

# CONVERSATIONS

Appendix

- April 26, 2018
- April 26, 2018, Fossil
- December 19, 2016,
- May 19, 2016
- March 1, 2016,
- October 30, 2015
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April 26, 2018

Transcribed conversation between Liv Bugge and Ingvil Hellstrand at Stavanger Kunsthall, after having a conversation with a fossil trilobite together with a group of interdisciplinary students. The Stavanger region and the city are widely referred to as the oil capital of Norway, as it is the onshore centre for the oil industry on the Norwegian sector of the North Sea.

Ingvil Hellstrand, PhD is an associate professor with the Network for Gender Studies at the University of Stavanger (UiS). She holds an MA in women's studies from Lancaster University, UK, and a PhD in gender and cultural studies from UiS. Her research interests are science fiction, posthuman bodies, bioethics, biopolitics, and feminist theory. She is one of the founding members of The Monster Network, an international platform for exploring the figure of the monster and the monstrous. Her current research centres on welfare technologies, human/non-human relations, and posthuman ethics.

Ingvil Hellstrand: I think there are three very striking things that run through the impressions from the meditations.

One is the insignificance of the human. I think it's really interesting that so many people feel this creature is wiser, or that we're not dignified with an answer. That was a really powerful thing, which links our exercise to the whole post-human critique of human exceptionalism. That feeds into the critique against the human, and our responsibility for the world and accountability to it.

The other thing is, of course, the breaking down of the barriers between the human and the non-human. Because when you started, you said, "Let's try to talk to it as if it's a fossil subject."

When you first started to find questions, you said, "Try to think what you would ask it if it were still alive." So, because the trilobite is essentialised and so readily evoked in stories of life on earth, the fact of it being dead was kind of the bridging of that divide between life and death.

Thirdly, it raised the whole ontology question: "What is being?" Of course, the whole fossil, and your experience of it being compressed in rock, is how we envision and perceive the mark of the human. So, there is some kind of relationship with how we've taken out that fossil.

Didn't someone also mention that maybe, in the future, they will dig us up and put a price tag on us?

Liv Bugge: Yes. Like, we're the fossils of the future.

IH: We're the fossils of the future. It's also about what marks we leave on the earth, and how it has been hacked away at as well. It's obviously also about how we understand history, and the value we place on different kinds of inanimate objects, and what meaning they are given in different meaning-making structures.

I thought the conversation actually hinged on both the Anthropocene and the Capitalocene. Perhaps what we're doing here is a bit of the Cthulu—just because we don't know what's happening.

When starting this course, we called it a laboratory, not just for confronting the post-human or figuring out what the post-human is, but also what the human is. Because in order to answer the question, "Is this really a post-human era?", we also need to address what the human is.

So, I think asking about the trilobite brought out questions, or answers, or at least reflections on what it means to be human, or alive, or a being in the world.

I work with science fiction, and we talk a lot about how speculating into the past or future is a way of talking about now. But this project, and

your work, is based on historicising—which is another way of understanding the now.

The trilobite, as an inanimate object, is also put in the “old” category. But, we surround ourselves with inanimate objects all the time. Do you think we could have had a conversation with a modern-day inanimate object with some kind of big significance, like an iPhone or something else?

LB: As you understood already, part of my point with dealing with this “old” fossil is, in a way, to insist that it also is now. I guess there are differences between the iPhone and the chair and, for example, a mountain. Juridically, or ethically, there are differences between objects.

I think that, yes, maybe we could have spoken to an iPhone. But, there are many components in an iPhone, so then it’s maybe a little bit unclear what exactly we are talking to. But, it’s interesting because I think asking questions to objects is quite important.

I come from an art context, and it’s an important question in all kinds of exhibition-making, or working with materials and objects, and I think, in many ways, artists have always had a sensibility towards what they are working with, and actually often ask the objects questions while making them. But, I think asking the objects is especially important when thinking about representation and how to exhibit in the postcolonial world, or the ongoing colonising world, when you think about non-living things.

I guess asking questions to those objects is one way of confronting the object rather than representing the object. When making art, and when dealing with materials and putting things on display for others to look at, what does that do? I think it’s very important to ask those questions.

IH: The iPhone might be a bad example.

LB: Not that bad, because there are things in the iPhone that are highly... –

IH: But more like, what would they excavate from this era if we science fiction ourselves –

LB: A lot of plastic waste. So, when asking the iPhone, we could talk about labour or slavery, and mining, artificial intelligence, information, and the oil industry, and things like that. What I am also interested in is mechanisms that make us able to think about things, living and non-living, as resources. Like, for example, removing things like the fossil from the now into the not-understandable past is one way of legitimising how we make things into resources. I was also wondering what you think about how resources are constituted. It’s an open question.

IH: I think that question has also been central to our discussion with the group, actually: “What constitutes a resource?” And the follow-up question, “For who, or for what?” Because a resource is something that changes with time.

Going back to the trilobite, it has social value even though it is made of minerals and rock. Even though it cost 900 kroner, that is a social-cultural-heritage value that's placed on it. It has no financial value on its own, like oil would have—like these pockets of black gold. I'm thinking about oil now, and there is a whole narrative surrounding it. Because the question of what constitutes a resource is a key question for how we can think about the future. Because we stick to the resources that we know, and we envision new kinds of resources.

Of course, you all know there is an attempt towards a green shift, from fossil resources to renewable resources. But, the aim for the use of these resources is still the same—it's for human consumption, and sustaining a level of comfortable living for humans, or even raising it. And we still have to remember the question, "For whom? Who will benefit from a green shift, and who will build the machinery to sustain it? What kind of air will they be breathing, for example."

What kind of resources or energy or fuels are used to build or make the green resources? Because, as with this terrible story about the iPhone, there are probably also terrible stories about windmills. Or electric cars. So, it's an entangled question. I don't have an answer for it.

LB: Thinking about the future is interesting. My second supervisor during this PhD is Elizabeth Povinelli. I don't know if you know her.

IH: I don't.

LB: She's an American anthropologist and film-maker, and she's been quite involved in the discussion around the Anthropocene.

She's also running this film collective with her Aboriginal family in Australia, the Karrabing collective. Some of what these films are showing is how they relate to these non-living entities—for example, there's this mountain called Two Women Sitting Down, which is a holy mountain.

Povinelli is making a point of the distinction between the mountain Two Women Sitting Down, and two women sitting down. What's the actual juridical difference between these four women sitting down?

Another example she mentions is this fog. I don't remember the name of it, but it is definitely something. It's not like it's living, but it has a strong will. It has its tempers, and it's kind of dangerous.

As a sort of long leap, I find what you're saying about the green shift, and the rhetoric of the Norwegian oil lobbyists—how they speak about drilling more oil is important for making a greener and more democratic future. Norwegian oil is very Norwegian, in a way. It's like, "cleaner, more democratic." It's seemingly important for the people of the future to be richer than us due to more oil drilling, and to be able to solve the climate problems that we are not able to solve.

In a way, this rhetoric is humanising the oil. And, in my long leap, it mimics the way the Aboriginals are talking about the fog, although they

do not humanise it. But, in the case of the oil lobbyists, it is clearly rhetorical, and it has political motivations.

IH: And it's symbolic of value, to say the least. Because I think the cultural value placed on oil in Norway—and especially now, the potential for the oil to do good—is also a thing that sets Norway apart from the rest of the world with their coal. So, this rhetoric and symbolism around it is creating differences as well, in nationalist ways.

Because I assume everyone can share the anthropomorphic, the Two Women—but not everybody can share the oil. So, there's a difference. It's a different, "For whom?" Because not everybody can access the oil.

Oil is so very abstract. Very few of us have been to the platforms. In Stavanger, everybody knows someone who works in the oil industry, but there's still this degree of separation. There's also the platform. It's elsewhere. So, maybe asking questions to a platform could be interesting, because it sits there like an island on its own.

It's inhabited by different people. It's a community that keeps changing, and it's replaceable all the time. It's not a stable community. That just made me think about that, too. Because what about future excavations? Would they find the platform? By "they", I mean people in the future. If there are people at all. They might be trilobites!

"What's this puny little thing here in the ocean?"

I don't know. I'll repeat myself, but it's still a question of access to both the symbolism and rhetoric, as well as to the places and locations. So, if this mountain you talked about is a holy mountain, does that mean only a few people can go to it?

LB: No.

IH: So, it's for everybody. Because we protect our seas quite rigidly from other people being able to take our oil. I thought that was interesting in the conversation we had with the trilobite about the price tag. Who is to sell it, and who is to own it when it actually belongs to the earth, or to everybody? Who gets to make a profit? But, that's a colonial question. Who gets to make a profit from the diamonds?

LB: Or the water.

IH: Yes, absolutely. In terms of the oil, there is a writer from South America called Eduardo Galeano, and he's written a book called *Open Veins of Latin America*. That is the oil that's been mined or pumped—I don't know, excavated—drilled, in the Amazon area and in the jungles. The open veins are the lifeblood of the country, but the industry is not nationalised, so it's the people who bleed. It's a comparison between blood veins and oil veins.

It's a really powerful image of how the oil might be the lifeblood, because it's so "of the earth", even if it is created as a polluting thing. We sell it and use it to pollute. There might be other uses for it, that we haven't thought about, that might not be as polluting. It's also about

how we treat what we excavate. I don't know if that made any sense at all.

LB: Because being an artist, for me, artistic knowledge production is not under any kind of strict rules. What I'm saying doesn't have to be true. Art can ask questions without really answering them, and I think that is a great thing about art, that it also allows for anything potentially otherwise. But, I am just curious how you, as academics, relate to this kind of knowledge that we've been talking about or experiencing today in conversation with the fossil.

IH: This is definitely a way of flipping the perspective around, or seeing things differently, or thinking about the otherwise.

In scientific traditions, knowledge is considered something that is fixed, and something that you can find, discover, and excavate, or bottle and take with you. But, I've been influenced by feminist philosophy of science, and they've always criticised this idea of knowledge as something fixed and stable.

They rather try to reconceptualise it as something that happens—something that is produced. I think with the post-human turn, it's been more acceptable to think of knowledge as something that keeps changing. At this moment in time, there's more acceptance for this in academia than there was only a couple of decades ago.

Because there is this—maybe not acknowledgment—but at least a sense that this is a pivotal time. There might be a paradigm shift in terms of the crises in the humanities, and how we should think of the human and its relationships.

So, there is an understanding that we might need to reconsider what we consider to be appropriate paths to knowledge. Working with art, and with artists like you, keeps us from shutting down the horizon. Because it's very easily done.

You say when you have an art exhibition you need to ask the objects, "What are you? Who are you? What are you doing here?" I think we could actually do the same when creating a course. For example, I could ask all of the texts that I've asked you to read, and all of the objects we've been discussing, "What are you? What are you doing here?"

That would probably bring a lot more room for creative thinking, and for new knowledge production, than if we just do what we always do. So, "Here we have a course. Here we have some text that you know something about. We ask you to read it, and we ask you to reproduce it, in a way."

That said, feminist philosophy of science—as a way of looking at knowledge that involves criticising the idea of a universal subject, and criticising the idea that knowledge is something fixed and stable, not something that is changeable and dependent on your situated



perspectives and your experience, and your body, and your social contexts—is not included in the courses we have at our university for philosophy of science. Not at Ex.phil level, and not at PhD level.

I have a sense that we are at a moment in time when these ideas are seeping into the general knowledge structures. I suspect that we might see a change there within—let's be pessimistic—10 years.

IH: The challenge for traditional knowledge structures are with the categorizations—that you are either a subject or an object, for example. The exercise today is making that distinction impossible.

To make that impossible is very difficult, when trying to produce research or knowledge. We are so dependent on categorizations, and not just of subject/object. I call it, “the problem of the in-between”. Because I've tried to write about gender and how there are structural differences between genders, but by stating this all the time, I keep reproducing it. I think that's a real problem for academia.

That's where I think having created a state where the fossil is both fossil subject, fossil object, fossil rock and fossil cartoon, and all of those things at the same time, is key to the knowledge production that we should strive for. But, I think it's difficult to do.

Karen Barad is a feminist theorist that we've briefly touched upon. She has tried to redo both the concept of ontology, as the knowledge of being, and epistemology, as the knowledge of knowledge, into onto-epistemology. So, you can't think of being and knowledge as two separate things, but you need to think of them together.

This is really inspiring to me, because of course you can't separate being and knowledge. The fact that we have two “ologies”, and have separated them, says something about how far off we are from this.

LB: Elizabeth Povinelli also has this term, “geontologies”. So, the being of the geo.

IH: The being of the geo, yes. That's really interesting. That's the ethical challenge we've talked about: how to keep many things at the same time. They don't choose either/or.

I think that the ideal is to get there. We've done that today. So, that's really inspiring. But, I don't think that would be possible without art as a catalyst for this solving of the linear thinking, and of the categorical thinking. It's an invitation to think otherwise.

LB: In terms of playing with language, I think that's the big potential of art. It's like finding new languages or changing the ones we have.

IH: And, in that way, it has a lot in common with speculative fiction. That's a field I like a lot. But, that's still usually in a conventional form because it's either written or visual. So, to role play a science fiction society

would be interesting. We always go to the past to do that. I think science fiction could also be challenged in how it tells its stories.

April 26. 2018

Transcription of notes from telepathic group conversation with a fossil trilobite found outside Oslo. Seminar room, 2nd floor in the Department of Energy and Petroleum Engineering, University of Stavanger (UiS). Approximately 15 interdisciplinary students and Ingvil Hellstrand, Associate Professor in Gender Studies, UiS, Norway.

- Is everybody done? Perhaps we can all come a bit closer to each other. How was it?
- Difficult.
- Nice conversation. It was very polite
- It was interesting because, as you said a lot of the time, I was thinking, "This is just me", and then I was writing down what happened. Then I thought, "This doesn't really sound like me", so that was interesting. Testing scepticism, you know, so that's good.
- It was hard because I didn't really know what it looked like. I kind of saw something in the end but I'm not sure. It was a bit weird. And that's when I realised that I was thinking a bit beyond what was me, because I was having a conversation with something that I could see, and then I couldn't. Partially there, partially not.
- I found it difficult to not do some anthropocentric thing to the body of it, so suddenly it insisted on standing on two legs or suddenly the environment was like an inner-city setting in my head and I couldn't get it out. It was difficult trying to have a conversation with it without anthropomorphising it in some way.

It felt weird for me because if someone comes and asks me, "Are you ok?", I'll ask myself, "Do I feel ok?" And I felt I was being aggressive and asking those questions in that way, rather than more like, "How are you?", "Where do you come from?", "Let's have a drink", or whatever.

- The same happened to me; most of my questions were answered with questions. I guess we'll talk about the answers later, but some of my questions were answered with more questions. So, it was like, "I cannot force you to speak out if you don't want to", but it made me reflect on my questions.
- Asking the questions wasn't structured, in that I wasn't asking questions no. 1-no. 11. It was more about what leads to what and back and forth. So, I didn't write 1-11 because I could do more of a free floating thing with the topics.
- My trilobite was massive, it was huge, and it was this immense thing on the beach. I didn't dare ask it all the questions I had. I felt really impolite asking that huge thing if it was a fossil. I didn't dare.
- Mine was a bit like that too. Because first it was a big anthropomorphic thing, sort of like a cartoon character. And then I was like, "No, no. Not a cartoon creature." But then it didn't want to be with me on the beach, it was like a sea creature. It just went into the green seawater and it wouldn't engage. I tried to ask these questions, "So, are you lonely? Are you happy?" But it was like, "Lonely, happy—why are you asking me these questions? Go away, I'm just doing my thing."

- From the way the questions were answered it was obvious that many of these questions didn't make sense to ask at all. It kind of accepted that I was there, showing up and asking these questions. It just gave no answers to anything.
- For me, it didn't want to answer almost any of the questions; it didn't understand them. The only answer I actually got was, "Yes, we are the same, you are here, and I am here, and we are both biological beings and so we are the same." I don't know why it answered that one, but I didn't get any other answers.
- I started to feel—it's going to sound a bit weird—a bit gassy and bloated, literally as soon as we started talking, but that could just be me. I kind of felt a bit gassy, yes gassy is the word.
- You felt gassy or it felt gassy?
- I don't quite know because it's kind of stopped now. It could just be me, I'm not quite sure.
- So, shall we go through the questions? Did people get answers? Shall we start with Ingvil?
- It's funny because it's also how, or what, constitutes an answer. So, my very huge trilobite would flip—not its tail—but, you know, the wings or legs. It was lying on its back at first. Then I asked if it felt exposed, but it just said, "No". It was there, enormous, and it just shrugged and rolled over and I suppose that's an answer. I didn't ask the questions in sequence. And it would smile. It was just really massive, so it felt as if it was almost as though I wasn't worthy of getting the answers from it, in a way. Very strange. And when I asked it what it felt like to have a price put on it, it seemed to grow even more. I don't know what to make of that. I got the feeling that it was very happy there on the beach and it wanted to stay there. But the only sort of proper answer I got was that, yes, it felt big and that it was somehow powerful.
- I didn't really get any answers. Or any sort of connection. I just felt dizzy and like a weight on my right side. And then I started to paint lots of circles on the paper. But, again, I have seen them or something similar living, so I was just thinking about the living ones and that we consider them a fossil, but they might still be living there in the middle of the desert. I asked my question, "Are you a fossil?" "Yes, this one is, but the others might not be." It might not be the same, but, I mean, if the energy of this one is still living . . . And, "No they are not lonely because now they all live all together in the sea." They look a bit like reker (shrimps), you know?
- When you started talking about the sun and everything, I got goose bumps and I felt like that electricity we get to see in films going through the body, and I felt warm and thirsty. I could just see it coming out of the waves, it was there out of the sea and I got on my knees and was like, "Do you need to get back?" I did get an answer, but I think it was just me answering myself. But I asked him, "Are you a fossil? Do you feel big?" and got no real answer. I think it was just at peace and thinking, "Why do you need to know everything? Just live.
- All the time I was picturing the sand on the beach and the sea was on my left side and the sun was on my left side, warming there. The sun just stayed on the left side, warming it. Then the fossil went through this morphosis, then it was a cartoon, and

then it was a small one. It went into the sea and it wasn't asking me to follow, but all of a sudden there I was in the sea looking at it in the algae and in the seaweed. And you know when you try to talk to someone who is busy, but they allow you to be there? It was eating and whatever, and I was like, "Excuse me?" But it was more amused by my questions. It felt big and dominant; it was as if I were too insignificant.

- That's really similar to my experience.
  
- Yes, it was more amused.
  
- Maybe it was the same one I met. That's why he was busy with all the questions. You helped him back to the sea, but then I was like, "Hello, I have questions."
  
- Well, I just ended up on one of the beaches I was backpacking on 20 years ago, in the Caribbean. It just appeared, about that size, [pointing to the fossil on the floor] not very scary. I was thinking, "How do I approach it; how do I get into a conversation?" And it ended up saying "hi" to me. The feedback was that it did not understand why I was asking all these questions. It was in more of a natural state. When I went through the questions afterwards, most of them were not really answered in precise words. So, for the question about being a fossil, it said, "No, but it is very interesting to know that I actually became one." It liked the idea that when it died it did not disintegrate, but became a fossil. That implicitly answered the second question, "Would you change anything?" "No, because I obviously have something to do in the very distant future and if I changed anything, I maybe wouldn't get to do that." It didn't understand itself as a ruler of the world; it's not dominant. It definitely felt part of the world, which also answers question no. 6, "You can't feel lonely if you are part of the world. If you are part of the world, then you aren't lonely." So, these questions were not answered explicitly. Basically, the only question that was answered properly with a question was the last one, "How does it feel to have a price tag put on you?" "How does it feel to be willing to pay for something that the seller doesn't own, and you cannot own yourself, ever?" And with these words it kind of just disappeared in the sand again, and then I muttered a goodbye but I'm not sure if it heard.
  
- Ok, so I asked it all the questions, but I kind of got the feeling that it knew that it was once living and it knew it was a fossil now. It kind of felt like I was answering all the questions myself, but that was maybe the point. The only question that I really felt I got a good answer to was no. 7, "What are we for you?" I just thought that it said that we are the modern-day trilobite because at one point they were kind of ruling the world and now humans are.

- Well, to me it was that size because I have never seen one before, and so it was about the size of a Madagascar cockroach—just a bit bigger. It was kind of on its back, and that's because I was imagining its belly. When I asked it, "Do you feel exposed?", it said, "Obviously, can't you see how the rock is carved around me and my belly is up, and I can't protect myself?" It was bilingual because I asked him, "What is a fossil?" and he said, "What is a fossil *egentlig*<sup>1</sup>?" and I don't speak Norwegian, but this one did. I think the answer I liked best was actually no. 7 too, "What are we to you?" It said, "You are the fossils because you don't live life, and if I'm stuck on a rock, you are stuck on money, like on a coin." The British pound with the queen on it came to my mind, and how we live with technology and how we are attached to it and so we are also fossils. It didn't really talk to me, it was more telepathically. I was standing next to it and feeling the answers. Yeah, I think that's no. 10, "Are you happy with your existence?", and it was like, "Yeah. I could have died anywhere, but I died on a rock and continued to live on in the future and that's pretty cool." I felt like it was a he for some reason.
- I needed quite a long time to get into the meditational state, but finally I got one answer, and this was to the last question. I got to know that it feels really strangely about us dealing with his dead body and that we sell it. I got the answer, "Why do you put a price on me? What does it matter because I'm dead, so what is the sense in that?"
- I started to feel that my hands got warm for some reason, because I have got very cold hands.
- When I asked if it felt exposed, it was actually lying on its back, and I got the same feeling I get every time I go to shower in the gym, like, "Oh my God, I hope no one is looking at me, I feel uncomfortable." It was the same feeling I got here, like, "OHHHH I hate this! Just get done with it." Exactly the same feeling.
- I can definitely say that I was walking barefoot on that beach.
- I had a piercing pain in my shoulder, like it was moving through the body, through the heart. Down from the shoulder. It started out like a small pain, and then it just moved. But I have a bad shoulder, so it might just be that I relaxed.
- I started hearing ocean sounds very clearly. I didn't feel any breeze, but the sounds were very vivid.
- For me, the sound of the cars passing by slowly became the sound of waves. I decided that those are cars, but no, they will be waves. I got more and more warm on my left side, and I decided that is the sun.
- And the time kind of slowed down too. Did anybody get that slow time?
- I guess for me it was a little bit different because it wasn't a conversation. I just assumed that I would look at it as I would look at an ant or any kind of creature like

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<sup>1</sup> «Egentlig» is Norwegian for «Really»

that, and any questions or answers that I might have would be my assumptions on its behaviour, or what I imagined it to be saying. I don't know if that's narrow-minded or anything, but I didn't have a conversation with it, per se. It's more like I observed it. Yes, for me there are no answers. It was just scuttling around, and I was on the beach observing it. I didn't feel that there was a conversation.

- Yeah, as I said, for me it insisted on anthropomorphing in some way, so suddenly it had a hat and then suddenly we were in the middle of Beijing or something. So, I tried to force us back to the beach, for it to be what it is. It was kind of aggressive to my questions. It didn't want to answer them and became quite hostile. So, one question we actually did was a variation of, "What are we to you?" or, "Are we the same?" and the answer was, "Yes we are the same basically, because we were in the same situation at that point." So, to it, there wasn't more to it than that. I imagined it also to be male, if that's relevant. I think the hat gave it away. It was like a sixpence, a grey sixpence.
- No hat on mine. I think it had something to do with the state I got into with the meditation, It wasn't lying on the sand or anything, it was floating with some green smoke around it. It felt like it was this very old—millions of years old—thing that was so much wiser than me. It wasn't hostile, it was more condescending to our species. So, when I asked, "Are you a fossil?", it was like, "Are you? What is a fossil?" Basically, it was just saying that we do what we do here, we eat, we socialise, we sleep with each other, and we just live. We don't care about being a ruler, a liberal, or being dominant. We don't care about status, and gender, and race, we are just trilobites. So, this old floating thing of wisdom was like, "You will never, ever, ever get to our level."
- I struggled a little bit because when it appeared, it was the same size as me. And I tried, because I am a realist, I tried to shrink it down. But yes, I almost lost the state of meditation. And so, I just gave in. It was more like not having a conversation, but me being the creature. I tried to ask some of the questions, and it wouldn't give me any answers, but just the sense of existence and being there in that time. Also it wouldn't stay on the beach, so I ended up in—I think it was rocks. It was like being content, feeling fresh, no limitations of the understanding of being, you just do what you do, just being there with the others. I don't know if it was a male or female. Somehow I was also in the water, and I ended up feeling compressed. Yes, then it ended there, just me feeling compressed.
- Mine was a bit different, I couldn't really visualise it. It was more like a blob, so when I tried to ask if it was a fossil, it got a bit confused. I thought that it was me starting to interpret it, rather than it talking directly to me. What I found interesting was that the beach I was on was one I know back in Portugal. But instead of being how it is now, it was just a pure beach with none of the extra things that are on it. What is special about this beach is that it's got a big black rock on it next to the cliffs. I didn't feel like I was choosing it, I don't know why it appeared, or if it was the fossil association that was there. It didn't really want to answer my questions, but it wanted me to be there, so when I tried to interpret things it was contradictory. For example, on the question, "Are you part of the world?", I kind of interpreted that it didn't feel part of earth really, but it did feel part of something. Maybe the universe, that's how I interpreted it. For, "What are we for you?", it just felt a little confused with everything. The area around us wasn't bright and colourful, but it wasn't dark, It was bright, but lacking colour.



Then the blob disappeared into the sea, and that was it. Then I felt gassy, but I don't know if that was just me . . .

- So, we are at the beach line and when I start approaching, it is very small. Like the size of a cockroach. It's facing directly towards me. I get this feeling that it is very confident, that it's not afraid of me.
  
- I found it a struggle to open up a conversation with it. It's just an insect, and I . . . We are totally different things. I sat down, and I started. I didn't want to approach it like it was dead, like it was a fossil, so I skipped all the questions about that. So, I asked him, also a him by the way, if he felt dominant. It said, "At times, but the circumstances remind me that I am just one of a series of coincidences." So, it's very self-aware. I was asking him. "What are we to you?" "You are the same to me as I am to you." It doesn't speak, it is all in my head, so I start to think while I have this conversation, "Is this just me?"
  
- I was not in such a deep meditation, but I noted what went through my head. On the question, "Are you a fossil?" I got, "No, I am mass. I am soft underneath." Then I had sort of an image of it flickering, from being frozen to being unfrozen. I was also on a beach, and it was the size it is, but I had difficulty getting close to it. On the question, "Would you change something in your life that would change something for us?", it said, "CHANGE?" And then it turned the image we were in upside down, so the sky was in the lower part of where we were and I got a bit dizzy. And then, "Do you consider yourself the ruler of the world?" It said, "No, kings and queens, circles of trilobites", so I guess it didn't enrol in the idea of the monarchy. It didn't feel big, it said it felt rather out of place. For the question about whether it felt part of the world, again, I had an image. It was in two parts. It was like a diagonal was going through the image, where these two different landscapes were. One sort of green landscape, and one sort of rocky landscape. It was kind of a life/non-life image, but it didn't really say anything about it. Then when I asked about loneliness, it said, "I feel like a baby inside the womb, not together, but inside each other. For the question, "Do you feel exposed or on display?", it said, "Beach and classroom are the same." During question no. 7, "What are we for you?", I felt a bit nauseated.

**December 19, 2016**

**Notes from 2 fossil conversations**

## **Trilobite\_Conversation 1. – Extract**

**Bo Bugge, Brynjar Åbel Bandlien, Roza Moshtaghi, Liv Bugge**

**A question relating to the future was which colours we got from it.**

– This was where I first got an answer, and it was different from before when it was an old woman that was sitting on a grassy hill. This time, it was the size of a spaceship, an enormous coffee bean, like in that new movie *First Contact*. Enormous, but it had shrivelled. It used to be a lot bigger, but now all the water had evaporated and it was completely dry. It was shaped like a coffee bean, and the trilobite said that we would all be the colour of coffee beans in the future. In other words, we will all be the same colour: a coffee-brown colour.

– In my experience it was grey.

– I also got a chocolatey, brownish black colour and it was flashing and changing. A bit similar to what you saw?

– Yes. I also saw alternating colours. Almost mottled.

– Funny you say coffee beans, because it was round. It started turning more and more blue. When it comes to generations, it is turning blue. Black turns to blue. At the moment it is pink or light red.

### **Food/resources**

– Your food turns into its food. It's simply about energy. Energy flows in and out of it, just like the sun did through us when we were meditating. Metabolism wasn't an issue; it just flows right through. It is pure energy. We consume a substance, and then this substance is converted into energy. It said that we are not able to extract energy directly from a source. The energy has to be transformed before we can receive it. This is a problem for us humans. It is not developed enough in humans. This will not happen to us before we are dead. When we die, we will become part of this source, and only then will we be able to receive and emit energy without the help of metabolism. The trilobite can receive energy directly from the source because it has become part of the source.

– In its life as a fossil?

– No, at the present time. When it comes to food, humans will also be able to do this in the future, but not until we die and no longer depend on metabolism.

– I'm a very visual person, so I can't explain it easily in words. You know the skin of a chicken when it is red and sticky? A kind of sticky, slimy, jelly-ish energy. The fat underneath the skin of a chicken. Something you can lie in, not like in a bathtub, but . . . something you can immerse yourself in.

– I saw the trilobite in New York, and it was in bad shape. It was hungry and couldn't find any food. It showed me an image of juicy, green grass in the wind, or in the sea. Seaweed. Very lush. Two contrasting images. The trilobite was run over by cars in New York, over and over again. [laughter] That was what I saw, and since we were not supposed to censor anything . . .

### **Concerns**

– When it comes to concerns and issues, we don't have to worry about it; the trilobite will be OK. That was interesting. We think of ourselves as more important than we are.

– We make ourselves important just by the fact that we worry.

– We shouldn't worry about managing recourses. That worry is not justifiable.

– It was clear when I asked about concerns and worries that we don't have to worry about time: about not having enough time, too much time, or getting bored. Time shouldn't be a source of worry in any capacity. That is probably because the trilobite has time in abundance.

– I experienced it as very tough. I didn't analyse it. It just felt heavy.

### **Matter versus image**

– The trilobite told me it felt very trapped in the image and shape that it has at the moment. It was trapped in a three-dimensional glass jar. It really wanted to fly out of the jar. The skin was

like bark, and the surface was transitioning to another substance very quickly, almost in a cinematic way—a violent transformation.

– At first I got a very clear answer: magic. The transition from lived life to a fossil is a form of magic. This may be about how we function neurologically, but after it answered in the simple term of magic, the trilobite went on to say, “I don’t know how, I just do it.” It keeps on transforming itself. The transition or transformation happens in the cerebellum: it happens to the cashier at the supermarket when the cash register goes “beep”, it happens when marbles crash into each other, it happens somewhere in the pelvic diaphragm, it happens when something is metabolised, and it happens when a prism refracts light.

– It felt like my legs were stuck to the floor and that the magnetism got stronger and stronger. Then it felt like I was melting, slowly but surely. The body inflates, and is compressed. You are sort of pressed down, but you have no idea who is doing it. A powerful suction force coming from underneath. It feels like being stuck.

### **How to maintain mere life in an ethical perspective?**

– Become brain-dead. Become a vegetable. Become a shell of a body. Enter a vegetative state. Enjoy many long, hot baths, and just stay in the warm water. That’s the answer.

– I rushed at the end because I knew you guys were finished, so I didn’t have enough time to ask this question. But I did get a sense about it not being concerned about ethics.

– That’s funny because I have written down: “Ethics? What is that?”

– Those types of concepts are meaningless.

## **Trilobite\_Conversation 1. – Extract**

**Erika Kvistad, Sara Orning, Henrik Treimo, Liv Bugge**

### **Presence**

– I was unsure the first time I asked that question because I got a heavy feeling in my arms and legs and it felt like the trilobite was reluctant towards me, it seemed like it was angry or scared. It was reluctant, in a way. I think the question about presence was answered through question no. 4, which was the one about emotions. I got answers to both those questions at the same time. It wasn't hostile, it just felt as if the trilobite was a bit sceptical or like a mass that was in opposition to me.

– I experienced that the trilobite was sort of cartoonish, and when I asked about presence it appeared very large in front of me. It was the same size as me. It was a little bit aggressive, a little bit fed up, a little bit frustrated, as if it were saying, "I'm all over the place", with its belly protruding—maybe in order to make itself look vulnerable. It felt like the trilobite was frustrated because it was missing body parts. The tongue, maybe. I'm not sure, but I felt a pain in the back of my head. On many of the questions, the trilobite started answering one thing, but then another question was answered at the same time. In my understanding, the trilobite was talking about how its life had been when it was still alive, but also about its current state, about missing things. I'm not sure about the tongue, but it looked like it was missing a few legs. But I also had this pain in the back of my head right after it had had some kind of blowout where it was "all over the place."

– I felt something in my neck.

– I felt a very specific stinging here. [gesturing] Strange.

– When I asked about presence, it was one of the few times when a word came to mind, and this was different from the rest of the thought process. It said, "You are there", and then it just went on to repeat, "you, you, you, you, you." I got worried that I was just imagining this, so I asked the trilobite, "Am I just making you up?" It just replied, "you" several more times. That was the most verbal part of the whole session for me. I then started talking about emotions like fear, and it felt like I was pushed back and I got a feeling that it didn't want to talk about that, but we ended up talking about it later on anyway.

– I asked that question several times, but I forgot to ask it in the beginning. I think it was the third question I asked. I got the feeling the trilobite said it couldn't answer that question. That was very clear. I kept insisting and held the question in my mind, and I kept an openness to it. It wasn't as if it didn't know the answer, it was more like the question itself was incomprehensible. It wasn't something it wanted to relate to. Later on I asked again, and suddenly the trilobite was in my hand, and it was warm. It was completely hard, then it suddenly turned soft and then hard again. We had just talked about question no. 7 (the transition from lived life), so it answered that question. Even though we had a solid contact with each other, we weren't completely on the same page, but we were very much connected. The communication was clear, so I think we both felt a kind of presence with each other.

– The presence was strangely very clear. The trilobite was *present*. The trilobite may not have thought it was present, but . . .

## **Time**

– I also forgot some questions at first. Well, I forgot to ask some questions, but I also experienced things that made it impossible to ask the questions in a particular order. I got a very emotional reaction at first and that made me filter the questions in accordance to the reactions. My hands and feet felt heavy and warm. That's why questions no. 1 and no. 4 came much later, after I had asked a few other questions. I got a strong feeling that the trilobite wanted to ask me questions in return, but I was unsure of what timeframe I was talking to it in. The time it is in wasn't important, but rather what time I think it is present in. What state is it in as I am talking to it? Is it alive, fossilised or something in between? That's when I started to think about the whole process. What has happened to it from the time it was alive, and what does alive even mean? Does it mean that it has a heartbeat, or that it consists of organic material? How did the bodily transition happen? What does it consist of now? What kind of substance is it composed of? Is it an animal? Is it a rock? Is it neither, or is it both? How do these materials and the substance of the body factor in to the questions we ask, and how we ask them? The types of questions we ask? In that way, the question about time blended in with the question about the transition from lived life to current form. This part dominated much of the conversation.

– The trilobite showed me an image of a vertically oriented spiral. The whole conversation was characterised by quick, swift images that came and went. It was as if it didn't have enough time. I felt a sort of resistance from it the whole time. "I can give you this much", but there isn't time to

stay in the moment. The spiral was big, of galactic proportions. The spiral itself was a thin line, and it had a lot of points that were floating freely around it. The spiral depicted time. After it showed me that image, it yawned a great big yawn, or it exhaled for a long time. As if time was passing by very slowly, in super slow motion. At first I thought it was yawning, but then I figured it was exhaling—an everlasting exhalation.

– I noticed that every time I wrote something down when something happened, it took some time to get refocused and to re-enter the conversation. When I first asked the trilobite about its relation to time, I got the impression it didn't want to talk about it at all. I got a hushing sound. "Huuuuuush" as in, "No, stop." We returned to the question when we talked about transition from lived life. We went a couple of rounds where it didn't want to talk about a certain subject at a given time, but we returned to the question later on. We had better luck when we returned to the question. But, at first, we didn't get to talk about time. [What did you talk about later on?] Later on we talked about the transition from what it had been to what it currently is, and I wanted to ask if it perceived itself to be here at this moment, if it felt present, and I tried asking it as simply as possible, in simple words. I got the impression it didn't feel present in the moment and it felt strongly that it wasn't in the room or in the conversation. I also asked if it was present here with me, and it said, "no." That's when I got the impression it was automatically answering, "no", so I asked if it indeed was just saying, "no" automatically, and that is when my head got heavy and hung down. I don't know how to interpret that. Afterwards we talked about death, and the reaction was strong here as well. The reaction is difficult to describe. It was very strange.

That's when I started to think, "what kind of question is that to ask?" and I shook my head a lot, and that's how I knew it was saying, "no." It shook its head again, but this time very slowly. Almost in a dramatic manner. I thought the communication was good, but I didn't always understand what it wanted to tell me. Or rather, I understood it on more of an emotional level.

– Time was what it least wanted to talk about, what it was least interested in talking about. The trilobite was a little vexed, and very quiet. It was still there, but it didn't respond to the question at all. I interpreted it as if it didn't have the perception of time, like that is what it wanted to tell me. It just seemed disinterested in the question. It understood the question to some extent, but it didn't want to talk about it. That is the question it was most aloof to. So, I went on to other questions.

## **Language**



– At first, I felt a slight pain in my right shin. I felt the trilobite crawling on me, and I thought that maybe the movement is language. Its movement is a form of language, but I didn't get much more out of it. It seemed to be a mixture of it not wanting to answer, "fuck you" and, "why should I take part in this, it's just stupid?" And, "I understand what you mean, but . . ." For that question it seemed more like it wanted to crawl all over me as if it were saying, "this is how we can communicate."

“You can feel me on your body in a physical way, and therefore know that I am here.” “I have something to say, but I will not let you know through language—I just won’t.”

– I asked about its language, and I got an answer in the form of an image of drumsticks. It seemed to be a bit “meh” the whole time. I heard, “drrrrrrrrr” in all directions, and then it was over. After I saw the drumsticks, I thought about antennae. Then I got a picture of it being full of holes, as if a stream of information flowed through it. It wasn’t a language as such, it was more a “fjss” of electricity that went through its body.

– This was the question where I felt I had to make the question as tangible as possible before I asked it. I started by asking if the trilobite had any words, if that is how it communicated. It didn’t have any words. I got a clear “no” to that question. Then I started visualising cursive writing, seismic three-dimensional writing. I thought it might be something along those lines—something visual—but again I got a “no” on that, it wasn’t something visual. Then I saw an image of the trilobite’s mouth moving; we could communicate through moving our mouths. Again, I got this feeling of, “I can try to answer this if it’s that important to you.” It was definitely a little impatient.

– When I asked that question it directed my attention to some green leaves that popped up beside it, but they turned out not to be leaves after all, but green triangles. I’m not sure if they were leaves, but I saw green shapes. That was the first thing I saw. Later, when I asked if it had a sense of self, it suddenly moved very quickly to the side, then it drew a trace behind itself, and then it paused.

I felt I got an answer in the form of a language. I figured it has a language, but it is unclear what kind of language it has. It spoke in a figurative way and it created this trace behind it, and both of those expressions were very clear. Nevertheless, I didn’t get any further; we didn’t manage to have a conversation around this. So, it stopped there.

– That echoes what I thought around movement—that the movement had something to do with language. Maybe it wasn’t the actual trace that was the language, but the action and movement in making the trace was the language.

## **Emotions**

– I got the impression that it has emotions. The trilobite didn't say it, it showed it. It mirrored it in my body, and I could tell it was angry, scared, and reluctant and that it was dense and compact, soft and—at the same time—solid and firm. The emotions in my body came from the trilobite. It let me know, in a way. Its emotions became my emotions, but its emotions developed in my body. I am completely convinced it has feelings. Well, to be technical, I'm unsure if those emotions were feelings or affect. Feelings need to have an object or a context towards something specific, so one can discuss if it has feelings, or moods or affect of varying intensity.

– I got the feeling the trilobite was rather sad. And maybe a little bit frightened. But it also showed me it was very happy and dancing around, but it was—like I said before—quite cartoonish. In its afterlife it is sad. I got a feeling of sadness. That it doesn't fully comprehend the situation it is in.

– I had to go through each emotion individually and ask about fear and joy etc., but nothing happened until it wanted to show me itself. That's when I felt these movements, my upper body moving towards something. I felt it quite strongly. I regarded it as if the trilobite had the capacity to want things, and that it wanted these things strongly. That was the only emotion/affect that it expressed, but it was strong and positive. Both that question and the next one, about being separated, were the questions I got the clearest answers to, not just, "you asked this question in the wrong way", so that was nice. It was very unambiguous.

– I forgot to ask that question. But on the question about the transition from lived life to its life now, I experienced that it pulled away from me, that it was distrusting of me. I was not sure if it was scared or if it felt rejected. The response seemed emotion-based, but that was not in response to this question, because I forgot to ask it.

– It seemed a little angry or vexed, impatient, uncomfortable and out of place as to all my questions. In other words, it was clearly emotional. Maybe it had more complex feelings than what it told me. Maybe it expresses feelings and emotions that are more complex.

### **Separated from others?**

– When I asked the trilobite this question, I sent it an image where I imagined it being separated and floating in outer space. In return, I got an image of it crawling on my body. I don't know if that means it looks at itself as separated from others or if it wanted to answer in a different way, or if it rejected my question. Or maybe it meant that it doesn't look at itself as confined and

separated. It was crawling on *my body*, not the grass and earth that we sat on. It was very rational, in a way. But this exchange happened in images, not words.

– For me, it showed itself to be in the room, and that it was enclosed by water. I felt that the water was embracing it and this was an answer to whether it felt separated. It didn't ask any questions, but that is what I felt. How can I be separated when I'm being embraced? A follow-up image showed the same thing, but now the substance was different, a substance that looks more like this [gesturing], an image of my body, almost werewolf-ish, that had undergone some kind of transformation. The skin changed into another substance, a similar image: the water embraced it and the body itself changed substance. But the last image didn't show this embrace.

– When I wanted to ask if it has a sense of self or considers itself a separate entity, it displayed a happy emotion. That was the only time it was happy. My body language changed, I felt my head falling back and I started to think about the beginning of the meditation, when the sunlight streamed down. I then felt the sunlight streaming down, and I felt happy. Again, I got a sense that the trilobite doesn't feel separate and there is something rational in being in contact with others or things around it, almost like the image of the water gushing in, and that this is associated with something positive. I went back to this question after the question about transformation because I wanted to lift the mood a little bit. [Laughter] I thought, "Shall we talk about something more positive?" "Let us talk about the fact that you are separate." I went back to that, and I got a happy feeling once again, so I got the same answer twice. I also asked if it considered itself to have a body, and the answer was similar to what some of you have said; it has something to do with motion and movement, because I noticed I started to scratch and scrape my hands as if they were legs. In other words, I think it feels it has a body in that it moves. Movement is important. At that point it was quite talkative.

### **The self**

– This might apply to question no. 6 as well; it was a bit difficult to separate the two. But when I asked about "sense of self", I didn't really get any answers, it seemed irrelevant and then it bit my throat. We discussed it again later on after a lot of other topics, and I suddenly thought about a spine, because I could really sense my own spine. Down my neck and further towards the chair, then I started to think of the trilobite as lacking a spine. It didn't want to talk much about sense of self, and I don't know if that was because it feels like that is irrelevant.

– It is difficult to know what is relevant to the trilobite. [laughter] It has its own priorities that we haven't completely arrived at yet.

– I just got the answer that it has a sense of self. Simply a, "yes." I was met with, "those are your words" on many of the questions.

– I have seldom felt more strongly that what I say is affected by who I am, and that as a result, the conversation becomes inadequate—because we have so little in common.

– I asked the trilobite the question about sense of self right after I had talked to it about space, and it moved quickly to the side in a quarter of a circle, leaving traces behind it. Does this have anything to do with it having a sense of self? Maybe it has to do with the traces it leaves on the ground? Is it part of the ground? Are those lines the traces of the world? It made traces to show us where it has travelled. Those traces were the trilobite itself, in a way. At the same time, I felt I got an answer to whether or not it has a language. The traces behind me are the self. I brought up the subject of the earth, and that was very interesting. It started to spin, and it whirled and a cloud formed. It did this several times. It enjoyed those kinds of open topics. I think we could have talked a lot more about such open topics.

## **Earth**

– Lived life to current existence, language, and time were answered simultaneously, but when it comes to earth, I grabbed some dirt and threw into the air and I got a feeling it took it for granted and that it was nothing we needed to discuss. We didn't need to discuss earth, it was self-evident, obvious. I didn't get a feeling that the trilobite was thinking, "why would you want to talk about this, that is stupid"; it was more like, "that is just how it is."

– I tried to send an image of the ground by seeing it in my mind's eye for as long as I could. That's when the trilobite just went completely still. It didn't respond at all. It might have been a dismissive silence or a silence that comes from the place of, "that's obvious/that's just the way it is." It was a peaceful moment. We both imagined the ground for a while, and then we moved on.

– I also sent an image of ground, and in return I got an image of the dirt being flooded by water. I know the trilobite lived in the ocean, so that might be why the sea entered the image of us on the path. Maybe it wanted the ocean to be there, or maybe it was an image of erosion. I got a clear image of the earth being washed away. I am not sure what was being communicated in that

instance. But the image of water washing over the earth kept reoccurring, and then I saw a cross-section of the earth with water and sand lines.

– I got a clear image of what it looked like inside the things that protruded from its head, bubbles came out, but I just thought it shouldn't be in the water because I met it in the forest. It told me it didn't miss the ocean, but I saw it was a mollusc. A little bit slimy and wet like a snail. It moved in and out the whole time. It sort of bubbled a little bit.

– I think of it as a large beetle.

– I got the sense of something shrimp-like.

– Crayfish.

– The belly region was crayfish-like.

– I think the experience would have been different if we met it in the water instead of a path in the woods.

– If I had met it in the water, I think it would have had more vigour and the power to act. I usually dislike both beetles and crayfish. I respond badly towards them, but I didn't respond badly towards the trilobite. I found it aesthetically appealing. It didn't register as something I find disgusting or unappealing. It didn't display any sudden movements.

– I think if I had met it in the sea, I would have been on foreign ground. Maybe I would have found it harder to breathe.

– If we both had been in the water, we might have had a more direct connection between us. Some kind of touch, but I think I would have felt less in control.

### **Does the trilobite have any questions?**

– That is when my concentration started to dwindle. I started to feel I was coming back to everything that has happened today, and nothing of significance revealed itself to me, so I thanked the trilobite for the conversation and left.

– I asked if it had any questions, and the problem with the fact that it can talk to me but I don't know exactly what it is saying appeared. The response I got was that my arms started moving backwards and upwards. I felt something, but I don't know the meaning of it. That happened a few times, and I thought, "I don't fully understand the meaning of this." That's when I felt it was the right time to end, so I went back to the beginning of the conversation. I finished up by saying, "I believe you are real, and I don't think you are a figment of my imagination." That was the end of our conversation.

– I asked if it had any questions for me, and I waited for a really long time, and that's when I fell asleep. I never got an answer.

– I waited a really long time for an answer, but I just got, "will you please leave me alone?" as a response. [Laughter] "No, please, I feel very old." After a while I got, "what is the point of this?" and, "what do you want?" It felt a little bit contrived. It didn't come as an immediate response.

– It was very interesting to talk to the trilobite.

– I became very aware of my own questions, and to what degree I just assumed things. Was I intrusive or untimely? I thought, "Maybe I shouldn't have asked that question; maybe I should work on how I word this question."

– One can be aware of these things theoretically, but they become more acute when you are conversing with a being or a counterpart. It becomes more direct.

MAY 19, 2016

Conversation with Jon Lønnve, Section Manager - Department of Technical and Scientific Conservation, Natural History Museum, Oslo



LIV BUGGE: Can you tell me a little about the history of Brøgger's Hus? And the collections in it?

JON LØNNVE: Well, the collection wasn't really started up here. It was started in Kongsberg, the Kongsberg Mining Academy, with the silver mines over there – the mining industry. We are talking the 1700s here. Later, the collections arrived at the Oslo University when it was founded quite some time later, and spent its childhood years downtown. You found something of a natural sciences cabinet of wonder, with skeletons, minerals, fossils and all kinds of such things. And this was a time when the interest in natural sciences and the institutional development both nationally and internationally was blooming. The need for a suitable place to keep all of this arose: a natural sciences museum, a geology museum, a museum of zoology – something respectable, matching what could be found elsewhere in the western world. Actually Norway experienced hard times at that time, and the union dissolution between Norway and Sweden was upcoming in the early 1900s, but it still was possible to fundraise for establishing these museums here, at Tøyen. Then we moved the collection from downtown up here, and with it, bigger geological, zoological and botanical communities were formed. Here we are in 1906 or something, up to the first world war – about that time frame. Quite a difficult point of time in the Norwegian history, but it was accomplished anyway. And the collections grew, because at the time there was a need for assessing the country – "what resources are available?" – mineral resources and so on; geological maps were drawn to find out what was going on in the bedrock around the country – different rock types, minerals, and stratigraphic... that is, layer divisions and such. And in connection with this, material was collected to document the collections. This very job is what the NGU (Geological Survey of Norway) is doing today. We aren't doing these anymore. At the

same time, quite a few geological disciplines started off here. Geochemistry was one of them. Mineralogy of course also was an important subject, and mineralogical collections began to be built, in connection with the mapping. And this has resulted in a very comprehensive mineralogical collection, because in mineralogy, we have a system that divides this matter into a few thousand different minerals. We don't have all of them, but we have quite a good collection (40 000) compared to the number of existing minerals. Many of them have been identified here, that is, by mineralogists here. They have contributed to finding new minerals, name and describe them. And this work goes on even today.

JON LØNNVE: In time, the proficiency found here was also useful to institutions around the world, and cooperation projects etc were set up. One of the more spectacular maybe was what happened with NASA in connection to the Apollo missions. At that time, the center was at the international forefront, so much that NASA chose to send rock samples from the moon to Oslo to have it analyzed. Some of this material we keep until today. This project with planning the rock types of the country also has continued steadily up until recent times. Additionally, our paleontology, that is, fossils, also go back a long way. Surely that arises from the fact that we live in Oslo, a fossil-rich area in Norway, and most of the rock types of fossil layers are not found in the country. They have eroded ages ago. It lies there as sand and clay on the continental shelf, where it's being drilled for oil. But right here in the Oslo field, up to Mjøsa and down to Vestfold, fossils from early stages of the globe formation are found. Therefore it was collected and people proficient in it were working here. Oslo became a renowned destination for field trips; people came from all over Europe to see the Cambrian and Silurian layers that here lie in the open and easily accessible.

These layers really lie on top of each other like mattresses, right?

But in Oslo they have been folded over time, or the time is folded. This is why at some places exposed today you can find a phase with fossils, but just beyond you find another layer that have none –you find all these strange structures all the way. There have been so many geological processes with tectonic activity squeezing this together. Yes, it is a nice place to be. And from the fifties on and specially the last years, we have had lots of activity on Svalbard. On Svalbard there are other fossil layers than the ones here, perhaps more exciting for those occupied with larger animals, sea animals.

LIV BUGGE: Could you briefly say something on what a fossil is, exactly? What is a fossilization process?

JON LØNNVE: A fossil is a imprint a life form from the past. It is not the creature itself anymore, because it has rotted a long time ago, but it is an exact impression of what has been sedimented once upon a time. Most frequently, these are organisms with certain hardness, a shell, bone or such. Whatever once were soft parts do not leave much impression for the aftermath. That means we find many marine sea-things – shell, fishes and whatnot; other places in the world it could be plant fossils too. Petrified trees and such. On Svalbard, remains of foliage and such has deposited on the seabed and become fossilized. That is a source for reading the flora and fauna of the past. But then one only sees parts of it, because most of what lived left no trace. For those interested in long epochs and “what happens to the earth in the future”, by studying the past, when the atmosphere carried more CO<sub>2</sub>, a time when it was warmer –or when it was colder, for that matter– one could maybe tell what is to be expected in the future given the right circumstances – temperature increases, etc.

JON LØNNVE: In connection with moving the museum and collections, and renovating the buildings, it was decided that the activity that was taking place there up until now is not to return in the same

format. It will become an exhibition and not a collections-, research- and exhibition - site like today, and be specialized as a building for the public. This means there will be no moving back later here, it's "out and that's it". It is a quite comprehensive move because the collections complicate it. The entire house is filled with cabinets and drawers from loft to basement, and we calculate needing to move about 600 tons of material. Probably the easiest part is the transport between here and Økern, but then we have all the preparative and finishing work. Quite a lot of these 600000 objects are too vulnerable to be moved around a lot, quite fragile –particularly the mineral collection is valued to many million kroner– so we have a security concern at hand also. For rock types and fossils we're not looking at the same market value; it is more about the uniqueness. It is irreplaceable. It is not tradeable; there are also many lifetimes of work built into this museum. There are people alive today that spent their entire life here since they were young, and now are even retired. One could say we find their "children" here. There is also quite a lot of material we're considering not bringing along. We can't discard museum collections just like that though, because we're bound by an international regulation, a museum code of ethics, making these decisions quite complex.

In a way we are about to finish off hundred years of history. That's what it is really about. We are sifting through a hundred years of life and work here, packing it and opening a new chapter of this book at Økern.

LIV BUGGE: Could you tell us something about the security around the mineral collection, where it comes from and that kind of things?

JON LØNNVE: Our mineralogists have collected quite a lot – some of it has been donated to us from other collectors wanting to give from their collections, and other things we have bought. We complement the collections each year, chiefly with exhibition

items, because of the international market that exists. When we buy fossils –in markets in Germany, particularly– it isn't always very easy documenting the history of the object. But we seek to stay within legal bounds. A couple of years ago there was a scandal at Kongsberg. The Kongsberg mines are a historically and internationally renown location for silver and silver-ore, and the entire site is protected. But even today there still is silver in the mountain, and also other minerals. And in that scandal one person had made his way down into the mines, worked there for several years well knowing it was protected, taking out material from the mines and selling it. He sold it to those willing to pay, and one of these willing to pay was the very Kongsberg Mining Museum. That was very unfortunate, of course, and ended in trial. We have never been involved in anything similar to that, and we make sure it doesn't happen.

In these collections we also have things that we really can not display; some minerals cannot handle being on display – due to light or moisture for example, and of course some radioactive ones we used to have on display but are now removed and stored because we don't want to run any risks with theft or gas. On the security related to this, we employ security on various levels. Perimeter security for one, that is, the building itself, alarms on all windows, locks in all doors –such things, being the outer shell– and there are different measures inside, like motion sensors, glass break detectors, camera surveillance, etc. And for the exhibition displays showing off the most expensive minerals, the glass is of a thickness that makes it very hard to break. It is the same kind of security glass used for storing the crown jewels in Trondheim.

LIV BUGGE: Could you say something on the relation between the Norwegian economy and the Geological museum? Of course, when the collection starts in the Kongsberg silver mines and that is for making money for the Danish king, that is an obvious reference

to the economy. But I'm thinking of the relation to Norway being an oil producing nation, and when we did a tour here it was apparent many of the science projects here in some way or another is related to the oil industry.

JON LØNNVE: Previously we perhaps touched raw materials mostly – that what was mapped had a relevance to industry and Norwegian industry: the raw materials laboratory. Other research communities in Norway have taken over that bit to a greater extent now. What perhaps is most exiting here is the fundamental research performed on minerals, and that might gain relevance at a later time. Just think of the development of new battery types and such things. Take lithium for example – lithium batteries. We didn't have anything to do with that, but such things can emerge inadvertently due to the mapping. When you say the oil industry is present here, you're right, and specially what we have been working on Svalbard. The oil companies have a need to show they are engaged in environmental projects and such, and several of our scientists have managed to obtain funding from the oil industry for field excavations on Svalbard. These monster lizards, or whatever they were, that were dug out on Svalbard in the last years, were financed, partially financed, with money from there.

LIV BUGGE: The rocks or minerals that do something, has an influence, or communicates: You mentioned the radioactive ones –that's mostly alum shale, or what?

JON LØNNVE: Yes, and particularly uranium ores. Uranium does not want to be uranium. Uranium wants to be something else. Some minerals and elements are like that, unstable. They want to transform in some way, or to combine with others. And what uranium would prefer to be is perhaps lead. So it changes. And then it radiates. It wants to get rid of something, the radiation. Alum shale creates uranium and other things. But because it is unstable, it is also

interesting from an energy perspective. We have made a separate lead room for them here. So that the “frustrations” they radiate will stay in that room. Very few gain access to it. Not because this is angry bomb material, it's just a policy of ours, and visiting the collection is not dangerous, but you should wear gloves, coat, face mask and such just for safety. And you shouldn't be inside there for days. Nobody is working with those collections at the moment, and that is okay. They lie in darkness. In 20 steel cabinets or so. The rocks are dark, maybe with a somewhat metallic luster. I have a few down at Geological that I haven't moved. You can see them if you want.

LIV BUGGE: I'd love to.

JON LØNNVE: You can read up on radon and these radon daughters.

LIV BUGGE: Daughters? Where from?

JON LØNNVE: Well, radon is a radioactive gas, but it also does not want to stay Radon, so it changes over time, and gets what is called radon daughters. It is the next form of gas, and are bad daughters. After all, we're adapted to a life with radioactivity. We are. There are many different kinds of radiation.

LIV BUGGE: Really, what kind of radiation is radioactivity?

JON LØNNVE: In any case, we have alpha radiation here. It emits, giving off, alpha rays, and these are the particles we don't want in our lungs. The particles are blocked by the skin, where they don't penetrate, but if you should ingest them, there they stay. In that case they stick around, having a ball radiating in your lungs, and that is not a good thing.

March 1, 2016

Kunstneres Hus, Oslo

Extended Stipendiatforum, 15 participants

Transcribed notes from fossil conversation with a trilobite borrowed from the Natural History Museum in Oslo.



– I felt very strongly that what was communicated to me was definitely before language. And I couldn't start asking the questions. Then of course my mind went somewhere, but I had a sensation of not only spoken language, but being in the world with language . . . It felt like this was being in the world before language, so . . .

– Being in the world with image?

– Yes.

– Yes, me too. It was mostly images. That's language too, but I was addressing the question of time. It seemed to be a pre-language time we were going towards, maybe. If you think language is image, that was my impression.

– I had the same feeling actually, but I didn't perceive it as pre [language]. I didn't perceive it as time at all. Since there was no time, I can't say that it was before. Or after. There was no linearity. It was the same feeling as the impossibility of asking a question and getting a response. The image was mostly lines, not like a picture—an image but with lines, primarily black and a light colour. And then sometimes red. And blue. There was a materiality in the pictures as well. Some things seemed hard, other things seemed not hard. Not light either, but there was a difference in the materiality of the pictures and in the sensation of them.

– I had this very strong image: I was imagining this path in the woods where I met the trilobite. I started to ask, “Do you think in terms of future/past/present and life/nonlife?” Then it was a bit like the whole image I had created was dissolving. Like it was in a blue screen or a green screen or something—the imagery somehow disappeared. Then I thought, “It is like these first questions are questioning whether I can even talk to you.” Maybe it was a bad opening in a way. It was a little like asking if I am reliable or not. Like it was already doubting or something. So, I tried to hold onto this image. And then it was disappearing and coming back and then disappearing again.

– Mine was sort of different. I got this very strong feeling that we could not communicate other than through emotion. So, I could just feel what you are describing—that you are seeing

something and being somewhere, like on a path or something. But it is more like a void. Experiencing a different entity in a void and just feeling how this different entity was responding somehow. It was as though I was in the way or stopping them. So, that was kind of strange. It was like it was putting a mirror up to me. Just reflecting, almost questioning if there was anyone there, or if it was just me meeting myself, if that makes sense?

– I guess I got different sensations and images. Something like body and feelings. I was kind of floating, and the trilobite was close to me, and kind of huge actually. He was moving a bit like I was, he was kind of glowing like certain flies, and he had some feet. He couldn't talk to me, but when I asked the question about the translator, he needed more information to understand them. There was also this really weird moment where I had the impression that he was working my feet.

– I had the same sensation about non-communication. I was trying to hold this image up with the path, but it kept falling down. There were little sensations that were very heavy.

– I was trying to find a landscape that it was comfortable in. I was trying out all these different landscapes, but it didn't seem to like any of them. Then I got this feeling that it wasn't really possible to ask him the questions. I could just try out different things. I felt like it was playing with me a little bit, like it was a game. At some points it was quite solitary, and it was not small, it was bigger—and that was the right size.

– I also had the sensation that it was very big—it was big in front of me on the path. But it was in the air and moving all the time. It seemed to me to be a male character. At a certain point, this stupid path was also falling away because it was then filled with water and we were in the water. It was very cartoonlike for me; I wasn't able to free myself from this cartoon figure. It was very active, and when I was posing the questions it was a lot like, “Wrong question, wrong question”, or that it didn't feel like communicating. But this question about consciousness was also difficult. It is not one consciousness, so it became a difficult question. It was living in complete darkness now, it seemed. I asked if it wanted to ask us something, and it asked, “Why white?” [laughter] But that was interesting in terms of the black and white that was mentioned earlier because it also had these lines.

– I had a vertical activity also, in my own way. It was very active on the left side, much more than on the right. And when I closed my eyes, it was always up here by my left side. It was also jumping at one point so I thought it was a frog.

– You were talking about the feeling of the sun, and I also really got the feeling of sunshine. I wasn't really able to get to the trilobite, but it was really cartoonlike, as you said. Lying around in the grass and rolling. So, it was a good sensation, you know, with the sun and life. I started to ask the questions, and it asked, "Why do you ask these questions? Why don't you just roll around in the grass with me?" So, I tried to do that for a while.

– I had a very quick and nice meeting with this one. This meditation sort of worked for me, so I went there, and I met the thing and I asked the questions and I got the answers. But I didn't want to focus too much on the questions, because I wanted to keep this kind of strangeness. It wasn't very talkative, but also sort of curious and it was quite normal—not abstract. I once worked with a shaman with a drum, and it reminded me of that, in a way. It was like I had done this journey before. Because, when you do the shamanistic thing, you meet several animals. So, it was like doing something quite normal, in a way. It was a nice meeting, but strange.

I think she liked my questions, in a way. "Do you think future/past/present?" "NO." It said it was a female, but I think of it as male. I don't know why. "Do you have a social life? A perception of your surroundings?" "Mostly no. But I have family." "Do you have a translator?" "Yes, but I don't know who or how." So, it was a nice conversation, and the trilobite had one question for us: "Do you have a good life?"

– I had the same sensation as you, that through this conversation setup, we had already constructed some kind of relationship with it. I am very quick to imagine things, so I pictured this grandma/old lady person, but then I had a sensation that this conversation was a pretext. So, she played along, but she was kind of restless because of the situation. For the first question—the one about whether it thinks in future, past, or present—she said, "It's a beam of light."

For the next question about life/non-life and being inanimate, she said, "It comes and goes." She was very quick in answering, and thought the questions were kind of lame. For the

question about social life, she said, “Thank you very much for asking. Social life is culture, and culture is life in terms of communication between—” and then she used the German word “Grundstoffe”. So she communicated that social life is culture, it is chemistry—which is life. She basically said, “Without social life there is no life.”

– Sorry, can I ask: so that means the exchange of particles is the same as a social life?

– Yes, and that’s essential, because without it there is no life—they are inseparable. And then I asked, “Are you conscious?” She said, “Flickers.” She flickers between consciousness and unconsciousness. “Do you have a translator?” “No need.” When I asked about sex, “No need.” “How is your situation now?” “It’s a bit more cold now.” “Do you want to ask something?” “Yes. Why are you not closer together?”

– I also experienced that it was much bigger than I thought. It was up here, in a way, [gesturing] and always pushing me away. My head was thrown back all the time. I had to force myself not to go like this. [gesturing] I felt kind of stupid trying to communicate with all these questions and I felt very heavy, with a force dragging me down and pushing me back—especially from my shoulders and up, and also my forehead. It had all these legs that were moving all the time, so that I couldn’t see them. It was threatening, in a way. It seemed very strong and powerful. Then I tried to ask questions without language, but without language I only managed to get three answers: it had no gender and didn’t need a translator. And it was living in a flock/pack. At one time, I felt nauseous.

– I imagined this path, which was very cartoonlike. I met the trilobite that was crawling around and I felt that he was not very interested, in a way. He didn’t want to relate to me. So, I tried to imagine what it would have answered if it could talk, or if language was involved. I found it hard to keep the contact, so it didn’t go on for very long. It was very much living in the moment. No future, past or anything like that—it was just doing what it had to do in the moment. Is this a transitional phase? No, it didn’t relate to anything in the moment. It was very much alone. And that was enough, in a way. What is the situation like now? It is in a resting phase. It was difficult to figure out what was contact, and what was me trying to imagine or fantasise about what was going on. I think that was why it had a cartoonlike feeling. It was very nice. It was a very beautiful place, and very lively. I was sort of in the way.

– I forgot to say “thank you” all the time, and then I was like, “I need to say who I am”, so I said my name and it felt so stupid. Because what is a name? I’m not represented through a name, so that was an issue.

– Can I ask you a question? What do you think happened here before you arrived?

– I don’t know. [laughter] I tried to figure it out, but I didn’t understand. I just got into my own thoughts.

– I have a question about the translator. I was wondering about knowledge production and how it produces knowledge. We all experienced that there is no way in which to speak with it. It has these placid eyes.

– This is just an exercise. For me, it was interesting to see how we can try to relate to this now. That it is not a place that existed 500 million years ago, but that we are actually here in this room together, and what that can bring in terms of how we think about our surroundings. I’m interested in the narratives, and how the rhetoric is fallen power. How we can say that these countries are behind, and how we place things on a timeline. Scientifically, it relates to here in Oslo. There are 20,000 of those fossils living in geological museums in this form and they are collected mostly in Oslo. Oslo is filled with these because Oslo has a very special earth. Most of Scandinavia is covered with sediments that have lain very still, and Oslo has folded so that the earth from the Cambrian Period has come to the fore. This is called “skifer” in Norwegian, and “slate” in English. This has caused Oslo to be troubled by radiation and radon. The slate is radioactive, and slate is out in the open in most parts of Oslo.

– Why have they collected 20,000 of them? It seems excessive.

– They have collected and kept them because they are from the same period as fossil fuel. They were eager to collect everything at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

– You are also obliged to send in any findings if you find a piece, like an arrow, when you are digging in the ground.

30 Oct. 2015

Conversation with Hans Petter Graver

Hans Petter Graver is a Norwegian legal scholar. He serves as professor and was at this point the dean of the Faculty of Law at the University of Oslo, he left his position half a year later.

Liv Bugge: I started a project two years ago that deals with normativity. As a point of departure, I was most interested in how the normative works from within—internalised in our bodies. I was also interested in normativity in history. I took a look at witch hunts, especially in relation to the emergence of Capitalism as an economic system, the transition from a feudal society, and the accumulation of human bodies as physical labour and land areas—how the human body was becoming a tool of Capitalism. I am trying to find modern examples of demonisation occurring right now. I am also interested in something you have written about: magic as part of legal and rhetorical practices. I am also interested in an idea you call *the Jurist's Powers*.

H P Graver: On a structural level, it may be that our legal system has taken over much of the socially integrative function that theology and priests once had. If you look at confidence surveys among the Norwegian population, the legal system and the police are two agencies that Norwegians trust the most. They score very high on so-called *trust barometers* when named there. Undeservedly high, I think, but that says something about the role our legal system plays in uniting society across professions and social strata. And, of course, keeping people in the fold by their adherence to basic normative rules.

That is the basis of jurisprudence; agreeing on a unified way of analysing important questions. Or perhaps that is the way it used to be. It is quite paradoxical that, during apartheid in South Africa (one of the areas I analysed), surveys taken among the population indicated most black people still trusted the legal system (the legal system of the whites). It sounds absurd, but perhaps this tells us something about the way jurisprudence and law function in an extremely divided society. The population segment with the least trust in the legal system was black lawyers. They had hands-on experience with the workings of the system, while the population as a whole had greater confidence. In any case, that tells us something about power.

LB: For me as a non-jurist, the law and jurisprudence deal in one way or another with truth and falsehood, maybe justice and injustice. A dichotomy. Good and evil, in a way. We also use the term “devil's advocate”. There may be some historical connection here to the priesthood. Maybe the jurist does/changes things with words, what a priest does by touch. Maybe there is a transformativity through practice.

HPG: Yes, there is almost something magical about it. This is what the linguist J L Austin calls perlocution. By means of a statement, a locution, you create an action. “I hereby pronounce you man and wife.” This statement has no significance or meaning in itself; the significance comes from what is created through it. Transformation is part of the nature of jurisprudence and law, that the accused is either found guilty and sentenced or acquitted. Or an agreement is invalidated. It all occurs through acts of speech. That is precisely the point of a court ruling or decision, to bring about this type of outcome of language by action. It seems to be akin to magic. Historically, there has always been a close relationship between religion and law. Much of our legal system and legal mindset comes from canonical law, which we find in Catholicism, not from the last millennium but the millennium before that.

LB: What kinds of concepts are we talking about here?

HPG: I think we are talking about concepts like responsibility, guilt, obligation, and structure. You have been quite interested in witch hunts. If we read the *Malleus Maleficarum*, *The Hammer of Witches*, those who wrote about heretics offered a long diatribe about how not believing in witches should be considered heresy. The question then is: Did they entirely fail to understand the real world in which they live, or did they simply misunderstand the rules regarding heresy? Because, if they misunderstood the world and reality, they were not guilty; they just got it wrong. But, if they misunderstood the rules, they could be judged and punished because everyone should know and obey the rules. We also have this distinction in Norwegian criminal law today and in criminal law in all western countries that are based on that tradition. If you misunderstand the facts—if you think you are kicking a pile of dirt and there turns out to be a person in there—you cannot be punished for assault. But if you know there is a person in the pile, and you choose to kick it, you can be punished. It does not matter if you think you are allowed to kick people who are lying on the road like that because you are just as guilty due to your ignorance of the law, which is no excuse; harming people like that is illegal. So, we still have that distinction, and the deliberations on the question in the *Malleus Maleficarum* are just as advanced as the deliberations we find in modern Norwegian criminal law theory. So we recognise many of those concepts and those kind of systematics, which we can trace back to Roman law, which the Catholic Church inherited as the basis for developing its internal, canonical system. So; we have the relationship between church and law, which made biblical commandments an important part of criminal legislation. Blasphemy, violating the Ten Commandments, etc. In Norway we have the laws laid down by King Christian V from the 1600s which became a key element of criminal law to be enforced by the secular courts. And using god to legitimise the state's power was important until the Age of Enlightenment and the decline of absolutism, and maybe even in recent times. We must not forget the importance of symbolism and their use: robes and all that other paraphernalia.

LB: Not to mention similar furnishing and architecture, and to a certain extent the dramaturgy and scenography. Where the altarpiece stands, they have a pulpit and often a baptismal font on the other side. The courtroom is set up in a similar fashion, with the judge's bench and the two lawyers' tables, only they face the judges when they speak, not the congregation. I have focused my attention on magic in relation to power structures, and something that is structurally ridiculed in that context, as an intervention of power.

HPG: It is a bit like the self-perpetuating effect of legislation. The witch trials proved that witches existed because we had legal processes against them and they were found guilty, which legitimised the idea that witches did exist. It is a way for the community to affirm its laws, and its belief in witchcraft. There is a modern similarity in the illegalisation of narcotics, which is considered a social evil. One can discuss whether the punishment fits the crime for drug use, possession and/or sale. Many people remain in prison for long sentences for importation or sale of narcotics. That would lead us to believe that the prison population is home to the most evil people in society. This is also self-perpetuating because the sentences we pronounce are severe. We take that as proof of a huge social problem, otherwise they would not have received severe punishments, so the legal system perhaps seems to function today in the same way that it did back then.

LB: The Anthropocene geological epoch is dominated by human activity which has ingrained every substance on the planet, to the extent that the entire dichotomy of culture-nature is beginning to fall apart. To a certain extent, it seems the construction of self and other is also



falling apart. In all this, it seems humanism is also somehow changing. Do you see any parallels in the field of law?

HPG: It is difficult to imagine existing laws that are not anthropocentric because human beings are the legal subjects (subjects of law) of a legal system. We have some exceptions to this. I have used our modern acceptance of corporations as legal entities as an example of this, but animals have not been granted rights as legal entities yet.

Pigs were punished by the courts in the Middle Ages, which makes them objects, to some extent. But I do not think they were ever considered legal subjects. But it is an entirely different matter saying animals or non-human entities (like ecosystems) should be granted legal subjectivity than being the object of punishment. I used the example of dogs used in dog fighting. They are forbidden in Norway pursuant to the Dog Act, which means the owner will be forced to remove them from the Realm. The dog can be euthanised if the owner refuses. The dog is suddenly placed in a conflict of interest with its owner. If the owner refuses to pay for its removal from the Realm, the owner ipso facto agrees to euthanising it. I am not sure the dog would agree with the owner's decision, but the dog has no legal right in the matter. We are seeing some development when it comes to animal protection legislation. Animal neglect is forbidden. But, again, there is a difference between saying other people have the right to protections than deviating from the anthropocentric point of view. We can protect a lot of things without saying they have any legal subjectivity on equal terms with humans.

Destroying cultural monuments is also prohibited without saying the monuments are legal entities. In our system, human beings function as the subject on behalf of the animal or non-human entity. But we can do this through fictions. We do this when we say a corporation is a legal fiction and therefore a legal subject, but there is always a legal person acting on behalf of the corporation saying what they will do, and what they mean, and how they protect their rights. We can do the same thing for biotopes. The forest surrounding Oslo, Nordmarka, is a biotope that had its own legal subjectivity in relation to interventions into a natural environment. But it's hard to go from *this* to say a dog is a legal entity. I do not think that is possible. My imagination does not stretch that far. To that extent, I believe our legal system presupposes humanism in its definition as anthropocentrism. Of course, this does not imply the system is based on humanistic values. That would have more to do with how you define law, because we also need to define law to encompass the Nazis' legal system because it functioned structurally in the same way as our legal system does and it worked through the same institutions that used the same methods to interpret all kinds of things. But, in terms of content, their legal system did not contain many humanistic values. So, in that context, there is not necessarily any link, in my opinion, between humanism and law.

LB: I am interested in what you wrote about the use of metaphors and fantasy in legal rhetoric and legal practice. There are some similarities with the visual arts and image production.

HPG: Lawyers also have different genres to work in. A lawyer needs to tell a story that will catch the attention of a jury or a judge. So, for a lawyer, the use of metaphors is akin to other professionals telling stories to attract the interest of the audience. The genre of procedural law is different from literary genres which influences style, and there are rules for how one's arguments can be presented, but structurally they are very similar. When it comes to judges, they need to be convinced to a certain extent but a judge has a different kind of legitimacy. A judge's legitimacy is to draw a line in the sand. He is not as dependent on *immediate endorsement* as a lawyer is. But I think linguistic metaphors and our daily experiences can explain why we would simply take a court's ruling for granted. When a judge speaks of a *compelling argument*, nobody questions what those words mean. We simply accept his

opinion. Seen in this way, we could object to many aspects of communication and definitions or words, but we do not. This includes legal communication, which also uses a great deal of everyday language. There are still many opportunities for being creative and for development. The law does not evolve just when a parliament adopts new laws or changes old ones; it also evolves through practice. This is precisely where things become visible, and we can hold a metaphor up and say, "Listen here, this is only a metaphor. What do we really believe?" Are we actually agreeing when we think we agree when we start to think about what lies beneath a metaphor? Visual art must have a similar process, in that there is a dynamic in evolution through practice, especially linguistic practices.

LB: Yes, to some extent for art this is a problem of representation. Postmodernism has produced a school of reading and interpretation that, to some extent, makes us less sensitive. The fact that we reproduce interpretations and interpret everything symbolically and bring on representations of others to the extent that we fail to move on, means there is a lot of discussion among artists these days as to whether we can get past this.

HPG: There is obviously a power structure here, no doubt about that. Perhaps not just in the metaphors but also in style and choice of words. Is the *voice* that pronounces a judgement important in constructing the legal ethos? In any case, it is not the voice of the person who acts as the judge, or is it the court as an impersonal entity that is speaking? It is the narrative voice or the pronouncing voice that is authoritative which helps to build authority. And instead of saying, "I think . . .", a judge says, "It is reasonable to assume . . ." or, "We put to reason . . .".

There are many such formulations in traditional legal jargon which abstract, establish distance and build authority, thus encouraging submission.

A jurist's education consists of reading a lot of legal literature. Eventually, you learn to express yourself in those words and terms; this is a process of socialisation. Familiarising yourself with legal texts is one aspect of a legal education; the other aspect is learning how to phrase questions correctly in legal terms. This implies learning to eliminate any aspects of a situation or a reality that are of no relevance to the normative question that must be resolved. And this is thus defined by clarifying a norm. One clarifies a norm either by identifying it in statutory provision or basing it on legal practice. For example, theft is punished as an attempt to take something away from another person that does not belong to you. In this case, the irrelevant question is: Is it an object? For example, if someone has downloaded a digital file from a streaming service unlawfully; was an object taken, or did the object ever exist? Does it really belong to someone? How is its ownership determined? Was it taken for gain? So, clarifying those things leads to other questions like, "What kind of object is it? Is it beautiful? Is it not beautiful? Was it fair that the person who possessed it was allowed to have it? Or is that unfair? Were the children of the person who took it starving?" All these questions are eliminated as uninteresting. In a normal, human conversation about this topic, many of these things would be part of the conversation. But learning to be structured and being trained in the systematic clarification of questions and identifying irrelevant things is the other basic and important element of a legal education. Both elements are found in legal education in all countries that pertain to our legal traditions, so it is very easy for someone trained as a lawyer in Norway to talk with a lawyer in Germany, England or USA and be completely in tune as lawyers. Of course, each country has its own traditions and country-specific literature, so we cannot simply cross the border and become an attorney in another country.

Emotional aspects are downplayed to a very extensive degree during one's education. Try reading the books that law students read and you get the impression that this is a purely a rational affair; there are only arguments here and only justifiable assessments are possible. There is very little room to express feelings, at least by the players in the legal system. A courtroom can obviously be an emotional place; court cases often involve deep, personal conflicts and very serious situations. But emotional outbursts are very rare among legal professionals. There is occasionally a little space for humour. Maybe that is the most common feeling seen in courtrooms. Indignation as well, some lawyers play heavily on indignation as an expression of emotion. Sometimes, rarely, you will also see other emotions expressed, like when Judge Arntzen cried in court during the Breivik case (re: Norwegian home-grown terrorist who killed political youth on 22 July, 2011).

LB: The idea of objectivity is interesting here. Documentary filmmakers and social anthropologists have come to terms with the fact that pure objectivity does not exist in their professions.

HPG: A lot of that is true, but one must be selective. What you select and eliminate tells us something about how you will be presenting yourself, or how you will present a situation. In that context, there is no true objectivity. But, in my opinion, that does not mean *truth* does not exist. And it is precisely here that the court has a kind of objectivity in that the way questions are asked is clearly defined. And thus, there are rules for how the situation and the person are presented. While in a different context—whether it be scientific, literary or artistic—many of the questions revolve around how you ask questions. How should you choose to let a person or situation be presented then? There are no fixed points of reference in those contexts, so we can say that the kind of objectivity one finds in a court of law is lacking in those fields. But there is only one type of objectivity. Many would say that the Normative is objective in itself, that Rule of Law exists and judges are bound by those rules. In that case I would say, no, there is no objectivity. But there is much disagreement within the field. Some of my colleagues disagreed about teaching this because they said I would only confuse my students. Because I would be asserting that there is no objectivity in the legal method.

We have internalised many aspects of law. It seems that the basic authority of the courts has been internalised (nobody walks around with every law and regulation in our brain, and that includes lawyers) but I think the most important aspect of how the courts work (as opposed to morality) is that most of us have internalised the idea that lawgivers have the right to create laws and judges have the right to pronounce judgements, and that means we in a way have internalised/given the representatives of our legal system the authorisations, the right to resolve normative questions for us and on our behalf. Of course, we internalise many of the values that the lawgivers have provided. Thus, we have internalised the rough edges of core values that form the basis of our society such as universal health care, the right to schooling for everyone and of course the classic prohibitions against theft, murder and all such things. But we do not need to internalise all the rules that exist in our legal system precisely because we have internalised the authorisations.

LB: In your encounter with the South African legal system and in other places, have you seen any practices that deviate?

HPG: Not that deviate to the extent there is no legal practice, but in South Africa I saw some disagreement during the worst time of apartheid, where the state almost became totalitarian in its relationship to opposition. Thus, South Africa was fighting two battles; it was a racist society, but it was also a totalitarian society where no one was allowed to oppose the government. That included opposition from whites as well. But the system did permit the existence of a rather large group of judges who disagreed with the state and who pronounced rulings or judgements against the regime throughout the entire period of apartheid. So there was some deviation.

My main impression is that the courts are very loyal. Enforcing the law seems to be an integral part of a judge's role, but (as it did in Germany) that leads to situations where all the judges who had that role before Hitler came to power continued to serve as judges during the Nazi regime but they were suddenly subject to legislation and laws laid down by the Nazis. When the regime collapsed and the Federal Republic of Germany arose afterwards, in West Germany, these same judges now presided and pronounced judgements based on the German constitution which was adopted after the war. We see this consistently in most other countries. After taking a new look at western legal traditions which are utilised by the regimes that use the legal system in a completely different way than they did in places like China and Cambodia and similar countries, we can say two things: they were using the legal system that gave judges certain freedom in their decision making—meaning the judges were free, but they did not use this freedom to oppose the regime, rather they used their freedom to loyally enforce the evil these regimes stood for.

LB: What you say about the dangers of consenting with a regime and risk in relation to thinking for oneself is interesting.

HPG: Yes, and we are systematically teaching these people to not think for themselves, in a way. Although critical thinking is part of one's education, it seems conformity is even more important. I learned a hard lesson this fall. I learned that my colleagues believed it is okay to disagree on certain things, but they felt I should shelter my students from any insights that might confuse them. It was hard for me to see that my colleagues could have such an attitude. I have not completely digested it all yet, but I think in many ways it confirms what we are talking about: the rigid and conformist influence of education, which some people obviously think is acceptable.

*Open Demonstration.*

65% seminar, KHiO. September 28, 2015

Transcribed conversation between Gyrid Gunnes, Solveig Styve Holte, and Liv Bugge.

Gyrid Gunnes is first responding to Liv Bugge's two artistic research case studies: the Geological Museum in Oslo and Oslo Prison.

Gyrid Gunnes is a Norwegian theologian, priest, feminist, and writer.  
Solveig Styve Holte is a dancer and choreographer.

Gyrid Gunnes: I think the two case studies we have heard about, and the project you are about to start working on, are about touch and the politics of touch in different ways. Touch is both an immediate experience, you know, and, at the same time, both being touched and touching [others] is essentially woven into discourses about power, differentiation, and human dignity. The types of touch that are allowed, and those that are not, are what we call the politics of touch. We all govern the politics of touch. This is probably most evident in how infants need skin-to-skin contact, but maybe as importantly, and as an echo of that, we experience it in lust and sexual touch—and, of course, everything in between. It might be a friendly hug, a handshake, a hand that lightly touches a wound, a body that leans into another body to console that person. That is why the rules of appropriateness and decency in society, law, and ethics are found where the politics of touch are governed, negotiated, and renegotiated.

The fossil is, in my opinion, a radical form of touch because the touch is not a one-to-one experience in the present, but it is, in fact, happening in the past. It seems to be a preserved touch. There is another element surrounding the fossil, namely the museum where the fossil has lived up until now. By exploring fossils at the museum, the case handles the imprinted material memory from two different angles: nature's imprint in stone and humankind's imprint in nature. By taking certain objects out of their context of use, we make them studies of the objects themselves.

Liv's first case study explores the change in the relationship between the museum and the fossil. The fossils will be moved, and the exhibition will be altered. And, at the same time, the cultural organisation of nature's structure is up for discussion. Your starting point is the transition to an Anthropocene era where humanity faces a new geological era and where humankind marks all matter.

I interpret this work as a double unhinging. In other words, the museum is closing and the meaning allocated to the fossils is renegotiated—this is a double disruption that calls on a form of memory politics. What memory politics are created from the fossils that are to be moved from the museum? If it is true that we are entering a new era, the fossils are not just a concrete reminder of the animals that are imprinted—they are also reminders of a different era. What are the memory politics aspects to this transition? What is at stake in this transition? What power, what discourses? Maybe, first and foremost, it is about thinking about how it is possible to approach this transition in an artistic, intellectual, and emotional way. And I think it is about the enormous power that lies in the hands of mankind, if it is, in fact, true that all living and non-living things and creatures have a human component to them. Humans always colonize the worlds of all living—and now—non-living creatures, and I think this case forms part of a draft on what this recognition can look like.

The next input is the prison. And this is where the fossil aspect of the museum is explored. I think this case looks at the relationship between touch and worth and values to an even larger extent than the first one. The prison is not a neutral place. It is a place where society puts people who have done things we consider criminal. The prison is therefore a place that brings pain in the shape of detention, force, and coercion. But, also, the way Vigdis Hjorth describes her experiences is what it feels like to be imprisoned: shame, regret, and self-examination, and the critique of old-fashioned systems, injustice, and unnecessary humiliation. I think exploring the imprints of the body's presence in this very charged institution is a deeply ethical, but also risky, project. Don't you just want to flee this place, forget, and delete your presence or memory of other people's presence from this place of shame, which is what the prison really is? In this particular place, how do you create a space for remembering in a worthy way? I think this second case study tries to explore and find the language for what this kind of "memorying" can look like.

Maybe looking for physical memories of your own and other people's bodies in this place is a way in itself to create worth or dignity? Because doing so is intervening in the way politics of touch are crafted within the prison. It is negotiating the power balance between the inmate and the physical surfaces of the prison. The surfaces of the prison touch the inmates in the most banal of ways, in that if they try to escape their bodies will meet the surface of the prison's walls. But, when Liv and the inmates look for traces of disappeared inmates on the prison walls, this becomes a way to renegotiate the power to make one's mark. The inmates also touch the prison itself by leaving behind traces and marks on the walls—just as the case study demonstrates. In this way, the case study produces remnants of life, resistance, sorrow, and shame, and makes this visible for those of us who find ourselves outside the prison walls.

Touch is a central aspect in the church and its rituals. In all the church's rites of passage, the priest's touch is the burning core. It might be the priest's hand on the child's head during a christening, it might be the priest's blessing hand on the heads of the confirmands, or the hand of the priest on the bride and groom's heads. The only exception from this is the funeral. In a funeral, the priest's touch is decentralised to the earth that is scattered over the dead body. And at the same time, it is not a decentralisation as such, because the element that is implemented between the body of the dead person and the hand of the priest is the earth. The earth is the word that, according to Genesis in the Hebrew text, is used to describe "the living being", where humans, animals, and fish are Adam—a gender-neutral word derived from "adamah", meaning "earth". So, that means if you look at the Hebrew text, the difference between the earth and the hand is just a matter of timely randomness. It is the same substance.

Touch is also essential in other, marginal, rituals of the church. This applies to the laying on of hands in individual intercession, confessions, or individual blessings. And it applies to exorcism. This is a practice that doesn't exist in the Lutheran Church, but does in the Catholic Church. What does touch mean in the rituals of the church? The hand conveys the presence of God, but what kind of ontological status does this have? It is different each time. Is the hand a metaphor or a symbol of the presence of God, or is there an ontological connection between the hand and God? How you answer that question will vary depending on your view of the relationship between language and reality. You'll find an example of the latter, an ontological extension between the hand and God, in the Catholic Church's view on the ordination of priests. In the Catholic Church, a new priest is ordained as a part of the Catholic Church's hierarchy. One imagines a continuous line from bishops today all the way back to Saint Peter—this is called the apostolic succession. So, one imagines that touch creates a metaphysical line from Peter up until bishops today, and further on to new priests. And that's why Lutheran priests are not acknowledged as real priests—because we are not a part of the apostolic succession.

Lutherans have a different view on the relationship between language and reality. In the Lutheran tradition, God is not bound by language and ritual in the same way. However, since touch is such a central part of the Norwegian Church's liturgy, the rituals are where the politics of touch is governed, purely symbolically, even though there are no ontological similarities there. Two weeks ago, the Norwegian church had an election where the outcome, in a way, renegotiates the politics of touch. The majority voted in favour of priests no longer touching the heads of only heterosexuals during weddings. This ritual of touch now includes queer people. I think this is a game changer for the church, but it is also a step towards the emancipation of queer people in Norway: the thought that the erotic touch of queer people should be included in the church's politics of touch. But, I also think that ritualised touch is part of the politics of touch in an even more explicitly gendered way because in all the big world religions, religious authority until the 20th century has, to a large extent, belonged to men. People who have had the power to touch others have been men. To have women occupying positions of religious authority is a relatively new concept in Christianity, Judaism, and Islam. Priesthood is one of these positions—one that I hold myself. I think the fact that the formal power to touch others has been so explicitly gendered leads to men's right to touch women and children outside of the ritual. The ritual touch echoes the recognition that the extension of this touch has been excessively misused and abused. I'm thinking specifically about sexual assault that has taken place within the church, especially in the Catholic Church, but also the Protestant Church. The tightrope we walk when it comes to the type of touch that is a symbol of God and the type of touch that infringes on other people's dignity, makes the priest's touch upon the believer a deeply ambivalent action. This is because we are acutely aware of the misconduct that has taken place in the past.



So, what was the question you asked earlier, Liv? What is the transformative potential of touch? Judith Butler's theory of performativity indicates that there is no ontologically solid ground, which is to say a body or a religion or a state. Rather, we reproduce performances that cause actions to emerge as self-evident and natural. So, what does it take to perform these actions in a radical new way, so that they become transformative? From my tradition, from theology, I want to discuss the possibility of a surprising subversive touch as an example of transformative touch. The New Testament has examples of how this makes touch a place where a confrontation happens, and the resistance of power becomes evident.

You'll find an example of this in the Gospel of Mark, where a nameless prostitute crashes the party of a Pharisee called Simon. Even though Jesus generally had a bad relationship with the Pharisees, he was still invited to this particular party. The woman, who was not invited, runs over to Jesus, falls to her knees in front of him, and starts to wash his feet with her tears and dry them with her hair. This is an explicit, powerful touch. The fact that servants/slaves washed the feet of master's guests was a part of the politics of touch. In other words, touch was an explicit way to maintain and express hierarchy. So, the fact that someone washes another person's feet is not controversial in itself. What is controversial here is that the woman is not a servant but a prostitute—an unclean and impure person. She socialises with non-Jews for economic reasons, non-Jews being representatives of the Roman occupying power. She is an outsider in every possible way. In Christian children's literature and piety literature, the text where Jesus calms the storm is the main text about safety. On occasions when it is not this text, this one about the woman washing Jesus' feet is the main text about safety. I think the people who have the power to interpret these texts have completely forgotten about the gender aspects and the politics involved in touch. We forget when the woman makes her way into the party and washes Jesus' feet, she involves herself in the politics of touch in a radical way. We forget all the other women at Simon's party were prostitutes, which was the norm at all parties in this particular cultural context. Parties were a no-go zone for decent women. So, here comes this woman who really was there to be forcibly touched by others' lust—but this is where a rupture in the politics of touch happens—when the nameless woman touches Jesus in a sensual, but non-sexual, way. Affectionately, but not autonomously. He receives the touch, but does not misuse his position of power. He is aware of the vulnerability that comes with the touch without exploiting or hiding it. So, the texts in the New Testament that are a part of our cultural heritage, where Jesus touches lepers, prostitutes, and children, are examples of a transformative touch. The fact that Jesus touches them redefines their status in society.

But, it also affirms their normality, and the fact that they are allowed to be touched. Although, maybe most of all it isn't only about redefining his position of power and their position of power but what—in essence—power truly is. What happens when there is a shift in power? What happens when power doesn't act as power, but as something else? Maybe it's less radical to have a God who dies on the

cross than a God who basically submits himself to the politics of touch and who dabbles in metaphors and the practices of touch and submission, degradation, and lack of autonomy—expressed through touch.

This last summer I did a performance where I, as a priest, sat outside the Oslo Cathedral and washed the feet of passers-by. I wanted to see what would happen when a priest is no longer in the surroundings of religious service and the church hall, but is instead uncompromisingly forced to face the reality of the streets. Perhaps the most subversive and transformative aspect of this action wasn't about the people who got their feet washed, but the people who weren't interested in the touch I had to offer. They wanted me to perform other services; something completely different from washing their feet. My self-appointed touch of other people's feet as a servant's task was undermined by the fact that people wanted totally different things from me: services that I could sometimes fulfil, sometimes not. Perhaps this says something about touch's outside surface. We should consider the context that touch happens in, the hunger and the cold. So, that was my initial response.

Liv Bugge: The colonized touch you talked about, both going back to the Anthropocene era, where touch has colonized all substances in a wider sense, and also in an artistic practice, touch is—if you are not talking physically, if you let yourself get touched emotionally or in other ways—normative in relation to education and professionalism. It is interesting to see how in artistic touch you also see demands for sensitivity in relation to it. You wash the feet of passers-by and it is professional, but in other contexts—for instance for Solveig [Styve Holte], who is a dancer and choreographer—touch has a different professionalism, and this professionalisation excludes sensitivity in relation to the actual touch. Maybe you would like to say a few words about that, Solveig?

Solveig Styve Holte: I think I should start by saying something about the work I do. When it comes to what you said about touch and my thoughts on the subject—I started my professional education as a dancer. When I got my education we had a lot of somatic practices. I don't know if you are familiar with the concept, but in somatic practices we automatically exclude psychosomatic elements, which state that we do something with the body to achieve something with the body. Somatic practices do not necessarily have a therapeutic effect or promise to deliver something more beyond the movement itself. Maybe you are familiar with some of these practices: The Feldenkrais Method, the Alexander Technique, the Klein Technique and the Rosen Method, all of which border on therapy. However, in educational purposes, they're often used as methods for enhanced sensibility in the body—in other words, body awareness—everything that is part of becoming a professional dancer. These techniques are often authorized; they are supposed to be done in a particular way. I have a background of experience in this and I have my own choreography practice, where one of the important steps in our artistic process has been working with touch.

We have tried working with touch to produce a specific partner technique, and I have worked with touch to treat pains in my body. We have worked with touch to experience togetherness. The artistic space may open a new dimension, for instance, I have used a type of “lyng exercise” where we lie side by side for more than 10 minutes. The body seems to change after this, some call lying beside another person for an extended period of time a detox-like experience, and say the body releases toxins. We do this because the action is supposed to give us something else in return. I have been interested in whether we can do these things just for the sake of doing them. That is a paradox because we do these things as an artistic process and, therefore, the process has value in itself. It is something we do, and we often do it in connection with art, performing arts, and production, but it is a technique that is a by-product and I think it is interesting to consider how we practice it and what we think about it. When we close in on a deadline and we have to be effective, we abandon the lying exercise—we don’t have time to work with touch anymore. It can be considered an excessive process. In our latest production, we suddenly realised that we need to lie with each other to re-establish contact, so we did the lying exercise during preparations. It is difficult to find the time for those two hours before the audience arrives, but we insisted on lying together for half an hour—which doesn’t really make sense in our society, where we constantly consume or produce stuff. I’m interested in whether we are able to produce things that do not promise a transformation in the end. Nothing changes from this touch and it is not sexual.

It has sensuality, but not a sexuality. We have an agreement in the group, a non-productive mode, a mode where we don’t produce art, we produce through our bodies. We produce something else as a collective unit. I’m not quite sure what is, but we all agree it’s valuable, without having the words to describe it.

At the same time, I feel part of becoming professional at something desensitises you; you have to endure things you perhaps don’t like. Last week, I was at a performance where the guy holding it touched my breast, completely out of nowhere. I experienced it as something I had to endure as a professional audience member, but, in hindsight, I find it inappropriate. I wonder how and why being a professional, both in practice but also as an audience member, is to a large extent about being boundless when it comes to touch. It is about letting things go beyond your boundaries and not being affected by anything. I think that balancing act is interesting. As a dancer you are trained not to feel, but at the same time we are trained to feel more. As an audience member, I’m able to tolerate more and more extreme things without batting an eye. Touch is something I do in all of my productions, but it is never our main project. It is something we do behind the scenes, but it is something that everybody finds valuable.

LB: I'm thinking of the treatment or healing culture, which is an economy, but is also aiming for things—pains or whatever—to disappear. In a previous work, I was interested in the body-mind split that we believe was introduced with the witch hunts in the middle ages. Silvia Federici has written about this split as a result of the introduction of capitalist economy and its accumulation and need for a working class body. In western culture we have a lot of pain and problems with our necks and shoulders and I suppose there is still a need for healing where head and body are separated. The healing of touch is about removing something and making it better, but I'm interested in how touch can be not necessarily something that gets better, but can be a confrontation. I don't mean violently, rather in healing way. It isn't just a New Age thing where the perception is, "everything is going to be alright as long as we touch each other."

GG: May I respond to what you said earlier? It is about professional touch. I think it is a very interesting topic. What is the professional component in touch? A lot of people have touch as part of their professional practice. You talk about dancers, but both priests and health professionals do too. Especially if we think the way you did earlier: that it's all about being touched—not just physically, but also spiritually. I can't remember holding a single funeral where I didn't cry. So, you can ask yourself, "Are the priest's tears professional tears?" And if they are, it would be much better to not cry. There is something in that relationship, in the triangle between the professional, the touch, and the authentic, where I think something exciting occurs. It is clear those tears are totally dependent on the fact that it is not arbitrary, in fact, it is I, which is fundamental in professionalism—you must refrain from being personal. It is clear that you cry because you are present and aware as a person and you are touched by this particular person, so it's authentic, in a way, when the volume is at max level. And what happens when you cry in a professional setting? I don't have the answers to this question, but I think it's completely necessary to let the personal and the authentic be part of the professional discourse. I think when professional discourse is divorced from touch, it can very quickly be open to abuse. When you are disconnected from yourself, you are, in reality, disconnected from the vulnerability of the concrete other.

LB: If we step back a little bit to my thesis: we exclude a sort of collectivism. Eileen Myles says that capitalism wants us to be alone (Eileen Myles, 'An American Poem', in *Not Me* (1991)), and that political or capitalist influence makes us refrain from touch as a way of excluding a type of collectivism. People needing touch: people with a disability or special needs. Consider the fact that we talk about them having "special needs", while we are all carried by the hands of the collective. Again, Judith Butler talks about systems of support. We are all carried forward, someone made this floor, these chairs, and material is holding us every step of the way: there is always an indirect touch that we deny in one form or another because it is not visible. When I mention structural magic, it might seem

like I'm being negative about the structural, but I also see that we are all dependent on these hands that carry us, including through the material.

SSH: Mutuality is always a demand in what I do, which is different from when you buy a service, or someone is paid: instead, someone has organised that somebody touches someone else. This is also a religious role, where you execute something on behalf of an authority. I have been interested in practicing techniques of touch where we both receive and give. If I touch you, you have to touch me. In a larger group setting we have discovered a sensibility and sensational touch that is non-sexual in a society where sexuality and touch are intertwined. That is, to experience intimacy that isn't connected directly to a sexual relationship. I see there is a potential there that should be investigated further. In relation to authenticity: in my experience the value of "fake" has been quite strong. There are fake rituals, fake healing, fake somatic practices, fake anything because you want to destabilise the idea that there is an authority that decides if something is authentic or not. It is possible for fake healing to have a real effect, but the healing doesn't ever actually claim to have an effect; it's fake healing. If you want the real effect—great, but there is no guarantee. It's different if you go and buy the services of a healer versus people just healing each other *now*. I think we all have the ability to heal each other, apropos trying to achieve a collective grip. When something is announced as being fake, there is a distribution of power and a shared responsibility instead of there being one authorized person.

GG: That's exciting because then you, in a way, cut the bond between the ontological reality and the practice. I did that at Høstutstillingen (The Autumn Exhibition) when I, as a priest, prayed to Allah, a God that might be my own, who might not, or maybe it is the same God—I don't know. It was a way of saying that maybe the practice is enough. I wouldn't call it fake, but I would say it is insisting on using the practices as a basis, as a believer of God being an ontological agnostic, but believing in the practices. Believe in the healing without taking a stand to what effect it has. It is, in a way, reversing something very fundamental in our culture and a lot of exciting things occur when we do just that.

During my practical theological education—precisely because sexual abuse within the frame of the church had been in the media to such a large extent—when I graduated six years ago I think all the case studies we worked on during a six month period touched upon questions about assault. It wasn't necessarily the main point, but it was something we were trained to think about. It is the abnormal, criminal, unethical touch—this is the touch we study—but the ordinary touch just becomes a part of everyday life, and maybe we should talk about and discuss that type of touch too?