Revolutionary Creative Labor

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This chapter elaborates the concept of revolutionary creative labor. The Arab uprisings, particularly the conflict in Syria, have given rise to a notion of creative resistance. Various activists, journalists, academics, and curators have used that phrase to celebrate a gamut of expressive practices and forms encompassing graffiti, digital memes and mash-ups, handheld banners, political rap, and others.[1] The wording combines two terms with overwhelmingly positive connotations that evoke human ingenuity and agency. But if *creative resistance* is to convey anything beyond a nebulous concept of ingenious rebellion, it needs to be systematically explored and situated vis-à-vis notions of activism, creativity, and labor in cultural production. One way to achieve that goal is to theorize processes of artful dissent as revolutionary creative labor.[2]

In order to develop a working definition of revolutionary creative labor, this chapter draws on a study of the body and activism in the Arab uprisings based on primary materials, most collected in 2011 and 2012.[3] In this chapter I pursue the following questions: To what extent does the extreme duress of revolution shift our understanding of creative labor? Is revolutionary creative labor different from other kinds of creative labor? What does revolution add to our understanding of creativity and precarity in cultural production? To answer these questions, I engage with a few key texts. The chapter first zeroes in on the use of creativity in social movement theory, mainly in James Jasper's *The Art of Moral Protest.*[4] Then it reviews some work in media industries research that addresses precarity and creativity, namely Vicki Mayer's *Below the Line.*[5] A comparative analysis of "industrial'" and "revolutionary" forms of creative labor follows. Finally, via brief references to the magisterial compendium provided by Hans Joas in *The Creativity of*

Action[6] and to Lazzarato's theory of immaterial labor,[7] the chapter concludes with a theoretical elaboration of revolutionary creative labor.

CREATIVITY AND LABOR IN SOCIAL MOVEMENT AND PRODUCTION STUDIES: A SNAPSHOT

Social movement theorists have rarely discussed activism in terms of creativity or labor. Though creativity is sometimes mentioned in its prosaic meaning and the word occasionally appears in titles of books on social movements, rarely is it systematically theorized or critiqued as a conceptual category.[8] Jasper's *The Art of Moral Protest* comes closest to a sustained conceptual treatment of creativity: the notion of artfulness is a cornerstone of the book's "cultural" approach to protest, which intends "to increase [the focus on] explanatory factors . . . to concentrate on mechanisms, not grand theories . . . to give the voice back to the protestors we study."[9] Jasper writes: "Protest movements work at the edge of a society's understanding of itself and its surroundings. Like artists, they take inchoate intuitions and put flesh on them, formulating and elaborating them so that they can be debated. Without them, we would have only the inventions of corporations and state agencies, products and technologies created to enhance efficiency or profitability." Jasper then concludes: "In order to understand these innovations, we need 'moral innovators' too: the artists, religious figures, and protestors who help us understand what we feel about new technologies."[10] By comparing activists to artists, Jasper anchors artfulness in the socio-political realm of activism, valorizing innovation not in its potential for commodification but for its ability to generate political-rhetorical value.[11]

For Jasper, *artfulness* refers to "experimental efforts to transmute existing traditions into new creations by problematizing elements that have been taken for granted."[12] Artfulness articulates biography and culture: beginning as individual creativity, it becomes strategic once shaped by a group, and subsequently it is enacted in protest. Examples include deploying widely familiar and emotionally evocative symbols and grafting new meanings onto existing symbols. Language is a primary vehicle through which activists project, manipulate, and redefine symbols. Having elsewhere in the book compared activists to artists, Jasper writes that "at the most extreme, ideologists operate as poets; they define emerging structures of feeling with new terms and images."[13] Invoking the "immense value we place on individual creativity,"[14] Jasper employs the notion of "tactical innovation," a mainstay in the social movements literature, which emerges at "the interplay of protest groups and their opponents."[15]

Unlike studies of activism, research on cultural production does not focus on Political aspects of labor.[16] But the two are alike in rarely grappling directly with creativity as a central conceptual category.[17] One exception is Vicki Mayer's study of workers in a television set factory in Manaus, Brazil, where the author endeavors to "deconstruct our received notions of creativity and to reconstruct a notion of

creative action that is both social and individual in the practices of assembling."[18] Following an argument made by Joas and others that social context is key to under-standing creativity, Mayer develops notions of creativity that "conjoin the interiority of mental labor with the exteriority of a world that enables its articulation."[19] In addi-tion to emphasizing creativity's social dimension, Mayer shows that as a discourse creativity is deployed with discrimination for purposes of social distinction and control. But it is Mayer's discussion of creativity as a process of making do under structural constraints that is most relevant for my purposes, because it leads to two questions that are central to this chapter. What differences can we discern between deployments of "creativity" in media industries research and the trope of "creative resistance" used to describe some forms of dissent in the Arab uprisings? And how do these differences enable my elaboration of revolutionary creative labor?

"Creativity" is a strategic and discriminatory trope. It is strategic because its selective deployment reflects and perpetuates relations of politico-economic power. It is discriminatory because it is applied according to rules of exclusion and inclusion that serve criteria of social distinction. Considerations of power and distinction in creative labor differ between scholarship on media industries and research on Political forms of labor, such as activism and propaganda. In the tele-vision set factory Mayer studied, the discourse of creativity is reserved to opera-tors in higher ranks of the industry, who exclude workers on the assembly line from creativity's definitional scope. As Miller has shown, proponents of "creativ-ity" have stretched the term to encompass most ways in which any activity that could remotely be described as cultural is monetized.[20] In contrast, the creative resistance trope operates primarily according to political and ideological impera-tives. *Creative resistance* refers to propaganda by people we like—in this sense *cre-ative resistance* is a more glamorous, bottom-up cousin of the great euphemism *public diplomacy.* During the war between Israel and Lebanon in 2006, Hezbollah launched a range of stylistically bold, visually compelling propaganda videos, some aimed at mobilizing supporters, others psyops clips, many in Hebrew, aimed at demoralizing Israeli soldiers. Though the notion of resistance is central to Hezbol-lah's raison d'être, and though many of the videos were rhetorically sophisticated and aesthetically slick, to my knowledge no one called these "creative resistance." Most mainstream media coverage in the West referred to them as "propaganda," though in some aspects they resemble revolutionary videos of the Arab uprisings, and some of them even resemble U.S. Army recruitment commercials.

INDUSTRIAL AND REVOLUTIONARY: TWO TYPES OF CREATIVE LABOR?

As a mercurial term that is applied at once broadly (connoting a vast and varied semantic field) and selectively (according to considerations of political power and social distinction), *creativity* requires definitional work to be analytically

useful. In this chapter I am not interested in developing a full-scale analytical parsing of *creativity*'s various possible definitions and applications. I am, however, keen on discerning differences between the kind of creativity that one sees in, say, a television studio or factory floor—industrial creative labor—and the kind of creativity manifest in revolutionary creative labor. What might some of these differences be?

One must begin with the rather obvious observation that the creative labor of Egyptian, Syrian, and Tunisian revolutionaries is more confrontational than the invisible, sanctioned, unsanctioned, and even subversive types of creativity that Mayer identifies on the Manaus factory floor. Manifestations of creative labor in the Arab uprisings are not flexible, reformist, or merely subversive: spawned under life-threatening conditions, they are *radical* rejectionist expressions of human affects and aspirations. Rather than trying to find ways to survive or thrive in the factory, revolutionaries seek to burn the factory down, clean the debris, and build a new and utterly different edifice. This is the first and most crucial difference between industrial and revolutionary creative labor.

The centrality of the human body is a second difference between industrial and revolutionary creative labor. Though concern with the body is not vital to most research on media industries, Mayer does grapple with corporeality as an important aspect of workers' experience, what she calls "the corporeal achievement of assembly," and she argues that "conditioning the body to do the physical work signified an important rite of passage in the social world of the factory."[21] Assembly workers regiment their bodies in new and uncomfortable ways with the purpose of increasing productivity. Nonetheless, "the corporeality of the act of assembling the television set could not communicate a creative act in itself simply because of its exclusion from the discourse of creativity."[22] In contrast, revolutionary creative labor, I would argue, is more deeply and more intimately entangled with the human body. This is primarily a matter of resources: factory workers are provided with the tools needed to satisfy the demands of capitalist production. Revolutionaries, in contrast, are often bereft of tools and resort to very basic media. The Syrian Masasit Mati collective, which created the famous *Top Goon* video series lampooning Bashar al-Assad, used paper, wood, and fabric to create finger puppets and human energy to operate the puppets. Using basic materials, they miniaturized the dictator by reducing him to a finger puppet and infantilized him through satire.[23] Of course, they also had a basic video camera and eventually set up a YouTube channel, but rather than being provided by "the system," these resources (most from the seventeenth century, some from the twentieth and twenty-first) were snatched "behind the back" of the dictator to express derision of his person and rejection of his rule.

This brings us to the third divergence. In the television set factory in Manaus, assembly-line workers are subjected to a range of *managerial* constraints that

Mayer groups under Taylorism, "parsing complex jobs into tasks,"[24] and Japanization, which consists of a gamut of "social surveillance techniques."[25] Working in tandem and sometimes in contradiction, these two top-down forces constrain workers as they create opportunities to overcome constraints. In Mayer's words, "Assemblers looked creatively for solutions to stressful limits because *they had no other choice. . . .* Yet workers' creativity could also overstep expectations, leading to disciplinary actions, dismissal, or even blacklisting."[26] In contrast, revolutionary creative labor is situated farther down the sanctioned–unsanctioned creativity that Mayer evokes in her analysis. Assembly workers' creativity is what I would call "making-do" creativity, whereas creative insurgency involves "breaking-bad" creativity.[27] The first is conjured up to cope with the system; the second is deployed to topple the system. The first is framed by top-down industrial-managerial models; the second is a bottom-up expression of pent-up repressed subjectivity. The former involves bodily discipline—"The adaptation of her fingers to the fine manipulations of wires was an acquired skill"[28]—on the factory floor, while the second entails bodily insurrection on a literal and symbolic battlefield. In the first, Mayer points out, "unsanctioned creative actions generally stimulated more rules."[29] Whereas factory workers bent their fingers to the demands of capital, members of Masasit Mati moved puppets' fingers to utterly reject the Syrian dictatorship. The first is adaptation; the second, rebellion.

Whereas assembly workers face managerial (and social) constraints, Arab creative activists confront often brutal and sometimes murderous repression, which grows increasingly violent as uprisings endure. If Brazilian assembly workers focus their creativity on "eking out a living,"[30] Arab revolutionaries deploy creativity for the purpose of eking out a dignity, a political agency. Prerevolutionary creative dissent in countries like Egypt, Syria, and Tunisia—double-entendre parodies, strategically ambivalent artwork, and allegorical theater—can be described as subversive. In contrast, revolutionary creativity is a confrontational, no-holds-barred, high-stakes, high-risk, and potentially high-rewards gambit.

Industrial creative labor and revolutionary creative labor differ in a fourth way. Whereas the former occurs openly, the latter operates surreptitiously. In both cases, the visibility of creative labor is determined by the structural constraints already discussed. Though factory floor workers may engage in micropractices of subversion to improve their lives in the factory, they are subjected to a strong surveillance regime, and the lion's share of their labor is exceedingly visible to their managers. But if in the factory "absences were treated as the worst infractions,"[31] absence from the revolutionary public sphere constitutes an ideal situation for incumbent dictators—presence and visibility invite immediate repression. As a result, though security apparatuses attempt to spy on and capture activists, revolutionary creative labor must occur underground and be physically peripatetic to avoid arrest. In addition to resources, then, revolutionary creative labor's "trajectories of creative

migration," as Michael Curtin called creative labor's movement across national boundaries,[32] are motivated primarily by the desire to physically stay alive, rather than by economic survival. Many Syrian revolutionary artists now live in Beirut or Berlin, and several prominent Arab uprising activists are political refugees in Europe.

A fifth and final difference between industrial and revolutionary creative labor is that the former is remunerated, however unfairly, while the latter is unwaged labor.[33] I list this difference in fifth place rather than earlier in the list because this contrast is not as extreme as it may appear. Though the creative labor of most activists in the Arab uprisings remained unrecognized and unwaged, there have been several exceptions reflecting the commercial and political co-optation of revolutionary creative labor. The Egyptian surgeon turned late-night comedian, Bassem Youssef, the so-called Egyptian Jon Stewart, started his show on YouTube during the Egyptian revolution. In time, one television channel picked up the show, then a bigger channel acquired it, to considerable commercial success and global critical praise. Subsequently, the show was streamed by the Arabic-language channel of the German broadcaster Deutsche Welle, before being shut down after the military coup of Abdelfattah El-Sisi in June 2013.[34] Youssef, already an affluent medical doctor, was one of a few revolutionary creative laborers who moved from unpaid to highly waged labor. The finger puppeteers of Masasit Mati, in contrast, tried crowdfunding their second season via Kickstarter, and when that effort failed, they received a grant from the Prince Claus Fund in the Netherlands. In effect, they leveraged their fame into financial support and official recognition from prestigious Western institutions, even if technically that does not constitute waged labor. But disagreements within the group led to its dissolution. Despite momentary success, then, revolutionary creative labor's mainstream prospects are as precarious as revolutionaries' ambitions for political rule.[35]

SUBJECTIVITY AND REVOLUTIONARY CREATIVE LABOR

This chapter has been grappling with the extent to which different contextual environments and constraints generate different types of creative labor with different levels of precarity. From the preceding critical comparison of what I called *industrial* and *revolutionary* creative labor, we can conclude that the extreme strictures of revolutionary contexts lead to a specific relation between the individual and the social. In *The Creativity of Action,* Joas singles out three metaphors, which emerged between 1750 and 1850, that are central to creative action: *expression,* from the work of Johann Gottfried Herder; and *production* and *revolution,* both elaborated by Karl Marx. Each of these metaphors, Joas argues, "represents an

attempt to anchor human creativity in at least one of the three ways of relating to the world. The idea of *expression* circumscribes creativity primarily in relation to the subjective world of the actor." In contrast, "the idea of *production* relates creativity to the objective world, the world of material objects that are the conditions and means of actions." "And finally," Joas concludes, "the idea of *revolution* assumes that there is a potential of human creativity relative to the social world, namely that we can fundamentally reorganize the social institutions that govern human coexistence."[36]

Revolutionary creative labor, I conclude, entails the convergence of expression, production, and revolution. Revolutionary contexts are characterized by total upheaval—social and political but also economic and cultural—in which everything is up for grabs. These contexts of tremendous flux and peril require a total expenditure of resources, calling on people to mobilize to enact subjective and objective changes to the world they live in.

The definitional field delineated by expression, production, and revolution encompasses familiar axes of tension: the individual versus the social, the ideational against the material, the reformist in contrast to the radical. Such a field is a particularly apt space to grapple with the revolutionary creative labor emerging in the Arab uprisings. If, as Joas and Mayer argue, creativity entails coordinating a variety of means, responding to incentives, and working within constraints, and if, as I have already argued, revolutionaries respond to specific motivations and work within strictures distinct from the constraints of the factory floor (or, for that matter, the production studio), then revolutionary creative labor is indeed a distinct kind of creative labor.[37]

Revolutionary creative labor contributes to the creation of a subjectivity that is radically different from that of industrial labor. Jasper noted that artists can "gener-ate and regenerate the very subjectivity they pretend only to display."[38] This echoes Lazzarato's argument about immaterial labor, which "presupposes and results in an enlargement of productive cooperation that even includes the production and reproduction of communication and hence its most important content: subjec-tivity."[39] Whereas Lazzarato argues that immaterial labor changes the relationship *between producer and consumer,* it is productive to think of revolutionary creative labor as changing the relationship *between ruler and ruled.* One important aspect of Lazzarato's thesis is that the shift from manual to immaterial labor transforms the three elements of what he calls the aesthetic model of labor—author, reproduc-tion, and reception—by emphasizing their social rather than individual aspects. Creativity, Lazzarato concludes by way of brief mentions of Simmel's work on intellectual labor and Bakhtin's focus on social creativity, is social rather than indi-vidual, a point also made by Joas and Mayer.

Ordinary people from among the hitherto ruled, having become revolutionary activists, enact revolutionary creative labor to get rid of the ruler. Revolutionary

creative labor, then, occasions a shift in subjectivity from the atomized docility of subjects under dictatorship to the collective rebellion of politicized agents in revolution. In Foucauldian terms, we can describe revolutionary creative labor as *a technology of revolutionary selfhood*. It mobilizes expressive and affective resources alongside the material resources of "noncreative" revolutionary labor—demonstrating in the street, staffing barricades, confronting security personnel, wielding sticks, shooting guns, tending to the wounded—to effect fundamental and political change.

The body is crucial to the project of revolutionary selfhood. As I have argued elsewhere[40] (though without grappling with the conceptual minutiae of creativity and labor), the body—as instrument, metaphor, symbol, medium—is central to revolutionary creative labor. Mayer explains how creativity pertains to Joas's concept of a "situation," by which he means "the ability of the body to move and communicate in an innovative way. . . . [C]reativity must be enacted through both the body and the social system of meanings that recognizes the action as different from the norm. . . . Creative action unifies the mind and body in doing something perceived as different. . . . This means that thought must be materialized, but also that the material is cause for later reflection."[41]

But in revolutionary contexts of the twenty-first century, the body must be understood as a central and agentive node among a panoply of other media—from cardboard to digital video—that are harnessed by revolutionaries in an all-out campaign to change their lives. The body, then, must be understood as the animator of what I elsewhere called "hypermedia space," a space of signification with multiple points of access created by interconnections among various media platforms.[42] In the case of the Arab uprisings, these include media that can be characterized as mainstream (television, newspapers), new (mobile devices, social media), and old (puppetry, graffiti), alongside the oldest of them all, the human body, which operates all other media.

Revolutionary creative labor, then, is an embodied, extremely precarious practice unfolding in a life-or-death situation, one among several kinds of labor (from physical struggle to mainstream media production) that challenge authoritarian leaders. Whereas, as Mayer argues, assembly-line work is a kind of creative labor that should to be situated within the broader context of media creativity, a different kind of creativity is at work in what I defined and explicated in this chapter as revolutionary creative labor. Indeed, a final distinction can be made between forms of creative labor that are embedded in localized contexts (the factory) which are otherwise not creative (the assembly line), what in this chapter I called industrial creative labor, and revolutionary creative labor, which consists of explicit and self-conscious forms of revolutionary creativity that are intended to be launched into broader trajectories of circulation. By enacting contextually new forms of political subjectivity and directing them at radical change, revolutionary creative labor seeks to find, congeal, and mobilize publics.

NOTES

1. Media stories and academic publications celebrating Arab revolutionary rap and graffiti have become so commonplace that we could talk of an a Revolutionary Graffiti Index or and Arab Rap Index, following what Miller, referring to Richard Florida's work, calls the Technological and Gay Indexes (Toby Miller, "A View from a Fossil: The New Economy, Creativity and Consumption—Two or Three Things I Don't Believe In," *International Journal of Cultural Studies* 7.1 [2004]: 60).

2. Clearly, this is only a small part of revolutionary labor at large, which includes demonstrating, confronting policy and security personnel, building barricades, feeding revolutionaries, tending to the wounded, and so on.

3. Marwan M. Kraidy, *The Naked Blogger of Cairo: Creative Insurgency in the Arab World* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2016).

4. James M. Jasper, *The Art of Moral Protest: Culture, Biography and Creativity in Social Movements* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997).

5. Vicki Mayer, *Below the Line: Producers and Production Studies in the New Television Economy* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2011).

6. Hans Joas, *The Creativity of* Action (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996).

7. Maurizio Lazzarato, "Immaterial Labour," in *Radical Thought in Italy: A Potential Politics,* ed. Paolo Virno and Michael Hardt (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996), 133–147.

8. For example, Benjamin Shephard, *Play, Creativity and Social Movement* (New York: Routledge, 2011), pivots around the notion of play; while Glenda Ballantyne, *Creativity and Critique: Subjectivity and Agency in Touraine and Ricoeur* (Leiden: Brill, 2007), focuses on subjectivity and agency. The "culture-jamming" literature does not apply in this context because it concerns relatively low-risk subversion of consumer culture in relatively stable, relatively democratic, industrialized countries.

9. Jasper, *Art of Moral Protest,* 378–379. Jasper identifies four basic dimensions that artful protesters use: *resources* like technology and money; *strategies,* individual and group tactics; *culture,* shared aspects of mental worlds and their physical representations; and *biography,* individuals' mental worlds, conscious and subconscious.

10. Ibid., 375.

11. Jasper uses *creativity* and *innovation* somewhat interchangeably, though definitional differences emerge in his discussion. The sociologist Doug McAdam has done extensive work on tactical innovation. For a summary introduction, see Doug McAdam, "Tactical Interaction and Innovation," *The* Wiley-Blackwell *Encyclopedia of Social and Political Movements,* ed. David A. Snow et al. (Hoboken: Wiley-Blackwell, 2013).

12. Jasper, *Art of Moral Protest,* 65.

13. Ibid., 159.

14. Ibid., 219.

15. Ibid., 99. For an argument about upbringing and social support as key biographical enablers of creativity in famously "creative" people, see Howard Gardner, *Creating Minds: An Anatomy of Creativity Seen through the Lives of Freud, Einstein, Picasso, Stravinsky, Eliot, Graham, and Gandhi* (New York: Basic Books, 2011).

16. *Political* with a capital *P* connotes issues of state power and resistance to it, as opposed to cultural politics.

17. Media, cultural, and music production scholars have addressed labor issues, though mostly focusing on the exploitation of labor by those industries. See Toby Miller et al., *Global Hollywood:Issue 2* (London: British Film Institute, 2004); Mark Andrejevic, *Reality TV: The Work of Being Watched*

(Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 2004); Matt Stahl, *Unfree Masters: Recording Artists and the Politics of Work* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2013). The emerging literature on digital labor also focuses on the increasingly exploitative nature of capitalism; see Christian Fuchs, *Digital Labour and Karl Marx* (London: Routledge, 2014). This literature's socio-economic focus is helpful, but only indirectly, for studying a revolutionary setting.

18. Mayer, *Below the Line,* 33.

19. Ibid., 32.

20. Miller, "A View from a Fossil."

21. Mayer, *Below the Line,* 43.

22. Ibid.

23. See their YouTube channel at www.youtube.com/user/MasasitMati.

24. Mayer, *Below the Line,* 44.

25. Ibid.

26. Ibid., 47–51.

27. Jasper's definition of creativity as an "extreme form of flexibility" (*The Art of Moral Protest,* 94) has a matter-of-fact resonance in a revolutionary setting.

28. Mayer, *Below the Line,* 58.

29. Ibid., 56–57.

30. Ibid., 58.

31. Ibid., 59.

32. Michael Curtin, *Playing to the World's Biggest Audience: The Globalization of Chinese Film and TV* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007).

33. One aspect of the compatibility of revolutionary work with digital labor is that they are both unpaid. Though Lazarrato's elaboration of "immaterial labor" focused on the remunerated kind, there has been an active discussion of unwaged labor in the digital era at least since Terranova's 2000 article: Tiziana Terranova, "Free Labor: Producing Culture for the Digital Economy," *Social Text* 18.2 (2000): 33–58. Andrejevic's critique of reality television highlighted the unpaid "work of being watched" (*Reality TV,* 2004). Most recently, see the special issue of *TripleC,* "Philosophers of the World Unite! Theorising Digital Labour and Virtual Work—Definitions, Dimensions and Form," ed. Christian Fuchs et al.; especially Brian A. Brown, "Will Work for Free: The Biopolitics of Unwaged Digital Labour," *TripleC: Communication, Capitalism and Critique* 12.2 (2014): 694–712, www.triple-c.at/index.php/tripleC/article/view/538.

34. Marwan M. Kraidy, "No Country for Funny Men," *Al-Jazeera America,* February 26, 2014, http://america.aljazeera.com/opinions/2014/2/no-country-for-funnymen.html.

35. For more details, see Kraidy, *The Naked Blogger of Cairo.*

36. Joas, *The Creativity of Action,* 71 (emphasis in original).

37. I suspect that a systematic, theoretical, and comparative examination of "action" and "labor" would unearth fascinating overlaps and differences, but this falls outside the purview of this chapter.

38. Jasper, *Art of Moral Protest,* 154.

39. Lazzarato, "Immaterial Labour," 139.

40. Marwan M. Kraidy, "The Revolutionary Body Politic: Preliminary Thoughts on a Neglected Medium in the Arab Uprisings," *Middle East Journal of Culture and Communication* 5.1 (2012): 68–76; "The Body as Medium in the Digital Age: Challenges and Opportunities," *Communication and* Critical-Cultural *Studies* 10.2–3 (2013): 285–290; "The Politics of Revolutionary Celebrity in the Contemporary Arab World," *Public Culture* 27.1 (2014).

41. Mayer, *Below the Line,* 41–42.

42. I initially elaborated it in Marwan M. Kraidy, "Governance and Hypermedia in Saudi Arabia," *First Monday* 11.9 (2006), http://firstmonday.org/issues/special11_9/kraidy/index.html. For an application of the concept in the context of political activism before the Arab uprisings, see Marwan M. Kraidy, *Reality Television and Arab Politics: Contention in Public Life* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010).