



SOCIAL MEDIA AND REVOLUTIONS

IMAGINED COMMUNITIES AND POLITICAL ACTION

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ARAB SPRING, OCCUPY MOVEMENTS, FERGUSON
CAN SOCIAL MEDIA
CAUSE REVOLUTIONS?



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SLACTIVISM, CLICTIVISM, "FEEL GOOD" ACTIVISM, IGNORES SURVEILLANCE

NO?



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MEDIA AND CREATING COMMUNITIES

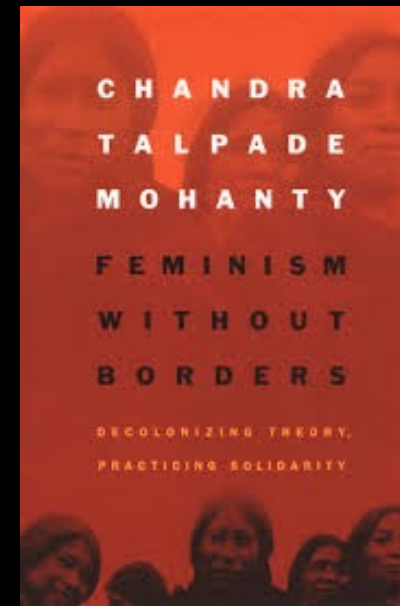
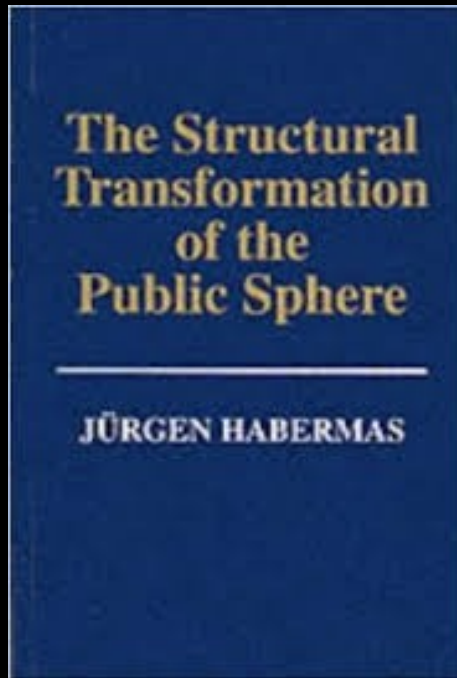


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IMAGINED COMMUNITIES

- Benedict Anderson's Imagined Communities
- Critics of social media have paid insufficient attention to the affordances of a community created by the medium
- Networked public sphere = next battleground

IMAGINED COMMUNITY & THE NETWORKED PUBLIC SPHERE



ANDERSON

- print capitalism -> nationalism
- Walter Benjamin's "homogenous, empty time" vs. "simultaneous, messianic time"
- Prior to print capitalism—anachronism irrelevant
- Anderson: "...the medieval Christian mind had no conception of history as an endless cause and effect or of separations between past and present."

NOLI ME TANGERE

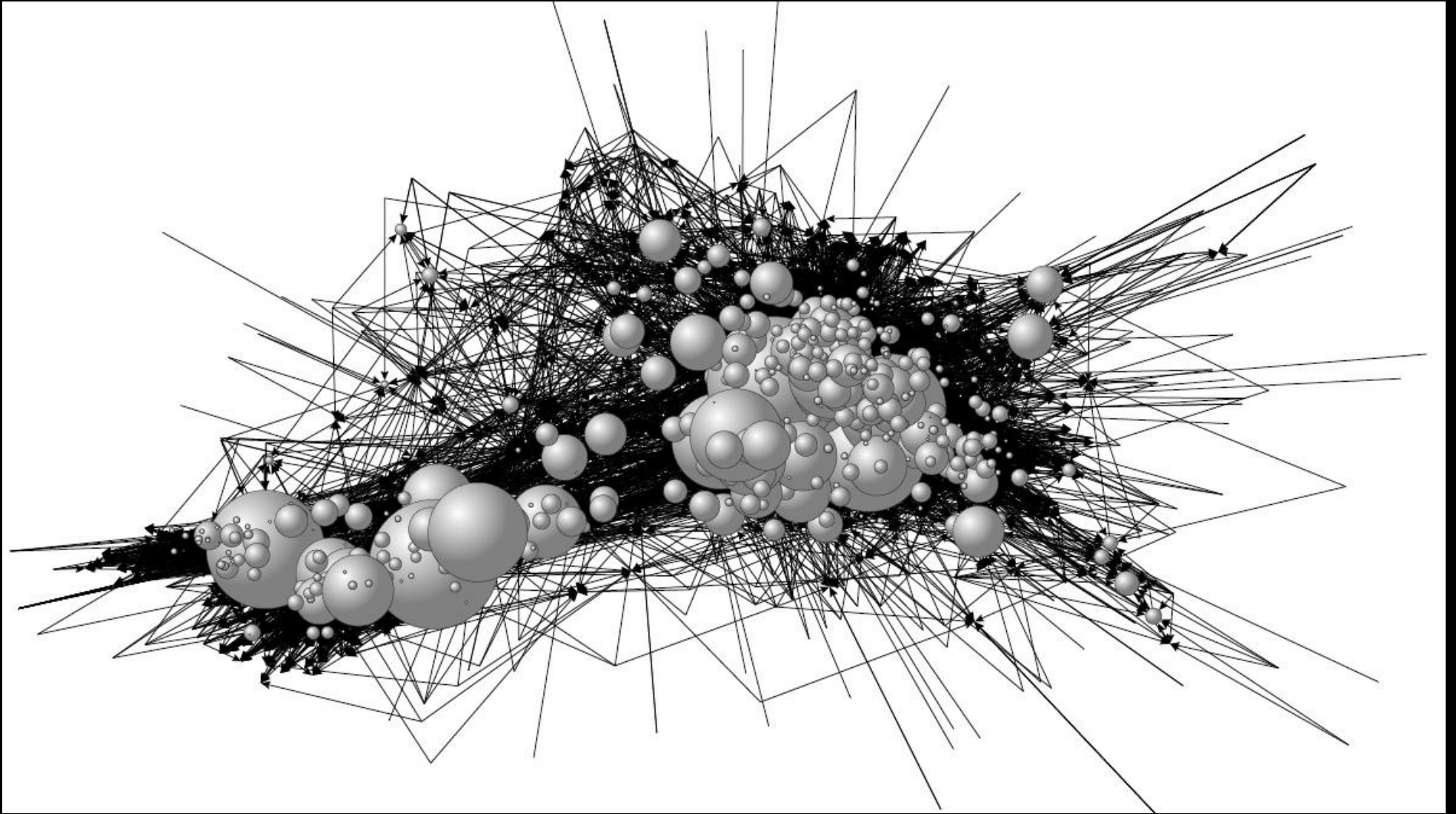
STORY OF FLORANTE & LAURA IN THE KINGDOM OF ALBANIA

- José Rizal, Father of Filipino nationalism
 - “a dinner party being discussed by hundreds of unnamed people, who do not know each other, in quite different parts of Manila, in a particular month of a particular decade”
- Francisco Balagtas
 - Does not follow chronological order, begins in medias res
 - simultaneous pasts created through covering voices of characters

PRINT-CAPITALISM TIME

- Imagined Community: “hypnotic confirmation of a single community, embracing authors and readers, moving onwards through calendrical time”
- “...the idea of a sociological organism moving calendrically through homogenous, empty time is a precise analogue of the idea of a nation, which is conceived of a solid community moving steadily down (or up) history.”

THE NETWORKED PUBLIC SPHERE



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FOCUS ON PRODUCERS NOT CONSUMERS

NETWORKED COMMUNITY



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NEW CONNECTIONS

IMAGINED COMMONALITY



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NETWORKED PUBLIC SPHERE

- New 'mediascapes' / 'ideoscapes' (Appadurai)
- Asynchronous communities
- New modes and node for identification and community



SOCIAL MEDIA AS SPECTACLE: A RETURN TO MARX

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CRITIQUES OF SOCIAL MEDIA

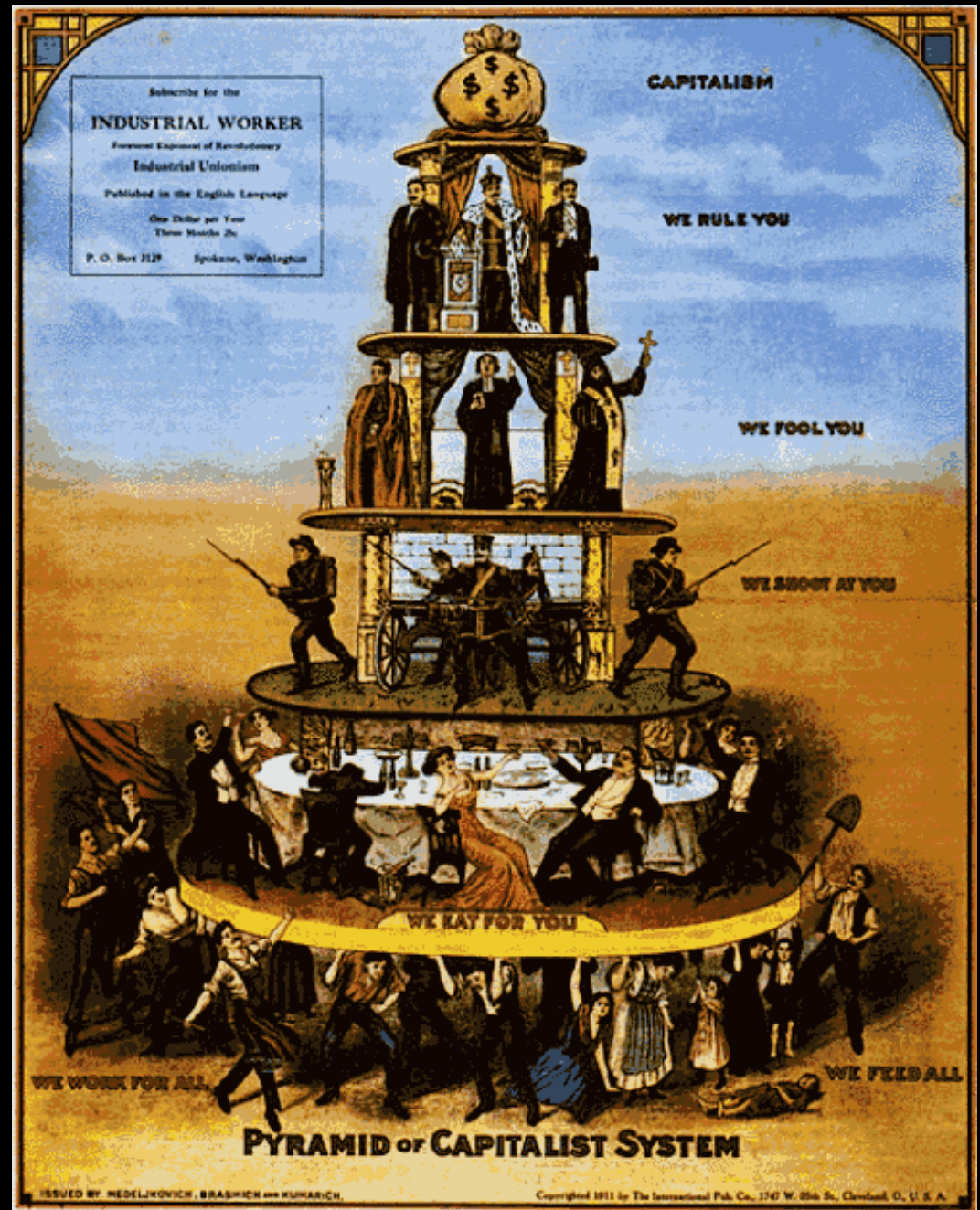
- Focus on tools & the discursive sphere
- Brea / White "clicktivism" ; Morozov, "slactivism"

PARALLELS IN THE HISTORY OF MARXISM

- Counterinformation conference, Amsterdam 1999
- Eastern European movements—“changing the system”
- Western Europe—“media tactics”
- Roots in Debord; media as Spectacle

MARX

- “material” over “ideological”
- even found in Marx’s notion of commodity fetishism



YET

- The importance of who controls *information* is as important as who controls the *mode of production*
- “manufacture of consent” —> Chomsky
- Said: “from travelers’ tales... colonies were created”

WESTERN MARXISM



- Focus on "alienation"
- Adorno & Horkheimer's "Culture Industry"
- oppositional forms of cinema: Third Cinema vs. First Cinema

SOCIAL MEDIA/CINEMA

- Some uses of social media = some uses of Third Cinema?
- Different media to break through different types of alienation

CAVEATS

- Cooptation of activist platforms beyond the state, e.g. "Operation Lollipop"
- misinformation
- Data-mining by the state/ surveillance



FINALLY:

- Social media does not cause revolutions.
- It affords us a political space from which potentially revolutionary communities can come into being.
- We need to pay attention to social media & the community beyond the nation
- The battleground for hearts and minds—no longer print, but the networked public sphere.

- Image Credits
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