

# Prologue

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## Revise the Canon

### The Duty to Remember is Not Sovereign

Linda Nochlin has taught me that while a wish to bring certain moments of collective amnesia to general knowledge might admittedly be justifiable, it can paradoxically prove to be counterproductive. Shedding light upon certain veiled practices cannot be envisaged without a critical analysis that can and must acutely consider its own territory. In “Why Have There Been No Great Women Artists?” the author takes a distance from the actions of overexposure and legitimation of veiled knowledge undertaken by her own sisters, who at the time belonged to the Women Art Coalition and the Women’s Art in Revolution groups, the first artist protest groups stemming from the Women’s Liberation Movement. It is therein that lies, in my opinion, her literally revolutionary contribution. From this strategic and discursive deviation, Nochlin names and describes a chain of correlative actions between the emancipation movements that were rapidly expanding in the end of the 1960s on the one hand, and the process of calling into question the Humanities’ epistemological principles on the other. What the North American intellectual saw in these marches and protests was not a blind spot; she rather discerned a disjunctive force, also called, in Michel de Certeau’s words, a founding rupture.<sup>1</sup> This founding rupture is driven by expressions of singularity rubbing and grating against enunciations marked by universality; from then on liberating “questions that were *unheard* and whose *answers* were *unspoken*, that remained to be sought in [...] a *labor of common elucidation*.”<sup>2</sup>

1. “Founding rupture” is a concept elaborated as a reading of the first May ‘68 actions in France. De Certeau was one of the first intellectuals to extol the May ‘68 events, to deliver an immediate analysis of their distinct importance and therefore to refute authoritarian arguments ordering to control social chaos: “Last May, speech was

taken the way, in 1789, the Bastille was taken,” Michel de Certeau, *The Capture of Speech and Other Political Writings*, trans. Tom Conley (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997), 11.

2. *Ibid.*, viii.

This labor of elucidation is entitled *Revise the Canon*, to pay tribute to the visionary pioneer that was Linda Nochlin. *Revise the Canon* pursues what Nochlin advocates should be figured out and identified in the art historical field: “The white Western male viewpoint, unconsciously accepted as *the* viewpoint of the art historian, may—and does—prove to be inadequate not merely on moral or ethical grounds, or because it is elitist, but on purely intellectual ones. [...] At a moment when all disciplines are becoming more self-conscious [...] such uncritical acceptance of ‘what is’ as ‘natural’ may be intellectually fatal.”<sup>3</sup>

Nochlin’s call is a founding gesture, insofar as the repeated experiences of women’s exclusion from knowledge, creation, teaching, political formations have placed them/us in a position of exteriority and invisibility inciting them/us to define them/ourselves by contrast, by opposition to numerous essentializing and ontological constructions. The aims of *Revise the Canon* are contained in what follows: “Become a catalyst, an intellectual instrument, probing basic and ‘natural’ assumptions, providing a paradigm for other kinds of internal questioning, and in turn providing links with paradigms established by radical approaches in other fields.”<sup>4</sup>

## How to Not Trip and Fall Over the Same and the Other

By extension, the statements of difference between the sexes tacitly acting before this operation of *Revise the Canon* expand toward other types of discursive formations such as racism, social class, ageism, religion, geographical periphery, and urban marginalization. *Revise the Canon* undertakes to subvert the smooth functioning of the machinery transmitting these narratives. According to Jean-François Lyotard, the function of narrative is fully achieved in the process of a narrator whose “only claim to competence for telling the story is the fact that he has heard it himself. The current narratee gains potential access to the same authority simply by listening. It is claimed that the narrative is a faithful transmission (even if the narrative performance is highly inventive) and that it has been told ‘forever’ [...]. [Knowledge] clearly illustrates that a narrative tradition is also the tradition of the criteria defining a threefold competence—‘know-how,’ ‘knowing how to speak,’ and ‘knowing how to hear’—through which the community’s relationship to itself and its environment is played out. What is transmitted through these narratives is the set of pragmatic rules that constitutes the social bond.”<sup>5</sup>

3. *Ibid.*

4. Linda Nochlin, “Why Have There Been No Great Women Artists?,” in *Women, Art, and Power and Other Essays* (New York: Harper and Row, 1988), 146.

5. Jean-François Lyotard, *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge*, trans. Geoff Bennington and Brian Massumi (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1984), 20–21.

It was a feminist North American historian, present in the end of this volume, who passed on to me one of the first narratives on the West Coast. In October 2006, while I was travelling for the first time to Los Angeles, aspiring to learn more about *Womanhouse* and the Feminist Art Program, I embraced, for a long time, historian Moira Roth's description of the "West Coast" art scene: "On the East Coast, in those years (sixties), performance art was highly influenced by and blended with contemporary experiments in dance, music, poetry and theater. West Coast performance, on the other hand, responded far more directly and pungently to two primary influences outside the arts: the visionary, poetic, and anarchistic creeds of the decade itself, and the equally visionary and poetic, but less anarchistic ones of the early Women's Movement."<sup>6</sup>

What I retained from this first introduction to the matter were not so much the adjectives coming one after the other, whose juxtaposition sought to render the content of a relatively unknown West Coast mixture—where, for me, San Francisco, Los Angeles and San Diego happily blended into each other—but rather the geographical opposition between the West and East Coast, at the very heart of which the East Coast was considered an artistic reference point, a figure of the Self/Same, while the West Coast was, by negation, the outsider, the reverse side, the Other. I could have, with that velleity that newcomers and neophytes bear within them, unfolded one argument after the other for a counterhistory, distinct from a narrative presented as a classic history of the European artistic avant-gardes for which Paris became a center; and of their shift, from World War I onwards, toward another center, that of New York—the American land of welcome for the avant-gardes that were to come. *Revise the Canon*, however, warns us of this strangely familiar tension between the Same and the Other; that is—or at least I hope it is—its insolence. In *The Second Sex*, Simone de Beauvoir undoes the ontology of the Same and the Other while reaffirming the Other as the negative of the Same, following the path of Alexandre Kojève's master and slave—dear to Jean-Paul Sartre and Jacques Lacan. In the Enlightenment's encyclopedic tradition, *The Second Sex* takes up, through the prism of the feminine subject, literary, sociological, symbolic, and scientific discourses all at once—without, however, putting into question their contexts of enunciation. Linda Nochlin writes that just as the production of knowledge concerning women artists didn't/doesn't guarantee their recognition or complete legitimacy, historical catch-up sessions, programs or events on the Los Angeles scene are not sufficient—they can even have

6. Moira Roth, "Coming of Age: California Performance Art in 1980," 1980, box 53, folder 15, Allan Kaprow Papers, Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles.

harmful consequences in its outreach and transmission. *Revise the Canon* is rooted in an epistemology that helps me take a distance from this type of narrative, all too rapidly associating the Southern California artistic scene with an otherness, a singularity re-instituting it as the other side of the Same—that is, of New York and its European elective affinities. How, then, and from where can one start?

## In the Canyon

*Revise the Canon* in the land of SoCal would start here. That is, not in the 1950s, the historical momentum chosen, for example, by Catherine Grenier for the *Los Angeles* exhibition at the Pompidou Centre in 2006, or by the Getty Research curatorial team for their *Pacific Standard Time* in 2011, but rather in the late 19th and early 20th century, when a certain genealogy, dear to Michel Foucault, was already making socialist, Marxist, pacifist, proto-feminist utopias flirt with the imagery staging a certain culture of American pioneers.

## The Monte Verità Spirit in SoCal

Some years before World War I was declared, certain well-known figures famous in Germany and Switzerland for their engagement in “life reform” movements had fled from Europe to find refuge in Santa Barbara, Palm Springs, and Los Angeles. From east to west, pacifism, in all its most radical forms, was one of the “maternal breasts”<sup>7</sup> nourishing all these heterogeneous groups, inspired by *Lebensreform* and *Naturmenschen*. These two Germanic trends, founders of micro-societies on Monte Verità, had been conceived in reaction to the intensification of the Industrial Revolution in Europe. They relied mainly on nature’s benefits in order to treat the diverse ills of the urban crowds overpopulating the changing cities of the late 19th century. *Lebensreform* and *Naturmenschen* attracted a great interest, which generated a multitude of texts with emancipatory principles inspired by vegetarianism, raw food, thermal treatments, and naturism; and which led to the construction of sanatoriums in the countryside while also propelling the creation of spontaneous children and teenagers’ mixed groups called the *Wandervögel*. It was a youth momentarily free from parental supervision, deliberately wandering, roaming through Germany, Switzerland and England on foot with a backpack, and counting within its ranks all political allegiances before becoming instrumentalized by National Socialism.

7. See *Monte Verità, les mamelles de la vérité* (*Monte Verità. Breasts of Truth*), eds. Harald Szeemann

and Armando Dadò (Ascona: Fondazione Carl Weidemeyer, 1978). Exhibition catalog.

Hermann Sexauer—founder of the first natural food store in Santa Barbara during World War I—had participated, in his childhood, in the Wandervögel's pagan rituals and communions with nature. In 1906, he left Germany for New York, where he taught Esperanto for some years. Tired of the big city, he then moved to Florida where he met his wife, Frieda Niedermuller, an artist and botanist in Berkeley. They were legally married in a health food store in San Francisco. Sexauer's Natural Food had been created in 1916 and closed its doors in 1967 in Quail Canyon, Santa Barbara. Sexauer cultivated all sorts of vegetables and fruit on this land, but also constructed wooden houses in the trees. His political convictions, however—he was an anarchist, pacifist and naturist—were so negatively received that, during both World Wars, he had to pay for them with a prolonged internment in American military camps. From this bio-political experience he drew the necessary analyses to structure the rhetoric of his public lectures in favor of civil disobedience, especially during the Vietnam War.

Just like Hermann Sexauer, John and Vera Richter—who in 1917 founded the Eutropheon in Los Angeles, a restaurant serving raw and vegetarian food—were passionate readers of Germanic works advocating alternatives to dietary and bodily habits for better health. These books, which would later become the bibles of naturopathy, were authored by the Germans Arnold Ehret, Louis Kuhne, and Adolf Just. Ehret, after having run or simply participated in the Monte Verità Sanatorium,<sup>8</sup> went into exile in Los Angeles in 1914. Like other life reformers, Ehret also fled to avoid military conscription, living up to his ethical principles, inspired by pacifism and anarchism. In Los Angeles, he made a living giving lectures drawn from his book *Health and Healing Through Fasting* (1906). Sexauer and the Richters took very seriously the ideas of Kuhne, nicknamed “the father of the detoxifying sitz bath,” as well as those of Just, author of *Return to Nature! The True Natural Method of Healing and Living and the True Salvation of the Soul* (1903).<sup>9</sup> This naturopathy book was presented as a life manual in which all elements of everyday and human life's stages were considered from a holistic perspective.

“Live Food, Live People:” that was the founding and prophetic motto of the Eutropheon, a “live” or uncooked food restaurant. John and Vera Richter, who had Germanic origins,<sup>10</sup> were affiliated with the political movement New Justice. They both defended the Russian Revolution's ideals and distributed in their restaurant anti-authority manifestos featuring the portrait of the North

8. Lyra Kilston, “Kalifornication,” *Frieze*, April–May 2013. In this article, the author writes that Ehret “ran” the Monte Verità sanatorium, but according to other sources, he might have only been there for short periods. See Robert Landmann, *Ascona-Monte Verità* (Berlin: Ullstein, 1979) or Andreas Schwab, *Monte Verità - Sanatorium der Sehnsucht* (Zürich: Orell Füssli, 2003).

9. Originally published as *Kehrt zur Natur zurück! Die Heilweise der Natur nach ewigen Gesetzen* (Braunschweig: 1896).

10. John Richter's parents were German immigrants to the United States.

American socialist leader Eugene Debs. The Eutropheon's phonograph boomed out Hawaiian music while uncooked soups were served with a side of raw vegetables. The body builder community of Los Angeles's first weights rooms and fitness centers rubbed shoulders with the Californian *Naturmenschen*, the "nature boys." There, a certain corporeal Rousseauism flirted with an incendiary enthusiasm of naked bodies, as incarnated by Rudolf Laban's dancers at Monte Verità.<sup>11</sup>

The Sexauer Natural Food and Eutropheon idealists were convinced that the Revolution would have been more efficient had it been incited by an individual and rigorous bodily practice, a certain asceticism of the self. These outsider circles of an American way of life in-the-making were not so much proto-hippies, as it is sometimes written,<sup>12</sup> but rather active subjects of a hermeneutics of the self, as it was conceived by Michel Foucault in his last years. These others<sup>13</sup> of all kinds extended the deaf poems and blind gestures of the great West's hermits, mystics, libertines, pioneers, and outlaws of all sorts. They alone incarnated a critique of the *inoperative community* (Jean-Luc Nancy), according to which this concept had been limited to a temporally segmented conception of *De l'utopie!* (which could be translated as "Utopia!"), as reproved by philosopher Pierre Macherey: "Utopia!," that would mean, then: let us find again the path of utopia, let us reactivate the power of the challenge it contains, instead of leaving it unused and asserting that the time of utopia is over, while the ideologies of which it would ultimately only be the most condensed form are also "finished", declared to be null and void. Let us once more follow utopia in its disconcerting operations, let us dare go off track with it, becoming aware that, besides, it more often overly rational, rather than lacking in rationality."<sup>14</sup>

The nature boys—and more particularly one of them: eden ahbez—present(ed) us the necessity of adopting a genealogical perspective as an order. One of the amateur videos posted on YouTube shows him, three years before his death in 1995, featuring the modest attributes of the Los Angeles secular prophet: a faded blue van, loose white clothing, sandals and long white hair.<sup>15</sup> Surprisingly, avoiding the gaze of the camera, he refuses any connection with or willingness to talk about politics. It is as if a certain life ethics, that of the Southern California *Naturmenschen*, had shielded him against a pamphlet-level neoromanticism that led some of the illuminated revolutionaries towards the wave of Monte Verità's history's dystopic aspects: Nazism. Ahbez slept in

11. Gordon Kennedy, *The Children of the Sun: A Pictorial Anthology from Germany to California 1883–1949* (Mecca, CA: Nivaria Press, 1998).

12. Cf. articles on the nature boys on the *Frieze* and *East of Borneo* websites.

13. See note 7 above.

14. Pierre Macherey, *De l'utopie!* [in French] (Lille: De l'Incence de l'Éditeur, 2011), 11. Translation by Anna Leon.

15. Ultimesence, "A Short Talk with Ahbe (eden ahbez) Nature Boy," YouTube video, 5:07, February 23, 2007, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iIkFWfZnXT0>.

a tent on a daily basis, just like when he settled under the Hollywood letters in Griffith Park with his wife Anna and their son. In the early 1940s, he slept on the floor, played the piano in exchange for some vegetable soups at the Eutropheon, and went on long journeys by foot, in particular in the desert east of Los Angeles.

During one of his wanderings, ahbez met William Pester, another German political refugee and life reform enthusiast. Photographic archives show Pester in a hut made of wood and dried palm tree leaves with rustic furniture accommodating only the most basic needs; playing the guitar, his bare feet in the desert's soil. This pioneering figure of the Los Angeles nature boys, who had a crucial role in the path followed by ahbez, is close to the radicalism of Gustav Arthur Gräser, one of the founders of Monte Verità. Gräser, a hermit and poet whose texts were prohibited from publication under the Third Reich, then hid in the woods and under bus stop shelters, while traveling around thanks to the Wandervögel's pathways. He always practiced his poetry only to immediately destroy what he had produced.

In comparison with the nature boys' worry-free *douceur de vivre* emanating from group photos—especially through the solar presence of a Gipsy Boots—Gustav Arthur Gräser's figure marks a sharp contrast. One is instantly taken by the graphic and scrawny form of this migratory bird, extricated from the ruins of bombed German cities. Suddenly, one finds oneself considering this: what would have happened to this founder of Monte Verità and hero in the eyes of author Hermann Hesse (himself a spiritual father to the young North American anti-authoritarian generations of the 1960s and '70s), if he had deserted and crossed the United States all the way to the Pacific Coast?

These last lines look back on the impact wave of an intellectual and political avant-garde, whose vibrations and turmoils resounded for several decades in Southern California, a European radical pacifism's land of welcome and new Babylon. This pacifism in exile during World War I formed a solid critical framework against the nation state much later and became a cornerstone for emancipation movements boiling up in the late 1960s. The state of mind necessary for the elaboration of notions of utopian knowledge and radical pedagogy was born from this genealogical womb; and it is to this that we owe what follows.

Utopian knowledge mainly emanates from two inspiring texts. First, that of the collective book *Utopian Pedagogy: Radical Experiments Against Neoliberal Globalisation* (2007), edited by Mark Cote, Richard J.F. Day, and Greig de Peuter, which revisits the struggles that stirred, these last few years, the humanities departments of universities seriously undermined by reforms



with a hint of neoliberalism, as well as the multiple alternatives that followed both in academic and in activist fields; and which doesn't hesitate, in order to do so, to revive Pierre Macherey's "Utopia!" chanted in a state of intellectual desolation, confronting the surrounding political conservatism incarnated at the time by the figure of President Sarkozy. The other book, also an edited collection, is the invaluable and indispensable *Institutions by Artists*, edited by Kristina Lee Podesva and Jeff Khonsary. It dismisses the rhetoric of a hegemonic opposition between institutions and alternative spaces, making use of the same argumentative structures also used by the narratives in which lurk the roughly defined figures of the Same and the Other, tracked down by *Revise the Canon*: "In a related reassessment entitled 'From the Critique of Institutions to an Institution of Critique' (2005), [Andrea] Fraser argues that critique is never external to artists, but is very much intrinsic to their activities. For her, it's not a question of being against the institution: We are the institution. It's a question of what kind of institution we are, what kind of values we institutionalize, what forms of practice we reward, and what kinds of reward we aspire to. Because the institution of art is internalized, embodied, and performed by individuals, these are the questions that institutional critique demands we ask, above all, of ourselves. Finally, it is this self-questioning—more than a thematic like 'the institution,' no matter how broadly conceived—that defines 'the institution,' no matter how broadly conceived—that defines institutional critique as a practice."<sup>16</sup>

It is therefore by political necessity that *In the Canyon, Revise the Canon* today appeals to the diverse productions of utopian knowledge imbuing, in different ways, the following contributions. Its heuristic sources are magnificently presented in Janet Sarbanes's analysis of radical pedagogy, which could indeed only find its right place at the very beginning of this book. I still, however, have to explain my choice of the third term, in the subtitle's ending: Artist-Run Community Art Space. I have to admit that I had in mind iconoclast Julie Ault's exhibition catalogue *Alternative Art New York* (2002), published after an exhibition at The Drawing Center, which was at the time directed by the prospective curator Catherine de Zegher. Just like the definition of the West Coast provided by the category-defying Moira Roth, I identified, for a certain time, with Ault's question regarding the alternative spaces element in New York: "I have come to believe that the very different activities, ranging from 'wanting a slice of the pie' to 'wanting nothing less than revolution,' outlined in the chronology of this book do in fact embody a cultural, political, and artistic movement—perhaps not as clear-cut or as unified as one might wish but a

16. *Institutions by Artists*, eds. Kristina Lee Podesva and Jeff Khonsary (Vancouver: Fillip Editions, 2012), 13.



consequential movement nonetheless. What constitutes a movement? What distinguishes it from activities and events that, although related, function discretely? A movement implies shared concerns and overlapping agendas; it conjures up social configurations as well as communication and degrees of collaboration between individuals—one thing leading to another, migration of ideas and models, generative social process.”<sup>17</sup>

Editors Lauren Rosati and Mary Anne Staniszewski pursued this inquiry in the outstanding publication *Alternative Histories: New York Art Spaces 1960 to 2010* (2012), which offers an invaluable collection of archives and accounts on the subject. There was one thing, however, that I considered certain when I embarked upon the *In the Canyon, Revise the Canon* adventure and contacted the contributors in November 2013: that I would not produce a review or an inventory, and even less a chronology or a historicization of alternative spaces in Los Angeles and SoCal, but rather grasp, in its entirety and heterogeneity, the “what” that *In the Canyon* can reveal about my contemporary interest, my expectations and future perspectives within a community of people, a country, a continent, and its relation to other continents. I replaced Julie Ault’s question about what a movement might be by an enquiry concerning the reasons for such a history today. That is, once again, by my same interest in the fabrication of knowledge and its conditions of enunciation.

While the exile of certain figures of the Monte Verità spirit has allowed me to call attention to the how and where to start *In the Canyon, Revise the Canon*, and thus to clarify the role played by utopian knowledge and radical pedagogy in the following texts, the principles of friendship as new forms of a social contract at the core of the Chicago Hull-House, another example of socialist utopias in action, will help me situate and accord the whole charge of insolence contained in what I mean when I speak of an artist-run community art space—at this point, I thank Mark Allen for having left Shannon Jackson’s book<sup>18</sup> lying around in the Machine Project apartment’s library.

17. Ault, *Alternative Art New York, 1965–1985* (New York: The Drawing Center: 2002), 4.

18. Shannon Jackson, *Lines of Activity: Performance,*

*Historiography, Hull-House Domesticity* (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 2001).

## Hull-House <sup>19</sup>

Jane Addams and Ellen Gates Starr were two friends who belonged to the early generation of graduate young women grappling with twenty-something ennui.<sup>20</sup> In modeling the Hull-House project on Toynbee Hall, a social reform center set up by a community of university men who, while living there, held their recreational clubs and social gatherings at the settlement house in London's East End, Addams and Gates Starr were escaping the destiny of Emma Bovary. In 1889, they opened a house in a destitute urban neighborhood, Chicago's Nineteenth Ward, and decided to work toward a socially responsible community in contrast to mainstream society—i.e., industrialized, bourgeois, paternalistic, and nationalistic. Addams and Gates Starr, who both came from the intellectual elite and were marginalized due to their status as unmarried women, supported inclusiveness toward the lower classes, single women, neglected children, and European immigrants (Russian Jews, Italians, French, Germans) with a conviction that mirrored that of the early African-American civil rights campaigner William Edward Burghardt Du Bois: "Again, what is this theory of benevolent guardianship for women, for the masses, for Negroes—for 'lesser breeds without the law'? It is simply the old cry of privilege, the old assumption that there are those in the world who know better what is best for others than those others know themselves, and who can be trusted to do this best."<sup>21</sup>

From its inception, the front room of Hull-House welcomed unions, members of political parties, and academics who shared with the Hull residents the ideals of a process of inclusion. Later, during the economic depression of 1893–94, Hull-House volunteers—increasingly irritated by the lengthy rhetorical evenings of the political groups—quickly took the decision to stay clear of those intellectuals or radical leftist militants who were all too absorbed in their taste for democratic sentimentalism, and to reverse the leadership systems that were the common denominator of police forces, industrialists, and political lobbies, by working from fellowship. The interweaving of private life and the public activities of the house as well as the involvement of several residents with strikers' movements reinforced the Hull-House pioneers in their rejection of "the indignity of speaking for others" (to borrow the words of both Gilles Deleuze and Michel Foucault). Some of the leaders in the workers' movements were indeed quick to brandish expert opinions and sociopolitical theories about the "masses," "classes," and "ignorant voters."

<sup>19</sup>. One part of this text on Hull-House has been previously published in *Composing the Difference*, ed. Virginie Bobin (Dijon: Presses du réel, 2015).

<sup>20</sup>. Jackson, 41.

<sup>21</sup>. W.E.B. Du Bois as quoted in Charlene Haddock Seigfried, *Pragmatism and Feminism* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996), 77.

For the Hull-House settlers, democracy was not defensive or sectarian: it was a process in which the means mattered much more than the results. The process of self-affirmation rested on a day-to-day companionship that allowed words and testimonies—on each and everyone's needs, wants, and projects—to be heard. Diametrically opposed to charitable organizations, which Addams and Gates Starr suspected of being used in election tactics, Hull-House gave the means to understand the effects of individualization and its correlative, marginalization; to live collectively as *sans-parts* (Jacques Rancière) in order to transform the situation through cooperation. In this way, Hull-House prefigured the *free spaces* later set up by feminist consciousness-raising collectives, used notably as the aesthetic and political paradigms behind *Womanhouse* and the Women's Building—two experiences of the *capture of speech* (Michel de Certeau) that Allan Kaprow admired.

At Hull-House, the sort of “feminist factory”<sup>22</sup> that would emerge in North American cities in the 1970s was already at work, in the manner described by Geneviève Fraisse, when, despite being treated “either as a façade (what offers itself to the gaze) or a symbol”—unable to access truth or reason although often symbolically embodying it—“women manage to switch from object to subject.”<sup>23</sup>

At the beginning of the twentieth century, the Hull-Housers as thinking subjects were acutely aware that they personified, outside the confines of the house, an alternative to modern industrialization. This alternative could pave the way for a new democratic governance, one that would take into account the “necessity of applying the power of the *state* to prevent the modern industrial system from destroying its own workers, particularly women and children,”<sup>24</sup> writes Florence Kelley, Cornell University graduate, lawyer, socialist, and Hull-House resident at the time. This approach was rooted in “domestic governance,”<sup>25</sup> the template of which was no longer that of Rousseau's social contract—the mononuclear family gathered around the family head—but a family composed and/or chosen for and by the heterogeneity of its members. By devising for themselves a brotherly and sisterly way of life within the public/private space of Hull-House, the settlers were building, through actions and agency, a pragmatist system of equalitarian division of labor—domestic, logistical, pedagogical, and sociocultural—at odds with mainstream political institutions. The bedrooms were regularly borrowed for activities such as the making of costumes for the plays put on at Hull-House—an auditorium was built after a few years along with a gymnasium, an art gallery, and a restaurant—

22. Geneviève Fraisse, *La Fabrique du féminisme*, trans. Clémentine Bobin (Paris: ed. Le Passager clandestin, 2012).

23. *Ibid.*, 100–1.

24. Quoted in Seigfried, 78. Emphasis mine.

25. Fraisse, 329.

or the production of political leaflets. There was no distinction between offices or workshops and private space. Likewise, a mixed-gender and non-proprietary use of the bedrooms was encouraged. Some nights, male and female guests would end up sharing the bedrooms of the volunteer residents of Hull-House.

Unlike everywhere else at the time, the single status of women was not seen as suspect—either as a social anomaly or as being on the fringe of amorality. On the contrary, it was affirmed, understood, and organized. Addams had put Marry Kenney in charge of overseeing the friendships in process between the different “Jane(s),” the name given to the single women of the house. Kenney would organize lectures, conferences, and cultural outings for this group of mostly educated and financially independent women. The unmarried women outings quickly became situations of both empowerment and emancipation in the male-sequestered public sphere; furthermore, their social actions became a form of plain political lobbying for a hitherto nameless section of society. “When Kenney invoked her fellow women’s interest in ‘outings,’ she referred to the host of heterosocial amusements on the urban scene. [...] Saying that ‘the social spirit was just as cooperative as the financial relationship,’ she and fellow boarders organized many an amusing evening for themselves. As a labor organizer and Jane Club president, Kenney’s dual role meant that labor politics and sociality often mixed.”<sup>26</sup>

According to Jackson, the cultural deconstruction of natural links of affiliation favored, on the one hand, a collective principle of adoption between Hull-House “brothers” and “sisters,” without blood relations but united in their elective affinities and progressive worldview; and, on the other hand, a queer practice of sentimental friendships between men and women: “It might be helpful to notice not simply that strong women did not take men (not simply that women with ‘careers’ did not have husbands) but, more profoundly, that the initial task of developing the field of public welfare was coextensive with the undoing of a private, heterosexual family.”<sup>27</sup>

Public aspirations for equal workers’ rights as they were debated in the streets, the factories, and the city were filtering through to the private sphere and came to challenge the heterosexual parental unit. At the same time, private and social affairs such as the single status of women, poverty, or immigration were turning into a pilot scheme for an increasingly inclusive democracy, serving a *socializing democracy*. The same intelligence was applied to the most trivial daily rituals, of seemingly no civic significance: cooking, bathing, and child-minding.

26. Jackson, 139.

27. *Ibid.*, 168–9.

Fairly quickly, the founders of Hull-House understood the need to convert some of the reception rooms of the Victorian mansion into a nursery and daycare center to allow mothers to work more freely. Educational activities were favored and the point of view of the child was taken into account, something that was totally absent from the more repressive, traditional methods of education. The work of the nanny was highly valued, on account of her knowledge, skills, and civic role. The most advanced nutritional information was used to put together the meals served to children and adults in the Hull-House restaurant. Addams and Starr had opted to equip the kitchens with the latest household technologies (for oven and steam cooking) and wanted this newfound nutritional accessibility to go hand-in-hand with physical education, practiced in the newly built gymnasium. Lessons in cooking, house hygiene, and the healthcare of women and children were also available. At Hull-House, homemaking became a science—one of the residents had become one of the first professors of women's medicine at Harvard—and the shared tasks of the brother and sister settlers had a subversive civic dimension that foreshadowed the Marxist-feminist slogan of the late 1960s: “the personal is political.”

The author of *The Politics of Friendship* notes that the notion of friendship runs through the history of philosophy from Ancient Greece to this day, leaving its mark on the common conception and representation of democracy. Reprising the Aristotelian maxim quoted by Montaigne, “O friends, there is no friend,” Jacques Derrida points out that friendship can only exist in rarity, at odds with the multitude, as well as in exemplarity, singularity, and in a responsibility to others. The *philia*, the essence of friendship, is “the community of those without community.”<sup>28</sup> The figure of the brothers (or false-brothers in instances of treason) is constitutive of friendship in philosophical discourses, overshadowing the place of sisters and sorority. From this androcentric and phallogocentric representation of friendship in canonical texts, Derrida notes the inextricable paradox of democracy: it is rooted in its respect for an irreducible singularity or heterogeneity; and yet at the same time, it cannot exist “without the ‘community of friends’ (*koînē ta philôn*), without the calculation of majorities, without identifiable, stabilizable, representable subjects, all equal.”<sup>29</sup> Derrida goes on to say: “These two laws are irreducible one to the other. Tragically irreconcilable and forever wounding.”<sup>30</sup>

The decades-long experience of the Hull-House settlers lies precisely in this blind spot, in this disjunction whose performativity makes and un-makes us as subjects living together in the city. It is no surprise that one of the earliest supporters of Addams and Gates Starr's initiative was the pragmatist

28. Georges Bataille, quoted by Jacques Derrida in *Politics of Friendship* (London: Verso, 2005), 47.

29. Derrida, 22.

philosopher John Dewey. In his 1916 text *In Democracy and Education*, Dewey addresses the Aristotelian dualism at the root of an unjust social order: “[Dewey] criticizes Aristotle’s theoretical separation of the practical and the intellectual because such a metaphysical position legitimates and extends an unequal and unjust order.”<sup>31</sup>

It is now for us to reassess further *The Politics of Friendship* in light of North American pragmatist and feminist writings and adventures.

My use of the notion of artist-run community art spaces is meant as an extension of the socio-democratic, pragmatist and proto-feminist experimentations of the Hull-House, which complement perfectly Derrida’s text. In this sense, the different narratives and analyses concerning past or ongoing artist-run community art spaces included in *In the Canyon, Revise the Canon* are differentiated from the non-profit space, the artist-run space, or other such kinds of categories, while at the same time embracing their political motives, thanks to a perspective going back not only to the 1960s, ’70s and ’80s but also to the late 19th century in Europe and the United States. May the articulation between utopian knowledge, radical pedagogy, and the artist-run community art space produce powerful germs of the catalysis *Revise the Canon*... *In the Canyon*, and vice versa!

30. *Ibid.*

31. Charlene Haddock Seigfried, “John Dewey’s Pragmatist Feminism,” in *Feminist Interpretations of John*

Dewey, ed. Charlene Haddock Seigfried (University Park, PA: Penn State University Press, 2002), 56.