



Applying STEPs to the following problem: that between thought and extension there is a moment of exhausted possibility, caesura, with claims of its own (mediations not bargains)

Does the master-slave dialectics (Hegel) apply within and beyond democracies, in the sense that dominated groups do not fully count and are thereby excused? Excused from *fully* participating in politics. Excused from *not* being fully equal before the law. Of course, *not* being fully excused. In other words, can someone be partially excused, partially accountable and partially equal to the law owing to their condition? Their condition of being dominated thereby begets an other form of domination—that of being partially excused, -accountable and -equal—which adds to it.

That is, being partially excused, -accountable and -equal becomes part of their condition as a dominated group: that they are somehow incompletely a group—in a democratic sense—with an incomplete political constitution (in that sense, pre-/proto-political). So, they are relativised, to some extent, and excused for being out of line, even for committing violent acts, on account of their condition. The whole gamut that defines repressive tolerance. Domination under the smoke-screen of understanding. My question here is what can come out of alliances of this sort?

People who are perceived to lack—and thereby be denied—identification on account of their *condition* (which is part of their condition as a dominated group). They readily become similar to other dominated groups (which is also part of their dominated condition). And they will be understood, not by reference to their acts and history, but on account of their culture. A culture which is typically without history. A relative culture. The culture of isolates that can be compare. Results and overview which is basically social anthropology at its worst in post/colonial history.



An alternative to this might be to bring the help and understanding to the door, but no further. Since otherwise the people in need of help can cease to be accountable of their acts. If there is transgression—before the law—this is a different matter, and entering becomes consistent: opening the door and going in. If this is tenable it means that transgressors are not in need of help. If they are, it means that help/understanding is forced upon them. It means that they are being taken charge of. They are not accountable.

But is it really possible to say that transgressors are not in need of help, but need to be stopped. And then help is brought to their door when they have stopped transgressing? Maybe we are overlooking something

Frieze Magazine, illustration from Eyal Weizman (Forensic Architecture) on IDF urban war strategy, *The Art of War*. May 6th 2006. Creating paths in urban warfare by moving through walls. From striated to smooth space (Deleuze and Guattari). Moving through walls in the *horizontal plane*.

between intervening and helping? In politics this is often where negotiations come in. But what about thinking of something similar to negotiations—thus identified—in our political culture: in some sense, to become truly democratic. That is, articulating differences between people, by *levelling* with these differences, in due process (given the necessary effort).

Levelling across asymmetries which define relations between the dominated and the dominating, allowing both parties to ascend in a cultural sense (and thereby improving the chances of everyone in society). It means that we must spend time levelling with each other, in a sense which is both free of intervention and of help: that is, as a third layer between help and intervention. It is then likely urgent to see whether areas and societies in the world that have come to a deadlock, have had a history where the chances of levelling with one another has been sabotaged.

And if such levelling has been sabotaged by both sides. Which might be a good place to start, if I have understood Arne Johan Vetlesen. That is, if we manage to level it means that we are also levelling up: staying with the trouble (Haraway) and levelling with it, somehow means that we have begun to rise. A common journey upwards. Clearly this does not fix all problems—for instance social injustice—but is likely a premise for working on a range of other problems. And therefore it is a never ending work to establish a foundation, in a situation with intervention and help.

Somehow, we already know this. But we do not embark on this venture, because it does not lead to anything: it is a necessary condition, not a sufficient one. Intervening and helping will therefore tend to have priority, although neither help nor intervention will do the job of levelling. In this sense, helping and intervening are *heuristic* responses to urgency. Which means that they are no long term, and both lack sustainability. They lack direction. They are not—in a social and historical sense—going anywhere. While the trouble of levelling is that it is neither short/long term.

Levelling takes place in the *meantime*: the realm of possibility (Masquelier and Durham, 2023). That is, in the above sense, levelling is necessary to have possibility (or, possibilities). Without it we are running out of time and options. It is a realm readily covered with fumes and shrouded with mystery. But it is not. Levelling requires a mid-term work which is neither deep nor shallow, but what is needed existentially. The bare fact of being listened to: not understood—this is impossible when people have been in trauma—but just cultivating an orientation in space of listening.

The critical threshold is when as the irreducible human experiences find an orientation in space because—at the human existential level—it appears that there is no other option. It will never be managed but can always be hosted. And it is in the acceptance that who else is there will be a different place as this fruits of human labours will be received, that the experiences and work (the labours) that defined us, will become spatiotemporally oriented. Without this, in the meantime, there cannot be any long term, nor any sustainability (no partnering of people and planet).



[Modern war institute](#): What can the IDF do about Hamas war tunnels? If the Israel Defense Forces conduct a ground campaign in Gaza, the threat of Hamas tunnels will be one of the most significant challenges to contend with. Many miles of these tunnels crisscross below the surface of Gaza, some as deep as 230 feet underground. Collectively, they offer Hamas fighters the means to protect themselves against the Israeli offensive, maneuver undetected below the surface, and launch attacks before returning to the security of the tunnels. Moving beyond reach in the vertical plane.

The trope of crisis—whether of traumatic or artistic origin—is not resolved with depth, nor dealt with superficially, but requires what Spinoza understood by *adequacy*. The response, the work of reception, needs to be adequate. Which is mid-way between deep and shallow: but it is also, and distinctively, something else. Adequacy is a category related to justice. And the possibility to be equal before the rule of law. The meantime is the realm of learning, but from lessons that are unique. Every point is specific. The outcome is unique. It determines whether how all parties involved will rise/fall. Perhaps this is what in religious terms was known as fear of G-d, in days of yore. Or, from the vantage point of a philosophy that grazes from boundary to theology, will harvest as the wealth of intuition. But we are not there now. As Ignazio Ramonet said: sometimes reality can be forbidden with images. Perhaps the corollary is that given the human potential to change, the result of levelling will be to see things differently. Where there were no options, to move up. Level up...