not paradoxically, perpetuated the same modern partitions that an ecosophical thought hopes to transform or even abolish—to be more precise, it is selling the form without dealing with the contents: fundamentals that cannot but break with the modern views of technological industry, citizenship and, more importantly, humanity.<sup>23</sup> There is no such thing as ecological modernization, only ecology.<sup>24</sup>

20 For ecological energetics see the original material by Phillipson J. (1966) *Ecological Energetics*. London: Edward Arnold and by Odum H. and E. (1959) *Fundamentals of Ecology*. W.B.Saunders, and the historical analysis by Worster D. (1977–1994) *Nature's Economy*. Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press. For systems dynamics in business see Serman J. (2000) *Business Dynamics: Systems Thinking and Modeling for a Complex World*. McGraw-Hill/Irwin.

21 See, among other, Seymour, B. (2011) 'Shorter Circuits: Finance, Feedback, and Culture in the Second Wave of the Crisis' in *Mute Magazine*, 'Double Negative Feedback', Vol. 3, N. 1. London. .Or (2001) 'The Cybernetic Hypothesis' in *Tiqqun*, N. 2 .

22 In fact, in a more than ironic case of contemporaneity, the book *St. Callen Management Model* by the Management Department of the University of St. Callen, singular for an early systems dynamics approach to business, was published in that same year of 1972 in which *Anti-Oedipus* answered back to Lacanian psychoanalysis and late capitalism with schizoanalysis, desire and all of those guerrilla concepts that, years on, came to define Cuattari's chaotic ethico-aesthetic paradigm. The 'coincidence' should not be taken purely as such.

23 For the referred ontological variability and the expansion of the term human, in contrast to Mankind, see among others, Latour, B. (2004) *The Politics of Nature*, Cambridge. Also, Castro, E. (2011) *Métaphysiques Cannibales*. Paris: Presses Universitaires de France and Stengers, I. (1997) *Cosmopolitiques, I–VII*. Paris; La Découverte, 1997.

24 In this respect, see Latour, B. (2004) *The Politics of Nature*.

25 Deleuze G. and Félix Guattari (1994) *What is Philosophy?*, 34.

26 'In any concept there are usually bits and components that come from other concepts, which corresponded to other problems and presupposed other planes. This is inevitable because each concept carries out a new cutting-out, takes on new contours, and must be reactivated or recut.' followed by 'a concept also has a becoming that involves its relationship with concepts situated on the same plane.' Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari (1994) *What is Philosophy?*, 18. As to the co-option of the concept of 'concept' itself, the example Deleuze and Guattari give is that of marketing, ie 'the most shameful moment came when computer science, marketing, design, and advertising, all the disciplines of communication, seized hold of the word concept itself and said: "This is our concern, we are the creative ones, we are the *ideas men!*"', *What is Philosophy?*, 10. The example is somewhat ridiculous one must con-

All of the above, though in the apparent shape of a slight detour, should serve to highlight the ambiguity within concepts, bit or small, and in this case within the concept of the curatorial, curating, and even curator. It should also serve, from the turn of the century onwards, for a parallel, that is, a non-museological, genealogy of curating yet to be done. Or, put otherwise, the consolidation of a contemporary space for curatorial activity—as it is now being called—in the midst of financial, image and data overabundance, and a multiplicity of related yet wilfully autonomous spheres (cultural, ideological, etc).

Locating the exercise on the meaning and role of the curatorial within a new economic paradigm cannot but make one feel as if semantics are spreading outside (the artistic sphere) while we (the arts) are happily discoursing. In other words, that a particular set of terms and discourses has already spread to other fields of specialization, if not to common usage. On the one hand, this might mean, in the way of Guattari, the potential for an individualization of terms and notions, functions and roles, at the level of the personal imaginary and beyond the scope of specialization. This dilettantism may contribute to the creation of unexpected, yet urgent, existential sites of appropriation, where new languages, postures and aesthetics can be developed and linked to other discourses, and thus be claimed differently. On the other hand, one is constantly aware of the potential territorialization of concepts (in this case, the curatorial) under the machine of economics, particularly in order to push through particular sets of organizational ideas in regards to others (in this case, neoliberal flexibilization of labour, identities and resources).

As such, if following Deleuze and Guattari, concepts are 'centres of vibration'—a-discursive resonances allowing for action and the expansion of the imagination that do 'not refer to the lived, by way of compensation, but consist, through its own creation, in setting up an event that surveys the whole of the lived no less than every state of affairs'—they are also projection screens for desire.<sup>25</sup> What this means is that, as Guattari often wrote, yielding to all interests involved and traversed by all sorts of parties, concepts are contestation sites tending as much to the liberation of subjectivity as to the constitution of fascistic nodes within relations. As a degree zero of intentions, these pledge no allegiance and are attached to no one except to themselves or to other concepts—to the point that even the concept of concept can be seized.<sup>26</sup>

The openness and ambiguity of concepts, their cynical alliance or bending by capture and contamination, appears foremost as territories of struggle, vigilance and care—not to mention of creativity: in reshaping them anew, or in exchanging them for other more appropriate concepts if need be. If indeed the personalization of production and the politicization of networks complexify the territories and methodologies for political insurrection, such

struggles may well have to start with concepts themselves. Not defensively, in the ways of retrograde critique, but as aggressively as in the streets of Tunis and of Athens. Not in order to substitute them for other concepts—though it may be needed—but not to lose track of their connectivity and the traces of their associations.<sup>27</sup> We have to fight for concepts, because concepts fight for (or against) us.

Once concepts begin to spread, dilute and mutate, emptied out or adulterated throughout the social sphere and throughout the variety of disciplinary realms—as is the case with ecology but with the curatorial as well—the overall feeling might be one of an abandonment and/or substitution of concepts, terms and models. Yet, should one not rather find the strength and the tools to dive into that same dispersion? To acknowledge the contingent life processes of concepts, and affirm them at the transitional moment of their mutation in the hands of others, friends or foes? For again a reminder from Deleuze and Guattari should be noted: ‘every concept always has a history, even though this history zigzags, though it passes, if need be, through other problems and onto different planes.’<sup>28</sup> Is it not then this history, its hybridization, unfaithfulness and even invalidation, which should be made core to militancy? Once again, the curatorial appears, structurally, as a privileged site for the effort of such contestation. According to Tapscott, it may very well be its name.

fess though, a caricature of sorts resembling the golden years of publicity in the 1950–60s more than anything else.

27 In this respect, ‘actor-network-theory’ may indeed prove to be a fruitful war strategy. Latour B. (2005) *Reassembling the Social: An Introduction to Actor-Network-Theory*. Oxford; Oxford Univ. Press.

28 Deleuze G. and Félix Guattari, 1994, 18.