

# TWO FAILURES OF LEFT INTERNATIONALISM

## Political Mimesis at French University Counter-Summits, 2010–2011

*Eli Thorkelson*

---

**ABSTRACT:** After the unsuccessful end of the spring 2009 French university movement, faculty and student activists searched for new political strategies. One promising option was an internationalist project that sought to unite anti-Bologna Project movements across Europe. Yet an ethnographic study of two international counter-summits in Brussels (March 2010) and Dijon (May 2011) shows that this strategy was unsuccessful. This article explores the causes of these failures, arguing that activist internationalism became caught in a trap of political mimesis, and that the form of official international summits was incompatible with activists' temporal, representational, and reflexive needs.

**KEYWORDS:** activism, Bologna Process, French university politics, internationalism, political mimesis

*"Ce monde est déjà perdu,"* this world is already lost, said a spray-painted slogan on the stained wall of an apartment building that we marched past in a protest in May 2011, in Dijon, at the end of a university counter-summit that had aimed to critique the G8 and build an international university movement.\* I was there as an ethnographer of French public university politics, examining the debates over the Sarkozy government's controversial university reforms, particularly the nation-wide protest movement of spring 2009.<sup>1</sup> But the anti-G8 university summit had not been very successful, and the marchers numbered perhaps 150—tiny by French standards (Figure 1). And although we were scrupulously followed and penned in by several units of riot police, the march made only an ephemeral, minor disturbance in the rhythm of the city. We marched past the gates of a prison, a stray cat perched on a balcony, small cars parked on

*French Politics, Culture & Society*, Vol. 36, No. 3, Autumn 2018: 143–169



© The Institute of French Studies at New York University and the  
Minda de Gunzburg Center for European Studies at Harvard University  
doi:10.3167/fpcs.2018.360309

the sidewalk. “It’s not a mistery we make history,” said another graffiti tag in misspelled English on the side of a warehouse. A banner hanging from the École maternelle Voltaire warned of education cutbacks.



**Figure 1.** Protest march at G8 university counter-summit, Dijon, 7 May 2011.

*Source:* Photograph by author.

*Ce monde est déjà perdu* began to seem like a fitting slogan for our protest—a protest which was already lost, it seemed, from the moment of its departure from the front steps of a cavernous lecture hall at the University of Bourgogne. The historical moment did not seem especially propitious. A series of intensive university reforms had preoccupied Europe for a decade, and there had been major waves of protest across the continent, but by 2011, they were dying down. And the historical moment was not the only problem. As I have argued elsewhere, the traditional French *manifestation* had come to seem problematic during this period, and French activists were experimenting with a range of new protest forms, some more successful than others.<sup>2</sup>

The shape of Sarkozy-era university politics in France had been set twenty years earlier. In March 1986, a center-right UDF-RPR government

came to power under Jacques Chirac, “cohabitating” uneasily with the Socialist, President Mitterrand. Alain Devaquet, Chirac’s deputy minister for research and higher education, advanced a reform project that would have made French public universities autonomous from the state, empowered to restrict and regulate admissions and to modulate student fees. But the reform was withdrawn in the face of massive student protests that November-December, which culminated in the death of a Franco-Algerian student, Malik Oussekiné, at the hands of the police. Devaquet resigned and the traces of the movement lingered. Selective admissions and fee increases became taboo, and according to Robi Morder, “people even spoke of a 1986 ‘syndrome’ to evoke governments’ fear of youth mobilizations.”<sup>3</sup>

The underlying reform agenda nevertheless survived within French policy circles, which arguably became increasingly “liberal” (in the French sense) on both the center-right and center-left.<sup>4</sup> A very gradual trend towards contractualizing the state’s relations to universities was successfully put in place a few years later, and the 1998 Attali report emphasized “creating efficient institutions that economize on public funds,” along with “accepting controlled competition.”<sup>5</sup> But a narrative had set in that the French university system was “unreformable.” By the time of the Socialist Party’s Jospin government (1997–2002), the minister of education, Claude Allègre, reckoned that national university reforms could only pass with international backing. For Allègre, at the inception of the Bologna Process at a 1998 Sorbonne conference, a pan-European university process constituted a “consciously pursued strategy to employ a Europe-wide model as a means for addressing difficult, if not insoluble, issues in France itself.”<sup>6</sup> Allègre was quite open about this, writing a few years later that he wanted to “modernize the social fabric by availing ourselves of Europe [*moderniser la trame en se servant de l’Europe*].”<sup>7</sup>

We will see below that the Bologna Process would become closely integrated into the European Union’s supranational project, whose influence over education and research was not through direct regulatory action, but instead via the “Open Method of Coordination,” an EU process of international standardization and norm policing.<sup>8</sup> But not all European countries were equal actors in these supranational processes, and in France, the Bologna agreement never seemed to force the government to do anything it would not have done anyway. This is unsurprising if the Bologna Process was indeed conceived with an eye towards facilitating a liberal reform agenda in France. In any event, such an agenda rapidly became reality, via the April 2002 Réforme LMD (License-Master-Doctorat), which streamlined the degree system into a 3-year undergraduate degree, 2-year master’s degree, and 3-year doctoral degree, and mandated a semester

schedule and standard course credit system (ECTS). The Réforme LMD sought to make French university education more compatible with European-wide university standards, more legible on a global scale (particularly in the Anglo-American world), and better able to facilitate flows of foreign students across Europe. The second major objective of the Bologna reforms, quantified educational “quality control,” was furthered by the 2006 creation of a new quality assessment agency, the AERES (later renamed HCERES).<sup>9</sup> In 2007, the newly elected Sarkozy government initiated an ambitious project of campus denationalization, termed “autonomization” (Loi LRU), which, albeit advocated by the OECD, was not mandated by any international process. This set in motion a program of managerial devolution intended to re-constitute universities as “free” actors on the global higher education market.

The Devaquet program thus returned in bits and pieces, in spite of numerous protest waves. There were small protests and left-wing denunciations of the Réforme LMD in 2003. A massive student movement in 2006 prompted the withdrawal of a new, short-term work contract for youth, the *contrat première embauche*.<sup>10</sup> In 2007–2009, more than fifty French public universities saw protests against the Sarkozy government’s university autonomy reforms.<sup>11</sup> But the 2009 movement ended inconclusively—most would say in defeat. During my research in France in 2009–2011, the university opposition did not manage to remobilize, and campus activists I knew were largely pessimistic.

The impulse towards building an internationalist politics nevertheless emerged in the French university milieu out of this uncertain moment, in which political analysis had far outpaced political praxis. In theory, the argument for a European-wide university protest movement was straightforward. Similar sorts of neoliberal university reforms were being put in place all across Europe, constituting, in the eyes of left critics, a coordinated international system of pro-business, “modernizing” projects. This seemed to demand an international protest movement. I term this would-be movement *international* rather than transnational, pan-European, or globalist because fundamentally it was an effort to coordinate *national* protests of national university reforms, rather than an effort to transcend nationality or to redirect protests primarily towards supranational institutions like the EU or OECD.<sup>12</sup> As the French Collectif Printemps 2010 argued, “The indissociable link between the Lisbon Strategy and the Bologna Process calls for a coordination of struggles and of political proposals on these two fronts.”<sup>13</sup> But in practice, a coordinated international protest movement was hard to establish. The two international counter-summits that I examine here—Brussels in March 2010, Dijon in May 2011—were both perceived as failures.

The key claim of this article is that the perception of failure in these two cases stemmed from what I term a trap of political mimesis. As European university activists sought to imitate the summit form while also twisting it to serve their own political purposes, they discovered that the form of an international summit was structurally inhospitable to them, readily becoming politically divisive and affectively deadening. But the crucial distinction here is that the two counter-summits failed quite *differently*. While the 2010 Brussels counter-summit dispersed without lasting effect, the 2011 Dijon counter-summit garnered a partial victory by drawing the French state apparatus into a game of cat and mouse. The state planned an official summit; the protests against it promised to be large; the state feared the protests and rescheduled the official event; and the planned protests were thus deprived of their *raison d'être*. The irony was that this partial success still *felt like failure*; but in any case, as I argue here, miming official forms can lead activists into two traps that revolve, I will show in the conclusion, around problems of political temporality and reflexivity.

To understand the genesis and the futility of this re-appropriated internationalist strategy, I aim here to examine the structure of political mimesis at these counter-summits. The article makes four interconnected claims: (1) Official internationalism—including crucially the Bologna Process—is itself already a project of state mimesis. (2) Activist internationalism emerges to mirror official internationalism through a relationship of antagonistic proximity to state mimesis.<sup>14</sup> (3) As a form of activist mimesis of state mimesis, the counter-summit was a fundamentally disabling and unsatisfying form, as the Brussels case shows. (4) Nevertheless, when mimesis is successful at developing relations of antagonistic proximity with the state, it can develop into a game of reciprocal fantasy and menace, which culminated in Dijon in a “victory by forfeit.”

### State Mimesis in the “Lisbologna Process”

This is not the place for a general theory of mimesis.<sup>15</sup> I will merely note that mimesis generically designates the *imitative re-enactment of social forms*, and is itself, in turn, a social form with its own history.<sup>16</sup> Michael Taussig has proposed that the mimetic faculty is “the compulsion to become the Other,” noting that it works “by means of what was once called sympathetic magic, granting the copy the character and power of the original, the representation the power of the represented.”<sup>17</sup> Certainly this applies to the Dijon and Brussels counter-summits, which sought to appropriate the *gravitas* of international summits like the European Coun-

cil or the G20, and to acquire political recognition by imitating the official performance of discursive authority. The Brussels counter-summit, for instance, sought to mime official “deliberative” processes and thereby authorize itself to speak to the media: “After this collective deliberation, we will publish our conclusions for an Other Europe of Knowledge in an online text and in a broadly distributed press release.”<sup>18</sup>

Yet mimesis is not just a one-step, unidirectional process where counter-summits imitate summits or where drag queens, for instance, imitate normative femininity. Rather mimesis is often reactive and recursive, as Dick Hebdige showed in the case of the intricate cross-racial “dialogue” between punk and reggae.<sup>19</sup> If social life is a long, uneven process of historical derivation, there are no true originals, and all mimesis is thus an *imitation of another imitation*.<sup>20</sup> This can be bidirectional, since mimesis entails a structural potential for counter-reactions, as Mladen Dolar suggests. “Imitation cuts both ways; it affects the imitator, one becomes what one imitates, it is contagious.... But there is the reverse danger ... that imitation strikes back, it impinges on the original.”<sup>21</sup> Following Dolar, we will see that it became disabling for the protesters to “become what they imitated,” because the form of a summit was incompatible with their form of political representation. And in the Dijon case, in particular, we will also see that the threat of direct protest (though not the counter-summit per se) spawned a mimetic process that also ensnared the state apparatus. On a conceptual level, our case is thus reminiscent of Begoña Aretxaga’s study of how political reality (in the case of Basque separatism) was co-constituted through a play of reciprocal projections: “The state and terrorism [are produced] as fetishes of each other, constructing reality as an endless play of mirror images.”<sup>22</sup>

Of course, European university protests have little in common politically with “officials who became terrorists for the purpose of eliminating Basque terrorism.”<sup>23</sup> I would only retain Aretxaga’s general point that the state can encounter anti-state political activists by way of an ideological play of mirrors. It is not just the activists who are mimetic; state performative magic is equally grounded in its own history of mimesis. As Dolar quips, “The state is the true mimesis, not the false one; it is the supreme theatre, the best show in town.”<sup>24</sup> For instance the French state, particularly diligent in the art of reiterating sovereign gestures, generally presents itself through what Marc Abélès has called, citing Lévi-Strauss, “an orgy of repetitions” of presidential ritual.<sup>25</sup> Supranational politics draws on this ritual repertoire as well: as Cris Shore observes, the European Union has long sought legitimacy by imitating traditional state forms. “The new Europe is being constructed on much the same symbolic terrain as the old nation-states of the last two centuries. Flags, anthems, passports, trophies, medals and maps are all icons for evoking the presence of the emergent state.”<sup>26</sup>

I do not mean to conflate the three quite distinct forms of non-national organization that framed the events of this paper. The Lisbon Strategy was an official EU initiative. The Bologna Process was formally an intergovernmental project of separate European states. The G8 (now the G7) is merely a consultative instance, being an annual summit of “the world’s most industrially advanced economies.”<sup>27</sup> While the Bologna Process now incorporates the European Commission, it began outside it, as we saw, as a multinational push for standardizing university degrees, initiated by France, Germany, Italy, and the UK. It now includes 48 countries, several outside the European Union.<sup>28</sup> The Lisbon Strategy, meanwhile, was an EU project seeking to foster economic growth by increasing European research spending to 3 percent of GDP.<sup>29</sup> Both these projects’ texts stressed a greater integration between higher education and the “economy,” meaning primarily corporate enterprise and the wage workforce.

I leave aside the policy details, because from the bottom-up perspective of university activists, the inner workings were not apparent. Instead, activists perceived the general ritual image that organized the “Lisbologna” project, as they called it. Lisbologna’s events consisted primarily of men in suits speaking on behalf of state power and embodying its might. Whether formally intergovernmental (Bologna) or supranational (Lisbon), these public affairs, like the European Union in general, were anchored in a mimesis of state power. Solemn “declarations” were uttered in symbolically mighty locations like Paris (1998), Bologna (1999) or Prague (2001); ceremonial texts spoke as if on behalf of all Europeans, oscillating between the active voice of “we” policymakers and the passive voice of historical necessity. One could call this ritual theatre, since the official proceedings were somewhat decoupled from their protagonists’ underlying strategies. Official summits are about legitimation, as Carl Death suggests in an analysis of global environmental summits: “The theatrical rationality on which summitry rests has a number of political implications, including the reinforcement of dominant hierarchical, state-centric, elitist and rationalist models of politics.”<sup>30</sup>

We can better perceive European summits’ entanglements with state theatre if we consider how the European Council portrayed its meeting in Brussels on 25–26 March 2010. On Flickr, the Council released a stream of official photographs including a “Family picture” of the heads of state and government, a photograph of the meeting in progress (Figure 2), and numerous action shots of these figures conversing and walking about (Figure 3). In the background was a massive press corps, wearing access badges, appearing fascinated by the banal scenes of politicians’ chatter, and “socially proximate with [their] prominent subjects,” as Annie Rudd puts it.<sup>31</sup> An equally massive professional staff of aides and interpreters was

faintly visible behind the tinted windows of the booths that ringed the meeting room. These images simultaneously humanized and consecrated the political leadership. Their minor smiles were caught on camera, and their hands were often full of official documents: Nicolas Sarkozy carried an armload of folders as he emerged from his armored sedan. By staging the minor interactions of the “leaders” against a large chorus of supporting personnel, the European Council enacted a scene where bona fide historical actors made weighty decisions in the face of hyper-attentive yet subordinate, functionally servile masses. Just as Death’s analysis would have us expect, the “heads” (of state) loomed large above their (societal) “bodies.”

Thus, the European Council presented itself as a choreography of hierarchy, legitimated not just by its own institutional and legal architecture but also by a mimetic performance of state power. The normative, modal figure here was a well-fed, smiling man with artfully shaped silver hair and a conservative tie beneath a glossy suit jacket, comfortably surrounded by others of his kind (Figure 3). Such a scene is *mimetic*, I insist, because its very recognizability emerges from its being a re-enactment of a ritual image that gives it a generic form. Though it is indisputably significant that some European heads of state are women, this whole performance remains anchored in the now-standard image of Great Men meeting. That image became familiar last century, for example through historical photographs of Roosevelt, Churchill, and Stalin at the 1945 Yalta Conference, or earlier still through Erich Salomon’s pioneering photojournalism at the 1930 Hague reparations meeting (Figure 4).



**Figure 2.** “The Heads of State and Government gather at the Council building,” 25 March 2010.

Source: Official European Council photograph, ©European Union, published on Flickr at [https://www.flickr.com/photos/european\\_council\\_meetings/4537287107/](https://www.flickr.com/photos/european_council_meetings/4537287107/).





**Figure 3.** “Netherlands PM Balkenende and UK PM Brown,”  
25 March 2010.

*Source:* Official European Council photograph, ©European Union, published on Flickr at [https://www.flickr.com/photos/european\\_council\\_meetings/4537289569/](https://www.flickr.com/photos/european_council_meetings/4537289569/).



**Figure 4.** “The Hague Reparation Conference,” Erich Salomon, 1930.

*Source:* Photograph by Erich Salomon, Public domain image, published on Wikipedia at [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:The\\_Hague\\_Reparation\\_Conference.png](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:The_Hague_Reparation_Conference.png).



**Figure 5.** “European Council intermediary press conference” with Herman von Rompuy, 25 March 2010.

Source: Official European Council video, ©European Union, published on YouTube at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5lktX1Ra5WU>.

The ritual staging of the official meeting was not only photographic. It also required a vocal and affective performance. In daily press conferences on March 25 and 26, Herman von Rompuy, then President of the European Council, took the stage, backed by the starry circle of the European flag, to announce to the press corps that the ritual was going well (Figure 5). After the first day he declared the importance of his work and the necessity of political decision-making:

I believe that we have done very important work [*on a fait un travail très important*], not only for Greece, but also for the stability of the Eurozone and I would even say further that we have made a contribution to international monetary stability. It was an important day and we made the decisions that needed making [*on a pris les décisions qu'il fallait prendre*].<sup>32</sup>

After the second day of the summit, commenting on the “Europe 2020” strategy which continued the Lisbon program of economic expansion, Von Rompuy again stressed the importance of growth:

We want a strong economy, but an economy that takes into account ecological constraints and social constraints. And there, let’s say, is the value added that Europe wants to bequeath to future generations. This is also the European model that we’re offering to the rest of the world. But it demands very strong

economic performance [*il faut une performance économique très forte*], though within the social and ecological framework that is our hallmark.<sup>33</sup>

It is striking that Von Rompuy would go so far as to define the historical significance of Europe itself in terms of “value added,” as if the European societal model were a commodity on the market of societal ideas. But ultimately Von Rompuy’s discourse was much less about its relatively empty content than about sending tacit social signals about the European political process. While disclosing precious few specifics, Von Rompuy’s style of speaking encoded a normative image of impersonal masculine power and reasonableness. He spoke slowly, sedately, and without political passion or vehemence, as if his very tone were an index of the slow, inexorable progress of European institutions. He rarely foregrounded his personal views, relying on the impersonal French pronoun *on* to represent the European Council’s collective action (“*on a fait un travail important*”) and the impersonal imperative *il faut* to represent economic policy as historical necessity (“*il faut une performance économique très forte*”). Such a political performance aspired to constitute EU economic policy as doxa.

I dwell on these minor performative details because, curiously, they set out the form that the Brussels counter-summit had set out to mime that day. Of course, the counter-summit sought to craft an alternative political line and to create a less hierarchical form of deliberative democracy. But the Brussels counter-summit organizers nevertheless aspired to imitate Von Rompuy’s structure of political enunciation, where, after a period of legitimate deliberation, a press statement would make known a collective project. As we will see, though, the counter-summit was much too unstable, marginal, and illegible to culminate in a successful press conference.

### The Failure of Internationalism in Brussels

In France, the impetus for oppositional internationalism had begun to emerge during the 2009 *printemps universitaire*. “University reform: It’s not just France that’s resisting,” declared one March 2009 interview.<sup>34</sup> Isabelle Bruno, an activist and Foucauldian political scientist at the Université de Lille-2, explained to the interviewer that French university reforms were hardly unique in Europe; that similar managerial policies had been seen in Spain, Italy, Finland, Denmark, Germany, the UK, and Greece; and that these policies “are inscribed in the frame of a European strategy.” That year, Bruno became one of the most ardent French proponents of a pan-European resistance to neoliberalism, exhorting activists to “change scale” from the national to the European. She put her project in practice by working to organize the 2010 Brussels counter-summit, which protested

the European Council's meeting on the occasion of the Lisbon Strategy's tenth birthday. The counter-summit, organized by an all-French collective called Printemps 2010, attracted the sponsorship of major French academic unions, along with leftist groups like Attac, and it received the backing of a sympathetic member of the European Parliament, who arranged for it to have a room in the Paul Henri Spaak Building.



**Figure 6.** Brussels counter-summit, 25 March 2010.

*Source:* Photograph by author.

The summit began well; official escorts in technocratic suits led us to our meeting room, and the morning had an enthusiastic, comparative exchange about the situations in our respective countries. After lunch, though, dialogue broke down into acrimony, as different political factions disagreed about the wording of a press release. The French would not speak English and the Austrians could not speak French. The student contingent walked out of the room in disgust after two hours of fruitless discussions, caucusing in the hall. "Do you want to stay here or do you want to come build an international student movement?" someone whispered to me. The professors were demoralized by the students' departure, as if their leaving indicated the failure of a shared desire for international political unity. Eventually an organizer went to fetch the students, arguing the

counter-summit could not legitimately reach consensus on their press release if not everyone was present. "You have to come back inside and explain why you left," she pleaded.

The event did manage to produce a final political communiqué, which argued (again equivocating between social-democratic and anti-capitalist views) that "we should free our society from the globalised and generalised competition and financial market, and promote a new organisation of the international exchanges in economy, science, culture etc. based on the values of solidarity and mutual respect." The appearance of success was kept up by publishing this statement on the counter-summit's website, just as the European Council had released a final statement about its meeting.<sup>35</sup> But the participants all seemed disappointed, and subsequently the life seemed to go out of the project. One student wrote angrily to complain that the press statement mentioned a "knowledge based society," in spite of criticism that such a category tended to exclude the socially marginalized. An organizer responded candidly: "I am also very disappointed by this press release. It is very weak. As I was tired at the end of the day, and as we had no more time, I couldn't do anything."

Thus, instead of finding unity, participants became hypersensitive about their internal differences. "It's hard to work together," reflected one activist professor afterwards, "because [the students] are deeply politicized and have a strong consciousness of their status," whereas "we, the professors, necessarily have responsibilities...." The students who left the room evinced a similar sentiment in reverse. "They have their status to defend, the professors," one French student explained. "They're already established in the institution." No procedure for surmounting this status difference was ever proposed, and a year later at the Dijon summit, one of the Brussels organizers would tell me resignedly that "The Collectif Printemps 2010 is dead."

If we compare the speeches from the start and end of the Brussels counter-summit, we see how participants themselves shifted from dignity to despair. In the morning, the first speaker (from the Collectif Printemps 2010) had pictured the event amidst a rising tide of political fortune:

In the autumn, 2008, there was a great wave of movements in the European universities. There was the anomalous wave in Italy. A little later, Greece. A little later, Spain. Then France. And in the autumn, 2009, Austria, and then Germany, and then some other countries, Netherlands, Switzerland, who took over. In the frame of the movement to reclaim your education—which was much more than a week long. Two months, or nearly, in some cases. There was, some two weeks ago, a first alternative summit in Vienna, Bologna Burns, and Bologna Burns, Bologne brûle, was the first step for the great united movement that we want.

Here the counter-summit appeared as a moment in a historical trajectory that (at that moment) appeared favorable to the opposition. The geographical breadth and accelerating rhythm of recent protests were taken as indicators of a more general historical momentum. The image of an internationally coordinated series of protests, where one country would “take over” when things died down in another, was taken as leading toward a “great united movement” of the kind that has captured the Left’s political imagination since the nineteenth century.<sup>36</sup> Such a discourse cites a series of empirical events only in order to evoke a political mythos that mobilizes its audience while also rendering things serious, solid, even solemn.

By the end of the afternoon, though, the political spell was wearing off, and the audience was worn out, frustrated by the long debate over what to put in the press release. There were long discussions of whether students were workers, of internal group process, and of research patenting. “It’s a problem to have formulations that have no chance of getting accepted outside our group,” someone eventually said in frustration. “Do we really disagree?” someone asked plaintively. “Yes,” came the answer, with a shrug. There was a long litany of exhortations about what the press statement needed to contain. “It’s important to have this idea of the *social*.” “The text is a bit soft, it needs to be more critical.” “We have to talk more about what research should be independent *from*: from economic powers, from bureaucracy, from religion....” In the end, there was resignation: “It’s not a Bible, it’s a press release.”

Once the student contingent walked out, their departure weighed on the room, and the question of linguistic difference lingered, since the discussions had become progressively more Francophone as people lost the will to translate everything for the non-Francophone minority. The conference organizers ultimately called on the one student remaining, a tall, young, genderqueer German with flowing blonde hair, whom I will call Dominique, to close the summit by addressing its problems. Dominique began by remarking on the problem of language:

I’ve been asked to elaborate on the reasons people left, and on the problems of this conference, because I left with them.... I’m not natively English speaking, I’m German speaking, and I came here with the expectation that this would be a European summit, and my English is well enough to participate in such a summit, and I expected it to be in English. I had the luck to have an education and to work in the French language ... because I could follow like fifty percent or three quarters of what has happened here, which is more than the other guests.... Yes, there was a *traductrice, merci beaucoup*, but there was no process of institutionalizing this—this European way of communicating. Because it always went back into the French. Because the majority was involved so much in the discussion and the point of discussion that the *way* of discussion was neglected. And this led also to the exclusion of people who were not French speaking.

The problem, to reformulate Dominique's explanation slightly, was not just that participants spoke different languages, but that they had no successful institutional process for surmounting their linguistic differences. There was indeed an interpreter, but she was not a professional and was frequently overwhelmed by the pace of discussion. (The counter-summit took place in a large diplomatic room with booths for interpreters, but unlike the European Council, the activists had no professional staff.) Moreover, the summit's problems, for Dominique, went beyond issues of institutional process or linguistic incompatibility. The problem was also that the summit had been falsely advertised, claiming to be properly pan-European but actually lapsing into a Franco-centric affair. As if the very essence of its European orientation had been undermined by the Franco-centric form and content. Dominique went on to invoke the broader trajectory of anti-Bologna protests that had been raised at the start of the summit, but instead of citing the history to celebrate and legitimate the summit's potential political contribution, the summit was upbraided for having forgotten its context.

I am an activist, I am not organized in any formal body, I'm just a student.... I heard in Vienna about Brussels and I thought: yes!, a good opportunity to further the European coordination, the European cooperation in our protest movement to further education. To fight for education. And I think that was the hopes of the other young people who came here as well.... What I found was mainly French people discussing issues that are not really related to this point. Perhaps it was mentioned shortly on the slide, but it was not really discussed. And that I am sad about, but the conclusion from that could be to just take this opportunity elsewhere, to one of the following summits.

The tone probably does not come through in the transcript, but this was a decidedly bittersweet speech. "I am sad" that the summit wasn't what had been announced, Dominique said. This sadness was particularly marked for the students who had made a long journey from Germany and Austria to an event they ultimately viewed as pointless. After the summit, a few emails circulated among the group of students who had walked out of the summit. "I fear it [the summit] was kinda pathetic," a French student wrote. "Maybe we have a similar feeling about the result," a German student chimed in, and even this laconic string of criticism soon petered out.

Dominique's seemingly mundane conclusion about "taking this opportunity elsewhere" takes on a different character, though, if we read it as a deliberate effort to be optimistic in spite of the deep sense of resignation, disappointment, and scorn that circulated among the student contingent. Political optimism mattered here because, as Dominique formulated it, what was at stake at the summit was nothing less than the

“fight for education” itself. In the face of such large political stakes, political optimism seemed to become almost obligatory. In closing remarks, Dominique repeatedly oscillated between the register of internal critique and the register of this almost normative faith in political possibilities yet to come:

I saw this summit in the context of the summit before in Vienna and the summit before in Paris, and the summit coming in Madrid, but this was not really mentioned or discussed here, and I fear that this context was somehow ignored.... I would like you to discuss with me on European cooperation further, so I'm glad to just stay here and give you my email address so that we can perhaps build a European movement at a different point, and I hope to see you all in Boholm.... Perhaps from this something will grow.

Here Dominique took European internationalism very seriously and essentially at face value. When it became clear that the hoped-for internationalist framework was not about to materialize, when the counter-summit proved not to produce a coordinated international movement but rather to re-inscribe national differences, Dominique was left deeply disappointed. This disappointment was itself the index of a prior attachment. For these student activists, internationalism seemed to become a political ethos, not to mention a position that grounded a critique of the university protest movement from within. The merely national, for Dominique, became retrograde, wasteful, a place of loss. And while there was a certain political logic to this position, we have seen that internationalist commitments also become grounds for political frustration and division within the very movements they had sought to unify.

After Dominique's speech, there was applause, and then we headed back to the train station, rapidly becoming anonymous pedestrians and then anonymous passengers on intercity trains.

### **Reciprocal Threats and Fantasies in Dijon**

A year later, as the Bologna protests of 2009 faded into history, new conjunctures presented themselves. In 2011, France was in line to host the G8 meetings, and the organization of the recently instituted “G8 University Summit” fell to the University of Bourgogne in Dijon. The G8 University Summit had initially been conceived by a number of Japanese university presidents in 2008, who seized on the regular G8 meeting that year to mount a large international conference on the role of universities in “global issues” such as climate change and sustainable development. The conference, which met annually in subsequent years, brought together selected university presidents and student representatives from the G20



countries, apparently in circumstances of ceremonial splendor. The Japanese summit boasted of their reception at “the JR Tower Hotel Nikko Sapporo’s Taiyou Sky Banquet Room on the 36th floor,” while the 2009 Italian summit met in a castle, and the 2010 Canadian summit was sponsored by Xerox and Microsoft. While the conference was not an official governmental affair, it made a point of presenting its recommendations to government officials afterwards, thus alleging its own political importance—and miming the standard form of summit theatre.



Figure 7. Posters for the Dijon university counter-summit, 6 May 2011.

Source: Photograph by author.

In France, a group of student and faculty organizers, supported by academic unions and militant associations like *Sauvons l'Université!*, set out to organize a counter-summit that would oppose the 2011 G8 university summit. But on 24 April, just days before the summit was to begin with a student meeting in Besançon, the Dijon part of the event was canceled, evidently at the request of the mayor of Dijon, who was said to “invoke a hypothetical threat from autonomist anarchists.”<sup>37</sup> The counter-summit organizers retorted: “These threats, perhaps phantasmatic, must not make us miss the point: the policies pushed by the G8/G20 are nefarious and reviled by the vast majority of the world population.” For its part, the G8 summit organizing committee, along with the French *Conférence des présidents d'université*, called on the president of the Republic to find alternate space for the conference, complaining that the cancellation “casts doubt on France’s capacity to host international academic meetings and keep them secure.” The student meeting still took place on 28–30 April in Besançon, where a small student protest was tear gassed by the riot police. The summit organizers eventually decided to relocate the main summit to Paris—“at the request of the public authorities ... in order to provide a secure and serene environment for our debates”<sup>38</sup>—but kept the new location secret to avoid protesters.

The counter-summit organizers, having already invested in their Dijon events, decided to stick to their original plans. Noting that the president of the University of Bourgogne had initially praised the counter-summit, they called on her to “keep her promises” and let the counter-summit take place. And indeed, the counter-summit went on without logistical interference. But while the public rhetoric was one of stubborn, ongoing resistance to the “commodification of knowledge and education,” activists I knew in Paris were privately very pessimistic in the days before the event. Student activists at the left-wing University of Paris 8 declined to attend, saying that the event would be small, while several Parisian faculty activists opted to take short day trips to Dijon, just long enough to give presentations and then go home. As everyone acknowledged, in the absence of an official G8 summit to protest, there was much less motivation to show up.

Nevertheless, I decided to delay the end of my fieldwork in France in order to attend. From the train station in the center of Dijon, a bus took me to the university, revealing a deep structural division between a modernized, aestheticized old city center and the more brutally functional, largely concrete outskirts of the city. The campus, one of the largest I’d seen in France, was fenced in by quiet streets, quiet houses, a single kebab shop, a single bar, and many parking lots. When I asked directions from the first student I saw, she had never heard of a counter-summit. Then I

approached a group of students clustered around a barbecue, dressed in black and vaguely anarchistic in style, but they laughed at me and said they had nothing in common with “them,” which I understood to mean the left-wing counter-summitters.



**Figure 8.** Student campsite for the Dijon university counter-summit, 6 May 2011.

*Source:* Photograph by author.



**Figure 9.** Student campsite at mealtime, 6 May 2011.

*Source:* Photograph by author.

Eventually I discovered a group of eight or ten activists surrounded by three or four tents in the corner of an immense lawn (Figure 8). A young man in jeans and a grey fedora emerged from the group, with dark eyes and long dark hair tied up behind his head. He explained he was from Besançon, and was one of the organizers of the event. They were expecting the counter-summit to be small, he said, because of the official summit cancellation. The week before, he'd been at the small, heavily-repressed protest of the G8 student summit in Besançon—"we had no idea there would be so many riot cops [CRS]," he said, "we were just expecting a gathering of activists." In Dijon, I observed police vans driving past the campsite at all hours of the day and night. Meanwhile the camp grew as new groups showed up and pitched their tents. Some Bisontin boys lent me a mallet to set up my tent stakes, and then offered me ragged bread, along with cheese scraps eager to melt in the sun.

The three-day counter-summit that followed was tiny, with participants numbering in the dozens, primarily French with a handful of Swiss and Italians. As in Brussels, it imitated the normative form of an international summit, with a series of workshops followed by a plenary session meant to yield a collective text. The formal program centered on a series of workshops, such as "Democratization," "Precarity," "Excellence, competition," or "Dominant thought." (The final plenary session had problems familiar from Brussels: low attendance, political disagreements, low energy, and a painful effort to negotiate minute wording choices.) The students hung around the campsite and held a series of barbecues (Figure 9), while the professors in the audience largely socialized with other professors. People stuck together with their friends or took walks in town, while organizers and volunteers handled the logistics of the event semi-spontaneously. A series of signs and banners were hung around campus to advertise the event, including a large one that said "Contre G8 des universités" in orange paint, hung at the door of the campus building where the workshops met. One afternoon the breeze picked up and blew the banner up onto the roof of the building, leaving it crumpled and invisible. Since no one else seemed eager to sort it out, I found my way to the window of a second-floor office, crawled out onto the roof with the aid of a bewildered administrator, and put the banner back in place. This was typical of how logistics were handled: by whomever was present and willing.

Thus the counter-summit was by its own account too small to be politically effective, and yet its political insignificance seemed to be lost on the security forces, who not only surveilled the campsite but also lined downtown Dijon, during the weekend street march, with more riot police than there were protesters. The exchange of political threats brought the activists and the state apparatus into a curious mimetic dialogue. In

Besançon, the previous weekend, activists observed that “the announcement of a gathering and a picnic provokes a gigantic police operation.” Just as the protesters reacted against the non-event of the absent summit, so, too, the police in their turn overreacted to the non-event of the very tiny activist protest. Paradoxically, this chain of reciprocal mimetic excess constituted a minor victory for the protesters, who had after all apparently succeeded in preventing the G8 university summit from taking place. “The threat will have sufficed to make the mayor freak out [*la menace aura suffi à faire flipper [la] mairie*],” one anarchist blog observed, noting that “we can only celebrate this new victory by forfeit.”<sup>39</sup>

The Dijon case reveals that even when activist internationalism *does* win victories “by forfeit”—forcing a change of plans, a wrinkle in official time—it nevertheless can still *feel* merely local and *seem* like a failure. Few activists *felt* enthusiastic as they marched through the streets of Dijon after the counter-summit’s plenary session: there was nothing there to protest. It seems that the forced relocation of the official summit dismayed the official summit participants as well. Obligated to stay in Paris, some of them expressed “disappointment at not being able to discover Dijon and its region,” even though official photos depicted a fancy wine tasting that served as a compensatory cultural experience. The Dijon counter-summit was consequential, then. But one consequence of its consequentiality, ironically, was that the experience of participating in the counter-summit felt like a failure.

### The Trap of Political Mimesis

We have here the chief difference between Brussels and Dijon. In Brussels, the official forces remained *indifferent* to the counter-summit, whose mimetic enactment of the official summit remained essentially a unidirectional copy, failing to affect its “source.” In Dijon, by contrast, the state and the opposition entered into Aretxaga’s bidirectional scenario, where the state and the protesters became “fetishes of each other, constructing reality as an endless play of mirror images.”<sup>40</sup> The Dijon protest reveals that the French state has its fantasy of the opposition just as much as the opposition has its fantasy of the state. When the Mayor of Dijon claims to fear vandalism by “anarchists” while protesters carry signs accusing “heads of state [of being] the true vandals,” we can reasonably conclude that there is a mimetic system at work, where official internationalisms and unofficial internationalisms get bound together in reciprocal accusations of violence.

Inasmuch as the Dijon protest was a success, this success emerged from a nonlinear and bifurcated temporality. One could sum it up in terms

of these two opposing slogans, “Ce monde est déjà perdu” and “La menace aura suffi.” The first insisted that protest was always already too late, the second that the mere threat of protest already “will have” induced victory by forfeit. Both were true—the protest was pointless (or more precisely, object-less), precisely because its victory already “will have” been secured (by the very absence of its object). And curiously, these two temporalities failed to be mutually exclusive. The coexistence of incompatible temporalities enabled activists to continue their cause without lapsing into either unsustainable optimism or pessimistic stasis. An incoherent relationship to temporality became effective among French activists, I have argued elsewhere, as a strategy of resisting state reform projects that presented themselves as inevitable.<sup>41</sup> In Dijon, activist practice wound up suspended between an eternalized defeatism and a fatalist optimism, the latter taking form in the future anterior (the “will-have-been”).

This brings us back to what was most disabling for the protesters about the very form of the counter-summit: its structures of time and of reflexivity.

(1) If we look at the official representations of state and EU action, we see that a linear “modernization” telos remained doxa.<sup>42</sup> In Herman von Rompuy’s carefully worded press statement, history went only in one direction: the direction chosen by the legitimate authorities. “It was an important day and we made the decisions that needed making,” we recall him saying after the March 2010 European Council meeting. I would argue that this image of linear time—where the summit seeks to produce a unified, decisive intervention in a given conjuncture—was not altogether a post hoc representation superimposed on the summit form. Rather, temporal linearity was a constitutive component of the summit model: it was the linear form of summit deliberations that conferred process legitimacy on the final statement to the press.

And yet, activist temporality in this historical moment was *incapable* of functioning within such a linear temporality. In a 2010 Paris case that I have examined elsewhere, political temporality depended on what I have called a politics of futurity without hope.<sup>43</sup> In Dijon, activists inhabited a structurally split temporality, divided between fatalist pessimism and future-anterior optimism, between “we’ve already lost” and “we *will have won* by forfeit.” This temporal project was formally incompatible with the linear structure of the counter-summits, which, by miming the official summits, sought to progress rather un-ironically from preparatory meetings through a plenary session to a final proclamation of consensus progress. If these left-wing protesters had been able to practice such a linear political rationality (and thereby to garner political victories more reliably), they would no doubt have done so long ago.

The attempt to mime the official summit form, in turn, left activists untrue to their own ideologies of representation. As Death's study of summitry insists, international summits presuppose an elitist and delegated vision of political exchange. The format of a small international gathering of policy elites matches an elite preference for a top-down policy process. Left-wing opposition groups, on the other hand, tended to advocate a more participatory direct democracy, such that internationalism would ideally be a *mass* internationalism, an internationalism of movements. As a result, small international gatherings like the counter-summits failed to give their participants the sense of legitimacy that might have been conferred by a large crowd.

The counter-summits were never completely conceived as massively participatory direct democracy, to be sure. The Brussels counter-summit even boasted that most of its participants were representatives of other political organizations. But size and inclusivity were foundational aspirations for the counter-summits: this is half an explanation for why it was a crisis when the students walked out in Brussels, and for why it was demoralizing in Dijon to have such small crowds. In the absence of mass movements having already appointed legitimate representatives who could serve as conduits of a participatory politics, it was not possible to realize the left ideal of a *mass internationalism* in the counter-summit format. This formal constraint left participants distressed by the small, non-representative, non-unified nature of their gatherings.<sup>44</sup>

(2) The counter-summit's form entailed a further problem: it had no *outside*, no clear concept of its own theatrical and mimetic character. It was simply expected that participants would show up and start to enact summit theatre without needing training, participatory governance, or a space outside their performance from which to calibrate or reshape their practice. Once the mimetic enactment was undertaken—of a form where preparatory sessions led to a plenary and then to a shared text—any “stepping outside the script” constituted a threat to the very integrity of the form. That was why when the students walked out of the Brussels meeting, we saw that the organizers felt that the entire structure of their event was being delegitimized and sought forlornly to have the students return to the summit room, so as to be able to *continue the form*. In the theatre of the counter-summit, there was no Greek chorus and no standard place for dramatic soliloquys. So, when the participants wanted to express reflexive discontent, this could only appear as rupture or failure in the form itself.

In other words, the counter-summits were enacted as self-sufficient, coherent performances, as if their performative magic would go without saying. It became impossible to decide whether the counter-summits were entirely serious or partly a deconstructive satire, or to distinguish between

their mimesis and their negation of the official summits. The counter-summits became spaces of “indeterminate performativity,” as Dominic Boyer has characterized the work of Iceland’s unrealistic Best Party, where “it is ... hard to tell whether ... anarcho-surreal experiments point toward anything like a ‘political ideology’ in the traditional sense or whether political performativity is meant to be an end in itself.”<sup>45</sup> Like the Best Party, and quite unlike the American satirists “Billionaires for Bush” that Angelique Haugerud has recently studied, there was no standard metadiscursive protocol in which counter-summitteers could “step out of character” to comment on their practice. Haugerud’s activists sought to “use irony as a Trojan Horse ... to win the attention of the media or a voter and then break character to explain our message in plain terms.”<sup>46</sup> The counter-summits, on the contrary, hesitated to embrace irony, and thus deprived themselves of reflexive space.

If we think back to Dominique’s lament at the end of the Brussels counter-summit, again I would suggest that perhaps it was not merely a complaint about contingent problems of language, French localism, and so on. Perhaps instead Dominique was responding to the sense that there was something ideologically askew within the very form of the counter-summit. These critical laments could be read not as a cry to better enact the forms of official summits, but rather as an invitation to rebuild an oppositional internationalism around some *different* form of coherence and togetherness. But such an alternate format was not forthcoming, and although later in 2011 the far-left “Knowledge Liberation Front” organized two last “transnational meetings” in Barcelona and post-revolutionary Tunis, it seems that this particular form of internationalist mimesis was not destined to endure.<sup>47</sup> André Drainville, writing from Québec City, had previously commented on the altermondialist program that “Aping the ways of the ruling class is a sure way to fall into easy ambushes.”<sup>48</sup> Drainville’s caustic idiom of “aping” goes rather too far towards belittling and animalizing mimesis as such. But this paper’s case does leave us with a Drainvillean lesson in the constraints of political form, and in the inherent risks of miming the forms of one’s political opponents.

---

ELI THORKELSON is Lecturer in Social Anthropology at Stellenbosch University. He writes about French university politics, culture, and precarious labor, and is working on an ethnographic book about the historical contradictions of left-wing philosophy in the Paris banlieue, tentatively entitled *Disappointed Utopia: Radical Philosophy in Postcolonial France*. He blogs about his research at Decasia (<https://decasia.org/>) and more generally about critical ethnography of higher education at Academography (<https://academography.org/>). Email: [eli.thorkelson@gmail.com](mailto:eli.thorkelson@gmail.com)



## Notes

\* I am grateful for feedback on this paper from Jessica Namakkal, Emile Chabal, and the Rethinking Europe workshop at the University of Minnesota (2011); from Fabian Arzuaga and the Social Theory workshop at the University of Chicago (2014); and from Charles Soulié, Meghan Morris, Chris Thorkelson, and the *French Politics, Culture & Society* reviewers and editorial staff. My primary debt remains, as always, with my research participants.

1. See Claire-Akiko Brisset, ed., *L'Université et la recherche en colère: Un mouvement social inédit* (Broissieux: Éditions Croquant, 2009); Olivier Beaud, Alain Caillé et al., *Refonder l'université: Pourquoi l'enseignement supérieur reste à reconstruire* (Paris: La Découverte, 2010).
2. Eli Thorkelson, "The Infinite Rounds of the Stubborn: Reparative Futures at a French Political Protest," *Cultural Anthropology* 31, 4 (2016): 493–519; Marcos Ancelovici, "Social Movements and Protest Politics," in *Developments in French Politics 4*, ed. Alistair Cole, Patrick Le Galès, and Jonah Levy (Houndmills, UK: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), 74–91.
3. Robi Morder, "'Devaquet si tu savais', 30 ans après, l'espace d'une génération!" *Mediapart*, <https://blogs.mediapart.fr/robi-morder/blog/241116/devaquet-si-tu-savais-30-ans-apres-lespace-dune-generation>, 25 November 2016.
4. Emile Chabal, *A Divided Republic: Nation, State and Citizenship in Contemporary France* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015).
5. Jacques Attali et al., *Pour un modèle européen d'enseignement supérieur*, official report, ministère de l'Éducation nationale, de la Recherche et de la Technologie (1998). For policy background, see Christine Musselin, *The Long March of French Universities* (New York: Routledge Falmer, 2004).
6. Jürgen Schriewer, "'Rationalized Myths' in European Higher Education: The Construction and Diffusion of the Bologna Model," *European Education* 41, 2 (2009), 35.
7. *Ibid.*, 34–39. An international university reform program was also congenial to the German, Italian, and British ministers of education of the period for a range of domestic reasons. See Pauline Ravinet, "The Sorbonne Meeting and Declaration: Actors, Shared Vision and Europeanisation," paper presented at Second Euredocs International Conference, <http://euredocs.sciences-po.fr/en/conference/2005/ravinet.pdf>, 2005.
8. Ole Henckel and Susan Wright, "The Bologna Process: A Voluntary Method of Coordination and Marketisation?" *LATISS - Learning and Teaching in the Social Sciences* 1, 2 (2008): 1–24.
9. Sandrine Garcia, "L'expert et le profane: qui est juge de la qualité universitaire?" *Genèses* 70 (2008): 66–87.
10. Bertrand Geay, ed., *La Protestation étudiante: Le mouvement du printemps 2006* (Paris: Raisons d'agir, 2009).
11. Brisset, *L'Université et la recherche en colère*, 6–25.
12. While it is certainly the case that this movement aimed mainly to contest European university policies, several considerations push me away from designating it mainly as European. For one thing, pan-European identity was at best an aspiration here, never something that felt actual or that took priority over national identification. As the Brussels case shows, "Europeanization" was pictured as a practice of translation and social exchange across difference,

- not as an emergent intracontinental identity. In addition, some key organizers for the Brussels meeting came from the SNESup's Secteur International, which dealt with foreign solidarity and international dialogues, and calling the counter-summits "internationalist" helps hint at this project. Finally, calling this project "internationalist" helps to situate it within the history of the left.
13. "Printemps 2010," *Sauvons l'Université*, <http://www.sauvonsluniversite.com/spip.php?article3489>, 23 March 2010.
  14. This activist internationalism had developed by way of a specific altermondialist political history that had developed a series of counter-summits to parallel the official G8 summits (e.g., Jeffrey Juris, "Social Forums and their Margins: Networking Logics and the Cultural Politics of Autonomous Space," *Ephemeria* 5, 2 (2005): 253–272). By April 2009, there was even a political critique of this developing tradition put forward by student militants at Paris 8: "Des contre-sommets, pour quoi faire?" circulated among activists at the Université de Paris 8 on 29 April 2009. I would note here, though, that while the altermondialist tradition often sought to be global in scope, the anti-Bologna movements remained internationalist without being globalist.
  15. See Michael Taussig, *Mimesis and Alterity: A Particular History of the Senses* (New York: Routledge, 1993); Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (New York: Routledge, 1999), 163–180; Dick Hebdige, *Subculture: The Meaning of Style* (London: Methuen, 1979).
  16. One can write this history as a history of artistic genres, media, and cultural appropriation; one can also write it as the iterative history of activist tactics: e.g., Angelique Haugerud, *No Billionaire Left Behind: Satirical Activism in America Today* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2013).
  17. Taussig, *Mimesis and Alterity*, xviii.
  18. Collectif Printemps 2010, "Invitation/Inscription/Programme," <http://www.snesup.fr/sites/default/files/asset/Invitation-Sommet-alternatif.pdf>.
  19. Hebdige, *Subculture*, 29.
  20. Mladen Dolar, "The Comic Mimesis," *Critical Inquiry* 43, 2 (2017), 575.
  21. Dolar, "The Comic Mimesis," 580.
  22. Begoña Aretxaga, "Playing Terrorist: Ghastly Plots and the Ghostly State," *Journal of Spanish Cultural Studies* 1, 1 (2000), 53.
  23. *Ibid.*, 45.
  24. Dolar, "The Comic Mimesis," 579.
  25. Marc Abélès, "Modern Political Ritual: Ethnography of an Inauguration and a Pilgrimage by President Mitterrand," *Current Anthropology* 29, 3 (1988), 395.
  26. Cris Shore, *Building Europe: The Cultural Politics of European Integration* (London: Routledge, 2000), 50.
  27. Italian G7 Presidency 2017, "Origin and Development," <http://www.g7italy.it/en/history>.
  28. Barbara M. Kehm, Jeroen Huisman, and Bjørn Stensaker, *The European Higher Education Area: Perspectives on a Moving Target* (Rotterdam: Sense Publishers, 2009).
  29. Ruth Keeling, "The Bologna Process and the Lisbon Research Agenda: The European Commission's Expanding Role in Higher Education Discourse," *European Journal of Education* 41, 2 (2006): 203–223.
  30. Carl Death, "Summit Theatre: Exemplary Governmentality and Environmental Diplomacy in Johannesburg and Copenhagen," *Environmental Politics* 20, 1 (2011): 1–19.

31. Annie Rudd, "Erich Salomon's Candid Camera and the Framing of Political Authority," *Information & Culture* 52, 4 (2017), 415.
32. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5lktX1Ra5WU>.
33. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ytTqT03275Q>.
34. Isabelle Bruno/Médiapart, "Réforme de l'Université: il n'y a pas que la France qui résiste," <http://sauvons-lecole.over-blog.com/article-29283762.html>, 21 March 2009.
35. See Collectif Printemps 2010, "Notre agenda Europe 2020," <http://www.sauvonsluniversite.com/spip.php?article3619>; European Council, "Conclusions – 25/26 March 2010," <http://register.consilium.europa.eu/doc/srv?l=EN&f=ST%207%202010%20INIT>.
36. For instance, George Katsiaficas argues that in 1968, "The vision which was fought for in May knew no national boundaries." See *The Imagination of the New Left: A Global Analysis of 1968* (Boston: South End, 1987), 104.
37. Attac France, "Le Contre-G8 éducation recherche est maintenu!" <https://france.attac.org/actus-et-medias/salle-de-presse/articles/le-contre-g8-education-recherche-est-maintenu>, 26 April 2011.
38. Sommet mondial des universités, "Après-Sommet," [http://web.archive.org/web/20110820105309/http://www.university-summit2011.org/dijon\\_page.php?page=13](http://web.archive.org/web/20110820105309/http://www.university-summit2011.org/dijon_page.php?page=13).
39. Le Chat Noir Emeutier, "Sommet du G20 des universités à Dijon annulé par peur d'émeutes et de 'black blocs': pour Rebsamen, c'est 'alerte sur la ville, v'là les anarchistes!'" <https://lechatnoiremeutier.wordpress.com/2011/04/22/sommet-du-g20-des-universites-a-dijon-annule-par-peur-demeutes-et-de-black-blocs-pour-rebsamen-cest-alerte-sur-la-ville-vla-les-anarchistes/>, 22 April 2011.
40. Aretxaga, "Playing Terrorist," 53.
41. Eli Thorkelson, "Hostile Futures: Radical Philosophy and the French University Movement of 2009" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Chicago, 2014).
42. Collectif Abélard, *Universitas calamitatum: Le livre noir des réformes universitaires* (Broissieux: Éditions du Croquant, 2003).
43. Thorkelson, "The Infinite Rounds of the Stubborn."
44. The comparison case for a counter-summit would perhaps be the anarchist form "spokescouncil," a collective meeting of collectives frequently used during the North American anti-globalization movement to come to a consensus on the parameters for mass action. See David Graeber, *Direct Action: An Ethnography* (Oakland, CA: AK Press, 2009).
45. Dominic Boyer, "Simply the Best: Parody and Political Sincerity in Iceland," *American Ethnologist* 40, 2 (2013), 277.
46. Haugerud, *No Billionaire Left Behind*, 141.
47. Knowledge Liberation Front, "Meeting," <http://web.archive.org/web/20120308124236/http://www.knowledgeliberationfront.org/meeting.html>.
48. André Drainville, "Beyond Altermondialisme: Anti-Capitalist Dialectic of Presence," *Review of International Political Economy* 12, 5 (2005), 903.