

Embed ~~in-bed~~ Omnivorousness in the Profile of Intellectuals

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Abstract—In an Airbnb-turned-study, we perform as intellectuals: reading, discussing, and writing, while eating, excreting, sleeping, and having sex. Through an unserious essay writing process, we challenge the stereotypical image of the “serious” intellectual. While intellectuals construct a credible image to legitimize their knowledge-making, we ask: can the “unserious” also produce knowledge?

Keywords—Intellectual Knowledge Production, Intellectual Stimulation, Pseudo-Intellectual, Seriousness and Unseriousness of Intellectual, Intellectual Stereotypes, Intellectual Public Projection

I. INTRODUCTION

Dressed as intellectuals in an Airbnb-turned-study, we perform intellectual practice: reading, discussing, and writing, while eating, excreting, sleeping, and having sex. By documenting an essay-writing process, we expose these often-overlooked aspects that disrupt the stereotypical image of the “serious” intellectual. 我們從普世價值中對於「論文」或如何產出「知識」的既定印象出發，在嚴肅與庸俗之間遊走。

Intellectuals construct a credible image to legitimize their knowledge-making. By reintroducing elements excluded from this intellectual package, we question whether the “unserious”—often seen as irrelevant to intellectuals—produce knowledge. In research, we cite unverified sources. In writing, we pause for sex. In form, our essay takes a forum discussion format. Yet, we do not simply avoid intellectual standards—we perform them, unseriously. 我們一邊正襟危坐著寫 essay 同時又不時進行著邊緣性行為，逐漸從書桌移動到旁邊的床鋪、沙發，或離開寫作進行日常必要活動，例如進食、如廁、睡覺甚至呼吸。從學術性論文資料，到沒有「權威認證」與出處的網絡三流資料，我們的 essay 嘗試組合不同“社会地位”的 sources, or even just don’t care about 学术界的 formality (language, tone, format, source credibility), 以及去 fit in intellectual 就要是正经的 stereotype。

In the presentation of the work, four-channel video splits into two parts: the top half shows a screen recording of us writing an essay in a Google Doc. At the same time, the bottom three security camera feeds reveal the daily needs and desires disrupting the writing. In this 6-page Reddit-style essay, we respond to each other like Reddit users. We write in our fluent languages: Simplified Chinese, English (Dou), Traditional Chinese, and Cantonese (Wu). Our sources range from journal articles, research papers, and books to unverified, third-rate content like unpublished research, wikis, and memes. The essay defies standard structure and citation styles, yet its formal title page creates a deceptive first impression.

In *Embed in-bed*, we create an intellectual presence through artifacts: the essay, 40+ annotated sources, and a fake JSTOR page. As artists, we package ourselves both on and off camera, questioning stereotypes of intellectuals and knowledge-making. But what happens when we strip away the packaging, does it still contribute to knowledge? 通过这个project询问当没有依据/违反很多条件和规则产出的还是knowledge吗？

II. THE CONCEPT WHAT IS INTELLECTUAL

@kw: 我一直認為知識份子是指受過高等教育的人（以前指大學，現在可能要把standard抬高到更高等教育——MA, Mphil, P.h.D，甚至是做學術專業工作。

@rd: 在多处读到intellectual是一个被公用成名词的形容词。不同于scholars、professors、其他与知识相关的角色，intellectual不是一个被定性的profession。同样都是和知识打交道，学者专家们好像更倾向于知识创造者，而intellectuals是知识发生者。Intellectuals不应该是被一个standard或者definition框架住的流动体。

@kw: 「知識份子」是一個可攻可守的形容詞且包容度高。它可以向下包容至「接受過教育

的人」，也可以向上延伸至極少數受到專業教育的「專家」、學者。好像以前香港，中五畢業便叫「叻仔」，只因社會中能夠受到完整12年教育的人不多。現在中五畢業都只是基本得不能再基本，碩士也只算是「入場卷」。但對我來說，知識份子也只是一個「接受過教育而願意服務於它」的基本意義而已。

@rd: Thinking backwards from the production of intellectuals—knowledge. Knowledge is often perceived as a passive recording which makes the public believe in it as knowledge is recorded, secure, and protected. Intellectuals as producer and disseminator of knowledge, should they bear the same property as knowledge being trusted and credible? Or should they be the “active aspect of knowledge to idealism”? 之前你跟我講《蘇格拉底遇見耶穌》(Socrates Meets Jesus)里，蘇格拉底看見一群教徒很沉迷在經文當中便問他們，你們不是相信你們的神還活著嗎？為什麼你們這麼沉醉在這些過去的句子裡面。無關宗教，這句話點到我，因為現今，人們也很專注在被記錄的文字裡面尋找所謂知識。但知識是活的，在“死”的文字裡面找不到。

@kw: 知識份子有義務支撐自己的論點及思考。我也相信我們是知識的 seeker, producer, but at the same time also **keeper**。白紙黑字的記錄成為了我們（或知識份子們）的聖經，所以我更傾向是（一）公眾對知識份子；（二）知識份子對於公眾；（三）公眾對於知識與知識份子的緊扣關係；（四）知識份子自我認為與知識的關係——都正在發生著多重錯誤投射，並且互相影響。

THE INTELLECTUAL PROFILE— SERIOUSNESS AND UNSERIOUSNESS

@rd: Intellectual 和 public 的情感糾葛——Is the intellectual the counterpart of the public, just as the élite vs. the mass, opposite and mutually exclusive? The public, or the expectation of theirs, largely cultivates the profile of an intellectual: “[the] imaginary entity [of the public] gives it [the intellectual] its importance.” Steven Connor starts his speech, “Public

Intellectuals and Public Intelligence,” by saying that the idea of public intellectual is “sad, bad and silly.” Is the focus confused and distracted: from creating more public intelligence to fostering of the public intellectual?

@kw: How To Become A Intellectual by Kolakowski, 作者以100個「成為知識份子」的條件，例如‘Carry e-books on the road,’ ‘Read and comprehend (nearly) everything.’從逆向角度反串「知識份子」的日常生活，我們可能也在做一樣的事。
Read! Read! Read! You must be a FAST and GOOD reader (also radar) !

@rd: 我也看過同本書的節選，其中有一節印象很深，說如果你想要找另外一個“志同道合”的 intellectual coffee chat，那麼帶一本The Unbearable Lightness of Being 《不能承受的生命之輕》出門是不二之選。我馬上被這句話擊中了。小時候我也喜歡帶這本書出門，是從我爸爸的书櫃上偷拿的。白色的封皮、文艺的字体、怪诞的插画、淡紫色的签页。单从包装来说就透露出“你不简单”的感觉。简单来说就是“装逼”。从初中时起，我常被人叫作“文青”。我其实并不喜欢这个称呼，但同时又享受它给我带来的“位置”/感觉（？）对当时的我来说，我的内里并非文青，但我给自己包装了一个文青的刻板印象。

@kw: 生命不能承受之輕、自願被吃的豬、村上春樹（98%都是挪威的森林、1984等。在香港、台灣同時，文青是一個很諷刺的存在，既具反面意思，又讓人不適的「污名化」，還延伸「真文青」與「偽文青」之分。是不是我們對知識份子等的身份都有一個「不設實際」的想像？從衣著到行為、取向與品味或許都是在於本人之外（我們的、公眾的）的投射，而很大程度上都與本人不一。又有沒有可能我們認為知識份子的「seriousness」，是我們希望知識份子是serious的，我們希望他們是規距的，因為他們「應該」是規距的，而不是他們是規距的，形成了一個雙向的不理解。可是同時，又真的可能知識份子就是如此的「無聊」，認真的無聊，固定的形象與態度深入我們的認知，變成了我們以為「知識」也如此無聊，因為它的 producer很無聊，從而形成了屏障——我們以為知識創造自嚴肅的人 / 時機 / 背景。而「造作」又是另一回事了。以近年的「文青」為例，當我們稱一個人為文青，多半是因為他們的「模仿術」，也模仿衣著、模仿品味，所有都是來自於我們的投

射，投射於「得到」知識份子的形象，便會擁有他們的腦子、氛圍、品味……在於公眾便變成了「造作」，但同時又默許了知識份子的形象便是如此，可是真的代表「知識份子」嗎？我們一直以來都認為的所謂知識份子的形象，會不會一直都是以那些「模仿術」的人來做模版呢？

@rd: Agreed! 🍌 或者说“模仿”本身并非问题所在，是我们在追求知识的路上，单只学会模仿表面，并且在不断精通如何模仿这个皮囊。还未曾深入。也是我们只学会了模仿那些知识分子所谓“正经”的模样，但没有想过“不正经”也是其中的一部分。我想也是为什么我们用Omnivorousness（杂食性）给这个作品取名。源自Cultural Omnivorousness，本义是指增加cultural taste的广度，或跨越现有文化阶级及界限的意愿。而我们的作品是在给现有的intellectual profile增加杂食性，不只有现今正经正襟的模样。

@kw: Perhaps intellectuals need to be omnivorous in order to absorb all the 'knowledge'.

WHY ESSAY?

@rd: Essay作为知识分子的重要工具之一，自带包裝。Essay这个词一出现，就给我们一种很学术、很正经、很trustworthy、很credible的印象。之所以选用这个形式：一是我们不可避免地会包装和使用所需工具。其次是我们想要试验，当包装失去了它的特质时，会有什么样的效用和反响。在开始书写之前，我们一直在讨论应当以何种形式呈现我们的观点/想法。在讨论的过程中，我们发现相比plain text，讨论其实是一种与我们很适配的模式。我们都能参与其中；都更令人更加积极兴奋（同比读长篇大论晦涩难懂或是困意十足）。

@kw: 我是一個「自學型」的人，跟隨在學術上的rules和系統對我來說是極端的難。好像我們都應該要知道essay怎樣打，而是必須的。當我們沒有做到準則，內容多好也不過是「文章」，在學校沒有做足準則都要被扣分（我寫的essay都超低分）——系統高於內容，甚至價值。當一連串藝術行為繞過了學術形式，會被認真對待嗎？我想是這作品的重點。

III. THE ACT PREPARATION (WE DONE) AND MATERIALS (WE COLLECT)

@kw: 這是一場屬表演性質的藝術體驗。我們模仿並濃縮了知識份子在工作整個過程：資料搜集、討論、思考、撰寫等，再通過多個小時的網上資料搜集、閱讀。在此我發現到當我愈想去了解為什麼知識份子都那麼「認真」做愈發get lost在其中——因為我發現都是想成為/想被稱為知識份子的人才「認真」，因為知識份子的形象是他們心目中的聖像，那些從心便發著光的人，其實也不在乎「認真」，或應稱「嚴肅」。我們的這次體驗，更像是在嚴肅與極不嚴肅之間爭戰，兩樣都有，也兩種都沒有。

@rd: Before the recording, we were in the same airbnb, sitting in the same chairs, reading the research we collected. For 20 hours, we did not sleep, but read, annotated, and discussed (excluding the small portion of cooking and eating time). We dressed in pajamas, sitting in casual postures (东倒西歪 as I call), mixed different activities from discussion to chitchat, from complete focus to hugging, kissing, and having sex. The time distribution is quite balanced. I felt in control of the pacing—know when to take a break and know when to come back. I was surprised: for someone like me who usually find it hard to read or focused on reading, I was enjoying it / 读得津津有味。More importantly, I wasn't bored, tired, or sleepy. In a way, this preparation time is perhaps our natural way of being. The “unserious” part of it, or what we believe to be non-knowledge-producing time, is not a distraction but a balance.

The performative act itself, is a more or less rigid mimic of this preparation, but distinct allegedly what is serious (knowledge-production) from what is unserious (non-knowledge-production). I was pretending to be an intellectual, looking professional, sitting straight up, (perhaps faked) active thinking. Those elements are supposed to make me feel more in control; but in fact, I was quite insecure and more easily lost control. During the performance, those unserious parts became more like a distraction because the pressure I felt being “serious” and always-looking-busy-producing-knowledge. When we started meandering from the desk to bed, we never came back again (but take into consideration that we were sleep-deprived).

All I am trying to say is that, the packaging of being an intellectual embeds the pressure of sustaining that particular image yet not assisting the knowledge production itself. Looking like an intellectual, or the state of always-looking-busy-producing-knowledge is a pseudo-busyness that supports the image of intellectual but not the act of intelligence. In reverse, this pseudo-busyness makes, at least me, more depleted, easily distracted, and lose interest in the knowledge production itself

@kw: 🍌

@kw: Agree with the point *always-looking-busy-producing-knowledge* is a pseudo-busyness LOL. I think all is about the projection and images as my before points in “seriousness” sections. 從來沒有人說過知識份子絕對嚴肅的，也沒有人說過知識是從絕對嚴肅之中被創造。但人會 shame of 在「不正經」中製造出來的東西，也習慣拒絕那些已知從不正經的情景中產出的東西，一切都是儀式感作祟。但又是神奇，我們都對於從學院中產生的「風化新聞」不稀奇：Sex trade、教授與學生的各種奇怪關係、學術系統之間的利益交易……特別是備受注目的Ivy League，又或是精英、權威性的機構、藝術館等，兩者之間充滿衝突，可以說我們也一切對人性光輝的希望都放在知識的嚴肅性。人可以犯錯，但知識的產出過程不可以。



(Black Ice 《黑冰》: It's fucking hard to have sex with you intellectuals)

@kw: 我們在20多個小時裡讀了多個資料，但用在這個conversation及有益這個作品的，我想沒有多於5個。我們沒有得到知識嗎？有又沒有，當中也可以說知識產生自我們在「體驗」的時間

之中，而不在於閱讀的時間。那麼我可以說，知識體驗很大可能並不是在於嚴肅性、正經不正經、性、空間、緊湊等，而更不在乎多少閱讀量（有關但不多）。

@rd:



(Break Dance Rock'n Roll by New Pants: Intellectuals also need to dance)

@rd: So knowledge is also a fluid entity, just as I said earlier about the role of intellectuals. It is just that we cannot help but expect and rely on both of them being secure and serious. Back to the public's (ours) projection and expectation that disguise what knowledge and the intellectual are.

@kw: 我認為知識是流動體，而知識份子只是負責把它們呈現。

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