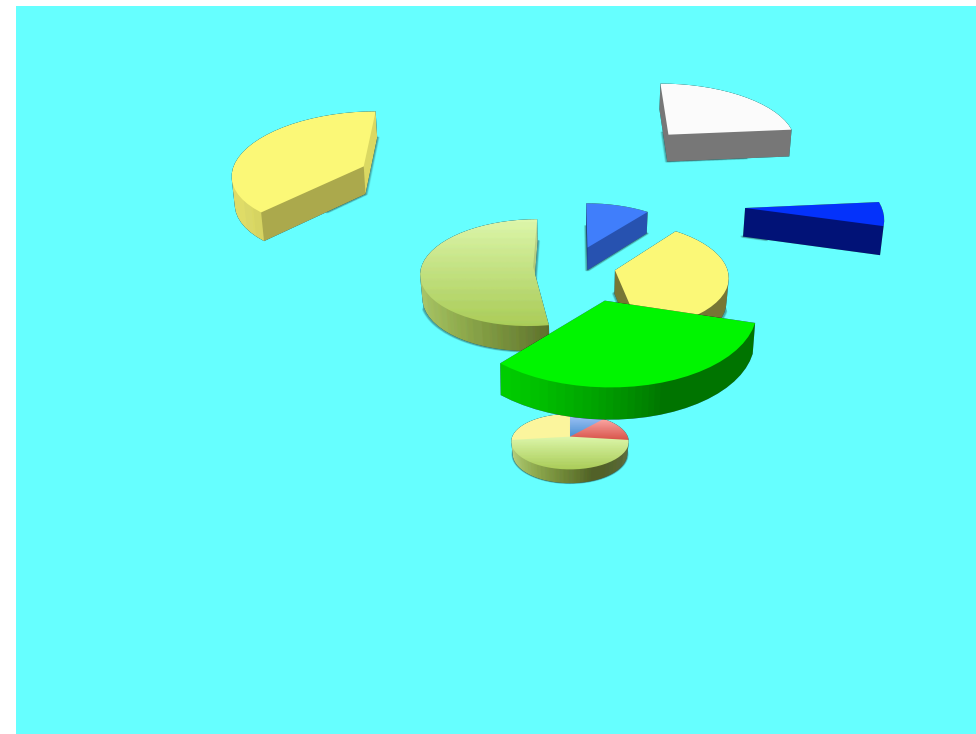


NATURAL / SOCIAL RESOURCES

A Crisis in Matters Between Them?



*Wealth is what Nature gives us
and what a reasonable man can make
out of the gifts of Nature
for his reasonable use*

William Morris

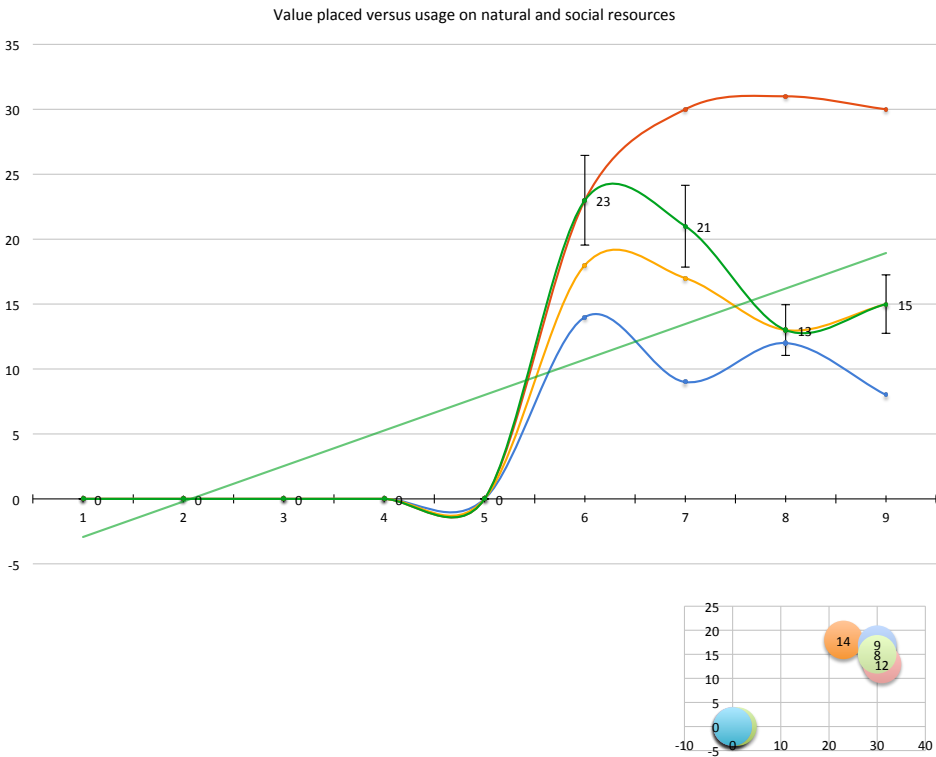
Initial survey of properties constituting natural and social resources and their co-dependencies

The origination of this document lies in the imminent and emergent conditions that have run through various states in recent months, yet have been latent from as far back as the second half of the 20th century. Significantly, attitudes towards what might have previously been easily delineated as nature and culture have become more complex due to various dramatic shifts in perception of how human life interacts with its habitat. What is presented here follows quantitative and qualitative analyses of moments when conflict has arisen due to the shortcomings of simple divisions between humanity’s actions and any other worldly factor. Inevitably, such tabulated formulas result in reductions of their own. Nevertheless, the aim is to provide some measure of equity of comparison between different world views – ideological, philosophical, economic, political, social, cultural, and others – which might not ultimately be as distinct as they are usually constituted. As a result, language itself falls into such a study marking out distinctions and confluences that are beyond the sensible or factual, and are highly context dependent.

	Natural	Social	Hybrid	Co-dependencies	
	Raw materials which can be used primarily for generating profit including petroleum, but also sunlight.	Social resources are post-natural ones. In fact, in the most traditional sense they are what is produced from natural resources and put into circulation within the social sphere – that is exchanged goods etc that have a purpose (in distinction from commodities which are surplus to requirements).	Increasingly SOCIAL are gaining value above natural ones. This is present in the market place as influencers, social networks are exploited as if they are natural resources. In investment capitalism the shift away from investing in commodities (in the literal sense of the word, famously orange juice and pork bellies being a real material made abstract in the stock market) move into hedge-fund management, shorting, and betting on how the market itself performs. While there is an interaction between the real stocks and bond and shares markets that do to some extent control values (shortages driving prices up, surplus down), market rushes, and other emotionally and mainly shared drives of traders (market panics, bank rushes) become like natural resources to be speculated on.	For corporations to extract natural resources a 'social licence' is required. There is no formal mechanism for this and it is not a legal or even political mechanism, but an assumed consensus to allow their activities to proceed. Examining what facilitates a particular social licence to be assumed would find different interests at play and therefore is a highly complex pact without any formal mechanism at its base and overlaps with the field of ethical business practices. Likewise it is fragile and might itself be seen as a social resource, or at least tool, that is most commonly employed by businesses to show legitimacy for their actions, but is also prone to be invoked by those at points of resistance. A social licence, therefore, reframes debates around natural resource practices into terms of social resources that are extra-economic and an-political in the usual sense. One description of	
	Renewable energy is as dependent on a natural resource as petroleum, but it is otherwise understood to be derived from one which would otherwise be left redundant in distinction from untapped.	However, today we talk about social resources in an immaterial sense they are services that are exchanged between different layers of society – individuals, communities, governance.	This is actually embedded in the theories of capital extolled by Marx, who registered seasonal change to the markets, and described them through similes and metaphors for natural cycles.	how this might be put into play is from the group Platform London who operate on the borders of art and activism (that is cultural and political); in order for an oil company to produce oil and transport it to the global market, it needs either the support or the silence of the population in those areas of the world where this takes place. Where the necessary support – or 'social licence to operate' – is not forthcoming, the ability of that company to carry out its business becomes seriously impaired.	
	Natural resources in the traditional sense are post-death when put into use. Minerals are the exception to this being never-living.	Social Resources are CONSENSUAL		The building of this social licence takes place to some extent in the countries of the distant oil fields, but to a far greater degree in the cities of the global North, such as London. BP and Shell have between them sponsored almost all of London's most prestigious museums and cultural institutions over the course of the last decade.	

Modulation of values of natural and social resources

Increasingly, social resources are gaining value above natural ones. This is present in the marketplace as influencers and the social networks they reside in are exploited as if they are themselves natural resources. In investment capitalism the shift away from trading in commodities (in the literal sense of the word, famously orange juice and pork barrels being a real material bought and sold in the abstract stock market) move into hedge-fund management, shorting, and betting on how the market itself performs. While there is an interaction between the real stocks and bond and shares markets that do impact on values to some extent (shortages driving prices up, surplus down), market rushes, and other emotionally and mainly shared drives of traders (market panics, bank rushes) become like natural resources to be speculated on. This is actually embedded in the theories of capital extolled by Marx in *Das Kapital*, who registered seasonal change to the markets, and described them through similes and metaphors for natural cycles.



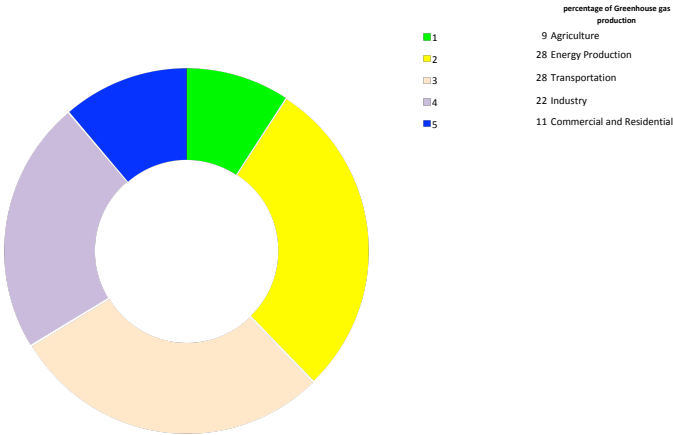
Comparative case study of two incidents of social and natural resource interactions

Two independent situations arose in the course of 3 months between November 2018 and January 2019 in which the relationships with the petroleum industrial and social resources came into particularly sharp focus - the gasoline shortages in Mexico and the *Gilets Jaunes* protests in France. While the causes and results were distinct and varied, a comparison between them offers insights into the potential interaction of resources, their effects and affects at this time.

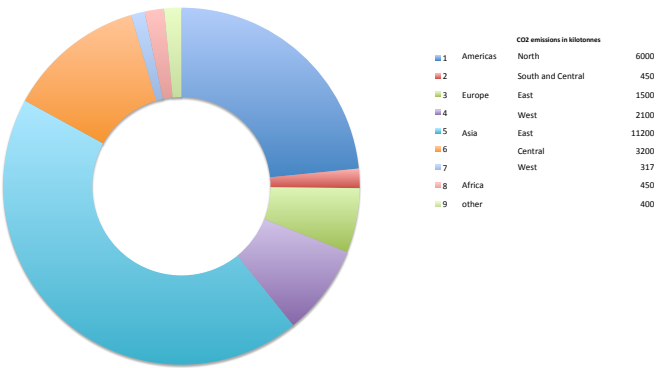
	Mexico	France
Causes	Due to improvements being made to the gasoline supply network of pipelines in the country in a bid to prevent the large-scale pirating of fuel, PEMEX, the nationalized petroleum company cut off supply temporarily in certain regions.	Increases to taxation on Diesel introduced by the French government as part of an ecological policy aimed at reducing carbon emissions.
Effects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In certain states this resulted in fuel shortages at pumping stations • A rush on gasoline ensued in many states with panic buying by customers • This rush on gasoline created further shortages in otherwise unaffected states • Long queues at already empty gas stations were observed across the country with armed guards and police sent in to maintain order • Industry supplies chains were unaffected due to diesel continuing to be available without interruption. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A large-scale, organized demonstration feed by social media took place in Paris with protestors symbolically wearing the high-visibility vests or 'Gilets Jaunes' required of all motorists in case of breakdown. • Large-scale protests in Paris and elsewhere caused major disruption to cities and frequently turned violent. • Protests continued over weeks and the causes became more various and, therefore, diffuse. • The French government relented and cancelled the tax increases on diesel
Affects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Apart from being reported on and minor fracas at gasoline pumps, no major protests were instigated and the shortage ran without significant impact despite Mexico citizens and small business being among the most petroleum dependent globally. • While no direct evidence is present, among the factors that may have mitigated against major protests include the 'honeymoon period' for the newly instated president AMLO whose policies are to target organized crime. • During the shortage, a widely reported pirating of a gasoline line occurred, resulting in a major explosion and a number of deaths and injuries underlining the need of the change in petroleum supply. However, these occurrences are common (hence the need) and this particular instance was brought to press attention and public interest by the gasoline shortages themselves. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Gilets Jaunes protestors themselves laid claim to the 1968 demonstrations in Paris, themselves part of an oft-cited historical lineage stretching back to the barricades and French Revolution that is suffused with nostalgia. • The organizers of the '68 revolution argued against this interpretation as the Gilets Jaunes protests were motivated by self-interest of maintaining cheap fuel supplies rather than a revolutionary spirit. • Given the increasingly diffuse nature of the reasons for protesting among the mobs the Gilets Jaunes were seen as a symbol for general discontent, particularly among the self-proclaimed forgotten middle-classes that has been a major force in the move to the conservative right in Europe as a whole. • Claims were made that the later protests were organised by right-wing groups and the hi-visibility jackets were adopted as a symbol for other demonstrating groups in the UK, for instance, among those picketing parliament in support of Brexit. • The caving in of the French government to these populist demands is seen as a wider symptom of Macron's failing popularity and steadfast social position after the end of his 'Honeymoon Period'.

Speculations on the mingling of emissions

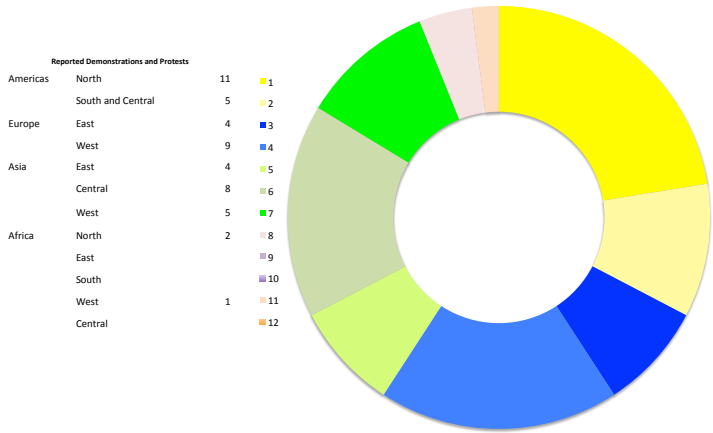
Whereas natural and social resources are used to deal with situations, their use produces different forms of emissions, usually contaminants to their particular environmental realities. Here we look at different emissions in each sphere and where they subject one another. From the charts on emissions we can transversally read certain correlations with caution. We note that, while packaging and other industrial products would instinctively be assumed to be major pollutants (and are in terms of land and sea), agriculture, commerce and housing, are equivalent in terms of atmospheric pollutants causing global warming. It is worth here breaking down further some of what these constitute. For instance the majority of agricultural emissions are from methane (distinct from CO2), which is produced primarily by livestock, particularly ruminants as flatulence. Methane is 10 times as impactful as a greenhouse gas than CO2, meaning that the net cause of agriculture's 9% of emissions is significantly more than this percentile. Furthermore, agriculture is active in deforestation in many parts of the world, resulting in a lowering of carbon reabsorption, particular for grazing land for dairy and meat production.



In comparison with other charts, we also see that there is a rough correlation between the production of greenhouse gases and the proportion of political demonstrations, with regions producing large quantities of gases also demonstrating the most. This must be noted with some trepidation as the protests noted here are a summary of those that have been reported in the international press. This may bias the findings in two distinct ways. Firstly, the larger industrial regions tend to be focused on more by news reporting due to their economic and political influence. Secondly, we might speculate that those regions with higher industrialisation also have higher access to technology and the social resources afforded by networked communication. However, this is somewhat disproved by the particular conditions in China – the largest overall producer of Greenhouse gases – and Saudi Arabia, the largest per capita producer – neither of which report demonstrations due to their stringent control of dissent.



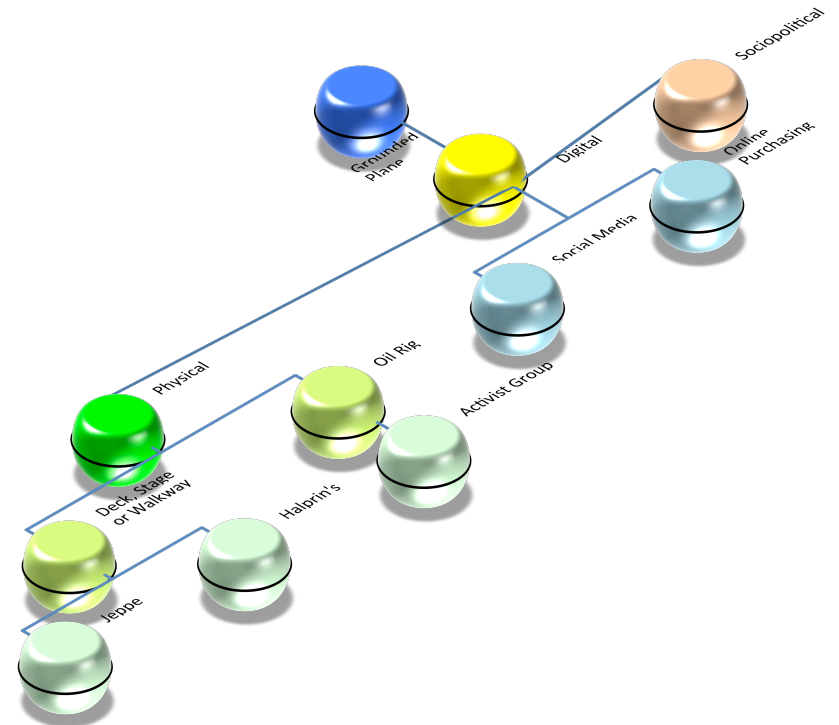
Further, China's seeming overproduction of emissions is, in part, due to a manufacturing service economy with other countries and in more detailed study might show that, in fact, many developed nations are effectively exporting their emissions to other parts of the world where no social licence is required to operate. Nevertheless, with Bangladesh showing high levels of protest, while also being a major low labour cost manufacturer, their is evidence in both directions in how emissions of CO2 might link to manufacturing or agribusiness, questionable levels of pay for labour and the ability and impetus to protest.



Platforms

Further investigation into linguistic correlations between fields

As a study in the pliancy of language in the context of Natural and Social Resource uses, 'platform' offers a particular example worth following. The offshore oil industry relies on platforms as part of its extraction rigs and are recognisable even when few have seen one up close. In fact, as a child, my parents' friend was a pilot for such rigs. Contrary to appearances, they are rarely permanently rooted to the seabed as they require maintenance in harbours, therefore can be piloted albeit on remote, which in the 1980s required a rather rudimentary radar system. Despite its size, this family friend lost the rig en route, it simply disappeared from the radar as it was approaching the coast. Returning to the point, the drilling platform is somewhat of a cultural symbol, itself changing over time from one of industrial mastery of the environment to (particularly following repeated large-scale disasters) one of a major ecological threat. Platforms also exist within the social milieu, particularly in new media. They represent a point of support that raises the user above turbulent waters towards success and visibility. The chart illustrates differing branches of use by which the term platform has been applied in relationship to resource acquisition and use.



Circulation

Cross-pollination of terminology derived from natural and social processes as applied back to each other's fields.

The term chosen for comparison is circulation, although this is, in part, arbitrary as a means to draw together different fields of action in which resources are put into play, either through naturally occurring, man-made, or hybrid means. The perceived directions and returns of such flows of material are commonly held ones, at least in part, based in our perception of time which is metered out the cycles of days (solar), months (lunar), and seasonal (orbital) motions. The perpendicular readings of time to this interpretation would encompass progress and entropy that take linear forms towards a higher or base level. These are not considered within the overarching study due to them rarely being employed within discourses around its themes, although the associated values surplus and scarcity do intersect with resource-based issues. A broader study would be required to incorporate this.

		Etymology	Contemporary meaning	Cultural usage	Worldview	Epoch
Revolution		To roll back	Physical: to turn in a complete circle/cycle. Political: A popular uprising to overthrow an existing regime.	Usually associated with the political meaning, revolution is libertarian. It may be violent or pacific, but carries with it the sense of crisis (see below) born about by injustice from a ruling class and a leap forward, as distinct from its etymological roots.	More commonly associated with leftist and communist (particular Marxist) politics, in part due to the historical revolutions that threw off minority rule, in recent years, uses have appeared in far-right rhetoric as well as marketing campaigns, alongside other linguistic adoptions of a progressive left terminology, often in opposition to their former usage. This might be considered a nostalgic reference back to the early 20th century history in which populism was an urgent political struggle for equality.	primarily associated with 19th-20th century as an inherent aspect of modernity.
Crisis		a moment when change must come or the turning point of a disease.	a dramatic moment of change that needs immediate attention to prevent collapse	Operates across physical, physical and psychological, and cultural bodies on all scales. No specific cultural location.	Use of word denotes an urgency to address an issue at breaking point. It has no particular political cadence. In a quotidian setting, it frequently relates to psychological issues (Freudian) or relational issues (Jungian).	19th-21st century.
Substance Turnover		Substance: standing firm, or having an essential character. Turnover: self explanatory	A geological term for the movement of natural materials from one state to another, often in a cyclical fashion. For instance rain into rivers into seas, evaporating to produce clouds and falling again as rain being a simple example. More complex interactions between substance turnovers relate to erosion and the formation and dispersal of minerals or features of the landscape. Petroleum, for instance, is a turnover of significant length. Involving ancient biological process absorbing carbon from the atmosphere, biological material becoming compressed through sedimentation, forces of geological pressure and temperature on rock formation, and the subsequent extraction, burning and release back into the atmosphere as carbon compounds to be reabsorbed.	Not in current cultural usage outside of scientific study	Earth-sciences	20th - 21st century
Ecological Cycle		Ecological: science of dwelling Cycle: Circle	Similar to Substance Turnover but, rather than tracing the movement of an individual element or substance, it reflects on the complex interactions of different agents in the natural world. The cycle represents a balanced system.	Has entered culture at large as a comprehensible means of picturing the natural world. Ecological Thinking has expanded beyond its original field into non-natural sciences and philosophy.	Academic, Cultural and Scientific	19th - 21st century
Holistic		No true etymology. Coined in the 1920s by Jan Christian Smuts, it derives from 'Whole-istic' with the silent W dropped.	A broadening of ecological thinking to include non-physical aspects of the world including the mind and spirit which sit in a circular relationship with bodies. Originally, it was anthropocentric but has been widely adopted beyond that limitations to reflect relationships between humans and the non-human world.	Most frequently associated with New Age thinking and Alternative life-practices such as permaculture.	Alternative Cultures, frequently ones that focus on the self with a consciousness of the interdependency of the world at large. As such it sits on a axis perpendicular to political right and left with no contradiction in a holistic capitalism or communism as such.	20th - 21st century
Recycle			Based on the process of waste management, turning disposed of materials, particularly packaging, back into new usable materials. The process is now accepted as mainstream to the point that other practices make use of corruptions of the word, i.e. 'upcycle'. Industrial processes have found ways to capitalise on waste management to produce new products. For instance, the upsurge in use of 'ecological' cleaning products and the return to Sodium Bicarbonate as a preference to chemical cleaning products is, in part, industry driven as the substance is a common by-product of other chemical manufacturing with some companies even buying rivals' waste material to turn into competing products with added 'green' value.	Common language	Originating in fringe ecological cultures, recycling is now a base ideology accepted by all except the most radical of refuseurs of climate change.	20th - 21st century
Circulation of Goods		-	Economic theory posits that goods must circulate, accruing value through exchanges in the cycle. The word-image of circulation is misnomer as goods move in more of a linear progression from raw materials to consumption.	Accept meaning in economics and broadly understood to represent movement within the market.	-	19th - 21st century

Epilogue

I first met Thomas by chance in Paris during one of those strange visits to an art fair that are both a perk and a chore. There is no real reason to be there, and no-one seems to expect anything of you other than your presence at a couple of social functions related to the foundations, organisations or individual patrons who have paid for your ticket and hotel, and, of course, your name, and perhaps more importantly your institution's name, on their publicity.

Personally, I always feel obliged to do something, so am not able to relax, as some curators are more at ease to do, and worry all the time about missing the few appointments I have made in advance. And in terminally British fashion, I always arrive bang on time, which means I am always way too early. And so too it was when I arrived at the Fondation d'entreprise Ricard, the one who had invited me to travel. Their reception was in the morning in a strange grey zone between breakfast and brunch. Milling around, desperately in need of a coffee, while waiting for the show to be switched on, and everyone else to arrive, I got chatting to Thomas who had made the same mistake. If I remember rightly he had rather a dirty bandage on his hand after falling off his bike, but was otherwise dapper, and charming as usual.

It was only later during the walk-around of the gallery where each of the artists showing in the annual Ricard Prize presented their work that I fully realized Thomas was actually one of them. He'd probably told me and I'd missed it in the usual fumble of introductions (the first 5 minutes of meeting anyone new always seems to go over my head) and realized there was a lot more in common with our interests than I had first realized. His work in that show was somewhat complex in its references, and I don't remember all the details right now, but I do remember the fanzines that were part of the installation. They were very authentic-looking, somewhat dishevelled in their appearance, and to say they were bound would be overstating it. They had a staple in the corner at least. Each was related to underground music, techno if I remember rightly, or perhaps the rave scene. We managed to speak again after, about our interest in publications not so much as the medium per se but as a cultural object – proto-social media platforms, modes of communication that used the available production systems and which were put together out of enthusiasm rather than professionalism using whatever resources could be rustled up tactically.

We bumped into each other once more in the Ricard party, but I was leaving in the early morning, and it became another one of those art fair encounters; a pleasure to meet someone new whose work was interesting, and a vague hope that we might have the chance to work, or just to see each other again. I was beaten to it by Brett, who rather astutely has chosen to show Thomas's work in Mexico before anyone else can get the chance. However, according to Malcolm McClaren (and I paraphrase a bit) you don't make money from being the first (as he claims was the case for his involvement in Punk), but you profit from being second and jumping on the bandwagon (as he did with his pop music production career), so perhaps there is still a better opportunity to exploit this particular resource.

Nevertheless, when Thomas told me he was coming to Mexico for the show, we vaguely talked about doing something together. Maybe I could write something, he suggested, which I was happy to do within what could be managed in the conflict of interest clause of my employers. Again, it lay a little fallow, perhaps as Thomas planned exactly what he was going to present and started installing the show. Then, he asked me to the gallery, surprisingly already well underway in building up platforms and hanging paintings, but with only about 10 days to go before the opening in which to write something. In a flurry of explanations, discussions and digressions, and some, in retrospect, rather dubious justifications for approaching this in a performative way, we agreed to incorporate the text into the display itself in the corporate and academic tragedy of form that is an Excel document. As we enthusiastically informed Brett this was to be my contribution, he summoned what minimal energy he had left from a long day dealing with a Material press conference, and said (again I paraphrase) 'I'm up for anything'. He had just enough wherewithal to dodge our final suggestion we had to issue the document as a CD ROM, to which I owe him my gratitude. I've written and published things that I doubt anyone has ever read, and given lectures to empty rooms in my time, but perhaps making the whole thing obsolete before it is begun is a step too far towards self-redundancy. At least something printed might ultimately find its way into a bargain bin in a bookshop, or on a shelf somewhere, or simply crumpled up in a pocket of a most idle mind might flick through and find some interest in it as they sit in traffic on their way home.

All that to say, what is presented is not about Thomas's work in the exhibition, but is around about it. If what is written is entirely accurate, or even factual, is superseded by the bare fact that it is matter that can be read, as much as it is reading matter. Between it all is some level of conspiracy masquerading as interpretation, but whether it is mine, or the product of the social waves above which we stand just slightly about their rising tides, I cannot say.

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an Excel document
in response to

Thomas Jeppe

Cabrón Footprint
In a Social Crisis, how to Offset one's own Emissions

an exhibition at
BWSMX, Mexico City
4 February - 5 April 2019

document authored by
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