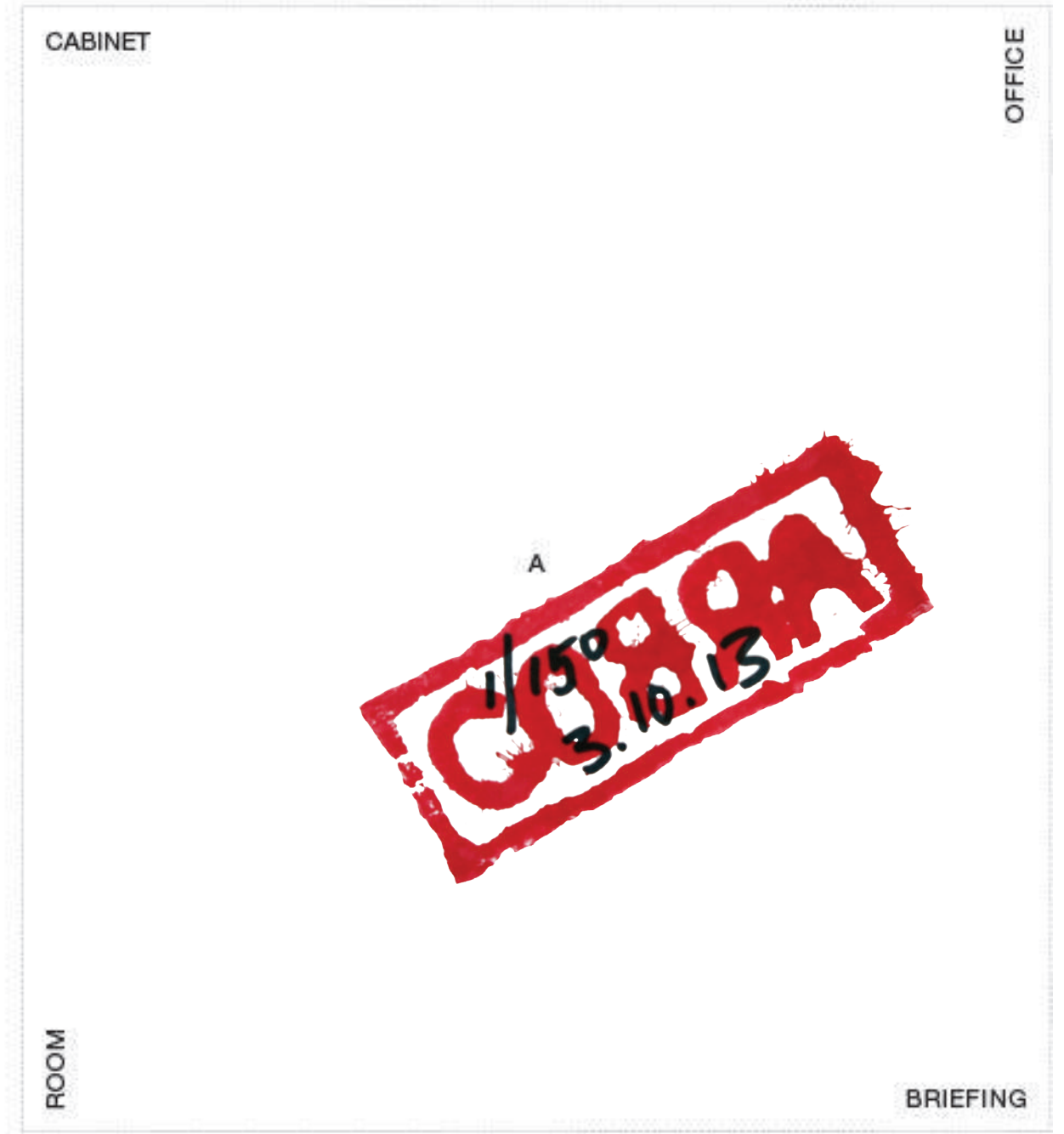


Steve Bell / Iain Boal / Hugh Jordan /
kennardphillipps / Nima Esmailpour /
N. Hausdorf & A. Goller (h+corp) /
Frida Go / Philip Howe / Chie Konishi /
Barry Murphy / Samuel Stevens /
Adam Ferguson / Jenny Richards /
Richard Wilson / Robert Malt /
Theodore Price /

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COBRA: A CRITICAL RESPONSE 1.1



COBRA: A CRITICAL RESPONSE 1.1
A creative response to British emergency politics

COBRA: A CRITICAL RESPONSE 1.1 PDF

**COBRA:
A CRITICAL RESPONSE
1.1**

Edited by Theodore Price

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Editor

Theodore Price

Graphic design

Alexander Goller

Published by COBRA PRESS 2013

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Printed by Calverts Co-operative, London,
United Kingdom

Limited edition of 150 paperback books

ISBN-978-0-9926622-0-2

www.cobrapress.co.uk

COBRA:A CRITICAL RESPONSE 1.1 PDF

Editor's note.

This publication contains a series of artistic and written responses to the British Government's emergency response committee COBRA which was convened on 22nd and 23rd May 2013 in response to the killing of Lee Rigby in Woolwich, south London. Following that first meeting, COBRA: A Critical Response, invited a broad spectrum of individuals to respond to the COBRA meeting within nine days. The call to respond was not motivated by a moral judgment of the death of Lee Rigby, nor was it intended to comment on the personal tragedy that had befallen him and his family. Instead, the call for responses aimed to invite further engagement with the broader issues at play in the *modus operandi* of the state through emergency politics and the COBRA Committee. In an era of increased emergency politics, terror legislation and rhetoric around 'high level security threats' it is vital to offer an alternative perspective and a critical frame through which to address this mode of 'democratic' governance.

It is unclear if all the submissions to COBRA 1.1 are complete or whether with more time texts would be edited and images rearranged, but in the nature of *response* a specific moment in time has

been captured. The only exceptions to this rule of direct response is Steve Bell, Adam Ferguson and kennardphillipps who were asked to contribute work already exhibited elsewhere and therefore are not direct responses to the initial invitation by COBRA: A Critical Response. Yet these works create a response to COBRA from within and even physically of, the print media that plays such a huge role in embellishing emergency response politics.

Owing to time constraints the contributors were unable to view each other's submissions and have therefore created an eclectic selection of viewpoints from separate locations. There was no opportunity for the artists to meet and discuss the project and consequently the works submitted speak only for each individual, not for the collective as a whole. All individual work submitted was neither edited nor censored before publication, thus offering the viewer the clearest possible freedom of interpretation. That said, all artists and writers were invited to contribute because of their diverse range of reference through equally multifarious mediums and in doing so have offered a valuable and critical set of perspectives through which to engage and respond to emergency politics and its COBRA committee.

COBRA

COBRA is the British Government’s emergency response committee set up to respond to a national or regional crisis. Standing for Cabinet Office Briefing Room A, the COBRA Committee comes together in moments of perceived crisis under the chairmanship of either the Prime Minister or the Home Secretary. At COBRA meetings decisions and a possible response, sometimes simply a press conference, are made under real or imagined conditions of emergency and/or crisis.* The committee can evoke emergency powers such as suspending Parliament or restricting movement. Such emergency-based responses can range from tackling Ash Dieback disease to the deployment of military hardware on civilian rooftops during the London Olympics.

Emergency and crisis-based politics are becoming increasingly common as modes of contemporary governance in an age of hyped terrorism and economic and environmental crises.

*As far as we are able to clarify, COBRA has been meeting since 1984 and has met in recent years in response to:

2007	Car bomb explodes at Glasgow airport.	2011	No-fly zone over Libya.
2007	Two car bombs found near <i>Tiger Tiger</i> nightclub, London.	2011	Summer riots in London.
2007	Foot and Mouth outbreak.	2012	London Olympics.
2009	15 British Naval Crew are captured in Iranian territorial waters.	2012	Ash Tree Dieback disease.
2010	Eyjafjallajokull Volcano eruption in Iceland.	2013	British and international hostages held in Tiguentourine gas plant in Algeria.
2010	Discovery of bombs in ink cartridges on UPS airplanes bound for the U.S.	2013	Woolwich killing.

COBRA: A Critical Response

Like an alternative currency, COBRA: A Critical Response pegs itself to the official COBRA as a way of producing different information, new perspectives and alternative narratives while existing in a mimetic relationship to the emergency Committee itself and the situation it is responding to. COBRA: A Critical Response aims to re-frame the response from an aesthetic perspective, while operating as an active-archive that follows, traces and maps the constantly changing tide of emergency politics.

COBRA: A Critical Response is a collective of artists and writers who aim to ask critical questions of COBRA through a series of creative responses. Reflecting and mimicking the structure of the COBRA Committee, the artists, writers and advisors are chosen for their relevance to the given context of the COBRA meeting. The artists and writers are given nine days from the initial COBRA meeting in which to respond to either COBRA or the context it is meeting under. For the process to work, it is important that pressure is applied to the artists and writers so as prevent too much consideration, with limited facts available, in an attempt to re-create a parallel action of response.

Since January 2013 COBRA and COBRA: A Critical Response, have met twice;

COBRA 1.0 - Our first response was an exhibition after COBRA had met when hostages had been held in Tiguentourine gas plant in Algeria. 19.1.13

COBRA 1.1 - The second response is this book of artistic and written responses to the COBRA meeting following the killing of soldier Lee Rigby in Woolwich, south London. 22.5.13

COBRA: A Critical Response will continue responding to COBRA over the next five years until 2018. For more information see:

www.cobra-res.info

Foreword

Iain Boal, August 2013

In 1963 an anonymous group of pacifists calling themselves ‘Spies for Peace’ and affiliated with the direct action wing of the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament exposed the secret UK network of underground bunkers (RSGs) built for the nomenklatura in case of a nuclear war. Macmillan’s cabinet issued a gag order (D-Notice) to the media in an attempt to suppress news of these emergency plans becoming public knowledge. It is a measure of the advance of the spectacle and a development that would have surprised the old school anarcho-pacifists who broke into RSG-6 near Reading, that when today’s state managers convene in the upstairs bunker (Cabinet Office Briefing Room A) at 70 Whitehall, far from maintaining secrecy, they proclaim it at press conferences.

‘Getting out ahead of the crisis’, ‘controlling the communications void’ - these are by now the basic banalities of Media Management 101. In Retort’s *Afflicted Powers*, we suggested that as a consequence of the new technics of communication the state was being drawn more and more fully - though with some reluctance - into micro-managing the structure and conditions of everyday life.

Horst Teltschik, a former security adviser to Chancellor Kohl, expressed this reluctance robustly: “It is a tragedy of every democracy that everyone can publicly represent their opinion.... In a dictatorship, this type of thing wouldn’t happen.” Much easier, in other words, to declare an emergency, suspend parliament, and abolish the court of public opinion, than having to cohabit with the likes of Google and Verizon.

Back in 1917, Randolph Bourne forecast that the combination of income tax and standing armies would likely have disastrous consequences for the 20th century. He expressed it in the indelible phrase: “War is the health of the state”. In a sense Bourne predicted the condition of ‘permanent war’, and would have understood current interest in the work of Schmitt and Agamben. Recent history suggests that terrorism too is the health of the state; we might call it the Bourne Corollary. COBRA watchers will need to stay alert not only to the ideological grotesquerie of the term as deployed by the state (not to mention its ugly twin, ‘counter-terrorism’) but also to a clear-eyed recognition that there is in reality such a thing as the strategic use

of violence against civilians—typically by states, no doubt, but also by those thinking like a state, however marginal and poor in resources. Terrorism as a strategy seeks to kill and maim, but also more widely to demoralise, to spread the message that no one is safe. Terrorism is moreover an act of communication. It aims to breed rumor, grab headlines, burn an image of pain and horror into the citizenry's collective skull. As a tactic terrorism can be cost-effective, and has had successes. Colonial occupiers have given up and gone home in the face of it. Whether victimisation and the sowing of mass paranoia can ever provide the basis for a 'revolution'—that is, the release and refocusing of repressed social energies—is another question. Whereas terror is often disavowed (though inherent to rapine, slavery, inquisitions and colonialism), *terrorism* lives on the oxygen of publicity. It took modern form with the Jacobins' spectacular use of Dr Guillotin's enlightenment machine for rational decapitation. The next *fin-de-siècle* burst of 'propaganda by the deed'—political assassinations, bombings and incendiarism, often in fact the work of *agents provocateurs* in the service of the state's need to justify the deployment of its hegemonic violence—turned out to be just a curtain-raiser for the twentieth century which witnessed the apotheosis of terrorism. Its emblematic instruments have been, in the industrialised North, the car-bomb and, in the Third World, disappearances and the death-squad. But twentieth century terrorism's hallmark was bombardment from the air, the Damoclean threat of mass death aimed at the inhabitants of cities—Guernica, London, Dresden, and the

ground zero of globalized atomic terror, Hiroshima. It was the absurdity of the politics of emergency, Cold War style, that propelled Nicolas Walter and the other Spies for Peace to their critical response, the publication of the pamphlet *Danger! Official Secret RSG-6*. The keepers of nuclear stockpiles are still resident in Whitehall and Washington and other capitals, and for them to declare a 'war on terrorism' places them very deep in Orwell's debt. In political rhetoric, the epithet "terrorist" is projected only onto others; after September 11th the term proliferated to implicate all resistance to capitalist expansion, foreign and domestic, as well as to justify states of emergency and laws or decrees suspending habeas corpus.

Accordingly it does not take the threat of full armageddon to trigger the bunkering of the COBRA committee. Car bombs, microbes (*aphthovirus*, *charlara fraxinea*), hostage taking, rioting, sporting events as targets and volcanoes will do it. It makes sense that the sublime Eyjafjallajökull eruption provoked a COBRA meeting; climate change feeds catastrophism and politics by diktat. Al Gore offered an insipid version of Teltschik: "What we are facing is a planetary emergency. So some things you would never consider otherwise, it makes sense to consider." From the other end of the spectrum, two historians of the environment, Mike Davis and Colin Duncan, independently proposed that the only response to the ecological crisis with any chance of success is to put society on a war footing, albeit having in mind the Second World War - that is, the 'good war' against fascism. Here then, is a

real problem for root-and-branch antagonists of the present order of things - how to find an idiom capable of expressing the seriousness of the situation without giving fuel to arbitrary power or sounding like fundamentalists. An idiom, in other words, that inoculates against the enchantments of *l'état d'urgence*, not least COBRA's, which is most certainly at odds with a peaceable world and lives of ease and invention.

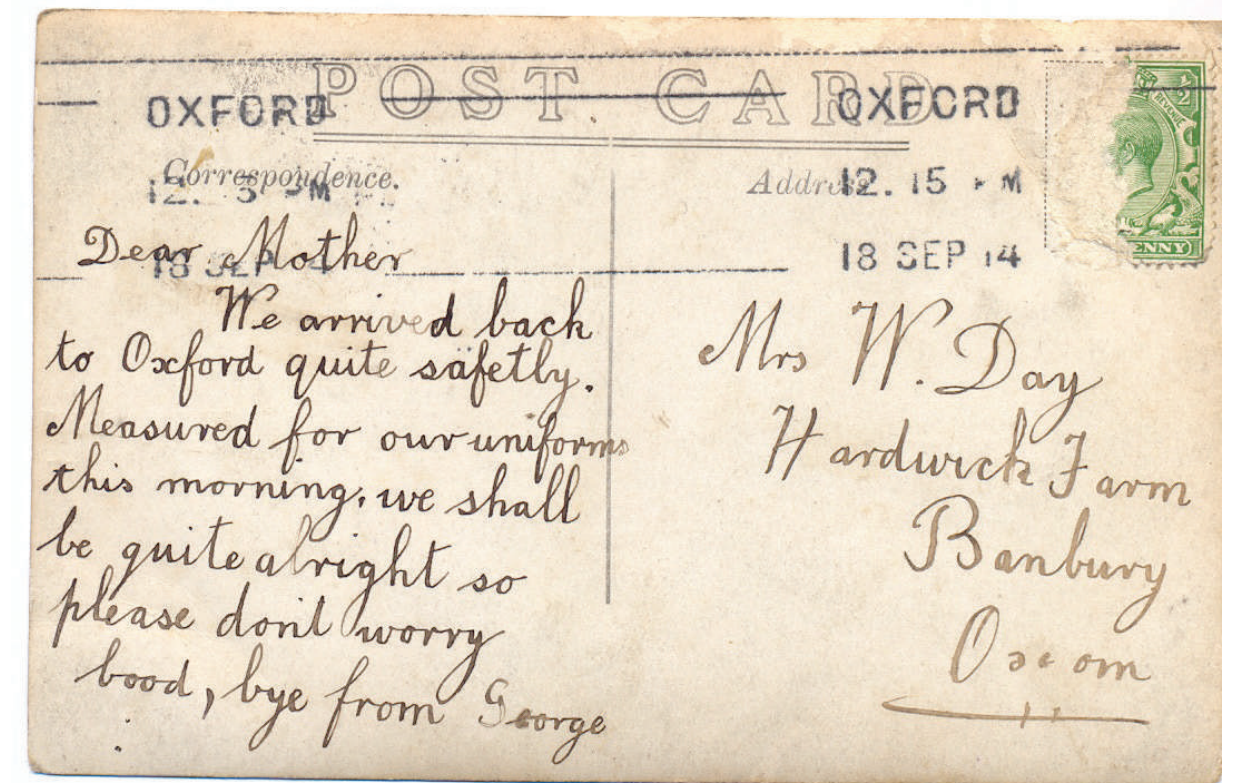
The events of September 11th prompted Retort to ask what might be involved in pushing back against the derealizing force of modernity's image-machines. We were not sanguine. Least of all about the art world. "Art is not fated", we said, "to remain at any particular level of evasion or lucidity in present circumstances, because 'art' is no longer a coherent social category – no longer a distinctive form of life. It has no destiny. History has left it behind." Yet notwithstanding the difficulties confronting those aiming to lend their voices and their art work against the spectacle, out of the shambles of ecological disasters, failed states, IMF shock therapies, and neoliberalism's new round of global enclosures a non-vanguardist, non-apocalyptic, movement of movements is slowly coming into being. The sites and modes of resistance are - have to be - as motley and protean as the sites of emergency. The engagement has to take place at all points, north and south, in the circuits of capital - at the points of expropriation, production, reproduction, and consumption.

There is an urgent need for new tools and tactics

under the current conditions of spectacle. *COBRA: A Critical Response 1.1* assembles the second set of rejoinders by a shadow committee of artists and writers who have taken up this vital challenge, a taskforce that will be mobilised (over the next five years) in the first week following the British government's declaration of a COBRA-level emergency. The counter-committee's remit - the editor explains - is to reflect, mimic, archive, trace, map, reframe, even to act as 'an alternative currency'. These modes and metaphors match the heterogeneity of events deemed COBRA-worthy. The first imperative is to refuse the politics of the abyss on offer from the salesmen of apocalypse in Room A, which only serves to mask further expropriation. It is time for commoners everywhere to hold the terrain that is yet in our hands, for pushing back against the new enclosures and for re-making the world as we go.



Robert Malt,
2013
'Good, bye from George'



in a year of the snake it seems appropriate
to reflect on when a COBRA rears its head

what scary tunes are played by which charmers
to draw this sacred serpent from its box?

when St George defeated the dragon,
that great worm was put to guardian work
one form may be griffins guarding London's hoard
at each entry to the Square Mile's golden streets

in parts of Wales
(refuge of early Britons, undefeated on the
inside at least maybe)
St George's Day is known as Dragon Day

Dragonss, Serpentss, Snakess..
Trussst in Meeeee

at the heart of Abrahamic religions:
the myth of genesis:
a snake lures 'Eve', the second woman,
to become a temptress,
to become like the serpent scary, slinky,
giving birth to sorrow and sin..

these are men's stories,
the women's tales banished

with Lilith's kundalini sexuality
lost to Nicene politics of priestly power..
and then back here in Avalon, auld Albion,
we have the image of twin serpents -
one red one white -
one the masculine principle:

white like bone, like tears, like sperm the other
feminine: blood.

entwining around the heart of British mythos
as dancing these two great serpents rise,
and fight, dance, intertwine
inseparable, incorrigible,
two in one

wars of roses,
red and white houses
eventually united
strong

double helix echoes our DNA
and theories of the origins of life
locate our emergence from underseabed processes
called, of course, it would be
serpentinisation

from how deep can a cobra come?

Frida Go,
2013



Serpentinite rock composed of one or more serpentine group minerals.

Perception Management and the Data Coup d'Etat

Philip Howe, May 2013

It would appear that political strategy in the hands of the Conservative party has reached new moral lows; recent events and Conservative reactions mark a fascinating example of creative media/policy strategy. Just a few months ago, the conviction of Mick Philpotts, notorious Jeremy Kyle featured 'chav', for the murder of his children in a botched arson scheme, rocked the British press and public. The mainstream media was saturated and sodden with sensational and perpetual reportage on the event, court case and conviction. The Conservative party, battered by numerous media gaffs and disastrous U-turns in the early years of their term in office, decided to pounce and utilise the media spectacle of the Philpotts case in order to bolster and justify sweeping benefit reforms. George Osborne appeared in the media in the coming days to insinuate that the benefit culture was ultimately to blame for the tragic events and evenly tarnished the majority of benefit recipients as being of the same ilk as Mick Philpotts. Although the move drew ire from many corners and claims that the Conservative party was exploiting the deaths of innocents for their own agenda, it was in its way a successful attack on the poverty-stricken

underclasses of Britain.

This strategy is, of course nothing new; it is spin or the 'dark arts', something the Labour party mastered in the new media environment under the regime of Tony Blair and his snarling press secretary Alistair Campbell (without whom the Iraqis would be one million civilians to the better). Use of the so-called 'dark arts' is useful in many ways in modern parliamentary politics; it earns its keep mostly sweeping up the media disasters of careless and/or amoral politicians, however, the 'dark arts', in other words *perception management*, is most useful in forcing unpopular, often authoritarian and invasive policies into law.

Just a few months on from the Philpotts conviction and Britain's media have once again descended into their sensational rage. The brutal public execution of British soldier Lee Rigby by two home-grown Islamic fundamentalists has shocked the nation and drawn mass tributes at the site of the murder in Woolwich; not to mention stoking racial and political tensions leading to right-wing demonstrations against Islam and immigration;

then subsequently counter demonstrations from anti-fascist organisations and Muslim community groups. The murderous acts of these men have raised the bar in terms of 'propaganda of the deed'. For many years we have witnessed grainy footage of beheadings along with other deplorable acts and suffered the politics of fear in regards to suicide bombings. Rather than self-sacrifice we now have ritual slaughter instead of far removed executions and attacks on British soldiers in Afghanistan; the violence of the war on terror has been once again thrust into the collective consciousness and geographical vision of Britain's citizenry.

Hoping to capitalise on this wave of publicity the Conservative party has sprung into action. Just a few days after the murder and the emergency COBRA meeting, the political response is clear. Theresa May this time took to the news studios and began to link the murder of Lee Rigby to an inherent need to pass mass electronic communications legislation in order to censor 'extremist websites' and monitor the communications of terror suspects. The so-called 'snooper bill' has been waiting in the wings for some time now (first plied by the Labour party into the early 2000's) and the Conservatives have already had an attempt at passing such legislation this term, an endeavour in which they have so far failed. Although no evidence has emerged, to my knowledge, linking the events to cybernetic organisation or indoctrination, the Conservatives push on in their fight to pass their cyber surveillance and censorship policies. It would appear that the site of indoctrination, leading to these crimes, is linked to meetings of radical Islamic

groups, including those led by pariah Abu Qatada (yet another reason for the Conservatives to *try* and deport him). Naturally however, the Conservatives are moving through the juridical means offered by exceptionalist anti-terror legislation to monitor Islamic groups. Somewhat worryingly, May identified a greater need for intelligence on university societies and religious meetings amongst other groups that were identified as 'problematic'. Interestingly this response was proposed in the broadest of terms and one cannot help but feel the Conservatives and other silent (Lib Dems) and willing parties (Labour) are going to use this to monitor and subjugate political opponents (not to mention the potential catastrophe of a veritable loon like Nigel Farage getting his hands on said power).

If it is a question of 'who is radicalising these young angry British men?' Then perhaps we should not be solely looking to radical hate-speaking groups or supposedly malevolent websites. The West received stark warnings when engaging in the war on terror over ten years ago, that conflicts in Afghanistan and Iraq would only lead to more extremism and more attacks on British interests at home and abroad. Instead of blaming decades of misguided foreign policy, the right would rather bury their heads in sand and flail their political limbs towards the nearest Draconian policy.

Mooted reports emerged in the days following the murder of Lee Rigby that would indicate British intelligence were aware of the suspects, they had been monitoring them and had even tried to recruit

one as recently as last year. Obviously, such reports must be suppressed if any legislative actions off the back of this event are going to stick. Though clearly the intelligence infrastructure that is supposed to monitor threats, although present, is defunct and/or ineffective; so then, why does the state need more exceptional measures? The SIS are hardly lacking in resources or ability to monitor en masse, to identify and survey potential targets. By means of deduction then, we can assume that Conservative policy objectives are not in the interests of national security, they are with a view to monopolisation and totalisation of real and virtual space.

This hijacking, of often violent media events, plays to one of the conditions of law as highlighted by the work of Michel Foucault. In ‘Society must Be Defended’ he states that;

‘Law is not born of nature, near the springs frequented by the first shepherds; law is born from real battles, victories, massacres, conquests which have their dates and their heroes of horror. The law is born in torched villages, ravaged lands; it is born with the notorious innocents suffering in the throes of death as the sun rises.’

In this sense there must be some violence before the law; a fitting example of this would be 9/11 and the Patriot Act or 7/7 and British Anti-Terror legislation. Events, in the dark age of perception management, are seemingly far more malleable; unrelated objectives can be achieved through the ambush of media events. The use of media saturation in this way could be described as a ‘data

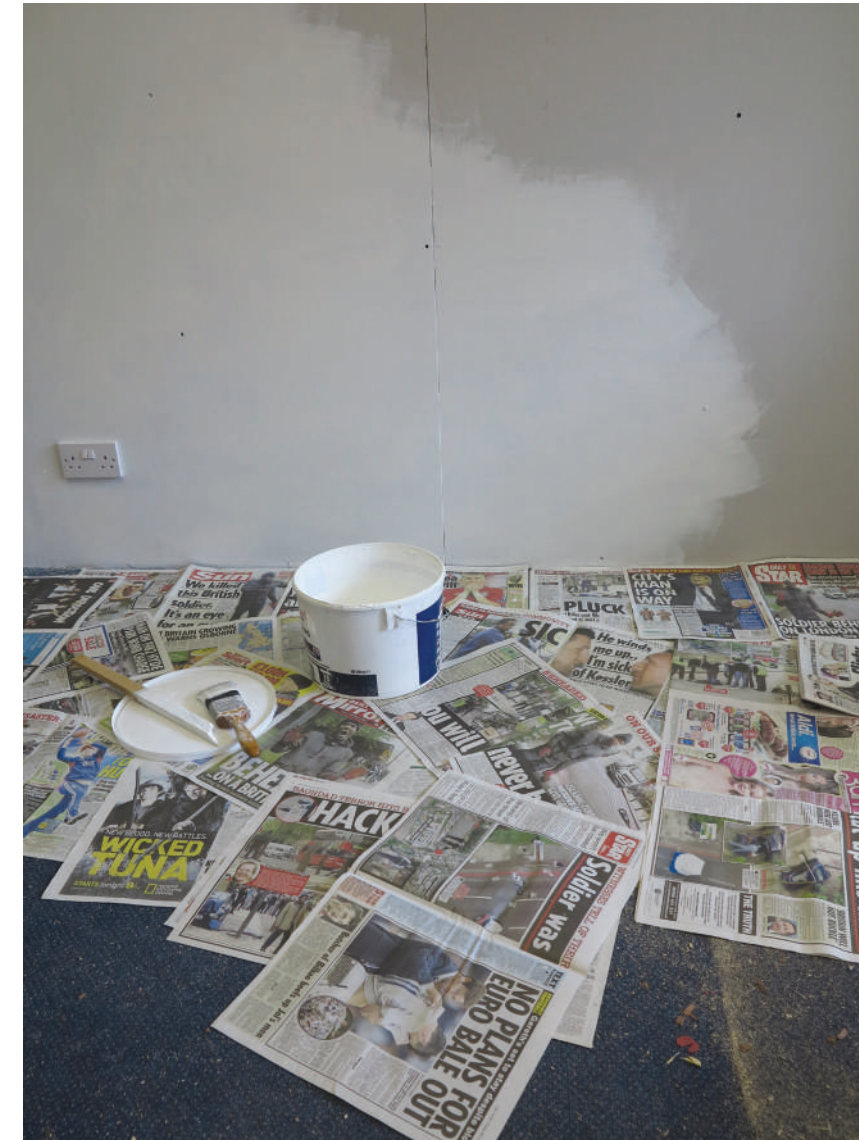
coup d’etat’ the hijacking of a media event in order to accumulate and sustain power. The key point here is that when exceptional powers are granted they are seldom if ever revoked, instead they are just integrated into existing legal norms.

How should we resist such media and policy strategies that inevitably infringe on our rights to privacy, freedom of movement and association? How can we undo the spell of media saturation, to draw eyes away from the gross spectacles that run through the echo chamber of 24-hour news?

Always beware when somebody cries

“SOCIETY MUST BE DEFENDED!”

Especially if it is a politician.



Theodore Price,
2013
'Untitled'



Adam Ferguson,
2012
From series 'Iraq's Legacy'

Supporters of Shiite religious leader Mahmoud Al-Sarkhi Protest
in Tahir Square, Baghdad, Iraq.
Two of Mahmoud Al-Sarkhi's offices were targeted in arson attacks.



Adam Ferguson,
2012
From series 'Iraq's Legacy'

An Iraqi man sits on a concrete blast wall in Baghdad, Iraq.



Adam Ferguson,
2012
From series 'Iraq's Legacy'

A women's rights activist speaks on a talk show programme on Iraqiya television channel seen inside a teashop at the central market in Hilla, Babil Province, Iraq.



Adam Ferguson,
2012
From series 'Iraq's Legacy'

An Iraqi security forces member hoses the street in Basra, Iraq.



Adam Ferguson,
2012
From series 'Iraq's Legacy'

People attend Friday prayer at the Kufa Mosque near the holy Shiite city of Najaf, Iraq.



Adam Ferguson,
2009
From series 'Iraq's Legacy'

Afghan National Army and US Army soldiers from 1st Platoon, Apache Company, 2nd Battalion, 87th Infantry Regiment, 3rd Brigade Combat team, 10th Mountain Division, search a house as an Afghan girl watches on, in the Tangi Valley, in Wardak Province, Afghanistan.



Adam Ferguson,
2012
From series 'Iraq's Legacy'

An Iraqi girl sits inside a spaceship ride at an amusement park in Baghdad, Iraq.



Adam Ferguson,
2009
From series 'Iraq's Legacy'

Iraqi boys stand near a line of Iraqi security forces during a protest in support of Shiite religious leader Mahmoud Al-Sarkhi in Tahrir Square, Baghdad, Iraq. Two of Mahmoud Al-Sarkhi's offices were targeted in arson attacks.



Richard Wilson,
2013
'Anonymous, year 7'

Found in a school classroom in Kent.

COBRA:A CRITICAL

I.E.D E.D.L I.T.V
N.S.A I.M.F E.D.F C.I.A
I.B.S I.B.M I.D.S
D.F.S B.B.C E.O.N C.A.T
I.R.A E.D.I H.M.S E.D.A
A.B.S J.F.K
E.T.A D.N.A
L.O.L N.G.A
S.A.S C.N.D A.F.G B.N.P
R.A.F I.D.F E.D.O
L.H.R O.M.G
T.L.A R.A.W A.N.C
U.K.I.P I.D.S
G.D.P C.A

Theodore Price,
2013
'O.M.G'

Iraqi boys stand near a line of Iraqi security forces during a protest in support of Shiite religious leader Mahmoud Al-SarkhiProtest in Tahir Square, Baghdad, Iraq. Two of Mahmoud Al-Sarkhi's offices were targeted in arson attacks.



kennardphillipps,
2013
'Studies for a Head XI'



kennardphillipps,
2013
'Studies for a Head VII'

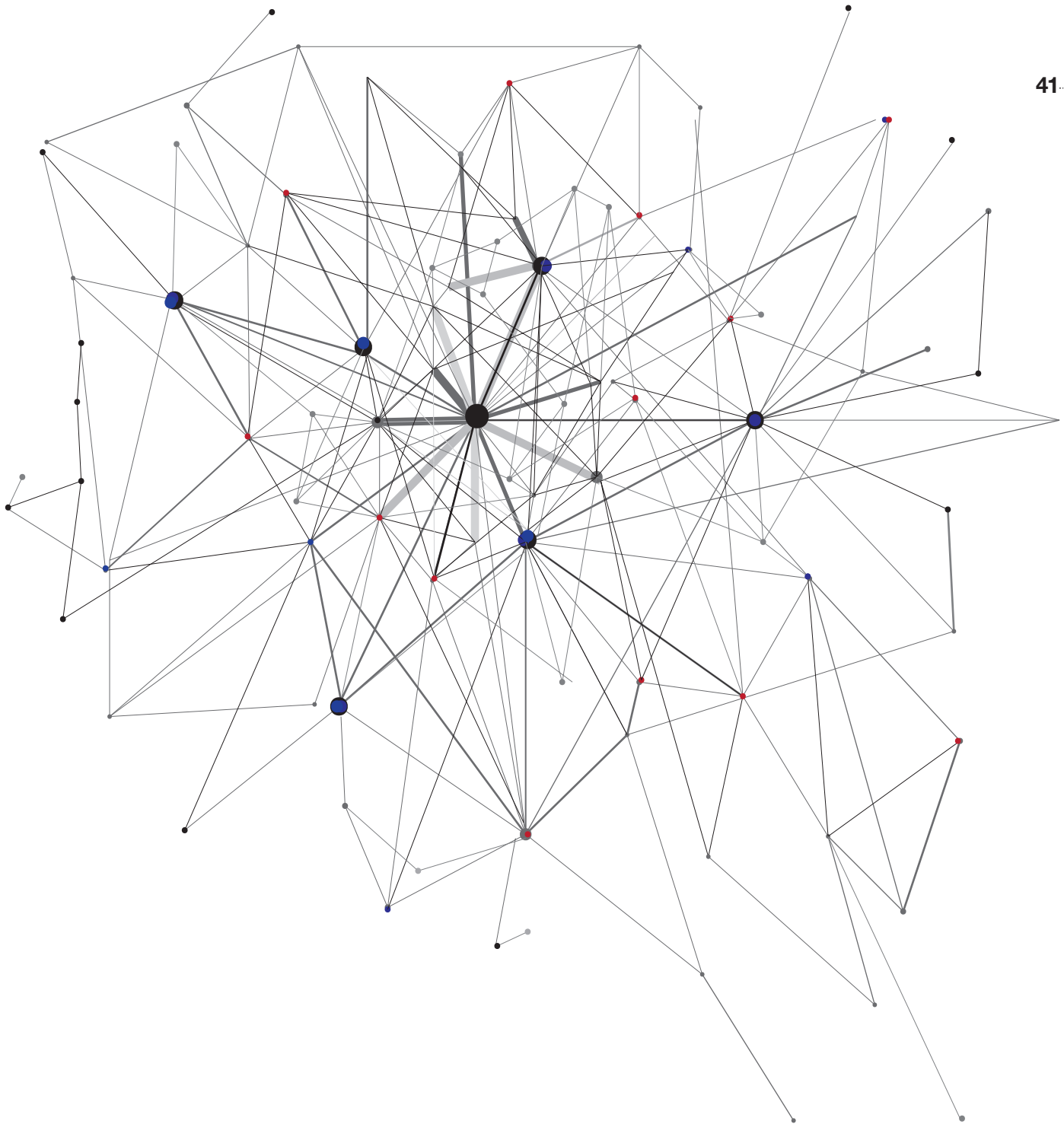


kennardphillipps,
2013
'Studies for a Head X'



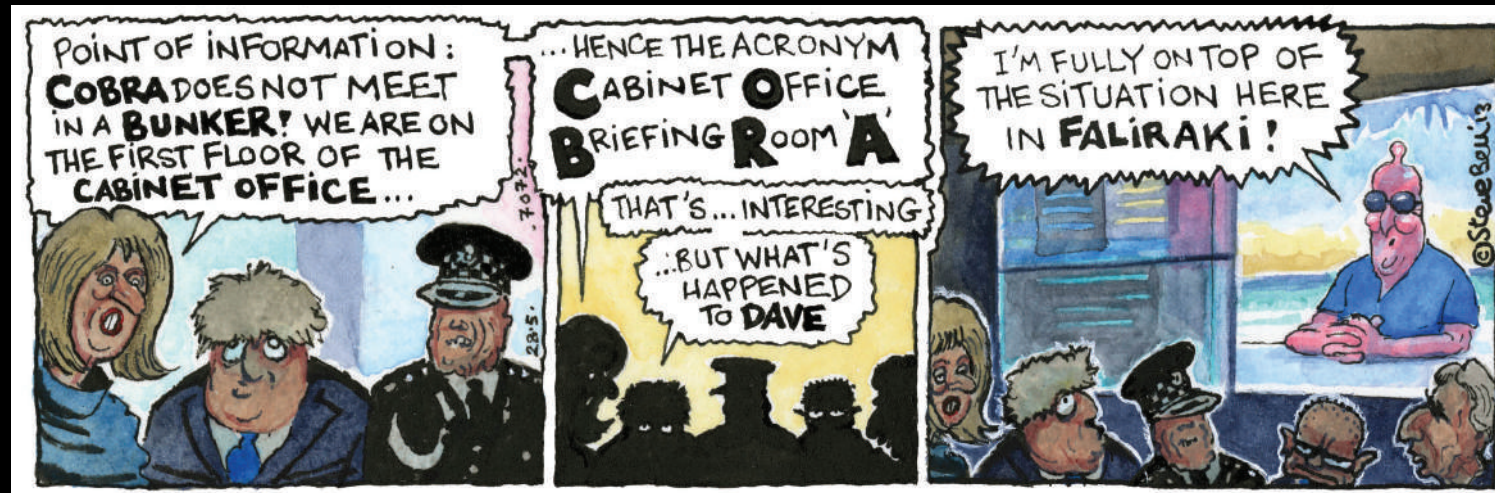
kennardphillipps,
2013
'Studies for a Head I'

MrGumball229	יְהוָה יִבְרַח אֶת יִשְׂרָאֵל	hah. you under estimate us. england will be free of ur poisen soon. anO*o uprising is coming
יְהוָה יִבְרַח אֶת יִשְׂרָאֵל	Zehavala	If I'm a man then post my name? You are just full of shit, you know I'm Sabah Da...Though I knowO*o that you are a fat Jew boy with no debate.
You lose continually		
Zehavala	BreatheWithUs	A womanO*o walking by not hysterical doesnt convey the message they want to convey sec.
BreatheWithUs		
Zehavala	יְהוָה יִבְרַח אֶת יִשְׂרָאֵל	So you ARE a muslim. YouO*o keep changing your mind every hour. Yesterday you were agnostic. The day before you were atheist. The day before that you were Jewish. Today you're muslim.
יְהוָה יִבְרַח אֶת יִשְׂרָאֵל		
יְהוָה יִבְרַח אֶת יִשְׂרָאֵל	Zehavala	Smelly feet? MuslimsO*o wash their feet before prayer muffin
Zehavala		
Zehavala	MrGumball229	He lives in a room.O*o He's a shut in. He is on YT literally 20 hours a day and has been doing this for YEARS!!!
MrGumball144	MrGumball229	NewO*o York, center of the Universe
יְהוָה יִבְרַח אֶת יִשְׂרָאֵל		
MrGumball144		
Zehavala	MrGumball229	He will lie to you, so don't bother asking.Every single syllableO*o out of this filthy cockroach PIG is a lie!!!!!!
MrGumball229		
Zehavala	יְהוָה יִבְרַח אֶת יִשְׂרָאֵל	You have defeatedO*o nothing and no one.You just have smelly feet. anyone who spends 20 hours a day on youtube, year after YEAR, is a fucking loser.
יְהוָה יִבְרַח אֶת יִשְׂרָאֵל		
MrGumball229	יְהוָה יִבְרַח אֶת יִשְׂרָאֵל	whereO*o do you live?
יְהוָה יִבְרַח אֶת יִשְׂרָאֵל		
יְהוָה יִבְרַח אֶת יִשְׂרָאֵל	MrGumball229	Nobody cares what an intellectually weak pipsqueak likeO*o you thinks. I hope England lives under the Shari'ah soon
MrGumball229		
Zehavala	יְהוָה יִבְרַח אֶת יִשְׂרָאֵל	You are on the internet 20 hours a day. A few weeks ago, you went for cocktails at a hotel in Manhattan. Where's your 2 year old?BW'W'WAHAHAHAfiction, like EVERYTHING you spew here 20 hours a day. Does your 'daughter' drive herselfO*o for falafel sannies?
יְהוָה יִבְרַח אֶת יִשְׂרָאֵל		
Zehavala	יְהוָה יִבְרַח אֶת יִשְׂרָאֵל	His legacy is living on in syria - just look at all the babies being slaughtered there. And youO*o love it.
יְהוָה יִבְרַח אֶת יִשְׂרָאֵל		
Zehavala	יְהוָה יִבְרַח אֶת יִשְׂרָאֵל	All you do, all day and all night long is write about killing people andO*o reveling in the death and dying of many.Then you pound your chest with pride that you're arab.
יְהוָה יִבְרַח אֶת יִשְׂרָאֵל		
יְהוָה יִבְרַח אֶת יִשְׂרָאֵל	Zehavala	His legacy lives on,O*o both Iraq and Syria were National Socialist nations which is why Communist Jews (Israel) hate them so much.Iran is named in respect for the NAZIS, Iran means Aryan muffin. A whole country dedicated to the great NAZIS
Zehavala		
Zehavala	יְהוָה יִבְרַח אֶת יִשְׂרָאֵל	You haveO*o defeated nothing and no one. You are the biggest loser on YT, not to mention the biggest liar with hundred or more accounts, many of which are MALE.
יְהוָה יִבְרַח אֶת יִשְׂרָאֵל		
Zehavala	יְהוָה יִבְרַח אֶת יִשְׂרָאֵל	well ASSad is following in shitler's footsteps. No wonder you love himO*o so much. He's killed 80,000 innocent civilians, 10,000 of which are BABIES. This makes you so happy.
יְהוָה יִבְרַח אֶת יִשְׂרָאֵל		
MrGumball229	יְהוָה יִבְרַח אֶת יִשְׂרָאֵל	your a fucking cunt on a video for a man who got murdered by two cunts who have no place england. take your religion and fuckO*o off. this country wont stand for that mindless violence.
יְהוָה יִבְרַח אֶת יִשְׂרָאֵל		
יְהוָה יִבְרַח אֶת יִשְׂרָאֵל	Zehavala	I have defeated yourO*o entire ilk singlehanded actually you fat ugly misogynistic man.You know zip about women which is why you are a lonely old man
Zehavala		
Zehavala	יְהוָה יִבְרַח אֶת יִשְׂרָאֵל	You have no facts.O*o Just lies, hate and propaganda. You think it's working for ya?lol. All those many lies and troll accounts? How many recruits so far?
יְהוָה יִבְרַח אֶת יִשְׂרָאֵל		
Zehavala	יְהוָה יִבְרַח אֶת יִשְׂרָאֵל	Hi legacy is buried, along with the 60 million people he is responsible forO*o murdering. You just love death and killing.
יְהוָה יִבְרַח אֶת יִשְׂרָאֵל		
יְהוָה יִבְרַח אֶת יִשְׂרָאֵל	unblockable hater	God Bless Hitler, may his legacy come back inO*o this world that needs it so much
unblockable hater		
Zehavala	יְהוָה יִבְרַח אֶת יִשְׂרָאֵל	You're not a woman. You're a liar. I have no russian account pumpkin head. I am certainly not a misogynist, but I know another person who thinks I am and actually writes EXACTLY likeO*o you, calling other women barren, fat, ugly and jealous. You have never defeated a single one of my channels pumpkin head.
יְהוָה יִבְרַח אֶת יִשְׂרָאֵל		
יְהוָה יִבְרַח אֶת יִשְׂרָאֵל	MrGumball229	Pay myO*o respects to what? To Michael?Definitely not to the soldier who was stupid enough to join the army and go kill Afghans. I would sooner spit on his grave
MrGumball229		
יְהוָה יִבְרַח אֶת יִשְׂרָאֵל	Zehavala	And you are in the know of what women say? You're such a misogynist!Is your fake Russian account failing?It seems every time I defeat one of your youtube channels your ZehavaO*o channel comes out to troll with false accusations.I'm Sabah, I'm Syrian and I'm a woman *fact*
Zehavala		
MrGumball229	יְהוָה יִבְרַח אֶת יִשְׂרָאֵל	whyO*o are you on this video. pay respect or use facebook
יְהוָה יִבְרַח אֶת יִשְׂרָאֵל		
Zehavala	יְהוָה יִבְרַח אֶת יִשְׂרָאֵל	'Quotes mean zip muffin'...your words.filthy hypocriteO*o
יְהוָה יִבְרַח אֶת יִשְׂרָאֵל		
Zehavala	יְהוָה יִבְרַח אֶת יִשְׂרָאֵל	You're the one getting screwed. That's why you work so hard here on social media. You're working overtime. Haven't met your quota yet? Still



Hugh Jordan,
2013

The opposite page contains comments on one of the most popular Youtube videos of the Woolwich stabbing. The network diagram shows the interaction between the users who are commenting.



Steve Bell,
2013
'If ...'



Steve Bell,
2013
'If ...'

These cartoons appeared in The Guardian newspaper 27th-30th May 2013 "Copyright © Steve Bell 2013 - All Rights Reserved - www.belltoons.co.uk/reuse"

Art as Response, The Woolwich Attack

Samuel Stevens, May 2013

Media spectacle

The circumstances of the attack by two men on the off-duty soldier Lee Rigby, on Wednesday 22nd May 2013, at the corner of John Wilton Street in Woolwich, London, are well-documented. Though there is no visual record of the attack itself in circulation, the scene that immediately followed was relatively extensively photographed. These images, from between the attack itself and the arrival of the police, became widely circulated as the story of the incident unfolded in the news media.

To the surprise of the thousands of those who saw the photographs and videos, those who were at the scene recorded the victim and his murderers seemingly without threat. The greatest surprise was the video of one of the murderers, Michael Adebolajo, speaking directly to camera at the scene of the crime. This video was exclusively released by ITV at 6:15pm that day, on a web-page titled

1 Undisclosed author, 23 May 2013, Woolwich machete attack leaves man dead, BBC, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-22630303>

Exclusive video: Man with bloodied hands speaks at Woolwich scene. The initial reaction, via social media, to the video focused on the bravery of the person who had recorded it rather than majoritively, as one might expect, the moral appropriateness of broadcasting the images at that time. But the bravery of the person who shot the video was soon explained by an interview with one bystander in particular.

A BBC news report records an interview with a witness, ‘identified only as James’.¹ In the interview James recalled that the two men who committed the murder asked people to take pictures of them “as if they wanted to be on TV or something”. He continued, “They were oblivious to anything, they were more worried about having their photo taken”. The Woolwich attack, as it was most commonly described, was clearly devised to be seen by as many people as possible. That is, the murderers performed their act in full daylight on a highly visible public road. But this was not simply so that it could be witnessed by bystanders. They

appeared to have wanted it to be ‘documented’ by the witnesses, more specifically photographed and filmed.

The Mirror also reports, presumably the same James, as saying, “They were running up and down the road, urging people to take pictures. Even the guy with the gun, a tall guy with a beanie cap on. Then a bus pulled up, he walked over to the bus and was asking people to take his photo[”].² A report from Sky news titled *Woolwich Assailants ‘Filmed’ Hacking Attack*, quoted the same witness, who was this time identified as James Heneghan, with the same statement.³ This article, however, begins; ‘Two attackers armed with machetes filmed their deadly assault on a man in London, according to Sky sources,’ but then goes on to reference another video recorded by a bystander and not filmed by the attackers as suggested in the title of the article. No evidence that I could find, either visual or in witness statements, confirms that the murderers actually did film the attack themselves. It is as if Sky news, in the frenzied coverage of the attack, compounded the act of murder with the act of its documentation attributing both to the murderers.

The attack also bears a further tragic relation to

film with the revelation that Adebolajo, seen in the video at the scene of the crime holding a blade, was witness to a similar murder during which he was also a victim of the attack five years earlier.⁴ In this sense the attack by Adebolajo was in effect a re-enactment. As well as a mode used extensively within documentary film, re-enactment is used as a form of therapy. Significantly events from war, where an individual has been witness and/or victim to a traumatic experience, are reconstructed using virtual reality. In this way ‘Virtual Reality Exposure Therapy’ as it is known, is used by the United States military to treat post-traumatic stress disorder in soldiers who have actively served in the Middle East. It is a further regretful aspect of the Woolwich attack that Adebolajo did not receive appropriate help following his assault.

The following morning a debate grew about whether the images and films from the scene of the crime should have been broadcast in the media. There was little debate over what part they played in completing this gruesome act. The importance of witnessing such terrible events, to retain them in memory as evidence, is indisputable. But no image is complete without testimony and these images embodied more than a judicial function. In this sense the images of the event stood not as witness

2 Palmer Alun & Atkins, Nigel, 23 May 2013, Woolwich attack: How brave woman faced down killers to tend to dying victim, The Mirror, <http://www.mirror.co.uk/news/uk-news/woolwich-attack-how-brave-woman-1905516>

3 Undisclosed author, 22 May 2013, Woolwich Assailants ‘filmed’ Hacking Attack, Sky News, <http://news.sky.com/story/1094437/woolwich-assailants-filmed-hacking-attack>

4 Ferguson, Ben, Dodd, Vikram & Taylor Mathew, 24 May 2013, Woolwich suspect was victim of frenzied knife attack aged 16, The Guardian, <http://www.guardian.co.uk/uk/2013/may/24/woolwich-adebolajo-witnessed-murder-knife?INTCMP=SRCH>

alone. They embodied a more intrinsic component of the event. The act of violence itself relied on its documentation and the dissemination of its image, as the assailants were encouraged to complete it as spectacle.

A case for art

In his text, *Art at War*, Boris Groys describes how the ‘contemporary warrior or terrorist’ is reliant on the news media to ‘acquire fame and inscribe his feats into the universal memory’.⁵ The act of terror is like a detonator that ‘pushes a button that starts the media machine’. The Woolwich attack was such an act, that relied on this media machine, and the political response that followed, such as the COBRA meeting, swinging into action. Groys identifies such images as sublime, ‘that is, as ugly, repelling, unbearable, terrifying.’ And in the wider context of the images produced by the ‘war on terror’ such as those designed to inspire shock and awe it is apparent to Groys that the sublime has in this sense become politicised. The rendering of the political sublime visually is crucial for contemporary politics in exploiting the media machine. The artist appears redundant. No longer required by the contemporary warrior, the terrorist, to render his cause visually. The artist also appears unable to respond to these images that are apparently incontestable in their reality or radicality as political gestures. Yet the rendering visible, to

the senses, of the abstract, the political, ideal or subjectivity, is a case of aesthetics and so a case for art.

For Groys, the terrorist who orchestrates such radical gestures and images of supposed realism, does not replace the artists. Rather he is opposed to the artist in that he strives ‘to create images that have a claim to be true and real – beyond any criticism of representation.’ The role of art, therefore, as it has been since it began to critically respond to the First World War, is to critique the realism presented in these images of murder and war as rendered by the act of killing and the response of politicians’ actions such as calling a COBRA meeting and in their public address. As Groys states: ‘an image of terror is also produced, staged—and can be aesthetically analysed and criticised in terms of a critique of representation.’ It can also be augmented or diminished by the media machine for political gains.

A crack in the images’ status as indicator of reality appears during the video released by ITV when the killer apologised for women having to see this traumatic act of murder. In it Adebolajo makes the statement: “I apologies that woman had to see this here today but in our lands woman have to see the same”. This was in contradiction to his desire for it to be filmed and broadcast, which would ultimately

lead to it being seen by millions of women. The contradiction indicates the difference in reality between actually witnessing the event and witnessing the event as an image. The reference in Adebolajo’s statement to other lands is an obvious reference to the Middle East. The Guardian article, *Britain’s wars fuel terror. Denying it only feeds Islamophobia*,⁶ references an incident of the stabbing of a ten year-old Afghan boy by a British soldier in Afghanistan, in relation to the murder in Woolwich. We may question why it is essential to broadcast the images of the Woolwich attack and not those of the numerous murders committed by soldiers in Afghanistan.

But how can art negotiate moral sensibility to respond to images indexically tied to the individual event that they depict? That the Woolwich attack appeared to be staged by the murderers for the media to activate through its image makes the event of the death of Lee Rigby no less real or less difficult to consider. But to criticise or analyse its image does not indicate a lack of moral sensibility. As Groys states: ‘This moral sense is indispensable as the image relates to the specific individual, empirical event that is documented’, but ‘the moment an image begins to circulate in the media and acquires the symbolic value of a representation of the political sublime, it can be subjected to art criticism along with every other image’.

The difficulty of the task of critique laid before art here is discouraging when faced with the moral sense that is inextricable from such an event.

However, the image of the political sublime, its use by the state and the terrorist alike, and its implementation by the media, must be addressed as an intrinsic part of the theatre of war. Thus the political and commercial economy of such images must also be exposed and critiqued. In this sense, perhaps art may address the travesties of war and the murder it promotes as a response to events such as the Woolwich attack. If it is to comment on the subject of war directly, as it also should, it must do so on its own terms, by the determination of the artist. Not as an endorsement of an official perspective or a secondary rebuke following a reactionary and grievable act of murder.

⁵ Groys, Boris, *Art and War*, in Groys, Boris, 2008, *Art Power*, pp. 121-130, London, MIT Press

Milne, Seumas, 29 May 2013, *Britain’s wars fuel terror. Denying it only feeds Islamophobia*, *The Guardian*, <http://www.guardian.co.uk/commentisfree/2013/may/29/britain-wars-terror-islamophobia?INTCMP=SRCH>



Samuel Stevens,
2013
'Spectacle of a Spectacle'
(Woolwich No. 1)



Samuel Stevens,
2013
'Spectacle of a Spectacle'
(Woolwich No. 2)

Samuel Stevens,
2013
'Spectacle of a Spectacle'
(Woolwich No. 3)

Samuel Stevens,
2013
'Spectacle of a Spectacle'
(Woolwich No. 4)



Samuel Stevens,
2013
'Spectacle of a Spectacle'
(Woolwich No. 5)



Samuel Stevens,
2013
'Spectacle of a Spectacle'
(Woolwich No. 6)



Samuel Stevens,
2013
'Spectacle of a Spectacle'
(Woolwich No. 7)

The discovery of ~~dark matter~~ terror

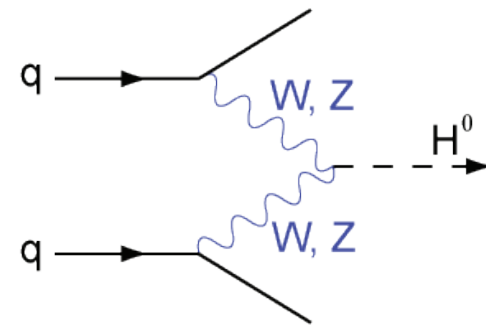
Chie Konishi, 2013

There has been a rumour spreading across the internet, that a particle of ~~dark matter~~ terror has been detected by ~~physicists~~ British Government. If this is true, then our understanding of the formation of ~~galaxies~~ political unities will have to go through a drastic change.

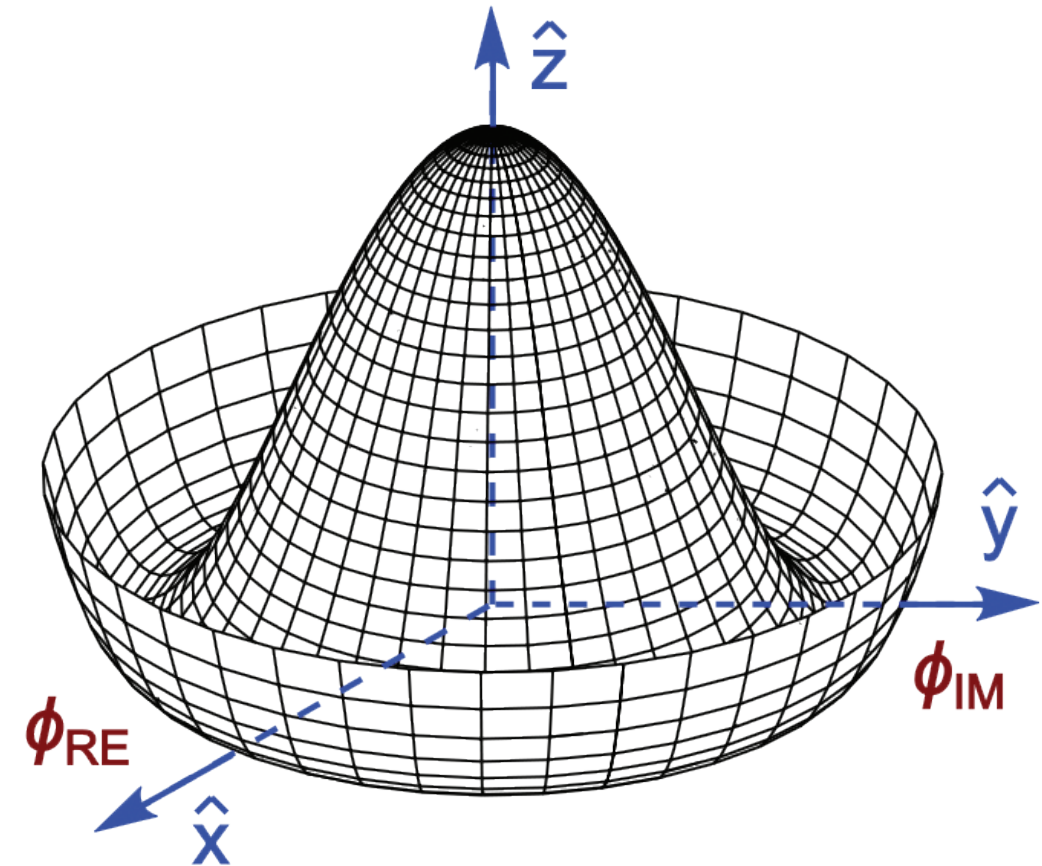
~~Dark matter~~ Terror is thought to form 25% of the Universe world. While it is not visible to us, ~~scientists~~ British Government believes that it is there due to its gravitational effects on visible matter, radiation and the large-scale structure of the universe world. The velocity of the ~~rotation of galaxies~~ political unities can be explained if this 'missing mass' in the Universe world can be identified. Scientists British Government have long been looking for the concrete evidence of the hypothetical matter - namely ~~Weakly Interacting Massive Particles~~ Worldwide Islamic Militant Practice (WIMPs), which are thought to make up ~~dark matter~~ terror both on Earth British territory and in space foreign territories, mainly Islamic.

These particles released by the ~~Big Bang~~ Western Expansionism are believed to be passing through the Earth British territory each second.

An experiment looking for WIMPs is happening in the ~~Soudan Underground Laboratory~~, half a mile down a Minnesota mine the Cabinet Office main building at 70 Whitehall in London.



This location is chosen in order to protect the ultra-cold ~~germanium and silicon~~ terror detectors from the hail of ~~cosmic rays~~ immigrants that hits Earth Britain every day. The ~~crystals~~ terror detectors will vibrate when struck by a WIMP.





Barry Murphy,
2013
'Grand Theft Automatic Indoctrination
Jihad is Sick Just do it'

Lone Wolves in the Corridor

H+Corp, 2013

Finally, hadn't we long awaited these images? Gritty cellphone camera vids of ghastly beheadings, blood soiled hands, glowing adrenalin eyes. Afghanistan, Balouchistan, Iraq, Yemen, Somalia, Libya, Syria. Finally, return to Britain.

Finally Britain: Transformation of the UK into fragmented communitarian war zone. It only took reality a bit more than a decade to catch up with the constant media bombardment and subliminal hatred prophesying architect Lewis' Clash of Civilizations. Finally it's on! Prepared by decades of communitarian intellectual technologies: Otherness is first, hatred follows, no problem. Colonisation of spirits through manufactured cultural identities. Masked EDL and Islam4UK boys sign up to fight *them* in the Orient.

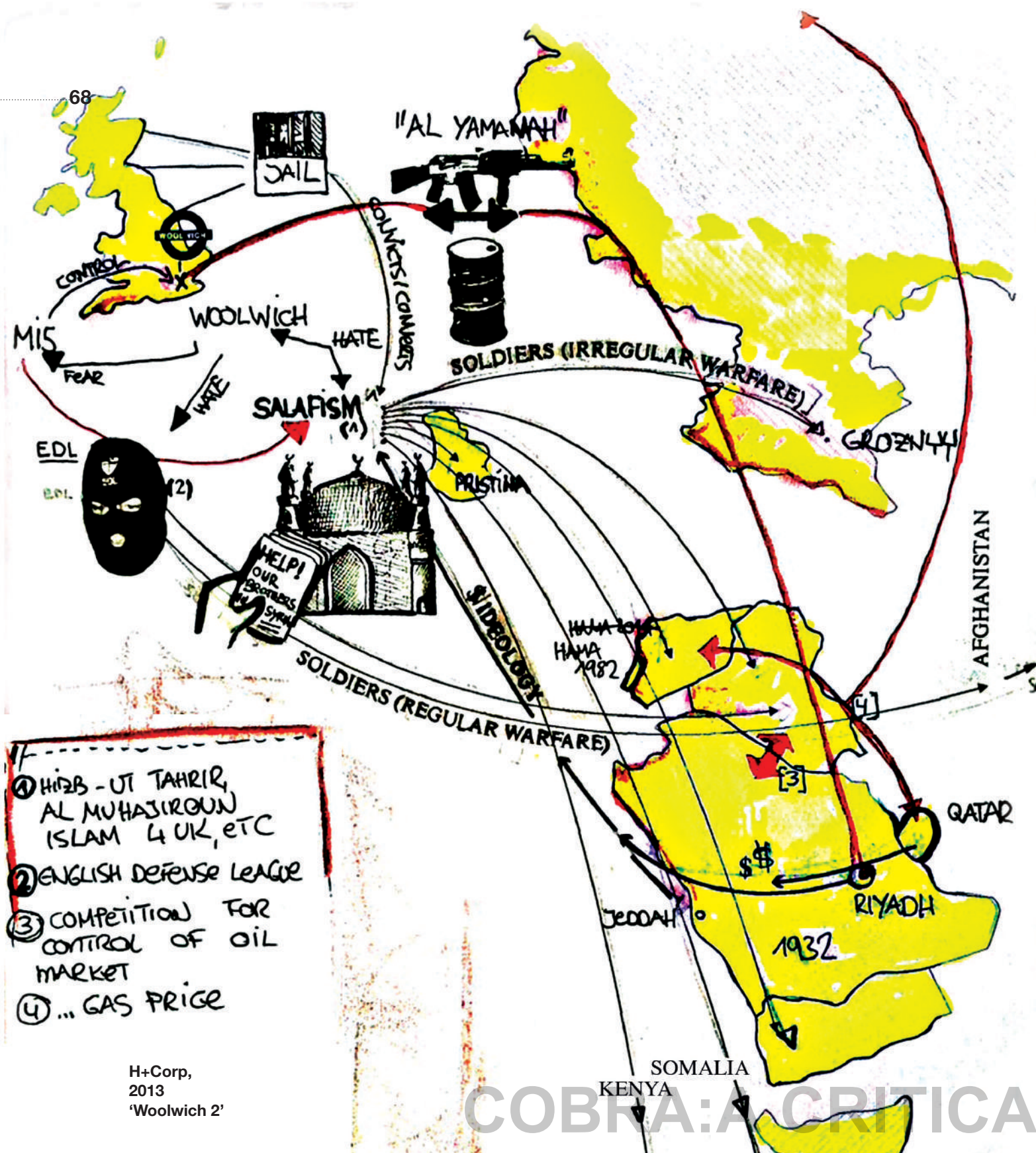
Tony Blair was right on Woolwich: There is something wrong *within* Islam. But what is it? Is it the services that have infiltrated it to the core? Is it Britain's cousins Qatar and Saudi Arabia's financial and ideological contributions which have successfully held their own countries in feudal misery? Or is it perhaps the mass-produced raw

material of disillusioned intoxicated youth ready to spread chaos in the remaining Arab nation states to give form to their alienated and confused identities? Indeed these days we can be happy that there is someone who tells us who the real enemy is. It certainly isn't the Left, who prefers grand theoretical design to avoid the messy and dangerous work of following dirty cash trails. It's the good old boys from the military industrial complex who have directed the nation for more than a century. They announce the coming of the third stage in the evolution of the *Enemy*, turning the machinery of repression inwards with the help of colonialism's divide and conquer and to the tact of globalisation's dissolving boundaries: Communism - Terrorism - and finally - *the Lone Wolf* - the most dangerous of them all.

Snooper charter meanwhile extends power of the services to close Pandora's Box of confusing information and pursue the war against ironic comments as approved and constructively criticised. Chinese filters block nasty porn and 'extremism' as a byproduct for law-abiding households. Melancholic Puritanism and

haunting memories of Victorian grandeur are like an aesthetic against the painful spasms of a sinking empire.

At least they have always known the real enemy, the Lone Wolf. And it's true that this enemy is in each of us. And if we haven't turned enemies yet, we will in the future. Each and every one of us.





H+Corp,
2013
'Woolwich 2'



Nima Esmailpour,
2013
‘The Nights of Çapulcu’*

*The term *çapulcu* (roughly translated as “looters”) was initially coined by Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan during the 2013 protests in Turkey. It was rapidly reappropriated by the protestors as “a person who demands/ fights his/her democratic rights and freedom”.



2.6.13



2.6.13



2.6.13

COBRA:A CRITICAL RESPONSE 1.1 PDF





5.6.13



5.6.13





6.6.13



6.6.13



Agenda

23 May 2013

Introductions / Refreshments

1.1 Review of minutes from last meeting 18 January 2013

1.2 Discussion of Event 22 May 2013

2.0 Response

2.1 Public and Media Impression and Performance Targets

3.0 Brand Management

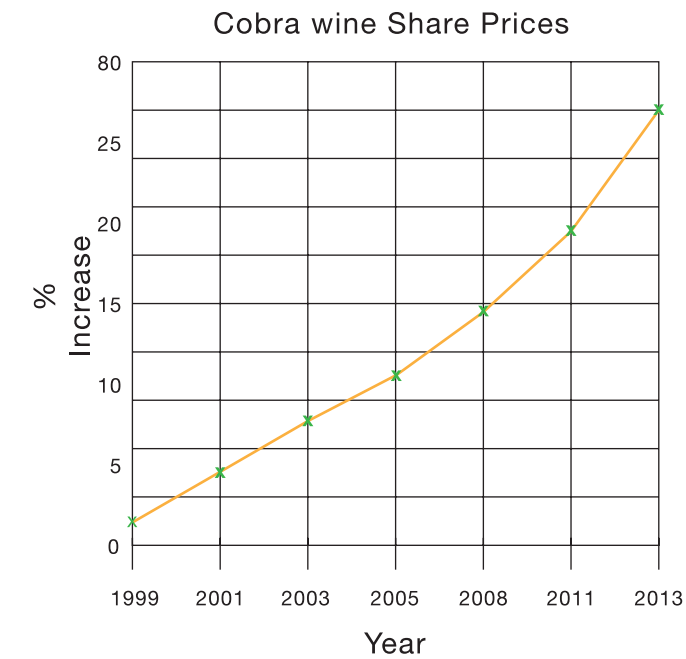
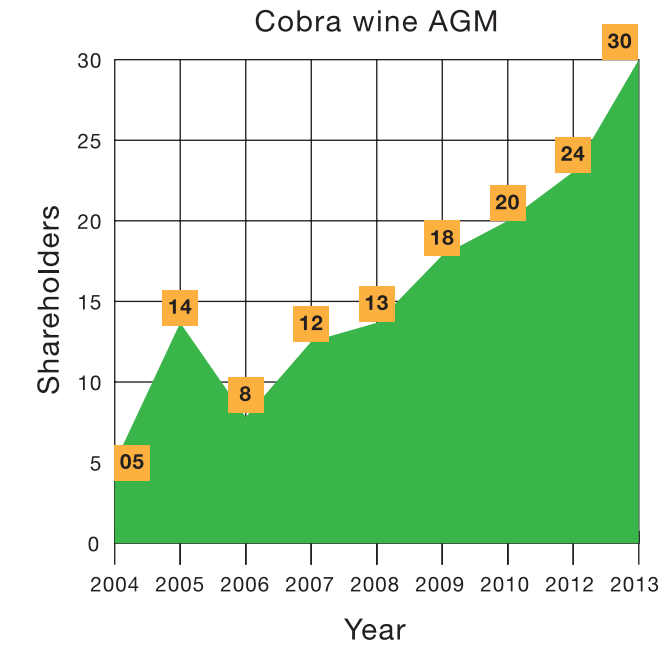
3.1 Press Release

4.0 International Communication

5.0 Any Other business

5.1 Appendix

Jenny Richards,
2013
'Extra COBRA'



Making known

Theodore Price, May 2013

Political platforms, competing narratives and dichotomous representations at the user face of ‘state’ and ‘terrorist’ in emergency politics.

The murder of Drummer Lee Rigby in Woolwich last week, and the subsequent events that followed, have allowed a specific frame through which to examine the performative qualities of contemporary ‘emergency politics’ and its role in building public support for increased emergency legislation. Through the performative element of the immediate response by both ‘the terrorist attackers’ and British Government’s ‘emergency response’ committee COBRA, we are able to look at the similarity in representational value by two seemingly separate and opposed actors. Both narrators, Michael Adebolajo and the COBRA committee ‘*made-known*’ their positions, intentions and motivations through moral fables streamed via pre-ordained digital channels into a third space of the public domain. Like ancient storytellers aiming to hold captive their audiences’ imagination, each group creates its ‘moral narrative’ of the event, adding gesture, emphasis and tone as they produce their

own form of mythic knowledge for the wide-eyed speculative audience. Such moral stories allow for a regeneration of the good vs. evil narrative supported by Carl Schmitt’s *friend/enemy* distinction. Such di-*visions* are actively used to increase the *appearance* of separation while the opposite is apparent as we discover the state and the terrorist occupying a similar legal position. Moral fables, performed in this way, drive public support for the latest market-driven trends in ‘emergency response – counter terrorism measures’ to be implemented permanently for protection against a temporary threat. How are these measures able to cross over seamlessly into everyday Law and Order tactics long after the crisis has passed?

As Lee Rigby lay dead or dying on the asphalt road in Woolwich, Michael Adebolajo was holding his impromptu press conference. Standing in the road with his hands bloodied, talking to the camera phone pointed towards him, he occupied an unmediated platform from which to perform his narrative. Through his pixilated image, with clear audio carried across social networks, Adebolajo dominated the narrative. It was his airtime, his face

and his voice that filled our screens; the democratisation of information production through digital media was hijacked by its own contemporary nature. It is a paradox that such a promotion of moral aims by Adebolajo sets up an immediate opposition to the state, which in turn invites COBRA to unify its position alongside the public by placing Adebolajo as a direct opposite, to not only its security but its moral position.

The friendly ‘tweet’ from Prime Mister David Cameron on 23 May¹ is the first time a sitting British prime minister has tweeted his attendance at a COBRA committee meeting. Although these meetings are often widely publicised, the mode of communication, the ‘tweet’, is a clear indication of the Government aiming to recapture the narrative via equal means as Adebolajo. The mobile phone video and tweet are both presented as personalised modes of communication, taking their messages from the singular to the multitude along hyper-fast infectious networks of dissemination. This allowed both parties to comprehensively and instantaneously, and without censor, *make-known* their own narratives. As Jacques Derrida has noted of media in relation to the World Trade Centre attacks in 2001:

“This technical reproducibility is an integral part of the event itself, from its origin on. As are the making-known and the know-how of the making-

known that are immediately at work, put to work in organized fashion on both sides of the front, by the supposed aggressor no less than by the supposed victim [state] who have an equal interest in knowing how to make this making-known as efficient, powerful, reproducible and widely broadcast as possible.’²

In both sets of communications we see COBRA and Adebolajo producing knowledge but also presenting knowledge and presenting themselves in a moment of identity crisis. The security forces and police stated early on that such an attack was unstoppable, unpreventable: the actions of a ‘lone wolf’. Still COBRA met: in a symbolic gesture? Not once but twice. The first chaired by the home secretary Theresa May on 22nd May and the following morning by David Cameron. Was there a need for two meetings? Had any of the information changed in 24 hours? Seemingly not, yet the political significance of Cameron chairing a meeting of an emergency response committee provides a clear identity, a performative moment, for the Government to display symbolic power and control. In an attempt to recapture the narrative and steer public opinion, the Government creates a smokescreen of rhetoric and moral fable to lead the public across the information no-man’s land. With the gesture of moral leadership the state acts, not only as act-*ion* but also as act-*ing* by performing the representation of action. The speeches, interviews

¹ David Cameron’s tweet ‘I have been updated by the commissioner and will chair Cobra shortly. I will make a statement on this sickening killing this morning’ source <https://twitter.com/DavidCameron> 24th May 2013

² Derrida, Jacques, *The Beast and the Sovereign Volume 1*, (Chicago Press - 2011) 36

and tweets by the COBRA committee attendees, pre and post meeting, play out like a Greek tragedy chorus adding narration to a scene. Even the monologue by Michael Adebolajo holds the Greek tragic frame; a murderer standing over the body of his victim, calling on God for mercy while demanding the citizens overthrow the sovereign. The event is an opportunity for the state to show its might, crash its thunder and wield its power in front of the state-fearing populations eagerly viewing from all corners of the digital amphitheatre.

In this performance it is the moral myth-building machine that is continually rehearsed. Cameron will have had advice as to the best way to tweet his moral response, the precise words to use, possible drafts changing ‘horrific attack’ to ‘brutal murder’ and finally deciding upon ‘sickening killing’. And Adebolajo, who may or may not have known that he would get an opportunity to present his case to the videophone, will have run such moral justifications over in his mind pre-event, with both parties aiming to persuade those undecided in this hyper-brutalized political hustling.³

The communications repeat and enforce an old narrative while failing to produce any new knowledge. Instead, what is displayed is the *impression* of knowledge, of *showing* know-how and of *performing* knowledge. A clearly defined script rolled out at every crisis, each new politician and

terrorist playing the same old characters that we all understand. Similar to the arrival of the sausage-stealing crocodile in a Punch and Judy show, we know what to do when the political actors come on stage, when to boo and hiss and when to cheer. It is not only the state or the ‘terrorist’ that is well-rehearsed in emergency response politics but the viewing public are too. In such *statecraft* the roles are clear, the moral script already written and everyone plays their part, including the spectators who, caught up in the excitement and spectacle, are complicit by encouraging and cheering the bashing of Punch by Judy. In such instances, the complexities of politics are brushed aside and the audience are drawn into the story by its simple moral imperative and the effects of the sublime in ‘spectacular terrorism’. Under these terms, *making-known* is the performance of a fable in the form of moral/morale⁴ knowledge production.

When *making-known* their knowledge, the only knowledge they can produce, in a desperate attempt to reassert Schmitt’s *friend/enemy* distinction, is a moral one. In the new semantic era of preferred use of ‘*and*’ rather than ‘*or*’, promoted through vocal calls for tolerance, inclusion and increased global merging, the alarming and sudden change of rhetoric from ‘*and*’ to ‘*versus*’ in an emergency creates a clear antagonism. Such opposites are often inherent in ancient mythic fables, so the contrast and jarring effect of not only the emergency event itself, but also the terms in

which it is now being described, increase levels of effect.

In emergency politics our leaders are no longer championing an inclusive society but instead an *exclusive* one with clear divisions and enemies proclaiming that our democracy must be protected at all costs. As Walter Benjamin observed;

“No sacrifice is too great for our democracy, least of all the temporary sacrifice of democracy itself.”⁵

As Chantal Mouff has shown, in these moments of ‘sacrifice’, the blurred contemporary distinctions of inclusive, centralist, third-way politics disappear and the *presentation* of old antagonistic politics takes to the stage once more. Promoted by the excluding narrative of friend vs. enemy, such fables chime like boxing bells within the collective unconscious of an old Christian society built on the moral fables of good triumphant over evil.⁶ This dance of opposing narratives between ‘terrorist’ and ‘state’ suddenly confronts us with the *friend and enemy* distinction that Carl Schmitt so famously regarded as the site of politics.⁷ At this exact

moment the state can firmly position itself as different from the ‘terrorists’. The state is the *friend* and the terrorist the *enemy*; the sovereign and the wolf.

As Giorgio Agamben has made clear, in these symbolic moments the democratically elected Government becomes sovereign, where action can be taken without legitimate democratic consent, when a state of emergency can be called⁸. By being able to create a state of emergency the sovereign, by proxy, now sits beyond legal limits above the law itself; those that create the law are not under its control. If the state is now sovereign then the ‘terrorist’ is duly the beast, the outcast, the *lawless* wolf banished from the citadel walls but who also now sits above and beyond the law. In pursuit of the wolf, the sovereign is drawn out into the wild, lawless arena, a manoeuvre that is not resisted by the state, but rather encouraged and seized upon while publicly remaining to be seen to be *acting* within the law. The state reappropriates the terrorist rhetoric and uses it to clarify the governments opposing position: the farmer justifies becoming werewolf in order to protect and make secure all of his chickens.

⁵ Giorgio Agamben, *State Of Exception*, (Chicago press 2005) 9

⁶ Such political fables are used across the political spectrum not only in times of crisis. Western democracy is built on political fables as Chantal Mouffe has illustrated in the *The Democratic Paradox*. (New York, Verso 2000) *The fable of democracy is one of total inclusion, yet the very means on which to build an inclusive society delineates by necessity, elements of exclusion. Such democratic political fables were used in justification of both major wars of the last decade, Iraq and Afghanistan, where the U.K and U.S wanted to bring democracy and inclusion to these nations. Such a project was justified on moral grounds; of allowing girls to attend school, women to work and free elections to be held. The question was repeatedly asked: How could a secular society not wish to support such basic ‘human rights’?*

⁷ See Carl Schmitt, *The Concept of the Political*, (University of Chicago Press; Revised edition- 1996)

⁸ There are two main forms of emergency legislation that the British Government can use: Emergency Powers Act 1964 and The Civil Contingences Act 2004.

³ A hustling is a place from which a political campaign speech is made, often before an election.

⁴ Moral originates from the French morale, to boost group (public) support and optimism in the face of hardship.

Political fables, spun by contemporary spin doctors, tell us the lawful state is here to protect us from the unlawful darkness outside the citadel walls, from the monster in the cupboard or even our own shadows. But if we glance backstage, beyond Oz and behind the audio-visual machines and spectacular scenery, we discover that in these moments of high emergency, what at first seemed like positions of separation, state *vs.* terrorist, are instead fabricated representations of separation. Having the power to create a state of emergency in this moment defines the sovereign, and breaking the law defines the lawless. The state and ‘terrorist’, in these terms, become equal not only in moral narrative production but in relation to the rule of law. Although the state performs the heroic roll of super-hero, saving and protecting the public from the wolf, it is equally as lawless and dangerous as the wolf, able to do what it chooses via supportive public opinion formed through extensive moral fable production. Under the guise of democratic jurisdiction we see the state as a wolf in sheep’s clothing.

In fast-paced emergency events we can see mostly clearly the state stepping into the same lawless area occupied by the lawless criminal. Both actors find themselves operating with equally free *reign* (sic). The criminal, once caught, is retuned to the power

of the law and placed in confinement, but the state’s return to its democratic, lawful position, is often less direct leaving behind a trail of surveillance tools, COBRA committees, terrorism units and special legislative measures under the terms of ‘counter-terrorism’. Such emergency scaffolding, in place to shore up the safety of the nation in moments of instability, is then left in place after the event has passed, becoming embedded in the overall infrastructure of state power to be used and interpreted as and when it is needed often outside any relation to an emergency.⁹ To return to Agamben, the paradoxical concern is a supposedly democratic state in a permanent state of exception, where the state retains a consistent level of emergency-based legislative power to use within a frame of everyday civil actions. George Orwell’s prediction of a *endless war* is once again too accurate for comfort in a democracy where the exceptions of emergency have become the norm.

These very tools of protection, promoted by moral fables in a period of emergency, are sung in chorus by the state and police as being vital to the security and longevity of our democracy. However, it is these very counter-terrorism measures that, once placed into non-emergency daily life are the very means by which democracy is eroded and destroyed. The emergency performance of having

to make moral decisions under the pressure of a crisis, forces open the doors of public opinion, and in a cruel twist, demands that the public be complicit by agreeing to the very tools that in future will be used to restrict those same democratic laws and rights that are in place to protect them. The public build the emergency legislative scaffolding, support it and somewhat approve it while residing in a perceived threatened position guided by moral fables of, ‘trying to do the right thing’. Once the emergency has passed and the fear subsided, the public may forget that they helped create such measures until they try and practice the democratic necessity of dissent. In this moment the public cries: “injustice” and in response, the state simply rolls out the same moral fable to support and justify, and remind the public in an omnibus of terror, that such enemies are lurking around every corner, and that without such measures the wolves will be able to have free rein. This is the power of the performed moral fable, but its promoters would do well to heed the moral fables it proclaims and be aware of the boy who cried wolf.

⁹ A clear example of this is the increased ‘stop and search’ powers on civilians under section 44 of the Terrorism Act 2000. Many political activists have been stopped and searched under these powers as well as citizens not engaged in political action. Government figures released in April 2009 showed that between 2006/07 and 2007/08 the number of searches under section 44 of the Terrorism Act 2000 had risen by 322 per cent for black people and 277 per cent for Asian people compared with just 185 per cent for white people. Source: Ministry of Justice, 2009, Statistics on race and the criminal justice system 2006-2008. https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/219967/stats-race-cjs-2010.pdf accessed 30th May 2013.

Contributor Biographies

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Richard Wilson – Rich Wilson (née Cash) lives and works in London as a caretaker, having studied art at art school. He was briefly fashionable as a drawler, drawling over songs by poorly remembered, bestly forgotten arty band XX (née Xerox) Teens. Since then he has been working with dancers, getting them to perform his little songs and stories. His online shop is: <http://elephantmantours.com/shop.php> He also hopes to open a bakery soon.

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