



The Lennon Wall of Hong Kong: A Political and Aesthetic Reflection

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Abstract. In Hong Kong, 2019, during the Anti-Extradition Movement in which the Hong Kongers protested against the controversial proposal of the extradition law by the government, people began to stick notes, posters, photographs, and other visual objects onto walls and façades in common places like tunnels, bridges, flyovers and shopping malls all around Hong Kong. On these walls, one can see news regarding the protest, words of encouragement, voices against the government and even artefacts whose goal is to stir the emotion of the people. Such an artistic-activist movement borrows the concept of the “John Lennon Wall” emerged in Prague during the 1980s, and thus, this collective of walls as well as other public spaces where such a concept is materialised bears the name the Lennon Wall of Hong Kong. By analysing the case of the Lennon Wall in Hong Kong, this project looks into one of the notions resonating the idea of democracy: that of commons and “commoning”. Also reflecting on Jacques Rancière’s understanding of politics and aesthetics, this paper explores the following question: *How the Hong Kongers articulated their voices through the Lennon Wall in a political movement?* I will take into account the societal background of Hong Kong, the features, as well as the development of the Lennon Wall. The outcomes of this artistic-activist initiative and the political movement also reveal possible challenges of any politically-charged common, which, in turn, allows us to re-think democracy through commoning.

Keywords: Aesthetics, Common, The Lennon Wall, Politics.

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INTRODUCTION

In 2014, the Hong Kong Umbrella Movement arose, sparked by the intervention of the National People's Congress Standing Committee of China, who set a restraining election framework for both the Chief Executive and the Legislative Council. A large number of Hong Kongers went on streets, gathered, protested, and finally occupied two sites in Hong Kong, namely Causeway Bay and Mong Kok, to show the resistance against the Chinese intercession and discontent for the pro-Beijing Hong Kong government. In September, hoping to induce conversation with the government as well as among the protestors, a few activists pasted the first post-it notes with citizens' reasons of joining the protest onto the wall circulating the Central Government Complex, and later onto the inner wall above the staircase leading to the Central Government Office (Valjakka, 2019). Such an activity — pasting the Hong Konger's voices onto this wall — spread quickly: a “Memo Wall” became a “Lennon Wall” (連儂牆), as it resembled the “John Lennon Wall” in Prague, created by a group of Czech youth in the 1980s to commemorate the deceased artist by painting graffiti, and subsequently turned into a site of advocacy for resistance against the neo-Stalinist government (Valjakka, 2019; Kruse II, 2005). Nonetheless, as the Umbrella Movement ended after about eleven weeks, this Lennon Wall was also torn down by the Hong Kong police.

In June 2019, the Hong Kongers launched a new wave of demonstrations and civil disobedience actions, protesting against the government's controversial proposal of extradition law. Such a wave thus received the name Anti-Extradition Movement. Concurrently, the concept of the Lennon Wall re-emerged: this time it did not exist in one place and one form any more, but spread all over in Hong Kong, occupying walls and façades in common places like tunnels, bridges, flyovers and shopping malls — it is no longer constituted only by a piece of wall, but also comprises of “Lennon Tunnels” (連儂隧道), “Lennon Pedestrians Footbridges” (連儂天橋), etc. Not only post-it notes were seen, but posters, banners, flags, photographs, and other visual objects. In these areas, one can see news regarding the protest, words of encouragement, voices against the government and even artefacts whose goal is to stir the emotion of the people. The Lennon Wall, thus, is the collective term of the spaces where these artistic-activist installations are placed. Some of these spaces were so beautifully established and maintained, that artists from other parts of the world, like Taiwan, Japan, Czechia and France, were encouraged to curate similar and parallel initiatives to support the Hong Kong's political movement (Crossing, 2019; The New Lens, 2020).



Figure 1: A Lennon Wall in Central, close by the the Central Government Complex. Photo: Alex Hon.

The case of the Lennon Wall of Hong Kong is significant in a few ways. First, this artistic-activist initiative was supported by many Hong Kongers, regardless of age, profession, ethnic groups, or whether you are passionate about the Anti-Extradition Movement or not. Second, no single group of specific activists/organisers maintained the state of the walls, but the participating Hong Kongers themselves. Third, this artistic movement became exemplary for activists in other places, while the Lennon Wall of Hong Kong also became one of the symbols from which the world knew about the political movement happening in Hong Kong. Therefore, the examination of this case will doubtlessly provide us with relevant insights about the relation of political movement and artistic activism.

Specifically, this paper explores how the Hong Kongers articulated their voices through artistic means within a political movement. To present the discourse clearly, I will first illustrate the features of the Lennon Wall more in-depth, and relate our case with the concepts of “commons”. In the second chapter, I will speculate the political and aesthetic characteristics of the Lennon Wall, by referring to Rancière’s opus *Dissensus: On Politics and Aesthetics*. I will also look into how this artistic movement and its parallel political movement are intertwined. Finally, I will examine the outcomes of this movement, be reflecting once again on the ideas of commons and politics.

COMMONING THE HONG KONGERS’ VOICES

As aforementioned, one outstanding feature of the initiative of the Lennon Wall is that there was not a single organisation behind the whole artistic-activist movement collecting

participants' voices, controlling which visual objects should be put in which place, maintaining or surveilling the state of the spaces, but the participating Hong Kongers themselves. Simultaneously, the Hong Kongers also devised varied forms and ways to visualise their confrontation against the government: from the pixel-like post-it notes to vivid posters; from words of encouragement to anonymous poems and philosophical quotes; from photos of the protests to parodies of the governmental officials; from original paintings to secondary creations; from a visual installation of thousands of origami cranes to improvised altars to commemorate those who died in the movement. These walls, these tunnels, et cetera, exceed the mere meaning of a public area. And these spaces, I argue, have turned into the platforms, the podia, the scenes, where the participating Hong Kongers can “common” their voices, emotions and aspirations, and act out their resistance against the government.



Figure 2: A corner at a certain Lennon Pedestrians Footbridge, where the one of the mascots of the Anti-Extradition Movement, the LIHKG Pig, is turned into origami with different words of encouragement. Photo: Alex Hon.

How can the Hong Kongers “common”? What are the “commons” actually at stake? Before delving into these questions, it is useful to first clarify what “commons” are. Traditionally, and in the broadest sense, commons are resources that are shared by people, thus we talk about a “common pool of resources” like fisheries, forests, land and water (International Association for the Study of the Commons, 2020). Commons also entail resources that “we inherit jointly and freely, and hold in trust for future generations” (Hodkinson, 2016: p.283). There are, thus, commons in other domains, both tangible and intangible, such as knowledge commons, cultural commons and urban commons (Fournier, 2013; International Association for the Study of the Commons, 2020). To illustrate, for instance, “urban commons” entail the sharing of a local street or a set of neighbourhood

amenities (*idem*); while music and creative skills can fall under “cultural commons”. This list, nevertheless, is not exhaustive, while new commons would emerge over time. Also to be noted is that these commons are not subjected to state’s control, but are governed by the people who share these resources. In other words, a group of commoners would need to “define for themselves the rules according to which they [the resources] are accessed and used.” (de Angelis, 2010: p.2) I argue that the emergence of the Lennon Wall in Hong Kong is a significant if not exemplary case of commons. I will base my argument following Massimo de Angelis’ conception of the commons.

De Angelis argues that the conceptualisation of commons includes three things simultaneously. First, “all commons involve some sort of common pool of resources, understood as non-commodified means of fulfilling peoples needs” (de Angelis, 2010: p.2). In other words, commons, in an anti-neoliberal sense, entail resources and materials whose values are not evaluated in the market, but justified by the community of users based on their own ideas and rules on how these commons are harnessed. On a Lennon Wall, inside a Lennon Tunnel, one can see different sorts of material (blank post-it notes, writing tools, stickers, handbills) and immaterial resources (as a reflecting space, as a photogenic backdrop, as a collective of shared ideas and ideology), whose values as mere commodities are replaced by another type of value, however abstract it may be — a value given by the participating Hong Kongers only when they utter cheering words on a post-it note and paste it onto the Wall, a value that only exists when an elderly can know more about what is happening in the protest when he stops by an information board and reads the news of the Anti-Extradition Movement, a value that only emerges when card boxes and boards were arranged by the activists to become an artefact.

Second, de Angelis points out that “the commons are necessarily created and sustained by communities” (de Angelis, 2010: p.2). Commons, to be sure, would also face declination and other uncertainty if not maintained by the members of the community (Santagata et al., 2011). Upon talking with individuals who have participated in the movement, they said that they would “sit around a Lennon Wall when they had time”, “read through the poster, write a note and contribute a ‘pixel’ to the whole wall”, or “help to fix parts of the collage if they fell apart when they passed through a Lennon Tunnel”. While everyone could contribute a part to the Lennon Wall, everyone could also protect, upkeep and repair the Lennon Wall whenever they felt responsible. Besides, the activists also made use of the cyber world and created a “Lennon Wall Map” with the “My Maps” function on Google, where there was information

about where you could find a Lennon Wall/ Lennon Tunnel, and where one could find the most updated photos of that piece of wall, as well as information regarding its current status. (Figure 2) Facebook, Instagram and Twitter are just three of the many social online platforms where participants in this movement could share the actuality of the Lennon Wall. In short, from all these observations, it can be seen that the Hong Kongers — at least those who were very much into the political movement — actively took up the responsibility, and saw that as their own duty, to maintain the space, physical and virtual, revolving around the Lennon Wall.

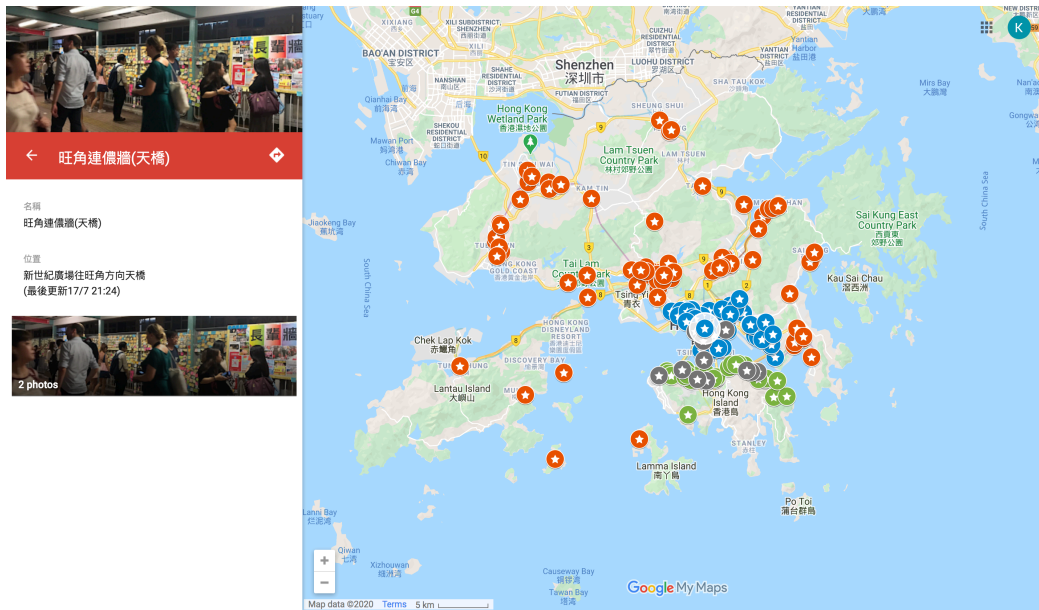


Figure 3: Lennon Wall Map on Google Maps. Screen captured from <https://www.google.com/maps/d/u/0/viewer?mid=1uGqynlkWVRvvtVr-e1-7vOUbpqFvcDvP&ll=22.339016084416567%2C114.14551538706392&z=11>.

Finally, and also most importantly, it comes to the action: “to common”. “Commoning” does not only entail reproducing and creating the commons, but also describe how the community takes their common matter into their own hands. De Angelis stresses that the community’s rights to their corresponding commons should not be seen as “granted” by a higher authority, but as “de facto” rights acknowledged by every member of the community (de Angelis, 2010: p.3). As disclosed in the earlier paragraph, there are self-initiated platforms and forums where people can share the information about different locations of the Lennon Wall. Those who were devoted to this movement would also spontaneously guard the Walls, refill the handbills, post-it notes, pens and markers as well as repair the artefacts. On the other hand, there were also people keeping on producing new posters, information boards, banners and even murals, parallel to the Anti-Extradition Movement, to keep those who would look at them updated as well as to provide such an artistic-activist movement with inertia. There are

also news and reports that show how some of the activists have confronted, pacifically or with violence, with other individuals who were being disrespectful to the Lennon Wall (Siu, 2020). A community relating to the Lennon Wall, thus, exists, both on the virtual and in the actual world. Such a community also defines their own rules and logic of the Lennon Wall, claiming the managing of the affairs revolving the Lennon Wall their own rights.

The Lennon Wall, as I have striven to show, is where Hong Kongers the commoners — activists and those who support the Anti-Extradition Movement, common their stance and voice, guard their common ground, while, at the same time, collectively sustaining their commons. In the case of the Lennon Wall, I assert, not only one common could be identified, but several, depending on the domains of commons. It is a cultural common, where participants contributed to the aesthetic dimension of the spaces, at the same time being able to demonstrate freely their ideas and thoughts; it is an urban common, where activists intentionally “claimed” the public areas and governed these spaces regardless of authoritarian and non-supporters’ challenges; it is, in an abstract term, also a mental common, where the participating Hong Kongers expressed, shared, sustained and guarded their values and resistance, which in turn were materialised and supported by their continual contribution to the Lennon Wall.

By being identified as a common with self-governance, the Lennon Wall is also immediately identified with a label of resistance - a movement opposing the normal logic of being ruled. As I will argue in the following paragraphs, it is particularly its attempt to suspend the normal societal logic and the capitalist values of materials, and to anticipate an alternative way of governing and being governed that gives the Lennon Wall its *political* meaning.

THE POLITICS AND AESTHETICS OF THE LENNON WALL

Arts and Politics. These two seemingly separated domains have actually one intertwining thought, which, according to Rancière, links the two together. He understands “art and politics as singular and wholly contingent egalitarian practices that fracture the rules governing ‘normal’ experience” (Rancière & Corcoran, 2010: p.3). “Normal” experience, to him, also means the “sensible” experience. In Rancière’s exegesis, “the sensible” are those whose voices are heard and whose faces are seen. Policies, therefore, aim at partitioning the sensible — “revealing who can have a share in what is common to the community based on what they do and on the time and space in which this activity is performed”, categorising and controlling the sensible according to corresponding groups (Rancière, 2004: p.13; Rancière et al., 2001: p.10).

Therefore, the governance from an authority would wish to organise and control the people according to a regime that is sound and convenient to the authority, at the same time rendering the people subservient to the regime. In organising — partitioning the people, such a regime would simultaneously include the sensible and exclude the “insensible” — the *part of those who have no part*, in Rancière’s term (2001: p.6) — who have *no part* as being sensible, whose voices and stances are obscured. Artistic and political movements, therefore, can suspend, rupture and intervene in such a distribution of the sensible. Arts and politics, thus, are as such because those who have no stance and whose voices are not heard make their own stance and speak up their voices in an artistic and political action (Rancière & Corcoran, 2010).²

Now that arts and politics are two realisations of the same principle, what is then the relationship between something *aesthetic* and something *political*? According to Rancière, aesthetics and politics are actually closely related. The French philosopher first understands “aesthetic practices” as follows:

[A]esthetic practices ... [are] forms of visibility that disclose artistic practices, the place they occupy, what they ‘do’ or ‘make’ *from the standpoint of what is common to the community* [emphasis added]...are ‘ways of doing and making’ that *intervene* [emphasis added] in the general distribution of ways of doing and making as well as in the relationships they maintain to modes of being and forms of visibility (Rancière, 2004: p.13).

Therefore, aesthetics accentuate a bottom-up movement, one that is initiated by the people (contrary to the authority). Aesthetics also call for a disjunction, a discontinuity in normal experiences. Combining the two points, aesthetic practices signify a democratic idea that will always attempt to revise and review the everyday way of life and logic of living, that will always try to resist established rules and laws. Thus, in terms of artistic action, the aesthetics behind “free it from any specific rule, from any hierarchy of the arts, subject matter, and genres” (Rancière, 2004: p.23). Aesthetics suspend the relations between materials and products, and between the production of art forms and their specific social functions. In the same vein, aesthetics disregard the normal, commodified values of any object — rupturing the “general distribution of ways of doing and making”(Rancière, 2004: p.13), and anticipate a revision or transcendence of such an object into something significant “from the standpoint of

² Steve Corcoran, the editor from the book *Dissensus: On Politics and Aesthetics*, clearly summarises that “politics...breaks with the distribution of territories and competences, with consensual interpretations of facts, with the anticipation of forms of political power from the ‘self-evidence’ of social forms....Similarly, art first emerged as an egalitarian suspension of the hierarchical modes of representation...” (Rancière & Corcoran, 2010: p.3)

what is common” to a community (idem). To put it further, in redefining what we can perceive, aesthetic practices also let us rethink how we perceive the world: it entails a sense of *aisthesis*, “an autonomous regime of experience that is not reducible to logic, reason or morality” (Bishop, 2012: p.18). It produces a *sensorium*, wherein our senses are reframed, the forms are ruptured and our bodily experience is redefined (Rancière & Corcoran, 2010). This, eventually, is what makes “[t]he aesthetic regime of the arts stands in contrast with the representative regime” (Rancière, 2004: p.22).

“Politics”, on the other hand, which is less abstract comparably, re-configures our spaces:

The essence of politics is dissensus. Dissensus is not the confrontation between interests or opinions. It is the manifestation of a distance of the sensible from itself. Politics makes visible that which had no reason to be seen, it lodges one world into another (Rancière et al., 2001: p.10).

“Dissensus” is the core of politics as understood by Rancière. Politics, therefore, disrupt the consensual understanding of governance — the established, the fixated and the normal ways of governing and being governed. Political actions, accordingly, first demand opposition from the people against the authority. They intervene in the partitioning of the sensible and the hierarchy of society, and therefore, they call for hearing the unheard and seeing the unseen.

So close and related as they seem to be, aesthetics and politics, according to Rancière, can co-exist in one movement, one action. I argue that the Lennon Wall is such a realisation of both ideas. As I have shown in the last chapter, material and immaterial objects have been used by the participating Hong Kongers and have been turned into de-commodified commons, with which they commoned their stance. And there is an aesthetic dimension in such commoning. Specifically, they created a fabric of common experience using new modes of common objects, being first ruptured from their “normal” meanings and usage (Think of how a card box has ceased to be one when it assumed a part in an improvised altar). The Lennon Wall brings out possibilities of “subjective enunciation”, which suspends the normal distribution of materials and objects (Rancière & Corcoran, 2010: p.133, 150), and where “normal” objects can be turned into something significant from the point of the views of the participating Hong Kongers. The Lennon Wall, as a common, provides the Hong Kongers with a sensorium, where they could encounter alternatives to express their alternative thoughts and new ways of seeing things, and where a re-definition of society was anticipated.

In breaking the normal senses and reframing normal objects, the Lennon Wall then also makes its political dimension explicit. Through the creation of a wall full of cheering words and voices of resistance, Hong Kongers have made a noise normally unheard of. Through the

creation of allegorical murals, activist artists made the unseen unity of the Hong Kongers and the political violence seen. The relationship between Hong Kongers and a normal public space is also questioned, negotiated, and acquires a new meaning when, for example, a tunnel becomes a space of resistance, an alter of encouragement and a podium of free expression. Linking back to the notion of commons, the moment when a normal object starts to abandon its commodified or everyday value and let its alternative meaning be seen is the moment when the object acquires its political meaning. In sum, politics arise when we “make the invisible visible or to question the self-evidence of the visible” and when we “rupture given relates between things and meanings” (Rancière & Corcoran, 2010: p.149).



Figure 4: A “Lennon Telephone booth”, where news, the slogans for the Anti-Extradition Movement, posters and bunches of flowers (for those who died or were injured in the Movement) are amalgamated, shedding the “normal” use of a telephone booth and gaining a value commoned by the Hong Kongers who continually transformed it. Photo: Alex Hon.

These aesthetic and political dimensions are not only just perceived in the Lennon Wall, but are also pronounced in its parallel Anti-Extradition Movement. Protestors being mobilised to protest, authority being challenged, youths shouting out their demands and the others requesting a reform are but a few of the most apparent reasons the Movement is a political one. When, during the Movement, the ordinary societal fabric was suspended and a new form of society was anticipated; when the relation between the government and the governed was ruptured and redefined; when a re-assessment of the distribution of the sensible was needed and demanded, is the aesthetic side of the Movement identified. Thus, the Lennon Wall and the Anti-Extradition Movement, one artistic movement and one political movement, possess both aesthetics and politics in their configurations.

CONCLUSION

To summarise my arguments, as I have attempted to show, the Lennon Wall is a sensorium where the Hong Kongers commoned their voices and stance. A common pool of resources, a community and the action of commoning are vividly seen in the case of the Lennon Wall. Therefore, I contend that the Lennon Wall fulfils what de Angelis has highlighted to be a common. Through the process of commoning, the Lennon Wall has also acquired its political traits, where the Hong Kongers rupture the normal logic of objects and gave them new meanings, and where they intervene in the normal logic of governance and anticipated a re-assessment of the distribution of sensible. I assert that such a “rupture” is seen on multiple levels. First, the Lennon Wall sees a rupture in information, where normally concealed messages, censored news are exposed, and where what people normally do not think as important is exaggerated and revealed. All of this can be seen in the abundant examples of post-it notes, news, reports, posters and banners being hanged in the Lennon Wall. In addition, an urban rupture is also demonstrated where the Hong Kongers claim different public spaces and turn them into the Lennon Wall. Through such intervening and reclaiming of spaces, the Hong Kongers express their voices and ideas usually unheard of. This links to a third facet of rupture: one in governance. By negotiating their public spaces and exposing their voices, the Hong Kongers attempt to intervene in the normal top-down approach of governing the people, and questioning the logic of the distribution of sensible. The Lennon Wall, thus becomes a podium where the Hong Kongers’ resistance is demonstrated, common values are guarded and the Hong Kongers themselves are emancipated. All these aspects ultimately leads to an aesthetic rupture. Starting from the activists turning normal and banal objects into artistic installations, Hong Kongers exposing their unspoken ideas and thoughts and spaces being re-used, the Lennon Wall becomes an aggregation of different elements which rupture the “normal lives” of the Hong Kongers and their urban spaces, which, in turn, allow the Hong Kongers to re-view and reflect on themselves. Such is a vivid manner of making the invisible visible, the unheard heard.

Eventually, The “politics of aesthetics” are uttered in the case of the Lennon Wall (Rancière & Corcoran, 2010: p.148), and the political and aesthetic connection between the Lennon Wall and the Anti-Extradition Movement is seen. It is also the capability of the Lennon Wall to bring the Hong Kongers novel experience of common objects, to refute the normal

allocation of materials and to mobilise the Hong Kongers that claims the Lennon Wall a piece of “art” (Rancière & Corcoran, 2010p. 149).³

EPILOGUE — THE LENNON WALL’S OUTCOME AND IMPLICATIONS

Now that I have delineated the commoning, political and aesthetic dimension of the Lennon Wall, let me draw a final remark on this artistic-activist movement by reflecting on its results. I have talked about rupture, emancipation and anticipation — but what actually is the outcome of this exemplary movement?

On 1 July, 2020, the Chinese central government decreed and imposed the National Security Law on Hong Kong, bypassing the Basic Law. Fearing to be arrested for things they have advocated, expressed or simply said, and fearing of the severe sentence they would face, activists began to conceal themselves from continuing the Movement. The Lennon Wall, subsequently, not being further sustained, was gradually demolished, by both pro-Beijing organisations and the police. By September, there was hardly a tangible remnant from any of the former Lennon Wall or Lennon Tunnels. By now, the Anti-Extradition Movement in local Hong Kong has largely been silenced, while international voices supporting Hong Kong could still be heard.

Alas! Does it all mean that *the part that has no part* will remain without a part, however loud they cry and however visible they seem, if the state or authority is strong and deaf and blind enough? What can the theories of the commons and politics inform us about this outcome? As Elinor Ostrom, awardee of Nobel Memorial Prize in Economic Science, who has an expertise in the governance of commons, states in her book *Governing the Commons*, there are seven factors that can determine the success of a commons. The seventh element, in her words, is “[m]inimal recognition of rights to organise.” In other words, “a state that is willing to recognise the rights” of the commons is needed (Ostrom, 2015: p. 90, 101; Borchi, 2018: p. 34). In our case, if the Lennon Wall was to be sustained, the Hong Kong government would have to allow its existence.

³ In Rancière’s wording, it would be called “critical art”: “Critical art is an art that aims to produce a new perception of the world, and therefore to create a commitment to its transformation. This schema, very simple in appearance, is actually the conjunction of three processes: first, the production of a sensory form of ‘strangeness’; second, the development of an awareness of the reason for the strangeness; and third, a mobilisation of individuals as a result of that awareness.” (Rancière & Corcoran, 2010: p.150)

But the reality is the other way round. Why? Because the Lennon Wall was also heavily politically-charged, and its ideal was to directly confront with the government. Rancière himself would have disagreed with Ostrom, as such a commons would contribute to a consensus if it needs recognition from the authority, instead of a dissensus, and the essence of politics would have been lost. I would like to assert here that I have derived my argument from my exegesis that the Lennon Wall is at the same time a common and a dissensual political movement. This combination seems to be a paradox, but only when such a combination stems from the ideals of Ostrom and Rancière. De Angelis himself has actually given the example of the Exarcheia Park in Greece, which is a politically-charged commons (de Angelis, 2010). What is then the implication from the fall of the Lennon Wall?

The paradox goes, a dilemma comes: politically-charged commons can be sustained in certain ways, but concurrently it is also highly unstable, as dissensual struggles between the authority and the commoners are extremely dynamic if not violent at its essence. Politics creates possibilities, but is also undecidable; it is a state of ambiguity, because it ruptures the normal logic; it is an anticipation, but never a promise. Therefore, I contemplate that politically-charged commons can disrupt the normal logic of politics so that the people can reflect on their everyday political life. Discussions and debates can be sparked, new perspectives and thoughts can be ignited. Nevertheless, whether a radical change in politics can be induced is, after all, not warranted.

I maintain, from the case of the Lennon Wall, that it is this very instability and undecidability that allows the authority to de-rupture and re-confirm its distribution of sensible. It is this suspension of the normal logic that allows the very same logic to be reinforced once it is chanced. The sensorium, which once allowed the commoners to experience new values and to see the unseen, also allows fear and distrust to filtrate and to be felt. *Aisthesis* is not reducible to logic and reasons, but is also not excluded from power and threat. But let us also bear in mind that never, in the end, is politics pessimistic; it is to be accepted that politics can only be dynamic. And democracy itself, retained by the *demos*, however susceptible it is to challenges, manipulations or intimidation, remains in our hands — we the people's hands.

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