



The January 6 Capitol Invasion Politics and Social Affordances

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1. John Protevi research and course materials

Plan of the talk

- Method of case studies
- Political philosophy of mind
- The events of January 6

Method of case studies

- Under-used tool in philosophy.
- Reveal the intersecting dimensions of concrete events.
- Events “crystallize” interacting processes of a multiplicity.
- Case studies require choice of dimensions to study.
- Synergy: case studies identify processes to be tested experimentally; that helps us do better case studies.
- Concrete lives are nexus of processes whose patterns can be treated statistically, but which are concretized as events one experiences.

Political philosophy of mind – 1: 5 persons

- -1st person: sub-personal neuro-physio mechanisms; danger of physicalist reductionism
- 1st person: from autopoiesis and adaptivity to full self-ness;
- 2nd person: alongside the subject to interpersonal interactions / participatory sense-making and technological adjuncts;
- 3rd person: above the subject to field of politically analyzable subjectification processes;
 - Danger of “structuralist reduction” where experience is predictable
 - Danger of naïve agency where social position is ignored
- 4th person: actions compared to a standard derived from convergent behaviors of large numbers; danger of ignoring singular actions

Political philosophy of mind – 2: causality and sociogenesis

- Upward causality resists reification; downward causality accounts for political subjectification.
- Development / inter-generational “sociogenesis” (Wynter).
- Granularity problem: you can't reduce people to their categories, but you can't have sheer idiosyncrasy either:

Political philosophy of mind – 3: “bodies politic”

- Three temporal scales: evolutionary, developmental, behavioral
- Three compositional scales: civic, somatic, "evental"
- The patterns, triggers, and thresholds of affective cognitive dispositions are produced via trans-generational subjectification practices that are the intensive individuation processes (“crystallization”) of a social-neural-somatic multiplicity.
- Social and somatic are not synchronic opposites but a spiraling diachronic interweaving of “bodies politic”

Political philosophy of mind – 4:

historical libidinal materialism per Deleuze and Guattari

- As with lesion studies where abnormality reveals normality, for DG, schizophrenics are a window into desiring-production, as they feel what is hidden to us normal neurotics.
- If you listen to schizophrenic delirium, you hear that it is packed with historical political content.
- Schizophrenics feel the waves of desire flowing through the social field, so they inhabit subject-positions from anywhere (“all the names of history” – Thor, in the example of the QAnon Shaman)
- In other words, no need to desexualize libido to invest politics; there is a direct libidinal investment of the social field.

The events of J6: social affordances

- Social affordances “solicit (further) affective appraisal and [hence] act as perceptual and affective prompts for the organism to act on the affordance” (Ramstead et al 2016, 5)
- Skilled Intentionality Framework: “affordances always have to be understood in the context of an ecological niche that implies the form of life of a certain kind of animal” (Rietveld, Denys, and Van Westen 2018).
- The Capitol was not a neutral stage on which the events played out; its built environment solicited actions.

The Events of J6:
Storming the walls:
physical and social
affordances

- What was the intersection of political subjectification, historical-libidinal investment, and social affordances that led some to heed the call to climb walls, storm doors, and fight cops?



Wide angle view: Critical Race Architecture

- Building that purports to represent democratic ideals of freedom and equality was built by enslaved persons.
- “In the Capitol building, idealized narratives of liberty and democracy rest on brute force” (Miranda 2021).
- “The proper subjects represented in this monument to representational democracy are not the citizens of the Republic, but the enslaved people excluded from political and architectural representation” (Minosh).



Neoclassical architecture

Abjecting the accursed share

- Was there something about the cold, hard, shiny marble floors that called for shitting, for defilement?
- *NY Daily News*: “They took a dump on American democracy — literally.”
- If you only get cleanliness by abjecting the accursed share, then memory of enslaved workers was repressed.
- Hence, shit defiling a clean Capitol could be shocking only to those whose good conscience is achieved by such repression.
- Perhaps we should let that shit remind us that the Capitol was already defiled, from the start, by its very construction.

Close-up analysis of social affordances

The Senate Chamber as temple of democracy



Jacob Chansley, the QAnon Shaman

DG: direct libidinal investment of the social field.

Social affordances of storming the building to retake a republic which should be henceforth led by men strong enough to embody Norse myths.



American civic religion

- “I been making sure they ain’t disrespecting the place.” The policeman says, “just want you to know, this is like *the* sacredest place.”
- “C’mon man. This is our Capitol, let’s be respectful. There’s 4 million people coming in... we love you guys, we love the cops.”
- Chansley’s note: “It’s only a matter of time. Justice is coming!”
- Chansley evokes the ambience of the chamber: “Thank you divine, omniscient, omnipotent and omnipresent creator God for filling this chamber with your white light and love, your white light of harmony.”

Chansley et al. at the dais

Small scale social
affordance: prayer solicited
by Senate Chamber's
architecture evoking
American civic religion
intersecting with Chansley's
political subjectivity (his
libidinal investments)

