Varieties of Radical Dissent:: Essay 4::
Manifesting the Radical

The Essay / The Manifesto

In 4 pages you will present your own manifesto.

What is a manifesto? A manifesto is an argument for change. In saying that, I've just described a great deal of what we've read this semester. So, a few other definitions:

- Mary Ann Caws marks the consistent goal of the manifesto as "a deliberate manipulation of the public view."
- Steven Marcus names a manifesto as: "an unsurpassed dramatic representation, diagnosis and prophetic array of visionary judgment on the modern world."

In all this, a manifesto stands on the cusp of a moment, inventing a new world view (rather than merely taking a position in an established debate). Its question is like the one T.S. Eliot's Prufrock asks: "Have the strength to force the moment to its crisis?"

Tip: Timeliness
The successful manifesto finds that crux between what is and what will be. If it is to be effective in stepping into (and manipulating us into) the change of its envisioned future, you'll have to demonstrate that the time is right for your vision. Some topics are too old and worn; others may seem too inconsequential if they seem too new. Your old friend motive can be an asset here: a good way to assert timeliness is to walk through a yes/but structure (yes, this may seem like an old issue, but here's why we still need to think about it now).

Tip: Scope
The Big Issues of the day may not necessarily yield the best manifestoes because the topic may be too huge to wrangle in 4 pages and/or its various arguments may be too well known and too well worn.

Tip: Structure (Diagnosis + Vision)
You could go far by modifying the basic structure suggested by Marcus: A) diagnose the present condition; and then B) offer your vision for how to change it.

Tip: The List
Machiavelli likely created the connection between manifesto and list (and many after him have adopted that mode), but a manifesto does not have to be (or contain) a list. Still, this innovation seems to be popular in manifestoes for the way it offers pointed and sequential analysis as well as clear steps for change.

Tip: Evidence & Specifics
In every case, you'll be most successful when you root even your grandest ideas in specifics. You need a particular source for your complaint and a particular set of replacement ideas. Choose an topic that is immediate to you—a contemporary inequality in need of redress, a recent cultural error that needs to be set straight, a private future—and begin your work there.
**Pitches: Dec. 1**
On Wed., Dec. 1st we'll have pitch conferences instead of class. You'll meet with me and 3 others to pitch your idea and get suggestions—in 10 minutes or less!

**Workshop Draft: Dec. 8**
Your Workshop Draft is due at the beginning of class on Wednesday, Dec. 8th. Please bring 2 copies (making sure to keep a copy for yourself).

**Peer Workshop: Dec. 8**
On Wednesday, Dec. 8th we will meet in Peer Workshop groups.

**Final Draft: Dec 5**
You'll submit your Final Draft of your manifesto in class on Mon. Dec. 13th.

**Presentations: Dec 15**
You'll deliver a 3-minute version of your manifesto in class on Wednesday, Dec. 15th.

**Semester Progress Report + Portfolio: Dec 10**
Finally, you'll write a short essay as final Progress Report in class on Dec 10th and complete your Portfolio by uploading your two best essays.