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CENTRE FOR CULTURAL RESEARCH

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The Birth of Territory

This paper provides a brief overview of a longer project tracing the emergence of territory in Western political thought. It suggests that territory is far more complicated than modern scholarship would have us believe, and should be interrogated as word, concept and practice. The argument is made that territory needs to be understood not simply as a political-economic or political-strategic relation, but also as a political-legal and political-calculative category that is dependent on the existence of a range of techniques. Three key moments are then analyzed: the translation of Greek political thought into Latin and its use by temporal power theorists in their struggles with the Papacy; the rediscovery of Roman law and its application in fourteenth century debates in Italy; and German disputes about the relative standing of the constituent parts of the Holy Roman Empire. The last, which will be treated in most detail, can be found especially in the writings of Andreas Knichen, Johannes Althusius and Gottfried Leibniz. These are key elements in tracing the birth of territory.

Professor Stuart Elden's research is at the intersection of politics, philosophy and geography. His books include: *Terror and Territory: The Spatial Extent of Sovereignty* (2009), *Speaking Against Number: Heidegger, Language and the Politics of Calculation* (2006), *Understanding Henri Lefebvre: Theory and the Possible* (2004) and *Mapping the Present: Heidegger, Foucault and the project of a spatial history* (2001). He is the editor of *Society and Space (Environment and Planning D)*. He has also been the reviews editor of the *Review of International Political Economy* and was one of the founding editors of *Foucault Studies*. At Durham he is an Associate Director of the International Boundaries Research Unit, having served as Academic Director from 2004-2007. He is currently a visiting fellow at the Humanities Research Centre, Australian National University, until May 2011.

Matteo Pasquinelli

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Informationalism, Environmentalism and the Notion of Surplus

Today the information commons are often presented as the realm of the 'digital abundance' against the scarcity of the natural commons and the environmental crisis. Along this polarization between immaterial abundance and material scarcity many theoretical and political schools have been shaped. Opposite to a plain notion of 'surplus', my contribution will discuss how the information revolution features a specific form of 'excessive production' that is misunderstood by critical theory and political economy. We are still in need of a theory of value to properly describe contemporary capitalism in its network and cognitive extension. New definitions of immaterial surplus and energetic surplus will be scrutinized in order to provide a different perspective on both media theory and environmental discourse.

Matteo Pasquinelli is a writer, curator and researcher. He completed his doctorate at Queen Mary University of London with a thesis on the new forms of conflict within knowledge economy and cognitive capitalism. He wrote the book *Animal Spirits: A Bestiary of the Commons* (2008) and edited the collections *Media Activism* (2002) and *C'Lick Me: A Netporn Studies Reader* (2007). He writes and lectures frequently at the intersection of French philosophy, media culture and Italian post-*operaismo*. He is a member of the international collectives Uninomade and Edufactory and also of the jury of Transmediale 2011 festival in Berlin. In Amsterdam, together with Katrien Jacobs and the Institute of Network Cultures, he organised the *Art and Politics of Netporn Conference* (2005) and the *C'Lick Me Festival* (2007). At Queen Mary University of London he co-organised the series of seminars *The Art of Rent* and the research network *The Factory of the Common* (2008-2009). From 2000 to 2009 he has been editor of the mailing list *Rekombinant*. Together with Wietske Maas he developed the art project *Urbanibalism*. His current project is a book about the history of the notion of *surplus* across biology, psychoanalysis, knowledge economy and the environmental discourse. He lives and works between Amsterdam and Berlin.

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