





STATES ARE MADE UP OF LAYERS OF
MORE OR LESS INCOMPLETE VISIONS
OF THE FUTURE, AND THE RESULT IS A
PERMANENT STATE OF IMPERMANENCE

STATE is the deadly God who kneads and bakes our bread. The state has the power to form our will and show us how to perform our rituals. Like dough, the state is kneaded by its citizens, competing states, and raised by yeast – the collective unconscious. The finished product is often insufficient, gets burned or simply moulds over time.

STATE premiered in Dom im Berg at the steirischer herbst festival (AU) in September 2016, and is inspired by ritual dances from a wide range of sources. Together with five dancers and two musicians, choreographer Ingri Midgard Fiksdal and director Jonas Corell Petersen draft ideas for fictional and real states.

STATE is part concert part dance performance, with music composed by Lasse Marhaug. The composition fluctuates between the natural sounds of the instruments and that created when they are processed through various electronic devices. The costumes, created by Henrik Vibskov, double as the stage design.

When researching the performance we visited different pow-wows in Quebec, Canada, to see how First Nations such as the Mohawk (Kahnawake) and Iriquoan integrate their rituals in a modern context. We explored different bodily and mental states – amongst them hypnosis and various reading. We are interested in the micro politics that operate in the relation between rituals and the apparatus of the modern nation state. How are the workings of rituals on the state, and of the state on rituals?

We have asked researchers from different fields to elaborate and expand on the idea of the nation state, its rituals and fictions, and mental and bodily states. The contributors are Bojana Cvejic, Knut Ove Eliassen, Ingjerd Hoëm, Kenan Malik, Jon Refsdal Moe, Cecilia Sjöholm and The Centre for Wild Analysis.

Ingri Midgard Fiksdal and Jonas Corell Petersen

Concept, Choreography: Ingri Midgard Fiksdal

Concept, Dramaturgy: Jonas Corell Petersen

Composer: Lasse Marhaug

Lighting designers: Øyvind Wangensteen and Phillip Isaksen

Costume designer: Henrik Vibskov

Developed and performed by:

Rosalind Goldberg, Rannei Grenne, Nuria Guiu Sagarra, Louis Schou-Hanssen and Jeffrey Young

Musicians: Heida J. Mobeck and Anja Lauvdal

Producer: Nicole Schuchardt

Administrator and assistant choreographer: Eva Grainger

Photos: Anders Lindén

Co-produced by:

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BIT teatergarasjen (NO), Teaterhuset Avant Garden (NO) and the apap network (EU)

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www.ingrifiksdal.com
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Cecilia Sjöholm is Professor of Aesthetics at Södertörn University in Stockholm, specializing in the history of aesthetics and critical theory. Her book on Hannah Arendt, art and aesthetics was published by Columbia University Press in 2016: *Doing Aesthetics with Arendt; How to See Things*. Other books include *Regionality/ Mondiality*, ed. with Charlotte Bydler (Södertörn University Press 2014), *Translativity*, ed. with Sara Arrhenius and Magnus Bergh (Albert Bonniers Publisher 2011), *Kristeva and the Political* (Routledge 2005), *The Antigone Complex; Ethics and the Invention of Feminine Desire* (Stanford University Press).

Ingrid Hoëm is Professor of Social Anthropology at the University of Oslo, Norway. Her fieldwork is in the Polynesian Pacific, and she has published extensively on the atoll society of Tokelau and its relationship with New Zealand. Her work is on ritual communication and the politics of identity. Among her recent publications are *Languages of Governance in Conflict* (John Benjamin 2015), and "Ritualized Performances as Total Social facts", in G. Senft and E. B. Basso (eds.) *Ritual Communication* (Berg, 2009).

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Kenan Malik is an Indian-born (1960) English author, lecturer and broadcaster, who studied neurobiology and the history of science. As a scientific author, his focus is on the philosophy of biology and contemporary theories of multiculturalism, pluralism and race. These topics are core concerns in *The Meaning of Race* (1996), *Man, Beast and Zombie* (2000) and *Strange Fruit: Why Both Sides Are Wrong in the Race Debate* (2008). His work contains a forthright defence of the values of the Eighteenth Century Enlightenment, which he sees as having been distorted and misunderstood in more recent political and scientific thought. He was shortlisted for the Orwell Prize in 2010.

Knut Ove Eliassen: Born 1959, he has a PhD and is Professor of Comparative Literature at the Norwegian University of Science and Technology, Trondheim. His recent publications include: *Foucaults begreper* (2016) and *Kvalitetsforståelser* (with Øyvind

Prytz) (2016). His main fields of interest are: Twentieth Century French Philosophy, Media Archaeology, Enlightenment Studies, Aesthetics, and the History of the Novel. He has translated Michel Foucault, Friedrich Kittler, and Jean Baudrillard into Norwegian. He is currently involved in an inter-disciplinary project on the cultural history of the ocean.

The Centre for Wild Analysis is a philosophical collective that writes books, columns and articles analysing contemporary society through the lens of psychoanalysis and philosophy. The centre was founded in 2006, and has published two books as well as three hundred weekly columns in the Danish newspaper, Information, in addition to sixty radio shows on DR, Denmark's national broadcasting corporation. The identity of the collective's members is no secret, but neither is it important. The collective exists when at least two members are present or have co-written a text. The last thing the public debate needs is more "unique" voices with exciting, personal angles. Rather it is in urgent need of collective interventions that may prompt society to actually think rather than refer everything back to personal interests and experiences.

Ingrid Fiksdal: Born 1982, she works as a choreographer and is currently a Research Fellow in the Norwegian Artistic Research Program. Her work deals with perception and affect, and places equal emphasis on sound, light, choreography, costume and set-design within the performances. An ongoing theme within Fiksdal's work is ritual and its inherent capacity for transforming and ultimately transcending its partakers. Within this, the relationship between cognition and affectivity and how they operate in perception and production of meaning, is central. Her most recent productions *Cosmic Body* (2015), *HOODS* (2014), *BAND* (2013), *Night Tripper* (2012) and *The Orchard Ballads* (2011) have toured a number of venues in Norway, Europe and the US. *Night Tripper* won the Oslo Award for Best Performance in 2012, and *HOODS* won the Dance Critic Award for Best Performance in 2014. www.ingridfiksdal.com

Jonas Corell Petersen: Born in Copenhagen in 1979, he studied drama, art history and philosophy at the University of Copenhagen. He has an MA in theatre directing from the Oslo National Academy of the Arts. His work has been performed in Norway, England, the Netherlands, Germany and Denmark. He won the European Fast Forward award for young directors for his diploma production, *The Sorrows of Young Werther* (2010). In 2012, he was awarded The Hedda Award for Best Youth Production for *I-K-EG*. Other productions include *Don Quixote* and *ZOO* (2011 and 2013). Petersen is writer in residence at the Norwegian Centre for New Playwriting (2016-2017) and is a resident director at the Norwegian National Theatre (2015-2018) where he has staged his two recent plays *We Chew on the Bones of Time* (2015, available at <http://www.culturbooks.de/terrorisms/>) and *Island* (2016).







THE STATE – A FICTION AND A STATE OF MIND?

KNUT OVE ELIASSEN

We are all familiar with the *state* – that “cold monster” – as the German thinker Friedrich Nietzsche put it, echoing British philosopher Thomas Hobbes’ famous characterization of the state as “Leviathan”. Once an allegory of raw political power drawn from the *Book of Job*, it has become ubiquitous. Rather than appearing as the fearsome authority father figure of Reformation England, its modern Scandinavian descendant is instead a facilitator and a caretaker. Due to its pervasive presence as the 21st century welfare state, we acknowledge its importance and live our lives accordingly – less as, the two philosophers have it, an entity to be feared and respected, it has become a part of our mindset, internalized – *a state of mind*. At the same time both omnipresent and strangely elusive, the *state* provides the physical infrastructure of our lives as citizens – from maternity wards and kindergartens

by way of schools, universities and workplaces, to retirement homes and graveyards.

Whether we like it or not, the *state* forms our life stories; we pass through its buildings and interact with its representatives. Be it health or education, public or private activities, our existence interfaces continually with and is governed by regulations and laws, taxes and levies, pensions and loans, bureaucrats and police. And in the Scandinavian economies, it is the largest provider; not only is a significant percentage of the working population employed by it, a similar number gets their income from state pensions. Nevertheless, despite its omnipresence, in the bustle of everyday life few of us stop to reflect upon *what* the state might be. It is *there*, it is the state of things – *the status quo*.

However, when we cross the border from

our own state and enter another country, it soon becomes evident that things are done differently there. Whether visitor, tourist or immigrant, one is confronted with a *different state of affairs*; a different way of shaping, organizing and regulating the interactions between people and things, that is, the ordering of the nation. The longer the stay, the more profoundly one comes to experience how other states function, how they interface with various aspects of everyday life, in brief, how they do things differently, their different distributions of the status quo. Hence, the notion of the state that we, as the offspring of a long, social democratic tradition, are so familiar with, comes across as inadequate, as a bad fit to the functions, values and significations of *l'état*, *der Staat*, or *lo stato*, or whatever the word might be (for instance *government*, a word that in the USA covers much of the same semantic field that “state” does in continental Europe). These terms, as well as their counterparts in other European languages, designate entities each with its own distinctly different history and different political and societal functions, roles and symbolic values. Thus it makes little sense to speak of such a thing as the state; there are only states in the plural, as each state has a distinctly different history that entails different value sets, practices and political conflicts. Nevertheless, despite the complex plethora of characteristics revealed by the comparison of these different concepts, as well as their obvious incongruent functions, they still share some common features that become evident when the concept is placed in a historical perspective.

Greek philosophy and legislation gave us the concept of “politics” by way of the term *politeia*, a word that is often rendered as “city state”. From Roman tradition stems another just as influential

term, *res publica*, an expression that can literally can be translated as “the public (or common) thing”, or “the nation”, but most translators throughout history have opted for “the state”, or even the “republic” (a term which for a long time was more or less synonymous with “state” and did not acquire its modern significance until after the French revolution). Thus, while Plato’s dialogue *Politikos* (The Politician) has traditionally been rendered as *The Statesman*, the title of its Ciceronian counterpart, *De re publica*, has been often been translated as *The State*. As the titles reveal, the philosophers of Antiquity were the first to identify systematically, articulate and attempt to understand the nature of the state, of the principles of government and co-existence. It is to this classical tradition we owe what to this day remains the fundamental taxonomy of governmental forms, of states: monarchy, oligarchy, and democracy – the distinction between the rule by the one, the few or the many.

While the contemporary political vocabulary and notions owe much to the legacy of the thinkers of Antiquity, these early concepts of “state”, whether in the more limited sense of *politeia* (a city state with a certain autonomy) or *res publica* (the nation) reflect a different historical reality than the one we designate with the word “state”. While the Roman Empire was no stranger to public institutions, be they of an administrative, political or of a judicial nature, the classical languages have no conceptual equivalent for such a term as bureaucracy. While there was government, there was no such thing as statecraft. Neither was there anything that can be reasonably compared to such notions as sovereignty, territory or nation; concepts that are crucial to our modern understanding of statehood

(not to mention the many terms which have no exact equivalents in the English language).

It is in the time period between the early fifteenth and the mid seventeenth century, with the rise of the Italian city states and, a little later, the modern French and English nation states, that a modern concept of “state” emerges. However, at this stage, it describes not so much the bureaucratic apparatus we are so familiar with today, but rather the new political entities that came out of the early modern period, such as “the city state”. Louis XIV’s famous, if apocryphal, “l’état, c’est moi” reflects less the king’s role as policy maker than the fact that he, by the power vested in him as king by God and as a descendant of the first family of France, was the incarnation of nation. The king’s body was also the body of the country – “the body politick”, to use the era’s own terminology. This should make it abundantly clear how the concept of the state is not only eminently historical, and therefore both shifting and vague, continually being renegotiated, what it refers to is also permanently undergoing structural changes and is in no way given. But the meaning and the associated functions of the term “state” have not only shifted due to the transformations of what they refer to – the political realities of Norway in 1537 or 1660 are quite different from those in 1905 or 2016 – the term has also changed as it has been adapted to other conceptual developments that are part of the inventory of modern political thought: “politics”, “society”, “nation”, “revolution” – and many other concepts of the legacy of modern political realities.

The shifting semantics of the word from one language to another, and from one period to the next, bear witness to how the content and functions of the term “state” vary depending on political

institutions, the vicissitudes of history, and material and cultural conditions. Concepts are not merely tools for articulating and reflecting upon political reality, they also incorporate historical experience. The events and experiences of the past not only influence the decisions of the present, they also format and filter the prognoses of the future and thus influence actions and interventions. Concepts form the infrastructure of an idea that is represented as laws, regulations and practices, they partake in the feedback loop between production of a historical mentality and the discourses and practices which at the same time make it possible and are formed by it.

If one looks more closely at what characterizes the early modern notion of the state, what is immediately obvious is that it refers less to a bureaucracy, that is “the state apparatus” as twentieth century sociologists put it, than it designates “a state of things”, that is a condition. A key concept in the sixteenth century treaties of politics in the works of Juan Mariana, Giovanni Botero, and Jean Bodin (to mention just three of the most famous of a long list of mainly forgotten writers, today only read by specialists), four different definitions stand out: “State” designates a physical domain or a territory; furthermore, it refers to a jurisdiction and a set of laws (valid for a limited area); it denotes a certain standard of living, or conditions of life; and, finally, it characterizes a particular and stable situation, a status quo (as opposed to a situation of flux or change).

These four concepts have in common the reference to objects that are all aspects of government. What is to be governed, that is the nation, is a certain area (and whatever might be found in that area, population, resources,



livestock, infrastructure, etc.). What characterizes this physically defined area is that there are tools available for governing and upholding it (laws, and the means to impose them as well as to defend the area). These tools make it possible to maintain a stable situation that allows for a certain and desirable standard of living – these are the results of good government. Statecraft is thus not only about exerting authority over a territory; one purpose of authority is the ability to secure and maintain a good life for those who inhabit the territory. Government, or the art of managing a state, is thus exercised between two opposing poles: The means to uphold and defend the state internally and externally, and the acquiescence of its inhabitants. Whether the goal of the state is the power of the prince or the wealth and happiness of

the population, what lies at the heart of the heart of government is the issue of maintaining the state, that is, the status quo. This requires knowledge of the nature of the state, knowledge upon which any sound administration must build. Jean Bodin famously called this knowledge the *raison d'état* or *ratio status* – that is “reason of state”. The term is usually associated with Machiavellianism, that is the cynical employment of cunning in statecraft or politics for the purpose of personal gain. For Bodin, however, “reason of state” refers both to the specific rationality of the object, that is, how a state functions, as well as to the science of applying this knowledge, in other words, *Realpolitik*. Reason of state is characterized by the following: The state has no justification beyond itself, it is its own reference; reason of state thus refers both to the

nature of the state and the science of this nature; it is in its essence of a conservative nature (it is about preserving a given configuration of things); and finally, reason of state has no objective beyond itself, the state is its own goal and purpose.

These early concepts of state refer in a way that is highly characteristic, primarily to issues of a governmental nature. Furthermore, the distinction between public and private is of little importance: The political subjects are not sovereign, they are subjects of what is fittingly called “the head of state”, a political relation that is wonderfully illustrated in the famous frontispiece of Thomas Hobbes’ treatise on the state, *Leviathan*, where the body of the king, wielding the sword in one hand (power) and the sceptre in the other (the authority of law), is filled with drawings of small individual bodies, the loyal subjects. However, Hobbes is also the thinker who introduces a new usage of the word “state”, employing it to identify a particular type of union or civil association, that is, a nation of individuals who acknowledge the sovereignty of a king or a ruling class. The innovation lies in the distinction between the state of the sovereign, that is, the territory he controls and over which he can therefore exert his authority, and the state seen as the nation of its inhabitants, an entity that exists independently of royal power. When civil society is conceived of as something that exists in its own right, a gap within the body politick opens up, separating the interests of the sovereign and his subjects. The king’s authority as the supreme civil head can thus in principle be challenged; the king is no longer necessarily the state, the king embodies the state only in so far as he represents and takes care of the interests of the people. This paves the way for the notion of a state for the people, of the

people and by the people, or in other words, of the modern concept of popular sovereignty – that is the full right and power of a people to determine the governing body and to govern itself without any interference from outside sources or bodies.

In theory, this should solve the issue of the external relationship between the state and its subjects: According to the notion of popular sovereignty the state represents the populace of a given territory and manages its interests. The inhabitants, or in the suggestive words of Hobbes, *the multitude*, select representatives whose task it is to govern the nation in the best interests of its members; in delegating such an authority the multitude becomes what he calls “authors”. The term “author” hints at the fundamental of Hobbes’ thought, namely that the elected representatives should not pursue their own interest but are spokesmen or actors, what he calls artificial persons. In this process, the multitude transforms itself into a political unity, that is, a commonwealth or a state. This state, Hobbes claims, is thus nothing but a *fiction*, an entity that has no existence in itself beyond the perpetual repetition of those acts that maintain it. In this resides the essence of modern politics, that is, the state. The state is the commonwealth maintained by and dependent upon our actions and our mind sets. Despite its apparent institutional autonomy, it is – what civil wars and independence movements lay bare – a fragile construct, a fiction that depends on our state of mind to keep it alive.



WHAT WE MAY FIND – OUTSIDE OF THE ORDINARY

INGJERD HOËM

A mystic's question: "I stepped out of time and entered a world more real than reality. How can we speak of life beyond illusion?"

Anonymous

And an artist's answer: "If I could say it, I wouldn't have to dance it".

Isadora Duncan

Ekstasis is the original Greek word for ecstasy. It means to stand outside, to step outside oneself. In anthropological studies, this is a common feature of ritual. To use a social situation to create a framework that makes room for the extraordinary. A situation set apart from the everyday, which allows those who enter it to leave behind their ordinary roles and tasks for the duration of the

ritual ceremony. The social anthropological ritual scholar Victor Turner describes what happens in such a state of existential nakedness. Firstly, he says, this condition can best be characterized as liminal. A space between the old self, and the not yet to be, new persona. The person, who enters the ritual space, is thus no longer in his/her ordinary frame of action. What happens then to the individual's perception of themselves and their surroundings in such a state?

From numerous accounts throughout human history, of personal experiences, of small and great ecstasies, people frequently report a slowing down of time and a simultaneous expansion of space. The everyday self withdraws and a deeper, more expansive soul emerges. A feeling of oneness with or a degree of merging with the larger universe, with other participants and natural surroundings

takes place. This falling away of the ordinary self and everyday habits is often accompanied by pain and anxiety, but also by feelings of great joy and relief. This state is what Victor Turner calls *communitas*.

In the wide-open psychic state characteristic of *communitas*, ritual leaders from shamans and priests to musicians, trance dancers and many artists of the contemporary scene, may direct and powerfully intervene in the composition of reality – or so it seems within the state of *communitas*. A recent study by the social anthropologist Bruce Kapferer, based on his long-term studies of South East Asian ritual, draws attention to the dominant quality of this state as being *virtual*. By characterizing it by its virtual quality, he points to a kind of hyper-reality, in other words, a state of being more real than reality.

Such experiences of the hyper-real, and the difficulties of expressing it in ordinary language are hinted at in the mystic's quote above. A virtual space shifts the experience of the ordinary from the naturalized, accepted basis, upon which everyday existence flows unnoticed, to the background where it is relegated as unimportant for the time being. The virtual state then holds a great potential for manipulating the parameters of being in the world.

But who set the parameters of how we are in the world in the first place? This question and reflections upon similar issues are what any participant in the state of *communitas* is faced with. The answer is, as always and everywhere nowadays, the (nation)state in some form. The norms and values that guide our lives, and the limits that are set for our agency and capacity for experience, are seen from the vantage point of the virtual for what

they are – as products of coordinated human effort and social control that endure historically.

In his book *Seeing Like a State* the sociologist James Scott discusses the ideology that goes hand in hand with the way a state operates. The nation state, as we know it provides, although to varying degrees, stability over time through its legitimate monopoly of the use of violence to protect its institutions. The predictability thus created allows our societal institutions, such as material production, trade and other forms of exchange of ideas and artistic expressions to develop.

The discipline required of its citizens to uphold the State varies immensely. This is where the potential for stepping out of and experiencing life outside of society's normal strictures while in the ritual state, becomes a test for the degree of discipline and power exercised by society. The extent of a society's control and its citizens' potential for freedom can be measured by the opportunities provided for varied, multiple experiences – within and importantly also outside the ritual sphere. An additional test is whether the richness of life, the full realization of experiences is accessible to all or only to some. And finally, we can ask whether extraordinary, important, festive ritual activities are hidden and tabooed, or openly celebrated? One example would be the fluctuating status of Carnival traditions which emerge powerfully from time to time, only to be suppressed again and again throughout history in Europe.

The potential power that is typical of the state of *communitas* – the energy and alternative viewpoints accessible in this open, virtual state is dangerous for the established institutions of society. The force of the virtual is thus posed as anti-structural in the analysis put forward by Victor

Turner. It is important to note, however, that in this analysis the force achieved by leaving the structure and stepping into the realm of anti-structure is inherently neither positive nor negative. It points only to the liberation of all the energy that is ordinarily harnessed for the benefit of some part of society. The raw force of unfettered human energy, what Sigmund Freud called the libido and Polynesians call mana (cosmic power, energy, force associated with leadership) is commonly associated with a capacity both for great good and great destruction. It needs to be guided, given some form, in order for the experience even for the individual to be pleasurable. Meaning is integral to human survival, and the absence of meaning, as in no order or pattern at all, equals chaos and psychotic breakdown.

The ritual guides, artists and other psychic guides in ritualized settings have two critically important functions: firstly, they must provide a pattern for the ritual experience, in short, to create the state of virtuality. Secondly and equally important, they must guide the participants towards an integration of the ritual experience into the life that awaits after the ritual is concluded.

There are many possible ways to interpret and use what has been experienced in the really real of the virtual, in the stepping out of structure, into the anti-structure for a limited period of time. Studies of ritual show that these responses largely take three forms. The first type comprises responses aimed at changing the structures of a society. Such society-changing impulses may become revolutionary movements, or more commonly, they take the form of what the Manchester scholar Max Gluckman called rituals of rebellion, aimed at changing the State. The second type takes the form

of transition-rituals, or rites of passage; life-stage rituals aimed at changing not the State, but the status of the individual within society, for example from a child to an adult, exemplified by what used to be a function of the ceremony of confirmation in the Christian Church. Other examples are a single young individual becoming married, or from a member of society achieving the new status of a dead ancestor by dying. A general group of the rituals of rebellion are those that serve to “let off steam,” in which, for example, children are allowed to play the role of adults for one day and order their elders about, or where poor workers play at humiliating their leaders during a short festival. The work on riotous burlesque by John Brewer, an expert on British Eighteenth Century political history, writing on the ritual function of so-called mock elections, illustrates the close association between the theatrical and the political in the often characterized rituals of rebellion. While life-cycle rituals at some level serve to confirm society’s structure, the playing with societal roles in a carnival is potentially more threatening to the established order – that is, the play may turn serious, threaten to spill over and engulf the everyday. The various attempts at controlling and containing the Notting Hill carnival that has taken place in London since the early 1960s are a case in point. When the role reversers insist on remaining in the reversed roles, the playful becomes political, and the established order is threatened. The state controllers, police and legal apparatus, usually intervene at this point, and, unless the rituals of rebellion go on to become a large-scale state revolution, order is restored. The revolutionary aspect of large-scale public rituals is well known, and has been studied, among others by Corinne A. Kratz in Africa, and Joel C. Kuipers

in Indonesia. They describe situations, akin to the French Revolution, where collective mobilization occurs as a result of situational circumstances, where the ritual state incorporates societal structural problems, and aligns with them, thus gaining immense force for collective action. Where the power of such collective movements' runs, flows and finally ends, is dependent on the same structural conditions that allowed them to happen in the first place. There is no such thing, even if some Marxist theorists have thought otherwise, as a permanent revolution. Structure and anti-structure are dependent upon each other and society, as the State is always in need of renewing itself by reacting to external influences.

This leads to the third and ultimate kind of ritual. This is the ritual of the mystic, and as Michael Silverstein and others including myself have argued in the book *Ritual Communication*, this involves a stepping out of the common world of language and meaning into nature, as experienced without filters. By considering, for example, solitary spirit power quests common to indigenous North American spirituality, we learn of the adepts' need of aid from ritual experts for help with the

interpretation of the vision after the quest. This subsequent interpretation is in line with what Victor Turner describes as the third phase of ritual, the re-integration from the virtual state, into the confines of the ordinary, everyday life again. Interpretations of visions are commonly sought after the fact, and familiar figures and forces, animals and spirits, are tried on to see if they fit with what the individual saw in the visions. It is, as members of mystical traditions have claimed, difficult if not impossible to describe something for which there are no words, and in the efforts of describing what was seen in the virtual state, we need help.

An experience that transcends the everyday may also transcend ordinary expression – it is outside language and cognitive conceptions, as we normally employ them. It is then that we have to resort to calling upon the aid of ritual experts. From such experts we find what is offered by the interpretative technologies of art, as the dancer Isadora Duncan hinted when she stated that she danced a reality and communicated an experience that she could not express with words.



THE PSYCHOPATHOLOGY OF EVERYDAY RITUALS

CENTRE FOR WILD ANALYSIS

When Margaret Thatcher said that “there is no such thing as society”, she was of course right in an obvious and rather banal way: No such object as “society” exists in the same way as pencils or dogs or the moon exist. Similarly, there is no agent called the Will of the People, just like there is no entity that just happens to know what a large group of people really want and acts accordingly on their behalf. But just because society does not exist, it does not follow that the social does not exist either. On the contrary, it is precisely because there is no such thing as a unanimous societal body that the social exists as the constant articulation, as Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe would have called it, of discourses and patterns that regulate and reinforce social relations and social meaning. We would argue that rituals are a central factor in this articulation of the social. Rituals are a particular

kind of social glue. One could perhaps even claim that they are the social.

There is a certain kind of melancholia pertaining to a common form of conservatism, which consists of lamenting that no one really believes in anything any more. The churches are mostly empty, the youth is ignorant of its own culture and traditions, and thrives instead on video games and reality TV. Individualism is running rampant; respect for authorities is a thing of the past. This common litany is sometimes countered by a more optimistic or even avant-garde view that celebrates the freedom from old mores and routines, and encourages everyone to choose their own path in life without being bound by age old customs and superstitions. However, what unites both of these perspectives is the perception of a decline of social norms and rituals.

We would argue that there are just as many rituals now as there have ever been; the rumour of the death of society, authority and ritualistic behaviour in general has been greatly exaggerated. Our point is that rituals are not just the norms of consciously practised and taught social behaviour. Indeed we are more or less unconscious most of our rituals. They are social glue, habits, acts, ways of acting and regulating and they are everywhere in our lives. Rituals govern how we brush our teeth, eat breakfast, transport ourselves to school or work, buy groceries, talk to friends, watch TV, have sex, etc. Rituals are working, even when we are not aware of it. Thus the interesting question concerning rituals is not so much whether they are disappearing from our social lives, but rather how we relate to them. The allegedly disappearing rituals have a tendency to resurface for us in new and more or less conscious ways.

It is true that many rituals have lost their traditional meaning and, say, religious purport, but the curious thing is that we continue to believe in them, *even though we know this*. Even though we (enlightened Westerners that we are) consciously dismiss traditional rituals, arguing for example that marriage is an antiquated institution or that Christmas is mostly a capitalist spectacle, we nevertheless continue to participate in them.

Our argument here is that in order to achieve this, we form certain unconscious attachments (repressions, disavowals or foreclosures) to the rituals we consciously dismiss, and that this is what allows us to continue our ritualistic behaviour even as we publicly denounce it. When we say that the interesting point about rituals is the way we relate to them, rather than whether or not they exist, we want to encourage an investigation into

the unconscious desires that structure these forms of participation in want of conscious belief. Thus we believe that a schema for our contemporary ritualistic behaviour can be developed from the psychoanalytic division of the three fundamental structures, individuals might inhabit: perversion (disavowal), neurosis (repression), and psychosis (foreclosure).

We wish to stress that by employing these categories, we are not suggesting that “society is sick” or any such normative evaluation. Rather, it is the basic lesson of psychoanalysis that there is no such thing as normality without pathological traits. It does not mean that the majority of us are healthy, while a few unfortunate didn’t make it. On the contrary, as Freud said, the “normal” mind is structurally identical to the “pathological”; the structures are merely easier to see in the pathological mind, just like the structure of a crystal is revealed when it is shattered.

i. Neurosis

Probably the most common and least problematic relationship to rituals is the neurotic’s. The neurotic is someone who knows that rituals are not “natural”, and that they have no firm basis, but represses this knowledge and continues to uphold them in face of their secret meaninglessness. Take Christmas celebrations for example: Everyone knows that Christmas has turned into a massive, commercial event, and that the official, religious celebration of the birth of Christ plays scarcely any role in our thoughts and behaviour around that time of year at all. Many people go to church and sing Christmas carols, but do so with a sort of ironic detachment, their thoughts revolving mostly

around the celebrations, food preparations, the gifts to be bought and so on, rather than whether Jesus was actually born to a virgin, and the true meaning of Christmas.

A popular way of upholding this “belief” in Christmas is expecting others to believe in it. In church, the priest has come to take the role of the subject supposed to believe on our behalf, and at home, around the Christmas tree, children are politely playing the role of the subjects supposed to believe in the carols, in Santa Claus, and in the great enjoyment and peace that we get from the holidays in general. This is precisely what the Lacanian concept of the big Other entails: The Other functions, we uphold it and “objectively” believe in it, even though privately, if we were pressed for an answer, we would probably admit that most of the rituals are performed with a secret detachment.

In order to repress the meaninglessness of rituals, the neurotic needs the Other to want them and to believe in them. But the desire of the Other is a very delicate thing. You can never be completely sure of it, and at the same time, you would not want to get too close to it. If the Other fails to believe, the meaning of rituals threatens to evaporate, but if the Other believes *too much*, if he takes on a fundamentalist belief in dogmas, for instance, rituals suddenly become scary. (Imagine a fifteen-year-old, who still believes in Santa Claus). The neurotic is far more comfortable when desire fluctuates: he is on the hunt for the Thing, the clear confirmation of the desire of the Other, but he wants that desire to always remain at a distance.

Neurosis works really well with capitalism. Buying things, always reasserting or renegotiating one’s identity and behaviour, is the perfect fuel

for the circulation of commodities. Ironic rituals, hipster products, kitsch, nostalgic concerts, but also the obsessive quest for the right look, the right things to buy, etc., are all neurotic answers to the lack of the Other.

ii. Perversion

The pervert is less faltering. It is someone who rather disavows the lack in the Other, i.e. who has excluded the possibility of a flaw or a lack of meaning in the Other. The pervert’s reaction to the alleged diminishing of the value of rituals would thus often consist of an emphatic insistence upon those very rituals. The pervert’s disavowal very often takes the form of an unwavering insistence that he, the pervert, *really believes* in the ritual, and that rituals should be performed the way they have always been performed. Marriage must be held in a church, it must comprise all the right props and actors, and must be between a man and a woman (a perverse belief if there ever was one). A marriage is a marriage, a family is a family, and a man is a man (so he should cut down trees, drink beer and urinate standing up). The pervert is the one who insists on authenticity and identifies with the image of authenticity that has been passed down through parents, schools, traditions, etc.

But the pervert is also someone who rekindles a kind of magic in rituals. Even food can take on an almost religious dimension of authenticity that we must respect and revere. What is more perverted today than the return to certain forms of “authentic” diets like the Paleo Diet, say, eating like some imagined authentic human life form, food as it was “supposed to be”? We find the same tendency even in mainstream TV cooking programmes: is it not

remarkable that chefs on TV can praise their own work completely unashamedly? Where else do we see professionals exclaiming that “this is perfect”, “oh my God, that is real pasta”, etc.? (Imagine a postman delivering a letter with the comment: “Now this is how to do it!”) We need organic food, clean products, or at least nice, colourful pictures of grazing cows on our milk cartons.

The pervert submits himself fully to the Other. His disavowal is the rejection of any failure on the part of the Other. Hence his Other is no ordinary Other. The pervert is not satisfied with the sloppy way most people enact their rituals. Thus, although perversion is tied to a strict code and a notion of abiding by the rules, there is also an inherent element of transgression in perversion. If one is perversely attached to making coffee, then it is not enough to simply make good coffee like any ordinary fool does. The brand and production of the coffee have to be right, as do the coffee-maker and the grinder. And the ritual of making coffee must be elaborate and detailed beyond anything any “ordinary” person would be able to understand. In this way, the perverse ritual of making coffee could be said to cover up, or to disavow, the gaps left in our social fabric which more traditional rituals involving coffee might have filled: afternoon coffee with the family, coffee after church on Sundays.

It is interesting how a certain circularity of perversion can almost be identified by the rituals involving coffee today. If one kind of perversion can be found in the elaborate rituals of making very specific, ethical, aesthetic and expensive kinds of coffee, then another kind of perversion can perhaps be found in the proud dismissal of such elaborate schemes. “I only drink instant coffee, because I firmly believe that the whole business

of making coffee has gone too far.” A perverse transgression of perversion. All contained in one terrible cup of coffee.

iii. Psychosis

The psychotic is primarily someone who struggles to maintain distance. There is no irony in the psychotic, but neither is there an authentic level to reach for or get back to. Everything is of equal importance, so everything might be important, and consequently the psychotic might have seemingly “mad” rituals, say, performing rituals in the most detailed ways, including apparently senseless elements such as caressing every tree in a park or watching every news show again and again to find the secret message or pattern that they contain. To even function, the psychotic must develop a kind of *sinthome*, to use the Lacanian term, that is, some kind of replacement of a ritual or a structure that allows a minimal form of consistency in the world. For the psychotic, there is either no meaning at all, or much too much meaning all the time and everywhere.

The psychotic structure, however, also paves the way for a rather fundamental insight: Anything could be a ritual! Instead of insisting on performing the same rituals over and over, we could just as easily invent new ones. Surrealist art, for example, has played with this notion. In Luis Buñuel’s 1972 film *The Discreet Charm of the Bourgeoisie*, there is a famous scene where the guests at an otherwise completely normal, petty bourgeois party, are seated around a dinner table, politely conversing, while seated on lavatories and performing the functions related to this. Now and then one of them excuses him- or herself and leaves the table

for a separate room where they secretly and with some shame take out sandwiches, etc., and snack a little bit in private.

One should diagnose psychosis with care, but as a structure of thought it nonetheless open a theoretical perspective worth pursuing: the deconstruction and reassembling of rituals. Maybe some rituals prevent us from examining life or inventing new ideas or forms of action that could solve some of the problems we refuse to acknowledge in our private or even in our public life. Maybe we could even come up with certain political strategies or counter strategies on the basis of a more reflective relationship with rituals. We will call them total disidentification and overidentification, respectively.

Total disidentification

Disidentification could also be called the “punk strategy”, since it entails a rejection of everything inherited, of *Geworfenheit* as such, to put it in Heideggerian terms. Punk strategy implies that one doesn’t recognize any ritual, or even opposes any ritual, precisely because it is a ritual, i.e. because someone has installed it as “what one does”. Punks reject the received norms and customs in toto: “This country is not my country”, as the German punk band *Terrorgruppe* sang, followed by a rather straightforward explanation why: “I have never recognized it.”

In reality, it is of course one thing to declare your complete independence, and quite another to actually achieve it. You have to work your way out – or, indeed, fight your way out. The radical political impulse of David Fincher’s *Fight Club* was thus its tearing apart of the superficial logic of

the late capitalist society. Jack (played by Edward Norton) cannot sleep, and as his insomnia drives him away from society, he undergoes a kind of psychotic transformation that ends up in the invention of *Fight Club* and the political sequel to it – the “Project Mayhem”. *Fight Club* invents its own rituals, it is built around a completely formalized ritual in a basement, where the members of *Fight Club* simply beat each other up, and it has its own set of rules. The first rule of *Fight Club* is (the infamous): “You do not talk about *Fight Club*”, which underlines its principal separation from the outside world, but importantly the second rule of *Fight Club* is *also* “You do not talk about *Fight Club*.” Through repetition, the contingency of the rituals of *Fight Club* is thus simultaneously acknowledged and overcome: It is like this because we have decided it! *Fight Club* describes a kind of psychotic breakdown, but also a re-emergence of sense, ultimately illustrated in the silent and strangely meaningful contemplation of the collapse of buildings at the end of the movie.

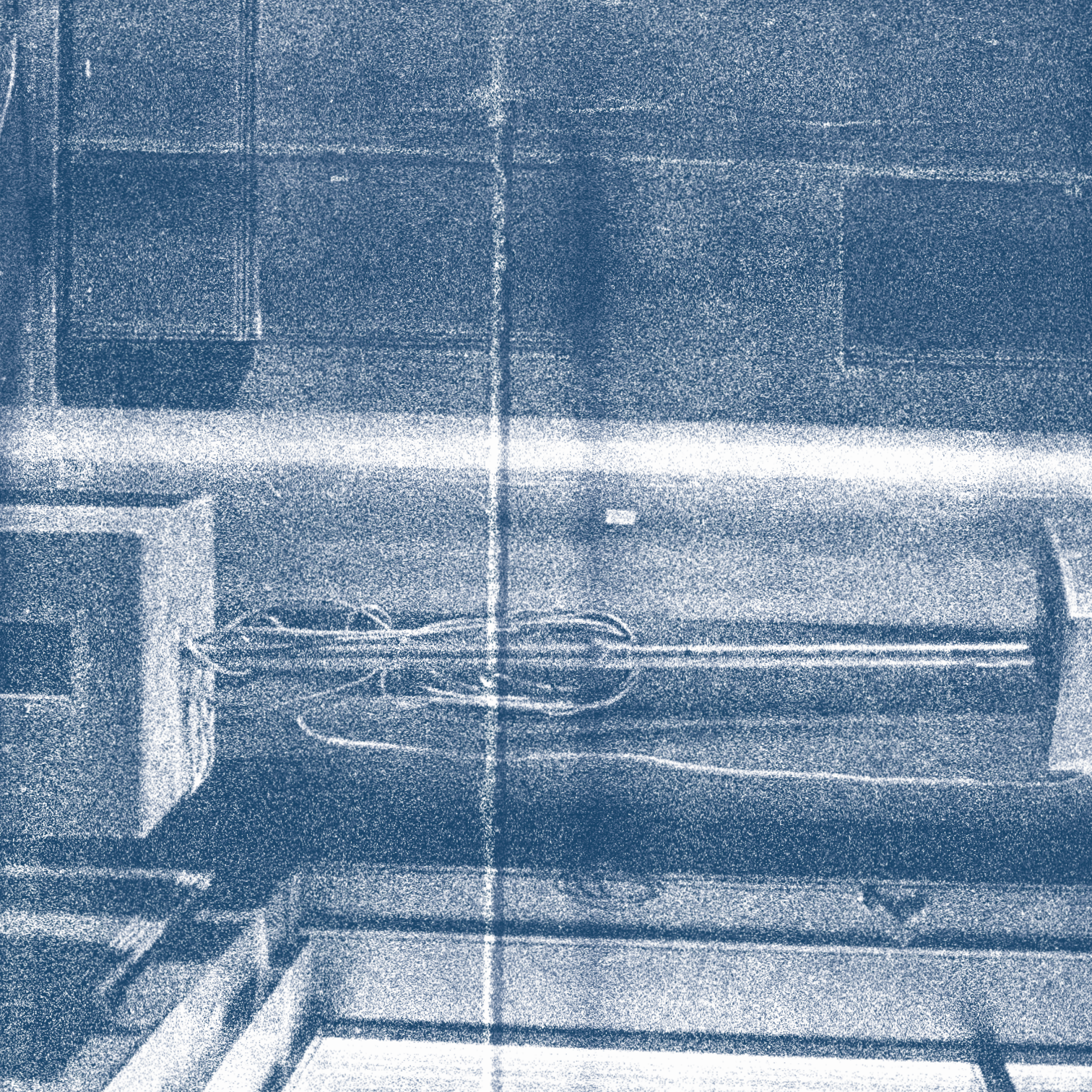
Another and less constructive alternative is the one that has been celebrated in the political writings of e.g. Giorgio Agamben, Gilles Deleuze and Slavoj Žižek in recent years. It is a model built on the character Mr Bartleby from Herman Melville’s short story *Bartleby, the Scrivener*. In it, Bartleby is a legal copyist, who one day suddenly begins to respond to any request or command with a simple: “I prefer not to.” At first, his refusal causes confusion and rather impractical situations, but ultimately it leads to the complete collapse of the company where he works. The Bartleby approach is one that demands extreme resilience and defiance, even more than *Fight Club*, because it not only disidentifies with the prevailing rituals, but also

suspends the invention of new ones. In Žižek's use of this example, *Bartleby* contains an important lesson because we tend to quickly produce alternative frames and forms of action that actually prevent us from truly changing anything at all (charity and the so called "philanthrocapitalism" in general is probably the best example of this). Instead, he argues, we must have enough patience and serenity to devote ourselves to serious, theoretical studies in order to be able to find genuinely new approaches.

Overidentification

Another strategy that might transpire from the "psychotic" realization of the complete contingency of rituals, is what we term "overidentification". Here, rituals are not rejected or even criticized, but rather taken even more literally than in the perverse forms of upholding them, and thus *forcing the Other* to acknowledge their contingency. Even in the most perverse forms of rituals, there is always some secret knowledge attached (this is precisely what is disavowed) of how to act, if things do not go as planned, or when it is permissible to make small transgressions, etc. Thus even a rather perverse identification with the official view contains a flip side where transgressions or private gratifications are acted out in tacit agreement with the Other

(think of homosexual rituals in the army, secret drinking among otherwise strongly religious groups, etc.). In overidentification, one simply takes the ritual all too seriously and insists on keeping to the letter of the law, thereby cancelling any valve for the release of excessive, libidinal drive. One does as the Other expects, but even more vehemently and meticulously than the Other itself. This strategy has been used by, for example, the Slovene rock band Laibach when they perform in Nazi uniforms, pledge allegiance to the Capitalist System, etc., but it is also seen in labour struggles, when workers "work to rule", as it is called, denying any interpretation of the letter of the law that transgresses what it literally prescribes. If all nurses in hospitals followed their instructions without any exceptions (concerning lifting, time spent with patients, coffee breaks, use of equipment, etc., etc.), the treatment of patients would probably collapse very quickly. In order for a ritual to work, it is necessary that its subjects maintain an open, interpretive relation to it and adjust and adapt in order to maintain it. This is partly why rituals are such strong social powers. And why sometimes, we have to discard them or reinvent them.



MAPS OF LOVE AND HATE

CECILIA SJÖHOLM

Every line...

...drawn on the global map reminds us not only of the colonial past of vast continents, but also of the fiction that defines nations. As migration becomes the new reality of modern life, one might think that such lines are being replaced by others: new lines indicating movement, spread and transition. As Bouchra Khalili has shown in her *The Mapping Journey Project* (shown at MoMa and Färgfabriken 2016), diagrams of borders can be replaced by lines indicating movement, so the global map becomes more interesting for the migration of people and less interesting for its definitions of States.

The modern nation state may appear as a dispassionate machine, anointing its citizens through formal application rather than heartfelt allegiance. However, in times of threat, real or

imagined, a passionate investment may erupt and deny that the dismantling of the nation state is hollow or allegorical. The threat may come from a foreign power, a union like the EU, or streams of migrants. Whatever the cause, a passionate investment in the nation may burst out. With the passionate investment of nationalism, a spiritual and territorial aspect of the nation state may emerge. Territorial claims may merge with ritual veneration of symbols, such as the flag.

The real force of the nation, then, lies not in the configuration of its borders, but in the mapping of the mind. Benedict Anderson's *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, which appeared in the early 80s, articulated the need to realize the status of the nation in order to counter blatant nationalism. It has been much quoted since. What has been less

apparent, however, is how the mapping of the imaginary nation corresponds with what Freud called “the drive”. Countries are never mere functions of distribution. People invest in them. They are objects of passionate love: they are “mine”, or “ours”. And the notional border signifies a clear distinction between “us” and “them.” “They” cannot have my country! The nation is a version of the Lacanian *objet petit a*: a symbol of the point from which drive and desire originate, an object of enjoyment that extends beyond the limits by which its own character has been set.

This means that any critique of national symbolism will appear to threaten the existence of the state itself. It also means that artists and intellectuals will be unable to criticize the idea of the nation state, in order not to come across as traitors.

Does this mean, then, that “safe” states where disputes of borders, population, ideology etc. have been resolved, will enjoy a higher level of sophistication when it comes to artistic and intellectual critique? Does it mean that the passionate investment leads to war and repression, whereas the artistic and intellectual critique of nationalism speaks in the name of peace and democracy? In other words: is the nationalist caught in the pangs of desires and drives, and the intellectual critic more distanced, more aloof, and more mature?

Many have tried...

...to articulate the relationship between a state and its citizens as one of nourishment and protection. Like Aristotle, Hegel thought that there was something in human nature which revealed itself

in the community: an organic coherence formed between the symbols of the community and the characteristics of the individual.

The idea of such organic coherence has been described in terms of love. Julia Kristeva, in her cosmopolitan ethics, has argued for an objective understanding of the fiction of the nation. The nation, like the teddy bear, is a transitional object. Just as the teddy bear paves the way for full and loving relationships for the child, the nation prepares its citizens for encounters with the outside world by offering safety and reassurance. But just like the teddy bear must be surrendered, so must the nation. The nourishing of the nation must have as its goal an acceptance of identities as split and faulty. The nation should be a positive image of identification only to be traversed in the same way that a loving mother must be released as an object of desire. The nation offers its citizens the reassurance of belonging for the benefit of cosmopolitanism. The nation is a transitional space, as transitive as it is transitory. As a transitional object of identification, the nation is to be likened to Montesquieu’s *esprit général*, offering a historical identity which can serve as the foundation for wider and more generous processes of identification. Such an *esprit général* would counteract the regressive drives of nationalism, without effacing the value of options for identification. A wider opportunity for identification offers an embrace and inclusive welcome.

Axel Honneth has also referenced psychoanalysis in order to throw light on the relationship between the citizen and the state. His model of a modern welfare state embodies the ideals of modern family politics. For Honneth, recognition can only be won in stages. Firstly, we

need recognition in the intimate sphere, through what Winnicott calls the “good enough mother” satisfying our need for love, food, intimacy and so forth. Love then serves as an introduction to the normative order as constituted by positive values: justice, rights, etc. In other words: in order to become good citizens, we must first satisfy our primary need for love. And this is precisely the symbolic function that a good state must fill. The law, which recognizes its citizens by granting them rights, continues the work of the “good enough mother.” Awareness of rights develops through the awareness of the self, and self-esteem can only be created through loving relationships. The individual identifies with the values of the law: justice, rights, etc., and love serves as an introduction to the normative order as constituted by values such as equality, freedom, justice, the right to have rights, etc.

Ever since the Enlightenment, progressive European intellectuals have been raised in a spirit of cosmopolitanism. The contemporary heirs of Montesquieu are numerous. They shun political nationalism as an exaggerated love for the homeland, a perverted form of fixation to which only extreme groups on the right are truly dedicated.

But love is rarely isolated

...from its counterpart, hatred. Love relationships are dependent relationships, and are therefore exposed to abuse and transgression. Love of the nation may easily lead to hatred of the “they”: “they” are stealing my homeland, “they” are stealing my enjoyment.

What is less commented upon, however,

is hatred of one’s own homeland. Overall, the powerful effect of a negative investment in one’s own homeland is an underestimated force in the life of intellectuals. There is a fine tradition of hating one’s country to be found in the life of artists and writers. The hatred of one’s nation may be as powerful as love, and as confused about its motives and origins. The nation is an object of identification releasing an array of desires and drives. Never a neutral concept, the relationship to the nation state is based on the strength of the “drive”. This “drive” has forced writers, artists and intellectuals into excessively rejective modes of writing, rationalized as social criticism, ever since the beginning of 20th century: Friedrich Nietzsche, August Strindberg and Knut Hamsun are examples of such excessive rejection, as are Ferdinand Céline and Ezra Pound. Nietzsche despised the inability of his fellow countrymen to rise above the banal discourses that defined them. Martin Heidegger did the same in his definition of *das Man*, dreaming of the rise of works of art that would truly capture the elements of Germanic being. Strindberg and Hamsun both hated the social environment of their contemporaries, blaming it on an ingrained provincialism. Céline represents a position where an exaggerated hatred of the nation is reversible in relation to an exaggerated love, as embodied in the dream of a strong, potent nation. Hatred and love of the nation are reversible afflictions resulting in similar symptoms: exaggerated affections and deluded beliefs about the role that the nation can play in the core of one’s very being.

Hating my country...

...is the only one thing that makes me get up

and sit down by my writer's desk in the morning, the late Austrian writer Thomas Bernhard said. His colleague, Elfriede Jelinek, has continued to slaughter Austria's "culture of death" in novel after novel, play after play. Numerous writers and artists, whether exiled or not, will testify to a highly ambivalent relation to their home country: Chimamanda Ngozi Adiche, Salman Rushdie, Duong Thu Huong, Hertha Müller, Vladimir Sorokin...

Indeed, investment in one's home country will always be motivated not only by a sense of belonging, but also by unconscious motivations of desires and drives. The extent to which the nation state may be a part of the unconscious formations of fantasy and desire, however, is rarely mentioned by intellectuals and artists who may well be feeding off such interactions in their work. While intellectuals may appear to have seen through the fiction of the nation state, they are still not immune to its presence as the *objet petit a* in their outlook.

It is understandable that cosmopolitanism may appear as a solution, offering an alternative to nationalist identification. The problem is, however, that cosmopolitanism may too easily do away with the emotional conditioning of our identity. Our thrownness, as termed by Heidegger, in whatever context — nation, state, people — will always define us. It will define us at an imaginary level, and at an emotional level, in ways that not all of us are aware of.

The idea of the nation as founded upon an organic coherence of community — mother-child, teddy bear-nation — must give way to the realization of radical contingency at the root of every form of identification. A national identity — whether based on hatred or love — is always strange, foreign and excessive. Cosmopolitanism, therefore, is useless as a remedy against nationalism because it fails to acknowledge the drives inherent in the *objet petit a* which the nation represents. We do not necessarily love our countries. We may even hate them. In what way will they serve as a transitional object then? The nation will continue to haunt us because it is part of our thrownness. And if cosmopolitanism has failed to create a worldwide movement of solidarity, to undo the investment in national identity and nationalism, it may well be because nationalism has not yet been fully understood as a community, not only of the imaginary, but also of the "drive". Nations are mapping our minds, but also our bodies, in ways that are not always conscious to us. For that reason, hating one's country may well be a way of bringing to the fore what used to be hidden in the night of self-deceit.

(This text is a reworking of Sjöholm's "Hating your country" first printed in Cabinet Magazine, Issue 18, Fictional States, Summer 2005)



AWAY WITH THE GATEKEEPERS!

KENAN MALIK

My latest column for *Al Jazeera English* was on the controversies over “cultural appropriation” and what they reveal about the degradation of contemporary campaigns for social justice. It was published in AJE under the headline “The bane of cultural appropriation” (14th of April 2016).

Another week, another controversy about “cultural appropriation”. The latest has been the furore over Justin Bieber’s dreadlocks. The Bieber furore followed similar controversies over Beyoncé’s Bollywood outfit, Kylie Jenner’s cornrows, Canadians practicing yoga, English students wearing sombreros and American students donning Native American Halloween costumes.

Many of these controversies may seem as laughable as Bieber’s locks. What they reveal, however, is how degraded have become

contemporary campaigns for social justice.

Cultural appropriation is, in the words of Susan Scafidi, professor of law at Fordham University, and Law author of *Who Owns Culture? Appropriation and Authenticity in American Law*, “Taking intellectual property, traditional knowledge, cultural expressions, or artefacts from someone else’s culture without permission”. It can include the “unauthorized use of another culture’s dance, dress, music, language, folklore, cuisine, traditional medicine, religious symbols, etc.”

But what is it for knowledge or an object to “belong” to a culture? And who gives permission for someone from another culture to use such knowledge or forms?

The idea that the world could be divided into distinct cultures, and that every culture belonged to a particular people, has its roots in late Eighteenth

century Europe. The Romantic movement, which developed in part in opposition to the rationalism of the Enlightenment, celebrated cultural differences and insisted on the importance of “authentic” ways of being. For Johann Gottfried Herder, the German philosopher who best articulated the Romantic notion of culture, what made each people – or Volk – unique was its particular language, history and modes of living. The unique nature of each Volk was expressed through its *Volksgeist* – the unchanging spirit of a people refined through history.

Herder was no reactionary – he was an important champion of equality – but his ideas about culture were adopted by reactionary thinkers. Those ideas became central to racial thinking – the notion of the *Volksgeist* was transformed into the concept of racial make-up – and fuelled the belief that non-Western societies were “backward” because of their “backward” cultures.

Radicals challenging racism and colonialism rejected the Romantic view of culture, adopting instead a universalist perspective. From the struggle against slavery to the anti-colonial movements, the aim was not to protect one’s own special culture, but to create a more universal culture in which all could participate on equal terms.

In recent decades, however, the universalist viewpoint has been eroded, largely as many of the social movements that embodied that viewpoint have disintegrated. The social space vacated by that disintegration has become filled by identity politics. As the broader struggles for social transformation have faded, people have tended to retreat into their particular faiths or cultures, and to embrace more parochial forms of identity. In this process, the old cultural arguments of the racists have returned, but

now rebranded as “antiracist”.

But how does creating gated cultures and preventing others from trespassing upon one’s culture without permission, challenge racism or promote social justice? Campaigners against cultural appropriation argue that when “privileged” cultures adopt the styles of “less privileged” ones, they help create stereotypes of what such cultures are like, and assert racial power. “By dressing up as a fake Indian”, one Native American activist told white students, “you are asserting your power over us, and continuing to oppress us.” The trouble is, in making the case against cultural appropriation, campaigners equally perpetuate stereotypes. After all, to suggest that it is “authentic” for blacks to wear locks, or for Native Americans to wear a headdress, but not for whites to do so, is itself to stereotype those cultures.

Cultures do not, and cannot, work through notions of “ownership”. The history of culture is the history of cultural appropriation – of cultures borrowing, stealing, changing, transforming.

Nor does preventing whites from wearing locks or practicing yoga challenge racism in any meaningful way. What the campaigns against cultural appropriation reveal is the disintegration of the meaning of “anti-racism”. Once it meant to struggle for equal treatment for all. Now it means defining the correct etiquette for a plural society. The campaign against cultural appropriation is about policing manners rather than transforming society.

This takes us to the second question: who does the policing? Who gives permission to people of other cultures to use particular cultural forms? Who act as the gatekeepers to gated cultures?

Most black people could probably not care less

what Justin Bieber does to his hair. Inevitably, the gatekeepers are those who are outraged by Bieber's locks. The very fact of being outraged makes one the arbiter of what is outrageous. The gatekeepers, in other words, define themselves, because they are the ones who want to erect the gates.

The debates around Justin Bieber's hair or Beyonce's Bollywood outfit are relatively trivial. But, in other contexts, the creation of gatekeepers has proved highly problematic. In many European nations, minority groups have come to be seen as distinct communities, each with their own interests, needs and desires, and each with certain so-called "community leaders" acting as their representatives. Such leaders are frequently religious, often conservative, and rarely representative of their communities. But they wield great power as mediators between their communities and wider society. In effect, they act as gatekeepers to those communities.

Their role as gatekeepers is particularly problematic when it comes to policing not fashion

styles or cuisine but ideas. Community leaders often help define what is acceptable to say about particular communities, and what is "offensive". And notions of "offence" are often used to police not just what outsiders may say about a particular community, but to shut down debate *within* those communities – think of the fatwa against Salman Rushdie or the shutting down by Sikh activists of Sikh playwright Gurpreet Kaur Bhatti's play *Behzti*, which explored the role of women within Sikh communities.

The campaign against cultural appropriation is, in other words, part of the broader attempt to police communities and cultures. Those who most suffer from such policing are minority communities themselves, and in particular progressive voices within those communities. The real fight against injustice begins with ridding ourselves of our self-appointed gatekeepers.



IN SEARCH OF A RITUAL STATE

JON REFSDAL MOE

The connection between theatre and ritual is very complicated. Or perhaps it is not so very complicated; art is usually quite simple, delving back and forth into perceptions, attempts and strategies, new or old. It is only when trying to describe it that this complexity appears. And in that respect I have no choice: Complexity is my craft and my profession. Could I have *written* this essay using a language of pure sensation and sonority? Could I have attempted to create new perceptions and effects? Could I have turned the writing of an essay into a ritual process? Or is ritual the production of fundamental unity, the opposite of writing, whereas writing is the production of fundamental difference?

Could it be that much of the controversy and complication surrounding theatre and ritual in the 20th and early 21st centuries is purely written,

and as such should be viewed as excess material from their own conditions of production? Do the insurmountable differences between ritual and theatre exist solely because they are produced in a medium that simply has no choice but to produce them?

One of the many beginnings to this account takes place in august 1931, when Antonin Artaud went to see Balinese theatre at the Colonial Exposition in Paris. The performance was a revelation to Artaud, leading him to reject the idea and grammar of theatre as he knew it. In the essay “Oriental and Occidental theatre” published in his immensely influential collection *Le théâtre et son Double* from 1936 (English edition 1958), Artaud writes:

The Balinese theatre has revealed to us a physical

and non-verbal idea of theatre, in which the theatre is contained within the limits of everything that can happen on a stage, independently of the written text, whereas the theatre as we conceive it in the Occident has declared its alliance with the text and finds itself limited by it. (Artaud 1958:68).

Much has been written on Artaud's failure to understand Balinese theatre because he, as a European, lacked the conceptual apparatus to decode its various symbols. More has also been written about the inherent colonialism of his attempts to appropriate Balinese culture. But what is Artaud really after? Looking more closely at his essay, it seems that Balinese theatre was not so much a revelation to Artaud, as it was a catalyst. Consider the French original for the text quoted above: "*La révélation du Théâtre Balinais a été de nous fournir du théâtre une idée physique et non-verbale(...)*" (Artaud 2004: 545) As opposed to what may be suggested by the 1958 translation – the translation most used by English language scholars and artists commenting on his work – Artaud does not state that the Balinese theatre has revealed itself to him. The Balinese theatre was a revelation, because it provided him [fournir] with a physical and non-verbal idea of drama. The point lost in translation is that Artaud's modernist idea of theatre, beginning with space and bodies rather than with a pre-conceived text to be expressed, was not revealed to him by the Balinese theatre, but induced in him after seeing the Balinese theatre. It is a detailed point, but it is of crucial importance. And it explains why theatre historian Nicola Savarese can conclude that:

Artaud was not in fact interested in Balinese culture; he

used the Balinese performance because its extraneousness to his own culture made it possible for him to delineate a difference (Savarese 2001:71).

The American scholar Susan Sontag makes a similar point in "Approaching Artaud" (1980), which also serves as the introduction to her seminal collection of Artaud's writings.

But to the criticism that the quest for "another form of civilization' refuses to submit to the disillusionment of accurate historical knowledge, one can make an answer. It never sought such knowledge. The other civilizations are being used as models and are available as stimulants precisely because they are not accessible." (Sontag 1980:45). Why are Sontag's and Savarese's points so crucial in this context? It is because they open up a different perspective not only on Artaud's own work, but on any artistic endeavour that puts ritual practices at the base of its aesthetics. Perhaps it is not unity that is sought but contradiction. Perhaps modernist theatre's involvement with ritual does not seek confirmation in another culture, but rather to draw a distinction, a delineation of the difference between that other culture and one's own.

According to the theatre scholar Erika Fischer-Lichte, Artaud's use of ritual strategies means the complete opposite of that. Rather than making a distinction, she sees Artaud's project as a levelling down of drama and culture to a primal pre-linguistic identity:

To overcome the crisis of logocentrism, rationalism and individualism in the West, Artaud proposed to re-theatricalise theatre. In taking theatre back to its pre-logic, pre-rational, pre-individualistic origins, the theatre will be transformed into a magical ritual which will

initiate a process of healing in the spectator.
(Fischer Lichte 2002:295)

Martin Puchner, Professor of Literature and Theatre at Harvard University, makes a similar argument in his 2002 essay “The Theater in Modernist Thought”. According to him, Artaud’s use of ritual strategies should be read as part of his attempt to create theatre as a space in which no representation occurs – where meaning emanates as pure presence:

No matter how far Artaud ventured—from the rituals of the Tahahumeras (sic) to Balinese theatre, from the Marx Brothers to the Plague—nothing resembling his idea of a theatre without representation was found. Nor was Artaud ever able to institute such a theatre himself. (Puchner 2002:527)

Why this obsession with a primal unity and a non-representational state in the scholarly discourse surrounding ritual artistic practices? Many artists have indeed spoken in such terms, not least Artaud himself, whose writings sparked some of the most important philosophical discourses on this subject in the 20th century. But could it also be that we as scholars obsess over this unity simply because it is not accessible to the medium in which we operate? And is it the reason that we constantly circle around it, because it is the *duplication* of our own discourse, an idea that we will never be able to access, but which we still, and precisely for that reason, just cannot let go? Are we obsessed with primal unities simply because we, whatever we do, produce only differences? Can such a unity be produced in any other medium than writing, and in any other state except as an absence?

I do not remember where, but the theatre director Eugenio Barba wrote: *Theatre can never be a space for the ritual of the people. But it can be a space for the people of the ritual.*

Artaud travelled to Mexico in 1936. After spending time among the intellectual élite of Mexico City, he travelled north to seek out the Tarahumara people who lived in a remote part of the Sierra Madre. We do not know what he experienced there, if he ever took part in their peyote-induced rituals or if he merely observed them. But it is easy to relate to the fatigue and doubt he shows, after he had waited a month in the mountains for the ritual to begin:

For having come so far, to find myself finally at the threshold of an encounter and of this place I had hoped so many revelations from, and then to feel so forlorn, so empty, so un-crowned. (...) And all this, for what? For a dance, for a ritual of some lost Indians who didn't even know who they were anymore, nor where they came from, and who, when I questioned them, answered me with stories whose mystery and coherence they had garbled. (Artaud 1965:73)

Artaud here echoes Proust, who in volume 2 of *In Remembrance of Things Past* describes how as a child he failed to revel in any experience that he did not already know from art or literature. He could be struck by the beauty of a painting or building, only if he had already read about it or seen it reproduced. If there was nothing to correspond to his pre-conceived ideas, what was there to appreciate at all? How can I respond to a form that is completely alien to me, of which I have no previous understanding? And how does Artaud respond to this acknowledgement – that he

does not understand what he has travelled across the globe to see? He does what any sensible person would do in such a context. He begins to dream. He creates his own poetic work out of the bits and pieces he is offered.

Nevertheless, as night drew on, a vision possessed my eyes. I had before me the nativity of Hieronymus Bosch, arranged in order and turned so the old uneven clapboard roof was sloping down in front of the stable, with the flames of the Child-King gleaming on the left among the animals, with the scattered farms, the shepherds; and, in the foreground, other animals bleating; and on the right, the dancer-kings. The kings, with their mirror-crowns on their heads and their rectangular purple robes on their backs – to my right in the picture, like the Magi of Hieronymus Bosch.

(Artaud 1965: 76)

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STATES OF TRANSINDIVIDUALITY

BOJANA CVEJIĆ

I was commissioned by Ingri Midgard Fiksdal to write this article, but I regard it as an opportunity to discuss collectivity in the light of individuation and transindividuality. Fifteen years ago we had different concerns: collectivity and collaboration represented political modes of being and acting, which radically broke away from individualism, be it single authorship in the arts or indeed any talk of individuality. Our discourse – ranging from philosophy to political theory to performance poetics – was enamoured with the illusion that we finally made the transition into a more progressive social organization of our work and our lives (do you remember the much venerated notions of “multitude” and “desiring production” that promised to replace “nations,” “the people” and the Marxist critique of “alienation”?). In the vocabulary of those frantic discussions, there was no room

for, nor interest in, comparing the collective with the individual. We – and I proudly admit here a sense of belonging to a collective undertaking of a discourse – thought that bourgeois individualism had already been sufficiently contested and overcome in the 1980s.¹ That explains why today it is hard to admit the reverse: collectivism is no longer an issue in an age where individualism is the reigning ideology. I am describing a new, neoliberal brand of individualism: refashioned according to an aesthetic ideal of Western art where the artist delivers advanced techniques and a model-performance of the self....² Could it be that the practice of collectivity has now been abandoned or is more repressed than ever? Or rather is it the case that its terms and conditions have changed so much that its operation no longer fits the ideologically narrow meaning of “collective”? Are

we in need of a new concept, or even a new, non-judgmental word?

*

In the legendary performance of Living Theatre's *Paradise Now*, the performance ritual is described as follows:

*He allows himself to be possessed by whatever forces are available to him. The community helps him to take his trip. They watch him intently, but don't hinder him. The community becomes involved in the essence of his trip. They follow his changes. They do not seek to soothe him, nor to bring him back from where he is, but urge him to go further in the direction in which he is going. In this way they support him, and by the support of sharing his changes, they give him the courage to take the trip into the unknown.*³

Living Theatre proposed a spiral voyage of social, political, cultural revolutions in rites of actions – displayed diagrammatically as a chart of rungs superimposed on the human body from the feet to the head and linked by colours, archetypes and dramaturgical situations (see image 1) – whereby the group merged with the audience in order to reach the transcendent state of permanent innovation, the climax of which was to be – funny how things change – the landing on Mars. “The essential trip is the voyage from the many to the one,” the underscored title reads. “When we feel, we feel things emerge: when we feel things emerge, we will act: when we act, we will change the world,” according to Julian Beck, the founder of Living Theatre. *Paradise Now* and similar stage productions from 1968, made the social choreography of their

time explicit: “we” here stands for unity reached by eliminating differences, the dissolution of the many into the Universal One. Belonging is total, fusing life and art, non-work and work. Its ideology is top-down, exalting the political leader of the State (as in the Eastern dictatorships) or bowing to an alternative guru (in the West, for instance, the Zen-Buddhist master or a charismatic theatre director like Beck). The stability of the pattern is found at the opposite poles of two images: a mass display (a communist parade on the stadium) or an orgy (performed on stage in order to transcend everyday normality). The choice between the totalitarian or the New Age depends on the degree of the State's liberality...

The closure of such patterns of collectivity, often invoking uniformity, was renounced thirty years later, in the late 1990s. “We” knew better. So we rescued the happiness of being many from being one. We formed “rhizomes” and “bodies without organs,” and honoured a process in lieu of a product. Our liberty was nominalist and pragmatic, the result of a social-democratic contract: inventing a collaborative framework, a generic procedure, a critical dispositif was enough to assure multiplicity to “take-place” in plurality. As Jean-Luc Nancy wrote, the extension of being-singular-plural changed the law of touching. The contact was no longer fusion, but separation where heterogeneous surfaces touch each other. This was the state of collectivity in the 2000s.⁴ In retrospect, the disposition of such collectivity (aka multiplicity) led to a dispersal of positions, a fragmentation of subjects in a society, which the more it connected and related, the more that relation appeared as isolation.⁵ Refusing ideological commitment, a realistic stance to begin with, closed the circle to

THE LIVING THEATRE

ESSENTIAL TRIP IS THE VOYAGE FROM THE MANY TO THE ONE

THE PLOT IS THE REVOLUTION

COLLECTIVE CREATION

Julian Beck and Judith Malina, *Paradise Now*.
Collective Creation of *The Living Theatre*
(New York: Random House, 1971)

complete an ideologically voided idea of abstract individual. Where are we to look next?

There is, however, a case to be made for another understanding of collectivity. To begin with, we are not condemned to the binary opposition between the individual and society, to a choice between individualism and holism (organicism). In fact, they constitute component parts, or rather dimensions of a systematic unity. Gilbert Simondon refers to it as a psychic and collective individuation. The merit of this forgotten and recently revived French philosopher, and his magnum opus, the two-fold doctoral thesis, *Individuation in the Light of Notions of Form and Information*⁶ is to have posited individuation as a process in which the individual is no longer central, but only a phase, a relative state of being. Individuation qua process rather than a principle reconstructed backwards from the constituted individual, presupposes another ontology that parts with substance, form and matter. In a gesture of returning to the pre-Socratic ground of *physis*, being precedes the individual. If being is given prior to the individual, it acts as the pre-individual source, supersaturated with potentials: a “veritable reality charged with potentials actually existing as potentials, that is, as energy of a metastable system.”⁷ Every living and non-living entity, in Simondon’s view, is charged with an indeterminate nature (or *apeiron*, another Ionian term for the infinite and boundless nature), a reserve of power of mutation. The potentials are in a metastable equilibrium – an image borrowed from thermodynamics – where the modification of one parameter is enough to break its equilibrium.

Individuation is not understood as passing from one identity to other, but as a polyphasic mutation, or becoming, where different potentials, or simultaneous phases, are in tension. Tensions arise between incompatible elements, which define being as *problematic*, to be (temporarily) *resolved* through individuation in a passage from one (metastable) state to another.

Once the focus of individuation shifts from crystals and plants – the happy examples of Simondon’s naturalist paradigm of ontogenesis – to animals and humans as social beings, individuation becomes psychic and collective. The psychic defines a relation that is interior to the individual, and is described as the affective life in which the individual relates to something it brings with it, but feels exterior to. This something is the pre-individual nature (*apeiron*, again), or a biological, social and historical share of existence that any individual carries with it. Apart from affectivity, perception also poses a problem for the individual: an act that takes place within the conjunction between the subject and world. Perception implies that the subject invents a form that will restructure both itself and its object. Thus the individual can never coincide with itself, as its being is always more-than-self-identity.⁸ In Simondon’s words: “psyche is made of successive individuations allowing for the being to resolve problematic states corresponding to the permanent putting into communication of what is larger than it with what is smaller than it.”⁹

But the individual cannot resolve its affects and perceptions alone. This is where the collective kicks in – the environment in which the individual seeks to extend itself, translate perceptions into actions and affects into emotions. The collective is the environment that the individual participates

in and co-creates, in which perception and self-affection can be reconciled, the tension between the two incompatible subjective problematics resolved, and, as Muriel Combes concludes, the subject can bring together the two sides of its psychic activity and to some degree coincide with itself.¹⁰ The collective is the relationship exterior to the individual, and with the psychic, it constitutes the transindividual as a relation of relations. “The transindividual is defined by everything that surpasses the individual while it prolongs it.”¹¹ There is no relation that transindividuality draws from the psychic and the collective, as two distinct terms, which could be a quality (for example, sociality predicated of being). Neither is there a passage from psychic to collective, which we could readily imagine as the individual joining a community, a group based on an identitarian difference. In that sense, transindividuality is not the same as interindividuality, or the intersubjective relations, based on functions, exchange, interest, roles etc., in which “I” acquires a sense of “me” from negotiating its sense of self through the perspective of others. Quite the contrary, transindividuality happens in the situation in which the individual suspends the function of its (interindividual) relations to the others, or, in other words, disindividualizes itself by questioning itself, by forcing itself to become aware of what is more-than-individual within it. That is when it actualizes the excess of pre-individual nature, which endows it, with the capacity to go beyond itself, and tests what it can do insofar as it is not alone.

Transindividuality solves the old problems of

collectivity, while it poses new challenges. Firstly, it eliminates the problem of individuals becoming collective, since the psychic and the collective are in a reciprocal exchange of information and causality, constituting a dynamic unity that also individuates itself. This means that not only am I, as a psychic individual, individuated anew in the transindividual collective, thus becoming a “group individual,” but so is the collective individuated with my own individuation in turn. In reality, there are no two processes, but only one individuation viewed from two different perspectives (the psychic and the collective), interconnected and interdependent. But here is the challenge of this concept: if the collective is latent in every subject, a disposition toward transindividuality that we all share as individuals – in other words, if it is true, why is it not what actually happens? Why do we systematically counteract transindividuality in a praxis of individualization, taking the individual as the ultimate value and measure of action, knowledge, emotion, success? Or, to formulate this question from a more affirmative perspective, what would it mean, and take, to ontologically and politically reconstitute being as transindividual? To answer this question, Simondon’s naturalist ontogenesis must be complemented with a more politically determined thought on transindividuality, invoking the notion of the common.

In 1996, Jean-Luc Nancy wrote: “The collapse of communism was met with a liberal response that involved nothing more than an eager repression of the very question of being-in-common (which so-called real communism repressed under a common Being).”¹² We cynically acknowledged then that under neoliberalism we enjoyed a “being-together,” if you like, but what we have in common

is commerce and communication. Yet putting the transindividual into praxis through the necessary cooperation at work and in the marketplace is only made possible by something more basic which we all share. The pre-individual is that foundation of language, sensibility, affectibility, habits, and history passed through the mechanisms that we inherit. Thus the content of the common is materialized.

In their definitions of transindividuality, Paolo Virno and Etienne Balibar both return to Spinoza's *Ethics*, perhaps because Spinoza's relational ontology is intertwined with his practical philosophy involving an ethical and political conception of community.¹³ It opens with a non-essentialist definition of the human, and is associated with striving (conatus) and desire. Spinoza defines the individual by its striving to persevere in its being, to preserve a certain relationship among a myriad of transformations it undergoes during its life (E3P9).¹⁴ "Appetite" is the term used to describe the striving related to the mind and the body together, with desire as "appetite and the consciousness of the appetite" (E3P9Schol). If "desire is the very nature or essence of every single individual (E3P57D)", and the individual's essence is "conceived to be determined, from any given affection of it, to do something" (E3Aff.D1), then "the desire of each individual differs from the desire of another inasmuch as the nature, or essence, of the one differs from the essence of the other" (E3P57Dem). This immediately complicates the quest for something shared. The same thing, the same object, idea or person, is often the cause of both joy *and* sadness, hope *and* fear,¹⁵ and, in this scenario, individuals seem condemned to a struggle for what often appear to be their mutually exclusive interests. If a shared territory is constantly

divided between agreement and conflict, how can common ground enhance rather than exploit or exhaust the power of the transindividual?

The encounter of two bodies creates affects and images of the causes of affections on the basis of which collective individuation can begin. To cause (or effect) something or someone is to modulate or modify the way that something or someone operates. This process is complex, as Balibar explains, because it cannot be viewed as an independent linear series (A "causes" B which "causes" C which etc.). Rather it is an infinite network with a "dynamic unity of modulating/modulated activities (the action of B upon any A is itself modulated by some Cs, which themselves are modulated by some Ds, etc.)."¹⁶ The second level of complexity involves a deeper understanding of shared experiences, a process in which individuals integrate and incorporate each other. Balibar writes:

Spinoza's idea is simple, but daring: what is exchanged are parts of the individuals under consideration, that is, "regeneration" means that a given individual (let's call it "I") continuously abandons some part(s) of itself, while at the same time continuously incorporating some part(s) of others (let's call them "they"), provided this substitution leaves a certain "proportion" (or essence) invariant.¹⁷

The more relationships an individual has, the more intensive its exchange of "parts" with other similar or dissimilar individuals will be, and consequently the more it will need these exchanges to preserve its own existence; but also the more its own preservation will depend on, and possibly be threatened by, the strength of others. Complexity begets strength and fragility alike. To affirm the

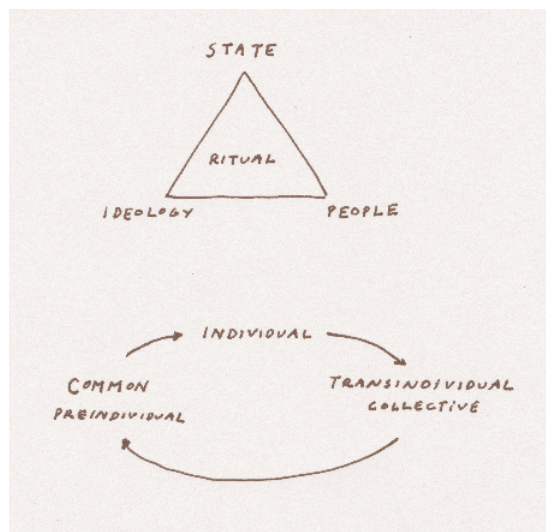
positive side of an increase in the power to act, Spinoza introduces reason, which will transform inadequate (we could also say “subjective” instead of inadequate) ideas of affects and imagination into “common notions,” with which everyone will agree. Common notions are born out of practice, by endorsing those encounters that strengthen individuals. Reversing the Hobbesian materialist instrumentalism (*homo homini lupus est*), Spinoza asserts that nothing is more useful for a man than another man (*homini nihil homine utilius*), not even himself (E4P26 and 27). This reason is utilitarian, as it recommends reciprocal utility, as well as reciprocal use of each other’s forces. To understand this, we could think of solidarity as a common notion. Sharing in and out of a common need is based on the appreciation that my own usefulness to others implies their usefulness to me. Such thinking is often inspired by circumstances of immiseration: we are ready to use and be used by each other when we perceive a need for it. Not only will our individual needs be satisfied, but our powers will also be augmented.

What renders transindividuality irreducible rather than a commendable supplement, is the understanding that the common notion is greater than the common *good* or common utility we recognize. The common notion is the source of infinite *singularities*. Why should we prefer singularity to individuality when we speak of individuation? This is not a rhetorical question or a fetishism of small differences between philosophical terms. Individuality is associated with identity and, as Virno explains, identity is reflexive (A is A) and solipsistic (A is unrelated to B).¹⁸ By contrast, singularity immediately involves relationships with other things, as it emerges from

the preliminary sharing of a pre-individual nature: “X and Y are individuated individuals only because they display what they have in common *differently*” (my emphasis).¹⁹ Being singular, being “as-such”, *quodlibet ens*, is not being exemplary, a particular instance of the general, or the Common mistaken for the Universal; it does not amount to a specific quality that being is predicated upon. The singular is paradoxically more *and* less than the common: at once additional because it adds something positive, rather than distinctive (derived from comparison with another structural element) and defective, because it doesn’t actualize many-in-one.

Individuation generates singularities that are transindividual. Singularities are modes in which common nature actualizes itself *ad infinitum*. To conclude this is enough to place collectivity on another footing. If we look back at the rituals of mass dancing, we see people bound to the state by ideology. Or people bound to their bodies by some spiritual teaching about human essence. Their unity represents a transcendent meaning – a statement about nationhood, the lessons of revolution, or what it means to be superhuman (see image 2). But when dancing in unison in a mass display, people themselves are not the meaning. There is nothing to be nostalgic about here, since the moment of overlap between people’s meaning and the meaning they perform has passed. It is lost to history where performance ideology was once useful, and in some other cases detrimental.²⁰ If desire is the only reason of transindividuation we can count on, the process of collectivity is more difficult, full of ambivalence, but ultimately more

durable. And above all, it would be hard to ritualize and prescribe forms and images of action that would cause a state of transindividuality, since individuation circularly individuates itself without any rules, patterns or scores. The good news is that we have the capacity for it. All we need is to employ our intelligence to finding ways of redirecting actions from the private individual to a public transindividual sharing in common. It is not *logos*, but our *phusis* that guarantees it.



Bojana Cveji

1. I am referring here to a number of books, essays and lectures, among which are: *La Communauté desœuvrée* (Paris: Christian Bourgeois, 1990), *Being Singular Plural*, (trans. Robert D. Richardson and Anne E. O'Byrne, Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 2000) and *La Communauté affrontée* (Paris: Galilée, 2001) by Jean-Luc Nancy; Maurice Blanchot's *La Communauté inavouable* (Paris: Les Éditions de minuit, 1983), Giorgio Agamben's *The Coming Community* (trans. Michael Hardt, Minnesota, MA: University of Minnesota Press, 1993) and my own lecture "Collectivity? You Mean Collaboration" (presented at Context # 1 in Hebbel am Ufer, Berlin, February 22, 2004).
2. This is the topic of my current research, conducted with Ana Vujanović and Marta Popivoda, on performing the self in the 21st century.
3. Julian Beck and Judith Malina, *Paradise Now. Collective Creation of The Living Theatre* (New York: Random House, 1971)
4. I am referring here to the collective performance projects E.X.T.E.N.S.I.O.N.S. (1998-2003) initiated by Xavier Le Roy involving around forty artists and Collect-If initiated by Emil Hrvatin and co-authored by seven artists.
5. Jason Read, *The Politics of Transindividuality* (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2015)
6. Gilbert Simondon, *L'individuation à la lumière des notions de forme et d'information* (Grenoble: Editions Jérôme Millon 2005), 3.
7. Simondon, 313.
8. "The relation of the being to itself is infinitely richer than identity; identity, a poor relation, is the only relation of the being to itself that we can conceive according to the doctrine that considers the being to have one phase only" (Simondon, 308).
9. Simondon, 31.
10. Muriel Combe *Gilbert Simondon and the Philosophy of the Transindividual* (trans. by Thomas LaMarre. Cambridge, MA & London, England: The MIT Press, 2013) 33.
11. Simondon, 274.
12. Nancy *Being Singular Plural* (trans. Robert D. Richardson and Anne E. O'Byrne, Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 2000) 43.
13. I am referring to Paolo Virno, *Angels and the General Intellect: individuation in Duns Scotus and Gilbert Simondon* (trans. by Nick Heron, Parrhesia no. 7, 2009, 58-67) and Etienne Balibar, *Spinoza: From Individuality to Transindividuality* (Delft: Eburon, 1997).
14. All references to Spinoza's Ethics follow the standard annotation, and are sourced from Benedict De Spinoza, *Ethics* (trans. Edwin Curley, London: Penguin Books, 1996).
15. Balibar, 31.
16. Balibar, 15.
17. Balibar, 18.
18. Virno, 61.
19. Ibidem.
20. I distinguish between rehearsing the lessons of the socialist revolution, as in Yugoslav Tito's youth parades and Nazi parades in which fascism was instilled. See chapter "Social Choreography" in Bojana Cvejić and Ana Vujanović *Public Sphere by Performance* (Berlin: bbooks 2012), 64.

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