

## Fragment on the Concept of Revocation

The word [vocation](#) arrives to us from Latin, as a "spiritual calling," from vocationem, vocation, literally "a calling" from vocatus "called," vocare, "to call" . Already from 1550s, one finds vocation being used for profession or occupation. the term [revocation](#) emerges in the early 15c., from L. revocationem (revocation), a calling back, recalling, it is a noun of action from revocare, to revoke, [revoke](#) which is a late 14c. word emerging from french, revoquer, and latin revocare, to rescind, call back, from the re, which is "back" + vocare "to call",

But of course, both words are very close to the word voice, the sound made by the human mouth, which comes from the French, voix, and Latin vocem, vox, voice, sound, utterance, cry, call, speech, sentence, language, word, also related to vocare, to call.

Anything resembling a 'true' vocation, exactly because it is tied to the possibility of an experience, to be able to do anything, signifies above all a revocation of a precedent vocation. In art, one begins by doing something to become an artist, and then after, one says, but no, I wanted another thing, something else, more important, more urgent, and then by doing another thing, this vocation is revoked.

It is said that Plato started as a tragic poet, and then hearing the voice of Socrates in the markets, said no, no, burned the tragedies, and wrote what we now understand as philosophy. But the task of thinking revocation is not to simply assign this revocation of a new doing a name, the task is to understand the necessity of revoking, of questioning, of putting our doings into question, putting to question every vocation.

If art, was once associated with work, and a reflection of or the public visibility of the private principle of work, today, art has the capacity to serve as a space to rethink the category of work entirely.

This is not simply the dream of comrades who praised laziness or refused work, anticipating the birth of an automatized world. Nor is it the dream of friends who struggled to bring life closer to the work, which today has created a regime of relentless mining and extraction of value and productivity from hitherto untouched arenas of one's " non-working life". Revocation becomes a category to question what we are called to do, and what we call doing. The notion of revocation gives space to all of the kinds of doing which reclaim or reassess what actually constitutes productive labor, or meaningful work, and more importantly to our potential to refuse that which has been refused to us (namely work itself).

In the context of art, the category helps us see or perceive a multiplicity of practices as either symptoms of or efforts to escape or scrutinize the devastation of societies which constructed themselves around specific notions of work or productivity, and thus value. And which today, are willing to destroy a planet, go to war, displace communities, expose every facet of life to the accountant's ledger before reappraising and revoking these inherited categories.

(aa, rg, 06.05.2012)