

The Myth of **EUROPA**

*The transnational journal
of European Alternatives*



EUROPEAN
ALTERNATIVES

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of European Alternatives*

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SPECIAL THANKS

The masthead in each issue of the journal reproduced here names the individuals involved in its production. A few recurring names call out for special thanks: Rasha Kahil designed European Alternatives in a sense that went well beyond laying-out the magazine — she set a visual identity for the organisation which was crucial in any early and ongoing successes we have had. Ségolène Pruvot joined the journey early on and expanded the outlook and capabilities of the organisation immeasurably. Nadja Stamselberg helped edit the journal and did much of the work in finding photographs, contributors and sub-editing. We thank Marta Cillero, Giuseppina Tucci and Federica Baiocchi for their work on this collection. A special thanks also goes to Ricardo Barquín Molero, who designed and patiently followed us in putting this publication together.

FURTHER THANKS

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European Alternatives is a transnational organisation working to promote democracy, equality and culture beyond the nation-state since 2007. We believe that today democratic participation, social equality and cultural innovation are undermined by the nation states in Europe and the transnational forms of collectivity must be fostered to promote these values. This journal aims to contribute to our mission.

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ABOUT EUROPEAN ALTERNATIVES

European Alternatives is a transnational civil society organisation working since 2007 to promote democracy, equality and culture beyond the nation state. We imagine, demand and enact alternatives for a viable future for Europe helping to shape new forms of governance, art, citizenship and media that directly connect the local to the transnational. Throughout ten years of activity across the continent, European Alternatives has developed a unique model of transnational activism and citizenship rejecting the idea that we must choose between the status-quo and nationalism.

EUROPA, TRANSEUROPA, THE MYTH OF EUROPA

*Never before has the planet needed
an adventurous Europe
as much as it needs it now*
Zygmunt Bauman

«A European journal of new transnational thought and culture» is the way we characterised the first publication of European Alternatives in 2007. The ambitious subtitle says much about what we were trying to achieve: a regular publication that could be called genuinely «European» (and not national), but which was not euro-centric; a political publication which was also philosophical, artistic, cultural and literary; and which was resolutely «new» and forward-looking.

In its quest to live up to its title, the journal took different physical forms and appearances, and changed its name from «European Alternatives» to «The Myth of Europa» to «Transeuropa». It was as if in our search for the mythical Europa carried away by Zeus, disguised as a bull, we ourselves took on different forms, different personas, different guises. And in our search we were joined by some of the leading thinkers, artists, writers, poets, political and social theorists of our age. Together with our readers we ranged over Europe, to North Africa, the Middle East, the Americas, China and elsewhere, knowing that Europa is never to be found where you expect, and that frontiers are the limits of our imaginations and understandings, sometimes to be overcome, sometimes to be interrogated and sometimes to be opened-up or breached by dialogue and experimentation.

In the journal of European Alternatives from 2007 onwards the reader found an intellectual, cultural and political chronicle and interpretation of contemporary events and tendencies, a unique set of viewpoints on a changing world that was entering into a new stage of crisis and complexity. Those viewpoints came through the words and also the images and photographs. The time we put into choosing and making combinations between the articles and images expressed our conviction that photographs can at once open up the world *to us* and open *us up to the world*, a window in the white page to another part of the planet, to another human subjectivity.

The journal of European Alternatives has always been a campaigning journal, whether for gender equality, Roma rights, migrant rights, media freedom or democratic renewal: through it readers, writers and artists since 2007 have been informed about and joined our campaigns, joined our movement, joined our organization for democracy, equality and culture beyond the nation-state. 10 years after the beginnings of European Alternatives and its first publications, we take a moment to gather many of them in one place, to take a look back at the journey we have travelled, share what we have seen with new acquaintances encountered recently on our route, before turning our faces resolutely to the wind, looking into the distance, and continuing our adventure together as friends.

Niccolò Milanese and Lorenzo Marsili

ZYGMUNT BAUMAN

HANS ULRICH OBRIST

ETIENNE BALIBAR

+ SPECIAL ROMANIAN SECTION

*and more European culture,
philosophy and politics*

EUROPEAN ALTERNATIVES

A EUROPEAN JOURNAL OF NEW
TRANSNATIONAL THOUGHT AND CULTURE
Issue 1 / Volume 1 / Summer 2007



EUROPEAN ALTERNATIVES IS A MOVEMENT
FOR CULTURAL ENGAGEMENT WITH THE IDEA
AND REALITY OF EUROPE. IT IS COMMITTED
TO PROMOTING TRANSNATIONAL THOUGHT
AND CULTURE AND MAKING THOSE NEW IDEAS
AVAILABLE TO AS WIDE A PUBLIC AS POSSIBLE.

Editors:
LORENZO MARSILI
NICCOLÓ MILANESE
editors@euroalter.com

Designer:
RASHA KAHIL
www.rashakahil.com

www.euroalter.com



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B 1 F

Europe is something that must be actively created, and this creation must be carried out in every domain of culture. It is ceaseless ambition and exploration which gives Europe its importance and interest. For too long, too many of the cultural elite have regarded Europe either as a political inevitability, which can be left to the administrators to best organise, or as a political distraction from what should be their own specialist concern — be it in history, art, literature, science or elsewhere. But a half-hearted, mediocre Europe is perhaps worse than no Europe at all; and no sphere of endeavour can be dissociated from the community in which it takes place and which it must help to form.

Once we took the first steps towards a European political organisation — and we took them over 50 years ago — cultural and intellectual engagement with Europe became an obligation: the fate of Europe cannot be delegated.

European Alternatives is a movement for cultural engagement with the idea and reality of Europe. This journal is one space in which that engagement will take place. It is committed to promoting transnational thought and culture and making those new ideas available to as wide a public as possible.

The first action of European Alternatives was the London Festival of Europe in March 2007. This two week series of debates, lectures and art exhibitions shared the intention of widespread cultural debate about Europe, of the highest possible quality and diversity. The Festival is at the same time a political demand, a cultural celebration and a philosophical exploration.

This first issue picks up on several of the Festival's themes and commitments, and includes several of its contributors.

It sees the publication of Zygmunt Bauman's momentous opening lecture to the Festival, demanding that Europe take on a sense of global responsibility.

The **Visions of Europe** section calls for philosophical projections of a European ideal. In this issue the call is met by Etienne Balibar and Marc Crépon, both of whom see Europe

as a multitudinous space, which must be comprehended in all its irreducible complexity.

Europe can no longer be defined by its place of origin. All the world has visited Europe, as Europe has explored all the world: indelible traces have been left throughout. Europe must therefore be understood in its relations with the world. In this first of our regular **Europe in the World** sections, David Gosset gestures towards more substantial Sino-European cultural interaction.

Inside Europe Europe is a space for engagement with current national and trans-national politics within Europe. In this issue Patrick Diamond suggests finding a new base for the European common market in social justice and responsibility; Vera Rich unravels the tangled post-revolution politics of Ukraine; and Stella Tang looks at political fragmentation in Italy.

European Alternatives is aware of its responsibility to present the best of the many European cultures. In this issue we are very pleased to have a special section in partnership with the Romanian Cultural Institute, presenting Romania's ambitions in joining the European Union, and the best of Romanian film and photography.

The final section of the magazine is one of the most important. The **Culture and the Arts** section asks that cultural practitioners rally themselves to the cause of constructing Europe and a European society. In this issue Hans Ulrich Obrist presents his thoughts on curating in a trans-national context, and Viky Steiri hails Greek composer Jani Christou, a master of musical surrealism.

In reading *European Alternatives*, we hope you will see the multitude of future possibilities Europe presents, and the importance of realising them. To take part in creating Europe, please visit www.euroalter.com, where you can join us, subscribe to this journal, and find out about our other activities.

TRANS-NATIONAL POLITICS AND GLOBAL RESPONSIBILITY

B 2 F

The only substantive political questions are now at a level beyond the nation state. It is only in a trans-national arena that real decisions will become apparent. The European Union, and the search for more satisfactory ways to make it work, must represent a foremost hope in finding new ways to formulate and address these questions.

There are at least two reasons why politics must now be trans-national. Firstly, increased interrelations between peoples mean that any national event can easily have a global audience and rapid global impacts. Europe inherits the role as a crucible of this new interconnectedness, both from the proximity of difference between its internal neighbours and from its colonial past.

Secondly, the global movement of capital and the increasing power of corporations imply that decisions of fundamental importance for the evolution of our societies occur well beyond national politics. These have gone hand in hand with the exponential increase of the gap between global rich and poor.

The implication of these two facts is that real choices which concern more than merely administrative matters of governance, *political* choices between ways of living, choices that truly aim to *make history*, can only be taken in a trans-national context. Politics must, as Habermas has said, catch up with global markets. But politics must also begin to take a role in *shaping* global markets, in fostering global justice and creating a truly trans-national democratic practice.

Democratic disengagement is the bigger problem lying behind the much touted 'democratic deficit'. People no longer see the possibility in formal politics. The new trans-nationalism of political issues suggests that this problem can only be addressed simultaneously at the national and international

level. It is the huge failure of the present European Union to have not successfully articulated a sense of global responsibility and possibility.

Lucien Febvre, in a famous course at the Collège de France in 1945, rhetorically asked whether a Europe united as a new super-state would truly be able to halt the wars, factionalisms, and miseries of all sort that burden humanity, and would instead not merely replicate – at the global level – the tragic actions that marked the first part of the twentieth century. Europe must not think of creating a new "global power" capable of standing up to the rising Asian countries or the USA. Instead, Europe should open itself to the possibility of generating a new political constellation. In doing this it need only be guided by its founding mission: to be a motor of peace and reconciliation. The challenge must not be to replace 'the glory of the nation' with 'the glory of Europe', but to attempt the creation of a novel political system that makes of tolerance for difference, respect for justice and equality, and a multilateral approach its prime characteristics.

Political alternatives can be glimpsed through the cracked glass of Europe. In bringing them into focus, the role of cultural actors in Europe cannot be underestimated. Febvre's doubts about a new European political entity were motivated by his post-war pessimism about the maturity of the European peoples: about whether they were capable for the task of generating peaceful global solutions. It is the inalienable responsibility of cultural practitioners to ensure the European peoples do live up to this, that they have both the vision and the ambition to demand these solutions and create them. It is a responsibility that has only been taken up patchily in contemporary Europe, and yet one that can no longer be escaped.

BRITAIN AND EUROPE

B 3 F

Great Britain has always been an unfinished nation. Both the outgoing and the incoming Prime Minister have promised to complete it with new constitutional arrangements, all the while still employing the rhetorical force of 'nationhood'. As phoney debates about 'Britishness' are launched and re-launched, in the space opened by the vacuous noise pro-European voices should be making themselves heard. The unresolved status of Britishness yields both the possibility for the birth of a new paradigm and the danger of retrenchment. The current government has, for the most part, preferred the false safety of the prolonged interregnum. It is part of the task of pro-Europeans to foster the conditions for the birth of the new.

There is an argument to say that the debate must start with the status of *Englishness*, that insecure, nostalgic chimera which conjures the problem of Britishness. But to start here would be always to chase reality with one's head turned away: Englishness looks only backwards, and it is already outdated and exclusive amongst Britain's contemporary demographic. Critical national history is undeniably vital and presently lacking, but what lacks above all from the political discourse of all European countries is brave experimentation with future possibilities and configurations: this is what the 'identity' debate must become, and the only thing that would genuinely count as having it.

At the beginnings of what is now 10 years in power, the Labour government showed some limited signs of engaging bravely with new European politics: Tony Blair stood beside Jacques Chirac at St Malo in 1998 to introduce the possibility of a real common foreign policy to the European discourse; the government have ceaselessly pushed for CAP reform, and not always for the wrong reasons; only recently has the government's support for enlargement started to flag (with the closing of the doors to Romanians and Bulgarians).

In many ways the government has later undermined many of these earlier achievements, but the most significant failing is to have never promoted a positive, engaged national discourse about Europe. Instead it has allowed the debate to become increasingly poisoned, and at times it has fed itself from that poison.

The clamour for a national referendum on Europe is rising again, with the claim being that avoiding any such referendum is undemocratic. Yet to insist that holding a referendum in the current climate would be democratic is to have too facile an understanding of democracy, as if whatever the majority says *at any time* should go *all the time*. What should be promoted is an engaged and intelligent national debate, and a referendum is not at the moment the way to achieve that. The interest of the anti-European lobby in staging one has little to do with democracy, and everything to do with opportunism. Both sides are to blame. It was from the cowardice of not facing down the Euro-obsessed Tory party in 1997 that the referendum promise arrived: the unfulfilled promise to do the arguing later.

Ultimately the responsibility lies with pro-European civil society and business, which must urgently find new ways of organising itself. In the past these movements have lacked ambition, imagination and breadth. They have also, ironically, lacked trans-national dimensions. Now, in many countries of Europe, they find themselves in increasingly hostile conditions. Paradoxically, these conditions simultaneously offer some of the greatest political possibilities since the end of the Second World War. There is a renewal of politics being attempted once again throughout the Western democracies of Europe. Despite all appearances otherwise, Britain, through its permanently unresolved identity, offers one paramount potentiality for making of this renewal a genuinely new phase in European history. That opportunity will not be open indefinitely, it must be taken now.

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In partnership with Romanian Cultural Institute

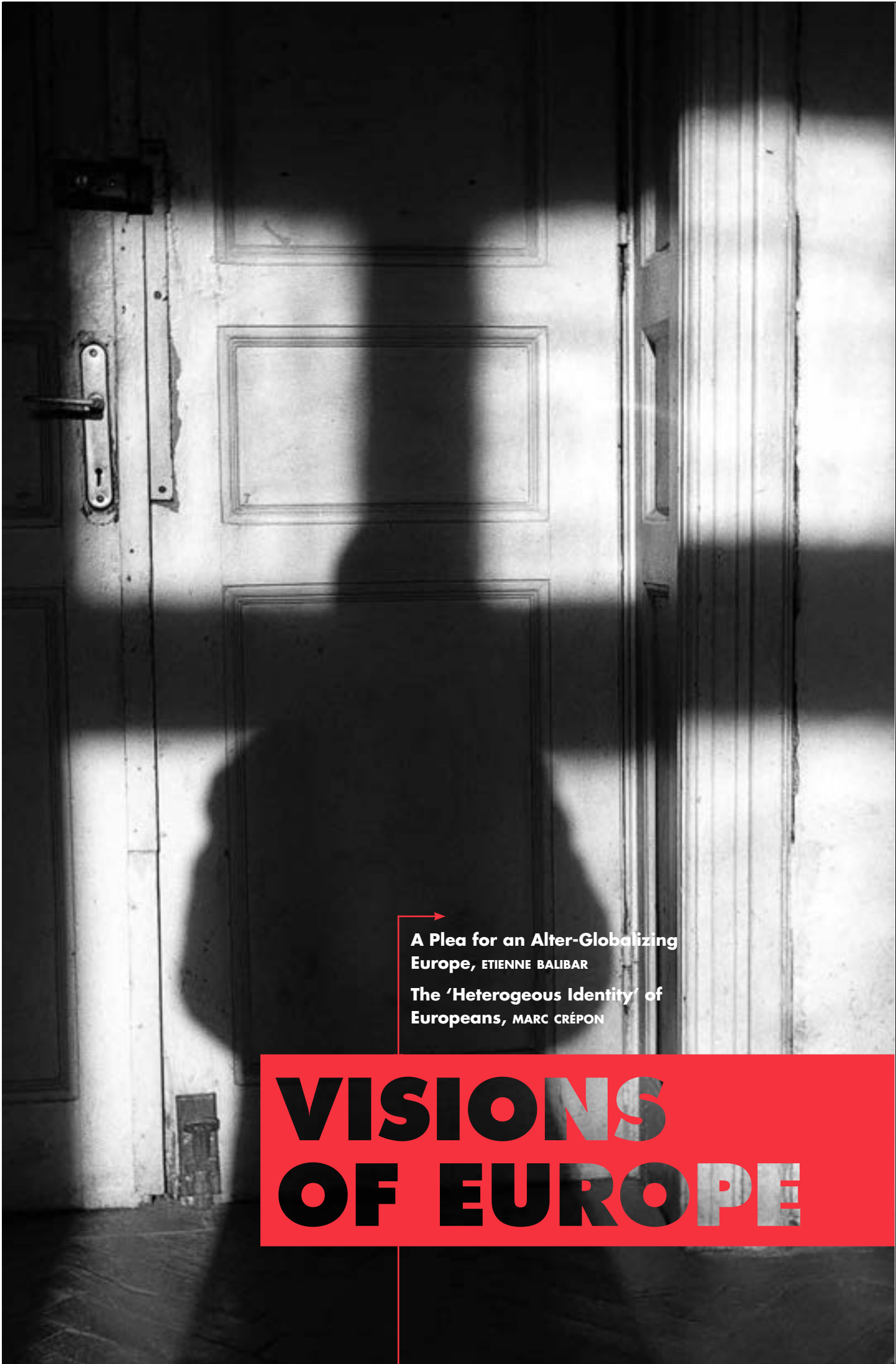
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VISIONS OF EUROPE

A Plea for an Alter- Globalizing Europe

Theses

ETIENNE BALIBAR

Translated by Anna Preger

Etienne Balibar is Emeritus Professor of Philosophy at the University of Nanterre, and Professor of Critical Theory at the University of California, Irvine.

1. Now, more than ever before, politics, as Max Weber put it, can only be “global”. This does not mean that there is *only one* global politics possible: on the contrary there is necessarily a *choice* between several politics, defined by their objectives, their means, their conditions, their obstacles, their “subjects” or “wills”, the risks they involve. The field of politics is that of the *alternative*. If we posit that today all the possibilities fall within *one* trend towards “globalization”, the question then becomes: what are the alternatives to its dominant forms? Can Europe be an “alterglobalizing” force, and how?

2. To claim that politics can only be global does not equate to saying that politics is not concerned with the condition and the problems of “people” where they live, where their life history has placed them: on the contrary, it equates to asserting that local citizenship has as its condition an active global citizenship. Every local political choice of economic, social, cultural, institutional orientation involves a “cosmopolitical” choice, and vice-versa.

3. Europe’s place in the world today – in spite of a few vague diplomatic impulses – is that of a dead dog that follows the water’s current, devoid of any initiative of its own. If not – given its economic and cultural “weight” – that of a dead elephant that goes with the flow. Examples abound: from the reform of the United Nations to the enforcement of the Tokyo Protocol, from the regulation of international migration to the resolution of Near and Middle Eastern crises or the deployment of

back-up troops to the wars initiated by the US. Consequently, Europe lacks the means of resolving its own “internal” problems, including institutional ones.

4. That Europe has no global politics entails that there is no – or hardly any – global politics emerging from the European *nations*, despite the desire of some to “keep their rank” of former great powers or to be a spanner in the works. European nations thus have no – or hardly any – home politics presenting *real alternatives*. National elections function in this respect as a trompe-l’œil, but one which fails to dupe everyone: hence depoliticization. Global issues therefore re-emerge in a purely ideological form: “the clash of civilizations,” and the like.

5. The *causes* of this situation are to be found within the evolution of historically inherited power relations that have been reinforced by the current state of affairs. But this evolution – that confers either a purely *reactive* or a simply *adaptive* function upon the “European construction” – cannot stand as a total explanation. We must supplement this acknowledgement with another one: there is a disastrous collective inability, amongst the majority of the European population, to imagine alternative policies and forms of politics, and this cannot be dissociated from the uncertainty looming over the political identity of Europe. The failure of the Constitution treaty is not the source but one of the symptoms of this uncertainty.

6. The construction of Europe as a new kind of federation began and developed during previous stages of globalization and international relations whose features have now undergone a total shake-up. This construction is an (uneven) asset, but not a necessity: its “expansiveness” must not mislead us in this regard. The USSR may have been dismantled 80 years after its formation due to its rigidity and its system of state control, but the corollary of this is not that, 50 years on, by virtue of its flexibility and liberalism, there is no risk of an EU break-up. However, such a break-up would not mean going back to square one: some things are irreversible. Thus the European construction will either establish new foundations and new objectives, or it will collapse taking along with it, for the foreseeable future, any chance of collective political action in this part of the world.

7. The forces – “right-” as well as “left-wing” – that are opposed to re-launching the European construction, are both *inside* each country (as demonstrated by the “no” voters in France and the Netherlands who would have been joined by many others had the ratification campaign been pursued) and *beyond* Europe (in particular in the United States). But the determining factor is what I shall call “the contradiction within the European people itself”, with all its social and cultural dimensions. This is what needs to be tackled through discussion and mobilization: operating, initially, at one’s own level, across the borders. To this end, if not parties, then we at least need movements, networks, trans-European initiatives.

8. European identity – with regards to the legacy inscribed in the institutions, the geography, the culture that it must maintain – is faced with two problems whose solution will only be reached at the cost of conflicts and errors. On the one hand it must overcome its *East-West divide*, which shifts position at different points in time, is associated with antagonisms between “regimes” and “systems” (not without its paradoxes, for example when “Westernism” spreads to the East following “revolutions” or “counter-revolutions”), but never disappears. *On the other hand* it must find a balance between a “closed” Europe (therefore restricted, but within which limits?) that one may wish to homogenize, and an “open” Europe (not so much a Great Europe than a Europe of borders, acknowledging its constitutive interpenetration with vast Euro-Atlantic, Euro-Asian, Euro-Mediterranean, Euro-African spaces). This is where the “questions” now pending lie: the Turkish question, the Russian question, the British question... In order to go on, Europe must invent a variable

geometry, a form of state and administration without precedent in history.

9. Facing the decline of the American hegemony in the world (which is relative, but irreversible and precipitated by the “neo-conservative” attempt to re-establish it by force), Europe must choose between two strategies, which will gradually entail consequences in every area of political and social life: either attempting to form one of the “power blocs” (*Grossraum*) that will compete with one another for supremacy over a new global configuration, or forming one of the “mediations” that will attempt to give birth to a new economic and political order, more egalitarian and more decentralized, likely to effectively curtail conflicts, to institute redistribution mechanisms, to keep claims to hegemony in check. The first way is doomed to failure (even at the cost of an evolution towards totalitarianism, that might increase insecurity, terrorism being one of its aspects). The second is improbable without a considerable degree of collective conscience and political will, rallying public opinion across the continent. What is certain is that the terms of the alternative cannot be conflated within a rhetoric of compromises between national and communitarian bureaucracies.

10. Between the “North”, which most of Europe pertains to, and the “South” (whose geography, economy and degree of state integration are increasingly changing), there is not only an interdependence but a genuine *reciprocity* of possibilities of development (or “co-development”). It is important to recognize this and turn it into a political project. The fact that Europe was the starting-point for the “Westernization of the world”, in ways that were, to varying degrees, marked by domination but which today are universally challenged, represents in this respect both an obstacle and an opportunity to be seized: these are the two sides of the “post-colony”. Only a project such as this would allow for a balance to be found between a Europe focused on law-and-order, violently repressing the migrations it itself provokes, and a Europe without borders, open to “unrestrained” migration (that is to say, migrations entirely ordered by the market of human instruments). Only this would allow for conflicts of interests and culture between “old” and “new”, “legal” and “illegal”, “communitarian” and “extra-communitarian” Europeans to be addressed. It is thus not an administrative but an existential priority.

FURTHER READING

We, the People of Europe? Reflections on Transnational Citizenship, Etienne Balibar and Immanuel Wallerstein

Who If Not We?, Etienne Balibar, Boris Groys, Robert Fleck, and others.

Politics and the Other Scene, Etienne Balibar and Daniel Hahn

11 Against the backdrop of the uninterrupted Middle Eastern crisis that is in the process of becoming a regional war, the war in Lebanon highlighted the urgency of creating a political space encompassing all the countries surrounding the Mediterranean – only such a space can offer an alternative to the “clash of civilizations” in this highly sensitive and crucial region. As for the Israeli-Palestinian question that is its epicentre, the extreme anti-Zionist discourse should not be condoned; rather, concerted and without delay Israeli expansion should be stopped and the rights of the Palestinian people recognized – rights that are officially championed by European nations. More generally, this hotbed of wars and ethnic-religious hatred should be turned into a site of cooperation and institutionalized negotiation, with repercussions across the globe. It is, for obvious reasons, Europe that should take the initiative. France, with its shared and troubled history with the Maghreb, has a particular part to play here.

12. Crucial to alterglobalization are the following legal and political projects:

- The democratic regulation of migration flows, therefore the reform regarding the right to mobility and residence, still marked by national interests at the expense of reciprocity;
- “Collective security” and, correlatively, the penal responsibility of states and individuals

regarding supranational affairs, therefore the reform of the UN, still held back by its support of decisions inherited from the Second World War and the logic of power;

- The reinforcement of the guarantees of individual freedom, minority rights and human rights, therefore the practical and legal conditions of humanitarian intervention.
- The merging of the instances of economic negotiation and regulation, of those controlling tax evasion and those concerning social rights, so as to sketch out on a global scale a Keynesian model now dismantled on a national level;
- Finally, the prioritization of ecological risks over the other factors of insecurity rehearsed by Kofi Annan in his Millennium speech.

This list is not a closed one, but it demonstrates how diverse and interrelated the elements now forming, on a global scale, the substance of real politics are.

13. The above theses are merely propositions to orient and open a debate. Rather than presenting solutions, they are attempts to explicate contradictions that cannot be evaded. It is now a question of establishing the touchstones of rigour and integrity for a political debate in Europe today. And this debate will enable us, hopefully, to then supplement, clarify and modify them.



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The 'Heterogeneous Identity' of Europeans

MARC CRÉPON
Translated by NM and
Segolène Pruvot

Marc Crépon is Professor of
Philosophy at École Normale
Supérieure, Paris.

In the many philosophical attempts to define the identity of Europe over more than the last two centuries, it is possible to distinguish two major directions of thought:

1) The first is to attribute to Europe a heritage both selective and restrictive. Together or separately, one after the other, ancient Greece, Rome or Judeo-Christianism are invoked, with various accentuations – shared historical references that Europeans have ceaselessly re-identified, cultivated, sustained, promoted and conjoined over the course of their history. To think of Europe would be to make a typology of these gestures, of which the history of the different European nations, the museums and their capitals offer a million and one traces. There are amongst them those which have sustained what might be called the 'politics of identity' or the 'politics of belonging' each time they have been used as a political instrument. This first way of identifying Europe calls for three remarks. The first is it frequently leads to a substantialisation of Europe's identity. It is just the same as imposing something like an *essence* (Greek, Roman or Judeo-Christian) on Europe. The second is that this imposition is usually exclusive. It ends up by designating, even *inside* Europe, that which is not European or that which is less European – perhaps also that which *cannot be held* for European, and which it should defend itself against. The third, finally, is that identity thus defined always presupposes a genealogy – that is to say a discourse of origins – and moreover a *mono*-genealogy, even when it recognises conjointly the Greek, Roman and Christian heritages. Said in other words, at each turn it is the relation of Europe to its 'alterities' that is forgotten – it is the set of those constitutive elements of its identity which are not directly implicated in this triple heritage that is hidden.

2) The second way of defining Europe consists in making Europe an end in itself. This is just as exclusive: Europe becomes an end which, without doubt, groups the Europeans, but also separates them and distinguishes them from all others. And it is true that, for more than two

hundred years, many things have been invoked in the name of this communal project. This project would ultimately impose itself on the rest of the world: rationality, modernity or, in more political versions – which always run the risk of being subverted or instrumentalised – democracy, the rights of Man etc.

Of such an approach one should not ignore the merit: in making a communal project of Europe, it makes the crucible of European identity out of the transcendence of national allegiances and the inscription of European history in a movement that cannot be reduced to national ambitions and calculation. But one must also recall that this way of defining Europe is not without many problems. It may well be these that a Europe unsure of its own identity, now more than ever, is confronted with.

Firstly, it is a conception of European identity that one can call Euro-centric, in that, making of reason, progress, democracy etc. the property of Europe, it designates itself, again and always, as the centre of the world. Furthermore, it implies a movement of the universal characterised by its own unilateralism: from Europe *towards* the rest of the world. According to such a vision, it is the responsibility of the Europeans, now and throughout history, to bring in and often impose their values, their principles, which are *ipso facto* taken to have universal force. On the basis of ignorance or denial of what the rest of the world has been able to bring simultaneously to Europe, Europe carries out what one cannot but understand as a *confiscation* of the universal. One cannot subscribe to this confiscation today, for at least two reasons. The first, which recalls Patocka's essays on Europe in the 1970s, is that the two World Wars (and more so the second) definitively sanctioned the image that Europe could give to itself – this sanction is imposed in the first instance by the rest of the world and has prompted the chaotic reconfiguration of the relationship between the European continent and its alterities. The second is that this appropriation is always likely to come back doubly: at the same time against Europe itself and also against those

ideals which it appropriates as its own. Today, this unilateral movement cannot carry on. It is no longer acceptable nor credible. Its continuation would bring the allegation, quite rightly, that Europe is being arrogant or hegemonic. This accusation is indexed to the one million and one forms which Euro-centrism has taken over the last centuries. The other result would be the discrediting outside of Europe of those ideals Europe has appropriated as its own (democracy, human rights, progress, etc). In other geographical areas, and under other political skies, these ideals would be denounced for being precisely *European, all too European*. But, for all that, this does not signify that the notions of *heritage* and *project* should be rejected. It indicates only that, if the problem of each of the two conceptions hitherto analysed is that of their exclusivity, they must be rethought in the prism of a new conception of identity, which no longer ignores the constitutive relation of Europe with that which it has itself defined, imagined, and sometimes fantasised, as its own alterities. This is a precondition for the future credibility of the heritage and project of Europe. The one and the other, in effect, can provide the basis for hope and positive action, at the world-scale, only if they are underlined by the recognition that Europe is the complex result of a double movement of multiple assemblages and adoptions. Since Europe's history cannot be dissociated from the numerous exchanges that have linked it, reciprocally, to other continents, Europe cannot define itself exclusively on its own and starting from itself. All reflections on its past as well as on its future must, on the contrary, start from the following axiom: "that which did not 'belong' to Europe has nevertheless, in one way or another, come to it and then 'belonged' to it at least partially; whatever one defines as the property of Europe also exists outside of Europe – and therefore does not strictly 'belong to it' (or not anymore)."

What has made Europe? Nothing more and nothing less than a double network of relations. In a first sense, it takes its identity from the ensemble of relations which the nations making up Europe have had one with another. Europe is made intrinsically of that which they have exchanged, imported and translated in all the domains: artistic, political, institutional, technical and scientific. Europe presents itself therefore as an ensemble of regional and national entities which have been composed one with the other and which were made, not without conflict or resistance, following different processes of adoption. But Europe also takes its identity from the ensemble of relations which these same nations have maintained, together and concurrently, with those which they have 'taken' as their communal alterity: the alterity or the alterities of Europe. Europe is a collection of countries which, in their great majority, shared a common way of relating to the other continents – at a given moment in their history, they have joined their own development with a project of appropriation and exploitation of the rest of the world. Each of them (or nearly all) carry traces of these relations that can be interpreted as, again, a series of elements assembled and adopted – those same ones which, today, the forces most

hostile to the European project would like to see it renounce.

The consequences of this other way of thinking of identity for our conception of the heritage and the project of Europe are not insignificant. To think of Europe in these terms is, in effect, to uncouple 'European belonging' from mono-genealogy by opposing the idea of a homogenous identity with that of an identity fundamentally heterogeneous. The same manoeuvre ensures that inside Europe we avoid the situation where, due to a restrictive notion of identity, belonging becomes selective and exclusive in such a way that a non-negligible number of European citizens – and indeed those who still lack the rights of citizenship – are perceived to be, or regard themselves to be, *non-European* or *less European*.

This other way of thinking gives European heritage a content which is essentially relational. Wherever we come from, whatever our personal and family history, whatever the religious context in which we have been brought up and whatever our education, that which we Europeans inherit is, before all, this double array of relations. These multiple constructions, in all domains of our shared existence, memory, customs, institutions, art, but also alimentation, clothing and many other things still carry, in various degrees, the traces of a diverse history. All politics that tries to impose exclusive and restrictive criteria on

"Europe's history cannot be dissociated from the numerous exchanges that have linked it, reciprocally, to other continents"

belonging (in name of *such a* monogenealogy, the belonging to *such a* civilisation, *such a* religion etc) denies its own history and finally its very own identity. We know (as recent history has shown) that such a politics is also (and always) potentially murderous; because it is, each time, through the denial of the *constitutively* heterogeneous nature of identity (hiding this heterogeneity from those whose identity is itself composed of it) that violence starts.

With regard to the European project, all this means that we cannot avoid a renewed interrogation of the conditions of the relations it wants to sustain with that which it has always thought and defined as its own alterities. Two divergent ways are then available. The first makes of Europe, despite its composite history and identity, a fortress; a fortress seeking power, on the look out for anything that might oppose its logic. It protects itself from others in infinitely hardening the conditions of its hospitality, making more precarious each instant the conditions of life for strangers on its territory, imposing on the rest of the world the multiple, recurring manifestations of its enclosure and its defence. By reducing the ambitions of the European projects to *un peau de chagrin*, this route condemns Europeans to an infinite spiral of fears and increasingly menacing attempts to ensure security. In the long run, it will turn against Europe itself – as everywhere (including inside its borders) it discerns, records, registers



and controls 'strangers' who might threaten it. The second way, on the contrary, knows that the 'European dream' – as Jeremy Rifkin called it – has a chance to be shared, not only by the 'populations' of the 'European nations', but also by others. It is in the name of this 'openness', as against the retrenchment of identity – the appropriations and confiscations of belonging, be they in the name of politics, religion or something else — that Europe has constructed (and must continue to construct) a heterogeneous identity. The fortune of Europe, and the reason for taking the *risk* of Europe, today as before, is that it never remains identical to itself: it has never been possible to reduce

"All politics that tries to impose exclusive and restrictive criteria on belonging denies its own history and finally its very own identity"

Europe, at any point in the course of its history, to one or another circumscription of what could define it. Not even a religion or a certain form of government determines it. As Valéry already pointed out in 1922, in his «Note on the European», re-printed in *The Crisis of the Spirit*, the principle of Europe is its own transformation in result of its exposure to the rest of the world. This exposition is not

simple – most of the time it has taken the form of a brutal imposition (of which it still carries the painful memory). But at the same time as Europe imposed itself on others (by appropriating and colonising the world), it became more heterogeneous itself. This is the rule of its history. Such is, once again, its heritage, and this is the scale on which its project should be measured. One cannot formulate economic and social policy, immigration policy, foreign policy, educational and judicial policy, as if the future of Europe does not depend intrinsically on the relation that it defines and sustains with that which it will carry on conceiving, imagining, fictionalising and fantasising as its own alterities. None of them can be made as if, in closing the many routes of heterogenisation, it is not this *future* that would be compromised. Now, this rule not only concerns collective cultural identities (that of Europe or of each 'nation' which makes it up). It firstly applies to each and every European citizen, current, past and future. Further, it is for everyone the best way to achieve what we can call 'the idiomatic invention of one's own singularity'. It is here that the question of multilingualism is written, in a way paradigmatic to reflections on identity. What does Umberto Eco's now famous expression 'the language of Europe is translation' state if not, in a broader sense, that any singular heterogenisation must firstly be that of identity itself? From a literary and linguistic point of view, this implies that those texts which European nations have appropriated do not belong to the nations themselves. Instead, they are given to each and every European citizen, whatever their linguistic knowledge, to appropriate – i.e. to make a constitutive element of this *invention* of oneself, to which reading contributes, in an essential but not an exclusive way.

The works of Shakespeare, Dante, Cervantes, Kafka, Hugo or Pushkin and many others, throughout the centuries, not only haunt the memory of the English, Italians, Spanish, Germans, French or Russians. Through translations, they have been (and will continue to be), over the centuries or decades, integrated in each European language. They have left (and will continue to leave) their traces in these languages, so that each time we read them, in translation or in the original, we give ourselves additional tools to move aside, deviate or differ from the most conventional uses of language. Now, it is in this distancing, deviation or difference that the

idiomatic invention of singularity consists.

If we conceive of language not only as a mere means of communication – always susceptible to standardisation and uniformisation – but

also as the means for this invention, in which the *variability* of identity depends, translations that bring the reverberations of another language into our own subvert attempts to formalise identity. He who invents his own idiom — and this is what schools, amongst other institutions, should aim at making possible, if their purpose is to awaken and educate, rather than to *adapt* — he



who gives *himself* an idiom, in order to share it or to pass it on, does not do so in and from a language that no *difference*, no exposition to alterity, has modified. He or she does not *reproduce* nor *cultivate* nor *develop* a foundation identifiable with the patrimony of a community closed within itself, even if there are those who would like to make such a patrimony an element of their identity.

Having the use of a European language, whatever it might be, is to do the contrary to this. It is to be the trustee, in various ways, of one thousand and one translations – it is to inherit that which has been translated from Hebrew to Greek, from Greek to Latin, from each of these languages into all the vernaculars and from all these languages into all the others. But this is not all. The word ‘idiom’ also carries another meaning. Everyone inherits these marks in a different way. Or, more exactly, these would be nothing if everyone did not have the responsibility to use them in their own way. This is the reason why the statement that the language of Europe is translation refers to something like a ‘freedom’: freedom to *invent itself* within the traces one is given – that is to say to translate them one more time. Over translations sedimented in the language are superimposed the ones that everyone *should* be free to use in one’s *own* language.

This should be the function of any education policy as of any European linguistic policy. But nothing is less evident as things stand. This would suppose that learning languages (and first of all foreign languages) is not reduced to just placing a means of communication at one’s disposal. It would imply that, throughout Europe, the study of language and literature should be

dedicated to bringing out the million and one resonances, the million and one reverberations of languages and literatures within one another. It also implies that the consistent discrediting of literary studies – thought of as useless or out of date (notably studies of Greek and Latin) – should be halted.

But there is one last way to understand Umberto Eco’s sentence ‘the language of Europe is translation’, in giving it its broader significance. It is to understand that translation is not only the

“Translation is not only the ‘language’ that Europeans speak one to another, but what they should ‘exemplify’ in speaking to the rest of the world”

‘language’ that Europeans speak one to another, but what they should ‘exemplify’ in speaking to the *rest of the world*. It is true that to speak of such a relation is not straightforward — it is legitimate to ask oneself to what extent, in so doing, one avoids re-introducing surreptitiously the European teleology and universalism we were trying to get rid of. This would be the case if translation, understood as openness, did not itself have the inverse effect. Translation speaks first of all about openness and hospitality. To translate is welcome into a language what has been written and thought in another language, it is to open oneself to the risk of something which presents difference to oneself, of which the

“the principle of Europe is its own transformation in result of its exposure to the rest of the world”

principle is not autonomous. To speak, as we have tried, of the relationship between Europe and its alterities as a constitutive relation is to recall the fact of such heterogeneousness. Europe is a space in which men and women of different 'origins', religions and beliefs learn – not without difficulties,

resistance and violence – not only to cohabit and tolerate each other, but to live together; that is to say, to make of the various and unpredictable inventions of their own identities a translation. A true 'European history' would suppose that all attempts at enclosure, all the confiscations of self-invention, all the censures and prohibitions, fevers, resurgences of nationalism and fanaticism, have been refuted as being opposed to its law. But nothing is stable – because nothing is more delicate than this heterogeneousness. The forces which oppose it are rearming both inside Europe and outside its frontiers – as are all those who would like to establish another law which determines identity: that of separation, of incompatibility, of retrenchment of each in the sphere of their own civilisation. Today there are many throughout the world who are tempted by this other way of formulating identity, which is always violent and murderous. And this means that, just as Derrida called for, most notably in *L'Autre Cap*, something like a responsibility for Europe must be thought of today, and that would be firstly and above all this singular way of formulating identity, which recalls the idea of translation (even if it is not the only one to practice such a mode) – in opposition to these discourses of fixity, of definition, of stigmatisation or of the excitation of feelings of belonging of which one speaks a little in all the world, including inside Europe. It is not an unavoidable clash between opposing civilisations which defines the present moment, but a fight to the death between two ways of thinking of identity which are at work in every civilisation: on one side, that which recognises (and lives from) its own constitutively heterogenous identity, and for which every belonging in its becoming is defined by its openness; on the other side that which is regressive, which is sustained and haunted by a fantasy of homogeneity. The responsibility for Europe is to take the mantle, so difficult, of this difference. And this obliges it to listen to and to give rights to all voices, with even more reason when those voices are feeble and fragile and when they have no power – to all the voices which try to think of their identity in terms of translation. This obliges the European authorities (heads of government, ministers and commissioners) not to make out as if these voices did not exist, in the name of economic calculation, of strategic interest, of such a simplification of thought and action, as if they counted for nothing, as if everything were already played-out long ago – as if the combat between two languages were already lost to

begin with. But this responsibility (both ethical and political) is also that of European citizens who, from their legitimate fear of all those who promote and carry out violence, are exposed, at each new insurgence of the unacceptable (such a crime, such a massacre, such a threat), to the regressive temptation of refusing and denying the constitutively heterogeneous, plural and composite character of all identity. This is, and will always be, the most dangerous of traps laid for them.

"Europe is a space in which men and women of different 'origins', religions and beliefs learn – not without difficulties, resistance and violence – not only to cohabit and tolerate each other, but to live together; that is to say, to make of the various and unpredictable inventions of their own identities a translation"





Europe and China: A Symphony of
Civilisations, DAVID GOSSET

EUROPE AND THE WORLD

Europe and China: A Symphony of Civilisations

DAVID GOSSET

David Gosset is Director
of the Academia Sinica
Europaea, Shanghai

It is the studio of an artist in the 17th-century Netherlands. In the foreground there are a tapestry, an empty chair and a table. A seated painter is trying to catch the essence of his model, a demure young woman, Clio, the Greek muse of history. On the wall, as a backdrop, is a large map of the Seventeen Provinces printed in Amsterdam. The scene is quiet but inspiring.

Johannes Vermeer’s *Art of Painting* is open to interpretations. With Clio and a map as key elements of the composition, Vermeer represents the interplay between history and geography but, more fundamentally, the interaction between time and space. However, Clio is the Dutch Golden Age painter’s main focus. Even if both time and space are conditions of human experience, history is well and truly alive in Vermeer’s allegory. This living presence of history is a differentiating factor between, on one side, Europe and China and, on the other, the United States: while the two old worlds carry ancient memories, the American spirit, always on the move for new frontiers, has relatively less historical depth.

Used to innumerable discourses on the differences between the West and the East, one is not prepared to recognize two facts. First, although Europe and China have been slowly elaborating two distinct civilizations, they cannot be absolutely separated. Having in common long maturations over millennia, the two old worlds have developed affinities and, despite all the exotic representations, the two edges of Eurasia are closer than they seem. Second, one should not reduce the West to the US: that country, which from a colony has been

rising to the rank of global hyperpower in only 230 years, is very singular and is culturally departing from its European foundation. “The reasons for the trans-Atlantic divide are deep, long in development, and likely to endure,” writes Robert Kagan (*Paradise and Power*, 2003). While we would disagree with the Washington-based analyst on the causes of the Atlantic divide, we strongly converge to observe the divisive trend.

It is precisely based on their affinities that Europe and China have to build a partnership that goes beyond ever-varying trade, scientific or even political interests. In other words, by placing culture as the keystone of their relationship, the two Eurasian civilizations would enter a really stable and meaningful cooperation having over time global constructive impact. Historian Christopher Dawson (1889-1970) already indicated after the first massive tragedy of the 20th century the direction to follow: “If a true world-civilization is ever to be created, it will not be by ignoring the existence of the great historic traditions of culture, but rather by an increase of mutual comprehension” (*The Making of Europe*, 1932).

Understand, so that you can trust

Escalation in the Middle East, chaos in Iraq, uncertainty in Afghanistan, tensions over Iran’s and North Korea’s nuclear programs, the spread of terrorism, large economic exclusion, deadlock in the Doha trade development agenda, rhetorical dispute between Washington and Moscow, evaporation of US soft power and discredit of the very values it is supposed to project. Despite Francis Fukuyama’s famous

post-Cold War prediction, history has not ended (*The End of History and the Last Man*, 1992). On the contrary, it is a time when various models of society are facing one another and opposite ideas circulating intensively.

At the two edges of the Eurasian continent, the European Union, a model for cooperation among countries, and China, a reference for developing countries, have a greater role to play in this highly critical global situation. It requires on both sides vision and leadership. However, one should not forget that managing the growing interdependence between a post-nation-state Europe and a re-emerging Chinese world is a process that does presuppose time. An agenda uniquely driven by trade or immediate technocratic concerns does not fully express the nature of the European and Chinese cultures.

Only a shared awareness of fundamental cultural and historical commonalities can lead to the deepening of the links between the two edges of Eurasia and have a moderating effect on Washington's imperial hubris. Better understanding between Europe and China is also necessary for both sides to take the full measure of what the two ancient civilizations can achieve together.

But in various segments of European society, one hesitates about China's intentions, and it seems that China is still too unknown to be trusted. *Intellige ut credas* - "understand so that you should believe" - Augustine's words on reason and faith might apply also to the actors of international relations: mutual understanding begets trust and the two are, in fact, reinforcing each other.

From internal pluralism to global equilibrium

China's re-emergence - there is no "China rise", but only China's restoration to its historical position - is already having considerable impact on the global village. Understandably, observers and analysts discuss the nature of Beijing's behaviour on the international scene. Will China behave like an empire trying to dominate and extend a *pax Sinica*, or act as a cooperative force working for a foedus pacificum, a league of peace, to use Immanuel Kant's expression (*Perpetual Peace*, 1795)?

In other words, will China tend to behave like the US, indeed at the centre of a unilateral pax Americana, or more like the members of the

European Union embarked to build a republic of nations? Peace or war at a massive scale in the 21st century will depend largely on the answer to this question.

Obviously, a *pax Sinica* would collide with the *pax Americana*; in such a scenario, indirect or direct conflicts between the two hegemons seem unavoidable. But if a cooperative Chinese civilization joins the efforts of a cooperative Europe, not only could an unprecedented area of peace and prosperity be opened on Eurasia, but the US could rediscover the wisdom of the Jeffersonian spirit, or face the risk of being isolated from the dynamics of a post-imperial Eurasian world-continent.

One may try to anticipate the nature of Beijing's posture in world affairs by looking at what can be called China's experience of diversity. Here, we are looking for a factor that partly explains

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China's current relatively good relationship with its 14 land neighbours (given the heterogeneity of China's periphery, this is already a remarkable diplomatic achievement), its strong engagement into the United Nations system and the World Trade Organization, its commitment to the ASEAN+3 process, the six-party talks on North Korea or the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO).

Beyond more obvious and immediate tactical concerns, or strategic choices, Zhou Enlai's "Five Principles of Peaceful Co-Existence", or more recently the SCO's "Shanghai Spirit" (mutual trust, mutual benefit, equality, consultation, respect for cultural diversity, and common development) might well also be linked with a tradition of having to handle pluralism and to cope with complexity.

Since it shares with the Old World an accumulation of experiences in dealing with a high level of internal diversity, the Chinese world is more likely to adopt the European quest for equilibrium on the global chessboard. As custom deeply influences individuals' behaviour, history has profound impact on the reflexes or responses of political entities.



The US, which never had to manage internally a multilateral subsystem, is just not well equipped to accept and live within a genuine global multilateral system. Discussing the trans-Atlantic divide, Robert Kagan affirms that “on major strategic and international questions today, Americans are from Mars and Europeans are from Venus” (*Paradise and Power*, 2003). But to continue the astronomical metaphor, if one can say, indeed, that Americans are from one planet, both Chinese and Europeans are from constellations.

For Washington the only conceivable alternative is between chaos (to be understood as a world without US leadership) or the leadership of one

survival. Indeed, analyzing the “war on terror”, David Frum and Richard Perle conclude: “There is no middle way for Americans: it is victory or Holocaust” (*An end to evil*, 2004). One should not underestimate the danger of such a gross and immature remark, since it gives no more space to reason and intelligence.

By contrast, because of their past internal diplomatic arrangements, Europe and China see almost instinctively the nuances between these extremes and the advantages of maintaining equilibrium among various poles of power. History has trained the two old worlds to deal better with complexity, uncertainty and the art of concessions. In the US, many would have first to recognize that reality is complex and uncertain and that compromise is not necessarily a betrayal of ideals, or negotiation a waste of time. Americans like Henry Kissinger, who are able to apprehend at the world level a genuine multipolar configuration, have been shaped by careful studies of European thinking. *Diplomacy* (1994) recapitulates the story of the Old World foreign-policy wisdom – and, of course, imperfections.

Middle ways between uniformity, fragmentation

It is a paradox that despite a long obsession for an immutable order – unity under the emperor mainly served by an ideology, orthodox Confucianism, and an obedient bureaucracy – China could well be prepared to act as a co-architect of a multipolar world.

“History has trained the two old worlds to deal better with complexity, uncertainty and the art of concessions”

pole over the others (another way to formulate and justify the *pax Americana*). “A quick end to US supremacy would produce massive international instability. In effect, it would prompt global anarchy,” wrote Zbigniew Brzezinski, analyst and formerly national security adviser to president Jimmy Carter (*The Grand Chessboard*, 1997). One can even find a radical version of this alternative, where chaos is mere non-existence, and its opposite order and

Western “Orientalism” reflects China’s imperial vision of itself: a timeless pyramidal socio-political construction occupying the centre of the world. This “Orientalism”, vulgar or sophisticated, is still one of the sources of the “China threat” refrain. Indeed, a re-emerging “Middle Kingdom” – translation of the Chinese *zhong guo*, where the notion of “kingdom” is not even obvious – would logically strive to gain a position of dominant centrality.

In that sense, the fear is just a consequence of a biased initial assumption. One should stop to indulge in vague representation such as the one behind the alleged quotation attributed to Napoleon Bonaparte: “When China awakes the world will tremble.” Why should the world necessarily dread China’s awakening? China is, in fact, able for concrete universalism, which is already partly enveloped in its own internal “unity in diversity” and in its post-imperial socio-political transformations.

The overture of the epic *Romance of the Three Kingdoms* (either written at the very end of the Yuan Dynasty, 1277-1367, or at the very beginning of the Ming period, 1368-1644) is often cited: “The world under heaven, after a long period of division, tends to unite; after a long period of union, tends to divide.” The author of the novel, Luo Guanzhong (1330-1400), points to different phases of Chinese history where fragmentation and unity alternate. The issue of unification has been the recurrent theme of China’s history well after the Qin’s first emperor (221 BC) or the long Han Dynasty (206 BC-AD 220), which established the intellectual foundations and fixed the rules of imperial Confucianism.

If this system has been able for long periods of time to structure the Chinese world, one cannot reduce all Chinese history to it, and one should pay attention to phases whose characteristic was to balance unity and diversity. If China has suffered in the past from totalitarian uniformity or the chaos of internecine fights, it also made the experience of a wide range of political configurations between these two extremes.

The pre-Qin age presents interesting examples of such configurations. Under the Zhou Dynasty (1121-222 BC), numerous kingdoms co-existed within what is today’s China territory. While describing a sub-period (known as Springs and Autumns, 722-481 BC) of this long dynastic time, French sociologist and sinologist Marcel Granet (1884-1940) writes: “This time saw a kind of inferior concord ... it was the result of

a practice of summits and treaties among the kingdoms ... they intended to reach a certain equilibrium” (*The Chinese Civilization*, 1929).

It is in that context that American analyst and academic Kendall Myers (Johns Hopkins University, Paul Nitze School of Advanced International Studies) is right to affirm: “China, like Europe, has had its own international system, with a long experience of several thousand years of international relations, for the most part within China. As a consequence, China has developed its own classical theories” (“Why history matters”, Daxia Forum Lecture, East China Normal University, Shanghai, June 2, 2006). A study that would be to the Chinese world what Henry Kissinger’s *Diplomacy* is to the West has yet to be written.

“China is not another nation-state, and an analogy with Europe can help us to frame the Chinese world in a way that is both useful and meaningful”

Enveloping diversity, also potentially a source of fragmentation as indicated in the opening of the *Romance of the Three Kingdoms*, China has developed highly refined thinking on equilibrium and harmony. Widely used nowadays is the famous sentence whose origin is the *Analects* of Confucius (551-479 BC): “The gentleman is looking for harmony and not assimilation, the others are looking for assimilation without harmony” (*Analects* 13:23). More generally, it makes sense to read the *Analects* as, among other things, a classic on peace and conflict prevention. Asked by his disciple Zigong, often engaged in inter-state diplomacy, about government, Confucius replies: “Sufficiency of food, military equipment and confidence of the people in their ruler.” But when the disciple asks: “Suppose you had no choice but to dispense with one of these three, which would you forgo?” the master answers: “Weapons.” (*Analects* 12:7).

Let us go back to Vienna’s Kunsthistorisches Museum to look again at *The Art of Painting*. In her left hand, Vermeer’s Clio is holding *The History of the Peloponnesian War* by Thucydides. Here again, Europe and China meet; they have in common the sad experience of violent tragedies. While Chinese and European histories are made of wars on their respective soils, the US did not have to go through major conflicts on its territory (the



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Civil War between 1861 and 1865 being an exception).

With such similarities in their past trajectories, Europe and China probably developed a perception that is closer than it can seem. Exoticism and strangeness reconstructed by literature or cultivated by Sinologists who examine China, as Egyptologists would explore hieroglyphs, sphinx and mummies, might diminish when the analysis is gaining in accuracy.

On December 1, 2005, Premier Wen Jiabao gave an interview to the French newspaper Le Figaro. As an introduction, he made a reference to the scholar Gu Hongming (1857-1928): “It seems that only the French people could understand China and the Chinese civilization because the French share an extraordinary quality with the Chinese, namely subtlety.”

And Wen added: “So when I meet French friends, I do not feel there is estrangement between us.” We have also this reference to subtlety to describe the Chinese mind, but this time in Jean Monnet’s words; remembering his stay in Shanghai in 1934 and 1935, the father of the European community writes: “When I reached Shanghai ... I found myself face to face with men who seemed far more subtle and intelligent than Westerners” (Jean Monnet, *Memoirs*, Collins, English translation 1978, p 110).

Delicacy of perception and an aptitude for nuances are not, of course, exclusively Sino-French characteristics. Wen was being polite with his guests - and supremely “subtle” with his French visitors, who may have been especially receptive to the agreeable wording.

However, millennia have polished the European and Chinese collective mind to an extent yet to be matched by the New World, in spite of its many achievements. General refined judgment did not prevent the two edges of Eurasia to fall repeatedly into the madness of wars, internal turmoil and even to come close to self-annihilation, but accumulated wisdom certainly contributed to their respective longevity and current renewal.

China: The Europe of the Far East?

Alexis de Tocqueville (1805-59) observed this general paradox of 19th-century US society: “The aspect of American society is animated, because men and things are always changing; but it is monotonous, because all these changes

are alike” (Chapter XVII, *Democracy in America*, 1835).

Today, for those trying to describe China’s mega-society, the difficulty is twofold: men and things are, indeed, changing, but these changes, because of the heterogeneity of the Chinese world, are not similar. Discontinuities in geography, demography and economy humble the China watcher and certainly make the work of policymakers arduous. People not directly in contact with the reality of the Chinese constellation tend to look at China as a homogeneous entity. They imagine one Chinese type from Harbin to Guangzhou or from Shanghai to Chengdu living in similar environment and conditions. This is, of course, a stereotype. China is not another nation-state, and an analogy with Europe can help us to frame the Chinese world in a way that is both useful and meaningful.

China is physically almost as large as Europe and much larger than the European Union 27. The population of the European Union does not exceed a third of China’s 1.3 billion inhabitants. These basic elements introduce us to the scale and variety of the Chinese world. Nine Chinese continental provinces (Henan, Shandong, Guangdong, Sichuan, Jiangsu, Hebei, Hunan, Hubei and Anhui) have a population superior in number to the population of France, which is after Germany the most populated of the 25 EU member states. Almost 200 million people live in the Shanghai economic basin alone (the Shanghai municipality, Jiangsu, Zhejiang and Anhui). A strong Sichuan identity, a Cantonese culture or some Shandong characteristics, to name a few Chinese cultural subsystems, are not really surprising. Moreover, one should not forget that China is a multinational political entity.

Conventionally, one speaks of 56 ethnic groups composing China’s gigantic human mosaic. If the Han group - being itself much less uniform than it seems - makes more than 90% of the total population, one has to keep in mind that other minorities represent in total more than 100 million people. China’s largest minority, the Zhuang group mainly located in the Guangxi autonomous region, is made up of 16 million people, and more than 18 ethnic groups are composed by more than a million people each. The newest independent European country, Montenegro, has a population of fewer than 650,000.

In such a context, it is important to balance the legitimate need for unity with the richness of diversity. Indeed, the preamble of the People’s

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Francois Jullien

The Changing Face of China: From Mao to Market,
John Gittings

The River Below,
Francois Cheng

Republic of China constitution adopted in 1982 stipulates: “The People’s Republic of China is a unitary multinational state built up jointly by the people of all its nationalities. In the struggle to safeguard the unity of the nationalities, it is necessary to combat big-nation chauvinism, mainly Han chauvinism, and also necessary to combat local-national chauvinism.” To combat big-nation chauvinism and local-national chauvinism, this double simultaneous task would sound familiar, *mutatis mutandis*, to a European Union official. On one side, Beijing needs to ensure that the Han large majority does not fall into the pitfalls of exclusive nationalism within the Chinese world, and on the other side, it needs to prevent separatism.

From six to 27 members; the history of post-World War II European integration is made of successive enlargements; it is also, gradually, the political reunification of the European civilization. At the other edge of Eurasia, with Hong Kong and Macau (1997 and 1999 respectively) retrocession, the Chinese world is also going through a process of reunification; using EU jargon, it could be framed as China’s own version of enlargement. The status of special administrative region allows Hong Kong and Macau to maintain some of their characteristics within an enlarged Chinese world. In Hong Kong, the Basic Law guarantees a large degree of autonomy (under the principle “one country, two systems”) to the citizens of the city-state. It also indicates the path toward democratization (for example, Article 45 of the Basic Law specifies that “the ultimate aim is the selection of the chief executive by universal suffrage upon nomination by a broadly representative nominating committee in accordance with democratic procedures”). For the Chinese world, Hong Kong is a laboratory whose successful experimentations will have a considerable impact. Indeed, if the principle “one country, two systems” proves to be workable and effective, it can be a point of departure to frame the future of cross-strait relations. The road to political integration between Beijing and Taipei after intense economic links will be long and tortuous.

Europe and China: Cross-fertilizations

The European Union must articulate more options with respect to China than seeing it simply as either a threat or an economic opportunity. By reflecting on China’s cohesion, Europe can find the path toward more political integration. In that sense, for the world’s largest

trading bloc, the reintegration of one-fifth of mankind into the world-system is not only a test but also an impulse for further political deepening. Europe is being asked to face its historical responsibility, and this task might help focus the union’s energies and take them away from other issues, perhaps more urgent, but certainly less important.

After the exchanges with the Jesuits in the 16th century, and the clashes with Western aggressive powers in the 1800s, China is facing Europe directly for the third time. However, Beijing is now talking to Brussels as an equal. Failing to realize that a renewed Europe is more than a force that can potentially counterbalance Washington or a partner for business, Beijing would miss an historical opportunity. If China can find inspiration in European society and its constant effort to balance economic efficiency and social justice under the rule of law, then even more Chinese citizens will be able to enjoy all the benefits of modernization. Chinese civilization will subsequently be in a better position to contribute to global equilibrium.

Moreover, culture has to stand as the keystone of the Euro-China relationship. Whereas trade, economic or political interests vary and can be sources of tensions, culture is what can maintain the connection between Europe and China, the supporting element without which the Euro-China arch can easily collapse. In its highest expression, culture does not divide. “Friends converge towards the gentleman’s culture and their friendship promotes benevolence and goodness.” This was Confucius’ view (Analects 12:24). Clashes between human beings are caused by obscurantism or misinterpretations of the traditions and not by what has been precisely elaborated through millennia to be a source of harmony.

Aware of fundamental commonalities, understanding their respective constraints and looking for cross-fertilizations, it is time now for the two old worlds to join their strengths and wisdoms to open a more cooperative page of history. Let us meditate one very last time on Vermeer’s *Art of Painting*. It presents a paradox: Clio imposes her presence but we can shape her features.



More Than Just a Social Model:
Reform and Social Justice,
PATRICK DIAMOND

The Changing Colors of the Sun:
Post-Revolution Ukraine, VERA RICH

Difference and the Parliamentary
Coup, STELLA TANG

INSIDE EUROPE

More Than Just a Social Model: Reform and Social Justice

PATRICK DIAMOND

Patrick Diamond is the Director of Policy Network, London and a Senior Visiting Fellow at the LSE.

In May 2003, Jürgen Habermas and Jacques Derrida wrote a public letter about the future of European identity in the wake of the Iraq war. The welfare state’s guarantees of social security, the European commitment to the civilising power of the state, and its capacity to address market failures were held to be distinctive characteristics that articulated Europe’s identity, differentiating it firmly from the United States.

The European Social Model (ESM) has become central to the definition of what modern Europe is for. The ESM is not a single concept, but a wider set of strategic principles and policy instruments designed to ensure security and opportunity for all in a changing world. This definition of the ESM reflects three categories or criteria:

Responsibility: society takes broad responsibility for the welfare of individuals, sheltering them against poverty and providing support against unemployment, illness, disability and old age. Society encourages and actively promotes high quality public goods such as education, health and support for families.

Regulation: labour relations are institutionalised. They are based on social dialogue, labour laws and collective agreements. Social partnership flourishes in firms. Regulation persists in product markets.

Redistribution: transfers and services are open

to all groups. Differences in incomes are limited by redistribution through financial transfers, taxes on property, and so on.

The policy framework underpinning this conception includes a developed and interventionist state; a robust welfare system; the containment of economic inequalities; and a key role in sustaining the institutions of social partnership. The ESM also implies a rich framework of social and economic citizenship rights, gradually consolidated in Europe since the Second World War.

But the ESM is more than just a social model. Indeed, it influences productivity and growth, as well as the overall structure of the economy itself. The ESM helps to shape social institutions, social norms and the wider culture. At the heart of the ESM are values of equity, fairness, solidarity and freedom.

The starting-point for any discussion of the ESM today should be an acknowledgement that the debate in Europe has too often focused on the question of welfare state sustainability: will the ESM survive; does it deserve to in the future? There are, of course, several compelling economic and competitiveness challenges confronting the welfare states of Western Europe. But this is the wrong perspective from which to begin. The centre-right has created a false choice - ‘liberalise or die’ - to justify the scaling-back of the welfare state while facilitating globalisation, world trade, and



“We should not lose confidence in the idea of the active state as an efficient instrument of social justice and economic modernisation”

adaptation to economic change.
There is no compelling evidence that suggests the welfare state is becoming uncompetitive or unaffordable due to these external pressures. Instead, the debate about the ESM should be concerned with how reform of such models re-distributes opportunity, assists the vulnerable, protects the marginalised and strengthens social justice. Indeed, reform should be the friend of social justice in the new Europe, not the enemy.
Social democrats need to frame the arguments for reform more persuasively, however, reflecting the core priorities of social justice. This is a notoriously elusive concept, but the German political scientist Wolfgang Merkel has listed five priorities of social justice in a post-industrial society:

1. The fight against poverty - not just economic inequality itself, but on the grounds that poverty (above all enduring poverty) limits the individual’s capacity for autonomy and self-esteem.
2. Creating the highest possible standards of education and training, rooted in equal and fair access for all.
3. Ensuring employment for all those willing

- and able.
4. A welfare state that provides protection and dignity.
 5. Limiting inequalities of income and wealth if they hinder the realisation of the first four goals or endanger the cohesion of society.

Defenders of the status-quo should appreciate that Europe’s models of welfare capitalism do not currently match these basic principles of social justice. At present:

- Full employment no longer exists in most EU member-states. Even high employment countries like Sweden and the UK have problems of working age inactivity and rising claims for sickness and invalidity benefit.
- Security against social risks is very partial: welfare systems insure against ‘old’ risks such as short-term unemployment, sickness and poverty in old age, but not so well against ‘new’ risks - single parenthood, relationship breakdown, and incapacity in old age.



- Fairness between the generations has broken down as pensioners fare better, but poverty among families with children and child poverty is rising throughout the EU.

- The industrial relations system protects privileged labour market insiders through strong trade unions and collective agreements, but excludes weaker and more vulnerable workers in the competitive service economy.

- Inequalities of income and wealth are rising in the EU, while the inheritance of social disadvantage among children is becoming more rather than less embedded.

Welfare states in the future will have to confront massive exogenous changes: the ageing society requiring traditional conceptions of retirement to be re-thought; the emergence of post-scarcity lifestyles; new kinds and greater numbers of vulnerable and impoverished groups, including migrants, women and children; social changes such as the decline of the traditional family; and the weaker performance of the European economy since the early 1990s.

In response, the EU needs a new social justice charter, enforced by the European Commission, to which all member-states sign-up. This developmental welfare state is an alternative to both EU Keynesian policies that seek to recreate traditional powers of national economic intervention; and the EU regulatory state where employment and social regulation fills the gap created by the collapse of the old constraints on market capitalism.

The social justice charter should involve:

- Effective peer review of social justice policies through Europe-wide sharing of best practice through the Open Method of Co-ordination (OMC).
- New criteria to assess the quality of national public expenditure. The growth and stability pact has had perverse effects since

public expenditure is often the prerequisite for structural reforms, for example in infrastructure and skills.

- Reform of the EU budget with a shift away from agriculture and old industries to research and investment in human capital.

This model attempts to counter the adverse effects of globalisation on the low skilled and low paid, by recreating three pillars of security in industrialised societies: ensuring that those who lose their job can find new employment; providing universal access to basic services such as health and education; and anticipating the root causes of insecurity such as low skills and lack of employability, acting to alleviate them early.

If Europe is to flourish in the future, then growth must be inclusive. The EU's role should be to help member-states to transform welfare from the passive distribution of benefits to actively investing in opportunities and more equal life-chances. What is distinctive about the ESM is that it aspires to go beyond compensating for the injustices inflicted by the market, to shaping the market as well.

We should not lose confidence in the idea of the active state as an efficient instrument of social justice and economic modernisation. The enduring ideals of the ESM - solidarity, equality, liberty - are as valid today as a century ago. But the model itself is under strain. That is why its institutions and programmes have to be updated for the 21st century.

A future ESM would not be any one national model, but would fuse together solutions from across countries through policy emulation. These include obligations as well as rights in the welfare state, especially active labour market policy; sustaining the contributory principle in the services provided through the ESM; a shift from 'negative' to 'positive' welfare, promoting active social and economic participation, learning, and life-choices; and finally less bureaucracy and greater decentralisation and diversity of provision.

The future of the ESM does not amount to a choice between 'Keynesian Europe' and a deregulated 'Anglo-Saxon' Europe. There is an alternative vision of a 'Social Europe' that is both progressive and fair.

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Small Transformations. The Politics of Welfare Reform - East and West, János Mátyás Kovács

The Changing Colours of the Sun: Post-Revolution Ukraine

VERA RICH

Vera Rich was recently given the Order of St Olga – the highest award that can be given to a female by the State of Ukraine – for her championship of Ukrainian culture.

In 1991, when the Soviet Union fell apart, Ukraine became the largest state in Europe. During the past sixteen years, it has captured world headlines on several occasions and at various levels – from the ephemeral world of pop-music to the pro-democracy “Orange Revolution”. Yet, for the most part, in the world at large, knowledge of Ukraine remains fragmentary – so that while millions of UK citizens know the name of the footballer Andriy Shevchenko, relatively few know of the poet Taras Shevchenko, who for Ukrainians combines the iconic roles of national poet, defender of the oppressed, and inspiration of the long struggle for statehood and independence. And while the Orange Revolution won world-wide admiration and support (no less than 30,000 “international observers” sacrificed their Christmas festivities to monitor the vital re-run of the disputed Presidential elections – the vast majority of them paying their own expenses!), the political confusion ensuing from President Yushchenko’s dissolution of the Ukrainian Parliament in April 2007 has disconcerted even many of Ukraine’s most loyal friends.

For those with some interest in European geopolitics, Ukraine’s future is viewed as a choice between Russia and “Europe”. The linguistic situation is seen as a corollary of this: with Ukrainophones looking westward to eventual membership of the European Union and Russophones looking towards closer

ties with Russia. This division, however, is simplistic. Many people in the east and south East of Ukraine, whom Soviet polity denied the chance of learning the Ukrainian language in their youth, and who do not possess the linguistic skills to master it as adults, deeply resent their lack of what should have been their mother tongue. One of the most moving of the songs sung on Kyiv’s Independence Square during the “Orange Revolution” – “The Colour of the Sun” – was a duel in which two singers, Ukrainophone and Russophone, expressed love for their country that transcended the linguistic “barrier.” And EU membership was on Ukraine’s agenda well before the president Victor Yushchenko came to power; already by the mid-1990s an accession date of 2020 was part of Ukraine’s political discourse.

No serious politician would deny that Ukraine has to preserve a viable working relationship with her big neighbour. However, recent developments, ranging from reported Russian attempts to buy up Ukraine’s energy suppliers to such symbolic irritants as the news (which arrived during the writing of this article) that the Director of the Ukrainian Academy’s Institute of Literature has been denied a visa for a private visit to St Petersburg have made Ukrainian relations with Russia increasingly a matter of political pragmatism rather than based on fraternal warmth.

Symbolic of Ukraine’s need to look simultaneously East and West is the Odessa-

Brody pipeline. This was built with the intention of conveying oil from the Caspian and Central Asian fields, shipped by tanker across the Black Sea, to Brody on the Polish border, and thence to the Płock oil refinery and the Gdansk oil terminal. Oil from the non-Russian states of the former USSR would thus reach northern, central and western Europe, bypassing the potential stranglehold of Russia. However, although western politicians frequently praised the pipeline as a potential guarantor of energy security, the oil multinationals were shy of committing themselves, while the Poles delayed over their commitment to build the required links to Płock and Brody. In 2004, in the final months of the Kuchma presidency, the Ukrainian government, after months of indecision, agreed a temporary deal with Russia, by which Russian oil, piped westward across Belarus to Brody, would then be sent eastward again to Odessa, and thence by tanker to the Mediterranean (contravening, incidentally, the Turkish commitment to make the ecologically high-risk Dardanelles a tanker-free zone). Since this arrangement came into operation, Ukrainian international political discourse has shown a significant dichotomy: when addressing Russians it notes the benefit to Ukraine’s economy from the transit fees paid by Russia; when speaking to westerners it urges the eventual completion of the Płock and Gdansk links so that, as originally envisaged, Odessa can transmit oil into the heart of the European market.

Apart from some die-hard Communists who would like to see the Soviet Union restored, Ukrainian public opinion is becoming increasingly Europe-oriented. The problem, increasingly a pragmatic rather than an ideological one, is how to reconcile this with living next door to what appears to be an increasingly assertive Russia.

The current political turmoil in Ukraine has been seen by some commentators as a re-emergence of the Europe-versus-Russia controversy. Such a view is over-simplistic. Certainly, one root of the problem is the disputed 2004 Presidential elections, in which geopolitical factors did play some role, and in the aftermath of which, to resolve a deadlock, the incoming President Viktor Yushchenko agreed to the transfer of a package of powers and prerogatives hitherto belonging to the Presidency into the competence of Parliament. The problem is precisely what powers were transferred. In spring 2005, elections to the Ukrainian Supreme Rada (parliament) resulted in a government headed by Viktor Yanukovych (Yushchenko’s erstwhile rival for

the Presidency) leaving the pro-Yushchenko parties in the Rada as a minority. This situation is not new – many US Presidents have had to work with a Congress dominated by the opposite party, but it requires considerable political finesse and – perhaps more important – a tradition of such “cohabitation”.

For Ukraine, new to multi-party democracy, the difficulties were considerable; on one occasion, Prime Minister Yanukovych refused to ratify seven Presidential decrees unless Yushchenko agreed to dismiss seven provincial governors who were loyal to the President. After several months during which parliamentary business became increasingly unworkable, and with conflicts between the various opposition parties exacerbating the situation, the final straw came when the parties of the ruling coalition were perceived by Yushchenko to be poaching Rada members from the parties supporting him. On 2 April 2007 Yushchenko decreed the Rada to be dissolved and announced new elections for 24 June. This led to a two-fold outcry: the pro-Yanukovych parties protested that the President had no right to dissolve the Rada ahead of its four-year term, while all parties – even the most pro-President – protested that this date would give them too little time to prepare their campaign. Smouldering in the background was another, related, dispute – if (as agreed in December 2004) the President could now only appoint certain key officials with the consent of the Rada, had he the right to dismiss them without the Rada’s approval?

Following Yushchenko’s decree, opposition parties and blocs withdrew from the Rada; the pro-Yanukovych ruling coalition continued to convene – awaiting a decision from the Constitutional Court as to its legality. Meanwhile, the rank-and-file Yanukovych supporters took to the streets – or rather to Independence Square in Kyiv, the focus of the “Orange Revolution” campaigners of autumn 2004, but now festooned with azure-and-white. Nothing abashed, the “Orange” opposition parties (now calling belatedly for a united stand!) established their rallying-ground on European Square, a couple of hundred metres away, noting that the name was appropriate, since *they* were the true, westward looking, European-minded democrats. The two groups continued for some weeks to campaign against each other, using no weapon against each other stronger than pop music to drown out each other’s speeches. But on 24 May, the situation took an uglier turn, when Yushchenko decreed that the special riot police should be subordinated to him, not to Interior Minister Vasyl Tsusko –and the following day, when he

FURTHER READING

Ukraine's Orange Revolution, Andrew Wilson

Song out of Darkness, Taras Shevchenko. translated by Vera Rich

summoned squads of such police to Kyiv, other troops loyal to Tsyusko blocked the roads. Under threat of armed violence, a deal was worked out between Yushchenko, Yanukovych, and a person who until now had been ignored in negotiations – Rada speaker Oleksandr Moroz – agreeing to the dissolution of the Rada and setting the new election date at 30 September. However, there have been further appeals to the Constitutional Court as to the legality of these decisions, and as this journal goes to press, that Court has still to rule. For the moment, Ukraine seems beset with divisions and conflicts between her would-be leaders. This is nothing new: back in the 17th century, Ivan Mazepa, Hetman (elected leader) of Ukraine’s Cossack state complained that

“All men long for peace, yet never
With one purpose work together”

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**7 Graphite Square
Vauxhall Walk
London SE11 5EE
T: +44 (0)20 7735 4000
F: +44 (0)20 7735 8000**

Difference and the Italian Parliamentary Coup

STELLA TANG

Stella Tang is a philosopher
and political activist dividing
her time between Rome
and Beijing.

During his stay in Genoa, Nietzsche heartily expressed his admiration for the spirit of individualism that characterised the architecture of the city: houses of all colours and shapes fighting one with the other, trying to prevail by escaping urban monotony like the pest, boasting a balcony somewhat more extended than the neighbour’s, a higher floor, a small turret, and any other expression of difference. He contrasted this with the homogeneous spirit he distilled in the German residential neighbourhoods, with their identical houses duly lined up in endless rows of the same.

Ambition has famously been given a most concise characterisation by Julius Caesar – better be first in the provinces than second in Rome. And it is in Rome that we discover today the multifaceted nature of words such as ‘difference’, ‘multiplicity’ and ‘pluralism’, that always oscillate between the expression of the greatest freedom for the individual and the most direct political representation for the inhabitants of the polis, and the risk of factionalism, inimical division, persecution of private interest.

Political fragmentation in the Italian Parliament – a Parliament that, we should remember, with two chambers with identical powers exercises an enormous role in the life of the Italian parliamentary democracy – is a well-known phenomenon. More than twenty parties are actively represented in Parliament, and the governing coalition – depending on how it is looked at – oscillates between nine and eleven parties.

To the extent that this fragmentation points to

a wealth of political offers, it bestows a peculiar pleasure on going to the ballot box in Italy. With a television system that is forced to give ample space even to the most minute of political groups, it often happens that the voter is able to associate himself with a particular group to an important degree. This is probably one of the reasons behind the greater political engagement of Italians as evidenced by both a reading of the official media and conversations robbed in cafes.

The actual political situation, however, offers a marked contrast to such hopes. Many Italian commentators, reflecting on the current state of affairs, repeatedly speak of a “spirit of 1992”, referring to the period when, torn between corruption scandals and an economy gone out of control, a whole political system and the class it created were reduced to ashes. It was the end of the First Republic, with the disappearance of the Democrazia Cristiana (DC) – the party that effectively ruled since the instauration of the Republic in 1948, – the break-up of the Partito Comunista Italiano (PCI), and the exile of important political figures such as former prime minister Bettino Craxi.

The sense of a “new 1992” is given its main thrust from the perceived weakness of the current government. With endless negotiation between coalition partners – further complicated by the feeble majority at the Senate (where the governing coalition can only count on two votes over the Berlusconi-led opposition) – the government is often deemed unable to govern. Faced with fundamental issues demanding immediate attention – such as a thorough reform of the Welfare State (which should include greater support for young “temporary” workers,

as well as a stabilisation of the pension system), a new electoral system (the current system was voted in by the Berlusconi government alone and is deemed to be at the root of the current political uncertainty in the Senate), and a revision of the tax system – the government seem unable to reach an agreement between its many components and steer a viable way.

The perceived weakness seems to have given rise to an “assault” on the part of so-called “poteri forti”. Just recently Luca Cordero di Montezemolo – president of the industrialists and the man behind Fiat and Ferrari – publicly voiced a full-fledged political program, going well beyond his duties as president of Confindustria; the Catholic Church has never been so active as in the recent months, to the point of organising a nation-wide rally in Rome with the organised participation of over half a million people; Trade Unions are unusually assertive in their demands prior to political confrontation with the government.

A new offensive of the judiciary can also be noted. In recent months enormous amounts of phone “intercettazioni” (interceptions) of leading politicians were made public causing repeated rows. This is coupled by confidential information being repeatedly “leaked” to (certain) newspapers going to fuel a largely groundless debate in the national media.

It is then not surprising that trust towards the institutions of the State seems to be at an all-time low, with the apparent public rejection of the current political class. But it would be rushing to conclusions to refer back too strongly to the experience of 1992. For one thing, the economic situation is not even comparable; on the verge of national bankruptcy then, and now expected to grow over 2% in 2007. Likewise, the corruption scandals investigated by the Mani Pulite (“clean hands”) team in 1992 led to serious charges and arrests, whereas the situation today seem to be characterised by a legally irrelevant but media-effective accusations campaign.

If the evolution of the situation is unpredictable at the present moment it points to serious structural problems in the Italian parliamentary democracy, problems that force us to cast a second look at how to understand, and best practice, that pluralism that European societies (should) see as their most precious treasure.

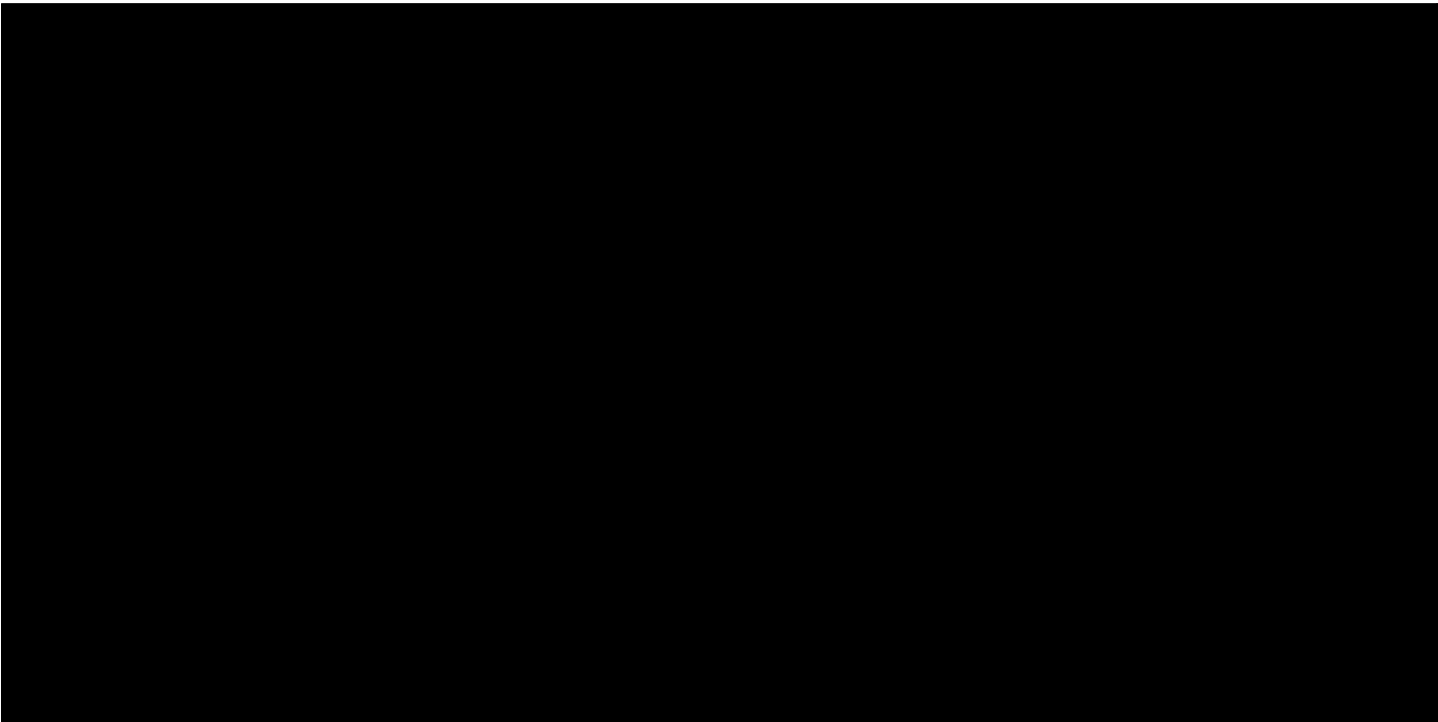
Chinese thought has a millenarian aversion to political and social fragmentation. Words such as ‘partiality’ and ‘partisanship’, and the thought of separate groups representing a particular ‘interest’, have been vehemently



The School of Athens,
Raphael, c. 1511

condemned as a descent from the interest for the whole to that for the individual. A party has always been understood as a clique, the representation of an interest as a demand for private gain. That this is a possible negative outcome of plurality is a thought that the current Italian situation instantiates. But it is hardly alone: the disappearance of the Polish nation over the 18th century has frequently been linked to the suicidal system of *liberum veto*, whereby any parliamentarian had the right to block legislation, effectively leading the nation to a stand-still. This illness may also turn out to affect the European creation, where the exploration of its full potentialities is blocked by a system not too dissimilar in ethos to that of 18th century Poland.

But history has also shown that a party can also give voice to a repressed subjectivity. What the Italian example paradoxically shows is that what is needed is not *less* but *more* plurality, if perhaps of a different kind. Systems must make decisions, must act and not merely react, legislate with a solid vision of the future, and have impact. If, on one side, this can only be achieved by a greater cohesion of the governing forces (such as is the case in many European countries), this is not enough. The political forces (and one may rightly wish they be not reduced to merely two) must compete on the terrain of the *future*, offering truly alternative proposals that incite the necessary *political* interest on the part of its citizens. The prospect of a future competition between a Rudolph Giuliani and a Hilary Clinton, as well as the lack of any real left-of-centre alternatives for a Briton during the recent attack on Iraq, are worrying signs. If true democratic pluralism dies when exacerbated factionalism gains predominance, neither does it boost a healthy constitution when the ballot box is turned into a procedural reproduction of the same.



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Romania ²~~AND~~²_{THE} EU: Aspiration and Expectation

by Mihai Razvan Ungureanu



As Romania joined the European Union on January 1st 2007, there is an ever growing interest in Romania in the United Kingdom. It is in our mutual interest to make Romania better known in Europe, as well as to present to the European public the image of a *young, modern and dynamic Romania*, a country with a strong European and democratic heritage – brutally interrupted after the end of the second world war – a country which has a lot to bring to the European family, in political, economic, and cultural terms.

The EU needs Romania as much as Romania needs the EU. However paradoxical or daring it may sound, this phrase reflects the truth about Romania’s European path. The accession to the Union is the achievement of a long road on which Romania and the EU have worked together to make sure that the enlarged Europe is stronger, more democratic and more competitive.

In economic terms, Romania has maintained for the last six years in a row a growth rate which is double the rate of the old EU-15 average. This dynamism has already brought benefits to the Member States of the EU - the Netherlands, Austria, France, Germany, Italy and Great Britain, to mention only a few of them - through the return coming from their investments.

But this trend would not have been possible without the incentive represented by our accession process, without the economic support provided by the pre-accession funds, as well as the constant support in implementing reforms. Romania has completely re-founded its economy according to the internal market principles and ensures a genuine competitive environment, in which all companies are treated equally by the law and where the same provisions apply to everyone in the business environment. In turn, these transformations play to the advantage of the Union, through the extension of the area of the internal market, where common, transparent and predictable standards are enforced.

Another example is represented by Romania’s human resources potential, an important part of the population being highly trained and having high professional standards. For example: Romania trains the largest number of IT engineers in the world after India. At the headquarters of Microsoft in Washington, Romanians are the second largest group of foreigners after Indians. IT knowledge and skills represent an

Mihai Razvan Ungureanu is a Romanian historian, diplomat and politician. He is a former Minister of Foreign Affairs (2004-2007), and Regional Emissary of the Stability Pact for South-Eastern Europe (2000-2004). He holds a Master's Degree from the University of Oxford, and a PhD degree from the University of Iasi, Romania, where he served as a professor.

THE EU NEEDS ROMANIA AS MUCH AS ROMANIA NEEDS THE EU.



important dimension of the “brand” of Romania. For a Union which sets as an objective to make a difference as the first knowledge based economy, Romania can provide solid assets in this direction.

Free movement of workers is one of the main freedoms of the EU and one asset in providing growth in the Union. Free movement of workers supports economic growth in the destination countries and contributes to *bridging the economic gap* between old and new Member States. Romanian labour forces working abroad are already bringing about benefits both at national and at community levels. Furthermore, Romanian migrant labour is mostly temporary, thus posing no threat to the national budget of the destination countries.

In the medium-term, Romania’s economic growth will be an incentive for Romanians to work in their native country rather than abroad. Romania has a low unemployment rate (less than 6%). Furthermore, the Romanian market will itself turn into a destination for labour migration. The Romanian Government runs a series of growth and employment policies that will improve domestic standards and diminish the attractiveness of outward migration.

Besides the economic dimension of Romania’s integration in the European Union, my country can also bring added value to the common European policies, as well as in several dimensions of its external relations.

Romania is managing the second longest external border of the EU, after Finland. It is a huge responsibility and also an important task we have undertaken. In this position, Romania is in charge of guaranteeing the efficient management of the Eastern borders of the Union, and of responding effectively to common threats such as trafficking in human beings, organized crime etc. Romania has in fact already endorsed these responsibilities, acting now as a provider of security at the Eastern EU border.

Moreover, our geographic position has given us a vast knowledge of the area, including first-hand evaluations about the regional issues in the EU’s Eastern Neighborhood, as well as ideas on possible ways to tackle them. Therefore, Romania can contribute to a more coherent and coordinated involvement of the EU in the Eastern vicinity. Romania brings to the EU two new neighbours: the Republic of Moldova and the Black Sea.

From this perspective, Romania has the responsibility and the determination to consolidate the EU’s values in the Republic of Moldova and to engage this country into a meaningful, beneficial cooperation with the EU. We also look forward to our further and direct involvement in the European security cooperation meant to solve the Transnistrian conflict, a major hindrance

to the development of Republic of Moldova and to the stability and security of the entire region.

Romania will have the biggest impact on the European Common Foreign and Security Policy with regard to the Black Sea region and will certainly play an important role in the definition and direct involvement of the EU in this region. Our experience



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and initiatives of cooperation with the countries in the area will be a valuable asset for the future actions of the Union.

At the same time, Romania is willing and able to contribute to the process of settling the difficult issues in the Western Balkans region. In particular, Romania supports a strong and substantial EU involvement in Kosovo, in the post-status period.

Romania’s contribution to the European Security and Defense Policy is well-known. Apart from the conceptual input, the involvement in the field operations is self-explaining: participation in the EU Concordia mission in Bosnia-Herzegovina, and in EU forces in Rafah (in Palestinian territories) and Kinshasa (in RD Congo). Now we are preparing our contribution to the future EU mission in Kosovo, as well as a Romanian input to the crisis management operation in Iraq.



As an EU member state, Romania’s voice will join the ones interested in consolidating the transatlantic partnership in all its aspects. I picture a transatlantic relationship based on the existence of two equal partners that support and respect each other, able to answer in a coordinated manner the challenges of globalization.

Security has become a complex concept nowadays. It can be associated with a wide range of policies, such as internal security, or energy security, or external security. It can also be associated with another concept and transform into “flexicurity”, at the edge between economy and security.

Energy security represents another global challenge for the Union. The way ahead in creating a stable and predictable energy trading context, as well as ensuring environmental standards, is based on building strong partnership with third countries. Romania has built up its strength in the energy sector and reached a high degree of market liberalization, which is one of the crucial aspects for a competitive internal market. In line with the current European approach towards energy security and considering the strategic potential of the Black Sea in this respect, Romania, as a gas importer from the Russian Federation, is interested in accelerating alternative projects for the transportation of hydrocarbons projects aiming at the diversification of energy suppliers and transit routes. The Nabucco gas pipeline and PEOP oil pipeline (Constan a-Trieste) represent efficient alternative solutions with reasonable costs, which could contribute to increasing energy security in Europe.

The current European context could be considered a historic opportunity to evaluate our achievements so far and to lay the foundation for the future. It is a moment of intellectual effervescence and of substantial debates on the major issues facing us today. Romania is part to the “re-founding” exercise, which will define the new identity of the Union. The future of the EU is intrinsically connected to the success of its enlargement policy. ‘The essence of the EU’s soft power’, as Commissioner Rehn



has called it, enlargement is the most powerful instrument in the EU's "arsenal". It has brought back into the European family countries that had been for decades behind oppressive regimes. It has contributed to transforming former totalitarian governments into functional democracies and market economies. In some areas, it has helped reverse the effects of years of confrontation and bring security and stability to war-torn countries. The benefits have not been directed exclusively to the new member states and candidate countries. As figures have clearly shown, economic growth has been registered across the board, for old and new members alike.

The added value that new members bring is not a bonus – it is a vital necessity for a powerful and competitive EU. The perception of so-called "enlargement fatigue" cannot be overcome by drawing new borders, but only by a process of improving the EU's institutions and functioning capacity, on a par with an honest, open and substantial dialogue with our citizens. *Enlargement cannot be an inertial project.* It must be driven forward by the European people's interests and aspirations; it must fulfill their expectations and improve their lives.

Romania has its own experience in dealing with a strenuous transition period towards a genuine democracy and functioning market economy. One could say that this is a success story. We are aware of the problems, pressures, sacrifices that need to be made and what strategies to apply in this process. All of these are tools that the Union can

factor into its policies. All of these are examples of, if you like, good practices, that in the case of candidate or potential candidate countries could prove useful.

Romania's integration in the EU can be described as a continuous balance between what it brings to the Union and what the EU gives to Romania. It is a perfect example of a *win-win situation*. EU membership does not simply mean a contribution to the budget and attendance at the EU gatherings. It means, most of all, a direct involvement in the every day life and activities of the Union, an active presence in its politics, presenting solutions for the problems that come up either in Europe or worldwide. Romania strongly believes that, as a new Member State, it can rise up to this important challenge.

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Photo montage
artworks by
Iosif Király

Iosif Király
is an established
Romanian visual
artist who works in
the media of photography,
installation and performance. His works
have been exhibited in major museums
and art galleries throughout Europe
and the United States. He lectures at the
University of Arts, Bucharest, as well as
internationally.

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Artwork by Iosif Király





Artwork by Iosif Király

Stuff Dough: Young Romanian Cinema

by Alex Leo Serban

*When talking about Romanian Cinema, one should bear in mind a few things:
There is no "Romanian School of Cinema", just some film schools;
There are no "waves" (old or new), just individuals;
There are not many big prizes, just a few (but the situation is changing);
There is no money (except for – generally – inept films...)*

The "History of Romanian Cinema" would never make a feature – a short, rather. OK, film dictionaries say it all started in 1911 and on a grand scale (the film was called "The War of Independence", no less), but who are we fooling?!... Only a short while ago (that is, two years ago, when Cristi Puiu won the "Un certain regard" in Cannes with "The Death of Mr Lazarescu"), we were not even "on the map" – as Peter Greenaway so gracefully put it when invited by the "Anonimul" Independent Film Festival in the Danube Delta: "Romanian cinema does not exist", he solemnly stated. Well, thank you, Mr Greenaway, but here is some news for you: now it does! It is even a red, pulsating dot on the map of world cinema.

It happened so fast most Romanians are still bewildered. So, here is a short summing up: in 2006, Corneliu Porumboiu won the Golden Camera with his irresistible "12.08 East of Bucharest" in 2006. This year, it was a double win: Cristian Mungiu with "4 Months, 3 Weeks and 2 Days" (Palme d'Or) and late Cristian Nemescu with "California Dreamin' (endless)" (the "Un certain regard" main prize). Apart from these, we have to go back as early as 1957 (yes, that's 50 years ago!) to mention another Palme d'Or (in the shorts competition): Ion Popescu Gopo's animation "Short History". In 1965, Liviu Ciulei won the Best Director's Prize in Cannes with his adaptation of Liviu Rebreanu's classic novel "The Forest of the Hanged". And in 2004, Catalin Mitulescu also won the Palme d'Or for his short "Traffic". These successes are even more surprising since the Romanian participation in Cannes (Venice or Berlin...) was scarce: Lucian Pintilie – the most influential Romanian filmmaker – was (unfortunately) *out of* competition with his energy-filled "The Oak" (back in 1992) and *in* competition with his two subsequent efforts ("An Unforgettable Summer" and "Too Late") – which didn't win the favours of the jury... What proved to be "too late" for the unofficially recognized "dean" of Romanian cinema was too early for aspiring directors: the late 90s were more or less lost for them.

But then, immediately after, tiny lights seemed to blink at the end of the tunnel. Films made on a shoe-string or very limited budgets (Cristi Puiu's "Stuff & Dough" in 2001 and Cristian Mungiu's "Occident" in 2002) were shown in the "Director's Fortnight" in Cannes and received critical accolades. The former – constantly derailed during its production and very badly distributed locally – was never allowed to become a hit, whereas the latter opened in Romania to wide public success. These two titles mirror – as in a fable – the two facets of current Romanian cinema. It

Alex Leo Serban is a well-known Romanian film critic, writer, academic, translator and visual artist. He is currently a film columnist with the major cultural and literary publications in Romania. His works have been published and exhibited throughout the world.

is torn, symbolically and effectively, between the need for commercial success and the necessity of finding a specific, hopefully personal, way of telling stories. As many of those who work in this business know, this is never easy.

Puiu (now 40) and Mungiu (39) are highly illustrative if one wanted to give a definition of young Romanian cinema, not only because of their now high-profiled authority, but because they represent two models of serious dedication to the art of filmmaking. Significantly enough, both come from artistic and intellectual areas which were not cinematic per se from the start: Puiu studied fine arts before taking up film courses (in Switzerland) and Mungiu was a student in British and American literatures before going to film school (in Romania). Both took some time (four years in Puiu's case and five in Mungiu's) before directing their second feature. And both share the same patient, unwavering and uncompromising attitude to filmmaking. But there are differences too: Puiu's scripts were written in collaboration with writer Razvan Radulescu; Mungiu's are all his own. Puiu's style is easily recognizable in both "Stuff & Dough" and "The Death of Mr Lazarescu", whereas Mungiu makes a clear break between "Occident" and "4 Months, 3 Weeks and 2 Days". Quite frankly, someone who saw his grim, almost clinical dissection of "solidarity" in Communist times (in what is now commonly referred to as "432") would never suspect he is also the author of lighthearted, albeit dramatic, 3-part post-Communist fable in comedic mode that is "Occident"... It is not only his style which has changed (needless to say, for the



better!); it is his whole conception of cinema.

Mungiu's debut still bore the marks of Nae Caranfil's highly entertaining and seminal first feature "În pericoloso sporgersi" (one of the few box-office hits from the early 90s): the same 3-part structure – in which one story is perceived from three points of view –, the same light tone and the same soft look at "grand issues" (from politics to economic to social and family issues) which seems to be shared by many Romanian directors of the same generation. Mungiu's treatment of the story in *Occident* – which moved from the late-Communist time of Caranfil's film to the early years of Capitalist Romania – gave justice to the popular call for good comedies: his dialogues sparkled with wit and instant quotes, some visual jokes were quite clever and his twisting & turning of material proved pretty deft. But the acting, although above average, was not consistent and seemed to rely too heavily – at times – on some actors' charisma or star-power. The highlights of that, first, feature were the script and the soundtrack (the leitmotif of the highly popular pioneer song "Noi in anul 2000/ Cind nu vom mai fi copii..." / "In the year 2000, / When we won't be kids anymore..."



was a hoot among that generation!); but he's come a long way since then...

Cristi Puiu seems to be responsible for this change, just like Nae Caranfil seemed to "inspire" Mungiu for his first feature. Puiu – with his ferocious yet humane eye for the sordid details of post-Communist life in Bucharest – stands tall in all possible discussions about the re-invention of Romanian cinema after 2000.

This re-invention sparked the imagination of numerous film critics, most of them referring to it as "the New Wave". It seemed handy enough to coin a term which has already earned its coat of arms c/o French cinema; but apart from that, and the relative value of labeling the "Nouvelle Vague" to young Romanian cinema, it doesn't mean much.

First, because there was no manifesto, no programme and no theoretical background. The Romanian "New Wave" is not the work of film critics or theoreticians exasperated with the state of Romanian filmmaking, who set out to make a revolution by seizing cameras, dollies etc. and taking to the streets to capture "life"... (I'm not saying this exasperation does not exist; I'm just saying it didn't go *that* far – fortunately!) The critics, for the most part, were quick enough to salute this radical change in subject-matter *and* style – but then again, it would be inaccurate to point out to (only) *one* trend in young Romanian cinema: if Puiu definitely put his mark on this cinema with his vibrant mix of handheld, cine-verite "slice of life" drama with Cassavetes flavour, there are few similitudes between this harrowing minimalism and Radu Muntean's more detached, less congestive brand of the same (in his haunting, truth-perfect "The Paper Will Be Blue", a chilling re-enactment of individual drama during the revolution) or Mungiu's own brand in "432" – emotionally precise, flat-out suspenseful and "classically" controlled. True, the oft-invoked "minimalism" is pretty much in-your-face, but is it really only an aesthetic choice, or (just as much) the "natural" result of working on a low budget? ("432" started out on a tight 590,000 euros! Would his film have looked different if he benefited from a higher budget? – I asked Mungiu during his first press conference in Bucharest after the award. "No", he replied dryly; it is just that more money would have gone to the people who worked on the film – and who were underpaid...)

Not everybody is "in the minimalist mode", though: in June, at the

Film stills from Christian Mungiu's film
4 Months, 3 Weeks and 2 days.
Stills © Mobra Films

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“Transilvania” International Film Festival, Nae Caranfil premiered his ambitious, sprawling period-piece “The Rest is Silence” – a project long in the making (some 10 years) and which already boasts the legend of being “the most expensive Romanian film ever made”! It is so atypical (and a-topical: the story of the making of that first Romanian film, 1911’s “The War of Independence”) that many were taken aback... Is Caranfil really “twisting the neck of rhetoric” – the rhetoric of current Romanian cinema – or is he deluding himself? Will crafting a 2 hours-long film, that is programmatically “old fashioned”, pay off? For now, the strategy didn’t pay: the film was rejected at Cannes. It may be that only time will tell, “the rest is silence”...

But neither is Cristian Nemescu’s first (and, unfortunately, last: the director was killed in a taxi crash in August, age 27, together with his sound designer Andrei Toncu) feature, “California Dreamin’ (endless)”, in tune with the said minimalism: unique among his peers for his fresh and playful combination of comedy, drama and teenage fantasies, Nemescu left a body of some 5 shorts and one – this – unfinished feature; he may have found his style in this unprecedented (for Romanian cinema) brand of solid script, good acting, cine-verite and childlike daydreaming – a sort of “magical neorealism”; sadly, time will *not* tell how he would have evolved...

Close – to a certain extent – to Nemescu’s vision (pruder about the sex, though!) is Catalin Mitulescu’s co-production (with a French team) “How I Spent the End of the World”, which premiered at the “Un certain regard” last year. Meant to earn him a bit prize in Cannes – in view of its comparatively big budget and over-ambitious scope: a depiction of the last year of Ceausescu’s reign as seen by a young boy, in a “Good-bye, Lenin” meets Kusturica style –, it only won a prize for lead actress Dorotheea Petre; the “challenger” – who went on to get all the main prizes at every festival it was screened at! – was none

other than newcomer Corneliu Porumboiu with his “goofy” dramedy “12.08 East of Bucharest”. Weary of waiting for money from the always-unreliable CNC (National Centre for Cinema), Porumboiu produced the film himself. It proved to be a hit everywhere else – except Romania!

So, what is really the matter with the Romanian public? Why are all the good films produced now – there are not many! – lost on them?

The answer is many-fold. It has to do with money, yes (people prefer to stay at home and watch TV, because it’s cheaper; most films can now be downloaded “freely” from the Internet; and the state of most cinemas is dismal...), but it has a lot to do – also – with the fact that this particular brand of realism (minimalist or otherwise) is keeping them away... Hopelessly formatted by years of American blockbusters, this public would – perhaps – make it to the nearest cinema, but what it hopes to find there is the same kind of “escapist” production (such as (romantic) comedies, (SF/historical) adventure movies, thrillers etc.) that he or she would enjoy at home. They don’t seem to be interested in cinema *as such*, but rather by what French critic Serge Daney used to call “objective mythologies”: those planetary stories which capture the “Zeitgeist” and keep everybody tuned up in the comfort of collective wavelength... Yes, I’m talking about movies such as “The Da Vinci Code”; but *even that one* only managed to attract some 150.000 viewers (Porumboiu’s film made 15.000 entries, which is a proud 10%)...

As I used to say (half jokingly), Romanian cinema doesn’t need to be lobbied abroad anymore: it needs to be lobbied *inside* Romania! Maybe Mungiu’s Palme d’Or – which made many Romanians proud to be Romanians – will change that, but *for the wrong reasons*: it spells out “success story”. The fact that it is in cinema rather than football or fashion is secondary.

END OF SECTION

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ART AND CULTURE



Exhibition - Making in a Trans-national Context
HANS ULRICH OCKST

Jani Christou: Composer of Theatrical Surrealism
VICKY STEIRI



Exhibition - Making in a Trans - National Context → by Hans Ulrich Obrist

Hans Ulrich Obrist is currently the director of International Projects at Serpentine Gallery, London. His latest curatorial projects included *China Power Station* and *Uncertain State of America*.

The point of departure is *Elgaland-Vargaland*, the artistic Kingdom proclaimed in 1992 and consisting of all Border Territories: geographical, mental and digital. Set in relief against the media attention given to discussion of the ongoing atrocities in the Middle East, North Korea's nuclear capabilities and the probabilities of *who* and *what* policies will rule supreme in a post-Bush/Blair West, investigations into the status of these geographically ambiguous border-crossings makes for salient cultural debate. Indeed, Carl Michael von Hausswolff and Leif Elggren's project raises fundamental questions of ownership, access and moral right – questions, that is, of amplified interest as globalization realigns the governance and economic structures of modern nation-states, and as technological improvements shift power hierarchies pertaining to information and content flows.



Elgaland-Vargaland in its utopian aspirations and rigorous questioning of geographic parceling offers an instructive entry-point through which we may discuss some striking facets of our contemporary political economy. But rather than tackling this project in the concrete or these porous philosophies in the abstract, I'd prefer to engage them obliquely through an examination of trans-

nationalism in my own curatorial practice.

Significantly, the question of trans-national exhibitions seems to be one of the key issues running from the '90s through to the present. Having been asked as a curator by the Musée d'Art Moderne de la ville de Paris to curate numerous of explicitly 'national' exhibitions – starting actually with *Live/Life*, an investigation of the British scene of the '90s, then *Nuit Blanche* on the Nordic art scene, and last but not least, *Traverses*, an exhibition on the French art scene around the beginning of the millennium – I often tried to turn the tables and investigate questions of what we might call the post- or trans-national. Or to put it even more precisely, I've been interested in deliberating how an exhibition focussing on the post- or trans-national notion of national exhibition could not be *about* borderlines, but actually *become* a borderline – a function akin to what might be possible with *Elgaland-Vargaland* as well.

A rudimentary interest in these processes was triggered years back by my desire to counter the pre-packaged, top-down model of how I felt many travelling exhibitions migrated. One might call this the 'blockbuster effect' and it is driven by the cost-effective distribution of static works for maximum effect: gate sales and visibility, for example. Saatchi's 'Sensation' is an obvious case-in-point in the contemporary realm. But if this posed one model of globalisation, I've been driven to explore other more organic models. In opposing what he called the 'irreversible' aspects of globalisation (uniformity, homogeneity), Etienne Balibar once described to me what he framed as the need for intellectual

artists and exhibitions to become nomadic, physically and mentally travelling across the borders. Further on, he described how going beyond national boundaries would allow languages and cultures to spill in all directions, to broaden the horizon of translating capacities. 'Exhibitions would vanish in their intervention,' Balibar used to say, 'they would be necessary but without monopoly, they would be borderlines themselves.' Thus my earlier accentuation: *to become a borderline*.

To illustrate my ideas, I'd like to talk a little bit about these three aforementioned shows and then about my recent project, *Uncertain States of America*, a travelling group show curated by myself, Daniel Birnbaum and Gunnar Kvaran that examines the practices of some 40 contemporary American artists.

Live/Life, the first of these which I co-curated with Lawrence Bossé, occurred in '96 and looked at the amazing dynamics of the British art scene of the period. It was also replete with trepidations. From the beginning, for example, we were aware of the sheer impossibility of such a project – that it was naïve to grapple with the entirety of such a vibrant arts scene – and the risks of imposing a reductive perspective from the outside. It thus became clear that we would work with curators practicing within the UK and we also felt strongly that it should not be a dogmatic exhibition demonstrating the 'totality' of British art in the '90s.

Urbanists like Cedric Price proved invaluable guides to questioning the masterplan of such an exhibition and introducing in its place alternative models of self-organisation. Robert Venturi, in his seminal book, *Complexity and Contradiction in Architecture*, offered another in-road. I quote here at length:

The tradition of "either-or" has characterized orthodox modern architecture: a sun-screen is probably nothing else; a support is seldom an enclosure; a wall is not violated by window penetrations but is totally interrupted by glass [...] Even "flowing space" has implied being outside when inside, and inside when outside, rather than both at the same time. Such manifestations of articulation and clarity are foreign to an architecture of complexity and contradiction, which tends to include "both-and" rather than exclude "either-or." [...] An architecture which includes varying levels of meaning breeds ambiguity and tension. [...] [Ultimately] it makes [the observer's] perception more vivid. (VENTURI, 23, 25)

Over the course of our research for Live/Life, we became attuned to the incredible importance of artist-run spaces all over the UK, in London but also elsewhere, and began thinking about how to break up and open the exhibition. The idea,



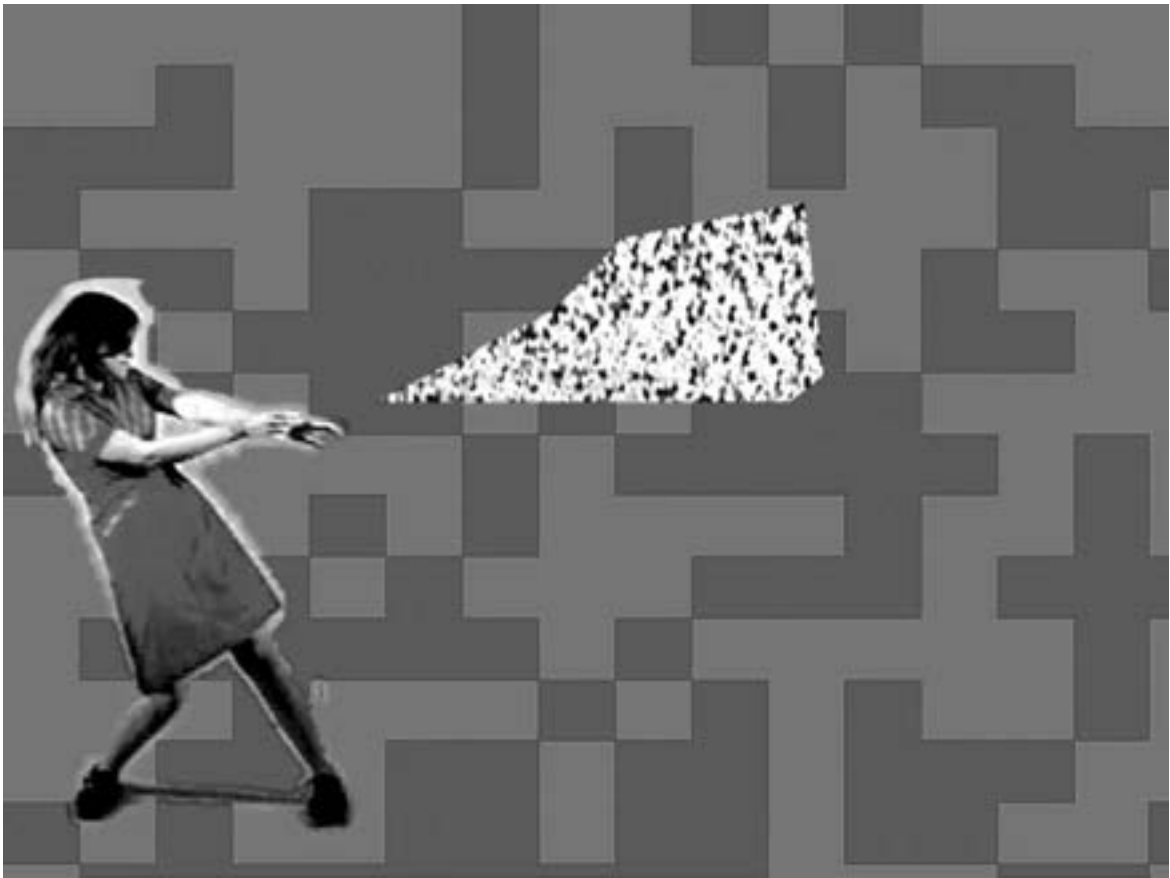
and one that I continue to champion, would be to organise a show where there would be many exhibitions within the exhibition, where a show would hide other shows. So we invited a number of artist-run spaces such as City Racing and Bank in London, Transmission from Glasgow, and many others as well, to curate parts of the show. The exhibition in this sense became a polyphony of these different micro situations and our role, more than curating a masterplan, was to somehow create bridges and links between these different temporary and autonomous domes within the exhibition.

The idea was also to map the situation and obviously there again we faced an impossibility. It's the same thing as when we talk about a city, the impossibility of making a portrait of a city, something Italo Calvino talked about in his discussion of the futility of making a synthetic image of such a dense urban space.

But Live/Life did not travel and that's probably its fundamental divergence with Nuit Blanche, the second of the exhibitions I'd like to discuss. In this show, also co-curated with Lawrence Bossé, we were again focussing on specific geographical boundaries but here they were perhaps more diverse: artistic production of the moment in Finland, Sweden, Norway, Denmark

TOP: *Uncertain States of America*, Installation.
In the foreground: Mike Bouchet, *Karl Lagerfeld Jacuzzi*, 2005 (Courtesy of the artist and maccarone inc, New York). In the background: Frank Benson, *Human Statue*, 2005 (Astrup Fearnley Collection Oslo Norway). Installation
Shot: © Stephen White

LEFT: Paul Chan, *First Light Floor Projection*



TM Sisters, (still 01 from
Superpowers...)

and Iceland was our point of departure.

I like to think about Nuit Blanche as a kind of a travelling laboratory. The show toured several Nordic countries and each time there was a different video programme driven by guest curators. So cinema, in addition to links with other fields of knowledge such as architecture, design and literature, drove this show—positions, the cinematic especially, which resurface prominently in more recent undertakings of mine such as *Uncertain States of America*.

The value of this long-term research is vital to the integrity and the vision of such shows. In fact, I think that these are ultimately research exhibitions: they are not about representation, but knowledge production. The shows emerge from hundreds of studio visits encompassing a year or more, so they are actually also very slow – the opposite, maybe, of what one might consider to be the basis of today’s exhibition practice. Globalisation is not only about speeding up, but slowing down: repeat visits, slow discussions, were absolutely key. This constant flow of dialogue gradually builds up the idea, the structure.

Transverses, another of the exhibitions I did with Lawrence Bossé, is the last of the Musée d’Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris shows I’d

like to discuss. Here we proposed a different rule of the game: each artist would invite another practitioner to do something in relation *to* or *with* his or her work to engage further collaboration. The actual mode of collaboration, however, would remain completely open. For example, Marine Hugonnier showed a film that captured a dialogue with her father, a very well known economist. The architect, Philippe Rahm, meanwhile, collaborated with the music group Air who developed a soundtrack which was played on a frequency that was almost inaudible for exhibition visitors, yet had a strong presence in this particular room. In yet another instance, Didier Fiuza Faustino worked with a young composer to create a soundtrack, a project which stemmed from the familiarity in the world of theatre. There are many other relevant examples as well. In essence, we began to view exhibition-making less as a continental thing, and more, to borrow poet and philosopher Eduard Glissant’s distillation, as an archipelago – a production of interconnected bodies of activity and knowledge.

This then leads to the latest exhibition, *Uncertain States of America*, which commenced at the Astrup Fearnley Museum of Modern Art, Oslo, in 2005 and has since passed through the Center of Curatorial Studies at Bard College, New York, the Serpentine Gallery, London, and the Reykjavik

Art Museum. What I want to stress here is the extent to which Uncertain States also functions as a multi-centred toolbox.

The polyphony of centres is something that has really come to define the art world over the last two decades. If the 1980s system was still very much dominated by competition for who is the centre – this famous idea of Paris having ceded the centre to New York – this jostling seemed to become less and less relevant over the course of the '90s. I realised this first in '91 when I went to Glasgow to give a lecture on Transmission and came to understand what an incredibly dynamic position this otherwise regional city had in the art world. I began talking to Douglas Gordon about this and our conversations really alerted me to this dynamic: Europe as a polyphony of cultural centres.

When Daniel Birnbaum, Gunnar Kvaran and I began research on Uncertain States of America, we thus began with the given that New York City no longer rules supreme and did some intense travelling across the country in order to identify some other burgeoning scenes. Portland, Oregon, for example, had an amazing wealth of goings-on around music, cinema and art – it proved to be a very strong local pocket. One could say the same of San Francisco and Los Angeles with artists like Trisha Donnelly,

"In opposing what he called the 'insensible' aspects of globalisation (uniformity, homogeneity), Etienne Bulbin once described to me what he framed as the need for intellectual artists and exhibitions to become nomadic, physically and mentally travelling across the borders."

Miranda July, Mario Ybarra Jr and Rodney McMillian practicing there: in very different ways, they all have very strong connections to the local California scene and have only more recently, and in very different manners, engaged with the broader international context. Then there's Miami: a few years ago there was nothing and now there is a completely new scene with young artists and tireless discussions about the new art school.

Because the show is very much a learning system, we've been able to adjust and add to this

along the way. And then there's a very strong reader that Noah Horowitz and Brian Sholis put together which, keeping with the theme of the exhibition, compiles writings around art and cultural politics in America since 2000. So it straddles two publishing economies – one closely aligned with the exhibition, the other entering the larger sphere of academic books – and it's another great example, I believe, of this slowness I mentioned before and the research-driven aspect of these projects.

I think it's important, at this juncture, to return to Édouard Glissant who's been an unparalleled influence in terms of how I've negotiated these knowledge-production ventures and my approach to globalisation at large; understanding how to trigger and reinforce global dialogue while still enhancing differences. In the art context, the pre-packaged exhibition is a very dangerous undertaking: shipping the same show from one venue to the next is uninteresting, and at the extreme may even be opportunistic. So I think it's essential that we continue to stress local research and open-ended dialogue. It is a process not of rejecting global dialogue, but of entering dialogues between the local and the global and of always keeping in mind that they must produce difference, what Glissant calls becoming a 'different engine.'

FURTHER READING

Hans Ulrich Obrist: Interviews: 1, Hans Ulrich Obrist and Michael Diers

The Poetics of Relation, Édouard Glissant and Betsy Wing

Flexible Citizenship: The Cultural Logics of Transnationality, Aihwa Ong

Jani Christou: Composer of Musical Surrealism

→ by Vicky Steiri

Vicky Steiri is a practicing cellist who graduated in composition from Goldsmiths College.

1. He was born at Heliopolis, N.E. of Cairo, on January 9th, 1926, to Greek parents. In 1945 he traveled to England to study under Ludwig Wittgenstein and Bertrand Russell. At the same time he studied music privately with H.F. Redlich, the distinguished musicologist and pupil of Alban Berg, and in 1949 traveled to Rome to study orchestration with F. Lavagnino. He also traveled widely in Europe, culminating for a short period in Zurich, where he met and attended lectures in psychology with Carl Jung. For more information on Christou's life and work, you can visit the official site, www.janichristou.org.

Jani Christou is one of the most important Greek composers of the twentieth century. Although he was only 44 when he died in a car accident in January 1970, he was regarded by many as one of the leading composers of his generation. He was controversial, highly talented, and greatly admired both in his own country and abroad. His music was heard at some of the most prestigious international music festivals in the world. Moreover, before his untimely death, he was preparing to unveil the most ambitious project of his career - a large scale contemporary opera based on *Oresteia*, a massive stage ritual based on the text by Aeschylus, for actors, singers, dancers, chorus, orchestra, tape and visual effects. *Oresteia* would have received its world premiere at the English Bach Festival in London in April 1970, with further performances scheduled for France, Japan, America and Scandinavia. All of Christou's music springs from his philosophical and theoretical studies.¹ His interests include philosophy, anthropology, psychology, theology and comparative religions, history and pre-history through to occultism and art. This is particularly so in the music covering the last ten years of his life, where his compositional techniques are at times transmuted beyond conventional music. A key term is 'transformation'. As Christou explains in one of his most celebrated writings, 'a credo for music' (Review Epoches, vol.34, February, 1966):

The logic of transformation cannot be explained in terms other than those pertaining to itself. It is very difficult because the validity of such descriptions



depend on whether or not we are talking or listening from experience. But an image can help. Let us take as a basic concept space-time. We can go even further and consider the object as occupying space-time within space-time (namely solar space-time). We can go even further and consider the object as occupying space-time within space-time, when we reach out to

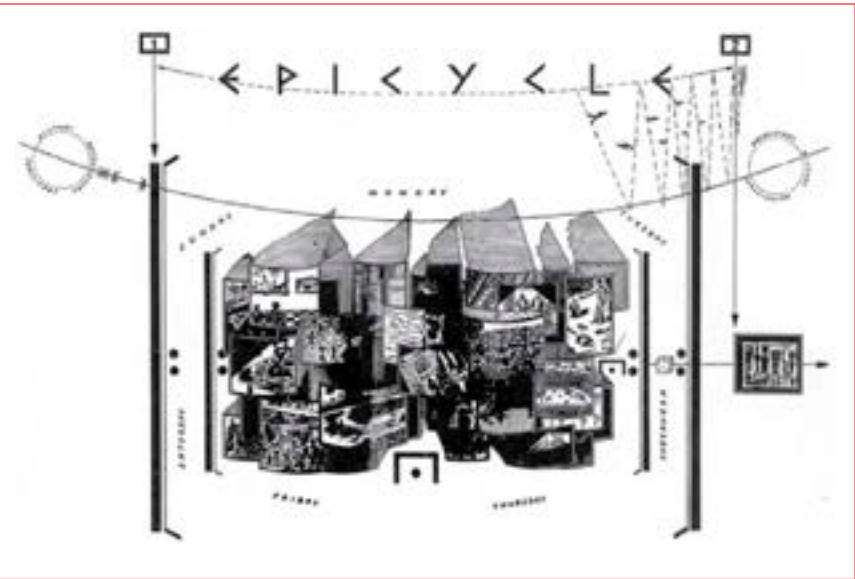
galaxial space-time dimensions. We can go to intergalaxial dimensions. That same object assumes vastly different meanings, yet it is the same object. If we now think in terms of acoustical objects or events, we can perhaps, by analogy, see how the same events can have ever deepening implications. Transformations in music do just that. Absence of transforming powers keeps the acoustical events on one level, thus catering only to our sense of decoration. Art which does not rise above this level may be craftful, but it is no longer meaningful. I think there is a much greater interest in art that is of a liberating nature than in art which is of a decorative nature; liberating in the sense of *liberating* us from the common space-time continuum, pointing to other areas of experience [...]

For both listener and composer the danger is of being seduced by the whore of decoration and aesthetics. [...] Every age experiences transformations within an aesthetic characteristic of that particular age. The obstinate transplantation of an aesthetic of one age to another or even a generation to a generation is not only futile and invalid but is also a declaration of spiritual bankruptcy. Contrary to what is commonly held against the music of our day, its frequent jarring and shock-provoking methods can be symptoms of the necessity for liberation from an inherited aesthetic and worn-out patters of thought.

While examining Christou’s creative output, one can detect an evolution from conventional musical notation and use of serial techniques towards the invention of his own personal musical notation and ‘meta-serial’ techniques, in combination with new concepts. As the colleague and friend of Christou, composer Theodore Antoniou has observed, the evolution of Christou as a composer came from two sides: firstly, he was a sensitive receiver of the world’s cutting-edge compositional styles and techniques and he got involved in everything new that occurred. Secondly, he was influenced by philosophers and thinkers who tried to focus their thought on the evolution of human societies.

With the arrival of the new notation, the new concepts of *Praxis* and *Metapraxis* appear. Praxis is the action which conforms to the logic characteristic of the art (a conductor conducting a concert), whereas Metapraxis is the action which is purposely performed to go beyond the piece (a conductor required to walk about, speak, scream, etc.) A Metapraxis is an assault on the logic of the performer’s relationship to his own particular medium. A violation within a single order of things. Or, a subtle pressure against the barrier of meaning which any system generates for its own preservation.

Antoniou draws a comparison between the late



Iannis Xenakis (the internationally acclaimed Greek composer) as being apollonian, where Christou is both apollonian and dionysiac in the sense that he was influenced by the rationality of the western world and the mysticism of the East. This also explains the infiltration of drama in his composing technique. He acquired the western technique to support his ideas, but he always allowed space for the idea of the internal human dynamism in its several appearances in history, pre-history and meta-history. Moreover, his philosophical background offered him ways of bridging the whole gamut of human evolution. Christou’s musical philosophy was essentially, if not entirely, Jungian in concept. Jung believed that each person partakes of a universal collective unconscious that persists through generations: Jung held that the whole of

Score of Epicycle, Chester Music London

“All of Christou's music springs from his philosophical and theoretical studies.”

mythology could be taken as a sort of projection of the collective unconscious. Christou projects the worlds of myth, ecstasy, mysticism and primitivism to the present and mixes them with the contemporary world of masses, group psychology, panic and hysteria. Through his works, he endeavours to create rites and rituals, where even the most routine and stereotypical actions of everyday life are transmuted and elevated. In the words of the composer,

I am therefore concerned with a music that confronts; with a music that wants to stare at the suffocating

Climax of Metapraxix in
Enantiodromia, Chester
Music London

“Christou is both ~~app~~ apollonian and dionysiac in the sense that he was influenced by the nationality of the western world and the mysticism of the East.”

effect, even terror, of much of our everyday experience of living; with a music that does NOT seek to escape the relentlessness of patterns in which this experience keeps unfolding. With a music that not only does not attempt to escape this experience, but that seeks out its forms – and eats them up, and throws them up again, just as dreams do.

Antoniou considers Christou a composer of *musical surrealism* (the term does not even exist in musical terminology): he saw mankind through all its history, pre-history and meta-history. Whatever the situation he wanted to create, he would use contemporary symbols. For instance, in one of his last works *Anaparastasis I* (1968) the first scene and lyrics are taken from *Oresteia* by Aeschylus, where the guard has been waiting for a year on a roof-top for a signal signifying the fall of Troy. When this happens, there is the psychological panic of a man who has waited a whole year for this moment. But the way the conductor communicates with the musicians is surreal; when panic commences, the ensemble and the conductor start reciting safety directions explaining the sounding of alarm-apparatus on a ship at sea (!). Moreover, the conductor indicates traffic signs which refer to traffic lights (when he/she says red, everyone stops, etc). It is amazing how he unites all those elements in order to express the feeling of panic for us today and for a guard in an ancient era. Musical Dadaism with Cage is already known, but what about musical surrealism? Maybe Christou’s music is an example. In his oratorio *Mysterion* (for narrator, three choruses, tape, orchestra and actors, 1965-

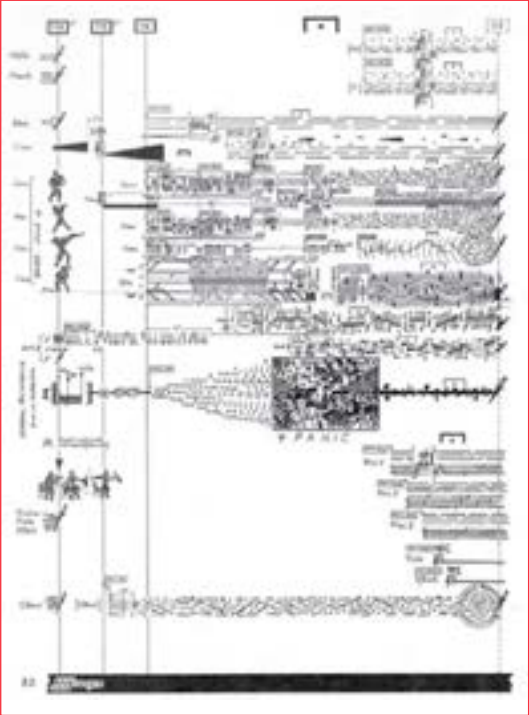
1966), one of his masterpieces, he uses again the idea of the continuum of human history. The lyrics and concept are taken from ancient Egyptian funerary texts: the sun-god penetrates the underworld nightly, traveling in his ‘boat of a million years’. The inhabitants of the underworld must cry out the *Words of Power* in order to be redeemed. Nevertheless, in the middle part, the action is transferred to a 1960s cocktail party! How can this be interpreted? Christou gives us some hints in the introduction of the score:

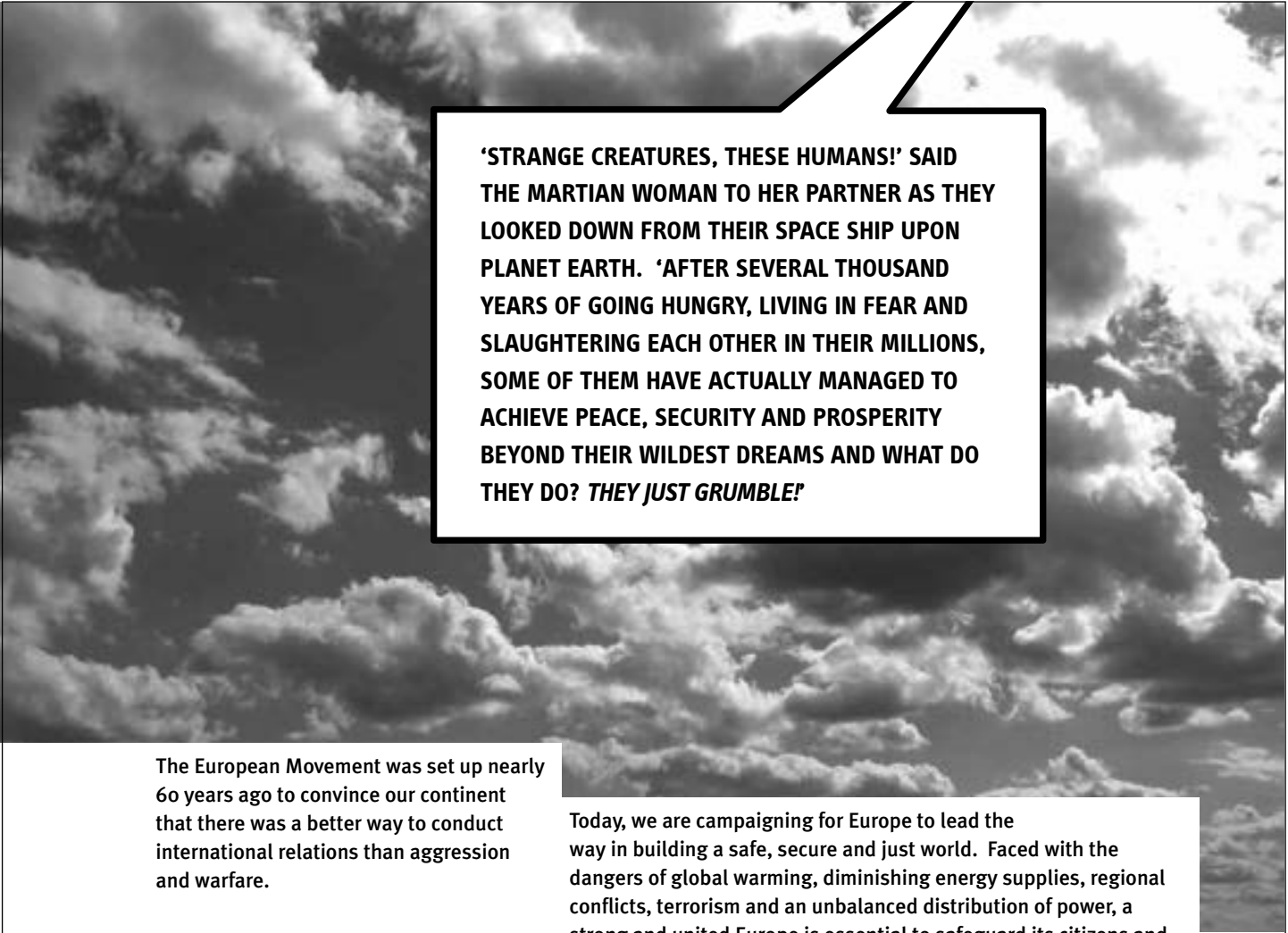
Within this climate, then, *Mysterion* unfolds with the logic – or lack of logic – of a dream, of a dream dreamt today, or tomorrow. Words are articulated, but their meaning cannot possibly be clear, and the text cannot be followed. After all, this consists entirely of magical formulas in a remote language. But even if the words were contemporary today, the distortions would still be the same. Nevertheless it is not always necessary to understand words in order to be affected by them. It is not, for instance, necessary to understand what a rioting crowd is saying in order to be affected by the shouting. Perhaps everything is an exclamation. In that case it is the context and tone of voice which are significant. And in that sense non-words can be meaningful. As *Mysterion* unfolds, words are articulated. For us their meaning cannot possibly be clear since these express magical formulas in a remote language. But psychologically they can be as clear to us as our own contemporary *Words of Power*: the language of science and technology upon

which we have been reduced to depend so desperately.

Christou was a great loss. He wrote a great number of works and although his name remains respected in contemporary music circles to this day, performances of his music are extremely rare; few musicians and conductors are able to perform his works, especially those of the last period, which are the most experimental. Had Christou lived longer, his particular musical amalgam

– containing all his advanced technique, experience and philosophical thought – would only have grown richer and more diverse.





‘STRANGE CREATURES, THESE HUMANS!’ SAID THE MARTIAN WOMAN TO HER PARTNER AS THEY LOOKED DOWN FROM THEIR SPACE SHIP UPON PLANET EARTH. ‘AFTER SEVERAL THOUSAND YEARS OF GOING HUNGRY, LIVING IN FEAR AND SLAUGHTERING EACH OTHER IN THEIR MILLIONS, SOME OF THEM HAVE ACTUALLY MANAGED TO ACHIEVE PEACE, SECURITY AND PROSPERITY BEYOND THEIR WILDEST DREAMS AND WHAT DO THEY DO? *THEY JUST GRUMBLE!*’

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BOOK REVIEWS

In 1999, Dutch journalist Geert Mak's newspaper, *NRC Handelsblad*, sent him in a camper-van on a pilgrimage throughout Europe. His articles appeared on the front page each day throughout the year, the commission to write 'a sort of final inspection: what shape was the continent in, here at the conclusion of the twentieth century?' At the same time it was to be an historical journey, to trace the contours of the twentieth century and how they affected the places in which they happened. The written up reports make an epic of over 800 pages, divided by month of the year 1999, city, and the period of the twentieth century Mak is concerned with.

Of course, the journey takes in all the obligatory events and locations of twentieth century history: Vienna before the 1st world war; Versailles; Lenin's route after the Russian Revolution to arrive in Petrograd; Munich; Guernica; Dunkirk; Auschwitz; Berlin; Gdansk ... The historical narrative is familiar, and Mak's interest is always in how the history lives on in the consciousness of today's inhabitants, if not always in their willing memory: it is journalism written as history of the present. There are facts in the book about the ways the 20th century still punctuates 21st century European life which should be common knowledge, but which come (at least to me) as a surprise. Still today, for example, there are twice daily explosions of unspent ammunition from World War One at Ypres in Belgium, unremarkable and almost unnoticed amongst the locals.

In Europe has sold over 350,000 hardback copies in the Netherlands, and become a bestseller across Europe. For an 800 page tome about history, that seems an extraordinary achievement; but then widespread curiosity, of a certain kind, for the 20th century seems to be unflagging. Many critics have complained that the book tells us nothing new, that there are neither historical discoveries nor radical reconfigurations of the way the twentieth century is to be understood. This is unfair: Mak's mode of writing – and the original commission – would have been impossible working outside a commonly known historical narrative, but frequently he asks unusual questions about aspects of this, which would be unfamiliar to those who learnt their history only in school, such as what Basques at the turn of the Millennium think about the Civil War Guernica bombings. It is a brilliant blending of grand and small histories which awakens the traces

of that history in each of us, and the occasional challenging of assumptions which gives those traces a pulse. In the final chapters, Mak visits Sarajevo and Srebrenica, the gruesome last acts of a bloody and genocidal century. The Yugoslav conflict – about which Mak reads in the news throughout 1999 – hangs over the whole book. It might have come across as a fitting end to what could have been a kind of pilgrimage through millenarian End Times. Yet, as Mak says at the end of the book, the story of Europe cannot yet be told, since the ending has yet to be decided. Goethe said that Europe is the result of medieval pilgrimages: it is clear that with his own pilgrimage Mak sees himself as contributing towards the construction of a future Europe. There is a hopefulness which runs throughout the book and gives it its curiosity and verve. But it is at the same time an urgent hopefulness. The book is an appeal, based on Europe's past, for the *urgent* creation of a common European 'cultural, political and democratic space'.

Mak begins the book with a quotation from Borges (although it could have so easily been one of countless similar by Calvino), to the effect that in charting the world one only charts the contours of one's own face. There are so many histories in Europe that one cannot hope to create a single historical narrative that is any more than subjective. But, as many have pointed out, it is in the space between the multitudinous peoples and histories that Europe exists: Europe is the aspiration which drives the cultural exchange between these communities. One of Mak's diversions throughout the book is to find the borders of Europe. The method he chooses for deciding this is to listen for people saying they are 'going to Europe', on holiday, on business ...

He finds people speaking in this way in Portugal, in the United Kingdom, in Russia. It seems to me this is one of his few faults. The important psychological border is not one that becomes apparent in this vernacular. It is instead the difference between those *who want to be European*, in the sense of promoting cultural exchange and aspiration, and try to bring this about in a specifically European context, and those who do not. Of course, cultural exchange and aspiration are not exclusively European virtues (thank-goodness!) Rather, a particular way of doing cultural endeavour is given to Europeans by their history. Mak's

pilgrimage is an instantiation of such European searching.
Published by Harvill Secker, 876 pp, £25

GEERT MAK'S *In Europe: Travels Through the Twentieth Century*



REVIEW
BY
NICCOLÓ
MILANESE

Simon Critchley's new work is an impassioned call to wake an increasingly apathic citizenry to the responsibilities of engaged, perhaps militant but never Jacobin, democratic practice. In times when the curtain seems to have drawn over the possibility of a truly oppositional grassroots political project, Critchley reminds us that public *contestation* – as the plural, un-coopted, sincere manifestation of outrage in the face of injustice – represents the very essence of radical democratic praxis.

At the root of Critchley's analysis lies a consideration of the motivational deficit at the heart of today's liberal democracies, which Critchley chooses to frame in the classical Kantian dilemma of experiencing the (governmental) norms that rule contemporary society as externally binding but not internally compelling. The task of the book can be framed around Yeats' famous declaration that the best lack all conviction, whilst the worst are full of passionate intensity (and one must here just recall Bush's latest speech in Prague before the G8): it is a call to arms, a ringing morning bell, a vigorous push to stand up and start walking.

The book is divided into two parts; one exquisitely ethical, the other overtly political. The problem haunting Critchley in the first part of the volume is how the self binds itself to whatever it determines as its good. In other words, where is *conviction* to come from? Critchley chooses to focus on three European thinkers, two philosophers and one theologian, from whom he borrows his basic tools of analysis. From Alain Badiou, he borrows the idea of the subject binding itself to the universality of a demand that opens up within a particular instance, through a particular event, but which exceeds that contingent situation. With the thought of Knud Ejler Løgstrup, Critchley develops this into the idea of an infinite, unfulfillable, one-sided *ethical demand*, and the a-symmetrical relationship it creates between the subject and the nature of that demand. By reading Emmanuel Levinas he then attempts to show how this moment of radical asymmetry between the infinity of the ethical demand and the finite and fallible nature of man goes on to define the subject as the bearer of an impossible infinite responsibility. After reading Critchley's short but precise analysis, one cannot but be left feeling that too much is being left unsaid, that entire *Panzerdivisions* of objections are not being dodged but simply ignored. Critchley's reading of the three thinkers mentioned is evocative but perhaps a little uncritical, the results potent but unchallenged. But indeed, this is a particular book, half a philosophical treatise, half a manifesto, and Critchley has spared us none of his critical powers in his other recent works. And, in fact, the gestures offered in the first section of the book cannot but be read together with the second, political exhortation. Critchley begins by taking issue with the classical Marxist thought that capitalism is bound to create an increasingly homogeneous social fabric defined

by a self-conscious revolutionary subjectivity, the proletarian worker. Critchley, rightly enough, sees instead a multiplication and differentiation of social actors in contemporary capitalism. But this immediately leads to the question—who is then the contemporary subject of revolutionary-emancipatory politics? As Mario Tronti, one of the founding minds of Italian *operaismo*, recently put it, who is the worker today, understood not as anthropological *object*, but as political *subject*? Critchley interprets this as the lack of a "name" around which radical politics can take shape, the lack of a commonly shared political vocabulary that allows multiple social realities with plural and at times contradictory demands to rally together under a common banner. Critchley attempts to offer a response indirectly. Through a timely discussion of the "politics of fear" as the Schmittian creation of an internal order through the more or less fantastic threat of an external enemy, he calls for a radical political articulation conceived as the creation of *interstitial* distance within the state territory, defined by the active articulation of political opposition from local experiences of injustice by presenting universally binding demands. The art of politics is to weave together such cells of resistance into a shared political subjectivity precisely by stressing the *universal* character of the demand, and here is the connection to the first part of the book. This leads to Critchley's call for a new anarchic meta-politics, which, as any reader of Laclau would wish, refuses to see democracy as the dead dog of neoliberalism, taking it instead as a "totally reproposable idea", to use recent words of Antonio Negri, defined by Critchley as "the deformation of society from itself through the act of material political contestation".

Although the total divorce of structural and super-structural concerns effected by Critchley raises the problem of the economical sustainability of the demands presented – thus limiting their scope of impact in the very structural organisation of society – we cannot but agree that if the possibility of viable alternative futures is to arise this will only happen through the articulation of what we may none too euphemistically call an *enraged citizenry*. A moment of disappointment comes from Critchley's failure to connect the universality of the political demand with the necessary transnational nature of the response. And this represents the crux of the problem:

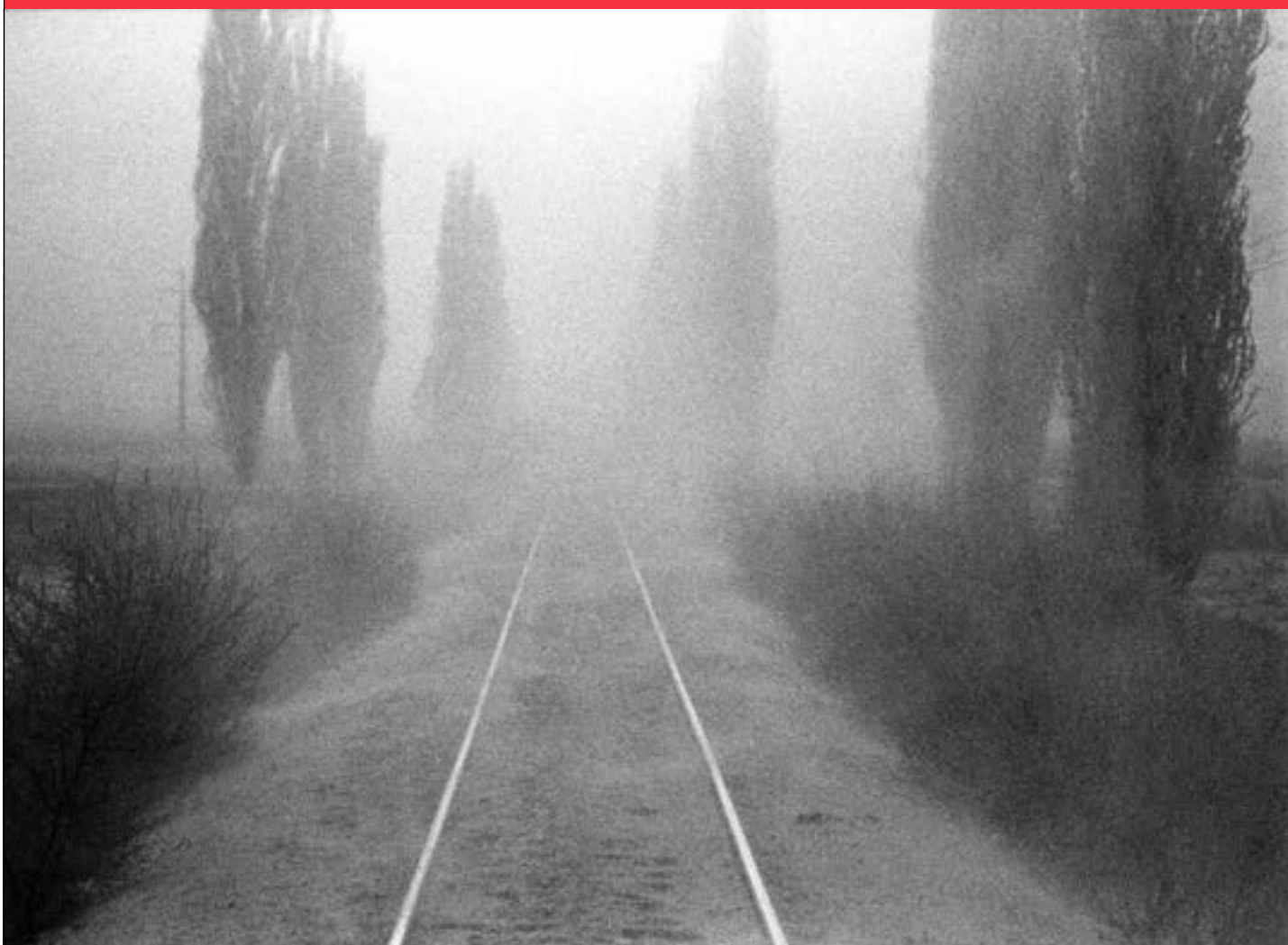
how to harmonise local and global? Are protests against delocalisation ethically universal demands when they are blind to the advantages such delocalisation brings to developing countries?

Verso Books, 178 pp, £ 17.99

SIMON CRITCHLEY'S
Infinitely Demanding: Ethics of
Commitment, Politics of Resistance



REVIEW
BY
LORENZO
MARSILI



The opening lecture
of the London Festival
of Europe 2007

by Zygmunt
Bauman

Supported by:



“MAKING THE PLANET HOSPITABLE TO EUROPE”

Zygmunt Bauman is Emeritus Professor of Sociology at the Universities of Leeds and Warsaw.

My title implies that our planet is not at the moment hospitable to Europe. It also suggests, obliquely, that we, the Europeans, experience the lack of such hospitality as a problem – that is, as a deviation from what could be legitimately expected, an abnormality that needs to be put right again. ‘Again’ – since, presumably, in the past we used to feel on the planet **chez soi** and expected its hospitality to us and to our daring pursuits to be our birthright; and assumed that the homely feeling will continue as part of the natural order of things. ‘Hospitality’ came so naturally for us as to hardly ever leap into our view as a ‘problem’ calling for special attention. As Martin Heidegger would have put it, it remained in the grey and misty area of *zuhanden* and as long as things worked as they were expected to, there was no occasion to move it into the sphere of *vorhanden* – into the focus of attention, into the universe of ‘troubles’ and ‘tasks’...

In 1784, Immanuel Kant shared with his contemporaries a few thoughts conceived in his tranquil, off-the-beaten-track Königsberg seclusion. Those were, in his own rendering, ideas of ‘universal history’, considered from the point of view of ‘world-wide citizenship’. Kant observed that the planet we inhabit is a *sphere* – and thought through the consequences of that admittedly trivial fact: that we all stay and move on the surface of that sphere, have nowhere else to go and hence are bound to live forever in each other’s neighbourhood and company. Moving on a spherical surface, we cannot but shorten the distance on one side as we try to stretch it on the other. All effort to lengthen a distance cannot but be ultimately self-defeating. Sooner or later, Kant warned, there will be no empty

space left into which those of us who have found the already populated places too cramped or too inconvenient, awkward and uncomfortable, could venture. And so Nature commands us to view *hospitality* as the supreme precept, which we all in equal measure will have to embrace sooner or later – in order to seek the end to the long chain of trials and errors, of catastrophes which our errors caused, and of the ruins left in the wake of those catastrophes.

But unlike other *oeuvres* of the same author, this little book on the peaceful coexistence of humankind, on the imminent ‘citizenship of the world’ and world-wide hospitality, gathered dust for two centuries in academic libraries. Only quite recently, the little book burst all of a sudden into the very centre of the *Jetztzeitgeschichte*. It would be a tall order to find these days a learned study of the challenges of the current stage of planetary history that does not quote Kant’s little book as a supreme authority and source of inspiration. As Jacques Derrida, for instance, observed, Kant’s time-honoured insights would easily expose the present-day buzz-words like ‘culture of hospitality’ or ‘ethics of hospitality’ as mere pleonasms: ‘L’hospitalité, c’est la culture même et ce n’est pas une éthique parmi des autres... *L’éthique est hospitalité*’. Indeed, if ethics, as Kant wished, is a work of reason, then hospitality is – must be, or must sooner or later become – the first rule of human conduct.

Ryszard Kapuściński notes a most fateful, even if surreptitious and subterranean, change in the mood of the planet. In the course of the last five centuries the military and economic domination of Europe tended to be topped with the unchallenged position of Europe as the reference point for evaluation, praise or condemnation of all others, past and present,

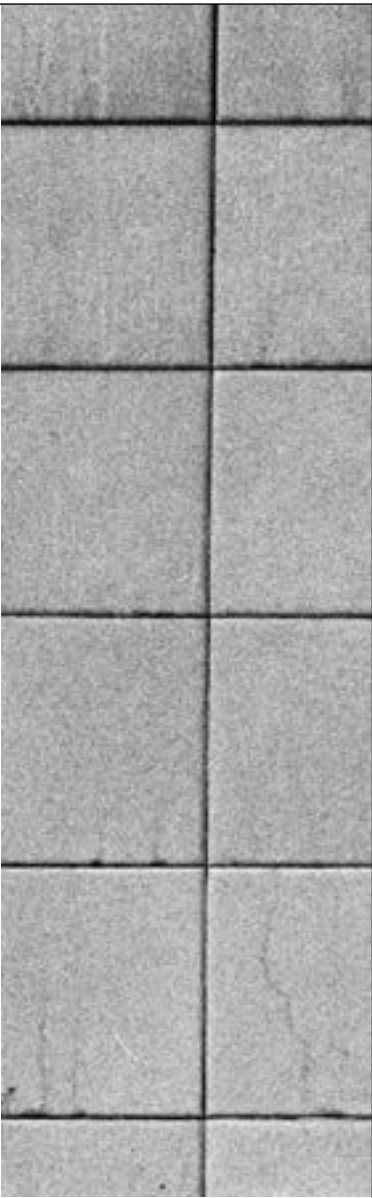
forms of human life, and as the supreme court where such assessment was authoritatively pronounced and made binding. It was enough just to be a European, says Kapuściński, to feel everywhere else a boss and a ruler. This is no longer the case. The present time is marked by the ever more self-assured and outspoken self-awareness of peoples which still half a century ago genuflected to Europe and placed it on the altar of cargo cults, but now show a fast growing sense of their own value and ever more evident ambition to gain and retain an independent and weighty place in the new, increasingly polycentric and multi-cultural world. And another profound change has happened

Europe invented global solutions to locally produced problems - and by doing this, it forced all the others to seek, desperately and in vain, local solutions to the globally produced problems.

to the planet to make us feel apprehensive and uneasy. The wide world ‘out there’, at the other end of a long-distance flight from London, Paris or Amsterdam, seldom if ever appears now to be a playground, a site of adventure - challenging and exciting, but safe, with a happy end certain and insured. Unless the flight in question is an all-inclusive holiday flight to favourite tourist spots, the places at its other end look more like a wilderness teeming with unspoken and unspeakable dangers – the kind of ‘no-go’ areas which ancient Romans used to mark out on their world maps as ‘hic sunt leones’. This is quite a change, a shocking change, traumatic enough to put paid to European self-confidence, courage and ardour. Indeed, until quite recently Europe was that *centre* that made the rest of the planet a *periphery*. As Denis de Rougemont crisply put it, Europe discovered all the lands of Earth, but no one ever discovered Europe; it dominated all continents in succession, but was never dominated by any; and it invented a civilization which the rest of the world tried to imitate, but a reverse process never (thus far, at any rate) happened. We may add: wars of the Europeans, and only those wars, were *world* wars... Until quite recently, one could still define Europe as de Rougemont suggested not that long ago: by its ‘globalizing function’. Europe was, for most of its last few centuries, a uniquely adventurous continent. Having been first to enter the mode

of life that it subsequently dubbed ‘modern’, Europe created locally problems no one on earth had heard of before and which no one had the slightest inkling how to resolve; Europe also invented the way of their resolution - though in a form unfit to be universalized. Europe resolved the problems it produced by transforming other parts of the planet into a source of cheap energy or cheap minerals, inexpensive and docile labour and dumping grounds for its excessive and redundant products and excessive and redundant people. To put it in the nutshell, Europe invented global solutions to locally produced problems - and by doing this, it forced all the others to seek, desperately and in vain, local solutions to the globally produced problems. All this is over now – and hence the shock and the trauma, anxiety and the wilting of confidence. It is over – as global solutions to the locally produced problems can be only available to a few inhabitants of the planet, and only as long as they enjoy a power privilege over the whole rest, benefiting from a power differential large enough to remain unchallenged (at least not challenged effectively) and be regarded as unchallengeable and for that reason offering an apparently reliable and reassuring foundation for a long secure future. But Europe no longer enjoys such privilege and cannot seriously hope to recover what it has lost. Hence an abrupt fall of European self-confidence, a sudden explosion of acute interest in a ‘new European identity’ and in ‘redefining the role’ of Europe in the planetary game in which the rules and the stakes have drastically changed and continue to change - though no longer under Europe’s control, and with minimal European influence. Hence also a tide of neo-tribal sentiments swelling from Copenhagen to Rome and from Paris to Prague, magnified and beefed up by the deepening ‘enemy at the gate’ and ‘fifth column’ alerts and fears, and the resulting ‘besieged fortress spirit’ manifested in the fast rising popularity of securely locked borders and doors firmly shut.

It has become common to blame all such worrying developments on Europe’s loss of economic and military domination in the result of the spectacular rise of the United States to the position of the sole planetary superpower and the metropolis of the world-wide empire - and of the parallel dismantling of all European-centred empires. But is indeed the U.S.A the ‘World Empire’ in the sense with which Europe endowed the concept





of 'empire' through its own past practices, and bequeathed to the planet through its own collective memory? There are many reasons to doubt whether it is, and these reasons seem to multiply currently at almost exponential pace. There is little if any doubt that in terms of sheer expenditure on military high-tech equipment and all sorts of weapons of mass destruction the United States have no equals, and that no single state or combination of states can realistically contemplate matching the US military power in foreseeable future (US spends annually on armaments a sum equal to the joint military expenditure of 25 states next in rank). It is also true, however, that the US military is stretched to its limits without coming any nearer to preventing new emergencies and resolving the problems arising with the past ones. Perhaps yet more important is the ever more obvious inadequacy of American military machine for the kind of tasks posited by the new shape of warfare.

Before sending troops to Iraq, Donald Rumsfeld declared that the 'war will be won when Americans feel secure again'. But sending troops to Iraq pushed the mood of insecurity, in

America and elsewhere, to new heights. Far from shrinking, the spaces of lawlessness, the highly effective training grounds for global terrorism, stretched to unheard of dimensions.

If there is a World Empire, it is confronted with a kind of adversary that cannot be caught in the nets it has and is able to acquire. By **military** means (and most certainly by military means alone) the 'war on terrorism' **can't be won**. Its continuation may only further expose the 'soft underbelly' of the apparently invincible super power, with disastrous consequences for the planetary cohabitation and the prospect of the planetary peace of the kind dreamt of, more than two centuries ago, by Immanuel Kant.

Stretching the *military* might of the US 'to its limits' is also a principal, arguably **the** principal, cause of 'stretching to the limits' the *economic* resources of the metropolis – resources that could be conceivably deployed in assuring victory over global terrorism through cutting terrorism at its roots: through arresting and possibly reversing the current polarization of standards of life and life prospects, that most effective

fertilizer of the terrorists-growing plantations. Nowadays, America is perhaps deeper in debt than any other country in history. In 2005, America spent 57 percent more than it earned on world markets, and funded this by running up debts to Japan, China and Middle Eastern oil producers. America is as addicted to, and dependent on, imported money as it is to and on imported oil; imported money that will need sooner or later to be repaid are not spent on financing potentially profitable investments, but on sustaining consumer boom and the ‘feel-good factor’ in the electorate and on financing growing federal deficits – regularly exacerbated as they are (despite all cuts in social provisions) by the continuing tax cuts for the rich. Some calculate that the dollar will eventually have to fall by 30 percent or more and that both American consumers and the U.S. government will have to start living within their means – awakening from their current superpower, or ‘world empire’ version of the American Dream. All that does not augur well for the prospects of the aspiring World Empire to acquit itself of the task of the settlement-and-peace-

enforcement, which the empires of the past could neglect only at the cost of their decline and demise. It seems that the U.S. enters the stage of undivided world domination while already dangerously close to the exhaustion of their expansive potential. *Pax Americana* may stretch territorially well beyond the boundaries of *Pax Romana*, yet its life expectancy is hardly measured in centuries. Like everything else in our ‘negatively globalized’, liquid-modern world, the self-dissembling and self-destructive mechanisms built into every empire on record work faster and need much less time to run the full cycle.

* * *

Starting the calculation of tasks and missions of Europe from the axiom of American monopoly of world power and world-policing ability is therefore conspicuously wrong: the present-day challenge to Europe *does not* derive from the axiom that ‘since we play at best a second





fiddle, we can't, and won't be allowed, to make much difference to the state of the planet'. The *real* challenge to Europe derives from the fast accumulating evidence that the sole superpower of the planet fails abominably to lead the planet towards peaceful coexistence and away from imminent disaster. Indeed, there are ample reasons to suppose that this superpower may become a prime cause of disaster not being averted.

Having admitted that 'it is nonsense to suppose that Europe will rival the economy, military and technological might' of the United States and of the emergent powerhouses in Asia, George Steiner insists that Europe assignment 'is one of the spirit and the intellect'. 'The genius of Europe is what William Blake would have called "the holiness of the minute particular"'. It is that of linguistic, cultural, social diversity, of a prodigal mosaic which often makes a trivial distance, twenty kilometres apart, a division between worlds... Europe will indeed perish if it does not fight for its languages, local traditions and social autonomies. If it forgets that "God lies in the detail".'

Similar thoughts can be found in the literary legacy of Hans-Georg Gadamer. It is its variety, its richness boarding on profligacy, which Gadamer places at the top of the list of Europe's unique merits; he sees the profusion of differences as the foremost among the treasures which Europe preserved and can offer to the world. 'To live with the Other, live as the Other's Other, is the fundamental human task – on the most lowly and the most elevated levels alike...'. In Europe like nowhere else, 'the Other' has been and is always close, in sight and at hand's stretch; metaphorically or even literally, the Other is a next door neighbour – and Europeans can't but negotiate the terms of that neighbourliness despite the alterity and the differences that set them apart. To acquire and share the art of learning from each other is, in Gadamer's view, 'the task of Europe'. I would add: Europe's mission, or more precisely Europe's *fate* waiting to be recast into *destiny*. The importance of this task, and the importance of Europe's determination to undertake it, is impossible to exaggerate, as 'the decisive condition of solving vital problems of modern world', a truly *sine qua non* condition, are friendship and 'buoyant solidarity' that alone can secure 'an orderly structure' of human cohabitation.

When seen against the background of the conflict-ridden planet, Europe looks as a laboratory where the tools necessary for Kant's universal unification of humanity keep being designed, and as a workshop in which they keep being 'tried in action', though for the time being in the performance of less ambitious, smaller scale jobs. The tools that are currently forged and put to test inside Europe serve above all the delicate operation of separating the bases of political legitimacy, of democratic procedure and willingness to a community-style sharing of assets, from the principle of national/territorial sovereignty with which they have been for the most part of modern history inextricably linked. The budding European Federation is now facing the task of repeating the feat accomplished by the nation-state of early modernity: the task of bringing back together power and politics, presently separated and navigating in opposite directions. The road leading to the implementation of that task is as rocky now as

The budding European Federation is now facing the task of repeating the feat accomplished by the nation-state of early modernity: the task of bringing back together power and politics, presently separated and navigating in opposite directions.

it was then, strewn with snares and spattered with incalculable risks. Worse of all, this road is unmapped, and each successive step seems like a leap into the unknown. Many observers doubt the wisdom of the endeavour and score low the chances of its success. The sceptics don't believe in the viability of a 'post-national' democracy, or any democratic political entity above the level of the nation – insisting that the allegiance to civic and political norms would not replace 'ethno-cultural ties' and that citizenship is unworkable on purely 'civilizational' (legal-political) basis without the assistance of 'Eros' (the 'emotional dimension'), while assuming that the 'ethno-cultural ties' and 'Eros' are uniquely and inextricably linked to the kind of the 'past-and-destiny-sharing sentiment' which went down in history under the name of nationalism. They believe that communal-

style solidarity can strike roots and grow only inside this connection and cannot be rebuilt or established anew in any other way. Jürgen Habermas is arguably the most consistent and the most authoritative spokesman for the opposition to that kind of scepticism. 'A democratic order does not inherently need to be mentally rooted in "the nation" as a pre-political community of shared destiny. The strength of the democratic constitutional state lies precisely in its ability to close the holes of social integration through the political participation of its citizens.' This is true - but the argument may be pushed yet further. 'The nation', as any promoter of any 'national idea' would eagerly admit, is as vulnerable and frail without a sovereign state that protects it (indeed, assures its continuing identity), as the state would be without a nation that legitimizes its demands of obedience and discipline. Modern *nations* and modern *states* are twin products of *the same historical constellation*. One might 'precede' the other only in a short run. The French state was 'preceded' by Savoignards and Bretons, not Frenchmen; The German state by Bavarians and Prussians, not Germans. Savoignards and Bretons would have hardly turned into Frenchmen and Bavarians and Prussians into Germans were not their reincarnation 'power assisted' by, respectively, the French and the German states. For all practical intents and purposes, modern nations and modern states alike emerged in the course of simultaneous and closely intertwined

We cannot effectively defend our freedoms here at home while fencing ourselves off from the rest of the world.

processes of nation- and state-building; anything but cloudless processes, and anything but guaranteed to succeed. To say that political framework cannot be established without a viable ethno-cultural organism already in place is neither more nor less convincing than to say that no ethno-cultural organism is likely to become and stay viable without a working and workable political framework. A chicken-and-egg dilemma, if there ever was one. Habermas's comprehensive and grinding analysis points in a very similar direction: *... precisely the artificial conditions in which national consciousness arose argue against the defeatist assumption that a form of civic solidarity among strangers can only be generated within the confines of the nation. If this form of collective identity was due to*

a highly abstractive leap from the local and dynastic to national and then to democratic consciousness, why shouldn't this learning process be able to continue?

For the time being, Europe seems to look however for an answer to the new and unfamiliar problems in inward- rather than outward-looking policies, centripetal rather than centrifugal, implosive rather than expansive - like retrenchment, falling back upon themselves, building fences topped with X-ray machines and close circuit television cameras, putting more officials inside the immigration booths and more border guards outside, tightening the nets of immigration and naturalization law, keeping refugees in closely guarded and isolated camps or turning them back before they had a chance of claiming a refugee or asylum-seeker status; in short - in sealing its own doors while doing pretty little, if anything at all, to repair the situation that prompted their closure. Let's recall that the funds which European Union transferred most willingly and with no haggling to the East-and Central-European countries applying for accession were those earmarked for the fortification of their Eastern borders... Casting the victims of the rampant globalisation of financial and commodity markets as first and foremost a security threat, rather than people needing aid and entitled to compensation for their damaged lives, has its uses. First, it puts paid to the ethical compunctions: one is dealing with enemies who 'hate our values' and cannot stand the sight of men and women living in freedom and democracy. Second, it allows the diversion of the funds that could be used 'unprofitably' on the narrowing of disparities and defusing the animosities, to the profitable task of beefing up the weapon industry, arms sales and stockholders gains, and so of improving the statistics of home employment and raising the feel-good gradient. It also allows the governments to shake off the more irritating constraints of the popular, democratic control by re-casting political and economic choices as military necessities. America, as always, takes the lead - but it is closely watched and eagerly followed by the large number of European governments. Admittedly, there are reasons for Europe to be increasingly inward-looking. The world no longer looks inviting. It appears to be a hostile world, a treacherous, vengeance-breathing world, a world that needs yet to be made safe for us, the tourists. In an insecure world, security is the name of the game. It is the main purpose of





the game and its paramount stake. It is a value that in practice, if not in theory, dwarfs and elbows out all other values – including the values dearest to ‘us’ while hated most by ‘them’, and the prime reasons of ‘their’ wish to harm ‘us’. In a world as insecure as ours, personal freedom of word and action, right to privacy, access to truth – all those things we used to associate with democracy and in whose name we still go to war – need to be trimmed or suspended. Or this is at least what the official version, confirmed by the official practice, maintains.

The truth is, nevertheless, that *we cannot effectively defend our freedoms here at home while fencing ourselves off from the rest of the world.*

There are valid reasons to suppose that on a globalized planet, on which the plight of everyone everywhere determines and is determined by all other’s plights, one can no longer assure freedom and democracy ‘separately’ – in one country, or in a few selected countries only. The fate of freedom and democracy in each land is decided and settled on the global stage – and only on that stage can it be defended with a realistic chance of a lasting

success. It is no longer in the power of any singly acting state, however heavily armed, resolute and uncompromising, to defend chosen values at home while turning its back to the dreams and yearnings of those outside its borders. But turning our backs is precisely what we, the Europeans, seem to be doing, when keeping our riches and multiplying them at the expense of the poor outside.

A few examples will suffice. If 40 years ago the income of the five richest per cent of the world population was thirty times higher than the income of the poorest five per cent, 15 years ago it was already sixty time higher, and by 2002 it reached the factor of 114.

90 per cent of the total wealth of the planet remains in the hands of just one percent of the planet inhabitants.

Tanzania earns 2.2 billion dollars a year which it divides among 25 million inhabitants. The Goldman Sachs Bank earns 2.6 billion dollars, which is then divided between 161 stockholders.

Europe and the US spend each year 17 billion dollars on animal food, while according to

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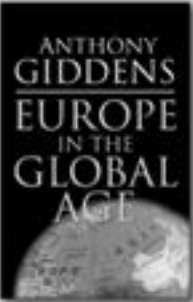
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experts 19 billion dollars is missing to save the world population of hunger. As Joseph Stiglitz reminded the trade ministers preparing for their Mexico meeting, the average European subsidy per cow 'matches the 2 dollars per day poverty level on which billions of people barely subsist' – whereas America's 4 billion dollars cotton subsidies paid to 25 thousand well-off farmers 'bring misery to 10 million African farmers and more than offset the US's miserly aid to some of the affected countries'.

* * *

If they are to be lifted and re-focused at a level higher than the nation-state, the essential features of human solidarity (like the sentiments of mutual belonging and of shared responsibility for the common future, or the willingness to care for each other's well-being and to find amicable and durable solutions of sporadically inflamed conflicts) need necessarily an *institutional* framework of opinion-building and will-formation. The European Union aims, however slowly and haltingly, towards a rudimentary or embryonic form of such an institutional framework, encountering on its way, as most obtrusive obstacles, the existing nation-states and their reluctance to part with whatever is left of their once fully-fledged sovereignty. The current direction is difficult to plot unambiguously, and prognosticating its future turns is even more difficult (in addition to being irresponsible and unwise). The present momentum seems to be shaped by two different logics. One is the *logic of local retrenchment*: the other is the *logic of global responsibility and global aspiration*. The first logic is that of the quantitative expansion of the territory-and-resource basis for the *Standsortkonkurrenz* strategy ('competition between localities', 'locally grounded competition'; more precisely, competition between territorial states). Even if no attempts were ever made by the founders of the European Common Market and their successors to emancipate economy from their relatively incapacitating confinement in the *Nationalökonomie* frames, the 'war of liberation' currently conducted by global capital, finances and trade against 'local constraints', a war triggered and intensified not by local interests but by the global diffusion of opportunities, would have been waged anyway and carried on unabated. The role of European institutions *does not* consist in eroding member-states sovereignty and in particular in exempting economic activity from their controlling (and constraining) interference; in short, it does not consist in facilitating, let alone initiating, the

divorce procedure between power and politics. For such purpose the services of European institutions are hardly required. The real function of European institutions consists, on the contrary, in *stemming the tide*: stopping the capital assets that have escaped the nation-state cages inside the continental stockade and keeping them there. In other words: the logic of local entrenchment is that of re-constructing at the Union level of the legal-institutional web which no longer holds together the 'national economy' within the boundaries of the nation-state's territorial sovereignty. But, as Habermas put it – 'the creation of larger political unities in itself changes nothing about the mode of *Standsortkonkurrenz* as such.' Viewed from the planetary perspective, the joint strategy of a continental combination of states is hardly distinguishable from single nation-states' codes of conduct which it came to replace. It is still guided by the logic of division, separation, enclosure and retrenchment; of seeking territorial exemptions from the general rules and trends – or to put it bluntly, local solutions for globally generated problems. The logic of global responsibility on the other hand (and once that responsibility is acknowledged and taken, also the logic of global aspiration), is aimed, at least in principle, at confronting the globally generated problems point-blank - at their own level. It stems from the assumption that lasting and truly effective solutions to the planet-wide problems can only be found and work through the re-negotiation and reform of the web of global interdependencies and interactions. Instead of aiming at the least local damage and most local benefits derived from the capricious and haphazard drifts of global economic forces, it would rather pursue a new kind of global setting, in which the itineraries

The logic of global responsibility and aspiration ushers onto an unknown territory and opens an era of political experimentation.

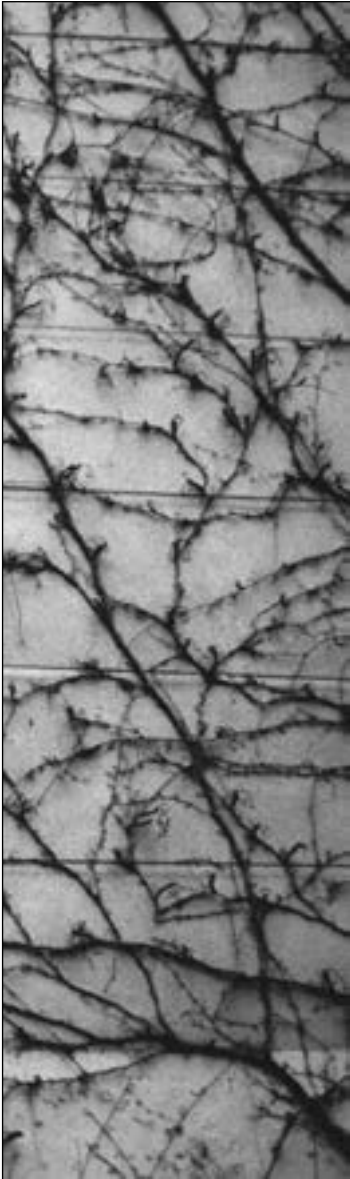
of economic initiatives anywhere on the planet won't be any longer whimsical and guided haphazardly by momentary gains alone, with no attention paid to the side-effects and 'collateral casualties', and no importance attached to the social dimensions of the cost-and-effects balances. In short, that logic is aimed, to quote Habermas again, at the development of 'politics that can catch up with global markets'.



Unlike the logic of local entrenchment, which mostly re-plays the perseverant tunes of the ‘*raison d’état* philosophy’ - the logic of global responsibility and aspiration ushers onto an unknown territory and opens an era of political experimentation. It rejects, as leading admittedly into a blind alley, the strategy of a purely local defence against planetary trends; it also abstains (by necessity, if not by reasons of conscience) from falling back on another orthodox European strategy of treating the planetary space as a ‘hinterland’ (or, indeed, the *Lebensraum*) onto which the problems home-produced yet un-resolvable at home could be unloaded. And so, willy-nilly, new unexplored strategies and tactics must be sought and tried without the possibility to reliably calculate, let alone to assure, their ultimate success. What Europe faces now is the prospect of developing, gradually and *simultaneously*, and possibly through a long series of trials and errors, the objects *and* the tools fit to tackle and resolve them. To make the task yet more daunting, the ultimate destination of all that labour, an effective planetary policy based on a continuous polilogue rather than on the soliloquy of a single planetary government, is equally unprecedented.

Only historical practice may prove (though never disprove) its feasibility; or, more correctly, *render* it feasible.

We feel, guess, suspect what needs to be done. But we cannot know in which shape and form it eventually will. We can be pretty sure though that the ultimate shape will not be familiar – different from all we’ve got used to in the past, in the era of nation building and nation-states’ self-assertion. And it can hardly be otherwise, as all political institutions currently at our disposal were made to the measure of the *territorial sovereignty* of the nation state; they resist stretching to the planetary, supra-national scale, and the political institutions serving the self-constitution of the planet-wide human community won’t be, can’t be ‘the same, only bigger’. We may well sense that the passage from ‘inter-national’ agencies and tools of action to ‘universal’ – all-human – institution must be and will be a qualitative, not merely a quantitative change. So we may ponder, worryingly, whether the presently available frames of ‘global politics’ may accommodate



the practices of the emergent global polity or indeed serve as their incubator; what about the UN, for instance – briefed at its birth to guard and defend the undivided sovereignty of the state over its territory? The *binding force* of global laws – can it depend on the (admittedly

New unexplored strategies and tactics must be sought and tried without the possibility to reliably calculate, let alone to assure, their ultimate success.

revocable!) agreements of sovereign members of the ‘international community’ to obey them? To grasp the logic of the fateful departures in the 17th Century European thought, Reinhardt Kosseleck deployed the trope of the ‘mountain pass’. I suggest that this is apt and felicitous metaphor for us as much as it was for our ancestors of four centuries ago. Like our ancestors three centuries ago, we are on a rising slope of a mountain pass which we have never climbed before – and so we have no inkling what sort of view will open once we have reached it; we are not sure to where the winding and twisted gorge will eventually lead us. One thing we can be sure of is that where we are now, at some point of a steeply rising slope, we cannot settle and rest. And so we go on moving; we move not so much ‘in order to’, as ‘because of’ – we move because we can’t rest nor stand still for long. Only when (if) we reach the pass and survey the landscape on its other side, time will come to move ‘in order to’; pulled ahead by the sight of a visible destination, by the goal within our reach, rather than pushed to move by current discomforts. Concepts fit to grasp the realities that are *not yet* are formed in the practice of climbing, and not a moment before it started. Of the other side of the mountain pass, prudent climbers ought to keep silent. The climbers’ ignorance about the shape of their final destination does not mean that they should stop moving. And in the case of Europeans, known for their fondness for adventure and knack for experimentation, it is unlikely that they will. We will need many stark choices, all to be made under the condition of severely limited knowledge (this is exactly what sets adventure apart from routine and acting-on-command). The adversary odds seem truly daunting – but there are hopes not at all idle, hopes rooted firmly in our acquired skills of living with difference and of engagement in meaningful and mutually beneficial dialogue,

skills that stay most of the time hidden yet come to the surface in the moments of crisis. In a conversation held in May 2003, Jürgen Habermas and Jacques Derrida called 15 February 2003 ‘another 4th of July’, but this time on the all-European scale: the day on which ‘a genuine shared European conscience’ was born. On that day, millions of Europeans went to the streets of Rome, Madrid, Paris, Berlin, London and other capitals of Europe to manifest their unanimous condemnation of the invasion of Iraq about to be launched – and obliquely their shared historical memory of past sufferings and shared revulsion to violence and atrocities committed in the name of national rivalries.

The choice we confront is between our cities turning into places of terror ‘where the stranger is to be feared and distrusted’, or sustaining the legacy of mutual civility of citizens and ‘solidarity of strangers’, solidarity strengthened by the ever harder tests to which it is subjected and which it survives – now and in the future.

• • •

The logic of global responsibility/aspiration, if adopted and given preference over the logic of local retrenchment, may help to prepare Europe to its successive adventure, perhaps greater than all previous ones. Despite the formidable volume of adverse odds, it could once more cast Europe into the role of a global pattern-setter; it may enable Europe to deploy the values it has learned to cherish and managed to preserve against odds, and the political/ethical experience it has acquired of democratic self-government, in the awesome task of replacing the collection of territorially entrenched entities engaged in a zero-sum game of survival with a fully inclusive, planetary human community. Only when (if) such a community is achieved, Europe may consider its mission accomplished. The values enlightening Europe’s ambitions and pursuits, values that *are Europe*, can be truly safe only within such a community. What lies ahead has been prophetically put in writing by Franz Kafka – as a premonition, a warning, and encouragement:

If you find nothing in the corridors open the doors, if you find nothing behind these doors there are more floors, and if you find nothing up there, don’t worry, just leap up another flight of stairs. As long as you don’t stop climbing, the stairs won’t end, under your climbing feet they will go on growing upwards.

■

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the planet needed an
adventurous Europe
as much as it needs
it now'***

- Zygmunt Bauman

European
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PHOTOGRAPHERS' BIOGRAPHIES

COSMIN BUMBUT is a prolific Romanian photographer with an international reputation. A graduate of the Theatre and Film Academy in Bucharest, he has won awards for both fashion and advertising photography in Romania. His book *Transit* won “Art Book of the Year” at the Romanian National Book Fair in 2003. His photographs appear thanks to the Romanian Cultural Institute.

His photographs appear on the front cover, and on pages 5, 15, 23, 49 and 60.

KYLIE-ROSE DOUGLAS was born in 1975 and grew up in Fremantle, Western Australia. Currently living in England, she investigates the changing face of our urban landscapes as she explores the sea side, rural and inner city locales of the United Kingdom and Europe. Along with Elizabeth Clancy she published *Same Face, Different Place* in 2006, a project exploring changing realities in St Kilda, Australia.

Her photographs appear on pages 11, 12, 14, 25, 26, 63, 64, 67 and 70 .

EUROPEAN ALTERNATIVES IS A MOVEMENT
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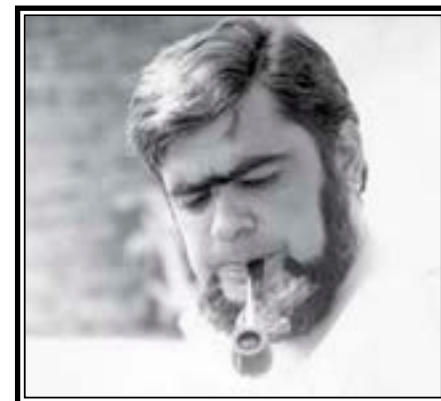
Cróniques reals d'un pais imaginari, Eric Roux-Fontaine. See exhibition review page 4

It does not escape us that the name of Europe is today far from representing a sincere guiding light on which to focus the desires for change of a generation of Europeans. The name seems to bore, no longer to resonate. We are also conscious that the actions conducted until now under the name of "Europe" do not even distantly recall a truly alternative form of political organisation or conduct. Despite some recent and encouraging activity over climate change, there is no "European effect" over global politics to speak of, nor much enlightening in the recent political dialectic around the integration of the continent. We recognise that little in the "spirit of the age" suggests the unfolding of a significant progression in the European political project.

But if all of this does not escape us, the possibility of things being otherwise also refuses to abandon us, just as it refuses to abandon the name of Europe. The belief that it is through engagement, and not indifference, that change will only come to be. For this belief used to be characteristic of we 'adventurous' Europeans. There has been much talk of the "holiday period" from history for Europe; under the tutelage of the United States, for too long have we remained content with merely witnessing, commenting, at best analysing and criticising the evolution of this planet. To the whitened hands of the sculptor, we have preferred the expressive but ineffectual gestures of the spectator. Europe must become the name of a new political maturity, and a new youthful energy. ►

(READ PAGE 88)

Festina Lente - Interview with Andrei Pleșu



Can we speak of a "European identity"?

I think on the contrary that it is time to pause, to stop speaking about it in the hyperbole currently in favour. Much has been said about Europe already, much has been written; the original *nucleus* has been enlarged. Now, whatever happens, there will be a break before the next enlargement, if there should be one. Under these circumstances an exercise in silence might help. Besides, what has been said was not terribly imaginative. Some words appear too often!

Do you think then, like the Hungarian writer Peter Esterhazy, that people should be fined for using expressions like "return to Europe", "common house", "European values"?

Oh! I have heard better: "*A soul for Europe*"! It was the theme of a conference recently organised by some Germans. They like that sort of uneasy sentiment ...

But, to be quite candid, it isn't just a few similar words but also the same themes that keep popping up...

Which ones?

Before we go any further let one thing be clear: these themes are *per se* utterly honourable. What actually shocks me is the way they are treated.

Firstly, of course, we find the famous '*values*'. Ah! Values! Culture! Heritage! ►

(READ PAGE 100)

Europe, the UK, and Catch 22 Democracy

Niccolò Milanese

Whilst the debate over the EU Reform Treaty grows ever more trivial in the UK, and each side makes appeals to 'democracy', democracy in Europe becomes ever deeper in crisis. What is required is a new movement for democracy amongst the 'frontierless generation'. This would be a genuine pro-European coalition, and a campaign for democracy that would answer to Britain's ideal of itself. ►

(READ PAGE 92)

Fronteres y Apartheid Exhibitions

Lorenzo Marsili

Two powerful exhibitions bring to the fore the contemporary tragedy of migration. The exhibitions remind us of the sheer exceptionality of our present state; they speak with particular force to Europeans, reinforcing the notion of a secluded continental fortress. But they also gesture to the dire need for a radical reconceptualisation of Europe's role in the world. ►

(READ PAGE 90)

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page 96. Thomas Ferenczi on the French Left

page 92. Fernando Savater on his new Spanish party

pages 95, 97, 98. Letters from Italy, Germany, Poland

page 103. Interview with Gianni Vattimo

page 104. Essay by Simon Critchley

(CONTINUED FROM FRONT PAGE)

European Alternatives

► Possibility and engagement are the two pivotal words, intertwined and inspiring each other. If it is the vision of possibility that motivates the act and the desire for alternatives that draws political participation, it is only through the process of public political engagement itself that new possibilities, both in their ideal and real form, are made to arise. Possibilities will not appear to us unless we search for them, make ready, take interest and responsibility.

This is nowhere more the case than in the reality of contemporary Europe, at once beacon of possibility and object of disinterest. But there is much that could be drawn from the potential of this continent, if only we began seeking and demanding it.

It is now apparent to many that a significantly novel planetary arrangement is coming to be, or rather, attempting to mature. There are many negative signs; the endless American crusades, Iranian hubris, Russia’s muscular opportunism, China’s dreams of wealth but dire social reality. There are also signs that may at first be greeted with felicitation, such as the much-hyped coming of a “multipolar” world order, but upon reflection these turn into rather stale ideas. If the conflict of interest now raging amongst the global powers is a preview of the multi-polarity to come, to us it looks strikingly similar to the multipolar Europe of the nineteenth century already marching towards catastrophe.

And if these planetary events to come have already been played out in the European crucible, then perhaps Europe contains the seeds of alternatives, despite present appearances. And indeed, could not Europe become a means of surpassing just this antagonistic division between national tribes? This continent that will always refuse to be a bordered, self-referential, delineated whole; after having invented nationalism, could it not show us the way out of its most savage outcomes?

“Europe” is probably the only possibility held by a citizen of a European country to militate for a different unfolding of our common future. In times when the scope of action of individual nation states leave us blushing, how can any hope for a serious transformation of global relations be entertained if not through the creation of a some sort of post-national political subject, one that would surpass the tight limitations of movement imposed by the current global economic order upon increasingly impotent national states? And if this be so, would not the reclaiming-back of decision power to the polis in the name of Europe be a fundamentally democratic act? Far from accusations of “distance” and “democratic deficit”, should we not see in Europe the prime possibility of regaining control over our future?

Europe establishes itself in the names of justice, peace and equality. Although Europe is actually far from achieving any of these, the rich intellectual tradition of humanism which is our common European heritage associates these names together. If



Europe does not respect this living heritage and its demands, then it has no reason to be at all, and is indeed an empty shell of a name in which monsters will hide. And the great danger is that not only Europeans will be compromised, but also the ideals, which have global scope and importance. So the task and its urgency are clear: to insist that Europe lives up to itself. Perhaps its ideals are so high that this is an infinitely demanding task: but that is just to say there is no scope for escaping the responsibility.

We agree, it may be difficult to see the fruits of change in the contemporary European panorama. But this is where it is up to engagement to open up the field of possibility. Have we really been numbed to the point of waiting for an alternative future to be served on a silvery plate?

Against the current trend of handing purely a-political, financial tasks to the European Union, what is called for is a powerful re-politicisation of the continent at all levels. It is ludicrous ball-throwing that the European Union is accused of avoiding pronouncements in the most crucial areas of interest to its citizens – international relations, global warming, social rights – when these are precisely the powers our avid states most tenaciously hold on to. It would be foolish to believe a mere transition of powers to the supranational level might bring in itself a truly innovate political practice. We must stop talking of ‘Europe’ as if it meant only a supranational organisation. It is the whole of Europe that must be re-politicised; it is the peoples of Europe who must begin to take an active and collegial interest in the unfolding of their destinies. And, who knows? The vision of a possible Europe to be might just grow to stimulate the political awakening of the European peoples.

CREDITS

Editors
Lorenzo Marsili
Niccoló Milanese

European Alternatives Board
Segolène Pruvot

Design
Rasha Kahil
www.rashakahil.com

www.euroalter.com
editors@euroalter.com



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Notes For A New Transnational Practice

“Those who sleep are collaborators in whatever happens in the cosmos.”
– *Heraclites*

Lorenzo Marsili



Itineraris clandestins, Olivier Jobard. Exhibition review next page.

There seems to be a fundamental paradox in the current dialectic of globalisation and the numerous public debates surrounding it. We are constantly reminded of the inescapable supranational interconnectedness of contemporary economical reality, as recent buzzwords such as “delocalisation”, “debt crisis”, “china factor”, etc. have served to describe. We are also aware of the increasingly cosmopolitan feel of European cities, providing a very tangible representation of the global migrations of the new century. At the same time, however, a gaze at the political landscape seems to return us to a déjà of competition between states, imperialist ventures, and a tribal conception of the national interest. The Westphalian panorama of gated communities racing to reap the world’s harvest seems to continue unchallenged, as recent international upheavals and the unprecedented insignificance of the United Nations might go to demonstrate.

Within such a reality, the scarce arguments for a truly “internationalist” behaviour on the part of developed countries are either understood in terms of sheer benevolence (a moral obligation, or Christian charity), or accused of representing an unwarranted intrusion in the affairs of foreign societies that easily transforms into an interested and profit-driven escapade (as many experiences of the IMF and World Bank have led many to believe).

From an ethical standpoint, the dichotomy obliterates a crucial awareness: the appre-

ciation that we are actively responsible for the harm being perpetuated in our name with the maintenance of an unjust global organisation directly sustained by the governments that represent us.

And indeed it can be argued that the very possibility of isolation is today anachronistic, and the anachronism results from a belief that we can no longer debate “the right of interference” when already faced, as Etienne Balibar has expressed it, with “the fact of interference”. And with the duty to organise and direct its effects.

This is a most crucial difference, for in its mystification hides the false thesis that the problem of world poverty does not concern us, citizens of the first world, aside from the charitable aid that we could offer (in all our generosity). Here also hides the suggestion that not doing anything is not immoral. Europe’s retreat from the world stage – wished by many a postcolonialist and not without reason – proves to be neither ethically sound nor politically wise. To the extent that this abdication simply represents a green light to the powers that be – be it an Atlantic empire or the multinational rule of finance – it does not represent a morally justified response to the great horrors, of which “Europe” is surely in no little part responsible, that have haunted us over the course of the past century and continue to face us today. Is Pontius Pilate our ideal of justice?

The current discourse on migration serves as an excellent example of this denial of

Europe’s retreat from the world stage proves to be neither ethically sound nor politically wise. Is Pontius Pilate our ideal of justice?

responsibility. Europeans often act as if “migrants” were being pushed upon our lands by baffling gravitational forces or, in a splendid example of intellectual diversion, by “criminal gangs” from the mysterious North African shores (and then the matter becomes one of “fight against crime,” but what is in front of those “gangs” if not marching thousands?). The state is inclined to view itself as a neutral actor that has nothing to do with migration, and which can respond either brutally or with sympathy (with *charity*), through a more or less strict regulation on asylum seeking procedures, more or less tight internal controls, concession of partial rights, etc. But, as Saskia Sassen has recently argued in *Papeles de Cuestiones Internacionales*, this hides the connection between the phenomenon of migration and the economic and military actions of the “receiving” countries or their prime economic actors. Jacques Derrida’s address to the Writer’s Congress later published as *On Cosmopolitanism*, together with much of the discourse on “hospitality”

it has triggered, inadvertently seems to fall prey to just such an obliteration. This discourse risks missing the crucial awareness of the *un-foreign* nature of the causes that make of a foreigner an immigrant, it risks by-passing the very real daily unfolding of willed exploitation departing from our own capital cities, offering in response a generous disposition of the day-after.

Without removing anything from the utter importance of the fight for incorporation of the migrant populations into Europe (a disgrace for which many have begun employing the term of “European Apartheid”), it would perhaps be worthwhile to raise the question of why, in the twenty-first century, we are faced with such baffling, monstrous, and unacceptable levels of disparity in the planet. And perhaps we should truly look at the terms of the GATT agreements, at Europe’s trade policy and its effect on third world produce, or at the real moral implications of our own delocalised companies enforcing the lowest survival wage on citizens of the third world.

China is repeatedly accused for its sad record on human rights, environmental protection, and inhuman treatment of its workers. Over the course of the summer a new labour law has been passed, increasing the role of trade unions (although these remain state-controlled) in the workplace and calling for greater social security for the workers. The new law includes a stricter code governing lay-offs and a reduction on the employment of “temporary” workers without contracts or benefits. ►

FRONTERES Y APARTHEID; TWO EXHIBITIONS POUR ÉPATER LES EUROPÉENS

Lorenzo Marsili



Melilla, José Palazón



Olivier Coret, Rezo



Gerard Sekoto, Song of the pick, 1946-47, Oil on canvas, BHP Billiton Collection



Itineraris clandestins, Olivier Jobard (Sipa Press)

The border is an idol at whose altar innumerable lives have been sacrificed.
- Claudio Magris

Fronteres (closed 30th of September) and Apartheid (until 13th of January) are two exhibitions co-organised (together with the Musée des Confluences) and currently hosted by the Centro de Cultura Contemporànea de Barcelona. The gist of Fronteres, but not much less that of Apartheid, can be encapsulated with a heavy statement of Claudio Magris: the border is an idol at whose altar innumerable lives have been sacrificed.

Fronteres focuses on the reality of global “borders,” separations between states at once artificial and yet very real, the seat of conflict and mass migrations. The exhibition has a broad scope, focussing on such diverse realities as the walled border between Mexico and the USA, the hermetically sealed frontiers of North Korea, the war on the glacier for control of Cashmere, or the thin strip of sea that separates Havana from Miami. A special attention is placed on the shifting and eternal frontiers of Europe, with powerful deceptions of both the new Eastern frontier of the Union, stretching all the way to Russia, Belarus, Ukraine, and the reality of the Mediterranean, theatre to the tragedies of contemporary migration, to intolerable seclusions, and yet historical route of communication between its Northern and Southern shores.

The exhibition reminds us of the sheer exceptionality of our present state, and it speaks particularly to Europeans, where it reinforces the notion of a continental “fortress” secluded, in its veil of unreality, from the vast expanses that surround it (almost a regression to Patocka’s understanding of early myth, with its stark dichotomy between the *polis* and the barbarian unknown). Against the eternal exhortations to enjoy, against the simulacrum of consumption, we are reminded that *the real exists*; we are put face-to-face with a tragedy that is not somewhere else, in another time and a remote space, but *hic et nunc*, here and now at our very own borders; in our complacent immobility, we are made to feel like greedy, selfish, petty tribesmen.

But Fronteres is a strange creature, between an exhibition and a multimedia reportage, a presentation of photographic or video work is accompanied by ample text, framed together by Michel Foucher’s extensive introductions to each project. Most interestingly, many of the works presented are joint productions where word and image have been labouring together since start. So for example with Marie Dorigny’s and Marc Epstein’s effective and technically exquisite photo reportage on the endless border feud between India and Pakistan over Cashmere, or in *The Boundaries of Europe*, a video on the new Eastern borders of the European Union where Frederic Sautereau’s compelling images of the diversity of landscapes and of peoples that characterise this vast frontier going from the Aegean to the Barents sea intermingle with the narrating voice of Guy-Pierre Chomette. Or when Olivier Jobard follows a Senegalese migrant in his odyssey from Senegal to France, in which case the interaction is that between a photoreporter and his subject, and it is as rewarding to savour the evolving relationship between the two as their voyage proceeds as to focus on the social reality portrayed.

This makes it a very effective and suggestive proposal, a diverse journey through the overall concept of the exhibition that results in a strong capacity to *communicate*, to communicate information but also, and perhaps most importantly, communicate sentiments. A peculiar Chinese expression is 意味, *yi-wei*, or “meaning-taste;” if “meaning” returns us to an appropriation, to an *acquisition* (of information), then “taste” suggests an ultimately irreducible and inexpressible “sentiment”, like the burning that continues after a spice has been eaten. And indeed, this is an exhibition that *grows inside*, one that is carried along on the road and granted power to influence our reaction to perceived existence.

It would have perhaps been nice to see a less literal discussion of borders through an analysis of their insubstantial or *unrecognised* variant. For example, one felt the lack of a discussion on the construction of invisible borders such as those barring off *sans papiers* from access to employment, travel, and social protection, and that motivate Balibar to offer the terrifying expression “European apartheid”.

Melilla, the walled Spanish enclave in Morocco, is the subject of a powerful installation in the garden by Jane Alexander, where high fences, guarded passes and security towers are represented as dehumanising forces and populated by chimerical, eerie figures, half men and half animals. Mellina represents the link between Fronteres and Apartheid, and it is in fact part of the latter, not less interesting exhibition, which accompanies a wide selection of South African artworks from the 19th century to the present with documentary material to reflect on the reality of racial prejudice and discrimination, both in its historical and novel contemporary forms. The effect of visiting the two exhibitions together is potent, and in the end the connection between the “island” of Europe and the reality of Apartheid presents itself in a most compelling manner.

We are reminded that, as citizens of Europe, we are called to decide whether to make of our borders mere defenders of privilege, markers and makers of injustice and fathers of *Penia* —or to dance with our frontiers, rending them no longer markers of social, cultural, and economic disparity, but mere, arbitrary, geographical divisions between administered areas. For a world without borders is not necessarily a world where borders do not exist, but a world in which they no longer serve to divide those who have from those who have not.

The opportunity is not obviously lost by the organizers. The last room of Apartheid features a large wooden board hanging over two walls; on it, *the List of 8855 documented refugee deaths in Fortress Europe*. “Died from weakness after hunger strike and being deported (Great Britain)” “Suicide, hanged himself in detention centre fearing deportation (Germany)” “Roma shot by French police when entering from Italy on mountain way (France)”

► Through the long run-up to the approval of the law by the party congress, strong pressures have been exercised by Western multi-national corporations to water-down the bill. The American Chamber of Commerce in Shanghai, backed by the US-China Business Council, threatened that many companies would leave China in favour of more attractive - read *less regulated* - job markets such as those in Vietnam. The European Chamber of Commerce in-

Faced with an increasingly Hobbesian world ruled by particular interest it is in the unexplored terrain of global responsibility that Europe must find its call.

itially behaved just as its American equivalent. Faced with mounting criticism from human rights and labour organisations, it finally backed off and renounced its threats. In an example of the moral contradiction of our societies, European governments have been peculiarly silent about these events. No serious discussion in the media has

taken place. This, and it is to be stated with the maximum of force, is unacceptable.

But little of this discussion seems to be present amongst the European left. In the program of the French socialists, in the demands of the more radical elements in the centre-left coalition in Italy, in the dialectic of the Spanish or German left—one finds little inclination to truly militate for a structural readjustment of the unequal relations of power that currently govern the rapport between nations and which are at the basis of so much widespread suffering on our own planet (of *power* understood in the most ample sense, but, to use just one declination, we can mention unequal *commercial* relations).

An intervention that is not merely humanitarian - one aiming instead at the very core of the global interpenetration of economical, technological, and cultural processes - is surely beyond the capacities of any individual nation state. To truly enact a positive global transformation and to seriously address the immense social inequalities and moral injustices with which this planet overflows—could we name one European country capable of doing this?

All international organisations, beginning with the UN, the IMF, and the World Bank, have thus far proved totally ineffective in truly addressing the problem of global poverty and inequality. But then—as the world's largest economy, could this not be-

come the role of the European Union? Is that not what *we* should ask the European Union *to do*? In much criticism against the neo-liberalism of the EU, as for example evidenced by recent writing in *Le Monde Diplomatique*, one often finds a lack of a positive *alternative* vision of what a truly renovated European union could achieve. But this should be our task. Let us not forget that trade – one of the most powerful weapons to address the current global economic imbalance, a far more powerful instrument than aid or any “structural funds” can ever be – is currently managed by the EU on behalf of its member states. Should we not actively push for this tool to be used in new ways? The material potential existing, should we not militate for its alternative employment? Faced with an increasingly Hobbesian world ruled by particular interest, it is in the unexplored terrain of global responsibility that Europe must find its call. And the enactment of this transformation is how we can understand the “adventurous” Europe Zygmunt Bauman called for on the pages of the last issue of this publication.

But the crucial objection is well encapsulated by Henri Dorion in the exhibition catalogue of *Fronteres* [see review on previous page]; “should we place hope”, he rhetorically asks, “in the good will of our civil authorities in turning a border of separation into a border of contact? This is much generosity when we can reap great benefits on proximity based on differences”.

There are great (economical) benefits to a proximity based on difference. But this very realisation, this very objection, is it not what should forcefully be brought to the fore? In the hope that any remaining sense of justice might finally produce that *enraged* citizenry that morality now so decidedly demands, should this not become the focus of our discussions? Common sense prescribes profound scepticism towards the current capacities of any European union to truly enact an alternative global politics. But hasn't this, in our long history, always been the condition faced by emerging political alternatives? And instead of a recoiling-back, isn't the correct posture a charge forward? Faced with the insufficiency of the present moment, should we not militate for the coming-alive of a genuine European consensus, understood as the consensus of the citizens of Europe and their political consciousness?

This is also what it means for Europe to become *political*, to be invested with serious projections of its potential futures surpassing the restricted scope of the national discourse. But instead of complaints, Europe should become a race of *ideas*. And of actions. ■



Nandipha Mntambo, *Beginning of the Empire*
2007, installation, artist collection

Europe, the UK and Catch 22 democracy

Whilst the debate over the EU Reform Treaty grows ever more trivial, and each side makes appeals to ‘democracy’, democracy in Europe becomes ever deeper in crisis. What is required is a new movement for democracy amongst the ‘frontierless generation’.

Niccoló Milanese

‘Major Major never sees anyone in his office whilst he is in his office.’ So Sergeant Tower explains to Appleby that he can only have a meeting with Major Major Major Major (whose first, middle and surnames are ‘Major’), in his office when he is not in his office. The increasing familiarity of this kind of ‘catch 22’ explanation in all domains of British public life surely gives reason to think that Joseph Heller’s novel of that title is more than ever the book for the moment.

The UK ‘debate’ over the EU reform treaty is a particularly fine example of this, as anyone who has tried to understand the status of the ‘red lines’ supposedly drawn by the British government in negotiations over the treaty to protect ‘our national interest’ knows. The ‘red lines’, depending on who you ask, are ‘stronger’, ‘thinner’, ‘water based’, ‘transparent’, have ‘had a horse and cart driven through them’, ‘been perforated’ or ‘been secured’. All of which is completely meaningless.

The baffling net of confused arguments surrounding Europe in the UK not only displays the intellectual confusion of the protagonists involved: as in Heller’s novel, they also represent an attempt on all sides to prevent public understanding and scupper public engagement. What is more sinister, and more dangerous, is that they pretend to be doing this in the name of promoting democracy itself. For there *is* a profound crisis of democracy in Europe, both at the national and European levels. Most people recognise this, and are absolutely right to kick up a fuss. What has yet to happen is for any political organisation to sincerely uphold attempts to deal with this crisis, instead of generating political capital from it. There is no way of dealing with the crisis of democracy at the national level without dealing with it at the European level as well. It makes no sense to ‘pull out of European politics in the name of democracy.’ All democratic politics in Europe for the foreseeable future will be pro-European, and this



can fairly straightforwardly be shown.

There are at least three precepts of democracy that should be aspired towards. The first two are frequently invoked by both sides in the debate over whether there should be a referendum. The third is ignored by almost all the political establishment:

- 1. That the public is not just ‘consulted’** once every few years about its opinions by being given a choice between candidates, and ignored the rest of the time. Democracy means that each member of society has the power to influence the way that society is run, and this has to be a continuous power, exempted only in the most exceptional of circumstances for a temporary period.
- 2. That the public should not be deceived** by those who govern society.
- 3. That every member** of society should be able to take part in democracy on an equal basis, and should have their voice heard.

The pro-referendum campaign claims that the Labour government made a manifesto pledge to have a referendum on the EU constitution, that the reform treaty is extremely similar to the EU constitution, and that therefore there should be a referendum. This is an appeal to the first and second precepts above. The reason given for a referendum being required is that the

There is no way of dealing with the crisis of democracy at national level without dealing with it at the European level as well.

treaty transfers significant powers to the European Union, and that the ‘British government’ should have control over ‘British’ problems. This argument entirely ignores its own premise that the British government is unrepresentative of the ‘British’ people. If it were to be convincing, it would have to propose a program for how the national parliament should be reformed to be more representative, more ‘democratic’.

The British government wearing one face claims that the treaty can be democratically ratified in parliament, because British citizens live in a ‘representative democracy’, and wearing the other face claims that a profound renewal of democracy is required, based on consultation and public involvement.

Both of these are catch 22 circular arguments, which repose on the deep rooted myth in British consciousness that we live in a democracy. This seems to me an institutional myth, which runs through our media, governmental and educational institutions, rather than a myth that is actively believed by most people in the UK. Most people in the UK might say they live in a democracy, but when questioned as to whether they feel there is a possibility of their voice affecting political decisions, they know full well the possibility is far from guaranteed.

The poverty of voices involved in the debate over the reform treaty is symptomatic. Where are the voices questioning the British 'red-line' protecting us against the European Charter on Human Rights? Who is making the arguments that it would actually give greater rights to workers in the UK? Who is asking about immigrant labour and the reform treaty from the point of view of the migrant? Whether it really would help these people or not is a different matter, but there is simply no public discussion.

Where are the voices of all those who have come to the UK through the opening of borders by the European Union, who have an interest both in the politics of their original countries and of Britain? What sense for the generation of students travelling freely around Europe? What sense does it make for 'them' (that is, for us) to claim that the British should have control over British affairs? This argument is for them (for us) entirely spurious, for these people know that one of the un-repealable consequences of the European Union is a generation who live across borders, that a person's reality is not neatly contained within national frontiers.

This goes to the heart of the matter. The

debate over Europe in the UK is blind to the question 'who is part of society in the UK?', because it is dominated by people for whom this question is not at issue. Once we ask the question "who is the 'we' that should have control over 'our' own affairs?" there is no plausible definition of any particular group in the UK that should have control: there is only the reality of those who have power at the moment, and those who are excluded.

Since these groups have no real voice, the bourgeois majority in Britain is able to continue to slumber in a post-imperial daze, unwilling to give up the belief that Britain can really tackle any political problem presented to it by means of the ingenuity of its 'innate' population (which is in any case anything but *innate*), and its long-standing ability to win at the Westphalian game of balancing powers against each other. It is this majority that the Conservative party in the UK have recently been so good at attracting, with implausible promises on UK foreign policy, climate change and immigration without any indication either given or asked for as to how they would be achieved without taking some structure that resembles the European Union. It is catch 22 politics again – the refusal to give any meaningful explanation, the blank re-

fusal of dialogue or acknowledgement.

After the rejection of the Constitution in referenda in France and the Netherlands, many hoped that the European Union would change the way it carried on its business, open itself up to citizens and thereby become more democratic. The way the reform treaty has been drafted and negotiated has been even more hermetic than the way the constitution was written. This is not something that can be entirely blamed on the European Union itself (without the good will of national leaders and administrations, there is at the moment no other way for them to get agreement) – it is to be blamed on the entire way democracy is not working in Europe. Until this changes throughout Europe, things will only get worse.

Britain would have had important role to play in the new context. There is little sign that any significant public debate over the reform treaty will take place in France or the Netherlands and therefore it would have been up to Britain to insist on changes to the way the democracy in Europe functions at this particular moment. This would be a worthy campaign for greater democracy in the EU and one that would resonate strongly with the whole of the British public, as well the pub-

lic right across Europe. Instead the debate has already been hijacked by those with a different agenda, and there is little sign of any coalition demanding democracy coming about. Perhaps this is too pessimistic, and the pro-European forces in the UK will find ways of joining forces with the pro-democracy pressure groups.

A pro-European coalition in Britain would be a coalition which stands against the catch 22 politics, which stands with all those who have no voice at the moment: the immigrant communities, the frontierless generation, the poor – who are ever more ignored throughout the whole of Western Europe. It would be a coalition which confronts unblinkingly contemporary reality, and stands up against the dogmas which prevent us from seeing it, which make us powerless in the face of it while telling us we have all the choice in the world. It would be a coalition which necessarily reached beyond 'Britain' as it appears on the map, and finally realised what is surely the most important intellectual shift of our times: that all the human world, just as all the physical world, is inescapably joined and mixed. It may sound like a huge project: and it is, in its importance. But that is not to say it is impossible : that is the biggest social dogma of all. ■

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**7 Graphite Square
 Vauxhall Walk
 London SE11 5EE
 T: +44 (0)20 7735 4000
 F: +44 (0)20 7735 8000**

Italy's *Partito Democratico*: Three Million Votes and Three Questions

The merger of Italy's two largest left-of-centre political parties aspires to revolutionise the stiff and fragmented Italian landscape. But it is still unclear what the new party aspires to be.

Stella Tang

Italy has always been an important laboratory for new political organisations. Without disturbing the sleeping ghosts of fascism, it is worth remembering that the country boasted Western Europe's largest Communist party, lending initial credence to many hopes for an "Italian road to socialism", a democratic Communist government ready to accept the parliamentary game of compromise.

Today there comes again from Italy something new in the European political panorama of the left. The *Democratici di Sinistra*, "heirs" to the Communist Party and Italy's largest leftist party, have merged with the "popolari" (read: centre-left Christian democrats) of the *Margherita* (the "daisy"). The result is the new and much touted *Partito Democratico*, which can reasonably aim to reach around 35% of electoral preferences, positioning itself as Italy's leading political force. What is more, the union of centrist and leftist elements in the new party stands as a potential example for many sectors of the European left faced with increased fragmentation and reduced electoral appeal. It is not surprising that Segolène Royal is a frequent guest in the new party's political rallies, and that the attempted Italian "salvage" of socialist principles by anchoring them to centrist prerogatives is an experiment being closely followed by many.

In the period leading to the formation of the new party there have been repeated accusations of *fusione fredda*, or what Eric Jozsef, correspondent of *Liberation*, interpreted as the merger of two groupings afraid of the competition but without any serious plan to offer. And indeed, at first glance the reasons for the alliance seem to be tactical above all; the leftist *Democratici di Sinistra* are increasingly worried at the prospect of a re-creation of centrist unity and the reappearance of a strong centrist party. If Bayrou's exploit at the recent French elections comes to mind, we should not forget that the years between 1948 and 1992 saw the uncompromised hegemony of the centrist *Democrazia Cristiana* in Italian political life.

Together with its name, the new party imported from American political life the system of "primary elections". Elections took



Electra, photography by Sarah Adina

place on October 16th, witnessing an un-hoped-for public interest and participation. Over three million voters queued and contributed one euro to decide the party's new leadership. As amply predicted, Walter Veltroni, charismatic current mayor of Rome, was elected with 75% of the preferences. Supported by such a popular plebiscite many see in Veltroni the "new man" of stiff Italian political life; Veltroni's exploits include the revitalisation of cultural life in Italy's capital - which as I write is celebrating the second edition of its new Film Festival devised by the mayor himself - an economic performance of the city well above average, and, most important of all, the capacity to surpass party apparatuses and ideological divisions in rallying transversal support.

But there are at the very least three major questions around the success of this new project.

The Italian political system is in complete decay, but seems unable to reform itself. The current government led by Romano Prodi is marked by internal instability and

The doubt that the new Partito Democratico be merely an abortive and late-coming child of 1990s European illusions for a "third way" is hard to dislodge.

incapacity to approve significant legislation, plummeting well below 40% in recent popularity ratings. Internal fragmentation (the governing coalition is composed of eleven parties) is accentuated by an absurd electoral law - defined by its own creator, Roberto Calderoli, as a "porcata" (something vile) - resulting in a near parity in the Senate. However, the Parliament is unable to work towards a redrafting of the law as many of its twenty parties oppose a simplification of representation that would negatively affect them. The Prodi government is therefore widely predicted to fall anytime within the next months.

It is however unclear what options lay open. An "institutional" government, with a participation of elements from both left and right, is vehemently opposed by Silvio Berlusconi, who instead presses for a return to the ballot box from which he would most likely emerge victorious. In the event of general elections, after its present failure the left-wing coalition would be unable to present itself in the same composition; it is however extremely unlikely that any simplified version of the alliance

would gain a majority in Parliament. Many commentators are beginning to foresee a *Partito Democratico* running alone – and hence condemned to losing – in the next elections, in the hope of consolidating its hegemony on the left during a second Berlusconi government. If a return to power of Silvio Berlusconi appears a rather grotesque eventuality, there seems to be not much space for manoeuvre for the new leader of the *Partito Democratico*.

The second question addresses the political position of the party. Veltroni seems to have followed the widespread European

trend of appropriating keywords from the opposition; now “security” and “legality”, “tax breaks” and “privatisation” have begun making repeated appearances in Veltroni’s speeches, whereas traditional themes such as solidarity toward migrants, the fight against precarious work, the need for social equality, rights for homosexual couples, have all suddenly been discarded. This seems to be leaving an empty space to the left of the *Partito Democratico*, which might be seized by a re-organised union of the four “radical” left-wing parties of which there is recently much talk but few concrete steps. Be this as it may, it is

doubtful whether the new *Partito* will be able to offer anything more than a watered down version of Blairism, a new centrism, or a return to a slightly more left-leaning Christian Democracy.

Lastly, the international standing of the party has been all but ignored. Veltroni is well known for his frequent “African expeditions” and his mostly mediatic attention to the problems of the third world. This, however, seems to have been left out of the political dialectic thus far, and there seems little hope that the new party may embody those principles of transnationalism that are dis-

cussed on the pages of this journal. Lastly, although the *Partito* is surely pro-European, as most Italian political forces are bound to be, it has not presented any truly innovative proposal for the future of the Union, lying content with a distracted and inertial support towards the integration process.

The doubt that the new *Partito Democratico* be merely an abortive and late-coming child of 1990s European illusions for a “third way” is hard to dislodge. But it will be worth keeping an eye on its evolution. Italy is always a land of surprises. ■

A European Route to *Une Nouvelle Gauche Française*?

After the defeat of Segolène Royal in the Presidential elections in France, and then the heavy loses of the Socialist Party in the Parliamentary elections, the French Left is looking for a way to redefine itself. Thomas Ferenczi, Europe editor of *Le Monde*, suggests a possible route...

Thomas Ferenczi

The French Socialists, who were profoundly divided in 2005 over the project for the European Constitution, still have not managed to adopt a coherent attitude toward Europe. Out of power since 2002, they denounce the way the Union works, which they regard as too complaisant regarding neo-liberalism and the rule of the market. But when they directed the government, first under François Mitterrand and then Lionel Jospin, they happily accepted the rules, founded on competition and free exchange. Thus, depending on the circumstances, they either insist on the weaknesses of the European construction or they choose to underline the advantages, to such an extent that they forget the insufficiencies. Torn between ideas of a

social Europe and the realities of a liberal Europe, they try in vain to make coherent their words and their actions.

This tear is nothing new. Since the beginning of the European unification, the left in France has been divided between a positive vision of the communitarian project and a critical vision. The positive vision: although it may be true that the unification of Europe is first of all founded on the putting

in place of a common market, conforming to the principles of a market economy, it is also seen to be the symbol of reconciliation between ancient enemies, in particular France and Germany, and as the method of consolidating democracy in the Old continent. Critical vision: the great European market is inscribed in the logic of the development of modern capitalism, servile to the domination of the United States, which has transformed the Union over several

decades into a Trojan horse of an unconquered globalisation. ‘The liberal development of the European construction has obscured the project of mutual integration and solidarity’ the PS wrote in its manifesto.

The majority of the Socialist party is still attached to the European project such as it was elaborated and then put in action by the founding fathers – Jean Monnet, Robert Schuman, Konrad Adenauer... Along ▶

Europe as fortress or Europe as manager? Between these two extremes, a large number of socialists, who regard this choice as too Manichean, are looking for an intermediate route.



Glass Kiss, photography by Sarah Adina

► with the Christian Democrats, the social-democrats, particularly in France, have been over 50 years the principle actors in constructing Europe. In the name of internationalism, which is one of the elements of their identity, they have supported a politics of opening borders and creating a united Europe against the currents of nationalism and separatism. On the other hand, another part of the left – a minority of socialists, communists, the extreme left – have fought against this politics, considered as an instrument of war at the service of the struggle against communism. Their priorities have instead been the struggles in the third world and the revolts of decolonisation rather than the European cause.

Debates over the effect of globalisation have revived the quarrels between the two political lefts over the roles of the European Union. For the radical left, baptised firstly as anti-globalist and then alter-globalist, Europe should offer a way of resisting globalisation rather than favour its further spread. For the moderate left, which one might call 'social-liberal', globalisation is a reality, which France will not be able to escape and which Europe must attempt to manage in such a way as to exploit the positive aspects. Europe as fortress or Europe as manager? Between these two extremes, a large number of socialists, who regard this choice as too Manichean, are looking for an intermediate route.

'Globalisation is a fact but the liberal course it has taken is not inevitable' affirms the manifesto of the Socialist Party, according to which 'the European Union will remain an important tool for taking control of our future.' How? In giving priority to full employment, in harmonising social rights from above, in establishing rules which ensure a 'better protection' in world-wide market competition. Hubert Védrine – the former minister for foreign affairs and close collaborator of François Mitterrand and then Lionel Jospin – was more precise in a recent report to the President of Republic. He notes the inquietude of a large part of the French public faced with globalisation and the hope they place in an 'other' globalisation...

According to Védrine, if belief in 'happy globalisation' has failed to convince public opinion, 'suspicious anti-globalisation' has shown its 'sterility'. Thus he recommends an 'offensive strategy' within the European Union, not 'faced' with globalisation but 'within' globalisation. The crucial word is 'adapt'. 'To adapt to play part in globalisation' he says, 'is not to conform to rules imposed from the outside, but instead to valorise our advantages and to liberate our energies in trying to correct the mechanisms.' For him, openness does not exclude a certain degree of protection, even if one must admit, undogmatically, that 'some protections are justified, whereas others are inefficient.'

The route is very narrow: it will displease the radical left without capturing the sentiment of the liberal right. But perhaps it would be a way for the social-democratic left to reaffirm its identity. ■

From Words to Fact: A New Party For Spain

Fernando Savater, Spain's leading philosopher, essayist, and novelist, has joined forces with Rosa Díez to in the formation of a new political party. Faced with an increasing fragmentation of the country, the party attempts to address the excesses of "regionalism" in Spanish politics and to reclaim the equality of rights and opportunities for all citizens.

Fernando Savater

I have taught for many years that democracy consists of two essential notions: firstly, in a democracy we are all politicians, and members of the government are little more than our delegates, those to whom we have given a mandate for a certain time and under certain conditions; secondly, that it is senseless to simply lament, as monarchic subjects or slaves would do, the actions of our politicians: if we believe they are not conducting their function well, it is up to us to depose them in the ballot box, to substitute them for others, and, as a last resort, to offer to carry out their tasks ourselves when we think we can improve on them. The basis of the democratic system is that no one is born just to *command* or just to *obey*, but we all must be ready for one or the other according to what may benefit the community.

For this reason I have participated in all

imaginable civic movements in the Basque countries: Movement for Peace and Non-Violence, Foro de Ermua, Basta Ya... it was a means of doing *politics* (not *ethics* nor *conscientious objection*) without converting into a professional politician. But today it is not enough to follow the same line of action, and we have no other remedy than to attempt offering a new political alternative so that our voice may reach up to the Spanish parliament. We have therefore launched ourselves in the difficult adventure of proposing a new political party: Unión Progreso y Democracia (UPD).

Our principal objective is to defend the equality of citizens, without which there is no State of Right that is worth its salt. But this implies beginning to unequivo

It is time to finish with the beatified fetish of endless difference and with the conversion of any discourse of unity and similarity into quasi-fascist impositions.



K&2, photography by Sarah Adina

cally and constitutionally determine the attributes of the State and those of the “autonomies,” which are merely their subsidiary and not mini-states. What should worry us is not the nationalism of the nationalists; they defend what they believe in and so long as they do it pacifically and within the rule of law there is nothing to object, except attempting to oppose better reasons. Rather, it is the rampart nationalism of the *non* nationalists, the swell over all of Spain of a sort of induced pseudo-nationalism or a contagious *regionalitis*, which finds electoral and economic advantages in advancing (regional) nationalist claims demanding “that they give us back what is ours” and that “they give it all now” without any concern for the *common* good. One hears expressions such as “the Basque countries will be what the Basques will want” or “Catalonia what the Catalans will decide”; these are clearly nationalist statements, for the constitutional truth is that Spain will be what the Spanish in all and every part of the country want it to be. The most important self-determination is that of the Spanish citizens in the management of their global community. From

the educational point of view, it is time to end it with the beatified fetish of endless difference and with the conversion of any discourse of unity and similarity into quasi-fascist impositions.

We view freedom of conscience and the laicism of the state as simply necessary in any democracy worthy of this name. And we are also convinced that there is no effective equality without a redistribution of wealth, and for this reason we defend public services and social protection without exclusions. And all of this is not a political “shopping list” full of heterogeneous annotations, but something intimately tied together and articulated in a coherent conception of the national reality.

The UPD does not come to castigate any existing political option, but to help to govern in a different way. We would like to contribute towards a sentiment of democratic modesty, as Albert Camus well expressed it: “the democrat, in the end, is someone who accepts that the adversary can be right, who allows him to express himself and accepts to

reflect on his arguments.” This differentiates us from those who reduce political discourse to a banal “at least we are not like *them*.” To never share anything with the adversary and to never recognize in him any merit is the most idiotic of all sectarian formulae.

The last of our preoccupations is to define our place amongst the left or amongst the right, when in Spain the socialist government seeks support from the large banking groups for its economic policy and the liberal opposition goes hand in hand with the most fundamentalist of bishops. For too much time we suffered at the hands of a battalion of politicians immune to the sense of ridicule who, when faced with a mistake of Zapatero’s cabinet, remind us that the opposition in turn did the same or worse when in government, as if this were to serve as a consolation. One of the finest scenes in *Macbeth* sees the dialogue between prince Malcom, son of the assassinated Duncan, and Macduff, whose son has also died at the hands of the tyrant. To test Macduff, who wishes to return him the usurped throne, Malcolm admits to all kinds of vices and atrocious ambitions, which

Macduff takes as trifles of no importance so long as Macbeth can be deposed. This is simply the choice of rancour. But the UPD will not lower itself to this, nor will it chase after those who raise their voices full of bile but short of ideas.

Many of the promoters of the UPD have defended these ideas in the media over the course of many years. But now we must go beyond the intellectual debate and, well argued as they may be, the mere exchange of opinions. We have seen that this is not enough, and we have decided to go from words to parliamentary facts. Are we ingenuous? Surely yes, at least in the original meaning of the word: we are born free, without vassalage or toll to pay. To go back to Macbeth; the usurper asked the outraged skies that they let him sleep, sleep “in spite of the thunders.” In Spain one hears thunders every time stronger, but we do not want to sleep: on the contrary, we intend to keep citizens well awake, vigilant, and combative. ■

GERMAN LITERATURE AND THE MIRROR OF NATURE

A CONTROVERSIAL RULING OF THE GERMAN CONSTITUTIONAL COURT BANNED A NOVEL BY MAXIM BILLER REALISTICALLY DEPICTING HIS SEXUAL EXPLOITS WITH HIS FORMER GIRLFRIEND FOR AN ALLEGED PRIVACY BREACH. BUT CAN ART BREAK PRIVACY?

[Catherine Davies](#)

On October 12, the German constitutional court ruled that *Esra*, a novel written by the German author Maxim Biller, would remain banned from publication in Germany. It thus confirmed four previous rulings in the case by lower regional courts all of which had argued that Biller’s detailed descriptions of his protagonist’s sexual exploits with his lover (easily identifiable as Biller’s ex-girlfriend) constituted a serious attack on the latter’s right to privacy and anonymity and thus justified a ban. The book in question had been published in 2003 and by the time that Biller’s ex-girlfriend, a German actress of Turkish descent, and her mother (who also felt she had been unfairly depicted) decided to take legal action against its publication, around 4000 copies had already been distributed to newspapers and bookshops.

The public’s reaction to the court’s verdict was divided – as was indeed the court itself with three of the eight judges writing dissenting minority opinions. Perhaps unsurprisingly, those commentators who sharply condemned the ban were quick to evoke the unhappy German tradition of censorship and authoritarianism and could see in the whole affair nothing but a dangerous illiberal attack on the freedom of artistic expression. It nevertheless seems remarkable how readily and easily these critics were prepared to dismiss the possibility that an individual’s right to privacy may carry more weight than an artist’s right to make public all sorts of personal and potentially humiliating details about his ex-girlfriend’s sex life as long as he does so in an “artistic” manner (whatever that may mean). As Bernd Seiler, a scholar in German literature at the

University of Bielefeld, pointed out, the degree of freedom of speech granted to artists and novelists by German law goes far beyond that accorded to the media or indeed any other form of public expression which does not lay claim to being a work of art. The dissenting judges in their minority opinions came out in support of this distinction and, quoting Theodor Adorno (!), claimed that a work of art could, as a matter of principle, never be seen as a simple mirror of reality. In the process of aesthetic transformation, they argue, the work of art severs all ties with reality and assumes an autonomous existence outside of the realm of the real. Amazing enough as it is to see Adorno being thus summoned to give an expert opinion, it seems even harder to believe that the three dissenting judges really do think that reality and art are so fundamentally distinct when quite obviously they are not. Biller himself made only weak attempts at disguising the female protagonist’s identity, merely changing her name but retaining most other features, including the name of the street in Munich she lives in, her Turkish origin, her child’s fatal illness, and the prizes she was awarded as an actress. Asserting that all this has absolutely nothing to do with a real person simply because the book purports to be a novel and novels by definition are ontologically distinct from reality is begging the question – all the more so as Adorno himself arguably would not rest the case there and most certainly did not give the final verdict on this matter. The majority judges’ more commonsensical observation that the relationship between a book and the reality it depicts is to a large extent dependent on the reader’s perspective is therefore to be welcomed, as is their decision to uphold the publication ban.

A Letter from Poland: The Same Europe, the Other Hate?

With the spectre of homophobia and anti-feminism ever-present in Eastern Europe, artists and young activists are becoming the new dissidents, says the artists and curators Tomek Kitlinski and Pawel Leszkowicz...

Tomek Kitlinski & Pawel Leszkowicz

“We’ll do to you what Hitler did to Jews!” shout counterdemonstrators at feminist and gay marchers in Poland. This country abjects Jews, women, and homosexuals. In the old Polish capital of Cracow caustic acid was thrown at the Parade of Equality which champions the rights of queers on May 7, 2004 a week after Poland joined the European Union. In Riga, Latvia, bags of excrement were pelted at gay priders on July 22, 2006. Our gay love, our subjectivity is soiled, hurt, humiliated. Affective alterity appears as peril for the nation. Citizens or rather nationalists are to be bred in the name of the nation (the Latin *natio* for breeding). Same-sex love and the freedom of women is a crime to the newly-born and ever-breeding nations of Eastern Europe. Abortion has been criminalized in Poland since 1993.

A spectre is haunting Eastern Europe: the spectre of love dissidence. Women and gays stand up against the exclusionary body politic. Artists, in particular women, and young activists are the new dissidents. This dissent in society is being created in their work, exhibition projects and, generally, the mobilizations of minorities as revolt. Here belongs the younger generation’s insistence on combining queerness and Jewishness. Art and activism explore democratic diversity to counter nationalist censorship, misogyny, homophobia - an inhospitality, that is, xenophobia in the society.

Members of the League of Polish Families, a party that until recently was part of the government coalition, physically attacked one young woman artist, Dorota Nieznalska, and then the party brought charges against her for “offending religious feelings.” She was sentenced to “restriction of freedom in the form of penal labour” and banned from leaving the country. Nieznalska and her feminist and queer allies participated in the “Love and Democracy” exhibition in Poznan and Gdansk. Presented at the show was Dorota Nieznalska’s photograph presenting fundamentalism-cum-na-

tionalism in terms of sadomasochism. In her work both the erotic and the political dimension of sadomasochism are prominent. Her photos entice the viewer with their perverse allure and at the same time they sketch a perverse commentary on the subject of the surrounding social reality. Nieznalska’s images reveal the sexual foundation of the society dreamed about by fundamentalists. Dorota Nieznalska represents new dissidence against the anti-modernism of today’s Poland. Against violent, claustrophobic, repressive religionism – without religion as inner experience.

Pawel curated the show and in his installations Tomek analyzed the Jewish and gay ideas-images of hospitality as non-majoritarian praxis. Minorities ally also in a practical way: Warsaw’s reform synagogue Beit issued a statement supporting the Gay Parade, as chairwoman of the liberal Jewish community Dorota Szymborska-Dyrda put it, “minority for minority.”

Even if the regime changes, other domineering parties in Poland also draw on prejudices. During their rule, the ex-Communists did nothing to promote the rights of women and gays. The Civic Platform, a liberal, market-oriented party is a mixture of homophiles and homophobes. The worst in its hate is the far-right party until recently in government coalition, the League of Polish Families, with its roots in Poland’s inter-war anti-Semitism. It is led by Roman Giertych, until last month Poland’s Minister of Education. His grandfather, Jędrzej Giertych, was a racist politician in the 1930s and author of *Towards Ending the Crisis* (1938), a book where he called for the expulsion of Jews from Poland. Journalist Andrew Nagorski of Newsweek comments on Giertych’s party: “gay bashing has been his party latest sport”. The League’s militia, the All-Polish Youth violently attacks gay prides - with stones, bottles, and such catcalls as “To the gas!”

The All-Polish Youth has a long history of anti-Semitism and remains proud of having supported the *numerous clausus* and bench ghettos at Poland’s universities

Art and activism explore democratic diversity to counter nationalistic censorship, misogyny and homophobic inhospitality, that is, xenophobia in the society.

between the world wars. Roman Giertych reactivated the All-Polish Youth and led a “Parade of Normality” in Warsaw, one that presented skinheads as model Poles. The League’s anti-gay tirades are repeated over and over again by the media. Gays are disrespected in parliament (the League’s MPs use there words like “deviants,” or “pederasts”), on the streets, in the media and even publications of scholarly ambitions. The *Encyclopedia*, published in 2005 by Poland’s leading newspaper *Gazeta Wyborcza* and the Polish Scientific Publishers last year, defines homosexuality as a form of “disturbed sexual identification.”

Reporter Jean-Luc Testault of the Agence France Press noted: “In this part of Europe homophobia is not confined to the circles of Christian fundamentalists.” Atheist Bogusław Wolniewicz, Professor of Philosophy at Warsaw University, said on national TV that the Jewish holiday of Sukkot must not be publicly celebrated in Poland; likewise, gays must not go public. Wolniewicz’s anti-German lampoon attacking Benedict XVI was published by the mass audience Radio Maryja’s newspaper *Nasz Dziennik* (The German Pope admonished Radio Maryja). Professor of Philosophy and current Minister of Education, Ryszard Legutko, authored a book entitled “I Don’t Like Toleration” and an article in the broadsheet *Rzeczpospolita* about queer movement and studies as “invented party of the wronged” and “danger-

ous absurd.” Zdzisław Krasnodebski, Polish sociologist at Bremen University, is active in the Polish press deriding German help for the gay movement in Poland. Neither Legutko’s nor Krasnodebski’s homophobia is inspired by Catholicism. Theirs is a rationalized hate in gentlemen cultivating their petty pet aversions. “Today lesbo-gays, tomorrow zoophiliacs, who the day after tomorrow??? Is that how freedom and democracy should look like??? This is syphilization!!!” is a slogan not of the All-Polish Youth, but of the ruling Law and Justice party.

But more and more of Poland’s scholars, students, and even pupils turn into anti-government activists. Commentator Jan Puhl of *Der Spiegel* writes: “And so in the meantime a little Polish gay movement changes peu à peu into a citizens’ initiative against intolerance”. Women public intellectuals Maria Janion, Magdalena Sroda, Kazimiera Szczuka, spearhead it. Janion (b. 1926) has changed the Polish humanities, edited an influential series of anthologies *Transgressions* and published a dozen of her own books. The recent ones analyze misogyny and anti-Semitism in Poland. Janion and her seminarists, including feminist literary historian, author of a book *Cinderella, Frankenstein and Other Women* and TV host Kazimiera Szczuka, political philosopher Magdalena Sroda are a voice of freedom in contemporary Poland. Alongside them, *Krytyka Polityczna* is a journal, publishing house and milieu of progressive younger sociologists, literary critics and activists. They publish a number of translations of Žižek and Badiou. To their recent issue, they added a CD documenting Slavoj Žižek’s visit to their headquarters. “Father Žižek”, said *Krytyka*’s editor-in-chief smirking, “the public is yours.”

Krytyka Polityczna’s Igor Stokfiżewski blasts Polish poetry for conservatism. In his literary criticism sheet *europa. poetical fiction* Igor Stokfiżewski went far in going beyond conventions: he abandoned punctuation. A Gertrude Stein-like nonconformity began in contemporary Poland in an artzine *Counterart-Kontrstuka* which aimed to avant-gardize poetics and politics

alike. Stokfiszewski champions new gay fiction in Poland – with many predecessors of discreet homotextuality in the literary canon – a cult novel of Michal Witkowski. The younger generation of Polish Jews initiated a cultural magazine *Gwiazdeczki/Babel*. It warns against the anti-Semitism and homophobia in Poland (texts by Darek Galecki, Dorota Szymborska-Dyrda, and Pawel Pilarski), presents feminist and queer ideas (articles by Ewa Majewska) and goes back to the transgressive figure of a woman tzaddik (drama by Anna Cialowicz). Textually, but also visually with its artwork by dissident artists, *Gwiazdeczki/Babel* embody the spirit of revolt.

Homophobia and anti-Semitism are resonated by Radio Maryja, the fundamentalist media conglomerate. It has no sacred, no sublimation, no aura. In opposition to

“Love the stranger!” and the secular public sphere. Elements of Bergsonian dynamic religion and a strong civil society – *laïque*. Instead we are crushed under the local pieties of xenophobia in post-Protestant Latvia, post-Soviet Russia and ultranationalist rather than Catholic Poland.

We are in the grip of far-righters who are not extremists any more, but the mightiest part of the political mainstream. They see themselves as the epitome of “normality,” guardians of the temple of civilization. They construct a state of siege, feel their ideas threatened, and entrench themselves. Discrimination, to their mind, is not against national and sexual minorities, but against themselves. The reactionaries worldwide appropriate the language of minorities. Italian politician whose candidacy as EU commissioner was dropped because

rected to the non-males, including in the fantasies of far-righters, gays. If women, children and gays do not change into virile, in fact military “real Polish” men, they are to be sacrificed. Tribe chieftains of the Kaczynskis’ and the Giertychs’ parties and now government turn Poland into a jail of chauvinist-fundamentalist mentality, Milosz’s “captive mind” of a closed community.

“Poland for Poles” is *de rigeur*. On September 16, 2007 in his convention speech PM Jaroslaw Kaczynski said that his party must win the elections to make sure that “this soil is inhabited by one Polish nation, and not a variety of nations.”

This is our reading, hidden in a series of East European narratives: in the beginning was xenophobia. Openness to strangers,

philoxenia, is a work of culture. Eastern Europe today is hostage to hate and abjection and exclusion; we witness, nay, we participate in a ghostly return of anti-Semitism, misogyny and homophobia. At stake is one’s disgust, abomination and violence against the not-belonging, against oneself.

Poland lacks hospitality, philoxenia. Hospitality is a Biblical, Koranic, Kantian, Arendtian, Derridean, Baumanian idea which we badly need here and now. It was Zygmunt Bauman who called for hospitality at this year’s Festival of Europe. In Polish, the very word for hospitality, *goscinnosc*, embraces *innosc*, otherness. Hosting otherness, including the Kristevan (or just human!) strangeness in oneself, is crucial in our part of Europe. And globally. ■



Tomek Kitlinski 'Hospitality with none other than Queen Deen'

this “Radio of Mary” and Poland’s homogeneous Marian cult, a diversity of Mary’s identities, their “strangeness” could be cultivated: Mary is an impoverished Jewish woman Miriam, Maryam in the Koran, explosion of subjectivity in Kristevan feminism. Pawel presented postmodern Madonnas of dissident artists in a GK Collection exhibition in Poznan. It placed Polish art in a cosmopolitan context and punctuated sadomasochism (Dorota Nieznalska again) with the tenderness of the Virgin. Open ideas of religion, and not of fundamentalism, as the divine as Levinasian *autre qu’autrui*, of generosity and hospitality to others are badly needed here. We need the biblically-inspired

of his homophobia, Rocco Buttiglione, calls Christians an endangered minority. He and other ultra-rightists use the arguments of human rights, freedom of expression, tolerance. Under these banners, the international mobilization of the right involves Poland, in fact culminates here. Rocco Buttiglione was feted in Poland; his heterosexual lecture at the Catholic University of Lublin was interrupted with bursts of enthusiastic applause.

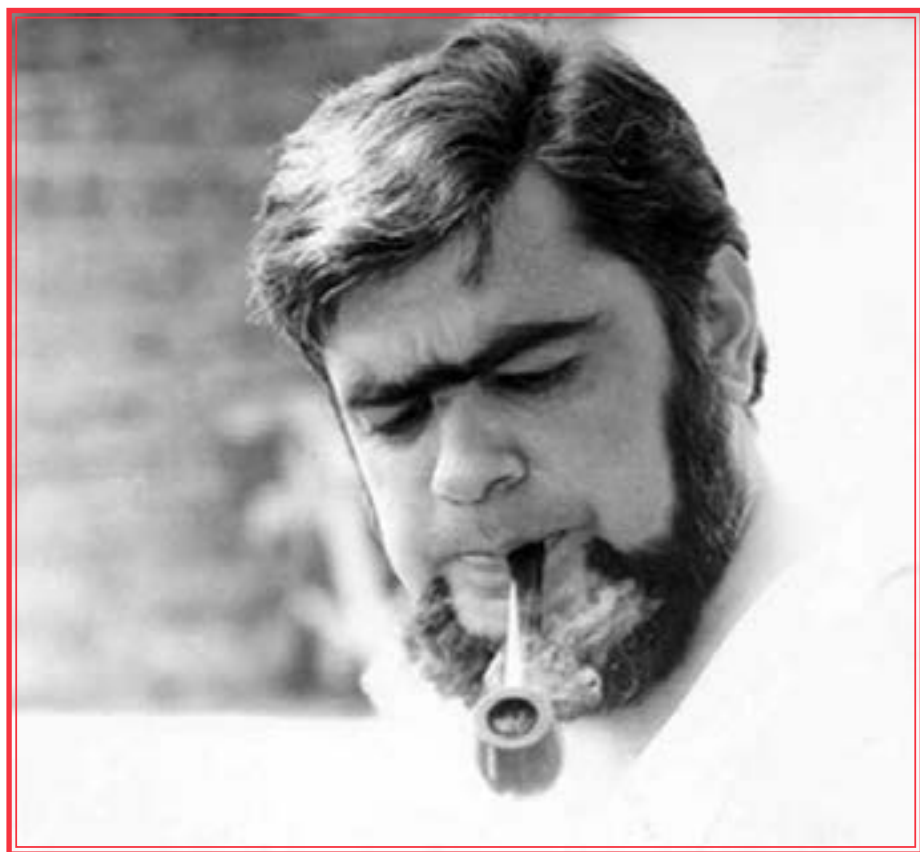
The far-righters enact a dark family romance. Their parties are incestuous clans: the Kaczynskis, the Giertychs. The cult of women and children is a smoke screen for despising them. It is scorn that is di-

In the parliamentary elections in October, the pro-EU centrist party Civic Platform won with 41.51% of the vote, thereby gaining 209 seats out of the 460 seats in the Polish Sejm. The Law and Justice Party of former Prime Minister Jaroslaw Kaczynski got 32.11% of the vote, and thereby 166 seats. The populist Self-Defence party and the far-right League

of Families were swept out of parliament, neither gaining the 5% of votes required. Turnout was at 53.8%, the highest since the fall of Communism. Despite seeing hope in the shift from the right, the authors of this article continue to express grave concerns over predominant attitudes towards women and homosexuals.

FESTINA LENTE –

INTERVIEW WITH ANDREI PLEȘU



Andrei Pleșu teaches philosophy at Bucharest University and is Rector of the New Europe College, a multidisciplinary institute of higher education created in 1994. He has previously been Romania's Minister for Culture and Minister for Foreign Affairs.

Can we speak of a "European identity"?

I think on the contrary that it is time to pause, to stop speaking about it in the hyperbole currently in favour. Much has been said about Europe already, much has been written; the original *nucleus* has been enlarged. Now, whatever happens, there will be a break before the next enlargement, if there should be one. Under these circumstances an exercise in silence might help. Besides, what has been said was not terribly imaginative. Some words appear too often!

Do you think then, like the Hungarian writer Peter Esterhazy, that people should be fined for using expressions like "return to Europe", "common house", "European values"?

Oh! I have heard better: "*A soul for Europe*". It was the theme of a conference recently organised by some Germans. They like that sort of uneasy sentiment ...

But, to be quite candid, it isn't just a few similar words but also the same themes that keep popping up...

Which ones?

Before we go any further let one thing be clear: these themes are *per se* utterly honourable. What actually shocks me is the way they are treated.

Firstly, of course, we find the famous '*values*'. Ah! Values! Culture! Heritage! They never fail to adorn the end of speeches, but you can't help feeling that they are not the heart of the matter – rather some kind of flourish; one could say *the rococo of political discourse*.

The second required theme: the well rehearsed "*What can the East bring to the West?*" You have now joined the Club and we, Westerners, wonder – in the friendliest possible way, but no less persistent for that – what you could bring to our organisation. And then, everybody chimes in: values! Local traditions! Culture!

I am sick and tired of this discourse. If you want my opinion on values and on what the East has to offer, here it is: In any case we shall bring you our vices! We are going to bring you a certain historical lassitude. Yes, we are weary. But this weariness can also become a virtue, for Europe has forgotten how to look tired: she is too active, too dynamic, she is forever talking of the future, making plans. And yet, Europe is also a past – and the East might be able to bring her some perspective distance, a measure of calm, of analytical silence. This is as necessary to her as the Western citizen's dynamism.

Can these two Europes understand each other?

I hope they can. But right now, there are problems in bringing them together. And I don't think anybody is to blame for that situation. The last decades have erected awesome barriers between East and West, an asymmetry in experience, in mentality, in openness. We can be polite to each other, pretend to get on: but real dialogue is hardly possible.

Romanian philosopher Andrei Pleșu says that perhaps it is time for Europe to slow down and reflect a little – for the enlarged European Union to follow Augustus' motto: *Festina Lente*, make haste slowly.

Interview by Alexandre Mirlesse, *Notre Europe*

"IF YOU WANT MY OPINION ON VALUES AND ON WHAT THE EAST HAS TO OFFER, HERE IT IS: IN ANY CASE WE SHALL BRING YOU OUR VICES!"

Your doctoral thesis, presented in Romania thirty years ago is entitled "*Picturesque and Melancholy*". Yet isn't the "asymmetry" you just referred to quite picturesque in fact? Is there not a pleasure in travelling, an art of travel specific to Europe and more readily accessible since borders vanished?

Let me answer your question with a quote from George Steiner who, in a very fine text on "the idea of Europe", writes that Europe is the only continent in the world where one can travel on foot. That is not possible anywhere else! Brancusi, for instance, left Romania and covered all the distance from his native town to Paris on foot, like a young man set to conquer the capital. Europe is not designed for speed.

Ulysse de Marsillac, a French traveller visiting Bucharest in the 1850s wrote: "*Bucharest has the rare gift to satisfy both our desire for civilisation and freedom*". Do you think Romania is still "exotic" to its European visitors?

No, I don't think so. It was the case until the beginning of the 20th century, when Bucharest shocked the Western traveller with the paradox of remarkable evidence of civilisation and culture in the immediate proximity of barbarism.

But your quote reminds me of another traveller, roving around Greece at about the same time. He reported meeting in the mountains some kind of bearded and terrifying monk, primitive to the point of near-bestiality. From the monster's mouth, a question: "Where do you come from?" Confused and close to panic, he answers: "I come from France". And the monster enquires in French: "Indeed! And how is Monsieur Voltaire?"

The contrast between the brutish apparition

and the Voltaire reference gave him a feeling of unmitigated exoticism. And that is fairly typical of South-Eastern Europe: You meet people there who have an extraordinary breadth of knowledge and all the complexes of people in small countries.

Which complexes have you got in mind?

Inferiority complexes. As the Romanian philosopher Cioran said: "A small country's pride is always wounded".

Do the region's intellectuals still have an "inferiority complex"?

One day, Mircea Eliade told me about his early days in Paris. There, he met Georges Dumézil who asked him what his field was. Eliade answered: "the history of religions". Dumézil was surprised: "You know, that's rather a lot. I, for instance, have specialised in the Indo-European sources of religion – and that's more than enough." Then they got into conversation. Two hours later, Dumézil exclaimed: "But you know everything!" and Eliade replied: "Sir, that's how it should be". There you have the inferiority complex of intellectuals from the East. They feel obliged to be more than they are, to know more than is possible or necessary in order to face the competition of the metropolis – this quality yields great assets and great failings.

Which are?

The major asset, in a rich and powerful mind like Eliade's, is the ability to achieve outstandingly encyclopaedic knowledge; the major failing, in lesser beings, is a staggering amateurism. You look like you know everything; you are interested in everything, but there is no professionalism; you play some jolly music that will soothe the ear. This dilettantism may well be endearing but it lacks depth, stability, *Gründlichkeit*.

What would be, for you, the ideal education for a European?

The philosopher Constantin Noica used to say: I think it would be crucial to go through school again between the age of 30 and 35, because when you go to school you are obliged to do chemistry, geography and you get bored. To redo it when you are grown up, read again a geography text book, is to marry

“EUROPE IS ALSO A PAST — AND THE EAST MIGHT BE ABLE TO BRING HER SOME PERSPECTIVE DISTANCE, A MEASURE OF CALM, OF ANALYTICAL SILENCE. THIS IS AS NECESSARY TO HER AS THE WESTERN CITIZEN’S DYNAMISM.”

encyclopaedic knowledge with the strength of one’s maturity. This could give Europe intellectual breadth and enable Europeans to recover their openness and tolerance – these famous “*values*” which hitherto have not gone much beyond rhetoric.

I would therefore suggest that our institutions organise in European cities public classes open to everybody, for two or three years, in all fields. This opening of minds to all comers – utopian though it is – could become a font of wisdom and fresh air.

From the picturesque to the melancholy: Do you think this mood is typically European?

Maybe. I confess that I could say melancholy is a mood typical of Europe, whereas I would not say that the mood typical of America or typical of Africa is melancholy. But I associate it more closely with *Mitteleuropa*, which, with its mix of peoples and its colourful history is melancholy’s home territory. Melancholy is Europe’s post-imperial face. Europe was born as the epiphenomenon of an Empire, the Roman Empire. Ever since, there have been post-imperial periods in Europe. It is this post-classical experience which gives some parts of Europe this melancholy hue. There is a very mysterious passage in Paul’s second epistle to the Thessalonians which says there is a moment as the Apocalypse approaches, when the speed of evolution accelerates. And when the end of the world is nigh, somebody or something is needed to slow down the rate of the falling away, to hold up a little this inevitable course.

From a rationalist point of view, the types in this category are not attractive: not progressive but rather conservative: they lag behind, somehow. But at times when history accelerates, a *Catechon* is useful. And I think Eastern Europe is going to be able to play that part, in a world where everything is moving in a clear direction, in an outwardly dynamic and more and more vital way: perhaps the rhythms of that part of Europe are going to succeed in slowing down this evolution, in holding back the horse before it bolts.

Does research on Europe have a privileged terrain?

Europe is, I believe, essentially and originally the Mediterranean space. Saint Augustine was born in North Africa before becoming one of the founding fathers of Christianity in Europe!

All that goes on in the Maghreb is nourishing for the European mindset. Europe has radiated and also ingested some Mediterranean quality which suffuses the Maghreb right down to its cooking. North Africa is also European. That’s where cultures and traditions mix: they presided over the birth of Europe and may well also sustain its future.

That is how Europe was born: the Roman Empire was in ruins and in poured the Barbarians, all over Europe, shaping something quite new. Europe is the combination of the traditions that survived the fall of Rome and the dark, hysterical and barbarian vitality of the nomadic invasions. History can repeat itself.

By way of conclusion, I would like to tell you an anecdote about Barbarians and Europe.

I had a painter friend who was a firm believer. One very hot afternoon, he had to go into a church – not just to pray, but also to take advantage of the cool atmosphere. Inside, there was nobody – except for the priest, bare-chested, sitting at a table before the altar with a bottle of wine. My friend, wine lover though he is, was somewhat put

off. “Father, I don’t understand. I go into the church with the devout intention to pray and what do I find: the priest in a state of undress, drinking wine in front of the altar!” This was the European reaction: my friend wanted respect for the institution, observance of the rules.

And the priest went: “My son, this is God’s house. I feel at home here – and I intend to act accordingly and if you don’t like it, get out!” That was the barbarian response: the priest was not cowed by solemnities or institutional rigor.

This trait has something entirely sublime about it, it brings some freshness in the relationship to God and to the institution – but it also carries the seeds of chaos. ■

Interview by Alexandre Mirlesse, *Notre Europe*. A longer version of this interview is available in English and French on *Notre Europe*’s website.

Founded by Jacques Delors in 1996, *Notre Europe* is an independent think-tank dedicated to “thinking a united Europe”. *Notre Europe* is currently conducting research on the formation of contemporary European identity, using the varied approaches of researchers, artists and writers from across Europe. The publications resulting from this research – studies, seminar reports and interviews – are available under the “Visions of Europe” rubric on *Notre Europe*’s website: www.notre-europe.eu



www.euroalter.com

November / December Public Program



Wednesday, November 21st

THE BOUNDARIES OF CITIZENSHIP

A debate and roundtable discussion to analyse the political role of the citizen, the meaning of citizenship and its extension, and its significance in the European context.

Speakers: Simon Critchley (Philosopher, New School for Social Sciences, New York); Olaf Cramm (Director, Policy Network); Hilary Wainwright (Editor, Red Pepper)

London School of Economics, East Building, room E304, 5PM

Thursday, December 13th

ART AND POLITICS: EASTERN PERSPECTIVES

A debate to investigate the relation between political and artistic practice with a special focus on the contemporary Eastern European reality. What is the role artists and cultural actors are called to play in today’s volatile sociopolitical reality?

With Hans Ulrich Obrist, director of international projects at Serpentine Gallery, Sasrah Wilsoo, professor at Courtauld Institute of Art, and several invited Eastern European curators and artists.

Venue to be confirmed. See www.euroalter.com

INTERVIEW WITH GIANNI VATTIMO

EUROPA meets with Gianni Vattimo, one of Europe’s leading philosophers whose numerous publications include The Transparent Society, The End of Modernity, and On Belief, and strongly opinionated former member of the European Parliament.

It is increasingly common on the left to incur into a feeling of frustration and resignation towards the European project. Recent issues of Le Monde Diplomatique paint the European Union as a neoliberal war machine. You seem yourself to have lost some of your initial enthusiasm. But how can we respond to this criticism? Is it possible to see in Europe, in times of increasing irrelevance and impotence of the nation state, the only possibility of governing globalisation?

I don’t think it is possible to govern globalisation. If we look at the WTO, or indeed at the economic directives of the European Union, we will find them lacking all public consent. European citizens are against the laws governing economic integration because they see them more as a threat than an opportunity. France recently rejected the treaty precisely for these reasons: fear of the Polish plumber taking the jobs of French workers. The only way to govern globalisation is by an equal balance between great powers, as there was before 1989. Today we are all, European Union included, subjects to the decision of the World Bank - which is to say, the United States. It is precisely to address this imbalance that on the 12th of October 2007 the new “Banco del Sur” has been created, proposed by Chavez and with the participation of seven South American countries.

It is indeed true that I was enthusiastic myself when I was first elected as MEP; but precisely this experience as a member of Parliament, experiencing it from within, has enabled me to see how this community, such as it has been formed, is not much more than the “neoliberal war machine” you mentioned. The feeling of resignation you describe is the awareness that the European Union is not much more than a new office of the World Bank.

In an article published in La Stampa during the permanence of the Italian contingent in Iraq, you suggest that the European intervention should have the aim of

substituting the presence of American troops with that of a truly neutral contingent. Beyond the specificities of this proposal, yours is surely a call for a Europe more present in the world. As you say, this Europe would have to show characteristics that would markedly distinguish it as a true “third way”. What should this “European difference” be based upon?

The only alternative today to the imperialist politics of the United States is to be found in those South American countries I just mentioned. I still do not see the alternative in Asia or in the Middle East, as those countries are not yet able to unite. It is true that recently Russia, China and Iran have been attempting to forge not just economic but military agreements, but it is too early to make any predictions. In South America, instead, there truly is an agreement and a mutual help that many Europeans would like to have here. If before I thought of or at least hoped for a European difference, now I find that difference in South America. I am not alone in this; it is something Noam Chomsky and Naomi Klein agree on. One can intervene militarily only if the majority of the invaded country is in agreement. If the United States has been able to stabilise Europe in less time than it is taking them to conquer Iraq it is just because they found the favour of the population.

The hope for a European difference is none else than the hope that someone may block American interventions, aimed almost always at imposing their own concerns. It was Kissinger who remarked that Americans have no friends, but only interests.

May we draw aspiration from the very process of European integration to delineate a new conception of “global responsibility” based on multilateralism, transnationalism, and the attempt to supersede the merely “tribal” and particularistic logic of the nation state? Can Europe put justice at the centre of its international role?

Europe will begin to have an international role the day it will decide to listen to its citizens. Now the majority of Europeans have no interest in NATO missions, nor in the politics that Europe may express. This majority of Europeans are simply angry because they see in the Union an imposition of rules contrasting with the diversity that belongs to all European countries. Let us be honest: the only globalisation there is at the moment is that of the market, not of citizenship. And what is more, in this globalisation the products of the industries of developed countries are favoured. I am in agreement with you that it would be beautiful to find in Europe the foundations for a so-called perpetual peace; but as Europe is still behind NATO, still a friend of the Bush administration, and everyday more enmeshed in the neoliberal market, we have to admit the hopes are few.

In The Transparent Society you argue that little remains of the great utopias of the artistic avant-gardes of the twentieth century. You instead suggest thinking in terms of “heterotopias”, encouraging the expression of a community without the exclusion of another. Can one postulate the idea of a pan-European cultural avant-garde that may truly open up the possibility of a new understanding of the European “community”?

A society that does not exclude another is a community of differences, but today the European community is little else than the limit of differences. Why were Italy and Spain amongst the first to join the Union? Because their role is precisely that of regulating and limiting the access of the “different”, which in this case is to say Africans. You see, if we take the example of Chavez once again, we can understand how he may be seen to promote a politics of difference: he helps countries like Argentina, ruined by the World Bank, he exchanges doctors for oil with Cuba, sends oil to the poor in the United States for their winter heating, exchanges oil for university staff with the mayor of London. This is a true politics of difference.



Illustration by Eunkyung Kang

Constituting Europe 1: The Myth of the Social Contract

 **Simon Critchley** 

In this first of his three essays on the constitution of community in Jean-Jacques Rousseau, the philosopher Simon Critchley explores the myth of the Social Contract, and argues that political communities are necessarily fictive.

As everyone knows, Rousseau begins *The Social Contract* with the following words,

Man is born free, and he is everywhere in chains. One believes himself the others' master, and yet is more a slave than they. How did this change come about? I do not know. What can make it legitimate? I believe I can solve this question.

Now, the most obvious way of reading these words is to imagine that Rousseau is recommending that we throw off our chains and return to a state of original freedom, what he elsewhere calls natural freedom. This is the romantic or indeed anarchist reading of Rousseau, where revolutionary political activity is justified insofar as it returns us to the allegedly free and original condition of humanity without the shackles of law and government.

However, to read Rousseau in this manner is to misread him. Let's look at those words more closely: man is everywhere in chains, that is, everyone everywhere is in chains, not just the oppressed, the exploited and the poor. Rousseau is clear, 'One believes himself the others' master, and yet is more a slave than they'. Thus, and this is the dialectical logic that Hegel will develop to full effect, the master who believes himself free because of his ability to oppress the poor and disadvantaged and bend them to his will is mistaken in his belief. On the contrary, his very being as master is utterly dependent upon recognition from the slave from whom he believes himself independent and superior. The master is paradoxically less free than the slave because the former's entire being is constituted through his purported superiority to the latter. Rousseau's point is everyone is a slave, especially the master who believes that he is free.

Rousseau goes on, 'How did this change come about?' That is, how is it that human beings all ended up wearing chains? How did we lose our natural freedom, that is to say, our natural equality? In other words,

to coin a phrase, what is the origin and foundations of inequality amongst human beings? Rousseau curtly responds, 'Je l'ignore', 'I do not know'. Now, this is a peculiar thing to say as seven years earlier Rousseau had given a quite breathtakingly original answer to this question in the 1755 *Discourse on the Origin and Foundations of Inequality Among Men*, the so-called Second Discourse. Either Rousseau is being inconsistent - and as readers of the *Confessions* are aware, consistency was never a virtue he claimed to possess - or what is going on in *The Social Contract* is not of the order of knowledge or epistemic certainty, but something else. Returning to the opening quotation, we can see an intriguing and important separation of the realm of knowledge from the realm of legitimacy. That is, the political question of the transformation from freedom to bondage is not an epistemic or empirical question that can be resolved with reference to the state of nature or natural law. It is rather a question of the *legitimacy* of this transformation that presupposes a break between the orders of nature and politics. This means that the order of politics begins, to paraphrase Rousseau, by 'setting aside all the facts', that is, by disregarding the realm of being, of that which is, and establishing a domain where a new political subject comes into existence, a domain of fiction in the strong sense, the realm of what Alain Badiou calls the event.

With the question of legitimacy, understood as the emergence into existence of a political subject that breaks with the realm of facts and knowledge, we arrive at the problem of politics as conceived by Rousseau. In many ways, it feels more like a riddle than a problem. Slightly later in *The Social Contract*, in words set apart in the text with quotation marks, he states the problem in the following terms,

'To find a form of association that will defend and protect the person and goods of each associate with the full common force, and by means of which each, uniting with

How can human beings live according to a law that they recognize as equally binding on all citizens, as legitimate for the collective as a whole, and yet at the same time being a law to which they freely submit because they see it as the expression of their own freedom?

* * *

all, nevertheless obey only himself and remain as free as before.'

That is, how can human beings live according to a law that they recognize as equally binding on all citizens, as legitimate for the collective as a whole, and yet at the same time being a law to which they freely submit because they see it as the expression of their own freedom? If there is no question of a return to nature, to an original freedom where we are finally free of our chains, the anarchist dream of society without the state, then the problem of politics is: how can those chains be made legitimate? Or, better, how can citizens wear legitimate chains? To put it crudely, the problem of politics is the relation and transition from forms of non-consensual to consensual bondage. How can we organize society so that freedom and equality could exist in some sort of equilibrium? As Rousseau writes, 'This is the fundamental problem to which the social contract provides the solution'.

But what do the words 'social contract' mean for Rousseau? Is it, indeed, a misnomer for what he imagines as the being of politics? Firstly, the matter of politics is about the establishment of the form of *association* spoken of above. This requires a convention or covenant, Rousseau thinks, but one that is not based on the family or any form of patriarchy *à la* Filmer, or the right of the strongest where the conqueror simply enslaves the conquered *à la* William the Conqueror. Importantly, it also excludes the possibility of a primary covenant between a people and a king of the kind imagined by Grotius or, in a different way, by Hobbes. For Rousseau, crucially,

Hence before examining the act by which a people elects a king, it would be well to examine the act by which a people is a people. For that act, being necessarily prior to the other, is the true foundation of society.

Thus, the essence of politics consists in an act whereby a people becomes a people,

True politics is rare, the obstacles are vast and the force required to bring it about is exceptional.

* * *

an original covenant that presupposes that there has been at one time unanimity.

Althusser usefully illuminates this issue with an opposition between *obstacles* and *forces*; namely, the obstacles that stand in the way of such a form of association and the forces which might enable it, a distinction which echoes Marx's distinction between relations and forces of production. This is also where we are obliged to consider the relation between *The Social Contract* and the Second Discourse. Part Two of the Second Discourse gives an extraordinarily powerful account of the obstacles that stand in the way of a legitimate politics, namely the vicious state of war described in its final pages, which it is tempting to translate as the present state of the world, what Agamben in characteristically understated manner describes as 'global civil war'. In this state of war, human beings exist in a state of total alienation and the previous history of humanity, for Rousseau as for Marx, is the history of the growth of that alienation. The force that can face and possibly overcome these obstacles is the combined bodily power of alienated individuals, not working for particular interests but for the common interest. This is the force that is described in *The Social Contract*, a force that can only take effect as a transformation of human beings' manner of existence, what Rousseau refers to on many occasions as a 'change of nature'. This entails that the relation between the Second Discourse and *The Social Contract* is complimentary but radically disjunctive: the radically unequal state of the world in the former, the possibility of a legitimate politics in the latter.

Politics, then, is about the creation of a force that can overcome obstacles, which requires an act of aggregation or what Denis Guénoun calls 'pure assembly' where a people unites and decides to act. Let me leave to one side the vast question as to where this force might come from (where *does* it come from? Does it come? Always?). We can say for sure that it is not given in the situation, but in excess of the situation as a vital but fleeting supplement, a fictional force perhaps. Yet, Rousseau is crystal clear – and such is his pessimism, a tone that one finds echoed in Badiou, Rancière and others – this force is rare and can only exist in very few places: Geneva for a while, Corsica for a while, Poland as a theoretical possibility, and so on. I feel certain that he would not find it in the contemporary regimes that go by the misnomer of democracy. True politics is rare, the obstacles are vast and the force required to bring it about is exceptional.

Now, is this act of association a contract? If it

is, then it is a very strange contract. Usually, a contract is understood as a relation entered into by two pre-existing parties, like a marriage. But this does not begin to describe Rousseau's 'social contract'. There is no pre-existing second party. Indeed, there is not even a first party. Let me try and be clear here as the logic of this 'contract' is difficult to grasp. To begin with, there is the first party of the contract, which exists in the state of total alienation described in the Second Discourse, which is to say that it is not free at all but totally enmeshed in systems of social inequality. Yet, this radically unfree, alienated individual still possesses the force – that peculiar, rare force I mentioned just now – to give itself in an act of association with others, that is, with others who also exists in a radically alienated state. Yet, in giving himself to others the subject contracts with no-one except the generality, the imagined association, which is the expected outcome of such self-giving. Rousseau is crystal clear on this point, '... each, by giving himself to all, gives himself to no one'. Thus, there is no contract, I give myself to no one. Indeed, there is no self to give as it exists in a state of total alienation and only becomes a subject through an act of force where it associates with others. The act of association that is the essence of politics is what I would like to call *the fiction of an alienation from alienation*. In other words, the essence of politics is an act and a fiction. Once again, Rousseau is clear,

I give myself to the community, to an imagined generality, to a people which does not in fact exist. I totally alienate myself in the name of a fiction of association that would allow me to overcome the total alienation of social inequality.

* * *

These clauses [i.e. of the social contract [S.C.]], rightly understood, all come down to just one, namely the total alienation of each associate with all of his rights to the whole community.

The so-called 'social contract' begins with the *fact* of total alienation, which is overcome by an *act* of total alienation where I give myself to the community, to an imagined generality, to a people *which does not in fact exist*. That is, I totally alienate myself in the name of a fiction of association that would allow me to overcome the total alienation of social inequality. As Althusser rightly underlines, *total alienation is the solution to the state of total alienation*. Thus, and here is a first *décalage*, Rousseau's 'social contract' does not correspond to its concept: it is not a contract based on an exchange between parties, but an act of constitution, of fictive constitution, where a people wills itself into existence. That such a people exists, that it might exist, that the fictional act might become fact, is what Althusser calls Rousseau's 'dream'. One of the important issues towards which this essay is trying to grope its way is the necessity of such dreams, such supreme fictions, in the political realm and to provide a key to their interpretation. In my next essay I will get closer to this theme, in considering religion and community. ■

Next month, Critchley will look at religious faith and community.



Illustration by Sarah Adina

THE MACHINE'S DIALOGUE: THE PHOTOGRAPHY OF ✱ BORIS MIKHAILOV ✱

Emilia Terracciano

If in all ideology men and their circumstances appear upside-down as in a *camera obscura*, this phenomenon arises just as much from their historical life-process as the inversion of objects on the retina does from their physical life-process.' – Karl Marx, *The German Ideology*

Whilst the Cold War froze all relations between the USSR and the US, the Ukrainian photographer Boris Mikhailov's concern to re-orient representations of the everyday was mirrored in the photography of some US artists. While the world was split between East/West and communist/capitalist alignments, artists on both sides effectively conducted a radical critique of Western and Eastern forms of totalitarian ideology.

This unlikely congruence between Soviet and American photographic practice could be perceived in the late 1960s when artists from both sides recovered a historically truncated example of radical art, i.e. the early Soviet avant-garde. Nonetheless Mikhailov's use of photographic documentation differs considerably from that of his Soviet predecessors, appearing highly aestheticised through its contrived amateurish style, its use of colour and unusual selection of subject matter. This radical but *unique*, bastardised combination yields on the one hand a decisively unflattering and demoralizing photography and on the other, one that celebrates the transgressive potential of the carnival during the Brezhnev era. By juxtaposing depictions of the rite of carnival to official imagery Mikhailov undermines the latter's authority and celebrates the former's utopian and liberating potential.

In most photos, especially those depicting women, Mikhailov includes his own shadow. In a manner similar to Lee Friedlander, Mikhailov aims to reveal the inherent theatricality of his photography. His shadow acts as constant reminder that the photo is a staged creation. This formal instance of Brechtian demystification is complemented by the artist's use of what is in my view, the Bakhtinian carnival repertoire.

In discussing the 'dialogic', Mikhail Bakhtin sees speech ('the two world condition'), as

a field whereby 'a fight is fought within the general unity of a shared code.' Therefore the field of speech acts as symbolic space where a tense dialogue between an official culture, founded upon fear, and its unofficial subversion, founded upon laughter, is constantly performed. By opposing monologism to dialogism, Bakhtin sought to 'define the authoritarian as the destruction of cultural diversity from high, the flattening of vibrant heteroglossia by central institutions.' In Bakhtin's view it is only through the rite of carnival (represented by popular festivity), that the official authority (represented by state rituals) of monologic speech is undermined. Carnival inaugurates the temporary dissipation of the hegemonic order, generating the creation of grotesque mythical doublets that is, 'birth-death, youth-age, top-bottom, face-lower bodily-stratum, praise-abuse, juxtaposed with official ones.' The carnivalesque body in this view, is epitomised 'by activities where the boundaries between bodies and objects are obscured: birth, death, copulation, eating and defecation' and by a 'collectivised jumble of orifices: bellies, noses, breasts, buttocks, assorted genitalia and mouths.' Accordingly, the destructive/re-

generative, painful/joyful potential of the bodily lower stratum is paradigmatically identified by Bakhtin in the female body. 'Woman is essentially the incarnation of this stratum that degrades and regenerates simultaneously. She is ambivalent. She debases, *brings down to earth*, lends a bodily substance to things, and destroys; but first of all, she is the principle that gives birth.'

In *Red*, by carefully juxtaposing the Bakhtinian repertoire (the female 'lower bodily stratum' and orifices: breasts and mouths), to official Soviet imagery, and by using the most grotesque of all mediums, i.e. photography, Mikhailov generates a carnivalesque montage of the Brezhnev era. In this way, the meaning of the colour 'red' is turned upside down. 'Red' becomes the colour of a generalized transgression, momentarily recoding through inversion high/low relations across the whole structure. This 'turning upside down' of normative chromatic behaviour and female iconography by extension, reveals the fundamental and unpleasantly grotesque workings of Soviet society.

Whereas the absorption of photography

into art pioneered by American artists in the 1970s was aimed at the critique of 'the traditional art object and painting's unique gesture' this was not so in Russian post-utopian art. Given the established cultural hegemony of photography and painting, Russian conceptualists' incorporation of photography into art in the 70s, had an altogether different role, i.e. the 'deconstruction of the law of mass distribution-the copy.' In this sense therefore one can see *Red* as an 'intimate media' levelling a critique of the Soviet state's 'orientation towards mass media.' *Red Series's* aesthetic *uniqueness*, offers a form of political resistance to the massive de-individualization actualized by the Soviet state. Mikhailov's *Red Series* was followed by a brown and a blue series. The Bakhtinian optimism detectable in *Red* is absent in both these works. What we find instead is a documentary depicting the return to pre-revolutionary conditions of Ukrainians. The pink series, which would have represented the Ukrainian revival of a new life, was never made. The pink Ukrainian dawn was eclipsed by the Orange revolution. ■



GIACOMETTI'S AFTER-SCULPTURE

Review by Aude Blanchâtre



above: *La Boule Suspendue*, 1930 - 1931
Coll. Fondation Alberto et Annette Giacometti, Paris, © Adagp

left: *Grande tête*, vers 1958
Coll. Fondation Alberto et Annette Giacometti, Paris, © Adagp

Giacometti sculpted the inner skeleton of human being. Or rather he *after-sculpted* it. Beyond both performance and materiality, Giacometti's sculpture becomes the movements of sculpting itself and what remains has gone past any figure. The sculptor takes something material and makes it into something figurative. Giacometti takes something material and sculpts it past the stage when it is figurative, to such an extent that it is no longer a figure and no longer a material, but what remains. Giacometti commented that often he would sculpt to the extent that the sculpture disappeared altogether. And then the whole artwork had been pure performance, and pure oblivion.

Early on, Giacometti was involved with the surrealists, but soon enough went beyond them, as the layout of this exhibition at the Centre Pompidou clearly shows. Simone De Beauvoir relates how Giacometti told Breton that he wanted to become the first person to truly sculpt a human face. Breton responded with bemusement: 'but everyone knows what a human head looks like!' The *malentendu* here is indicative: Breton was interested in the surreal

– what is above reality – and yet misinterprets Giacometti for a kind of materialist. It is not a human *head* that Giacometti is interested in, but the human *face*. There is nothing surreal about faces – they are utterly in the world – but still, they are not material. It is not a question of getting the shape or the colour right, it is a question of capturing the whole human meaningfulness of a face. Giacometti's method resembles that of Edvard Munch painting his sister as he remembered her just before she was about to die (*The Sick Child*, in the TATE Modern): Munch paints his memory then scores and scratches it out to repaint – working through and out the psychological layers ('perforated into a certainty / of symptoms', as the poet Adam Thorpe recently described it). Giacometti, who lived the first sixty five years of the 20th century, sculpts through the psychological layers of the first half of the century in Europe even as they happen: what faces there are grated to almost nothingness.

The critical inclination in interpreting Giacometti at the moment is to see his work as solipsistic. The lack of expressions on some of his faces, and the extreme

ugliness of others are pointed to as justifications. But this is to read Giacometti as if perhaps he were fundamentally a painter rather than a sculptor. To encounter a Giacometti, as to view any sculpture, is to encounter the space around the statue as much as the statue itself: in this space all of humanity is present, or at least as much humanity as the audience brings to the room. It is this humanity which allows us to understand the work, despite its being *overdone*. Giacometti once said to Jean Genet that he had the idea of sculpting a statue then burying it, as if it were an offering. In a sense all his sculptures are already buried: they rely on human memory and experience, the traces which are left, to exist as sculptures at all. This exhibition is entitled 'Giacometti's Atelier'. It is a just title, for Giacometti asks us all to be artists with him, in conditions desperately cramped with history, to attempt to resuscitate what remains.

L'Atelier d'Alberto Giacometti
17 October 2007 – 11 February 2008
Centre Pompidou, Paris
10€ / 8€ concessions

REFINDING THE BODY OF THE WORLD : *CERCLE*, Yannick Haenel

Review by Aude Blanchâtre

‘Le problème sera désormais : comment retrouver un corps, et lequel ?’ a dit Phillipe Sollers. ‘The problem from now on will be : how to find once again a body, and which one ?’ *Cercle* by Yannick Haenel, which appears in the collection *L’infini* edited by Sollers for Gallimard, proposes a method. It is the method of 8.07 am, the moment when the narrator decides ‘C’est maintenant qu’il faut reprendre vie’ – ‘it is now that one must find life again’ – and, instead of getting on his RER train to work, embarks on a spiritual and erotic odyssey of the body that will take him through Paris, to Berlin, to Auschwitz.

The narrator of Haenel’s novel, Jean Deichel, holds that we are all dead most of the time. He takes a motto from Bob Dylan, ‘He not busy being born is busy dying,’ and decides to live life from a poetic point of view, between reading books and experimenting with an endless number of women. Everything speaks to Deichel. The phrases from the books he reads join with phrases he encounters in wandering the streets of Paris. These phrases fly to him with the pigeons, float to him in the Seine, appear from the top of Notre Dame ... He writes them down on scraps of paper and carries them on his odyssey, literally sowing them into his coat. He frequently cites Rimbaud: ‘Ma vie s’envole, elle flotte loin au-dessus de l’action’. Perhaps one might think that the narrator wants to weigh himself down with his phrases, drag himself back amongst the action, but this is too simplistic: the narrator seeks rather to dance, to fly whilst still on the ground. These phrases eventually become the novel, written in a style charged with desire, seeking to re-enchant the world with its poetic *erōs*.

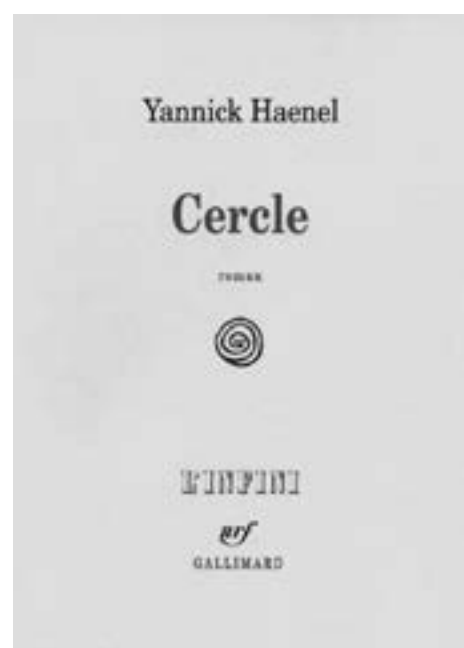
Partly to blame for us almost all being waking dead is what is called the culture of ‘combien?’ in the novel: the insistence on finding the price of everything. But this is not at the source of the problem: to blame it on raw materialism would be too quick. Instead the pervasiveness, and persuasiveness, of contemporary capitalism is seen as a consequence of a particular form of nihilism: a nihilism from which most only momentarily find escape in the moment of purchase.

The epitaph to the novel comes from Joyce, from whom Haenel clearly draws enormous inspiration: ‘History is a nightmare from which I am trying to wake up.’ Haenel has related how he regards contemporary global nihilism as the consequence of



what happened in Europe during the XXth century. The climax of the odyssey thus quite naturally comes in travelling to Auschwitz, the point of the greatest extermination of the human flesh. And it is at this point, in a car to Auschwitz, that the experience becomes something spiritual for the narrator. He, and the two other people in the car, remember reading Primo Levi relating how he tried to teach Italian to a young Frenchman in Auschwitz by reciting Ulysses’ song in Hell in the *Divine Comedy*. To his frustration Levi cannot remember perfectly the exact text of Dante’s verse, and he cannot translate perfectly from the *italiano antico* to the French of the 20th century. When Deichel and his companions try to recite the text they cannot do so perfectly either, but they realise that they are simply adapting the text for their own circumstances, as Levi took from the text what was needed to survive. History becomes an act of memory, a body from which to draw sustenance, an endless series of phrases which carry hope and which death can do nothing against.

Haenel’s book tries to be both inside and outside itself: it is an act of metafiction at the same time as an attempt to be a desiring body. Haenel’s fiction tries to justify itself as it goes along, and the justification often stands a long way out of the fiction: it is circular in that way. It is sometimes a little like a dancer who tells you what she is doing as



Gallimard, 514pp, 21€

she does it, when you only wish she would be quiet. One might wonder if this is the novel’s final defeat. For this circle is not a completeness: Haenel does not succeed in transmuting the world around him into a complete fiction, in which the justification is implicit and therefore no longer required. If the novel does ultimately fail in this way, it is a fault of the time, and this book deserves the huge abrogation it is getting in some quarters of the French literary world precisely because it leads the way out.

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NOVEMBER HIGHLIGHTS

WEDNESDAY 7 NOVEMBER

ALFRED JARRY ROUND TABLE Anniversary

Chaired by Professor John Stokes (King's College, London) with Stanley Chapman, Jill Fell, Ben Fisher and Linda Stillman.

Jarry died one hundred years ago. A delicate and strange Symbolist poet and writer, he is mostly known for giving to Literature the monstrous character of Ubu. He was also the creator of a new science called "Pataphysics".

A Round Table discussion between scholars and Pataphysicians will be followed by readings from selected Jarry texts by actors from RADA. At 9.00 pm, a Polish movie by Jan Lenica Ubu et la Grande Gidouille will be shown.

7.30 pm

£3 / conc. £2

Combined ticket for Round Table + Film : £9 / conc. £7

Library – In English

Early reservation recommended

THURSDAY 8 NOVEMBER

Pierre Rosanvallon in conversation with Christian Schubert « DEMOCRACY AND EUROPEAN INSTITUTIONS » European Series

One of France's most brilliant French intellectuals and historians, Professor at the Collège de France, Pierre Rosanvallon will give an enlightening lecture on "Democracy and European Institutions." He will then be in conversation with Christian Schubert, author of *Great Britain, and Island Between Two Worlds*. Maurice Fraser, Director of LSE European Public Lecture Series will chair the evening.

In partnership with the Goethe Institute.

6.30 pm

£6 / conc. £5

Library – In English

Early reservation recommended

WEDNESDAY 14 NOVEMBER

THE POWER OF FLIES, BY LYDIE SALVAYRE Book Launch

The Power of Flies begins in a courtroom, where a man is undergoing an interrogation. He has committed a crime and must now explain himself. While ranting on to the court about various topics – his family, the museum where he works and even Blaise Pascal – the narrator of *The Power of Flies* reveals himself to be both calculating and unstable.

Lydie Salvayre, longlisted for the Goncourt and the Renaudot Prize for her last novel *Portrait de l'écrivain en animal domestique*, will be in conversation with Franco-British writer Michèle Roberts.

7.30 pm

£3 / conc. £2

Library – In English



London Festival of Europe 2008 6th- 16th March

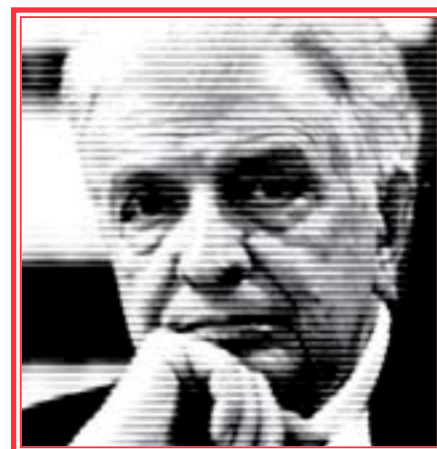
The London Festival of Europe is an annual series of public debates, lectures and art events in some of London's most prestigious institutions, seeking to engage in the multiplicity of European questions, and celebrate the diverse cultures in Europe. We are resolute in seeing in Europe both an inescapable potential and a responsibility, despite of all that may be said about its institutions, procedures or particularly bloody history. With the Festival we hope to open up new spaces not only for discussion of Europe and its politics, but for the active creation of a European polis. The Festival is held in London because of the huge potential for the creation of Europe arising from the city's international diversity and creative energy.

This Festival issue of Europa shares some of the same themes as the 2008 Festival, and introduces some of the events. Every one

of them engages a particularly important theme for the future of Europe, be it human rights, Portuguese poetry, the Mediterranean, or the future of political parties. But there are two events at this year's London Festival of Europe we highlight here because they manifest the spirit of the Festival most intensely: they are an international Congress on the future of the arts in Europe, and an international summit on the Future of European Feminism. Both of these are the first actions in ongoing projects of European Alternatives, which organises the Festival. We do so to provide an opportunity for friendships and collaborations to be made, for projects to be born and for attitudes to be challenged. The Festival opens the spaces for this, it relies on you to come and fill them.

*All the events of the Festival are free to attend and open to all.
The full program is online: www.festivalofeurope.eu*

Interview with Fuiro Colombo



European Alternatives: Is it too unrealistic to imagine the possibility of a renewed and concerted cultural effort that may truly open up the possibility of a new understanding of the European project?

This question hits a crucial problem that is difficult to answer. Europe is politically and culturally weak, but has an immense economical force. It is the first time in history that an economic force refuses to have pride in its culture and identity. Usually when a subject achieves independence and economic strength it becomes self-satisfied and tries to send out messages of its successes. Not necessarily celebrative, perhaps critical, but this does not happen, neither as the celebration of a new sense of belonging nor as a distinction or contraposition from it. Europe looks itself at the mirror but does not see anything, which is sad and representative of the crisis we are currently living through.

... ..

But after we have made the list of all that does not work in the European Union, its sense of solitude, of void, of aphasia, after we have pictured this edifice where only bureaucratic commas and precepts resound full of instructions for use but devoid of ideas on meaning or direction, this giant and rich ship left anchored in a harbour from which it does not have the courage to move, why could it not be that suddenly there will emerge a great land called Europe?

(READ PAGE 124) ►

A European Vote for a European President!

Editorial

The growing speculation over who might be the first permanent President of the European Council shows a desire for a European figurehead. The introduction of a permanent President, whilst a good thing in itself, may make an already confusing division of powers worse. There should be a European figurehead, and we must insist that he or she be publicly elected and accountable. ►

(READ PAGE 112)

For a Euro-Mediterranean Community

Editorial

There has been discussion recently on the prospect of a "Euro-Mediterranean Union", after Sarkozy promised to make this a priority of the French presidency of the EU. But what is necessary is a truly innovative transnational and multilateral approach, serving as a laboratory for future European global responsibly. ►

(READ PAGE 113)

Also in this issue:

- page 115. Launch of Future of European Feminism program
- page 117. John Palmer on Future of European Political Parties
- page 124. Giuseppe Penone at Villa Medici
- page 127. Engagement and the Arts in Europe
- page 132. Essay By Simon Critchley

EDITORIAL

EUROPEAN ELECTIONS FOR A EUROPEAN PRESIDENT!

SPECULATION ABOUT WHO MIGHT BE THE FIRST PERMANENT PRESIDENT OF THE EUROPEAN COUNCIL MANIFESTS A DESIRE FOR A EUROPEAN FIGUREHEAD. IF THERE IS TO BE A EUROPEAN FIGUREHEAD, WE MUST INSIST THAT HE OR SHE BE ELECTED AND PUBLICLY ACCOUNTABLE.



Even before the post formally exists, speculation is already rife about who might fill it. The role of a permanent President of the European Council, or ‘European President’, as the role is already being called, will be created by the EU Reform Treaty if it is ratified by all 27 member states, and Tony Blair is by a long way the most frequently mentioned potential candidate. One might think that another European President - to add to the President of the Commission and the President of the Parliament - is one more too many. But the speculation about the ‘European President’ shows a strong desire for a European figurehead, and this desire should be satisfied. And if there is to be a European figurehead, we should insist on one thing: that he or she be elected and accountable.

In the current arrangement of the EU institutions, there is a rotating presidency of the European Council (the heads of state and government of the member states + the President of the Commission), a President of the European Commission who is nominated by the European Council and a President of the Parliament who is elected by the Parliament, but has little power. The EU Reform treaty signed in Lisbon, if it is ratified by all member states, will introduce a permanent presidency of the European Council, for a period of 2 and a half years, renewable once. It will also give to the Parliament the power to approve or disapprove a President of the Commission proposed by the European Council, which is supposed to make its proposal taking into account the results of the European Parliamentary elections. This last is a very welcome change, because it opens the door for European Political parties to go into the elections saying whom they would support as Commission president.

It is problematic that the moment they do this, the post of the President of the Commission looks to be eclipsed by that of the President of the Council, a last minute change in the rules that risks looking like cheating to an already distrustful European citizen. The President of the Council will be nominated by the members of the European Council with qualified majority voting. There is no procedure for how candidates are to be proposed, the only criterion laid down by the Treaty that they should not hold national office.

The role of the President of the Council is, to put it mildly, under-defined by the Treaty. The President of the Council is to: direct the work of the European Council and promote its cohesion, work with the President of the Commission, report to the Parliament, and ‘at his or her level, and in that capacity, ensure the external representation of the Union on issues concerning its foreign and security policy’ without prejudicing the powers of the High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security, a post also created by the Treaty. The risk with such flimsy terms - the result of endless compromise - is that a compromise candidate is chosen by the council, who does not have the power to articulate what differentiates him or her from the President of the Commission, or the President of the Parliament. A confused situation will become even more confusing, and the energy

already created by the idea of a ‘President of Europe’ will be wasted.

Part of the purpose of Tony Blair’s barely concealed campaigning for the role so early is to demand a meaty job description for the Presidency of the Council. Tony only wants the job, we are told, if it carries with it significant powers. The danger with the idea of giving too much power to the President of the Council, especially if it is given to a politician with the public presence and personal charisma of Tony Blair, is that it would skew the European Union into a Presidential mode of governance where the president from the start had considerably more power than the parliament. It is no great wonder that Tony Blair’s candidature is championed so enthusiastically by super-president Nicholas Sarkozy. A disproportionately powerful President of the Council would potentially also cement an inter-governmental Europe by taking authority away from the transnational administration. The greatest danger would be if the new role of a permanent President of the Council leads to even more being decided in the secretive, behind-closed-doors manner the European Council currently tends to adopt, and indeed this might happen whether the President is personally a strong or a weak leader.

These risks are only risks if the President of the European Council remains an unelected, unaccountable position. If the President of the European Council were to be elected by pan-European elections, he would have a mandate different from the national leaders in the council, and therefore would have a responsibility to act in a way taking into account the transnational interests of the citizens of Europe. With a sufficiently robust division of responsibility between the institutions and procedures of accountability to the Parliament there is no reason why the European Union should automatically become a solely Presidential regime. Indeed, if a vote for the Presidency came at a similar time as the vote for the European Parliament, the profile and importance of both would be immeasurably increased.

Tony Blair made an impression in the European Parliament before the British Presidency of the Council in 2005 with his ‘walls of jericho’ speech, in which he argued that the people are ‘blowing the trumpets around the city walls’, that the European institutions must show leadership; show that they are part of the solution not part of the problem. It would be falling to temptation twice to take at face value a real commitment to democracy in these words, and naive religious allusions are best left out of politics. But during his campaign for the Presidency, we should be holding Tony to his words, knowing as we all do what dangers there are in allowing them to be too quickly forgotten.

Leadership of the European Union would mean a clear division of powers, with each institution having sufficient power to both be meaningful in its own right and to hold the others to account. It would mean having candidates for the higher offices in the European Union who campaign, are elected and are forced to speak to the people they represent. ‘The people’ the higher European officials represent should be *all the peoples* of Europe, and in virtue of this fact they will become the European figureheads for which many are expressing the desire, and most recognise the importance for a credible European Union. There are many excuses for not yet doing or thinking about these things, ranging from a lack of a European public sphere in which candidates could campaign to the lack of maturity of the European institutions. But these excuses are quashed by the urgent need for the European Union to start to become the means of expression of its diverse peoples. A credible and accountable mouthpiece is a prerequisite for that.

EUROPA

Editors
Lorenzo Marsili
Niccoló Milanese

Projects Officer
Segolène Pruvot

Design
Rasha Kahil
www.rashakahil.com

www.euroalter.com
editors@euroalter.com



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Registered Office: Taliesyn, Houghton Hill, Houghton, PE28 2BS, UK

EDITORIAL

FOR A EURO-MEDITERRANEAN COMMUNITY

NICHOLAS SARKOZY IS CHAMPIONING THE PROJECT OF A NEW EURO-MEDITERRANEAN UNION. BUT THE IDEA WILL ONLY SUCCEED PROVIDED WE LEARN FROM OUR MISTAKES AND RAISE OUR AMBITIONS.

There has been discussion recently about the possibility of a “Mediterranean Union”. Following a meeting with Prodi and Zapatero in December, Nicholas Sarkozy has promised to make this a priority of the French presidency of the EU, and said Paris would hold a summit for potential members on July 13 to “lay the foundations of a political, economic and cultural union founded on the principles of strict equality”.

There is much scepticism surrounding the proposal, which some see as a way of refusing membership of the EU to Turkey and some as a barely veiled French attempt at regaining leadership in the Maghreb. Most importantly, to speak of the Mediterranean too often evokes idyllic clichés: the culture of olive oil, the gestures of the people, the lifestyle. But this Medi-terranean, this sea between lands, is today the very heart of an immense cultural, political, and economic fracture, and the prime seat of what has too hastily been referred to as the “clash of civilisations”. It is the seat of the conflict between Israel and Palestine, of Lebanon’s turmoil, the theatre of one of the most massive fluxes of migration in recent history.

Prospects of a functional “Union” between such diverse and fragmented realities, and faced with the profound distrust of the many countries that lived on their skin the experience of European colonialism, seem chimerical to many.

At the same time, it is becoming increasingly clear that Europe can no longer afford to ignore the tumultuous reality across this thin strip of sea. An innovative approach to the troubled Mediterranean region might represent an important laboratory for the development of a truly trans-national and multilateral European global role.

THE BARCELONA PROCESS

The first attempt at drafting a multilateral European approach to the Mediterranean was initiated at the 1995 Barcelona Conference, with the participation of representatives of European countries and those on the Northern and Eastern shore of the Mediterranean. A “global” approach to the Mediterranean was here invoked, one that would unite political, economic, cultural and security issues. The attempt to organise, enact, and conduct such an approach took the name of Barcelona process, which included regular summits between diplomats, high functionaries, and ministers to draft concrete cooperation proposals. The process is structured in three principal “baskets”, or chapters:

- 1) A political partnership, with the aim of creating a common area of peace and stability through trans-national dialogue
- 2) An economic and financial partnership, with the aims of: a) setting up cooperation programs in areas of common interest; b) increasing the financial support from the European Union; c) creating a Mediterranean free-trade zone, ambitiously set at 2010
- 3) A cultural and social dialogue to foster mutual civil society relations and the development of human resources by increasing dialogue between cultural actors, media, trade unions, universities and research centres.

After initial optimism, enhanced by the participation of ministers of Syria, Lebanon, and Israel at the same table, the post-September 11th climate and the worsening of the Israel-Palestine stalemate with the proclamation of the second *Intifada* have significantly reduced the political ambitions of the process. The attention in the first basket has shifted to issues of migration and security, something that was very evident in the mostly failed 2005 conference marking the 10-year anniversary of the Barcelona Process prepared by Tony Blair. The agenda of the event had at its centre terrorism and security issues, mixed with problems of migration and criminality. But these are themes primarily of interest to European countries, and not necessarily a priority for countries of the South, where issues of agriculture, water, infrastructure, etc., are felt as more urgent.

Failure of coming to agreements for most of the issues in the first basket implied a greater emphasis on the second, with its Washington Consensus-based, economic approach. But the proposals presented for discussion have tended to appear mainly to the benefit of European

countries and crafted according to their needs. A particular problem has been caused by the EU’s strenuous defence of tariffs on agricultural produce and textiles while simultaneously calling for a cut in trade barriers. The presence of pervasive structural adjustment conditions served to increase the suspicions of many. The economic basket was progressively reduced to the creation of a “free-trade” area, with little discussion on issues of aid and partnerships, or the development of infrastructure and local economies. Originally planned to come into place in 2010, the prospect appears today extremely unrealistic.

The “political” conduction of the cultural basket has mainly focussed on issues of “human rights” and “democracy-building”, without a particular innovation on the (rarely successful and much critiqued) previous international practices on these chapters. However, there have been several interesting civil-society initiatives, many of which not directly connected with the Barcelona process, and some overtly critical of it. The Mediterranean Civil Forum and the Mediterranean Social Forum are just two of a myriad of joint gatherings, conferences, and workshops that take place regularly across the shores of the Mediterranean.

TOWARDS A EURO-MEDITERRANEAN COMMUNITY

It is clear that any attempts to forge a renewed approach to the Mediterranean will have to seriously reflect on the failure of the Barcelona process. A unilateral approach principally aimed at the protection of Europe’s commercial interests and security prerogatives will be bound to meet with a similar destiny.

The recent Portuguese presidency referred to a “Marshall Plan” for the Mediterranean. The term “Marshall Plan”, in itself, means very little. The political conditions, the economic potential, and the social capital of post-war Europe and present-day North Africa and Middle East are to say the least incomparable. But what this easily understood metaphor may serve to convey is the necessity of a considerable transferral of resources, including human, cultural, and scientific resources.

The prospect of a Mediterranean Investment Bank can here be a potentially important innovation. But if the institute were to follow the development model of the IMF and the World Bank, it is clear that it would have nothing particularly interesting to offer. But options exist. We have the example of the more egalitarian principles being forged for the *Banco del Sur*, the new investment bank being founded by numerous Latin American countries. Or the experience of micro credit being advanced, amongst others, by 2006 Economics Nobel laureate Muhammad Yunus.

The membership of such a “Community” should also not be taken for granted. One of the problems encountered with the Barcelona process was the multiplicity of geopolitical interests of the numerous states grouped under the signifier “Mediterranean”, leading former minister of Morocco Hassan Abouyoub to call the Mediterranean “a non-identified geopolitical objective”. The possibility of a voluntary Community, with only a reduced

number of initial participants should not be discarded, something that might also alleviate problems linked to the congenital differences between the Arab countries of North Africa and those of the Eastern Mediterranean.

The promotion of a novel sense of “proximity” between countries is an important task, as only the awareness of a precious commonality of hope and vicinity of interests between Europe and its Southern neighbours can provide the necessary impetus for a tangible and engaged political project. The prospects of a novel Euro-Mediterranean Community will only work provided a profound discussion is started on its scope and meaning. This same public discussion, affecting the interests of the citizens of Europe as a whole, would also provide a good example of a first pan-European foreign policy debate.

MEDITERRANEAN SUGGESTIONS AT THE LONDON FESTIVAL OF EUROPE 2008

A reading focussed on the reality of the Mediterranean by Maltese author Adrian Grima and Italian author Valerio Cruciani, Portuguese poet Casimiro De Brito and Moroccan poet Hassan el Ouazzani, accompanied by live music.

Friday 14th March,
Italian Cultural Institute, 39 Belgrave
Square London /Free

LONDON FESTIVAL OF
EUROPE
www.festivalofeurope.eu

Where are all the European Feminists?

Every European government and institution is committed to equality, but yet discrimination remains. European Alternatives launches its Future of European Feminism Project.

Sékolène Pruvot, Shandi Miller, Anna M Koeman, Federica Ambrosini

Feminism, the 'F-word', calls various images to people's minds. Some see suffragettes holding 'Vote for Women' banners, others think of Simone de Beauvoir, the free minded intellectual, or of young women in the 1970's, highly politicised and challenging traditional social roles and demanding, as the Dutch put it at the time, the right to 'Be the boss of their own bellies'.

These are some snapshots from the first and second 'waves' or 'generations' of the feminist movement, when women openly took the streets, or used their public image, to challenge the existing social structures that made them second rank citizens with a restricted access to certain rights. They represent two of the central aspects of feminism: the struggle for effective access to political rights, and the struggle to have full ownership of their bodies.

So what? This movement has proved successful and since the 80's, women have it all.

Or so it seems listening to the French popular singer Michel Sardou. His song 'Être une femme' (to be a woman) celebrates with envy 'The Woman' of the 80's who is having as many sexual affairs as she desires and is successful in her career. Finally she climbs up the social and political ladder up and becomes President of the Republic. This woman is a menacing man eater ('dévoreuse de minets') and is extremely sexually attractive for men. She is what most girls born in the 80's are supposed to have wanted to be: sexually 'free', ambitious, and in total control of her own life.

Other voices warned against idealising the myth. Cookie Dingler told us in '84 'Ne la laisse pas tomber, elle est si fragile, être une femme libérée, tu sais c'est pas si facile' ('Don't let her down, she is so fragile, to be a free woman, really it's not so easy')

Indeed, the trouble is that, as so often quoted, but unfortunately as often forgotten, this myth does not survive the examination of evidence. In all European countries, women are underrepresented in political institutions. In all European countries, women are paid less than men for similar occupations. In all European countries most women continue to take the primary responsibility for unpaid work at home.



"In all European countries, women are paid less than men for similar occupations. In all European countries most women continue to take the primary responsibility for unpaid work at home."

If we look at just one of these dimensions - the representation of women in political institutions, governments and Parliaments - unsurprisingly Scandinavian countries rank on top. In Finland, 55% of the members of government and 41% of the members of the Parliament are women, in Sweden these proportions are 45 and 46%. In the UK, these proportions fall to 22% and 18%. In Romania there are no women in the government, In Greece, one (6%). The mean of the 27 countries is about 23% of women in the Parliament. The European

Union is no exception to the rule. There are eight women in the European Commission, of a total of 27 commissioners. 30% of the European Parliament is female.

This indicator is too simplistic to be more than just a partial indicator of progress or equality. Considering that in France, for example, women did not get the right to vote until 1946, considerable advances have been won in a relatively short period of time. Nevertheless the mutation of social structures and gender roles are slow (very slow), suggesting that most of the barriers to equality are still in place.

And although there are no fewer 'feminists' today, the nature of their political engagement has changed. There is an increasing awareness that discrimination in our societies is multiple and not restricted to gender issues, race, class, or sexuality, but these are simply factors of the same processes. Therefore people who, one generation ago, may have been active in women's organisations might be just as likely today to be active in organisations fighting for other causes such as the rights of gay and lesbians, the regularisation of immigrants, or prevention against discrimination over health issues, such as HIV/AIDS or disabilities. Yet the problem remains: women ►

The Future of European Feminism project launches at London Festival of Europe 2008

EUROPEAN FEMINIST SUMMIT:

An international summit drawing on intergeneration experience to assess the future of Feminism in Europe. Two public workshops: Sexualisation in the Arts and Media; Feminist engagement in Business and Politics. Speakers include: Claire Fox; Heleen Mees; Peter Tatchell; Rosalind Gill; Loredanna Rotondo, Dominique de la Garanderie.

Saturday 15 March, 2:30 – 5:30 pm
Hampstead Town Hall, 213 Haverstock Hill (Belsize Park tube), London NW3 4QP
Registration from 2pm, Reception to follow; FREE and open to all
See www.festivalofeurope.eu for full program

Summit co-financed by European Union within program 'Europe for Citizens' 2007-2013'

LONDON FESTIVAL OF EUROPE
www.festivalofeurope.eu

still tend to come out on average doing worse than men regardless of other forms of discrimination they may face.

Today, the European perspective can be a tool for us, European feminists, to challenge and deepen our understanding of the processes that maintain gender inequalities and therefore work towards social change.

Comparing one country's situation with others is the first step in assessing the changes that have happened and the barriers that remain. For instance, In the German Democratic Republic, women used to have access to good childcare, but after reunification, these facilities partly disappeared, revealing the barriers to work imposed on West German mothers. The situation in transition countries is therefore likely to reveal the stickiness of structural obstacles to gender equality in western European countries, and conversely.

More importantly, because the European Union actively promotes gender equality, it is also a tool that we can use to demand social and institutional changes when resistances are too strong to be dealt with from inside national countries.

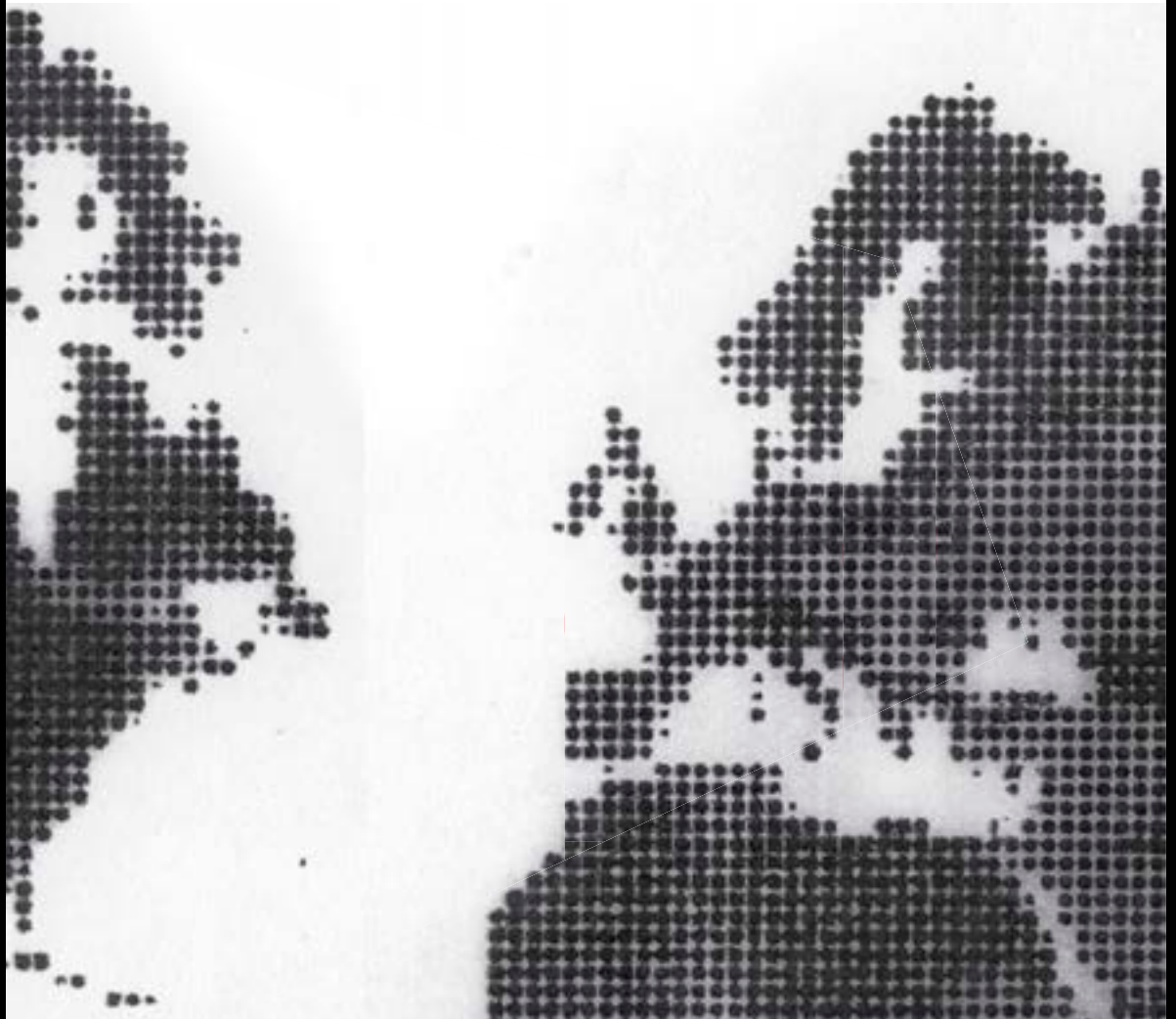
One of key objectives of the European Union is *'to eliminate inequalities and promote gender equality throughout the European Community' using a 'comprehensive approach which includes legislation, mainstreaming and positive actions'*. At least four articles of the Treaty of Amsterdam set gender equality objectives to the EU. Articles 2 and 3 set speak about 'gender mainstreaming'. This means that the gender equality objective is to be integrated into all Community policies. Article 141 focuses on equality between women and men in matters of employment and occupation and Article 137 about sex discrimination within and outside the work place. Confirming this commitment, all Member States approved the European Pact for Gender Equality in March 2006, and the EU Commission has designed a "roadmap for equality between women and men" for 2006-2010. It is our responsibility to use the opportunities opened up by European integration and to promote the objectives of the feminist movements and to act towards more equality in European societies.

The legal commitments of the European Union can be used to encourage formal gender equality where the legislation of the countries lags behind. Yet the enforcement of legal rights is necessary but never sufficient to ensure that equality improves: the changes required are fundamentally cultural and social. These changes should be fought for, constructed and insisted upon at a transnational scale as well as locally. The ideals of the European Union give an unprecedented opportunity to insist on change throughout Europe. Transnational activism and networking between feminists is therefore crucial to ensure that the commitments of the European Union are lived up to. ■

europaeantfeminism@gmail.com

About Our Logo

As every attempt to define or limit it has shown by its failure, Europe is not primarily a geographical space: it is a process and a pursuit.



Before Europe was a geographical space, it was a myth: the myth of the goddess Europa abducted by Zeus, who disguised himself as a bull and carried the beautiful Europa away. As the myth is told by Apollodorus, Europa was the daughter to Agenor and Telephassa had three brothers: Cadmus, Phoenix and Cilix. After her abduction, Agenor sent the three brothers set out to find Europa, telling them not to return until they had found her. They set out in three different directions, and when they could not find Europa they founded cities from which to continue the search. Phoenix settled in Phoenicia, which is modern day Lebanon, Syria, Israel and Palestine; Cilicia settled in Cilicia, which is modern day Anatolia; and Cadmus settled in Thrace (now Greece, Bulgaria, Turkey) and founded the city Thasus, known later on as Thebes. But the importance of this myth is not the particular geographical cities and countries (although it serves to remind us that 'Europe' has from the beginning been thought of as bigger than it is now typically understood), but the idea that Europe is a pursuit - it is never where you are, it is something to be aspired after.

The logo of European Alternatives, read from the inside towards the outside, represents the three paths of Europa's brothers. The centre of the logo is no particular place: is wherever the pursuit starts from. The three divergent paths remind us that there is no one way to pursue Europe; no one way to be European.

The logo of European Alternatives can also be read from the outside in. Europe is not a culture or a space that can be defined independently of all other cultures and spaces. Europe has always been a place of exchange and cultural counter-influence, and those are the processes that define it. Attempts to impose European values on others are necessarily self-defeating for this reason: Europe is necessarily a multiplicity which includes and involves others. From the outside in the logo of European Alternatives represents the three dominant cultural influences on Europe: the influence of Asia from the East, the influence of Africa from the South, and the influence of the Americas and the sea from the West. Europe is to be found in that intersection.

Globalisation Demands a More Political and More Democratic Europe

Only by embracing a European dimension will national political parties be able to regenerate in the era of globalization.

John Palmer

As it crosses the largely uncharted seas of globalisation, the European Union sometimes implements policies which prove inadequate for reforming its economy, strengthening its internal decision-making or seeking greater influence internationally – not least to help shape the governance of globalisation itself.

But such failures, if followed by an appropriate change of strategy, are likely to be permanently or fatally damaging to the Union itself. A continuing loss of *political* legitimacy, however, could pose a mortal threat to both the EU and the wider process of European integration. The warning signals in recent years of a growing popular unease about the evolution of the EU can no longer be ignored. Opinion polls confirm that the gulf between the EU institutions and citizens in many of its 27 Member States is still growing.

The EU will not be able to confront the challenges of globalisation unless it becomes less technocratic and diplomatic, and more political and democratic. This must involve political parties giving voters in European elections a greater choice of alternative policy strategies.

The European public is bewildered by the complexities of policy-making and decision-taking in the EU. This is, in part, due to the speed of developments, especially the (necessary) enlargement of the Union and seemingly constant changes in both EU policy and governance. Voters have little idea how to engage with the European process or what democratic choices they are being called on to make. EU affairs tend to be dismissed as excessively technocratic and diplomatic, and insufficiently political and democratic.

What passes for public debate on Europe in many Member States does not help. The political elites in most countries conduct their public discourse about EU affairs in a ludicrously short-sighted way. Quick to demonise the Union and its institutions when unpopular decisions are taken – very often at the instigation of the Member States themselves – governments have not surprisingly found it difficult to mobilise support for the EU when they have desperately needed to in their own interests. It is less widely appreciated that national politicians and political in-



Photography by Stuart Mudie

“The EU will not be able to confront the challenges of globalisation unless it becomes less technocratic and diplomatic, and more political and democratic.”

stitutions are held in even lower esteem than the EU and its institutions in most Member States.

Opinion polls reveal a startling decline in public confidence in national political parties and government systems, irrespective of the political orientation of specific governments. Fifty years ago, one in 11 of the electorate belonged to a political party; today,

the figure is just one in 88. In 1966, 42% professed a “very strong” attachment to the party of their choice; today only 13% do so. A recent Eurobarometer poll found that across the EU as a whole, just 17% of the population trusted political parties, compared with 29% for civil society organisations – not least the church.

The EU has suffered enormous collateral damage as a result of the backlash against unpopular Member State governments. The referenda on the proposed Constitutional Treaty provided an irresistible opportunity for voters in France and the Netherlands to punish deeply unpopular national administrations, mainly because of domestic economic, political or social issues quite unrelated to the EU. But as a consequence of the two ‘No’ votes, the proposed EU treaty has been derailed.

Why should voters feel so disenchanted with national politicians? There has been a striking decline in ‘ideological’ politics since the end of the Cold War. Voters today are now uncertain what the basic ‘mission and values’ of mainstream parties really are. Accelerating

bureaucratisation and the professionalisation of party politics has also marginalised the influence of voluntary party members. Parties across Europe report a massive decline in membership. The energy and the idealism which led younger people to join political parties in the past now tend to lead them into support for single-issue campaigns and activity in voluntary organisations.

At the same time, globalisation is restricting the political space which parties need to develop alternative national policy strategies that sharply differentiate them from each other, but which are credible in the new global environment. Mainstream parties have found themselves driven into an ever smaller and more crowded space in the political centre. This loss of policy differentiation restricts the political choices open to voters.

More worrying than the implosion of membership of political parties has been the downward trend in voter participation in both national and European elections. Even in the larger EU Member States, govern-

ments tend to be seen as increasingly marginal actors in the dramas generated by the sometimes painful adjustment to the new patterns of employment and social welfare policies required to survive and prosper in a global economy. Only extreme 'populist' and xenophobic parties benefit by exploiting public unease at the apparent impotence of national governments and mainstream parties to respond to the challenges of globalisation.

At the European level, these problems have been reinforced by a sense that EU decision-making is too remote, too esoteric, too technocratic and too elitist. Many citizens believe that they are denied the information they need to adequately understand (let alone pass judgement on) what is being done in their name by their governments and by the EU institutions.

More can be done to improve public knowledge and understanding of how the Union functions and the key policy issues it faces. The recent initiatives taken by European Commission Vice-President Margot Wallström to address these problems are welcome. But to be effective, an EU communications strategy requires Member States to take shared ownership with the EU institutions (notably the Commission) of the messages delivered to the public. Communications cannot simply be left to 'Brussels'.

Thanks to the Convention on the Future of Europe, a European Citizens' Initiative was included in the Constitutional Treaty. This gives citizens the right to propose that the Commission introduce new legislation, although it is still unclear what the minimum number of Member States in which signatures need to be collected should be. It is encouraging that this has been retained in the new EU Reform Treaty.

Improved information or a more structured system of consultation with citizens – while indispensable – may not suffice to close the gap between the public and the EU institutions. Advocates of the more radical versions of 'direct democracy' recognise that it is vulnerable to the charges of 'corporatism' and elitism. Consultative democracy will tend to appeal most to organised special-interest advocates. For the mass of people, involvement in the European governance process will only have meaning when they are asked to choose in European elections between parties with different programmes and values, led by personalities who present themselves as aspirant leaders of the EU executive.

The growth and complexity of EU affairs has made democratic accountability weak to non-existent when it is exercised purely through elected Member State governments and scrutiny by national parliaments. More can be done to strengthen the powers of national parliaments to scrutinize the behaviour of governments in the Council of Ministers. But only a dedicated, elected European Parliament can really be charged with holding the EU's executive institutions to account. This means not only the Commission, but also the Council of Ministers (when governments legislate under Community law).

"Only a dedicated, elected European Parliament can really be charged with holding the EU's executive institutions to account."

Without doubt, political parties (national and European) will need to re-invent themselves at the national level if they are to survive the profound changes in political culture brought about by globalisation. At the EU level, genuinely European parties with their own identities, programmes and (eventually) membership still have to be built. Of course they will retain close links with their national affiliates in the Member States – in the same way that many regional parties in Member States do. At present, European Parliament elections lack sufficient political consequence to engage voters. They are 'not about enough' in terms of the European political choices offered voters and, therefore, tend to be fought on purely national issues. When they act together through shared sovereignty to meet the challenges of globalisation, EU Member States can create new space for policy alternatives at a European level in a way which would be impossible for any single state acting alone.

Of course, the realities of globalisation will always impose some limits on the freedom of action open to the Union. But the balance of power which would exist between the global market and the huge potential

of the European economies if collectively mobilised by the Member States would be very different to that which exists between the global market and individual countries acting alone.

In this perspective, it becomes possible to offer voters far more wide-ranging and significant choices on issues such as jobs, prosperity, social justice and sustainability. Moreover, if Member States are forced by changes in the global environment to take the construction of an EU Common Foreign and Security Policy more seriously, a healthy democratic debate about alternative European strategies in these areas too becomes possible. Taken together, these developments would imply a cultural revolution for European politicians. They have – for good reasons – traditionally seen consensus rather than conflict and choice as central to the dynamic of European integration.

Today the EU has evolved to the point where, without democratic political choice between differing strategies, no popular consensus is likely to remain intact for long. On the assumption that the Reform Treaty, which was agreed by EU Heads of Government in Lisbon at the end of 2007, is ratified in all 27 Member States the way will be open for EU parties to elect the President of the Commission in 2009. The EU parties should go to voters in the 2009 European Parliament elections presenting serious programmatic alternatives to exploit the space for collective action and also presenting voters with their candidates for the Presidency of the European Commission as part of their lists. Indeed there is no reason why they should not also make public who they will support for the new posts of President of the European Council and the enhanced High Representative for Foreign and Security Policy.

This would give voters the power to help shape the EU executive (the nearest equivalent to a Member State government). The major political groups in the European Parliament are at last serious about achieving full party status – a development that the Constitutional Treaty would have encouraged by giving European parties their own legal identities and by providing funding. Change is already under way.

In a study of voting patterns, Simon Hix, Professor of European and Comparative Politics at the London School of Economics, states that "...on the positive side, and potentially far more profound, is the emergence of a genuine 'democratic party system' in the European Parliament. First, voting in the Parliament is more along transnational and ideological party lines than along national lines, and increasingly so." It is already possible to discern the outlines of a developing European *demos* – in the ever-growing cross-border activities of business, trade unions, non-governmental organisations and other civil society interests as well as through the still slowly-emerging political life of the EU institutions, above all the European Parliament.

A more democratic European Union politics will involve more conflict between the different political families and emerging European parties. But through this contestation for power and the political direction the Union should take, the evolution of European democratic politics will strengthen. It will also strengthen and certainly not undermine democracy at the national and sub-national levels. ■

John Palmer is a member of the Advisory Board of the Federal Trust in London and the Advisory Council of the European Policy Centre in Brussels.



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7 Graphite Square
Vauxhall Walk
London SE11 5EE
T: +44 (0)20 7735 4000
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European Citizenship for European Migrants?

The following text is a part of reaction to a debate on European citizenship recently organised by European Alternatives at the London School of Economics.

Anne Bostanci

Is there any chance that European citizenship could be extended to those who live in the EU member states as non-national minority groups, i.e. immigrants from non-EU countries? Despite the overwhelmingly negative response to these questions commonly heard, there are grounds to advocate EU citizenship for non-EU-national migrants.

The problem of articulating any argument in favour of a European citizenship which includes resident non-nationals springs from its apparent irreconcilability with 'realist' arguments of national interests and sovereignty. It goes like this: even if it was desirable to conceive of and ultimately introduce such a new form of European citizenship, it would be impossible to find broad enough support for such a project at the European level, because it is the interests of the member-states and their citizens that matter here, while it is not a particular priority of most member states to empower their non-national minorities to democratic participation or other citizenship rights – rather, in many cases, it is quite the reverse. In view of such facts, Balibar's expression "European Apartheid" is strong but accurate language.

One way of answering this is by drawing on the frequently evoked, alas mostly ill-defined, idea of European values. Of course it is impossible to give a clearly defined and comprehensive overview of these so-called European values, but this is a problem characteristic of all (geo)culturally defined value systems. But I would venture to assume that most Europeans, including those politicians, technocrats and experts mentioned above, would agree that the following concepts are among Europe's values: tolerance, equality and democracy. The combination of tolerance for difference – be it national, ethnic, or any other – with the equality of diverse groups and individuals and with the idea of political participation of the people in a structured processes that aims at fulfilling the will of the majority in my opinion can only lead to an argument in favour of a European citizenship.

The European Union could become the first global actor to take a tentative step towards a most fundamental change in the understanding of citizenship, by conceptualising a new manifestation of rights and duties, of participation and belonging, moving towards a society based on actual location rather than the rather arbitrarily distributed criterion of place of origin or nationality. ■

Germany's SPD - from Volkspartei to Coalition Engineer

For lack of articulating unifying idea for the German Left, Germany's oldest party is being eroded from all sides

Jan Seifert



Photography by Ralph Stockman

It has been a rough start for Kurt Beck. After the Schröder years and an unstable interim period the current SPD leader took over the top post of his party in May 2006. Since then the SPD has stopped the steady fall in public opinion and keeps stabilising at record low levels around the 30% mark. The circumstances for Beck were tough to say the least: after seven years in government the party and its personnel had been burnt out in the wake of the 2005 electoral defeat; with charismatic Schröder moving on to shady business (greetings from Russia), the power centre waned and a leadership gap appeared. But potentially more dangerous is the lack of a new idea for a modern SPD beyond 2005.

Since other coalition options were unworkable, the two big parties CDU/CSU and SPD

had to agree to a Grand Coalition in late 2005. Such a constellation has only worked in (West-) Germany from 1966-69 and did not go down in the history books as a particular success story. At least the last time paved the ground for charismatic Willy Brand to capture for the first time the chancellor post for the SPD. Now it looks unlikely that the SPD can gain ground and initiative from within the grand coalition. With parties surrounding the social-democrats from all sides, the oldest German party undoubtedly has the toughest job in Berlin's political market.

Heavily-underestimated by many, the new Linkspartei with its charismatic leaders Oskar Lafontaine and Gregor Gysi turns out to be the most stable party in national polls (scoring around 10%). The reason for this is

"The comrades are struggling to find their way around and act like an opposition party while being in government."

the SPD's incapability to reach out to its traditional base, in particular to those people in society who believe that the extent and duration of welfare spending is proportional to a party's social awareness. Not surprisingly, it is very easy for Lafontaine, the former SPD leader and new Linkspartei hero, to claim that the Left party is the real heirs of Willy Brandt. Their populist, old-school rhetoric in favour of unlimited welfare hand-outs recalls the strategy of opposition of the SPD during the 1980s and 90s. Schröder's second-term reform package, the Agenda 2010, turns against his own party now. This series of reforms, praised by economists and business, implemented decisive changes to Germany's economic and social regime and laid the foundation for the current economic upturn. However, Schröder communicated the reforms very badly within his own electoral base and thereby let his own voters fade away into the hands of those who keep on preaching the never-ending brilliance of the old West German Sozialstaat.

In this context the irony of the SPD-Linkspartei relationship in the city-state of Berlin is apparent. Here the two parties continue their second-term government coalition while implementing Germany's toughest budget cuts of any Land during the past 6 years.

While the SPD can practically draw voters from the realm of all other four parties, it also has the toughest competitive environment of any party. What makes the party very vul-

nerable is also its biggest strength. While the SPD is currently governing only 4 out of 16 Länder as the senior government party, it has recently shown that – unlike the CDU – it can successfully govern with all other four parties. This strategic advantage is also the main reason for the social-democrats not to be too afraid of the immediate future as long as power is the only concern. On the other hand it is only too obvious that the Greens might actually take over as king-maker in the foreseeable future. Grand coalitions have historically been very bad solutions in German political culture. So it might be as soon as spring 2008 that the Greens could join the first “black-green” coalition (in Hamburg). Once established as an option on any Land level, the participation of the Greens in a CDU-led coalition (with or without the FDP) will be a viable option – and simply putting European practice (the Greens currently governing in three EU countries with right-leaning governments) into German reality.

In the last weeks of 2007 the SPD adopted its new Hamburg manifesto. This first basic party programme after German re-unification brings the SPD formally in line with the more modern Scandinavian understanding of social democracy. At the same time the party did not dare to move into a new century and abandon its initial attachment to “democratic socialism”. Now the new manifesto brings the party back into European mainstream but leaves its activists still without a clue when it comes to concrete and worthy visions for current and future

“The new manifesto brings the party back into European mainstream but leaves its activists still without a clue when it comes to concrete and worthy visions for current and future government.

government. No one really knows what the SPD is really standing for and which project would justify its return to the job of chancellor. Consequently, the comrades are struggling to find their way around and act like an opposition party while being in government. How this party without a renewed project and more inspiring personnel can gain back power on national level in 2009 remains a mystery. But if anything can be said about Germany's political system – and even more so its social-democrats since 1998 – then it is that nothing is impossible. ■

Jan Seifert is a former European president of Young European Federalists

THE FUTURE OF EUROPEAN POLITICAL PARTIES

In the 50th year anniversary of the European Parliament, what future for political parties in Europe?

With: Brendan Donnelly, Federal Trust
John Palmer
Maurice Fraser

In partnership with the European Movement, the Federal Trust and the European Institute, LSE
Sunday 9th March
7.30pm
Old Theatre, LSE

for full program see
www.festivalofeurope.eu



LONDON FESTIVAL OF
EUROPE
www.festivalofeurope.eu

BRITAIN'S FUTURE IN EUROPE



Looking at the history of the European Union, it is clear that Britain has benefited from membership in so many ways:

PEACE: war between European countries is now unthinkable – compare the last 50 years of European history with the previous 50 years to see what a difference the EU has made

PROSPERITY: British businesses can now trade and compete in a home market of 500 million consumers – Europe is the largest and richest marketplace in the world

OPPORTUNITY: British people can now live, travel, work and study wherever they like throughout 27 European countries – we can take for granted a freedom our grandparents never had

But the case for the European Union depends not just on what it has done but more importantly on what it is needed to do next. Issues such as the globalisation of economic

life, the fight against terrorism and organised crime, and the looming threat of climate change, can only be dealt with if the different countries of Europe work together. They must learn from their successful experience of the past 50 years in order to prepare for the next 50.

The European Movement is Britain's pro-European campaigning organisation which argues that Britain and Europe should do just that. Lessons from the past are important, in order to deal with the challenges of the future.

Recently relaunched under the leadership of former Liberal Democrat leader Rt Hon Charles Kennedy MP, the European Movement aims to take the pro-European message to every part of the United Kingdom. It will provide information on the facts about Europe, and encourage debate about what Europe should do next.

The future of Europe is not settled – it remains to be decided – and

the involvement and opinions of citizens throughout the continent will give it a final shape.

The European Movement has a network of branches throughout the country to argue the pro-European case and generate debate in their local area. It is also part of the European Movement International, a network active in more than 40 countries, to provide the indispensable international perspective on the debate about Europe in Britain.

As the future of Europe returns to the political agenda, the European Movement is ready to respond. Europe will be stronger if Britain is fully involved: Britain will be stronger if it can fully take part.

If you want to support Britain's future in Europe, please join the European Movement. Visit our website at www.euromove.org.uk or write to us at European Movement, 7 Graphite Square, Vauxhall Walk, London SE11 5EE

After the 'Crisis': Increasing Public Support for the EU

After the institutional wrangling, the EU must address its citizens' knowledge about the way it works at the same time as promoting inspiring and unifying grand ideas.

István Hegedüs

Since the agreement reached at the Lisbon summit about the Reform Treaty, new hopes have emerged that the long-lasting constitutional-institutional debates about the future shape of the European Union might be completed after a successful ratification process before the next European elections in 2009. If this positive scenario is realised, we would breathe easier after an unpleasant period of a world-wide debate about the state of the European Union since the negative outcome of the French and Dutch referendums on the draft constitution in May/June 2005. The confronting arguments turned round two dissenting views: is the European Union in a crisis or, perhaps, in a deep crisis?

Well, the failure of the approval of the European constitution in two founding member states expressed the inability of Euro-enthusiastic politicians, intellectuals and civil organisations to convince the majority of their societies to join them in their beliefs. Although the victory of the 'no' campaigns in France and the Netherlands did not occur simply because of a lack in popularity for an elite-driven project, it is still necessary to contemplate the tasks of pro-European public actors in order to change the embarrassingly sceptical/pessimistic public mood in many old and new member states. To avoid referendums on the new treaty almost everywhere inside the EU-27 seems to be a good solution from the perspective of political reasoning, but this method cannot solve the problem of a growing gap in attitudes and opinions concerning the European project between elites and masses.

The idea that the ongoing battle for the souls and votes of the European citizens in all member states could be easily won by pro-European political forces simply using better communication tricks is an illusion. Public sentiments rooted in popular culture and past historic experiences cannot be overcome by professional PR messages. One of the most important obstacles that should be tackled by mainstream Europeans is the very limited general knowledge of the people about European decision-making processes and the role of the common institutions. How can we imagine an even partially rational debate about the future of Europe if many Europeans have never heard anything about the present sharing of policy competences between European and national



Listen to Me, © Zsuzsanna Ardo

levels? Moreover, it is still not common knowledge amongst a significant part of the European electorate that Members of the European Parliament do not sit and vote together in national blocks, but that they have joined competing political groups in the all-European trans-national party system.

We might accept the argument that many citizens do not necessarily invest much energy in learning facts and opinions about political issues. But those who are interested in public affairs can usually make the difference between parliament, government, opposition, and the constitutional court at the domestic level. The sad consequence of missing basic information about the European institutions and the rules of the game is that Eurosceptics can easily misinterpret the decision-making processes, the objectives and motivations of all-European ideas.

The wide spread opinion that ordinary people cannot understand the unique European institutional framework and that therefore we should focus on simple, everyday European topics and policy issues, which are closer to people's concern, is both short-sighted and misleading in this simplified form. Although the democratic

“Successful pragmatic policy steps and the introduction of new grand ideas should go hand in hand.”

procedures and the system of checks and balances in the European public life are different to the conventional constitutional methods people are more familiar with in the domestic political arena, all stakeholders could learn the fundamental logic of the European institutional set-up. At least, citizens should know who is (more) responsible for the development of a special policy area: their national government or, let's say, the European Commission? Education could raise the general level of public discourse. Not all citizens can attend courses of European Studies at universities, but without any clue to the political world of the EU there is no real chance for anybody to

develop reasonable positions on European matters.

In recent years, anti-European and Eurosceptic political groups often in alliance with populist and nationalistic parties have emerged and gained public attention in many countries. Pro-Europeans should keep on explaining that there is nothing resembling a giga-state in Brussels going over the heads of the citizens. Members of advocacy coalitions beyond partisan borders supporting the idea of a united Europe should not fall into a rhetorical trap by accepting that the EU faces more and more serious democracy deficits. Instead, the offensive appearance of pro-European groups might convince people that one of the main objectives of the institutional reform process during the last two decades of European integration has been to upgrade the degree of citizens' representation, to increase the democratic nature of the decision-making procedures as well as to strengthen control mechanisms and transparency.

Constitutional and institutional issues, however, are just part of the bigger package. There are mutual fears both in the old and new member states concerning the performance of the enlarged and enlarging

European Union. Pro-European politicians should realise that bad feelings about there having allegedly been too much spending to support the economic catch-up of Central and Eastern European countries is just one side of the coin: people living in the former communist regions had the impression that the West hesitated too long before new democracies could join the European club of excellence. Hungarians still often complain that we are second-class members inside the EU since we do not receive the amount of financial transfers from the EU budget “rightly deserved”. Since dominant narratives of European politics are not the same in the whole of Europe, the double-speak of politicians in order to calm down dissatisfaction at home forecloses the crucial argument, namely that common efforts should be made for the sake of all Europeans.

When I saw the exhibition at the renewed Berlaymont building visited by crowds one year after the biggest enlargement in the history of European integration, it was an unpleasant surprise to me that once again the old version of the story was presented. The concept of the show did not include the complicated development of the “other” Europe before and after the Second World War. Jean Monnet was naturally the symbolic figure of pragmatic federalism. But beside all the prominent West European constructors of an ever-closer union, there have been thinkers and politicians believing in a new Europe born in other parts of the continent. Guests of the Brussels fair might have learnt the name and fortune of Oszkár Jászi, the Hungarian social scientist, who had to leave for the United States in the nineteen-twenties after being a minister in Mihály Károlyi’s revolutionary government at the end of the First World War. In exile, as an antifascist and anticommunist intellectual, he wrote a study entitled “The United States of Europe”, and whilst evaluating the disappointing and dangerous European political situation of the 1920s as well as listing the problems of the crumbled East-Central-European region facing national antagonisms and violations of minority rights, he proposed the integration of the European nations.

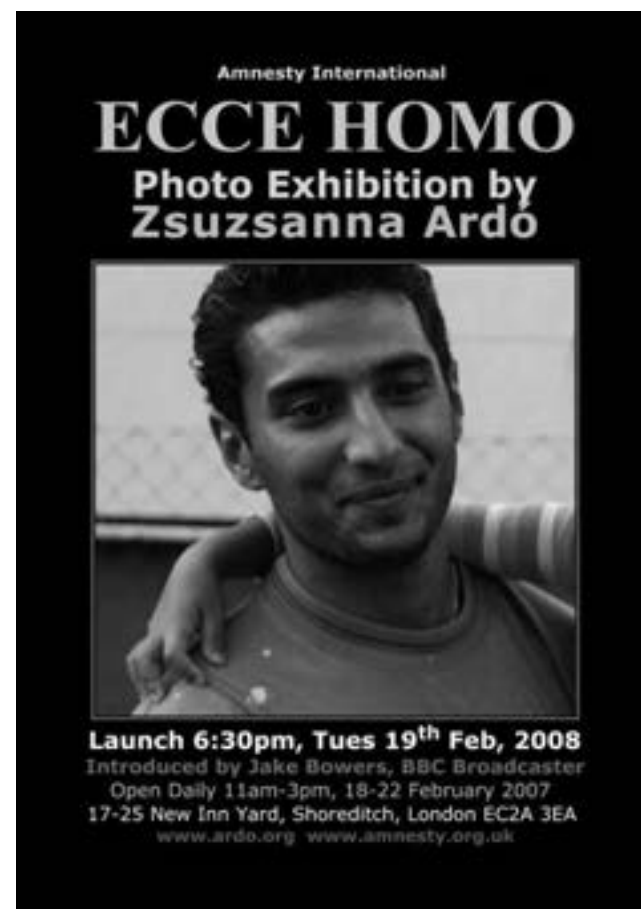
Today, successful pragmatic policy steps and the introduction of new grand ideas should go hand in hand. These efforts might improve the overall political climate and help tolerant patriotism fit into European identity. Hopefully, mainstream European political elites have regained their self-confidence in their roles. The growing role of the European Parliament and an increasingly partisan debate on European issues might mobilise more and more citizens to realise that European and national issues are interlinked with one another.

No doubt: the challenges facing the EU at the beginning of the twenty-first century will be seen retrospectively as the childhood diseases of a long and prosperous development of a united Europe! ■

Istvan Hegedus is the Chariman of the Hungarian Europe Society



Above: photography by Zsuzsanna Ardó, below: *Memory in the Sand*, photography by Zsuzsanna Ardó, www.ardo.org



Amnesty International ECCE HOMO
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60 YEARS ON FROM THE UNIVERSAL DECLARATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS

2008 marks the 60th anniversary of the Universal Declaration on Human Rights, adopted by the United Nations on December 10th 1948. Two years later, the *European Convention on Human Rights* was adopted by the Council of Europe to protect human rights and fundamental freedoms, establishing the European Court of Human Rights. All 46 member states of the Council of Europe have signed up to the Convention

The *European Charter of Fundamental Rights* was drafted in 2000 to allow the European Communities to accede to the European Convention. As part of the EU Reform Treaty, if it is ratified, all states in the European Union will be signing up to the European Charter on Fundamental Rights, apart from the UK and Poland, both of which have opt outs.

In their most recent reports, both Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch signal as causes for concern in the EU area: racial and ethnic discrimination; people trafficking; violence against women; detention and expulsion of people seeking asylum and migrants; lack of a fair trial and access to justice; the excessive use of force by police; and infringements arising from ‘counter-terrorist’ actions and extraditions.

As part of the London Festival of Europe 2008,

SPECIAL DEBATE ON HUMAN RIGHTS

Gilbert Achcar, SOAS

Roger Smith, Director of JUSTICE

Oscar Guardiola-Rivera, social activist and theorist
teaching at Birkbeck University

12th March 2008

See www.festivalofeurope.eu for venue and full details

LONDON FESTIVAL OF
EUROPE
www.festivalofeurope.eu

Giuseppe Penone - Poet of the Uncanny

Giuseppe Penone, originally included by the art critic Germano Celant in the movement of "Arte Povera", is most celebrated for his investigation of the relation between nature and man. His art is often classified as Land Art or Process Art. Villa Medici, home of the Académie de France à Rome, is hosting a magnificent journey through the evocative production of this timeless artist.

Lorenzo Marsili

We enter from the decayed renaissance meanders of 16th century Villa Medici, careful not to slip over a Roman column lying flat on the tight corridor leading to the first room of the exhibition. Staring at this dead ancient marble it seems to reveal itself as the surreal end of a pipe, perhaps a beak utilising a hollowed Roman column once bringing water from the nearby house reservoir. Or maybe, and this thought suddenly crosses our mind, we have already entered the exhibition, where the works are arranged by the artist himself for these spectacular spaces, and this is the first to cross our path. This ambiguity, which must not be untied, is the key to the whole journey, and indeed to the art of Giuseppe Penone, this artist who respects the craft of traditional sculpture and believes in the poetry of nature. And it is in fact towards simple reality, sheer immanence, that the works of

this exhibition force our attention. Life in its unfolding, its growth and its mutation; life that itself become, in this *arte povera* where wood and natural forms predominate, the material of artistic creation, returning us to a basic condition of affinity with the world.

Accessing the first room a wide rectangle composed of several blocs of tree bark cast in bronze lies on the floor; *Lo Spazio della Scultura*. One section is raised from the ground by about half a meter and sustained by several curved branches and covered in animal skin, distinguishable from the bronze-cast bark by its soft curves and opaque response to the light of the room. Seen from the distance it is an uncanny presence, somewhat recalling, in form, Salvador Dali's surreal elephants with their long thin legs. But this juxtaposition, the panels lying on the floor and

"What's an idea that appears suddenly or after a long a reflection? An idea that has been formed by adding up the myriad of preceding thoughts, polished by the passage of time, compacted by the weight of memories, damaged by doubts and incertitude? It is the stone of a river appearing between the branches of a tree"

the artist magically draws out the forceful uncanny of the natural, in a wizardry giving life to the inert, conferring it the status of *creature*. And indeed, there is a strange *foreignness of company* to these statues, not too unlike the sudden emotion, a mixture of fear, surprise, and curiosity, of abruptly running into a mysterious person on a desolated mountain path. This near becoming-man of a tree is at basis of another of Penone's works, the celebrated *Alpi Marittime*, where a series of interventions of the artists are directly inscribed in the process of growth of the tree; he has inserted the cast of his hand in the trunk, which will continue to grow with the exception of this point; or he hugs a tree marking his profile on the bark, so that his action will be conserved with its growth.

The exhibition continues in the marvellous gardens of the villa, where the lavishly decorated internal façade of the palace finally becomes fully visible. Scattered over the grass, broken fragments of Roman columns, like in a pit of sacred capitol, a quarry of Ionic marble. Suddenly staring at us is *Idee di Pietra*, like a delayed *contrapposto* to the flat installation of the first room; a solemn tree, cast in bronze, rises from this low garden weighted by large river stones laid on its branches. The tree appears pulled back towards the ground, constrained, immobilised. Paradoxically, precisely this attempt to halt and immortalise the tree seems to make it appear even more alive, mobile, symphonic. The very *necessity* of having to anchor the tree with heavy rocks cannot, in a Heraclitean game of the opposites, but remind us that this tree is ultimately something alive, making us believe, in a sudden moment of ecstasy, that without those grey anchors it would fly off, or grow at magical speed and break the windows of the surrounding palace. But perhaps the strange union of wood and stone appears to betray a complicit understanding, the forging of a unity not absurd but harmonious; "after having tried to avoid the obstacles present in the surrounding environment", write Penone, "the tree absorbs them". This process of absorption, stressing the life-process of the natural, here again turn

the suspended, emerging pioneer in their centre, serves to make the structure come alive, assuming not only a strong dynamic element, a forceful three-dimensionality, but also the suggestion of life and breathing. This feeling is further reinforced by the contrast offered by the naked, cold, and sickly yellow stone of the section of the pavement left visible, like an open wound, under the raised panel.

Proceeding through our labyrinth we reach a raised and wide corridor, where branches and leaves of all sizes parade in a line of anthropomorphic statues like soldiers under review; it is the series *Pelle di Foglie*, once again cast in bronze, a material which, according to Penone, "resembles the natural", not only because if left in the open it reacts to the weather oxidising and changing in colour, but because the process of fusion dates to an ancient past of animistic believes. An assemblage of leaves reminds us of a human face, another of a heart; branches as waving hands, saplings as marching feet; the proportions those of a body. Despite the simplicity and familiarity of the materials





Académie de France à Rome, Villa Medici
Opposite page: *Idee di pietra*, above: *Lo spazio della scultura*, below: *Pelle di foglie*



ing our attention to the very *aliveness* of the breathing of the cosmos around us that so much characterises this art, is offered as a metaphor for the human process of growth itself; Penone, in a beautiful text in the exhibition catalogue, writes: “what’s an idea that appears suddenly or after a long a reflection? An idea that has been formed by adding up the myriad of preceding thoughts, polished by the passage of time, compacted by the weight of memories, damaged by doubts and incertitude...? It is the stone of a river appearing between the branches of a tree...”

The very last room of the exhibition, an isolated, minute closed space at the far end of the gardens, features the evocative *Pietra di Foglie*. It is a simple composition, a large rock, seemingly from the banks of a river, surrounded by a myriad of fallen laurel leaves. The crisp but soothing scent of laurel (but which could equally well be musk, cedar, or again eucalyptus, to each his childhood) contributes to making the scene appear perfectly simple and real. And indeed, if visual art has traditionally favoured what Hegel called the “theoretical sense”, of sight, the art of Penone returns us to the material truth of touch, and smell. The invocation that comes from this room, as from the rest of the exhibition, is to open our senses on our next stroll out, halting, still in body but voyaging in mind, in front of a pine tree shaken by the wind.

The enchantment of Penone, and the deepest meaning of the adjective “povera” to describe this art, is to open up a whole realm of possibility from the very everydayness of our lives, returning our gaze modified to the world around us. The final empty corridor which we pass leaving the exhibition offers a good example of the propaedeutic function of this art. The walls of the room are on one side built of ochre bricks, on the other painted of milky white. On this second side, breaking the parade of plaster, is a mysterious protuberance of stone, like the amputated limb of an old arch, or the last survivor of an architrave that once sustained a lower ceiling. The profound disruption offered to the perceptual act by this piece of stone, unwanted and unreasonable, without function or aesthetic, is an awareness that must be cultivated through a particular attention to the breathing of the space that surrounds us, an inclination to its absorption and investigation. Almost a subversive stance in an age marked by fast consumption and instantaneous gratification. ■

Giuseppe Penone
30th January – 25th March

INTERVIEW WITH FURIO COLOMBO

Furio Colombo, Furio Colombo, currently Senator in the Italian Parliament, is former editor-in-chief of daily *L'Unita*, former Director of the Italian Cultural Institute in New York, former correspondent for *La Stampa* and *La Repubblica* from the USA, and professor of journalism at Columbia University.

European Alternatives: The name of Europe seems to resonate less and less, referring in the minds of its citizens more to the grey corridors of Brussels than the extreme creative diversity that always characterised this continent. Is it too unrealistic to imagine the possibility of a renewed and concerted cultural effort that may truly open up the possibility of a new understanding of the European project?

Furio Colombo: This question hits a crucial problem that is difficult to answer. Europe is politically and culturally weak, but has an immense economical force. It is the first time in history that an economic force refuses to have pride in its culture and identity. Usually when a subject achieves independence and economic strength it becomes self-satisfied and tries to send out messages of its successes. Maybe not necessarily celebrative, perhaps instead critical, for after all in regimes of liberty it is wealth that brings critical vitality. But this does not happen, neither as the celebration of a new sense of belonging nor as a distinction or contraposition from it, and this is surely a problem not easy to solve for as long as Europe remains voiceless. Europe looks itself at the mirror but does not see anything, which is sad and representative of the crisis we are currently living through. Having realised almost everything apart from a constitutional chart, Europe currently exists mainly in its bureaucratic aspects. I am convinced kids in schools do not feel “Europe”, aside from some privileges in travelling with greater ease in what was once called “foreign countries”, but they don’t have, even distantly, that pride that even the last of the Americans who passed the frontier illegally has for the simple fact of living in the territory of the United States. The united states of Europe have never been born, there is unfortunately no European pride, and in the best of cases we see a frankly pathetic race between Spain who claims to have surpassed Italy, France claiming to have surpassed the UK, Germany claiming it has surpassed France and the UK, etc., which is all very modest because these claims are

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not being made in relation to India, China or Japan, but to one another, where one should think that the growth of one is the growth of the other and the crisis of one the crisis of the other. But these thoughts do not enter the minds of European politicians, who have only given up minimum parts of their powers, and seem unable to govern Europe instead of merely governing a fraction of it.

But let us say something that may give us an element of hope. When there are very strong crises it is not always the case that the way out becomes apparent much before its arrival; it can very well happen that

we continue moving in a desolate landscape when suddenly that landscape becomes animated and alive, completely different and new. This was, for example, the case with the United States in the passage from the 1950s to the 1960s, when I was living there. There was nothing in the America of Eisenhower predicting the America of Kennedy and Luther King, the cultural renaissance, from the beat generation to Woodstock, the free speech movement in Berkeley and the 1968 of Chicago. This was an immense revolution that has revitalised and redefined the United States, leaving behind with an incredible force the unbelievably boring, irrelevant, and pitiful

1950s where everything was ugly, where cinema, literature and music was boring, middle-class and claustrophobic. And suddenly a country without borders emerged, without limits, open to the world, with the most extraordinary creative capacity. But all this happened unexpectedly and at once. America redefined itself and its relevance in the world beginning from a few months in which it revealed itself as a new country. Why couldn't this happen with Europe? After we have made the list of all that does not work in the European Union, its sense of solitude, of void, of aphasia, after we have pictured this edifice where only bureaucratic commas and precepts resound full of instructions for use but devoid of ideas on meaning or direction, this giant and rich ship left anchored in a harbour from which it does not have the courage to move, why could it not be that suddenly there will emerge a great land called Europe?

EA: Next month our journal will organise a Congress of European writers, artists, and critics to reason on the meaning and responsibility of artistic creation in the current European panorama. You are amongst the founders of "Gruppo 63", which self-consciously called itself an "avant-garde" movement. Does this term still have a meaning today? Can one still imagine a movement of social rejuvenation arising from cultural actors?

Furio Colombo: An artist does not have other obligations apart from his aesthetic, poetic, or personal code, his expressive capacity and his courage. The rest remains dependant on temporal circumstances difficult to predict. For example, Gruppo 63 was born in a situation that greatly favoured aggregation between different kinds of artistic practices; from writers to painters, from architects to musicians, there was a strong desire to get together, to theorise together ways of understanding a cultural renovation of one's country, something that in other epochs has not been the case and that the present era lacks entirely. The current period is rich in talent and expressive capacity, but they don't tend to get together, they don't want to do it, nor do they have a particular nostalgia for us who have done it or a particular desire to imitate us. On the contrary, maybe I see a negative judgement towards groups that have been pivotal for the cultural production of the twentieth century but that are now looked at with distance. Today a strong personal solitude is more typical, which is another way of being protagonists of a creative life. I believe this protagonism under conditions of adequate freedom will continue to express itself even without giving birth, or at least not for now, to clearly labelled groups, or "great" magazines serving as a cultural push for particular modes of expression. In the United States, for example, the New York Review of Books is a great publisher managed with insight by its editors, but it is not and does not represent a group, which it did when it was first founded.

EA: As we speak, representatives of the African diaspora, supported by the pres-

EUROPEAN POLITICIANS SEEM UNABLE TO GOVERN EUROPE INSTEAD OF MERELY GOVERNING A FRACTION OF IT.

ident of Senegal, are protesting in front of the European Commission in Brussels against what they perceive as unjust trade agreements reached at the last EU-Africa summit in Lisbon. In a recent interview for our journal Gianni Vattimo joined the chorus of those who see in the EU merely a "neoliberal war machine"; Vattimo used the term "a new office of the world bank". Do you believe this criticism is grounded?

Furio Colombo: The issue is not whether these critiques are grounded; the moment one side feels an injustice, even only as a subjective perception, it has a right to protest and to make this protest heard. The problem is that this protest is destined to fall in the void because there is no European political power capable of responding. One imagines an action and a reaction but one of the protagonists is absent, and this is Europe. Defining it as an office of the World Bank is clever but does not mean very much, for it would imply that it has a will, a coherence, a structure, and a leadership, all things that Europe does not have.

EA: Let's come to Italy. There is currently a large discussion in the media about the so-called "Italian decline", ranging from a relatively weak economic performance over the last 15 years to the scandal of garbage in Naples and the weakness of the government to take action on sensible issues. The foreign press, from the New York Times to the Financial Times, has been particularly critical of the country lately. Some commentators suggest that the responsibility lies with the political class, pointing to the vivacity of Italian society, the successes of its export and the creativity of its industries; some claim that the political situation is just the expression of a sick society. You have been on both sides of the barricade: I wonder what opinion you have on the current crisis?

Furio Colombo: Each country is a container inside other containers, and Italy, often judged on its own, is instead part of Europe and the economy reality of the West, sharing the problems that affect the entire globalised world. We can think of the current torment in the United States, where the primary elections are seen as so important and dramatic precisely because Americans are longing for a change, perceiving their situation as one of difficulty or crisis. In the United States there is also an economic crisis manifesting itself both in the stock exchange and the price of oil that is shacking the group of industrialised countries, including the largest and most powerful nation. There is still a lot of uncertainty surrounding this crisis, neither the collapse of the stock exchanges

nor the rise in energy prices are yet completely understood phenomena; of course we know about the effects of industrialisation in China and India on the increase in global demand, the never-ending war in Iraq, the deterioration of the situation in Afghanistan, the explosion of sub-prime loans, etc.

Now if we think how much the political and economic life of the largest and most powerful country of the series to which Italy belongs is affected, we become aware that Italy is shaken with force by similar torments. And when these reach Italy they increase in magnitude. Firstly, because by the time they reach Italy they have diffused in the world and have influenced the many other economies that influence Italy's; secondly, because Italy is a smaller country, with a more tormented past; lastly because Italy has generated and is living an additional profound crisis that is entirely of its creation.

Indeed, in Italy there are two concurrent crises, determining a risk similar to the transversal and undulatory oscillations of a bridge; experts tell us that a well-built bridge does not fall just for a transversal or undulatory shock, but only when the two happen simultaneously. Italy is living two crises at once, and this is the difference between the Italian crisis and that of France, Spain, United States, etc. And what is this peculiarly Italian crisis? It is a profound crisis in trust from the bottom up, from public opinion towards politics, and from the top down, in the incapacity to create new leadership and create confidence; it is a profound break between the upper and lower economical strata, where the poor are becoming more and more poor and the rich are barely affected; it is a crisis of communication and information, which in Italy has reached its lowest point.

To understand the analogy we made with the United States we could think of a recent and much celebrated film, "Lions for Lambs", by Robert Redford. This a particularly dramatic scenario for a country like the US, which has always been admired as the home of great journalism, where the film shows that journalism can at times betray the trust of citizens, the "consumers" of news with a right to the truth, and accept to become a partner of power by diffusing false information, in this case about the war. In Italy this situation is aggravated by a uniquely Italian historical accident; Italy has been governed for five years by a man who is the owner of most sources of information in the country, controlling virtually all private TV channels, a large share of radio and newspapers, and having arrived to control public broadcasting when he assumed the role of prime minister.

This phenomenon has never come about elsewhere. It is deeply connected with another problem, which many Italians see as the most serious, and it is that of the conflict of interest, which means that someone can pass laws in his own favour and then cover his traces because he disposes of virtual control of all information. This is what happened in five years of Berlusconi gov-

FROM WRITERS TO PAINTERS, FROM ARCHITECTS TO MUSICIANS, IN THE PAST THERE WAS A STRONG DESIRE TO GET TOGETHER, TO THEORISE TOGETHER WAYS OF UNDERSTANDING A CULTURAL RENOVATION OF ONE'S COUNTRY, SOMETHING THAT THE PRESENT ERA LACKS ENTIRELY.

ernment; Italy has been gravely damaged in its economy, in its international prestige, its image, its international relations, without Italians knowing it because information has been forcefully manipulated. The particular ability of this system is to have prepared an "afterwards", so that if it's true that now Berlusconi is no longer in power, the continuous intimidations that the Berlusconi government made towards the Italian information system over the years lasts still today. Every journalist who wants to have a career, a future, the possibility to transfer from A to B, must be palatable to one person. This shows the caution of the news, the prudence of the newspapers, the extreme lightness with which at times enormous gaffes of Berlusconi are treated. This is a clear cessation in the function of journalism that has made much more tepid and weak the action of the Prodi government following the Berlusconi administration. ■

This interview was recorded on January 16th, 2008. On January 25th the Prodi government was forced to resign after only two years in office following the defection of a centrist party. Early elections are scheduled for the month of April. Silvio Berlusconi is currently indicated by most surveys as around 10 point ahead the centre-left coalition.

ENGAGEMENT AND THE ARTS IN EUROPE

As artists, writers, musicians and thinkers come to London for a Cultural Congress as part of the Festival of Europe, what is the relationship between the arts and engagement in Europe?

NICCOLÓ MILANESE

From now on we live in imaginary communities. From when we cowered together in fear of the earliest thunderbolts of Zeus, the imagination has been the fundamental human faculty holding us together, but the specificity of large parts of the modern world is that we live in communities knowing full-well they are imaginary. The comparative ease with which many of us can cross geographical obstacles, globalised communications and the speed with which demographics is changing all call us to question what holds us together, and the only remaining answer is a shared imagination. To say that communities are imaginary is not at all to say they are false: on the contrary, it is to say they are absolutely real in virtue of shared imaginative spaces, the only spaces in which human communities can exist.

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Europe is at the forefront of this global movement. Here, where there is so much by which communities could be defined and divided, when the defence and demarcation of different cultures, nations, religions, languages has taken up so much of our resources and blood, we are finally thrown forwards towards an identity no-one but wily old Zeus can fully capture: European. All attempts at saying what is or is not European necessarily fail, because they misunderstand the nature of the adjective: *European* is a way of *carrying on*, it is an endless process of self-creation. Some of us once made the disastrous mistake of thinking we had grasped for once and for all what Europe is and could impose it on others. From now on Europe can only progress by including its alterities. The imagination is the only structure which has the required property of being open to others whilst not destroying their difference. The imagination is the structure of negative capability.

The responsibility of those who tend to the

imagination could not be higher. Not only do they have the responsibility for caring for the resources which hold our communities together, but they also have the responsibility for tending to those resources in such a way that we do not define ourselves against one another, that we do not foreclose difference too quickly. They have the responsibility for turning civilisations inside-out. The Europeans, living after and in spite of the many collapses of their own 'civilisations', have a historic duty.

Who are those who tend to the imagination? For us they are to begin with archetypes we have inherited from antiquity: the poet, the writer, the painter, the sculptor, the musician, the dancer, the philosopher, the critic. The imaginative tools we inherit as Europeans have been shaped and developed by these figures from the beginning of history, and they each carry a particular historical charge and character.

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There are archetypes we have invented more recently, which are technological developments of the older archetypes: the photographer, the film maker, the TV producer, the radio script writer, the web designer. Technological developments in communications have opened up entirely new domains for the imagination to fill. The modern world is increasingly structured according to these new technologies of communication. Like all features of the modern world, that is a huge opportunity as well as a huge danger, which means to say it is a heavy responsibility. The danger is that the new technologies used inhumanely and unimaginatively tend to be alienating and solipsistic. The structures and prerogatives of technology are not automatically the same structures and prerogatives as those of human understanding, and they are by default private and personal, despite their apparent claim to



René Magritte, *Galcondia*

opening intersubjective spaces. The new technologies of communication employ the modes of expression which belong to the arts, but do so impersonally. So long as the communities created via new technology remain merely 'virtual', they will not be human communities at all. They require the artist to make them real. The huge opportunity opened up by new technologies of communication is to give to the artist complete and direct influence over the state of real interpersonal relations by the exercise of his or her imagination. A feature of new technologies is that in using them each and every one of us is required to be an artist in this sense.

Europe is not a giant translation machine. For translation to be worthwhile there must be languages to translate between. The huge richness of the languages of Europe is an extremely good reason for being grateful that the language of Europe is not (only) translation. The languages we inhabit, which enter into us and structure the way we understand the world, are one of the ways our cultural and historical inheritance is given to us. Language is part of the living organism that we are, and requires the same attention, care, preservation and innovation. For a long time the languages of Europe have not belonged

EUROPE IS NOT A GIANT TRANSLATION MACHINE.

to any one people; in virtue of translation, but also in virtue of individual and collective multilingualism and as a side effect of domination. The search for a perfect language is perhaps a peculiarly European search, which has fascinated the most powerful of our thinkers and poets. But if they have been impassioned by this search, it is because they felt the richness of all the languages in Europe: the power of languages leads to awe, the diversity of equally rich languages to the idea of an even greater language.

The European fascination for languages tends to distract from other modes of communication in the arts other than literature-on-the-page. But many of the same questions can be put with regards to these other modes as are raised with regards to language: are there different 'languages' of sculpture or dance, which might vary throughout Europe? It is probably mistaken to imperiously extend the paradigm of language to cover these means of expression: language is one amongst them. At the very least we can say in general about the arts that there are different traditions, different costumes, different customs, different canons spread throughout Europe. And furthermore we can say that from the beginning, in Europe, these traditions and customs have been inescapably mixed and shared, even when the greatest efforts have been made to keep them 'pure'.

But the contemporary European might regard the customs, costumes and canons

he or she has 'inherited' as entirely foreign, and the idea of tradition something that has been overthrown by modernism. The apocalyptic visions of Europe's cultural fate are well known. George Steiner often paints an image of TS Eliot and Ezra Pound rushing through Europe collecting artefacts from the museums before the collapse. Paul Valéry paints the image of a European Hamlet in the graveyard of European culture, picking up the skulls he at first does not recognise. This one is Leonardo's, that one is Leibniz. What is he to do with these skulls? If he abandons them, will he be abandoning himself?

The solution to the cultural impasse is revalorisation and re-appropriation, as well as innovation in the arts. To say that the European artist finds himself emerging from an intellectual heritage is not to say he or she must be burdened by it, or reverential towards it. Indeed it is to say the contrary: it is to say that the European artist must move from where he finds himself, taking account of where that is. Revalorisation and innovation are no longer opposites. The various imaginative spaces in Europe are all of them historically conditioned, as all the communities in Europe are historically conditioned. To be a European innovator in the arts is to give a reinterpretation of these conditions, albeit implicitly. If there has been a collapse of European culture – and I suspect to totalise the collapse is to go too far – then the response and the responsibility is to reinterpret European culture after the collapse. And whatever the actual state of European culture, it can no longer look only to itself for its resources. Not only have elements of European culture entered the entire world, been taken up by others, deconstructed and rebuilt, but all the world has entered Europe: every god of almost every culture the world has known has left some traces here. Europe is not primarily a geographical space: it is a continual attempt to give some value to its own history. Mnemosyne is the mother of the muses, and the family of the muses is more diverse than ever before.

The predicament of the European Hamlet can be generalised to encompass the contemporary spirit of Europe: at an impasse, always in a 'period of reflection', nervous, hesitant. All that I have said suggests that the role of the artist in Europe is fundamental for moving beyond this. The European legislator has only the resources he is rendered by those who care for the imagination. He or she has the diverse histories and traditions of Europe – which implicitly involve all the world. The legislator has the fears and hopes of the diverse peoples in Europe. But these can only been employed to govern positively if they are nurtured into a healthy shape. If not, the legislator relies only on force. The *engagement* of the artist is precisely here: the artist carries the responsibility for the care of the imaginative resources of the Europeans, the only means by which a European community can be built. This engagement is fundamentally political in the sense of continually re-generating a European *polis*, of re-generating European ways of living together.

THE PREDICAMENT OF THE EUROPEAN HAMLET CAN BE GENERALISED TO ENCOMPASS THE CONTEMPORARY SPIRIT OF EUROPE: AT AN IMPASSE, ALWAYS IN A 'PERIOD OF REFLECTION', NERVOUS, HESITANT.

This imaginative re-generation can only take place at a European level, in contemporary Europe, because all the potential substantives around which communities can be built have been shown to fail. From now on communities can only be built as ways of carrying on, of ways of striving and aspiring: for us, under these skies, Europe as an ideal describes these ways.

The political engagement called for is therefore more fundamental than left-or-right surface distinctions in political programs. It is much commented that the surface distinctions of political programs are increasingly only a façade, and that no real political choices remain. In so far as any real modern political program relies both on an interpretation of history and a project for the future, all that I have said suggests that it is only by the kind cultural engagement here advocated at the fundamental level that these choices will reappear.

If the meaning of political engagement in the arts for Europe is now at this fundamental level, it will nevertheless be articulated and realised with respect to particular conflicts and political causes in particular places at particular times: be these at the level of immediate human survival or human rights, or be they intellectual and artistic. It is by definition impossible to speak for all of Europe, for all time. Therefore the artistic engagement that will contribute to the generation of a European polis will be variegated through different levels of generality: from geographically highly specific conflicts to issues that concern directly the whole world. But at each of these levels these causes can be fought for *as a European act* by Europeans. To say that is just to say that Europeans, inescapably caught up in their own history, engage politically *as Europeans*.

The calls for a 'European soul', for 'culture' in Europe from the political classes are often naïve and sometimes obfuscatory, but they are consistently present and more and more loudly heard. Like all things in modern Europe, that presents a huge opportunity as well as huge dangers. The huge dangers are that 'culture' once again becomes understood as something 'pure' and exclusionary, and Europe falls back on itself and fully collapses; the huge opportunity is that Europe can re-imagine itself as a community based on justice and inclusion. The opportunities are there to be taken: Europa is still just about visible ahead of us. Perhaps if we lose sight of her we will be lucky enough to find another guide, but if we are not it will be our own fault. ■

THE FUTURE OF ARTS IN EUROPE An International Cultural Congress

15th and 16th March
Chelsea College of the Arts

Over two days artists, writers, philosophers, musicians and other cultural producers will discuss a variety of crucial topics for the future of the arts in Europe. This public congress is the first action of the European Alternatives program on the role of the artist in Europe. Congress in partnership with Critical Practice Group at Chelsea, who will organise a special workshop on Sunday 16th.

See www.festivalofeurope.eu for full Congress program and forums
Free and open to all. Workshops require registration: editors@euroalter.com
Banqueting Hall, Chelsea College of the Arts,
16 John Islip Street, London, SW1P 4JU

SATURDAY 15th:
12.30 pm Opening
1.30pm – 4.30pm Workshops
5pm – Hans Ulrich Obrist in
Conversation with artists and
writers on the idea of Europe

SUNDAY 16th:
1pm – 5pm Workshops
5.30pm: Towards a European Cultural
Avant Garde Debate featuring
Gianni Vattimo

Supported by



JAN PATOČKA, PHILOSOPHER OF EUROPE AND AFTER



On the 13th March 1977, the 70 year old Czech philosopher Jan Patočka died under a final police interrogation. One of the founders of Charter 77 along with Vaclav Havel - who later acknowledged the spiritual influence of Patočka in both Charter 77 and the Velvet Revolution – Patočka was chased out of teaching at university no less than three times by the authorities and so gave his seminars clandestinely. The transcript of the final police interrogations read ironically like a testimony: one policeman asks Patočka about why he took on the role of spokesperson for Charter 77, and notes his response as ‘it is extremely unlikely that anyone else would have the courage to do it’.

Disciple of Husserl and phenomenology, Patočka is the most important post-war philosopher to have theorised the notion of ‘Europe’, elevating Europe to the status of an idea. Europe is the principles of its own history, which are to be found in its philosophical, scientific and literary heritage. The two world wars affected this idea in a paradoxical way: the wars manifested the defeat of Europe’s attempt to dominate the world, but at the same time gave the fruits of Europe’s technological and scientific invention to the whole world. Patočka was the first to see the predicament globalisation would throw Europe into: how to find justification for itself in a world that has appropriated Europe’s own technologies of development? This is the predicament for Europe in the post-European world. Patočka’s response is taken from the beginning of the European philosophical tradition. Employing the Socratic notion of ‘looking after the spirit’ or ‘care’, Patočka paints Europe’s role in the post-European world as that of changing the principles of development it itself gave to the world, mitigating their auto-destructive tendencies.

Looking after the spirit is necessarily philosophical, political and existential. Philosophical, because Europe must renew its questioning spirit to interrogate its own

principles; political and existential because it requires taking responsibility for the common good, the rejecting the easy comforts of making security one’s only concern, and the courage to place the liberty and dignity of men above the ‘chains that tie life to its own consummation.’

By uncovering its most deeply rooted philosophical traditions, Europe could again take on the role of changing the world in the post-European age of globalisation, not by ordering the world to its own ends, but by taking responsibility for the spiritual transformation and unification of the world through its caring for itself. The courage and foresight of Jan Patočka in urging Europe to take this responsibility makes him not only an essential philosopher for today’s Europe, but also an essential example of an engaged citizen. ■

**‘JAN PATOČKA
AND THE IDEA
OF EUROPE’**

Special event celebrating Patočka and his heritage as part of the London Festival of Europe 2008.

Featuring: Ivan Chvatik, Director of ‘Patočka Archives Prague’,
Ludger Hagedorn, Patočka research project, IWN Vienna.

*11th March 2008
6pm, Room 347 UCL School of Slavonic and East European Studies,
16 Taviton Street, London WC1H
Free*

for full program see www.festivalofeurope.eu

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Opening Lecture: Bernard Stiegler

Towards a European Way of Life

Bernard Stiegler is a philosopher and director of the Centre for Cultural Development at the Centre Pompidou, Paris. He has written extensively about the importance of the arts in our mastering contemporary technologies, and actively campaigns for new forms of democracy. The lecture will be followed by a drinks reception.

*Thursday 6th March / 6.30pm / Free
Lecture Theatre, Chelsea College of Art,
16 John Islip Street, London SW1P 4JU*

**“ECONOMIC COMPETITION
CANNOT BE THE
PREMIER PRINCIPLE OF
A NEW COMMUNITY.
THE PEOPLES OF
EUROPE MUST REALISE
A CONSISTENT
EUROPEAN IDEA,
THE AFFIRMATION OF
A EUROPEAN WAY
OF LIFE.”**
- Bernard Stiegler

*In collaboration with the Chelsea Critical
Practice group.*

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FERNANDO PESSOA, POET OF THE MANY

Fernando Pessoa is one of the most and important European intellectual figures of the past century. The London Festival of Europe 2008 dedicated a whole day to the exploration of this mysterious Portuguese Poet.

Fernando Pessoa is a multitude. Born in Lisbon in 1888, the reputation of this mysterious Portuguese poet has been steadily growing over the years, until he is today considered one of the most fundamental European voices of the past century. The most striking characteristic of Pessoa is his constant use of heteronyms, or literary egos, so that a plurality of voices and biographies are the only possible voice and biography of this poet of polygamy. Alberto Caeiro, Ricardo Reis, and Alvaro de Campos are the three most developed poetic heteronyms employed by Pessoa, but after his death, from a box containing his writings – fragmented, on spare restaurant receipts, napkins, loose sheets – emerged a true multitude of characters, each the author of a particular assemblage of texts.

Bernardo Soares, the semi-heteronym author of the magnificent *Book of Disquiet*; Antonio Mora, philosopher and sociologist; Baron of Teive, essayist; Thomas Coarse and Alexander Search, writing in English; Raphael Baldaya, astrologer ... and onwards to a list of seventy-two names and as many genres of writing. All the heteronyms collaborated on publication projects, critiqued and even translated one another. Sensationalism, one of the numerous “movements” started by Pessoa, was critiqued by Antonio de Seabra and compiled in English by Sher Henay, both fruits of Pessoa’s imagination. Neo-Paganism was strongly defended by Antonio Mora, Pessoa’s philosophical persona. Alvaro de Campos and Ricardo Reis frequently attacked each other’s poetry, but joined in the appreciation of Alberto Caeiro’s verses. Pessoa’s heteronyms had a real presence in his life, well beyond literary play; Pessoa’s only, mainly epistolary, romantic relation was broken by the constant interference of Alvaro de Campos, who exasperated the beloved, Ophelia Queiroz, who was, at last, real.

Most importantly, the heteronyms he assumes are not simple literary alter-egos, like Valéry and his Monsiery Teste or Rilke and Malte Laurids; they are entirely self-sufficient, perfect existents, with their own biography, attitude, aesthetics, style and, what is more, they all express, in the most profound sense of the term, a particular *possibility of being*, a “metaphysics”, a true, tangible, honest reaction to the mystery of being. In a letter to Armando Cortes-Rodrigues Pessoa writes:



“I CONSIDER INSINCERE ALL THINGS... THAT DO NOT CONTAIN A FUNDAMENTAL METAPHYSICAL IDEA, IN WHICH THERE IS NOT, NOT EVEN AS A GUST OF WIND, A MINIMUM NOTION OF THE GRAVITY AND MYSTERY OF LIFE.”

“I consider insincere all things... that do not contain a fundamental metaphysical idea, in which there is not, not even as a gust of wind, a minimum notion of the gravity and mystery of Life. This is why all I have written under the names of Caeiro, Reis, Alvaro de Campos is authentic. In each of them I have put a profound concept of life, different in each of the three, but in all deeply aware of the mysterious importance of existence.”

The production of Pessoa mirrors the evolution of a life that has given up all pretensions and wishes to find a harbour. At first it could be seen to depart from the plateau of disbelief that characterised much mod-

ernist creation, and that finds its clearest echo in Pessoa-Bernardo Soares’ *Book of Disquiet*, the factless autobiography of a solitary employee in which all the themes dear to the high-bourgeois literature of the early twentieth century find their place, enmeshed in an absurd air of normality already prefiguring some of Beckett’s characters to come.

But it would be reductive, and indeed impossible, to inscribe Pessoa in the simple existential reaction to the meaninglessness of a world without certainty. If Pessoa departs from the “nothingness” of the world, it is only to turn this nothingness into eternal possibility, to hold a constant revolution in thought by “usurping the Divine power of being everything”. And this is the effect Pessoa’s three-dimensional heteronyms achieve, that of a multiplicity of the truthful, a crystallisation of experience with its refraction of a thousand shades of possible existences; “all manners”, the poet writes, “of faking I understand the world, or better, of faking it can be understood”. ■

Supported by the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation



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He even fakes the pain
Of pain he feels in fact.

And those who read his words
Will feel in his writing
Neither of the pains he has
But just the one they’re missing.

And so around its track
This thing called the heart winds,
A little clockwork train
To entertain our minds.

– 1 April 1931

Poem translated by Richard Zenith, in *Fernando Pessoa : A little Larger than the Entire Universe. Selected Poems*. (Penguin Classics)

FERNANDO PESSOA: EUROPEAN MODERNIST OR POSTMODERNIST?

Celebrated writer and translator Richard Zenith will present a lecture and read selected verses of Pessoa. Accompanied by a special cello composition by Vicky Steiri and screening of contemporary Portuguese Video-Art.

Friday 7th March
FREE

6.30PM, St Peter’s Church (Mayfair),
Vere Street, London W1G 0DQ
Part of the London Festival of Europe

for full program see www.festivalofeurope.eu

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SEDUCED AT THE BARBICAN

Review by Nora Razian

More than an informative survey of sex and art over the last two millennia, the Barbican's *Seduced: Sex and Art from Antiquity till Now* was an insight into current censorship debates, and a telling reflection of contemporary attitudes towards representations of sex, sexuality, and what we are ready to hold up as art.

Seduced: art and sex from antiquity to Now was an ambitious, 5 years in the making, overview of the changes in representations of sex and sexuality in various cultures at various moments in history. The myriad of works on show, many of which were censored at some point, included pieces rarely or never before viewed. It was also probably the first time a London gallery had issued an age restriction on a show.

The exhibition's three curators, Professor Martin Kemp, Professor Marina Wallace, and Ms Joanna Bernstein, described their cumulative efforts as a celebration of the way different cultures portray sex, and a critical look at when, and for what reason, such representations were deemed unfit for public view.

The breadth of the exhibition spanned works salvaged from the brothels of Pompeii, masterfully sculpted marble nymphs and satyrs, Persian and Ottoman prints, Rembrandt, Gustave Klimt, and Picasso, finally culminating in a showcase of art world heroes including Andy Warhol, Jeff Koons, k r buxey, Nan Goldin, Thomas Ruff, Francis Bacon, Tracey Emin, and Marcel Duchamp.

The exhibition opened with seldom, or never, shown pieces dating from the Roman period up to the turn of the 20th century. The works on display included a life-size marble sculptor of an exquisite nymph, Michelangelo's drawings of the Rape of Ganymede, Bucher's sensuous depiction of Leda and the swan, as well as sumptuous 17th century Japanese prints depicting the pleasure districts, or 'floating world'.

Included in this part of the exhibition were pieces from the *Gabinetto Segreto* (secret cabinet) of the Archeological Museum in Naples and the former *Secretum* of the British Museum. Both collections contained works from classical antiquity deemed corrupting and offensive for public view. At the entrance to the show, we are greeted by a telling symbol; a fig leaf especially commissioned to veil a cast of Michelangelo's *David* from the chaste eyes of Queen Victoria. This most biblical of cover ups sets the tone for the exhibition, calling up the specter guilt and shame that haunts European attitudes towards nudity and sexual depictions, and harking us back to Adam's fall from grace.

The second part of the exhibition dealt with modern and contemporary representations of sexuality in art and included Andy Warhol's *Blowjob*, Thomas



Woman and Man with Oysters, Unknown Artist, album of Japanese watercolours
© V&A Images / Victoria and Albert Museum, London



Blowjob, Andy Warhol, 1963, 16mm film
© 2007, The Andy Warhol Museum, Pittsburgh, PA

Ruffs treatment of internet pornography, Nobuyashi Araki's slippery and sensual black and white images, and photographs from Robert Mapplethorpe's *X Portfolio*, whose images were the focus of U.S. debates on art censorship in the 1980s. Though the exhibition culminates in works said to be pushing the boundaries of sexual representation in art, inclusion of a more global gamut of contemporary works would have provided additional and relevant insights into the state of current debates on censorship and representations of sex in art in contemporary global cultures.

Though *Seduced: Art and Sex from Antiquity to Now* inevitably invoked the porous barrier between art and pornography, the questions posed were of a more self-reflexive nature; how, and how much, have our attitudes to sex really changed over the last tow millennia? Are we really more accepting of others sexuality, or have we relegated sex to the realms of the trivial or sensational. At least one of the artists on show was recently censored; Nan Goldin's photograph

of a naked girl, taken as part of her intimate portrait series *Heartbeats*, was removed from an exhibition at Gateshead's Baltic Centre. Though we may perceive our views on sex to be progressive, we made not be tolerant as we think having it publicly displayed. As one curator noted, though the exhibition had an age restriction, adding an illicit layer to its message of sexual celebration, it could not "have been done in America."

The exhibition holds up an uncomfortably candid reflection of ourselves, and pushes us to question the base on which our standards of acceptability in sex, and sexual representations in art is formed. *Seduced* encourages us to look at the way other cultures have constructed their views of sexuality, and whether our present day notions are really a progression from the days of the *Gabinetto Segreto*.

Seduced: Art and Sex from Antiquity to Now
ran from 12 October 2007 to 27 January 2008
Barbican Artgallery, London

Constituting Europe 2: Civil Religion

✧ Simon Critchley ✧

In the second of his essays on Jean-Jacques Rousseau and the nature of community, Simon Critchley looks at the question of religious faith in a political community.

Civil religion can be thought of as a profession of faith that is paradoxically both transcendent and subordinate to the immanentism of popular sovereignty. In Robert Bellah's formulation, civil religion is that religious dimension that is arguably found in the life of every people through which it interprets its historical and social experience in the light of some transcendent reality, usually God. What Rousseau tackles with alarming directness, much more radically than in his other writings on religion, and more than a century before Nietzsche, is the problem of Christianity and politics, namely the Christian separation of theological and political authority.

In the religions of antiquity there was an identity of theological and political authority. One need only read the *Oresteia* or the tragedies of Sophocles to realize that the gods of the Athenians were gods of the city, civic gods without universal jurisdiction. Although cities and peoples were jealously proud of their local gods, this pride seems to have gone hand in hand with the recognition of the relativity of religious belief; namely, that the gods of Sparta were not the gods of Athens, Corinth or Thebes and furthermore the adoption of such gods would not be good for the Athenians, the Corinthians, the Thebans or anyone else. Oddly, this relativity of belief never seems to have led to religious war. Christianity, by contrast, which requires universality of belief has led to little else but religious wars for the past couple of millennia. Christianity divides political and theological authority, declaring that the kingdom of God is not of this world, but of the next. It is, for Rousseau, an essentially anti-political religion. He declares, '...after all what does it matter in this vale of tears whether one is free or a serf?', and goes on,

What is more; far from attaching the Citizens' hearts to the State, it detaches them from it as from all earthly things. I know of nothing more contrary to the social spirit.

In an eerie anticipation of Nietzsche's argument in *On the Genealogy of Morals*, Rousseau writes that Christianity is slave morality, 'True Christians are made to be slaves; they know it and are hardly moved by it; this brief life has too little value in their eyes'.

The task of a civil religion - a task that Rousseau sees as avowedly Hobbesian in explicit opposition to Warburton's idea of a necessary alliance between church and state - is that of 'reuniting the two heads of the eagle', that is, bringing together political and theological authority. Rousseau's critique of the political utility of Christianity is, in my view, compelling, but it leads him to construct a conception of civil religion that is at best syncretic and at worst cynical. He declares that,

The dogmas of civil religion ought to be simple, few in number, stated with precision, without explanations or commentary.

The positive dogmas include belief in an omnipotent and provident deity, the happiness of the just and the punishment of the wicked, the sanctity of the social contract and the laws, without forgetting the necessity of a belief in the afterlife. It would not, I believe, be an exaggeration to describe this miscellany of dogmas as somewhat opportunistic. In addition, anyone who acts against the laws can be banished, '...not as impious but as unsociable, as incapable of sincerely loving the laws, justice, and, if need be of sacrificing his life to his duty'. What's more, if someone is found to be a social hypocrite by publicly acknowledging the authority of the laws but behaving as if he did not believe them, then 'let him be punished with death; he has committed the greatest of crimes, he has lied before the laws'. *Sacer est od* - the sacredness of civil religion requires the execution of the *homo sacer*. If the purpose of civil religion is to provide a transcendent, sacred underpinning to the immanence

It is my belief that there is no way of understanding contemporary political reality without a clear understanding of the nature, history and force of civil religion

of the general will, then it does not require much imagination to see how such sacredness might be violently employed to legitimate the most ugly forms of state repression and state terror, particularly when we link them together with Rousseau's argument for dictatorship. In the period of the National Convention in France after 1792, pacific invocations of the *Être Suprême* in civic festivals found their echo in the bloody violence with which blasphemers were executed. The general will can become murderous.

And yet...*must* the general will be murderous? If Rousseau's conception of civil religion amounts to little more than a cynical amalgam of neo-pagan dogmas, then does this discredit the whole idea of civil religion? I don't think so, for at least two reasons, one diagnostic and descriptive, the other more normative or perhaps simply hopeful. In this essay I give the diagnostic and descriptive reason, the next essay I will give the normative reason.

It is my belief that there is no way of understanding contemporary political reality without a clear understanding of the nature, history and force of civil religion, by which I mean the sacralization of politics in its diverse and contradictory forms, which arises when a political unit transforms itself into a sacred entity as a way of buttressing its claim to legitimacy. This is most obviously the case in American civil religion, which finds banal but compelling empirical confirmation in the weird symbolism of the one dollar bill, complete with the words 'In God we Trust', although it was only added by Eisenhower in 1956. In addition to the Roman eagle of the Great Seal of the United States, we find two allusions to Virgil, the inscription '*Novus ordo seclorum*', 'a new order of ages' and '*Annuit coeptis*', 'he has approved our undertaking'. These allusions bring together the divine source for the polity with a prefiguration of the idea of Manifest Destiny. It is the divine source whose radiant sun-like eye stares out at us at the top of the incomplete Masonic pyramid, with its thirteen steps symboliz ►

ing the number of the original colonies and the Roman numerals MDCCLXXVI. It is the God of American civil political religion who underwrites the act of republican association, the unification of a disparate plurality, ‘*E pluribus unum*’. Beyond the materiality of the greenback, the articles of American civil religion find expression in the pledge of allegiance, the worship of the flag, the cult of the war dead and entire culture of war.

To move far too quickly, the presence of civil religion can be seen in various European nationalisms, but it can be seen most strikingly in the extraordinary symbolism of the European flag, with its crown of 12 yellow stars on a blue background. The flag was adopted by the Council of Europe on December 8th, 1955 and was based on a design by Arsène Heitz. It seems innocent enough with the stars representing the diverse European peoples (at least, ‘the Europe of the 12’) on a background of the blue Western sky. It is apparently a simple symbol for European integration. However, Heitz was a pious and devoted Catholic and his design was directly inspired by the history of the apparitions of the Blessed Virgin in the Rue du Bac in Paris. In the summer of 1830, the Virgin Mary appeared to Catherine Labouré, a novice in the Sisters of Charity in the Rue du Bac. The Virgin is reported to have said that, ‘The times are very evil. Sorrows will befall France; the throne will be overturned. The whole world will be plunged into every kind of misery’. Despite the apocalyptic tone, it is truly impressive that the Virgin Mary should take such an interest in the political affairs of 19th Century France. The Virgin went on to demand that Catherine have a medal struck, the ‘Miraculous Medal’ that was worn by millions of Catholics by the time of Catherine’s death in 1876, when the Rue du Bac began to be eclipsed by the slightly later apparition of the Virgin at Lourdes. On this medal, the Virgin is depicted with a halo of twelve gold stars around her head in an allusion to the Revelation of St. John (12:1). Now, if all of this seems like a flight of fancy, then one might simply note that that the day the European flag was adopted by the Council of Europe, December 8th, is also the Feast of the Immaculate Conception, adopted by Pius IX on December 8th 1854, exactly 101 years earlier. I am not suggesting that the European Union is a covert catholic conspiracy, but there is at the very least a story to tell and a history that requires uncovering.

Without an understanding of the intrication of politics and religion, we have little hope of comprehending the present through which we are all-too-precipitously passing. Ours is a time of new religious war: what an as yet unpublished report by the Rand Corporation calls a time of ‘cosmic war’ where political actors are religious believers or ‘cosmic warriors’ with a Manichean opposition between Good and Evil. It seems to me that any attempt to understand politics at the present time has to begin from the datum of sacred violence, of political violence carried out in the name of the divine.

As the authors of Rand report write,

Religious contestation in Europe before the age of nationalism and Marxism is a better guide to the future than the secular conflict of the Cold War.

It is in relation to a triangulation of politics, religion and morality that the present is playing itself out and I see little sign of this changing in the foreseeable future. For example, the much-discussed factoid about the presence of moral values in the exit polls from the U.S. Presidential elections of November 2004, which caused a minor panic amongst American liberals, is deeply interesting to a humble philosopher. Citizens are making political decisions that are really moral judgments and these judgments flow from a religious metaphysics, to be precise the alleged will of God. Although one may argue that such a religious morality is pernicious, in either its U.S. Christian version or its Jihadist obverse, there is no doubt that the triangulation of faith, morality and politics is a powerful framework of intelligibility that makes powerful sense and motivates subjects in a way that far outstrips its secular opponents. To go further, one might say with Robert Bellah that the intrication between faith, morality and politics is one of the most enduring features of civil society in the U.S since the time of its original, violent settlement, through to the eulogies of Tom Paine and Tocqueville. Any political movement in the U.S or elsewhere ignores this connection between faith, morality and politics at its peril. This, it seems to me, is what the religious right in the U.S. have powerfully and with ev-



Illustration by Sarah Adina

Any political movement in the U.S or elsewhere ignores this connection between faith, morality and politics at its peril.

er-growing hegemony understood since the late 1970s. In my view, there can be no leftist, egalitarian politics without an acknowledgement of the motivational force of religion and an attempt to harness that force for progressive ends. This entails facing up to issues like civic patriotism, moral education and the necessity for populism, even ceremonies of nationhood. Once again, to be clear, I say this with reluctance and little enthusiasm, but these are dark times.

Such is what we might call the ‘actuality’ of Rousseau and this is the reason why I have sought to follow closely the intrication of three terms in Rousseau’s text: politics, law and religion. For Rousseau, the condition of possibility for any legitimate form of political association requires the externality of the legislator for its authorization and the transcendence of civil religion for its sacralization. Sadly, this condition of possibility is also the system’s condition of impossibility and we have seen Rousseau’s political argument result in a rather improbable conception of civil religion. But it might lead elsewhere. In the final essay, I will suggest one route it might lead us to. ■

‘Constituting Europe 1 – The myth of the social contract’, printed in the previous issue of *Europa* is available online at www.euroalter.com

The third and final of Critchley’s essays will appear in the next issue of *Europa*, and will present a proposal for a poetically constituted community.

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❖ European Alternatives is a civil society organisation dedicated to promoting intellectual engagement with the idea and future of Europe. It both advocates that engagement, and, through its many activities, attempts to enact it. We publish a regular journal, EUROPA, and organise numerous events including the yearly London Festival of Europe.

❖ It is our belief that the contemporary project of European unification represent potential fertile soil for political innovation and vehement democratic participation. But Europe must be understood in its multifaceted political, cultural, and philosophical reality, and the European project cannot rest content with economic unification.



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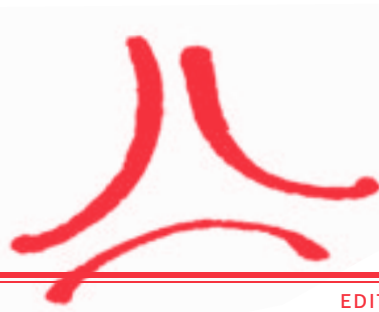
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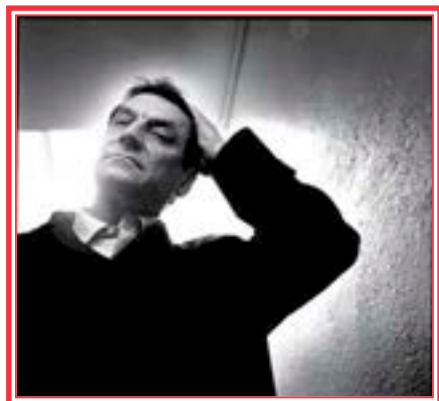
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Hans Ulrich Obrist Interviews Claudio Magris



Hans Ulrich Obrist: I would like to ask you a question on memory, on dynamic memory. You have talked extensively about this attempt to fight against the oblivion of time. Today we live in a political moment in which memory is often employed in a static, objective, reactionary sense. Your point of view on memory seems instead quite different...

Claudio Magris: On the one side memory is a fundamental and foundational category; it is the mother of the Muses, *Mnemosyne*, as the Greeks said. Memory for me is fundamental. But not so much memory of the past, something that has to do with nostalgia, with regret, with idealisation, but rather a strong sense of the present of all things that have meaning and value, above all people.

... Memory has a very strong meaning, it gives depth, it allows for relations and so on. But there is also a mistaken kind of memory, which is where we become prisoners to it, obsessed by the past, continuously reproaching the wrongs suffered, presenting the bill. This of course is a false memory because it is not the salvaging of things, of love and passions, but merely the prison of resentment. ... And this evil memory, which in truth has been cultivated extensively in the Mitteleuropa, now becomes used politically in a regressive way, to fuel hatreds between people. To remember is necessary, but not the remembering that makes one prisoner of hatred and bitterness, leading us not to go beyond but to repeat those tragedies that we are reminded of. (READ PAGE 147) ►

CULTURAL CONGRESS SPECIAL



Image by Boris Mikhailov

Over the closing weekend of the London Festival of Europe 2008, the 15th and 16th March, writers, artists, philosophers, musicians and other cultural producers from throughout Europe and the Mediterranean came together to discuss the future of the arts in Europe as part of the *How to Make Europe Dream?* Cultural Congress at Chelsea College of Arts and Design. Selected contributions to the Congress are included in this special issue of Europa (pages 14-28).

The Cultural Congress marks the commitment of European Alternatives that Europe must be continuously constructed as an artistic as well as political project. The European project cannot rest content with economic unification. It cannot hope for a mere political union of the national status quo: a leap of the imagination is required to formulate a new way of living together. It is our belief that artists and cultural practitioners share the responsibility of creating the bases for such a leap.

Europe can neither be a fortress nor a museum; it was historically defined by continuous contaminations with its exterior and must now become a living organism in constant dialogue with its own others. For this reason artists from outside of the European Union – what is presently known as ‘Europe’ – were also included in the congress, and this journal will continue to pose the question of Europe’s future to artists worldwide.

There is a danger that culture once again becomes understood as something closed, pure and exclusionary: we must insist that Europe re-imagine itself as a community based on justice and inclusion. Culture – the *paideia* of the Greeks, the procedure through which man creates, recognises, and positively invests with meaning the values of his own society. Art poses an extreme paradox: completely autarchic, useless, it becomes art only when it returns us to the world disclosing what until that moment was unthinkable, the other, the alternative.

The EU needs a positive immigration policy

Editorial

The French Presidency of the EU is committed to securing a European Pact on Immigration. In the European Year of Intercultural Dialogue, we must insist that European cooperation is not limited to exclusion, but that a positive policy on legal migration and integration is developed in the context of the development of a rich European citizenship. We are already seeing the frightening symptoms of our failure to do this. ► (READ PAGE 136)

One way ticket to modernity: China

Editorial

In recent media coverage on Tibet the Western discourse of human rights, with its calls for equality, justice, and fairness, is pitted against a monstrous Chinese power only interested in exploiting Tibet’s economic potential, erasing local customs, and subduing the region to its draconian control. But this is to forget Europe’s own road to modernity. ► (READ PAGE 137)

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page 139. The Future of the European Presidents

page 141. Europe after the Italian Elections

page 145. European Feminism

page 147 – 162. Cultural Congress Special

page 163. Europe and the Mediterranean: Danilo Zolo

EDITORIAL

POSITIVE IMMIGRATION POLICY
MUST BE THE FOUNDATION OF A
NEW EUROPEAN POLITICS

IN THE EUROPEAN YEAR OF INTERCULTURAL DIALOGUE, WE MUST INSIST THAT EUROPEAN COOPERATION IS NOT LIMITED TO EXCLUSION, BUT THAT A POSITIVE POLICY ON LEGAL MIGRATION AND INTEGRATION IS DEVELOPED IN THE CONTEXT OF THE DEVELOPMENT OF A RICH EUROPEAN CITIZENSHIP.



The French government has declared as one of its primary intentions during its Presidency of the European Union – starting on July 1st – to secure a European Pact on Immigration. The initiative to formulate common policy at a European level is to be welcomed, but in the European year of intercultural dialogue we must insist that it is a positive approach to immigration that is agreed upon. Much of the rhetoric surrounding the ‘innovative’ European Pact coming from President Sarkozy has been regarding to illegal immigrants and control of the borders of the European Union. This is not surprising from a President who made it one of his election promises to deport thousands of sans-papiers. But cooperation on stopping illegal immigration is no innovation in the European Union: since it became a community competence in 1999 the fight against illegal immigration has been the only aspect of immigration that the EU states have cooperated on. Legal migration policy and development policies for third countries – to improve conditions in the countries of origin – have been left up to individual nation states. With attention and energies focussed on the policing of borders rather than on the welcoming of migrants and on the causes of their arrival, migrants are becoming seen increasingly as a ‘problem’ to be dealt with en masse rather than as individuals arriving for a variety of reasons. Inscribed in this movement towards the dehumanisation of migrants are various recent illiberal proposals such strong emphasis on including biometric information as part of visas, and taking the fingerprints and iris-scans of both adults and children entering the European Union. The proposals of the European Commission for standardising the legal basis for detention and return of migrants to the European Union seem to exemplify this: the proposed legal time limit of up to 18 months for detention of migrants without papers is in line with the more draconian of European policies, such those in Greece and Malta – in France, for example, the current limit is 32 days (although it should be remembered that in the UK at the moment there is no legal limit on detention at all). These proposals have to have the agreement of the European Parliament in order to be accepted – the first test of Parliament’s co-decision on this subject will come later on this year. After a recent compromise between the Commission and the Parliament at Strasburg on these proposals – which actually made them more illiberal – the Parliament’s rapporteur on the return of illegal immigrants, Manfred Weber MEP, said that it is only on the condition of a stronger line on illegal immigration that European citizens would be willing to accept a politics of aid for legal immigration. But the logic of the argument is surely the inverse: only on the basis of a positive politics of legal immigration is it going to be

possible to deal with illegal immigration. Without any proposals for a European politics of legal immigration, the Commission’s proposals threaten to turn detention into the ‘normal’ state of the immigrant. The chief positive proposal of the Commission, picked up in the French proposals for the European Pact, is a ‘blue card’ scheme based in some ways on the USA’s green card targeted towards professionals with diplomas. But the current proposals for the blue card make it even more difficult to obtain and renew than the green card (the only way of getting a blue card is to have a one-year job contract with a salary of at least 3 times the minimum wage; it is only valid for 2 years), few details have emerged as to exactly how it will be implemented and very little has been said about 3rd country development and avoiding a brain-drain situation in those countries. There is a tendency in the European Union to talk about external immigration, from third states outside the EU to EU countries and internal migration between EU states as if they were radically different issues. The European Pact on Immigration concerns exclusively the former, for example. But in fact the two form a continuum that has to be thought of in a joined-up way. It is true that in the Schengen area – recently extended in December 2007 – a significant number of the legal barriers to the free movement of workers have been brought down, and no visas are required to work in other countries. But, firstly, Romanians and Bulgarians are citizens of the EU yet do not yet have the same rights to movement as other EU citizens, and secondly, since requirements for becoming a national citizen are different throughout the European Union (and national citizenship is the only way of getting European citizenship), many third state migrants are becoming citizens in one state and then rapidly relocating to another. Given the likelihood of further expansion of the EU, and the impossibility and undesirability of ‘managing’ the movements of migrants once they are inside the EU area, migration must be thought of in a different way. But more important are the social barriers opposed to all forms of migration. Completely absent from the debate at present are proposals for European integration policy. It is completely contrary to the idea of granting European citizenship that ‘integration’ should be left as simply a national issue. Moreover, integration is a two-way process. We have recently seen fear of migrants from Romania intervene crucially in local elections in Rome, and the British National Party has won a seat in the London Mayoral Assembly: without the development of a rich notion of European citizenship amongst ‘settled’ populations, the integration of ‘transient’ migrant European citizens will remain impossible. In the European Year of Intercultural dialogue one might have hoped that the link would have been made, for the situation of the migrant is the index of the success or failure of intercultural dialogue. One suspects that the new right-wing mayor of Rome has understood this when he proposes that the Rome Film Festival will from now on only show Italian films. There has to be a concerted effort both on the part of the European institutions and from civil society and cultural organisations to fight against these prejudices and construct a positive version of European citizenship. For as long as pro-Europeans remain silent about these issues and leave them to the radical right they are irresponsibly hoping against hope – and recent evidence – that they will go away.

EUROPA

Editors
Lorenzo Marsili
Niccoló Milanese

Projects Officer
Segolène Pruvot

Design
Rasha Kahil
www.rashakahil.com

www.euroalter.com
editors@euroalter.com



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EDITORIAL

ONE WAY TICKET FROM SHANGRI-LA TO MODERNITY: EUROPE'S CHINA

EUROPE NEEDS ONE VOICE ON CHINA: BUT BEFORE IT SPEAKS, PERHAPS IT SHOULD REMEMBER ITS OWN HISTORY

There is much room for complacency in being a European today. In recent media coverage on Tibet, the Western discourse of human rights, with its calls for equality, justice, and fairness, is pitted against a monstrous Chinese power only interested in exploiting Tibet's economic potential, erasing local customs, and subduing the region to its draconian control. If our governments, for short-sighted economic interest, fail to take a stand on China, it is up to our own civil society, together with global celebrities and continent-hopping activists, to remind us it is democracy Europe really believes in. But what if China is doing to Tibet is similar to what Europe has historically done all over the world?

China believes in modernisation. Indeed, it would not be a mistake to say that today China is *the* modern, understood as radical upturning of established patterns and ways of life, strong development of the productive forces, instalment of the notion of progress as the centrepiece of national consciousness. And Tibet is China's peasant, refusing the dialectic of modernisation and accumulation.

The discussion here is not the harsh Chinese reaction to the recent Tibetan protests. China reacts harshly to *all* protests, be them in Guanxi or in Lhasa. This is obviously not a justification of any sorts, but we should understand that the violence of the Chinese regime against its own people is not a problem just about *Tibet*. The problem specific to Tibet is hidden well under the images of Chinese soldiers chasing after demonstrating monks. And it has to do with the all-encompassing cultural, social, and economic transformation of the region at the hands of Chinese capitalist development.

It is fashionable to call what China is doing to Tibet cultural genocide. So what is China doing to Tibet? China is transforming what was an essentially rural, traditionalist, superstitious, strongly hierarchic society into a fully fledged member of the twenty-first century. This is not a value judgement. Some people will rightly highlight that before 1949 Tibet was an extremely harsh feudal society, run by a conservative and corrupt monastic order that kept most of its population in abject poverty (life expectancy was barely 30), ignorance, and servitude. And China is transforming it into a relatively prosperous modern society. Others will highlight the importance of millenarian customs and beliefs, the values of Buddhism, the peaceful smile of even the poorest of Tibetan peasants. And China is destroying all of this in favour of a bad copy of American suburban culture.

But what we call cultural genocide is none other than the global process known by the name of modernity initiated by our very own continent and imposed, in good or in evil, willingly or unwillingly, on the near totality of the globe. We might recall the opening of Fellini's *Dolce Vita*, where a helicopter is carrying a statue of Christ over the new developments of sprawling boom-time Rome, under the amused gaze of a group of fashionable intellectuals on a rooftop terrace. This scene went to the heart of the social transformations of the 1960s, morphing a still predominantly agricultural country of traditional beliefs and superstitions into a modern industrial economy.

Let us forget for a moment Tibet's claims to historical autonomy from China. If Tibet unambiguously were a region of China, would we have any right to protest for its forced modernisation more than we had to defend the inhabitants of Southern Italian villages with their black Madonnas against the industrial boom?

But today it is fashionable to defend queer peasants who still believe in black Madonnas. It is fashionable because Europe has forgotten what it means to die of starvation. China has not, and it has found only one solution to address the chronic death of millions of children due to malnutrition: Western-style industrial modernisation.

Maybe we have better ideas. But that is how we have to present them – as alternatives to modernity, including our very own privileges of taking an overseas weekend city-break.

And not call achieved modernity freedom and modernity-in-the-making fascism. But of course, the problem we avoided is this: assuming China has a right to developing its own land to the detriment of its traditional beliefs, how much right has China over Tibet? This is where European and Chinese responses diverge entirely with few possibilities of reconciliation. China has a strong conception of national sovereignty, unwilling to even consider the possibility of Tibetan autonomy. There are long historical and intellectual reasons for this, but also more pragmatic, immediate concerns: China, with its Muslim and Uighur populations to the North-West, its Mongols to the North, its fifty-two recognised ethnic minorities, is deeply afraid of a domino-effect leading to the Balkanisation of the country. In addition, the country is highly suspicious of trans-national politics, marking Western reactions to internal concerns as an undue intrusion in national affairs. A long history of European colonial attacks and more recent chronicles of American "humanitarian" invasions have served to deeply entrench the equation of global responsibility with imperial self-interest.

But here then is a fundamental role for Europe to play. To inculcate the meaning and desirability of a certain kind of non-aggressive multilateralism, positively engaging China in global political dialogue and avoiding the repetition of nationalist follies this continent knows only too well. To engage the country in a global deal on environment, in arms trade, in halting support to African dictatorships. And to slowly walk it towards democratic responsibility towards its own citizens.

But firstly, and most importantly, Europe must play Europe with China. Recent developments have only confirmed this – one year ago Angela Merkel, against Chinese advice, met with the Dalai Lama triggering Chinese protests and industrial boycott. French industries thanked and took advantage. Today, China protests against France and Sarkozy's statements regarding the boycott of the Olympic. German industries thank and take advantage. Moved like pawns one against the other, Europeans only stand a chance in having an influence with China if they speak with a single voice. And we should not underestimate that China's announcement of talks with the Dalai Lama has been made on the even of a high-profile visit of the European Commission to Beijing led by Barroso. The development of a joint European policy on China should be a prerogative. But this must follow a thorough and unbiased engagement with the reality, desires, and future hopes of a country as different and complex as China.

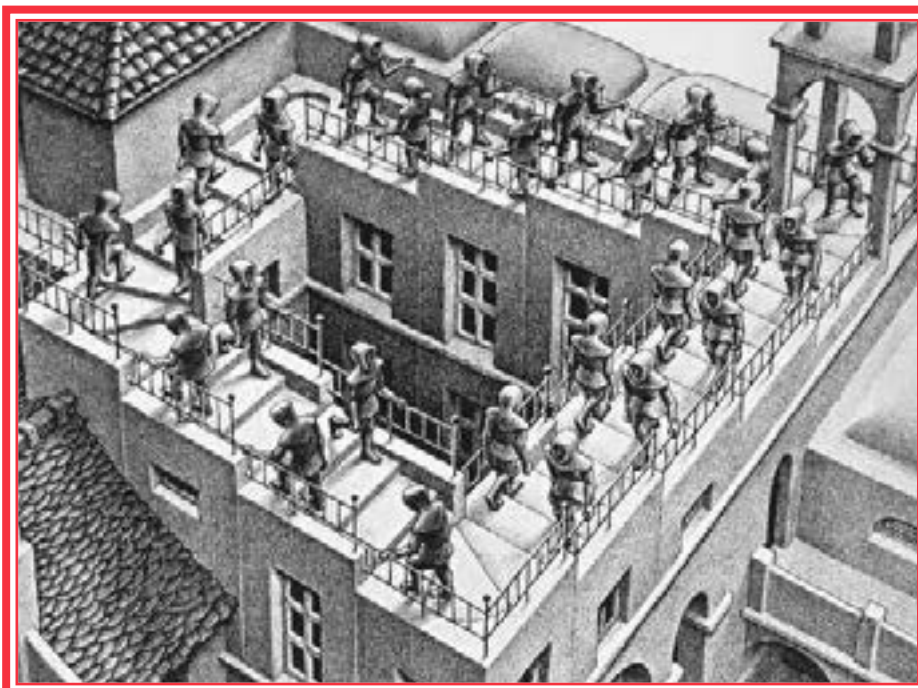


Image by Escher

All The Presidents

In 2009 each of the three Presidents of the European Union will be re-elected, although each in different ways...

Brendan Donnelly

Unless the Irish voters decide otherwise in their referendum this June, the first effects of the Lisbon Treaty are likely to be felt in the course of 2009. A number of the Treaty's new provisions affect in particular the various Presidents and Presidencies that are responsible for the day to day running of the European Union.

Perhaps the most widely-discussed innovation of the Treaty of Lisbon is the modified Presidency of the European Council, the Union's meeting-place of heads of state and government. Until now, this post has been exercised by the head of state or government from the member state holding the overall European presidency, a post changing by rotation every six months. In future, the Presidency of the European Council will be a full-time post, lasting two and a half years, renewable once. The President will be elected by majority vote within the European Council and is expected to bring to the job substantial personal and political credentials.

When the possibility of a non-rotating Presidency for the European Council was first mooted, its supporters plausibly argued that this change would bring greater continuity and political identity to the European Council itself and by extension to the European Union as a whole. At the same time, some of the new post's supporters hoped, and some of its opponents feared, that future Presidents of the European Council could by their personal and institutional prestige serve to "rebalance" the workings of the European Union in a more intergovernmental direction.

In fact, it is highly doubtful whether any future President of the European Council will have the powers and institutional standing to make any significant difference to the institutional architecture of the European Union. The Lisbon Treaty is vague on the subject of the President's competences precisely because the signatories had very different views about the new post's appropriate workings. The sectoral, law-making Councils of the Union are in no sense subordinate to the new President of the European Council. Occasional and general exhortations from the European Council, of which the new President will be the articulator, will inevitably be diluted in the Union's complicated negotiating and institutional structure.

In the United Kingdom, some discussion has been directed to the possibility that the first full-time President of the European

"A previously named politician whose political family had garnered the largest number of votes in the European Elections of 2009 would be in a politically much stronger position to demand nomination from the European Council as President of the Commission"

Council might be Mr. Blair, possibly attracted by the representative function for the European Union which the Treaty of Lisbon confers on the future President.

An argument can certainly be made for the proposition that a well-known, prestigious international figure such as Mr. Blair

would be a suitable first occupant of the European Council's Presidency. At least as powerful an argument can be made that on the contrary the imprecise and limited objective resources given to the new Presidency by the Treaty of Lisbon point towards candidates, perhaps from smaller member states, with a broader and more varied experience of the Union's structures than Mr. Blair's.

Another important post within the European Union that will be allocated next year is that of the Presidency of the European Commission. The Lisbon Treaty contains potentially important clauses on this issue. As with many central questions taken up by the Treaty, the finally agreed text is one which can lend itself to varying interpretations and varying paths of implementation.

Under the Lisbon Treaty, the European Council will still be the proposer of the new President for the Commission in the later half of 2009. But the European Council is enjoined, when choosing its candidate, to "take into account" the preceding European Elections (June 2009), and the high threshold of a majority of the European Parliament's mem-

bers is set for the Parliament's endorsement of the Council's candidate. If the European Council's candidate does not attain this majority, another candidate must be put forward within a month, with the Parliament once again needing a majority of its members to endorse the European Council's candidate.

The new system certainly opens new possibilities of influence in the choice of Commission President to the European Parliament. It is an as yet unresolved question whether the political groups represented in the Parliament will be willing and able to take advantage of these new possibilities. At least two challenging hurdles would need to be surmounted before next year's European Elections.

First, at least the major political groups within the European Parliament would need to choose and publicise beforehand their favoured candidates for the Presidency of the Commission. A previously named politician whose political family had garnered the largest number of votes in the European Elections of 2009 would be in a politically much stronger position to demand nomination from the European Council as President of the ►



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► Commission than an individual whose interest in the Commission Presidency only emerged after the European Elections. Second, there would need to be an agreement between at least the largest political groups in the European Parliament that they would act together after the European Elections, and themselves respect the result of those elections, as they wish the European Council to respect them. Both of these are difficult preconditions for the Parliament to put in place before the Elections and observe after the Elections.

In addition to these two major presidential contests likely to be decided next year, the European Parliament will also need after the European Elections to choose a new president. The ministerial Councils of the European Union will, unlike the European Council, continue under the direction of “team presidencies,” whereby not one, but three countries will be responsible on a rotating basis for guiding the work of these specialist law-making councils. Ironically, national ministers will find their contribution to the workings of the European Union less changed by the Lisbon Treaty than will their political superiors, the heads of state and government. With this range of presidential authority to be exercised next year in the European Union, there will no doubt be pressure from national governments for a political and geographical balance to be struck in the new appointments. Such a balancing compromise between overlapping interests, in which the nomination for the new High Representative for External Affairs will probably also play a part, is an altogether more likely outcome by the end of 2009 than the over-drawn picture favoured by some commentators of a future European Union dominated, for good or evil, by an all-powerful President of the European Council. Evolution, not revolution is the current watchword of the European Union. ■

Brendan Donnelly is director of the Federal Trust

Who Is Your Candidate?

Søren Winther Lundby, *New Europe*
& Joan Marc Simon, *Union of European Federalists*



What is the best thing that could happen for the EU in the coming year? How can we make sure that the EU develops into an efficient tool in the struggle for a globalisation with a human face?

We are convinced that what the EU needs is a democratically elected President of the European Commission. So far the President has been elected behind closed doors in the European Council. This will no longer do. This realization is also expressed in the Lisbon Treaty.

Articles 9A and 9D of the Lisbon Treaty prepare the ground for a decisive influence for the European Parliament in the election of the President. The wording could be clearer but especially Article 9A seems unambiguous: “It (the EP) shall elect the President of the Commission”.

The new and improved procedure for the election of the President of the European Commission has not been very prominent in the public debate. Attention has instead been given to the new post as President of the European Council. This an important post, of course, but hardly as important as it has been presented by many people, and especially if you compare it to the post of President of the European Commission.

The fact of the matter is that if the European Parliament elects the President of the European Commission, then the future President will be the first in EU history in office on a genuine public mandate. This is so because the European Parliament is composed by us, the voters. A “publicly elected” President who presides over a network of more than 25.000 officials and who is the leader of a college that has the

right to initiate EU legislation will have a very strong position.

As a matter of fact the President's position will be so strong that the post is undoubtedly worth fighting for. Therefore the parties in the European Parliament must – well before the parliamentary elections in June 2009 – answer the question: *Who is Your Candidate?* These candidates should, on the behalf of the parties, present their political programmes. Then we, as voters, will have a real chance to find the candidate and the political programme that we want to support. So everything in the garden appears to be lovely. Unfortunately the reality paints another picture. Even though the European Parliament in most instances pays careful attention to avoid the influence seeping away from the open debates of the European Parliament towards the closed, secretive gathering in the European Council, there is a real danger this is exactly what will happen with this issue.

The problem is that European political parties are still undeveloped as parties, who feel unready to choose their respective candidates for the post of President. Therefore the temptation is great to do nothing and just allow the “election” of the President to be part of a large EU job negotiation done behind closed doors.

The only solution to this problem is for us – we voters – to put pressure on the parties to establish themselves and nominate their candidates. The more people who sign the petition online at www.who-is-your-candidate.eu, the better the chances that the EU in the coming year will take a significant step forwards towards democracy. To do so would be a crucial example of democracy in a world where 9 billion people will have to live side by side by 2050.

Online campaign: www.who-is-your-candidate.eu

Initiative for One President of the EU: Who Do I call?

Jan Seifert and Jon Worth



The media is full of stories about intrigue and insider deals over the appointment of the President of the European Council. The names of Blair, Rasmussen, Juncker and many others are frequently mentioned. The excitement and speculations seem to imply that most have forgotten about the current leader of the EU's executive - the Commission President. But with all this typical EU-style secrecy and speculations no one questions the wider picture of the problem: Henry Kissinger once famously asked “Who do I call if I want to call Europe?” We think it is time for an answer. This is the reason why we started the www.whodoicall.eu initiative.

With the Treaty of Lisbon to be ratified by the end of this year it would be possible for there to be one person to call – one person as both President of the Commission and the European Council. He or she would be the leader of Europe, at eye-level with the US or Russian president. But as things stand at the moment European heads of state are determined to first name the president of the European Council for January 2009 and then to propose a name for Commission President in or around June 2009.

If the new European Council President were to be strong it would damage the EU in two ways: competition over power in Brussels (European Council vs Commission), and less democratic legitimacy (the Commission President is at least chosen according to results of the European Parliament elections, the European Council President simply appointed). The selection system and the ill-defined work-division of the two presidential posts therefore pose a serious threat to the EU's functioning.

Secondly, why do we really need an *additional* figure-head when the current leader lacks the power to effectively lead?

And if the European Council President were a weak technocrat... well, who wants a weak technocrat? We do not. So give us one, strong, accountable person by combining both roles.

To find out more about our initiative, to read about the wider argument and to sign the petition, please visit www.whodoicall.eu



When Europe Catches a Cold, Italy is the First to Sneeze

The recent Italian elections take the temperature of the current political dialect in Europe. One marked by the emergence of a reactionary discourse of security, the crisis of the left, and the eradication of political struggle.

Stella Tang

Here we go again. Berlusconi comes back to power with an overwhelming parliamentary majority and nearly 3.5 million votes ahead of the opposition led by Walter Veltroni. A mixture of incredulity, contempt, and worry for the country's future accompanies virtually all commentaries in reputable papers such as the FT, The Economist, or the Wall Street Journal. But it would be foolish to limit the reach of Berlusconi's victory to the Italian reality, merely interpreting it as the expression of a country in profound social crisis unable or unwilling to cope with the challenges of globalisation. Berlusconi is the overblown, even farcical representation of a profound malaise in contemporary democracies.

The keyword of the past elections is a word that finds echoes in virtually every other European capital: "security". This is clearly expressed in a boom in votes for the party of the Lega Nord, which only runs in Italy's prosperous Northern regions, with an election campaign marked by vociferous attacks on the centralised state, accused of draining resources from the richest areas to the benefit of the backwards South, and a violent demonisation of the migrant population, "stealing jobs" from Italian citizens. As in the competing regions of Spain or Belgium, as in the increased animosity between settled and migrant populations in the Netherlands, the particularisation of interest and the collapse of solidarity is a growing characteristic of the European political landscape. In the European year of inter-cultural dialogue, "identity" and "community" become new buzzwords, pitted against the foreign and its herald, the foreigner, as a ready-made cure for the evils of an increasingly turbulent globe. At the beginning of the twentieth century proto-fascist thinker Julius Evola first approached the community as an organic whole to be protected against contamination, preserved against disintegration and corruption, and cared for against threats of decadence. Today, in the name of community, ministers of the Lega Nord walk pigs to defecate on the future site of a mosque, wear t-shirts with the offensive Islamic cartoons on prime-time TV, argue that "mice are easier to exterminate than gypsies, because they are smaller". In the name of community the recently elected post-fascist mayor



Mario Ceroli, *Quinto Stato*

"Berlusconi is the overblown, even farcical representation of a profound malaise in contemporary democracies."

of Rome, Gianni Alemanno, has promised the deportation of 20,000 Romanians from the city. In the name of community a group of his supporters have attacked a nomad camp at the outskirts of the city.

But there is an inescapable and frightful conclusion: this is what the majority of the people have voted for. The most telling result to have come out of these elections is that workers, the long-established stronghold of the Italian Communist Party "inherited" by the new social-democratic formations, seem to have deserted their traditional basis. Faced with increased impoverishment in the global competition of labour they have supported the right wing coalition en masse: 48% of the votes, with a steep rise for the Lega Nord. There is something very telling here: the "losers"

of globalisation, the disenfranchised lower classes whose lifestyle is being eroded by inflation and job insecurity, no longer find a clear political representation in the form of left-wing, socialist or communist-oriented parties. And the vacuum of representation is being filled by reactionary and regressive formations offering a clearly identifiable enemy against whom to vent one's resentment (the migrant) and a clearly comprehensible solution: barriers. Both economic, as in the tariffs against China or India often advocated by future finance minister Giulio Tremonti, and social, with a tough new stance on migration, a return to "order and morality" in the form of heightened police surveillance, criminalisation of different lifestyles (homosexuals, single mothers, divorced, etc.), and the hegemony of the catholic family. A Polish route for Italy?

The left-wing or progressive groups bear an enormous responsibility. By joining the game of political normalisation, with its devaluation of the political in favour of the administrative, the rejection of the dialectical and of the oppositional in favour of the consensual and the technocratic, they have turned their back to the struggle for the political emancipation of all citizens and their right to economic and social dignity.

Berlusconi's return to power is likely to

hinder even further the emergence of any meaningful and alternative political dialectic in the country. The Italian parliament that came out of these elections is arguably the only continental-European assembly where no groups directly referring back to either socialism or communism are represented. The disaster of the left-wing formations has been shattering – from over 10% of the votes to exclusion from both the Senate and the Chamber of Deputies. The result is that only two major formations are represented: Berlusconi's own and Walter Veltroni's post-communist, post-socialist, post-leftist Partito Democratico (PD). While the political development of the young PD, founded a mere six months ago, still calls for the benefit of doubt, the current situation seems to represent a profound shift to the right of national political discourse.

But there is more. For as long as the "radical" fights of the opposition of the PD are focussed on containing the sprawling power of Berlusconi and his control over the country's media, the secessionists and xenophobic rants of the Lega Nord party, the economically disastrous policies of finance minister Giulio Tremonti, we are faced with an opposition whose main prospect is militating for the *normalisation* of the country. ►

“Europe is no longer a utopia to be constructed but a mere status quo to aspire to.”

► There is a profound political risk in this dialectic: the moment the Italian “left” takes as its main objective to return the country to the European mainstream, understood as a mixture of well-functioning democratic public sphere and efficient market-led development, the future of Italy is reduced to the present of Christian-democratic Germany. The curtain draws on political innovation, taking current hegemonic “consensus” as the sought-after object of desire.

This is bad news for Italy: a society where the progressive groups merely try to “catch up” with the centre is one we usually associate with peripheral countries, not with what still today is the sixth world economy.

But this is also bad news for Europe: by reducing parliamentary struggle to a quest for normalisation today’s Italy seems to confirm the disappearance of serious political alternatives at the core of contemporary democracies, validating the flattening of the opposition between “left” and “right” in favour of a technocratic problem-solving machine. We are in the home ground of Giddens and Beck. The only rational solution (represented by the PD) against archaic longings failing to stand up to the new paradigm of globalisation (with the odd couple of Berlusconi and the Communist factions in the role of the cavemen). But the Italian elections tell us more – the technocratic problem-solving machine emerges as a fragile toy, producing a “surplus” of unrepresented social classes vulnerable to the siren’s call of the new populists.

Italy’s historical role in the construction of the European Union has been of fundamental importance. From the visionary writings of Altiero Spinelli to the impetus of Alcide De Gasperi in the immediate after war, from the historical decision of the Italian Communist Party, Europe’s largest, to take an active European stance, to the torch-bearing in the 1980s for closer economic and political integration [see next article]. But today Italian pro-Europeanism seems to lack the power to propose a fully articulated conception of a united Europe, resting content with the keyword of “integration” as a good in itself. Berlusconi’s victory is likely to further promote this tendency. Not only because Berlusconi’s European credentials are minimal, but because for the opposition forces Europe is no longer a utopia to be constructed but a mere status quo to aspire to. ■

Europe, towards an “Ever Closer Union”?

A comparison between public and political attitudes in Italy and the UK towards the European Union reveals differing assumptions arising from national history, but increasingly there is scope for a common agenda.

Giovanni Brauzzi.

The new Italian Parliament will have, among its first tasks, to approve the ratification of the Lisbon Treaty. The issue will be raised only in Parliament since the Italian Constitution (art. 75) does not authorize a popular referendum on the ratification of an international treaty. The parliamentary debate will focus on a theme which has been hardly mentioned during the recent electoral campaign. It is not expected to be highly confrontational, since the mainstream of Italian politics, both on the right and on the left, is nowadays strongly in favour of the European integration process. This process is generally perceived as a ‘win-win situation’, being at the same time an expansion of opportunities for the nation and as a warrant of proper benchmarking in several key aspects of public life.

This is a remarkable difference with the United Kingdom, where on the contrary there is a wide-spread fear of a ‘zero sum game’ and even the genuinely pro-Europe politicians prefer to qualify their attitude in terms of staunch defence of national prerogatives against the Brussels’ Leviathan.

A comparison between public attitudes in Italy and UK on European issues is quite enlightening. The collective perceptions are based on rather different assumptions, deeply rooted into the respective historical background.

Italy is extremely proud of having been among the ‘founding fathers’ because Europe was also a very effective way of helping to ‘rescue’ the country from its post World War II status. ‘Never again’ claimed Altiero Spinelli, already in 1941, in his ‘Ventotene Manifesto’. The Italian Constitution of 1947 enshrined such principle in its Article 11, whereas ‘it agrees, on conditions of equality with other States, to such limitations of sovereignty as may be necessary for an international order aimed at ensuring peace and justice among Nations’. This was not only an ethical reaction against the abysmal experience of fascist nationalism, which led, with its aggression against Ethiopia, to the collapse of the League of Nations. It was also enlightened self

interest, because a sober assessment of the main features of the Italian national life (few commodities, limited energy sources, aging and shrinking population, no way of keeping gates closed, cultural and institutional pluralism, legacy of an universal vision, together with the lessons learnt from old and recent past) leads to the conclusion that it is in the Italian national interest to join forces with like-minded partners in a common endeavour. This was defined in the Treaty of Rome in 1957 as ‘an ever closer union among the peoples of Europe’ and this remains the ultimate goal of the integration process.

The United Kingdom approached it at the beginning in a totally different way. On one hand, it was the first Europe’s rescuer: without London’s stubborn resistance to Hitler, the Old Continent would have been subjugated; a different status and a different destiny are therefore to be expected for the Country which alone kept alive the flame of freedom. On the other hand, Britain had a much larger horizon, because of its imperial projection: as Anthony Eden remarked in the early Fifties, ‘if you looked at the post-bag of any English village and examined the letters coming in from abroad, ninety per cent would come from way beyond Europe’.

This is probably ‘fair enough’ to understand the skeptical attitude which was allegedly adopted by the British observer at the Messina Conference in 1955: ‘Gentlemen, you are trying to negotiate you will never be able to negotiate: But if negotiated, it will not be ratified. And if ratified, it will not work’. It is appropriate to recall a comment by Hugo Young: ‘Europe remained a speculative venture, all right for other Countries, quite unlikely to come to anything, and, in any case, a project that could never dent the immortal verities that sustained the independent British State’.

We know that the UK had to change opinion rather quickly, seeking accession to the European club already in the Sixties. But a sort of Groucho Marx’s syndrome is still alive in some British quarters: ‘I do not want to belong to any club that will

accept me as a member’. The problem is to digest the implications of the ‘ever closer union’. As Hugh Thomas wrote at the time of the Maastricht Treaty: ‘The neglect since 1975 by the ‘Europeans’ among us to address ourselves to the large issue at stake about the destiny of Europe was a mistake. We should have insisted, forcefully and loudly, that we have agreed, by the terms of the preamble to the Treaty of Rome, to associate ourselves with an organisation whose long-term aim was explicitly to achieve ‘an ever closer union’ of the European peoples. We should have discussed what this grand phrase, ‘ever closer union’, meant. We had accepted, after all, the ‘acquis communautaire’, the accumulated wisdom and aspirations of the six founding nations, before we joined’.

This is the different historical background. What about the present and future challenges? Although they may still be influenced by the above mentioned perceptions, there is probably today room for a much larger convergence towards a common agenda: tackle aggressively climate change; liberalize world trade; work for the Millennium Development Goals; build a common front against terrorism, proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and organized crime; implement the Lisbon Agenda and a new European Social Model; shift resources within the European Budget towards more productive allocations; give more roles and responsibilities to Europe in world affairs.

The institutional adaptations introduced with the Lisbon Treaty will strengthen Europe’s ability to deliver these policies. Certainly, this is the priority now. Certainly, we need a ‘Global Europe’, not a ‘Fortress Europe’. Certainly, we should avoid inward-looking approaches. But let us remember that the European integration is a process, not an event. Let us remember as well that widening and deepening should go hand in hand, to ensure balance and sense of direction. It is worth to recall the metaphor of the European Union as a bicycle: the safest way to ride it is to advance steadily, to remain ‘sur place’ is very difficult and would absorb a lot of vital energies. ■

Acting As One: Europe's Diplomatic Service

Europe's diplomatic service needs to be structured to meet the demands and problems of the globalised world. Bold and innovative thinking will be required at EU level to achieve this

Daniel Korski, European Council on Foreign Relations

The Lisbon Treaty is meant to herald the emergence of a new world actor – a Europe that can look upwards and outwards and is equipped with the bureaucratic tools to do so. A British diplomat called the European External Action Service (EEAS) “the natural administrative expression of the European Union's desire to give greater force and coherence to its external policies.”

Gone should be the days of institutional squabbling. Banished should be the incomprehensible syllable-soup of committees and overlapping organisations. In future, the European Union should be better placed to speak – and more importantly act – with unity and purpose.

Sad, therefore, that debates about the EU's new foreign policy bureaucracy have turned into a turf-protecting, entitlement-securing battle between the Commission and the Council, as both seek to maintain their institutional responsibilities and staff prerogatives. Fearful that any mention of the subject may scupper ratification of the Lisbon Treaty, most countries, large and

small, have kept out of the debate.

Sadder still: while the United States has begun re-thinking the nature of its government – Congress is now funding a major study and a new President likely to institute reform in the State Department, Pentagon, CIA and the NSC -, little of this is reflected in the Brussels debate.

The Lisbon Treaty itself cannot be used to steer debates as its references to the diplomatic corps – the European External Action Service (EEAS) – are limited. It states that the EEAS “shall comprise officials from relevant departments of the General Secretariat of the Council and of the Commission, as well as staff seconded from national diplomatic services of the Member States”. Their job will be to “assist” the High Representative. It also places the EC delegations – in effect the EU's embassies – under the High Representative.

In March 2005, High Representative Solana and Commission President Barroso agreed a joint “issues paper”, which was followed up two months later by a joint “progress re-

“Terrorism, natural disasters, and other challenges – among them WMD threats, non-proliferation, space, information, and communications – have no borders. They require a regional response.”

port” presented to the European Council. Following the French and Dutch “no” votes in referendums on the Constitutional Treaty, this work was suspended. With the Lisbon Treaty agreed, some work has begun behind the scenes. But as treaty is still not ratified, most EU officials have taken a Trappist vow of silence on the EEAS.

THINK TANKS TO THE RESCUE

Much work is needed to put flesh on the bones of the EEAS and to do so in a way that takes into account new thinking. In this, think-tankers are coming to the EU's aid. The European Policy Centre, and the German Institute for International and Security Affairs have published studies on the subject; the Centre for European Reform expects to do so shortly while a group of former high-ranking officials – the Experts Group – are working on a report. The UK Parliament also issued a report recently.

The main issues are under examination are the role of the High Representative; the nature of the EU's embassies, the size and shape of the headquarters, how to manage the policy process i.e. the many committees that function like the EU's foreign policy arteries, and how to ensure that the EEAS is staffed by top-flight diplomats who are taught necessary languages, and rotated into key posts.

Other issues include how many EEAS staff are to be seconded national personnel, whether the EEAS will support the President of the European Council, as well as the High Representative; the legal status of the EEAS – as a new EU institution, or as an agency; how the EEAS is to be funded; and the legal status of EEAS staff seconded from national diplomatic services.

A question runs through all the debates: what should the relationship between the EEAS and the EU-27 ministries be – both in Brussels and in the field. Without a simple “render-unto-Cesar” formula, this is not easy to determine. Different countries have different views, based on their varying interests and their capabilities. Large countries with a world-girdling network of embassies – like Britain, France and Germany – have different needs than small countries who cannot sustain large diplomatic corps.

To answer the question, it may be useful to look at where the EU can add value. In other words, what can an EEAS do that the EU-27 – with their separate ministries and legations – cannot do, but need to have done? Three issues stand out. First, the EU has a hard time delivering the common policies it adopts in Brussels? What role could the EEAS play at the sharp end of policy delivery? Second, EU-27 ministries face problems in developing regional approaches. Third, the EU-27 struggle to deal with cross-cutting issues i.e. those that require more than a single-agency response.

DELIVERING COMMON POLICIES

To provide an effective, coherent service to deliver an EU foreign policy, real coordination is required at the delivery end in foreign capitals, major cities (consulates) and at multilateral organisations. EEAS, argues my colleague at the European Council on Foreign Relations John Fox, should be the backbone around which this coordination happens. “EEAS would replace the (weak) commission RELEX and Presidency roles, and be supported by significant diplomatic resources on the ground (i.e. EEAS staff). These would carry out the majority of core EU business supported locally by member states missions.”

Changes to the way Europe acts in the World as part of the Lisbon Treaty

of the Lisbon Treaty. A new post of The High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy will be created and appointed in January 2009 so long as the treaty has been ratified by member states. The post will be appointed by the European Council of National heads of State and Government by qualified majority voting and with the agreement of the President of the European Commission. He or she will be responsible for conducting the common foreign and security policies of the European Union. In this the High

Representative will be assisted by the newly created European External Action Service, which will work in cooperation with the civil services of nation states, and comprise officials both from the European Union institutions and officials seconded from national administrations.

Neither the exact organisation nor functioning of the External Action Service, nor who presides over it, are specified in the Lisbon Treaty: it is to be decided by the European Council.

"Banished should be the incomprehensible syllable-soup of committees and overlapping organisations."

► This would allow member states to reduce their diplomatic presence in areas where EEAS could take over (and correspondingly support the EEAS through seconding these staff into it). To succeed it would need resources and the confidence of member states. Member states would need to feel better informed and involved in EEAS activity than they currently do in local commission/Presidency activity. As an initial step, John Fox suggests, it may be necessary to look at local member states officials acting under an EEAS umbrella.

REGIONAL STRUCTURES

Examining what traditional ministries find most difficult, one issue stands out: the inability to take a regional approach. Countries have embassies. Embassies have ambassadors. Their job is to focus on the country or countries they have been accredited to. Back in the capital sits the only person with a regional remit – for example the Foreign Office's Asia Director.

But these people rarely have the time to take a series of country-specific plans and integrate these. More often than not, regional plans are a series of country-specific plans. Yet such an outlook is problematic. Terrorism, natural disasters, and other challenges – among them WMD threats, non-proliferation, space, information, and communications – have no borders. They require a regional response.

This situation is similar to the one faced by the U.S. military until just after World War II. Before then, each service's regional structure reflected its parochial view of the world. Recognizing that the adverse impact on inter-service coordination outweighed the benefits to the services for their individual regional structures, the newly formed Joint Chiefs of Staff required all the services to adopt a single structure. Since 1946, a "unified command plan" for a single global regional structure has been in place.

The EU-27 are unlikely ever to shift towards a regional approach. The sociology – the norms and practices – of the diplomatic world militates against this. But this could be an area where the EEAS can add value. Instead of simply re-branding the EC delegations into EU embassies, it may be worth considering amalgamating these into a few large regional offices, led by a high-ranking diplomat and with a multi-country remit and budget. Such EU "hubs", for example in Nairobi, Jakarta or Buenos Aires could bring together political, developmental and military activities. The EU has already made



some headway, by appointing European Union Special Representatives, each with a regional remit e.g. the Great Lakes. But the post-Lisbon set-up could take this further.

INTEGRATED GOVERNMENT

Success in facing the challenges of the 21st Century requires all elements of national power, not just military. But to do so requires overcoming the besetting sin of modern government – departmentalism. That is, the excessively strict division of work among departments with too little intercommunication and cooperation.

There were – and are – many arguments for the traditional model of government – of vertical functional departments, organised according to the service provided, over horizontal, cross-cutting units, organised according to clients. But the model has given rise to a series of intractable problems: stove-piping, duplication, and reactive policy-making. While 'departmentalism' has plagued all policy areas, the problems have perhaps been the greatest in the governments' approach to conflict and post-conflict policy because these areas, much more than any other area of public policy, do not fit into neatly into departmental boundaries; they cut across all government departments.

Integrating the efforts of multiple agencies – foreign, development and defence ministries – has not proven successful. Most large EU countries find this exceedingly difficult to do while small states often do not have the resources. In Britain, there is evidence that despite the Public Service Agreements shared between the Ministry of Defence, the Department for International Development and the Foreign Office, and numerous projects like the Provincial Reconstruction Teams

in Basra and Helmand, actual collaboration in missions is limited. This should not be surprising.

In Bureaucracy Does Its Thing, Bob Komer wrote how the U.S. experienced similar problems in Vietnam. He pointed out that even though many in the individual bureaucracies knew what needed to be done, and even though there were high level policies in place articulating the right strategy, individual organizations reverted to the tasks they were designed to conduct. They optimized for success in their respective stove-pipes, but this resulted in less-than-optimal outcomes for the overall endeavour.

Rather than replicate the stove-piped bureaucracy in the EU-27 – which has been the tendency with EU institutions hitherto – the EEAS is an opportunity to develop a model of government that avoids this departmentalism. This would mean creating cadres of staff who feel equally at home in several departmental areas. For example, all military officers who make it to 1*-level must have served in a non-defence department. Equally, senior civilians must have worked in or with a defence ministry, the military or the intelligence community.

Tied to this, a budget process must be established that supports inter-departmental goals. And rather than create units and positions like those of member states – for example Defence Attachés – the EEAS should establish the kind of organisations and posts that the EU-27 find difficult to set-up, e.g. in security sector reform. While the EU-27 may have a defence attaché in an embassy in one country, the EU hub would have a security and justice sector attaché, perhaps a senior police officer, who can engage in police, defence and judicial reform in way that his national counterparts cannot.

CONCLUSION

A number of recent studies, especially in the US, have called for new thinking in how to structure our foreign policy bureaucracies. The 9/11 Commission, for example, called for a "different way of organizing government" that recognizes the need for greater integration of effort in both the horizontal and vertical dimensions: horizontally across all departments and agencies; and vertically up-and-down all levels of decision-making and implementation i.e. not simply at the senior level, but down through middle management and out to the front-line. Concerns for how to address issues that involve more than one country – climate, migration, diseases, and terrorism – have received similar attention.

While the final shape and form of the EEAS may ultimately be determined through backroom-deals under the French Presidency in late 2008, the ratification of the Lisbon Treaty will provide an opportunity to develop a new type of foreign policy bureaucracy, which can help the EU-27 address the many cross-cutting, and cross-country challenges that their current organisational set-up are ill-equipped to handle.

No doubt the pressure will be on to keep the EEAS small and its development gradual. But a greater prize looms – which can help amplify EU27 policies without duplicating what Ministries of Foreign Affairs are currently doing. To reach it, bold thinking will be needed. ■

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Achieving Gender Equality is an Essential Step in Building an Inclusive Europe

Gender equality in Europe is about more than statistics, it is about changing perceptions and stereotypes. Fighting for gender equality is to fight for a more diverse and inclusive Europe.

Ségolène Pruvot and Shandi Miller

The Europe Union has, in its treaties, endorsed the mission of achieving gender equality. This is not insignificant, indeed striving for gender equality in Europe is one of the keystones in building an open and inclusive European society.

Because inequalities between women and men persist in today's European societies, gender equality is one of the key areas in which to facilitate change in order to build a society that ensures equality of opportunities for all. According to Amartya Sen's definition, equality of opportunity means that individuals have the "substantive freedom" that allows them to do what they want with their lives. Often people make choices that are constrained by cultural or other pressures: "social institutions and policies tend either to enhance or stunt the development of an individual's life chances (for example through education)," as the Equalities Review published by the British government put it. Thinking about gender equality in these terms allows us to address issues that go beyond the simple gender divide and to propose a vision of an equal society, building on diversity.

Individuals tend to internalise obstacles (institutional, social, etc) when considering various life opportunities. But as such obstacles are structural in the society, surmounting them requires more than just individual willingness and action. One often cited example of such a barrier is the *glass ceiling*, a metaphor used to describe the invisible 'ceiling' that keeps women from moving up the career ladder, as men are able to, into senior positions. As a result, as Dominique de la Garanderie has mentioned at the recent European Feminist Summit in London, women are likely "to engage in self-censure. Knowing that a gender-based glass ceiling exists, women are less likely to aim for high-level positions, either curbing their ambitions or saying to themselves that attaining a high-powered position would expose them to a wide range of reactions and constraints, sapping their energy".

The European Commission therefore pro-

poses actions which aim at addressing the obstacles that hinder the capacity of individuals to make freer choices. Regarding gender, the Roadmap for Equality between men and women for 2006 and 2010 sets six priority areas for action in both the private and public spheres. These priorities are to achieve:

- Equal economic independence for women and men
- Reconciliation of private and professional life
- Equal representation in decision-making
- Eradication of all forms of gender-based violence
- Elimination of gender stereotypes
- Promotion of gender equality in external and development policies.

The Roadmap outlines plans to establish an institution dedicated to fostering gender equality in Europe, the *European Institute for Gender Equality* to be located in Vilnius. The opening, initially scheduled in early 2008, is still to come.

The priorities of the roadmap will have impacts in two areas. First, they aim at facilitating and accelerating the process of equality of representation in the public sphere and second at triggering change in perceptions of gender and gender roles.

Increasing the representation of women in the public sphere, by fighting for equal economic independence for women and men and equal representation in decision-making, is essential. Women help enrich the public debate by expressing different views, formed by differing life experiences. For instance, in business and politics, women are more likely to insist on the negotiation of a manageable work/life balance as they are more often than not primary care givers in the private sphere. In the arts, women artists represent and express sexuality in different ways, influenced by women's feelings and experiences, as does K R Buxey in *Requiem* (2002), for example, when she films her face during sexual intercourse—a point of view very rarely, if ever, explored in mainstream cinema.



In the economic, political and artistic spheres changes can be enforced by laws, and triggered through policies. The effects of such support are demonstrated in the increased proportion of women in political institutions, in corporate business boards, or the proportion of women artists artworks exhibited in museum.

The main benefits of such a pragmatic, policy-led approach to change are recognised by a wide variety of actors. In the political sphere, achieving gender equality in governments and parliaments, through the imposition of quotas if necessary, has been set as an objective in most European countries. Recently, a few European prime ministers have deliberately chosen to include 50% or more women in their governments. Spain and Finland have taken the initiative a step further: they are today the only two European countries in which more than half of the ministers are women.

In business, the economic advantages of getting women into the labour market have been widely discussed and the management consultancy Mc Kinsey published a report in October 2007 demonstrating that companies

with more women in top positions tend to outperform rivals.

Social changes induced by the increasing participation of women in the public sphere can significantly benefit men as well. For example, the growing phenomenon of young fathers taking parental leave, and even in some cases choosing to stay at home to raise their children, has recently received wide press coverage. Their ability to enjoy the possibility of spending more time with their children is a direct result of what were mostly women's efforts to demand a better work-life balance

Facilitating and accelerating the process of equality of representation in the public sphere is not enough in itself to affect perceptions on gender. The recent comments of Silvio Berlusconi about the new Spanish government demonstrate how gender-based stereotypes survive. According to the Italian prime minister however Jose Louis Zapatero might "have problems leading" his women. This is a reference to the overused stereotype of the unreliable woman, more subject to anger and emotions than men. One argument already used at the beginning of the 20th century to refuse women the right to vote. Additionally when Silvio Berlusconi claims that 'their', i.e. 'right-wing' women (as if women belonged to right-wing men) are more beautiful than left-wing women, women are effectively differentiated on the basis of their beauty and not of their political competences. But these attitudes also prove that the use of stereotypes is not incompatible with a higher proportion of women in government: Berlusconi's government includes 30% of women, more than the previous Italian government.

“Accelerating the process of equality of representation in the public sphere is not enough in itself to affect perceptions of gender.”

► But this is why changing perceptions of gender and gender roles in society, the second objective of the Roadmap, is also the most ambitious. Achieving the ‘elimination of gender stereotypes’ and the ‘eradication of all forms of gender-based violence’ is certainly as important as increasing the representation of women in the public sphere. These objectives are more closely entangled with human rights issues and invoke respect for the other and of difference. On a symbolic level, the commoditisation of human bodies in publicity and media for commercial and/or pornographic purposes can impact on real human relationships. And passive acceptance of psychological or physical gender-based violence in society is an insult to human rights.

In the UK, this intertwining of equality and human rights issues was the ground for creating a new Equality and Human Rights Commission, merging the previous Commission for Racial Equality, the Equal Opportunities Commission and the Disability Rights Commission. This is also the reason why groups mobilised for Gay, lesbian, bi and transsexual people (GLBT), disabled people, and minorities’ rights, among many others, often fight hand-in-hand with human rights groups against discrimination. Respect and understanding of difference, and demanding equality of opportunity to all are ways in which to create a truly open and just society.

Gender equality is key to building Europe upon sustainable grounds. This is why it is necessary for European feminists to continue to demand that the EU effectively pursue the objectives of the Roadmap. This is also why, as called for by Heleen Mees among many others, European women and men must continue to fight for equality of opportunities *for all*.

These discussions are particularly relevant at a time when Europe is increasingly diverse, but some discussions of gender equality invoke cultural determinism and tend to concentrate on gender equality issues in other regions of the world. For instance, discussions on practices of Islamic veiling, inside and outside European societies, are an example of one complex challenge to discourses of equality and diversity.

Pursuing feminist objectives in Europe means more than simply achieving gender equality. Promoting gender equality goes beyond gender issues – it is also about fighting for an open and inclusive society that builds on respect for all, and accepts differences as an asset instead of as a threat. At a European level, an ongoing commitment to equal opportunities provides potential tools for this to happen: they now have to be fully activated and used. ■

In March 2008 European Alternatives organised a one-day European feminist summit in London. For more information, videos, reports, and discussion see www.euroalter.com

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Hans Ulrich Obrist Interviews Claudio Magris

Claudio Magris, author of many works of fiction, notably including *Danube*, editorialist at *Corriere Della Sera* and professor of German literature in Trieste, meets Hans Ulrich Obrist, Director of International Projects at the Serpentine Gallery, London.

Hans Ulrich Obrist: My first question has to do with your relation to visual art, discussions with artists and obviously collaborations...

Claudio Magris: Compared with discussions with writers or philosophers, my contact with artists has been somewhat scant. I have always been greatly interested in art, I regularly visit museums and exhibitions, I read and keep myself informed, but I lack, to be honest, a relation to the very creative process that allows for true dialogue with an artist. The problem is not so much that I appreciate a novel or a poem more than a Lied or a symphony, but that in the former case I am able to truly get into the work, to explore the creative process; in the latter I am more of a receiver, a listener, someone who is enriched. But then, of course, there have been artists whom I have known very well; for example, in Trieste, Mascherini, a great sculptor, inconsistent but with great intuitions, whom I met as he was a friend of my father since their childhoods. So as a child I began visiting his studio, with the possibility of seeing his works come to life under his

hands. We established a dialogue where an interest for art, for how an idea is born, for how materials, and in this particular case the stones of the Carso, are employed in a sculpture, was mixed with more general reflections on art. In Trieste I follow closely the work of Livio Risognano, with whom I am friends. Then obviously I associate with artists, particularly those of Trieste and Milan. Nevertheless, I have never been in collaboration with a visual artist. From some time now I have been planning with Jenssen to go to Zurich, we have a kind of "he draws I write" project, but until now I have always postponed it due to other engagements.

HUO: A question dear to the artistic sensitivity is that of places: in your books we often find descriptions of places and above all cities. You have always worked and lived between Trieste and Turin, to the point that in a beautiful interview you said that, in some ways, these two cities form together something of a cubist city. Could tell me a bit about this?

CM: Yes, to begin with, contradictory as it may be, I am at the same time both nomad

and sedentary. Sedentary in the sense that I am very attached to things, to places, to the extent that even moving homes from the first to the fourth floor would give me the impression of uprooting. I am then very tied to memories, to my cafes, my house, and the part of Trieste where I go to have a swim. In all of this I am very stay-at-home and habitual. But I have these habits everywhere, all over the world, with the same conservative *pathos* that is opposed to change. This is true for the Caffè Fiorio of Turin just as for the Caffè San Marco of Trieste or other places of Freiburg or other cities of my life, in various parts of the world, in which I continuously go because I continuously travel. So I live in a cubist city in the sense that it is composed of numerous pieces, the sea of Trieste and the hills of Turin, where I lived and taught for many years. In my mental geography, even though the cafes might be three or four for me it is as if there were a single café.

HUO: There is the Caffè San Marco, and then?

CM: The San marco, there is the Caffè Fiorio, there are a couple of Bierstuben in Freiburg, and there there are the cafes of

third. And then there are cities like Munich or Paris, but also Barcelona, for numerous reasons. But still, it is Trieste and Turin that are completely undistinguishable: I was born and grew up in Trieste, which for me constitutes the mythical world of childhood, of adolescence, of "received" family, these epical memories and, in short, the world of the Buddenbrooks or the Buendia of Garcia Marquez. Turin instead represents the world of youth and maturity, a world that I have built myself, the world of culture, of thought, of freedom, going out in the evening, the world of many friendships and loves. The city where I wander is truly cubist, each building is enclosed in another, just like in my mind.

HUO: Could you talk a little about the Caffè San Marco, which is often in your writings? It is a place that paradoxically seems to combine space of solitude and of community.

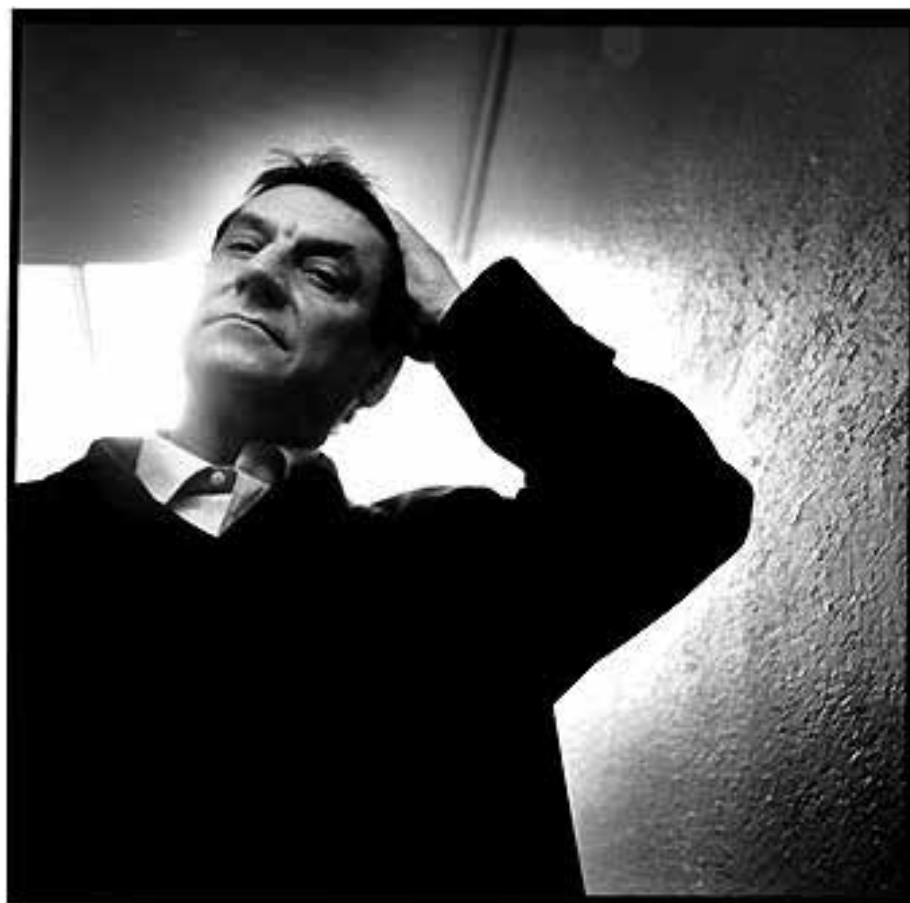
CM: Yes, but I must say one thing: I do not speak too willingly of the café, and particularly the Caffè San Marco; unfortunately, in the increasingly mediated world we inhabit, there is a great risk: there are things that, even when they are true because they are lived simply and authentically, in the moment they are talked about they become false. Now this story of the Caffè San Marco is becoming unbearable – and I am not thinking of you – because it has now become a sort of cliché. But let's say the good things first: I go to the Caffè San Marco because I like it, because it gives me a sense of being alone and yet in company; I go there to work, to write, to read, because I am much more concentrated and because only there, for example, the telephone cannot reach me. These are practical but important reasons (the telephone rings every minute at my house, working becomes impossible). Furthermore at home I have many distractions. You see, if I am writing something, I raise my eyes and I see the works of Stendhal, just two meters away, and of course I feel like throwing away what I am working on to read a page of *La Chartreuse de Parme*. And consequently I don't do anything productive. Instead in the cafes I feel like a shipwrecked, stuck to my table like to the essential, it is all I have in that moment. And in addition, you

"In the café we are in the world, between people, and, seeing that in writing there is always a little delirium of omnipotency, it is not bad to have around oneself people who couldn't care less!"

Paris, the *Café de l'industrie*, for example...

HUO: The *Café de l'industrie* in Bastille, right?

CM: Yes, in Bastille. And then you see why a cubist city? A cubist city because aside from Trieste and Turin, aside from these two loved cities, I would place Freiburg as



Claudio Magris

“Today, unfortunately, we witness an undue exploitation of memory, a falsification, a continuous digging up of past things not to make them affectively present in our heart but to use them instrumentally against someone.”

► see, in the café we are in the world, between people, and, seeing that in writing there is always a little delirium of omnipotency, it is not bad to have around oneself people who couldn't care less! In some way we are made ironical. Finally in the café there is a sense of the world, of a reality in which the small 'me' finds its modest place to one side, there is a sense of chorality, a life shared to some extent – and I really feel this. And then of course it happens that all of this suddenly becomes false and I become the writer who goes to the café to pose, to imitate Viennese or French writers, to play the little Altenberg or the little Sartre. And everyone wants to interview me in the Caffè San Marco, and photograph me at the Caffè San Marco – a little like going to see an animal in its habitat. But this is not all: some time ago a political figure from Trieste warned me of the visit of a foreign political delegation. This man begged me – something that made me furious – to let them find me at the café during their visit of the city, as if by chance, at six in the evening, so he could show me...

HUO: Could you talk to me about Turin? In many interviews you have said that today you work in Turin and teach in Trieste (your activity in Trieste is therefore more public). Giulio Paolini told me much about Turin, especially in relation to his discussions with Italo Calvino. And after all there seems to truly have been something around Einaudi, the famous publishing house, which, in this moment of editions without an editor, lacks completely. Could you tell me your point of view on the Turin of the Einaudi years?

CM: I went to Turin in '57, and there I studied at university, and then worked as assistant and professor. It was a truly extraordinary city. Extraordinarily welcoming and fraternal, it was my world. In those years, while Trieste was declining Turin doubled its size, with all the problems, in good or in evil, of immigration (at the time the immigration from Southern Italy), between political tensions and great hopes. What happened in Turin characterised Italy. And it is in Turin that modern Italy was born: communism was born there, together with modern liberalism, anti-fascism, and the contestations of '68. There is the Turin of

the classical liberalism of Einaudi senior, of the left-wing liberalism of Gobetti, the Turin of Gramsci, where what was still at that time a working-class world produced culture. And this was truly extraordinary, it was an environment I needed. And then there was Einaudi, the legendary publishing house. With Einaudi I published, very young, the volume *Il Mito Asburgico*. Then I entered the editorial board; I remember the Wednesday meetings with many people who would later become dear friends. Davico, Giulio Bollati, Bobbio or Mila. What was incredible was the contact with this generation of founding fathers. It was a formative experience, which allowed me to get in touch with a great world, also economical, political, and industrial, and not only with the individual, anarchic-individualist-bourgeois reality of Trieste, which I do like, even so. In Turin there truly was *die grosse Welt*, to say it with Hegel. And this world marked me deeply, a world which is now disappearing, even in Turin. In those years I was happy going back and forth, living a strong contrast: Trieste was the gipsy freedom of the *intérieurs*; reflection, escape, wandering *à la* Robert Walser. Turin was all the opposite. And instead they are two cities increasingly alike, because Turin is now in a great crisis. So today in Trieste we talk of the great Trieste of the past, of Svevo and Saba, and in Turin we talk of the great Turin of the past, of Gramsci and Gobetti. But when these things are talked about rather than lived it is a little dangerous.

HUO: At this point I would like to ask you a question on memory, on dynamic memory. You have talked extensively about this attempt to fight against the oblivion of time. Today we live in a political moment in which memory is often employed in a static, objective, reactionary sense. Your point of view on memory seems instead quite different...

CM: Of course. On the one side memory is a fundamental and foundational category; it is the mother of the Muses, *Mnemosyne*, as the Greeks said. Memory for me is fundamental. But not so much memory of the past, something that has to do with nostalgia, with regret, with idealisation, but rather a strong sense of the present of all things that have meaning and value, above all people. My great friend Biagio Marin, the poet, said that the past does not exist: he meant that either there are things with a mere functional utility, like, say, the telephone number of an office that we need and that disappears when we no longer require it, or simply there are things that *are*. In this sense even death has little power: we do not say that Leopardi *was* a poet, but that Leopardi *is* a poet. And this is so for everyone. I have a very strong feeling of the present of things, of people, of passions and sentiments; life that must never be put into archives. With the loved ones – I am thinking about my Marisa, but not only her, also some friends – I continue to speak, they continue to exist. Memory has a very strong meaning, it gives depth, it allows for relations and so on. But there is also a mistaken kind of memory, which is where we become prisoners to it, obsessed by the past, continuously reproaching the wrongs suffered, presenting

the bill. This of course is a false memory because it is not the salvaging of things, of love and passions, but merely the prison of resentment. I remember, as I cite in *Danube*, once seeing on the steps of a church a fantastic writing saying “only when you have laughed have you freed yourself from resentment”. And this evil memory, which in truth has been cultivated extensively in the Mitteleuropa, now becomes used politically in a regressive way, to fuel hatreds between people. To remember is necessary, but not the remembering that makes one prisoner of hatred and bitterness, leading us not to go beyond but to repeat those tragedies that we are reminded of. In her book *Verde Acqua* Marisa Madieri narrates the story of the exodus from Fiume after the second world war; first there was the violence of the Italians on the Slavs and then the retaliation of the Slavs towards the Italians, after which many Italians abandoned Istria and Fiume, finally became Yugoslavian, leaving everything behind and living for years, just

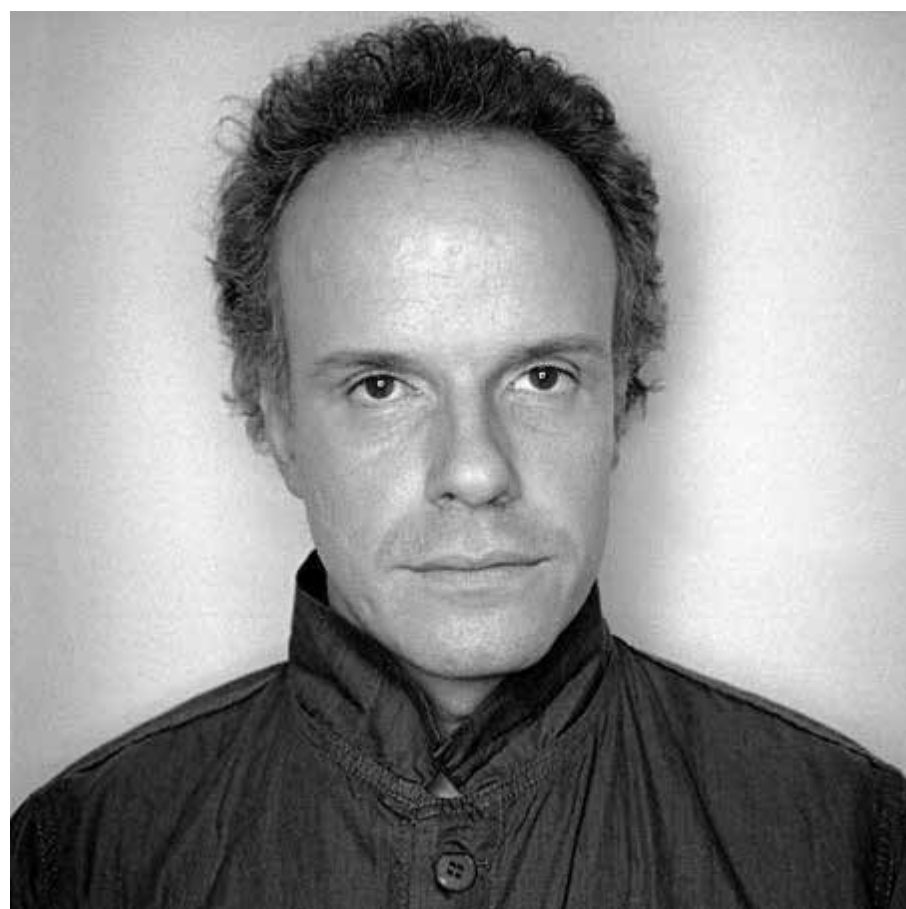
“Contradictory as it may be, I am at the same time both nomad and sedentary.”

like Marisa Madiera as a child with her family, a precarious existence in refuge camps. But narrating this story, the story of an Italian driven away by Slavs, and narrating it objectively and without any preoccupation of being politically correct, Marisa Madieri discovers the partly Slavic roots of her family, something which was removed and forgotten, therefore finding a sentiment not of hostility but of proximity, a feeling in some way of belonging to the Slavic world. In this case memory does not fuel, but surpasses and cancels resentment; it does not chain

to the past, preventing the projection of oneself into the future, but enriches that very march towards the future. Today, unfortunately, we witness an undue exploitation of memory, a falsification, a continuous digging up of past things not to make them affectively present in our heart but to use them instrumentally against someone. This is truly intolerable, this absolute obsession makes us prisoners and that is tied to a regressive political project. It is not *pietas* towards all of our past, which we must have, but the exhuming of what instead must be left behind. And this regressive, reactionary, at times racist phenomenon can be seen everywhere in our world. It is like when we digest badly and get nauseous: now, this nausea must be cured, not cultivated. In this sense, precisely because I believe so much in memory, this employment, this falsification and this instrumentalisation of memory seems to me like a blasphemy.

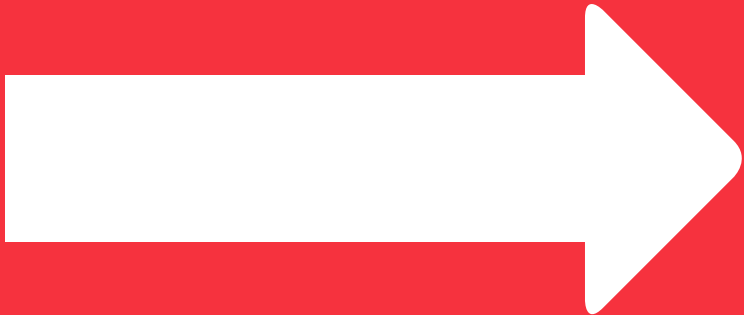
HUO: A beautiful conclusion. One last question I always ask at the end of every interview: could you tell me about an unrealised project.

CM: It risks getting long... but let's say I have always been fascinated by cinema. After secondary school I was unsure for a long time whether to go to Turin to study literature, as I did, or to Rome to the experimental centre of cinematography. I would have loved to narrate with things, with colours, with faces and with gestures. But then there are numerous other unrealised projects, many omissions. In catholic catechism, in the list of sins, where it says that we can sin with words, with thoughts, or with actions, it also says that we can sin by omission: and I believe this is the most serious sin. But this is not about projects, but about a lack of generosity or charity. In many cases what I have not done weighs on me more than what I have. ■



Hans Ulrich Obrist

CULTURAL CONGRESS SPECIAL



Over the closing weekend of the London Festival of Europe 2008, the 15th and 16th March, writers, artists, philosophers, musicians and other cultural producers from throughout Europe and the Mediterranean came together to discuss the future of the arts in Europe as part of the How to Make Europe Dream? Cultural Congress at Chelsea College of Arts and Design.

Selected contributions to the Congress are included in this special section.

The Cultural Congress was organised
in association with Allianz Kulturstiftung



Dan Perjovschi E.U., E.Me

drawings 2003-2008

Dan Perjovschi's participation at the Cultural Congress was supported by the Romanian Institute in London. Dan Perjovschi born 1961 in Sibiu Romania lives and works in Bucharest. His recent solo exhibitions include *What Happen to US?* at MoMA New York and *I am not Exotic I am Exhausted* at Kunsthalle Basel in 2007, *The Room Drawing* at Tate Modern London, *On the Other Hand* at Portikus Frankfurt in 2006 and *Naked Drawings* at Ludwig Museum Cologne in 2005. www.perjovschi.ro



Seventeen Theses For a European Cultural Movement

By Boyan Manchev

First Thesis:

The cultural movement or, rather, the movement of culture, is neither the reproduction of types nor a performance of forms of exchange. It's neither conservation or preservation nor a performance: it is resistance, or, better, *per-sistance*.

The cultural movement thus has to resist the fixation of culture in mythical figures and also the liquid flows of contemporary market. But most of all, it has to resist the dangerous fusion of the two.

Second Thesis:

European cultural movement has to be polemic.

When speaking of (European) culture, we should first of all speak of the politics of the contemporary use of the notion of culture: politics of use which are to a large extent European. These politics of use are paradoxical because their main task appears as – it seems at least – the task to depoliticise the notion of culture. The “*cultural-ist*” discourse is the typical discourse of depolitisation. This discourse is based on clichés like: culture is good, politics is bad; culture unites people, politics divides etc. But in itself, the notion of culture doesn't have any positive content or value. This notion could very well transmit mechanisms of domination, of exclusion, of injustice. In other words, the depoliticised notion of culture tends to create an ideological blind spot: the ideological, conflictual dimension of the notion is reduced.

At the same time the cultural movement has to oppose the conversion of the notion of culture into an uncritical, mythical figure, which allows its dangerous political instrumentalisation. We have often seen the notion of culture becoming the bellicose machinery of the identifier myths: it is turned into a pseudo-mythic figure promoting homogeneous, immanent communities, closed identities. All this comes to suggest that there is an urgent need, in the European context in particular, to take a strong position against the apolitical or rather depoliticising use of the notion of culture. Because – is it still a secret for somebody? – the discourse of depolitisation serves only one cause: that of the market. The discourse that presents culture as the opposite of the political practice is inherently related to the discourse of the universal value of market.

In contrast, we have to affirm that:

Third Thesis:

Culture is what is essentially different from the market. Culture *has* to be alternative to the market.

Today the market is our culture: culture has to become our market, that is to say a place of exchange and of *subjectivation*, of the emergence of new types of subjectivity.

Fourth Thesis:

Cultural movement needs cultural institutions.

We need cultural institutions in Europe, based on a progressive cultural politics. This demand is more then urgent in the former “Eastern Europe” (which at some point was turned, for a while, into a “New Europe”), where in many countries culture is in fact in a state of institutional collapse and where only the enthusiastic and somewhat clandestine, somewhat modestly heroic efforts of people who face incredible daily needs and failure, keep what we call culture, going. Of course, the institutional representatives of many of those countries would give us extremely positive statistic data in order to prove their support for culture – but how much of this money is spent in fact for subventions of nationalistic propaganda, sport and the most vulgar type of pop-culture (to the extent that the typified caricatured idea of culture is the promotion of the image that state propaganda produces of itself)? The new nationalistic populisms are rapidly integrating and applying a liberal market idea to the culture – because populist phantasms are an extremely promising form of investment and merchandised production.

Yes indeed: in the time of bio-capitalism culture is matter of production. Therefore what demands urgent critical reflection today are the new forms of production and consumption, which I designate in the line of André Gorz with the term *bio-capitalism*: the merchandisation of forms of life.

Fifth Thesis:

Cultural institutions, as *public* institutions, have first of all the role to resist not only private interest but the standardisation of forms of life, which reduces them to merchandise.

We know that Europe is unique with its institutional net-

work of support for culture. We can only applaud it, of course. We have to recognise the pioneer role of Europe in the domain of cultural politics, which could be a dream for the rest of the world. But is it really enough?

Today we have to resist of necessity the attempts of neo-liberal reduction of the European cultural politics. In other words, to resist the application of the market rules to culture according to which what is to be supported is what corresponds to demand. This liberal strategy of “support” is based upon a corrupted fundament. This strategy is profoundly vicious – because the market itself creates the offer: the first thing which contemporary capitalism creates is indeed the demand.

Sixth Thesis:

European cultural movement has to be able to oppose anti-cultural pressure – or the impulse of bestialisation.

I come from a European country where the former minister of culture, most likely inspired by his colleague, the minister of finances, wanted to sell the National Gallery for Foreign Art in Sofia to a Turkish company who wanted to “transform” it in an “art hotel”. This didn't happen because a massive public resistance took place but in the meantime, in less than four years, a huge percentage of the Bulgarian cultural and natural heritage was erased by construction and savage tourism development. And this tendency is only increasing, often not without the support of the “old Europe's” financial capital. The unleashed anti-cultural violence was in fact one of the dominant characteristics of the glorious transition to a free market economy and to what some people use to call “democracy” (in fact parliamentary oligarchy). So this is Europe too.

One may say that these are the specific problems of the *lumpen-capitalism* (according to Regina Bittner's term) of the former East; but I refuse to think this tendency of “bestialisation” according to a logic of exception. It has to be read according to the logic of symptom. What happens “there” is a symptom of what happened of what might happen “here”.

Seventh Thesis:

European cultural movement has to resist by all means the *institutionalisation of stupidity*.



The metaphor of “bestialisation”, which I just introduced, belongs to the German philosopher Peter Sloterdijk. He is not the first to oppose two models, the American culture as a bestial-Roman one and the European as Greek, the one of culture and *civilitas* or *humanitas*. But it is very important to state that the “bestialisation” in question is not at all a kind of regression to primitive anthropological strata. It is *produced* by the new technologies of production. I would then correct Sloterdijk by saying that the market produces a globalized *stupidity*. In the former Eastern Europe we witnessed the progressive *institutionalisation of stupidity*. The stupidity was established, institutionalised with the argument “people do not want this “elite” stuff”. (The new economy arrived with extremely powerful anti-intellectual tendency, especially in Bulgaria. With the arrival of the market many private libraries, which each average family possessed, went to the cellars or to the rubbish bins, even before those countries introduced separate waste collection; not to speak of bookshops.) Of course, the “wish” of the people in question – the non-questionable populist argument of capitalism engaged in culture – is being *cultivated*. It is a matter of production. So what market produces first, what it promotes, is the idea of a kind of virgin, natural substance, we could say *wild substance*, of “cultural” desire. At the origin of cultural desire there is nothing but primary natural, hobbesian impulses. There are primitive cultural needs which demand a sort of primitive if not bestial food – primary passions, naked bodies, and at the same time luxurious ambiances, fetishist images of goods. Culture as nature.

Eighth Thesis:

There is no *libidinal* substance of cultural desire. Culture doesn't have substance.

But the contrary is not true either. Culture is not a super-ego which has to cultivate, to domesticate the wild “it”, the libido.

Culture's only substance is the infinite number of *tekhnai*, its tekhnō-aesthetical potential (in the Greek sense of *tekhnè* and *aisthesis* – sensible experience). Culture is the formation of (the) sensible *tekhnai* of modes of life, or better – of the sensible *tekhnai* through which the forms of life form themselves. Culture is the process of articulation of the space needed for these *tekhnai* or modes of life to emerge.

What Movement?

For Culture as a Movement of Emergence of New Forms

It is crucial in this context to make a statement against the somewhat easy rhetoric of the creation and the invention, which is entirely appropriated by the “creative capitalism”. In fact, the new model of production is entirely dominated by the radicalisation of the demand to produce the new. Therefore the crucial question for a European cultural movement is how to differentiate between the produced new and the emerging new – the standardised new and the “authentic” new? Is there such a possibility at all? How to dissociate the absorbed forms of life from the potential of new forms of life to appear?

Ninth Thesis:

The new (cultural) form can be identified as one which does not incite a demand at all because it cannot be identified as such in the regime of the market.

This should be affirmed in opposition to the neo-liberal rule according to which institutions have to support the production of cultural products which are demanded.

(Of course, the singularity of the new form is rapidly absorbed by the economical exchange: the omnipresent tendency of *labelisation* or *brandicisation* of culture. So there is a new imperative of the artistic production – to create forms which resist to the appropriation in the circuit of the exchange.)

Tenth Thesis:

The European cultural movement has to lead beyond the surface of the endless diversification of market (offers) and to start operating on a surface of a “pure” diversity. The cultural field has no other choice – and chance – but to experiment with alternative economies in order not to get suffocated in the grip of the market. We could call these new economies “economies of gift”, or economies of confidence.

Nevertheless, the critical imperative has its requirements, so we have to ask here: isn't this a conservative, regressive claim? Isn't the opposition between art/culture

as a space of liberty and market/institution as a space of restriction, of reduction of the primary condition, as functional slavery, just a structural repetition of the old modern opposition between virgin (organic) substance and corrupted mechanism – “bare” life against technologised, functionalised life? Do we have to resist by the virtue of a “conservative” resistance – that is to say by trying to preserve the old world? Wouldn't we do better to take the risk and be courageous enough to jump into the troubled waters of the new super-Heraclitean flux?

And in fact, hasn't art always been the name of that flexible force which has had the capacity to inscribe itself in transformed societal, political and economical conditions? Hasn't culture always been the very name of this flexibility or plasticity? Yes, art or culture is this flexible force, this plasticity, but *plasticity* not in the sense of the Plato's definition of matter as it is exposed in *Timaeus*: a passive plastic mass expecting to be modelled, to be *figured* by the active form, by the plasticist potential of the *eidos*. No, culture is precisely the potential to form the forms, the potential of emergence of forms. It is an active forming force. That is why the dilemma of resistance is not a real dilemma and in order to « sublate » it, it is worth introducing a new concept and speaking of *per-sistence*. The question of culture does not consist in the *conservation* in the sense of conservative *resistance* but in the *per-sistence* of cultural forms.

Eleventh Thesis:

The crucial question for a European cultural movement is not only the one of the conservation of culture, of protection of culture – but the question of the emergence of new cultural forms, which means broadly new forms of life.

Twelfth Thesis:

The question of European cultural movement is not only the question of *cultural diversity*.

The ideology of diversity could very well think the diversity of autonomous cultures based on “closed” identities: ethnic, religious, gender etc. The crucial question is the diversity itself: the movement of diversification, of tension, of contact and transformation. Culture is this force of diversification, which transgresses every ►

Steps, by Aleksander Rodchenko



frozen type or identity. The question of the European
 ► cultural movement is then the question of the forming of cultural forms, of their *heterogenesis*.

Thirteenth Thesis:

The European cultural movement has to be a movement for a new urban culture.

The city is the laboratory of culture: it is the place of diversification and *heterogenesis* of new cultural forms, or of new forms of life. Culture happens as urban culture – the city is the place of the world today.

European cultural movement – the movement as European culture demands then a European urban politics. We have to transform our cities from former factories of social segregation to workshops of collective *subjectivation*, of the emergence and growing of forms of life, the inspiring scene of living together, of the happening of common life.

Fourteenth Thesis:

European cultural movement is impossible without the creation of a European public space.

Unification process could not lead by itself to a cultural movement. Something which Europe should support and develop is a *European public sphere*: it is crucial to have European media – journals, radios, televisions, as well as development of urban culture as European cosmopolitan culture. But what is even more important is the characteristic of this public sphere: the European public sphere has to be governed by a critical imperative.

Fifteenth Thesis:

European culture would be impossible without new modes of technical and sensible experience.

European cultural movement has to be a movement of creation of new *aisthetical* and *tekhical* modes, which are the proper modes of the new collective subjectivation.

To elaborate cultural politics means then before all to elaborate a new politics of *tekhni*, or, better, eco-

politics of *tekhni*. Without a politics of the new *tekhni*, of the new modes of the becoming sensible of the sensible, of the modes of life, there is no chance for Europe.

Will the Cultural movement happen as a new collective subjectivation?

Sixteenth Thesis:

European cultural movement is only possible as the re-invention of the world as the place of the irreducible multiplicity of forms of life – or of cultural forms.

European cultural movement has to be a movement for the sake of the world.

Seventeenth Thesis:

European cultural movement has to be eccentric. It has to destabilise not only the idea of Europe as the centre of the world but the very possibility of a self-centred world. European cultural movement is a movement for an eccentric world.

On which side?

On which side will be Europe then? On the side of the totalisation of market culture or on the side of the emergence of new forms of life? This is the crucial question Europe has to ask itself. After demolishing the wall which was built in its very heart, in Berlin, isn't Europe running the risk of erecting a new wall: the wall which divides the visible from the invisible? Aren't we facing a risk of new segregationist politics of visibility resulting from the economical appropriation of the public sphere, which would condemn the new forms of life to a clandestine existence in the margins of the totalised space of merchandised symbolic exchange and of institutional production-consumption?... If we speak of Europe as of a subject, we could only mean of course for the time being European cultural institutions. The question which EU institutions then have to answer for themselves is: how could they, European institutions, guarantee the persistence of modes of life (and also the presence to collective memory of disappeared cultural forms) and at the same time to open the space for the emergence of new forms of life? This is the crucial question not only

for European institutions. It is crucial for Europe – for us, for the world. Because only the emergence of new cultural forms – of new forms of life – can guarantee the emergence of new political forms, of forms of living together, that is, of a new world. The question of culture (or I would prefer to say finally, the question of general *aesthesis*, of the experience of the sensible matter, and its creation–transformation) is at the core of the political question. So the claim for a European cultural movement can only be a claim to follow the movement of the persistence and the emergence of new cultural forms: to be on the side of the movement of culture and not of its fixation in a standardised product. And at the same time, precisely for that reason, the question of European cultural movement is by necessity also the question of the emergence, the construction and the invention of the European *demos*, of the European people – the space of articulation of unimaginable justice.

All this means that Europe has crucial choices to make. If European cultural institutions do not make the choice to support a European cultural movement as the emergence of unpredictable forms, then the name Europe will be simply dissociated from the movement which will necessarily find its way. This means that new cultural forms would happen without coinciding with the name of Europe and without Europe taking part in the movement of their emergence – because these forms will take place anyway. Let's hope that Europe will have the collective critical intelligence and the power of imagination to become the welcoming place where those new forms will take place – will happen to us. ■

Boyan Manchev is a philosopher and Vice President of the College International de Philosophie, Paris.

Living Life in a Language

Every language is the product of a unique historical experience, each is the carrier of a memory, a literary heritage, and is the legitimate basis of cultural identity. Languages are not interchangeable, none is dispensable, none is superfluous.

Adrian Grima

In his introduction to *Out of Place - A Memoir* (2000), Edward W. Said observes that “Everyone lives life in a given language; everyone’s experiences therefore are had, absorbed, and recalled in that language.” Then he goes on to acknowledge that “the basic split” in his life was the one between Arabic, his “native language,” and English, the language of his “education and subsequent expression as a scholar and teacher.”

LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE

Maltese is the national language of the Maltese Islands. Maltese and English are the two official languages. When Malta became a member of the EU in 2004, Maltese became one of the official languages of the Union, the first one of Semitic, or more precisely Arabic, origin.



I have difficulty recalling my childhood experiences in any particular language. Like an increasing number of Maltese people, I was brought up in what was in many ways a Maltese-English speaking environment. At home, at school and almost everywhere I went, the message I seemed to receive was that English was the better language and that Maltese was limited and unworthy of too much attention and respect. But Maltese, nonetheless, was everywhere.

Then, at the age of 15, I bumped into Oreste Calleja’s *Erba’ Drammi* (Four Plays) and I was fascinated by his creative, even transgressive use of language. Although I had spoken and been exposed to Maltese all my life, I had never come across anything quite so appealing, so refreshing. Somehow I could see myself in that fresh language and I decided I wanted to take that experience further. Today I can’t see myself writing literature in any language other than Maltese.

Maltese started as a dialect of Arabic in 870AD when the Aglabids invaded Malta and slowly developed into a unique language by creating its own forms and allowing itself to be strongly influenced by Sicilian, Italian and English. Maltese is spoken by the vast majority of those who live on our two inhabited islands. However, 61% say that they prefer to read in English. This is a complex issue, and, amongst others, it is a choice dictated by the quality and availability of translations.

But most Maltese literature is written in Maltese. Many would not even accept the idea that a novel written in a different language by a Maltese person in Malta or elsewhere can be considered a work of Maltese literature. Despite the obvious limitations of readership and the added problem that only 45% of the Maltese choose to read at least one book a year for leisure, Malta has a small but healthy and thriving book-publishing industry.

WORDS AND THE FUTURE IN THE EUROPEAN UNION

Even though the new generation of writers is eager to distinguish the dynamics of writing literature, of re-describing the world by reconstructing language, from those of promoting the use of the Maltese language and acting as guardians of its well-being, writing in Malta today is intimately tied to questions of language. When Malta joined the EU in 2004, it opened up new possibilities for the consolidation and promotion of its literature in Maltese. However, we have not yet come to terms with this new situation and taken full advantage of it. Inizjamed, the voluntary organization that I coordinate, has been active on the local, Mediterranean and European level, but there is still no national strategy or local infrastructure for the promotion of Maltese literature.

In this both bleak and promising context, the proposals made by a group of intellectuals for intercultural dialogue, chaired by Amin Maalouf and set up at the initiative of the European Commission, make interesting reading. The document, published in 2008, and rather unimaginatively called “A Rewarding Challenge. How the Multiplicity of Languages could Strengthen Europe” argues convincingly that “efficient management of our linguistic, cultural and religious diversity would produce a reference model indispensable to a planet tragically afflicted by chaotic management of its own diversity.” The group believes that a common sense of belonging based on linguistic and cultural diversity “is a powerful antidote against the various types of fanaticism towards which all too often the assertion of identity has slipped in Europe and elsewhere, in previous years as today.”

At a time when populism and intellectual absolutism are back with a vengeance, Niccolò Milanese (“Engagement and the Arts in Europe,” *Europa*, March 2008) reminds us that Europe’s identity is neither a blank page nor a pre-written and pre-printed page. It is a page which is in the process of being written. It is “an endless process of self-creation,” the crucial word being “endless.” The EU document suggests two ways of anchoring linguistic diversity in a sustainable way in the lives of the people of Europe, its citizens, its peoples and its institutions.

1. The *bilateral* relations between the peoples of the European Union should hinge by way of priority on the languages of the two peoples involved rather than on another language. This means that every European language should have, in each of the countries of the European Union, a substantial group of proficient and highly motivated speakers.

2. The EU should advocate the idea of “personal adoptive language,” a kind of “second mother tongue.” Every European should be encouraged to freely choose a distinctive language, different from their language of identity and also different from their language of international communication. Learning that language would go hand in hand with familiarity with the country or countries in which that language is used, along with the literature, culture, society and history linked with that language and its speakers.

In this way, every European language would have “a special place in the bilateral exchanges with all European partners; none would be condemned to disappearance, none would be reduced to the status of local dialect.” It is not difficult to see the great advantages of such an idea for small or lesser-known languages and literatures like Maltese and Estonian, or even Polish and Czech. The bilateral relations would offer great scope not only for literary translation projects but also for the better promotion of the different cultures with their fascinating cultural baggage. ►

► TENDING TO THE IMAGINATION

It is hoped that many Europeans would opt for languages from other continents as their personal adoptive language, and not only languages of the EU. Moreover, it is important for both recent and second-generation migrants to maintain knowledge of their own language of origin. We have to gradually get out of this one-way relationship in which people from elsewhere are getting better and better at learning European languages, while very few Europeans take the trouble to learn the languages of the immigrants. The latter need to feel that their languages, their literature, and their cultures are known and appreciated by the societies in which they live; the approach based on the «*personal adoptive language*» could help to dispel this *malaise*.

Malta, like other EU countries, is receiving a progressively larger number and variety of non-European immigrants and is having difficulty dealing with this influx and making the best of it, both for the new arrivals and for the hosts. Maltese literature has a lot to gain, and in many ways, from this new phenomenon, and some Maltese writers are narrating stories that are shaping a new imaginary of our iden-

“Efficient management of our linguistic, cultural and religious diversity would produce a reference model indispensable to a planet tragically afflicted by chaotic management of its own diversity.”

tity and of the world. But so much more can be done. “Europe should be open to others while not destroying their difference,” writes Niccolò Milanese. Those “who tend to the imagination,” like philosophers, writers and other artists, “have the responsibility for caring for the resources which hold our communities together.” They must be careful not to do anything that might prompt or encourage us to define ourselves “against” one another, to “foreclose difference too quickly.”

A respect for and engagement with linguistic diversity allows writers to constantly lose and find their place, for

Every language is the product of a unique historical experience, each is the carrier of a memory, a literary heritage, a specific skill, and is the legitimate basis of cultural identity. Languages are not interchangeable, none is dispensable, none is superfluous.

The document commissioned by the European Commission argues that to preserve all the languages of our heritage and encourage their development in the rest of the continent “is inseparable from the very idea of a Europe of peace, culture, universality and prosperity.” It means that as writers, as human beings, we respect and seek to engage with those who live their life in each of these languages, with their cultures and their aspirations. It also means that we seek to share our words and our worlds with them. ■

On Aesthetics and Politics

Artistic engagement is the struggle against the humiliation of the other.

Hassan el Ouazzani

1 I am one of the Moroccan poets of a particular generation, that of the 90s, which emerged at a particular moment in our history, which seemed to be a moment of decline: the revolutionary Marxists in Morocco had just got out of their cells, after long years of prison, and certain amongst them ended up reintegrating the new society and changing the social classes; the leftist political parties had just abandoned their struggle to prepare themselves for integrating completely into the political system, waiting for access to power. The ideas of the 70s, those of change, of revolution, of engagement and of struggle were in the end invaded by the increasingly prominent ideas of pragmatism, of opportunism and of individualism.

We all found ourselves therefore as a generation without any political cause and we created, each in his own way, our own “causes”: those of belonging to a world, of normalising all certitudes and all “grand” political ideas, of making the irregular triumph and of striding along with the tiny details of our own daily lives.

2 I always find this question – of putting together two components, aesthetics and politics – to be ambiguous in several ways.

If engagement in literature or art is defined by the conscious awareness of the artist or writer of his or her belonging to a society - a conscious awareness that must manifest itself, incidentally, in putting creation into the service of a cause - it is nevertheless important to put this definition into perspective, for several reasons:

Firstly, what counts as a cause for one writer is not necessarily a cause for another. A national cause is not necessarily a universal cause.

Secondly, the different levels of engagement of a writer can be diverse even for the same writer: Sartre, as Gerard Garutti noted, celebrated Cuba for the Castro revolution, but denounced it as a tropical goulag, and he supported Israel in accept-

ing a doctorate in honoris causa from the university of Jerusalem, and in refusing the assimilation of Zionism with racism by UNESCO, but at the same time he justified the armed struggle of the Palestinians.

Thirdly, the perception of engagement based on the strict correlation between literature and art and political combat risks to reduce literature to a purely militant practice and to subjugate it to propaganda.

3 These ambiguities do not negate, on the other hand, the enlightening aspect of engagement in art or in literature. Various literary experiences and human arts are evidence of this. The experience of Victor Jara, of Federica Garcia Lorca, of Mahmoud Darwish, and of all those who have been able to offer their peoples and all of humanity masterpieces attest to an equitable balance in this correlation between aesthetics and politics.

4 I myself have a particular memory. I was invited, in 2000, to the huge festival of Medellin in Colombia, and I had to make a transfer in London. The police services at Heathrow had other ideas: that is, that I should be made to wait four hours in a small cell until they were sure that I was a poet and not a drug trafficker. The authorities at Heathrow have kept for the last eight years a photograph in which I am with other Moroccan poets, which they confiscated, thinking that it was perhaps a band of terrorists. Besides that, to be able to be with you all in this ‘european dream’ I had to live through a nightmare with the visa services in Rabat.

I evoke this detail to say that our engagement as poets and writers and artists must consist above all in the consecration and in the triumph of the values of difference, and in the struggle against the humiliation of the other. ■

Hassan el Ouazzani is a poet.

The New Contempt of Culture is a Symptom of Contempt for Equality

Any potential European cultural movement must avoid the increasing phenomenon of contempt of culture and its pseudo-intellectual posturing.

Leonardo Kovačević

To speak on the meaning of European culture and on the directions of its progress without any reservations concerning the word 'culture' is to do nothing more than to summon up the vagaries of contemporary cultural politics in Europe. This intentional in-distinction of two different domains often prompts critiques from both sides, political theory (criticising culture) and cultural theory (criticising politics). I would like to tackle the question of the phenomenon in relation to the first critique, the critique of culture from a political point of a view. Although my intention is not to provide any kind of an apotheosis of culture, I argue that culture has become the object of vehement critique transformed lately into contempt. In that what follows, I shall try to show what is behind this contempt and what notion of culture is imposed on us by this contempt.

IS CULTURE GUILTY FOR EVERYTHING?

The manifestation of this contempt can be seen in the increasing tendency of the denunciation of culture as a reign of a petty-citizen ideology or as a sphere where public symbolic exchange intertwines its forces with capital. But the real target of the denunciations of this kind is not culture itself, but rather a certain kind of ideology that is taken to be a major cause of all social problems. The very indistinctiveness of its notion makes culture apt to become the medium or even universal support of this cause. In this process, culture has obviously become guilty for all possible social diseases. But it has also become a solution *deus ex machina* when the search for hidden causes of these diseases has failed. Lately we are witnessing a rising contempt of culture, especially in the works of Alain Badiou, who in his latest book *What is Sarkozy the name of?* marks the notion of culture as completely opposed to art and thus as the realm of mediocre consumerism in a market of various symbolical values.

Since we also get used to hearing similar tones and sentences from Slavoj Žižek, I would like to begin my short analysis with one of his typical anecdotes concerning the critique of a culture. In a few articles by him we can read his inversion of the famous sentence attributed to Goebbels: "When I hear the word 'culture', I reach for my gun". This phrase was also used by Godard in his movie "Contempt" and it is put in

"Culture is always impure, it is a mixture of intertwined values"

the mouth of the producer who replies to Fritz Lang: "When I hear for the word 'culture', I reach for my cheque-book". According to Žižek, the dogmatic opinion of today's leftist discourse would be the inversion of Goebbels' phrase: "When I hear the word 'gun', I reach for my culture". Žižek of course makes allusion to the idea of a culture as means of pacifying and reconciling passions and aggressive drives. What lies behind this cynical and dismissive relation toward culture is evidently an inversion of the Freudian idea of civilization and its discontents which presupposes that culture means nothing but a kind of general state of repressed desires finally sublimed in a cultural commodity. But Žižek's critique of culture in a form of inversion of Freud is still limited by the notion of culture that is conceived merely in terms of libido: as a kind of libidinal economy of value exchange. The first two slogans, pronounced by Goebbels and by the fictitious character of the producer in Godard's movie, a producer who is interested in making just another commodity of an entertainment industry, make two basic reproaches to culture that help our contemporary intellectuals (like Žižek) to finally dismiss culture. The first reproach is proclaimed in the name of politics: more exactly in the name of some purity of politics, of a desire to establish a firm and homogenous social order. In that case, culture represents an obstacle to that kind of politics because it is always impure, it is a mixture of various intertwined values for which it is difficult to find out the real origin. It is a mixture of *all too different* knowledges and artistic experiences.

The second reproach is mostly proclaimed by those people whose principal concern is a struggle against the free circulation of Capital, that is to say against the economical superdetermination of social life. From the historical viewpoint, it was marxism and especially the marxist critique of fetishism that was involved in this struggle. In the line of this tradition of critique, it was Adorno who constructed the most

powerful critique of culture. He divided culture in two, into the low culture of the masses, a consumerism that is ruled just by the law of a market, and into the high culture of art. Supporters of the critique of fetishism caused this splitting of the idea of culture into, on the one hand, all that is pathological, fetishistic, and the on other all that is sublime, all that is the expression of the very heights of the human spirit. The first idea of culture is supposed to be inseparable from market dynamics and the other not so much. Let everybody conclude for himself if it is possible today to separate any culture and art from the market. So the argument of a complete determination of a culture by a market seems to be superfluous.

CULTURE AS MANIFESTATION OF ANARCHICAL EQUALITY

But the supporters of both kinds of cultural criticism are more and more influential. I argue that this criticism develops itself towards the contempt of culture. I suppose there are two main reasons for this. The first is less dangerous: sometimes we are just sick of culture, we are saturated with it and we feel weak vis-a-vis all the social problems, and all we have as a tool to deal with them is culture. In that case, we just reverse the problem and culture becomes guilty for everything.

The second reason is far more dangerous: it concerns the imposing of one's intellectual mastery or superiority by the denunciation of culture as a realm of common places or as not-real-thinking but mere chatter. This version of the contempt of culture always wants to impose some form of *thinking* – that is to say, some hierarchy. The bad news for these 'intellectual authorities' is that culture as symbolical exchange does not know any privileged places for *thinking* nor the right way to do it. The idea of culture always implies some anarchical equality, a battleground of free argumentation, without any given form. So it is not at all surprising that culture should have become equally a target for pretenders to intellectual mastery and for the State and its mechanisms of a power seeking to suppress this excess of egalitarian activities that permeates more and more all social domains. ■

Leonardo Kovačević is a philosopher based at the Multimedia Institute, Zagreb

Fragile Resistance

Most activist movements are in danger of becoming trends. Perhaps we need a new notion of activism to effectively resist: a fragile resistance.

Ana Vaseva

A few months ago somebody told me “We are making a film about the activists and activism in Bulgaria”, “What do you mean?” – I replied – “Well, you know, about things that happen in the public space and that are visible”.

I want to start with this question – is activism and activist art something that is necessarily visible, and visible in a way that it becomes widely known? Yes, when it concerns actions that are connected with popularizing a notion. But can activism be also not so visible, even almost invisible?

Of course first we have to define what we mean by *activism*: in common usage, it probably means something like *action, which has impact in the social space, striving to induce a change*. This is a very general definition, but perhaps it will be functional for my purposes here.

But then the next question comes - what kind of activity? For example I have recently seen many examples of young people promoting Bulgarian “cultural specificities” – meaning traditional dances, rituals etc. They say that they fight to affirm our cultural uniqueness and identity (to induce change in the national consciousness, that is supposedly not sufficiently patriotic anymore) – but then it means that they are fighting to make the exotic cultural identity rigid. I take this as an aggressive act towards me. This so called “traditional Bulgarian culture” as invented in the 19th century, implies archaic cultural and political models, which are gender discriminative, religiously imposing, patriarchal, machist etc. When we speak about activism let's keep in mind that activism isn't valuable just in itself – it gets its value from its content.

So, the question is: has an action to be visible, to be widely public (in order to induce a change, to have impact, let's say)? If so, then we have always the same problem – when something becomes successful it is immediately appropriated by the market. The punk movement, for example, originally shouting against the social injustice, is now a trend, a mass fashion tendency of clothing and hair styles, which has nothing to do with the original punk movement, though its popularity has its foundation there. (This is so typical – the riot is accepted and welcomed by many people, and then the people who are themselves the targets of this riot managed to use its power for their own financial gains.)

The ecological movement in Bulgaria is another example: it is so popular now that everybody is “ecologist”. You can see building companies with names

“Greenbuild” or something like that - and they are not green at all.

Most of the activist movements are in danger of becoming mere trends.

So a possible strategy is to try to be effective but keep a shape that cannot be appropriated. In resisting the principles of the neoliberal capitalist market we should aim at something I call *fragile resistance*.

In general what I mean by fragile resistance is a resistance that is opposing the principles of the neoliberal free market *and it manages to remain fragile* – a characteristic that is usually lost in the process of resisting: a resistance to the free market which is not a re-appropriating of its means.

The market is aggressive, brutal, harassing, obliterating – and usually, in order to fight it, the strategies themselves become brutal, one-sided, violent (and there is the danger to become as rigid and undemocratic as the “capitalist” society itself).

Sometimes those aggressive strategies work, sometimes they are the only way, but then what is lost is ex-

have almost no chances for surviving – that is why we have to strive to open the spaces for those who do not wish either to be sold to the open market nor to the big institutions.

- searching for ways of occupying spaces and opening them, making them possible for fragility, for difficulty. The free market has the possibility of unlimited occupation of spaces, so what this resistance has inevitably to do is to re-occupy spaces, to fill them with all their unclarity, difficulty and subversiveness. One of the ways of course is squatting (which is not very popular in Bulgaria).

My city is occupied by the neoliberal free market, by concrete, by the destroying of the public space, by lack of air and green etc. by the big bright signs.

It is occupied silently because there is no public reaction against this – not in the media, not in “public opinion” (whatever that animal might be). So, one of the many possible strategies against that is to silently re-occupy the spaces to fill the space with presence, silent but persistent, to multiply those presences, those



actly that which is the opposite of the “market” – the soft, the vague, the unclear, the subversive, the difficult ... the fragile – can something survive without being transformed, neglected and excluded and yet remain fragile? I suggest that it could be done by creating and asserting spaces of fragile resistance, defending and multiplying them.

The principles that this fragile resistance supposes are: - being flexible – changing strategies, not allowing oneself to be appropriated by the market, or by another manipulative system, that would use what is created for its own economy.

- helping/giving a chance to those who are usually discarded by the market – those who are not easy to sell. If you are not part of the market and you are not under the patronage of a strong cultural institution you

places, open for possibility and for difficulty, those anti-market spaces.

- being difficult – one of the principles of the free market is “take it easy” – be easily graspable, easily consumable etc. – so, if you want to resist, you should be difficult.

In conclusion, I would suggest that for fighting the principles of the neoliberal free market that kills the possibility for real creative force, we have to create and maintain spaces of fragile resistance. That would help us to remain as complicated, difficult, stubborn and unsaleable as we are and as we want to persist in being ■

Ana Vaseva is a Bulgarian video artist and photographer.

What is cultural about economics? A Market of Ideas

For the Festival of Europe, Critical Practice hosted the inaugural lecture by Bernard Stiegler, and, as part of the two day How to Make Europe Dream; a Cultural Congress, organised a Market of Ideas.

Edited by Cinzia Cremona

Markets are good at convening and distributing resources. Based on the model of the ancient bazaar, our non-competitive market encouraged the co-production and distribution of knowledge. Critical Practice invited artists, anthropologists, economists and others to activate 'stalls' distributed throughout the grand banqueting hall. This enabled the congress audience to become a noisy milling crowd, animatedly transacting knowledge and experience. The **Market of Ideas** challenged the lazy institutionalised model of knowledge transfer - in which amplified 'experts' speak at a passive audience - and offered instead an engaged and distributed peer-to-peer exchange within the *Festival of Europe*.

The project has its theoretical roots in Bruno Latour's approach to Actor-Network Theory. According to Latour, connectors are the vehicles that carry the 'truth condition' of association. They are not external binding conditions, but composites of individual behaviour. From this point of view, we imagined economies and culture as connectors, and our market as a composite of composites.

Critical Practice reflected on economic and cultural conditions as layers of association that inform our coming together. Each stall offered an opportunity to sample and interrogate a variety of models of transaction and evaluation.

Mike Reddin's lively **Economies of consensus and information** invited people to consider ethical ways in which we should, and could *pay for things*. Mike offered a choice of five ethical questions to explore, starting with a 'medical dilemma' designed to find out what value we bring to situations of *resource-choice*. Encouraging participants to ask for further pieces of information, Mike tried to elicit the common ground which people bring to such decision making - or see if they could come to common decisions via very different routes.

In the **Waste Proposal Unit**, Mike Knowlden invited participants to discuss their habits of food consumption and draw up recipes based on their personal requirements. Mike's stall addressed the notion of domestic leftovers - food waste - as a void from which

both economic and non-economic value might be recovered. In this practice, the recipes became a tool to chart this value, and one outcome of the stall as a means of returning content to the public domain.

Facilitated by Marsha Bradfield with the help of Mary Anne Francis, Kelly Large, Katrine Hjelde and Helena Capkova, the **reFREsEments Café** provided a place/space for delegates and marketers to sit and chat. Marsha Bradfield and Jem Mackay set out to provide a platform for what Donald Schön calls 'reflection-in-action.' The Café was the focal point for **Ecoes**, a collaborative video project that uses Actor-Network Theory to explore the Market of Ideas as a web of heterogeneous interests. Project facilitators Jem Mackay and Marsha Bradfield circulated through the market, talking to marketers, delegates and visitors about their experience of the event.

For the **Economy of Emotions** stall, Cinzia Cremona (with the help of Davina Drummond) offered a thought experiment of sorts, which required investing in a momentary personal relationship. Asked to select their favourite TV advert, participants were invited to explore the emotions, feelings, needs, desires and ideas it evoked for them. The thought experiment consisted in 'converting' these emotions from needs waiting to be fulfilled (passive) into a form of capital for 'you' to invest into productive activities (active).

The **Well-being** stall was developed with New Economics Foundation - a think-do tank focused on changes in policy and attitudes. Their 'Happy Planet Index Calculator' provided the impetus to reflect on personal well-being and to speculate on what the world might look like if well-being was to become a standard of comparison between economies national and personal. Visitors were also invited to test their happiness using a short test devised by Ed Deiner. By extension information on **Basic Income** was used to introduce the issue of moral responsibility toward basic human need within developed societies.

Katelyn Toth-Fejel took inspiration from the '70s permaculture movement for her **Permaculture, Permacouture** stall. The permaculture movement was started in Australia to impart holistic systems thinking



Image by Tom Dingle

into agriculture. Katelyn operated a mobile dyeing station using natural techniques and materials to alter available items.

Joe Balfour with economists Federico Campagna, Francesca Papa contributed the very lively **Corporation.comm, The perverse pleasure of mixing community and business**. The stall proposed to discuss the A B C of a new approach to social economics: the mix of Artists, Business, Communities. This meant connecting the Artists Placement Group's assimilation of 'socially engaged practice' by art institutions, with @TMark and Netart's tactical use of corporation tools enacted by bottom-up communities, and a new perspective in marketing - that a social community can act like an entrepreneur, as in the example of Parkour. The dialogue is continuing at www.corporationdot-comm.blogspot.com.

Offering a more traditional interpretation of the link between commercial transaction and exchange of ideas, Robert Dingle invited a professional **Barber**, to engage customers in meaningful conversation as he shaved them and cut their hair.

Debt was a stall manned by anarchist and anthropologist David Graeber. For the Market, David evolved a draft 'typology' of some 24, mostly non-commercial social transactions. The typology was used to structure exchanges about the possibility of transactions without incurring debt.

Economics Through Imagery - An Associative Approach. Using pastels and black paper - a conversation takes place. What is 'an invisible hand', a 'national economy' or a 'market force'? Arthur Edwards worked with passers-by to explore perceptions of economics derived from the imagery of graphs, words and mantras, and the values inculcated through their repetition. Transactions focused on how the present circumstances of participants can be translated and made visible through the logic of accounting.

Reflecting back onto the **Market of Ideas** and its effects, the general feeling within Critical Practice is that there was a rough and interesting rub between the Congress and the Market: the Congress seemed to *dream* Europe via theoretical assertions about *the other* in the form of experts, panels and audience, whereas the Market embodied a generous, peer-to-peer co-production. The Market was a successful form of practice and could be used for other projects. Confident in the potential of the non-competitive market format, Critical Practice aims to develop the idea further with more attention to the aesthetics of the stalls and more time to transact. ■

CRITICAL PRACTICE

Critical Practice is a cluster of artists, researchers, academics and others, hosted by Chelsea College of Art & Design, London.

Our research and practice revolve around art, and issues of ethics and governance in relation to culture. We explore new models for creative practice, and look to engage those models in appropriate public forums, both nationally and internationally.

We seek to avoid the passive reproduction of art and uncritical cultural production. Our research, projects, exhibitions, publications and funding, our very constitution and administration are legitimate subjects of critical enquiry.

All art is organised, so we are trying to be sensitive to issues of organisation. Governance emerges whenever there is a deliberate organisation of interactions between people. We are striving to be an open organization, and to make all decisions, processes and production accessible and public. We are always in the process of defining our aims and objectives and improving the transparency and accountability of our processes.

All aspects of Critical Practice can be accessed and modified through our wiki: www.criticalpracticechelsea.org

critical
practice

Because He Was Mad

Paul Valéry's European Hamlet poses the question of the creator's relation to the past. Do the skulls he finds in the graveyard of European culture still speak to him?

© Tom McCarthy

I want to start by quibbling with Paul Valéry. In 'The Crisis of the Spirit', his text from which our discussion takes its cue, he presents Hamlet as a European addressing his Euro-ancestors (artists, philosophers, inventors and so on). And this isn't quite right.

For a start, Hamlet's a member of that Eurosceptic group the Danes. Secondly, of course, this is all shorthand: as anyone who's studied the play's historical context knows, Shakespeare's Denmark, riven by the fraught question of royal succession, this police state full of Polonius's spies, in which all iterations have to be encrypted, all activity cloaked in 'antic disposition', is shorthand for England under Elizabeth and her Chief of Police Walsingham. One has only to look at Sidney's *Arcadia* or Spenser's *The Faerie Queen* to appreciate the amount of 'indirection' and circumvention that Elizabethan art demanded if its producers wanted to maintain their liberty and lives.

But it gets even more complex: the whole analogy almost implodes when we remember that Shakespeare, in a kind of in-joke, has Hamlet, in the famous gravedigger scene to which Valéry alludes, have just come back from England. He was sent there, as the clown gravedigger tells him

because he was mad: he shall recover his wits there; or, if he do not, it's no great matter there. [because] there the men are as mad as he.

I want to home in on this notion of madness, of folly. We should recall that the only one of the graveyard's skulls that Hamlet actually picks up belongs not to an intellectual, nor an artist or inventor, but rather to a fool, a jester. This in turn should remind us that the European Renaissance tradition of folly was firmly linked to England: Erasmus, after all, dedicated his *In Praise of Folly* to Sir Thomas Moore, even punning on his name in its title (it was originally published with the Greek title *Morias Enkomion*). This tradition runs from Skelton to Sterne, and on through Carroll (who, incidentally, in the blank map of *The Hunting of the Snark* invented white-on-white three decades before Malevich) – and, on the Anglo-Irish side, Swift and

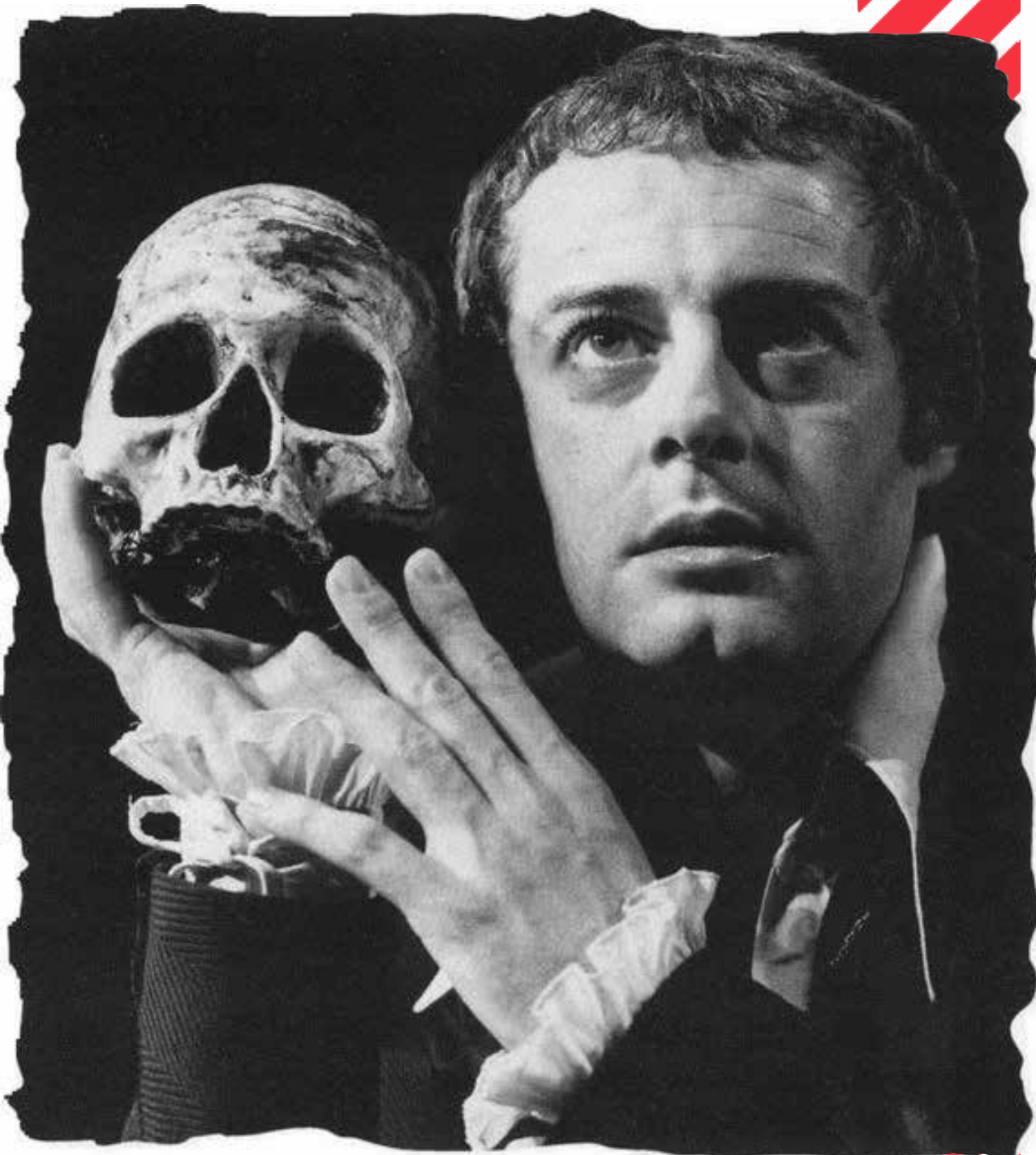
Joyce (whose *Finnegans Wake* is at once both a morass of nonsense and the high point of literary Modernism). And nor should we forget that Swift was imprisoned, and Joyce forced into European exile: to Paris, Trieste and Zurich.

I also want to home in on another area that, in Hamlet's case, is closely tied in with folly, indeed commensurate with it: mourning. The largest part of Hamlet's folly is his melancholia, which is takes a textbook Freudian form: a pathological refusal to let the lost object go – or, as Nicholas Abraham and Maria Torok would put it, a cryptic incorporation, an internal tomb. For all his modernity and violence, for all the destruction he wreaks against the status quo, and no matter how tempting, for me it's impossible to see Hamlet as a Futurist, a kind of Marinetti sweeping away the past, because he's so haunted by it. This makes him a perfect model for literary influence, which, I suggest, should be conceived not along Harold Bloom-ish lines of Oedipal anxiety but rather along post-Freudian ones of mourning and its pathological extension, melancholia.

This is where, for me, Hamlet has something to say about England's relation to Europe and to a European past in literature. Despite the fact that many seminal modernists made England their home (Eliot,

James, Pound etc etc) or made English their language (Conrad), the avant-garde thrust of their work has always been rejected on these shores in favour of the endless nineteenth century to which the dire novels of Hardy and a sentimental attachment to Dickens and Austen have tied us – an era and an attachment that have culminated now in the middle-brow fiction which dominates the mainstream cultural and commercial landscape.

Hamlet's folly, his melancholia, makes him see a ghost. Gertrude, in the same room as him, is adamant that there's no ghost present. They can't both be right. By specifying in the stage directions that the role of the ghost be played out by an actor, Shakespeare sides with Hamlet: the ghost is there, and demands attending to. I would say that, now, the ghost is Modernism itself: mainstream British literary culture simply doesn't want to see it. A perfect recent example of this wilful blindness is the recent dismissal of Alain Robbe-Grillet by British newspaper obituarists as a quirky experimenter whose writing had lead him into a dead-end – which is the cultural equivalent of saying that Pele wasn't really a significant footballer. But Modernism isn't going to go away, any more than the ghost is. Let us remember the end of Hamlet: while all the main players die, only the ghost – or, more precisely, his demand – survives. ■



Art as Dissidence in Today's Eastern Europe

The first of a two-part essay exploring the meaning of dissidence in art and in the contemporary Polish and Eastern European panorama, with a specific reference to those who choose to live their sexuality otherwise

Pawel Leszkowicz and Tomek Kitlinski

We need ethically committed art. Aesthetics, erotics and ethics bind together in the rebellion of the European arts. Engaged art explores and enhances our common humanity - shared with refugees dying at the borders of the EU and with women, migrants-turned-slaves, Jews, Roma, the homeless, the unemployed, transgender and gays, and with more underprivileged in the context of the world food price crisis.

Let us rebel against the indifference of Eastern Europe! Let us care for the excluded by art-as-thought-of-dissidence! Since the Orphic and Pythagorean sisterhood, thought has dissuaded from murder and healed. As Jean-Paul Sartre argued in *Qu'est-ce que la littérature ?*, art reveals the images which society tries to conceal from itself. Simone de Beauvoir would not consider us free if others are unfree. Those without freedom, without rights, without papers in the EU and globally are the images which our society - we - hide from ourselves.

How to heal? 'Art is a gesture of repair', Hélène Cixous told us. Saving, reparation, generosity is cultivated in art. Hospitality joins in, as Cixous showed in Théâtre du Soleil's spectacle *Odysees* about refugees. Inspired by the Hebrew Bible, Levinas and Derrida attempted to construct a place of meeting, thinking and sheltering otherness in the idea of the cosmopolitan open city (*ville franche*) or refuge city (*ville refuge*). Simon Critchley and Richard Kearney define this city as space where 'migrants may seek sanctuary from the pressures of persecution, intimidation, and exile'.

Artists who cherish those who are unfree are the new dissidents. Art is altruism - the most other ethics of otherness. Hélène Cixous demonstrates it in her interpretation of the work of the Jewish, Ukrainian, Brazilian writer Clarice Lispector: 'One might say that the work of Clarice Lispector is an immense *book of respect*, a *book of the right distance*. And, as she tells us all the time, one can only attain this right distance through a relentless process of de-selfing, a relentless practice of de-egoization.'

Foregrounding *others* foregrounds ethics as primary philosophy, the Levinasian *prote philosophia*. This is also a conclusion drawn from an inspirational part of

the Cultural Congress in London, the Bazaar of Critical Practice Group, a project of Neil Cummings and his collaborators at the Chelsea College of Art. It was an intervention which aimed at the cosmopolitan politics of responsibility. Discussions, debates, conversations were encouraged in this bazaar or, as we would call it, Socratic agora.

In Poland transgender people face humiliation, harassment, social exclusion, high fees for surgery and for legal changes of documentation, violence. In the industrial city of Lodz a homeless transperson was murdered by neo-Nazi skinheads on September 21, 2003. Suicide among the transgender people is rampant. Poland lacks sexual education at schools, condom ads in the media, and all in all, tolerance. Prejudiced perceptions of the LGBT community dehumanize us.

In the parliamentary election, the party of Premier Jaroslaw Kaczynski was defeated: it earned 32 per cent of the vote, while the Civic Platform won 41 per cent. The turnout was very high for Poland; it was the younger generation which turned the polls into a plebiscite against the government which used religion as political weapon. Fear and loathing of 'otherness' is structural to the rule of the identical twins, Lech and Jaroslaw Kaczynski, who became Poland's President in 2005 and Prime Minister in 2006 respectively. President Lech Kaczynski remains in power until 2010. In Poland and abroad, the President said 'with the promotion of homosexuality, the humankind would die out'. As mayor of Warsaw, he banned gay pride twice.

Phobias were fueled by the outgoing government. Just after it was sworn in, the government-controlled police in Poznan cordoned off feminist and gay activists on November 17, 2005. The far-right All-Polish Youth swarmed around and shouted, 'Fags to gas! We'll do to you what Hitler did to Jews!' The police didn't mind the anti-Semitic and homophobic cat-calls, but stormed and arrested sixty-five feminist and gay priders. Deputy PM and Minister of the Interior Ludwik Dorn expressed his recognition to the police. In October 2007 in Wroclaw far-right supporters threw butyric acid at participants of 'Gays, Lesbians, and Friends' Festival.

The president's twin brother and outgoing PM Jaroslaw Kaczynski called gay prides 'abomination', repeated



that 'Marriage is a union of a man and a woman' and in the recent election campaign tried to scare voters into rejecting his pro-European opponents the Civic Platform that supports the European Union's Charter of Fundamental Rights prohibiting discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity. In the major TV debate before the election Jaroslaw Kaczynski said the Charter would introduce to Poland 'homosexual marriages and euthanasia'.

Jaroslaw Kaczynski lost in the parliamentary elections - does this end the rule of prejudices in this country? The European Union's Charter of Fundamental Rights with its principle of non-discrimination based on gender and sexual orientation will not be signed by Poland's new government. The new PM Donald Tusk in November made no reference to the rights of women and sexual minorities. Abortion is still criminalized in this country.

The far-right League of Polish Families isn't part of the new Polish Parliament, but it sits in the European Parliament. The League's Eurodeputy Maciej Giertych eulogized Spain's General Franco and railed

► against homosexuality. His father Jędrzej was an anti-Semitic activist in the 1930s, author of a 1938 pamphlet where he argued for the expulsion of Jews from Poland, whereas his son Roman is the current leader of the League and reactivated the All-Polish Youth which in the interwar period had beaten Jewish and Ukrainian students at Poland's universities. Until recently Roman Giertych was minister for education; his pet aversion was each and every form of LGBT culture which he called 'homosexual propaganda'. From the Polish school's assigned readings he deleted the works of Polish gay writer, Witold Gombrowicz.

**“Let us rebel against
the indifference of
Eastern Europe!
Let us care for the
excluded by art-as-
thought-of dissidence!”**



Maciej Osika's transgender self-portrait in Love and Democracy exhibition, curated by Paweł Leszkowicz.

Director of the film on the love of Verlaine and Rimbaud *Total Eclipse*, Agnieszka Holland said to the daily *Gazeta Wyborcza*, 'Officially the stranger, Jew, the evil one has changed today into the homosexual. In the dominant language and in the language of Mr. and Mr. Kaczynski and of Mr. Giertych, homosexuals play the part of the pre-war Jew. And in the manner in which anti-Semites decided who is Jewish, they now decide who is gay and who is not'. Agnieszka Holland was born into a Jewish family of intellectuals and made the movies *Copying Beethoven* and *Secret Garden*.

Archconservative rhetoric, introduced by Giertych, is used in education. Poland's younger generation is in an ideological and economic crisis. One million Poles have migrated to Britain and Ireland. The young, in particular queer, massively flee Poland.

The League of Polish Families is anti-gay, anti-Semitic, and anti-contemporary art. League members physically attacked one young woman artist, Dorota Nieznalska, and then the party brought charges against her for 'offending religious feelings'. She was sentenced to community work and banned from leav-

ing the country or, as the judge phrased it, 'half a year of the restriction of freedom'. Nieznalska and many queer artists participated in *Love and Democracy* exhibitions in Gdansk and Poznan. As curator of the show, Paweł stressed that cultural history tells plural stories of gender, sexuality, and love. The exhibition *Love and Democracy* looked for this forgotten heritage in contemporary Polish art. There are many kinds of love which should have a place in democracy. The artworks in his exhibition portrayed love and life in relationships between a woman and a woman, a man and a man, a woman and a man.

From the social campaign *Let Us Be Seen* with Karolina Bregula's portraits of lesbian and gay couples to representations of intimate relations, the eroticism of the male nude, self-portrayal, the theatre of gender and club sub-culture - the exhibition presented the histories of loves and identities in an age of fluid sexuality and their role in the democratisation of Polish society and culture. Despite the dominating atmosphere of contemporariness, *Love and Democracy* turned towards the past, identifying with the 1960s, the period of moral revolution and anti-war protests in Western culture.

In Poland there has never been a real moral and in-

and Józef Czošek, Franciszek Dzida, Piotr Majdrowicz, Jan Bujak), which examined amorous and erotic subjects, undermined the official party policy concerning gender, Communist sexophobia and prudishness.

In the film *Drown* (1978), Jan Bujak, through his surrealist images, shows the compulsion of heterosexual sex endured by a boy who, in his imagination, escapes into the narcissistic homosexual fantasies which express his real nature – hence the role of landscape in the film. In the film *Misunderstanding* (1978), Piotr Majdrowicz's camera depicts a desiring homosexual look at the body of another man. We see a young photographer in love with a sportsman whose photograph he takes. The traumatic love story is linked with the theme of the erotic presentation of the male body. We see sumptuous bodily scenes with the athlete while he is exercising or taking a shower. The photographer and his model look together at Classical and Renaissance sculpted male nudes, which serve as models for the photographed poses. It seems that the young men are together entering an alternative homosexual 'matrix' and its visuality. The hopes of the enamoured young man turn out to be a misunderstanding – the film ends with a scene showing the sportsman and his girlfriend and the tragically lonely protagonist standing watching from the side, just like the viewer. In the films of Bujak and Majdrowicz, compulsory heterosexuality is a barrier blocking homosexual fulfilment and as such it becomes a sign of the repressive and alienating system. Both film-makers, avoiding censorship under the protective shield of the Amateur Film Clubs, show us alternative histories and images of masculinity, desire, looking and presenting.

The title of the collection created by Lewandowska and Cummings – *Enthusiasts* – is telling since it is precisely the rebellious enthusiasm and energy of the amateur film-makers that had enabled them to portray the hidden level of existence in the People's Republic of Poland. They entered an area which the so-called official directors, subject to greater pressure, could not enter because of censorship. That is why homosexuality is shown in these works *altruistically*, as we would say - in a non-pathological and non-mocking way, in contrast to how it was portrayed in Communist cinema.

The exhibition *Love and Democracy* depicted also transgender subjectivity in the self-portraits of a young artist Maciej Osika. Art plays a prominent part in Poland's political debate as it is critical, opposed to anti-LGBT politicians and media.

A new dissidence of ethically committed art is being created. Queer artists are rebels – confronted with the fundamentalism in many parts of Eastern Europe. In April 2008 posters which called feminist and gay Marches for Toleration 'barbarity' were officially hung in the streets of Warsaw. In Latvia, which introduced a constitutional ban on same-sex marriage, LGBT marchers in Riga in 2006 were pelted with bags of excrement. Contemporary art is suspect in Russia (the trial of conceptual artist Anna Alchuk) and gays are hurt at every pride in Moscow.

In the sequel to this article we will look at the rebellious work of artists in Lithuania, Svajone and Paulius Stanikas, who will feature in the *Sacré* exhibition in Centre Georges Pompidou in Paris. ■

Intellectual revolt like the one experienced by the West in the 1960s. This is one of the reasons for the homogenisation of the society. When contesting the official 'Solidarity' version of history, one must, however, do justice to alternative and marginal stories. In the People's Republic of Poland, a sexual revolution progressed in a dispersed and hidden way. Counter-culture constituted a great and still undervalued force in the breaking up of Communism from the inside by giving young people different models: the ideal of personal freedom, self-expression, non-conformism, musical ecstasy, artistic experiment and spiritual searching.

An independent explosion of sexuality in the visual culture under Communism took place in the counter-cultural work of the Amateur Film Clubs (AKF), discovered by the *Enthusiasts* exhibition (Centre for Contemporary Art, Warsaw 2004) mounted by Marysia Lewandowska and Neil Cummings. As part of the *Love and Democracy* exhibition, Lewandowska and Cummings presented a film show entitled *Enthusiasts-Love?* in a specially-arranged club film room. The films by the AKF artists (Ryszard Wawryniewicz, Krystyna

160TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE HUNGARIAN REVOLUTION

The Plucking of Poetry

—All the Way to the Goose Flesh

By István Kemény, translated by Tim Wilkinson

When Odysseus decided to subject himself to the singing of the Sirens, a fair bit was put at stake.

His own life for one thing, and those of his sailors as well. All the same, his chances of coming through it were fairly strong since he was a king, and orders are orders, after all, and in trust is truth. He was able to trust his sailors, then, even though he had himself bound to the mast and gave the order that they were not to untie him, however hard he screamed and shouted, whereas the sailors themselves must not immediately dig out the wax plugs from their ears and take wild flying dives into the waves, leaving their king high and dry, tied to the mast, effing and blinding while the Sirens' song warbled much as in a video promotion clip.

Once upon a time that was how things were. A king was not chosen merely to rule, to lead his troops into battle and, preferably, lead them back home (in fact Odysseus failed on that score...), but a king was chosen in order to mediate certain experiences between his people and the divine world. To recount to them what the Sirens' song was like, for instance. Alongside his roles as leader, judge and priest, on occasion he also assumed that of poet. Until the latter function was entrusted to poets.

Poetry is nothing more than telling the tale of the Sirens' song. Someone listens to it and then attempts to pass it on to others. It is a huge undertaking and a hopeless one at that, because even the greatest poets are only capable of passing on but a faint echo of the Sirens' song. Even so, it is a sacred duty.

Poetry—at least ever since it has been written (that is, ever since the king entrusted it to poets)—is aristocratic in character.

Now, being an aristocrat does not simply imply toffee-nosed elitist arrogance; that is a mistake. Being an aristocrat stands for remembering what it was (which, for instance) the king entrusted to one. Being an aristocrat stands for being responsible for the fief that has been entrusted to one—what particular bit of the world, the beasts, mankind, the planet, and so forth.

A poet is not an aristocrat at the very times he is accused of being one (ivory tower, elitism, etcetera); those are the times when he is not an aristocrat, just a coward and stuck-up: he is hiding from what is entrusted to him. Sándor Petfi, a born democrat if ever there was, lived like an aristocrat because, until the day he died, he was serious about his own gift, his mission, and what had been entrusted to him: the people, the Hungarian language, his poems, indeed poetry itself. His fief.

I feel there are irresolvable contradictions between the state of written poetry today, the general state of poetry today, and my current mental state. In plain language, written poetry is aristocratic by nature, yet it is customary (it behoves us) to call the world we live in 'democratic'. On what authority do I call myself an Odysseus, a king, a priest, a leader, and—well, yes—a poet? Nowadays everyone has the right to listen to the Sirens' song. At least they do in principle. In practice, however, that goes with a near-certainty the boat will strike the rocks, as is shown all too alarmingly by the ship of Western civilisation as it drifts aimlessly in its culture of round-the-clock entertainment, partying and consumerism, but that does nothing to alter the uncomfortable, conscience-stricken sensation that if I were to start talking about my own poetry, that could only be presumptuous, purblind conceit on my part, nothing else, because as the years go by I am increasingly assailed by doubts.

In an objective essay on the art of poetry—or in its place—I feel it is only honest to admit to my own puzzlement. When I sit down to write a poem—that is, when I resolve to sit down, in spite of everything—then for many years my first task has been to grapple with that puzzlement and even incredulity. That is an objective art of poetry.

I belong to the hapless generation that turned forty around the millennium. Around that age one gets to wondering what one has achieved in life. A forty-year-old poet who has made no impression cuts a laughable figure. Hundreds upon hundreds of millions ready themselves for decades for centennial and millennial celebrations, so it is hardly surprising—being a self-fulfilling prophecy—that these regularly mark the beginning of some sort of

new era. In an intellectual as well as a historical sense. The crisis of the forty-year-olds of my generation happens to have coincided with the turn of the century and the millennium. We are now starting to approach old age. If, therefore, I use this occasion to list my doubts, it may be that these are all just my own personal problems: perhaps they simply stem from my own ageing and weariness. Grousing and grumping.

The way I see it, the kind of reading-public that was still in evidence in Hungary when I was a young man is now, slowly but surely, dying out. For the generations that are succeeding them written poetry is no more important than, let's say, the history of the twentieth century: i.e. hardly at all. For decades on end, people have been ringing the alarm bells that kids don't read enough books. Willy-nilly, those kids and the kids' kids are grown-ups now, and they constitute the fabric of society. It turns out that life is possible without reading.

I am no longer able to believe that if I write a fine verse couplet and I read it out in a suitable forum on a suitably festive occasion to a suitably select (educated, cultivated) audience, then that couplet will start working and, purely by force of gravity, will trickle down (and I do mean down) the social hierarchy to exert an effect on the multitude, making the world a nicer place. (Yes indeed, nicer and not nastier: I owe the multitude that much if I'm going to picture them being down below.) Literature, and written poetry above all, has withdrawn from the world; it has deconstructed (destroyed) itself. The reign of written poetry is over.

In its place is sung poetry. (For the time being, that is.)

Why am I a poet when thousands can quote the words of singer-songwriters like Jenő Menyhár, András Lovasi or Tibi Kiss?

I ought to be hiding rather than strutting in public. Fair point, but all the same I do feel that I know something only few others know. I know that written poetry is one of human culture's supreme achievements. I also know that this is not just one opinion among many. I love reading great poetry, and I love it when it gives my flesh goose bumps; I even love it when it makes me

weep. It also seems to me that if I resign myself to the age of written poetry being at an end, I shall only be helping it towards that end. And I also know that there is no person alive who does not carry his or her own potential poem. Maybe more than one, but they need to gain access to at least one.

When it comes to my own poems I am shy of using big words like creation, creative process, lyric poem, significant, major. It strikes me as a touch farcical. May I stress: that's with my own poems, not those of others, because they are someone else's. If someone else writes a poem from which I get goose bumps, I couldn't care less what words they use in talking about their own poems.

Just two things interest me: rescuing written poetry, and the goose bumps. Unless I can give a clear-cut response to these, I cannot move a step further forward.

One way that written poetry needs to be looked after, for example, is by arranging conferences about the craft of contemporary Hungarian poetry. That would ensure that at least there were a discussion about written poetry for one whole day at a serious academic institution. Or in other words, something had been done in the interest of written poetry—something official in nature, but never mind, that's very much as it should be. Serious people would be able to see that poetry has a place in a serious institution. What would be very important, though, is if the subject of such a conference were to be goose flesh.

I know nothing more objective to say about the art of poetry than that. No doubt I am not clever enough; I have no special theory. For me the only things that exist are the practical nuts and bolts of writing poetry. The core is inspiration; the method—perseverance; the goal—goose bumps.

As for methodology, however, so far I have said nothing, I have not lifted the veil surrounding the secret of how I personally write poems. I have offered no example of my own. But then there is only one question to which I could give an answer using an example of my own, and that is: How does a dopey poet work?

► Let me tell you how I put this essay together. I put it together in the same way as I do a poem. I began with a highly emotional splurge, because I realised that I should have refused to take the job on. That was less than honourable on my part. That gets me worked up. So let me admit that. I admit it. A bit of Odysseizing to begin, with grand, fervent words about poetry, aristocracy, hopelessness, and I see that bit is almost right: at least it has a spot of zing and candour about it. I ought to go on, but I can't. I am unable to get a grip on what I am writing, what this essay is driving at. I am stubborn, and therefore I am angry with myself, and this text is driving me crazy. On top of which it is now evening. So, I switch off the computer with the intention of reading through, tomorrow morning, what I have written in the hope that some way of carrying on will occur to me. If it doesn't, I'll delete the whole lot.

I did switch off, and meanwhile it is now tomorrow and I'm sitting in front of the computer screen again. I haven't deleted what I wrote yesterday; I'm carrying on. It occurs to me that I'm a dopey poet, and I ought to admit it; that's what the logic of this big-mouthed talk, with its Odysseus and all the rest demands: that I have no mercy on myself. So, that's that done and dusted. That is how the essay has taken shape. I've even written my own obituary, I haven't evaded the task, I have plucked poetry down to its essentials; there was a dash of inspiration, perseverance too, and although there may have been no goose bumps, this is only a talk, not a poem. At least I have mentioned the goose bumps as a goal, and that in itself is something. Behold "my method". And this is also how I write poems: for want of a better method, going stubbornly forward, head down and just hoping I hit no wall.

So what does the dopey poet feel while this is going on? Miffed, I can tell you.

We are sitting in the boat and approaching the Sirens' rocky coast. If we do not start heading in another direction pronto, we shall hear their song and that will be the end of us. What should we do? Odysseus shrugs his shoulders: that's for you to know, boys (and girls). You'd like to hear them, wouldn't you? Well, I have a suggestion: I'll block my ears, bind all of you to the thwarts and hide the oars. Then hey presto! you can listen to the Sirens' song. That will give you something to tell tales about.

In the meantime I'll sit here with my ears nicely plugged with wax and make notes. So I won't untie you, however hard you scream and shout at me to do so. I shall study how Homo sapiens behaves while listening to the Sirens, and from that I shall try and deduce what their song might be like. I shall become a poet notwithstanding, and that is how. ■

With thanks to the Hungarian Cultural Centre, London



Sándor Petöfi and the Hungarian Revolution of 1848

The Hungarian Revolution of 1848 began on March 15th with bloodless uprisings in Pest and Buda, followed by further protests throughout the country, demanding the independence of Hungary within the Habsburg Empire. Inspired by the uprisings in Paris and Vienna, the revolution was led by a small group of young intellectuals – the Márciusi Ifjak ('youths of March') – including amongst them the young poet Sándor Petöfi who recited his National Song from the steps of the National Museum to the amassing crowds.

Following the appeal of Franz Joseph to Tsar Nicholas 1 for military assistance, the revolution was suppressed through the summer of 1848 and into 1849. Petöfi himself joined the revolutionary resistance in the Transylvanian Army, and is thought to have died at the battle of Sighisoara in July 1849.

March 15th is one of three Hungarian National Holidays.

Two poems by Sándor Petöfi



Young people gather around the statue of Petöfi during the 1956 Hungarian revolution

* * *

Sorrow? A great ocean.
Joy?
A little pearl in the ocean. Perhaps,
By the time I fish it up, I may break it.

(Translated by W.H. Auden)

*A bánat? Egy nagy oceán
S az öröm?
Az oceán kis gyöngye. Talán,
Mire fölhozzom, össze is töröm.*

NATIONAL SONG

Rise up, Magyar, the country calls!
It's 'now or never' what fate befalls...
Shall we live as slaves or free men?
That's the question - choose your 'Amen'!
God of Hungarians, we swear unto Thee,
We swear unto Thee - that slaves we shall no longer be!
For up till now we lived like slaves,
Damned lie our forefathers in their graves -
They who lived and died in freedom
Cannot rest in dusts of thralldom.
God of Hungarians, we swear unto Thee,
We swear unto Thee - that slaves we shall no longer be!
A coward and a lowly bastard
Is he, who dares not raise the standard -
He whose wretched life is dearer
Than the country's sacred honor.
God of Hungarians, we swear unto Thee,
We swear unto Thee - that slaves we shall no longer be!
Sabers outshine chains and fetters,
It's the sword that one's arm betters.
Yet we wear grim chains and shackles.
Swords, slash through damned manacles!
God of Hungarians, we swear unto Thee,
We swear unto Thee - that slaves we shall no longer be!
Magyar's name will tell the story
Worthy of our erstwhile glory
we must wash off - fiercely cleansing
Centuries of shame and condensing.
God of Hungarians, we swear unto Thee,
We swear unto Thee - that slaves we shall no longer be!
Where our grave-mounds bulge and huddle
Our grandson will kneel and cuddle,
While in grateful prayer they mention
All our sainted names' ascension.
God of Hungarians, we swear unto Thee,
We swear unto Thee - that slaves we shall no longer be!
(March 13. 1848)

Translated by Adam Makkai

Searching for a Mediterranean Alternative

An interview with Danilo Zolo, Italian philosopher and co-editor of the important volume "Alternativa Mediterranea".

What does the Mediterranean represent in today's global panorama? How could it embody an "alternative", as you have

written, to the current geopolitical reality?

Danilo Zolo: The Mediterranean is today the epicentre of a conflict of large, perhaps planetary dimensions. I am thinking of the Palestinian question, which I consider the hub of world conflict. It is doubtless, in fact, that the terrible question of terrorism has seen its birth in the Palestinian area. The first terrorist acts have taken place in Lebanon, perhaps in part also in Iran, and then, of course, in Palestine. The Mediterranean – which could be, and this is the perhaps daring thesis of the book *The Mediterranean Alternative*, a crossroads of peace – is now the heart of a conflict that opposes the West, and particularly the Far West, that is to say the great American power, to the Islamic world, with extremely serious consequences for the stability of the Mediterranean space and for the international order. It is then doubtless that to speak of a "Mediterranean alternative" is to approach a theme of great ambition, which discusses the capacity of the countries of the two shores of the Mediterranean to succeed in developing a cooperation alternative to the Atlantic dimension.

EA: In this regard, to what extent are we witnessing the failure of that ambitious project of a Euro-Mediterranean partnership going by the name of Barcelona process? What where the intrinsic limitations of this process?

DZ: The Barcelona process has been important in some ways: it was the first time that Europe, after the end of the Second World War, established a relation that was not principally colonial with the other shore of the Mediterranean and in particular with the Maghreb. So as an attempt, as a project, it is certainly something of great value, although today almost everyone considers it unsuccessful. There were three main baskets to the project, concerning politics, economy, and cultural dialogue. For what concerns the political aspects, the failure of Barcelona is due in large part to the failure of solving the Palestinian conflict. Europe has done nothing in this regard, unable or unwilling to put a halt to the American neo-colonial strategies and the oppression of the Palestinian people on the part of Israel. Both Israel and the Palestinian authority were represented in the Barcelona process: it could have been an exceptional opportunity for dialogue between the two sides of the conflict, but nothing has been done in this regard. On the economic side there is an enormous original sin, which is that the whole of Europe

united – one of the greatest economic and commercial powers of the world – has established relations of cooperation with *individual* countries of the Arabic-Islamic shore. It is easy to imagine how this totally asymmetrical relation has created entirely negative results for the Arabic countries, to the advantage, of course, of Europe, to such an extent that from 1995 until today the economic inequality between the two shores has increased instead of diminishing. Lastly, cultural exchange has been extremely modest and always conditioned by the European attempt to tie commercial activities and economic aid to a blind adherence to all the political-judicial categories of the West and in particularly of Europe.

And we can notice how the rhetoric of human rights is nothing more than rhetoric:

and, on the other, would manifest a large amount of "patience" towards the Islamic world. And the Islamic world itself, through important authors and movements such as that of Islamic feminism, is trying to recuperate a number of values very similar to those of democratic Europe without renouncing its tradition or negating its great culture and civilisation, but rather finding them within this very culture. But I repeat that the fundamental question, for me, is that we must not exercise coercion, without of course undervaluing the gravity of the situation. It is doubtless, for example, that Gaddafi has a relation with the phenomenon of migration that is a times totally criminal, but so do we.

Gaddafi's criminal approach to migration seems to be strictly connected to European policies on this problem. Gaddafi

terrorist phenomenon, but in terms of political, economic, and cultural cooperation.

EA: In the introductory essay to the collection *The Mediterranean Alternative* Franco Cassano, co-editor of the volume, has valorised the "knowledge of the border" as a place "always ahead of any centre because it is always forced to look over onto the other". At a time when the border of the Mediterranean seems to have become a place of death, of violence and fear, how can we return to consider the Mediterranean not only as a "trench", as Serge Latouche writes in the book you have edited, but as a different understanding of the very notion of border?

DZ: There are no obvious solutions. The fun-



"There will not be peace in the Mediterranean if there will not be dialogue between the two shores"

ric: the last example is the recent European Union – African Union summit, where Gaddafi essentially ran the show dictating his conditions to all participants, both European and African, and was received with all honours in Spain and France. But we know well the political and social conditions of Libya, there are numerous and detailed reports of Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch...

The situation is very complex. There is an American project of forced democratisation of the Islamic world, which I do not agree with. I obviously recognise that almost all the Arabic-Islamic countries are ruled by strongly authoritarian elites. I however do not believe that the task of Europe is that of imposing democracy according to western categories. Imposing means to work through the use of force, or anyway through the use of coercive judiciary instruments or economical threats. I do not believe we can obtain any meaningful results in this way, while I hope for a dialogue between the two sides, which, on the one hand, would allow for Europe to propose its way towards democracy and popular political participation,

has perhaps had the merit, at the Lisbon summit, to unveil the real instrumentalisation of this phenomenon, often used as a threat or as a bargaining tool. But then, what is the real significance of the migratory phenomenon in the Mediterranean and the regulatory politics of Europe, especially the "sub-contracting" to Arab countries of techniques of control such as administrative detention?

I am naturally very attentive to the problem of migration, even though I am not a specialist, and I believe this is a fundamental step to finding peace again in the Mediterranean, especially as there is a tendency in numerous European countries to draw an equation between migration and terrorism, which is a very dangerous conception of security. I am a very strong critic of the migratory policies practices by Euro-Mediterranean countries; I think that we will not be able to go towards solving this problem as long as we keep on missing a Mediterranean vision which would include the African countries where the migratory flow originates, engaging them not only in terms of policing, as if this were a proto-

damental thesis of the book is that there will not be peace in the Mediterranean if there will not be dialogue between the two shores, and this means that we should open ourselves to Islamic culture and recognise that Europe ignores and refuses it, seeing it as a decayed culture: the Islamic world as the world that cannot keep the pace of development and modernity, a world we must bear-with but one that has nothing of interest to tell us. There is a radical negation of the Mediterranean roots of Europe and of the entire Western world, and a negation of the immense contribution that Islamic culture has given to the development of Western culture, science, and medicine. So the first objective is to demolish the wall of ignorance and refusal that separates the European from the Islamic world. This is an achievable objective. The other great theme is that of the capacity of Europe, of a Europe that would rediscover its Mediterranean roots, to give itself a stronger and more energetic identity and profile. Europe today is an enormous economic power, the first commercial power in the world, but its political identity and its international subjectivity is close to zero. There will not be European autonomy, and there will hence not be a European civil society, for so long as Europe will not be able to emancipate itself from its often servile subordination to the Atlantic empire. ■

END OF SECTION

THE MYTH OF EUROPA

DEMOCRACY EQUALITY CULTURE BEYOND THE NATION STATE

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JAN 09

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CHANGE UTOPIA!

IO-GATTO, WANDA WULZ, 1932

Ours are not sterile times. They are not times of political impossibility, nor of inevitable fate. They are not times

when utopias cannot change.

They are times of disorientation, of otherworldly skies and flowing fields of the sea.

Times where thought is forced to meander through corridors it has never navigated; rolling corridors in which noise reverberates, is distorted, and appears to the senses devoid of unity. And imagination plays the games of a child with a tempera unknown, it spreads its hands over colours it has never mixed, witnesses shapes it has never drawn. But these are nothing if not sketches of possible histories, allegories of yet unimagined arcadias.

Our future is a clearing for these dreams, and our times a flux where we will either mould our destinies, or abandon ourselves to them.

It is with these premonitions and presentiments that this journal and the organisation it represents have started a process of transnational encounters to discern a new and different world. Over the course of the next six months cultural, political, and philosophical voices will meet in six European cities to come back for a final Congress in London in the month of May. This journey, ChangeUtopia!, is a simple contribution to the wider navigation of all those unsatisfied with our present and engaged constructing our future.

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INTERVIEW WITH ALFREDO JAAR



In his work, artist Alfredo Jaar explores the relationship between the “First” and the “Third Worlds”, how the two are materially interdependent and the for-

mer implicated in maintaining the power dynamics of the relationship.

To mark a major retrospective of Jaar's work taking place in Milan, and to celebrate an artist who prolifically continues to engage his audience with the wider world, proposing possible new models of reality, Europa interviewed Jaar during a recent visit of his to London.

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CHANGE

FOR A GLOBAL CONSCIOUSNESS

Over the past decade we have witnessed the emergence of a complex web of political and philosophical suggestions demanding the construction of a world where global exploitation is no longer the norm. Born out of the global movement of the late nineties, many of these demands have found their way in the public political dialectic of today: calls for the governance of unrestrained multinational capital, an awareness of environmental sustainability, the recognition that the state of world poverty is a scandal.

In the process many of these requests have been watered down, rendered palatable when not innocuous to the status quo. But their radical

potential remains. It remains because the adjustments that have been offered have not worked, and have not worked in their very own moral terrain: the sustainability of the system. And it remains because what these demands heralded was nothing short of the emergence of a global consciousness.

And what is most striking about the three demands presented above? It is that the object of these political positions is not one of our historical usual suspects. There is no direct reference to ‘class’, no direct reference to ‘state’. Instead an appeal, in what is essentially an ethical demand, to suffering, wherever it is to be found. An appeal on behalf of the disadvantaged of our societies, cutting through the north-south economic divide and the east-west clash of civilisations.

And the radicality of such a stance should not go unnoticed. In times when increasingly vociferous cries of localistic greed are to be heard across Europe, when privileged communities shut their gates to the foreign and combat even merely national redistribution, what a stance to make of man beyond nations the subject of our attention!

This is where the European Union presents a positive side. Its role, albeit still too limited, as a redistributive power. Its attempt, albeit still embryonic, to create solidarity between peoples and across nations.

But the radicality of this cry is also to be found in its dangerous nature, in the threat it poses to our very conceptual scheme and the repartition of moral responsibility. And here it speaks to Westerners and Europeans, and to the privileged of privileged nations, first of all. To all those who, out of a global system where the rule of the jungle prevails, where force rules, where injustice and exploitation are tolerated, to all those who from such a system stand to gain. To gain perhaps an ephemeral gain, but one that seems to govern uncontested; to gain materially.

For a certain arrangement of the trade system, a certain structure of clientele amongst weaker nations, a certain free hand given to our enterprises abroad — enrich us. If we forced our multinationals to respect more stringent labour rights in the delocalised factories of the global South the price of consumer goods would increase; if, as a sign of our historical debt to the world’s environment, we followed the requests of the emerging economies of devoting a percentage of our GDP to promote emissions-saving projects in poorer countries, the cost would be dear.

But is the time not ripe to finally reach democratic maturity and take responsibility for injustice being perpetuated in our name by the governments that represent us?

The discourse on migration serves as an excellent example of our current state of irresponsibility. We act as if migrants were being driven towards our lands by baffling gravitational forces; our states view themselves as neutral actors having nothing to do with migration, to which they can respond either brutally or with sympathy, with *charity*, through a more or less strict regulation on asylum seeking procedures, relaxation of internal controls, concession of partial rights, etc.

But this hides the connection between the phenomenon of migration

and the economic and military actions of the “receiving” countries or their prime economic actors. It misses the crucial awareness of the *un-foreign* nature of the causes that make of a foreigner an immigrant, it forgets the logics of global exploitation that depart from our own capital cities.

And so, can we believe in a politics that would go against our interests? Can we imagine a politics that would see in the *other* the object of its action?

But who is the ‘us’ of those interests? The ‘us’ of the nation, an ‘us’ that is itself a lie, concealing unequal distribution, poverty and alienation in our own societies. And it is from here that we must start again; from an awareness of inequality, from a rejection of the dominance of profit, from a recognition of the unsustainable imbalance of the current system. And from a refusal of the association between our interests and those of the economic elite. And we will perhaps find that the greatest contradiction of our age is not that between rich and poor countries. But, more simply, that between rich and poor.



EUROPA is the journal of European Alternatives, a transnational civilsociety organisation promoting intellectual and artistic engagement with the idea and future of Europe, and actively promoting the emergence of a positive transnationalism in the cultural and political sphere.

European Alternatives organises events and discussions throughout Europe, along with the flagship London Festival of Europe each Spring.

You can find more information about us on www.euroalter.com

Europa Editors
Lorenzo Marsili
Niccolò Milanese

Assistant Editor
Nadja Stamselberg

Projects Officer
Ségolène Pruvot

Cultural Office
Eva Oddo
Luigi Galimberti Faussonne

Design
Rasha Kahil
www.rashakahil.com

 editors@euroalter.com

UTOPIA!

BEYOND HOMO ECONOMICUS

The present global economic crisis, whatever its final place in the historical ranking of *most dramatic economic crises* that many seem fixated on trying to predict, has already brought about unprecedented coordinated international economic intervention and has put yet more serious question-marks over both the “Washington-Consensus” as a model for development, and more generally the principles underlying the current functioning of the global economy. What is much more important, however, and what is presently undecided, is whether it will provide the opportunity for political innovation beyond mere technical fixes to the status quo.

The immediate causes of what was first the *financial* crisis, and then became a more general *economic* crisis - irresponsible mortgage lending, unregulated speculation and borrowing, opaque financial products etc. - are increasingly well identified and analysed, and the technical debates about regulatory reform as well as discussions of the best ways to restart the system are well under way. What is startlingly and alarmingly lacking from the enormous amount of discussion surrounding the crisis however, are any serious political assessments of the *way of life* both presupposed and promoted by the economic system we are in. What is more, many of those who have been long-term critics of elements or the entirety of the “Western way of life” have expressed their feeling of unpreparedness, of the acceleration of history, of urgency. It is worth asking where this feeling of unpreparedness might come from before suggesting some reasons for thinking that the current economic crisis opens the possibility for alternatives to be articulated.

There have been two apparently fertile subjects for promoting public discussion of alternative ways of life in recent years: the environment and third-world poverty. The environment as a political cause, although having the potential to radically question the relationship and priority between humans and the earth, has a tendency to focus on the second of these terms, and derive proposed changes to our way of life from the demands of the planet or environment. Third world poverty in its very formulation also has a tendency to be thought of as an *external* problem: one that calls for charity, or aid, rather than directly for a change in behaviour. What both of these

political causes lack is a direct consideration of the status of man himself: of what is important and what is not. This seems to be the question that is harder and harder to pose in a direct fashion.

A further phenomenon is perhaps the underlying cause of this problem: the increasing crisis of the state as an effective institution of governance. The international or transnational character of the most pressing political issues of our time is well known under the rubric of ‘globalisation’, and the inadequacy of the state as a political construction for dealing with these problems is increasingly evident: be it the financial crisis, the environment or terrorist threat. The dominance of multinational corporations over the nation-state is also well-known. What is perhaps less highlighted is that with the losing of relevance of the state and the lack of immediate successors, the context in which we pose the political question of “our” way of life is increasingly lost or complicated. This has perhaps most dramatically been the case for the Marxist left which no longer has the State to kick against, but all critics of our contemporary way of life are equally posed with the difficult problem of the level at which to situate the critique. The deliberate frustration of the possibility of critique is perhaps the numbing core of what is often named ‘neoliberalism’, and effectiveness of its dissolution of all alternative platforms the cause of the present feeling of vertiginous urgency.

The global recession that we are entering at once makes the stakes higher and might create conditions in which the question of what is really important can once again be posed profoundly. The International Labour Organisation recently predicted that an additional 20 million people are likely to be unemployed by the end of 2009, and the number of people living in extreme poverty will increase by up to 40 million. The hardest hit will certainly be economically underdeveloped countries, but one obvious consequence of the global recession is that the social question will again be high up the agenda in large parts of Europe and Northern America, where poverty will be much more visible *on our streets, amongst people like us*. That will either provoke a reflex turning-inwards and a new protectionism, or a turning-outwards and a profound re-appreciation of the social implications on a global scale of the

way of life we presently buy into and aspire towards. There is nothing that makes the first of these outcomes inevitable and unavoidable, but it is the most likely result if we leave the currently dominant ideology unchallenged. The second outcome will only be realised by the urgent transnational engagement of activists, thinkers, artists and citizens to make it possible.

Although the task of dealing with the social implications of a global recession looks likely to remain largely the competence of the nation-state, the reflection on the implications of our way of life must necessarily take place at a transnational level if it is to have genuinely *political* consequence. The financial crisis has given a new impetus to the consideration of reform of the World Bank and IMF, the G4 has grown to a G20. Each of these provides a newly active political level in which the status quo will either be tacitly reaffirmed or can be challenged. Amongst relevant international institutions, the European Union, despite

all appearances, has a particular importance for challenging the status quo. That it is the largest trading bloc in the world and also the largest donor of humanitarian aid gives the EU a global significance which it has yet to learn to fully assert, but what is crucially important is that the EU is unique amongst international bodies in having a certain claim of democratic representation of its peoples. It thus potentially provides a unique political horizon in which the status quo can effectively be called into question by the people themselves.

It is with these considerations in mind, amongst others, that European Alternatives launches its ChangeUtopia! series of events throughout Europe, starting with the question of poverty in a global world. We must make sure the economic crisis does not presage an imaginative crisis which would be more catastrophic because more terminal, for it would nullify our capacity to find alternative ways of carrying on.



Ahmed Mater, *Illumination*, From “Edge of Arabia”, exhibition review p.16

DEMOCRACY BEY

A PUPPET AND HIS EMPIRE



Despite the possibility for a popular election, it looks likely there will only be one candidate for the post of President in the new European Commission named next year – the incumbent Barroso. Why? The answer is a mix of spinelessness and myth.

BY NICCOLÒ MILANESE

When pressed on the political form of the European Union in June last year, the President of the Commission – Jose Manuel Barroso – after much flustering around and reference to ‘unidentified political objects’, made the comparison with empire. Previous empires, he said, ‘were usually made through force, with a centre that imposed a will on the others.’ The EU, on the other hand, is unique in being the ‘first non-imperial empire’: 27 states which have freely chosen to pool

sovereignty. ‘We should be proud of it, at least, we in the Commission are proud of it’, he concluded somewhat childishly.

The European Union Empire will have its largest ever elections in June next year for the European Parliament, and in November 2009 a new Commission takes office. Yet at this moment it looks likely the only candidate for the new President of the Commission will be none other than Jose Manuel Barroso. The same Jose Manuel Barroso who has presided over three negative referendum results, has done nothing to resolve Europe’s identity crisis, and most recently had his Financial Stimulus

Plan slapped down unceremoniously by national finance ministers. The same Barroso who is unpopular with most European political parties.

Then is the EU Empire undemocratic, like historical empires? Not according to its formal rules, at least with regard to choosing a President of the Commission. Although the President of the Commission is chosen by the heads of the 27 nation-states acting as the European Council, they present their choice to the new Parliament for approval. Furthermore, the Lisbon Treaty which 25 nation states have ratified adds that the Council should

“The European Socialists did not nominate any candidate at their congress, which is a little like the Labour Party not nominating a candidate for Prime Minister in the British elections because the polls are against them.”

make their choice ‘in light of the results of the European elections’, thus opening the possibility for European political parties to go into the elections with a candidate for Commission President.

So if most political parties are unhappy with Barroso, how come he is the only candidate? The answer is in part manipulation on the part of some heads of state and naivety on the part of others, but is ultimately the result of spinelessness on the part of many European politicians.

Most of Europe is controlled by conservative governments, and this is unlikely to change before the next Commission is selected. The majority of heads of state have already expressed their support for Barroso. This is utterly undemocratic manipulation, against the spirit of giving more democratic importance to the European elections that the majority of them have signed up to in the Lisbon Treaty. In addition to conservative heads of state, the heads of state of three countries governed by Socialists have also given him their support: those of the UK, Spain and Portugal. According to the European socialist Enrique Baron Crespo, Zapatero gave his backing to Barroso out of “wanting to be po-

lite”. If this is true, it is utterly naive. But in itself all this decides nothing: the parliament must approve the candidate.

Nevertheless the European Socialists seem to have already decided it is a lost cause, and no high-profile Socialist is willing to risk their reputation in running against Barroso. Thus the European Socialists did not nominate any candidate at their congress, which is a little like the Labour Party not nominating a candidate for Prime Minister in the British elections because the polls are against them. The socialists are not alone: the European Liberal Party also decided not to put forward a candidate; the Green Party is even running an anti-Barroso campaign, but it is not offering an alternative candidate because it does not think there is any chance of winning.

Some members of the conservative European People’s Party, to which Barroso belongs, have expressed dissatisfaction with his Presidency, but it seems entirely unlikely that the party will nominate anyone else, or even that anyone from the party will dare challenge him, at their congress in the New Year.

Such spinelessness from the political parties and their members is completely irresponsible. The most basic demand made of them is to provide a political choice, and the present legislation of the European Union actively encourages them to provide this choice. Whatever the naivety or machinations of heads of state, the parliament has a duty to assert its own importance and it has the powers already to do this. Under the Lisbon Treaty the Parliament would get more co-decision making powers with the Council, but its member parties must lose their spirit of deference if those powers are to have any significance.

The European Commission is one of the most powerful executive organisations in the world and controls the most powerful trading block in the world at a time of global economic crisis. Even though it is not the legislative power of the Union, the presenting of only one candidate for the post of President of the European Commission reinforces the hegemonic idea that

ON THE NATION

there is no choice available over what policies to adopt in the face of this crisis. Judging by their actions, this is a situation ours heads of state seem entirely content with. It is also, we can only imagine, a situation that the thousands of corporate lobbyists who stalk the corridors of Brussels are rather happy to live with.

It is the myth of the inevitability of the direction of the European Union that must be broken. There is nothing inevitable about Barroso being the only candidate for President of the Commission, just as there is nothing inevitable about the direction or failures of European policy. The appearance of inevitability is a montage created when political machination meets political cowardice, a political cowardice that seems presently endemic in Europe. If we persist with the analogy of an Empire, it is nonsense to place Barroso or anyone else in the position of Emperor. Rather the entire construction seems to be under the hypnotic influence of a myth of its own autonomous logic. In the non-imperial empire, as it turns out, it is not force that imposes an emperor, but fear which makes the "empire" itself into a puppet. ■

DANIELE ARCHIBUGI: THE GLOBAL COMMONWEALTH

Archibugi has recently advocated a new cosmopolitan politics. He lays out the key features of his project.

Europa: The idea of a global government is an old idea with a long history. What aspects of the contemporary situation do you think make it more realisable or important?

Daniele Archibugi: You are perfectly right that the idea is very old. Before the 16th century the idea of cosmopolitan citizenship was more associated with the individual and less associated with the sociological conditions of a global citizenship, but starting from that point the idea starts to be related to political developments, and to a new condition which we might call a kind of glo-

balisation. This poses the question of the connection between the new social conditions and new institutional devices. It is very difficult to think today of an action that does not have some important overlaps with other communities, and everything apart from political institutions has been globalised: the economy, the financial markets. One of the challenges of our age is to bridge the social, economic and cultural dimen-

"we need global institutions open to the participation of citizens"

sions of globalisation with a political dimension.

Europa: Your book makes frequent mention of democracy. Do you share the concerns of those who discern a democratic regression, from reduction in social rights (labour protection, etc.), to the emergence of a new kind of right wing populism?

DA: Democracy is always in a bad state, and this is somehow its strength. You are quite right that some social and political rights seem to be in decline. But this is not the only story; we have seen an increase in civil rights, racism for example is taken much more seriously. What worries me most is the growing inequalities of income. Regarding populism and racism, I think that this is a typical case where we see that a democratic society, even where it is very internally coherent, might have some irrational components, precisely because it does not manage to integrate the others. This phenomenon typically happens in periods of crisis, in periods of uncertainty, in which values are questioned. This shows that democracy is not itself necessarily a desirable system unless it is tamed with something else, which is cosmopolitanism. Cosmopolitanism is a school of thought, or we might even say a school of practice, which helps democratic societies to learn to deal with the other. The other can be the

immigrant, the refugee, the gypsy; even when they are living within our own societies. This is the challenge of our age.

Europa: Would you agree with Balibar's formulation of the state of affairs as a kind of European Apartheid?

DA: Yes, I agree with Balibar on that. Balibar stresses the political component, I would like to also stress the normative side. One problem is to provide a decent standard of living for the so-called "28th European nation", ie. the immigrants in Europe. But then we also need to manage the problem of migrations. Migrations are one of the most unfair problems occurring at the moment, not just for the European societies, but also for the societies of developing countries. It is generally the more entrepreneurial sectors from developing countries that come to Europe. There are two ways you can address the issue. The first is to say ex post 'I provide to these people equal rights once they get to Europe'. I think this should be done. But the second solution is to find some management of the problem, contributing on the one hand to the development of the societies from which migrants come, and on the other regulating the migration flows to make them fairer.

Europa: You argue that to move to a commonwealth of global citizens we have to go through a paradigm shift comparable to the shift to representative democracy. One of the most commented aspects of that shift was the birth of ideologies. The moment you have political parties with their different programs, you have different interpretations of the past, of the present and different programs for the future. How do you analyse the loss of ideology in contemporary politics, and the modifications of ideology when moved to a global level?

DA: There are two different aspects to be taken into account. The first is the substance of politics. This requires the willingness of citizens in taking part in political activity.

Citizens are willing to do so when they see there is a point. If they don't see it, because the traditional channels of representation have dried up, then they don't participate. Alternative channels of representation have not been provided. It was wrong to expect that these channels would be provided through a top-down process – that has never happened in history – rather these channels are created from the bottom up, when the people ask for something more. Now, the cosmopolitan democracy I advocate allows a variety of different ideological components; you can imagine that there would be two major ideological visions. One would be the socialist vision, which says we should combine cosmopolitanism with redistribution, with providing more public goods in areas such as the environment, security and so on. And another, equally cosmopolitan vision, would be closer to the traditional liberal position. What worries me is that the liberals do not advocate the creation of global institutions in the same way as the left does. That is contradictory, because they are very much in favour of, for example, free market, but they do not advocate global institutions to match them. They try to create a global society without global democratic players.

Europa: Do you think the contemporary economic crisis suggests any possibilities for the appearance of global governance?

DA: It has already happened in a very limited way. The way the financial crisis was managed was true global governance. All countries knew very well that they couldn't sort out the financial crisis alone, and they co-ordinated between themselves very, very quickly. It is telling that when key economic interests are concerned, the G2, G4, G7, G20 manages to be effective. When we have to deal with other equally important issues such as the environment, genocide in Congo, or a tsunami, the resources available are lower, the response is slower and much less effective. Maybe these countries have the wrong priorities. I assume that global institutions in which citizens would have their voices heard might go towards changing that. ■

Daniele Archibugi's latest book is *The Commonwealth of Citizens, Towards Cosmopolitan Democracy*



Photo by Brigita Eregovic

JOURNALISM

TOWARDS A COSMOPOLITAN ALLIANCE

Beyond tribal journalism, for a polyphony of minds.

BY LORENZO MARSILI

Today a magazine can only be international in its composition and cosmopolitan in its emotion and desire. What must arise is a wayfarer, an eternal vagabond, running the world after a scattered tribe of minds. The magazine must be let to fluctuate between the seas. But this fluctuation is not a 'visit'; the journal does not 'land' in a country to speak of what it sees. It is no longer the time for the simple presentation of culture and politics beyond nations. No, the magazine lands to refuel on ideas, be they ideas of the immediately near, of the distant, or of that which does not set foot on any ground. It is not a transnational *presentation* that is at stake, not a global survey that is sought after. But a cosmopolitan alliance.

But perhaps this is an impossible stance. After years of integration, despite investments and calls for its creation, even a European public sphere has not yet emerged. And to think just our distance from a cosmopolitan paradigm – how many European magazines still have most of their board from a single European nation! But the public sphere today has stale air. It is weighted by its *hubris* of unity, its tentacular reach, its closure. (An example of that closure – and of its beauties – comes from the last surviving artistic product on Italian television: Blob. Blob cuts a selection of brief television sketches and edits them into gems of irony and insight. Irony and insight that can only be drawn out *from within*, when the whole concatenation makes sense to us, when the faces are familiar, the stories known.)

But it is not necessary that a sphere of publicity be entirely familiar to every visitor. On the contrary; this space can contain unseen perspectives, can dislocate and disrupt; presenting alterity, it becomes the factory of an un-



Photos by Brigita Ercegovic

known. What does this mean? It means that we must forego the conception of a public sphere as an enclosed cluster of assumptions, as a place where everyone feels intellectually at home, where the vocabulary employed, the themes raised, the reasoning followed—all strike one as familiar, as daily bread, as the halo of maternal society. And what in its place? A field of overlapping commitments. A field of overlapping interests, of overlapping languages. Of overlapping, strug-

gling ideas.

But perhaps this is a politically suspicious stance. For in such an open space of possibility, amidst the cacophony of one thousand languages, how can the opportunity for engagement arise? Do we not edge dangerously close to an elitist cultural production, one that juggles a plurality of thoughts, browsing through a market of ideas where nothing is ever bought? (But first—the role played by localised publications is invaluable, and in

no way replaceable; loci of discussions that focus on particular struggles, be they for the precarity of labour or for the plights of the environment, or perhaps on the scholars of wisdom or those of letters, are and remain the necessary meeting point of all those pursuing a common effort.) And so, how can a cosmopolitan magazine be *political*?

But must an answer to this question really come from *some-where else*, must it be *created*, or is it not perhaps already amongst us?

Let us ask it again: For in such an open space of possibility, amidst the cacophony of one thousand languages, how can the opportunity for engagement arise? But have we not seen just the attempt to *practically* forge such a political space in the past ten years? What was the movement for an alternative globalisation if not a space of global polyphony? These are not the most popular times to chant its praises. But what is the lesson that it has taught, and that most likely it

TRANSNATIONAL

will continue to teach in the years to come? That global participation can be stimulated around local struggles; that a tribalistic understanding of commitment – commitment to what touches *me* – can be left behind. And at the same time that the plurality of local struggles can come together, producing a critical mass that demands nothing short of *another world*. And what are the latter two statements if not the clearest definition of the political task of a cosmopolitan publication? To stimulate a compassionate response, which means to *move*, regardless of geographical distance. And to articulate the emergence of a world to come from no privileged vantage point, from no urban centre, but through shifting geographies of thought.

And there is more. A cosmopolitan magazine becomes political the moment it ceases to be alone. The moment its concert of voices enters in direct relation with – and in this relation, dialectically, it also finds itself – with others. Exchanges of activisms. Exchanges – and here is a further, crucial political dimension, - that enable to surpass one's own *constituency*, one's own group of the converted, and that open a vision to and for society. And these can only be exchanges that stretch into public space, that *occupy*, with drums and trumpets, the sphere of publicity. Exchanges that both found and represent a political consciousness beyond borders. An example? The joint transnational publication and dissemination of statements, invectives, positions, pamphlets, or announcements, that appear simultaneously in the streets, cafés, galleries, universities, work places of cities across nations.

For the crucial task of magazines is to advance a political-cultural project. A project must not mean a blind adherence to a single position, membership of a single party. But creation and reformulation of the categories that govern our society. A project that is as broad and open and polyphonic as the transnational project sketched. And then—to allow for that project to emerge and be articulated, to grow and evolve and assume the shapes of history.

The hands of editors must be black of ink and commitment. ■

EUROPEAN MEDIA

We need courageous investment and less arrogance.

BY CHRISTIAN MIHR

In December 1998 the European daily *The European* died a media death. *The European* was founded by the legendary (and notorious) British media magnate Robert Maxwell amid the euphoria that accompanied the tearing down of the Iron Curtain in a bid to realise his dream of a European daily newspaper. In business terms the project was a flop from the start. Launched in 1990 with a print run of a quarter of a million, this innovative newspaper project was originally intended to have multi-lingual sections for sales on the European Continent. But that never happened.

Media colonisation

Today real transnational European journalism is still a phenomenon for elites. Yet for most people in Europe everyday life has already had a European dimension for some time – they just haven't always noticed. Many different national discourses exist in a state of "simultaneity of the non-simultaneous" (*Gleichzeitigkeit der Ungleichzeitigkeit*), to quote the philosopher Ernst Bloch, even if the big media concerns colonised Eastern Europe in the early 1990s, long before any East European country became a member of the EU: the Swiss *Ringier* group is already doing good business in Hungary, Romania, the Czech Republic and Slovakia; likewise the German *WAZ* group in the Balkans. In many cases they serve to foster national resentments: the newspapers of the German Springer concern in Poland and Germany, for example, are engaged in stirring up negative emotions against these countries' respective neighbours; while the biggest Bulgarian newspaper *24 Tschassa*, also owned by the German *WAZ* concern, in 2007 conducted a smear campaign

(known as the Batak affair) together with other Bulgarian media against the art historian Martina Baleva. In an exhibition catalogue Baleva had explored Islamic stereotypes in Bulgaria. Nationalists saw this as calling into question some facts concerning the Battle of Batak between the Ottomans and the Bulgarians – an important event of Bulgarian national history – and even sent Baleva death threats.

The case of the former Latvian foreign minister, Sandra Kalniete

"Many different national discourses exist in a state of "simultaneity of the non-simultaneous"

also showed that the Western public sphere is still having a hard time adjusting its picture of an Eastern Europe marked by Soviet-style communism to today's more complex reality, and that a pan-European public sphere is still illusory. In 2004 – just as the EU was expanding eastwards – Kalniete compared the Stalinist regime to the Hitler regime and stated at the Leipzig book fair that fifty years of European history had been written without paying any attention to



the experiences of Eastern Europe. Many Western politicians put her in her place, saying that only the Holocaust, not the Gulag should be cited as a negative experience in the founding myth of a unified Europe.

English as a lingua franca

Whether one likes it or not, English remains the European lingua franca, and there is no real multi-lingual European journalism.

Viewer and readership figures for European media lag behind political integration. At the same time, the way people use the media is changing world-wide, with the behaviour of users rather than content increasingly determining the character of the media. With the exception of the *Financial Times* there is not a single European newspaper that can claim to report from Europe for Europe. On the magazine market the only publications that can be said to be aimed at a European public are the monthlies *Le Monde Diplomatique* and *Lettre Internationale*. And in the field of television *euronews* and *eurosport* together with *arte* and *3sat* are the only bi- or multi-lingual channels of any significance. But even these do not represent any real competition for national public television stations or for the news outlets of *CNN*, the *BBC* and *Deutsche Welle*.

Internet projects

On the Internet, by contrast, there are a number of projects trying, via journalism, to create a European public sphere and at the same time to build bridges between old and new media and between East and West. Often these overcome language barriers, offering their products in several languages. Of particular importance here are www.eurotopics.net, www.n-ost.de, www.euranet.eu, [\[rozine.com\]\(http://rozine.com\), \[www.signandsight.com\]\(http://www.signandsight.com\), \[www.tol.cz\]\(http://www.tol.cz\) and \[www.cafebabel.com\]\(http://www.cafebabel.com\). Especially promising are press review projects like \[eurotopics.net\]\(http://eurotopics.net\), which allow immediate feedback to national newspapers: everyday, \[eurotopics.net\]\(http://eurotopics.net\) records the debates conducted in the newspapers, magazines and blogs of all the EU countries plus Switzerland and appears in four languages – English, French, German and Spanish \(and will](http://www.eu-</p></div><div data-bbox=)

shortly be translated into Polish as well). None of the projects mentioned has so far proved to be commercially viable, however. All of them are funded either out of public money or by foundations.

Structural problems of the European public sphere

It is not sufficient simply to teach journalists about European issues, for the European public sphere also suffers from a structural problem. In practice the emergence of a European public sphere is hampered on a daily basis by language barriers, national publics and as a consequence national news organizations. We need media organizations that have the courage to invest in the (admittedly expensive) translation of the content of foreign media and to justify the exchange of information on European issues and between journalists not only on the grounds of saving costs.

For the transnational European public sphere being constituted in the Internet, alliances between classical journalism and participatory media projects like blogs and platforms of the type offered by www.cafebabel.com are important too. It is time that both sides abandoned their arrogant attitudes, for if they were to do so, we could benefit both from the specialist knowledge that the numerous bloggers (who are also consumers of news)

hold on local events and special subjects and from the professional abilities of conventional journalists who by way of research, evaluation of sources and analyses navigate their way through the sea of information. ■

Christian Mihr is a journalist, working for the NGO "Network for Reporting on Eastern Europe n-ost" and there as a Senior Editor of eurotopics.net. The opinions expressed here are not necessarily those of [eurotopics](http://eurotopics.net).

PARADIGMS OF

CULTURE AND THE EUROPEAN UNIFICATION PROCESS

Europe has reached a stage where its cultural dimension can no longer be ignored.

BY STEVE AUSTEN
AND KAROLINA NOWACKI

Since 2004, the European Commission has launched various initiatives to promote the notion that European citizenship only can develop through means of cultural action. This idea however is not new.

In earlier years, citizenship, as a product of the implementation of human rights, came to the forefront of political cooperation between the two political blocs; the so called West and the socialist arena including the Soviet-Union. This finally resulted in the Helsinki agreements and the instalment of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE). This development - nowadays known as The Helsinki Process - was a caesura in post-war times.

It had taken some time: the idea of a European security conference was already introduced in the 1950s by the Soviet government.

NATO agreed on further talks no earlier than the late 1960s. NATO insisted on bringing in humanitarian questions such as the free movement of people and information throughout the Eastern Bloc. By that time general human rights were not explicitly taken into account. Their role started to grow with the course of the actual process after 1973.

In the Blue Book, the final recommendation of the Helsinki consultations of June 1973, it was suggested to organise the three main subjects in the so-called Baskets for Security, Economy and Humanitarian Questions. The equality of the baskets of the Helsinki Final Act presented culture as an actual means to overcome political barriers. Culture was slowly allowed to descend

from an ideological platform and became a more practicable notion.

The power of the symbolic to instigate reality enabled the widening civic movement to secure civil and human rights by intervening with the actual political process as well as supporting its achievements from bottom-up.

Artists and intellectuals took the initiative to take the Final Act as a guarantee of their civil, human and cultural rights and measured their current condition against the background of these agreed rights. Hence the

follow-up process was dominated by efforts of securing these rights both from political as well as from civil perspective. Eventually, both efforts blended in and served the improvement of the whole situation on both levels.

Two aspects became more and more important: firstly, the need for a confident citizenship, and secondly, the importance of culture for a peaceful unification process that on the one hand tries to bind individuals, not only countries, together and in doing so achieves the most valuable results.

In 1985 the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe held a cultural forum in Budapest that was meant to guide the efforts of the third basket and find solutions to improve contacts and exchange between the European peoples. It can be seen as a turning point in regard

“The power of the symbolic to instigate reality enabled the widening civic movement to secure civil and human rights.”

to the significance of culture for politics.

As spokesperson of the delegation of the Federal Republic of Germany at the official forum, Günter Grass, presented his proposal to open up “the actual borders in the minds of people” by installing a pan-European cultural foundation. At the same time his fellow writers and intellectuals were discussing similar issues with invited artists and intellectuals from Hungary at an informal gathering, called the Unofficial Writers Symposium, in a local pub. Of course there was a fruitful and permanent exchange of ideas between the two gatherings.

Finally Grass had to accept that the official congress refused his proposal, thanks to the vetoes from the USA and Romania.

This situation showed clearly to all artists and politicians involved that the exchange of ideas is one thing, the implementation of practical and innovative proposals another. This notion however did not stop the involved artists continuing their endeavours, but more and more without involving the political decision-makers. The idea became common that artists, intellectuals and cultural institutions can do a lot to enhance civil society even without the consent and approval of the political class.

One of the very first attempts to prove this approach was the European Artists Forum in Amsterdam in 1987. Günter Grass accepted the invitation to discuss his Budapest proposal again, this time with artists and intellectuals from all over Europe, without politicians. With 28 artists and intellectuals from 20 European countries it could be seen as a major platform for the voice of the cultural world. This platform was called “Gulliver” and was a first attempt to develop a European, non-governmental, informal and independent working group as a platform for the exchange of ideas between individual Euro



Photos by Brigita Eregovic

CULTURE

pean artists and intellectuals on essential issues for the future of European culture.

Over the years, Gulliver slowly transformed into a more advanced instrument of international co-operation, exchange and mobility by being integrated in a huge cultural network that not only links the distinct Gulliver members to each other but also to their birth place in Amsterdam as a permanent activity of The Felix Meritis Foundation (since 1988). This NGO grew with the years and outlasted the actual Gulliver body that subtly merged into this overwhelming entity formulating the foundation of a far bigger context than anyone could practically strive for: a real European civil society.

The latest attempt to foster the ideas of Helsinki is the civil initiative “A Soul for Europe” that started its activity in 2004. This time the initiative came from a politician: former president of the Federal republic of Germany: Richard von Weizsäcker. The Soul for Europe Initiators define the European process as a cultural process. The notion of citizenship must be the leading one. Facing the dull reality that the EU so far has not been very successful in promoting citizenship and culture as the key-element in the unification process, they strive (in the spirit of the Helsinki Final Act) to link cultural bottom-up movements with policy making top-down processes.

In only a few years, intellectuals, cultural operators, scientists, artists, pupils and students, as well as politicians, local, national as well as European, have joined the Berlin process to stimulate the upcoming generation of Europeans to take our future in their hands. At the same time it promotes the idea that civil society has to be fostered to shape and influence the political decision-making process to make Europe a place which will develop from a union of member states into a union of member states and citizens. To place the ownership of Europe in the hands of the citizens themselves, cultural organisations and artists again have to take the lead. ■

WHY A BOMBING OF POEMS?

Some notes for the continuation of a poetic intervention

BY CRISTÓBAL BIANCHI

Bombing of Poems is a performance in which cities that have experience aerial bombing in the past are now bombed with poems. The performance consists of dropping one hundred thousand poems printed in bookmarks from an aircraft over cities raided during military confrontations. The bookmarks are released at night and, as in the case of a real bombing, without previous warning. The poems are printed in two languages and they are by both Chilean authors and poets native to the bombed city¹.

Until now, the performance has been carried out in three different places: the government palace of Chile, La Moneda, bombed by Pinochet on 11 September 1973; the city of Dubrovnik (Croatia), shelled on 6 December 1991 by Serbian and Montenegrin forces; the city of Guernica (Basque Country, Spain), which suffered the first Nazi air-bombardment on 26 April 1937. In the next few years we expect to carry out this poetic event in the cities of Berlin and Dresden (Germany), Warsaw (Poland), Belgrade (Serbia) and Nagasaki (Japan).

Five Notes to Bomb Cities with Poems

1. The Ambivalence of the Poetic Event.

The nature of the poetic event that is triggered by the Bombing of Poems is double and ambivalent: the recall of the horror of the historical event – the real bombing of the city – is interrupted by the opening up of another moment which makes possible unpredictable effects. This openness is necessary to give room to an alternative response to the relation between poetry and war and the destruction of cities during warfare. This

openness is a potentiality to create relations rather than set up a discourse about them. This takes place not only in the public realm, but also in what Rancière calls “the capacity of the anonym”, an operation based on a principle of equality that “makes anybody equal to everybody”. As well as revisiting a traumatic historical event, all potential spectators create their own stories as witnesses.

2. Artist as Pacifist Perpetrator?

Exchanging bombs with poems using a military machine and military strategy (the air bombing), the poet becomes a soldier (a pilot of the aircraft) using a weapon of another type: five hundred kilos of printed poems. Even though

FOOTNOTE

1. The authors of this performance are a group of artists that work under the collective name ‘CasaGrande’: an active platform that has developed a series of publishing projects and art actions related to poetry and the intervention into public spaces. CasaGrande has worked on three main projects since 1996 including the publication of a magazine that changes its format every issue: giant posters installed in underground stations throughout Santiago (Chile), the sending of a DVD to the library of the International Space Station, and public performances including the series Bombing of Poems. More information: <http://revistacasagrande.blogspot.com/> e-mail: cristobbianchi@gmail.com

the audience is free to pick up the poems (and to read and share them), this act of affirmation operates as an ‘imposition’ by the military dispositive: when the sky is used to launch unusual objects, the poetical intervention becomes an act of supremacy and the options to avoid its potential effects are narrowed. Therefore, as the historical aerial bombardments were urgent acts within warfare, this new urgency of cultural affirmation realized by the artist recalls an activism where cultural production is a form of non-violent resistance.

3. The Importance to affirm Poetry after Plato and Adorno.

Plato expelled the poem and the

poet to organize the republic, Adorno advocated the silence of the poem in front of the horror of destruction. In a way, both have illustrated the necessity of drawing a frontier and evict the work of art from the most significant issues, namely politics and barbarism. However, the demand for silence as an aesthetic response became a requirement for response itself. Thus, the affirmation of poetry re-situated the written word as a practice able to create symbolic interruption and an exchange of passions. When the poem uses a military machine as an allegorical tool,



this is usurped from the political and military class to create an opposite effect. Rather than produce rubbles and injuries, the operation seeks to activate and multiply the forces embodied in poetry. The ‘development of an exclamation’, as Valéry says.

4. Being Naïve as a Tactic to Confront the Hypocrisy of the Political Class.

It has been said that the Bombing of Poems is ‘politically correct’ and ‘naïve’. Some reports have said that their authors endure a sort of ‘megalomania’. I maintain that to run a work of this type is vitally necessary to deal with the diverse range of layers that constitute cultural

and political institutions. Because of the ambivalent nature of the poetic event, each participant perceives a different meaning shaped according to his interests and concerns. A clear dislocation between words, actions and motives operates in the process. The potentiality of the poetic event cannot be reduced and controlled by the hypocrisy that circulates amongst the actors and the artists involved.

5. Assume the Potentiality Grounded in the Non-Event.

At a recent conference a German student in the audience urged me to consider that “Germany doesn’t need such a performance right now”. Given the evident controversies existing between a city and its historical destruction, it is

pivotal to consider that a possible Bombing of Poems may become a non-event. The outcomes of such a refusal are varied; the first one is to recognize that a city and its citizens may not be ready for a poetic event like the Bombing of Poems; this means that the gesture of launching poems is too brief and impressive, considering the sensibilities and amount of discourse still in the process of being articulated. In this sense, to assume the non-event is to enter in a waiting process. The role of patience in public art is crucial. And this waiting process could be accompanied by the following thought: these cities were able to prevent being bombed for a second time. ■

INTERVIEW WITH ALFREDO JAAR



INTERVIEW BY EVA ODDO
(CONTINUED FROM FRONT PAGE)

► **Eva Oddo: What do you think of the European Union and how do you see its future?**

Alfredo Jaar: I have always seen the EU as a potential model that has never been fully realized. It is a utopia that became a quasi-reality. I have always felt the potential was enormous, as a model of community. In fact the EU is the largest donor of humanitarian assistance in the world. Some significant progress has been made in certain areas, for example regarding the common currency, the euro, it has been interesting to see how we finally have a counterweight to the US dollar and its hegemony. But when you realize that the EU generates more than 30% share of the world's gross domestic product, you ask yourself why is it such a minor, ridiculous influence in world affairs? The incapacity of the EU to articulate and promote a common foreign policy, to have a voice in world affairs of a certain weight is truly frustrating. The EU has never fulfilled its responsibilities according to its relative geopolitical weight in the world. This is really a domain that the Americans dominate fully, and until now no one has been able to challenge

them. The world would be in such a different state if the EU had a voice. On the other hand, it is undeniable that we have freedom of movement of people, goods, services and capital but at the same time, how many doors have been closed? Visit Italy to look at how the immigration issue is being played out, or ask an African businessman trying to penetrate the EU market and you will hear a catalogue of frustrations.

EO: Moving on to the artist: do you think the artist has any responsibilities?

AJ: Absolutely. Artists are human beings, and every human being has responsibilities. Artists are an integral part of society, and within society we are very privileged because artists have been blessed with time and resources to think, to speculate, to dream about different worlds, better worlds. This privilege comes with a responsibility, to respond to what surrounds us, and to suggest models of thinking about society and about the world, and that's what the best art does. The best works of art take you to places you have never been - I'm referring to mental places - places where we create new models of thinking, and new possible ways of seeing the world. And that's a tremendous respon-

IT IS DIFFICULT
SPAZIO OBERDAN, MILANO
3.10.2008 – 25.01.2009

Muxima, 2005
DIGITAL VIDEO, COLOR, SOUND
DURATION: 36 MINUTES
© GALERIE LELONG, NEW YORK

sibility.

EO: While I've read your art described as 'political' art, I think I've read that you describe it as 'moral', or 'morally-engaged' art.

AJ: No, I do not accept any of these labels. All art is political. It is impossible to do anything in this world that does not have a political reading. It is impossible to make a gesture that does not at the same time incorporate aesthetics and ethics. I always quote Jean-Luc Godard, a filmmaker that I admire, when I am asked this question, when he said that "it may be true that one has to choose between ethics and aesthetics, but it is no less true that, whichever one chooses, one will always find the other at the end of the road." This is the reality that we face as artists and as cultural producers: we are always confronted with the issue of ethics and aesthetics at the same time, and they have to be incorporated not only in the way we do things, but also in the final articulation of our ideas in the works. When art

does not do this, it is just decoration, it is part of another world, the world of decoration and design, which has other, different objectives. You have decoration on one side, and you have art on the other side, and art for me has always been about critical thinking. But that doesn't mean we must leave out poetry. Poetry is an essential element of art. We could even say that there is no art without poetry, and there is no art without politics.

EO: Do you think art has changed the world, and if so how? And in the future do you see art changing the world, and how?

AJ: Well, can you imagine a world without art? In the answer to this question you will find the answer to your question. What would the world be without art, without culture? As Nietzsche said, "Life without music would be a mistake." And you could paraphrase him and say: Life without art would be a mistake. Just take a look at around us, look around the city, look around the world – what would it be if there was no art and culture around us? Art and culture are essential elements of contemporary life, of life. Life is unthinkable without it. Art does greatly change the world, and as an artist I have always said, even with the risk of sounding naïve, that I want to change the world. I became an artist because I was unhappy with the state of the world, I am unhappy with the way it is now, and I want to change it. Now, I change it one person at a time – it is a very slow process, it's a very modest change, but we can touch people, we can inform them, and we can move them to action. In that sense I am Gramscian. Gramsci was an extraordinary intellectual of the 20th century, and an inspiration. He really believed in culture's capacity to affect change, and it is difficult, sometimes it seems futile, but culture and art have definitely changed the world, and as the world becomes even more complex and difficult, the more art's potentiality will be realized, culture's potentiality can be realized. The spaces of art and culture are the last remaining spaces of freedom.

EO: And how do you see the state of the contemporary art world?

AJ: The world of contemporary

art has an image problem, which is of course ironic. The image circulated by the media with vicious vulgarity and spectacle, and it is a circus image of a few so-called art stars and a lot of money. Honestly, this has nothing to do with the world of contemporary art. The world of contemporary art is not monolithic; it is a network of systems. In one of these systems you have thousands of artists looking for meaning in life, in society, working with communities, trying to creatively expand their horizons. In another system you will find thinkers and intellectuals and dreamers discussing issues that affect society and the world, and producing papers and documents and publications and participating in lectures and

"All art is political. It is impossible to do anything in this world that does not have a political reading."

debates, and expanding models of thinking. Contemporary art is film, theatre, music, poetry, dance, visual arts, which makes you think, makes you cry, makes you feel, and makes you act in the world. Where is that image of contemporary art in the media today? It just doesn't exist. The media makes a spectacle out of it, and it is quite sad.

EO: Do you think part of the artist's role is public intervention? For visual artists, for example, it is not staying within the confines of the exhibition space, but going out onto the street?

AJ: Personally I have felt the need to get out, and that is why I have divided my work in three main areas; only one third of my time is spent working in the so-called art world, in museums, galleries and foundations. Because this art world is so insular, I have tried to reach out to a larger audience, and that is why I have created more than fifty public interventions around the world, outside of the confines of the art world. In these projects I work with different communities, removed from the art world, and I confront myself to real life problems, from real life people, and these confrontations,

.....
**"I became an artist
because I was unhappy
with the state of the world.
I am unhappy with the way
it is now, and I want to
change it."**
.....

these exercises in reality, keep me real, keep me grounded, and inform my practice as an artist within the art world. The third part of what I do is teaching. I direct seminars and workshops around the world where I exchange ideas with the younger generations, I share my experiences and I learn from their own experiences, and their own dreams. I would say that teaching is probably the most political of all three. But they are all three very important, and all these practices inform me as a professional and as a human being and make me complete.

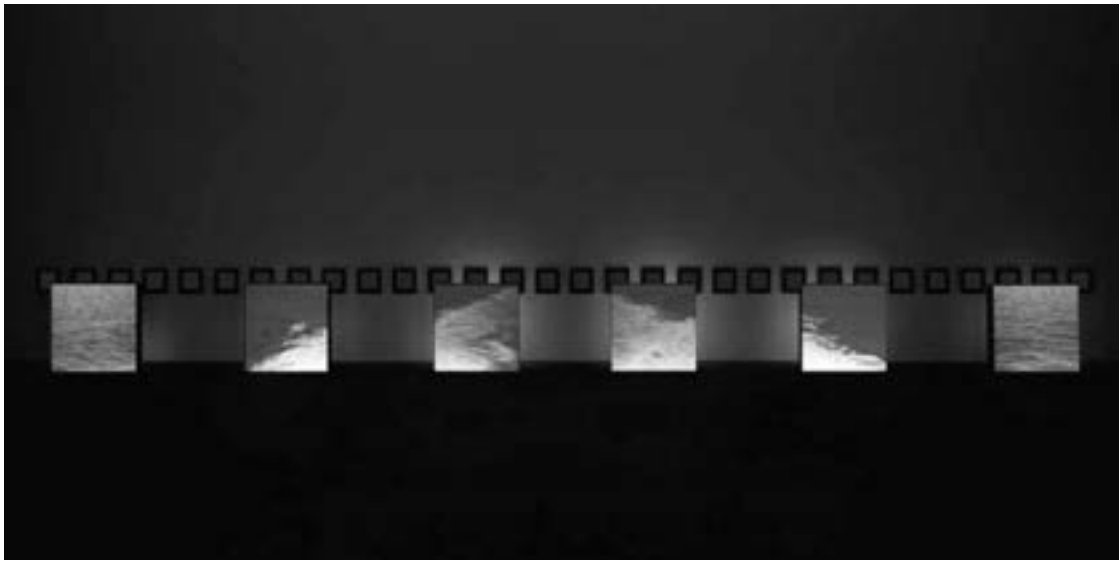
EO: Have you seen the recent Cildo Meireles exhibition (at the Tate Modern, in London, until January 11th, 2009)? I recently read a quote of his, which said: "In some way you become political when you don't have a chance to be poetic. I think human beings would much prefer to be poetic." Would you like to comment on this?

AJ: Yes, I have seen the exhibition. Cildo has managed to look

at the world poetically, and to create poetic assemblages, poetic environments, poetic installations and poetic objects. And they all have a political content – it is unavoidable – but the poetry of his constructions is overwhelming, and joyful. In contrast, I feel that my works have tilted more towards the political. Of course, they have a poetic element, always, but in that difficult balance between the poetic and the political, my works have been more political, I think. It has been more difficult for me, I am afraid, to contain my rage. In the works, for example, dealing with the Rwandan genocide I could not contain my rage, and so the political overwhelms the poetical. Cildo has been able to contain himself, or perhaps has confronted situations of less urgency than mine, and has been able to create explosions of poetry. It is an admirable exhibition from an admirable artist.

EO: Given the result of the most recent US presidential elections how do you view your 1989 work *The Fire Next Time*?

AJ: When I created that piece, I was living in New York and I felt race relations in the city were incredibly fragile, and it was a way for me to express that, and to express my shock, and sadness about the state of race relations in the country. When I moved to the United States in 1982 I



IT IS DIFFICULT
HANGAR BICOCCA, MILANO
3.10.2008 – 11.01.2009

(above)
Untitled (Water), 1990
SIX DOUBLE-SIDED LIGHTBOXES WITH TWELVE
COLOR TRANSPARENCIES, THIRTY FRAMED
MIRRORS
LIGHTBOXES: 102CM X 102CM X 20CM EACH,
MIRRORS: 30CM X 30CM X 5CM EACH
OVERALL DIMENSIONS: VARIABLE
© THE ARTIST, NEW YORK, AND GALLERIA LIA
RUMMA, MILANO

(below)
Geography = War, 1991
FIVE LIGHTBOXES WITH COLOR
TRANSPARENCIES, 100 METAL BARRELS,
WATER
LIGHTBOXES: 102CM X 102CM X 13CM
EACH, BARRELS: 91CM HIGH, 61CM
DIAMETER
OVERALL DIMENSIONS: VARIABLE
© THE ARTIST, NEW YORK, AND GALLERIA
LIA RUMMA, MILANO

its relationship to the rest of the world.

EO: What is your impression of the direction of contemporary politics?

AJ: I am always amazed at the simultaneous presence of contradictory winds in the world. On one hand you have what just happened in the United States, with its extraordinary potential, in a progressive direction, and then you have the phenomenon of Berlusconi in a country like Italy, where you can actually observe some fascist winds all over the country, and you wonder: how is that possible? How, why do societies, communities, move to the left or to the right simultaneously? What is it in human nature that make us behave in so contradictory ways, and if you look at Europe you will see some fascist spots on the map, and some progressive spots on the map, and they struggle against each other. And we, as citizens, are confronted with these realities, and we have to decide our path, and we will decide our path based on the education we have received, on the influence of our parents, on the influence of the milieu in which we live and grow, and on our personal convictions. But I am always amazed at this, all these possible paths, contradictions that we face in our daily lives, and that is why I always quote Emile Cioran, a Romanian poet and writer that I admire deeply, who wrote about his normal state of mind, as always being "simultaneously happy and unhappy, exalted and depressed, overcome by both pleasure and despair in the most contradictory harmonies", that is how I feel today, when I look at the world, when I read the papers, and I am always hoping that the balance will shift one day towards social justice. ■



ALFREDO JAAR'S COSMOPOLITAN CHALLENGE TO INSTITUTIONALISED INDIFFERENCE

North and South, overdeveloped, developing and developmentally arrested worlds must be made part of the same present.

BY PAUL GILROY

Europe's modernity was made and maintained by violence. Its initial energy came from the conquest of people pronounced alien and inferior. Its dynamism would be sustained by the consolidation of colonies and empires. Gradually, Capital ordered that divided and precarious arrangement into a system of national states and trans-national markets. Today, it is neither polite nor fashionable to point out that the idea of race was a fundamental factor in making those arbitrary divisions appear natural and historical as well as scientific and inevitable.

Now, the circuitry of power is shifting away from the Atlantic. We all face environmental and political catastrophes that do not respect national borders. Those changes place us under new obligations. We have to find new ways of understanding our predicament as a planetary phenomenon. We must assemble the social and ethical tools which we will need if we are to dwell peacefully with each other in a sustainable manner that recognizes global interdependence and admits the force of our common claims upon the imperiled earth. Our humanity is at stake.

The suffering born from that destructive and exploitative system has been given a voice and a face not by government but in cultural creativity. An urgent conversation about the future of our world is being led by artists rather than by politicians, journalists and academics. Everyday cultural spaces—by no means only powerful museums and galleries—are places where new imaginative habits are being

acquired, affirmed and refined. The pleasures of being exposed to difference can be discovered in art's precious, convivial corona. That contact with alterity need not mean loss and jeopardy even in circumstances where security is imagined to derive from absolute sameness. Freed from the pressure to encounter ethnic and racialised difference as exotica, we can face up to the ordinariness of plurality. Hopefully, that emancipatory contact will help to cultivate the cosmopolitan virtues of attentiveness, perspective and proportionality.

After the Nazi genocide was acknowledged as an epochal event, artists began to ask what varieties of creative practice would comprise an appropriate response to the scale and character of its horrors. They struggled to answer the ethical demands that were imposed by a commitment to preventing the recurrence of mass murder and related crimes against humanity. Those problems—and the various mid-twentieth century answers offered to them—redefined the imaginative boundaries of European culture which was in need of repair. The ethical and aesthetic dilemmas involved generated a battle of ideas which

ic poetry, indeed over the validity and shifting character of western culture. In the shadow of catastrophe and trauma, survivor testimony and contested memory, art had to be salvaged and made anew. In novel, perhaps in redemptive forms, it would contribute to a revised definition of what Europe was and what it would become in the future. Art alone could reacquaint Europe with the humanity from which it had been estranged.

The post-1945 reaction against fascism fostered the emergence of a new moral language centered on the idea of universal human rights. These innovations combined to ensure that the legacy of humanism and the category of the human were pending in Europe's reflections. However, the bloody history of colonial rule and of the bitter wars of decolonization that followed it were never registered in the same deep manner. Mid-century Europe's reflexive exercises were certainly well-intentioned but they stopped a long way short of a properly cosmopolitan commitment to understanding the history of the Nazi period in the context of earlier encounters with the peoples that Europe had conquered, sold, exploited and

temperately European, the other torridly colonial, has become fundamental in our postcolonial time. Perhaps Europe cannot remember its imperial and colonial history without learning too many painful and uncomfortable things about itself and about the uneven development of its civilisation. The prosecu-

"Jaar's interventions exemplify what might be called a responsible worldliness."

tion of colonial wars allowed no distinction between civilian and soldier. The Geneva conventions did not apply and weapons of mass destruction could be used upon primitive people without any great objection.

Western culture remains disoriented by troubling news of the comprehensive manner in which its civilisational claims were compromised. To make matters worse, postcolonial peoples began to appear inside Europe's fortifications. Their presence revealed that Europe was unable—just as Aimé Césaire had prophesied long ago—to resolve the two great, interrelated difficulties to which its modern history had given rise: the colonial problem and the problem of class hierarchy. Post-colonial settlers who came to clean up and reinvigorate Europe after the anti-Nazi war have gradually had their rights of citizenship circumscribed and withdrawn. Refugees, asylum-seekers, undocumented and unwanted denizens now comprise a newer caste of infra-human beings who have found the conspicuous benefits of loudly-trumpeted human rights hard to access. Those people are certainly here, mostly because Europe was once where they came from, but the door to recognition and belonging is being firmly blocked off. They experience not just racism and xenophobia but a mode of simultaneous exclusion and inclusion which confines them to a twilight life of rightslessness.

Cosmopolitan, contemporary art like Jaar's has offered a welcome therapeutic response. Firstly, this oppositional art says that the idea that European development bears a precious and unique telos cannot be sustained any longer. Secondly, it suggests that the old view in which Africa was outside of history and devoid of historicity, has crumpled before the postcolonial challenges of simultaneity and accountability. Thirdly, it says that those who dwell inside the grimy citadels of overdevelopment must acknowledge the way their fates are connected to the lives of people in the global South whose misery and insecurity conditions post-scarcity plenitude and security. This focus on the inter-relational does not generate another Manichaean script. Pockets of that desperate South are now lodged inside the North and vice versa. This is no longer a black and white world.

Somehow, North and South, overdeveloped, developing and developmentally arrested worlds must be made part of the same present. Living sustainably and with minimal conflict, means being prepared to be accountable to one another. Jaar rises to this challenge and his interventions exemplify what might be called a responsible worldliness. They are tacitly premised upon a critique of the indifference to the suffering of others which has been institutionalized in the overdeveloped countries. He does not approach that suffering as if it were the exclusive cultural or experiential property of its victims. He boldly takes the responsibility to acknowledge these wrongs on to his own shoulders and invites us to do likewise. His hostility to institutionalized indifference is profound enough to invite a daring return to the disreputable problem of common humanity. This is no rerun of the old cosmopolitanism based upon extending hospitality. National states are hemorrhaging. They leak people, ideas, technology and resources into each other. A



was swiftly recognized as part of a larger political, philosophical and moral problem. They were connected to debates over theodicy, over the complicity of European civilisation with racism and fascism, over the role of technology and debased, instrumental reason, over the timeliness of lyr-

sometimes sought to eradicate.

The historical continuity between those histories of suffering was ignored and dismissed. Similarly, the broad, human significance of the awful events proved difficult to grasp. But the continuity between those two extended phases of terror, one



restorative re-engagement with the notion of common humanity may help to stabilize this situation. However, it can only succeed if it is conducted in explicit opposition to racial hierarchies, civilisationist conceits and neo-imperial exploitation.

For some time now, Jaar's tricontinental projects have endeavoured provocatively to place Asia, Africa and Europe's first colony, Latin America in the official world picture. It is not only that he has indicted the malign unevenness of official media coverage and challenged its implicit geography. He has moved beyond the basic problems of omission and restorative inclusion and towards a different kind of inquiry altogether. This aspect of his work is aimed at the forms of power that flow from the control of images and from their eventful, contested reception by anxious viewers who want to know how to respond to the terrible things they can see, but do not know how, or what to do. They are not assisted in their quest for ethical probity by a media culture and a consumer mood that promote collusion and dignify a culture of indifference which is

"An urgent conversation about the future of our world is being led by artists rather than by politicians, journalists and academics."

fatal both for its object objects and its disoriented receivers.

Jaar's pieces return to these fundamental themes of controlling images and responding honestly to disturbing and demanding information in impossible situations. He has integrated an oblique but bitter commentary on these features of post- and neo-colonial power with a series of blunt enquiries into the responsibilities of artists as well as the plight of willfully innocent gatherers and transmitters of information. He promotes reexamining the rules and codes that govern the recognition and representation of the Others whose presence secures the border around us. Their appearance in our news-scapes, on our screens should not boil down to a choice between trivialization and betrayal. The artist's efforts to assimilate and humanize

these mutes might, he suggests, become both honest and authentic. That difficult prospect involves breaking up the dyad of victim and perpetrator and supplementing those narrow roles with a spectrum of other possibilities: denier, bystander, witness and perhaps in certain limited circumstances even saviour. This imaginative expansion requires ethical effort and it does not remain the artist's singular responsibility for long. In Jaar's hands, it opens slowly into a necessarily painful consideration of where witnesses, spectators and audiences stand in relation to the traumatic and depressing events that now compose the agenda of global news as it tracks our planet's commercial and political upheavals. The Rwandan tragedy which has occupied him so consistently, dropped out of that dubious programme for a number of the reasons outlined above. The clouds passing over a place of memory become a transient marker not only of the space of death but of the ambivalent conundrum of honest shock and human shame.

The growing inequality between the overdeveloped world

and the rest threatens to compromise the ground on which a resurgent understanding of common humanity will eventually have to be erected. Other deeply uncomfortable words like "accountability" and "responsibility" help to specify Jaar's humble engagement with the humanity of the other people who have been locked out of the promises and pathologies of overdevelopment. He offers compelling elements of a countermedia that might connect their everyday life to ours.

Filtered pseudo-news flows ceaselessly from the frontlines. The media is saturated by the strategic outpourings of a burgeoning PR machinery. In the process, politics and public culture have acquired an unrelenting tempo which is not conducive to any open engagement with suffering, immediate or remote. Jaar applies the same humanising tactics wherever he is. They start from a refusal of complicity with existing patterns of seeing and being seen. He will show you neither the homeless of Montreal nor the charnel houses of Rwanda. Yet the presence of both is publicly marked, announced

in other more demanding ways that break the polarity between those who chose to communicate horror and suffering in ways that will never be sufficient and those who refuse that task, opting instead to shock and to interrupt. That modernist dilemma is re-staged repeatedly but it is now accompanied by a distinctive commitment to working through the constraints of the colonial past. It is that resolution which breaks the melancholic spell cast all over Europe by the desire for a return to the greatness that vanished with departed imperial prestige. It is there too that Jaar extends Fanon's famous invitation to the sometime beneficiaries of colonial domination "wake up, put on (your) thinking caps and stop playing the irresponsible game of sleeping beauty." There is no kiss bestowed here. The flashes of light and flame are his inducements to that belated awakening. ■

This article is an edited extract of an essay in SCARDI, Gabi and PIETROMARCHI, Bartolomeo (eds) (2008) *Alfredo Jaar: It Is Difficult*, Vol. 2, Mantua, Italy: Edizioni Corraini. With thanks to the publisher and Paul Gilroy, © Paul Gilroy

SANDRO MEZZADRA INTERVIEWED

Migrants are here to stay, and their number is bound to increase in the next years: their practices and their struggles will play a key role in any attempt to imagine and build a “positive notion of European citizenship”.

Europa: In many European countries the policy towards immigration is getting tougher, and the financial crisis is already being used as a powerful justification for these policies. European legislation is also getting tougher, especially with regards to extra-European immigration. How do you see these developments?

Mezzadra: Although I am not at all excluding the importance of other factors (political, cultural, etc) I do think that the current crisis plays a key role in the toughening of European migration policies and in the increasing hostility towards extra-European migrants. Even one of the most “progressive” European governments, the Zapatero government in Spain, proposed repatriation programs for migrants as soon as the first signs of the crisis became apparent in the construction sector, which had employed thousands of migrants in recent years. The point is that the current crisis is not a mere “financial” crisis, it is a deep, global crisis of the whole economic system. And in such cases, the consequences for migrants tend to be negative: just think of the early 1930s in the US, when the start of the “New Deal” was accompanied by the deportation of half a million Mexican immigrants, together with many of their US-born sons and daughters. Or think of the *Anwerbestopp* (the end of recruitment of foreign “guestworkers”) and of the attempt to repatriate many immigrants in Western Germany after the crisis of 1973...

On the other hand, the economic system and the labour market work in contemporary Europe in a fundamentally different way than in the heyday of the so-called “Fordism”. “Labour shortages” and in general the demand of migrant labour are much more flexible, punctual and elusive than they used to be. It is therefore reasonable to think that each attempt to seal the borders will be accompanied by a series of exceptions (for careworkers, seasonal workers in agriculture and other sectors, etc.). And that the migration regime in Europe will evolve toward the adoption of ever more sophisticated and complicated systems of filtering and selection. Current developments and discussions in the UK on the new points-based system are symptomatic in this sense.

Migrants are here to stay, and their number

is bound to increase in the next years: their practices and their struggles will play a key role in any attempt to imagine and build a “positive notion of European citizenship”.

Europa: Do you think that the increasingly cosmopolitan composition of many European towns and cities (particularly in the west of Europe) lends itself to the construction of a new form of emancipatory politics, one that goes beyond issue-specific concerns and has a transnational dimension?

Mezzadra: No European metropolis could exist, produce, or even be “competitive” on the world market without the “hybrid” and cosmopolitan composition of its population, of its culture, of its styles of life, and of course of its labour market. This is a crucial point in my opinion, and everybody is aware of this in Europe: even current configurations of racism do not aim at assigning different populations to different territories, they rather aim to regulate, to “manage” as European rhetoric would have it, the intersection of their bodies within a single territory.

To put it in a rather schematic way: the heterogeneity of European population corresponds to the proliferation of heterogeneous devices of control, domination and exploitation, which are continuously disarticulating and re-assembling the very shape of citizenship in Europe. It is a question of political agency to transform European citizenship into a space of heterogeneous practices of freedom and equality.

Europa: You have recently questioned the idea (with reference to Mouffe and Laclau) that genuinely new political movements can be constructed on the basis of an equivalence between different particular demands

and have suggested that we might need instead to think of a relation more akin to translation between different heterogeneous groups and their struggles. If we adopt this approach, how do we avoid colluding with the dispersion and disintegration techniques employed by the organs of power – which have an interest in keeping political demands heterogeneous and contradictory

“We need variable geometries of struggle, of active involvement of heterogeneous subjects, actors and movements.”

– and generate a sufficiently cohesive alternative idiom of resistance?

Mezzadra: It is an important question, which directly relates with what I was just saying on the heterogeneity of practices of freedom and equality. Let me say, first of all, that while I have been critical towards Mouffe and Laclau in some of my recent writings, I do acknowledge the importance of their contributions to the rethinking of a critical theory of emancipatory politics in the last two decades. The problem with the concept of *equivalence* is that it tends to reproduce existing political forms – first of all the state – as the center and unsurpassable horizon of politics. To summarize and simplify what should be a long and complicated discourse: the subject of articulation between different particular claims according to the logic of equivalence is structurally a kind of “transcendent” subject (be it the party, be it the state). It is not internal to the movements that produce the claims. In my work I try to explore the productivity of the reference to the concept of translation to imagine a new kind of political subjectivity and

political action. I am trying to take more seriously the issue of “difference” and to frame the construction of the *common* through a continuous and never ending process of invention of a new political language, as well as of new forms of organization and even institutions. This is a process that traverses the heterogeneity of social struggles without sacrificing their specific claims to the logic of equivalence but at the same time without confining them to their specificity and to the logic of identity politics.

Europa: Etienne Balibar, with whom you have entered into considerable dialogue, has repeatedly stressed the importance of developing variable geometries for the European Union. How do you assess European neighbourhood policy in this regard, and in particular the use of offering a road to membership of the EU as bait? Does the recent re-launch of the idea of a Mediterranean Union present any new paradigms for Europe’s soft-power approach?

Mezzadra: I do agree with Etienne Balibar about the importance of developing variable geometries for the European process. But I think that these variable geometries must be first of all variable geometries of struggle, of active involvement of heterogeneous subjects, actors and movements. The variable geometries of the European Union tend to build different degrees of internality and externality to the European space to which precise relations of power correspond. Migration has been key to the whole process of the Eastward Enlargement of the European Union. Candidates had to adapt their legislation and their migratory politics to the “European standards”, what did not mean in the first place “human rights” but the building of detention facilities

On Movement: Sandro Mezzadra and the



BY NADJA STAMSELBERG

Reflecting on the notion of movement, which strategically crops up every time the multitude needs a definition, for instance when the concept of multitude needs to be detached from the false alternative between sovereignty and

anarchy calls for its definition. Leaving it undefined, Agamben claims, risks compromising our choices and strategies. He argues that the primacy of the notion of movement lies in the becoming unpolitical of the people. The movement becomes the decisive political concept when the democratic concept of the people, as a political body, is in demise. Democracy ends when movements emerge. Furthermore, if by democracy we mean what traditionally regards the people as the political body constitutive of democracy, no democratic movements exist.

But then why do we keep using the concept of movement? If it signals a threshold of politicisation of the unpolitical, can there be a movement that is different from civil war? or in what direction can we rethink the concept of movement and its relation to bio-politics?

Potential answers can be found in Mezzadra’s proposal to name migration as a social movement. The movement can find its own politicality only by assigning to the unpolitical body of the people an internal caesura that allow for its politicisation. For Schmitt, this caesura consists in the identity of species, i.e. racism. Analogously, the internal caesura, which allows for politicisation of the social movement of migration, is the practices of exclusion the migrant and the refugee are subjected to. The appellation of migration as a social movement can be found throughout Mezzadra’s body of work. In his call to re-address migration, one is invited to move away from the manner in which immigrants have been confronted in recent years. Despite referring to the immigrant situation in Italy, which resulted in a critique



Photo by Bilgita Eregovic

politics of migration

of the Bossi-Fini Law, the relevance of his observations transcends not only the Italian, but also the European sphere. Perceived as a weak subject, hollowed out by hunger and misery and in urgent need of care and help, the immigrant as Mezzadra describes him/her is an easy prey for a paternalistic logic that ascribes him/her to an inferior position, thus denying him/her any possibility of becoming a subject. The obverse face of this perception of the migrant is the emphasis of the right to difference, which characterises the multicultural understanding shared by most of the political and social Left. In view of this view of the Left, which depicts migrants as simple objects, dragged along and overwhelmed by the global mobilisation of capital, and in view of the naturalistic metaphors of the dominant public dis-

course, the need to revise the migration rhetoric becomes imperative. Through the prism of semantic appropriation, the migrant becomes as hazardous and in some cases deadly as the occurrences that initiated his/her exodus. Having escaped the objective causes, the migrants are subsequently objectified. As they become objects themselves, divorced from any subjective and personal dimension of being, they are subjected to a crude generalisation, numbering and classification implicit in the mainstream treatment of migratory processes. Ascribing these views to a lack of focus on the subjectivity of migrants, Mezzadra proposes to utilise the concept of what he aptly terms *right to escape*. Emphasising the subjective dimension of migration, Mezzadra claims, does not mean assuming the Anglo-Saxon po-

sition of considering a migrant as a rootless, nomadic post-modern subject freely crossing the boundaries between cultures and identities. For him, what constitutes the paradigmatic status of the migrant's condition lies in instances of transformation that regard not only migrants.

However, practices of exclusion, which correspond to objectivisation of migration, politicise migration as a movement, inevitably raise the question of whether subjectivisation of migration thus depoliticises it. Should we indeed read this trajectory as depoliticisation, or as an invitation to interpret differently the concept of the political and the concept of democracy, and to try and articulate both concepts via the notions of gift and singularity?

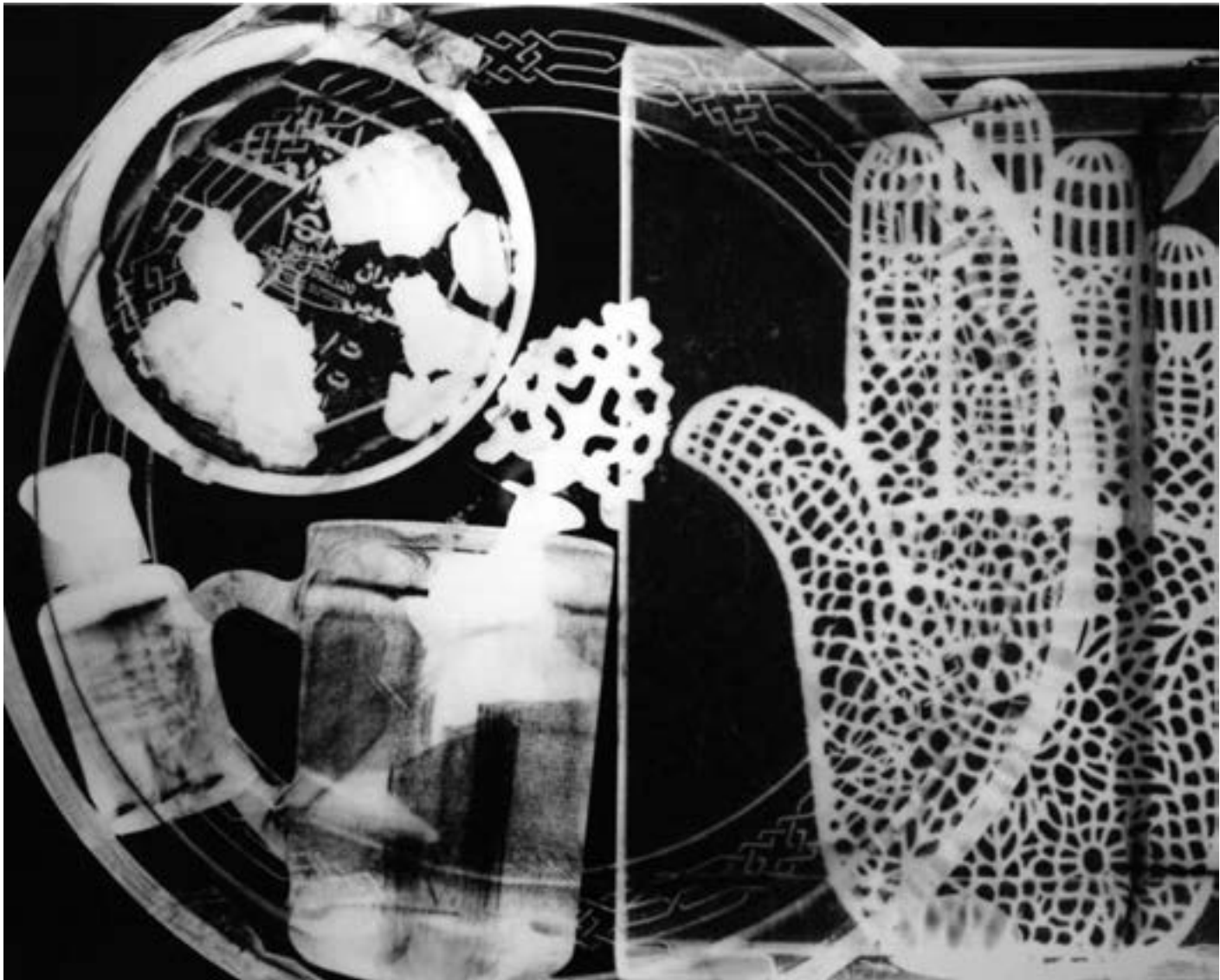
and the cooperation in the European regime of border control and deportation. And you cannot talk about the project of a Mediterranean Union without taking into account and closely analyzing the whole process of "externalization" of the European border and migration regime. As for instance Ali Bensaâd has recently written, the attempt to involve ever more neighbouring and even distant countries in the management of migration towards Europe corresponds to an attempt to "delocalize" Europe's tensions outside its borders. And this really works as a kind of "bait", since the cooperation in the field of migration and border control is becoming one of the fundamental conditions for any kind of further cooperation.

All this said, I remain convinced that these processes (European enlargement, neighbourhood policies, Mediterranean Union) open up fields of potential political experimentation well beyond the actual shape they take. But the condition for a positive and productive experimentation is the deepening of networking and exchange processes between movements and struggles. Many experiences are developing in this direction: although they are still small and limited, I do think that they are crucial in showing the vital necessity of new kinds of transnational and transborder emancipatory politics.

Europa: In your article *The Right to Escape*, published in 2004, you write that the subjectivity of a migrant must be placed at the centre of attention. In your opinion has this become more common practice since you wrote the article?

Mezzadra: It is difficult to generalize on such a point. "Public discourses" are diverse and profoundly heterogeneous in Europe: it's hard to compare Sweden and Italy when you look at the way in which migrants are represented in the dominant public discourse. Nevertheless I would tend to say that common characteristics have emerged within what we can very roughly call "European public discourse" in the last years. The increasing securitization of the public discourse has been for instance one of these characteristics, along with the rise of a certain "Anti-Islamism", particularly after September 11, and the bombings in London and Madrid. We could go on for a long time mentioning "negative" characteristics... But at the same time, even in a country like Italy, there have been, paradoxically as it can seem, contrasting developments, pointing in the direction of an increasing acknowledgement of the legitimacy and structural character of migrants' presence: attention is given to forms and practices of "vernacular multiculturalism", as well as to the subjectivity of the "second generation", which is a relatively new phenomenon in this country. After all, the "public discourse" is itself a battlefield, and one must not be exclusively pessimistic when looking at recent developments in the field: but the battle has to be fought everyday. And it is worth doing it! ■

ISLAMISM IS THE NEW RED?



Four years after the Madrid bombings, there is still no consensus on how to understand Political Islam in Europe.

BY JOSHUA CRAZE

The Rotterdam Imam El Moumni, whose preaching so shocked Pim Fortuyn, uses a language that would not seem out of place in an American Evangelist Church to make a moral appeal which would equally seem at home on the Christian right: homosexuals are sick and in need of treatment. Both Church and Mosque alike feel that they are among a small number of true believers in Godless societies.

Yet, despite this seeming proximity, the same Imam claims that it is these Churches that are part of the Crusader's imperialist project – equally, Christian Evangelists group Muslims and the multicultural (secular) left together when they diagnose society's ills.

If there seem to be strange bedfellows today, it is because we still do not have any real idea of what the bed is, and correspondingly who is lying in it; over four years after the Madrid bombings, there is still no consensus about how to understand Islamism in

Europe.

This uncertainty is made manifest by the terms we use: political Islamism, political Islam, Islamo-fascism, or just plain old Islam. Each term refers to a different object, and yet we tend to lump them together, or hope that our definitions will somehow be adequate to the situation in which we find ourselves.

A European Islamism?

In the aftermath of Madrid, and the regime-change that was seemingly affected, a popular line of argument linked these attacks to the situation in the Middle East. In such an argument, violent attacks in Europe

become the extension of a strange foreign policy acted out in the name of those oppressed by American (and often by extension, European) imperialism. It was, indeed, the explicit motivation of the Madrid bombers to protest Spanish troop deployment in Iraq and Afghanistan.

One approach to understanding European Islamism would be to take the claims of the Islamists themselves seriously; to share a vision of the world in which the dar al-Islam (land of Islam) is fragmented by migration, globalisation and military interventions, and in which actions in Europe act to support a deterritorialised Islam.

According to Olivier Roy, one of the most prominent analysts of Islam, what such an approach would miss is the specifically European aspect of Islamism. If we look to European history, what we will see is that:

“The far left in Europe today has abandoned zones of social exclusion.... a 30-year old, in France, who would have joined the proletarian left, the Maoists or *Action Directe*, who, in Italy, would have joined the *Brigate Rosse*, who, in Germany, would have joined the *Rote Armee Fraktion*, this young person no longer has the opportunity to join left-wing movements, and if he or she wants to fight the system, and use violence, he or she has only one role model: and that is bin Laden, or the local Islamist networks, or his or her friend.”

The inheritance of failure

There is much to suggest such a viewpoint has some merit.

We are in Egypt. It is 1952. Following the coup d'état that brings Nasser to power, Sayyid Qutb, one of the most influential Islamist thinkers of the last hundred years, is made the “tribune of the revolution”. Over the next six years Qutb made a series of radio broadcasts in which he sets out a vision of the revolution as the first in a series that will lead to the unity of all the Muslim nations.

The eventual separation between the socialism of Nasser and the radicalism of Qutb – which was soon followed by the collapse of socialism and the rise of Islamism – should not obscure the links between Islamism and socialism as political ideologies. Theoretically, both Qutb and Mawdudi – the influential Pakistani thinker – took the notion of the vanguard from Marxist language.

If the vanguard for Lenin is the party – that force that will ensure the movement from an existent political world in which the proletariat do not recognise the situation of oppression in which they find themselves – then, for Mawdudi and Qutb, the vanguard is used to ensure the movement between a world in which politics and religion are com



Edge of Arabia

Edge of Arabia is a pioneering attempt to expose new currents in Saudi Arabian visual arts to an international audience, and is the first major exhibition of contemporary Saudi art in London. It presents the work of 17 artists from across the country, both male and female, who address a range of global political issues as well as their relationship to the Islamic faith, issues surrounding self-image, and the history of their regions of Saudi Arabia. Saudi Arabia is often presented in Europe as a homogenous country of highly traditional cultural practices. What emerges is a highly diverse set of cultural subjectivities which all have a startlingly modern sensibility which in some places even displays irony. The exhibition will be regarded as a landmark beginning for international understanding of the complex relation between modernity and religious custom in what is often a very private kingdom.

BRUNEI GALLERY SOAS, LONDON, CLOSED 13TH DECEMBER

pletely separated, and the world to come, where religious virtue and political power will be inseparable.

Political Islamism failed, and what we see today in Europe, according to Olivier Roy, is structurally different. Among the videotapes and internet articles of those who argue for violent attacks on Europe, there is no thought, unlike for Sayyid Qutb, of taking state power. There is instead an insistence on the duty to perform individual actions, without thought for the practical political consequences. It is most of all this emphasis that means trying to understand Islamism in Middle Eastern terms is flawed.

The links that Roy sees between the radical left and Islamism go past ideology. There is also a similarity of situation: both movements emerge after a failed attempt to ensure passage to a virtuous state (the GIA in Algeria, Communism in Russia), both emphasize individual actions, both act in an international space constituted by a deterritorialised community, and, whether this community is the *ummah* or the global proletariat, the space is conveyed, paradigmatically, by the media.

But there are problems with Olivier Roy's account. The argument is narrowly functionalist: it assumes that there is a need for revolt in society, and that now merely the names have changed.

As an account of the far left, this account fails. The Rote Armee Fraktion was largely composed of the alienated bourgeois, and did not ever enter zones of social exclusion in order to abandon them. More importantly, the comparison misses the differing ways people understand the violence that they use. Why Islamism? The question is almost nonsensical to the framework Olivier Roy creates: what he sees is history repeated.

If we look to the justifications that are given, the personal videos made, the constant invocations of duty, the sudden appearance of violence outside of formal political parties, then it is clear we cannot understand them in terms of politics. If we can understand them at all, then it would seem to be as an ethical duty, something one takes upon oneself as an individual, outside of any political or religious structure. In a space outside of politics, we are left with a particularly deadly form of ethics. ■

European Alternatives launches Saudi Arabia project

Over the first sixth months of 2009 European Alternatives will be working in partnership with a wide range of Saudi Arabian and UK organisations on a joint project to promote the building of long-standing civil society relations between the two countries, to promote cultural exchange. This project, which will be launched in Jeddah and Riyadh in January, will be presented at the London Festival of Europe in May 2009, and again in Saudi over the summer.



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PERFORMACE ART IN LATIN AMERICA: TANIA BRUGUERA AND LORENA WOLFFER

Women artists in Latin American have been at the forefront in promoting an art that is at once introspective and socially engaged.

BY JOSEFINA ALCÁZAR

Performance art emerges in the second half of the twentieth century, a period characterised by a strong disrespect for artistic boundaries. The artists of the vanguardist movements of the fifties and sixties erase the distinction between high and low culture and move beyond traditional divisions between artistic forms, creating an essentially interdisciplinary art form. They defend the inseparability of art and life, an heritage of Dadaism that gains in strength over this period. The opposition between creating subject and created object becomes ambiguous, the relation between creator and spectator is turned upside down. From another angle, the growing mercantilisation of art is strongly questioned. The work of art, previously considered as the unique fruit of the imagination, is now compared to mass production. Contemplation, the

“The transgression of a hypocritical and regressive morality has been a fundamental theme for performance art.”

traditional gate of access to art, is identified with the fetishised gaze in front of a shop window. All this pushed artists to disarticulate the traditional manner of understanding art, developing alternative methods of production and distribution. New means of presenting the works were sought: artists left the concert hall, the theatre, the gallery, the museum, and all the other places usually assigned to the aesthetic experience, in search of a new space. A return to Duchamp favours a self-reflexive art, where an idea takes the place of an object. The process of conceptualisation

and creation gains primacy, culminating in a de-materialisation of the artistic process.

With the abolishment of ‘the work of art’, preoccupations for style, quality and permanence – traditionally all essential elements of art – are erased. The artist, says Joseph Kosuth, must first and foremost be judged according to his method and capacity to question the nature of art itself; art, able to address the spiritual interests of man, can be conceived to replace philosophy and religion.

Performance art has a number of predecessors, and it is impossible to establish a vertical structure to illustrate the point of origin of this artistic form. Its origins



are many and interlaced, extending in a rhizomic¹ horizontality. The germs that gave birth to performance art lived in the spirit of the age, so that we find its manifestations in Japan as much as in Brazil, in the United States as in Vienna, in Mexico as in Spain. In a nutshell, it could be said that performance art embraces a complex and heterogeneous range of live art, crossing artistic and disciplinary frontiers in search of new vocabularies, new spaces and new materials to create experiences that emphasise the process of creation and conceptualisation instead of the product, making of the artist’s body its raw material.

TANIA BRUGUERA (Cuba)

A cardinal point in Latin American performance art is the ritual component. The recuperation of indigenous traditions, a reference to religious ceremonies or shamanic acts, are all commonly found as

pects of this art; the question of identity is often approached in relation to ethno-cultural roots. Many artists retrieve an ancestral imaginary and cosmology, where the body is presented in its relation to the supernatural; this is particularly the case in the performances of artists from Cuba, Brazil, Mexico and Venezuela, who maintain a strong link to their past. These artists summon a sacred space in which to incorporate elements of mystic significance, such as blood, earth, water, flowers, candles or copal [a type of resin]. In Cuba, for example, “the presence of African culture, through the different ethnicities introduced over almost four centuries of slav-

“Bruguera explores her social and cultural context, she analyses the problems of power, migration, memory, or guilt, converting them in the central theme of her works. She turns art into critical reflection”

ery, has profoundly affected religious practice, dance, musical expression, as well as popular culture and plastic arts²”.

Within the field of art inspired by ritual, Tania Bruguera stands out for the force of her work, which recuperates ritual through her intimate and personal experience while relating it very subtly to the political context. Born in La Habana, Cuba, in 1968, Tania has held numerous exhibitions and performances since 1986. International recognition arrives with the series of performances *Rostros Corporales* [“corporeal faces”, 1982-1993], conceived as a homage to the mythical Cuban-American artist Ana Mendieta. Bruguera here departs from the name of a performance realised by Ana Mendieta in 1982, and carries out a reflection on migration, identity, and the sense of belonging.

In an interview realised in 1990 by Valia

Garzón, Tania recalled that “what began as a simple homage took on other connotations when... towards the end of eighties a massive emigration of Cuban artists and friends took place. They all began to disappear. All the energy was leaving Cuba. Ana Mendieta was looking for the Cuba she had lost; I was looking for all that Cuba was losing”. For Tania art represents the possibility of reflection, an attempt to bring an intimate and personal experience to the collective space.³

In 1997, Tania Bruguera began one of the most well-known and polemical of her series: *El peso de la culpa* [the weight of guilt]. The first piece of this series was realised in her house, in La Habana Vieja, as her work was not included in the 6th Habana Biennial. Her house faced the road, and she left the door open; the international public mixed with her neighbours and people from the crowded bar opposite the house. Dressed in a white dress and barefoot, Bruguera stood in front of the Cuban flag, which she had weaved herself using human hair. From her body hung a beheaded ram, covering her chest as a shield. In the flat there was a pot of earth and a bowl full of water. Tania placed some earth in her hand, mixed it with water and slowly ate it. Over the entire duration of the performance, around an hour, Bruguera was eating the earth in an attitude of resignation and resistance, with calm and ritual⁴.

Tania declared that this gesture was



related to the suicide ritual of the indigenous populations of the island faced with the pressure of the Spanish invasion. Doubtlessly, the symbolism of the performance allows for several readings. For the critic José Ramón Alonso the gigantic flag confined the action in Cuba. The ram is a symbol of sacrifice, but it also expresses innocence, submission, indulgency, compassion. It is a subdued, docile body, representing the body of the artist or perhaps that of society. From another angle, “eating earth” is a Cuban expression meaning absence of economic prosperity, and here the interpretation seems straightforward. Others spoke of the purification rites associated to the imaginary of local religious syncretism, or of a way of digesting reality, or again of a way of denouncing the predatory behaviour of dominant societies⁵.

Tania realises her performances over time; “the prolongation of the performance, always painful for the degree of intensity required on the artist for its realisation, transforms performance art into sacrifice... A primitive ritual that brings to light hidden cultural memories and their structure of meaning. Human behaviour becomes the means to access a truth about society⁶.

Bruguera explores her social and cultural context, she analyses the problems of power, migration, memory, or guilt, converting them in the central theme of her works. She makes a social act out of her personal tribunal. She turns art into critical reflection.

LORENA WOLFFER (Mexico)

Another artist who uses her body as a source of metaphorical imagination and as a field of resistance is Lorena Wolffer, born in Mexico City in 1971. One of her first performances, realised in 1992, at age 21, is *Báñate* [wash yourself]. In this work, Lorena Wolffer appears naked, sitting to the side of jars filled with blood, which she begins to spread over her body with slow and gentle movements.

Blood, in its enigmatic symbolism, is a recurrent element in many of Lorena’s performances. In Judeo-Christian culture blood receives a symbolic value and is converted in the Eucharist. The French historian

Jean-Paul Roux points out that “blood is intimately linked to images of death, but even more to those of a life that ulti-



mately always triumphs; blood has been considered at the same time dangerous and promising, fortunate and unfortunate, pure and impure. If it has never stopped to reject and attract it is because, as all that is sacred, it is essentially ambiguous⁷.”

In this work, Lorena slowly covers her chest, her arms, her legs and finally her entire body in blood, reclaiming its power as a vital element. It is well known that all bodily secretions bother and upset. Tears, which Saint Augustine calls the blood of the soul, are generally related to sadness; pus is related to pain and infection; sweat with fear, exhaustion or excitement. But of all of these the most frightening is blood. And it is precisely menstrual blood which has the strongest resonance in the human psyche; its unsettling character is further increased by its origin in the genitals of woman. In her performance, faced with the ambiguity of this element, Lorena seems to be telling us that blood cleans, purifies.

“Lorena Wolffer brings the spectator to be the voyeur of a tortured female body, while a voice in play back reconfigures the scene and converts it into a political denunciation.”

In 1997, Lorena Wolffer presented a performance called *Territorio Mexicano* [Mexican Territory]. She was naked, tied up hands and feet to a surgical bed, while every second, and uninterruptedly over six interminable hours, a drop of blood dripped on her belly from a suspended transfusion bag.

Her body, transformed into a metaphor of the Mexican territory, was a com-

ment on the passivity and defenceless of the majority of people faced with the pangs of the economic and social crisis of the country. By the entrance to the museum hall, converted for the occasion into an operating theatre, one could hear the speech of a North American senator discussing the role of Mexico in the fight against drug trafficking. Upon entering the room a thick white cloud made the air of the room unbreathable; at the centre was the tense body of Lorena resignedly bearing her suffering, while a voice-off interminably repeated “danger, danger, you are nearing Mexican territory”.

Lorena makes use of blood in this performance, but in this occasion through its tragic aspect, its sense of suffering, of death. The blood, constantly dripping over her belly button for six hours, ended up spreading over her stomach and legs. Approaching it the spectator suddenly faced the subdued and subjugated body of a woman.

Lorena Wolffer brings the spectator to be the voyeur of a tortured female body, while hearing a tape which reconfigures the scene and converts it into a political denunciation. The senses of the spectator are pulled in opposite directions, his perception shaken.

CONCLUSION

Performance art has been a means to explore the physical dimension of the body; it is through the body that one can express sentiments of reject and of acceptance, that one can stipulate an engagement with society. We could call performance art one of the artistic forms where the “I” of the artist is most involved, and it is from this fact that comes the power of the performance.



The body becomes space of transformation and of experience, of resistance and of expression. In their exploration of the body some artists look for the exaltation of the senses; they bring the body to the its physical as well as psychological limits. and awaken them anew to life. A rite of passage, an initiation to a new state of consciousness.

In societies where even desires are repressed it has been very important to present themes considered taboo. The transgression of a hypocritical and regressive morality has been a fundamental theme for performance art. The body extends its meaning, it becomes metaphor and material, word and canvas. The exploration of the body and the search for a liberated relation to sexuality are approached through feminism, the gay struggle, the questioning of religion and the analysis of public and private behaviour, all fundamental themes of an autobiographical and intimate art of performance. ■

FOOTNOTES

1. Ryzhome is a philosophical concept advanced by Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari. A rhizome works with horizontal and trans-species – as opposed to vertical and linear – connections.
2. Ramos Cruz, Guillermina. (2005) “La saga invisible del arte acción”, en Josefina Alcázar y Fernando Fuentes, eds.; Performance y arte acción en América Latina, México: Ediciones sin nombre, Conaculta-Fonca, Ex Teresa, Citru.
3. Garzón, Valia (1999) “Entrevista realizada a Tania Bruguera” Texto para el catálogo de la muestra Lo que me corresponde, Guatemala, Museo Nacional de Arte Moderno de Guatemala, Espacio Colloquia.
4. Pozo, Alejandra. “Cuerpos de artistas en plena acción” in Art News, No 26, http://www.universes-in-universe.de/artnexus/no26/pozo_esp.htm
5. Alonso, José Ramón. (2006) “Tania Bruguera o el arte acción como medio de reflexión”, Estudios Culturales, Madrid, <http://es.geocities.com/estudiosculturales2003/arteyarquitectura/taniabruguera.html>
6. Sosa Fernández, Sandra. “Tania Bruguera” in The H Magazine, http://www.theharte.com/tania_bruguera.htm
7. Jean-Paul Roux, La sangre. Mitos, símbolos y realidades, Península, Barcelona 1990.

(from left to right)
Tania Bruguera, “El peso de la culpa”
LA HABANA, CUBA, 1997
Tania Bruguera, “El peso de la culpa”
LA HABANA, CUBA, 1997
Lorena Wolffer, “Báñate”
MÉXICO, D.F. 1992
Lorena Wolffer, “Territorio Mexicano”
MÉXICO D.F. 1997.

FEMALE TROUBLE?

The camera as mirror and stage of female projection

REVIEW BY SÉGOLÈNE PRUVOT

Female trouble is the beginning of the title of an exhibition staged this summer at the Pinakothek der Moderne in Munich. Such a statement written in large font on top of the ticket desks of a large contemporary art museum immediately raises many questions in the mind of the traveller, maybe even more so if the traveller is a feminist herself:

Are females trouble? And if so – who are they trouble for? Are they trouble for men or for themselves? Or analysed differently, the title can have another meaning: Are women troubled? And if yes, what is causing them trouble? Are they more troubled than men or are they simply troubled in another way?

The exhibition *Female Trouble: The camera as mirror and stage of female projection* assumes that a specifically feminine trouble or one predominantly explored in artworks produced by women artists is the trouble – or the troubles – with self image and identity. Therefore, in their art, female artists more often play with their own images and use transgressed representations of female bodies, often their own body.

Too often, “feminism” is used as a label for any artwork produced by females in the 70’s and 80’s or simply by females in general. This was for instance the major weakness of the WACK! exhibition presented last spring at the MoMa in New York.



Inka Graeve Ingelmann, the curator of *Female Trouble*, has taken a more modest and more focused approach. And this was for the best. The exhibition focused on artists who have explored identity as a central theme. It included both artworks dating back from the 19th and early 20th century when “women discovered photography as a means of (self-) projection and enquiry” and works of con-



temporary artists “who, with the aid of photography and video art, examine the female image, deconstruct and redefine it”.

The interview below presents Inka’s approach. It starts with more explanation on this interestingly ambivalent title and continues with a reflection on feminist arts and political claims today.

SP: Why did you choose this title? Was it your intention to play with its double meaning?

Inka Graeve Ingelmann: In fact, the title *Female Trouble* has a double origin. First, it is the title of a movie produced by John Waters in 1974. This movie challenged the conventional and bourgeois representations of women and gender roles. It approached this issue in a very ironic and satirical way. This was maybe the first time it was done in such a way in a movie. *Gender Trouble* is also the title of a book by Judith Butler. Using this title links the exhibition to a specific body of previous works. However, the exhibition is not about gender but it is about issues around the feminine identity and how this was a source of inspiration for artists.

SP: Do you consider that the theme of identity is more present in artworks created by women?

IGI : First of all, one should remember that the input of women artists to visual arts is relatively recent: about 150 years. Before the beginning of the 20th century women were not allowed in the Academies of Fine Arts. Their access to recognition was almost inexistent. This was the case in Germany but probably anywhere else in Europe I suppose.

Until they used the cameras themselves, representations of women in the arts - and therefore of femininity - were those created by men. From the 1900s on, in photography, women artists reacted to this. They started to investigate and play with these traditional images of women. In that respect, female artists often used their bodies as objects to picture femininity differently, to force the explo-

sion of traditional images. They used transgression to challenge, unlock and explore the issue of what being a woman – having a female identity and body - means.

This can be found in the works of artists such as Countess Castiglione (see pictures).

In the 70s, representations of gender roles and of sexuality started to change. Women had already acquired their say in the social and political arenas. However the issue of identity continued to be relevant to women artists. This is partly because women have a different experience of the way the others look at them and at their actions. This is a way that is specific to their sexual identity. As John Berger said, ‘Men act, women appear’. It means that men are judged on what they do and on how they act, women are judged on how they look. This judgment is operated indifferently by men and by women. The need to challenge representations of femininity remains. ■

.....
(clockwise from below)
Nan Goldin, *NY Drag Queen*
Comtesse di Castiglione, c.1863/66
Cindy Sherman, *Untitled #216*, 1989
Wanda Wulz, *Io + gatto*, 1932



THE MYTH OF EUROPA

DEMOCRACY EQUALITY CULTURE BEYOND THE NATION STATE

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and others

BEYOND THE CRISIS

Tim A Hetherington,
Young rebel fighter
from Liberian United for
Reconciliation and Democracy
(LURD) rebel group,
LIBERIA, MAY 2003,

Hippocrates used the word crisis to refer to the turning point in a disease. A crisis is a crossroads; it is the moment one knows what is gone, but not yet what will arrive.

One of the benefits of the present global malaise is to have legitimated the belief in the urgency of a civilisational change, and to have opened an opportunity for the emergence of a comprehensive political alternative. The present disease is a crisis of global climate change and possible ecological catastrophe; it is a crisis of rising winds of war and the violence they unleash; it is a crisis of depletion of natural resources; it is a crisis of exponential rise in social inequality both globally and locally.

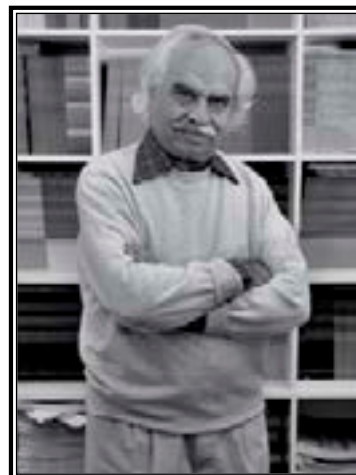
There is no financial crisis. What we face is rather a complex web of political, cultural and economic crises that call for a paradigm shift in the organisation of our societies. What this shift will be, whether it will bring a world where justice and freedom will be pronounced without blush, or

whether it will bring a gloomy, dreadful return to the madness humans are all too capable of, is in large part dependent on us. On whether we will seize this opportunity, or whether it will seize us. It is under the belief that an adequate declaration of this shift will only be transnational that this journal operates, militating for the definition of a world to come from no privileged vintage point, from no urban centre, but through shifting geographies of thought.

It is with a conviction in the necessary ambition and breath of this shift that we use the word Utopia, and with the certainty that the arts have a prime responsibility in opening up the horizon of the imaginable, of the possible, that we call for a strong social engagement on the part of artists, writers, and intellectuals. It is finally with the hope of contributing to the positive articulation of this shift that in this issue we feature two articles both pointing to what lies *beyond* the present crises.

SEE DOSSIER, WITH STEFAN COLLIGNON (P.190) AND SAMIR AMIN (PP 192) ►

INTERVIEW WITH RASHEED ARAEEN



Rasheed Araeen is an artist, writer and the founder of *Third Text*. He began working as an artist while studying civil engineering in Karachi; he left for London in 1964, where he pioneered minimalist sculpture in Britain. He has been active in various groups supporting liberation struggles, democracy and human rights. In his interview with *Europa* he talks about the new geographies art and the subversive power of creation.

(CONTINUED PAGE 194) ►

CHANGE

NOW IS NOT THE TIME TO FORGET THE IDEAL OF PEACE

Europe is no longer a continent to make bombastic statements about itself. Someone who now proclaimed ‘the hour of Europe has come’ as the European diplomatic envoy arrived in a crisis area would be ridiculed even quicker than was the hapless Luxembourgian foreign minister who uttered these words on arriving in Sarajevo in 1992. The European people, and certainly the rest of the world, have known too many self-proclaimed European Caesars and saviours to allow for even the slightest pretension. This is all to the best. But this justified movement towards humility should not be confused with disengagement from the world, and even less should it result in the abandoning of the heady philosophers’ ideal of universal peace, which at least in part inspired the European unification project. For it is by the measure of this ideal that Europe’s lack of foreign policy coordination is woefully shortcoming. This shortcoming is all the more unacceptable because contemporary Europe itself is still the preeminent example for the world of successful national reconciliation after war: its ‘soft power’ depends on how genuine it appears about helping to extend this peace to the rest of the world.

There are plenty of recent reasons to be extremely frustrated with Europe’s foreign policy shortcomings: chief amongst them the Gaza crisis and the war in Congo. The lack of coordination between European nations in responding to Israel’s most recent military assaults on Gaza was almost

farcical – with both an ‘official’ European delegation headed by the Czechs, and the delegation of Nicolas Sarkozy, from whom the Czechs have just taken over the European Presidency. As many commentators have pointed out, the Gaza offensive was contrary to everything the European Union claims to stand for, and yet the best it could manage was a rather meek statement calling for a ceasefire that was simply ignored, and a further loss of legitimacy in the Muslim world as a potential mediator. The European foreign ministers also squabbled amongst themselves over responding to the UN request for an EU peace-keeping force to go to the Congo.

Thus at a time when the American presidency was quiet, when the world was impatiently anticipating a paradigm shift from Bush-era militarism, the European Union and European nation states seemed too busy trying not to step on each others’ toes to show themselves to be relevant actors for peace.

These foreign policy failures are nothing new for the European Union or for its member states, and it is difficult to see how they can be resolved without some of the institutional changes to the way the EU works (notably an end to the debilitating 6-month rotating presidency of the European Union, and a high representative for foreign affairs with a real mandate and ministry backing him). In both the rejected Constitution for Europe and in the Lisbon reform treaty awaiting ratification from Ireland, the role of the European Union in promoting peace

is thankfully underlined (however much these documents might be regarded as hypocritical with regards to this goal in other ways). But the longer the endless institutional stalemate continues around these documents, the more there seems to grow a disquieting trend amongst Europe’s elites to start to underplay the importance of the ideal of peace as a continuing objective for contemporary Europe at all. Their thinking seems to go like this: *Europe is in need of a new narrative. The old mission was one of reconciling France and Germany after the second world war, but now that mission has been accomplished, and no longer appeals to a new European generation which does not have first-hand memories of the war.* In its worst formulation, this line of thinking reasons that the only way of ‘making Europe relevant’ to the post-war generations is to appeal to their own material self-interest. This philistine tendency is gathering adherents particularly as the economic crisis bites. It finds an especially clear and unapologetic expression in the manifesto of the European People’s Party for the forthcoming elections, in which the closest concern with peace is a neo-conservative emphasis on ‘security’:

“In the past, the need for peace brought the peoples of Europe together. Nowadays, a number of problems require both close cooperation on European level and a strong Europe in the world: The current crisis

on the financial markets and a severe worldwide recession, the fight against climate change, our ageing societies, as well as terrorism and organized crime. Only a strong Europe will be able to defend and protect our interests in the world.”

Although the manifestos of other, non-conservative, European political parties are not quite so solipsistic in their formulation, reasoning that is not at all dissimilar from that of the EPP can be heard regularly from many party leaders at European level.

A move from the ‘idealism’ of talking of peace to the ‘realism’ of talking of material self-interest might be thought to be ‘only natural’ in times of an economic recession. It is none the less objectionable for that. Europe as a political project cannot be justified on the basis of self-interest alone: the first few glancing appearances of nationalist protectionism and populism in response to the crisis have already shown how corrosive this logic is. Europe is an idealistic project or it is no political project at all. If all political projects that are committed to peace and international cooperation are called ‘idealistic’, then we might go further and say that no political project in the 21st century has any justification at all unless it is idealistic. In these ‘hard times’, just as in any other times, it is an obligation on the people themselves to insist on these ideals, particularly where they have benefitted from them so profitably in the past.



Carlos Vergara
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Europa Editors Lorenzo Marsili Niccoló Milanese	Advisory Office Sandro Mezzadra Richard Zenith Kaylpsa Nicolaidis
Associate Editor Nadja Stamselberg	Design Rasha Kahil www.rashakahil.com
Projects Officer Ségolène Pruvot	
Culture Office Eva Oddo Luigi Galimberti Faussone Alexis Gibbs	 editors@euroalter.com

UTOPIA!

THE WORLD SOCIAL FORUM REMINDS US ANOTHER WORLD IS POSSIBLE

The political and cultural hegemony of the current economic reality seems to work on a double-track; on one level it tells us that the world is ‘too well made’, too coherent for the introduction of any genuine novelty (there is no alternative and only one rational end, so that all the means of social change become de-politicised; juridical, technocratic, as we see only too well in Europe today); on another level it tells us that the world is too fragmented, that the multiplication of subjectivities (and the respect these call for – in what is often an uncanny alliance between neoliberalism and multiculturalism’s stress on individual identities) no longer allows for the articulation of a universally or holistically alternative project. Any alternative paradigm is deemed immature, unrealistic, and accused of utopianism.

And what is utopianism? Utopian is the belief in an unrealisable project that, in spite of and through its very impossibility, stimulates action and produces a force for change. Utopian is the neoliberal inevitability, with its impossible denial of any alternative to itself; and utopian is the alternative, with its radical assertion that another world is possible.

What defines an achieved hegemony is its capacity to hide – and eventually erase – any narrative alternative to its own. An hegemony blocs the articulation of political alternatives by masking the fact of their very existence.

The recent public and mediatic silence over

the celebration of the Sixth World Social Forum in Belem, which coincided with and provided an obvious counterpoint to the Davos Economic Forum, is a telling example of the ideological censorship of the collective imagination exercised in our present system.

With a transnational participation of over 100,000 people and five heads of state including Lula of Brail, the guiding questions of the Forum have included the search for a new global financial architecture, the definition of an environmental New Deal, the construction of a just peace process in the epicentres of the “infinite war” (Iraq, Afghanistan, Palestine...), and the organisation of independent/alternative press and information.

The World Social Forum began in 2001, providing a concrete structure and a regular calendar to the ‘global’ protest movement that began to raise its head towards the end of the nineties. The process embodied by the World Social Forum is nothing short of the attempt to globally articulate an alternative political, economic, and cultural future for humanity. What is more, it is an attempt that rests on the commitment of a global constellation of individual subjectivities, bringing together citizens, civil-society organisations, political parties, NGOs, and self-organised groups from the five continents. The demand is as much one for utopia as for a world where utopia is possible.

The most fundamental single question raised by the World Social Forum is this: Is there an alternative to our current economic system? Is there an alternative to

a status quo where the 500 richest individuals own as much wealth as the poorest 416 million human beings? Is there an alternative to the crisis of climate change that is not *more capital*, that is not a risible ‘financial’ architecture of carbon-credits? Is there an alternative to the exploitation of local and delocalised labour?

These – dangerous questions – are questions that political forces in Europe have given up on asking. Pronouncing them, is the first ring of a counter-hegemonic wake-up call. Over and beyond the specific answers that the Forum as such may or may not be able to give to these questions, their mere articulation – and the testament to the *possibility* of their articulation – represent a breaking, a forcing of the consensual paradigm of economic inevitability.

And indeed, the Forum as a site of dialogue consciously rejects to embody an ‘alternative’ in the singular, preferring to remain open to *alternative alternatives*, to an *archipelago of alternatives*, militating for no particular, closed conception of the world to come.

This is clearly laid out in its Charter of Principles, which prohibits the Forum from taking a public political position under its own name. This has not hindered the Forum form playing the politically crucial role of linking together geographically separate struggles, underscoring the necessity of a globally coordinated grassroots political response. But if the aim of such diffidence towards position-taking is to guarantee the openness and representativity of the Forum, and

to avoid its ‘partialisation’ under a single sectarian as much as totalising banner, many have critiqued the limitations of such an approach, which deprives the Forum from the potential to become a synthesising, politically propoitive force over and above the individual or even shared positions of its component parts. Whether this should change, is a discussion currently open inside of the Forum.

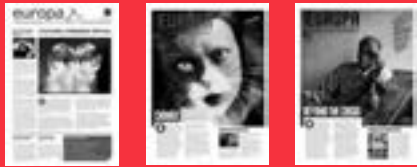
Nonetheless, the contributions of the World Social Forum to contemporary political praxis are numerous. With its heterogeneity, it has advanced a new and positive conception of diversity, something that has gradually found its way into mainstream discourse; at the same time, by weaving that heterogeneity together it contributes to an awareness that single-issue movements are not enough, that an effective political response must be polyphonically coordinated; and that coordination must be global, which is the scale at which the World Forum operates; but that ‘globality’, however, must not be forgetful or conducted in spite of the ‘local’, and indeed the Forum contributes an understanding of cosmopolitanism not as a top-down, centralised political ideology, but as a process of organic coming-together of different localities, with their prerogatives and struggles.

The political articulation of such an understanding of cosmopolitanism is the greatest contribution and ongoing mission of the World Social Forum. A project we would do well not to underestimate.

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THOUGHTS ON A TRANSNATIONAL LEFT

A coherent European left must move beyond three false dilemmas and propose a positive alternative.

BY MICHAŁ SUTOWSKI
AND KRYTYKA POLITYCZNA

The European left has been in a state of crisis for at least three decades. Many factors, economic and socio-cultural, give rise to that; Post-Fordism and the transition into a “fluid” phase of capitalism; the functionalisation of the emancipation ideals of the 1968 revolution through a system based on hedonism and individual consumption; the Postmodern ideology; deconstruction of the welfare state; and finally, the collapse of real socialism in the Eastern Block. In my opinion, at least three fundamental political dilemmas – basic oppositions which determined the framework of the left-wing thought at the beginning of the 21st century - are wrongly defined, constituting the main source of the problem.

The first dilemma is one of the scale of action, the dilemma between cosmopolitanism and nationalism. The opponents of the current globalization model can be divided into two groups.

On the one hand, there are the “sovereignists” or anti-globalists, whose strategy is based on defending societies, economies and communities from the destructive influence of capital flow, by means of strengthening the nation state and protectionism. As regards Europe, they are often against the development of European integration. On the other hand, we have the supporters of a cosmopolitan global government that would coordinate successive levels of management and regulate economic flow, thereby constituting that great community called Humankind. Both solutions are dead ends. The first does not acknowledge the asymmetry of forces between big corporations and national governments. Furthermore, it does not recognize the phenomenon of *Standortkonkurrenz* [competition between different localities] which is conducive to capital outflow to countries whose governments allow for lower taxes and social standards. The second solution would require structures and institutions of unimaginable size (just how many envoys would a genuinely democratic world parliament amount to?); but most of all it is based on universalist, highly Eurocentric assumptions, particularly applicable to those philosophical principles of law which would be valid in “the global republic,” but also required by such a community of political cultures. It is not easy to dis-

miss the accusation that such a solution would simply become a new model of Western political and cultural colonialism, difficult for the rest of the world to accept.

Another prevailing opposition concerns the attitude towards the broadly understood “system”: between supporters of the swing to the centre and access to the mainstream (i.e. Giddens’/Blair’s/Schröder’s *Third Way*), and the radical resistance and dismantling of the system from “the outside.” The first side of that conflict finds its justification in Fukuyama’s “historical necessity acknowledgement,” which leads directly to the acceptance of neo-liberalism. At the same time it supports the right-wing concept of transferring the basic political conflict from economy to culture. The Left may be permitted to fight for the rights of gays (women, children, immigrants, etc.) with the Right, but the released capital revels in the background undisturbed. The fight for acknowledgement replaces (instead of complementing) the fight for redistribution, whilst the lack of a left-wing alternative for the socially excluded pushes them into the arms of conservative populists (Haider, Le Pen). On the other side, anti-system radicalism allows the rebels to retain their ideological virtue untainted by contact with the mainstream media, current politics or political institutions. However, as Slavoj Žižek rightly points out, the capitalist system constitutes its own “Outside”, into which its critics are readily appropriated. The followers of the radical split, passing an alleged judgment from “the outside”, perfectly sustain and legitimize the *status quo*. They do so in various ways: as another economic niche (labeled “radical revolt”), in the recognition of pluralism (“hey, look at our freedom of speech, even for freaks such as these!”), or, in the extreme case, by constructing an Other-enemy exiled from the social and symbolic structure of liberal community (“enemy combatant” in Guantanamo).

The third dilemma concerns the subject of change – who are “the Wretched of the Earth?” Either there is “an objective collective interest” of some class, subclass or proletariat, whether conscious or not, or there are only separate groups of interest – the handicapped, for example, or subjects of discrimination. One side of the dilemma says that they can lead their own “micro-fights” (separately gays, feminists, workers in junk-jobs) but they will not make up one political movement. The other side of the dilemma thinks it possible that the multitudes created by fluid capital-

ism and propelled by some “invisible hand” could overthrow the system harmoniously and without any intentional coordination. But both solutions would lead us astray. The systems of hierarchy, exploitation, domination and discrimination are much more complex than a simple class division. Contrary to what was the case in the 19th century, there are now very narrow elites, a broader middle-class (if threatened with pauperization), and a “superfluous” subclass, along with many unsolved identity issues. Individual and group interests are not “objectively” concurrent, whilst their sources of oppression are not necessarily identical. Separate “micro-fights” will prove ineffective, as particular tactics are often contradictory. Many wealthy Polish gays, for example, voted for the conservative-liberal party because lower taxes would allow them to move out to a more secure neighborhood. Their erotic pursuits, meanwhile, can then be conducted in nightclubs customarily avoided by the conservative population.

Criticism has always been a strong point of the Left, but rarely has it taken a positive standpoint. One should ask not what is wrong, but, as Tchernischevsky said (and Lenin followed him), “What Is to Be Done?” In looking back at the first of the aforementioned dilemmas, perhaps the only trustworthy solution is for democratic regional block construction. Of course, I do not mean

“THE LEFT HAS TO APPEAR IN THE MEDIA – NOT AS PROVOCATEUR, BUT AS REPRESENTATIVE OF A COHERENT POLITICAL VISION”

NAFTA, but rather the South-American MERCOSUR and the European Union. Obviously, their current drawbacks and deficiencies are evident (lack of political coherence, tax and social policy determined at state level, and in particular the huge democracy deficit). Still, these are the strong regional structures which would stand a chance of organizing the world on a large scale, whereby the position of peripheral territories would be strengthened, whilst *modernization* would not have to mean *Westernization*. For example, a network variant of the welfare state (similar to the Finnish) could perhaps be adapted at a European level, but would be hardly conceivable as a global model. Therefore, other regions would have to develop different ways to control markets and redistribution. When it comes to human rights,

the regional blocks model would be more conducive to pluralisation and contextualization than today’s universalism and uniformity of the Western pattern. Lastly, the existence of a few such possibilities is conducive to a more democratic development of global regulations than it is in a unilateral world. The European idea of soft-power (I dare say our most precious contribution to the global order) would take roots more easily in the global Polyarchy.

In surpassing another “false” opposition – either entrance into or rejection of the mainstream – we begin to “shift mainstream.” Whilst staying within the framework of liberal democracy, we ought to restore the concept of politics as a sphere of *agon* and not *consensus*. Secondly, we ought to change (that is shift to the left) the scope of what can be uttered in the public sphere with legal validity, meaning that there ought not to be any pressure on us to simply enliven political debate with opinionated tomfoolery. What is required is presence in mass-media, the construction of a network of associations, and the credible symbolism of a political project. The Left has to appear in the media – not as provocateur, but as representative of a coherent political vision, backed with academic, cultural and pop-cultural background. As Gramsci observed, the political sphere is won over by the winning over of the cultural.

Answering the question about the subject of change it can be said that the role of politics is to properly determine who are “the Wretched of the Earth.” Different interests are not objectively convergent and proper contextualization and definition can help find the missing links between them, or “the logic of equivalence” in Chantal Mouffe’s words. The suffering, impairment and lowered self-esteem of individuals and groups cannot be reduced to one conflict. The intellectual and practical task of the Left should be to offer them a common political dimension.

Crises have always been a threat, but also a chance for the Left. 1929 bore the fruit of the welfare state in the US. The same outcome in Europe was imposed by Stalin’s tanks on the Elbe. Perhaps the current collapse of financial markets will help to end the end of history that offers as the only choice hedonist American capitalism or slavish Chinese capitalism. What do we get in return? To travesty a sentence perhaps never uttered by Marx (despite what Sorel hoped): even the mere thought about that is reactionary. We shall see.

Translated from Polish by Karolina Wałęcik



Angèle Etoundi Essamba
Rupture 2, 1993,
(SEE INTERVIEW P. 19)

THE FABLE OF CIRCULAR MIGRATION

Europe risks merging a high degree of mobility and flexibility with the immobility of the juridical and social status of migrant workers.

BY ENRICA RIGO

While I began to write what I initially conceived as an article commenting the latest developments of European migration policies, press agencies and the major Italian newspapers spread the news of a revolt in the detention centre of island of Lampedusa, which caused the temporary escape of nearly all of the 1300 detained migrants. For its size and impact, this is undoubtedly the largest revolt to have affected Italian centres so far. The island – which, beyond a mere geographical place, has now become a symbol of Italian and European migration management – witnessed just a few days before the migrants’ revolt a series of local demonstrations against the government’s decision to build a second centre, this time one of “identification and expulsion” (*Centro di Identificazione ed Espulsione*), which would keep migrants on the island until their final repatriation. The attempt was one of making Lampedusa, as already the case with Malta, an example of a European “Pacific solution”, similar to that which at the beginning of the millennium has transformed the island-state of Nauru in a kind of open air prison for Asian migrants trying to reach Australia.

In Lampedusa, the local population has welcomed with cheers the rebellion of the migrants, who paraded shouting “freedom, freedom!”. This coined a very odd alliance between the instances of the migrants and the resentment and aggression of a civil society that in the name of touristic development rejects the presence of the detention centre. What caught my attention during the reports over the revolt was the command of the Italian language of many of the North-Africans who escaped from the centre and explained the situation and their grievances to the journalists. Who knows if the European Commission, faced with such an evident indicator that this is not certainly the first time these migrants reach Italy, would declare itself satisfied with this kind of “circular migration”? Seen from the perspective of the migrant, of those rebelling, of the transnational movement that in the last years has mobilised for the construction of a European citizenship “from below”, and above all from the point of view of all those who are forced every day to face and fight the sprawl of juridical mechanisms marking their own life, this is certainly not a consolatory thought. It becomes every day more obvious, in fact, that the official rhetoric and state policies superimpose themselves on the concrete strategies and the transnational networks adopted by migrants, attempting to domesticate them. The recent rhetoric of “circular migration”, sold as a reasonable and efficient model to manage human movements, is just one example of this tendency, if a paradigmatic one for its emphatic promotion by the European institutions, and its capacity to function

as a prism through which to observe the multifaceted constitution of a European citizenship in the making. According to the official documents, “circular migration can be defined as a form of migration that is managed in a way allowing some degree of legal mobility back and forth between two countries”. This model of circulation management is directed to citizens of third countries who come to Europe “temporarily for work, study, training or a combination of these, on the condition that, at the end of the pe-

“OCCASIONS OF ACTUAL REVOLTS THAT SEE MIGRANTS IN THE FRONT LINE BEGIN TO MULTIPLY”

riod for which they were granted entry, they must re-establish their main residence and their main activity in their country of origin” (Commission communication *On circular migration and mobility partnerships between the European Union and third countries*). Against what might be expected, the Commission does not propose any kind of measures to stimulate or facilitate this form of migration. On one side, national legislations would be probably sufficient, for they already presuppose “some circularity”; on the other, the circularity of migrants goes to complement the fight against illegal migration thanks to the negotiation of “mobility packages”, which guarantee access to citizens of third countries collaborating in the readmission of expelled migrants. In short, more than an innovative model, “circular migration” seems to be an expedient to channel the management of migration into a pre-ex-

isting policy making scheme, based on a multi-level management. And not last an “informal” level, which, thanks to the massive illegalisation of migratory movements inside and outside of the borders of the European Union, guarantees a “rotation” of migrant work force not dissimilar to that realized with the agreements on the import of labour immediately after the second world war (on the two forms of “rotation”, see the work of the research group *Transit Migration*). It is however important to appreciate a number of differences to understand the peculiarity of the European model. Aside from the so-called fight against illegal immigration, the second pillar on which circular migrations rests is its *transitionality*, which is due to a juridical apparatus that by marking a series of temporal barriers [length of stay, etc.] constantly multiplies and reiterates spatial borders [conditioned access]. This is not comparable with the transitory nature of much management of migrant labour force in European countries in the after-war period, where “guest workers” were encouraged to return to their countries of origin once the need for additional work force was satisfied. Nor are we looking at a transitionality that virtuously leads to citizenship. We are rather faced with a prolonged management of the transit and circulation of labouring force through a system of mechanisms that permanently differentiate the access of migrants from the access to rights. The points-based system of recruitment already adopted in many countries is part and parcel of this logic, representing a

first step towards the European “Blue Card” currently under consideration. The Blue Card is conceived to attract a highly qualified work-force formed in emerging economies such as those of China or India, while not granting any access to citizenship nor, at least at the beginning, to permanent residency. In this way Europe – with a move that can only be called alarming – could merge a high degree of mobility and flexibility within the European space with the immobility of the juridical – and therefore social – status of the workers benefitting from this same freedom of movement. From the perspective of a radical social critique it seems no longer sufficient to simply reaffirm that the institutional strategies for the control of the labour force mirror the migrants’ practices of resistance – first of all those that, escaping the attempt to limit freedom of movement, *de facto* oppose the hierarchy of territorial divisions. If this can be an indication of the eminently political character of migrations, of their function as a practice of citizenship, the risk is that this same citizenship remains stuck in an increasingly tight corner. On the other hand, it is true that occasions of actual revolt that see migrants in a front line are beginning to multiply, and not just in Italy. The revolt of Lampedusa itself could be analysed through multiple layers. And not last that which, beyond any illusions on the reciprocal opportunism that made the protest of the local population overlap with that of the migrants, underscore that political practices can never be boxed inside of pacified categories. It is not always from where we most expect it that a decisive novelty arises. ■



Angele Etoundi Essamba
Symbole 3, 1999,
(SEE INTERVIEW P. 19)

AN ITALIAN BARBARITY

On February 5th the Italian Senate approved a bill allowing doctors to report to the police any illegal migrant who enters the hospital to be cured. The same bill authorises the establishment of informal citizens’ patrols. In the month of May 2008 two nomad camps were set on fire by unidentified groups.

On February 7th around ten migrants detained in the Lampedusa centre attempted to commit suicide, swallowing razor blades or hanging themselves with their own clothes. In January the United Nations refugee agency slammed Italy for allowing “unsustainable” overcrowding in Lampedusa. The number of people crammed into the 850-bed centre rose to 1,850, most of whom are forced to sleep outside. The same day a group of Tunisians started a hunger strike against the imminent repatriation decided by Interior Minister Roberto Maroni, despite the risk they would be tortured upon return. The Council of Europe’s Human Rights Commissioner Thomas Hammarberg defined this repatriation as in breach of rulings by the European Court. Italy is governed by a three-party coalition combining Berlusconi’s Populist Party, the post-fascist Alleanza Nazionale, and the racist and post-secessionist Lega Nord.

EUROPE:

SOUTH EAST EUROPEANS REMIND US THAT POPULAR PROTEST IS GOOD FOR DEMOCRACY

We should not turn a blind eye to political abuse when it is perpetrated by friendly governments.

BY MARKO ATTILA HOARE

Idealism is the new realism, it has been said. Nowhere has the adage proved more pertinent than in South East Europe, where socially fired popular protests against despot regimes have consistently worked to spread and strengthen democracy. There has been an unfortunate tendency on the part of some of our political leaders here in the West to applaud popular protest when it is directed against Communist or other anti-Western regimes, but not when it is directed against our allies. Yet to hold such double standards today is to fail to grasp the political realities of the late 2000s. For there is a very good case to be made that states today that are less than democratic are necessarily less than perfect members of the European family.

This may be demonstrated by a look at the southern flank of South East Europe - Turkey and Greece. Both countries have been committed members of NATO for many years, but anti-democratic tendencies in both have rendered them less than model allies. Turkey's brutal suppression of its Kurdish population, and the resulting war between the Turkish security forces and Kurdish PKK rebels, has persistently spilled over into northern Iraq, further undermining stability in that already barely stable country. Turkey is a strategically crucial member of the Western alliance, yet its human rights abuses, its restrictions on free speech and its military's interference in politics are well known facts. Turkey's gradual democratisation in recent years, under the guidance of the moderately Islamic, pro-EU Justice and Development Party (AKP), has ironically, according to some sources, led extremist elements from the ranks of the secular Turks to begin closing ranks with the Turkish Islamists on an anti-democratic basis.

As for Greece, though its restrictions

on democracy and human rights abuses are not on the scale of Turkey's, as a pillar of democracy in the Balkans it scores much lower than its eastern neighbour. Greece's disgraceful role in regional politics includes its past support for the Milosevic regime, its undermining of the fragile states of Macedonia and Kosova. Both Greece and Turkey are, however, countries whose internal politics are very much in states of flux. Greece has in recent weeks been the scene of a huge explosion of social anger on the part of youth and workers, directed against the very government of Costas Karamanlis that has been proving such a menace to regional stability. The protests have included riots, vandalism and assaults on police officers, something that can only be condemned. But the violent element cannot obscure the large numbers of Greeks who have been protesting and striking peacefully. Although the protests have now passed their peak, the social struggle in Greece is not over; Greek farmers have recently been blockading roads and border crossings in Greece in protest at the low prices of farm produce. It would be a mistake to see these protests purely in social terms; as was the case with the Romanian revolution of 1989, the Greek protests, fired as they are by social grievances, may have positive political effects. There is every reason to hope that these protests will hasten the end of the Karamanlis regime and contribute to a political rejuvenation of Greek politics, resulting in a country more at peace with itself and with its neighbours.

There was a time, perhaps still not completely past, when radical socialists would see in every wave of social protest the harbinger of the overthrow of capitalism, and many members of the conservative right would fear such protest for the same reason. Yet saner heads today know this is false: ordinary people are fundamentally conservative with a small 'c'. They do not want the overthrow of capitalism, or revolution for revolution's sake, but engage in social protest defensively, when the system seems to be letting them down. What they want is stability, pros-

perity and the pursuit of happiness. For all the Cassandras' talk of how recognising Kosova's independence in February 2008 would drive the Serbian people into the arms of the extreme nationalists, most Serbian people are fundamentally less interested in Kosova than they are in feeding themselves and their families - as was proven when pro-European elements won the Serbian parliamentary elections that followed soon after international recognition of Kosova's independence. Bread and butter issues will, in the last resort, trump nationalist pipe-dreams; Turkish Cypriots abandoned the unrealisable goal of an independent Turkish Cypriot state when in 2004 they voted overwhelmingly in favour of Cyprus's reunification on the basis of the Annan Plan, because they wanted to enjoy the benefits of EU mem-

bership. Greek students who had a better chance of finding decent jobs and pursuing more promising careers after graduating would be less likely to go out on to the streets to fight the police. Thus, the ordinary people of the Balkans, like the rest of us, have an interest in the spread of stable, post-nationalist democracy. Quieter, but perhaps ultimately more significant than the social explosion in Greece, is the movement to apologise for the Armenian genocide currently under way in Turkey; more than 28,000 Turkish

citizens to date have signed a petition drafted by a group of Turkish intellectuals apologising for what happened to the Armenians in 1915. Turkish state prosecutors have announced they will not take action against the organisers of the petition. This campaign, the work of entirely mainstream Turkish academics, journalists and others, marks a tremendous step forward for Turkish democracy; a step toward a Turkey that will, it is to be hoped, enjoy normal relations with neighbours like Armenia, Cyprus and Iraq, and whose commitment to, and sharing of the values of, democratic Europe will be unquestioned. Yet this process of democratisation depends entirely on the initiatives of brave individuals, such as the organisers of the apology petition.

No southeast European nation is a stauncher friend of the West than Kosova. Here, a particularly active protest movement exists, directed against the international administration of the country but catalysed by social discontent, and spearheaded by the group known as 'Vetevendosje', which is Albanian for 'self-determination'. Given the dismal record and stupendous corruption of the United Nations Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) and the pusillanimity of the EU in resisting Serbian efforts to destabilise Kosova, the frustration and anger that have spawned this movement can only be described as entirely legitimate and justified. The people of Kosova are as deserving of full democracy as any other nation, and full democracy requires full international independence. If we allow the international administration of Kosova to drag on indefinitely, without any meaningful progress on the reintegration of the Serb-controlled areas, we shall only have ourselves to blame for any future popular explosions in Kosova in which the international administration finds itself on the receiving end. The Russians have something to teach us about how not to treat one's allies. After the Russians cut gas supplies to the Balkans in the course of their recent dispute with Ukraine, citizens of Russia's supposed 'ally' Serbia, in the industrial city of Kragujevac, burned a Russian flag earlier this month in protest at being left without

“IN THE DEMOCRATIC WORLD, IN PRINCIPLE, OUR GOVERNMENTS GOVERN WITH THE CONSENT OF THE PEOPLE.”

A person who publicly denigrates Turkishness,	the Republic or the Grand National Assembly of Turkey,
shall be punishable by imprisonment of between six months and three years.	A person who publicly denigrates the Government of the Republic of Turkey,
the judicial institutions of the state,	shall be punishable by imprisonment of between six months and two years.
shall be punishable by imprisonment of between six months and two years.	I love you 301

Ferhat Özgür
I LOVE YOU 301, 2007
(FROM TRIENNALE BOVISA, “SAVE AS...”)

INSIDE / OUTSIDE

heat during the winter. And as one elderly Belgrade resident was quoted as saying, 'Russians always gave us nothing but misery. They should never be trusted, as this gas blackmail of Europe shows'. Resentment of Russia is not limited to Serbia, but has spread across eastern Europe. In the words of one elderly citizen of Bulgaria, another country frequently described as traditionally pro-Russian: 'This is a war without weapons in which Russia has used its control of energy supply to flex its muscles in front of the world... I am cold and angry. We have always been dependent on Russia, and this crisis shows that the situation hasn't changed. Instead of bombs or missiles, they want us to freeze to death.' In the Bulgarian port of Varna, residents demonstrated in front of the Russian consulate, holding banners that read 'Stop Putin's gas war'. Moscow's mistake has been to wage its gas war indiscriminately, without taking into account the effect this would have on South East Europeans upon whose goodwill its geopolitical ambitions ultimately depend.

In the democratic world, in principle, our governments govern with the consent of the people. Our elected leaders should not forget this; as ordinary people in Greece, Kosova and other South East European countries have shown us, citizens are still capable of taking to the streets to punish politicians who fail to protect them. ■

THE PREOCCUPATIONS OF A EUROPEAN 'NEIGHBOUR'

After the crisis of Summer 2008, the European Neighbourhood program in Georgia has become even more important. But beyond policy the cultural dimension cannot be forgotten.

BY DR. LEVAN KHETAGURI

Neighbourhood policy and the role of Europe

I will not hide the fact that cooperation with the European Neighbourhood policy program, the signing of this document and in particular the involvement of cultural cooperation in this program is of utmost importance not only for the citizens of Georgia but for the whole Caucasus region. This program should play a key role in the further development of civil society.

In spite of all this, there are issues

that cannot be regulated by programs only. Further integration with Europe – a historical process for Georgia – is a positive process itself. From ancient times Georgia considered its role as being an integral part of antique and Byzantine world. The perspective of becoming a member of European Union instead of just being its neighbour is a serious stimulus for citizens of Georgia. But against the background of the euphoria created by this positive fact, I will hazard to share with you some questions which are preoccupying me at this time:

Basic Values or a Price?

Are the so-called western values more important to Europe than let's say capital, money, prosperity, power?

Are the western values geographical to Europe or Universal?

I thought that European-western values were linked with the Enlightenment values that were first established in French Revolution and afterwards in the Bill of Rights. But

nowadays what is of a higher importance: *the truth or pragmatism or fear of the powerful?* The world of intellectuals has diverged from the world of pragmatic politicians, whose supreme values no longer represent the truth and human rights.

Today a politician one might say: "I will not sacrifice my country's prosperity for another country's defence. I will not blame the guilty because he is powerful."

The so-called unity of the leaders is acceptable for politicians, whether it is justified or not. But does being a politician necessarily mean a denial of Western values?

Do Western values oblige the Georgian government to implement Western standards and would the neighbourhood policy be a stimulus and a guarantee of their implementation?

The current question is – does virtue have any kind of value in politics?

Is the policy of European Union based on virtuous values?

Does pragmatism outweigh the truth?

Is the neighbour important even if it is not powerful – can friendship be based on fear?

Politicians or Citizens?

To what degree does the political activity of leaders take into account the views of the very citizens who brought them to power?

How transparent is the policy – are the written and oral political statements adequate to the real ones?

Does the neighbourhood policy consider the interests of the citizens or does it simply assist in strengthening the political elite?

Fear or Freedom?

Freedom is free from fear – today Europe does not fear Russia – how true is that?

And one more thing: how long do we have to fear Russia – is it not a neighbour, does it not have a responsibility that of a neighbour?

Did Russia indeed become a country, which has a responsibility for civilization?

Does everyone today have a right to freedom or is it just for the chosen? Who decides – one neighbour or a group of neighbours?

European Union consists of big and small members;

European Union consists of big and small neighbours;

Does the European Union have old and new members?

Does everyone have the same right in European Union?

These dilemmas or rather questions may very well be early or too late, some may sound silly or even naïve. It is just that the neighbours cannot be chosen or exchanged, just as you cannot exchange a single-room flat for a four-room flat and cannot improve the condition of space without wanting to invade. Nor can you put out an announcement – *I am a small country with a rich and ancient culture in search for a nice neighbour, one who will make an effort to scare or invade me at most once a century but not more; or otherwise we will not be able to coexist as neighbours.*

Hope

I truly think that neighbourhood policy does have a chance to prove that enlightenment values really are transcendent: that they defy time and political seductions. ■



Photo by Ashley Jonatan Clements

DOSSIER:

THE DAWN OF A NEW ERA:
SOCIAL DEMOCRACY AFTER THE FINANCIAL CRISIS

The financial crisis gives an opportunity to define a new society in Europe. A new European socialism will be based on freedom, economic security, equality and democracy.

BY STEFAN COLLIGNON

A new era is dawning. The financial crisis of 2008 is not the end of capitalism. Capitalism dates back to the Medici revolution, which invented modern banking, but since then it has gone through many different regimes and articulations. The 2008 crisis marks the end of the Reagan-Thatcher counter-revolution. Neoliberalism and monetarism are dead. Even Nicolas Sarkozy now calls for the re-foundation of capitalism. This does not mean that thousands of policymakers are not continuing to implement old recipes, helplessly watching their loss of control over events. Antonio Gramsci once said a crisis is when the old is dead, but the new not yet born.

With the election of Barack Obama new paradigms in policy-making become possible. Yes, we can reconcile markets and social justice; we can invent a new social model for Europe. We can integrate the real and financial economy. But how? European social democrats were able to shape various epochs to different degrees. How can they adapt to the new situation?

A new perspective for Europe's left needs to integrate economic and political norms and values into a coherent project for society. Since World War II, three paradigms have dominated political and economic thinking in the world. In the East, Marxism rejected markets and democracy; in the West, Keynesianism laid the foundations for social democracy and political liberalism, while Friedman's counter-revolution developed a neoliberal ideology from the theories of monetarism.

Friedman's anti-Keynesian revolution was not primarily directed against the welfare state. His more fundamen-

tal attack sought to establish the superiority of the market economy over centralised planning. In this he was right. Today, after Deng Xiaoping and the fall of the Berlin Wall, we are in one sense, all Friedmanians.

But this concession does not warrant the adoption of the erroneous monetarist paradigm. Friedman did understand that money was crucial to the functioning of a market economy. So did Marx. But they both remained confined to the classical economic paradigm, whereby markets are places for exchange of 'real' goods, while money was simply a veil that covered the reality. Marx drew the radical conclusion that capital and therefore money must be abolished. Not surprisingly, the 'new' economy of communism resembled the old: resources were allocated by hierarchy, and not by contracts between free and equal individuals; markets and consumer choice were suppressed. Friedman and his followers took another track: if money was a veil, it could distort. Inflation was the main cause of distortions. Monetary policy

therefore had to ensure price stability so that markets remained transparent and efficient. Only in the absence of inflation would prices send out the right signals to firms and consumers. Perfect competition would push profit maximising entrepreneurs to provide optimal welfare. Markets' 'invisible hand' (Adam Smith) would then yield a unique equilibrium towards which the economy would naturally gravitate. There was no role for governments or regulation.

This paradigm did not recognise the important role that money has in *creating* markets and in ensuring that the promises stipulated by financial

contracts are fulfilled. It ignored that our real economy is characterised by oligopolistic and not by perfect competition. The truly alternative economic paradigm of a monetary economy was first elaborated by John Maynard Keynes; it has subsequently been fine-tuned by Joseph Stiglitz and others: money is credit, a bridge to the future, and not a veil. Tomorrow's reality is determined by today's promises.

Because the human condition is characterised by fundamental uncertainty, money is a precautionary instrument to secure access to goods, services and resources in a risky world. Therefore money is a constraint to our actions in the present and in the future. And competition means striving for money, income and profit. It is frequently distorted by information asymmetries and does not necessarily lead to the unique equilibrium of welfare where everyone is better off. In this perspective, economic policy must aim at reducing uncertainty and insecurity. The financial crisis has reminded us all: without financial stability markets collapse. But more importantly, the generalised uncertainty in the economy as a whole, including prospects for effective demand and employment, will reduce growth, jobs, income and wealth.

The legitimacy of Keynesian macroeconomic policies and the modern welfare state were derived from this insight. But they became dysfunctional when the neoclassical-Keynesian synthesis started using fiscal policy as if money did not matter. The vulgarisation of Keynes opened the gate for Friedman. A misguided view of markets led to the deregulation of financial institutions. Believing that money served mainly as means of exchange in goods markets rather than as the ultimate asset for the extinction of debt justified the creation of liquidity, which has fuelled the enormous financial bubble in the American economy.

Fortunately, the European Central Bank has been more careful, but does it operate from different intellectual foundations? Today, we need a new paradigm for economic policies that links markets to security, that renews the promise of modernity and progress; a paradigm that marries economic

freedom to social justice, equality to solidarity.

Regulating financial markets today may be necessary to overcome the economic crisis, but it is not sufficient as a

ANTONIO GRAMSCI ONCE SAID A CRISIS IS WHEN THE OLD IS DEAD, BUT THE NEW NOT YET BORN.

new paradigm for a Social Europe. The emergence of modern social democracy cannot be separated from the existence of market economies and therefore from the institutions of money and finance. Modern social democracy has gone beyond Marxism, without forgetting that capitalism endogenously produces injustice. For the political norms of modernity will only be recognised as valid and legitimate in a society where contracts are concluded by market participants who interact as free and equal partners. These political norms give priority to freedom and equality over fraternity, to contractual relations of solidarity over the patriarchal hierarchy of community and they emphasise democracy as the only system which allows individuals to control the collective as free and equal citizens.

The aspect of democracy is of particular importance for a new social democratic paradigm in Europe. For decades, governments have behaved as if they were benevolent planers that were implementing 'the right policies' in order to make people happy. But few questions were asked *what* it is that made people happy. How much personal comfort are we ready to sacrifice for saving the planet? Do the rich not feel happier when 'wealth is spread around' (Barack Obama)? Do they not live more secure lives when crime rates are lower? And are crime and poverty not correlated? Does fairness not affect the subjective quality of everyone's lives? These and many other questions will only find an answer after long drawn out debates and public deliberation.

We increasingly find that citizens' input into the policy-making process is a value in itself that raises individual happiness. This brings us to the issue of policy-making in Europe. For years

Europe stood for peace and prosperity. But this association is increasingly put into question. Peace is taken for granted and neoliberal policies are proclaimed to be the only road to prosperity. But many citizens only find that their income is stagnating, real wages falling, jobs insecure, new employment nowhere to be found, while top executives make fortunes. These citizens have no choice over policies. They have to accept what governments and their bureaucracies negotiate on their behalf. If citizens in the European Union are dissatisfied with a particular set of practical policies, the only means they have to oppose them is to turn against the European Leviathan 'in Brussels'. Europe's institutions stifle political controversy and partisanship. Citizens have little to no choice between alternative policy packages. Yes, every five years they can vote for the European Parliament; but who believes seriously that it makes a fundamental difference to *their* lives? The Commission President is selected like the pope: in smoke-free secretive meetings between chiefs who are not accountable to the people. The assembled heads of governments have all kinds of interests but cannot, by definition, represent the *general* interest of the European Union. As long as democracy remains confined to the nation state, European institutions will not be able to muster support for the policies they pursue.

Europe must 'dare more democracy', to take up Willy Brandt's famous formula. But here again, new thinking for the new age is required. The growing conservative creed in Europe is that a European democracy is not possible because there is no European *demos*. What the advocates of this belief really mean is that national collective identities prime over the concrete interests of individual citizens. Citizens are assumed to fulfil the stereotypes of 'their countries' and they must surrender to what governments decide in their name. At best it is democracy *for* the people, but not *by* the people. The conservative policy consensus that emphasises cultural identities of communities may help governments to legitimise their

BEYOND THE CRISIS



policies at *home* (‘we are defending you’), but it prevents consensus and legitimacy at the European level. It is the opposite of what Jean Monnet described as the purpose of European integration: ‘We do not create coalitions of governments, we unite human beings’.

The renewed awakening of nationalism is a direct consequence of the dominance of neoliberalism. By shrinking the public sector, neoliberal policies have broadened the scope for private and reduced the space for democratic decision-making. But many privatising decisions and actions have direct or indirect consequences for all. These unintended consequences arise in the form of negative spillovers and externalities, because markets frequently fail to coordinate behaviour optimally. What is done by one group of companies or individuals may be seen as a welfare loss by many others.

So what to do? The conservative response is to appeal to morality, cus-

Marc Riboud,
A bus stop near the Luxembourg Garden,
Paris, 1984
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“IF EUROPE’S SOCIAL
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toms and communitarian identity. They argue, individuals should conform to what the prevailing and conventional sense of ‘proper’ behaviour. Deviation is sanctioned. But in Europe, communitarian identity means national identity and national interest. This confinement prevents minority dissent from crossing borders and forming majorities. Pan-European alliances are blocked because individuals are identified with their country and have to surrender to their governments’ interest. In a modern democracy citizens are the demos, the sovereign. With democratic institutions, public deliberation will lead to policy solutions for what citizens consider best for themselves. Citizens will accept the chosen solution, even if in minority, because they had an opportunity to participate and contribute to the preference-building process. But Europe does not have democratic institutions in this sense. Policy decisions reflect a consensus among governments and their bureau-

cracies, not among citizens. Public debates do not usually take place across the European Union, but only in the isolated honey combs of nation states. Nor is there any public choice by citizens. Like in pre-modern monarchies, governments negotiate policies with governments and states are the sovereign, not citizens. Of course, exceptions exist. The European Parliament has responded to public criticism of the so-called Bolkestein Directive on services. But as a rule, citizens are treated as spectators in a football match: they are supposed to support the local club with applause, but certainly not as owners of public goods that they all own jointly.

If Europe’s social democracy wants to meet the challenge of moving into a new era, it needs to become the advocate, the carrier and the implementer of a proper European democracy.

From the beginning, social democracy was internationalist, treat-

ing citizens as the sovereign, while conservatives thought of them as cattle. Today, European social democracy must fight for individuals’ freedom to take political decisions at the European level. They must acknowledge that European citizens are *equal citizens* with equal *rights to decide what they consider their best interests*. European democracy means, European citizens will be able to elect a European government that will make laws that are applicable to all citizens because they are all affected by them. It is now necessary that all democratic parties in Europe unite behind this project. A new era of human fulfilment, social justice and democratic progress is within reach, if social democrats in Europe draw the conclusions from the failures of the previous economic and political paradigm. But it is also clear that this redefinition of aims and purposes is necessarily a European venture. Europe remains the most exciting project of our times. ■

DOSSIER:

BEYOND THE CONTRADICTIONS OF GLOBAL CAPITALISM

With the financial collapse of September 2008 begins the development of a major systemic crisis.

BY SAMIR AMIN

The crisis is systemic in the sense that the further pursuit of the model of capitalism employed over the last decades will become im-

possible. The page will necessarily be turned, over a period of « transition » (of crisis) that will be brief or long, orderly or chaotic. “Another world is possible,” said the « alterglobalists » of Porto Allegre. I would say « another world is on its way », which could be even more barbarian, but which could also be altogether better, in different degrees.

The dominant social forces will try, in conflicts that will become more and more acute, to maintain their priv-

ileged positions. But they will not be able to do this unless they break with many of the principles and practices associated with their domination until now. In particular: renouncing democracy, international law and respect of the rights of the peoples of the South. If they manage this then the world of tomorrow will be founded on what I have called « apartheid at a global level ». A new phase of « capitalism » or a system that is qualitatively different and new? The question merits discussion.

The workers and the people who will be the victims of this barbarian evolution can defeat the social forces and reactionary politics (not « liberal politics » as they try to call themselves) at work. They are capable of taking the measure of what is at stake in this systemic crisis, of liberating themselves from the illusory responses which still often have the wind behind them, of inventing adequate forms of organisation and action, of transcending the fragmentation of their struggles and of overcoming the

contradictions which come from this. Will they thereby « invent » or « reinvent » the socialism of the 21st century? Or only advance in this direction, on the long route of the secular transition from capitalism to socialism? I would lean towards the second probability.

The Domination of the oligopolies, foundation of financierisation in disarray

The phenomenon described as financierisation of contemporary capitalism finds its expression in the expansion of investments on the monetary and financial markets. This exponential expansion, without precedent in history, began a quarter of a century ago, and has carried the volume of operations conducted annually on the monetary and financial markets to more than 2000 trillion dollars, compared with barely 50 trillion dollars for worldwide GDP and 15 trillion for international commerce.

The financierisation in question was made necessary by, on the one hand, the generalisation of the system of floating exchange rates (where the rates are determined day to day by what is called the market), and on the other hand, the parallel deregulation of interest rates (equally abandoned on the side of supply and of demand). In these conditions, operations on the monetary and financial markets no longer constitute, principally, the counterpart of exchanges in goods and services but are from now on motivated almost exclusively by the concern of economic agents to protect themselves from fluctuations in rates of exchange and interest.

It is self-evident that the vertiginous expansion of these operations for covering risks could not respond in any way to the expectations of those who used them. Elementary common sense should make it clear that the more the means of reducing the risk for a given operation are multiplied, the more the collective risk augments. But conventional economists are not equipped to understand this: they need to believe in the absurd dogma of the self-regulation of markets, without which their entire construction of the proclaimed « market economy » would collapse.



Liberia
Photo by TA Hetherington
2005
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TIM@MENTALPICTURE.ORG

THIS AND THE COVER IMAGE FORM PART OF THE UPCOMING BOOK LONG STORY BIT BY BIT: LIBERIA RETOLD, AN EXAMINATION OF THE POWER DYNAMICS OF RECENT LIBERIAN HISTORY.

BEYOND THE CRISIS

But we must go further. The question is to identify the social interests that are represented behind the adherence to the dogmas concerning deregulation of the markets in question.

Here again banks and other financial institutions appear to have truly been the privileged beneficiaries of this expansion, which allows the discourse of the powerful to attribute all the responsibility for the disaster to them. But in fact the financialisation was profitable to all the oligopolies, and 40% of their profits came solely from their financial operations. And these oligopolies control simultaneously the dominant sectors of the real productive economy and the financial institutions.

Why, therefore, did the oligopolies deliberately choose the route of the financialisation of the system in its totality? The reason is that doing so allowed them simply to concentrate, for their benefit, a growing proportion of the mass of profits realised in the real economy. The apparently insignificant rates of return for each financial operation produce, taking into account the gigantic number of these operations, considerable volumes of profits. These profits are the products of a redistribution of the surplus mass generated in the real economy and are the rents of the monopolies. We understand therefore why the high rates of return of financial investments (to the order of 15%) were counterbalanced by mediocre rates of return for investments in the productive economy (to the order of 5%). This levy on the global mass of profits operated by the oligopolies' financial rent, means that the cause (the oligopolistic character of contemporary capitalism) cannot be dissociated from its consequence (the financialisation, that is to say the preference for financial investment rather than investment in the real economy).

The expansion of the monetary and financial market conditions that of investment in the real economy and limits its growth. In turn, this weakening of the general growth of the economy brings about the same effects in employment growth, with the well-known associated consequences (unemployment, growth of precarity, stagnation – even reduction – of real salaries uncoupled from progress in productivity). The monetary and financial market dominates in turn the job market in this way. The ensemble of these mechanisms, which constitute the submission of the entire economy (the « markets ») to the dominant monetary and financial market, produces increasing inequality in the distribution of income (facts which

no one contests.)

The responses of those in power : restore financialisation

We are now equipped to understand why the powers in place, themselves at the service of the oligopolies, didn't have any other choice but to put the same financialised system back in the saddle. To question the domination of the monetary and financial markets over all the other markets would be to question the monopolistic rent of the oligopolies.

Can the policies that have been adopted to this end be effective? I don't think that the restoration of the system to the way it was before the crisis of autumn 2008 is impossible. But that would require that two conditions be fulfilled.

The first is that the State and the

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“IF CAPITALISM HAS REACHED THE POINT WHERE HALF OF HUMANITY IS SEEN AS «SUPERFLUOUS » POPULATION, DON'T WE HAVE TO THINK THAT IT IS IN FACT CAPITALISM ITSELF WHICH HAS BECOME A SUPERFLUOUS MODE OF SOCIAL ORGANISATION?”

.....

central banks inject into the system a volume of financial means sufficient to wipe-out the mass of bad debt and restore the credibility and the rentability of the resumption of financial expansion.

The second is that the consequences of this injection must be accepted by society. Workers in general, and the peoples of the South in particular, will necessarily be the victims of these politics.

The actual crisis of the oligopolies' capitalism has not been the product of an increase in social struggles imposing the reigning-in of their ambitions. It is the exclusive product of internal contradictions which belong to its system of accumulation. In my opinion, there is a central distinction between the crisis of a system produced by the explosion of its internal contradictions, and that of a society which undergoes the assault of progressive social forces which nurture the ambition of transforming the system. This distinction dictates to a large extent the possible outcomes. In a situation of the first type, chaos becomes a high probability, and it is only in a situation of the second type that a progres-

sive exit becomes possible. The central political question today, then, is to know if the social victims of the system in place will become capable of forming a positive, independent, radical and coherent alternative.

For want of such an alternative, the restoration to power of the renting financialised oligopolies is not impossible. But in this case the system will retract only to jump higher, and a new financial debacle, even more profound, will be inevitable, because the « adjustments » that are planned for the management of financial markets are largely insufficient, since they do not question the power of the oligopolies.

There remains the question of knowing how the states and the peoples of the South will respond to this challenge. The analysis of the challenge with which they are confronted, aggravated by the crisis in globalised financialisation, is important here.

The question of natural resources and the North/South Conflict

Our modern world system must register from now on a qualitative transformation of decisive importance. Some of the major natural resources have become considerably rarer – in relative terms – than they were even 50 years ago, whether or not their exhaustion constitutes a real menace or not (which can certainly be disputed). An awareness now exists that access to these resources cannot be open to all, and this is true, independently of the question of whether their current usage jeopardises the future of the planet. The « countries of the North » (I deliberately use this vague term to specify neither states nor peoples) intend to reserve the exclusivity of access to these resources for their own usage.

The egoism of the countries of the North finds its brutal expression in the phrase pronounced by President Bush (one which his successors will not dispute): “the American way of life is not negotiable”. Many in Europe and in Japan think the same way, even if they abstain from proclaiming it. This egoism means simply that access to these resources will be largely forbidden to the countries of the South (80% of humanity), whether they intend to use these resources in ways analogous to the North, wasteful and dangerous, or whether they envisage other forms which are more economic.

It goes without saying that this perspective is unacceptable for the countries of the South, in principle and in fact. Besides, the methods of the

market are not necessarily sufficient to match the rich countries' demand for a guarantee of exclusive access to these resources. Certain countries of the South can mobilise significant resources to make themselves noticed in these markets of access to resources. Ultimately, the only guarantee for the countries of the North resides in their military superiority.

The North/South conflict has become the central axis of the major contradictions of contemporary capitalist/imperialist globalisation. In this sense this conflict cannot be dissociated from that which opposes the pursuit of the domination of oligopolistic capitalism with the progressive and socialist ambitions which could promote positive alternatives here and there, in the South and in the North. To think of the alternative, in particular in the immediate term and in response to the crisis, requires taking account of the right and desire of the countries of the South to accede to the resources of the planet. Humanitarianism is not an acceptable substitute for international solidarity in struggle.

The conditions of a positive response to the challenge

It is not sufficient to say that the interventions of States can modify the rules of the game, or attenuate the errors. The real alternative consists in reversing the executive power of the oligopolies, which is inconceivable without their nationalisation with a purpose to their progressive democratic socialisation.

The dimensions of the desirable and possible alternative are multiple and concern all the aspects of economic, social and political life.

In the countries of the North the challenge implies that general opinion cannot allow itself to be constrained in a consensus defending their special privileges compared to the people of the South. The necessary internationalism passes by anti-imperialism, not humanitarianism.

In the countries of the South the crisis offers the occasion to renew a national development which would be popular and democratically self-centred, submitting relations with the North to its own requirements, in other words “delinking”. That implies:

- i) National control of monetary and financial markets
- ii) Mastery of modern technologies as soon as possible
- iii) Restoring national control over natural resources
- iv) Putting into retreat the globalised management dominated by oligopolies

(WTO) and the project of military control of the planet by the United States and their associates.

v) Liberating oneself from the illusions of an autonomous national capitalism in the system, and backwards looking myths.

The agrarian question strikes more than ever at the heart of choices that will have to be made in developing countries. Development worthy of the name cannot be founded on growth – even strong growth – which is to the exclusive benefit of a minority – even if it were 20% - abandoning the popular majorities to stagnation or even pauperisation. This model of development associated with exclusion is the only one which capitalism knows for the peripheries of its global system. The practice of political democracy, when it exists (and it is of course the exception in these conditions) will become extremely fragile if it is associated with social regression. In counterpoint, the national and popular alternative which associates the democratisation of the country with social progress, that is to say inscribes itself in the perspective of a development that includes – not one that excludes – the popular classes, implies a political strategy of rural development based on a guarantee of access to the soil for all the peasants.

If capitalism has reached the point where half of humanity is seen as « superfluous » population, don't we have to think that it is in fact capitalism itself which has become a superfluous mode of social organisation?

Clearly if the global capitalist/imperialist system which really exists is founded on the growing exclusion of the peoples who constitute the majority of humanity, and if the model of usage of natural resources produced by the logic of capitalist rentability is at once wasteful and dangerous, the socialist/communist alternative cannot ignore the challenges that these realities represent. An « other style of consumption and of life » than that which gives apparent happiness to the peoples of the rich countries and is in the imagination of its victims must impose itself. The expression of a « solar socialism» (which we can understand as socialism plus solar energy) proposed by Elmar Altvater must be taken seriously. Socialism cannot be capitalism corrected by equality of access to its benefits, at national and global levels. It will be qualitatively superior or it will not be. ■

Presented at SOAS London, November 2008

INTERVIEW WITH RASHEED ARAEEN

Rasheed Araeen, artist, writer, and founding editor of *Third Text*, analyses the state of cultural globalisation and the meaning of engaged art.

BY LORENZO MARSILI

1. SHIFTING GEOGRAPHIES OF ART

LORENZO MARSILI: We are now witnessing an explosion of interest in the cultural production of the “former-third world”, of which the recent craze around Indian or Chinese contemporary art is an example. This dynamic, even if not devoid of a commercial logic, seems to be part of a general geographical restructuring, which some may praise as a potential new multipolarity of the art world. I have two questions on this:

Would it be possible to understand the current stage of cultural globalisation as a kind of replication/fragmentation of the periphery/centre relation, with a host of inter-connected “urban global hubs” pitted against a local and excluded “outside” (“New Delhi” versus the Indian “periphery”)? To what extent do these global hubs collaborate in the diffusion of an essentially hegemonic and homogenising trans-national artistic consensus, and to what extent can they instead contribute to the emergence of a genuinely alternative and de-centred discourse?

You have strongly criticised multiculturalism for inducing “non-white” artists to wear their cultural mask, to parade their identity card of “otherness” and “happily dance in the court of the ethnic King Multiculturalism”. And we have seen an early exploitation of “Chineseness” or “Indian-ness” in the blockbuster exhibitions that first engaged with artists from these countries. But can we argue that this seems to be changing with the growing maturity of cultural globalisation? China is managing to establish a very competitive, partly independent and home-grown “art system”, and I don’t know your opinion on the latest show of Indian art at the Serpentine...

you have raised here is of historical nature and it can only be evoked or dealt with historically. To be specific, it involves looking at the history of ideas produced by art, not any art but that which emerged as part of human progress and advancement fundamental to modernity that has its roots in European enlightenment. Art sometimes followed its prescribed root, other times it revolted against its rationality; resulting from this conflict between the European rationality of progress and free artistic imagination has been a movement of idea that nevertheless did produce a body of knowledge whose critical examination led to the narratives of art history. What is this body of knowledge and how it was produced and by whom and how it was spread globally offer us an answer to most of your questions.

The problem here is of the spread of this knowledge under and with colonialism. Not that there was something wrong with this knowledge but it became a civilising tool in the hands of the coloniser. In turn, the colonised did accept, though grudgingly, what appeared to be a promise of better life. However, this acceptance and what followed as a collaboration between the coloniser and the colonised did not produce what was the basic promise of modernity: universal human freedom, self-realisation and equality.

What in fact modernity offered was an un-resolvable contradiction of colonialism; it could not be realised so long as colonialism was there. While centre-periphery paradigm, central to colonialism, was reinforced, philosophically or ideologically, by the gap between the European Self and its colonised Other, the struggle of anti-colonialism was or should have been to

“POSTCOLONIAL KNOWLEDGE IS TRAPPED WITHIN AND LEGITIMISED BY INSTITUTIONAL POWER“

confront this gap. This gap could have been filled only when the coloniser and the colonised were tied together in a struggle that liberated them both from colonialism. But, as the anti-colonial struggle became a tool in the hands of a particular class which was produced, nurtured and nourished by the colonial regime and which was in pursuit of its own power, the ideology of anti-colonialism collapsed into the illusions of the independence of post-

colonial nation states. While the former colonies of the West are now independent states, colonialism is still there. It has taken a different form; a benevolent form which covers the centre-periphery gap by collapsing it within a discourse that is open to all but not on the same basis. With this has in fact emerged a postcolonial surrogate ruling class in the so-called Third World with its surrogate intellectuals. Those intellectuals who could not be absorbed by the agendas of these nation states, migrated to the West where they now occupy an important place, both outside and inside the academe, as part of the postcolonial discourse. Although this has created an enormous body of useful knowledge, most of this knowledge is either reactive or a critical elaboration which only supplements what had already been there within the liberalism of Western humanities. In other words, postcolonial knowledge

own different identities, into this scenario has been promoted and legitimised by the postcolonial surrogate class and its intellectuals. It is this collaboration between the centre and periphery that has produced the mul-

“AS CHINESE AND INDIAN INDUSTRIAL PRODUCTS ARE INTEGRATED INTO GLOBAL CAPITAL THE GAP BETWEEN THE EXPLOITING CENTRE AND THE EXPLOITED PERIPHERY HAS NOW COLLAPSED.”

.....ticulturalism of ‘cultural globalisation’, in which Chinese and Indian artists are now allowed and are celebrated. As both the Chinese and Indian industrial products are integrated into the global capital and its exploitation of globally available cheap labour, the gap between the exploiting centre and

only a stepping stone into the continuity of a historical process, beyond the so-called independence of post-colonial nation states, that should have led to the liberation of both the perpetrators of colonialism and its victims from what has now become the colonial ideology of neo-colonialism and its worldview that now prevails and dominates the world. But this process was halted or high-jacked by those who became the rulers of the postcolonial world. Those who claim to have once struggled against the colonial regimes are now in fact complicit with the ideology of neo-colonialism.

2. ART AND SUBVERSION

LORENZO MARSILI: You have written that art has a historical responsibility, a subversive function. This journal has often called for just such awareness on the part of artists: can I ask you what you mean with these expressions, and how “subversion” can operate in the field of visual arts today?

You write that the only option open to an artist today is the commodity market, transforming the artist into a producer of commodity. I have two questions.

- This is a call for the restructuring of art institutions and the art system more generally; how radically do you want to pursue this critique, and what are its main targets?

- Secondly, to what extent are artists or cultural figures personally responsible for sustaining and legitimising a certain system of cultural mercantilism? If I want to hear Žižek speak on the end of capitalism I need to pay ten pounds.

You have been very active in founding pioneering cultural journals. In 1987 the project of *Third Text* was born with, amongst others, the objective of resisting Western “control” of the art world and cultural production more generally. In what way does the changed paradigm of cultural globalisation call for a change of political strategy for an anti-hegemonic cultural project?

RASHEED ARAEEN: Art is part of a historical process that should lead to a better society; and the responsibility of art lies within this process. It must continue maintaining this process, not only through new ideas and innovations but they must in

POLITICISING THE OPERA HOUSE

BY PAOLA K

A number of symbolic occupations of public buildings have taken place in Athens as part of a wider climate of resistance and contestation from the events of December onward. Athens’ Opera House came to be added to this list., chosen as a symbol of established art.

An opposition was in this way expressed to the art-spectacle that is being passively consumed and the demand was raised for an un-mediated art from everyone, for everyone.

People’s participation in the occupation was impressive from the first day to the last. Daily, long assemblies gathered around 400 people. The occupation would host intense discussions on art and politics, free classes of dance and martial arts, radio shows, workshops, screenings, art improvisations and concerts. The main avenue running in front of the Opera would be closed off ever so often by people dancing in the spontaneous parties that would start off almost every night.

Messages of solidarity poured in from workers at the Opera Teatro Colon of Buenos Aires; from the University of Rozario in Argentina (which was also occupied in solidarity); from the group Revolted Women of Brazil; from Venezuela and from UNAPE, the Popular Union of Artists of Ecuador.

The occupation lasted for nine days and ended with a strong demonstration. For these nine days the Opera was truly liberated. Even for a little while, a building that hosted and will continue to host sterile ideas, dead art and indifferent people, hosted a cultural core of free expression and resistance instead.

is trapped within and legitimised by the institutional power that continues to perceive the Other not as an integral part of the Self – and vice a versa – but the one who can be accepted in its progressive discourse only paternalistically. The Other is now in fact accepted into what can be shared by both the Self and the Other, so long as what divides them is not challenged and transformed into a liberated space – a space that is occupied by both on the same and equal terms.

Although what you call ‘cultural globalisation’ is part of the demand of global capital for continually unending innovation and production of new things, the successful entry of the products of other cultures, with their

the exploited periphery has now collapsed into this common goal. And culture is used to cover this up, producing global spectacles of art bien-nales and art fairs in which the colonial desire and fascination for the Other is put on display and is consumed like any other exotic commodity.

However, what I have described here is only part of the story. But a dominant part which is visible, recognised and globally celebrated. There is another part which is somewhat invisible, unrecognised or suppressed. It involved those who understood the true purpose of anti-colonial struggle, for whom it was not merely the question of obtaining the self-rule as the ultimate end. The self-rule was

Jetez-les à la Mer,
Jaffa 1948
ANONYMOUS PHOTOGRAPHER.
SEE NEXT PAGE FOR CONVERSATION
ON GAZA CRISIS



volve a vision that leads to a transformation of society. This transformation can take place by subverting what is an obstacle in its way.

Art as a ‘subversive’ force was in fact fundamental to the radical avant-garde. But this subversion became pacified once it entered the art institution with a demand to be recognised and legitimised as art. It is a difficult and unavoidable paradox, un-resolvable if art must maintain its status as art. And we haven’t yet found a way out of this paradox. The problem here is the individualism of the artist, whose main aim is only to strive for an individual success. Such a success does make an idea visible and distribute it in society. But by the time it reaches society and is consumed by it, it is no longer a subversive idea.

In fact, the institutionalisation of the avant-garde has today turned it into any other product promoted by the sensationalism of the mass media, and consumed by the public the way it consumes other things of the consumer culture. Its ‘subversion’ is now the same illusion by which capitalism operates and by which it makes the public

“ART IS NO LONGER
PERFORMING ITS
HISTORICAL RESPONSIBILITY”

buy and consume its useless products.

Art is therefore no longer performing its historical responsibility, as it is trapped not only in the artist’s inflated ego but the demands of a consumer society that puts the artist high up on a pedestal of the unique subject different and isolated from its own masses. Unless art enters and reinforces the creativity of the masses, it cannot be a liberating force for society as a whole.

Art now needs a new strategy which liberates it not only from the demands of consumer culture but its entrapment within the art institution. The role of art institutions cannot be denied in the process that connects an individual’s creativity with the public, but this role has now become subordinate to the demands of art market for which art is like any other precious commodity. What we therefore also need now is the liberation of art institutions from this subordi-

nation, so that they can perform the role for which they are established in society.

The point I want to make now is about art institutions particularly in Europe – as your publication is concerned with Europe. It seems they have not yet come to terms with what is in fact embedded within their own structures as part of the legacies of colonialism; and this has prevented them from recognising the fact that societies of Europe are no longer white societies but have become multiracial societies, particularly as a result of postwar immigration of people from Africa, Asia and the Caribbean. What we found in both Paris and London, in particular after the war, were integrated multiracial art communities in which artists of different racial or cultural backgrounds pursued the same goal within the movements of modernism and the avant-garde. Where are their achievements? European art histories do not even mention, let alone recognise, any of these achievements as part of Europe’s own histories or achievement. I would in fact go further to say that these institutions have

actively suppressed the knowledge of these achievements; and have instead turned to the promotion and celebration of what could be considered by them outside the movements of modernism and the avant-garde.

This brings back me to your first question about the ‘explosion of interest in the cultural production of the “former-third world”, to say that the art institutions in Europe are in fact behind what you call ‘cultural globalisation’. Why are these institutions promoting what are no more than the spectacles of exoticism of other cultures, while suppressing what their own postwar multiracial societies have produced in art? Why is ‘cultural globalisation’ more important for these institutions than what was necessary for the internal transformations of European societies?

The achievements of the postwar multiracial societies of Europe was in fact an allegory, that which provided a historical model for the postcolonial transformation of these societies. But the suppression of this achievement shows that Europe is perhaps not yet ready or unwilling for this transformation.

The critical role of *Third Text* should therefore remain in removing those obstacles which halt or stop historical processes of society’s social transformation; in particular to expose what is suppressed as knowledge. What *Third Text* faced, and has been facing since its emergence in 1987, was an extremely difficult task. It was the task of both confronting and negotiating both the postcolonial conditions responsible for ‘cultural globalisation’ and the institutional power that produced and legitimised them. This involved many compromises; sometimes even against our own objectives. But these compromises were necessary. Without these compromises *Third Text* would not be there, still operating after twenty two years of its existence. However, we have not capitulated to the dominant view and become one of its postcolonial functionaries. *Third Text* hasn’t achieved all its objectives, but we have not given up the hope. ■

London, 3rd February, 2009
See Back Cover for Rasheed Araeen’s Manifesto
for the 21st Century

ZONES OF CONFLICT: GAZA AND THE QUESTION OF THE REFUGEE

EYAL SIVAN AND EYAL WEIZMAN IN CONVERSATION



Photo by Ikey Green

Eyal Sivan is a filmmaker, producer and essayist, born in Haifa Israel; Eyal Weizman is director of the Centre for Research Architecture at Goldsmiths University. In this conversation, which took place as part of the conference Zones of Conflict, they approach the critical topic of the recent invasion of Gaza, and the resulting question of the position of the refugee.

Eyal Weizman: The destruction and the killing are on a huge scale. For us critically engaged in war and conflict, the problem is the assumption that if we exposed the level of atrocity and violence, if we brought it into heightened visibility, there would be an equally forceful, responsible, political public reaction that transferred outrage into a political action directed at stopping atrocities. But what if outrage itself becomes part of the logic of the ap-

plication of power here? From the last two major attacks it was involved in, Lebanon and Gaza, it became clear that the Israeli military, realising that it cannot fight counterinsurgency and urban war, opts to terrorise the population until it exercises sufficient pressure on its elected government to comply with the state's security vision. Thus the level of destruction, the dead children, the exploding schools and the overflowing hospitals are not "collateral" to

Israel's attack on Hamas, but the central part of Israel's strategy to convince the Palestinians that they are defeated and that resistance is futile. So Israel needs spectacular violence in its relation to the Palestinians and the world – the latter should acquiesce to its ultimatums to avoid generating an even larger catastrophe. We are faced with the mediatisation and amplification of rage used in continuation with a state logic that seeks to demonstrate its punishing

violence. If this is the case – should we even think about calling outrage? Should we find new ways of opposition?

Against the saturation of images of collapse and catastrophe, should we call for a strategy of withdrawal, a withdrawal of the image and of information? Or maybe there a way to engage in critical debate while taking this paradox into account, dealing with its proliferation in relation to a search for political transformation vis-à-vis an event? Should we absolutely ignore that event, or should we contribute to its hyper-visibility?

I think that we must initially, rather coldly examine the terms that are being employed: firstly, the ‘War on Gaza’, which implies the territorialisation of that war, as if Gaza was a sovereign, coherent, legitimate zone, and not a fragment of occupied Palestine, under a state of siege. We must not accept the language of the violence imposed. We hear of these words all the time, they have a utilitarian logic, whereas they are terms which need to be explained and reproduced as the categories of power itself. Another problem is that by heightening the visibility of this violence we may inadvertently contribute to the singularity of this event, which is in effect the last blow in a long process of attacks on Palestinian refugees.

Eyal Sivan: I am very happy to have had an introduction, because I must admit that after spending the time of the war in Israel shooting [a film] in Jaffa, I am quite confused. I was trying to make a film about the colonisation of the symbol of Palestine, in order to reflect on the fact that the only common symbol for the people that are living in this place called Palestine or Israel is the orange. I was trying to make a film about this commonality, this being together, which is in fact what Palestine was. And it was not a zone of conflict, but became a zone of conflict. The few thousand Palestinians in Jaffa have relatives in Gaza, because the refugees in Gaza are from Jaffa and from all those places that were under threat of the missiles from Gaza. There was a map published in the Israeli papers on the first day of the attack, which showed the range of the missiles coming from Gaza. And strange enough it was also a map of the places were the refugees now living in Gaza are originated from. They are the same places attacked by the Palestinian rockets, it is in some way an act of return. All those places are the places where the people who are under attack in Gaza have come from. And at the same time I was there in Jaffa trying to make a film on something that doesn't exist.

We have the possibility to reflect, and almost the need to understand. For us, all that's going on is a ques-

tion of denial. Denial is the nature of those populations that are under attack, which is not only the denial of the status of the refugees, but also the fact that there is or was something that is Palestine.

And so within this wordless, speechless position, while I was working in the last twenty years in that zone, the zone of conflict shifted, I became the zone of conflict.

Eyal Weizman: Indeed what is not discussed in context of this war is that the violence is directed at refugees. This is a part of an ongoing “war on refugees”, the [provisional] culmination of a historical process that started with the ethnic cleansing of southern Palestine in the fall of 1948.

I think that “war on refugee” is a distinct type of military/political/economical action that is afflicted on Palestinian refugees and which is un-

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“THE “WAR ON REFUGEES” ATTEMPTS TO UNDO THE “REFUGEE” AS A POLITICAL CATEGORY, BECAUSE THIS CATEGORY IS PERCEIVED AS DESTRUCTIVE AND NIHILIST.”

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dertaken through both destruction and construction. The refugees are managed through a combination of violence, “generosity” (after all the refugee and the history of humanitarianism intersect very clearly), “threat”... and “reward”

The “war on refugees” attempts to undo the “refugee” as a political category, because this category is perceived as destructive and nihilist. In the context of Palestine, but also in many other conflicts worldwide, the status of “refugee” is a manifestation of the unresolved and even of the un-resolvability of the conflict – without, that is, major political transformations. The demand for return is the one thing that in Israeli eyes threatens the very existence of the Israeli political/colonial order.

“The war on refugees” is applied in two interrelated ways: direct military force of destruction and killing, is often, if not always followed by development attempts to decamp the refugees by the transformation of their habitat. This process of “development” based on welfare and architecture is an attempt to address an “unresolvable” political issue with a series of existing socio-economic means or even urban solutions.

In the context of the “war on refugees” we can think about the six-day occupation not only in territorial terms, but as the handing over of the manage-

ment of the Palestinian refugee problem from Jordan and Egypt to Israeli. In fact, between, ‘49 and ‘67 Israeli ambassadors to different states in the world and the UN did not stop to complain about the fact that Palestinian refugees were not re-housed and absorbed, both politically and urbanistically, as citizens and into the fabric of cities. The occupation gave Israel the opportunity to show what it meant all these years. And indeed in fact the first plans that were drawn up after the 67 occupation of Gaza and the West bank were not for Jewish settlements, which came only later. The initial plans were for refugee cities, which would be built for the Gaza refugees and move them into areas near Hebron, in the West Bank, into specially designed cities that would undo the collective experience and the refugee status. It had a behaviourist logic to it: if only the Palestinians could live better, have better conditions, they would forget their political struggle. It was an attempt to address a political issue by the means of architecture. But these did not work out for various reasons, as there was internal conflict within the Israeli government.

The attempts to undo the refugee took much more of a violent turn few years later: it was Sharon's idea, the Haussmannisation of the refugee camps that took place between 1971 and 1972, the creation of a new urban form through the destruction of built matter. It was always the perception of the Israeli security apparatus of the refugee camp as a rabble of people and materials – material to be designed and reconfigured to be better controlled, so that the politics of resistance could be singled out and repressed. The refugee camps were not only seen as the location from which resistance was offered, but as the urban condition that bred this very resistance. Sharon wanted to eliminate the camps once and for all.

The spectre of the reconstruction of Gaza was present in Israeli discussions from the beginning of the attack, it was discussed simultaneously. We will destroy and international aid will rebuild. Without this understanding that international aid will clean up this mess – I doubt destruction would be allowed on this scale. It definitively didn't happen on this scale when it was Israel that had to foot the bill for the cleaning. The territorial withdrawal allowed the increase of violence and destruction.

We need to underscore the continuity of destruction and construction, and to see those not as separate actions but as continuous ones that amount to the reconfiguration of the built environment – the way it is reconfigured addresses what is perceived as the political category

of the refugee. And the category of the refugee goes beyond the immediate context of the actions of Israel; it is more generally a destructive category, the refugee is that which goes against and threatens the logic of state and borders, threatens the order of power. The refugee is that element which will both delegitimise and destroy the state. Although officially most Arab states support and promote the maintenance of this category of refugees – the very existence of the refugee also threatens their political orders. This might help connect this attack to the larger and ongoing “war on Palestinian refugees” in a wider historical/geographical context - from Zarqa [Amman 1970], Jebalya, Rafah and Shati [Gaza 1972], Sabra and Shatila [Lebanon 1982], Jenin and Balata [West Bank 2002] to Nahr el Bared [Lebanon 2007], and further to the kind of violence afflicted on refugee camps in the DRC at present.

This is also exemplified in various discussions that we have been hearing in the past years, for example within the different agencies that are dealing with Palestinian refugees. There has been many recent calls to dismantle UNRWA as the agency that supposedly “perpetuates” the refugee problems by handing refugee cards to descendents of the people who themselves were transferred. The political and verbal attacks on UNRWA are strangely mirrored by the fact of military attacks against its facilities in Gaza.

Eyal Sivan: And we also talk about the

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“AND SO WITHIN THIS WORDLESS, SPEECHLESS POSITION, WHILE I WAS WORKING IN THE LAST TWENTY YEARS IN THAT ZONE, THE ZONE OF CONFLICT SHIFTED, / BECAME THE ZONE OF CONFLICT.”

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resolution of conflict, and if we are able to think about the figure of the refugees we can consider that the recent attack is an attempt to solve the Palestinian refugees problem. When you consider as the solution the notion of peace, peace becomes the solution also to the problem of the refugee, the refugee is not anymore a problem, while a resolution to the notion of the refugee also calls for a leaving of the refuge and coming back, it demands that the moment of peace be peaceful. I believe that we should think about exactly this element: why the refugee notion was not raised. Who are those people that are under attack? And remember that part of the exposure of the Gaza attack is also a denial of the region of the conflict, which is the original war crime,

the ethnic cleansing and annexation of Palestine. Not identifying who are the people under attack allows the act of denial of the very beginning of the conflict, which is 1948 Palestine.

Eyal Weizman: In that sense, when we think about the question of reconstruction this is what we hear constantly: a few days into the war, a big meeting in the United Arab Emirates was held, and the first billion was already promised, the second billion is now also coming. This is not necessarily a problem and its consequences could indeed be positive, definitively to many families whose livelihood will be saved; but how is this money going to be spent, and what are the long-term consequences of the politics of reconstruction? We must be tuned to that. There are many ways of construction and the problem has a planning dimension to it.

In some bad examples reconstruction – namely when foreign aid is given for isolated housing clusters that fragment and scatter the spatial and historical continuity of the refugee camps – disrupts the refugee-ness as a political and historical experience. These attempts to improve, to transform the built environment in which refugees live could be part of that attempt to undo the refugee as a political identity, i.e to depoliticise the refugee problem.

In 1951, for the first time the residents of a tent encampment on the beach of Gaza were the first ones to receive pre-fabricated homes. People finally moved into them, but not without controversy; it is this resistance to transformation, the constant suspicion of refugees against improvement of their habitat – rather than the fact of not actually allowing for any transformation (there is finally always an improvement) – that keeps alive the refugee as a political category. UNRWA builds extensions to refugee camps in a way that keeps the community intact. Other agencies are far less sensitive to these nuances, or else intentionally attempt to de-refuge the refugee. If one understands that logic, one can see the current situation differently. This calls for a nuanced and urban thinking that is tuned to the communities that have been under such brutal and traumatizing attack, and not only seeing reconstruction according to the Hamas/Fatah divide.

What we want to leave you with is the non-obviousness of reconstruction. This does not mean that building homes for refugees is by definition a bad thing, that improving the conditions on the ground would necessarily depoliticise this political subjectivity and identity. But it is a problem, and one that needs to be thought through socially and architecturally. ■

ALEXANDRE KOJÈVE AND THE END OF POLITICS

EUROPEAN PROJECT AND EUROPEAN PRAXIS

The debate on the end of history is still relevant at the close of the twenty-first century, helping us to analyse the European post-political paradigm.

BY BOYAN MANCHEV

In a sense, the European project was an invention of the philosophers, is this also true for contemporary Europe, for Europe of the European integration? What is the operational and the regulative value of a philosophical concept in the political field? I will try to answer this question from the perspective of the philosophical and political debate on the End of History (a notion which I prefer to translate here, for reasons which will become clear with the development of my argument, as the End of Politics).

The Hegelian concept of the End of History reached its climax in the period after the fall of communism. It can be considered as the symptomatic concept of the political thought in the last decade of the last century, especially after Francis Fukuyama's book *The End of History and the Last Man* (1992). Is the debate on the End of History still relevant at the close of the twenty-first century's first decade, a decade marked by the events of 11 September 2001 and twenty years after the fall of the Berlin wall? Can we consider the contemporary transformation, or even crisis of traditional political projects, as symptoms of the End of History? During the last

decade we have witnessed a process of discursive substitution, which has to be critically examined – the concept of the End of Politics gradually takes the place of that of the End of History. The decline or the End of Politics is on the one hand celebrated by neo-liberal theorists, who affirm the supremacy of economics over politics, as well as by advocates of the "Third Way". On the other hand, it becomes the regulative horizon of the leftist philosophical criticism of modern forms of political power. Hence, the End of Politics appears as the new emblematic figure of political philosophy.

A central question in this respect would be – is the European project becoming a paradigmatic post-political project?

Alexandre Kojève and the European Project

Surprisingly enough, it seems that one departure point for a possible answer to the questions formulated above could be an investigation into the philosophical and the political ideas of one of the most original thinkers of the last century, especially in view of the European construction: the Russian-born French philosopher, Alexandre Kojève. Alexandre Kojève was not only a cosmopolitan intellectual mediating between the East and the West of Europe; he was (or pretended to be!), at the same time, surprisingly, one of the "authors" of the European political project.

Aleksandr Vladimirovich Kozhevnikov was born in 1902 in Moscow. After leaving Soviet Russia in 1920, he completed a thesis on the Russian religious philosopher Vladimir Soloviov under the supervision of Karl Jaspers in Heidelberg. In the 30's Kozhevnikov

moved to Paris where he acquired French citizenship and accepted the name Kojève. From 1933 to 1939 he taught his already legendary seminar on Hegel at the École Pratique des Hautes Études. The seminar was attended by some of the leading French philosophers and intellectuals of the period: Sartre, Merleau-Ponty, Lacan, Bataille, Klossowski, Althusser, Queneau, Aron, Breton, and Hannah Arendt, many of whom were profoundly influenced by Kojève's reading of Hegel. The seminar proposed an original reading of Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit*, indebted to Marx and Heidegger, which emphasised the historical, anthropological and ex-

"KOJÈVE WOULD APPEAR AS THE POLITICAL AND PHILOSOPHICAL "PROPHET" OF THE PERIOD FOLLOWING THE END OF THE COLD WAR, THE PERIOD WHICH STARTED TWENTY YEARS AGO WITH A REVOLUTIONARY EUPHORIA AND WHICH ENDS UP TODAY IN A SENSE OF GLOBALISED FAILURE."

istential dimensions of Hegel's seminal work. At the centre of his interpretation of Hegel, Kojève placed the negating activity of man – synonymous with human desire – the driving force of the historical process as a process of overcoming and transforming the material world through labour and the struggle for recognition. Kojève's seminar was published by Queneau under the title *Introduction à la lecture de Hegel*, in 1947. After the war, Kojève's friend Leo Strauss introduced his thinking to the United

States, where he also influenced Allan Bloom and Francis Fukuyama.

Kojève was not only a mastermind of contemporary French and American thought. Quite unexpectedly for a philosopher – a striking exception in the last century – Kojève quitted early – and irreversibly – the academic institutions in order to become one of the supposed mandarins of French and European policy. After the Second World War Kojève started to work in the French Ministry of Economic Affairs (where he remained until his death in 1968 in Brussels, during a European meeting). He had an indisputably important role in the construction of the EEC and GATT. Of course, it is quite possible that his role is exaggerated, but what most concerns me in this short text is the use of biographical fact as a symptom of a general movement, which radically exceeds the personal case: the transformation of the philosophical into political praxis as a founding movement for the modern political idea of Europe.

The End of Politics: Kojève as "Prophet" of the Contemporary World

I will formulate the following working hypothesis here: according to the logic of Kojève's philosophy of history the European project is the embodiment of the End of Politics.

It is not at all a secret that the prestige of the Hegelian concept of the End of History in the last century is due to Kojève's influence: its contemporary use is profoundly indebted to Kojève's Marxist interpretation of Hegel. Kojève saw the the becoming of Spirit as a material historical process. From his perspective, the culmination of universal history, or the end of history, is the state of satisfaction of human desires. In that sense, the end of the Cold War was the structural precondition of the fulfilment of universal history and of the becoming of universal society of freedom and welfare that makes political struggles meaningless, i.e. of the End of History. For that reason, Kojève suggests that the fulfilment of human productive capacities happens not in communism, but in capitalism, in the economic effectiveness of the United States, which would be joined by the Soviet Union. In other words, Kojève appears as the "godfather" of the "post-political era", the era in which economic regulation replaces modern political forms. To the extent

that – according to his Marxist-Hegelian vision – politics is determined by man's struggle for recognition, the end of the Cold War thus implies the end not only of the political *struggle* but also of the political in its proper terms. From such a perspective, Kojève would appear as the political and philosophical "prophet" of the period following the end of the Cold War, the period which started twenty years ago with a revolutionary euphoria and immense eruptions of hope, and which ends up today with resignation, a sense of globalised failure, which has perhaps already engaged the irreversible process of the progressive destruction of our world: the period of "globalisation".

This is why I suggest replacing the concept of the End of History with the concept of the End of Politics. The diachronic historical perspective, a *progressivist* one, is apparently discredited. The End of Politics is a concept which speaks for a structural transformation, and not of a temporal reality, namely for the transformation of the modern vision of democracy into a post-political project. I believe that this redefinition would have an explanatory role as far as the contemporary neo-liberal and "Third Way" theories – typologically close to Kojévian legacy – are concerned. Kojève's assertions can be seen on the one hand as arguments in favour of the neo-liberal ideas of a decline of politics; on the other hand, Kojève influences a radical tendency in contemporary political philosophy to reflect on the possibilities of stepping out of the modern forms of political sovereignty (Foucault, Derrida, Agamben, Esposito). In other words, the implicit or explicit political critique of the philosophers in question is also influenced by a vision of the "End of Politics". In my view, both tendencies face unsolvable problems, related to the possibility of common action. How is action possible after the End of History and/or Politics? Giorgio Agamben, undoubtedly inspired by Kojève, is quite direct in his response: at the end of history, after the "fall of law", the human state will be a state of "inoperativeness" (the genealogy of this notion could be traced back through Jean-Luc Nancy and Maurice Blanchot to Raymond Queneau and Kojève). That is why, ultimately, the end of history will imply a return to the "animal state", as announced





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(above)
G. Roland Biermann
APPARITION 21
TRITPYCH, 2004,
SILVER GELATIN PRINTS ON ALUMINIUM
DI-BOND, 160 X 47 CM EACH,
© G. ROLAND BIERMANN / COURTESY:
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by Kojève. Thus, through the mediation of Kojève's thought, we not only find ourselves in the centre of the debates of contemporary political philosophy, but we also find a unique position from which to articulate a germane perspective of facing the actual political crisis or *crisis of the political*, and more specifically, the difficulties of the European project.

The European Praxis

The world today is far from being the idyllic post-historical or post-political place envisaged by Kojève. Today the world alters before our eyes – and the most tangible result of the globalised politico-economical action in the (post-political?) age of financial capitalism seems to be the reduction of universal imperative and of the local places of justice. We have, then, urgently to foster a critical reflection on the vision of politics that carries the idea of an End of Politics.

But there is also a positive dimension of “Kojève's symptom”: we can identify within Kojève's philosophy and personal gesture an indication of the possible way out from the paradox of

the End of Politics. Kojève's crucial intuition is that the European question is a question of *praxis*, and it is precisely this intuition which is expressed by his radical decision to replace the École Pratique des Hautes Études with the Ministry of Economic Affairs.

Politics is governed by the *common praxis*, or by the *praxis of the common*. And the common *praxis* is always political. It is not necessary to go back to Aristotle in order to affirm that the *praxis of the common*, i.e. the ways-of-doing-together or the actualised-common-form-of-life is the originary dimension of politics. From this point of view, *praxis* is something completely different from the contemporary commoditisation of life, which, according

to Fukuyama's interpretation, functions as a means of symbolic recognition in the post-historical world and is the unambiguous sign of the end of political struggle: consumerism as the peaceful triumph of capitalist individualism. Fukuyama's lifestyle *apologia* is undoubtedly indebted to the famous Kojève footnotes to the second edition of his *Introduction à la lecture de Hegel*, where he suggests that the paragon of the End of History is not the animal state but the “Japanese snobbism”. There is still some meaning at the End of History, Kojève suggests: a purely aesthetic meaning beyond the political struggle, a surplus to the meaningless, effectively purified of post-historical economical regulation, as incarnated

by the United States.

Let us be attentive, then, to the positive resonance of “Kojève's symptom”, and oppose its post-political sentence for Europe. Kojève's gesture opens the question of the originary bound of personal *ethos* with the common *praxis*, which has the potential to oppose the individualistic visions of the “post-political ideologies”. Today, more than ever, we face the critical necessity to re-open the possibility of an affirmative political action. Only a vision of common *praxis* as an affirmative political action could open and govern the future of Europe. ■

The present article is related to research work conducted as a Robert Bosch Fellow at the IWM

I PAINT BECAUSE I'M A BLOND: MARLENE DUMAS'S FEMINIST EXPLORATION OF THE BODY AND IDENTITY

MOMA retrospective measures the political moments of the human form.

BY LOGAN ELIZABETH WERSCHKY

Marlene Dumas: Measuring Your Own Grave,” an exhibition of over 100 works currently at the Museum of Modern Art, New York, presents Dumas’s career-long exploration of identity through the human form. Despite the startling quality of Dumas’s work—saturated with images of corpses, sex workers, and disfigured babies—the retrospective proves to be much more than an exploration of the grotesque: it is a testament to the artist herself rather than her work. Thankfully, Dumas is a striking individual, with a complex understanding of and complicated relationship with identity.

The piece “Measuring Your Own Grave” (2003), from which the exhibition takes its title, encapsulates the significance of Dumas’s personal biography in her oeuvre. Beneath the inscribed text reading “measuring your own grave,” a figure, collapsed at the waist and with arms outstretched the width

of the 140 cm square canvas, takes a literal dimension of his or her own grave. It is a morbid image, signaling an approaching and accepted end. Death is a common theme in Dumas’s work, ranging from the ominous as in “De Wacht-Kamer (The Waiting Room)” (1988) to the bloody as in “Dead Girl” (2002). For Dumas, the images she creates become her legacy and, collectively, a portrait of herself. In 2008, Dumas explained:

“I’ve been told that people want to know why such a somber title for a show? Is it about artists and their mid-life careers or is it about women’s after-50 fears? No, let me make this clear: It is the best definition I can find for what an artist does when making art and how a figure in a painting makes its mark. For the type of portraitist like me this is as wide as I can see.”

It cannot be overlooked—one must take measure of the fundamental role the human form takes in her work. For Dumas’s body of work is a composite of hundreds of images of bodies.

Through portraiture, Dumas constructs her own image as well as explores the theme of identity more generally. Just as she explores death, Dumas examines identity through the opposite extreme—origin. Sexual imagery of pornography, erections, and vaginas are presented along with images of

pregnancy, birth and babies. The small painting, “Immaculate” (2003), frames a shadowed vulva between pale and ashen thighs and torso. While referencing Gustave Courbet’s “The Origin of the World” (1866), Dumas directly addresses the physical origin of life.

Dumas also takes a more existential view of identity. It is the complementary ideas of origin and of belonging which reveal her unique biography and provide perspective on her subjects. Her approach is often political and feminist, drawing from her personal history. Born in Cape Town in 1953, Dumas left at the age of 23 to attend art school in The Netherlands. Her departure from South Africa was voluntary, but as a white woman also political. While Dumas continues to live and practice in Amsterdam, she is well aware of her outsider status and the multiplicity of her identity. A self-described “allochtoon”, she demonstrates the complexity of origin and identity politics: “My fatherland is South Africa, my mother tongue is Afrikaans, my surname is French. I don’t speak French.” This investigation of identity through the idea of belonging—socially and politically—is clear in a number of paintings.

Perhaps this is confronted most directly in “The Look Alike” (2005), where Dumas portrays the face of a young

man who was mistakenly apprehended because of his resemblance to an individual pursued on terrorism charges. In “Black Drawings” (1991-1992), Dumas assembles 112 ink and watercolor drawings of faces. The title plays with ambiguity as the piece is drawn in black ink but also displays the faces of black individuals. Through providing 112 different faces, Dumas examines racial identity and representation. She con-

“DUMAS’S BODY OF WORK IS A COMPOSITE OF HUNDREDS OF IMAGES OF BODIES.”

fronts sameness and difference within this grouping and takes away traditional subjectification of black individuals. This is particularly interesting considering Dumas’s profile as a white woman of South African origin who, whilst proclaiming that she is “always not from here,” benefits from white privilege, and also can overwhelmingly “pass” in Dutch society.

Dumas’s work provides a strong feminist narrative. Through representing the body, and manipulating the body in her exploration of identity, Dumas exemplifies how the personal is

political. Germaine Greer, noted scholar and feminist, describes the importance of the body stating, “The personal is still political. The millennial feminist has to be aware that oppression exerts itself in and through her most intimate relationships, beginning with the most intimate, her relationship with her body.” Dumas’s paintings of sex workers may come to mind, as the use of the body is so visceral, yet it is her 1977 “Don’t Talk To Strangers” mixed media piece, in which she takes fragments of private texts (real and contrived) to construct—or refigure—a personal, yet publicly-displayed identity. It is one of her few works without an image of the human form.

The exhibition is organized somewhat thematically on two floors of the museum and this separation emphasizes Dumas’s choice of medium. The 6th Floor galleries only contain paintings and reflect Dumas’s deliberate pursuit of working in the medium. While other feminist artist worked in new media, Dumas’s decided to focus on painting in the early 1980s. This choice is a striking feminist act, challenging the gendered history of art. She has said, “So I decided that instead of saying that in spite of the fact that I’m a woman, I also like to paint, I’d say I paint because I’m a woman, I paint because I’m a blonde.”

This purposeful yet self-amused approach takes on the burden of history in Dumas’s use of appropriation. At times she clearly alludes to historical male artists, as she does in “The Woman of Algiers” (2001), using Eugene Delacroix’s 19th century piece, “Women of Algiers” as a point of reference in subject and title. She also takes on more playfully near contemporaries, such as Ad Reinhardt and Robert Ryman.

Depicting the most intimate moments in life, Dumas creates images which linger in the mind. Yet in the end, the exhibition leaves you yearning for Marlene Dumas in the flesh. ■

Marlene Dumas: Measuring Your Own Grave is at the Museum of Modern Art, New York through 16 February 2009. It will then travel to The Menil Collection, Houston, Texas from 26 March – 21 June 2009.

(far left)
Marlene Dumas
MEASURING YOUR OWN GRAVE, 2003
OIL ON CANVAS

(left)
THE WOMAN OF ALGIERS, 2001
OIL ON CANVAS



THE AFRICAN FEMALE FORM BETWEEN TWO WORLDS

INTERVIEW WITH ANGÈLE ESSAMBA

The photography of Angèle Essamba aims to construct a multiform image of African women.

BY SÉGOLÈNE PRUVOT

Angèle Etoundi Essamba was born in Cameroun and settled in Amsterdam more than twenty years ago. Her work provides an insight in the complex challenges facing the formation of a truly cosmopolitan feminism: to integrate the attempts, views and needs of women who have very diverse experiences, without imposing the views of one group, i.e. that of middle-class white European women.

Europa: In your photographs, your main subjects are women, black women. Why did you choose to focus on them?

Angèle Essamba: I wanted to challenge usual representations of black women. These representations often evoke exoticism of black women or show images of poverty, misery, submission and lack of autonomy. These representations have been totally constructed by European media. They also show African women

in their traditional roles: that of mother and caretaker, of worker in the fields. I did not recognize myself in these images and it seemed vital to me to break with it and to apply another look on African women and on myself: the reality is way more complex, it is multiform.

Photographing black women is also a way to explore my own identity, their lives and bodies reflect, each of them in their ways, various experiences that I have been through. Many of my photographs are also self-portraits. I photograph the human body because it is similar to me, close, intimate. It is also the medium by which transmission happens -transmission of life. Marks and traces on bodies also tell an intimate story.

Your last series of work is entitled 'veil and unveiling'. Why did you choose this particular topic?

This strand of work explores not only the Islamic veil but also all types of veils and scarves; it is a logic follow up of my previous works: it plays with materials, fashion effects, weaving and movements. I wanted to focus on strength and elegance or for instance on the sensuality with which some women wear the veil. The veil dares, invites and seduces because it allows the gesture of unveiling. A naked body is not necessarily



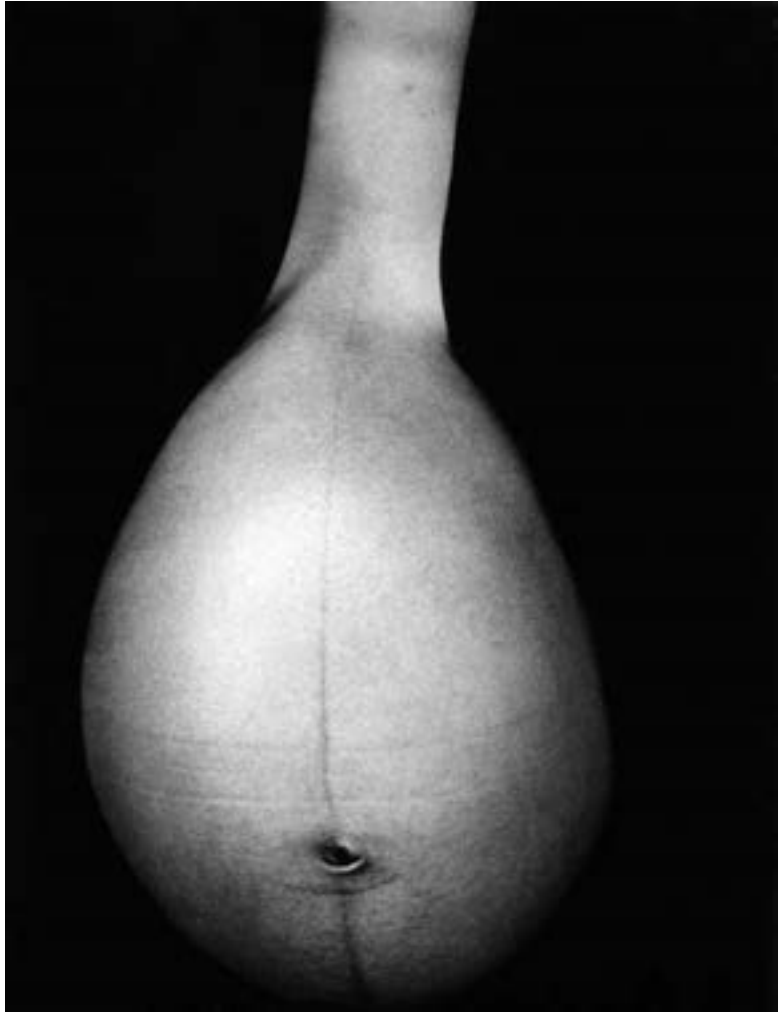
freely than a covered one. In some European countries, debates on the signification and admissibility of the Islamic veil have led to various forms of stigmatization and deliberate exclusion, which I want to challenge.

In some of your works you use superposition. Is there a symbolic importance to that in relation to your themes?

The work on superposition helps expressing the fact that nothing is totally "acquired" and defined for good. Superposition reflects the link and meeting between two realities, two worlds, between vegetal and human, between tradition and the contemporary "me". It allows playing with and addressing the question of roots, frontiers.

What are your sources of inspiration?
The artists that have marked me are too numerous and various to be all named. They range from Robert Mapplethorpe to Rodin and sculpture. Most of my inspiration comes from my African heritage and from the fact that I miss Africa. The audience often believes my photographs have been taken in Africa, but 95% of my work has been realized in my studio in Amsterdam. I photograph people I meet in the streets. They are also people who are in between, in between two worlds. ■

Angèle Essamba's photographs form part of the Femmes dans les arts d'Afrique exhibition at Musée Dapper, 36 Rue Valéry, 75116 Paris until 12 July. Her work can be visualized on her website www.essamba-art.com



(top) **ROOTS 4** 2000
(bottom right) **AU DELA DU MYSTÈRE 5** 1999
(bottom left) **NOIR 4**



ECOAESTHETICS: ART BEYOND ART

A Manifesto for the 21st Century



Artists must return to occupy a central place in the social and political evolution of our common destiny.

BY RASHEED ARAEEN

Art is today trapped in the facile idea of individual 'freedom of expression', which merely produces the banality of media scandals and sensationalism, further widening the gap between art and life. Art now operates purely as a commodity. The tremendous success of the artist today has inflated his narcissistic ego, turning him or her into a celebrity able to entertain the public but devoid of any transformational power.

All this is due to the failure of the historical avant-gardes. This failure was not inherent in the ideas of the avant-gardes themselves, but lied in the way the criticality of the avant-garde was appropriated by the very forces it wanted to confront and change. The potential of the avant-garde to intervene in life and transform it is still there. But it must first liberate itself both from the artist's ego and from where this ego leads art: the bourgeois art institution. Art must now go beyond the making of mere objects that are displayable in the museum and/or sold as precious commodities in the market place. Only then can it enter the world of everyday life and contribute to its collective energy.

Historically, the struggle of the avant-garde was to integrate art with life, to find ways by which individual creative processes could enter life's own dynamic processes and become part of them. But it was only during the Land art movement of the late 1960s and early 1970s that there emerged, though paradoxically, a means of abandoning the making of objects in favour of an art of concepts. It was

then that art went beyond Duchamp's object-based gestures and became engaged with the land or the earth itself – indeed, in a dynamic reversal of the readymade.

The land had always been an object of the artist's gaze, but this time the gaze did not produce landscape painting. On the contrary, the conception of land as art itself became an artwork. This was achieved by intervening in the land and transforming it as something that continued to remain part of the land, either as a stationary object or what would transform itself continually. But, again, what should have become part of the living process ended up in the museums as photographic artwork, as an object of the gaze

Some ten years later, Joseph Beuys tried to resolve this difficult paradox by suggesting that his tree-planting work (Kassel, 1982) could in fact become part of people's everyday work. It offered a social model for the transformative power of art, but his proposal of planting trees failed to go beyond the idea of art legitimised and contained by the bourgeois art institution. And although Beuys' work opened a new space for art to move forward, it failed to resolve the problem of art trapped within both the artist's narcissistic ego and the institution that will not allow art to become part of collective life.

Although such radical ideas of the avant-garde failed – inasmuch as they were legitimised and contained within the individualism of artists – the ideas themselves are still there to be taken out of their institutional closures. The ideas were of course appropriated and their true significance aborted, turning them into institutionally manageable objects, frozen in their temporalities. But ideas as knowledge can never be frozen or trapped, either as the absolute property of an individual or the institution. They can always be salvaged from history, given a new context and made to move forward within the dynamic of new

times and spaces. They can indeed be made to perform a radically transformative social function in the situation of humanity today.

But in order to perform this function art must go beyond and integrate itself within the collective struggle of life today, and recover its true social function.

A piece of land can now be conceived as an ongoing, self-sustaining dynamic process with a movement generated from within, by its own agency, legitimising itself. This agency is not that of an individual, but is the collective work of those who work on the land. It is this *collective work* of the masses, not of nature as perceived by American Land artists Smithson and Morris, which continually transforms the land, producing an agency which is not only creatively productive but posits, philosophically, a progressive idea.

The phenomenon of climate change can be studied by scientists in their ivory towers, but the reality of its disturbing consequences is faced by all life on earth. The solution to this problem lies not in the theories of the academics but in the productive creativity of people themselves, which can be enhanced through the intervention of *artistic imagination*. What the world now needs are rivers and lakes of clean water, collective farms and tree planting all over the world – something that was in fact initiated in Kenya by the 2004 Nobel Peace Prize Laureate, Wangari Maathai, a few years before Beuys' proposal. The aim of *Ecoaesthetics* is to bring both Maathai's and Beuys' visions together, in a unison that fills the gap between art and life. Although it is extremely important to protect existing rain forests, they alone cannot reduce the greenhouse effects in the atmosphere. Only planting more trees can achieve this, for which enormous water is required. This can be achieved by conceptualising the process of desalination of sea water as an ongoing continuous artwork, with its own dynamics and agency. The establishment of desalination plants around the world – which can be millions – would provide enormous quantities of water. Desalination of sea water as art is based on its potential to transform things. It comprises a complex cycle of continuous transformations of the sun's energy; when brought into contact with water it becomes steam, which runs the desalination plants and produces fresh water, which in turn fertilise the earth, producing trees and plants. This phenomenon actually happens in nature. But when it is replicated through the combination of art, science and technology, its controlled results enhance the very phenomenon of nature that is replicated. The role of the artistic imagination here is to think, initiate and create not what is self-consuming by the ego from which the idea emerges, but what can transcend and transgress narcissism and become part of the collective energy of the earth.

Art must, ultimately, liberate itself from the romanticism of anarchic confrontation, from the prison of facile irony (Baudrillard), from the regimes of representation (Ranciere/ Deleuze), in order to become a continuous movement in life's natural processes and part of its collective cultural endeavours, finally becoming truly egalitarian. ■

THE MYTH OF EUROPA

DEMOCRACY EQUALITY CULTURE BEYOND THE NATION STATE

FREE COPY
MAY 09

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BEYOND THE NATION

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We are trying to accelerate while stuck in neutral gear. The explosion in the numbers of civil society NGOs, think tanks, humanitarian actions, international media, 'global' forums, protests and meetings over the past 20 years following the fall of the Berlin wall has refined the demands and raised the awareness of new generations, but it has yet to produce any political project that measures up to the heights of their ambitions. As more and more problems are revealed to be 'global' in their complexity and implications, and become increasingly dramatic in their effects, this impotence is likely to become more and more frustrating, the gap between aspiration and possible action ever greater. Over the past 6 months we have seen and felt a new stage in this dislocation, with the spilling-over of both hope and anger at a global level. The G7 may have become the G20, the United States of America may have elected a leader exalted at least briefly in large parts of the Western World, but even we citizens lucky enough to live in the freer and more powerful parts of the world are, when we respond to global political

problems we are passionate about, increasingly in the position of humble petitioners to our leaders, whether they are national politicians or unelected bureaucrats in international organisations. We have the feeling of rolling backwards from autonomy, rolling away from democracy, at the very moment when the interconnectedness of global society was supposed to assert itself. In a world where all the crucial political issues cross national borders, any new political project with the capacity to inspire will necessarily be transnational. And transnationalism goes hand in hand with the awareness of the increasingly cosmopolitan feel of European cities, providing a very tangible representation of the global migrations of the new century. Contributing to the articulation of such a project is one of the tasks this magazine and the organisation it represents have set for themselves, a contribution that this issue brings out over several connected articles.

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INTERVIEW WITH NANCY FRASER



Nancy Fraser is one of the most radical critical theorists and champions of feminism working today. Her work on the public sphere, justice and equal participation engage with and challenge the emerging transnational political reality. In this interview Fraser talks about the challenge of transnationalism to public opinion in the fallout from the financial crisis, rethinking justice and pulling back the potential of social movements from the claws of neoliberalism.

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CHANGE

BEYOND DEVELOPMENT: IL FAUT ÊTRE ABSOLUMENT MODERNE

Beyond cyclical economic crises, beyond temporary ‘emergencies’ dictated by the life-cycle of media scoops, and beyond periodical appeals to the emergence of a new Asian ‘superpower’, an underlying structural transformation of geopolitical relations is clearly underway. The outcome of this process is in many ways unforeseeable, and certainly will not become evident in a matter of few years. It is a readjustment that takes place squarely in the *long durée*, evolving over and defined by the fluctuations of time.

The catchword for the end-point of this process is ‘multipolar world order’, or a world where a ‘system of continents’, a polyphony of countries or regional associations, breaks the hegemonic unipolarity of the post-1989 global order. The main engine for such transformation is the group of usual suspects: the China of accelerated economic development and global ambitions, the Brazil of ethanol production and biofuels technology, the India of Tata and electronics.

When we take seriously the possibility of real geopolitical change on a global scale many new questions are raised and many old questions are reformulated. In a world where many ‘former-developing’ countries begin to play the game of political competition and economic imperialism, former distinctions between the ‘centre’ and the ‘periphery’ begin to blur. The evolution of Lula’s

Brazil over the past few years is here a case in point; from hope of the new Latin American left, the country has been set on a developmentalist course with the clear aim of turning it into a regional superpower, with the priority of the ‘wealth and influence’ of the state silently replacing an earlier drive for social justice and equality. China, with its self-cannibalisation and self-colonisation, its neo-colonial approach to exploiting African resources, is a clearer case still.

But a multipolarity where individual nation states vie for economic and political supremacy is nothing radically new and nothing to be uncritically celebrated: the period of European imperialist expansion was in many ways a multipolar world, with the leading superpowers feuding over influence and resources.

If it has to have any value, the slow movement from uni- to multi- polarity must be accompanied by a parallel *transnationalisation* of political practice, a parallel movement that transforms the objective of political struggle and efforts at development and progress from the ‘*unicum*’ of the nation, from the loneliness of the tribe, to the *multitude* of the world’s citizens.

We approach this topic, the necessity and possibility of such transnational practice, throughout this and every issue of this journal. But in these few lines we can offer a different reformulation of the problem, through the question of the project of modernity. Against ongoing attempts to relegate

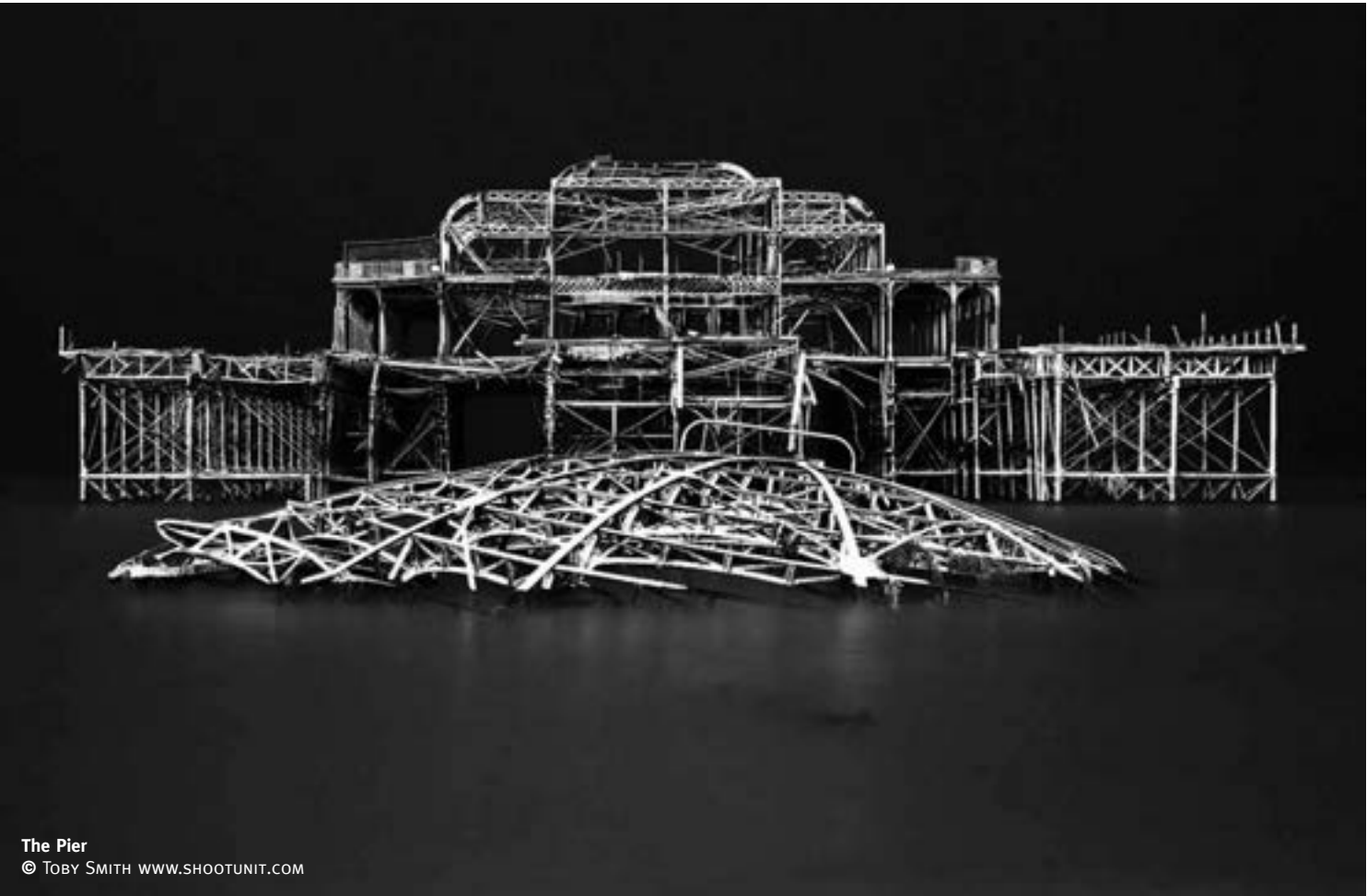
modernity and its sister concept of progress to a conception of mere technical amelioration and material accumulation, it is more necessary than ever to fully appreciate and recuperate the *critical spirit* that lies at the heart of the project of modernity, its ability to *shatter* and open-up a different future.

China offers us a very good example. With the reformist course undertaken in the 1980s, which in the last thirty years transformed the country into one of the most fast-developing proto-capitalist market systems, we witness the semantic transformation of the word ‘modernity’ into a signifier for sheer economic development. And in a country where egalitarianism was strenuously enforced over decades, we witness forceful attempts to transform the spiritual qualities of society to suit that developmentalist project, with the ongoing dismantlement of the moral-ideological framework of the past to make room for the neo-liberal theology of the free market, efficiency, and competitiveness. The creation of a new *homo economicus* goes hand in hand with the development of a Chinese capitalist economy, the drive towards consumerism and the primacy of wealth as a source of value and personal satisfaction creates the conditions for the emergence of a competitive Chinese economy. The trajectory is clear, the path is drawn in advance: catching up with the Western ‘centre’, increasing production, accumulating national wealth, improving military might to compete with and challenge the

main international powers of the time. A quick walk through the streets of Beijing will make us notice the character *xin*, meaning ‘new’, everywhere from laundries to barber shops. But this is not the novelty of the modern, it is not the new of the unthought-of; ‘new’ is the skyscraper, ‘new’ is the luxury car, ‘new China’ is an economically and politically empowered nation finally able to proudly play the Westphalian game of states competing for supremacy.

But modernity is to be understood exactly as the opposite – modernity is the free flow of the spirit and its capacities to break and supersede the present limits of possibility. Modernity is the act of opening up the *never opened*, making-arise the *previously hidden*, giving-birth to *that which never was*. More simply, modernity is a process of transformation, a process that refuses to take the end as given, the route chartered.

It is in this sense that today we must be absolutely modern. We must recognise that the hidden potential of the ongoing transformations of the global system will only yield a new and better future if that new and better future is imagined and constructed, and that construction will only come to be with a concerted, transnational, and in many ways radical reinterpretation of the hierarchy of values that hold our communities together. The crassly materialist and chauvinistically national declination of progress, of development, and in the end of nothing short of the meaning of the happy life, is what must return to the centre of our questioning.



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EUROPA is the journal of European Alternatives, a transnational civil society organisation advocating the emergence of a positive transnationalism in the cultural and political sphere, and promoting intellectual and artistic engagement with the idea and future of Europe.

European Alternatives organises events and discussions internationally, along with the flagship London Festival of Europe each Spring.

You can find more information about us on www.euroalter.com

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Advisory Office
Gilbert Achcar
Sandro Mezzadra
Kaylpo Nicolaidis
Richard Zenith

Design
Rasha Kahil
www.rashakahil.com


editors@euroalter.com

UTOPIA!

A PROGRESSIVE EUROPEAN MIGRATION POLICY IS URGENT

The absurdity and lethality of European national policies towards migration has once again risen towards public consciousness in recent weeks, without any indication that national politicians intend to do anything other than continue to promote myths of national egoism and self-sufficiency, whether or not covered by an often cynical sheen of humanitarian concern. In response to the humanitarian situation in Calais, the French interior minister disbanded the camp known as the ‘jungle’, without any apparent provisions for the migrants dispersed, and denied the plans for a new detention centre announced by the British home office minister who seems to believe Britain has the special right to profit from a precarious migrant class but blame failures in administering to migrants on other countries. Meanwhile, Italy and Malta played a similar, ongoing, and by definition interminable game of shifting the responsibility for migrants found at sea between them, trying to avoid adding to the numbers in already heavily overcrowded and riotous detention centres. Italy was again condemned by the European Council for deporting migrants to countries which practice torture and for various acts of discrimination, to add to its condemnation for racism and disregard of human rights by the United Nations in March. Médecins Sans Frontières produced a report on the deplorable and inhuman conditions in detention centres in Malta. Most serious of all at least another

200 people died in a capsized ship heading towards Italy, taking the total of those killed at the borders of Europe to over 14000 since 1988 (according to the newspaper review effected by fortresseurope.blogspot.com).

There is nothing exceptional about any of this, nor about the public or political responses to these events. They simply add to the already convincing case for the desperate need for a coordinated European migration policy: the European Union is the only level at which the rights and dignity of the migrants could effectively be protected, the benefits and burdens of migration fairly distributed amongst the peoples of Europe, and at which partnerships for genuine development promoting both solidarity and mobility in origin countries could be most successfully run. Although there are some European policies that try to make these things a priority, the centre of political ground on the issue seems to be increasingly moving towards a securitarian agenda which has ever less to do with either human dignity or rights, and is ever more detached even from political realism.

The European Parliament adopted in April a report on a *Common Immigration Policy For Europe*, which places the emphasis on reinforcing border controls and the powers of FRONTEX, and continues to insist on the not only undesirable and unjust but also completely implausible policy that all ‘irregular’ migrants in Europe must be forced to return to their

countries of origin. In the UK alone there are over 50,000 irregular migrants. In Italy this figure is over 10 times larger. In the whole of the European Union there are estimated to be roughly 8 million irregular migrants, and no matter how much the powers of those who control and police Europe’s borders are increased these numbers are unlikely to do anything but grow. Political priorities and political delusions seem to have changed little from the adoption of the Returns Directive in June 2008, which allows for the detention of people for up to 18 months simply for not being able to produce legitimating papers.

A small potential saving grace of the report adopted by the Parliament is a clause inserted after much struggle, and much to the consternation of the Conservative parties, to propose that migrants should be allowed to vote in local elections, and become part of political parties and trade unions. This extremely meek proposal, which many more progressively-inclined Europeans might mistakenly suppose is already the case, would do something to address the internal borders of European political society which exist for, as many have underlined, the metaphor of ‘fortress Europe’ mistakenly gives the impression that the borders to Europe are merely geographical. In fact, European societies are protected, insulated and policed in a huge variety of ways, such that the borders run throughout the fabrics of everyday life. Even in a non-legislatively binding report such as this adopted by the European

Parliament, however, our ‘European’ representatives still feel the need to specify that ultimately it is up to the member states of Europe to adopt such ‘integration’ measures.

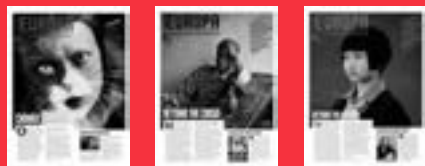
According to estimates by the Migreurop group (www.migreurop.org) there around 180 detention centres for migrants located in Europe, and an increasing number situated in North African and Middle Eastern countries and Turkey. The majority of these centres are closed to NGOs and other observers, and there are steps being taken to make it even more difficult for access in France and other European countries, whilst access to camps in non-EU member states is almost impossible. It is therefore unlikely that a migrant detained inside will have access to legal advice for protection under even the most basic human rights laws that exist at an international level. Access for external observers to these camps is an absolutely fundamental condition for Europe to be able to say it believes in upholding human rights at all, but such access seems to have been largely ignored in the European Parliament’s report.

Migration is widely recognised as the crucial worldwide political issue for the coming century, and there is no area of politics in which it does not enter. Europe is the crucible in which these politics will largely be played out – it is therefore urgent that a coalition for a progressive migration policy in Europe at a transnational level be built and supported.

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European Alternatives is dedicated to creating a community of activists. The organisation is run on a non-profit basis, aiming to spread an intellectually and aesthetically committed understanding of the meaning of a transnational project and the potentials of the European construction to as wide a public as possible.

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Ratcliffe on Soar 3
FROM THE SERIES: “LIGHT AFTER DARK”
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FOR A BETTER WORLD BEYOND THE CRISIS

A crisis liberates the imagination. The uncertainty of the future allows for the emergence of real political alternatives.

BY IMMANUEL WALLERSTEIN

The real crisis we are facing today is a structural crisis in the capitalist world economy. It began about 35 years ago and it is going to go on for at least as much. We are in a transition from this system to something else. The world revolution of 1968 shook up the cultural realities of the world, but the underlying crisis is basically an economic crisis – it has to do with the fact that the capitalist world economy has had some standard measures of getting out of its repeated periodic stagnation, which have worked for 400 or 500 years, but what they have done is they have pushed the curve steadily upwards. You have to think of all systems as having a combination of cyclical

rhythms which maintain their systemicity and secular trends which are the focus of continual change.

Basically it has to do with how capitalists make money. Capitalists make money essentially because they produce for a lower cost than they can sell and use it for capital accumulation. Now, the three basic costs of capital are personnel costs, input costs and taxation costs. The way we got out of each successive downturn in the world economy was to steadily increase each of these a little bit. After 500 years we have reached a point where we are approaching the asymptote, because the price for which you sell items is not infinitely extensible: you run against people's unwillingness to buy at certain levels. There is therefore a sort of upward curve; as long as it is at the 20% or 25% level it can go up to the 30% with a mere shrug of the shoulders, but when it reaches the 60% level or 75% level then you are beginning to shake terribly. This is basically how all systems work: it is how biological systems work, physical systems, chemical systems and the universe works, and the solar system works the same way. We

are in that structural crisis.

Many people misread the crisis because they misinterpret two normal phenomena as the crisis. The first is the Kondratieff B economic downturn. We've been in that since 1970 more or less, it always escalates at the end, and we are at that end point. The other normal phenomenon is the hegemonic cycle, and we are at the point where the US has more or less exhausted its hegemonic advantages. Those two things are not a crisis - all of that is absolutely normal - they happen to coincide with this other fundamental structural crisis, which manifests itself as chaos and enormous oscillations, and out of them comes a bifurcation. A bifurcation means technically there can be two ways of filling in the same equation, which you normally cannot do. But in social science terms it means the system cannot survive, we can know that for sure, but what we cannot know is what will replace it. That is a big political struggle, it has been going on for a while, and it will now intensify and go on for the next 20 to 30 years. And the outcome is intrinsically unpredictable. No-one can say who will win that struggle, but at some point in 2040 or 2050, we will enter into some new system.

The Kondratieff A phase – 1945 to 1970 more or less – was the biggest expansion of the world economy in the history of the modern world system. And the Kondratieff B phase has been following absolutely normal patterns, with a shift to the relocation of no longer profitable major industries, a shift of attempts to acquire capital from construction to finance, rising indebtedness, rising unemployment etc. All of that led to the most incredible expansion of debt in the history of the modern world system. Suddenly the bubble burst, in fact several bubbles burst and we are all living in the consequences. Probably nothing can be done about it. It doesn't matter if we follow Angela Merkel's policies or the US policies under Obama. Neither the one nor the other is going to pull us out of this. We are going to go down in real terms for real people for a good period. This will take the form of a big deflation, and the alternative mode of deflation is runaway inflation, but that is also deflation.

In this people are going to be hurt very hard, people who are at the bottom are going to be hurt the most because they have the least fat, so to

speak. The major problem for governments today is to prevent uprisings. The way they will handle it is social democratic things: more healthcare, more unemployment insurance etc – just like Sarkozy gave in to the Guadeloupians ... People are starting to rebel. It hasn't gotten violent yet – but it will; it will be nasty all over the place, there will be right-wing reactions of all kinds, there is xenophobia in all societies....

What is lacking is a kind of coherent, unified response across the world of what might be called the world left. There isn't one, yet. That is part of their problem. That is part of the uncertainty of what is going to happen in the next 10 or 20 years. There is no coherent centre, it is dispersed. But that is true on the other side as well.

The thing about a crisis is precisely that it liberates the imagination, it is the simple uncertainty of the future liberates the imagination. But that is what is so impossible to predict – where will it move? To speak for myself I think we have to try to de-commoditise things that have been commoditised. I personally do not see why a steel company cannot be run like a hospital – not for profit, but for all sorts of other things. Maybe

“I HAVE NEVER UNDERSTOOD WHY THE LEFT THINKS THEY CAN WIN BETTER IN THEIR NATIONAL SPHERE THAN IN EUROPE AS A WHOLE.”

when the steel company shuts down someone will take it over and try that. I always say I don't have the solutions in my right hand pocket ... I'm only trying to say things can be done.

I also have another way of putting this: the old philosophical debate in the Western world between determinism and free will. This debate has been going on for several hundred years, the arguments have become standard, but I think that they should be historicised – it is not the one or the other, it is that when a system is operating 'normally', when it is operating according to the rules by which it was set up, then the system is very deterministic, in the sense that every time you pull away from the way things are normally done there are enormous pressures to return to equilibrium. In a structural crisis things are precisely opposite because the oscillations are so violent and

so enormous and so unpredictable, so that we are actually in a situation of free will – it is the butterfly effect, every little butterfly effects at every moment where we come out, but no one can control all those butterflies, so every action every day has some impact. Globally that is a situation of relative free will – that is the plus of being in a structural crisis, that you matter much more than before.

With regards to Europe, we should focus on the decline of US hegemony and the emergence of multiple centres of real power, of which Europe is clearly one. Europe is trying to solidify its reality. Within a European context I have always been much more on the federalist side, I think their strength requires that they create much stronger political institutions, something they have not been able to do because they have been foot-dragging at both ends of the political spectrum. From the national right, who do not want to give up national control over x, y and z, and on the left, or at least the left in the northern part of Europe, who have seen this as essentially somehow giving into the neoliberal Brussels bureaucracy and so forth. I have never understood why the left thinks they can win better in whatever their national sphere is than in Europe as a whole, but they do, or at least they do in northern Europe. The European Union is in a very curious situation right now, they have one great strength at the moment, the euro, which everyone who is not a member now wants to be a part of. Take the example of Britain: I'm impressed by the degree to which Gordon Brown has tilted towards the European end of things. The crisis is such that in order to survive Britain needs to throw its lot in with Western Europe, and it needs to become part of the euro. And I think they will, eventually.

Globally, the outcome of the crisis is a struggle between the 'spirit of davos' and the 'spirit of porto alegre'. It is a struggle between people who want to replace the capitalist world economy with a system that is also, perhaps more so, exploitative, polarising and hierarchical, and people who militate for a system that is going to be democratic and radically egalitarian. That is the political struggle the world is in. ■

A sociologist, historical social scientist, and world-systems analyst, Immanuel Wallerstein teaches at Yale University



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THESES FOR AN ALTER-GLOBALISING EUROPE

In the context of an evident reshaping of global relations of power, and with the European Elections approaching, it is imperative to discuss the potentials and objectives of a real transnational political practice.

BY ETIENNE BALIBAR

1 Now, more than ever before, politics, as Max Weber put it, can only be “global”. This does not mean that there is only one global politics possible: on the contrary there is necessarily a choice between several politics, defined by their objectives, their means, their conditions, their obstacles, their “subjects” or “wills”, the risks they involve. The field of politics is that of the alternative. If we posit that today all the possibilities fall within one trend towards “globalization”, the question then becomes: what are the alternatives to its dominant forms? Can Europe be an “alterglobalizing” force, and how?

2 To claim that politics can only be global does not equate to saying that politics is not concerned with the condition and the problems of “people” where they live, where their life history has placed them: on the contrary, it equates to asserting that local citizenship has as its condition an active global citizenship. Every local political choice of economic, social, cultural, institutional orientation involves a “cosmopolitical” choice, and vice-versa.

3 Europe’s place in the world today – in spite of a few vague diplomatic impulses – is that of a dead dog that follows the water’s current, devoid of any initiative of its own. If not – given its economic and cultural “weight” – that of a dead elephant that goes with the flow. Examples abound: from the reform of the United Nations to the enforcement of the Tokyo Protocol, from the regulation of international migration to the resolution of Near and Middle Eastern crises or the deployment of back-up troops to the wars initiated by the US. Consequently, Europe lacks the means of resolving its own “internal” problems, including institutional ones.

4 That Europe has no global politics entails that there is no – or hardly any – global politics emerging from the

European nations. European nations thus have no – or hardly any – home politics presenting real alternatives. National elections function in this respect as a trompe-l’œil, but one which fails to dupe everyone: hence depoliticization. Global issues therefore re-emerge in a purely ideological form: “the clash of civilizations,” and the like.

5 The causes of this situation are to be found within the evolution of historically inherited power relations that have been reinforced by the current state of affairs. But this evolution – that confers either a purely reactive or a simply adaptive function upon the “European construction” – cannot stand as a total explanation. We must supplement this acknowledgement with another one: there is a disastrous collective inability, amongst the majority of the European population, to imagine alternative policies and forms of politics, and this cannot be dissociated from the uncertainty looming over the political identity of Europe.

6 European identity – with regards to the legacy inscribed in the institutions, the geography, the culture that it must maintain – is faced with two problems whose solution will only be reached at the cost of conflicts and errors. On the one hand it must overcome its East-West divide, which shifts position at different points in time, is associated with antagonisms between “regimes” and “systems” (not without its paradoxes, for example when “Westernism” spreads to the East following “revolutions” or “counter-revolutions”), but never disappears. On the other hand it must find a balance between a “closed” Europe (therefore restricted, but within which limits?) that one may wish to homogenize, and an “open” Europe (not so much a Great Europe than a Europe of borders, acknowledging its constitutive interpenetration with vast Euro-Atlantic, Euro-Asian, Euro-Mediterranean, Euro-African spaces). In order to go on, Europe must invent a variable geometry, a form of state and administration without precedent in history.

7 Facing the decline of the American hegemony in the world (which is relative, Europe must choose between two strategies, which will gradually entail consequences in every area of political and social life: either attempting to form one of the “power blocs” (Grossraum) that will compete with one another for supremacy over a new global configuration, or forming one of the “mediations” that will at-



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“EVERY LOCAL POLITICAL CHOICE OF ECONOMIC, SOCIAL, CULTURAL, INSTITUTIONAL ORIENTATION INVOLVES A ‘COSMOPOLITICAL’ CHOICE.”

tempt to give birth to a new economic and political order, more egalitarian and more decentralized, likely to effectively curtail conflicts, to institute redistribution mechanisms, to keep claims to hegemony in check. The first way is doomed to failure. The second is improbable without a considerable degree of collective conscience and political will, rallying public opinion across the continent. What is certain is that the terms of the alternative cannot be conflated within a rhetoric of compromises between national and communitarian bureaucracies.

8 Between the “North”, which most of Europe pertains to, and the “South” (whose geography, economy and degree of state integration are increasingly changing), there is not only an interdependence but a genuine reciprocity of possibilities of development (or “co-development”). It is important to recognize this and turn it into a political project. The fact that Europe was the starting-point for the “Westernization of the world”, in ways that were, to varying degrees, marked by domination but which today are universally challenged, represents in this respect both an obstacle and an opportunity to be seized: these are the two sides of the “post-colony”. Only a project such as this would allow for a balance to be found between

a Europe focused on law-and-order, violently repressing the migrations it itself provokes, and a Europe without borders, open to “unrestrained” migration (that is to say, migrations entirely ordered by the market of human instruments). Only this would allow for conflicts of interests and culture between “old” and “new”, “legal” and “illegal”, “communitarian” and “extra-communitarian” Europeans to be addressed. It is thus not an administrative but an existential priority.

9 Against the backdrop of the uninterrupted Middle Eastern crisis, we pose the urgency of creating a political space encompassing all the countries surrounding the Mediterranean – only such a space can offer an alternative to the “clash of civilizations” in this highly sensitive and crucial region. As for the Israeli-Palestinian question that is its epicentre, the extreme anti-Zionist discourse should not be condoned; rather, concerted and without delay Israeli expansion should be stopped and the rights of the Palestinian people recognized – rights that are officially championed by European nations. More generally, this hotbed of wars and ethnic-religious hatred should be turned into a site of cooperation and institutionalized negotiation, with repercussions across the globe. It is, for obvious reasons, Europe that should take the initiative.

10 Crucial to alterglobalization are the following legal and political projects:

- The democratic regulation of migra-

tion flows, therefore the reform regarding the right to mobility and residence, still marked by national interests at the expense of reciprocity;

- “Collective security” and, correlatively, the penal responsibility of states and individuals regarding supranational affairs, therefore the reform of the UN, still held back by its support of decisions inherited from the Second World War and the logic of power;

- The reinforcement of the guarantees of individual freedom, minority rights and human rights, therefore the practical and legal conditions of humanitarian intervention.

- The merging of the instances of economic negotiation and regulation, of those controlling tax evasion and those concerning social rights, so as to sketch out on a global scale a Keynesian model now dismantled on a national level;

- Finally, the prioritization of ecological risks over the other factors of insecurity

This list is not a closed one, but it demonstrates how diverse and interrelated the elements now forming, on a global scale, the substance of real politics, are.

11 The above theses are merely propositions to orient and open a debate. Rather than presenting solutions, they are attempts to explicate contradictions that cannot be evaded. It is now a question of establishing the touchstones of rigour and integrity for a political debate in Europe today. And this debate will enable us, hopefully, to then supplement, clarify and modify them. ■

WHY EUROPE MATTERS

The last 6 months have shown both the anachronistic nature of the global status quo, and the lack of a political project that genuinely changes the logic of global politics. The European project, despite certain appearances, has the potential to introduce a paradigm shift to an era of transnationalism.

BY NICCOLO MILANESE

We are trying to accelerate while stuck in neutral gear. The explosion in the numbers of civil society NGOs, think tanks, humanitarian actions, international media, ‘global’ forums, protests and meetings over the past 20 years following the fall of the Berlin wall has refined the demands and raised the awareness of new generations, but it has yet to produce any political project that measures up to the heights of their ambitions. As more and more problems are revealed to be ‘global’ in their complexity and implications, and become increasingly dramatic in their effects, this impotence is likely to become more and more frustrating, the gap between aspiration and possible action ever greater. Over the past 6 months we have seen and felt a new stage in this dislocation, with the spilling-over of both hope and anger at a global level. The G7 may have become the G20, the United States of America may have elected a leader exalted at least briefly in large parts of the Western World, but even we citizens lucky enough to live in the freer and more powerful parts of the world are, when we respond to global political problems we are passionate about, increasingly in the position of humble petitioners to our leaders, whether they are national politicians or unelected bureaucrats in international organisations. We have the feeling of rolling backwards from autonomy, rolling away from democracy, at the very moment when the interconnectedness of global society was supposed to assert itself.

The heretical question in

such a situation is to ask whether ‘global society’ is itself a meaningful aspiration, and whether in such a society either democracy or autonomy would be possible. There are many who see in all ‘globalisations’ exclusively a loss of self-determination, the rolling back of long-fought-for social rights and the emergence of, at the one end, a cosmopolitan class above the concerns of the grounded plebeians, and at the other a destitute irregular migrant class administered from one detention centre to another before finally either being propelled back to the land they came from, or disappearing into a clandestine and precarious existence on the underside of more privileged societies.

But in a world of global issues it is both cowardly and ill-advised not to have global aspirations, such ambitions are the precious threads that unite humankind. It is perhaps the ‘society’ element of ‘global society’ that needs to be questioned more strongly. For there are limits to how much social partners can achieve independently of political powers, at least in current conditions, and almost all of these political powers remain resolutely national in their constitution. This is, needless to say, even the case of that most ‘global’ of institutions, the United Nations, in which each nation state has a vote in the General Assembly and only privileged or elected nation states in its other organs. The World Bank and the IMF are also structured in such a way that their members are nation states. In

“THE EUROPEAN UNION HAS AN ENORMOUS UNREALISED POTENTIAL AS A TRANSFORMATIVE POWER IN GLOBAL POLITICS.”

an age which takes as a primary motif the recognition of political problems which cross national boundaries, it is startling that the nation state remains so widely unchallenged as the primary locus of political authority. If international institutions seem undemocratic, if citizens feel they do not have any say over their own destinies, or choice about the world they live in, then this antinomy is surely a good place to start.

The only existing political entity which does meaningfully challenge the nation-state system is the European Union. To take a recent ex-

ample, the G20 of the world’s most powerful economies, in distinction to the other international institutions mentioned, consists of only 19 nation states and the European Union. This, of course, is completely unfair (not to mention the exclusion of the other 170 countries), because it means that France, Germany, Italy and the UK are effectively represented twice. According to the logic of the aims of the G20, however, the exclusion of the European Union would have been nonsensical: it is the most powerful single market in the world, and has powers that are to a large extent independent of the nation states in how it regulates that market. What this fact alone means is that the European Union has an enormous unrealised potential as a transformative power in global politics.

As the most powerful trading bloc in the world, the European Union could be a positive force for social justice in the real functioning of the world economy. If it were to enforce decent work standards, such that it would not allow the sale of goods that are produced under exploitative conditions, whether they were produced in the EU or outside of the EU, then it would be an immense force for the positive improvement of work standards throughout the world. Likewise the European Union could enforce environmental standards so that it is impossible or very much more expensive to buy goods produced in environmentally damaging ways. At the moment a European consumer has to *pay more* if she chooses to buy a product that was not produced under conditions of exploitation, and pay more if she chooses a product that does not do as much damage to the environment – this is a damning indication of the values currently underlying the European free market.

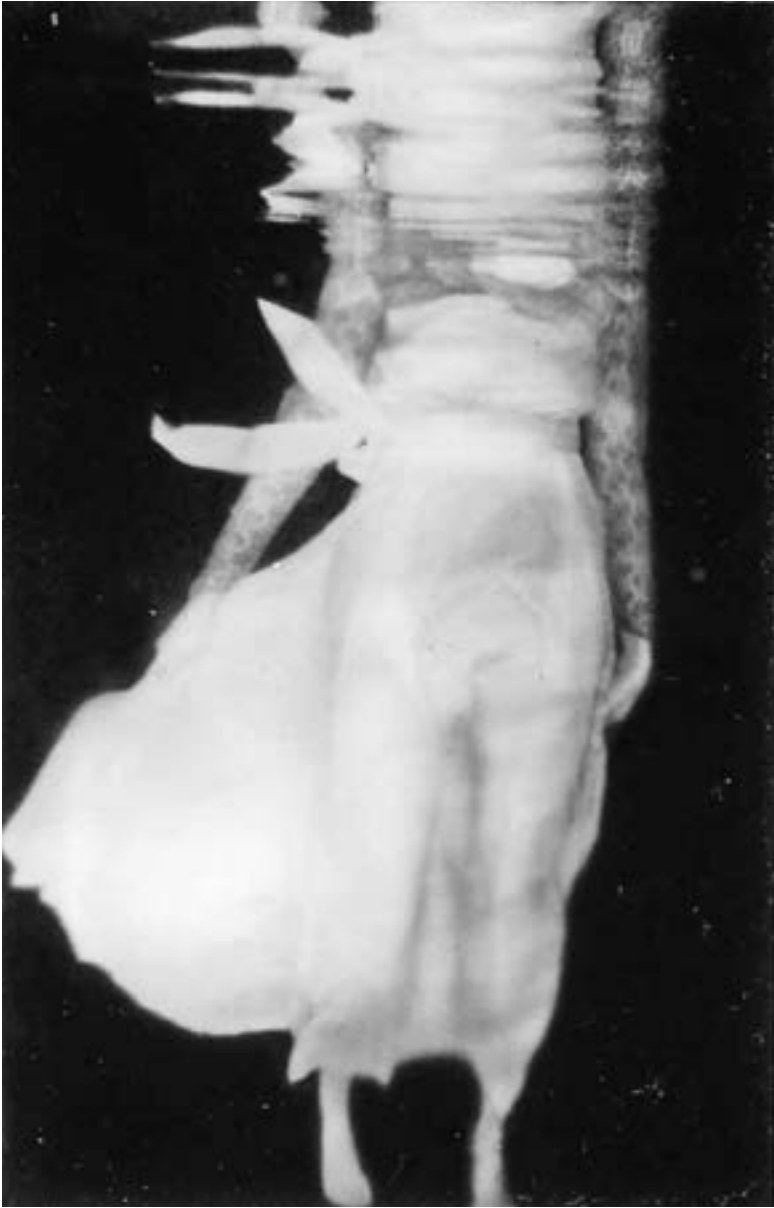
If the European Union were to introduce an international financial transaction tax resembling a Tobin Tax for all currency transactions carried out in Europe, if it were to introduce a cap on salaries, if it were to clamp down on tax havens, all of these would force real change in the global financial economy because other countries would simply be forced to react. No European nation state acting on its own has so much influence, and none of these policies could effectively be introduced at the national level alone. Campaigning for these measures to be introduced at a global level is entirely justified, but there is no global

actor who can implement and enforce them, and without a radical change to the current logics of international power, any such ‘global’ actor would be the puppet of the most powerful nation states behind it.

But the European Union not only has the powers necessary to enact these reforms at least in its own market, but also has the potential to change the logic of international relations and negotiations themselves. International negotiations are currently played out according to a fiction that the fate and interest of each nation state is independent from every other. Each ‘national’ negotiator is supposed to represent an exclusive, territorially-defined citizenry, the destiny and interests of which is supposed to be exhausted by the interests of the nation state. This is not only an increasingly untrue fiction - as more and more people have personal connections with several different countries, as multinationals operate by definition in several nation states, and as the world financial economy is increasingly interwoven – but it is also a blinkered,

“THE ONLY EXISTING POLITICAL ENTITY WHICH DOES MEANINGFULLY CHALLENGE THE NATION-STATE SYSTEM IS THE EUROPEAN UNION.”

pessimistic and materialistic vision of inescapable human division and conflict. Furthermore, it has the implication that the more economically and militarily powerful nation states inevitably control the negotiations. If the conservative demands that the European Union should be defined by its geographical borders are effectively resisted, it could define a new notion of citizenship less anchored in the fiction of national boundaries. If the European Union were to choose to operate not only in the interests of each of its nation states (and some nation states more than others) but rather in the interests of its peoples, and if it realised that amongst its peoples are not only citizens whose lives are entirely contained in their nation states, but peoples with



connections with the whole world, that it has a citizenry in a state of continual flux and change, then the configuration of the European Union could shift the logic of global relations. It would effect a paradigm shift from necessarily unequal negotiation between nation states each based on the fiction of exclusive citizenships, to intrinsically multilateral negotiations in which each negotiator is not only representing the short-term interests of those he currently represents, but is forced to consider those he may potentially come to represent in the future, no matter where they are from. This outcome has to be fought for, and there are strong forces opposing it, but at no other level of politics is such a shift a potentiality. It would no longer make sense to try count the members of the Group of most powerful economies (be it the G2, the G7, the G20, the G180...), it would be a question of forcing each of the negotiators to think increasingly in the interests of all humanity.

These arguments for why Europe should matter for those who care about global politics could be multiplied, including environmental, human rights, gender equality and peace concerns. On the right is a box of just some of the possible policies that could be adopted at a European level, impossible at the national level, and which would contribute to a gen-

uine paradigm shift in the global status-quo from a logic of national compromise to a logic of transnational aspiration. It is in these senses that it is not so much of an exaggeration to say that for an individual in Europe wanting to militate for a different unfolding of our common global future, Europe is the last remaining utopia.

Yet one month before the European Elections in June, with confidence in the EU at rock-bottom and a likely record-low turnout, attaching so much importance to the Europe as a potential actor for historic change seems deluded. Not only does the European Union seem to be impotent in global politics, but when it does act it often tends to do so in favour of maintaining the status quo, even to promote a politics many would call 'neoliberal'. In the face of the financial crisis, for example, it proved incapable of agreeing on a rescue package for its more vulnerable members, such as Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, which have all had recourse to the IMF instead as guarantor for state borrowing, on terms which neither promote investment in social justice nor welfare. Several judgements in the European Courts over recent years have favoured multinationals rather than workers. In the face of flagrant discrimination against migrants in countries like Italy, the European Union has been

unwilling to enforce the standards of human rights it claims to represent. It was apparently impotent in dealing with the recent Gaza crisis, and other military crises in Congo. This list could be extended. What is important in such a situation is to understand why an institution so powerful on paper and which has so much potential for transforming the global political landscape both seems impotent and only provokes either apathy or antagonism to its very existence amongst so many people. There is a veritable new industry of research into these questions in universities, in think tanks, and in civil society, much of it funded by the European institutions themselves, but to us the answer seems straightforward: there is no visible political party or wide-ranging civil-society coalition promoting an alternative and progressive European politics at a transnational level.

This is not to say that there is no difference between the major European political parties that exist and are taking part in the elections next month. Nor is it to say that the European political parties do not have very much power in Europe and are therefore irrelevant. The European parliament effectively has the power to elect the European

“IT IS NOT SO MUCH OF AN EXAGGERATION TO SAY THAT FOR AN INDIVIDUAL IN EUROPE WANTING TO MILITATE FOR A DIFFERENT UNFOLDING OF OUR COMMON GLOBAL FUTURE, EUROPE IS THE LAST REMAINING UTOPIA.”

commission, and it has the right to veto legislation proposed by the Commission. The Party of European Socialists promotes a much more socially progressive European politics than the dominant European Peoples Party. The European Left and the European Green parties promote more radical policies. But all of these parties are federations or coalitions of national parties. They do not have the structure necessary to pull political authority and attention effectively away from national politics. This has the result that although it is estimated that 60-80% of legislation effecting European citizens originates from the European Institutions, it is only discussed when it enters national legislation, at which point it invariably seems like an imposition from outside.

There are also various campaigns

and civil society organisations that work at European level, but they remain issue-specific, technical and often have the dull bureaucratic outlook which many consider to be contagious in Brussels. They lack the capacity to inspire sufficient imagination of the possibilities of a new society to even effectively critique the outmoded status quo.

The political energies unleashed in recent months have shown the anachronistic nature of the global logic of political power but also the insufficient logic of 'global civil society', which lacks any project for transforming the global status quo, and remains largely issue based, even in its more popular and influential manifestations. Europe matters, then, because it is the level at which any genuinely innovative political and cultural project which seeks to change the dominant global logics of contemporary politics must articulate itself if it is launched by those of us in this part of the world. It matters because it is the only existing political engine which can drive this project beyond the exclusionary and anachronistic logics of the nation state system. And it matters because if it is ignored by those who care about global politics it will subsist in its stultifying greyness and be a deadweight on our dreams. ■

Alternative European Transnational policies

As an illustration of the potentials of transnational politics at a European level, here are several policies that the European Union could adopt to influence the shape of global politics. They are not a manifesto, they are simple illustrations of an alternative European politics.

- **MORALISE GLOBALISATION:** Europe is the most powerful single market in the world. If it enforced decent work, human rights and environmental standards for all goods produced in Europe, and all goods imported into Europe, it would both improve the global situation in each of these areas and force other states to adapt.
- **GLOBAL FAIR TRADE:** Europe is the world's largest trading block, with a coordinated trade policy and a single representative at the WTO. This position is currently used to reap commercial advantages, but could instead be exercised to establish a mandatory fair trade regime for all goods imported into Europe. Likewise, a reorientation of the prerogatives of European trade policy could significantly contribute to international development through coordinated financial and know-how transfer to countries of the global South.
- **PROVIDE A DEMOCRATIC ALTERNATIVE TO THE IMF:** if the European Union agreed on a rescue package for members states of the European Union which have been victims of the financial crisis, and

- made this rescue package both more democratic and more socially just than those proposed by the IMF, it would not only help people in Europe, it would also provide a positive example for the democratisation of the IMF and World Bank.
- **INTRODUCE A TOBIN TAX:** An effective transaction tax on currency speculation could only be implemented transnationally. There have already been proposals for the European Union to adopt such a tax, but they have been rejected by the European Central Bank.
 - **ADOPT AND ENFORCE A MIGRATION POLICY THAT PLACES HOSPITALITY AND HUMAN DIGNITY AT THE CENTRE OF ITS CONCERNS:** European legislation on migration and detention has been becoming more repressive, at the same time as human rights abuses and discrimination are tolerated on Europe's borders. By transforming this situation and working with home countries of migrants, Europe would show that supra-national institutions do not simply serve to protect the interests of national citizens, but that another way of conceiving politics is possible.



Both images: Untitled from Submerged Series, 2008 © VICTORIA EMES WWW.VICTORIAEMES.COM

Abdul Manam's neice and nephew, born in exile, Afghan refugee village, Khairabad, North Pakistan, 1998.
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WWW.FAZALSHEIK.ORG



HIDDEN FACES

BY NADJA STAMSELBERG

Taking up agency on behalf of personae non graate – the often nameless, unrecognised and forgotten ones - Fazal Sheikh's images put focus onto their plight. In contrast to the repetitive sensationalist mass-media depictions of humanitarian crisis that shape our perceptions of others, his personalised encounters counteract this hyper-visibility increasingly responsible for the dehumanisation of the figure of

refugee and immigrant in the media. The black-and-white naturally lit images generate forms of recognition that work against identification of the refugees as the other. Repositioning its subjects as the ones who matter, Sheikh frames his own visibility to put forward their recognition as individuals. The photographs are accompanied by personal histories narrated by the subjects, which encourage us to embrace the refigured image of the refugee as a victim, as human, as one of us. By appropriating the figure of a refugee in a way

that functions to omit the differences between the ways of being displaced Sheikh sets out to contest their exclusion by revealing how it is constitutive of inclusion. However, universalising the condition of displacement as something we all experience fetishises the figure of the refugee. This draws attention to the difference between being a refugee and the figure of the refugee. Sheikh's portraits address this critical issue by transforming the refugee, the abject underside of the already politically

existent and what Imogen Tyler calls a figurative mirror for the subject's own disavowed exclusion/displacement to the figure of the refugee that offers us resources with which we might re-imagine ourselves. Sheikh ends 'The Victor Weeps' a book on Afghan refugees in the camp in Northern Pakistan with images of Afghan children born in exile. Differing from the other portraits in the book they are not accompanied by texts and they have no names. Their faces betray nothing;

their empty gazes offer no insight. These children are the bare life. They have no stories, no memory of home. For them home and exile is interchangeable. Disturbingly apathetic to identities, happiness, love, life and civility, the camps they were born into are zones of indifference. The children are found within it routinely passing from order into disorder. Remaining without destination, they inhabit a limbo suffering from a penalty for which they could not make amends... ■

THE RIGHT TO MOVEMENT AND THE RIGHT TO DEVELOPMENT

Europe must recognise the unconditional right to visit of citizens of formerly colonised countries. At the same time, it must become the motor of a new transnational drive to development and poverty reduction.

BY GILBERT ACHCAR

The centre of detention for “illegal” immigrants on the Italian island of Lampedusa has become the most infamous symbol of the ill-treatment inflicted by Fortress Europe on “boat people” coming from the African continent.

The “illegality” of these immigrants is not what the label proclaims, or what other terms such as “foreigners in an irregular situation” pretend. It is an illegality decreed according to a categorisation worked out by a European Union that has all but abolished the “legal” immigration of people originating from the African continent. It is not the violation by interned people of a legality that respects human rights, but rather the consequence of a denial of human rights by the sovereign power. The people detained at Lampedusa, like those in other European detention centres, are denied from the start the “right to hospitality”, i.e. the central element of cosmopolitan right according to Immanuel Kant, who defined it as the “right of a stranger not to be treated as an enemy when he arrives in the land of another”.

The “right of visit” (*Besuchsrecht*), in other words the right to free circulation, which Europe grants citizens of rich countries whom it welcomes without the prerequisite condition of a visa, is denied to nationals of poor countries – those same countries which Europe had annexed under colonial status, subjugating their populations until as recently as a few decades. To be sure, Kant explained, the right of visit does not amount to a right of settlement: in other words, the visitor cannot invoke a right to settle permanently in the visited country and to benefit thus from the

advantages enjoyed by the natives. Note, however, that those who argue against the idea of a right of immigration in accordance with this distinction do not demand in general the recognition of the right of visit, or “right to hospitality”, which they do not call into question.

On the other hand, when it comes to nationals of the African continent it is not a matter of a general right to settle – which Europe recognises *de facto* for nationals of rich countries. Europe does this for the latter under the pretext of a reciprocity which it does not accept as a sufficient condition for the numerous poor countries that would gladly agree to a reciprocal right to settle. But then instead of reciprocity, what should be invoked is a right to reparation, in compensation for the pillage of the African continent by the Europeans, whether in the guise of direct pillage carried out during the long colonial ordeal or in the guise of indirect pillage by means

as well as in Europe. Short of recognising a right to settle to the people it colonised formerly, – that is to say the obligation to give them a job or a minimal revenue upon arrival – which would represent anyway a poor compensation for the historical injustice since it could concern only a minority of the formerly colonised people, Europe has the obligation to provide these countries with a massive amount of aid, and not the derisory crumbs which it gives them presently (much less than 1% of its GDP), so that they can overcome their underdevelopment.

By putting as only conditions of this aid the respect for human rights and democracy, Europe would finally fulfil the “civilising mission” which it hypocritically assigned itself when it imposed its barbarian yoke on its colonies. The development of former colonies is the only way, both just and efficient, to reduce the human haemorrhage from which these countries suffer – a haemor-

rhage which is particularly costly because, as we know, those who emigrate are in majority people who are most needed for local development. This loss is hardly compensated by the monetary remittances of the migrants to their countries of origin.

A Marshall plan for the former colonies would be in the interest of Europe itself and of humanity as a whole. In these times of grave global economic crisis, a crisis which many are predicting to be of the same intensity, if not worse, as the Great Depression of the interwar years, there are two sure ways out: either a new world war similar to that which put an end to the depression of the 1930s – this option is fortunately impossible because it would annihilate humanity – or a global “war against poverty”, a true effort on the same scale as a world war, and not the masquerade that Tony Blair and his homologues thus christened. This would be, of course, a “war” of a very unusual type, since it would

have to begin with a massive reduction of military expenditure and the recycling of these funds in the benefit of global development.

Resuming its economic growth, Europe would then be able at the same time to welcome once again the masses of immigrants from the third world that are indispensable for its own development as a consequence of its demography. ■

Gilbert Achcar is Professor in Development Studies at the School of Oriental and African Studies at the University of London.

On Fortress Europe and the way it treats immigrants, see the remarkable multi-language website: <http://fortresseurope.blogspot.com/>

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Hamid Reza is a homeless Iranian asylum seeker sheltering in a bus stop in northern England. Hamid believes if he returns to Iran he will face the death penalty.
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“WE NEED A MASSIVE PLAN OF DEVELOPMENT FUNDING AND TECHNOLOGY TRANSFER BENEFITTING FORMERLY COLONISED COUNTRIES.”

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of unequal exchange since decolonisation. It is this combination of pillage and subjugation that has created “underdevelopment” as a lasting condition, which it is difficult for Africa, just like the rest of the formerly colonised world, to overcome solely by their own efforts within a global system that is hierarchical by essence.

In compensation for the long pillage and the crimes against humanity which Europe and its offspring in the Americas committed against the countries and populations of colonised continents, elementary justice requires the combination of two actions: an unrestricted right of visit for nationals of impoverished continents (as well as the strict respect for the right to asylum for persecuted people) and a massive plan of development funding and technology transfer benefitting formerly colonised countries, along with the massive education of their nationals inside their own countries



THE STATUS OF HUMANS AND THE SENSE OF WORK

Instead of speaking of a global humanitarian catastrophe, we should speak of political phenomena humans control. We need the terms of *de-globalisation* and *de-democratisation*.

BY MARIE-CLAIRE CALOZ-TSCHOPP

In the contemporary stage of globalisation, immaterial financial capitalism has succeeded industrial capitalism, while the production of global capitalism is characterised by the absence of a world government, of a global political schema, of laws, of constraining rights, and is instead administered by the 'shock treatments' of economists, politicians and the military. Neither charters nor conventions can cover over the political emptiness and absence of laws, even if, step by step, they are the way in which a global political schema, law and rights are being constructed. The deregulation of rights in the world of work has been carried out by private agreements between multinational enterprises, which are trying to undermine the State system and rights in relation to work, leading to the transformation of work relations into simple precarious mandates. In these conditions what happens to human kind, called to constitute itself and its world? What happens to *work*, which was considered by Marx as the possibility of human emancipation? What happens to the common goods necessary for human survival?

The actual stage of globalisation, which Zygmunt Bauman calls 'liquid capitalism', has brought about the instability, the fluidity of labour relations, precarity and economic and political chaos. Financiers speculate on subprimes, gold, primary materials and even foodstuffs, causing the prices of even elementary foods to rocket. We are seeing hunger riots in Argentina, in Mexico, in the Philippines, in Egypt, in Burkina Fasso, and so on. In these riots hunger shows its real face. It is not a question of lacking food, it is a question of lacking the right to access to food that is necessary for life. Even humanitarian action is coming to its

limits. "Instead of giving a bowl of rice to a hungry child, we are now giving him only half" declared a spokesperson for the World Food Program, who has seen the price of food soar (+57% since June 2007).

Must we then speak about an 'economic and humanitarian tsunami', to use the terms of Louis Michel, the European Commissioner for development? The choice of words is not neutral in debates surrounding the politics of development and immigration. Such a vocabulary suggests that the problem is thought of according to categories which can be called the 'metaphysics of catastrophe'. But instead of talking in terms of natural disasters or the punishment of gods, we should talk in political terms of phenomena which are under the control of man. We should talk of *de-globalisation*, and *de-democratisation*.

De-globalisation refers to *cosmos*, to *globe* and means in philosophy the *loss of the world*, of a relationship to the world, an expulsion from the world. Passing over the inter-relatedness, the closeness and diversity of the debates about the words *cosmos*, *world*, *universe*, let's look at the characteristics and traits common to all three terms. What is striking to the reader is the tension between the abyss of chaos and the permanent concern to construct an order by politics (regime), by philosophy (sense), by science (truth). The *cosmos* indicates a universe thought of as a well-ordered system. *World* indicates a collection of all that exists, which is formed by the earth and the visible stars thought of as an organised system. Opposed to the order of the cosmos, the totally disordered multiplicity is called 'chaos'. In ancient philosophy the world is an organised and meaningful totality inside of which each thing finds its natural place. Each ancient philosopher, from Heraclitus to the Stoics, searched for this unique law. The world is also the habitat of man, it is the location and the symbol of human life. Since the 18th century, the universe is the collection of all that exists, considered by philosophers as the totality of all created things, the totality of beings, the collection of things perceived, whether or not understood by human consciousness. Essentially, the three words sum-up the project to avert

chaos by different attempts to unify a dynamic totality which may be ordered by a transcendent power or instead be ordered by man himself (in the democratic view of things).

De-democratisation leads to the impossibility of trying to realise a democratic regime (*demos-cratos*, the power of the people) for social life. De-democratisation means therefore, in brief, the privation, the deficit, the democratic absence in society. The theme of democracy (Greece) and its republican side (Rome) is, following Kant, present in the debate over a world government and the limits of universalism. The vision that has dominated international relations is an anarchic, chaotic, authoritarian vision of the international sphere linked to an equilibrium of force (war-making) without even the possibility of imagining the project of genuine democracy. With the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989 the questions of the transformations in the relationships between economics and politics, of the nature of political regimes and the status of the state, have become research questions in international relations. Alongside this, the development of civil society and of social movements has underlined the limits of tyrannical regimes, imperial authorities based on force, exploitation, submission, corruption and chaos which claim to be an authoritarian democracy ensuring security. After 1989, quite against the hopes of democracy, theories of polyarchy (selection of the leaders) have tried to weaken the substance of democracy (the will of the people, the common good defined in terms of justice and social equality). Between maximalist and minimalist practices and visions of democracy what is at stake is the capacity of the dominant liberal discourse to impose its own interests whilst depending on a facade of consensus, leading to the reification of the effects of capitalism and political apathy.

The birth of the modern state (Machiavelli, Bodin, Hobbes, Locke) articulated the displacement of power to a sovereign state over a delimited territory, systems of representation in which a limited citizenry was envisaged (in the dominant currents of political philosophy). But when we find ourselves in a stage of globalisation which has repeated crises of modern capitalism and of international relations, and facing heterogeneous his-

tories and spaces which cover very different realities, a political project can no longer define itself starting from a vision that is sovereigntist, national and territorial, from a vision of the hegemony of the civilisation of industrial, imperial and financial capitalism that encourages identical replicas and blocks-off the possibility of a pluriversal political schema one which would bring together the societies of the planet and respect their heterogeneity. Democracy cannot reduce itself to the procedural and formal approaches which have been imposed. Democracy is not in effect reducible to more or less rational rituals which try to efface antagonisms by the institutionalisation of a forced consensus around a hegemonic and securitarian order. Democracy envisaged in a substantive manner is the

"A POLITICAL PROJECT CAN NO LONGER DEFINE ITSELF STARTING FROM A VISION THAT IS SOVEREIGNTIST, NATIONAL AND TERRITORIAL."

reappropriation of a new concept of positive power implying the radical displacement of our vision of migration and of international relations.

But in what way is the situation and place of migration in politics relevant to this? In March 2007, the 120 member states of the United Nations chose migration as the most important tool for socio-economic development. But this link proposed by numerous international organisations, states, NGOs, social movements, researchers, etc between *migration* and development and more specifically between *globalisation*, *migration* and *democracy* is a long way from being obvious when it is put in comparison with the contemporary construction of a new worldwide order of migration. Today, the politics of migration, caught in the mechanisms of international competition and the obligation of profit, combines a cynical utilitarianism and a war-like approach. Migration is one of the terrains where the processes of de-globalisation and de-democratisation are most visible and have been at work for a long period, and that it is also one of the terrains of the most political innovation at the borders of democracy.

Briefly, in countries of immigration we have a choice of two kinds

of migration policies, which relate to two kinds of choice of society:

1) the maximal appropriation of social riches by the class of owners who recommend the intensification of work for larger numbers of the national and immigrant population, implying busier, more intense and longer hours of work for all, rigid divisions between legal and illegal, the lengthening of the time of work, the extension in the amount of time spent at work by women; at the political level, this choice relates to a politics of securitarian apartheid.

2) a repartition of social wealth to all those who produce it (in the future, at the present time,



and in the past), and the real and free circulation of peoples, the redefinition of the economic and international relations in order to be able to survive, work and migrate in decency; this type of choice leads to the construction of a democratic project and the fighting of certain conflicts (xenophobia, racism, sexism).

This fundamental link between migratory policy, economic-socio-political situation and political regime is too often hidden.

The politics of the new world migration order are the object of numerous researches in Europe and on other continents. I am not going to make a presentation and a detailed analysis of these here. I will just consider questions of a philosophical and anthropological nature. What new hierarchies in the relations of force are there? What historical hegemonic bloc in the new world order has taken the place of the hegemonic structures following the Second World War which came to an end with the fall of the Berlin wall? What place for migration, what status for

migrants?

The proposition of the simplification and stabilisation of contracts (replacing their annual renewal, the putting in place of mechanisms for the regulation of a right to “come and go” in the form of a permanent visa for those with a university degree in Europe in order to meet the competition of the United States of America, the opening of national labour markets to those coming only from the European Union) are selective and discriminative regulations. This highly targeted vision of regulation is anchored in the principle of “selective migration”.

In the *lex migratoria* there is not a unique principle to envisage the situation of migration in its totality. Two principles in fact govern the management of the two categories of migrants: on the one hand there is *ordered migration*, on the other there is *the right of peoples to stay in their countries of origin with the means and the tools which combine practices of the police and those of private multinationals*.

Against these tendencies in the

migratory policies political theory and philosophy can formulate three questions of a political order. The first question concerns the place and the transformations of the political schema, of the public space, of the relationships between the public sphere and the private sphere. What is the public political statute of the zones of liberty (of the market) and of security (the perimeters of security) where competition, where inequalities in fact privatise public space, economic activities and the police without public control (states, social partners, trade unions)? What happens to the public space in these conditions? Who controls these new privatised zones? What is the place,

“MIGRATION IS ONE OF THE TERRAINS WHERE THE PROCESSES OF DE-GLOBALISATION AND DE-DEMOCRATISATION ARE MOST VISIBLE, AND ONE OF FIERCE POLITICAL INNOVATION AT THE BORDERS OF DEMOCRACY.”

the role of the system of states, of international organisations and of other social partners? How should we define the responsibility of businesses and the rights of workers? What becomes of the law? Who governs, who imposes the rules with what references and with what prerogatives? Can we accept that private economic actors impose their laws on other actors, that intergovernmental police themselves control the movement of populations outside of all democratic control?

The second question concerns the transformation of human kind by the transformation of work itself. How to analyse and evaluate the transformation of human activity from *work to service*? In other words, are human workers themselves assimilated to services, to things? What was previously a human work, which constructed a relationship with oneself, with others, with the world, protected by conventions, the law of work, social rights etc., now becomes a service limited in time in a market space outside of public control. Work transforms itself

and even disappears in the form of work, in such a way that the product of work is a service and no longer the expression of the essence of the worker. From being workers humans become simple servicers who disappear with that which they have produced after their services are caught in a precarious statute.

The third question concerns the existence and the status of a political schema for laws and rights tightly linked to the imagination and to the democratic project. Ours is a finite world where on the one hand the right to the auto-regulation of the market and of the labour market is affirmed by competition, or where it is affirmed that political regulation must intervene but without putting into question the market (for we haven’t found anything better), and, on the other hand, where the dangers and the chaos of our historical époque are denied, an époque in which domination by force at any price has become the norm. Today, the partisans of economic and political auto-regulation affirm that the market economy functions by perfect competition, whilst at the same time claiming that “everything has been broken in the world and everything needs to be reinvented”. They think that economic chaos must stabilise itself, must rule itself rationally. George Soros claims that “markets are made of men just like regulators, and therefore they are imperfect... we must take account of the new paradigm and be ready to adapt constantly the controls. We cannot neglect the incertitude which belongs to markets.” Faced with the incertitude of the markets, George Soros predicts the integrations of a flexible mechanism of regulation and control. We could cite Paul Valéry who, during the war of 1914-18, declared that we must learn to live in a finite world. Kant already said this two centuries before. He already underlined that after the conquests there are no more desert zones which can serve as a territory for deportation for evading tensions and wars. He concluded that the principle of hospitality was indispensable to peace and it was the basis of the development of international law. ■

Marie-Claire Caloz-Tschopp lectures at the University of Lausanne



Water is Life, 2007
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The Mwelu Foundation is working with young people living in Mathare, the slums area of Nairobi, Kenya to help them realise their potential through photography, film production and the building of life skills. For more information and donations check www.mwelu.org

BEYOND FORTRESS EUROPE

CONTRADICTIONS OF EUROPEAN MIGRATION POLICY



Contemporary migrations are an opportunity to challenge and redefine our understanding of citizenship.

BY MANUELA BOJADŽIJEV

The metaphor ‘Fortress Europe’ seems at first sight to provide a catchword for a very real situation, decrying the fact that migration is prevented through an increasing militarization of the borders towards the exterior and a massive deportation from the isolated interior. Similar in nature is the idea of a unified European immigration policy and corresponding talk of a global border regime with a wall around the West. All these terms refer to a very important aspect, and namely the violence required to maintain borders at all.

At the same time, however, these ideas imply a constancy and impenetrability of the borders to the outside and a consistency of EU migration policy on the inside, suggesting that there indeed exists a closed “European Space”. These aspects are helping create and maintain a certain myth compatible with the desire for a “harmonisation” of the “European Space of freedom, security and justice”, but they don’t correspond so well with the historical form that Europe today actually holds. The use of the term in critical discourse can thus bring unforeseen affirmations with it. It is not surprising that the term is sometimes used in places where there

is a desire for accountability – as a metaphor for the successful strategy to keep immigrants away and to connote a single immigration policy. Is using this metaphor in a critical way (still) useful at all?

EUROPE AS A “CROSS-OVER MODEL”

If the focus of our research is directed too much at external borders alone, even if they are depicted as walls, then there is a risk that one loses sight of the situation and the societal relations in the interior, relations which produced these boundaries and their political space in the first place. I refer to Henri Lefebvre’s definition of the social production of space and the representations of space. The concept of “borders” is related to the idea of a territory (or a process of territorialisation), which has historically grown in both a constitutive relationship with a certain population and is connected to a specific form of sovereignty. This has significantly changed, not least in Europe, as Étienne Balibar understands: this concept “tends to be replaced by various forms of mobile equilibrium between ‘internal’ and ‘external’ conflicting forces, and substituted by stronger and broader ‘global borders’, which appear as territorial projections of the political World Order (or disorder)”.

Balibar has created a typology of various conflicting visions of the political space in Europe, encouraging a model that he has named the “cross-over model”. This can be read as criticism of the metaphor of ‘Fortress Europe’, but should also serve as a warning for those whose attention is focussed too

much on the external borders of the EU. Balibar’s approach tries to think laterally of the resulting space, as a superposition of different geographical, political, social, cultural, religious and linguistic reference systems, as a “series of composite peripheries”, as he writes referring to Edward Said. The model corresponds to the representation of Europe as a “Borderland”; anywhere in Europe, you are always at the border.

CONFLICT AREAS WITHIN MIGRATION POLICIES

What about the ongoing attempts within the EU to represent a space of common immigration policy? Which areas of conflict are emerging? The declared primary objective is to attempt to adjust future immigration with the so-called needs of the labour market. To suit this purpose, the concept of the “Blue Card” has been created. This is a European work permit planned to have a duration of 10 years. It is also planned that by 2012 a single procedure for asylum seeking applications will have been adopted. In addition to this, a continuation of the deportation policies is planned, which aim at largely avoiding and discouraging the undocumented migration and any mass legalization through repression, control and surveillance. Furthermore there is an evident strengthening of the border management agency, FRONTEX, whose budget increase is among the largest within the EU. All these points were agreed in mid-October 2008 in Paris as part of the “European Pact on Immigration and Asylum”. This is, however, initially only a “work plan”, which is to lead to concrete measures for im-

plementation by 2010, at which point the Hague Program, which governs the regulation of EU immigration policies, also expires.

Within this context, there are however several general areas open to contestation:

1. The attempt to unify, or the idea of the controllability and the measurability of migration, is highly problematic. Here a relatively static picture of society is assumed, which blatantly falters given the current crisis of capitalism, and also collides with the ongoing transformations of statehood, which has evolved over the past couple of decades. Today’s EU migration policy is not uniform and will obviously not become uniform with this pact.

2. The idea that migration can and must be globally controlled in accordance with economic criteria for competitiveness and economic growth is often put into question. Immigration policy is increasingly synchronised with development policy, with a significant role played by money transfers from migrants to their countries of origin. The

“EUROPE IS A BORDERLAND; ANYWHERE IN EUROPE, YOU ARE ALWAYS AT THE BORDER.”

basic idea is that these remittances will form the main contribution to poverty reduction and development in the countries of origin¹. At the same time, the policy aims to influence what the respective funds will be used for, and profits on money transfers by adding transfer costs. It is, however, highly debatable whether and to what extent development aid has any influence on migration, as the desire to migrate might even rise along with economic prosperity.

3. The trend towards a strengthened circular migration is accused of causing a brain drain to countries of origin, as the intention of the Blue Card is to allow immigration of skilled and highly skilled workers from countries of the global South. The official response is to see the Blue Card in the context of “circular migration”; this scenario predicts that by means of the temporary work permit, the migrants in the EU will subsequently return to their countries of origin bringing acquired knowledge, which in turn contributes to a better development.

4. But states already have relatively little impact on migration movements, and usually underestimate the

subjective factor and the tenacity with which migration is organized despite all restrictions. The idea that circular migration can be organised tries to make use of and manage the flexibility and mobility already demonstrated by the migrant workers; this flexibility is recognised, but at the same time there is a belief that it can be brought under control.

5. Lastly, we still do not know what impact the current crisis of capital will have upon migration movements generally and migrants themselves specifically. The classic argument would be that in an economic crisis nationalism and racism will intensify, as jobs will be demanded for locals first. This argument, however, has always been questioned in the critical theory of racism, because no such automatic behaviour exists. Examples abound, as in the case of the economic prosperity at the beginning of this decade in Russia, where racism did not cease, but in fact intensified. Several historical conditions and social realities are therefore determining: What level of organization do those who oppose racism have? How developed and established is the understanding of anti-racism in society? Finally, there is the question of how such arguments will fare under new conditions of global interdependence and established immigration societies.

OUTLOOK

Due to the mobility of labour, the new function of civil rights and the production of transnational spaces, a new kind of segregation is installed in the context of the postcolonial condition of Europe. A breakdown of humanity, central to any form of racism, is completed in a single political space, which leads to the emergence of what Balibar terms a “European apartheid”. Taking these points together, efforts must go in the direction of critical and political work, continuing to develop institutions and practices of citizenship not bound to the territory of the nation state. Undocumented immigrants must not only be thought of as objects of exclusion, but their practices of appropriation of civil rights should be understood as an opportunity to challenge and redefine our understanding of citizenship. ■

Manuela Bojadžijev is Research Fellow at the Free University of Berlin.

Footnotes
1. The World Bank estimates the volume of these transfers are three times the official development assistance even exceed in some cases the GDP to the respective recipient countries.

WAR, PHOTOJOURNALISM AND ART PHOTOGRAPHY

The continuing War on Terror has done much to highlight the role of the media in wartime, the limits of acceptable and publishable critique, and the remarkable success of state and military propaganda machines in producing an image of the conflicts that was clean and heroic. Published photographic images of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan often reinforced such stories, showing spectacular displays of military might, the faces of stoic and expert warriors, and poetic pictures of soldiers in picturesque situations, shot against the setting sun, for example. It became clear that the critical function of the press, and its essential service to democracy, had become deeply undermined. The kind of consistent publication of critical imagery that so challenged the US establishment view of the Vietnam War seems impossible now, and it has led many to wonder whether photojournalism has not become institutionally

complicit with the waging of war. Perhaps the images made by embedded photojournalists, confined to their assigned military units, are not so different from the propaganda produced by military photographers; perhaps even the work of the independent photojournalists, in showing the tremendous destructive power of the US military, serves the purposes of the black propagandists, the psyops units, in clearly delineating the fate of those that dare to resist.

One common response by photographic artists to these questions about photojournalism has been to make images, often with large view cameras, of war zones, producing photographic prints to the scale of history painting, which encourage viewers used to flipping through photojournalistic cliché to slow down, examine the image in detail, and

question the aesthetics and the rhetorics of making photographs in such situations. As part of the Brighton Photo Biennial of 2008, which I curated, we showed an exhibition of such works, called 'The Sublime Image of Destruction' at the De La Warr Pavilion in Bexhill on Sea. It included the work of Simon Norfolk, Paul Seawright, and Broomberg and Chanarin. The Biennial, though, also mounted a defence of photojournalism, making visual arguments that it still had a critical role to play, and showing examples of work—even that made by embedded photographers—that showed things that the military would not have wanted seen.

In the conversation below, I talked to the artists Adam Broomberg and Oliver Chanarin about these issues. At the Paradise Row gallery in London, they were showing a series of works that they had made on an embed with

British forces in Afghanistan, by taking long pieces of photographic paper to the war zone and exposing them to light without using a camera. The results were streaky coloured traces of the light of a particular place, which were captioned with an event taken from the news on the day that they were exposed. Broomberg and Chanarin also showed a video of the progress of their box of photographic paper from London to the Afghan area of conflict, as it was manhandled by artists and soldiers alike. ■

Julian Stallabrass is a curator and lecturer at Courtauld Institute of Art

Tim Hetherington,
The remains of the burnt village of Singhetao that was attacked by Sudanese and Chadian Janjaweed militia in mid April. Over 109 villagers from here and surrounding areas were massacred over a period of two days.
Singhetao, Chad. May 2006



JULIAN STALLABRASS, OLIVER CHANARIN, AND ADAM BROOMBERG

A conversation on the position of the photographer in situations of conflict, between the impossibility to represent war and the risk of collusion.

BY JULIAN STALLABRASS

JS: You have presented us with some extraordinary objects in the next room and perhaps you could tell us how they were made?

OC: This started way before we went to Afghanistan. Adam and I were invited to visit Hedley Court to photograph and interview soldiers who have returned from Afghanistan and Iraq having lost limbs.



We learned there that there are more amputees in Britain now than there were even during World War I. This is because military medicine has become so advanced that more are surviving. We met a number of soldiers, some of whom as young as 19, who had come back from Afghanistan some just a week or two before, some had lost an arm, some both legs.

AB: It wasn't just the type of physical injuries that intrigued us but also the psychological; the type of conflict that they are experiencing is also similar to WWI in the particularly passive nature of injury or death that they experience. During WWI they compared the psychology of fighter pilots to those who were stuck in trenches. Even though the fighter pilots had a greater chance of dying every day they would return emotionally more

intact because, in the conflict, they had a greater sense of control, even if it was just over when they died. Whereas those stuck in the trenches had a passive sense of waiting which led to a particular type of trauma. This is the kind of shock we encountered in Hedley Court. As you know, we have spent the last few years navigating conflict zones, always concerned with how to represent trauma in those zones and how complicit representation is in these conflicts.

JS: Are you going to use those images of the amputees?

OC: We realized immediately that the images failed and would always fail to represent any of the trauma. They were hopeless as representatives of that experience.

JS: Your previous response, as in *Mr.*



Mkhize's Portrait, for instance, would have been to interview them, and use extracts alongside the photographs¹. There were people who were quite badly brutalised in that book. You now felt that inadequate?

AB: It's a different setting. Here we were talking very much about a conflict zone in which photojournalists are the image-makers. That is something we have never claimed to be, and it is a language we were taking head-on for the first time.

OC: It's interesting to compare *Mr. Mkhize* with this more recent work. There are some similar concerns in terms of the role of photography as evidence, the power relations between us and our subjects, representation of human trauma and in particular the navigation of authority. In the case of *Mr. Mkhize's Portrait* we were commissioned by The Constitutional Court of South Africa; a relationship that turned out to be fraught with problems. Our strategy there, the approach you describe of presenting portraits and interviews, feels naive to us now. Nevertheless, compared to Afghanistan we were relatively free. As embedded journalists there are hundreds of restrictions. We were forbidden to photograph soldiers who were injured or even the results of enemy fire.

JS: Is that one of their stipulations?

OC: Yes, we also couldn't photograph in the morgue, in any of the hospitals or officers tents. You are actually forbidden to photograph anything which resembles a sign of war.

JS: Can you talk about the experience of embedding and what the army was expecting of you and how you did or didn't fulfil those expectations



AB: Olly and I have done a lot of lying in the last few years. When we worked with the Israeli Defense Force we spent 8 months phoning once a week, speaking what Hebrew I could muster up and trying to win them over. After 8 months of negotiation we got half an hour access to Chicago, a fake Arab village in the middle of the Negev desert built for military training². Because we are Jewish they expected a sympathetic representation of their crisis. We approached this project in a similar way – we were not totally upfront about what our real concerns were.

OC: As the soldiers who were chaperoning us realised we were more interested in our box than the spectacle surrounding it, we started to slip down their priority list. At a certain point, they made sure they got us to Kandahar which is basically like being nudged out of the war. As they realised what we were doing, they slowly manoeuvred us away from the frontline.

JS: Where there any soldiers who were curious about your project? Or some to whom you manage to explain it?

AB: There were. The head of media operations, Colonel Matthews, was hilarious. The class system in the British Army was astounding, probably more for us as outsiders. It feels like the nineteenth century. Colonel Matthews would swing between being completely intrigued to completely paranoid and suspicious. On the third night we were there, he barged in and asked us: "Do you actually have MoD clearance?"



OC: Watching that mechanism at work was fascinating. Despite the fact that we were there, on the ground, in the midst of a war, events still came to us like distant newspaper headlines, and that disjuncture was surreal. For example, we heard about that hundredth death not from the military or the colonel but from a journalist from *The Sun* newspaper, who had heard about it from his editor back in London. Where had this information come from? It was shocking to discover that the newspapers have their own intelligence network in the Army, a network of spies that is gathering information all the time.

AB: The MoD [Ministry of Defence] use Combat Shooters. The British military have around 40 professional soldiers who are also professional photographers.

They carry an M16 and a Nikon D3. They are on the frontline, spending up to three weeks on patrols, their first duty being to take photographs and their second to engage combat. When the combat shooters get back to the base they hand over their digital chips to Media Operations and anything deemed unnecessary or too contentious is deleted and the rest is held on file or made accessible to the public, but they don't own anything. This is remarkable because photography is so concerned with ownership and copyright.

OC: If you think of a sliding scale of witnesses, with a soldier on the one end and a journalist on the other, the combat shooters inhabit this ambiguous zone in the middle. This starts to raise questions about the role of the embedded journalist in that situation. What became clear to us is to be an embedded journalist inevitably involves more collusion than collaboration. You work together with the army to create images. The strategy we adopted – to not show anything – felt like the most subversive way to engage.



JS: At the Brighton Photo Biennial, there is a show that displays many of these US Army photographs, and again, although all the photographs are credited, they're copyright free because they are part of the state archive. They are fascinating because many of them say things which you would think the Army wouldn't quite want to communicate. There is an amazing image, for instance, of American troops in an occupied house, photographed through a tarnished mirror. It is a very sinister image, and there it is on the US Army site available for download. More typically, these photographs are very generic, as you would expect, with

lots of pictures of US forces being nice to Iraqi kids or playing football. Anyhow, I am still unclear of how you go from interviewing these amputees, realising they were in incredibly dangerous, traumatic and passive situations, and then get it into your heads to say we are going to put ourselves in that same situation.

AB: We have always skirted around conflict, the show we are in that you curated at the Brighton Biennial is about what has become known as “aftermath photography”, images made just after the fact. We went to Iraq during the war but not to the centre of the conflict, the same with Rwanda, Darfur. We felt it was time to place ourselves in the centre to examine how representation is produced in that space.

OC: This year we were invited to be on the jury of the World Press Photo Awards which are very much an award for photojournalists, awarding news images. There we looked at thousands and thousands of images of war. One was particularly interesting, it won 1st prize in the ‘Spot News’ category, and was taken during Bhutto’s assassination by a photographer who was right there at the scene of the explosion, only a few yards away from the detonation. It all happened so quickly he hadn’t been able to focus, the camera was askew. The picture is not really a picture – more a blur of colour and

pher but an anti-war photographer. We feel, quite strongly that that is a conceit because as a journalist embedded in a conflict you are essentially part of that machinery, you’re a cog...

AB: Not only embedded journalists suffer this. Nachtwey I would imagine, resists being embedded but even so he is inevitably a part of the war-waging machine. Image-making and war-waging are congruent activities. Now to get “good images”, whatever that means, of combat means you have to collaborate with the military. If you want real access, you need to be embedded which brings with it a whole set of obstructions including self-censorship. This collusion gives you remarkable access and the possibility to create spectacle, images the public and photo-editors demand: like a soldier silhouetted against a desert sunset.

OC: I don’t think our project is intended to be set up in opposition to Nachtwey or even in opposition to photojournalism. We are not trying to undermine photojournalists who go to war zones, who risk their lives trying to bring back images of war. What we are asking photographers in those situations to do is to think a little about the kind of images they are making and what aesthetic rules they engage. There are a whole set of aesthetic rules that Nachtwey or any

JS: We should also talk about the viewer. With the Bhutto image, there is an abstract spectacle of light and colour that you project into because of the caption. Your work seems to be similar in that you are given a caption, so how do you see this projection working? Is it something you want to encourage or frustrate? What do you expect people to get out of looking at these? Visually, they are quite curious, looking a bit like Morris Lewis’ abstract paintings. They have colours which are redolent of the sky but also of blood. So where do you want to put the viewer?

AB: I have had my mother walk around them going: ‘Ooh, that looks so violent or that is so exquisite.’ Let’s face it, these show the marks of light on paper. Of course we are playing on the pictorialist and sublime notion of beauty, that there is something beautiful about it or violent because red denotes blood and therefore violence. But for us the most important part of the work is not what the viewer sees in the rolls of paper but rather their reaction to the film. I don’t

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“WE REALISED IMMEDIATELY
THAT THE IMAGES WOULD
ALWAYS FAIL TO REPRESENT
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.....

though. They are not useful because they are beautiful, or useful as a blank canvas onto which you can project. They are useful because suffering does require a witness. To bring back a piece of paper that has been right there. To bring back that piece of paper, not a photograph but that same piece of paper and to pin it to the wall is to bring back some visceral form of evidence, more than that Bhutto image constitutes evidence.

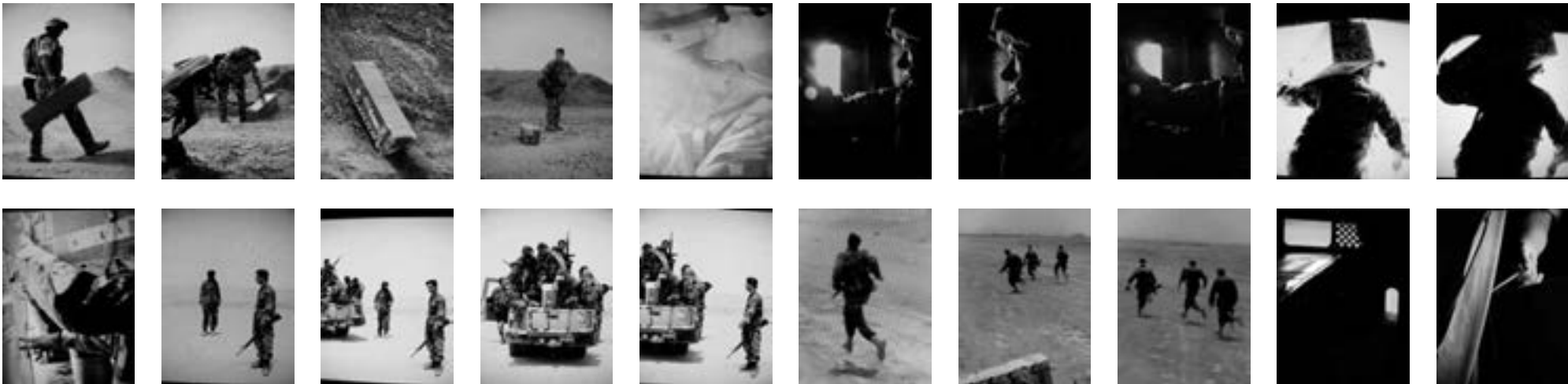
JS: Maybe you would like to elaborate on that more. Talking to people at the opening was an interesting experience because some were very taken by the images and intrigued by the combination of text and image, and others were quite angry. One woman described it to me as a ‘conceit’ which I thought was an interesting phrase because it was not necessarily condemnatory. You could see it as a literary conceit, an 18th century game with words or images, maybe an allegory. The reactions were mixed and so it would be interesting to hear why you think that evidential character or the presence of the paper at that place was necessary or interesting. You could have exposed these things right here in Hoxton and no one would have been any the wiser.

OC: I think it would be useful to go back to the experience of being there and to carrying this box around with the Brit-

ish military. Of course the word ‘conceit’ comes to mind. You have a war going on, soldiers risking their lives and there we were asking them to carry this heavy cardboard box around while we filmed them. There is something subversive about that. There was an article in the Times about this project. When the journalist first arrived for the interview she was really angry about us having made soldiers engage in this absurd performance, about us having co-opted the military. The journey of the box shows the mechanism, the workings of the war.

JS: There is a performative element in all of your work, and you are made to think, not only about the image but your goal in recording it and what you do with it. One way of looking at the images on show here would be to project into them a sublime spectacle of violence and destruction or even of the appalling progress of the war in Afghanistan and all that has occurred in the last few years, but the video puts a very different light on it and almost presents you as latter-day surrealist jokers. Would you talk about the contrast between these two things?

AB: We discussed it in Brechtian terms, the way his epic theatre was based on a series of interruptions. That the performance was so obscured that you became aware of the mechanisms, the workings behind it. An actor plays out the script but also makes you very aware that he or she is an actor. The fact that the box carrying the photographic paper appears in each scene undermines the spectacle. The unfolding of the conflict is constantly interrupted by this mute,



light, there was nothing to discern in it. It was interesting because it was mostly evidence of the witness having been there. We started to think about what constitutes a photojournalistic image.

JS: We know of some photographers, James Nachtwey would be a good example, who if they had been there, would have got it right, would have made a record.

AB: But what does that mean, ‘got it right’?

JS: He would have done what he is professionally engaged to do, maybe produce something interesting formally but certainly produce something which could have been used as evidence.

OC: Nachtwey is a good example. Nachtwey doesn’t call himself a war photogra-

Magnum photographer uses.

AB: I think we also need to look at the relationship between photographer, photo-editor and the market. Maybe we can put some responsibility for the problem on the market. Thomas Hirschhorn is an artist that you also included in the Biennial. His piece is an 18 foot-long banner which is a collage of images showing the effects of modern munitions on the human body. The most horrific thing you have ever seen. For me the best way to make radical work now is to construct a two-pronged attack. The first is what you have done, to display images that the media is not prepared to show, to show the reality of the war and the physical effects it has on the body. And the other is to withhold images, which is what we have tried here. To collude, but to expose that process of collusion.

think we would ever show one of those rolls without the film which describes the process of production, this performance is most important. I don’t care what the paper looks like.

OC: Images of other peoples suffering are designed to elicit a sense of shame. But in this project we are questioning that... What use do these images actually have, other than to act as a catharsis of some kind? Looking at images of war can actually short-circuit any kind of immediate call to action. We get this every time we turn the page of the newspaper. One aim of our work is to try to put the burden of looking back on the viewer. To rob the viewer of the cathartic effect of looking and ignoring images of human trauma.

AB: Our images are not wholly useless

comical witness that literally blocks your view during the whole journey.

OC: The box acts as your proxy, takes you on this journey and shows you this war that you would never normally see in a journalistic context. To see the mechanisms is to see something ultra banal, the way the whole machine is constructed to allow the war to function.

AB: The editing was very important; we made the takes as long as possible. None of the montage decisions were based on trying to entertain, the same way the images are not, but it’s actually about drawing it out so you feel the mundanity and the banality of war. ■

INTERVIEW WITH NANCY FRASER

Nancy Fraser is a celebrated critical theorist and a feminist. Europa asks her about the transnationalisation of the public sphere, radical justice and the crisis and pulling feminism back from neoliberalism.

EA: You are one of the leading theorists trying to develop the notion of the public sphere. In what ways has globalisation affected the public sphere? Has the public sphere become more transnational?

F: Today, the flow of public political discourse does not respect borders, but is often transnational. The result is a serious challenge to public-sphere theory, as originally developed by Jürgen Habermas. What made Habermas's idea of the public sphere a critical concept was the tacit assumption that the arena in which public opinion circulated and in which it could gather political force was a territorial state - a bounded national community. Thanks to that "westphalian" assumption, the public sphere could serve as the civil-society counterpart of the modern state. So it seemed that each of those indispensable two tracks of politics (the informal civil-society track and the formal-institutional track) were in place and well-matched, isomorphic to one another. Given those presuppositions,

the theory could offer a relatively clear critique of actually existing democratic states: These democracies were flawed insofar as their public spheres lacked legitimacy and efficacy—that is, insofar as the communicative processes through public opinion was formed were restricted and not accessible to all on equal terms; and/or insofar as public opinion lacked the political force to influence state actors and hold them accountable. In this way, the theory supplied a clear benchmark for evaluating social reality. But the clarity evaporates when we consider the complex transborder circuits in which public opinion circulates today. Where are the institutionalized public powers to which transnational opinion is addressed and which it should hold accountable? Where are the public pow-

ers with the capacity to solve transborder problems, such as global warming or financial meltdown, in the general interest of transborder populations? Where is the shared political status (analogous to shared citizenship) that positions members of transnational publics on terms of parity with one another, with equal participation rights and equal voice? All these things are lacking today, and the match between publics and states presupposed by public-sphere theory is nowhere to be found. Without a correlation between the scale of public opinion, on the one side, and the scale of public powers, on the other, it becomes hard to envisage what the critical ideals of public-sphere theory could mean today.

EA: Can you give me any examples of how public opinion and state institutions no longer seem to match up?

NF: There are two equal and opposite problems. In one case you have administrative powers that operate on a transnational scale, but you don't have comparably broad transnational public spheres, where civil society actors can form and mobilise public opinion. This is the case in the European Union today, where you have a relatively powerful administrative apparatus in Brussels, but no genuinely European-wide public-sphere: debate is still national. We saw that in the French 'no' vote for example, which was driven largely by domestic considerations. In this case the scale of institutional power outstrips that of public opinion. European public opinion is not sufficiently transnational to hold European administrative powers

“OUR SITUATION IS A SITUATION WHERE WE DON'T HAVE THE GLOBAL TRANSNATIONAL PUBLIC POWERS – WE HAVE TO BUILD THEM AND DEMOCRATIZE THEM AT THE SAME TIME.”

accountable.

But we can see the opposite problem, too, for example, in the world-wide demonstrations of February 15 2003 against the impending US invasion of Iraq. There could not have been a clearer global outpouring of public sentiment, the culmination of tremendous flows of communication and argument in the preceding months. There something approaching a genuinely transnational – even global – public sphere did develop, but what did it accomplish? A few weeks later Bush ordered the troops

and tanks into Iraq. There existed no institutionalized transnational public power that could implement that anti-war sentiment, no institutionalized agency that could make the opinion efficacious. Here, then, is a case in which the transnational scale of public opinion outstripped that of global governance. In the absence of transnational institutions that could translate anti-war opinion into actual policy. Bush felt free to simply ignore it: there was nothing to constrain him.

Until we come to grips with such mismatches of scale of both types, until we figure out how to overcome them, the theory of the public sphere will lack the kind of critical force it had before, when it presupposed the national frame.

EA: Do you think the global financial crisis calls for new transnational institutions?

NF: Yes: there won't be any lasting and secure solution until we create democratically accountable transnational – in some cases global – institutions with the capacity to regulate markets, banking, finance. In this area, there exist deficits at both ends at the same time: public opinion is not adequately scaled up, but the regulatory institutional capacities aren't there either. That is what makes the present situation so difficult. Normally, the process of democratisation works when institutions already exist, and publics and social movements clamour to democratise them. So first you get monarchies, and then you get republics, right? Now our situation is a situation where we don't have the global transnational public powers – we have to build them and democratize them at the same time. We have some powers like the IMF and the WTO, and those we need to democratise for sure, but other necessary public powers don't yet exist.

EA: Let's move on to your thoughts about justice. You have written about the popular theme of 'recognition' in political theory, and how this should be understood. How do you understand the category of recognition?

F: My interpretation goes against the standard view of recognition as a matter of identity. In contrast to that view, I construe recognition as a question of status. For me the issue is not whether others affirm my personal or collective self-understanding, but rather whether the institutionalized norms that regulate our interactions



Decadence
by Marco Sanges,
03 APRIL – 03 MAY AT EVERYMAN CINEMA
HAMPSTEAD, LONDON, UK
© MARCO SANGES WWW.MARCOSANGES.COM

permit me to participate as a peer in social life. On my view, then, the politics of recognition should not take the form of identity politics. Rather, it should aim to deinstitutionalize hierarchical patterns of cultural value that prevent some people from participating on a par with others in social interaction and to replace them with value patterns that foster parity. It should aim, in other words at dismantling status inequalities and establishing status equality.

Thus, I distinguish the politics of recognition from the politics of redistribution. In my view, the latter is a response to subordination and stratification in terms of class. Here the question is whether or not everyone has the resources they need in order to participate fully in social interaction on terms of parity with everyone else. But even when they have sufficient resources, people can still be prevented by participating on terms of parity in social life if they suffer from status inequality. In that case, the injustice is not maldistribution but misrecognition - an injustice that is every bit as serious, as material, as the former. Thus, I propose to understand the politics of recognition as aimed at combating status inequality and status subordination. Whether we are talking about women, racialised immigrants, ethnic minorities, or religious minorities, struggles against injustices of misrecognition are every bit as central to modern politics as struggles against injustices of maldistribution. For me, in other words, class and status constitute two orders of subordination, analytically distinct but inter-imbricated in modern societies.

EA: When you talk about ‘status injustice’, what is the notion of justice behind that?

F: I have a very demanding notion of justice as parity of participation. It is not enough, in my view, to have formally equal rights, or formally equal opportunities. It is not even enough to have the exact equality of resources or primary goods if that were even possible. What is necessary are social arrangements that do not entrench systematic institutionalised obstacles to parity of participation. So justice for me is about dismantling obstacles to parity that are institutionalised in unjust social arrangements. If you ask me how I justify this rather demanding, radical democratic interpretation of justice, I will give you a conceptual argument. I will say that the view of justice as participatory parity is a radical democratic interpretation of precisely that famous norm of *equal respect for and equal autonomy of all human beings*. As I interpret it, equal respect simply means participatory parity. Anything less makes a mockery of the notion of the equal dignity of all human beings.

I can also give you a historical argument. Over time, our notions of equality have become more demanding. For one thing, these notions have become broader, in the sense of applying in more and more spheres of life. Originally, equal respect had quite a narrow meaning, namely, equal access to the courts and freedom of conscience in the sphere of religion. Later, people came to see that it applied also in political life—hence the demand for political voice, the expansion of the franchise. Still later, came the notion that equal respect applied in the marketplace, that it entailed economic and social rights. Then with feminism came the idea that equality applied also in the family and in personal life. Historically, then, the norm of equal respect or equality has come to apply in more and more spheres, and the burden of argument has shifted – it is now incumbent on those who think that it shouldn't apply in some given domain to explain why. Equality is the default position.

At the same time, the idea of equal respect has become less formal and more substantive. So to take TH Marshall's famous example, it is not enough to say that in theory everyone has the right to sue in a court of law. To make that right real, everyone must have the means to exercise it: If you cannot afford an attorney, you will be provided with one. Here we see that equality has a material dimension. Thus, the career open to talents require not only the absence of external impediments but also the positive means, such free public education

“FEMINISM COULD REASSERT ITS CRITIQUE OF CAPITALISM’S ANDROCENTRISM.”

and an equitable division of domestic labour. These examples show that the meaning of equality has become increasingly substantialised and demanding. In effect, it has come to mean parity of participation.

EA: Isn't there a danger that by putting the emphasis of your critical theory on ‘removing obstacles’ it sounds like you have quite a laissez-faire attitude to the historical process? You have commented in some of your writings on the phenomenon that the political right seems increasingly to be able to dominate ideological argument, and you associate that phenomenon with a decline in utopian thinking on the left.

F: As a theorist of justice, which is to say of *injustice*, I am interested in diagnosing the forms, structures and mechanisms of injustice in our society. But I do agree that social movements have another side – that is that they project what we can call an ‘utopian imaginary’ of a better life. That is simultaneously a necessity and a risk, as the utopian element

can go bad and become authoritarian.

But I do agree with you: if we think of justice purely in procedural terms of fairness then this does seem too thin to really motivate and inspire. So the question is how do we see it connecting up with other elements of a utopian imaginary?

EA: Let us ask you about one of the terms that may or may not be used by social movements, and that is the term of ‘feminist’. You are often described as a feminist, and I have the sense that you have no problem with the term. However there are those who seem to see the term as a barrier, many who were part of the feminist movement in the 70s who now are no longer happy to see themselves described in that way. I wonder what you have to say about the idea that the term might be problematic.

F: I am more concerned with the opposite problem. Everyone claims to be a feminist now. People like me who have long identified with feminism as a social movement aimed at combating injustices of gender find that we don't own this term any more. Others claim the term too, in the service of other agendas. So, for example, Sarah Palin claims to be a feminist, as do elements of the Christian Right in the United States, the very people who not so long ago ranted and railed against ‘femi-nazis.’ In general, feminist ideas have become so broadly disseminated that they have become part of common sense. Just about everyone claims to be feminist now, but what does that mean? And what does that have to do with the social movement that I was part of?

I have recently explored the hypothesis that feminism is part of the new spirit of capitalism, that it has become an ideology that legitimates neoliberalism. We know that neoliberalism involves the massive entry of women into paid work all over the globe. What motivates these women? What gives ethical meaning to their daily struggles? It seems to me that feminism serves as the necessary moralizing force, at both ends of the spectrum, whether it is the professionals trying to crack the glass ceiling, or the temps, the part-timers, and EPZ workers who undertake wage work not only to earn their living but also in search of dignity and liberation from traditional authority. If that's right, then we have the confusing circumstance in which a movement that once posed a radical challenge to capitalism's androcentrism is now serving to legitimate, even glamorize, wage labor. And this poses a huge problem for feminists in the narrow sense like me. As our ideas are disseminated and resignified, we find ourselves facing our uncanny double, whether in the guise Sarah Palin or Hilary Clinton or Segolene Royal. If everyone is a feminist now, then “feminism” has become a term like ‘democracy’ that can be used for any purpose, including purposes which run



directly counter to gender justice.

EA: if it is the case that the feminist cause has been hijacked by the right how should the feminist respond to that?

F: First of all, this hijacking is a sign of feminism's success. But the experience is not unique to feminism. Other emancipatory movements, too, find their ideas hijacked for purposes at odds with their own.

EA – the environmental movement for example?

F: Yes, and this takes us back to our earlier discussion about the public sphere. Any discourse that gains a certain amount of currency in the public sphere becomes available for articulation to a variety of different political projects. As feminist discourse becomes mainstream, it becomes a token in ongoing struggles for hegemony. Thus, the question arises: Who will win the soul of feminism? Will feminism be articulated to the left or to the right?

And yet, just as neoliberalism may have hijacked some feminist ideals, so its current crisis presents an opportunity. This is a moment where feminists in the original sense can try to reactivate the movement's radical emancipatory potential. We might try to break the spurious links between our critique of the family wage and marketisation, between our critique of welfare-state paternalism and privatisation. In other words, this is a moment when the “dangerous liaison” of feminism and neoliberalism could be broken. Feminism could reassert its critique of capitalism's androcentrism, for

example, by reopening the question of wage labour's proper place in a humane form of life. We might ask: what role should wage labour play in a modern society? How should it relate to care and other forms of social participation?

EA: We're in a time of crisis as you've said. There seem to be very few alternatives being proposed by public intellectuals or anyone else, if you compare it to earlier crises in the 20th century for example. I wonder what your diagnosis is for this slightly depressing state of affairs?

F: It is still very early in the crisis. If you think back to the 1930s, it took quite a long time before a real Left emerged and became self confident and developed a culture and a discourse that could generating alternative ideas. Today, however, we are facing an historically new situation, given the apparent delegitimation of socialism in the wake of the collapse of communism. Until '89 there still seemed to be an alternative to capitalism, but everyone is understandably more agnostic about that now. I wouldn't say that we *know* that there is no alternative to capitalism, but the pictures we had before of what that alternative might be like were much too simple and possibly unworkable. On the one hand there is a big question mark about political economy – what would the political economy of a just society look like? On the other hand, both feminism and environmentalism are powerful world-pictures which are now available, and it seems to me that those are both good starting points and ... well, we all have to get cracking thinking about these things!

GLOCAL ART AT THE MARGINS OF EMPIRE

For an alternative artistic approach between an ephemeral global village and a reactionary appeal to tradition.

BY BHASKAR MUKHOPADHYAY

The emergence of art as a global institution (backed by a global art market) as one of the consequences of the process of financialisation, is an epochal event of our times that has rarely been commented upon. Commentators on New Capitalism have waxed eloquently about ‘informatization’ and ‘dematerialisation’¹ and, about the ability of capital to valorise processes and objects which were outside the erstwhile value circuit (affect and art are two prime examples) and to invent new, intangible, objects (e.g., financial derivatives), but what remain unsaid in that account is the fantastic concordance of artistic flows with financial flows leading to a certain Saatchification of contemporary art. In the mid-90s, Thierry de Duve wrote about an epochal transition – from Modernism to Postmodernism – premised upon art’s becoming a wholly self-referential category defined entirely by circulation rather than by some extrinsic criterion (beauty or truth).² While the tendency towards dematerialisation³ has been exacerbated in the subsequent innovation of ‘Conceptual Art’ followed by more ‘ephemeral’ forms of non-representational art, a parallel process in geopolitics culminated in art’s globalisation or biennialisation which would remove the last vestige of art’s anchorage in specific places and times. Despite Clement Greenberg’s expansive claim about art as such (art did not go global until the late twentieth century) around the middle of the last century, think how localised was the context of his pronouncements – determined largely by his own location within the US ‘culture industry’ and the Cold War ideology which shaped it. And when you contrast him with comparable figures of today who can make claims on behalf art as such (rather than this or that – American or Japanese – art) – say, someone like Nicolas Bourriaud or any other curator/theorist of stature who shuttles across the globe with the ease of a business traveller and negotiates with non-western or even ‘tribal’ artists with a flourish, it becomes quite

clear that the law of general equivalence (which is not the same thing as homogenisation) has permeated what can be called *The Global ArtWorld Inc.*⁴ Art’s de- and reterritorialisation in recent decades calls for a radical departure from theories (Bloch or Adorno) which valorized artwork’s transcendent qualities.

In our radically *delocalized* world, upholding the claims of a tradition is bound to sound hypocritical and reactionary. In the context of the ongoing Tate Triennial, Bourriaud (the curator) has rightly asserted that Postmodernism, which was obsessed with the idea of an indentifiable origin and tradition, is no longer relevant for the world we inhabit. The state of the artistic world today is such that one has to, of necessity, start from “a globalized state of culture – [the artists] not anymore working as logotypes of their own culture, or their own tradition. The question is not anymore where you are coming from but where you are going to?”

Yet, no one, except a miniscule and privileged minority of jet-set globetrotters, actually *lives* in the famed global village – it is counterintuitive. While lived places are pulverised and undercut by centripetal global forces, there can be no denial that groups to benefit from this mobility are usually the privileged ones – it is the powerless underdogs whose fate is to remain localized. In fact, the same forces that engender mobility and movement also create enclaves, ghettos and camps where the ‘dangerous’ populations are confined, trapped and un-homed. Glocal art does not espouse a certain fetishism of place, instead it destabilizes the very fixity of place by asking: who makes places out

“THE SAME FORCES THAT ENGENDER MOBILITY AND MOVEMENT ALSO CREATE ENCLAVES, GHETTOS AND CAMPS.”

of spaces? What are the stakes in this? What is the politics of place today? And it is precisely in these ‘zones of exception’ – refugee camps, borders, ghettos of illegal immigrants, depraved slums, zones crisscrossed by petty smugglers who cross borders regularly for making a living and other ‘dangerous’ subaltern population groups who are being deprived of their mobility and livelihood and are being steadily localized by the operation of the global surveil-

lance machinery – that the politics of place manifests itself. *These* places have nothing to do with the sense of sheltering autochthony associated with the erstwhile idea of place.

**EmFacing the Defaced:
The Art of Portrait in the Era of Displacement**

Paradoxically, some of the most prosperous zones of the globe have enclaves teeming with the disenfranchised. Squeaky clean Singapore happens to be one of the wealthiest states of Asia (in

terms of per capita income) but its red-light district, Gaylang, has a large population of immigrant, illegal sex-workers from China, Vietnam, Indonesia, India, Thailand and Malaysia. Many of them are not even professional sex-workers: they are housewives, daughters, young factory workers and college students from the large Asian hinterland where the operations of a globalised, ‘disorganised’ capitalism in recent times have brutalised, ravaged and disoriented traditional life-style and patterns of expectations. They all worship the

mighty Singapore Dollar and cross borders to make some fast buck. The heat of poverty and the dust of dispossession have driven them to such extreme alienation that traditional notions of honour, shame, wellbeing – have all been forgotten. Theorists of ‘affective labour’ do not adequately recognise the degree of dispossession and degradation entailed in sex-work in the squalor and brutality of the Asian sex-industry. Joan Marie Kelly, an American painter who teaches drawing and painting at the Nanyang Technological University



Joan M. Kelly,
Throw the Lilly Under the Couch,
175 x 114 cm, Oil on Canvas, 2008

(Singapore), was shocked to find out that painting these sex-workers was not easy. The resistance came from the sex-workers themselves who felt inadequate and were reluctant to be represented: they felt that they are merely part of some anonymous and commoditized ‘flesh’!

In this era of ‘conceptual art’ and ‘performance art’ when painting has almost been relegated to limbo, experimenting with portrait painting would appear to be anachronistic. The end of art-as-we-knew-it is a logical outcome of the exhaustion of the classical (post-Renaissance) problematic of representation whose aim was verisimilitude. The advent of photography and cinema in early twentieth century not only made painting, (*qua* representation) somewhat superfluous but also gave rise to a certain reflexivity which, instead of thinking of painting as a window to the world, began experimenting with the materiality of the surface of the canvas, with the nature of colour and lines -- without any reference to the ‘world’. Around mid-twentieth century, this tendency exhausted itself, culminating in high abstraction, ‘ready-mades’ and minimalism.

The wheel has come in full circle and today artists are asking, once again, with Nicholas Bourriaud, whether, through art, “it [is] still possible to generate relationships with the world” in a way that would circumvent the problematic of ‘representation’. Joan Kelly is a self-conscious practitioner of ‘relational aesthetics’ (an art taking as its theoretical horizon the realm of human interactions and its social context, rather than the assertion of an independent and private symbolic space).⁵ She looks at portraiture more as an ethnographic encounter rather than a mimetic activity: the purpose is not simply to paint a face but to generate an *encounter* between the artist and the social milieu of the subject to be painted. The idea is to use portraiture as a form of ‘conceptual art’ in order to engage with marginal communities in different parts of the world – illegal sex-workers in South and South East Asia, the unemployed and the homeless in the US, the refugees and the immigrants in Europe, factory workers in China who lost their



Mia Jafari,
Facade of washing machine,
80 X 120 CM, DIGITAL PRINT,
SEQUINS AND FABRIC, 2008

limbs in accidents and were thrown out of their jobs -- living on the margins of society. As is well known, the purpose of traditional portrait is to *re-present* a person's inner persona. Kelly's portraits, far from wanting to capture a subject's expression, seek to valorise the process of interaction itself (between the artist, the model and his/her milieu) and the resultant portraits are the material remains, or witnesses – to this inter-subjective exchange and the resultant establishment/reinforcement of sociality.

The face is what represents the person. To be human is to have a face. To be a person, to be acknowledged as a person, means to be acknowledged through one's face. It is not possible to contemplate a relationship of love, hatred or friendship with a faceless person. Human beings without faces are not quite humans. And yet, social marginality – professional sex-work and the kind of affective labour it entails – is precisely a way of rendering the sex-worker faceless. To concentrate on the *face* of a sex-worker is thus to redeem his/her humanity on the face of a ‘reality’ which seeks to reduce him/her to mere flesh. Kelly's invocation of Levinas' ideas on ‘the face of the other’ (he wrote about the ‘defenseless nudity’ of the face of the other – the ‘widow, orphan or stranger’) -- is significant. According to Levinas, in the human face is found the original ethical code. From a look into the face of the Other we become aware of basic human responsibility and meaning.⁶ To *emface* the faceless through artistic encounter (Kelly attracts crowds of onlookers whenever she paints the

sex-workers in public) is thus to restore the human in the dispossessed other.

Lipstick Jihad and the Sex of Things

By now it is widely acknowledged that the commodity is ontologically heterogeneous: it does not mean the same thing everywhere. Mia Jafari is a British-Iranian artiste who has been drawn to Iranian public commodity culture and her artistic work (textiles and photomontages made from staged photographs taken in Iran) on Iranian women's engagement with mundane, mass-produced western consumer goods deserves critical interrogation as glocal art. Iran is one of those few places in the world where a self-conscious anti-globalization, anti-consumerist agenda permeates the state ideology and public culture. Predictably, most Iranian art (diasporic art included) today is undergirded by a certain artistic angst about the illiberalism of the

Islamic regime.

As is well-known, the Islamic regime of Iran is critical of consumerism and for some strange reason consumerism is viewed as ‘western’ (while the crassest of the consumerist dystopias are located in the Middle East and South East Asia). While it would be difficult to brand Jafari's work either as pro- or anti-consumption, what is clear is that a certain irony about the semiotic status of mass-consumer goods in Iranian feminine imaginary is pervasive in the textiles she makes. The subtle perversity of the façade of a washing-machine made from shiny, shocking-pink rough fabric (with a golden door and instructions written in Persian) arises out of a shrewd play with the politics of gender in contemporary Iran. The transposition from cold, smooth white metal to warm but rough pink not just feminizes this mundane gadget but also seeks to characterise the defiance of young Iranian women whose affiliation with

“THE GLOBAL / LOCAL BINARY IS NO LONGER ADEQUATE.”

visible markers of westernisation (loud make-up, flashy clothes, shiny trinkets, high heels etc.) shocks the conservative public.⁷ It is chic, wry and simultaneously disturbing and attractive.

Jafari's photomontages depict staged scenarios of semi-veiled young Iranian women in colourful clothes playing with replicas of various mundane gadgets. What gives these scenes a certain dream-like quality is the background: a derelict but rugged and picturesque landscape (rural, sparsely inhabited areas outside of Tehran) reminiscent of absence, emptiness and aporia. It is in this utopic non-place that the romance of young Iranian women with western gadgets unfolds.

Jafari's Iranian works compels us to rethink not just Islam but also the ontology of commodity. The received binary of use- vs. exchange value is of little use in making sense of Islamic feminine

engagement with consumption. The thrust of feminine consumption is on mass-produced mundane gadgets of quotidian use (the regime disapproves of ‘conspicuous consumption’ – western cosmetics, for example) whose semioticity is nearly zero because these are use-values – utilities. Yet, as modest and non-spectacular metonyms of the western commodity imaginary, these do not remain mere passive things. It would not occur to anybody here in England, for example, to ask: what does a washing-machine *mean*? Our quotidian familiarity with household gadgets has rendered them banal: a washing-machine or a refrigerator *does* things for us (washing and cooling, respectively) – these have no *meaning* beyond their functionality. The ontological precariousness of the branded washing-machine in Iranian feminine imaginary arises out of the fact that its semioticity surpasses its functionality. Their artistic re-presentation in Jafari's art-works becomes doubly enigmatic when she characterises her own work as ‘kitsch’! In sum, her work on commodities in other places makes us rethink not just the problem of alterity but of our engagement with things as such.

Glocal art at the margins of empire is not about the ethnographer or the activist taking over the artist. These artists claim no ‘authenticity’, nor do they have any hang-ups about ‘tradition’. They are plain outsiders in the terrains where they work. But in important ways their engagement with life-worlds embedded in specific places – passages of coming and going, territories deterritorialized by the violence of states and wars – marks a clear departure from a line of thinking that would attribute an unthinking homogeneity to art practices. The global/local binary, conceived under the Enlightenment episteme which opposes universality to autochthony, is no longer adequate for articulating the planetary experience of unhomeliness: *our* world is no longer double, it is many. ■

Bhaskar Mukhopadhyay lectures in the Centre for Cultural Studies, Goldsmiths

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Footnotes
1. Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, *Empire*, 2000.
2. Thierry De Duve, *Kant after Duchamp*, 1996.
3. See *Ephemera* 7:1, 2007 (theme issue: Immaterial Labour).
4. Charlotte Bydler, *The Global Artworld Inc.*, Uppsala, 2004.
5. Nicolas Bourriaud, *Relational Aesthetics*, 2002.
6. Emmanuel Levinas, *Totality and Infinity: An Essay on Exteriority*, translated by Alphonso Lingis, 1969.
7. See Shahram Khosravi, *Young and Defiant in Tehran*, 2007.

THE MYTH OF

EUROPE
ORGANISES:

London Festival of Europe 2009

April 30 – May 10, London

CITY 2009: BRINGING DOWN THE BARRIERS

APRIL 30: CITY 2009 OPENING SYMPOSIUM

The Festival opens with a discussion between curator and Serpentine Gallery director Hans Ulrich Obrist, architect and editor Stefano Boeri, and architect Markus Miessen on the European and the global city.
Courtauld Institute of Art, 5.30 – 7.30pm, FREE

MAY 1: THEATRE, ART, SOUND LOCUS SOLUS

Locus Solus is a intermedia project and performance-based installation exploring the idea of science in relation to accounts of contemporary and historical utopic imagination.
Shunt Vaults, London Bridge, 8.00 – 11.00pm, £10

MAY 1: WALKING, WORDS, THEATRE MIDNIGHT PROCESSION

Concluding the performance of Locus Solus, artists, musicians, poets, and philosophers will move from London Bridge towards Shoreditch for a midnight walk including readings recitals and performances.
London Bridge to Shoreditch, Friday Midnight, FREE

MAY 3: DISCUSSION AND TOUR AROUND THE OLYMPIC SITE UTOPIA CITY

Join us for films and discussion on urban art and a guided artistic walk near the Olympic Site, followed by a picnic and video projections after sunset.
Arcola at 5pm for film, discussion & walk
or Hackney Wick Station at 7.30pm for only the walk, FREE

MAY 8 FRIDAY DOUBLE BILL

KAPUSCINSKI AND THE OTHER

Literary discussion of the legacy of Ryszard Kapuscinski (d.2007), celebrated journalist and photographer and one of Europe's most cosmopolitan writers.
Purcell Room, Southbank Centre, 7.45pm, £10 (£5 concessions)

KEYNOTE POLITICAL DEBATE EUROPEAN CHOICES

Senior figures from the leading European political parties come to London for a lively debate one month ahead of the European elections, discussing the different political alternatives available at the European level.
Old Theater, London School of Economics, 7.00 – 9.00pm, FREE

MAY 9 AND 10 TRANSNATIONAL CONGRESS:

The Congress for new transnational politics and culture is an annual appointment exploring the meaning and potentiality of a post-national approach to the most burning political, philosophical, and artistic questions of our time.

Rich Mix, 35-47 Bethnal Green Road, (top of Brick Lane)
Saturday and Sunday, all day, FREE

MAY 9: CONGRESS DAY ONE TRANSNATIONALISM, NEOLIBERALISM, GLOBALISATION

DAY 1 PROGRAMME: Saturday May 9th

10.30am: Opening Address / A Utopia of Change and Changing Utopia
11.00am: Opening Plenary / Transnationalism, Internationalism, Globalisation and Europe
1.30pm: Europe and the Neoliberal Inevitability
3.30pm: Session 1 / Europe: Transnationalism and Solidarity
5.30pm: The North and the South; Transnationalism and Global Justice
7.30pm: Performance Art and Music

MAY 10: CONGRESS DAY TWO ART, FEMINISM, POLITICS OF THE LEFT

DAY 2 PROGRAMME: Sunday May 10th

11.00am: Opening Plenary / For a Transnational feminism
1.30pm: Session 1 / New Geographies of Art
3.00pm: Session 2 / Migration and Artistic Strategies
4.30pm: Session 2 / Environment
6.00pm: Closing Plenary / For a Transnational Left
7.30pm: Artistic Closing



The London Festival of Europe is organised by European Alternatives, organisation devoted to promoting intellectual and artistic engagement with the idea and possibility of a new transnational politics and art.

We publish a magazine and run projects and events throughout the continent on the implications of globalisation and the potentials of the European project.

www.euroalter.com

www.festivalofeurope.eu



THE MYTH OF

EUROPA

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P.6: DENIS GUENON
EUROPE AND HER IDEA

The idea of Europe can only be the universal, which itself is a negation of all European ‘particularity’. In this apparent paradox contemporary Europe can find its historic mission as a transnational force in a nationalist world.

P.18: STEPHEN WRIGHT
GLOBAL AND VERNACULAR ART

In an era characterised by the dematerialised flux of information and imagery, and a previously unheard-of degree of individual mobility, it becomes necessary to clarify how artistic activity engages with territory, both physical and metaphorical.

P.8: BRIAN HOLMES
POLITICS OF KNOWLEDGE

With the pervasive trend towards the commodification of knowledge under intellectual property law, what is being challenged is the very ideal of the educational-cultural sphere as the locus of mutual understanding in a pluralist society.



PAGE 9 DOSSIER:
MIGRATION/
CITIZENSHIP

On the political and cultural dimension of the new melting pot. With articles by Saskia Sassen, Sandro Mezzadra, Nikos Papastergiadis, and Umut Erel.

ART AND
THE CITY:
BEIJING
SEMINAR
(See p.22-23)



Chen Liqin, Worker at a chili drying spot in the desert, Bulongji, Gansu, 2007
Courtesy of Paris-Beijing Photo Gallery / Mathias Braschler and Monika Fischer

THE “ITALIAN ANOMALY” AND A DANGEROUS PRECEDENT

Over the last few weeks great relevance has been given by the European press to the “Italian anomaly”. Lately, the attention has shifted to the problematic situation of the media in the country, and the danger of a distortion of one of the fundamental mechanisms of

any democracy, namely the freedom and pluralism of information. A lack of a European response to the intimidation of the press in Italy poses a direct threat to the right of liberty of expression throughout the European Union, and limits the authority of any European condemnation of censorship in the rest of the world.

The starting point is well known: Italy is the only Western democracy where the prime minister exercises direct control over three television channels he owns and indirect control over three public channels, as well as owning several newspapers, magazines, radio stations, and the largest publishing house in the country.

To these well-known facts a number of additional, worrying events have been piling up over the last few months, culminating in an all-out offensive of the Italian prime minister against the few organs of the press that still vehemently critique his and his government's positions.

Continued on page 2 ►

ABOUT THE PHOTOGRAPH:
The Chinese, Mathias Braschler and Monika Fischer
July 18th – Sept 10th 2009,
Paris-Beijing Photo Gallery, Beijing, China

The exhibition features a selection of 40 to 50 portraits depicting the extensive and contradictory spectrum of today's China. Ranging from the portraits of the mighty industrialist in Chongqing to the poor coal miner in Shanxi Province, the subjects are captured in their habitual environment.
www.parisbeijingphotogallery.com

editorial

THE "ITALIAN ANOMALY" AND A DANGEROUS PRECEDENT

► Continued from front cover
Here are just some of the recent facts:

TELEVISIONS

1. Nearly 90% of Italian television is comprised by the state television channels, Rair, Rai2, and Rai3, and the Mediaset private channels Rete4, Canale5, Italia1, owned by Berlusconi.
2. In a recent meeting at his own private villa, Berlusconi personally selected the main directors of the public channels and the directors of the evening news editions of these channels.
2. While the exercise could be repeated for most of the newly appointed figures, here are two quotes from the new director of Italy's leading evening news, TGR, Augusto Minzolini:
On Berlusconi: "He wears a blue jersey and has the firm hand of the worksite master, of the head of the fire brigade, of the military chief, but also the comprehension of the priest. Berlusconi gets exalted in emergencies. His attitude is 'the politics of action'".
The largest opposition party, on the other hand, is characterized negatively: "The truth is that the Democratic Party was born antiquated. The world runs, the centre-left stays still".
3. One of the historical founders of TG5, Enrico Mentana, was recently and abruptly fired by Berlusconi's Mediaset group over the running of his political program "Matrix". Here is a letter sent by Mentana to the head of the television channel he worked for, written a few months before being fired and soon after Berlusconi's latest election: "Our dinner ended a few hours ago. It was a mistake to invite me. I felt out of place. There was all the first bench of the newsdesk, but I did not hear a word about journalism for even a minute. It seemed a Thanksgiving dinner... an electoral Thanksgiving. All those around me had voted in the same way... it was obvious, as it was obvious to congratulate each other for their contribution towards this good end... I no longer feel at home in a group that seems an electoral committee, where everyone thinks in the same way, which is precisely why they have been put there."

NEWSPAPERS

Berlusconi's statements against particular newspapers opposed to his government are well known. Recently, however, there has been an escalation of what may only be called an attempt at intimidation:

1. Speaking in front of a congress of

young industrialists, Berlusconi encouraged companies not to advertise in newspapers hostile to his positions, claiming these same papers are responsible for exaggerating the reach of the economic crisis in Italy. Not only does this represent unprecedented interference by a head of state, but the matter is worsened by three considerations: a) the large advertising budget of 'state' companies, the directors of which are appointed by the Berlusconi cabinet and seek its goodwill; b) Berlusconi's large commercial empire and its advertising budget; c) Berlusconi's interests as editor of competing newspapers, radio, and television stations, all seeking advertising revenue.
2. Following a number of revelations this summer over Berlusconi's relation with escorts and showgirls and his using State flights for their transportation to private parties, all amply

“LACK OF A RESPONSE TO PRESS INTIMIDATION IN ITALY WOULD THREATEN ONE OF THE FUNDAMENTS OF EUROPEAN DEMOCRACY”

reported by the international media, Berlusconi has sued Italian newspapers La Repubblica, and L'Unita, and European newspapers El Pais and Le Nouvel Observateur, in total claiming in excess of three million euros. He is said to also be investigating suing The Times Newspaper of London.
3. Following repeated criticism over Berlusconi's personal life and his government's approach to questions of migration by the newspaper of the Italian catholic bishops, Avvenire, Berlusconi's own newspaper, Il Giornale, published an unsubstantiated report accusing the director of Avvenire of having threatened the wife of a man with whom he allegedly held sexual relations. The slander campaign has led to the resignation of the director of Avvenire, Dino Boffo.

INDEPENDENT REPORTS

1. In its latest 2009 report, Freedom House classified Italy as only "partly free", isolating in particular the political interference in the system of information
2. In its own latest report on freedom of the press in Italy, Reporters without Borders contend that Berlusconi "increases political interference" in the "editorial line" of the public and private news channels, "fostering self-censorship on the part of a section of the profession".

3. The Italian association of journalists calls the recent legal proceedings against L'Unita "an attempt to strangle a newspaper of the opposition"
4. Aidan White, secretary-general of the International and European Federation of Journalists, writes in a recent press statement that: "[Berlusconi] puts press freedom at risk by trying to use the law to intimidate journalists and to stifle media reporting."

In Italy, a more or less sophisticated process of media manipulation risks depriving citizens of the means to form a reasoned opinion on and check the actions of those in power. The legislation governing 'freedom of the press' remains intact and fully apt to a twenty-first century democracy. The problem lies in the application of such legislation, the acts of political intimidation and attempts at distortion of

the advertising market, and a continuous contamination of the personnel of media organs with individuals loyal to current Prime Minister Berlusconi. In a country where television channels represent the only source of information for over 80% of the population, control over the media does not necessarily have to assume the draconian and totalitarian nature of its twentieth century precedent. Manipulation of the principal, "mass" media of a country can today perfectly co-exist with the maintenance of dedicated 'indian reserves' of opposition, flag-bearers of a merely procedural freedom of expression.

The Italian example has consequences far beyond Italy. Lack of a European response to the attacks on the liberty of expression and thought in Italy would threaten one of the fundamentals of democracy throughout Europe. It puts in jeopardy progress made in former Soviet countries welcomed into the Union with regards to freedom of expression and of the press, and weakens any European condemnation of censorship or press intimidation on its borders and further abroad. In the context of what seem to be increasing attempts to limit the freedom of expression even in several Western countries which claim to be the homelands of liberty, the Italian example is potentially pernicious, and a Europe-wide response is demanded.



CAMPAIGN FOR THE LIBERTY OF THE PRESS

A lack of a European response to the recent intimidation of the press in Italy [see editorial starting cover page] poses a direct threat to the right of liberty of expression throughout the European Union, puts in jeopardy progress made in former Soviet countries welcomed into the Union with regards to freedom of expression and of the press, and limits the authority of any European condemnation of censorship in the rest of the world. The European Institutions have the authority to condemn intimidation of the press in Italy, and the potential to open legal proceedings.

European Alternatives is launching a campaign to pressure Members of the European Parliament in the Committee on Civil Liberties to open an investigation into the possibility of a breach of media freedom and pluralism in Italy. If, following the investigation, a breach is deemed plausible by a majority of members of the Committee, we are calling for the European Parliament to express a vote on the matter in plenary assembly. If the vote confirms the possibility of a breach, we are demanding for the dossier to be passed on to the European Council according to the procedure laid out in Article 7 of the Treaty of Nice.



TO KNOW MORE AND SUPPORT THE CAMPAIGN, VISIT:
www.euroalter.com/pressfreedom

ABOUT EUROPEAN ALTERNATIVES

EUROPA is the journal of European Alternatives, a transnational civil society organisation advocating the emergence of a positive transnationalism in the cultural and political sphere, and promoting intellectual and artistic engagement with the idea and future of Europe.

European Alternatives organises events, discussions and projects throughout Europe and beyond, and organises an annual festival in London.

www.euroalter.com

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news from the movement

BUILDING A COMMON FUTURE BEYOND LOCAL AND GLOBAL

SARA SALERI

As the debate about a “common European identity” has been intensifying since EU enlargement, in European countries expressions such as “national” identity, traditions and culture seem to be especially resistant, and continue to be widely used – and misused.

This is particularly true when dealing with immigration policies in many European countries, where being familiar with those “national” issues is one of the main prerequisites to obtain citizenship. The UK Border Agency has even published *Life in the United Kingdom: A Journey to Citizenship*, a handbook to prepare for the naturalisation test, which treats issues varying from the legal age to vote to the behaviour in a pub,

or the origins of a cultural icon such as Santa Claus.

In Italy, where immigration laws are taking a dramatic turn, the debate about national culture becomes more provincial and even grotesque, with a Minister of the Republic, member of the Northern League Party, declaring the necessity of teaching regional dialects in school to preserve Italian values.

What system of principles underpins this kind of policies?

First, a represented dichotomy between an “authentic local” and a supposedly disruptive “global” plays a key role here, the nostalgia towards the past is enhanced, together with the fear of present and future changes; “the past” is idealised and becomes a fetish to be preserved as such. This crystallization is precisely the second

deviation of these politics of identity: there’s a struggle to define – to set a clear border between what is and what is not “tradition”, or “national roots”. And this continuous reference to a definition ignores or tries to hide the simple fact that tradition, and cultural memory, are not something given, but are built and negotiated by different actors, through mechanisms of remembrance and oblivion.

To challenge these dominating views, it is essential to subvert this paradigm, thinking about history, traditions and memory in a different and more complex way.

First of all, we have to review our idea of the past, exploring the possible relation between different memories, different experiences and narrations of the same past, conveyed by different groups and communities.

That can refer for example to different roles in the past – just think about the different stories of the past narrated by the colonizer or the colonized.

This is absolutely crucial, but it is not enough, a more radical step must be taken, recognizing the processual nature of history and the constructed nature of memory: building a new culture – with a shared memory – is possible if a common experience can be recast into a future dimension.

Building a common memory, thus, implies acting in the present, reading the pasts, and imagining a shared possible future. We must accept this challenge, looking for new and creative ways to move from a conservative idea of a “history of the past” to a dynamic model of a society actively living in History. 🐘

ABOUT THE PHOTOGRAPH:
Zanele Muholi - Kalmplex, Toronto, 2008
Silver gelatine print
© Zanele Muholi. Courtesy of Michael Stevenson, Cape Town.

Faces and Phases
Zanele Muholi works predominantly on perceptions of gender, sexuality and identity. Her photographs challenge the public's perceptions of female and male identity and the notions of sameness and difference. *Faces and Phases* is a series of black and white portraits of black lesbians from different countries. Zanele started the series in 2007 in South Africa and, in the aftermath of homophobic and xenophobic attacks that took place in Johannesburg and Capetown in 2008, decided to expand to other countries. Her photographs aim at capturing ‘the subtle complexities that challenge our prejudices due to ignorance and hate’. Some of her shows have led to strong debates in South Africa, where same sex civil unions are allowed but still coexist with practices and actions of extreme violence against women, homosexuals and transgendered.
July-August 2009, Brodie/Stevenson gallery, Craighall, Johannesburg, South Africa, More info: <http://www.michaelstevenson.com/contemporary/artists/muholi.htm>

TURKEY AND EUROPE:
HALF A CENTURY
IN THE WAITING ROOM

BELEN GONGORA

Turkey applied for associate membership of the European Economic Community in 1959, when this only counted the six founders (Belgium, France, Germany, Italy, Luxembourg and the Netherlands). Half a century in the waiting room and the enlargement prospects for Turkey still at a standstill.

It is not surprising then that some have qualified these tortuous negotiations lasting for half a century as “a sad anniversary of 50 years knocking on Europe’s door”.

Turkey applied before Ireland, the UK and Denmark, but negotiations have experienced a death-slow tempo and there is not a clear and straightforward path for the long standing relationship between Turkey and the EU. Indeed, it was not until December 1999 when EU Helsinki Council recognised Turkey as an EU candidate country on an equal footing with other candidate countries and not until October 2005 when the formal opening of Accession negotiations with Turkey started.

Since then the EU has only closed provisionally one chapter, opened negotiations on seven chapters, but also decided that eight relevant chapters will not be opened and no chapter will be provisionally closed until Turkey has fully implemented the Additional Protocol to the Association Agreement (Turkey’s restrictions regarding the Republic of Cyprus, mainly on the free movement of goods, including restrictions on means of transport). There are 35 negotiation areas to cover. The issue of Cyprus continues to be a major obstacle to negotiations, but not the only one.

There is no doubt that Turkey is an exceptional case: there is no other

example of such a long process for any other candidate state. Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan stated that he is tired of “maybes” and “buts” and he refuses the proposal of a “privileged partnership” by France and Germany: “We have been waiting for fifty years for entering Europe. From now on, we want a

“ THE EU SHOULD ALSO LEAD BY EXAMPLE AND SHOW A MORE INCLUSIVE AND POSITIVE APPROACH TO A MORE DIVERSE AND OPEN EUROPE. ”

sharp answer. Some of the leaders are first saying something, and then they make a correction and claim that they didn’t say so. We have been tired of comedies. I will never accept a privileged partnership. We want full membership into the EU.”

The Nabucco project might place Turkey as a key ally to curb Europe’s over-dependence on Russia, but it might also be an asset for EU membership. Jose Barroso has said, “I believe that with the arrival of the first gas this agreement will open the door to a new era between the EU and Turkey”. It might be considered that this project has encouraged the view that Europe needs Turkey more than Turkey needs Europe.

Turkey’s case is in sharp contrast with the fast-track application of Iceland. Turkey should surely demonstrate further its determination to join the EU with words and facts. But this is not only Turkey’s task: the EU should also lead by example and show a more inclusive and positive approach to a more diverse and open Europe. 🐘



JO LEINEN

REFORM OF EUROPEAN DEMOCRACY:

The issue of the electoral system

Transnational electoral lists and personalisation of European politics are required to involve citizens in a shared political space

For the first time in 2009 the European Parliament together with the European Commission joint forces for setting up a true European election campaign. TV and radio spots were produced in different languages, featuring renowned personalities and picking up political issues of equal importance all across Europe. They included questions on how much of a fortress citizens want the EU to be, what energy mix is preferred or whether genfood should be on the dinner table.

Despite these efforts, voter turnout on June 7th remained low. Analyses of the campaign clearly showed that instead of a European campaign with competing European political parties focusing on European issues and presenting their different political concepts, there were 27 national campaigns, focusing mainly on national issues.

The low turnout during the elections shows that new efforts are required if we don't want to further create distances between the European

Union and its citizens. There is a structural problem that must be addressed quickly. Apart from certain European provisions such as proportional representation, the elections to the European Parliament are based on national legislation. They take place on different days and under different regimes. Consequently, they are rather a combination of 27 national elections than truly European elections. Once again, the elections that were meant to be about European topics have been decided by issues that are mostly national. It makes it difficult for voters to grasp the European dimension of the European elections. There is a structural gap between the mandates of the MEPs and the way they were nominated and elected. But as long as the parties put up lists that only consist of national candidates, the election campaigns will keep on focussing on national issues. This has to change for the next polls in 2014.

We have to move forward and create a real European Electoral System, if we want to re-instil interest in the citizens, along with a sense that their vote on the European level does matter and can bring about change. We need transnational European lists of candidates of the European Political Parties, i.e. two votes for each citizen, one for national lists and the other one for European lists. Thus, the EU would receive a double legitimacy. The national lists would respect the role of the member states inside the European Union. The European lists would be a strong

instrument for the development of a real pan-European debate and at the same time strengthen the European democracy and its legitimacy. Parties would have to pick European candidates, eventually adding a whole new, cross-border dimension and creating an understanding among themselves, their members and voters that the EU is more than just the sum of its members.


In order to europeanize the European Elections we also need to make sure that a real European electoral campaign is possible. The EU is not a second rate institution, trailing somewhere behind nation-states but an important player in the world; and, more importantly, the chief decision-maker for inner-European issues, such as the internal market, the common currency or environmental affairs. Decisions from the European level have direct impact on the everyday life of each EU citizen, e.g. passenger rights, cross-border health care, CO2 emissions for cars, health standards at the place of work or food safety.

We have to find ways to re-integrate citizens in European debates, involving them in the huge task of creating an EU that lives the values of solidarity, democracy, equality and respect of human rights. European integration will not be brought about by bureaucracy or technocrats harmonising industrial standards but by real, sometimes heated political debates, exchange of ideas and cross-border people-to-people con-

tacts. We need to move away from the top-down processes towards a bottom-up approach. Restructuring the European electoral system will be an important starting point in this regard; beginning at the very core of the campaign – with the timely and democratic preparation of the lists of candidates. It is not acceptable that only a few weeks before the elections, the electorate in some countries still doesn't know who their candidates are and what the alternatives are. It results in the total lack of thorough and informative campaign, which in any case would be crammed into a space of only two or three weeks and leads people to believe that European politics only happen shortly before elections. The missing synchronisation of debates and activities between the countries hinders the emergence of a true European debate, too. In addition, it is unacceptable that in some cases the party lists are drawn up by exclusive, intransparent party circles. It is therefore crucial that we develop EU-wide minimal standards for the establishment of the lists of candidates that include a well ahead deadline as well as rules on how to integrate the members of the parties in the decision making process.

But European lists can only be one aspect of this new system. Apart from the lack of a European debate, the campaign for the European Elections suffered under something else: there was not enough personalization. It was unclear to the citizens what personnel changes would occur after the elections and how much of an impact a majority shift in the European Parliament can have on the composition of the European Commission. Once the Lisbon Treaty enters into force, new provisions will apply that link the nomination and election of the Commission president to the results of the European elections, thus transforming the voter's voices and choices into political realities that impact the direction of the development of European integration. If we want to raise the interest of the electorate and demonstrate the political alternatives, the European Parties must put forward their candidates for the position of the President

of the "European Government" (i.e. Commission President) prior to the elections. This would be the most effective way to achieve a real politicization of the European Elections because it would lead to a much higher presence of European topics in the media and a pan-European dialogue about these personalities and their programmes. The voters could then better judge the strengths and weaknesses of the different parties and candidates in Europe and take a more informed decision. A controversial and open debate about political choices is fundamental to any democracy. We need to allow the citizens to express their choices about the political forces that will govern them on the European level.

Ever since the 1960s changes in the electoral system to the European Parliament have been the topic of many debates among the EU's heads of state and governments and leaders of national political parties, being aware of the immense impact they can have on the nation-state's role in the European set-up, with the attention of voters shifting away from the national towards the European level. As a result, these changes have often been stalled and progress remained slow or altogether absent. However, as the European level is assigned more and more tasks because many modern challenges can no longer be solved at the national level, it is crucial that these new powers and competences of the European Commission and the European Council are matched with the necessary parliamentary control. A control based on democratic legitimacy, brought about by conscious choices of a high number of informed voters, which in turn are the result of open, pan-European debates by European Political Parties offering alternative solutions to European questions. In the new legislature, the European Parliament should as quickly as possible start with the preparations for a new electoral system towards the next European elections in 2014. The debate has to start now! 

Jo Leinen is a Member of the European Parliament for the Party of European Socialists.

“A CONTROVERSIAL AND OPEN DEBATE ABOUT POLITICAL CHOICES IS FUNDAMENTAL TO ANY DEMOCRACY. WE NEED TO ALLOW EUROPEAN CITIZENS TO DECIDE WHO WILL GOVERN THEM.”



Muge, Fortune-telling man

CRYPTIC OF EUROPEAN DEMOCRACY

VÉRONIQUE FOULON

Herodotus tells us about the debate between Otanes, partisan of democracy, Megabyzus, champion of oligarchy, and Darius, speaking in favour of monarchy.

Otanes expresses his preference for a system of government which implies legitimacy, equality and the accountability of magistrates who must explain their actions and decisions in front of the majority of the people. Megabyzus, on the other hand, believes in the doctrine that Popper would call "historicism" or the doctrine of the chosen people, in which aristocracy or a group of citizens amongst what he designates as "the best citizens" would make all decisions because they would make the best decisions unlike what he calls "the frivolous throng". Finally, Darius criticizes oligarchy as allowing enmity inside the group of citizens constituting the government and

democracy as contributing to corruption. The defender of the people must, according to him, inevitably be unique and thus a monarch.

In our times where representative democracy is structured around competition between political parties, we might forget that the question of democracy has a long history of discussion and is a multifaceted topic. The aforementioned debate is said to have taken place in the Persian Empire no later than in the second half of the 6th century BC. In spite of how long deliberations about democracy have been in existence, we have still many lessons to draw and are constantly trying to learn again how to deal with what we share in the public sphere as wisely and as fairly as possible according to the values we believe in, be it honesty, integrity, liberty, equality, collectivity, human rights. Every change of the public sphere necessarily implies a change in the way we get involved in its time and space.

European democracy has now been for

PIERRE CALAME

TIME FOR A CITIZENS' EUROPE

The European Union is a world example of national reconciliation, but it can no longer rely on institutional compromise. A radically democratised citizens' Europe is called for

When the European community was created just after the Second World War, it had to be innovative in its form of governance to reconcile the European interest and national sovereignties. Therefore the power of proposition was dissociated from the power of decision: the European Commission was formed with the responsibility for declaring the common interest and given the monopoly over the power of proposition, and the power of decision remained in the hands of the member states.

This innovation has allowed the European Union to construct itself and to enlarge in a remarkable manner, despite multiple crises.

But the times have changed. Neither this foundational innovation, nor the growing role taken by the European Parliament, nor successive treaties which have attempted to adapt the European institutions to the new realities and new challenges of Europe, have allowed the emergence of an authentically democratic Europe. Despite their oaths of pro-European engagement, the heads of the member states over at least the last 10 years have not ceased to weaken the Commission, to limit the work of the college of commissioners, to

extinguish the capacities of initiative of the European civil servants by means of constraining procedures – in a word, to drive the union towards a inter-state mode of functioning.

The way the European parliament is elected, on the basis of national lists of candidates, tends to turn the Parliament itself into a space of confrontation between national interests. The interminable negotiations over the contingent of deputies allocated to each member state are an indication that in the Parliament it is the representatives of the nations who express their sentiments rather than representatives with political preferences or with the desire to give to Europe the future it merits.

Is it surprising, in these conditions, that the Commission and the European institutions, when they try to get closer to the Europe of its citizens, have almost always tried « from the top down », from the institutions towards the citizens, rather than the other way around? They try to « explain » European politics to the citizens and to convince them of their benefits, rather than empowering citizens to have their own visions of Europe and to become the inventors of its future politics. Thus instead of a democracy we are given a politics of institutional communication.

The net result is that every opinion poll reveals at the same time an attachment of citizens to the European Union – even if they expect protection against globalisation rather than for a project for a common future – and a disaffection with regards to the European institutions, illustrated by the very high rate of abstention of the young in the most recent European parliamentary elections in 2009.

The European democratic deficit is even more disquieting because the European Union is an example at a global level. No world governance which is at once democratic, legitimate and efficient can be conceived without the progressive construction of regions of the world, between 10 to 20 maximum, entering into dialogue with one another. No serious perspective can be based on the dialogue between 200 sovereign states as disparate as China and the United States on the one side and Bhutan, Nepal and Vanuatu on the other. The European Union remains the most developed example of regional inte-

gration: without a citizens' Europe, there is no perspective of democratic world governance.

I want to sketch in response a series of considerations. Without wanting to underplay the importance of institutional reforms, such as the choice of the different commissioners by the president of the commission in order to recover a capacity of initiative against the member states, or the election for the parliament on the basis of European lists, I will concentrate on citizens' initiatives.


These initiatives have to respond to the great challenges of our times, because democracy becomes a caricature of itself when it tries, under

eu, launched at the time of the recent parliamentary elections, are examples.

Tomorrow's European governance has to be a multi-level governance. The recent initiative of the committee of the Regions which tries to promote such a governance is promising in this respect. No real problem in our societies can be treated at a single level. It is not that the European problems are all on one side, and on the other there are the local problems. The development of a multi-level schema of governance would change radically the nature of European political debate, assuring its continuity from the local level to the European level.

The common market and the Europe are nothing but means to an end. In the new stage of its history, Europe is alone in a position to reinvent the foundations of the economy and this should be the object of a vast citizens' debate.

Choices in science and in technology will determine the future of our societies. There are often removed from public debate. But we have seen, in the case of GM crops, citizens inviting themselves into the debate and imposing strong restrictions on the development of these crops despite the overtly pro-GM attitude of the Commission and most of the member states. How can we organise such a public debate on such technical questions? The response, which also responds to the problem of the reform of political structures of Europe, consists in two complementary initiatives: citizens' panels, and multi-language internet sites of information and debate.

Beyond these different modalities to support democracy, there is a need for what we call a European Assembly of Citizens, which should be created as quickly as possible. Governance has two functions: the first is to direct a community which is already formed, the second is to allow the forming of a community. This second function is the most important, because no community of shared interest is automatic. The member States directed the rapid growth of Europe. It had to be that way. But the time has now come where the community of European citizens must establish itself and the citizens must be able to debate what kind of Europe they want and what role they would like it to play in a world that is irreversibly interdependent. 

Pierre Calame is Director General of the Charles Léopold Mayer Foundation.
www.fph.ch

“ THE TIME HAS NOW COME WHERE THE COMMUNITY OF EUROPEAN CITIZENS MUST ESTABLISH ITSELF AND THE CITIZENS MUST BE ABLE TO DEBATE WHAT KIND OF EUROPE THEY WANT AND WHAT ROLE THEY WOULD LIKE IT TO PLAY IN A WORLD THAT IS IRREVERSIBLY INTERDEPENDENT. ”

the pretext of participation, to make citizens debate secondary questions whilst the important decisions which concern the future are taken by cliques of experts. What are these great challenges? Firstly, globalisation and therefore the relations between the regions of the world. Secondly, the conception itself of European governance. Thirdly, the transition from the current model of development, which is not viable, to sustainable societies. Also the great scientific and technical choices. Finally, the reform of political structures of Europe.

The Charles Léopold Mayer Foundation has led citizen's projects in several of these areas. The China-Europa forum and our websites <http://www.citizenspanel.eu/>, a citizens' panel on the future of rural areas, and www.challengeforeurope.org.

The transition to sustainable societies will imply much more than just a “climate and energy package.” We have to reconsider the finalities themselves of production and exchange. The European Union was created in 1953 for historic reasons - in particular the failure of the European Defence community – on the basis of the common European market, the removal of customs barriers and the levelling of the conditions for competition. But these are not the profound finality of Europe, which is peace.

Go Home, 2006

The photographs on this spread were taken in Chongqing, the biggest city along the Yangtze river in the Three Gorges area in China, by Chinese photographer Muge. For more photographs of the series, visit: www.mugephoto.cn



Muge, A passenger ship on the Yangtze River

several years at a turning point. One needs to clarify how and where it is possible and sensible for those who are living in Europe to take advantage of the practice of democracy that has been made available to them at a transnational level.

Would the European arena provide us with the possibility of a hitherto untested democratic experience beyond the mean and destructive potential of a misleading nationalism into which our society can always lapse again?

European citizens did not see June's parliamentary elections as a way of expressing themselves democratically. In 2009 turnout has reached a record low in participation. But the real threshold, from a majority to a minority of the voters voting/ going to the poll, is 1999, when for the first time less than 50% of the voters expressed themselves.

If there might have been ineffective channels of information regarding the project of the EU due to politicians and the media, one other harm certainly comes from the belief that our condition, our lives and wellbeing should miraculously change while we are waiting for politicians to do what we want them to do,

i.e. be active instead of us. But politicians are only representatives and do not prevent people at a local, national and transnational level getting involved.

Democracy is an unfinished work/ is a work in progress. We must always distinguish between the use which is being made of the word democracy as a common ideal, and its practice.

According to Pierre Rosanvallon, “to overcome the current crisis will require more transparency, accountability and participation of the citizens. When dealing with the regulation of the economy or trying to solve social issues, democracy must always be in our sights”.

Democracy must always be in our sights as opposed to a particular group of interest in the name of which democracy and sovereignty can be manipulated like a vain word and consequently threatened for reasons that come down to those distinctly introduced at first glance in the deliberation between the three Persians by Megabyzus and Darius. But, do we really want to live and act in a democracy or will we constantly relegate it to being merely an idea?

DENIS GUÉNOUN

EUROPE AND HER IDEA

The idea of Europe can only be the universal, which itself is a negation of all European ‘particularity’. In this apparent paradox contemporary Europe can find its historic mission as a transnational force in a nationalist world

THE IDEA
He who looks for the idea of Europe finds the universal. The positive content of the culture which is elaborated in what we call “Europe” doesn’t consist in anything other than in the determination, the investigation, the exploration of what is most general and what is most widely shared: the intelligible unity of the natural world, the communal condition of human beings. This approach is not one of taking for granted but a process of continual expansion: the universal is won in thought and in practice by an extension to new physical spaces and by a transfer to new domains of sense – in sciences, in the arts, by the invention of norms. The discovery of the world, the production of rights:

the universal is a universalisation, a journey underway. Europe is a place and a pathway.

Now, this assertion conceals a profound paradox: because, if it is faithful to its intimate and positive energy, “Europe” is a process of opening. The official conditions of integration into Europe do not include any linguistic, religious, racial conditions, nor, what it perhaps more surprising, any determinate geographical markers. The only limits are those of sense, or of right, and they are open to the universal (civil liberties, human rights), that is to say to what removes limits. The boundaries of Europe are in fact defined in terms of access. One might fear therefore that Europe defines itself by that which breaks it or at least alters it, undoes its figure, its contours, its form itself. But inversely, when Europe looks to present itself as an identity, or as a constructed space, it is forced to give itself confines, and therefore to exclude from itself an entire world outside: and Europe is thereby unfaithful to its positive and constructive vocation. To say it more briefly, the contradiction is perhaps this: either Europe is faithful to what inspires her, and she denies herself as Europe (as the continent, as a map), or she inscribes herself within limits and a figurative design, and she interrupts the movement of universalisation which she carries and which essentially animates her.

All potential European politics is caught in this tension: when it looks for a European identity it denies the motor impulse of Europe, which is its opening; when it does not regard anything but the universal, it seems to dissolve what is European itself, its own capacity to distinguish itself.

The observation is not only speculative. It regards concrete history. Since modern times (since she exists as Europe), Europe doesn’t have any other history than that of her becoming-a-world. The idea of a continental history of Europe is a fiction that has been constructed afterwards. The entire history of Europe consists

in projects for the world: from the great discoveries to the constitution of colonial empires, there is no notable period, just occasional halts and pauses, in which the planetary enterprises of Europe were not active. From this point of view the last two centuries speak volumes: the future of the three great European inventions is that of their becoming world-wide: Revolution (and its manifestation as world-wide revolution, and in particular the communist revolution, an idea of Europe of which the durable realisations are found in Moscow and Beijing); the Nation (and its proliferation as nationalism, for which colonialism paved the way, because colonialism introduced the form of the Nation, in its preferred figure of the Nation-State, to the entire sur-

than that of the history of Europe? Should we think, for example, of international law, and the instances responsible for producing and developing it, as the privileged institutions in which the universal is produced, and that Europe is therefore condemned to the status of a regional instance, of a second grade?

This is not certain. First of all, international law, and, for example, the United Nations, as their names indicate, deal with the universal as a system of relations between nations. They are forced to address themselves to the fact of the nation, forced to take the nation for granted. Now, one of the principal questions of the moment is the possibility of going beyond the form of the nation. That is one of the keys of the universalisation which is

“ THE OFFICIAL CONDITIONS OF INTEGRATION INTO EUROPE DO NOT INCLUDE ANY LINGUISTIC, RELIGIOUS, RACIAL CONDITIONS, NOR, WHAT IT PERHAPS MORE SURPRISING, ANY DETERMINATE GEOGRAPHICAL MARKERS. THE ONLY LIMITS ARE THOSE OF SENSE, OR OF RIGHT, AND THEY ARE OPEN TO THE UNIVERSAL. ”

face of the planet); and last but not least Capital itself, which now covers the entire world with its fabric, with a further double European invention as its leading force: the United States of America and its unprecedented empire. East, South, West: three expansions of Europe to the extremes of the world.

One might fear therefore that the idea of reflecting on what Europe contains as a continent just reduces itself to the management of a residue: what rests of Europe when her global projects (socialism, nationalism, capitalism) escapes and free itself from their source, from the city where they was born.

THE ÉPOQUE
Does all that only concern the past? Have the future of the globalism and the future of the universal definitively moved to another terrain

underway. The nation ensnares the universal in specific attachments: territorial, ethnic or religious – the universal becomes national in the knotting together of a paradoxical and strained link between religion, race and territory. In many ways, the form of the nation state is in many ways a hindrance for the development of new processes of universalisation (egalitarian, juridical, moral, cultural). Now, Europe in its actual phase of history is a new form of post-national construction, or at least a form of advanced transnationalism. From this point of view, Europe is a (trans) formation underway which presents a quantum of innovation, of historical invention, intrinsically different from, for example, the globalism of the United States, which is a national globalism, articulated on the back of the national form of the United States of America. The USA is an original or singular national entity which is rel-

atively new: but it is a nation, and it declares itself loudly as one. With regards to the United Nations, it is constituted in an inter-national space, in a world made as the collection of nation states. Europe, on the other hand, can call upon its transnationalism, which is undergoing an innovative elaboration, to think of itself as being in an advanced stage of its own becoming-universal.

Secondly, Europe is not on the edge, but precisely on a frontier between civilisations. Thus it is not false to say, like Etienne Balibar, that Europe is a frontier. This frontier is one of the most important of the moment because it is largely one of the frontiers between “the Occident” and “Islam”. This frontier is internal to the history of Europe for many reasons: first of all because Islam was a fundamental component in the compost laid in medieval Europe. Secondly, because the relation of Europe with Islam has intimately marked the heart of European history in many dimensions: the Europe of the West and Maghreb, the Europe of the East and Turkey, the Balkans, etc. These confrontations do not mark external front, but internal frontiers. Algeria is an internal frontier of France, as Turkey is of the German world, as Pakistan is of England, and so on. This bordering is of course manifested in a way that is particularly striking in the urban future of today’s metropolises. The European future cannot come about but by the democratisation of its relation with Islam, that is to say as the affirmation of one of the dimensions the most difficult, and therefore the most productive, of today’s universalisation. This is why the question of the adhesion of Turkey, which will tomorrow be the questions of the Maghreb or of Israel-Palestine, raises one of the eminent vocations of the Europe in process of becoming, a powerful contribution to the possibility of a democratic and pacific universalisation of the world that is coming about.

As a new transnational construction, and as a democratic pacification of the relation between the West and Islam, Europe is today one of the most inventive construction sites of a new relation to the universal.

THE THEME
If there is a need to find a “theme” with which to mobile Europeans, we must be careful about looking for a “myth”. For several reasons: firstly because a myth is not created voluntarily. Myths cannot be created by the desire, and even less by the decision, to mythologise. Secondly because the principal use of myths in the modern époque, at least in the political sphere, has been for mythification. And lastly because the desires to rehabilitate myths have systematically been associated with the most regressive politics – those the least European, in the sense in which I have defined the word.

We can also see a reason less obvious, and which touches at the heart of the question. It is not certain that the amount of energy a human collectivity mobilises to engage in an idea is in proportion with its adhesion to an image or representation. Kant thought, for example, that the non-figurative character of the god of Islam or of Judaism explains in large part the faith, the fieriness and the enthusiasm of those who follow these religions. The ardour of the religious passion appeared to him there-

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Brian Griffin, Siouxsie, Rotherhithe Studio, London, 1984

fore not to be restricted or restrained but on the contrary to be activated by the absence of a figure of the divine, which is itself the fruit of the biblical interdiction of images. This is why he took this interdiction to be the most sublime commandment. Thus we should avoid ceding too quickly to the very widely spread opinion that in order for Europeans to engage in favour of Europe they have to be given resplendent, gratifying images, which are thoroughly mythic. For Europe then, and even if the affirmation seems provocative, we can't see any other theme which will mobilise the energies of militant citizens than the universal as such. This merits more attention that one might think. Effectively:

1 There are today perhaps not so many political entities, established or in the process of becoming, which can assume the figure of the universal as such as part of their preferred thematics. Europe is one of the rare places where it is possible to

“ AS A NEW TRANSNATIONAL CONSTRUCTION, AND AS A DEMOCRATIC PACIFICATION OF THE RELATION BETWEEN THE WEST AND ISLAM, EUROPE IS TODAY ONE OF THE MOST INVENTIVE CONSTRUCTION SITES OF A NEW RELATION TO THE UNIVERSAL. ”

consider oneself as part of the community of men without limits and without any reserves. The singularity of Europe, since we are looking for it, is perhaps in the vigour, the ancientness and the permanence of this universalism, and it is uncompromisingly a priori character, with all the effects that this brings about – a sense of justice, of equality, of concern for the planet, hostility to the death penalty, hostility to war etc..

2 There is perhaps nothing in the hypothesis which leads to a dissolution or a demobilisation of energies. It is perhaps precisely the opposite: we don't see many young Europeans take to the streets in

order to affirm their affinity for as we, Europeans. A neo-particularism, a neo-nationalism of continental dimension will not raise much passion. But, on the other hand, it is not impossible that passions will be raised when it comes to affirming oneself as a human being – or even, in certain respects, as a living creature – in solidarity with every person and every community in as much as it is human, without reservations. And it is possible that a great pride in Europe as such will be born if it shows itself as one of the places which favours this vision of humanity.

3 In any case neither neo-nationalism, nor continental identities,

nor religious fundamentalism, nor the interventionism of capital, nor even juridical inter-nationalism can claim an uncompromising concern for all human individuals, for the moment of transcendence which can be recognised in each human individual and perhaps, beyond this, even to nature itself. In this way (to suggest a specific application) the radical opening of Europe to Islam, to Judaism and to the Christian patrimony – if it chooses to affirm these places of democratisation and pacification at once internal and bordering – will perhaps allow it to take the unique position of welcoming with equal beneficence Israelis and Palestinians. European universalism is perhaps here capable of proposing an end to this nationalist and 'civilisational' confrontation apparently without any solution. That is not nothing.

Therefore we shouldn't hastily conclude that the absence of particular content or identity will imply that the European engagement lacks fighting spirit or force. The French revolution

LES RENCONTRES D'ARLES:

40 Years of the Rencontres celebrates the fortieth anniversary of the photographic show in Arles. In addition to bringing together the artistic directors who helped the exhibition develop over time it celebrates the talent of Robert Delpire. Concurrently, "40 Years of Radical Change" shows photographers whose initial Rencontres exhibitions were controversially at variance with the accepted standards of the time featuring, amongst others, a retrospective of Duane Michals' work and Nan Goldin, whose *Ballad of Sexual Dependency* had a huge impact when shown originally.

Les Rencontres d'Arles, 40 ans de rencontres, 40 ans de ruptures, July 7 – September 13, 2009, Arles, France www.rencontres-arles.com

affirmed itself by means of a universal theme – the Declaration of the Rights of Man makes no mention of either France or the French. It can't be criticised for lacking vigour. 🐘

Denis Guénoun is a playwright, poet and philosopher, and author of *Hypothèses sur l'Europe*.

BRIAN HOLMES

THE POLITICS OF KNOWLEDGE CONSTRUCTION

With the pervasive trend towards the commodification of knowledge under intellectual property law, what is being challenged is the very ideal of the educational-cultural sphere as the locus of mutual understanding in a pluralist society

In his extraordinary book *The Great Transformation* (1944), the economic anthropologist Karl Polanyi maintained that in all known societies prior to that of nineteenth-century England, exchanges of goods were embedded in an institutional mix, indeed in a human ecology: there was no separation between specifically economic calculations and a broader set of social reciprocities regulating the care and reproduction of land (i.e. the natural environment), labor (the human body/mind) and money itself (whether the cowrie shells of the Trobriand Islanders, or the fiduciary currencies of nation-states). Polanyi showed that the development of English economic liberalism, propelled by the industrial revolution and extended to worldwide dimensions by the gold standard, had effectively disembedded the economy from society, transforming land, labor and money into what he called “fictitious commodities,” continuously bought and sold on a supposedly “self-regulating market.”

Why are these three commodities any different from the average widget? The thing that makes them “fictitious” in Polanyi’s sense is that their production and sustainable reproduction is not ensured by market mechanisms. Land that isn’t cared for beyond the cycle of a cash-crop or a mineral dig can be durably blighted by misuse; labor with no life-support outside the workplace can be physically destroyed by downward pressure on wages; and the very medium of exchange, money, can be discredited by speculative trading of promissory notes without regard for the institutions from which their value derives. All these phenomena, which had been observed since

the Industrial Revolution, were experienced at their cruelest extremes during the early twentieth century, most acutely during the Great Depression of the 1930s – and Polanyi, whose book was a history of the rise and fall of the gold standard, was hardly alone in identifying the liberal doctrines of free trade and self-regulating markets as the underlying causes of the wars themselves.

In the finance-driven, networked economy of the postnational competition regimes, it is necessary to add a fourth “fictitious commodity” to Polanyi’s list of three (land, labor and money). This fourth fictitious commodity is knowledge, in a spectrum of forms ranging from science, technology and law to literature, cooking and everyday know-how. Its production depends on long-term institutionalized learning and teaching experiences, publicly available libraries, archives, museums and databanks, internalized modes of individual self-cultivation, urban spaces of improvisational or structured group interaction, processes of hybridization between different cultural traditions, the constitution of critical and dissident discourses ranging from punk rock and poetry slams to networks of concerned scientists or alliances of traditional and organic farmers, and so on through a near-infinite spectrum of practices whereby objective observation, theoretical abstraction, individual expression and patterns of social solidarity are laid down in complex traces and artifacts that can be taken up and transformed by successive individuals, groups and generations. The impossibility of completely functionalizing this subtle interweave of practices and motivations is obvious, and was recognized throughout the long era of national institution-building, from the early nineteenth century onwards in most parts of the Western world.

The expansion of the state’s cultural and educational mandate, and its hesitant extension to class, gender and ethnic groups that were formerly excluded from representation, brought new conflicts and challenges to this institutional mix, which undertook a difficult period of transformation in the wake of 1968 and the decade of unrest that followed. It is precisely this “difficulty of representation,” precluding any simple reiteration of supposed national icons and values, that has been the source of most vitally engaging developments in culture over the last thirty years; and the same kind of questioning has even extended into a reevaluation of certain economic and technoscientific functions. However, with the educational streamlining of the Bologna process, with the corporate sponsor-

ship and instrumentalization of the arts and sciences, with the retooling of national cultural institutions for the transnational tourist market, and with the pervasive trend towards the commodification of knowledge under intellectual property law, what is being challenged right now is the very ideal of the educational-cultural sphere as the locus of a problematic quest for mutual understanding in a pluralist society. Indeed, the commodification of knowledge is the driving force and central goal of the Schumpeterian competition state, to the precise extent that the leading edge of capitalist production is redefined as technological and managerial innovation (particularly in the financial sphere). All the flowerings of human aspiration and experience can then be treated not just as commodities, but as investments in an entrepreneurial self, as the economist Gary Becker has shown

a step forward in the ability to name and describe the effects of the neoliberal transformation process. Art has become one of the means of investigation, akin to social science, but irreducible to it. Similarly, a transnational organization such as Attac, whose economic critique has gained a certain influence in social-democratic countries like Norway, seeks to make visible the negative influence of a stateless, privatized currency on the fundamental realms of human labor and the natural environment, but also on the cultural-scientific domain that constitutes a second nature or an artificial environment (just as necessary as the air we breathe – and as likely to be polluted). When artists begin to explore the operations of capital, and to point directly to instances of capital failure, they are participating with their own expressive methods in a complex response to the gradual installation of

interest and involvement to reconstitute a socialized cultural sphere under fresh auspices, the contemporary arts have to throw off their blatant or subtle dependence on the new corporate-oriented institutions that promote an opportunistic and flexible subjectivity. And this is easier said than done, as shown by the ambiguous relations between cultural producers on the museum circuit and activists seeking forms of organization for precarious labor. Because it’s easy to invest in a little anguish over the biopolitical instrumentalization of one’s own creativity, in order to produce a new niche product for the originality markets. And it’s just as facile to criticize that investment. Indeed, hyperindividualization and the capitalization of everything seems to be the very formula for the breakdown of solidarities, and the emergence of liberal-fascism. What’s more complicated – as those involved



Luan Xiao, *Work No.5*, mixed media installation, 2008, 45x45 cm

with his notion of “human capital.” One of the ways Europeans now experience capital failure is when education and culture come packaged with a price tag that disfigures them, even when it doesn’t leave them completely out of reach.

Paradoxically, the damage caused by this capitalization of knowledge is at once a primary factor in societal blindness, and a chance to bring the new states of human coexistence under the neoliberal regimes to visibility. The collaboration of artists with social scientists, labor organizations and ecology movements during the recent cycle of antiglobalization counter-summits, and now around the theme of the “precariousness of existence” in the flexible economy, has marked

the competition regime, imposed as a single set of exclusive and increasingly intolerant rules for the difficult and irrevocably multiple states of human coexistence in society. The process of exploring and interpellating these currently invisible states is one aspect of the broader effort to constitute social formations that might act in common, having not only shared objective interests but potentially even an interest in each other.

The problem, however, is not only the gradual phasing-out of national cultural institutions, together with their outdated canons of beauty and elitist ideals of identity. The deeper problem is that in order to survive as exploratory and transformative practices, and in order to generate enough

in different aspects of the precarity movements are discovering – is to create lines of invention and critique that reinforce each other in their differences, across professional and class divides. In this respect, the role of knowledge producers in recreating an ability to say “we” is potentially decisive. By pursuing a new transvaluation of the old national values, it may be possible to arrive at what is now lacking: a sustainable constitution of multiplicity. But there is no assurance whatsoever that this potential will be realized. 🐼

Brian Holmes is a writer and theorist. This text is part of his forthcoming book “Continental Drift”, which can be followed on: www.brianholmes.wordpress.com

WHAT’S NEW AT EUROPEAN ALTERNATIVES?

European Alternatives runs projects, campaigns and events throughout Europe and beyond. Amongst our forthcoming projects are the following:

- **POLIS 21:** Citizens Culture and the Boundaries of the New City. A series of events and artistic interventions over October and November 2009 taking place in London, Athens, Zagreb and Belgrade, looking at forms of exclusion in public space and the possibilities for transnational artistic interventions.
- **TRANSNATIONAL POLITICS IN EUROPE:** Over autumn 2009 and Spring 2010, a series of conferences to consider crucial questions for the future of transnational politics in Europe,

including events on transnational political parties in Berlin, on transnational trade unions in Warsaw, and on the cultural dimensions of European foreign policy in Paris.

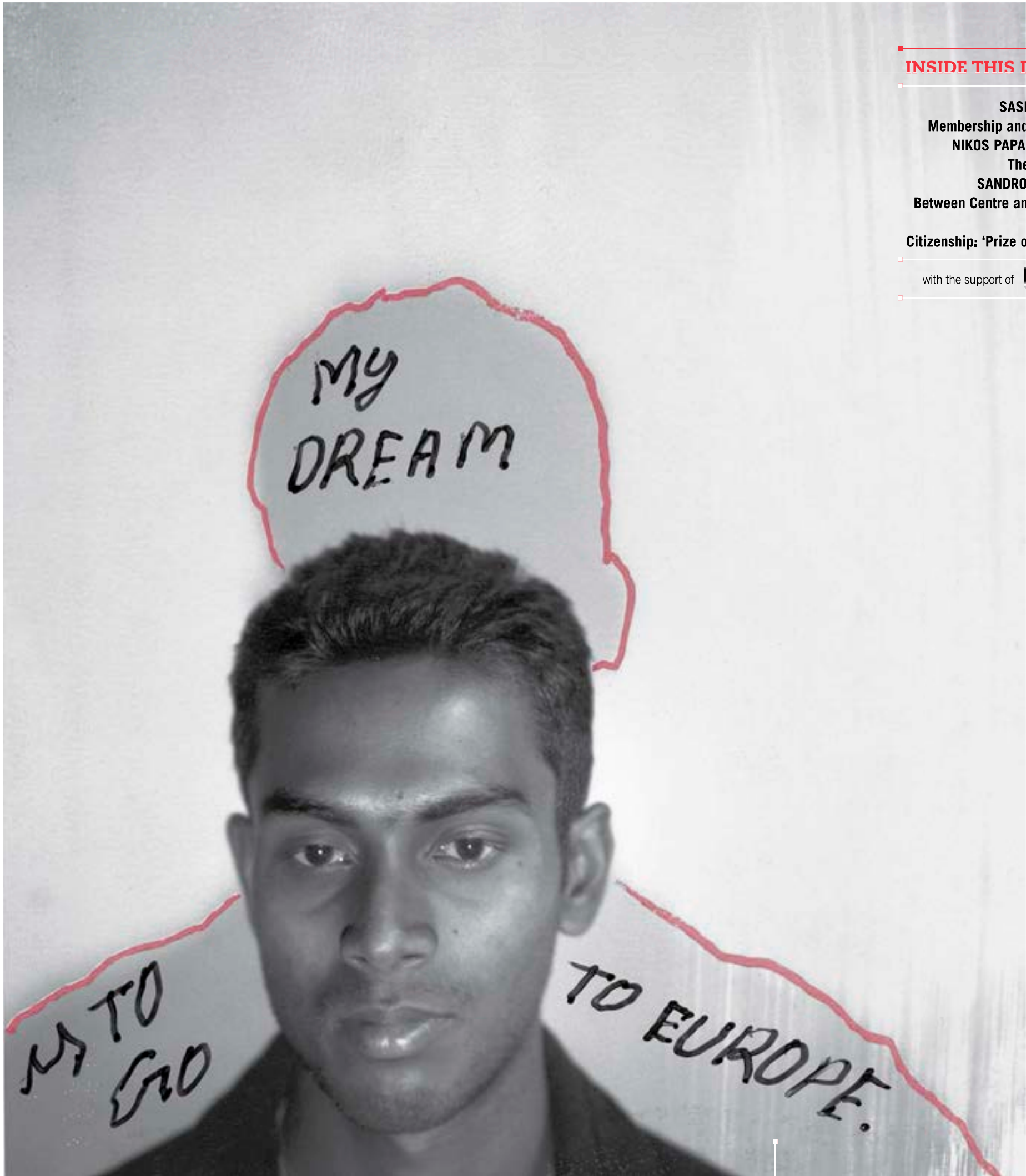
- **EUROPEAN POLICY CONFERENCES AND PAMPHLETS:** European Alternatives is organising a series of four conferences in the UK to debate current European Commission policies and propose alternative policies in four areas: democracy; climate change and energy; the commemoration of democratic transition in Eastern and Central Europe; jobs and employment. The conferences will bring together representatives of the Commission with civil society and academics, and be followed by policy pamphlet publications.

- **TRANSNATIONAL DIALOGUES:** The launch of an internet platform hosting dialogues between artists, writers and intellectuals from across continents on crucial cultural and political questions of our times. Following from our China-Europe workshop in Beijing which launched the transnational dialogue initiative, a series of workshops will be organised in Brazil in autumn 2009.

European Alternatives is a membership organisation which welcomes the active participation of its members in our activities. To join for just £10/10€ and to find out more, see: www.euroalter.com

DOSSIER:


CITIZENSHIP IN MOTION



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Citizenship: 'Prize or Practice?'

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The status of citizenship in Europe is in limbo. The unresolved tension between the universal aspirations of human rights and the particularity of citizenship by birth have yet to produce any new conception of citizenship in an integrated Europe.

The migrant to Europe falls directly into this space of limbo, which means that no consideration of citizenship in Europe is today possible without a direct consideration of the status of the migrant. Despite mobility being recognised as one of the most productive forces of our age many migrants are still perceived as a ‘problem’, responsible for their fate and a disruption to the norm of a settled life. They

are increasingly subjected to mechanisms that produce specific forms of immobility, culminating most visibly in the administrative detention system that has been established across Europe. Migrants are increasingly expected to ‘translate’ themselves into the culture of their host country, as an inflated notion of national ‘culture’ is increasingly used to make ‘citizenship tests’ to which only migrants are subject. If human rights alone are too thin to establish the European polis, the recourse to essentialist notions of cultural identity is a troubling souvenir of Europe’s recent history.

This dossier aims to look beyond essentialist paradigms to a flexible notion of citizenship. As is highlighted several times in the course

of this dossier, a flexible idea of geography is required to understand the labour, information and power flows which are constituent of the present global interrelations of peoples. The notions of “centre” and of “periphery” are no longer suitable to understand these interrelations. If Europe is to fully inscribe itself as a transformative force in global politics, it has to fully take into account new forms of global patterning and movement which set the conditions for the actions of citizens individually and together. In addition to new geographical understanding of spaces for citizenship, the new imaginative resources required for citizens to make sense of their membership of a polis cannot be underestimated, resources which art can be called upon to provide.

Jim Goldberg: Bangladesh. Dhaka. 2007.
Man at a recruitment center.
From exhibition “Open Sea”, 16 Oct 2009 – 17 Jan 2010, The Photographers' Gallery, London

The first UK solo exhibition of the Magnum photographer Jim Goldberg documents the experiences of refugees and immigrants from war torn, socially and economically devastated countries searching for stability and the promise of a better future in Europe. Through innovative use of image and text Goldberg narrates the intimate and frequently violent stories of their past and present experiences. The exhibition features marked and destroyed Polaroids, written on by the subjects they portray, with faces and features often scratched out and coloured in. The larger scale colour photographs depict landscapes from the subjects’ countries of origin, reflecting his interest in the motivations behind migration and the conditions for desiring escape.

MEMBERSHIP AND ITS POLITICS:

When the outsider expands the formal rights of citizens.

SASKIA SASSEN

The tension between the formal status and the normative project of citizenship reinforces views of citizenship as an aspirational project that includes effective rather than formal equality and increasingly comprehensive social membership.

The growth of anti-immigrant sentiment in Europe is renationalizing membership politics. While ideologically strong, this renationalizing of membership is becoming institutionally weak as the EU is increasingly strong institutionally. And although the EU level is still thin compared to that of the national state, it is beginning to alter the articulation between citizenship and the national state. The institutional development of the European Union and the strengthening of the European Human Rights Court are a partial denationalizing of what has historically been constructed as national. What is significant is that this denationalizing is also fed by the emergence of multiple actors, groups, and communities increasingly keen on broader notions of

political membership: they are unwilling automatically to identify with a national state even when they are citizens of that state. This is not a rejection of the national state nor a full embracing of the EU. It is a more complex distancing between the citizen and the state. This distancing is partly triangulated by some of the EU institutions, by the human rights regime, and by the ascendancy of transnational civil society.

These institutional and subjective transformations in the EU clash with that other strong trend, the renationalizing of membership. Can the new, often virulent anti-foreigner nationalisms intensify even as the institutional settings of membership are becoming partly denationalized. Can growing discrimination against the alien coexist with a strengthening of the right to have rights—as is illustrated by the decisions of the European Court of Human Rights when it confirms rights of immigrants that national legislatures had tried to withdraw. And can the ideological renationalizing of citizenship coexist with the Europeanizing of membership and multiple transnationalisms for identity politics?

Citizenship has historically grown and expanded through the claim-making and the demands of the excluded, be they minoritized citizens or immigrants. Further, by expanding the formal inclusions of citizenship, the national state itself contributed to create some of the conditions that eventually led to EU citizenship. At the same time, with the neoliberal ascendancy of the last two decades, the state itself has been changing. One feature of this change is reduction of social obligations to citizens in the name of the neoliberal “competitive state.” Thus today’s states are less likely to do the legislative and judiciary work that in the past produced expanded formal inclusions. This may in turn lead to even weaker attachments of citizens to their national states. Also claim-making will increasingly be directed at other institutions, such as the European Court of Human Rights.

The tension between the formal status

and the normative project of citizenship has also grown. For many, citizenship is becoming an aspirational project that should include effective, not only formal equality, and where social membership should be increasingly comprehensive. Civic globalization and human rights are further feeding this tension and therewith furthering the elements of a new discourse on rights.

These developments signal a shift in the analytic terrain for addressing the question of rights and membership, of authority and obligations. Here I examine some of these issues through a particular lens: the actual complexity of immigrant membership in Europe, especially if we take a sufficiently long temporal framing.

“Unlike the “citizen,” the “immigrant” or, more formally, the alien, is constructed in law as a very partial, thin subject.”

BENEATH NEW NATIONALISMS, A BLURRING OF MEMBERSHIP POLITICS.

Unlike the “citizen,” the “immigrant” or, more formally, the alien, is constructed in law as a very partial, thin subject. Yet the immigrant and immigration are actually thick realities, charged with content. In this tension between a thin formal subject and a rich reality lies the heuristic capacity of immigration to illuminate tensions at the heart of the historically constructed nation-state and national citizenship. These tensions are not new, historically speaking, but as with citizenship, current conditions are producing their own distinct possibilities. Further, the changes in the institution of citizenship itself, particularly its emergent debordering of formal definitions and national locations, has implications for the definition of the immigrant. Confronted with postnational and denationalized forms of citizenship, what is it we are trying to discern in the complex processes we group under the term immigration? On the other hand, the renationalizing of citi-

zenship narrows what we might refer to as the customary definition of the citizen and thereby that of the immigrant.

As a subject, then, the immigrant filters a much larger array of political dynamics than its status in law might suggest.

Working with the distinctions and transformations discussed thus far, we can discern the possibility of two somewhat stylized subjects that destabilize formal meanings and thereby illuminate the internal tensions of the institution of citizenship, specifically the citizen as a rights-bearing subject. On the one hand, we can identify a formal citizen who is fully authorized yet not fully recognized. Minoritized citizens who are discriminated against in any

domain are one key instance. This is a familiar and well-researched condition. On the other hand, we can identify a type of informal citizen who is unauthorized by the law yet recognized by a potential community of membership, as might be the case with undocumented immigrants who are long-term residents in a community and enact membership they way citizens do. Thus, unauthorized immigrants who demonstrate civic involvement, social deserv- edness, and national loyalty can argue that they merit legal residency, and often get it. But even if they do not gain legal residency, we can posit a condition akin to informal citizenship that binds long-term residents, even if they are undocumented immigrants, to their communities of residence.

These are dimensions of formal and informal citizenship and citizenship practices that do not fit the indicators and categories of mainstream academic frameworks for understanding citizenship and political life. The multiple dimensions of citizenship engender strategies



Duane Michals, Joseph Cornell, 1972 from Les Rencontres d'Arles

for legitimizing informal or extra-statal forms of membership. The practices of these undocumented immigrants are a form of citizenship practices and their identities as members of a community of residence assume some of the features of citizenship identities. Supposedly this could hold even in the communitarian model, where the community can decide on whom to admit and whom to exclude, but once admitted, proper civic practices earn full membership.

EUROPE AND ITS MIGRATIONS

It is a fact that the immigrant groups of the past are today reasonably well absorbed, though there are important differences. These older immigrant groups, dating three or four generations back or centuries back, have given us many of today's citizens. They are not the issue in today's debates. But in their time, they were the issue.

Today the argument against immigration focuses on questions of race, religion, and culture, and it tends to see cultural and religious distance as the reason for the difficulty of incorporation. And this can be seen as rational. But in sifting through the historical and current evidence we find only new contents for an old passion: the racialising of the outsider as 'other'. Today the 'other' is stereotyped by difference of race, religion and culture. Equivalent arguments were made in the past when migrants were broadly of the same religious, racial and cultural group: they were seen as not fitting in with the receiving society, as having bad habits, the wrong morals, and not practicing their religion correctly. Migration hinges on a move between two worlds, even if within a single region or country – such as East Germans moving to West Germany who were seen as a different ethnic group and one with undesirable traits.

There is strong evidence of a cyclical character to anti-immigration politics and the clouding of the issues that comes with it. For centuries Europe's major economies have gone through rapid cycles of great demand and then severe expulsion, only to fall back into high demand a few decades later. In the recent past, a country like France had a desperate need for immigrants during the first world war (using Algerian immigrants in its armies) and the reconstruction in the 1920s, only to move into aggressive anti-immigrant politics in the 1930s, to then wind up once again with acute needs for foreign workers in the late 1940s, and so on. In my reading of the features of that history and the current conditions described above, this cyclical history may well still be playing its part. If we consider the growing demand for low wage workers and sharp population decline in today's EU, it is easy to see that we might actually switch to a phase of sharp demand for more immigrant workers in a decade, if not sooner.

When Italy(1990), Portugal(1991) and Spain (1992) became part of the EC free movement area, it meant integrating what had been major senders of migrants to the north, barred from further entries for work by 1973. The policy change generated widespread fears of inva-

“ The multiple dimensions of citizenship engender strategies for legitimizing informal or extra-statal forms of membership.”

sions by masses of poor workers and families. In retrospective we can see how wrong this fear was. In fact, more immigrants returned home to Spain, and Italy, and Greece, and Portugal, and fewer emigrated to the North than had been expected. This was partly because now they were free to circulate and partly because their economies were developing in ways that incorporated their people.

The same is likely to hold with the much feared migrations from the new EU members in the East. Indeed the latest figures indicate that up to 50 percent of the Polish migrants who came to the UK after EU enlargement have recently returned to Poland (Pollard et al. 2008). People with deep grievances in their home countries are far more likely to emigrate permanently than those who might be low income but are fully fledged members of their communities. We have considerable evidence showing that being low income is not enough by itself to leave your community.

We also know that many low income migrants want to come every year for a few months and then go back to their communities.

Thus EU enlargement enables far more circular migration and reduces trafficking among authorized nationalities. Perhaps the best story here is that of the Polish women who teamed up to take care of cleaning and housekeeping in Berlin households. Each wanted to spend a minimum amount of time in Berlin, no matter its comforts, and then go back and live their real life. So teams of four organised for each to spend three months in a given household, and rotate annually (Lutz 2007). The best strategy for the rich EU countries so worried about receiving masses of low-wage, poorly educated workers from the new EU members, is to do whatever can be done to ensure their broad based development.

There is one set of communities for whom this will be inadequate: the Roma. Europe has failed the Roma for centuries. All those struggles fought in the name of civil society and civic rights fundamentally excluded the Roma. This will have its own backlash effect. Today we are paying the price for our historic neglect and, often aggression. There are significant numbers of very poor Roma in some of the new EU member countries, and centuries of exclusion have left their marks. Enlargement must be a wake-up call: we need to think of the Roma as part of our future.

At the same time, the Roma also illuminate a key feature of our history of migrations in Europe: it has usually been particular groups who are at the core of a country's emigration, rather than massive generalised flows from poverty to prosperity. In the early 1990s after the so-called Berlin Wall went down, Germany received over two million migrants from Eastern Europe and Russia, but the vast majority were ethnic Germans and the rest mostly Roma.

There were no high numbers among other nationalities. Similarly, the Turkish emigration to Germany, for instance, consisted largely of particular groups of minoritised Turkish, including Turkish Kurds. In brief, these were not indiscriminate movements from poverty in the East to wealth in the West. These two groups were motivated by very specific and long-term historical minoritizing inside their countries of origin.

MIGRATION AS EMBEDDED PROCESS

Establishing whether labour migration is an integral part of how an economic and social system operates and evolves is, in my view, critical to develop the politics of membership. The logic of this argument is, put simply, as follows: If immigration is thought of as the result of individuals in search of a better life, immigration is seen by the receiving country as an exogenous process formed and shaped by conditions outside the receiving country. The receiving country is then saddled with the task of accommodating this population. In this view as poverty and overpopulation grow in the rest of the world, there may be a parallel growth in immigration, at least potentially. The receiving country is here portrayed as a passive bystander to processes outside its domain and control, and hence with few options beyond tightening its frontiers to avoid an 'invasion'.

If, on the other hand, immigration is partly conditioned on the operation of the economic system in receiving countries, the latter can implement domestic policies that can regulate the employment of immigrants. Thus, if a country such as the US seeks to make manufacturing more competitive by making production cheaper using sweatshops, it is a participant in the formation of a sweated immigrant workforce. Also the growing demand for low-wage service workers in the new growth sectors of developed economies is a domestic condition. In both cases, the receiving country is not a passive bystander to the immigration process. Further, there is something these governments can do beyond controlling borders –they can make those jobs more attractive to resident immigrants and to citizens. Finally, at the global scale, receiving countries need to recognize that when they outsource jobs to low-wage countries they are building bridges for future migrations from those same countries. Yes, immigration happens in a context of economic inequality between countries and poverty in the emigration country. But poverty by itself is not enough

Fig.1: Ten most numerous citizenships of non-EU immigrants, 2006

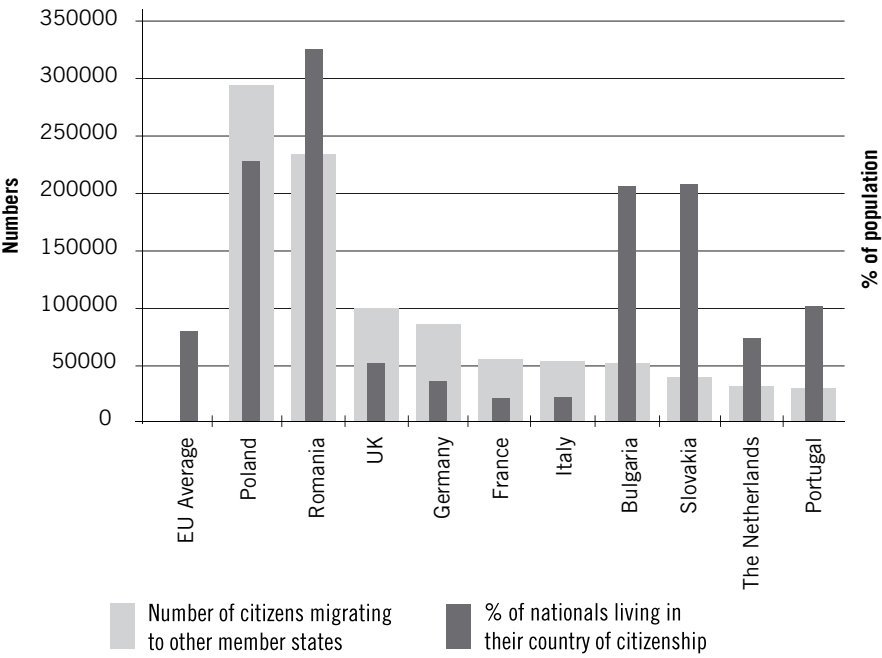


Fig.2: Immigrants from non-EU to EU citizenship, 2006

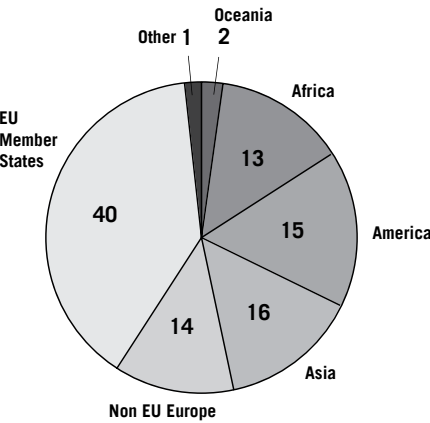


Fig.3: Median age of immigrants in the EU, 2006

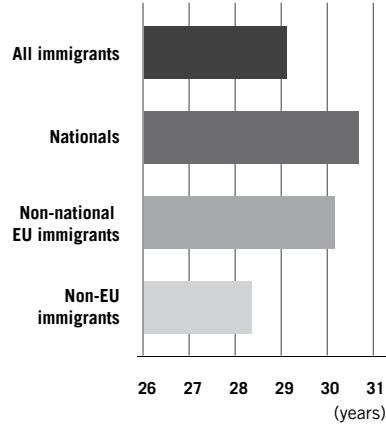
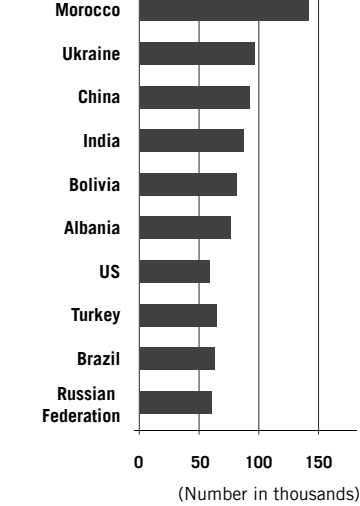


Fig.4: Ten most numerous citizenships of non-EU immigrants, EU-27, 2006



Eurostat estimate from Population and Social Conditions by Anne Herm, Eurostat, 98/2008

to lead to emigration. Poverty is activated as a migration push factor – through organised recruitment by employers in the richer country, by neo-colonial bonds, etc.

The economic, political, and social conditions in the receiving country contribute in many ways to set the parameters for immigration flows. Immigration flows may take a while to adjust to changes in levels of labour demand or to the saturation of opportunities, but will always tend eventually to adjust to the conditions in receiving countries, even if these adjustments are imperfect. Thus there was a decline in the growth rate of Polish immigration to Germany once it was clear that the opportunities were not as plentiful, and this movement was replaced by circular migration in many East to West flows, including from the former East Germany to West Germany. The size and duration of flows is shaped by these conditions: it is not an exogenous process shaped only by poverty and population growth elsewhere, and hence autonomous from the accommodation capacities of receiving countries.

A major addition to this making of immigration flows on the part of rich countries is the devastation brought about by the IMF and World Bank restructuring programs beginning in the 1980s. These have destroyed the traditional economies of already poor countries. Under the banner of modernizing their economies and opening them up to global trade, these programs undermined local, less modern firms and replaced jobs with imports. The emergence of a whole new set of migrations to Europe from Sub-Saharan Africa is deeply linked to these devastations of modernization.

There are implications for the politics of membership when we recognize that receiving countries participate in the making of immigrations. One of these implications concerns the right of these immigrants not to be seen as criminals and illegitimate human beings. A second implication is that the working classes of Europe which have suffered so many losses over the last twenty years, should direct more of their anger to the key economic and political actors who have engineered and supported these devastating programs.

Concluding, the history of intra-european migrations shows us that over time many persecuted immigrants became the parents and grandparents of Europe's citizens. And perhaps most importantly, this history shows us that the work of incorporating the outsider was also the work that expanded the formal rights of citizens and made Europe an open society. But every generation went through its conflicts and hatreds directed at whatever the new nationalities entering Europe. In the 1970s it was the Italians, the Spanish, the Portuguese. Now this seems almost inconceivable. But the hatreds are there and directed to a whole new generation of foreign nationalities and cultures. The challenge of ensuring that Europe's society remain an open one will require, once again, the making of expanded inclusions. These will only strengthen the rights of citizens and strengthen openness.

THE ROLE OF ART IN IMAGINING MULTICULTURAL COMMUNITIES

NIKOS PAPASTERGIADIS

The political significance of art increasingly lies in promotion of a democratic dialogue between different people that can relate local experiences to global processes

There are now two paradigms that are used to explain the effects of migration and define the agency of the migrant. Since the late nineteenth century the sociological and political discourse on migration has followed the core assumptions of nationalist ideologies that defined sovereign states as comprising a population that was both settled within a defined territory and in possession of a unique cultural identity. This viewpoint was also premised on a metaphysical claim that the abandonment of a nomadic lifestyle for fixed settlement was a developmental stage in human evolution. It was also framed by a mechanistic understanding of the negative relationship between movement and equilibrium: human movement was thereby seen as a depletion of energy as well as a threat to the integrity of borders and the stability of social entities. Hence, migration was considered as a deviation from the normal conventions of settled life, and the migrants (or as Oscar Handlin termed them, the 'uprooted ones'), were at best seen as the victims of external forces, or at worst perceived as suspect characters that sought unfair advantage over the residents and posed a threat to the prevailing social order. This tendency is also evident in sociological accounts on migration that express overt sympathy for the needs of migrants, but then describe them as 'people with problems'. Even when migration has been acknowledged as a crucial feature of modernisation, it was usually framed as if this process was finite, and adjustment was a mere transitional phase. Hence the 'problem with migrants' begins with the assumption that migration is a disruption to the norm of settled life, and that the desired destiny of a migrant is to become a citizen of the nation. Given these negative assumptions on the effects of migration and the status of migrants, it comes as no surprise that the public debates have tended to focus on the degree, rather than the legitimacy, of the imposition of limitations on immigration, restrictions on political entitlement, and the subjection of migrants to additional tests in relation to their biological and cultural fitness.

In the past decade a paradigm shift has enabled a new discourse on migration and migrants. The state-centric views on belonging have been challenged by new transnational perspectives on the formation of social spaces and a redefinition of the universal definitions of human rights. The teleological claims on social evolution that privileged, what Harald Kleinschmidt called 'residentialism' have been discredited, and there is now both a finer appreciation of the complex feedback systems that arise from cross-border movements, and an affirmative valuation of the role of cross-cultural interaction in re-vitalizing and ensuring the viability of social structures. From this perspective migration is now seen as a dynamic and often ongoing feature of social life. Similarly, migrants are no longer typecast as either passive victims that are 'pushed and pulled' by external forces, or deviants that threaten social order. It is therefore more appropriate to consider the way migrants plot their journeys and utilise extensive networks of information as part of the normal and

conscientious efforts by which people dignify their lives. In Hardt and Negri's spirited defence of a new form of critical agency migrants are pioneers of what they call the 'multitude' and, as Kleinschmidt argues, the new discourse on migration has the potential to extend the notion of citizenship to 'universalistic principles of human rights irrespective of loyalty to a particular institution of statehood'.

Art always plays critical role in our understanding of politics and ethics. Without an imaginative reach towards the other, there would be no basis for extending our capacity to recognise our mutual equality and determine acceptable paths of conduct. I am not seeking to define the function of art as a political legislator or a social regulator. That would be absurd. However, I do uphold the view that art can explore the conditions of belief beyond a rational calculation

and bounded form of a national society. Sguilia's declaration is both a rejection of the state and a proclamation that there is an alternative space for the realisation of the self. He already claims possession of the fullness of the 'who I am' while also protesting against the forces that block the wish of the who 'I want to be'. His identity proceeds by rejecting the city and nation as places in which identity is formed by coming together—'I do not want to integrate'—and proclaims an identity that is perpetually in motion: 'I am a migrant.' These paradoxical declarations also occur in the context of both a fightback against the populist backlash that minorities now experience, and an assertion of their awareness of the state's dependency on foreign labour and investment. However, this claim of rejecting integration and demanding the autonomy of identity is also expressive of an agency that occupies a complex topology.

and 'space ship'. Located in a medieval castle on the edge of the militarised south-eastern border of the European Union, this project sees itself as a 'mirror-territory' of the transformations taking place in the world'. The idea of the project is both utopian and instrumental. Through its coalition of artists and activists it has created a No-Border media laboratory that is engaged in mapping border flows, critiquing the new militarised border economies and developing links with both local protests on migration issues and international human rights organisations.

Throughout the diverse actions of the Fadaiat, the free flow of information is seen as the 'connector' between people from different places, and for people on the move. Given linguistic differences between the various members, the project has also embarked on an ambitious effort to devise a communication system based on universal spatial-visual symbols. This project has set



Two North African bedouins using the internet at the top of a fortress in Morocco. The Fadaiat, www.fadaiat.net.

of cost and benefit, as well as test the boundary between the permissible and the forbidden. In short, I will argue that aesthetic imagination precedes and frames the possible political and ethical choice. And we should recall, that if, as claimed by Benedict Anderson that artists were at the forefront of imaging the form of national consciousness that led to the construction of the nation state, then we should consider very seriously the post national forms of belonging that are currently being developed by artists.

After the 2005 riots in Paris, immigrant activist Nico Sguilia declared: 'I am a migrant. I do not want to integrate. I want to be who I am.' It is precisely the kind of comment that makes cultural conservatives and progressive multiculturalists panic. The rejection of integration is immediately seen as either a failure of the state to offer a stronger basis for national affiliation, or the inability of multiculturalism to generate more inclusive modes of cultural belonging. When Nico Sguilia declares 'I want to be who I am', he could be seen as threatening to oppose the national demand for solidarity and dismissing the civic promise of equality. Sguilia's comment at first glance seems to justify the fear that there is now a generation of youth that has turned its back on the state. They neither seek to gain access to more of its resources nor reform its operational logic. On the contrary, they are creating new imagined communities that have no relation to the territorial

“ Art plays a critical role in our understanding of politics and ethics. Without an imaginative reach towards the other, there would be no basis for extending our capacity to recognise our mutual equality and determine acceptable paths of conduct.”

The ambivalence of place that Sguilia articulates within his identity is in fact a consequence of what Ulrich Beck calls the zombification of the state. As Sguilia claims to be in but not of the place he simultaneously affirms the identity that comes in the context of mobility and asserts a right to define his human value in terms that exceed state-centric parameters. Sguilia decrees his right to preserve identity as a universal right. This proclamation takes a double twist: he claims to have access to the rights that are defined by the state, but also insists that his identity rests on rights that are above and beyond the state. By rejecting integration into the mechanisms of the state, Sguilia does not disavow the hope of realising his identity in the context of others; he simply rejects the claim that the context of his community is confined to the coordinates of the nation-state.

Nico Sguilia was born in Argentina and now lives in Spain. He is a member of the project Indymedia Straits of Gibraltar, a group composed of activists, artists and cross-disciplinary thinkers. The codename for the project is Fadaiat, which means in Arabic 'through space', 'satellite dish'

out to learn from and hijack the symbolic codes that have been developed to promote global capital, and to re-direct them towards the interests of migrants. While this collective is opposed to the existing modes of regulating migration, their method of opposition is not an outright confrontation with global capitalism, but a form of resistance that reassigns value back to the activities that migrants execute in their everyday lives. This method of resistance draws from a system that is generated by diasporic networks, and in this new social space the collective claims to forge a 'new territory for global democracy'. This rejection of the state is thus creating a space that is very different from the void in which only zombies can roam. The Fadaiat collective rejects the conventional definition of the border as simply a demarcation point that separates different entities. It is not just an imaginary line that becomes a geo-political division, but rather a 'crossed-place', where mixtures intensify and new 'social practices put pressure on established limits'. Hence the border is not a fixed location where one form ends and another begins, but a 'threshold' in which transformation occurs in multiple and unpre-



dictable ways. This vision of the border identity is linked to the ambition of hijacking the info-capital networks in order to create a new ecology between bodies and communication systems. In this utopian model, the Fadaiat collective claims that agency is shaped by the freedom of the cyborg: ‘Our modernity has its own mobile borders, which, as always, are in search of the other: the external other that we call nature, and the internal other—subjectivity, ourselves in plural.’

The Fadaiat project is one of many collective art projects that have emerged in the context of neo-liberal society. A common characteristic in many collectives from this period has been the identification of the transversal relationship between subjectivity and location. The fullness of subjectivity is no longer presented as an achievement that can only be gained after the overcoming of alienation, or even in the process of being connected between different places, but rather it is posed as occurring the midst of the subject’s movement across and through space. Hence, the forms of solidarity that emerge in these encounters follow from a prior commitment that cross-cultural communication can produce a recognition of mutual human worth, rather than proceeding from the quasi-mystical assumption that being born in a specific place and having acquired specific cultural traits is the basis of one’s exclusive identification with ‘a people’. It is no longer where you are from, or even where you

are at, which matters; it is more about the way we communicate with others. The new paradigm on migration is, from this perspective, not a nostalgic reclamation of a previous form of belonging, nor is it attempting to assert its validity within the existing terms of the national citizen. It announces a new and radical form of identity that defines itself through its mobility and interactivity with others.

The discourse on the political significance of art is still trapped in a debate over whether or not it can make a distinctive difference in the overall social context. For instance, Brian Holmes, one of the most optimistic advocates of the affirmative role played by artists in social transformation, argues that the appropriation of the internet, and in general the hijacking of the new communication technology, has inspired the deployment of subversive performances, mobilised information through global networks, initiated new self-organised counter-globalization tactics, enabled collaborative research on emerging issues, encouraged activists to converge on common sites, prompted legal and medical experts to offer support to artists and protestors, provided the means to document and disseminate accounts of events that would otherwise be ignored or distorted by the mass media. In short, he claims that artists, like all the other participants in the movement of networked resistance, were motivated by the belief that personal involvement at a micro level would facilitate global change, and thereby realise the


paradoxical social democratic and individualist axiom of ‘do-it-yourself geopolitics’.

It is my contention that this level of critical attention has a tendency to miss the point of collaborative art practice. Here, the effects of art tend to be registered only to the extent that they appear outside of its own, apparently autonomous, field. Is art only of value when it transforms or reflects the social? This question presumes that art is external to the existing forms of the social and must do something to the social in order to have a viable function. The place and function of art, as always, operates within the social. However, the new collaborative movements have sought to take an active role in social change, not by means of radical intervention or critical reflection, but through the mediation of new forms of public knowledge.

Contemporary artists have become increasingly aware of the pitfalls of making universal claims, and the limitations of confining the meaning of their practice to local perspectives. Their attention is focused toward the promotion of a democratic dialogue between different people that can relate local experiences to global processes. Within this context the artists neither claim to possess a superior knowledge that they will deliver to the public, nor do they aim to extract the raw information from the local context and then develop this into an aesthetic form with global purchase. While the projects are usually documented, the status of the documentary text or

Zanele Muholi - Miss D'vine I, 2006
Lambda print, 86,5 x 86,5 cm
Collectie Michael Stevenson Gallery, Kaapstad.

The image is part of the exhibition *Rebelle: Art and Feminism 1969-2009* in the museum for modern Art in Arnhem (the Netherlands), proposing a retrospective on feminist art. It featured works by about eighty artists from different generations, including some of the most famous feminist artists of the seventies such as Valie export (*Genital panic*, 1969) or the Cuban American artist Ana Mendieta’s (1948-1985). But its originality was to present not only works from European and American artists but also recent pieces from Middle Eastern and African artists, such as the Iranian artist Shadi Ghadirian and its series entitled ‘like everyday’ (*domestic life*), 2002 or the south African artist Zanele Muholi (*Miss Divine*, 2006).
For more information, Museum voor Moderne Kunst Arnhem, www.mmkarnhem.nl

image also blurs the conventional distinction between a purely aesthetic art object, and a factual document, as well as providing a fundamental challenge to art criticism. However, these collaborative social practices and even their attendant documentary forms provoke serious methodological questions for art criticism. How will art history acknowledge the status of the non-durable, site-specific work that passes through the experience of just a handful of people? Whose witness statement will be necessary to validate the artist’s intentions and evaluate that projected outcomes of these aesthetic moments? 

BEWTEEN CENTRE AND PERIPHERY: THE LABYRINTH OF CONTEMPORARY MIGRATIONS

SANDRO MEZZADRA

The categories of centre and periphery, of north and south, are increasingly unable to photograph contemporary economic, political, and cultural interdependence. The transnational experience of contemporary migrations points to the necessity of a new interpretative paradigm.

BETWEEN NORTH AND SOUTH
Centre and periphery are “spatial” categories; they refer, as much in historiography as in the social sciences, to the hierarchical organisation of the relation between social, cultural, economic, and political units differently collocated in a given space. This reminds one of the image of a geographical map, on which these relations would be visualised. In recent years, however, the modern “cartographic reason” has been radically critiqued from a variety of standpoints, which have questioned its capacity to reflect the most significant processes modifying the configuration of contemporary global space. At the centre of these critiques we do not simply find, as has been the case for a long time in the critical studies on geography and the “production of space”, the accusation of the implication of the “cartographic reason” in the projects of exploitation and domination that have characterised

the history of modern capitalism and the system of states. What is rather pointed out today is a deficit of representation, an inability of the traditional cartographic instruments in registering the main coordinates of what increasingly appears like a real spatial revolution.

One of the chief protagonists of Italian geography, Franco Farinelli, has proposed the image of the labyrinth to represent the dilemmas faced today by his discipline. The labyrinth is a particularly suitable image to account for a situation in which the increasing difficulty to organise the representation of space around a centre, or a plurality of centres, is matched by the continuous multiplication of the scale and dimension on which the processes of connection and division of the different spaces are articulated, adding a new “profundity” to contemporary global space.

This is a question that finds a direct counterpart in the field of traditional “international relations”. In an important article on “Foreign Affairs”, Richard R. Haass, President of the Council on Foreign Relations, has traced a merciless assessment of the defeat of American unilateralism, that is to say of the project of “unipolar” order followed by the Bush administration. Haass, however, does not expect for the future years the coming to be of a “multipolar” variant, but instead, what he calls a “telluric movement with respects to the past”: the progressive installment of a real “non-polarity”, of “a world dominated neither by one or two, nor by a certain number of states, but instead by dozens of actors possessing and exercising different kinds of power”. The “non-polarity” corresponds not only to the obvious difficulty to isolate the “centres” around which international relations would be organised, but also, coherently with our discussion, to the multiplication of the actors of the system. The non-polar order is in fact characterised, Haass explicitly affirms, by the loss of the monopoly of states as exclusive protagonists of international politics. Regional and global organisations, large multinationals, “global cities” and NGOs, networks and “guerrilla” organisations are some of the new subjects that have entered as determining actors in the system of international relations, profoundly complicating its structure. “Power”, Haass comments, “is currently in many hands and in many places”. Randomness and “turbulence”, in the specific sense given to this concept by James Resenau, seems to be destined to characterise such a system, affecting the very concepts of centre and periphery.

We find a similar situation in trying to analyse the geography of contemporary capitalism, which is also characterised – as many analysts have pointed out – by a series of processes directly challenging the consolidated analytical models of the “international division of labour” and any attempt to offer a precise cartography of the relations between centre and periphery. In other words, the spatial hierarchies around which contemporary global capitalism is structured have also assumed a “random” character unknown in previous historical moments. Structurally unstable, the hierarchical relations between the different spaces on which the global circuits of capitalist accumulation are articulated have ceased to connect relatively homogeneous areas according to the classical modalities of imperialism, unequal exchange, and dependence. What once were called “developing countries” are today far from forming a homogeneous “periphery” or a compact “third world”; now increasingly differentiating one from the other, they have often known within their own boundaries the creation of areas and sectors perfectly integrated in global networks living next to other areas and sectors suffering great difficulty when not risking downright “exclusion”. This finds a relatively precise correspondence in the evolution of the economic geography of the main “Western” countries. Instead of imagining a spatial organisation of capitalism according to which the most “advanced” (productive, financial, managerial...) functions would be condensed in certain “central” areas, and the most “backwards” functions in others (“peripheral” and “dependent” on the first), it is worth taking seriously the hypothesis that we

are currently faced with the affirmation in large part of the world of a hybrid economic and social structure, in which what makes the difference is the proportion between the different functions, all of which are however tendentially present at the same time.

“ Every attempt to give a graphic representation of the migratory phenomenon is doomed since the start, unless one wanted to represent something like a plate of spaghetti”

If faced with these processes the traditional concepts of “centre” and “periphery” seem to lose much of their explanatory potential, this does not mean, obviously, that global space is about to become “smooth”, homogeneous. Over the last years, in fact, attempting to integrate and correct an image of globalisation constructed around the metaphor of “fluxes”, a series of ethnographic analyses have underlined the different shades and cracks characterising global space. Particular attention has been paid to the crafting of the “channels” that make determinate fluxes possible while obstructing others, focussing on the processes that continuously reproduce “enclaves” and open “lateral spaces” for the production and circulation of goods, in the context of a globalisation that proceeds discontinuously, in “jumps”, connecting and disconnecting at the same time spaces and

subjects, economics, cultures, and societies.

It is no longer a paradox, in this sense, that the processes of globalisation be accompanied by a continuous multiplication of borders, but with a fundamental transformation in their nature: borders themselves, while still catastrophically closing everyday on the bodies of women and men in transit, in the Mediterranean as in the deserts between the United States and Mexico, seem to assume new characteristics of instability and randomness. Many scholars, consequently, have proposed to assume precisely the figure of the border as a fundamental point of view, empirically as much as epistemologically, to analyse the processes of globalisation and the spatial revolution these determine. And so extremely violent tensions, lines of conflict, relations of power and exploitation, scandalous inequalities in the distribution of wealth, come to the light exhibiting a growing complexity that makes it increasingly difficult to interpret the spatial coordinates of these global processes making use of rigid, fixed categories such as centre and periphery, North and South.

THE SPACES OF MIGRATIONS

All the problems briefly discussed in the preceding section assume a particular relevance for what concerns the reality of contemporary migrations. Still in the after-war period, for ex-

ample, it was relatively easy to isolate the dominant fluxes of migrations, with stable areas of departure and arrival that defined specific “migratory systems”. Today, on the contrary, “the fluxes go in all directions”, and, as has recently been noted by two Italian sociologists, Pugliese and Maciotti, every attempt to “give a graphic representation” of the migratory phenomenon is doomed since the start, “unless one wanted to represent something like a plate of spaghetti”.

The difficulty in producing stable and coherent maps of the routes followed by migrants in their voyage to Europe is, after all, explicitly recognised by the International Centre for Migration Policy Development (ICMPD), one of the most influential and authoritative think tanks researching policies of border control and migration in Europe. In the context of the so-called “Dialogue on Mediterranean Transit-Migration” (MTM), an informal process coordinated by the ICMP with a plurality of countries from the two shores of the Mediterranean (with the participation of the UNHCR, the European Commission, Europol, Frontex, as well as, to underline the “global” relevance of the project, Australia as an observ-

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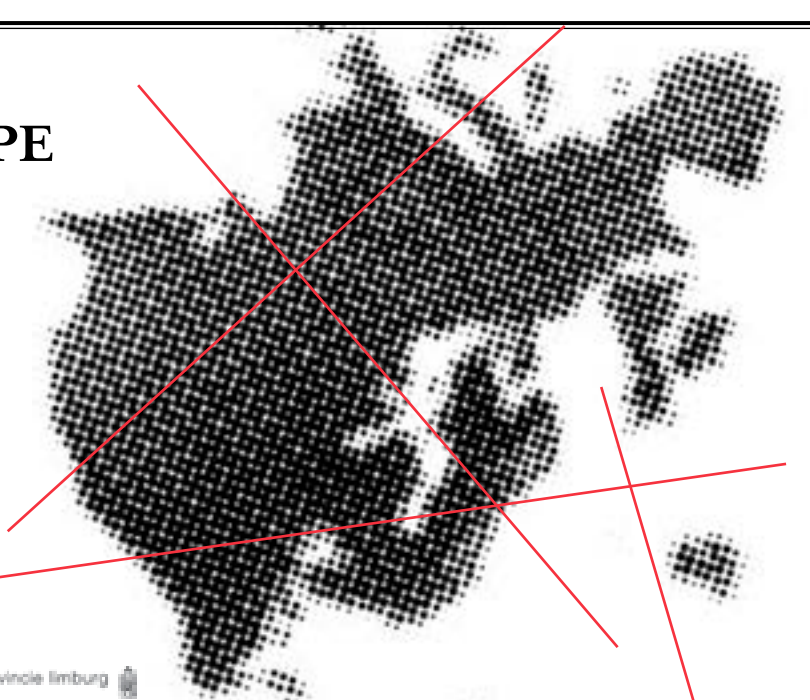
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ing country), one of the fundamental objectives was represented presicely by the production of a continuously updated “interactive map” of migratory fluxes crossing the Mediterranean. The unpredictability and randomness of the movements of the migrations are explicitly assumed as central challenges by the cartographers of the ICMPD, who in turn are attempting to lay down new instruments of knowledge suited to the definition of a new model of migration governance, more accurately corresponding to the needs of the “flexible” labour market. And they seem to actively make us of the numerous experiments of “counter-cartography” born in the last few years from the confluence of political activism and artistic practices in anti-racist and migrant movements.

The concept of “turbulence”, which we have previously recalled in the context of international relations, has been used a few years ago by an Australian scholar, Nikos Papastergiadis. At the centre of his analysis lies the continuous multiplication and growing unpredictability of migratory circuits, which challenged the whole idea of a “migratory system”, as well as an analysis of the transformations that affect the more slippery planes of “belonging” and “identity”. These two planes cannot, of course, be separated with any rigid, clear-cut division: one of the most significant developments in the literature on migrations of the last few years has been precisely the development of the concept of “transnationalism”. This concept efficiently underlines how the sense of belonging, the symbolic universe that gives meaning to the life and experience of migrants, increasingly tends to be distributed between a plurality of spaces, setting up unpredictable connections between places that can be easily identified on a geopractical map, while at the same time producing truly innovative social, cultural, and political spaces. Already in 1991, working on Mexican migrations to the United States, the anthropologist Roger Rouse had indicated the necessity to attentively explore the “alternative cartography of social space” of the transnational migratory circuits. It is evident

how this cartography is once again irreducible to the rigid relation between centre and periphery: even where, for example precisely in the case of Mexican migration to the United States, some “migratory systems” seems to channel movement from a “periphery” towards a “centre”, the daily experience of migrants rewrite that movement, giving it a novel meaning – and making of Chicago, for example, an extreme Northern appendix, a “periphery”, of Mexico.

It would be a mistake to reduce to the “cultural” plane of identity and belonging the relevance of transnational social spaces produced by contemporary migrations. These are spaces that have an enormous economic impact, evident, for example, when we take into account the volume of migrants’ remittances. But even beyond this aspect, and beyond the controversial question on the role played by remittances in stimulating or depressing development in the countries of origin of the migrants, the economical aspects of networks, circuits, and transnational spaces are such as to make problematic, again, analytical instruments such as those discussed of centre and periphery.

Anybody wanting to study the transnationalism of Bolivian migrants in Buenos Aires, for example, could not limit himself to investigating the processes of economic marginalisation, cultural stigmatisation, and territorial segregation that are extremely evident in, for example, a villa such as Bajo Flores. He should instead push to the suburbs and visit a place like “La Salada”, in Lomas de Zamora, where a couple of nights each week a gigantic informal market takes place – the largest in Latin America, according to an article published on “La Nación”, with a weekly turnover estimated around 9 million dollars. Here one does not really feel in the “periphery” of Buenos Aires, but rather in the “centre” of El Alto, in Bolivia. Even better: one feels to be at the centre, a totally random centre given the informality of the place, of one of those “alternative cartographies” that Rouse mentioned back in 1991. While public buses incessantly drop ever more buyers from the most remote

Argentinean provinces and even from beyond the national border, the ethnographer could observe that to the nucleus of Bolivian merchants who originally “founded” the market of “La Salada” a whole set of migrants from other Latin American countries has been added. And the same ethnographer could have fun drawing the labyrinth of the routes followed by the foods on sale on the stands and carts, discovering at the same time that inside of “La Salada” real home-grown “brands” have been born, a phenomenon definitely more interesting than the usual copying of the most celebrated global brands.

Clearly, we should not take a naively apologetic attitude towards the dynamics sustaining a space such as the one here briefly analysed. Reconstructing the paths followed by the goods on sale in “La Salada”, as I was just suggesting, would undoubtedly unveil terrible stories of exploitation in clandestine workshops (which, after all, even many large brands often do not disdain to use), stories of violence and labour conditions close to slavery. The point, however, is that “La Salada” can be taken as a symptom of a whole series of processes that are materially reconfiguring, through practices of mobility and migration, the Latin American space, decentring it and complicating its structure and constitution. Once more, we are faced with formidable conflicts and tensions, but also with the opening of a field of opportunity that should be taken into account by any project of regional integration.

Similar processes can be found in other parts of the planet, for example in relation to the Chinese diaspora or the role played by the so-called system of “bodyshopping” in the management of the transnational mobility of the Indian workforce, employed in the top-end sectors of information economy and communications in Sydney as in Singapore, in the United States and in many European countries. Each with its own specificities, these and other examples that could be brought up show that contemporary migrations are a fundamental factor in producing that multiplication of levels, of scales, and of dimensions that makes global

EUROPEAN ALTERNATIVES RESEARCH

CIRCULAR MIGRATION AND DEVELOPMENT

European Alternatives Research has recently published a report by Danai Vassilaki on the European proposals for promoting circular migration and its relationship to development

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space profoundly heterogeneous. And they show that it is precisely through migrations that this heterogeneity marks the transformations of citizenship and labour markets in the very “national” spaces themselves. It is worth repeating that there is nothing idyllic in this representation: on each plane operate mechanisms of control and systems of hierarchies, relations of domination and exploitation. The condition of migrants, in Buenos Aires as in Milan, in Los Angeles as in Beijing or Johannesburg, shows how much violence is daily unleashed in the functioning of these mechanisms and the reorganisation of these relations. But the concepts of “centre” and “periphery” are everyday less able to read this reality, extrapolating the crucial challenges we are facing today. 🐼



Thomas Florschuetz, *Untitled (Palast) 53*, 2006, 183 x 228 cm, C-print, Diasec Courtesy of Galeriem, Bochum, Germany
Part of the Rencontres d'Arles, www.rencontres-arles.com

CITIZENSHIP: ‘PRIZE’ OR PRACTICE?

UMUT EREL

By explicitly enshrining the earned nature of citizenship, the government implicitly regulates and calls to order existing citizens. The experience of migrant women from Turkey offers an alternative

The British Home Office's website announces that new earned citizenship laws, will come into effect in late 2009, if agreed by parliament. The idea of earned citizenship combines the management migration regime where entry is based on a points system, allowing mainly those defined as skilled migrants entry. This is combined with a three stage system of acquiring citizenship, so that anyone living in the UK is required to earn the right to stay and in the different stages of acquiring British citizenship will be entitled to different degrees of social citizenship.

This is problematic in many ways: Presenting British citizenship as a privilege, in Browns words a ‘prized asset’ that must be earned, calls on the ‘newcomers’ who want to acquire citizenship or even the right to permanent residence to demonstrate their ability to belong to Britain by speaking English, knowledge of the UK, being in employment, bringing up acceptable, i.e. non-criminal, children, and demonstrating active citizenship and an engagement with the wider society. If, and only if they can prove they fulfil these requirements they qualify for British citizenship. One aspect of presenting this long (6-10 years) and arduous route to citizenship for newcomers is to inculcate in those who already are British citizens a sense of how privileged they indeed are to already have this prized possession.

However, by explicitly enshrining the earned nature of citizenship, the government implicitly also, of course, regulates and calls to order existing citizens. This affects in particular ways racialized citizens who, in everyday situations, are still required to prove that indeed they are citizens rather than non-entitled immigrants. Questions about citizenship, and how long one has been in the country, say, when registering for a doctor’s surgery, activate and keep active the assumption that some citizens have more to prove than others that they belong. Indeed, the question of shared values is presented as at the heart of the citizenship agenda. And while these values are presented as universalistic rather than narrowly national or ethnic, the underlying assumption is that some citizens (non-Muslim, white, educated, economically active) are more predisposed than others to embrace and embody these shared values. Indeed, in some ways the universalistic discourse of equality and democracy is claimed as a national British or European property.

At the same time that these changes to the meanings of citizenship and possibilities of accessing citizenship are taking place, the academic field of citizenship studies is burgeoning. Yet, there is a disjuncture between academic debates on inclusive citizenship attempting to mobilize ‘citizenship’ as a concept to democratize an ever-widening range of social relations on one hand and current governmental attempts in Europe to increasingly construct citizenship as a privilege. One way in which academic debates on inclusive citizenship can connect effectively

with political debates on citizenship practices is by taking seriously and making relevant the experiences of citizenship of those that have been excluded or marginalized.

Here, I suggest some ways in which the experiences of migrant women from Turkey who arrived from the 1970s to late 1980s can be harnessed for an understanding of citizenship that can address the promise of citizenship as a democratizing practice rather than a privilege. I am not suggesting that this particular group of migrant women can contribute the most incisive insights on the relation between migration, gender and citizenship. Indeed, I’d like to caution against homogenizing the category of migrant women and, of course, new and diverse forms of mobility and migrant incorporation (say of migrants with temporary residence, of undocumented migrants, of accession country migrants) generate not just different, stratified statuses of citizenship but also different citizenship practices. Thus, what I provide here is not an ‘exemplary’ account of how to ‘do’ citizenship more critically. But it is a situated account of how (some) migrant women’s practices can help us reconceptualise notions of citizenship.

Migrant women are laying claim to citizenship practices. Though marginalized from the nation as legal or cultural outsiders, they create new meanings of belonging. While there has been considerable debate on the changing meaning of belonging to a national society with accelerating transnational relations, migrations and the experience of ‘new ethnicities’ there has been little, if any, attention paid to how migrant

“ Migrant women as emerging subjects create new, counter-hegemonic citizenship practices across boundaries of class, gender, ethnicity and nation. ”

women themselves re-define the concepts of postnational, multicultural or transnational citizenship. Migrant women as emerging subjects create new, counter-hegemonic citizenship practices across boundaries of class, gender, ethnicity and nation. Just consider the following examples: Pinar, a single mother in Germany carefully builds a cross-ethnic family of choice. While she wants her daughter to learn the Turkish language and cultural practices, cultural pluralism is the core value she wants to transmit to her daughter. Selin challenges community representatives’ and leaders’ lack of democratic accountability. She incisively critiques that the British multicultural system’s reliance on community organizations reproduces intra-community power relations of gender, class and ethnicity. These women’s lives, both through their actions and as life-stories, help us to theorize the meaning of citizenship. Migrant women’s citizenship practices can serve as evidence that alternatives to exclusionary practices of citizenship are possible and exist, though they might not be readily recognized as such.

Citizenship is most often viewed primarily as a status of rights-bearing subjects. The formal citizenship rights matter, of course. Stratified statuses of residence or citizenship have far-reaching implications for the ways in which migrant women have access to education, work, choices about their sexual identities and family life and opportunities to social and political activism. Yet, I contend we must consider the idea of rights claiming in conjunction with 1) migrant women becoming subjects with agency, which includes developing knowledges about themselves and the world in which they live which are often, though not necessarily, critical of dominant forms of knowledge and 2) becoming political/ cultural/ working/ caring/ sexual subjects, so that citizenship is not limited to a formal political arena but extends to the ways in which migrant women claim rights, and produce new ways of linking the cultural, the sexual, the arena of work to aspects of participation and belonging. This can help understand the political culture of migrants and help to achieve accurate representation of migrant collectivities in order to bring about the full democratizing potential of citizenship discourse.

Let me clarify the interrelatedness of these

aspects through an example: in the 1990s, Birgül, who did not hold formal German citizenship was repeatedly faced with the undermining of her ability to work as a doctor because of the difficulties of obtaining and renewing work, professional and residence permits. It is this experience of lack of status, which propelled her into becoming a political subject through establishing anti-racist campaigns. When as a non-citizen she was refused permission to open a surgery, she took the matter to court. She successfully argued that the law foresees health provision for the population (Bevölkerung), not just the nation (Volk). This population encompasses migrant women from Turkey, and Birgül argued that access to a female, Turkish-speaking gynaecologist should form part of their entitlement to healthcare. This can, of course, be read as an instance of Birgül’s rights claiming, in the sense that she claimed her right to open a surgery while she was a denizen rather than a formal citizen. Yet, I think such a reading would be limited. It misses out on the way in which she becomes a political subject. As a political subject she does more than gain the right to practice her profession in a setting of her choice. She questions the nationally bounded provision of healthcare. This challenges the supposed neutrality of the provision, as she points out that gender, ethnic, linguistic and cultural sensitivity matter to migrant women’s health. In this instance, Birgül’s act went beyond rights claiming to re-evaluating the substance (culturally and gender-sensitive provision of local health provision) and subject (the ethnically heterogeneous population rather than the ethnically ho-

mogeneous nation) of rights. Birgül’s act took place although - indeed because – she did not hold formal citizenship, yet, it constitutes a transformative citizenship practice.

Indeed, citizenship practices of becoming subjects with agency and substantiating their capacities as political, cultural, caring etc. subjects enable migrant women to make rights claims. By demanding respect for their practices of education, constructing skills, sexual identities, family relations and political activism, they create a social consciousness that the exclusions they experience are unjust, thus transforming our notions of justice and extended or creating new notions of rights.

Migrant women’s life-stories reflect on their position near the boundary of citizenship. At times they claim a view from outside, at times from inside, or, indeed both. These perspectives are empirically significant as they highlight how citizenship as a lived experience is constructed. More than this, such perspectives shed a critical light on how boundaries of belonging and rights are constructed and substantiated (or not). It is in these processes of making and negotiating boundaries, that particular forms of agency are recognized and conferred legitimacy. The negotiation of boundaries furthermore shapes which kind of subjectivities count as properly expressing ‘political’, ‘caring’, ‘working’, ‘cultural’, ‘sexual’ capacities and whether and how these aspects are recognized. Citizenship is one important instance of recognition, not only on the level of national belonging, but as things stand, even in terms of recognition of whether one is seen to properly embody/ enact subjectivity. In this sense, we are faced with a paradox: the ability to go beyond the ‘national’, be it in terms of competences (linguistic, cultural, etc.), emotional orientations, political and ethical subjectivities is valued for those who are recognized as full ‘citizens’. Yet, those who have by virtue of their migration crossed national boundaries are denied recognition as subjects with agency to change the societies in which they live and beyond, as our methodological nationalism fails to view them as subjects with agency. The migrant women’s (political, cultural, caring, working, ethical, etc.) capacities are mis-recognized, most often as a lack thereof. One might, of course, argue that these capacities and ways of being agentic do not qualify as ‘citizenship’ practices, as they do not engage with the state and rights-claiming activities. I argue that migrant women’s ways of acting politically, socially, culturally and sexually require us to extend the idea of rights and should be seen as citizenship practices. These women engage with the boundaries of citizenship and thus are part of its very constitution. If our current conceptions of citizenship cannot make sense of their lives, ‘citizenship’ risks becoming reified as a national privilege. It ceases to be a momentum concept and turns void of its analytic and political potential to democratize an ever-wider range of social relations and socio-political sites. In this sense, research can challenge notions of citizenship ‘earned citizenship’. This earned citizenship policy undermines practices of citizenship that migrant women already engage in. Yet, making migrant women’s interventions socially visible challenges narrow notions of citizenship as a ‘prize’.

GENDER AND CIRCULAR MIGRATION

NICOLA FLAMIGNI

Circular migration, allowing migrants to temporarily come to Europe to work and then return to their country of origin, is widely recognized as the new frontier of migration policies, especially for what regards low-skilled migration. Receiving states hope to meet their labour market needs without having to permanently incorporate newcomers, while sending states would maximize remittances gains while keeping under control the problem of brain drain. Theoretically, governments would stimulate circularity and avoid the risk of seeing temporary workers overstaying through a set of policies such as the selection of workers with the right skills and the guarantee of the annual renewal of the contract for those workers who comply with the terms. But a highly controversial case in Spain demonstrates how practice remains far ahead of policy.

The municipality of Cartaya, Andalusia, has implemented since 1999 a seasonal worker programme in cooperation with Morocco and Senegal. The European Union also supported the project, which

was meant to open legal channels for foreigners to work in strawberry harvesting. The agreement lasted only three years, from 2005 to 2007, when the European Commission decided to not renovate the funding. This decision could look paradoxical if we think that 2007 was the year the programme was finally successful in establishing circularity, while in the first years only a small percentage of workers went home after their contract expired.

To understand this decision we have to consider that in 2007 the programme changed the terms of agreement with the third countries and started to select only married women with children in their home country, in the belief that this would provide enough of an incentive not to overstay their work period in Europe. That year almost ninety percent of the workers returned voluntarily, and today the programme is still one of the most successful in Europe. But this new selection process warns us of the potential discriminatory nature of the game.

European Alternatives just published a report on circular migration: check out: www.euroalter.com/research

INTERVIEW WITH MARTIN KRENN

Conversation with an artist who keeps on challenging contemporary society with provocative projects and innovative interventions in public space

Martin Krenn is an artist and activist, whose interest in socio-political subjects leads him to produce a wide spectrum of actions that range from process-based and participatory projects to a more investigative-like research. By curating shows, conferences and/or internet platforms, he expands and continuously questions the concept of 'public space' with particular focus on the urban context. Krenn's engagement with issues such as immigration, racism, Nazi history and its legacy unfolds through the examination of the relationship between images and their role in the creation of ideologies. In this sense, his endeavor is directed at investigating and generating strategies of knowledge production as a form of resistance and an alternative to the current short-memory culture.

EMANUELE GUIDI: I'd like to start with a topic I think is very relevant to your practice: the use of imagery and communication in media campaigns (both with commercial and political purposes) that are nowadays used to build and promote precise identities – city, national, and European – with the result of excluding those ones which do not correspond to the subscribed image. A sort of 'politics of silence' that tends to direct the viewer's gaze by 'not acknowledging conflicts'...

MARTIN KRENN: Media Campaigns and political campaigns tend to simplify issues in order to draw attention to the topic. This can also be seen in campaigns of the "independent critical left". There is often a dilemma whether a campaign should be more process orientated, in order to raise awareness and to investigate how to work together and raise awareness of the overseen issues around the main topic, or a campaign should be focused on the result – where one just wants to win the battle in a more or less pragmatic way.

If the aim is to fight structural oppression and power relations it is necessary to reflect on the structural conditions of the campaigning group itself. Who can take part in it? What are the power relations between the members of the group? Who is responsible for what? Who

will benefit from the campaign? And many other questions ... To take this in consideration takes a lot of time and activists don't get paid for their work.

If the aim of the campaign is not that complex, i.e. to prevent the privatization of a public building/place, a more pragmatic strategy, of everyone participating in the campaign working on the same goal might work well. However, when the first step is done and the privatization is prevented other questions arise automatically: Who has access to that saved public space now, shall we continue the campaign on a broader level and so on.

EG: In your work *City Views* you react to these media campaigns trend by engaging in dialogue with migrants and promoting a different imaginary of the everyday city. And in *Misplaced Histories* you bring back to light some inconvenient historical information that has been 'hidden'. Do you see yourself, and more generally art, as an (potential) awareness and knowledge producer?

MK: I think art has the potential to produce awareness and knowledge especially in the visual field (but not exclusively). Artists are trained – or train themselves – to understand 'the language' of images. In my work, I am very interested in the relation between text and image and in their ideological, political, historical and social implications. In the series *Misplaced Histories* I photographed, with a field camera, well known locations like the Giant Wheel in Vienna, the Munich Stadtmuseum or the Berlin Zoo. All of them were 'Aryanised' properties. In addition to the photos I did research on questions concerning restitution and the politics of memory. The research was done in a kind of journalistic way: I wrote open letters to responsible persons and new owners of the robbed properties and I also got in contact with other researchers and victims.

In *City Views*, a 'work in progress' that I've realized in cooperation with city dwellers from migrant background in European cities, locations that are associated with emancipation and also those which exclude the public presence of migrants were sought out and dealt with in photo-text series form. During the visits to the cities I asked city residents to participate in the project and to lead personal tours through their city and suggested the respective locations as motifs. The way that the photographs were taken (distance, choice of lenses, angle, etc.) was determined together. After the photos have been taken, the participants complement their selected motifs with statements, which then were used as a part of the photo-text series.

EG: In your work you are very committed to anti-racist and anti-nazism campaigns, (*Monument of the "Aryanisation"*, 2005), as well as very dedicated to migrants rights (*Right to stay*, 2007). The two are very related issues, which should be a priority in the European political agenda. What's your position with regards to the new nationalisms in Europe, confirmed in the last European elections, and the role of culture in this context?

MK: Firstly, I think that the 'New Nationalisms in Europe' has a strong

relation to the economic failures of capitalism, which became visible to everyone in Europe during the course of 2006, when these failures finally culminated in the first global economic crisis of this century. Secondly, the "New Nationalism" is possible because of the lack of serious education about the Nazi-History in Europe. This becomes particularly clear in Austria and Germany, where Neo-Nazi movements especially attract young people. I really believe that the main problem of Neo-Nazism is an educational one. It is not enough just to give some information about the Third Reich and the Nazi atrocities and to show some shocking visual materials. The education about Shoah and Genocide has to have an absolute priority in school.

EG: In your practice you often tend to use means typical to media campaigns (posters in public space, internet, etc.) to formalize/express your ideas. In the same way you organize conferences and curate shows. Is it a mimetic approach to experiment and question the existing formats? Do you think that by appropriating the formats there lays the risk of reproducing the same power relations?

MK: I think that no matter what you are doing you always risk reproducing the same power relations. Even if your aim is to produce dissent as much as possible you have to accept that dissent is perfectly integrated in the capitalistic machine. Therefore, it is not a general question whether

to use appropriation or to question the existing formats. This depends very much on the project, the art piece or the campaign. My personal interest also very much lays in investigating micro politics and in developing and creating new formats of knowledge production in between the movements.

EG: Is the field of arts and culture a genuine 'public space' where a plural and an agonistic (C. Mouffe) dialogue can be developed or do you think that sometimes there is a risk of creating an in-house discourse?

MK: I personally believe that completely "normal people" are rebels. I think it is up to us to discover that in every human being already resides a potential for emancipation. Therefore I prefer to be involved in plural and agonistic struggles in which I have the possibility to take


MK: Well, that is a very interesting point. However, I don't think that we all share the same positions and secondly we change and correct our ideas/opinions from time to time depending on our new experiences and researches.

But on a broader level I agree with you and think that the leftist discourse also excludes people from the outside: Especially people who simply do not agree with the basic principles. Though most of these movements try to be open as much as possible it is also understandable that they cannot be open for everyone. But it is also a class issue, it is much more difficult for people to take part in this discourse, if you have a bad economic and/or social situation. So, I don't see the main problem in "preaching to the converted", what's more important it seems to me is to focus on micro politics and the power relations within the move-

“ I AM VERY INTERESTED IN THE RELATION BETWEEN TEXT AND IMAGE AND THEIR IDEOLOGICAL, POLITICAL IMPLICATIONS.”

part in a discourse and I can both talk with and learn from everybody in and outside the art field.

EG: OK, but I am afraid that within a certain artistic/activist scene, let's say where more or less everybody's share the same positions, or at least agree on common principles, a sort of exclusion of the opposite opinions can spontaneously generate, impeding in this way a real open democratic confrontation...

ments. Micro politics are creating nearly invisible forms of inclusion/exclusion, yet they often seem to be overlooked. In order to create a space for a "real open democratic confrontation" I think that we have to find ways of dealing with these micro politics. As a result the movements/campaigns would become much more effective and revolutionary, which is important especially during the time of the capitalist crisis. 



Institutional Racism, billboard-object in front of the Viennese state-opera exhibition in the Kunsthalle Exnergasse, 1997
A project by Martin Krenn & Oliver Ressler, Monument of the "Aryanisation", 2005, www.martinkrenn.net

STEPHEN WRIGHT

TOWARD AN EXTRATERRITORIAL RECIPROCITY:

Beyond worldart and vernacular culture

In an era characterised by the dematerialised flux of information and imagery, and a previously unheard-of degree of individual mobility, it becomes necessary to clarify how artistic activity engages with territory, both physical and metaphorical

To an unprecedented extent, the condition of many artists and artworlders today is one of mobility. If ever you stop to think about it, you cannot but be baffled at how much artworlders travel (though of course if you're an artworlder you won't have time to think too long). This underscores a genuine disparity

between the realities of the artworld and the rest of the planet and, by extension, the extraordinary privilege enjoyed by art in the global economy. But what sort of "privilege" is it to be obliged to accept, indeed to *be obliged to desire* a condition of perpetual exile? The attendant globalisation of artistic subjectivity, which is of course quite in keeping with the sort of biennialitis that seems to have infected so many large cities around the planet, has had a significant impact on the sort of art being produced.

It is scarcely necessary to point out that while art's role in the commercial economy may be growing, it remains negligible. This raises a paradox: for if the permanent mobility characteristic of the artworld is not, strictly speaking, driven by commercial necessity (artists are not part of the global capitalist class), then what actually is the underlying function of all this moving about? Certainly there is an ideological component, by which the apparent gratuitousness of moving art around becomes, for state funding agencies and corporate benefactors, evidence of their altruistic and humanistic values. But that alone scarcely explains the extent of the mobility of that rising class now ambivalently referred to as the "cognitariat", and of which artists and their ilk are a key component.

If one looks at the proliferation of residency programmes, seminars,

workshops, biennalia and international exchanges that characterise the institutional artworld – which, because they are invariably underwritten by public institutions or benevolent foundations, enjoy a semblance of usefulness and, at the same time, because they take place elsewhere, give off an aura of adventurousness and audacity – one is tempted to conclude that art itself is highly mobile. Yet the fact remains that while the artworld enjoys exceptional mobility, art itself rarely moves out of the seraglio of the artworld – and when it does so, it is with such fanfare that it in effect takes the artworld framing devices with it. In other words, in its forays beyond the borders of the artworld, art actually colonises new territories of the lifeworld, and then proceeds to bring the artefacts it has gleaned back into the referenced spaces of art. Because when art strays beyond the confines of its artworld framing devices, something truly strange happens: it is no longer seen as art; it is stripped of its artistic self-evidence. And that invisibility is not something the artworld can easily forebear. However some art-related practices are doing just that, and accepting the consequences. Stealth operations based on what I shall call "extraterritorial reciprocity" – that one might well describe as "spy art" – are cropping up here and there, and accepting to trade off their coefficient of artistic visibility for a higher degree of efficacy in the real. At first this ap-

pears a strange strategy: why should art not assert itself for what it is? Part of the answer, I think, is that art constantly faces the debilitating charge that that's *all* it is, that it's *just art* – not the potentially dangerous real thing. But to understand how we got to this critical point, we need to examine the different self-understandings that current art practices have with regard to territory.

In our era characterised by the dematerialised flux of information and imagery, a previously unheard-of (though, as I suggested, scandalously one-sided) degree of individual mobility, diffuse and plural forms of creativity – all key components of the neo-capitalist economy – the link between artists and territory has lost whatever self-evidence it may have had. It is in this thoroughly new context, which may sometimes feel more like the disappearance of context altogether, that it becomes possible, and indeed necessary, to clarify how artistic activity engages with territory, both physical and metaphorical.

For in a metaphorical sense too, has the notion of "territory" itself – as in the "territory of art" – not become

eminently problematic? To take but one example, the radical deskilling that has characterised so much of the art production over the past century has landed us in a paradoxical situation: art criticism has so thoroughly lost its bearings that it has become difficult not only to evaluate the relative merits of what artists are doing, but to even situate it as *art*. Though not necessarily undisciplined, art seems to have become an *extra-disciplinary* practice, sprawling far beyond the circumscribed borders of any given "territory." It is in this expanded sense of the term that I want to consider the various relationships between territorial attachment and contemporary artistic expression.

To this end, we might define three basic postures, which very roughly correspond to three historical moments as well as three kinds of artmaking, all three of which co-exist within contemporary artistic production. In each of these three "families," one finds more or less the same number of eminent artists, and though I do favour the latter, I do not wish to imply any strict hierarchy between them. For *vernacular* artists, activity is territorialised, the context

“FOR THE WORLD ARTIST, THE VERNACULAR ARTIST'S OBSESSION WITH BRINGING ART BACK TO ITS CONTEXT OF ORIGIN IS TANTAMOUNT TO SAYING THAT IT IS IMPOSSIBLE FOR ART TO FUNCTION OUTSIDE THIS TERRITORY.”



Cotton Candy, Rasha Kahil, Beirut, 2009. For more of Kahil's photography, see: <http://rashakahilblog.blogspot.com>

being an integral part of the productive framework; *world artists*, on the other hand, seek to wrest art free from any territorial rootedness, concerned with pitting origins against subsequent development; *artists of extraterritorial reciprocity* deliberately expatriate themselves not only from their geographical territory but from all the usual symbolic terrain that is customarily reserved for art: by refusing both territorialisation and deterritorialisation, their propositions are animated by a constitutive mobility and what I would call, following an expression of the French philosopher Maurice Blanchot, “elusive implication” (which is very different from twentieth-century style *engagement*). In practice, of course, one finds a good deal of overlap and interpenetration between these three aesthetic (and profoundly ethical) attitudes – just as one does amongst territories themselves. But that need not inhibit us from delineating them a bit more closely.

Vernacular artists perpetuate age-old traditions which they invigorate and enrich with formal innovations taken from other cultures, thanks to the intermingling made possible – indeed inevitable – by modernity. Many artists today live their historical moment with deep intensity even while using the visual *vernacular* specific to their place and time. Their work – whether installation or painting or whatever – integrates and reflects in one way or another the symbols of a consciously accepted heritage and identity. For them, art depends upon its inscription in a context that is at once more extensive and more intensive than what art alone can provide.

“FOR THE VERNACULAR ARTIST, WORLD ARTISTS ENCOURAGE THE EMERGENCE OF A SORT OF CONSUMERIST MULTICULTURALISM, AN EXPRESSION OF A PLANET-WIDE STANDARDISATION.”

Drawing upon a modernist paradigm, *world-artists* are immersed in the present of rapidly changing societies. They see their work as reflecting the confusion of a world that has lost its bearings. Generally speaking, however, this loss is experienced without anguish or despair. On the contrary, these artists – in keeping with the modern insistence upon individual freedom – seek to free themselves from any geographical or social determinism. Their aspiration is to produce work that is *autonomous* with regard to context, emphatically breaking ties with their formal and cultural heritage – without necessarily renouncing it per se – thereby giving free rein to autonomous expression.

Breaking with the modernist paradigm, artists of *extraterritorial reciprocity* undermine the whole issue of topography inasmuch as they refuse not only geographical borders but borders of all kinds, including those separating art from what is not art, from other and sundry social undertakings. Like vernacular artists, they are suspicious of any talk of autonomy; like world artists, they decline any inheritance. Their artistic practice does not necessarily culminate in the production of works, but nor is it exclusively process based. Rather, these artists see art as a system for producing meaning, which is most effective when engaged in overstepping borders and setting up extradisciplinary “production sites,” outside the territory of any given discipline. By displacing the creative centre of gravity toward artistic activity – originating in an artistic attitude or idea, before spreading amongst a broader usership – these artists seek to challenge the specificity of art as work on a unique object (painting, sculpture), by activating other do-

main and inviting other currents of knowledge to irrigate the field of art. As they see it, art has now integrated literally everything – other disciplines, other materials of all orders – and no longer needs to retrench itself behind borders of any kind. Nothing whatsoever links art with a specific geography, and all that links it to its own history is a certain aesthetics of decision-making, specific to each artist.

Typically, vernacular or territorial artists accuse world artists of encouraging the emergence of a sort of consumerist multiculturalism: world music and world fiction are not seen as the expression of universalisation but as symptoms of a planet-wide standardisation, which barely tolerates, here and there, like unavoidable ripples on an otherwise seamless surface, the odd flash of regional identity. As territorial artists see it, the meaning of an artwork is intrinsically bound up with the time and place of its production: the artist is – at most – but the co-author of his or her work, which, like the artist, bears the indelible stamp of a particular time and place.

Conversely, world artists adopt a normative and aggressively hostile position toward any notion of territorial rootedness. They have nothing but cutting sarcasm for those whom they see as snugly at home in the quiet mass of a particular culture, clinging to the visual idiom typical of some particular region – and are somehow incredulous that anyone make a virtue out of the necessity of happening to be from somewhere; they rail against those who take no account of the boundless labyrinth of cultures and languages, through which the French

West-Indian poet Édouard Glissant invites us to wander indiscriminately and blaze new trails. They explain the proliferation of identity politics over the past two decades as ultimately due to a universal depletion of the resources of collective hope. And as they are quick to point out, it is often toward regional, national or ethnic origin that identity turns when suffering from a lack of confidence, creativity and singularity.

It would be abusive, however – and by no means my intention – to portray vernacular artists as the fundamentalists of the artworld (and it would be only slightly less abusive to depict world artists as the jet set of the artworld); on the contrary, territorial artists stress the need for cultural relativism in the face of the massive homogenisation which they see occurring on a planetary scale. And this attitude is by no means confined to art. “In order to progress,” wrote the justly celebrated anthropologist Claude Lévi-Strauss, “people have to work together; and in the course of their collaboration, they gradually see an identification in their relationships whose initial diversity was precisely what made their collaboration fruitful and necessary.”

I quote Lévi-Strauss because he really cannot be accused of territorial chauvinism or narrow-mindedness (no one in the domain of anthropology went further in the deconstruction of institutionalised racism) and because he somehow manages in a single sentence to sum up the whole question of how and why and under what circumstances we collaborate – which is course linked to the very *raison d’être* of art-making, if seen as more than a merely individualist pursuit. But un-

derlying Lévi-Strauss’ point is a somewhat contorted Hegelian logic of synthesis whereby collaboration is fruitful because there is an initial difference, and the very fact of collaborating, instead of pushing that difference to a higher level, is liable to reduce it to its lowest common denominator.



For the world artist, the vernacular artist’s obsession with constantly bringing art back to its context of origin is tantamount to saying that it is impossible for art to function outside this territory. In fact, maintains the world artist, it is precisely its ability to affect us through a combination of emotion and knowledge – and to do so independently of any context, any particular territory – that is the defining quality of autonomous art. However important the conditions of its emergence may be, the effects it produces here and now are infinitely more so. With staunch allegiance to the precepts of modernity, world artists may even go so far as to argue – following the phenomenological tradition in general and Maurice Merleau-Ponty in particular – that an artwork is meaningful *only outside* its original context, leaving the initiative to the constitutive gaze. The white cubes that characterise the architecture of our galleries and museums, devised for the neutral exhibition of artworks, seem to enjoy a hand-in-glove fit with the purposes of world artists.

Like vernacular artists, artists of reciprocal extraterritoriality situate art in a bigger picture. But for them, this defining territory is not given: it has to be created. Their practice consists of implanting certain aspects of the general economy into the symbolic economy of art, encouraging the creation of a broader, extradisciplinary context. These artists have become real-time managers of the semiotic contingencies that arise in the course of their various undertakings. Their point is not merely to do away with an alleged autonomy of the artwork, but to confront the know-how specific to the field of art with competencies stemming from other fields of knowledge, thereby establishing a reciprocity between art and the sciences, or between art and political activism, and in so doing, dislocating the borders, interests, conventions and habits that maintain them in place, thereby prompting innovative collaborations. I use the admittedly clumsy term “extraterritorial reciprocity” because it names rather precisely the logic I have in mind: like nature, art abhors a vacuum and rushes to fill it. But in doing so, it creates its own vacuum that can be filled by an activity from a different field of human endeavour. In other words, in going “extraterritorial,” art vacates its convention-bestowed territory in the artworld, leaving it open for other activities, as it sets up shop in a different domain in a gesture of reciprocity. This is an art without a territory, which operates in the intersubjective space of collaboration. Yet that “space” is really no space at all, or only in the metaphorical sense of the term, as when we speak of “public space”; it is probably more accurate to speak of a “time” of collaboration and intervention – a “public time,” the time of common yet heterogeneous purpose. But the geographical model, with its cartography of partially overlapping territories, has the advantage of providing a tangible picture of what artists of reciprocal extraterritoriality are really after. “Always implicated, and yet elusive,” as Maurice Blanchot once put it. Constitutive mobility. Elusive implication. 🏠

Stephen Wright will continue his reflections in the next issue of Europa with a discussion on Public Time.

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PETER MÖRTENBÖCK

THE ART OF LIVING WITH STRANGERS:

Risk Taking in the Space of Flows

Postfordist landscape regime entails security conscious design, counter-terrorist architecture as well as immaterial strategies to regulate the increasing elasticity of borders and flows of movement

Whether in the form of transnational political initiatives, global economies, new technologies or urban social movements, networks are the distinctive characteristic of spatial organisation in the 21st century. Cities, regions, countries and continents are being experienced less and less as fixed territories and increasingly as fluid and contested landscapes, formed and mobilised by networks of interacting realities. But the dependence of such networks on the interests of the global market raises the question as to whether its politics of diffusion, segmentation and splintering is rendering it impossible to share cultural values or whether life in parallel universes is capable of generating new forms of sociality and solidarity. In particular, as the logic of globalisation seems to prevent any kind of cultural, political and indeed material bridge being built between the different characteristics of this landscape: While the neoliberal economy orients itself to risk taking, those who enjoy its benefits seek shelter in communities of securitisation, which are increasingly detached from the risks of the surrounding society and from market fluctuations. Risk management and safety concerns have become top priorities in programming urban environments. Closer attention to this dynamics is all the more urgent, as, from the perspective of the global market economy, cities are increasingly becoming a commercial formula, spatial products that can be assembled, dismantled and relocated to a new place. Entrepreneurial risks are often avoided by locating economic activities wherever a community is willing to safeguard the business, while labour disputes result in outsourcing abroad. Replacing the city, the much more flexible concept of community is now capturing our attention as the new level of reference. This transformation is critically advanced by a new culture of security-conscious design which designs fear into our cities.

risk of terrorist attacks without affecting the aesthetic appeal of the urban environment. In 2008 The British Home Office has launched a national programme to train all key designers of major public buildings in counter-terrorism. 'Argus Professional', a National Counter Terrorism Security Office initiative, is aimed at encouraging architects, developers and designers to consider counter-terrorism protective security in the concept design stage of their projects. Buildings are to be designed with panic rooms, truck-bomb barriers and limited glaz-

ing to prevent or mitigate terrorist attacks. The British prime minister promised to "work with architects and planners to design safer areas, using blast-resistant materials and enhancing physical protection against vehicle bomb attacks." Work on fortification of the British Treasury against the threat of car bombers is now underway. Likewise, retrofitting work at railway stations, airports and other public transport hubs is being accelerated.

Following this political move, the Royal Institute of British Architects

and a number of partners, including the Royal Society of the Arts and the British Home Office, jointly launched a competition that asked architecture students to think creatively about counter-terrorist features as integral parts of building blueprints. 'Public Spaces, Safer Places: Designing in Counter-Terrorism' called for design responses for a public space in the aftermath of a fictitious terrorist attack in the centre of a major European city. Backed by the Design Against Crime Research Centre at Central St Martin's College, London, the compe-

tion pleas for paying more attention to pro-active counter-terrorism planning so that security is built in rather than bolted on: Terrorism security is to be validated as a design challenge along with place-making and aesthetics, as an answer in equal measure to the specifications of elegant, busy and animated public space – the winning entry to this competition being praised for combining 'inspiring symbolism with an ingenious, tactical organisation of space.'

These developments have to be seen



Fallen Fruit, Street Bananas, David Burns, giclee print, 16"x20", 2004. www.fallenfruit.org

against the backdrop of policies dating back to the 1970s which aimed at regulating urban behaviour through specialised design strategies, in particular the American 'defensible space' concept, a design manual that has been strongly backed by the insurance industry, the police and politicians, and has been adopted by many European governments as tool in aid of safe urban environments. Focusing

concepts or social practices are acts of governmentality, indistinguishable from other forms of political activity. Reproducing all aspects of social life, they can be extended anywhere. Thus, the European politics of urban securitisation has emerged seamlessly, in connection with the global economic demand for continuous and flexible response to the space of flows and today gains ever more popularity with

showcase project of US-American terrorism prevention in the urban realm and as such has been hosting numerous conferences on technologies for homeland security. Aesthetic adornment has become a strategic instrument of the politics of normalisation and naturalisation in support of the invisible city of privatised infrastructures and technological flows. That way, late capitalist dominance en-

considered a symbol of hospitality and fertility, it also encourages us to unveil and ultimately change a range of hidden relations between those owning resources and those who do not; between property, land use and the common good; between the nature of the city and the nature in the city. Maps of local public fruit have been followed by nocturnal neighbourhood fruit tours, community fruit tree plantings, communal jam-making and Public Fruit Park proposals in Hollywood, Los Feliz and downtown LA – the latter rejected by the authorities for 'security concerns'. Similarly, Urban Rangers, a Los Angeles based group of geographers, artists, curators and architects, unsettles the securitised landscapes of the Southern Californian coastline by offering educational campfire programs, guided hikes and safaris that challenge the public-private boundary of Malibu beaches – twenty miles lined with secured private development.

If these projects constitute a form of activism, this is an activism that relies on mimicking rather than replacing, supplanting rather than reversing, repeating and multiplying rather than erasing that which they attack. Devoid of any aspiration to govern, they instigate transformation by way of performatively undermining the coherent identity of 'secure' urban spaces. Here, at the nexus of politics and aesthetics, art projects take on the task of breaking into the boundaries of spatial order by modifying the modalities of experience, conception and communication. They expose the fictitious and unpredictable character inherent in any form of spatio-political arrangement by making use of the entitlements, symbols, aesthetics and rituals that usually accrue from the practice of government. The intervention of artistic and creative forces into the security-led deformation of the urban environment takes effect as it interferes in the struggle between expressions and imaginings of geopolitical situations and thus creates a new discourse.

In the Networked Cultures project, an international platform of artists, architects, curators and theorists, we have aimed to reconsider cultural transformations by examining the potentials and effects of such networked spatial practices (www.networkedcultures.org). The 'Networked Cultures Dialogues', a series of screenings, installations, exhibitions, interventions and debates, have linked locations around the globe, asking how networks of collaboration in the arts can provide a setting for the emergence of a more responsive political system. From May 2008 these public events have been hosted by institutions as diverse as the Storefront for Art and

Architecture in New York, the cultural centre Proekt_Fabrika in Moscow, the Whitechapel Gallery in London, the Israeli Center for Digital Art in Holon or the Pro qm bookstore in Berlin. The common thread connecting these manifestations is the search for an architecture of possibilities, something that forms the guiding principle for the many praxes and projects brought together by Networked Cultures – initiatives that have been engaged over the long term in instigating a process of cultural appropriation of urban space and citizenry from the periphery. Numerous meetings, discussions and collectively organised events have been devoted to the modelling of structures within which spatial self-determination can take place. Who decides on the design of a collectively used space? Who controls access? Who takes responsibility for maintenance? Who is permitted to enter? Here, as elsewhere in networked urban initiatives, instead of fortifying and protecting the physical city, architecture expands and invents the means that it deploys: it uses a bricolage of art, propaganda, city policies and social relationships in order to intervene manipulatively in the context intended for urban renewal.

Outside the context prescribed by authorities, legal frameworks and security policies, unplanned and self-empowered formations have emerged whose architecture is usually accorded a subsidiary role because it only takes on efficacy in connection with a network of participants – with the gatherings of residents; with collective actions; with the extension of the space of action in international exhibitions; with the utilisation and transformation of the created structures; with the myths that enable a community to emerge and the myths in which the community continues to exist. Against the horizon of security-led planning operations, what such projects actively embrace is risk taking: not risk in economic terms but the fundamental risk that lies at the heart of an open society and highlights the fact that there is no perfect environment shapeable via art and architecture which could take the sting out of the pain associated with the experience of otherness. Exposure to the unknown and the uncertain is a basic experience that cannot be purged by aesthetic formation. Architecture can never elude the confrontation with uninvited guests. It can neither circumvent nor plan this experience just as it cannot fully determine the ideal site of urban cohabitation. What the networked laboratories of unsolicited and fearless urban engagement clearly demonstrate is that social interaction is not a state that can be planned and therefore is available not as a blueprint but only as a political possibility. 🐼



on ownership and control of the environment, the concept basically marks out clear territorial boundaries and renders strangers a source of danger for 'vulnerable' places. Since the early 1990s, Secured by Design, the influential UK Police flagship initiative supporting the principles of 'defensible space', has helped to trans-

those who regard the flexible administration of urban societies a useful means to regulate and control newly emerging space-time-assemblages.

Part of a programme that is transforming urban life under the aegis of safety, the quest for civilian 'decency', 'security' and 'well-being' mobilises a

ters a new phase in which the visible shape of the urban landscape diverts our attention from the interaction between governmental, institutional and commercial forces in the operating system of newly programmed urban ecologies. New forms of security landscaping that include bits of living infrastructure as performative organic machines are institutionalised as the dominant reality of the global North, as a prism through which we experience the social and cultural production of this fragmented civic formation. The more fragmented this landscape becomes, though, the more effort it requires to create new identities that promote the fusion of reality and capital as a political model.

But Los Angeles, a city obsessed with protection on all levels of land use planning, is also a place that is not short of alternatives to security-conscious environments, many of which voiced by a new generation of environmental art practices. One of them, Fallen Fruit employs fruit as a catalyst in its investigations into neighbourhood dynamics, civic processes and new forms of community formation. Fallen Fruit's work originated in mapping 'public fruit': fruit trees growing on or over public property in Los Angeles. This public fruit is not only

form of biopower which reinforces social hierarchies along prevalent value systems and opinion polls. Instead of engaging with a geopolitical situation that cuts across separate categories of violence and peace, the city of fear seeks to isolate and ghettoise zones of unregulated violence from purified and patrolled zones of harmony. It is not without reason that cities are entrenched in military imagery and that the resurgence of this imagery comes at a time of social deregulation. From battle fields to strategic lines, from frontier areas to no-go zones, the combined ideologies of social orchestration and urban planning have always conjured up a language of military warfare to legitimate violent acts of urban transformation and eviction. As new conflicts emerge from this complicated fabric today they direct our attention towards the new ways in which the presence of social exteriority is constituted and expressed.

In fact much of the European debate on counter-terrorism planning is not new at all, but has been well rehearsed in the USA, particularly in the wake of 9/11. A prime example of its implementation into the urban fabric is the Staples Center, a privately financed and controlled multi-purpose arena in Downtown Los Angeles, which has shaped a new understanding of urban spatial organisation: dozens of large-scale sculptures and an uninterrupted sequence of some hundred man-sized planters surrounding the building's apron regulate the stream of visitors and defend the arena against the threat of an attack. What at first sight may look like decoration is the minutely calculated camouflage of crisis planning hidden behind a normalising façade. The Staples Center is a

form thousands of commercial, housing and public sector developments into high-security enclaves. While the USA maintain specialised national training centres, such as the disaster centre facilities at Camp Dawson, West Virginia, to stage terrorist situations against the backdrop of a replica three-block urban landscape, the European logic of action – military, political or architectural – seems to lie in an implementation of replica elements in real urban space. Its artful disguise of mock urban features is to propagate a visual culture of innocent looks: barriers that double as planters, concrete bollards in the shape of giant letters and Chinese Cypress trees of the kind planted at Canary Wharf in London. Apparently, these trees are very good at absorbing the kinetic energy of a bomb blast and don't make the environment look sinister but foster a 'feeling of well-being', another term regularly woven into government rhetorics to promote security-led design.

It may come as no surprise that, in the mind of security officials, the urban landscape looks like a product catalogue of items that serve as a defence against violence and fear. Strikingly, though, the aesthetic deceit in composing this environment allows for an almost unmappable intrusion of forces into our lives and into the structure of urban cohabitation. Everything that is visible and pleasing to the eye is being turned into the 3D interface of a much more powerful command line operating in the background. This transformation demonstrates how in the war against abstract enemies the limits of security measures are rendered indeterminate, both spatially and temporally. Wars against abstract

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EUROPA

ART AND THE CITY:

Beijing seminar

Lorenzo Marsili

Transnational questions and transnational answers

The seminar organised by European Alternatives together with Abitare China and the China-Europa Forum last summer in Beijing is a further testament to our belief that the most pressing political and artistic questions of our time can only be tackled through the formulation of trans-cultural answers and the creation of transnational networks of activism and knowledge-production. The themes discussed were many; on the first day we looked at different strategies and examples of “engagement” in the European and Chinese artistic spheres, we then moved on to analyse the different relations to the nation and the “national” in the two contexts, and finally discussed the perception of “globalisation” and the meaning of “global artists”; the second day was devoted to the city, with discussions on different forms of artistic interventions in public space, the different conceptions of the “city” as a shared space of sociability in Chinese and European history, and finally a glance at the figure of the flaneur, attempting to overcome its untranslatability in

Chinese and identify a common way of living the city beyond productivist concerns.

All the themes shared a common objective, and namely the attempt to go beyond mere comparative analyses, to surpass the simple exchange of perspectives behind entrenched national barriers, aiming instead to isolate a core set of themes equally crucial in both Europe and China, initiating a process leading to shared alternative positions and suggestions.

This process has only just begun, and we invite you to take part.

On this page are short reflections from some of those taking part in the workshops. The full list of participants includes Mi You, Baskar Mukhopadhyay, Stephen Wright, Huang Rui, Shu Yang, Sonya Dyer, Lu Jie, Wuwei Chen, Fei Qing, Gideon Boie, Liang Jingyu, Bert de Muynck, Miao Yu, Zhuma Yujiang, Ran Ping, and Shuyu Chen.

Niccolo Milanese

The ends of dialogue and the beginnings of being together

European Alternatives is essentially a transnational initiative which happens to find its starting point in Europe but which regards the world. China and the Chinese have since the beginning of the initiative been for us a point of comparison, of reflection and of fascination. Although this comparison of cultures is justified in its own terms, our own perspective cannot be disassociated from a certain number of anxieties and fears of widespread amongst people in Europe which are attached to the rise of China as a perceived threat to jobs, prosperity and “security”. If China is felt to be a threat it is because the rules of global interaction are still thought of largely in terms of competition – be it between nations or between corporations – not in terms of cooperation.

In bringing together participants from several continents in Beijing this summer for several days of discussions surrounding the responsibilities of artists and intellectuals in society our goal was to bring together a group of people who see it as the responsibility of cultural actors to redefine the rules of global interaction between peoples, to invent new paradigms of communication and imaginative and real spaces for being together. This is a long-term engagement, and one that by definition extends irrespective of geographical or political boundaries.

TAKE PART ONLINE

In the belief that Europe cannot be defined by its borders, and attempting to forge alliances transnationally, we regularly hold events and projects in several countries in the world. Follow up on the development of our initiatives in China, Brazil, and Saudi Arabia by visiting www.euroalter.com and www.euroalter.com/china



Stephen Wright

On extradisciplinary collaboration

Collaboration, if it is to be fruitful, must be founded on an initial diversity. Though it may feel more natural to collaborate with groups and individuals with whom we have much in common, collaboration itself has little to gain from that commonality – for neither party really has much to offer the other and collaborating soon appears unnecessary. Today, when “interdisciplinary” collaboration has become a fact of life in the self-reflective world of research in academia and beyond, this has become more than a theoretical issue: it may even make such initiatives a smithy for testing larger-scale modes of community building. Needless to say, developing a collaborative community on the basis of difference rather than sameness poses some significant challenges. Yet it is relatively straightforward for open-minded members of one discipline to engage in inter- or transdisciplinary collaboration with similarly unbiased colleagues from another: biologists, like sociologists, mathematicians, philosophers and historians work within disciplines with an established canon of texts and references acknowledged by their scientific community. One may certainly contest the paradigms and even the canon as a whole (indeed to some extent, one is expected to) but if one is to be taken seriously, one must engage with them critically. Art, on the other hand, while not exactly undisciplined – as it is sometimes suggested by those

who are apt to dismiss it as a form of knowledge production – is not a discipline. Indeed art almost constitutionally resists attempts to discipline it. While it has its internal rigour, and a history, in fact many histories, this does not make art a discipline the way art history is. All of which makes collaboration between art and academic disciplines or activist practices, indeed between art and anything, both particularly interesting and singularly ticklish. For though there has been a commendable tendency to promote collaboration between, say, art and economics, the fact that art stands outside any constituted discipline means that this mode of collaboration can only be explicitly extradisciplinary, that is, beyond the confines of any discipline. Extradisciplinary collaboration is inherently experimental, because each initiative must generate its own methodology. But above all, it is premised on a unique dynamic of skill-crossing and sharing, that is, on the fundamental equality between competence and incompetence. Only in an extradisciplinary framework could one make such a claim – whose conditions of possibility lie in the radical deskilling that has characterised art of the past century. It is only when challenged by an incompetence (what is a question if not an often calculated incompetence?) that a competence is called upon to question itself, raising the exchange up a notch. In this respect, extradisciplinary collaboration is a deliberative form of community building and knowledge production – and a genuine alternative to expert culture.

Stephen Wright is a philosopher and art critic



Bert de Muynck | Moving Cities

The burden of building too many squares

Two weeks after a short exploration of the tensions between the European and Chinese perception of public and private space, the China Daily newspaper published an article entitled “City Squares Miss Urban Life.” In it the Xinghai Square in Dalian illustrates the urban space-race China’s cities are involved in. The Xinghai Square is three times bigger than Beijing’s Tian’anmen Square and is the largest city square in Asia. The article identifies the following set of problems emerging from this example: “*Inspired by Dalian, other cities have sped up city square projects to improve their images. (...) Local officials often seek the largest, not the best squares, which simply copy Western models without any creativity or consideration of local conditions. (...) Some underdeveloped cities like Jixi in Heilongjiang province have faced huge financial burdens by building too many squares.*” While it is common to discuss the perception that Chinese cities miss urban squares – and connecting to that a whole set of political, cultural and civic values, problems and sensitivities – it seems that actually the opposite is happening. In that regard the fascination for Beijings’ Tiananmen Square is understandable. To many it appears to be China’s only Square as it is easy to read in its history and outlook the blueprint for all private

and public activities happening on any square in any Chinese city. In “Remaking Beijing” (Reaktion Books, 2005) renowned Chinese art critic Wu Hung scans the artistic, political and architectural history of Tiananmen and explains his agenda as following: “I use the term ‘political space’ in both senses, as an architectonic embodiment of political ideology and as an architectural site activating political action and expression. Defined as such, an official political space such as Tiananmen Square inevitably lies within the dominant political system and helps to construct this system; but it also stimulates public debate and facilitates opposition.” Have we been looking at the wrong Square in order to understand the new relations between private and public life that are unfolding in many Chinese cities? The article in China Daily concludes that in Jixi, to collect enough money for the construction of the square, the city embezzled the road construction fund as well as reduced the wages of construction workers. It is the ongoing construction of new city squares in China that should stimulate debate about the direction China’s public and urban life is taking. Beijing may be exemplary to understand political space, but it is clear that Dalian has subtly altered the strategy; size matters. *Bert de Muynck is an architect, writer and co-director of MovingCities. He lives and works in Beijing, China, since 2006. For more info: <http://movingcities.org>*



Miao Yu

The Flâneur in China

One of the issues raised during the seminar was whether it is possible to recuperate the concept of the “flâneur” in contemporary China. Several Beijing residents in the audience immediately exchanged sad faces to one another. Indeed, with the exception of the old city center, Beijing’s urban landscape is frequently interrupted by multiple highways, leaving only a hostile environment for the urban pedestrians. Beijing is no longer a city that provides walking pleasures. However, should we take the notion of the “flâneur” literally as an urban walking figure? Largely a conceptual creation of Walter Benjamin, the late 19th-century flâneur is more than a social type, rather an important epistemological figure situated in the declining dream world of the Parisian arcades. Benjamin makes this figure deliberately avoid Haussmann’s new boulevards, loiter in the shopping arcades and spend time by gleaning archaeological fragments of the recent past. His slow temporal mode is out of synch with Haussmann’s boulevard, a new landscape based on the logic of speed, circulation and social control. In my opinion, it is the flâneur’s anachronism to the new Paris that, in part, defines him an epistemological figure. Benjamin’s purpose is certainly not nostalgia for the “golden era” of flânerie, but the critical knowledge necessary for a revolutionary break from history’s most recent configuration. The context of Benjamin’s flâneur in the late 19th-century Paris has interesting parallels

to contemporary China. Just like Haussman’s urban project was masterminded by the dictator Napoleon III, what enables China’s radical demolition and full-throttle development is also an authoritarian regime obsessed with erecting architectural icons. The glittering icons have replaced the historical courtyard buildings, the collective dan-wei housing of the 60s and the 70s, and even some of the iconic buildings of the 1980s—these waste architectures, each registered with utopian imaginations of the past, are quickly turning into rubbles by the bulldozers. How does the juxtaposition of demolition and the rising urban skyline speak about the fates of our past utopias? Are today’s Olympic icons going to end up as tomorrow’s graveyards? As an observer of Chinese contemporary art, I can’t help noticing the proliferation of ruin and ruin-like images centered on the phenomenon of urban demolition. A notable attempt from the Chinese artists is that they have deliberately rendered both demolitions and future developments into dialectical “ruin” images. And the juxtaposed layers of time and space on the imaginaries of the “ruin images” in Chinese contemporary art can shed lights on the epistemological configuration of contemporary China.

Miao Yu is a Ph.D. candidate in Art History at McGill University and doctoral fellow at Social Science and Humanities Research Council of Canada. She is currently researching her dissertation on the images of urban destruction and urban waste in Chinese contemporary art since the 1990s. She has a love-hate relationship with her city of residence, Beijing.



Huang Rui

Urbanism as Art Practice

During the workshop we visited the “baitasi”, the white pagoda in Beijing. The area is very interesting; effectively cornered by the second ring road to the South, and the so-called “Wallstreet of Beijing” to the West. But there we still see old Beijing houses, inhabited by traditional residents and migrant workers alike, all crammed into that area. And the white pagoda is one of the few remaining structures from the Yuan dynasty...it is a parallel time to when the city of Beijing was first built. Intellectuals, artists, and architects may feel the pressure of the coming transformations in the district. There are two ways to go: the area can be demolished and rebuilt with modern architecture like the “Wallstreet” zone, relocating the residents to other areas of the city; or the area can be rebuilt to its heyday of 7-800 years ago, when it boasted

rivers and courtyards for Chinese officials. We see in this case two very different options to deal with history and its economic implications. And here I want to make a proposal. In attempting to reconstruct the district faithful to its past, we need to research this past, its ways of life, the events that have taken place along the way... otherwise we are left with a touristic reconstruction of old houses that is terribly shallow and merely commercial, as has happened south of the Tiananmen area. I call for an organised network for this project. Urban planners, architects, artists and intellectuals were all involved and collaborated in the realisation of 798 [Beijing’s central artistic district, which arose out of an abandoned factory complex]. This spirit must be revived. And creative urban reconstruction, too, is to be considered an art form.

Huang Rui is an artist, the artistic director of Thinking Hands, and one of the founders of 798 district in Beijing



Chen Wu Wei

The Invisible Galaxy of Public Space

When wandering around the street corners, ashes along the sidewalk, moss on the roof tile, scent of the jasmines, laughter of kids... every sensation accumulated from daily life transcends into memories spontaneously. Static or dynamic, visible or invisible, everything around us participates in the moulding of our experiences.

Unfortunately, power and discipline segregate our perceptions towards space into pieces. Space faces dilemma regarding to its identity. Memorials, squares, parks, buildings... are they defined by residents or the authority? Preservation, demolition, reuse, release... how do we expand the boundary of space for public participation instead of propaganda usage? In the digital era, besides the debates of preserving or rebuilding, new thoughts shall be employed as alternative choice to augment

and document beyond the physical space. By means of social media, open source, mobile device, projection, etc., mixed information are able to map, navigate, expand and penetrate the existing space like another invisible galaxy. Time and space can be compressed and superimposed, memory and being are connected through tracking and positioning; we absorb and digest these data in blinks. Through this invisible galaxy which contains dynamic information and multi-user capacity, we have the chance to re-explore and re-examine the functionality and understanding of the same space we have. Sights, touches, smells and other sensations come along in the journey. As one of millions, our existence at this moment might be mapped into someone else’s memory, or being transmitted to another stage as a double. It is the moment that we realize - our thoughts float and intersect, like the particles inside a capsule.

Chen Wu Wei is a media art lecturer from Hong Kong Design Institute



Gideon Boie

AND THE BAVO COLLECTIVE

Do you really want to join us? It is up to you!

The many exchange projects these days between Europe and China tend to ‘orientalise’ the specific framework in which Chinese people operate. Stress is then laid upon the still almighty, invisible power the Communist Party entertains over the back of ordinary citizens – something that supposedly counter speaks the new freedoms people enjoy in the new China. As such the new openness in China today – exemplified for instance in the willingness to listen to the demands and desires of the people – seems to paradoxically strengthen the firm grip of power rather than weakening it. We claim however that this paradoxical logic is not reserved for Chinese subjects alone, but should be analysed as a local characteristic of a contemporary and global shift – a distortion, if you want – in the execution of power. A key scene in the documentary ‘The Corporation’ allows us to understand this logic in its Western manifestation. In this scene, we follow a group of otherglobalist activists as they organize a sit-in in the backyard of former chairman of Royal Dutch Shell, Sir Mark Moody-Stuart in order to protest against the malpractices of multinational oil companies. To their utmost surprise, the chairman revealed himself as a passionate critic of the oil industry, displaying a clear insight into the many inconvenient truths behind this notoriously dirty industry. Moreover, he claimed that they were not

telling him anything he had not already thought of himself and that he therefore did not need activists for that. The real question, he retorted, is what they were going to do about it. In this way, Sir Moody-Stuart put the ball back in the activists’ court while at the same time making himself an indispensable link in the chain by making them aware of the fact that although they might not have the power to change anything, he did! So, what we encounter here is a new way in which the ruling order mobilizes society. The shrewd tactics of the former chairman of Shell consists in not only being more critical than the activists but also in accusing them of shrugging away in the face of the enormous challenges ahead: ‘if you really think things are so bad, then stop complaining and put your money where your mouth is!’ In short, every criticism is interpreted as an unconscious wish for constructive cooperation and, consequently, every critic is treated as a possible ally in finding solutions to remedy the cracks in the system. In other words, it creates an atmosphere of horizontality, the feeling that both ruler and ruled are on an equal footing, engaged in a dialogue, and eager to complement each other’s capabilities. Consequently, critical actors are seduced into collaborating amicably with their usual enemies about possible solutions to the many problems at hand.

Gideon Boie is co-founder of the collective for radical architecture BAVO



Sonya Dyer

Thoughts on a Summer Seminar

My personal experience of the China Europa Forum can be described by contradictory adjectives such as exciting, frustrating, intense, enriching, confusing and moving. That is to say, it did what a brief exchange of ideas is supposed to do in many ways – confuse and enlighten in equal measure. Although I never quite shook the feeling that the ‘Western’ contingent didn’t quite share as much of ourselves – or at least our own situations in our own countries – as our Chinese counterparts were expected to. For me, the most interesting exchange was on the second day, during a discussion on the notion of public space. The conversation came about when one of our Chinese colleagues explained a particular project he had developed involving a group of artists engaging in ‘micro-performances’ in Tiananmen Square. The artists mainly interacted with random people in the square through these one-to-one performances, experiencing a mixed reaction from the individuals they were trying to interact with. For Westerners, Tiananmen Square is mainly associated with the protests in 1989 (known as the June Fourth Incident in China), as exemplified by the infamous ‘Tank Man’ photograph of an unknown man standing before a group of tanks. Tiananmen seems to have a particular hold on the Western liberal / neoliberal imagination as an example of the Chinese systems brutality and

inflexibility. What was interesting to me was the exchange that followed. Responses covered the spectrum, from the person who repeated the Governmental line that ‘the Government are the parents and the People are the children,’ to another who questioned the value of Tiananmen’s perceived value as the symbolic public space in Beijing. In the light of all the new, often Olympic-related architecture in Beijing, this argument suggested, wasn’t it a bit old fashioned to focus on Tiananmen? Why not engage with people in one of the new spaces? What is the value of these intimate exchanges – what’s the point of only affecting one person in a sea of people? This was the most passionate exchange of the entire weekend, and it was an exchange largely – if not entirely – between the Chinese participants. Conversely, it resonated with me more than anything else. In particular, it made me think about Brian Haw and his anti-war protest (originally an anti Iraqi sanctions project) in Parliament Square. Of how often I had seen him engaged in conversation with an individual or two, of all the cars that honked their approval of him as they drove past. And of course, how the British government went as far as to change the law to prevent anyone from protesting within a mile of the Houses of Parliament as a result of his presence. I see Brian Haw as an example of the power of protest, and how an individual can affect the politics of an entire country/culture.

Sonya Dyer is an artist and the coordinator of the <art and politics> programme at Chelsea College, University of the Arts, London

JÖRG COLBERG

INTERVIEW WITH RIO BRANCO

Conversation on photography, art, and photojournalism with one of Brazil's most outstanding artists

Miguel Rio Branco's work embodies the riches, complexity and sensuality of Latin America. His photographs do not attempt to hide the desolate side of life, but instead show pain, loneliness, violence and death, subjects that his extraordinary command of the intense colours and lighting transforms into beauty and poetry.

Jörg Colberg: When people hear "Magnum" I think many of them will think of classic b/w photojournalism. With its use of often very vibrant colour, your work clearly doesn't fall into that category. And since you have a background as a director of photography for movies I'm wondering how much that also contributed to the development of your own photographic style?

Miguel Rio Branco: I see that Magnum is growing into a dynamic creative force with many individual paths and not only in the traditional photojournalistic way. My own work was never only about colour since after painting, in the beginning I did most of the time both, black and white and colour, as well as experimental films (New York 1970-72). In 1980, while living in São Paulo, my archives burned, and what was left were mostly the colour slides that were travelling with me. The dramatic use of colour relates a lot to my painting background. But painting is not only the background since I am still painting again since the mid-eighties. The other link is with cinema and music. I was never really aware of the big names in photography until 1974, and this is after already six years of using photography as my main medium.

JC: Do you focus a lot of your attention on Latin America, an obvious choice for you, and if yes why?

MRB: I've always focused on what is around me. I was never really very much into the immediacy of certain subjects. I did Latin America when I was in Brazil (not as a Latin American), New York when I was in New York, Paris when I was in Paris. So: definitely I was never really focusing on

Latin American subjects because of a need for identity or something like that. Since I was the son of a diplomat I lived in Portugal, Switzerland, New York; and my grandmother was French. I feel very much as being part of a whole.

JC: Often, the boundary between the pure fine-art photography and photojournalism is not that clear. When I look at your work I'm under the impression that you never really worry about what your actual role is but that you instead focus on creating the kinds of images you want to see. **MRB:** The boundary between fine art and photography is clear at least to me. Between fine art and photojournalism it is the same. What I have seen lately is mostly commercial (photography), or technical or photojournalism, becoming "ART" just because of its size or because of who in power says that this or that is ART. To me Art is a question of: first, having something to say from the inside that has nothing to do with description of reality, reality being just the material thing that the camera captures.

JC: So when fine-art photographers go to places like New Orleans after Hurricane Katrina, take photos there, and then exhibit the work in museums or galleries – is it art? Or is it journalism, even though the photographic language used is clearly taken from the art world and not from photojournalism?

MRB: I think that it is not the fact that your work is being exhibited in the Museum that makes it a work of Art. I don't think Museums are free from influences by curators linked to galleries, and from the speculation of the powerful art market.

JC: You have been a member of Magnum for quite a while. How did being a member of Magnum benefited your work, and, looking back, how do you view its evolution since when you joined?

MRB: I've never become a member really. My status is that of a correspondent; you could call this a collaborator maybe. I have some of my work distributed by Magnum, and still enjoy meeting some of the members, mostly whenever I go to Paris. I stayed a nominee for two years, 1982 and 1983, and then I felt the need of not having to prove anything about my needs to create. I was back in Brazil, in Bahia, and getting back to painting.

JC: I think we are currently witnessing what one might call the transformation of Magnum into something different, even though I will not attempt to define what that might be. But it seems that with Magnum's inclusion of photographers who very clearly originate in the pure fine-art world and with "citizen journalism" becoming ever more prevalent - anyone with a camera can now shoot a newsworthy photo (i.e. the photos taken by the passengers of the

bombed subway in London). What do you see as the role an agency such as Magnum is going to play in the future?

MRB: I was never a real photojournalist, mostly a documentary photographer. For a while I thought a document was interesting. Since the beginning of the 1980's I was already speaking about the freedom of possibilities that using photography in poetic statements with total control of editing was giving a photographer/artist. The personal work was always more important to me than the document. Magnum is possibly only the agency, with VU maybe being another one that sees that the originality of each photographer is now more important than the fact that anyone around a disaster with a cell camera can document any disaster.

JC: I am under the impression that there is a development towards what you call banality and clichés, and I'm wondering what photographers can do about it. Editorial photographers experience being squeezed out of contracts, and I think the emphasis on digital and on photography being democratic (whatever that actually is supposed to mean). How can photographers counteract that trend?

MRB: I guess the only way is to have the need of being yourself, with your own identity, and not only look into the market's needs. Cultural projects are open fields to show the world, mostly by showing its own creator's needs of expression. The originality of each artist makes the difference, and not only the way a photographer can do an assignment well. I was always pro this difference and I guess this moment now is very open to this new field of expression.



Voyage Fugu 2007_2008
170x115cm.jpg, geometria do desejo versão

Geometria do Desejo 2007_2008
Ed. 1-5 políptico 5 fotos (dim. variadas)

Divagações de um Fugu Delirante
Silva Cintra Gallery, August 27 – September 26
Rua Teixeira de Melo, 53, Ipanema - Rio de Janeiro
Miguel Rio Branco's most recent photographic work, from which the images on this page are taken, is currently on display in Rio de Janeiro at the Silva Cintra Gallery. The photographs emerge from a special project carried on in 2007 and first presented at Tokyo's Museum of Contemporary Art, whereby Rio Branco was invited to photograph the Japanese capital and Daido Moryama worked in Rio de Janeiro.
www.silviacintra.com.br/



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IN THE NEXT ISSUE OF EUROPA:

SERIES: EUROPE AND THE OTHER

Celebrated philosopher Gianni Vattimo will continue our series of reflections on the relation between Europe and its outside.

FEMINISM IN THE 21ST CENTURY

Following on from the recent interview with Nancy Fraser, we continue our investigation of the potentials of feminism in the new century.

LATIN AMERICA & REGIONALISM

Two articles will be looking at the question of regional blocs and the participation of social movements, with a particular comparative eye at the Latin American reality.



DOSSIER: ART & THE CITY

Reports on cities torn between global flux and the erection of new borders, with a focus on questions of nationalism, migration, and ethnicity.



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P.8: CARBON TRADING:
FOR AND AGAINST

Climate Change is not just an environmental issue, it also affects social justice, poverty and human rights. Graciela Chichilnisky and Oscar Reyes debate the pros and cons of carbon trading as a solution.

P.4: POVERTY
AND SOCIAL EXCLUSION

With over 79 million people in Europe estimated to live in poverty, what should the EU be doing, and how should the political left be reforming to respond to the crisis? Zygmunt Bauman and Jean Lambert.



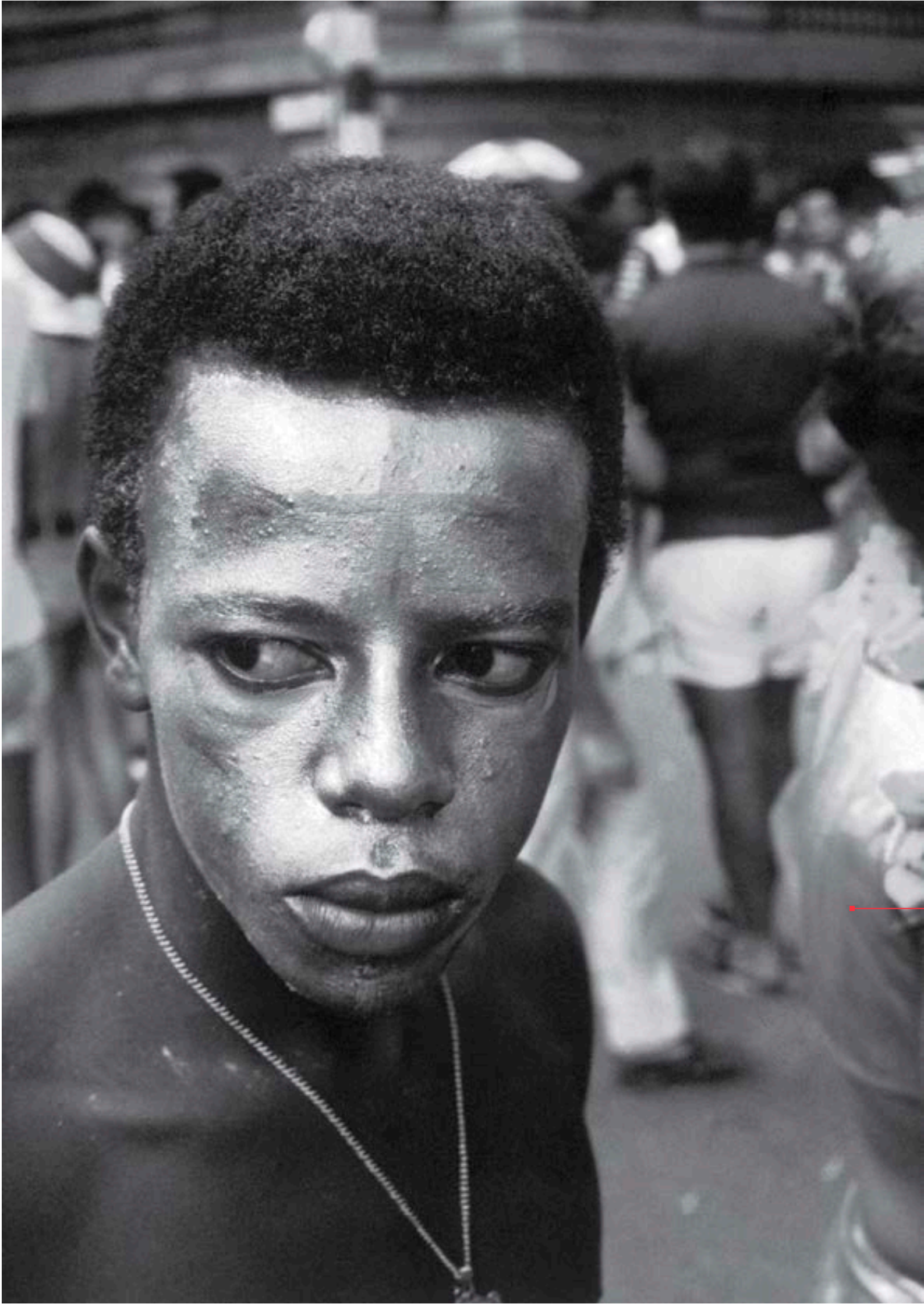
P.10: INTERVIEW WITH
SEYLA BENHABIB

The leading political thinker tells us about the ways in which transnational flows of people should change our conceptions of rights, and what political challenges this poses for democracy.



Pp. 24-27: Section Française
PAUL GILROY SUR L'ART
D'ALFREDO JAAR

Pp. 28-31: Sezione Italiana
DENIS GUÉNOUN SULL'IDEA
DI EUROPA



BUILDING
UP THE
PRESSURE

Europe has been more than normally present in the popular media recently: with the selection of the President of the European Council and the High Representative for Foreign Affairs, the nomination of the European Commission and the final ratification of the Lisbon Treaty. Given the selections that have been made and the relief of all to have gone beyond institutional questions, the danger is that media and public attention pass to other things at quite the wrong time.

The follow-up to the Copenhagen climate conference depends crucially on the European Union forging a way ahead which sets an example of both ambitious targets and real financial assistance to developing countries, including the most vulnerable. There are also substantive choices that have to be made about the way to deal with the problem, such as the desirability of carbon trading (see pages 8-9)

The creation of the European External Action Service to support the High Representative will determine crucially the direction that European action in the world takes, and notably whether it lives up to its promise in the Lisbon treaty to make combating poverty and promoting development a primary objective. Whether this objective will also apply to trade deals is also a critical question. (see Susan George pages 6-7) Meanwhile, poverty within Europe is becoming increasingly worrying (see pages 4-5).

Carlos Vergara
Carnival Series, Untitled, 1972/76
Fuji photograph paper in silicon
Metacrilat over Dibond,
Printed in 2008
100 cm x 150 cm edition of 7
www.carlosvergara.art.br

The reinvention of democracy in Europe remains a crucial issue. Recent concern over the lack of women in the European Commission conceals a more profound concern about gender equality in Europe, and about rights for migrants and other minorities. Europe has the opportunity to define new paradigms of equality, and must be pushed to take them. (see p. 3 and Seyla Benhabib p.10-11)

Civil society, citizens and media have to start to build up the pressure on European decision makers in all these areas, to ensure this series of globally important steps are taken.

ABOUT EUROPEAN ALTERNATIVES

This magazine is printed by European Alternatives, a trans-national organisation devoted to exploring the potential for a post-national or transnational politics and culture, and promoting intellectual and artistic engagement with the idea and future of Europe. Aside from publishing this magazine, we run several projects and events on cultural and political themes internationally, as well as organising the Transeuropa Festival.

European Alternatives believes that in a globalised world progressive politics must be articulated and fought for beyond the nation state. The European construction has an unrealised potential as a transformative power for social and cultural progress both inside and outside of the European Union, a potential that transcends the mere confines of Europe and contributes to the definition of a transnationally engaged political practice that speaks to the age of globalisation. We see as our task to articulate and promote that potential, and to do so by focussing on specific areas of social contestation, exploring the responses offered by a transnational approach to some of the key issues of our time.

The project of European Alternatives and of this magazine is participative and multidisciplinary, aiming to stimulate a large public debate and contribute to the construction of transnational networks of activism and research allowing citizens and social movements to take a stand and influence all those political processes that transcend national communities.

AMONGST OUR INTERESTS

- **Transnational Democracy:** Rather than pretending that the politics of the European Union are a-political and 'merely' regulatory, what is called for is a powerful re-politicisation of the continent. Important areas we investigate are European institutions and democracy in Europe, relations between social movements and European or transnational institutions, the role of the European parliament and the construction of transnational political parties. The meaning of transnational citizenship is particularly dear to us, and is approached in this issue by a long interview with Seyla Benhabib on pages 12 and 13.
- **Equality:** Europe will be an inclusive Europe or it will not be. We are interested in exploring what potential exists in transnational institutions for promoting fairer and more equal societies. We feel areas of particular urgency today are those of labour rights and trade unions in Europe, the social dimension of transnational institutions – something addressed on pages 4 and 5 of this issue – and questions of gender equality and women's rights, discussed on the next page.

“ EUROPEAN ALTERNATIVES BELIEVES THAT IN A GLOBALISED WORLD PROGRESSIVE POLITICS MUST BE ARTICULATED AND FOUGHT FOR BEYOND THE NATION STATE. ”

- **Migration:** Developing a just approach to migration is one of the most pressing questions for contemporary societies. We are interested in looking at European migration policies, the status of the migrant and the risk of xenophobic responses, and the relation between migration and transnational citizenship. A trans-disciplinary topic by definition, we are increasingly focussed on exploring the relation between political and economic actions of transnational bodies, and the European Union in particular, and the phenomenon of migration, something approached on page 6.
- **Cosmopolitics:** This section looks at the relation between Europe and the rest of the world, with a particular focus on promoting global justice and a fairer division of wealth between countries of the north and of the south. We are interested in looking at the effects of European trade policy and European environmental policy on developing countries, the 'foreign policy' actions of the European Union, and more generally the overcome of nationalism and the development of global channels of collaborations, such as the experience of the World Social Forum. Articles on pages 7, 8, and 9 discuss this.
- **Art Practice:** We find it impossible to divide a critical approach to some of today's most pressing social and political issue from an investigation into the role of the artist and the creator in contemporary society. Not only do we discuss these issues theoretically or through interviews with artists, but also through the organisation of artistic projects and initiatives such as the recent Polis21, presented on pages 16 and 17.

NEW → TRANSEUROPA FESTIVAL

TRANSEUROPA festival is an innovative kind of public event which is simultaneously an artistic, cultural and political engagement taking place across national borders. It is at once a unitary festival and a transnational network of diverse cultural and civil society organizations and individuals working together to embrace wider audiences with their work. Transeuropa develops from the successful London Festival of Europe, which was started by a young team of Europeans in 2007 and has run each spring since. Spring 2010 will see the transnationalisation of the festival in 4 cities: Bologna, Cluj, London and Paris.

NEW → CAMPAIGNS

European Alternatives runs campaigns promoting our core commitments at a transnational level in Europe. Our current campaigns are:

- **FOR A DEMOCRATIC PRESIDENT:** the President of the European Council should undergo regular question and answer sessions in the European parliament, and the point of view of the parliament should be taken increasingly into account in the Council.
- **FOR A GENDER EQUAL EUROPE:** Gender equalities issues must be tackled as a priority by the newly elected European Commission.
- **FOR EUROPEAN TRADE JUSTICE:** Combating poverty and promoting development must be taken as objectives of trade deals conducted by the European commission, and the High Representative for Foreign Affairs must play a role in promoting the coherence of the Union's policies with regards to combating poverty.

---- Full details of all campaigns, and ways of supporting them, are online at www.euroalter.com

NEW → EUROALTER.COM WEBSITE

Euroalter.com features a web-magazine of commentary on recent events, and further information, research, videos and resources relating to all crucial areas of our work. It is updated daily in three languages: English, French and Italian. The website features a participative 'community' section where members can upload their own articles, and also all details of our forthcoming events, and the activities of the local groups of European Alternatives.

And events around Europe, research, members' meetings and much more on...
www.euroalter.com



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www.euroalter.com
editors@euroalter.com



SÉGOLÈNE PRUVOT

IS THE END OF THE MASCULINE DOMINATION IN EUROPE APPROACHING?

Because gender inequality survives in all European nation-states, the rationale for feminists to develop and strengthen transnational feminists' movements is stronger than ever before.

The masculine domination is the title of a book published by the French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu published in 1998, in which he describes how discrimination is perpetuated in society. It is also a sentence you can currently read in capital letters in the streets of Paris

printed on top of a cinema advertisement poster that displays women hands knitting red and pink woollen male genitals.

The image is both ironic and sad: ironic because the knitted woollen genitals seem ridiculous, and sad because this image of a woman seems absurd but plausible. One can easily imagine that the woman may strive to become a man or that she simply nicely prepares something that will please her man or men in general.

EUROPEAN FEMINISTS' MOBILISATION AGAINST NEW FORMS OF CONSERVATISM INCREASES.

Today in Europe, the rise of new conservatism seems to exacerbate both attacks towards gender equality and the willingness of feminists to fight it at the European level, by using all means of mobilisation: cinema, documentaries largely broadcasted on the internet, demonstrations, etc.

In Italy, the collusion between Berlusconi's conservative and 'show' politics and machismo is well known. Lorella Zanardo, a well known feminist, has decided to denounce the

rise of machismo and the increasing number of abuses of female images in a 20 minute documentary 'the bodies of women', largely commented and broadcasted on the web in three languages. A quick watch of the documentary is paralysing: one sees a succession of images of prime time TV shows in which young women are humiliated in public by older men or older women, images of similar women's faces which plastic surgery has annihilated possibility to express a large variety of feelings.

In France, we have mentioned the sarcastic approach taken by the director of the movie the masculine domination, a feminist young man, who also happily describes how he has to fight against himself when he catches himself in situations of using the facilities given by his position as male. Feminists' movements and a collective of organisations also led to a large mobilisation in the streets of Paris on the 17th of October to denounce continuing forms of exclusion.

Conversely, on the same day -

the 17th of October, in Spain, an anti-abortion demonstration was organised in Madrid to protest against the extension of the legal period during which a woman is allowed to abort. The legal changes went through and the demonstration was less followed than people were afraid of but it is symptomatic of the tension between conservatism and women rights movements that is currently at play in Europe.

Because gender inequality survives in all European nation-states, the rationale for feminists to develop and strengthen transnational feminists' movements is stronger than ever before. Comparisons can be used to reveal the variety of forms the masculine domination takes in the day to day life and therefore the tools to fight it more efficiently.

The discussion on 'one third of women in the European Commission' reveals the scale of changes needed in Europe to pave the way for gender equality

The discussion around the nomination of the European Commission, which took place at the beginning of November, is a good example to look at issues regarding gender equality in Europe and possible solutions based on the potential of Europe as opposed to the locked situations in many member states.

The discussion on the new European Commission focused on the fact that it may include only a very restricted number of women. Mobilisation of citizens groups, of members of the European Parliament, of women commissioners was therefore organised to achieve the aim of reaching a quota of one third of women in the new European Commission.

The fact that a strong mobilisation had to take place to ensure that there will be at least a few women in the commission sheds light on how unequal access to political space generally remains in EU Member States all around Europe. In this context, the application of quotas appeared useful and needed. Otherwise the situation would remain extremely unequal.

But it also shows how, if member states are the only decision force, the EU may just replicate the situation that exists in member states; that of a democracy made and dominated by men. So far, the designation



of the commissioners has been left in the hands of the leaders of member states, each of whom decides in secret and on unclear criteria who the national candidate will be. This type of process encourages the choice of one's peer - often a middle-aged white man who has had the opportunity to get to important positions at the national level. It is not favourable to new political personalities. Proposing a quota was a simple means to break this tendency. However it does not set the ground for radical change and avoid the replication of the situation every five years.

It is somehow surprising that the president of the commission, the institution representative of European interests, cannot choose her or his team. Thus if the President of the commission was choosing a team among candidates proposed by political groupings European citizens vote for, this team would probably be more equal and less linked to the interests of national country's prime ministers.

The instauration of more democratic process to define who should make decisions in Europe may be the only way to ensure equality in the long run. By opening-up access to high positions to people who are less 'in the system' of national politics and national states, such a process would also go beyond what is possible at the national level.

The end of the masculine domination is not a natural process that will necessarily take place. It has to be closely followed and accompanied, if one does not want to run the risk of the perpetuation of inequality that makes of a once relevant title (such as the masculine domination), a still relevant title more than ten years later.

Obstacles to ensuring equality may seem unlimited but there are still ways to make the masculine domination break down. The European construction provides for feminists opportunities to challenge institutionalised forms of domination at the national level, by means of comparisons between the institutions of 'domination'.

In the EU, change is still possible and the balance of powers not fixed. Europe provides the ground for the institution of a more equal political space. A more equal political space is not enough to ensure a more gender equal society but it is one of its prerequisites. A more equal political space would also, more generally, ensure a more equal society for all type of interests and people and not only those defined by quotas.



AUGUST SANDER: VOIR, OBSERVER ET PENSER (SEE, OBSERVE AND THINK)

August Sander (1876-1964) is known as one of the most acute photographer of the social realities of the Weimar Republic. He is mostly famous for its portraits. The exhibition 'Voir, observer, penser' (See, observe, think), at the Fondation Cartier-Bresson in Paris, presents these portraits in resonance with less famous photographs of the artist of landscapes and nature, like one of snails. The exhibition illustrates perfectly the naturalistic approach of August Sander who thought there were no better ways to show the world than by strictly reflecting the nature.

Fondation Henri Cartier-Bresson,
2 Impasse Lebourg, 75014 Paris, France

NICCOLO MILANESE

Poverty must increasingly be understood as a problem of democracy as well as equality.

The European institutions nominate each year the ‘European Year of...’ The most recent examples are the ‘European Year of Intercultural Dialogue’ (2008) and the ‘European Year of Creativity and Innovation’ (2009). It is questionable the extent to which such European years serve a purpose – they typically involve no new funding for initiatives, and often have a very low public visibility. Unlike previous years, however, for 2010 the theme chosen is extremely topical given recent events in Europe and in the world: ‘European Year of Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion’. At the moment 79 million people inside the EU are estimated

POVERTY AND SOCIAL EXCLUSION:

A question of democracy

to live in poverty, despite living in the world’s richest economic area, and outside of the EU almost half the world population lives on less than €2 a day. Whilst the year as such is unlikely to foretell any sea-change in European policy either inside or outside the EU, the nomination of a year after a theme permits the possibility of critical dialogue on the signification of the theme, and the influencing of the way the problem is thought about at a European level. Naming is not only often the first move of politics - to name one’s opponent - but it is also the first move of philosophy - to name one’s subject.

Moreover, there are concrete opportunities to influence European Union policy in the area over the coming months – one of the first tasks of the newly selected European Commission will be to propose the new budget and objectives of the European Union for the coming period. Now that the Lisbon Treaty has entered into force, the elected European Parliament has co-decision with the European Council (of the member states) over the short and long term budgets of the Union, so if the opportunity is taken there should be greater democratic discussion over the budgetary priorities of the Union.

Of critical interest in the way the European year has been named is the conjunction of ‘Combating Poverty’ and

‘Social Exclusion’. This allows for the two things to be understood together to some extent, that poverty should be seen as a form of social exclusion. This makes poverty into a question of democracy: to be poor is not only to be materially poor and thereby lack to a greater or lesser extent the basic means for living, but also to lack the possibility of participating in a society as an equal member. Economic living standards and means of participation in society have to be thought together. This immediately poses the questions ‘what society?’ and ‘what means of participation?’ The answers must be thought about both within the European space and outside it.

Within the European space the situation is fractured and rendered incoherent by the intransigence of nation states in certain overlapping domains. Although the ‘economic’ community of the European Union is unified to a certain extent by the possibility of largely unrestricted capital flows, a common market and the existence of a common currency in some member states, the free movement of peoples between these countries is much more restricted than the movement of capital, and the possibilities of participation in society changes dramatically for people as they move through member states. For as long as the nation state is seen as the

primary locus of democratic legitimacy, it will remain difficult to say that there is a common European society.

Policy decisions regarding combating unemployment and economic inequalities remain largely at nation state level, with the exception of decisions over European Structural Funds and Cohesion, which remain sensitive political tools. Yet the situation inside the EU is becoming sufficiently dramatic that greater community solidarity in the area seems irresistible if only the arguments were made. At the moment those governments with some of the most difficult poverty situations to deal with are those cutting back most on social spending. The Latvian government, for example, is spending less than 10%

the EU. Overwhelmingly required over the coming months are transnational campaigns highlighting inequalities existing within the EU area. This poses the question of what organisms exist to run such campaigns, and one of the depressing conclusions is that political parties, which should be the means of participation and representation for all sectors of society, are in large part still handcuffed by their nationalised structures. NGOs and civil society therefore have to be the medium, but without ignoring that increasing the possibility for democratic participation, and therefore reforming the outdated political-party structures, is an integral part of combating poverty and the only sustainable structural solution.

“FOR AS LONG AS THE NATION STATE IS SEEN AS THE PRIMARY LOCUS OF DEMOCRATIC LEGITIMACY, IT WILL REMAIN DIFFICULT TO SAY THAT THERE IS A COMMON EUROPEAN SOCIETY.”

of its annual budget on social issues, as the recent IMF bailout forced it to cut its government spending, whilst the Swedish government spends more than 30% of its annual budget on social issues. Other ‘rich’ member states seem to be failing in their obligations: the UK and Ireland, for example, have the highest levels of child poverty in

The European Union does have a common aid budget and also a common strategy for development in the rest of the world. In the Lisbon Treaty combating poverty is made an explicit objective of the European External Action force to be formed around the newly selected High Representative for External Affairs, Baroness Ashton. The crucial question,

INTERVIEW WITH ROGER BALLEEN “Boarding House”

Rasha Kahil: The pictures are unsettling in the way that they are neither depicting the uncanny nor the sublime. They seem to portray a real that is rooted in the pathos of the human condition, yet depicted within an apparent fictitious space. How do these images reflect your view of the world, or alternatively, your view of the human psyche?

Roger Ballen: My photographs comment on the complex word that we loosely term as reality. Reality is ultimately impossible to define with words, perhaps images will provide some clarity.

It is my belief that the most challenging photographs are those that create a tension between what we refer to as the real and the imaginative.

My images symbolize the chaos around us and our inability to ultimately control our fate. In contrast to this world, my aesthetic is expressed in a very formalistic manner.

RK: You seem to have moved away from using identifiable portraits (e.g Eugene on the Phone, 2000), and more towards anonymous bodies and hidden identities. Where we once were introduced to people inhabiting the space, you now seem to negate their identities. How do you negotiate the barrier that you now seem to create between the viewer and the subject?

RB: In my previous photographs, my subjects were so intensely powerful that they dominated the viewers perception. Without photographs of faces, the viewer is forced to look elsewhere in the image.

My images are not only about people: they are about animals, objects, and ultimately about a place or a world that most of us have been to in one way or another.

RK: Is there a relationship between the space you create and the setting of South Africa where you reside/work? Are you influenced by your surroundings?

RB: I have lived in south africa for over thirty years. Over this period, i have had endless experiences which have shaped my identity. Nevertheless, my development as a photographer has been a very gradual one. In the end, i believe that the most important influence on my aesthetic have been the photographs that i have actually taken..

I have never been a photographer that has been overly interested in expressing my relationship to a social, political environment. My emphasis has always been on create psychological. Statement. To ultimately reveal what is hidden in my own psyche.

www.rogerballen.com
Boarding House by Roger Ballen is available from Phaidon Books.



unlikely to be asked over the coming months, is what degree of participation is possible for poorer countries, and the global poor themselves, in deciding over the way this money is used and strategy decided? To what extent are they 'socially excluded'? Posing this question is to challenge the sedimented logic of the nation state – where those born on a territory decide only amongst themselves on their common actions both inside and outside of the territory. In an increasingly interconnected world this logic is wholly inadequate, and the European Union is a potentially transformative structure in challenging this logic. Rather than conceiving of European external action as Europe's action on the world, we should conceive of it as a mechanism able to take into account the points of view of those it is trying to help. The High Representative for External Affairs must become not only a voice of Europe in the World but also a Voice of the World in Europe, a representative of the world's poor. Only in that way will EU external action go beyond hand-outs or conflict resolution, and start to create the possibility of building a common world together. Once again, there are no organisms but civil society to make these arguments for the moment. It is with arguments of democracy, autonomy and equality that such campaigns will be successful: we must rediscover and reinvent these vocabularies.. 🐘

RECONNECTING POWER AND POLITICS

Social democrats need to reassert the protective power of the state – this time through global institutions.



ZYGMUNT BAUMAN

Ten years ago Gerhard Schröder declared that: 'economic policy is neither left nor right. It is either good or bad'. Today we can conclude that this was a self-fulfilling prophecy. Then, eleven out of fifteen governments of the European Union were run by socialists. Now – in election after election, in country after country – the left has been elbowed out of state power. The crucial point, though, is that such changes of the guard have ceased to matter. In the course of the last decade, social democratic parties have presided

over an 'economic policy' consisting of the privatisation of gains and the nationalisation of losses; they have run states preoccupied with deregulation, privatisation and individualisation. It is no wonder that voters have come to associate social democrats with the neoliberal policy of dismantling the communal frameworks of existential security, leaving individual men and women to manage their fates on their own, from their individual and mostly scarce and inadequate resources. There is now next to nothing to distinguish between the 'left' the 'right', in economic, or any other, policy. In recent years to be on the 'left' has come to signal an intention to be more thorough than the 'right' in carrying out the agenda of the right, and better at protecting such undertakings from the backlash inevitably caused by their dire social consequences. It was Tony Blair's 'New Labour' that laid institutional foundations under Margaret Thatcher's inchoate ideas about there being no such thing as society, 'only individuals and families'. It was the French Socialist Party that did most work on the dismantling

of the French social state. And in East-Central Europe it is the 'post-communist' parties, renamed as 'social democrats' (wary as they are of being accused of lingering devotion to their communist past), that are the most enthusiastic and vociferous advocates – and most consistent practitioners – of unlimited freedom for the rich and the leaving of the poor to their own care. Previously, the distinctive mark of social democracy was the belief that it is the duty of a community to protect all its members against the powerful forces that they are unable to resist as individuals. And people's hopes were pinned on the modern state for the carrying out of this task – a state powerful enough to force economic interests to respect the political will of the nation and the ethical principles of the national community. But nation-states are no longer sovereign in any aspects of common life on their own territory. Genuine powers – the powers that decide the range of life options and life chances available for most of our contemporaries – have evaporated from the nation-state into the global space. Politics, however, has remained local, and is no longer able to reach the powerful, let alone constrain them. We now have power freed from political supervision in the global space, and politics without power in the local space. The big question is whether any political force is capable of stemming the tides of globalisation – of capital, trade, finance, industry, criminality, drugs and weapon

trafficking, terrorism, and the migration of the victims of all these forces – while having at their disposal solely the means of a single state ... Well, they can try – as North Korea has done, or China, or Burma, or Cuba, or Kyrgyzstan – but the consequences for their residents are too well-known not to be resented by most of them. It is no longer possible to construct a 'social state' that guarantees existential security to all its members within the framework of the nation-state. Globally produced problems can be only solved globally. The only thinkable solution to the globally generated tide of existential insecurity is to match the powers of the already globalised forces with the powers of politics, popular representation, law, jurisdiction; in other words, there is a need for the remarriage of power and politics – currently divorced – but this time at the global, planetary, all-humanity level. True, the odds seem stacked against such an endeavour; but the odds have always been weighted against social democratic visions of good society – and who recently has managed better than social democrats in the pursuit of their goals against apparently overwhelming odds (recently renamed 'public opinion polls')? In the third century of its history, social democracy is facing a challenge that requires it to reconstitute itself as a planetary political force, and to strive to tame and constrain the global powers that are dedicated to dismantling the social and ethical conquests it made in its first two centuries. ■

SOCIAL SERVICES IN TIME OF RECESSION: WHAT CAN THE EU DO TO ENSURE THEIR CONTINUED PROVISION?



JEAN LAMBERT MEP

Over the last 18 months the EU has seen many growing pressures on its social services provision. The unemployment rate in the EU has been rising steadily since April 2008, with Estonia, Spain, Ireland, Lithuania and Latvia being particularly adversely affected. The number of recipients of unemployment benefits has started to rise and the percentage of older workers claiming early retirement or disability has also started to increase. Many pension schemes have faced sharp declines in the value of their investments and credit availability has been scaled back. With no sign of a return to previous employment levels in the near future and combined with other pressures on income, more households are likely to default on rent and mortgage repayments and housing solutions will need to be sought. As such, budgets for social assistance are coming under increasing pressure, although capacity to meet this growing demand varies greatly between Member States.

RISK OF CUTS TO SERVICES

In the UK, the Government is taking a close look at all public services to decide where cuts will be made to make up the huge deficit in the national finances, caused by the massive bailout package to save the banking sector. One allowance likely to suffer is the basic state pension. Since 1980, when the link between its value and earnings was broken, its real value has been falling year on year. Now the government's commitment to increasing the value of pensions is likely to be postponed until 2015, and if the Conservatives win at the next General Election they look set to do the same.

Older people already face a higher risk of poverty compared to the general population, with women and the very elderly particularly unfavourably affected. It's estimated that 2.5m pensioners in the UK are living below the poverty line and this failure to stabilise and increase the state pension to a liveable level will see many more struggling to make ends meet over the coming years. **FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE PACKAGES** Many Governments across the EU are requiring recovery assistance to help stabilise their economies. Hungary, Latvia and Romania have requested help from the European Community (EC), and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) has approved Stand-By Arrangements for those Member States. In the near future other non-eurozone Member States might be forced to request similar assistance. However, the rules attached to the financial assistance between the EC and Hungary, Latvia and Romania demand that they reduce pensions and benefits, abolish subsidy schemes and increase the retirement age. Given that the financial crisis is having a greater adverse impact on the most vulnerable, such demands appear to be entirely at odds with a number of the EU's objectives, not least its aim to achieve a decisive and measurable reduction in poverty and social exclusion by 2010. **NEED FOR SOCIAL PROTECTION** Across the EU, old age pensions and sickness and healthcare benefits represent the bulk of social protection expenditure in all Member States, so when assessing the preventive role of social protection it is necessary to look at the resilience of pension systems and access of citizens to healthcare. On average in the EU, social transfers other than pensions, such as unemployment, family and housing benefits, reduce the risk of poverty by 36 per cent. In the absence of all social transfers, 25% of EU citizens would be at risk of poverty while this percentage is reduced to 16% after receipt of government support, with some Member States providing more effective support than others in this respect. **INCREASED DEMAND FOR SOCIAL SERVICES** Children are at greater risk of poverty too, with the main factors affecting child poverty being the labour market situation of their parents and the

effectiveness of Government support, both through income support and the provision of enabling services such as childcare. Indeed, access to high quality social services was identified as a key issue in the "Recommendation on the active inclusion of those furthest from the labour market", which was recently agreed by Council. Stable, decent housing is also crucial in the fight against social exclusion and demand for social housing is likely to increase during the downturn. It is known that domestic violence also tends to rise under economic pressure, putting additional strain on social services. We also need to be aware that growing unemployment is likely to affect individuals already facing discrimination in the labour market, such as people with disabilities, and in the UK cases of unfair dismissal concerning pregnant women are rising. **WHAT CAN THE EU DO?** With all these additional pressures, if we fail to invest now in social services, at a time when the most vulnerable are at risk, then we risk rolling back the progress made so far to reduce poverty and improve equality and social cohesion. So what can the EU do? **Insist on social conditionality** Firstly, it must insist on social conditionality for support packages rather than forcing Member States to reduce their social assistance in exchange for financial help. With 2010 being the European Year of Anti-Poverty the focus should be on measures to reduce inequality and support the most vulnerable, as well as kick-start the economies of the worst affected Member States. **Use Social Cohesion Funds**

The EU should also use the Social Cohesion Fund to improve the social dimension of Member States' economies. The fund can finance up to 85 per cent of expenditure on major projects involving the environment and transport infrastructure and was set up to help reduce economic and social disparities and to stabilise economies. Those eligible for assistance are the least prosperous Member States, whose gross national product (GNP) per capita is below 90% of the EU-average. Since 2004 those eligible have included Greece, Portugal, Spain, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Slovakia and Slovenia. **Protect services from market encroachment** The EU must also revisit the idea of protecting some services from market encroachment, as in the Directive on Services of General Interest. As Governments are having to budget for services with severely depleted public funds it will be tempting for the Government to look to the private sector to fill shortfalls in service provision, but this could set in motion unintended consequences. In the UK, Public Private Partnerships (PPP) are a range of initiatives which involve the private sector in the operation of public services and the Private Finance Initiative (PFI) is the one most frequently used. The key difference between PFI and conventional ways of providing public services is that the public does not own the asset involved, instead the authority makes an annual payment to the private company who provides the necessary building and associated services. According to UNISON, evidence and experience within the health care service shows that once services are run for private profit, the quality of care is reduced and the public service ethos is replaced by a motivation to make profit. Some PFI and PPP contracts have also been so badly formulated that public bodies and taxpayers have ended up paying private sector contractors far more than the going rate for outsourcing the work. **Avoid restricting benefits** Finally the EU and Member States should avoid restricting benefits under the banner of increased 'targetting'. Experience has shown that means-tested benefits are often left unclaimed leaving those most in need without the support to which they are entitled. Extreme caution should also be exercised when it comes to the 'penalty' approach of restricting benefits, for example reducing benefits to those who fail to find work. This approach is questionable at the best of times, but in a recession makes no sense at all. The key message for the EU and the Commission is that reducing social protection must be absolutely a last resort during this economic crisis since any roll back on social progress could take many years, if not decades, to correct. Investment in social services is good for individuals and for society and to fail to develop and improve them, especially in a recession, is to fail citizens. Any reduction in social provision would also constitute a retreat from the EU's ambitions towards achieving equality, opportunity and a decent quality of life for all. ■

THE GOOD SOCIETY DEBATE

JON CRUDDAS MP AND ANDREA NAHLES MdB

European social democracy needs a fresh start. In the wake of the most severe economic crisis in decades it became clear that social democrats have not paid enough attention to the development of a real political alternative to the dominant free market orthodoxy. Adaptation to the political mainstream over the last one and a half decades was a strategy that gave short-term electoral success at the price of the long-term viability of social democratic politics. Recent national and European election results prove that this short-term success is over. Previous social democratic renewal periods originated in one or few countries and spread from there. Today, we need a broad and inclusive

debate from the beginning on, taking as many national experiences and views on board as possible. Contemporary Europe is not the Europe of the 1950s or the even 1990s anymore. To live up to this commitment several partners organised a pan-European online debate on the future of social democracy and the good society. Find out more at www.goodsociety.social-europe.eu

SUSAN GEORGE

EUROPE IN THE WORLD: EFFECTS ON MIGRATION

Instead of relying on the border police, the EU should assess the effects of its own policies on poor, migrant-sending countries.

Let us ask an apparently simple question: Is out-migration from “South” to “North” on such a scale a “normal” phenomenon? Young people especially want to travel, but few, given the choice, would choose permanently to leave their countries, familiar landscapes, food, childhoods, families, friends, memories, languages....without serious motives. They would especially not risk their lives and gamble their futures in order to cross the borders or reach the shores of Europe, only to be confronted—in case of success—with the life of a marginal “sans papiers”, an undocumented person facing menial, ill-paid jobs, precarious living conditions, crowded sub-standard housing, no civil rights, possible imprisonment and deportation, racism, xenophobia....

Should we not therefore accept at least the hypothesis that mass migration is not “normal”; that migration candidates would, more often than not, avoid it if they had other options; that the “push factors” causing people to leave their home countries in such numbers require much closer examination than they have so far received? Among such factors should we not also accept the hypothesis that, in the case of Europe, its own policies may have more than a little to do with out-migration?

On one hand we are confronted almost daily with the evidence of increasingly desperate people willing to undertake harrowing, dangerous, long-distance journeys. On the other hand, virtually all the literature stresses that migration to Europe is caused by “poverty” or “socio-economic deterioration of the situation” at home; or “the growing gap” between North and South. These serve as handy, catch-all explanations.

More sophisticated analyses may point also to the lack of security in countries torn by civil strife; improved communications and information systems that give an unrealistic picture of life in the rich countries; social solidarity networks established by and with previous immigrants; the fairly recent emergence of an entire industry of commercial, usually criminal, people-trafficking enterprises devoted to recruiting and smuggling migrants across international borders and so on. Analyses that invoke “poverty”, “deterioration” and “gaps” do not seem to consider if their business to ask why these should exist on such a vast scale—such scourges are somehow just there.

In the case of such a major policy preoccupation for European governments and European citizens as migration, surely it is worth examining seriously the impact of EU policies on

population movements. Surely experience so far shows that the security-police approach is at best partial; at worst a failure and that root causes have not necessarily been identified, much less taken into consideration and dealt with.

European decision-makers of all political persuasions recognise that migratory flows from South to North constitute a problem area. These decision-makers should welcome more precise knowledge and assessment of the impact of European policies not merely on Southern governments, but also on the lives of communities and the vast majority of Southern populations that constitute the human pool from which migration springs. With such knowledge, they could at least decide whether maintaining this or that policy was worth the “boomerang effect” of provoking increased migratory attempts or whether Europe would be better off abandoning it.

Ideally, the overarching goal of European policy towards the sending countries should be that of the Hippocratic oath: “First, do no harm”. A courageous research programme has the duty to assess such harm, if it exists, and if so, to devise means to eliminate it and replace it with positive approaches. Nothing could improve the stature of the European Union with its Southern partners more than this. It is true that Europe, like any other political entity, has many constituencies to satisfy as well as many economic and political interests and cannot be expected to abandon them. Some of these constituencies and interests may, however, be quite limited in importance and of short-term value only. They could and should be replaced by the approach once known as “enlightened self-interest” which deserves a revival.

The key areas of European policies to examine concern debt and structural adjustment, trade as well as tariff structures; subsidies, commodity prices; fisheries, the impact of European transnational corporations; Economic Partnership Agreements [EPAs].

DEBT

Despite modest reductions, outflows from South to North remain a heavy burden on Southern countries and hamper their development. Research must quantify this burden and assess the current value—including monetary and non-monetary value—of reimbursement to individual EU countries and to the EU as a whole. What is the level of funds “sterilised”

by debt repayments and therefore unavailable for development? What are the real impacts of debt-induced structural adjustment packages, particularly the privatisation of public services and export-orientation, particularly of agriculture? The debt “crisis” is in fact a chronic illness and ideally the EU should, with the help of research, devise a quick, clean, democratic, non-bureaucratic, corruption-free, “once-for-all” plan that can put an end to a problem that has festered for over a quarter century.

We already know that debt cancellation is affordable. Research would need to examine the amounts owed to specific EU countries and the total amount over which Europe could have an influence [including sums still owed to the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, where 30% of the voting stock gives Europe plenty of influence].

Many argue that debt cancellation would simply lead to renewed indebtedness. One can, however, show—although research on these aspects is still thin—that when debt cancellation does occur, the money is on the whole well-used, for schools, clinics, immunisation, access to water... The EU, if it were to require that African governments associate their own people in the choice of priorities for spending the money freed up by cancellation, could insure that savings on debt repayments were wisely used everywhere.

Debt cancellation ought not

absorb and thus push down prices for everyone. Commodity prices have been declining since the 1970s. Lower prices paradoxically encourage overproduction because countries strive to keep their income stable by exporting even more.

Although China’s purchases have recently improved the prices of primary products somewhat, particularly for metals, the declines for cash crops have been consistent. In 2005, a Ugandan coffee farmer received 14 cents a kilo for beans; the coffee in a UK supermarket eventually cost the consumer \$26.40/kilo. European tariffs are low to non-existent for raw materials but high when goods are processed in the producer countries into more elaborate goods. Poor countries cannot compete in processing their own commodities so long as they face these high barriers. The European “Everything but Arms” policy has been a positive step which could inspire further beneficial changes.

EUROPEAN TRADE POLICIES AND EXPORTS TO AFRICA

Subsidies in the North can contribute to ruining small farmers. EU agricultural production is subsidised in the amount of about a billion euros a day. What proportion of those subsidies relates to products exported to African markets at prices below true costs of production? We need to know much more about the impact of European trade on small farmers and nascent industries in Africa, particularly the

coast of Africa has plummeted and small fisherman can no longer make a living. Many say that the depletion of stocks is due to overfishing by European industrial trawlers. Small fishermen are known to be selling their boats to the people-smuggling rings that use them to try to take migrants to the Canaries. The situation may be similar for countries bordering the Mediterranean [see box on this page].

CONSIDERATIONS

During and after the decolonisation process, formerly colonised and/or dependent countries produced many brilliant and charismatic leaders (present at Bandung and beyond....). These countries formed political groups like the Non-aligned Movement or the G-77. From the 1970s in particular, they called for a New International Economic Order; various UN documents like the 1981 “Brandt Report” seconded many of their demands. It looked for a time as if there might finally be a fairer distribution of wealth in the world and greater opportunity for emerging nations. The North was obliged at least to pay lip-service to the demands emerging from a newly confident South.

In 1974 at the FAO Rome World Food Conference, Henry Kissinger (fresh from engineering the coup in Chile) intoned that “Within a decade, no child will go to bed hungry, no family will fear for its next day’s bread...” Other conferences followed and the South thought, with some justification, that it was making progress. Gradually, however, the North, led by the United States, brought the situation back under control. Other dictatorships besides that of Pinochet were introduced and supported by the North and former colonisers often underpinned undemocratic and repressive regimes in Sub-Saharan Africa. In Jamaica in 1981, the newly elected president Ronald Reagan put a stop to the process of a New International Economic Order and greater autonomy once and for all.

The European Union as a comparatively new political entity has the opportunity to break with this inglorious past and show that it can not only cooperate but act as an advocate for permanent, equal partnerships with the South. Every ruined farmer, every unemployed youth, every fisherman without a livelihood is a candidate for migration. Europe can stop cutting off avenues to prosperity and development with its policies and make migration less necessary.

Naturally it would have to displace some more or less powerful European lobbies in the short term, but the benefits for Europeans as well as for the people of the South would be enormous. A fortress-Europe policy will not work and, under present circumstances at least, an “open borders” policy is politically unacceptable. The only other options are to reinforce the unsuccessful police-security-expulsion response with its train of inhumane measures and dismal record or to study present European practices and decide to eliminate abuses. Otherwise, no one—particularly no European official—should profess surprise in future as they witness the steady flow of incoming migrants..

Susan George is an author, Board Chair of the Transnational Institute, and Honorary President of Attac-France. This article is part of the Transnational Institute’s ongoing research in EU Trade Policy (www.tni.org).

“ IDEALLY, THE OVERARCHING GOAL OF EUROPEAN POLICY TOWARDS THE SENDING COUNTRIES SHOULD BE THAT OF THE HIPPOCRATIC OATH: “FIRST, DO NO HARM”. ”

mally to create huge numbers of jobs in the LDCs as well as allowing for much higher spending on health, education and other necessities. It would contribute to job creation in Europe as well, as former debtor countries began to be able to spend on capital goods, rather than on economically sterile interest payments.

COMMODITY PRICES AND TRADE

One of the most perverse impacts of debt is the export syndrome. All the indebted countries must earn hard currency to pay the interest owed and must therefore export. Particularly in Africa, indebted countries tend to export the same narrow range of primary products with the result that they produce more than markets can

dumping of subsidised products.

A few studies, particularly on dairy products, tomatoes and poultry, indicate that exports from Europe at unbeatably low prices have decimated local producers and processing industries [e.g. tomato paste production in Ghana]. Although there is significant literature concerning NAFTA—the North American Free Trade Agreement—and its impact on Mexican farmers, there seems to be little on EU impacts on African farmers.

European Union officials will probably be aware of persistent criticism of the EU’s present trade policies, whether in the WTO or in the various bilateral/multilateral agreements and EPAs [Economic Partnership Agreements], all of which contain detailed investment, raw-material access and government procurement provisions. The overwhelming bias towards the interests of European transnational corporations and the latter’s influence over EU trade policy seems in little doubt. EPAs have been challenged by a few African countries [Senegal, South Africa] but most are acquiescing and the Caribbean group of the ACP countries has already signed a full agreement.

The least the Commission could do would be to sponsor monitoring of the actual behaviour and impact of European transnational corporations, particularly raw-material extractors, in the migrant-sending countries. Several Latin American NGOs and researchers are at the moment studying the impact of European transnational corporations in Central and Latin America [see box on next page].

FISHERIES

The fish catch along the western

SENEGALESE FISHERMEN AND EUROPEAN BOATPEOPLE



FEDERICO GUERRIERI

Over 30,000 migrants have tried to reach Spain last year from Senegal shouting “Barça o Barsar” (Barcelona or death).

Fish is the primary source of food for the Senegalese, and sector that employs almost 20% of the population. The European Union’s trade and fisheries policies are accused of continuing to unsustainably use and exploit Senegal’s sea resources, handing

extensive fishing rights to European boats and thus creating unemployment among local fishermen and leading to a deterioration of Senegal’s marine ecosystem.

The government of Senegal in 2006 refused to renew its fishing agreement with the EU. But European fishermen—mostly from Spain and France—have found ways round the ban. They have been registering their boats as Senegalese, buying up quotas from local fishermen.

Gueye, President of the “Conseil Interprofessionnel de la pêche artisanale au Sénégal” (Conipas), a group of associations which defend the rights of independent workers, well sums up the situation: “Europe cannot close its eyes when its boats steal our fish and then complain when our young guys attempt to escape to the Canary Islands. There is a relation between the two facts”.



EUROPEAN MULTINATIONALS UNDER JUDGEMENT

A series of verdicts by the Permanent Tribunal of the People, culminating in a hearing at the European Parliament in Brussels in November 2009, finds several European multinationals guilty of human, labour, or environmental rights abuses, and puts under scrutiny the complicity of European commercial policy.

GIULIANA PISANI

The Permanent Tribunal of the People is an international tribunal of opinion, independent of all state authority. Promoted by the International Foundation Lelio Basso for the rights and liberation of the people, the Tribunal was founded the 24th June 1979 in Bologna, by a substantial group of jurists, writers, intellectuals and activists coming from 31 states and having amongst its members 5 Nobel Prize winners. The Tribunal finds its historical roots in the experience of the Russell Tribunal on the Vietnam war and

on the military regimes in Latin America. The verdicts given – 36 since 1979 – have a moral authority and are recognized by the Commission for Human rights at the United Nations. The examination of cases has its origin in the denunciation of violations of human rights and the rights of peoples by collectivities and by individuals, and it is the practice of the Tribunal to inform interested parties of its procedures, to give them every chance of defence.

In 2005 the Biregional European-Latin American network Enlazando Alternativas and the non governmental institute the Transnational Institute asked the Tribunal to judge several European subsidiary companies present in South America for the violation of the rights of access to essential services, of the right to land, of the right to food sovereignty, to security and to public health, trade union rights and work rights, and the rights of indigenous peoples. The denunciation presented to the Tribunal regarded the agro-alimentary sector, the agro-chemical, mineral and petroleum sectors, biochemicals, telecommunications, finance, and public services like electricity and public goods like water.

At the conclusion of the hearing, in May 2006 in Vienna, the Tribunal found that “The complexity and the seriousness of the reports and of the corresponding violations” required a more in depth hearing and the convocation of a formal session, entitled ‘Neoliberal politics and european multinationals in Latin America and in

the Caraiibbean’, which took place in Lima in May 2008. The testimonies at the session revealed how financial fluxes and direct European investments had widened the gap of social inequality, and had concentrated riches to a unprecedented level in the favour of the multinationals. The strategic document of the European Commission “Global Europe – competing in the world”, was seen to promote a new generation of bilateral agreements aiming to guarantee the interests of European multinational corporations abroad.

On the basis of these testimonies, the verdict in Lima morally sanctioned and denounced European multinationals for: serious, clear, and persistent violations of principles, norms, and international agreements in defense of civil, political, economic, social, cultural, and environmental rights of Latin American communities and peoples. The Lima session proposed that the member states of the European Union and the Union itself should ensure that all economic and cooperation agreements respect international conventions and UN declarations on fundamental rights, human development, democracy, and environmental protection.

On the 18th of November 2009 a hearing was held at the European Parliament in Brussels, with the participation of representatives of Enlazando Alternativas, the Permanent Tribunal of the People, and direct testimonies from victims of alleged human rights violations at the hands of the German TyssenKrupp and the Swiss Sygenta in Brazil, the Spanish Rio Blanco in Peru,

the Spanish Repsol in Nicaragua.

The Secretary General of the Permanent Tribunal of the People, Gianni Tognoni, concluded the institutional hearing calling for a greater involvement of the European Parliament in the following areas: the qualification of “crimes against humanity” the violations committed by multinational corporations; the setting up of an international organism based on participative democracy that would monitor the conduct of multinational corporations; adoption of a binding code of conduct for all European subsidiaries dealing with human and environmental rights. The MEPs present at the meeting agreed to monitor existing commercial agreements and agreements under negotiation between the European Commission and Latin American governments, and monitoring the conduct of European multinationals already condemned by the Permanent Tribunal of the People.

These proposals will be relaunched in May 2010 in Madrid where, as per the trials in Vienna and Lima, the final session of the Tribunal will be held, parallel with the summit of European and Latin American heads of state. This last session will have the task of qualifying the juridical responsibility of multinational corporations and of proposing an alternative path for European industrial and commercial expansion, one that refuses the primacy of economy over politics.

PARIS PHOTO 09:

The world’s leading fair for 19th Century, modern and contemporary photography, Paris Photo, closed on 22nd November with record numbers of visitors: 40,150, compared to 37,760 in 2008. The 2009 edition which brought together 102 exhibitors from 23 countries was held at the Carrousel du Louvre with a special focus on the Arab and Iranian photography scene. The 2009 edition of Paris Photo brought to light a particularly active contemporary scene rising out of the Arab world and Iran. At the same time, the fair placed photography in the context of its history in the region. On show were the traces of very first image taken in the Orient in 1839 presented by Serge Plantureux as well as the exhibition of photographs from the archives of the Arab Image Foundation in Beirut covering the period from 1870 to 1969. These served to demonstrate that contrary to what is often thought, there is a real passion for the image in this part of the world. In addition, the conferences by Catherine David and Mirjam Brusius on the expansion of photography in the Middle East provided opportunities to learn more about a scene that is still largely undocumented. The Statement section which brought together eight galleries from the region was met with enthusiasm, and within it, the Iranian artists in particular attracted serious attention. Tehran’s Silk Road Gallery did particularly well, selling all the works on show including four images by Bahman Jalali from his series “Images of Imagination” (See image page 12).

Image below:
Ramin Haerizadeh
Here Comes the Sunrise
2009
Mixed Media on Canvas, 200 x 220 cm
© Courtesy B21 Gallery and the Artist



NEW GREEN DEAL

Is Carbon Trading the Answer?

Climate change is not just an environmental issue – global warming affects social justice, poverty, and human rights. Water scarcity, food insecurity, and reduced agricultural productivity risk leading over 200 million people to be displaced by 2050.

European Alternatives believes that Europe can play an important role in fighting climate change, but it is necessary that the European Union sets stringent emission-reduction targets, forces members states to respect these targets, and acknowledges its responsibility for the damage caused to the environment and to third world countries during its

own industrialisation. An agreement should be immediately reached on a fair system of financial and technological assistance to developing countries, outside of pre-existing EU aid budget.

There are many discordant voices on how best to tackle climate change and reach a globally just agreement. Here we begin a series of confrontations by looking at the question of the carbon trading scheme, a system set up by the Kyoto protocol to allow companies to buy, sell, and trade pollution certificates within an overall total agreed by public authorities.

Graciela Chichilinsky proposes a modest innovation of the carbon market and a modest expansion of existing law to incorporate “negative carbon” technologies, something she believes would

provide substantial funding for Africa, Latin America, and small island states. Carlos Reyes, on the other hand, thinks that the carbon market has proven totally ineffective in curbing emissions, and has squarely played in the hands of industry and multinationals.

Follow the debate on our website,
www.euroalter.com

UNVEILING CARBON TRADING

NO

Carbon trading is a complex system which sets itself a simple goal: to make it cheaper for companies and governments to meet emissions reduction targets

OSCAR REYES AND TAMRA GILBERTSON

“Billions wasted on UN climate programme.” “Truth about Kyoto: huge profits, little carbon saved.” “UN effort to curtail emissions in turmoil.” Behind these headlines lies the tale of the growing failure of the main tool governments, financial institutions and corporations have adopted to address climate change. This is carbon trading – a multi-billion dollar scheme whose basic premise is that polluters can pay someone else to clean up their mess so that they don’t have to.

CAP AND TRADE

Carbon trading is a complex system which sets itself a simple goal: to make it cheaper for companies and governments to meet emissions reduction targets. It takes two main forms: “cap and trade” and “offsetting.”

Under “cap and trade” schemes, governments or transnational bodies like the European Commission hand out licenses to pollute (or “car-

bon permits”) to major industries. Instead of cleaning up its act, one polluter can then trade these permits with another who might make “equivalent” changes more cheaply. This is the approach underlying the European Union Emissions Trading Scheme (EU ETS), the world’s largest carbon market, which was worth US\$63 billion in 2008 and continues to expand rapidly.

The theory is that the availability of carbon permits will gradually be reduced, ensuring scarcity so that the market retains its value while at the same time forcing a reduction in the overall level of pollution. The cap part is supposed to do the work, environmentally speaking, setting a legal limit on levels of permissible pollution within a given time period. Each cap reduction is, in effect, a new regulatory measure introduced by governments and/or international bodies to restrict pollution further.

The “trading” (or “market-based”) component of such a scheme does not actually reduce any emissions. It simply gives companies greater room to manoeuvre in addressing the emissions problem, for which reason carbon trading proposals are sometimes also referred to as “flexible mechanisms”. Installations exceeding their reduction commitments can sell their surpluses to those who have failed to clean up their act adequately. Companies that want to keep on polluting save money, while in theory companies that are able to reduce beyond legal requirements will seize the chance to make money from selling their spare credits. But this flexibility comes at a cost – what is cheap in the short-term is not the same as what is effective in the long-term or environmentally and socially just.

In practice, the scheme has failed to incentivise emissions reductions. In the first phase of the EU ETS, which ran from 2005 to 2007, the ‘cap’ on emissions was set higher than the level of existing pollution as a result of industry lobbying. Prices collapsed, and no pollution was reduced.

In the second phase of the scheme, which began in 2008, prices rose to around €30 per ‘ton of CO₂ equivalent’ emissions, but have since crashed to around one-third of that level. The explana-

tion is relatively simple. Allocations were made on the assumption that European economies would keep growing, but the economic crisis has reduced output and power consumption, leaving companies with a surplus of permits. This problem was compounded by the inclusion of a significant number of “carbon offsets” within the EU ETS.

CARBON OFFSETS

Carbon offsetting is a second type of carbon trading. Instead of cutting emissions at source, companies, and sometimes international financial institutions, governments and individuals, finance “emissions-saving projects” outside the capped area. The UN-administered Clean Development Mechanism (CDM) is the largest such

“ INTRODUCING CARBON AS A COMMODITY HAS RESULTED IN NEW OPPORTUNITIES FOR PROFIT AND SPECULATION. ”

scheme, with almost 1,800 registered projects as of September 2009, and over 2,600 further projects awaiting approval. Based on current prices, the credits produced by approved schemes could generate over \$55 billion by 2012.

Although offsets are often presented as emissions reductions, they do not reduce emissions. Even in theory, they at most merely move reductions to where it is cheapest to make them, which normally means a shift from Northern to Southern countries. Pollution continues at one location on the assumption that an equivalent emissions saving will happen elsewhere. The projects that count as “emissions savings” range from building hydro-electric dams to capturing methane from industrial livestock facilities.

The carbon “savings” are calculated according to how much less greenhouse gas is presumed to be entering the atmosphere than would have been the case in the absence of the project. But even the World Bank officials, accounting firms, financial analysts, brokers, and carbon consultants involved in devising these projects often admit privately that no ways exist to demonstrate that it is carbon finance that makes the project possible. Researcher

Dan Welch sums up the difficulty: “Offsets are an imaginary commodity created by deducting what you hope happens from what you guess would have happened.” Since carbon offsets replace a requirement to verify emissions reductions in one location with a set of stories about what would have happened in an imagined future elsewhere, the net result tends to be an increase in greenhouse gas emissions.

A plethora of fossil fuel projects are also supported by the CDM. To apply for the scheme, a project simply needs to prove that it is cleaner than the norm for existing power production in the region or country where it is located. As new plants are generally more efficient than old, this is rarely a difficult task. A

recent study of new gas-fired power stations in China, for example, found that all twenty-four new Combined Cycle Gas Turbine plants under construction between 2005 and 2010 had applied for CDM subsidies. A second example involves new “supercritical” coal-fired power plants, which have been eligible for CDM credits since autumn 2007 – despite the fact that coal is amongst the most CO₂ intensive sources of power. This sets up a perversely circular structure where, instead of envisaging a rapid transition to clean energy, the CDM is subsidising the lock-in of fossil fuel dependence through providing incentives for new coal-fired power stations in the South, rather than renewable energy infrastructure based on local needs.

The use of “development” and “poverty” rhetoric to describe offsets masks their fundamental injustice: offsets hand a new revenue stream to some of the most highly polluting industries in the South, while simultaneously offering companies and governments in the North a means to delay changing their own industrial practices and energy usage. Carbon offset projects have also resulted in land grabs and the repression of local communities.

WAYS FORWARD

Introducing carbon as a commodity has resulted in new opportunities for profit and speculation. The carbon market is already developing the way of the financial market with the use of complex financial instruments (futures trading and derivatives) to hedge risk and increase speculative profit. This runs the risk of creating a “carbon bubble.” This is not a surprise, as it was created by many of the same people at the Chicago Climate Exchange who created the derivatives markets that led to the recent financial crash.

If a cleaner future is the goal, then the process should start elsewhere. At a global level, clean infrastructure investment tends to require upfront public funding – which should come largely from industrialised countries, since they predominantly caused the problem. Such funding is no guarantee of success, however, unless a decentralised structure is adopted which allows for meaningful citizens’ participation and sensitivity to local contexts – allowing for the adaptation and improvement of locally-adapted industrial and agricultural techniques, and engaging in a bottom-up assessment of real energy needs. This requires an urgent break from the carbon market model. Instead of stimulating new commodity markets, the targets and obligations placed on industrialised countries should be met domestically. A plethora of existing regulations, performance standards and incentives exist to help guide this path – ranging from “feed in tariffs” for renewables, to emissions output limits on power producers and heavy industry. But these, in turn, will not be enough unless we return the focus to how current industrial and agricultural models have caused climate change. Instead of adapting the climate debate to existing economic models, we need to look at climate change of a symptom of their failure and explore genuinely sustainable ways to move beyond them..

*This article is based on the forthcoming publication: Carbon Trading: how it works and why it fails, which can be downloaded from <http://www.carbontradewatch.org/carbon-trade-fails>

CARBON TRADING WORKS – FOR BOTH RICH AND POOR

Improvements in the carbon market are the only realistic and immediate method of fighting climate change.

GRACIELA CHICHILNISKY

The risks at stake are potentially catastrophic. Millions of climate refugees are expected in 2010, a total of 200 million by 2012. The 42 small island states that make up 25% of the United Nations are the most vulnerable: they contemplate a future where their home land sinks under the warming seas. Entire towns in Alaska are already sinking in the melting permafrost. Africa faces draughts, floods and increased malaria cases due to changing weather patterns. Australia – the world’s oldest continent – is in the midst of the longest draught in its history.

It is well known that developing nations – who emit a minority of the world emissions – will bear the brunt of climate change. Their populations are most exposed to the elements and depend on weather patterns for their food and shelter. But in the

future, by burning its own coal, Africa could unwillingly cause trillions of dollars in damages to the US, as shown by a recent OECD study that identifies Miami Florida as the worlds’ most vulnerable city, with potential global warming losses of US\$3.3 trillion, followed by Zhanghai with US2.3 trillion. For the first time we are all in this together. There is nowhere to hide.

World opinion seems gripped by the seriousness of the situation. Yet the global decision making process seems conflictive and as uncertain as ever. What we need is a system allowing reductions in emissions and the flexibility of trading emissions rights, as in the carbon market that I designed and drafted into the Protocol in Kyoto in December 1997. The carbon market started trading in 2005, and is now trading US\$120 billion in carbon credits at the European Union Trading System, growing by leaps and bounds and expected to become the largest commodity market in the world. Even the US House of Representatives voted this year – in the Markey-Waxman Energy Bill – to duplicate at home the Kyoto Protocol’s own features: its emissions limits and the ability of trading these in a US based “cap and trade” system. The Kyoto Protocol took decades to negotiate. Recreating from scratch a brand new global system would seem a recipe for disaster. Redoing the basic provisions of the Kyoto Protocol would require agreement by almost 200 nations and seems an irrational compulsion for rein-

venting the wheel. We need solutions fast, rather than excuses for further procrastination.

The carbon market has demonstrated it can help curtail carbon emissions and change the world economy for the better by increasing the prices of carbon producing goods and services and making cleaner ones – think high-mileage automobiles – more desirable and profitable. Its Clean Development Mechanism – which provides a way for developing nations to participate in the trading process and be rewarded by private investment – has achieved an additional US\$25 billion in clean investment projects in developing nations in the last 3-4 years. Yet the EU Parliament seems bound to dismantle or at

least severely limit the Clean Development Mechanism and its investments that go to developing nations – a short sighted vision of what can be achieved. The reason adduced is that real change is needed rather than investments that replace European change by changes in developing nations.

This is however just the opposite of what is needed for developing nations to execute emissions reductions, and achieve a show of global unity in a new form of sustainable development. In reality what we need is a way to fund more clean invest-

ments in developing nations that change the power plant structure in the global economy – which is a US\$50 trillion infrastructure according to the International Energy Agency. This is a project where the EU can act as an underwriter, favoring investments in energy plants that power economic development and thus help fight poverty – while sucking carbon from air to reduce the risk of global warming. This year the UK Royal Society published a report on ‘air capture technologies’ and can achieve just that: build power plants that suck carbon from air and reduce more carbon than they emit. Called ‘negative carbon’ these technologies are now needed – according to most scientists they are the only way

to overcome the enormous risks from climate change. Reducing emissions does not suffice any longer – we have procrastinated too long. Now we must reduce carbon in the atmosphere directly. For this we need an enlarged CDM program, not a reduced one. The EU could be well served with an enlarged CDM – one that could see the EU in the role of an underwriter of profitable private investments in the world economy, and an exporter of technology that creates valuable jobs at home.

The ongoing confrontation between developing and industrialized nations is now sharply identified with the impasse between China and the US, the world’s superpowers who are also the world’s largest emitters – each demanding reductions in emissions from the other in a replay of last century’s Cold War conflict. The times are different, the weapons are different – but the situation is the same.

Lost in this increasingly divided world is the future of the world’s climate – which is essential for the survival of any species and perhaps also our own. What we need is a show of world unity, a way to overcome our differences, and the cruel global divide – where over 1.3 billion people live today at the border of survival with less than \$1 per day. The Clean Development Mechanism and new carbon negative technologies can help achieve just that and Europe can play a critical role in making this a reality. It can be done, it should be done – and it is probably the only thing that will work..

“ THE CARBON MARKET HAS DEMONSTRATED IT CAN HELP CURTAIL CARBON EMISSIONS AND CHANGE THE WORLD ECONOMY FOR THE BETTER. ”



Photo: Gilbert Rodriguez- Gilbert R. /Flick

GIULIANO BATTISTON

INTERVIEW WITH SEYLA BENHABIB

Celebrated critical theorist Seyla Benhabib discusses the meaning of transnational institutions and citizenship, and the status of contemporary migrations.

Some people and scholars maintain that restrictions on immigration are necessary, in order to protect a country's political and legal culture and its constitutional principles. Instead, you have often asserted that the presence of individuals whose cultural identities differ from the majority can strengthen a society's constitutional laws - leading "to a deepening and widening of the schedule of rights in liberal democracies" -, thanks to what you call a "jurisgenerative politics". Could you explain it to us?

SB: According to me, an immigrant person introduces a new subjectivity into the host society, and brings in a set of new demands. If we look through some of the most sensitive questions recently to have come out across Europe - the *hijab*, polygamy and the debate about the setting of courts or legislations consistent with *sharia* - we realize that these cases emerge from a profound cultural challenge that could be productive. Democratic liberalism finds itself on principles and values: the constitution fixes some principles, which in their turn reflect fundamental values about nature and human dignity. It is anyway necessary to

bear in mind that values are abstract and place themselves on what we could call a regulatory level. In every specific case, we should identify some values and principles that are more fundamental than others and, according to them, handle different ways of living within our cultures. Obviously, there can be principles of incompatibility: for instance, I do not accept the principle of polygamy, because I believe it is not egalitarian, it violates gender equality and women's dignity. But there are also occasions when our disagreement must be subordinated to attempts to find a "human" solution to certain problems. It is just in these attempts that a jurisgenerative practice is produced: there is a "jurisgenerative praxis" whenever there is a confrontation with new subjectivities and demands, which allow us - or forces us - to rethink the true basis of our constitutional principles, and sometimes pushes us towards a new and diverse articulation of our fundamental values. This usually occurs when we discuss issues such as equality, when we question ourselves about the legitimacy of wearing *hijab* at workplaces or the legitimacy of homosexual marriages.

GB: You have extensively examined the ways migratory processes have transformed the institutions of citizenship in contemporary Europe. And you have written that, "despite the wishes for a coherent immigration and asylum policy at the intergovernmental level of EU institutions, legal and institutional conditions for immigrants and asylees vary widely among member countries". What you believe to be the causes of this lack of homogeneity?

SB: It is worth remembering that immigration has always had much to do with history and the construction of national identity. If the United Kingdom and Spain nowadays have to deal with dif-

"MIGRATIONS HAVE STARTED BEING A PROBLEM ONCE NATION-STATES DECIDED TO EXERT CONTROL ON BORDERS IN A CENTRALIZED MANNER. WHAT'S TRAGICALLY IRONIC IS THAT EVERYTHING CAN CROSS BORDERS - OFTEN EVADING THE STATE'S CONTROL: MONEY, NEWS, VIRUSES."

ferent problems, this is due also to their different histories. Thus, facing immigration-related issues, every country somehow faces its history, which in its turn is influenced by migrations. But let me go back to the specific frame of the European Union's problems: the status of those who come from a third country depends on the corpus of laws and regulations in force in any European country. Recently, a directive has

been issued that aims to define "civil citizenship" for those who belong to third countries: it acknowledges the necessity of making compatible the rights of all individuals residing in Europe, including those who do not enjoy a full political citizenship. In *The Rights of Others* I've underlined the wide variation within the EU concerning social and cultural rights, which depend mostly on

" HOW CAN INDIVIDUALS WHO HAVE LIVED IN A COUNTRY FOR THIRTY OR FORTY YEARS BE EXCLUDED FROM DEMOCRATIC PARTICIPATION AND DENIED THEIR RIGHT TO EXPRESS THEMSELVES? IT IS A SERIOUS MENACE FOR THE CONTINENT'S DEMOCRATIC STRUCTURE."

the social and juridical formations of every country. Generally, there have been attempts at overcoming juridical and social fragmentation, but areas where differences are excessive still exist. I refer, for instance, to the right to vote in local or regional elections and generally to political rights. In some European countries, such as Holland and Ireland, long-term residents have the right to vote for local and sometimes even regional elections, while this right is not granted by countries hosting the majority of immigrants, such as Austria, Germany and France. It's a problem of democracy and representation: how can individuals who have lived in a country for thirty or forty years be excluded from democratic participation and denied their right to express themselves? It is a serious menace for the continent's democratic structure.

GB: "Immigration and asylum issues - you wrote in *The Rights of Others* - remain time bombs in the hands of demagogues and right-wing politicians, ready to explode at very short notice". Contrary to demagogues and right-wing politicians, you believe that "the extension of full human right to these individuals and the decriminalization of their status is one of the most important tasks of cosmopolitical justice in our world". How could this duty be fulfilled?

SB: First of all, we should stop condemning migrants as if they were criminals. Also, we should acknowledge the change: the condition of refugees is changing, because they're mostly economic refugees, as we have seen, and not political refugees. Still, people usually say we should not "concede" too much to economic refugees, and we should instead engage to make them reach a higher standard of living (and this is right, even though not enough). But there's something we really need, that is opening our minds and admitting that migration is a universal human condition, not an exception, and that human history exists only thanks to migrations. Migrations are not a recent product of modern times, while the territorial regime of sovereign States is. Migrations have started being a problem once nation-States decided to exert control on borders in a centralized manner.

What's tragically ironic is that everything can cross borders - often evading the State's control: money, news, viruses. But human beings keep being persecuted by the State through military and police forces. If only we widened our moral horizons, we'd stop regarding migrants as dangerous individuals who make an attempt against our societies' integrity, and we would think of them as

strangers in need, who press for the universal host's duty. This does not mean we should automatically allow them to be part of the community we live in, but it should help us to understand that strangers are not enemies, but human beings whom we have the moral duty to assist and aid. Also, we cannot ignore the issues of global distributive justice, since in most cases world migrations are closely connected to economic problems, even if we often forget to analyse these connections. This concerns increasing migrations from Mexico to the United States, as determined by Nafta agreement that has excluded from the market Mexican farmers unable to cope with the competition of American products; but it concerns also some African migrants, who try to reach Mediterranean countries. Among migrants, in fact, some slogans read: "We're here, in your countries, because you've been there, in our countries", "We have not crossed the border, the border has crossed our lives". Thus, if we wish to achieve a cosmopolitan, global justice, we should examine the interdependence between the economic and distributive dimensions and migrations. To do so, we need to understand how big actors, such as the International Monetary Fund, the World Trade Organisation or the World Bank structure the global economy. After reaching this new sociological view about the way institutions organize the global system in terms of cooperation and competition, we could raise the question of global justice. Obviously, solutions to these issues cannot be delegated to single States, since they are "autistic" and tend to think mostly of themselves, nor to a sort of world council, hierarchically structured. We should turn to cosmopolitan federalism: some decisions are to be taken at a subnational level and others at a transnational level, in a coordinated way.

GB: In the introduction to *The Rights of Others* you wrote that we have entered an era when "the boundaries of the political community, as defined by the nation-state system, are no longer adequate to regulate membership". Several interpretations are given to the crisis of the Westphalian model of State sovereignty and subsequent changes in the forms



SEYLA BENHABIB

Seyla Benhabib (born 1950, Istanbul) is a professor of political science and philosophy at Yale, and director of the program in Ethics, Politics, and Economics, and a well-known contemporary philosopher. She is the author of several books, most notably about the philosophers Hannah Arendt and Jürgen Habermas. She has also worked with many important philosophers and scholars, including Herbert Marcuse. Benhabib is well known for combining critical theory with feminist theory. She also serves on the editorial advisory board for the Ethics & International Affairs.

of citizenship and membership. Could you expound the main mistakes of what you call "the decline-of-citizenship school"?

SB: This school has been named after David Jacobson's *Rights Across Borders: Immigration and the Decline of Citizenship*, and gathers all those authors who believe migrations to be radically altering the relations between the State and its citizens. I have got "sociological" objections to the supporters of the "decline of citizenship": they do not realize, in fact, that the decline of the meaning of citizenship is not due to migrations but probably to that reconfiguration of political spaces which is the basis of migrations themselves. Anyway, citizenship is even to me a really serious concept, I believe it to be a quite important form of membership. But I think there are several nuances of citizenship, membership and participation. I do not agree with theorists like Sandell, according to whom citizenship is the only relevant element of individuals' public or political identity, nor do I agree with cosmopolitan theorists of hybridism, like Homi Bhabha. Unlike the latter, I believe there will always be a relation between political "engagement" we accept towards a Constitution and its institutions and principles. As an American citizen, I have got duties towards the US political community; but I was born in Turkey, a country in whose history I'm still deeply involved, so I'm very serious also about my commitment towards Turkish society, even if I can not express it through my vote. At the same time, I am a cosmopolite, and I believe in European conventions. We need to be more conscious of the multiple forms of our belong-

ing. Also, we should pay more attention to the way these forms may reciprocally influence one another, sometimes conjugating, other times interfering.

GB: The trend towards the fragmentation of citizenship thus becomes “an inescapable aspect of contemporary globalization”, and can turn out to be productive. But you underline that relations

why it could become more “effective” than any other progressive alternative. Thus, the transnational character is not enough to give birth to a democratic citizenship, which needs to base itself on democratic principles, to be consolidated through what we call democratic iterations. That is to say, through those mechanisms such as local and regional vote. I firmly believe in the idea that di-

“IN A DEMOCRACY, IN FACT, EACH CITIZEN IS REQUIRED TO COMMIT FOR OTHER CITIZENS, FOR HIS OR HER CHILDREN, FOR A SHARED FUTURE WITHIN A SHARED FORM OF LIFE. OF COURSE, IT IS AN AMBITIOUS IDEA OF DEMOCRACY AND IN FACT MANY PEOPLE ARE DISCUSSING ABOUT “POST-DEMOCRACY”.”

and multiple allegiances across nation-state boundaries can produce a democratic citizenship “if, and only if, they are accompanied by active involvement with and attachment to representative institutions, which exhibit accountability and transparency”. Do you mean we should reconfigure and strengthen citizenship through what you call “democratic iterations”?

SB: Movements crossing the borders of nation-States do not concern only the people we’d like to live with. Islamist jihadism, for instance, works on a transnational level, and this is exactly


rect participation and the guarantee that all individuals have their say about decisions that concern them are the best instruments to make them stakeholders, as they say. We have seen the results of state politics marginalizing the outsiders: the increase of extreme right movements, neo-Nazis in Germany and neo-Fascists in Italy, Islamist groups among European migrants, movements that draw inspiration from the deepest and most dangerous feelings of marginalisation and oppression. If we want to defuse the dangers these movements represent, we should let all individuals have their say, support

their participation to public issues, integrate them, articulate all demands within a legitimate and transparent framework, until each individual becomes an actor of the public sphere.

GB: You maintain that a people’s homogeneity and territorial self-sufficiency and autochtony are false ideals. Yet, you keep believing in “a crucial link between democratic self-governance and territorial representation”, because “empires have frontiers, democracies have borders”. Why do you think there is no way “to cut the Gordian knot linking territoriality, representation and democratic voice”? In other words, if we assume – like you do – that territorial regimes of clearly delimited sovereign States are recent products of modernity, why can’t we imagine a new “political” product, less bound to territorial demarcation but still democratic?

SB: Representation can run across several roads: we can be represented according to our benefits, our profession, our abilities, by many organisations and associations. In this sense, representation does not need to base itself on territoriality, and rather recalls identity. But democratic representation bases itself on a choice: the choice of living together a common life, the firm belief that our common life’s is-

issues must be regulated, our common interests must be organised according to shared principles; the idea that the laws we submit to are the same for everyone, and we consider them to be our laws: this is why, submitting to them, we do not give up our freedom. Now, let’s see the Gordian knot: living territorially together on the basis of a shared project involving future generations means that our common life contains something really important. The fact that other people may join us is not under discussion, but this implies an engagement to equality, to a form of generational continuity, the ability to consider the laws to which we submit as our own laws, and the possibility of having our say about their definition. This is the heart of democracy, which can be declined in several ways. But this should not lead us to mistake these forms of membership for the specific forms of an association: being a citizen of a democracy is different from being a member of the World Philosophical Association. In a democracy, in fact, each citizen is required to commit for other citizens, for his or her children, for a shared future within a shared form of life. Of course, it is an ambitious idea of democracy and in fact many people are discussing about “post-democracy”. But thinking that the limited number of people adhering to this ambitious form of democracy can jus-

tify a lowering of its demands is extremely dangerous. This is why I keep asking for a strong definition of democratic citizenship. According to me, democracy is not a mere association promoting economic interests, but – as John Rawls would say – a lasting scheme of cooperation, which implies a form of “constitutional essentialism” and the fundamental structures of societies; and I do not see how other forms of representation can satisfy democratic criteria, among which there is undoubtedly territoriality, a form of continuity and commitment for a shared future. This does not leave out any innovative political solution, such as the institution of a world parliament, but it links such a representation to a territorial demarcation. 

BELOW: FROM PARIS PHOTO 2009
Laila Essaydi, 2008
Les femmes du Maroc: Harem Beauty #2
Chromogenic print mounted to aluminium
© Courtesy Edwynn Houk Gallery, New York

Continued from page 7
Central Europe guest of honour in 2010:
In 2010 Paris Photo, to be held from 18th to 21st November, will continue to look towards the East with Central Europe as guest of honour. This will include Poland, Hungary, Czech Republic, Slovakia and Slovenia. Art critic and curator Nataša Petrešin-Bachelez (born in 1976 in Ljubljana) has been asked to lead the project. She is currently working on “Les Promesses du Passé” (Promises of the Past), an exhibition to be held at the Pompidou Centre in the Spring of 2010 focussing on contemporary art from Central and Eastern Europe.
www.parisphoto.fr



GISÈLE SAPIRO

THE INTELLECTUAL SPACE IN EUROPE



Bahman Jalali, Image of Imagination 2, 2003 © Courtesy Silk Road Gallery, Tehran. Shown at the ParisPhoto exhibition.

The cradle of nationalism, Europe can be a laboratory for rethinking cultural diversity in a global denationalized world: this is the challenge to intellectuals in Europe.

The European Union is a political and economic construction, but despite insistent calls from the European commission or the European Science Foundation to scholars, or to creators, to reflect on the building of such an identity, there still seems to be a cultural void. The attempts to create a 'collective imagination', with anthologies, collections and series have had a limited impact. It is all the more paradoxical considering that an intellectual tradition in Europe existed long before the emergence of national identities.

EUROPEAN CULTURE: FROM HOMOGENEITY TO DIVERSITY

European culture was based on the humanist culture developed by secular men of letters during the Renaissance, a hybrid of Christian and Greco-Roman heritage, including some elements of other cultures like Arabic. This common culture was challenged first by the division of intellectual labour and by the rise of the scientific paradigm, which contested the authority of religion. The struggle between the two cultures, science and the humanities, started in the early 19th Century and has been continuing since then, as sci-

familiar, from colonialism to the two World Wars, and then to the ethnic wars.

Because of the central role assigned to culture, the construction of national identities depended very strongly on intellectuals as producers of collective representations – men of letters, publicists and social thinkers. Whether announcing a radiant future or nostalgic for a lost past, these intellectuals endorsed the role of prophets of the modern world. This construction took place in the framework of an ever more intense international competition, with Europe as its centre, and the model circulated from one country to another in a mimetic process. The nationalization of culture was strongly related to the acculturation of the people and to the expanding of education. In contrast to the cultural elites, who frequently mastered more than one central language, the underprivileged classes spoke local languages. The development of the book market fostered this phenom-

enon of nationalization of culture. It was fed not only with folk culture but also with that of the colonized countries. Romanticism imported elements from Asiatic and Arabic cultures, which were labelled "orientalism". In the early 20th Century, the Modern artists discovered African art. Although it was defined as "primitive", the recognition of other cultures began challenging the still prevailing representation of civilization as a unique historical process and opened a space for cultural relativism.

Today, the intellectual space in Europe is characterized by diversity, be it linguistic, cultural or in terms of specialization. This diversity is considered as an obstacle to the construction of a European space, driven by economic and administrative logic, which tend both towards homogenisation. Moreover, most intellectuals find their audience mainly at the national level. This situation results in large part from linguistic and cultural reasons, but not only. The autonomy that the intellectual space gained with regard to the expectations of the economic and political powers, as well as the lesson drawn from the experience of a blood-stained past and the deconstruction of national ideologies, no doubt also explain why Europe has not found its army of prophets. Experts in law, economy and political science rather than philosophers or creators were involved in the construction of the European community, thus intensifying among the populations the sense of dispossession and exclusion from a process carried out over their heads. In addition to this intellectual division of labour between memory, ethics and public policy, the social recognition of cultural as well as epistemic

pluralism induced a more relativistic stand, which confronts the paradigm of universalism.

THE ROLE OF INTELLECTUALS IN EUROPE

What then could or should be the role of intellectuals in the new European entity, other than expertise or collective identity building? There is one major function which is at the core of the European intellectual legacy: it

“ HOW CAN CULTURE BE DENATIONALIZED WITHOUT CURTAILING CULTURAL DIVERSITY? ”

is the critical function. This function was embodied by the figure of the public intellectual, claiming for his autonomy, as opposed to those who serve the political power, and for his responsibility in the democratic regime. Theorized by Sartre after the Second World War, this conception of the public intellectual was redefined, in France, by Foucault and later by Bourdieu.

Besides the global fight against neo-liberalism or specific political issues, the role of intellectuals could be, rather than to build a new collective identity, to contribute to denationalize the categories of thinking while keeping alive cultural diversity. One way of doing it would be to teach how these categories were built, in the past, and how they still underlie our vision of history and of culture. Another one would be to modify the curricula in strategic disciplines such as history and literature, which have been the locus of national indoctrination.

But there is also a risk in promoting a denationalized approach to culture, that intellectuals should

be aware of. The risk is to ignore the power relation between cultures and, consequently, to reinforce cultural hegemonies. As a result of the unequal distribution of symbolic capital (i.e. prestige) among cultures, some of them have a higher chance to gain international or global recognition. This is the consequence of the concentration of the cultural industries around a few big cities. The chance for a creator to accede to them depends not only on his cultural assets but also on geographic and social distance.


While in art the market has become global, the national framework still prevails in literature. This is also

“ THERE IS ONE MAJOR FUNCTION WHICH IS AT THE CORE OF THE EUROPEAN INTELLECTUAL LEGACY: IT IS THE CRITICAL FUNCTION. ”

true, though to a lesser extent, of the human and social science, as illustrated by the existence of national journals as well as national associations. The unequal power relation between cultures might be illustrated by the translation flows: the more a culture is dominant, the more books are translated from it. This is not only the result of the economic balance of power within the global book market, but also of political and cultural factors, like the role States play in intercultural exchanges (supporting national culture), or the symbolic capital that older cultures like the French, the English and the German have accumulated. The risk in globalization, or even Europeanisation of these markets, is to increase rather to diminish this unequal distribution. This is what happened on the world book market in the past twenty years: the share of translations from English into other languages has increased from 45% in the 1980s to 59% in the 1990s (according to the number of translated titles), reduc-

ing the visibility of books written in other languages.

How can culture be denationalized without curtailing cultural diversity? That might be the challenge European intellectuals should undertake. The cradle of nationalism, Europe can be a laboratory for rethinking cultural diversity in a global denationalized world. In parallel way, European intellectuals have to develop more equal exchanges with the former colonies. This implies concretely to support the development of alternative channels of cultural production and diffusion, and means of collaboration, like co-publishing.

Thus the critical role of the intellectuals in Europe today implies the denationalisation of culture while unveiling the principles of domination not only on a social, economic and political level, but also on a cultural one. This is the only way to preserve cultural diversity without sticking to a nationalist frame.  Gisèle Sapiro, sociologist. Editor of L'Espace intellectuel en Europe, XIXe-XXIe siècles : de la formation des Etats-nations à la mondialisation, Paris, La Découverte, 2009.

“ WHILE IN ART THE MARKET HAS BECOME GLOBAL, THE NATIONAL FRAMEWORK STILL PREVAILS IN LITERATURE. ”

ence was gaining more and more social recognition and authority. Born soon after, the human and social sciences are still torn between them.

But more than the division of intellectual labour, the European culture was challenged by the building of national identities. In the following century this new principle of cohesion, which supplanted religion to form abstract territorially-based entities, led to the murderous consequences with which we are all too

enon of nationalization of culture. Thus the extension of the public of readers in Europe implied a linguistic segmentation.

At the same time, colonialism extended the linguistic areas and the diffusion of European culture to other parts of the world, using humanist universalism as a justification. This brought about the third factor of disintegration of what had been a relatively united European culture. While it was splitting into national entities,

JOAN MIQUEL GUAL
& FRANCESCO SALVINI

BE NETWORK, MY FRIEND

In the context of changing forms of power and control, the network is fertile ground for the rediscovery of autonomous action and the reinvention of political subjectivity.

In Europe a new form of governing emerged. Government today acts on different levels at the same time: it permeates urban spaces and rearticulates borders in the everyday life of cities, it polarises pre-existing power relations, building new dependences in the contemporary geography of Europe. As a result the asymmetries of former Europe have not disappeared at all, but ruptures and fringes emerge every day and marginality and centrality exist one alongside the other.

This is the way in which contemporary capitalism is constituting a global market: playing on asymmetries for multiplying labour regimes and fragmenting social struggles. This proliferation of modes of exploitation stems in the crisis of unions, parties, welfare state and more generally, we would say, in the crisis of those political institutions based on belonging and representation, in times when belonging has blown up and representation has become the impossible attempt to discipline social heterogeneity, reducing difference and social life under the command of capital.

The asymmetric constitution of Europe towards the outside – manifest in the differential inclusion of Eastern Europe, as well as in the permanent production of outsides to reproduce European power – involves a becoming- asymmetric not only in the colony, in the outside, but also in the metropolis itself. This is the everyday life of European urban areas: the models of integration defined in Maastricht, Bologna, Amsterdam and Schengen dictate policies of exclusion and valorisation, of control and discipline, imposing a process of general precarisation of social life and urban production. The development of gentrification, the proliferation of internal borders and the securitarian obsession of urban governance display novel procedures of government aiming to multiply labour regimes

and exploit every segment of society as much as possible, depending on the vulnerability of each subject, on her fragility, or, as we might put it, on her precarity.

Our question here is what social strategy of *organizing* can escape this multiplication of modes of exploitations not by recomposing unity, identity and homogeneity, but permitting difference, precarity, vulnerability to become a departure point for radical politics? For this we will focus just on one facet, an ongoing experimentation that, we think, has been relevant in the development of autonomous social struggles during the last decade: networks not only as a tool, but as a *plane of consistency* for contemporary autonomous practices, in the invention of new forms of social cooperation among differences, for constituting new institutional forms able to reinvent social cooperation in the crisis of classical institutions, in the constitution of what we call “monster institutions”.

This is in our view a productive take on the recent history of social movements in Europe that since the early 1990s started to criss-cross the European spaces, weaving webs and nets to transform the forms of organisation and open new territories of struggle. This is the case of the movements against unemployment from 1994 to 1997 where basic income became a claim to develop practices on social rights outside the strict dimension of labour; this is also the case of struggles for mobility, that challenged on the European level the violent and ambiguous link between citizenship and rights (Sans Papiers, 1996, kein mensch ist illegal in Documenta, 1997), going beyond issues of culture and inscribing citizenship in the diagram of the governance of labour and in labour struggles. From 1997 to 2001 these network practices allowed the organisation of a cycle of mobilisations against global capitalism and have been crucial in the invention of political spaces for naming and constituting new rights. Freedom of movement, basic income, care-ship (*cuidadania*)¹ should be concrete goals of a new set of institutions: the institutions for the commons. In this sense movements invented ‘network-institutions’, as transversal groupings of new institutional forms that attempt to fight the governance of life and to open new spaces of autonomy and emancipation, where the question of programme – *what is to be done?* – radically collapses into the present.

Network institutions have therefore to be analysed in their everyday functioning, in their proceedings as social machines; as social practices and social constructions, and not as instituted and crystallised spaces. If cut through this optic, networks appear as sites for the production of critique as gestures that challenge the procedures of governing from a critical inside, opening the space to constitute norms and institutions for a ‘new’ community.

But how can a practice of critique challenge and reinvent the functioning of social institutions? How can critique be an instituting practice if not by contrasting crystallisation and by permanently displacing the production of organisation out of disciplined and instituted spaces? This is what we refer to when we write on the ‘extradisciplinary’ and ‘extrainstitutional’ address of autonomous political practices: the everyday practice of translation and excess happening in the weaving of networks, aiming to produce assemblages beyond the instituted spaces, and constitute new commonalities.

To exceed the institution, to exceed the discipline: this is the task of the political practices that explore possible escapes from the forms of contemporary capitalist governance. Nonetheless to *exceed* does not mean to leave behind, forget or refuse: it means to go beyond, overflow. Exceed as a practice for composing new sites for the production of situated knowledge and social cooperation able to open breaches where statements emerging in social mobilisations can proliferate.

Extra allows us to deal with the *beyond*, both in the physical meanings of the term – beyond the bureaucracies, beyond the walls of the institutions, in the open space of the metropolis

sciences (the royal sciences of the state) through the molecular acting of minor sciences (*nomadic sciences*), where knowledge becomes a situated process of production, that concretely modifies social reality, not formally, but in its everyday functioning.

This is why we think the most problematic task is not how to escape towards the outside, the outside of the hegemonic representation, but how to break the representation from the inside: how do we escape *inside* and challenge the functioning of the contemporary rationality of government? How do we invent a subversive and monstrous institutionality that interacts with existing institutions and traditional disciplines?

“ TO EXCEED THE INSTITUTION, TO EXCEED THE DISCIPLINE: THIS IS THE TASK OF THE POLITICAL PRACTICES THAT EXPLORE POSSIBLE ESCAPES FROM THE FORMS OF CONTEMPORARY CAPITALIST GOVERNANCE AS A PRACTICE FOR COMPOSING NEW SITES FOR THE PRODUCTION OF SITUATED KNOWLEDGE AND SOCIAL COOPERATION [...] ”

– and in theoretical terms, exceeding the borders of *discipline* as canon of knowledge, as authority in the social production of knowledge.


Autonomy is not enough. If we want to constitute dissident spaces for the production of subjectivities that do not respond to the order of government and to the command of capital, we need to constitute new *hybrid ecologies* for dissident socialities. We need to move on the margins, inside and outside institutions, in order to overwhelm and overcome them, in order to develop monstrous political practices, able to break the false coherence of representation and to challenge the discipline of major

This movement of subversion indeed needs not only to reappropriate the social values produced inside institutions and disciplines, but also to show the limits, the crises and the dramatic finitude of the contemporary institutional assemblages.

Practices generate contradictions and our experience is not an exception. But inside the privatization of the public and in the reduction of social autonomous production to the rules of capitalist accumulation, monster institutions want to be an attempt to constitute new textures that tie life and politics: to produce new territories of social existence, to permit excess, to avoid becoming a sur-

plus, to claim and construct dissident and alternative life-forms where freedom, solidarity and life itself can gain new meanings beyond market regulation and political representation. This is for us the institutional generative principle of the processes in which the Universidad Nomada participates.

Social centres, and networks for militant research, are spaces in which to reinvent the forms of cultural production, the relationship between life and labour, and are attempts to reconfigure social struggles in the enlargement of production from the factory to social life, and finally as sites for the production of autonomous knowledge, to demystify the functioning of contemporary capitalism but also to problematise the strategies of social movements.

In this process, *extra* is a constitutive prefix for the invention of monstrous institutions: extra as viral practice against the permanent attempt at normalisation and abstraction carried on by capital. *Extra* is a constituent practice that explores the emergent territory of the right to the commons. Mending on these margins, exceeding and exploring, network institutions emerge as spaces of invention to actualise these commons, to loot and reappropriate the social values circulating in the instituted spaces, and at the same time making possible the invention and proliferation of radically democratic processes of organization for social production. 

Footnote:

1. Cuidadania as a term plays with words: from ciudad (city) to cuidado (care), from ciudadania (citizenship) to cuidadania. It resulted from a typographical error and has been useful to define the practices of feminists networks working on care labour, especially in problematizing the link between citizenship and transnational care.

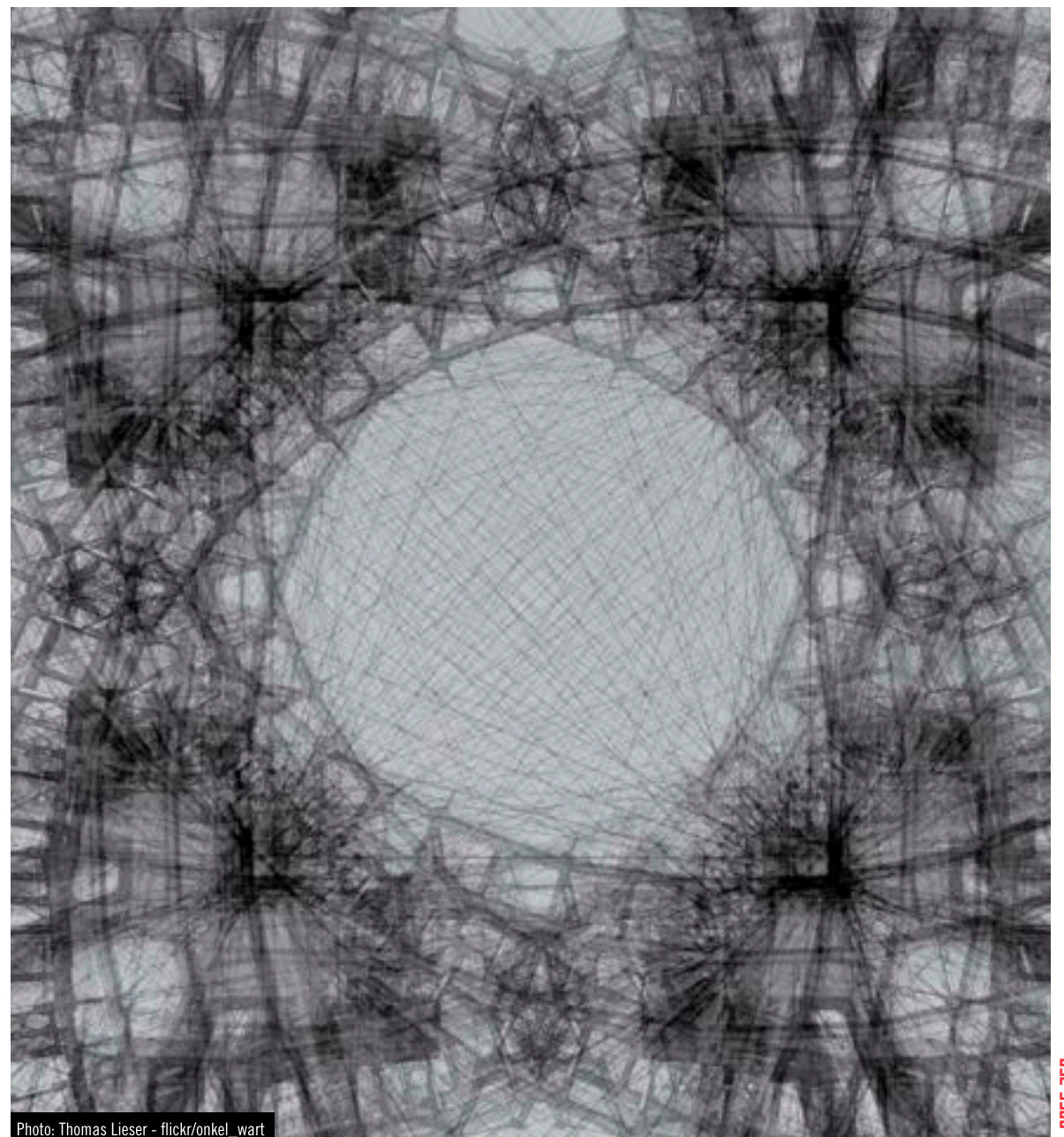


Photo: Thomas Lieser – flickr/onkel_wart

CLAUDIO MAGRIS

REAL AND IMAGINARY BORDERS:

Acceptance speech of the Peace Prize of the German Book Trade

Everything conspires to convince us that war is necessary and that we must resign ourselves to it. But it must not be so.

You can find many strange things in the large storage halls, depots and courtyards of an old abandoned barracks in Trieste. Some are lined up next to one another, and some are scattered about untidily, almost like the skeletons of sea monsters a tsunami has washed ashore. There are discarded tanks, slit-open submarines, anti-tank guns, armoured reconnaissance vehicles and airplanes with broken wings. Smaller war relicts are on display in other rooms: dented tin bowls, torn-off field-telephone receivers, cartridge containers, steel helmets and heaps of war posters. These spaces

were once the realm of an eccentric professor named Diego de Henriquez, who devoted his entire life to collecting untold amounts of war material – and, in the process, sacrificed both himself and his family. As he once wrote, his dream was to found «a historical war museum in the service of peace» and «a centre for the interpretation and transformation of past and future». In the mind of its creator, this universal war exhibition would generate a horror scenario of such magnitude that it would banish once and for all the thought of war from the heart of man and, thereby, usher in an era of everlasting peace.

In 1974, this polyglot professor, whose debts were as astronomically high as those of a major military power, died in a mysterious – and perhaps deliberately set – fire that devastated the museum. His body was found in a coffin that he had retrofitted to serve as a bed and that he had slept in, among his assault guns and armoured cars. There was an investigation, but it went nowhere, because de Henriquez had apparently also collected and copied scribbles and inscriptions originating from the dirty old public latrines near Trieste's «Risiera», the only concentration camp the National Socialists built in Italy. Rumour had it that, in these inscriptions, Jews who were later gassed accused a number of members of Trieste's upper crust of having been collaborators and as having denounced them. Whatever the

case may be, the walls of these latrines were painted over a long time ago. After war comes peace – which has the white colour of the grave and the colour of the many hearts that became whitewashed graves.

I'm sure that de Henriquez's feverish collection was motivated by completely pacifistic intentions. Still, I'm not sure whether there wasn't also an obsessive fascination with war hidden behind it. In order to find out, we need literature. But, as Manzoni says, we don't need the type of lit-

is inevitable or, as in Renoir's film *La Grande Illusion*, somehow inseparably connected with life. I will never forget a speech that I saw many years ago by chance on TV in France delivered by an old politician from North Vietnam as the war was ravaging his country. He spoke in a soft and melancholic tone and said that, for most people his age, life had become almost identical to the war that had been taking place in his country for so many decades and was still going on at that very moment. He added that the most insidious danger

is «What can I hope for?» Kant asks when confronted with a radical evil that shows itself victorious. He answers that the sight of devastation is exactly that which demands not being the only reality and, in so doing, he justifies having hope in the face of all despair. Hope is the greatest virtue, Charles Péguy argues, precisely because it is so difficult. And, for this very reason, we must see how things really are while remaining hopeful, nevertheless, that things will be better tomorrow.

Sometimes, even in the heart of complete and apparently permanent darkness, there shines a ray of hope:

In 1943, Aron Lieukant – who, unlike his fellow passengers, was aware of the fate that awaited him – found a way to send a letter to his children, Berthe and Simon, from the train that was taking him to Auschwitz. In the letter, he admonished them not to drink cold drinks when they were sweaty. The Third Reich aspired to last a thousand years. But when you compare it with the strength and indestructible humanity of this man, and others like him, it seems a mere «banal Medusa», as Joseph Roth once wrote. It appears destined to fall. And, indeed, it did not last a thousand years. It lasted only 12, which isn't even as long as my water heater.

Yet another threat to real peace lurks in the commonly held belief that progress has already been achieved, that is, that civilization has defeated barba-

“ THE MEANING OF LIFE LIES IN RESISTING THE IDOLATROUS SEDUCTIONS OF WHAT PRESENTS ITSELF AS HAVING BEEN DECREED BY FATE. ”

erature created by historians, which aims at determining facts. Rather, we need the type of literature that helps us imagine how people truly experienced history. For this reason, and for a long time, I have been living with the shadow of this man. It has been projected onto my brain by the flames of his funeral pyre and onto the paper I seek to write on.

Perhaps the reason why this shadow interests me so much is not least because it is a grotesque parable of the many illusions that threaten the peace in our minds even before reality has had a chance to do the same. One of these threats is an obsession with the universality of war and the idea that it

for us was the fact that we start to look at war as being something necessary, just like living and breathing, and that before long we can no longer imagine life without it.

Everything conspires to convince us that war is necessary and that we must resign ourselves to it. It's no coincidence that Western literature begins with a great martial poem, the «Iliad». And even sacred texts that explain the world – such as the «Mahabharata» and, to a certain extent, even the «Old Testament» – are also books about war. And yet, the meaning of life lies in resisting the idolatrous seductions of what presents itself as having been decreed by fate, as in a sperare contra



J.BIEBER (Afrique du Sud), Série Going Home, 2001, exposition panafricaine © Jodi Bieber

rism and that war – at least in our world – has been done away with, just as inoculation has eradicated yellow fever and smallpox. Even when there is a war, no one talks about it. Even when the bombs are falling, no one explains why.

When NATO – and, therefore, also Italy – bombed Belgrade and other parts of Serbia, the same Italian newspapers that were announcing the withdrawal of the Italian ambassador from Belgrade were also voicing concern that such a measure might jeopardize good relations with Serbia. This fear of looking reality in the eyes – in this case, this fear of seeing that there was a war going on – only allows the horror we want to turn away from to spread, like a cancerous ulcer that a patient prefers to ignore. We want to deceive ourselves, and we do so with a frightening degree of credulity. There is a terrible anecdote about Lord Nelson, which I'm not really sure is true. But, either way, according to the anecdote, when he was asked why he continued to allow Copenhagen and the Danish fleet to be bombed for two hours after they had raised a white flag in surrender, he answered: »I'm damned if I have seen it!« He had put the telescope up to his bandaged eye.

Even if most Europeans have been

lucky enough to not pay for it with their lives, the Third World War has already taken place. Since 1945, war has killed roughly 20 million people; and, in contrast to the deaths of the Second World War, these have remained almost completely unknown. They are the subjects of a brutal forgetting. We take comfort in the illusion that we live without war simply because hundreds of thousands of soldiers are not contesting the Rhine River or because that border on the Kras Plateau behind Trieste – which was once an insurmountable iron curtain and a powder keg – no longer exists.

In my childhood and youth, the latter was a border. It separated two political worlds, but it was also a wall designed to exclude the East – the always-despised and feared East, or, as many like to call it, »the other Europe«. Every country has its own »East« that it tries to repel. Even today, this border has not been lifted. Instead, it has only been shifted to shut out yet another, more eastern East. Any border that we look upon not as a passageway, but as a wall – as a bulwark against the barbarians – creates a latent potential for war.

Today, there are other borders that threaten peace. And, sometimes, they are invisible borders found within our own cities. They are between us

and the newcomers from all over the world, the people we hardly notice, the ones »you don't see in the dark«, as the song about Mack the Knife would have it. The coasts of Italy are not the only ones experiencing an influx of refugees, who many regard as predatory pirates. Reactions to these people's search for exile – one that many confuse with an invasion – are hysterical and symptomatic in their brutality. In 2000, a well-known Italian politician, who later became a minister in the republic, went to a building site in Lodi, a town in Lombardy, where a mosque was being planned. He brought with him a pig on a leash designed to insult the Muslim immigrants hoping to build the mosque. This, too, was a small act of war.

As someone who loves Italy, I can only hope that my country – which continues to be a magical land – will not become a pioneer in a negative sense once again. The fact is that, even if others went on to outdo us by far in terms of their fervour, we are the ones who invented European fascism. The new populism – which, today, is found in varying degrees throughout all of Europe – creates democracies without democracy, as one historian has put it. It poses a tremendous danger to democracy and peace. Indeed, no matter what form it takes, and even if it has nothing to do with traditional fascism, any threat to democracy – and we find ourselves in a temple, a cradle of democracy – is a threat to peace.

In fact, in this case, even the expression »populism« is as meaningless as a trite refrain. This populism is a vaguely defined phenomenon that has affected all levels of society. It is one that abandons many things, including steadfast basic values, all sense of justice and injustice, and every connection between the well-being of the individual and that of society as a whole. Although such a sense of justice is not sufficient in itself, it is nevertheless a necessary precondition if we want to at least hope to foster justice and, thereby, peace.

Without justice, there can be no peace. A growing impatience with the laws that seek to punish criminal offenses and a curtailing of the judiciary that pursues these offences are expressions of a dark dream of life without law or with as little law as possible. It is the dream of a jungle, a state of bellum omnium contra omnes, with every man fighting for himself, a world in

which the strong face little resistance in their efforts to suppress the weak. Take the example of Toni Negri, the philosophy professor whose pseudo-revolutionary ruminations allegedly influenced the Red Brigade, that idiotic and reactionary group that has gunned down so many representatives of a better Italy, that is, one that aims for a more open and free society. In a television interview given on May 3, 2003, which appeared two days later in the newspaper »Corriere della Sera«, Negri publicly declared his solidarity with Berlusconi on the grounds that, in his eyes, they were both being hounded by the law.

And yet, such debates run the risk of becoming purely moral, as if threats of war depended alone on the ignobility of a few or even several persons. War hangs in the air either as a threat or as objective reality. We are sitting – and we are still sitting quite comfortably – on the precipice of a volcano with the feeling that glowing masses of lava could spew forth at any moment and destroy the world – as a Jewish proverb says – between the evening and the morning. To a large extent, the world order we enjoy is based on disorder, on »deceitfulness«, as Michael Kohlhaas would say. It's both easy and right to criticize the inhumanity of those who turn immigrants back. But there might also come a time when the number of the world's citizens who want – with good reason – to escape the intolerable circumstances they find themselves in grows so large that they can literally no longer find any room for themselves. Such a situation could spawn intolerable conflicts in forms that are both unimaginable and completely different from what we have traditionally come to call war.

War is now assuming several different guises; it sneaks about and camouflages itself in a multitude of manifestations. It's not just the bloodbath in Biafra, 9/11 in New York and the methyl isocyanate disaster in Bhopal that have taken their toll in terms of lives. The trade in the organs of children, who are killed in the process, is also war. War is also the unending chain of people killed by the mafia in order to protect its revenues as a multinational corporation. Today, war is endless and »unrestricted«, just like the title of the masterpiece by Qiao Liang and Wang Xiangsui, a true Clausewitz of the 20th century.

Given the global dimensions of such potential disasters, Europe's current weakness and inner turmoil appear doubly painful and blameworthy. Only a truly united Europe, a true confederation of (of course, decentralised) states would be capable of confronting – and obligated to confront – problems that transcend the purely national. Europe will soon face the huge and difficult task of opening up to the new cultures brought in by new Europeans from all over the world, who enrich Europe with their diversity. It will involve questioning ourselves and being open to the greatest possible dialogue with other value systems. As part of this, however, we must draw borders around a tiny yet precise and non-negotiable quantum of values, meaning those values that are permanently anchored and that must be seen as absolutes not open to debate. These values should be few in number but clear, such as the value that cherishes the legal equality of all citizens regardless of gender, religion or nationality. But as long as Europe remains a parallel action, our reality will resemble that of Musil's, that is, it will »hang in the air«.

Many utopias of a paradise on earth have dissipated. But what has not dissipated is the demand that the world must not only be administered, but also – and much more importantly – transformed. »Change the world, it needs it!« demanded Bertolt Brecht. Even when everything tells us that it's impossible, we must change it. In the early days of November 1989, when

major protests were underway in East Berlin, a young East German film director, who was active in this protest, said that even though nobody was sure about how things would turn out, the Wall would unfortunately still be standing for many years to come. Two or three days later, the Wall was gone, and he had been one of the people who had helped tear it down. And yet, not for a second had he believed that it was possible – just like I wouldn't have believed it myself – because almost all of us are blind preservationists, convinced that the order or disorder of the things that define our lives are unchangeable and part of the final phase of history. Though we don't believe in eternity, we believe the present is eternal.

Ladies and gentlemen, especially when I think of importance of all the others who have received this prize, it would be very difficult for me to accept it, the generous words of the statement explaining why I was granted the award and the equally generous words of my friend Karl Schlögel in good conscience if I didn't know that every such award is not entirely aimed at the individual alone. Indeed, there are many other people with whom we must share it – people without whom we would never be who we are – just as my words now, too, belong to Ragni Maria Gschwend, who translated them into German – and without whom these books could never have been written. It is also for the people we have shared our lives with, and for those we have only crossed paths with briefly, but who have nevertheless shown and made us understand something fundamental. Gregory the Great used to say that he wouldn't have understood certain fundamental things about life if it hadn't been for his brother. And this also applies to those of us who don't become pope. And, without a doubt, everyone who isn't a pope also knows full well that one owes these fundamental things not only to brothers, but also – and sometimes even more so – to sisters. I am delighted to receive an award such as this in Germany, because Germany is not a foreign country to me, but rather like a second homeland where I feel at home – and, as we all know, we are handled more severely at home than in a foreign land where we can easily masquerade as someone else. I just hope that the jury, which has spoken so generously about my studies of the Central Europe of the Habsburgs, has not made a mistake and gone against a fundamental principle of that culture in which, as Musil wrote, it often came to pass that a genius was mistaken for a boor, but never a boor for a genius.

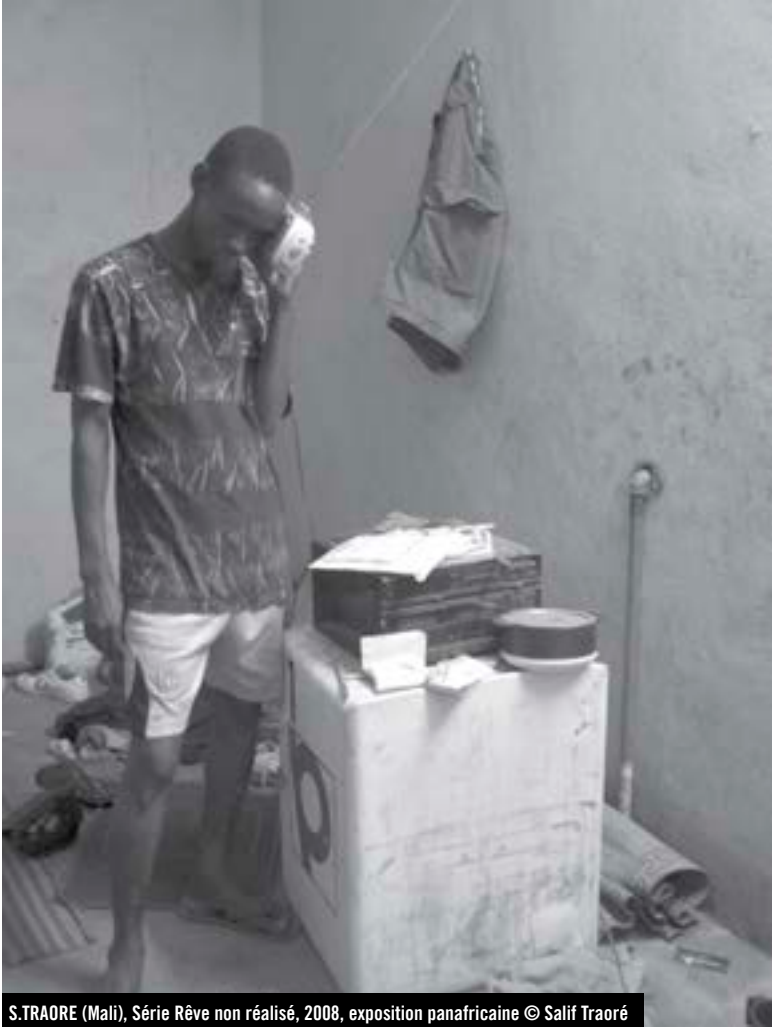
For this reason, when I look at myself in the mirror while shaving in the morning, I will remember even after this tremendous day the story once told to me by my friend Nathan Wiesenfeld, the former president of the Jewish community in Trieste. He had come to Trieste with his eastern-Jewish family at the beginning of the fascist era, when Mussolini was treating his political enemies and, in particular, the Slavs very harshly but had not yet become expressly anti-Semitic. Wiesenfeld's father was proud of his son's black uniform from the fascist youth organization and made him to wear it as often as possible so that they could walk together – the father clothed in a caftan – through the streets of Trieste. When they came upon any fascists, he would admonish his son in Yiddish: »Raise your hand, Meshuga!«

And so, when I'm shaving in front of the mirror and think of all the times I've messed up, even if they were far less tragic cases, I will greet my mirror image with the words »Raise your hand, Meshuga!« Thank you very much – vi ringrazio e vi abbraccio tutti.

Translated into English by The Hagedorn Group



Z. MUHOLI (Afrique du Sud), Série Miss Divine 2008, exposition panafricaine © Zanele Muholi



S. TRAORE (Mali), Série Rêve non réalisé, 2008, exposition panafricaine © Salif Traoré

RENCONTRES À BAMAKO: The 8th Edition of the African Biennale of Photography

The question of Borders remains of an imminent actuality and paradoxical in a world where, on one side, we proclaim and promote the disappearance of borders but where, on the other side, we build walls to protect them. In fact, if on one hand globalisation and economical liberalism have imposed the porosity of certain territories, this has not stopped the multiplication of dissuasive and repressive measures to counteract migratory fluxes dictated by other imperatives.

The exhibitions, screenings and conferences proposed during the Rencontres de Bamako attempt at outlining and analysing the different aspects of this complex reality. A multidisciplinary treatment that ties painting, cinema, fashion allows for the articulation of a discourse around borders and its diverse connotations: anchorage and mobility, the persistence of traditions and their changes, the public space and the private space, the individual and his relationship to the other, the innate and the acquired.

www.rencontres-bamako.com

■ european cultural foundation

POLIS 21

An artistic and political project carried out by European Alternatives in London, Athens, Belgrade and Zagreb over Autumn 2009.

The project Polis 21 / Locus Solus, organised by European Alternatives, Out of the Box, and numerous other partners and with the support of the European Cultural Foundation, asked about the boundaries of the city in Europe in the 21st century. If we have the impression that forms of exclusion and alienation are not only present in our societies but growing in complex, subtle and interlinked fashions which often escape our habitual political categories, looking at the public space in situated contexts, and asking such apparently simple questions as ‘who does it belong to?’ and ‘who is welcome in it?’ are ways of returning to the root of politics and getting a vision over its contemporary concrete manifestations. The four cities in which the project took place – London, Athens, Belgrade and Zagreb – are strikingly different in the answers that can be given to these questions. In the former Yugoslavia the evolution of ‘socially owned property’ over the years following the breakup of the federation poses a challenge to the analytical models of the meanings of ‘neoliberalism’, ‘privatisation’ and ‘gentrification’ as they are understood in the western parts of

Europe. Socially owned property was neither owned by individuals nor by the state, but by the society itself, and what has followed the breakup of this institution via the purchase of land can neither be understood as theft nor as strict privatisation, but is perhaps best understood by the metaphor of a cancer that infects the body politic itself. Discussions as part of the Polis 21 project in Belgrade and Zagreb focussed on understanding this phenomenon from critical and artistic perspectives. In Athens the project looked specifically at the neighbourhood of Psirri-kerameikos-metaxourgio, once the setting of an ongoing gentrification process that became a no-go area after migrants settled there. The categories of philoxenia and xenophobia were interrogated critically by means of situated research in the neighbourhood itself, in a conference at the Byzantine museum (a suitable public place to challenge the dominant discourses of identity at its core), and by artistic interventions in public space itself. European Alternatives is pleased to have organised this series of events and artistic interventions as a first attempt to forge the necessary networks of artistic activism that make transnational interventions possible.



Filoxe / Xeno

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A CONTRIBUTION FROM A POLIS 21 PARTICIPANT:



Gemma Galdon-Clavell

PUBLIC SPACE AND PUBLIC SECURITY

Nowhere are the exclusionary practices of contemporary societies more evident than in public space, where being or not being a (paper-carrying) citizen is the equivalent of being or not being allowed to share streets and squares with fellow human beings.

Interestingly enough, in 21st Century societies citizenship is defined not so much by those it includes, but most notably by those who are excluded from it. Citizenship only reveals itself in our day-to-day experience when we see, for instance, a dozen Black men running down a street, carrying huge bags and trying to escape the police. The excluded render evident that which most of us take for granted: we derive our rights not from our human condition, but from our affiliation to a particular nation-state.

Therefore, once one affiliates itself with a State, access to public space is granted.

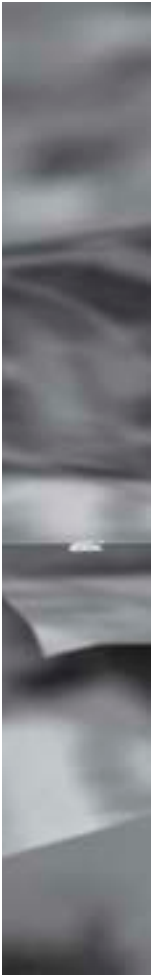
Yes. Well, more or less.

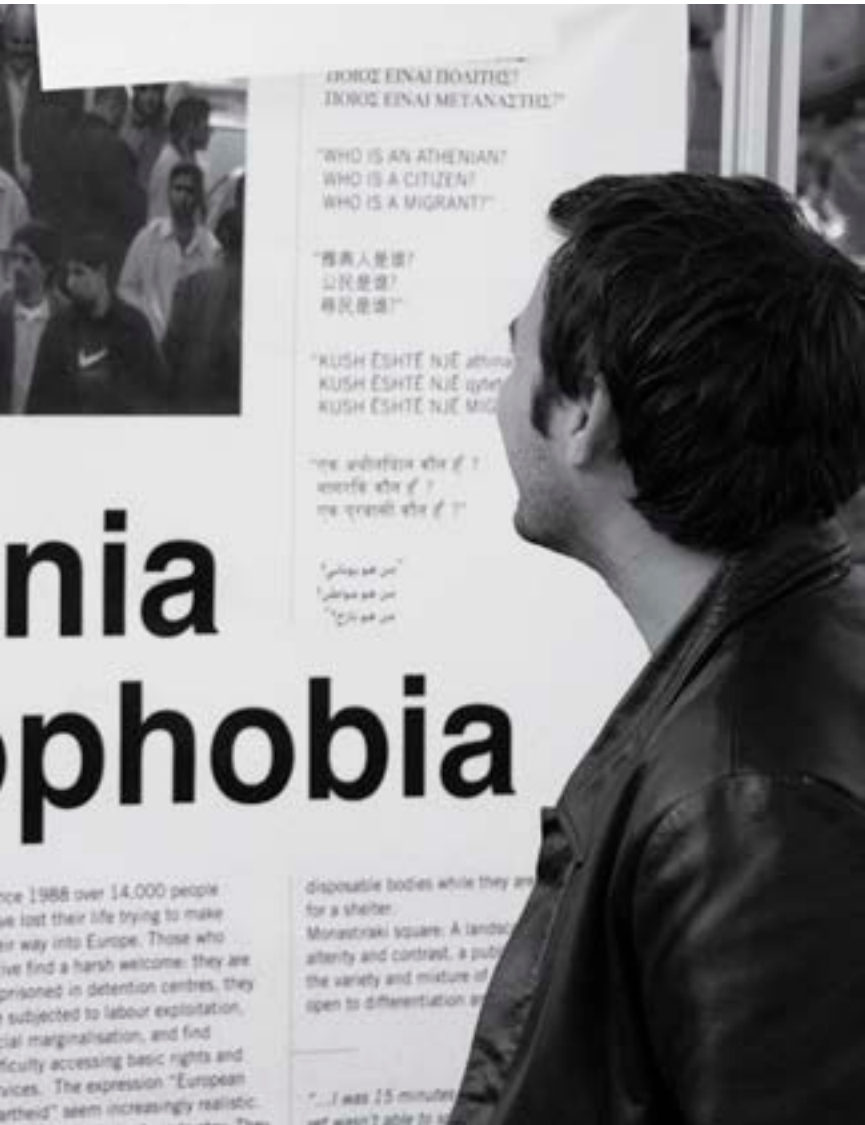
In the world of Anti-Social Behaviour orders, Civility

ordinances and Bad Behaviour by-laws, full citizenship, that which is not given by an official document, but by the regard of others, the complicity, the tacit acceptance of one's right to exist and negotiate the use of public space in equal conditions, is linked to the ability to look and act proper. Formal citizenship means little if one is looked down upon, stopped and searched for no apparent reason and fined for not complying with unwritten rules. Yet this is increasingly the case. The rhetoric around civility and security has in practice built a new wall, a new Checkpoint Charlie in the way to full rights, respect and recognition.

And yet, few voices expose how natural exclusion of the other has become. How annoyances have become security threats as we all feel entitled to call the police on our different neighbours, imposing on them a definition of civility, borne out of a sense of moral superiority and ‘seniority’, we can't be bothered to negotiate with those we share our cities with.

And then we wonder whatever happened to social cohesion, tolerance and respect.





ANTI-SITES

Arnaud Elfort and Guillaume Shaffer from the Survival Group have photographed these spaces that have been built to exclude in the new city. European Alternatives went to ask them about their initiative.

What are antisites ?

We called antisites all the spaces that have been occupied by street furniture which is anti-homeless people. These are spaces in the city that are condemned in a way. Anti-sites are occupied by objects or things -like pebbles for instance - with the purpose of forbidding undesired occupation of the space. Sometimes the purpose of these objects or sites is hidden behind the false appearance of a mini garden or a decorative object, the forms of which are sometimes creative.

How did you come to create this databank of photos of the antisites in Paris?

The project started spontaneously a few years ago while we developed interest on these excluding street furniture. After an initial period, it took shape as a reaction to a shocking image: that of anti-homeless furniture placed just in front of the office of the services dedicated to helping the unemployed. Placing such street furniture just in front of a place that should be one of solidarity appeared specifically ironic and shocking. We therefore organised the inauguration of this object. We covered it with black sheets, uncovered it and 'inaugurated' it, as if it was a piece of art. We celebrated it through a discourse that ironically valued its shape and characteristics, using the rhetoric that is usually used to speak about art.

Then we started to photograph more of these spaces and it became more and more interesting. At first one sees only the most obvious ones, and then once the eye gets used to it, one discovers many of them, that are almost invisible: those that look

like a garnishment at the entrance of a building, those that look like bike holders etc... We discovered a large variety of forms and styles, and some real thinking behind these forms: some of them look like minimalist sculptures.

What did the process of archiving these images allow?

Collecting photographs was a process of 'localising the spaces of oppression'. These objects are sometimes violent but not all of them. Collecting pictures of them allows showing the violence of these objects that one is not used to seeing. They are not objects that one automatically sees, one needs to come back to the picture to identify what they are exactly: is it a garden? Is it a piece of garnishment? Does it have other purposes?

The techniques of dissimulation are varied. One realises that there are people who think about these objects, that plan them so that they are not too violently, apparently excluding. It is a very insidious process that is grounded in the functioning of our society. It is not a clear policy of exclusion but it is everywhere. We have seen the recent changes in the city. For instance, about ten years ago, everyone was shocked when one saw the replacement of benches in tube stations by individual seats designed at forbidding 'undesired' occupation by homeless people. Now on the Canal Saint Martin, in spaces that used to be occupied by the tents provided by the organisation Don Quichotte to homeless people in the winter, new 'ecologic spaces', gardens, have been created.

The antisites proceed from and reveal a specific societal organisation; that of surveillance and security. Not only are the homeless people forbidden to sit but also these sites participate in the increase of fluxes in the city, the loss of the possibility of 'flânerie'.

"Antisites" is a project of the Survival Group, currently in display in the exhibition curated by Estelle Nabeyrat, The Survival Group, 2°37E, 48°86N, Arslongla, Paris.



JILLY TRAGANO

THE POST-NATIONAL POLIS:

Some thoughts with the opportunity of the Polis 21 event in Athens, Belgrade and Zagreb

We need new collective symbols for the construction of new ways of being together, finally divorced from ethnic or national representation.

THE CRISIS OF THE NATION
“We need to think ourselves beyond the nation. This ... is to suggest that the role of intellectual practices is to identify the current crisis of the nation and in identifying it to provide part of the apparatus of recognition for post-national social forms.”
Arjun Appadurai, *Modernity at Large: Cultural Dimensions of Globalization*

What is this crisis that Arjun Appadurai refers to, and where can it be seen? On the one hand, we are dealing with a crisis in the macro-

scale. The nation-states are becoming increasingly unable to deal on their own with problems that are global in scale: environmental degradation, financial crisis, rise of global corporate powers, pandemics are a few of such conditions that nations alone cannot cope with. On the other hand, we deal with problems in the micro-scale. Increased and unregulated immigration, for instance, especially as it is experienced in Europe today, is causing pressure for internal change. It is often met with the resistance or xenophobia of the local citizens.

Nevertheless, national identities have never been clear-cut. They are often layered, disputed, or hide in them repressed elements. Processes of national unification, and standardization, that suppress internal difference, have been at work during the periods of nation-building, which for most countries in Europe took place in the 18th and 19th century, and are now naturalized and difficult to discern. Nation-states, especially those modeled on ethnic basis, such as Greece for instance, have been narrated as homogeneous, pure, and unique. What ties their citizens is the belief in a common ancestry and territoriality. Within this view of nationhood as continuous, and insular, “otherness” is reluctantly accepted, since “ideal” citizens are primarily those who partake in the national

culture through relationships that are based on continuity of blood and soil. This idea of modern Greece’s descent from antiquity has prevailed throughout the country’s recent history and is a major hindrance to the function of a constitutional regime based on citizens’ equality. Minority identities, such as those of non-ethnic Greek and non-Greek Orthodox populations, continue to be marginalized and excluded from the national narrative. The same, but through a much more violently erupting process, has been at work with the ethnicization of former Yugoslavia into distinct nation-states. Through this process, Serbs and Croats, among other former Yugoslavs, rediscovered their ethnic and religious differences, and set up to purify and distinguish their identities and territories from those whom they started perceiving as contaminating “others.”

Coming back to Appadurai’s assertion: What are the post-national forms that Appadurai claims in this excerpt, and why are they necessitated today? As the ethnoscape of today’s Europe are in constant flux, today almost every European country is experiencing a crisis of identity. Greece is definitely one such example, with 10% of its citizens being of non-Greek descent, and with many more living in resident status or illegally. This situation has led to various forms of conflict that range from cultural tension to incidents of hostility and violence between “insiders”—Greek citizens—and “outsiders”—the “newcomers.”

A question that is being often asked is the following: Will these non-Europeans or in this case non-Greeks change and become nationalized, or will the national identities of the host-nations open up and accommodate the otherness of their newcomers? But this may be a faulty question, and an unnecessary struggle. Obtaining access to nationality should not be the criterion of access to this most precious good that is made scarce and difficult to access today: that of citizenship.

An approach that by-passes the national question may be a more appropriate way of addressing these conditions. Yasemin Nuhoglu Soysal defines postnational citizenship as a regime that ‘confers upon every person the right and duty of participation in the authority structures and public life of a polity, regardless of their historical or cultural ties to that community’. If national identity derives from belonging to a “people,” then, according to Curtin, the “post-national idea is premised precisely on the separation of politics and culture, of nationality and citizenship”. It presupposes that national (or cultural) plurality can coexist alongside political unity.

Thus the postnational polis lies beyond the ethnic or national definition of its citizens. The internal efforts that would help post-nationalize the polis from within, and overcome the national paradigm, should be undertaken by not only intellectuals or law-makers, but also by artists, designers, and urbanists alike, all those agents who partake in the creation of the local culture.

CULTURAL AGENCY AND POST-NATIONAL POLIS
Today, we witness a proliferation of initiatives that operate in the level

of the civil society. Many immigrant associations, and non-profit organizations that work on these issues indeed function as domestic post-national spaces that operate beyond national constraints. It is not surprising that artists, architects and designers have also tapped into this implosion of civil society practices, and use methods and tactics that aim at engaging with the condition of the stranger. Such as for instance initiatives by Design for Humanity, that often fluctuate between philanthropy and activism.

In my opinion we need a clearer political situatedness of these initiatives. For that, I would refer to what geographer Ash Amin has called as “Engagement with the Stranger.” Amin suggests that we need to “recognize the coming Europe of plural and hybrid cultures...and seek to develop an imaginary of becoming European through engagement with the stranger in ways that imply no threat to tradition and cultural autonomy.”

This proposition necessitates rethinking the distinction between self and other, but also looking for conditions of strangeness within the confines of a given culture, and in this way revising the certainties that constitute the identities of individuals,

polis, but also to propagate the need to re-consider those newcomers as members of the polis.

Talking about the case of Greece, we witness today a rise of acts which I would like to call territorial activism, works that bridge the realm of localized action with geo-politics, and for that being inherently transnational. Projects such as Egnatia by Osservatorio Nomade, a subset of Stalker, which stimulated engagement with Kurdish populations in Greece; or the participatory work initiated by the Network of Nomadic Architecture in the area of Gazochori in Athens, where large percentages of Muslim residents reside; or the Spatial Imaginary and Multiple Belonging project by Lydia Matthews, Eleni Tzirtzilaki and Jilly Traganou that took place in Athens in June 2008 involving immigrant women. All these projects not only pinpoint ethnic and social subjectivities that have been marginalized, but at the same time try to empower their constituencies with means of self-representation and connectivity with citizens and residents.

For projects of this nature to be effective and have a continuity, it is necessary that those involved are mindful of what Chantal Mouffe has called conflictual or agonistic

“ARTISTS, DESIGNERS, AND URBANISTS HAVE A ROLE TO PLAY IN CONSTRUCTING A POSTNATIONAL POLIS GOING BEYOND THE ETHNIC OR NATIONAL DEFINITION OF ITS CITIZENS.”

groups and places. There are plenty of instances of internal strangeness that one can discern in cultural symbols in countries like Greece, Serbia or Croatia. In fact, like in most places of the world, it would be hard to define almost any national symbol as outcome of singularity or purity, not unlike the examples of African textiles (such as kente) provided by Anthony Appiah in his discussion of African culture through the perspective of cosmopolitanism, which present cultural products that have been historically seen as unique to a local culture as outcomes instead of encounters with strangers.

I will give just one such example of an established national symbol that has been repeatedly deconstructed by scholars in ethnography and fashion studies alike, but which Greek populations still perceive as singularly Greek. It is nothing else than the national costume of the Greeks, the fustanella, which in fact as scholarship shows long before it came to symbolize Greek independence from the ottoman Turks, was common dress for Albanian men. There is nothing surprising about it, if one accepts that the history of Greece, like of many other countries in the world, is the story of endless movement of people: invasions. migrations, resettlement. Needless to say that such a view has not been highlighted in textbooks versions of Greekness that have emphasized instead the purity of the breed.

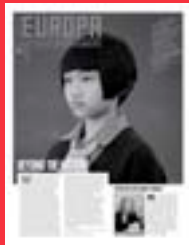
What would be the symbols of Greece as a postnational entity? One that does not derive anymore from the stock references of Greek antiquity and the Byzantine period, nor via ethnic references to its newcomers? Here I see a lot of space for artists, and designers to re-negotiate and reinvent the new symbols of the

participation. Often projects of this type foster a celebratory dimension that is reminiscent of the type of art that Nicolas Bourriaud has described as emblematic of today’s “relational aesthetics”. These artistic practices are made of the same material as the processes of social exchange. Many of these works often try to evoke a shared sense of festivity and conviviality. These elements of joy, relaxation or pleasure that are associated with the acts of celebration, and which are the means of conduct adopted by these art works, are often being accompanied by elements of conflict, resentment or misunderstanding. These moments of crisis are often the results of the unequal power relations between those involved—and particularly between the organizers-artists and members of immigrant or other marginal groups that participate in them. Having witnessed such instances of conflict, I find it particularly critical to capture and work precisely with these sentiments of resentment that emerge out of such interactions rather than to let them fall into oblivion, or let the processes of social interaction take a delusional sense of consensus. These are precisely the elements to be tackled upon in order to give to these acts continuity and have effects that last beyond the conviviality of their shared moments of joy. With this, it will become clear that conflict lies at the heart of relations among the different social actors that are involved in these processes.

I would therefore suggest that for the postnational polis, there is a need for both new symbols of representation, and for collective processes of action that reveal and activate the agonistic dynamics of its constituency, both their commonalities and their differences.

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EMANUELE GUIDI

INTERVIEW WITH LIBIA CASTRO & ÓLAFUR ÓLAFSSON

Cosmopolitan artists Libia Castro and Ólafur Ólafsson discuss their latest works engaging with migration, challenging national identity and delving into the secretive world of Brussels' lobbyists.

EMANUELE GUIDI: The artist is a kind of migrant who has the chance to experience and inhabit a sort of transnational condition. In your specific case, you live a double identity – both a national and a gender one – that is, I guess, an everyday confrontation/negotiation with “the other”. Would you explain in which way this situation affects your practice?

LIBIA CASTRO & ÓLAFUR ÓLAFSSON: It's the passport, rather than the artist profession, which determines rights and possibilities to migrate and/or work and exhibit transnationally. Regarding our national identity, there are actually three identities involved in the picture. We have been living for about 12 years in the Netherlands and we both speak, read and write Dutch and much of our dialogue takes place in the Dutch language as well. And now we are living in Germany. This, along with being a man and a woman collaborating, has given us an opportunity to learn and develop ourselves, as artists and persons, from out of a multiple perspective. Or “moving perspective” as we sometimes refer to it. And in our case it has furthered our interest, which we both already had, for de-

veloping an inclusive visual language and practice.

EG: You have a very “immersive” approach in your practice; engaging in conversation with the subjects of your work both through interviews and through participation-based action. You don't remain passive observer of the dynamics you are interested in. Do you see it as a process of re-subjectivization of the public space ?

LC & ÓÓ: The “immersive” is for us a way of making art politically. And instead of “re-subjectivization” I would suggest “continuous-subjectivization”, only it reads awfully and would therefore not have a chance to become a successful concept (suggestions are welcome!). But what I mean is that public space is something in a constant flux and our ideas of it change as times change and I don't know if it has ever been in “balance and harmony” and if it ever will be, since public space is also a space of contestation as well as a place of control and where power is being exercise and represented.

EG: In work as ‘Njal's Saga’, ‘Untitled (Self Portrait...)’..., you decided to intervene in those folkloristic traditions and stereotypes which partially build a national or local identity. With light and ironic gestures you suggested new imaginaries depicting what contemporary society should be. I think that too often one of the main problems today is exactly the incapability of imagining an alternative to a status quo, that is anyway inevitably changing. Would you like to add something about this issue?

LC & ÓÓ: In the work *Untitled (Self Portrait...)* everything is wrong and transgressed. I may be dressed in the costume of my nationality, but I'm dressed as a woman (when calling to rent the costumes the woman renting them asked me if I was gay) and Libia is dressed according to her gender but not to her nationality. And if you look at similar old photos, beginning of 20th century (often made through foreigners with a vision of an anthropologists of that time), people would be standing in



Caregivers 2008, video still. Video. 14 mint / color / sound / language English / subtitles English and the local language



you have a much better chance of influencing legislation

Lobbyists 2009, video still. Video. 16 mint / color / sound / language English / subtitles English and the local language

“ IT'S THE PASSPORT, RATHER THAN THE ARTIST PROFESSION, WHICH DETERMINES RIGHTS AND POSSIBILITIES TO MIGRATE AND/OR WORK AND EXHIBIT TRANSNATIONALLY. ”



Your country doesn't exist, 2003 ongoing. Billboards in Banja Luka, language Bosnian, alphabet Cyrillic and Latin, Bosnia-Herzegovina, SPAPORT BIENNIAL 2009/2010

front of their farm “burstabær”, but we are standing in front of an aluminium fabric and we were making a self portrait constructing therefore the whole image being the subject and object at the same time, a responsive image to the reality and the order of it's signs.

EG: Can you explain the origin of the work ‘Your Country Doesn't Exist’? How did you get to this sentence/statement and what's your intention with it?

LC & ÓÓ: After collaborating with - and portraying people (recently often under working conditions) we would meet informally; passers-by, migrants, (migrant) workers and undocumented people, we started to open up our research and in the last projects we started to include politicians and other people directly involved in societal decision-making. Art over the three centuries has moved away from portraying kings, queens, popes, cardinals and other patrons but artists like Goya managed both to portray the nobles and to produce a work of striking social critique.

When we were finding out how to approach the issue of the caregivers we wanted to go for another approach than in those works. The aspect of providing information or not

and how to do it, was something we thought much about. While making *Caregivers*, we had in mind amongst others Bertolt Brecht's ideas of *Verfremdungseffekt* (Estrangement Effect). And at some point when researching on the issue of Ukrainian migration to Italy, we came to the idea of using this one article about the issue we found on the internet. We thought that the article, written by an Italian-American journalist, could be a ready-made element for the work. At that point we had more or less decided that we would juxtapose music and that the article would be sung, to video images we would film ourselves from Ukrainian caregivers at work in Italy. The elements of journalism, classical contemporary music and our video-registrations of the women at work, gave the entire work freedom. It became a conceptual, poetical and realistic work with somehow a surreal air and a subverted energy to its realism. It gave the work autonomy as an art piece and a self-reflective angle. It made it concrete, becoming something you can't pin down in one-liners, or with just rational explanations or simple moral judgments. Because while the elements came together, they transformed and opened up new readings of themselves, becoming partly something else through the estrangement (or de-contextualizing) of their combination. So coming back

to the question, the “information” became an aesthetic element as well, not just information, in a new concrete organized representative micro world, in another symbolic order than the usual one.

For *Lobbyists* we decided to use the same concept as in *Caregivers* of portraying people performing under working conditions and to employ music and a journalistic article to reflect on this very different profession. In general the *Lobbyists* issue was much more complex than the *Caregivers*' one; from the intimate and domestic private world of the house of Paulina in a village of Trentino, to the huge dystopic post-modern spaces of the EU institutions in Brussels and the vague undefined working practices of visible and invisible players.

Lobbyists became a much more self-reflective and de-constructive work during its editing and through the estrangement of the juxtaposed elements it became as well more fictive and more dense. Still it is a document of “reality”. The work questions in a different way the ‘performers’ activity, but also the viewer's one by demanding an active and engaged vision. It is not made for a passive viewer because it is as much a portrait as it is questioning “What is it a video portrait?”, “What am I looking at?”

DMITRY VILENSKY

PRACTICING DIALECTIC: CHTO DELAT AND METHOD

The artistic collective Chto Delat, ‘What is to be done?’, is based in St Petersburg. Dmitry Vilensky of the group muses on the method of the group as a form of dialectic, and as a form of artistic and political engagement.

wracking their brains over the question of whether it is possible to elaborate precise rules for organizing the work of a collective. It is now quite rare to come across a new manifesto or declaration. The cult of spontaneity, reactivity, and tactics—the rejection of readymade rules—is the order of the day. Tactics, however, is something less than method. Only by uniting tactics and strategy can we arrive at method. Hence it is a good thing to try one’s hand at writing manifestos from time to time.

ON THE TOTALITY OF CAPITAL, OR PLAYING THE IDIOT

Today it is all the rage to say that there is nothing outside the contemporary

ON COMPROMISES

Politically engaged artists inevitably face the question of compromise in their practices. It primarily arises when they have to decide whether to take money from one or another source, or participate in one project or another. There are several readymade decisions to which artists resort. Some artists keen endlessly that it is impossible to stay pure in an unclean world and so they constantly wind up covered in shit. Other artists regard themselves as rays of light in the kingdom of darkness. They are quite afraid of relinquishing their radiant purity, which no one could care less about except themselves. The conversation about the balance between purity and impurity is banal, although finding this balance is in fact the prin-

art could and should be if the subjugation to the dominant classes and tastes could disappear.

ON THE HISTORICITY OF ART

Like everything else in the world, art is historical. What does this mean? First of all, it does not mean that what was created in the past has no meaning today.

*** Master Bertolt and Master Jean-Luc demonstrated that art is something that arises from difficulties and rouses us to action.

knowledge into separate disciplines. The mantra “knowledge is one” is hugely popular with many progressive people. They say that there is only one kind of knowledge, which serves the cause of emancipation. And they are right insofar as there is hardly any sense in using the proud word “knowledge” to describe methods for enslaving consciousness. It is a good cause to use all our powers to bring closer that day when the disciplinary divisions will disappear, but it is premature to speak of this today. We should say rather that knowledge is one, but for the time being it consists of many disciplines. We must try and achieve perfection in each of them. For now this is the most important contribution we can make to the cause of emancipation.



“Negation of negation” at Kiasma show “Faster than History”, 2004



Opening at Van Abbe Museum of Plug In Nr.51 - Chto delat “Activist Club”

MIXING DIFFERENT THINGS

The editorial and exhibition policy of Chto Delat is often accused of inconsistency, of lacking a clear “party line.” What is important for us today is to arrive at a method that would enable us to mix quite different things—reactionary form and radical content, anarchic spontaneity and organizational discipline, hedonism and asceticism, etc. It is a matter of finding the right proportions. That is, we are once again forced to solve the old problems of composition while also not forgetting that the most faithful composition is always built on the simultaneous sublation and supercharging of contradictions. As Master Bertolt taught us, these contradictions should be resolved not in the work of art, but in real life.

ON THE USEFULNESS OF DECLARATIONS

Everyone has long ago given up

world order. Capital and market relations are total, and even if someone or something escapes this logic, then this does not in any way negate it. This is a trait of moderately progressive consciousness: such is the opinion of leftist theorists, and the capitalists have no real objections to their equitable thesis. We should play the idiot and simply declare this thesis a lie. We know quite well whose interests are served by it.

BEING PRODUCTIVE?

Master Bertolt said that a person should be productive. Following his method of thinking, we might boldly claim that a person should be unproductive or that a person should not be productive. We end up with a big mess. We can get ourselves out of this muddle by asking a single question: to what end should we be productive? By constantly asking ourselves this question, we can resolve various working situations and understand when it is worth producing something and when it is not.

capital element of art making. Master Bertolt suggested us to “drink wine and water from different glasses”.

ON WORKING WITH INSTITUTIONS

It is too little to postulate that collaborating with cultural institutions is a good thing or, on the contrary, that it is a bad thing. We should always remember that it is worth getting mixed up in such relations only when we try to change these institutions themselves, so that those who come after us will not need to waste their time on such silly matters and will immediately be able to get down to more essential work.

ON SUBJUGATION TO THE DOMINANT CLASS

We cannot deny the fact that the great artworks of the past were produced despite the subjugated position of their creators. As we recognize this fact today we should emphasize the vital proviso “despite.” We thus constantly remind ourselves what

Those who deny art’s dependence on the powers that be are stupid. Those who do not see that people’s creative powers never dry up, even in the face of slavery and hopelessness, are blind.

The essence of the great method is to assist the power of creativity in overcoming its dependence on the system of art.

THE FORMULA OF DIALECTICAL CINEMA

As Master Jean-Luc quite aptly noted, “Art is not the reflection of reality, but the reality of this reflection.” To this we should add that this reality is transformative. It has less to do with life as it is, and more to do with how the conditions of people’s lives can and must change.

ON THE BOUNDARIES OF THE DISCIPLINES

It is believed that we should have long ago put an end to the division of

ON THE QUESTION OF SELF-EDUCATION

More and more often we hear that all imposed forms of education are unavoidably evil, that we should close all schools and organize ourselves into non-hierarchical circles in which there would be no difference between the learned and the ignorant, old and young, man and woman, the person born in misery and the person born with a silver spoon. All this sounds nice and of course we know the historical origins of such ideas.

Born at a certain historical moment, they played a supremely important role in transforming all of society and shifting capitalism to a new stage—the knowledge economy, the flexible labour market, exploitation of the general intellect, etc. Does it make sense for those who see all the dead ends of this path of development to repeat these new truisms of capital?

Let us leave the rhetoric of self-education to the corporations, which have such a need for the newly flexible worker willing to engage in lifelong learning.

Why shouldn't we again think hard about creating a methodology of learning and teaching that takes account of the contemporary moment?

ON THE THEORY OF THE WEAKEST LINK

The question of where a breakthrough is possible, in what countries—that is, where it will be possible to create new relations outside the dominion of private property and the egotistical interests of individuals—is the most vital question.

The theory of the weakest link proved its utility in the past. Can it prove workable again? On the one hand, we are witnesses to capital's unbelievable experiments in the development of technology and new forms of life. On the other, we see clearly that the period of prosperity in the First World, paid for with the slave labour of the rest of the world, led to a situation in which even oppressed people in the First World became more bourgeois. Their class consciousness, even in the most progressive circles, is bourgeois consciousness. In the west, even the

most out-and-out punk is bourgeois to a certain extent. The situation outside the First World, however, looks just as hopeless. Since the emergence of cognitive capitalism, the colonial hegemony of western countries has only grown. Detecting new emancipatory potential in the Third World is no less difficult than in the First World, despite the fact that it is precisely here that forms of collective consciousness have been preserved.

We should pay close attention to newly emergent enclaves of the Third World within the First World and of the First World on the periphery. If they cooperate in the future they might become a revolutionary force capable of changing the world. And of course we should carefully analyze everything that is happening in Latin America.

ON THE WITHERING AWAY OF ART

To create an art that withers away—that is, a powerful art that disappears as its functions disappear, an art that reduces its own success to naught—we should build its institutions dialectically. That is, to begin with we need to generate a healthy conflict

and then devise a mechanism that would enable us to abolish the gap between the act of creativity and the system that represents it.

This is only possible, however, given a total transformation of the entire system of power and political relations. Here the forces of art (even an art that is withering away) are insufficient. Although we also should affirm that unless art's function is changed right now, any transformation of power relations will prove impossible.

ON THE UTILITY OF READING, VIEWING, AND THE SUPREME PRIVILEGE

Many people greatly enjoy reading, viewing films, and visiting museums. There is nothing wrong with this. What is wrong is that in our society only a tiny minority is capable of creating something from their experience of reading books, watching films, and visiting museums.

There is an old argument. Should art dissolve into life, or should it, on the contrary, absorb the entire experience

ON UNIVERSALITY

A universal method might well be applied to a multitude of particular cases. But the great method is unlikely to arise from a multitude of particular cases.

ON WORLD ART

Everyone remembers how the Great Teacher wrote in a manifesto about the origin of world literature. Who would be so bold as to talk about world art today? Of course this would sound totalizing and bombastic. Statements of this sort will always appear suspicious.

It is just for this reason that we should try to speak of world art.

ON LEADERS

Even in the most horizontally democratic organization the police can fairly quickly determine who they should arrest in order to paralyze its work.

ON DEFAMILIARIZATION AND SUBVERSIVE AFFIRMATION

Nothing has so spoiled the consciousness of the handful of politically minded contemporary artists than using the method of subversive affirmation. Many of them have decided that this is the most appropriate method for critiquing society and raising consciousness. But is this the case?

It is as if everyone has forgotten that capital has no sense of shame, that it is essentially pornographic. Of course it's tempting to turn soft porn into hardcore, but what does this change? This does not mean that we should discard these methods altogether. We should simply always employ them in the right proportions. It is not enough to make shit look shittier and smell smellier. It is vital to convince the viewer that there is also something that is different from shit. And we shouldn't count on the fact that viewers will figure this out for themselves.



Above and below: Perestroika Time line graphic and video installation and take away Chto Dealt newspaper “Great Method” at 11 Istanbul Biennale



“Negation of negation” at Ivan Dougherty Gallery, Sydney, 2005



of life and express it in new forms? Which position is the most correct one today?

Art should absorb the entire experience of life and express it in new forms. The principal task of these new forms—to come back transformed and dissolve into life, thus provoking life's transformation — is to change the world, the thing that everyone so loves talking about.

IDEAS AND THE MASSES

Ideas mean nothing unless they seize the consciousness of people. Does this principle allow us to judge the quality of ideas? No, it does not. History teaches us that ideas need time in order to possess the consciousness of many people; it is a lengthy process. We can say with certainty, however, that ideas that do nothing to possess people's consciousness mean very little.

Therefore we have only ourselves to blame for the fact that we have remained unpersuasive.

We should consider organizational models in which this situation would be inconceivable.


We don't need an absence of leaders, but a surplus. Only when each of us becomes a leader can we reject this notion itself. For the time being, however, we should not forget that our leaders need special protection from the police.

The brightest minds are willing to write and meditate on the dialectic, but only a few of them are capable of doing this dialectically. The best artists make works on politics, inequality, and ordinary people, but only a few of them do this politically.

The best politicians try to mitigate people's hardships—to guarantee that their rights and freedoms are observed, to help the weak and the sick—but only a few of them are capable of questioning the very system of relations that destroys, robs, and cripples people.

IS IT POSSIBLE TO MAKE LOVE POLITICALLY?

Master Bertolt said that love between two people becomes meaningful when a common cause arises between them — serving the revolutionary cause or something of the sort. Only then are they able to overcome their finitude in bed as well.

The most vivid example of dialectical affirmation in history is Benjamin's thesis that communists answer the fascist “aestheticization of politics” with a “politicization of art.” It turns out that aesthetics is on the side of fascism, while art is on the side of the communists. I think that we shouldn't so easily farm out aesthetics to history's brown-shirted forces. Today we should re-examine this thesis and, most likely, conclude that we really lack an aesthetics of the politicization of art. 

THOUGHTS FROM THE

European Alternatives is a community of activists that investigates conditions for political and cultural change and tries to enact this change.

On our website the ‘Community’ section allows our members to write about what is important from their point of view. Here we present a selection of some of the best recent posts.

COLPO DI GRAZIA AL TEATRINO DEL PATRIARCATO

ELENA BORGHI

In seguito alle vicende della scorsa primavera italiana – costellata da notizie sui rapporti di scambio tra sesso, potere e denaro di cui il cuore stesso del potere nazionale è stato ed è luogo privilegiato – tornano spesso alla ribalta commenti sul degrado della cosa pubblica, sull’uso privato delle istituzioni, sulla virilità esibita come simbolo del mito del capo.

Pur giuste e giustificate, queste

doli e potenti stratagemmi di questo residuo figura la messa in scena di una fiction del femminile, che vuole le donne descritte e costruite sempre dai canoni del piacere maschile, gli oggetti del discorso, le grandi assenti del club di chi pensa e decide. Da questa narrazione del femminile al discorso su corpo e corporeità, il passo è breve, e conduce ad un pensiero che mescola filosofia ad incarnazione e rinuncia alla tentazione delle formule per “possedere come sola saggezza la saggezza dell’incertezza”.

[1]

Lo dice bene Michela Marzano, ospite d’onore della kermesse bolognese Gender Bender, il festival internazionale che esplora gli immaginari prodotti dalla cultura contemporanea legati alle nuove rappresentazioni del corpo, delle identità di genere e di orientamento sessuale. In locandina, un piede femminile orlato del bianco di un kimono, con le dita separate da ciuffi di cotone in attesa che lo smalto si asciughi sulle unghie, rosa brillante. Con

quel piede – curato ma poderoso, fine ma deciso – la sua proprietaria sferra un affondo di judo che vuole essere il Colpo di grazia (titolo della rassegna) per la donna a due dimensioni: corpo mercificato e/o vittima silente.

Michela Marzano scava nella filosofia di sempre – filosofia di uomini –, che ha categorizzato il mondo in dicotomie storiche, fatte di termini dalla relazione gerarchica

evidente: anima e corpo, cultura e natura, pubblico e privato. Uomo e donna. Ai primi, le idee, il pensiero, le ali; ai secondi, la materia, il terreno, la finitezza. Ma c’è altra filosofia, dice lei a nome di tante colleghe, una filosofia soprattutto di donne, che pensa “attraverso” il corpo, piuttosto che rifuggerlo. Una riflessione che contempla la possibilità del limite, della vulnerabilità e dell’inspiegabile, aspetti ai quali l’ascolto del corpo abitua, insegnando la finitezza.

Il discorso conduce inevitabilmente a qualche considerazione su questo tempo, che alla materialità del corpo ha dichiarato guerra aperta, rifiutando con cocciutaggine (e scarso realismo) l’ipotesi che un fisico possa incappare nei limiti imposti dallo scorrere degli anni e dal mutare degli eventi, dalla malattia, dalla stanchezza, dal dolore. Il delirio di onnipotenza che si cela dietro il mito del “volere è potere” è l’arma con cui veniamo costantemente invitate (spesso anche invitati) a combattere la finitezza del corpo, dominarne le esigenze, le imperfezioni, i mutamenti: possiamo essere belle, giovani, sane, magre ed attraenti in eterno, se solo lo vogliamo. In un gorgo di normatività sempre più numerose ed opprimenti, la dittatura dell’apparenza contemporaneamente colpevolizza chi non raggiunge o non mantiene gli standard – e pecca, dunque, di mancanza di forza di volontà –; seduce, insinuando che quegli stessi standard siano lo specchio della libertà femminile che il movimento delle donne rivendicava qualche decennio fa, finalmente raggiunta; e spersonalizza, trattando i corpi come involucri scissi dalle persone che li abitano, quindi riducendo ad una le due dimensioni del corpo stesso: quella strumentale, dell’aver (ciascuno possiede il proprio corpo-oggetto) fagocita ed annulla quella costitutiva, dell’essere. ■



Photo: abhijeet.rane/flickr

THE FALL OF THE WALL, THE RISE OF IMPERIALISM

FEDERICO GUERRIERI

When Mikhail Gorbachev was nominated General Secretary of the Soviet Communist Party in 1985, he introduced democratisation as a key element of his radical reform programme, opening up new doors in international relations

Twenty years ago, the 9th of November 1989, the Berlin Wall fell. One year later, Germany was reunited and the Cold War was officially over. Western countries started to accept the former enemy (USSR) in what Gorbachev saw as a community “united by the common heritage of the Renaissance, the Enlightenment and the great philosophical and social teachings of the 19th and 20th centuries”.

With the subsequent dissolution of the USSR, the United States remained the only superpower and the world hoped for a long period of peace under the American guide and their economic, social and ideological model – capitalism. These words of Francis Fukuyama, in his 1989 essay “The end of history”, exemplified the atmosphere of those days: “What we may be witnessing is not just the end of the Cold War, or the passing of a particular period of post-war history, but the end of history as such: that is, the end point of mankind’s ideological evolution and the universalisation of Western liberal democracy as the final form of human government,” which would lead to “accumulation without end”. The end of the Cold War was seen by Fukuyama as a “peace dividend”: the US, being the only superpower, would no longer have to waste billions of dollars on arms spending.

Fukuyama also argued that China and Russia have infected the spread of liberalism (which in his view means democracy). It appears clear to me that democracy is and has been threatened not only by these two countries, but also by the hegemonic superpower,

the United States. Chomsky’s words are clearer than mine to explain the situation: “their terror against us and our clients is the ultimate evils, while our terror against them does not exist, or if it does, it is extremely appropriate”. As we have seen during the past twenty years, Fukuyama (as usual) was completely wrong, in fact the US have incremented their costs on arm spending, and have also used their predominant position to impose their view of the world to weaker states.

Mikhail Gorbachev has recently underlined that, for many millions of people around the globe, the world has not become a safer place. Quite to the contrary, innumerable local conflicts and ethnic and religious wars have appeared like a curse on the new map of world politics, creating large numbers of victims.

Alas, over the last few decades, the world has not become a fairer place: disparities between the rich and the poor either remained or increased, not only between the north and the developing south but also within developed countries themselves. The social problems in Russia, as in other post-communist countries, are proof that simply abandoning the flawed model of a centralised economy and bureaucratic planning is not enough, and guarantees neither a country’s global competitiveness nor respect for the principles of social justice or a dignified standard of living for the population.

Today’s global economic crisis was needed to reveal the organic defects of the present model of western development that was imposed on the rest of the world as the only one possible; it also revealed that not only bureaucratic socialism but also ultra-liberal capitalism are in need of profound democratic reform, their own kind of perestroika. ■



Photo: imylthin/flickr

considerazioni lasciano sempre piuttosto in ombra il discorso sotteso alle squallide manifestazioni machiste del potente di turno, ossia il riproporsi del teatro del patriarcato: sfiancato – proprio come chi ultimamente ne è divenuto il simbolo – dai segni evidenti dell’età, eppure intenzionato a non rinunciare allo smalto della propria immagine, uno dei pochi made in Italy di cui ancora si parla all’estero. Tra i più sub-

EUROPA COMMUNITY

GREECE: FROM TRANSIT COUNTRY TO DESTINATION FOR MIGRANTS

DANAI VASSILAKI

Despite Greece rarely providing asylum status to refugees, and despite poor living conditions in its asylum camps, migrants keep coming hoping to move to another European member state. But most of them stay here permanently.

Yet, what is not mentioned in the media discourse is that even if Greece had healthy fiscal economic conditions, building adequate infrastructure for the reception of migrants to accommodate such a demand would be impossible. Additionally, out of the thousands of illegal migrants arrested in the Greek territory, a large majority of them apply for asylum without being eligible, just to avoid possible expulsion. This situation puts an extra burden to the already packed accommodations for the asylum seekers, makes it more difficult to distinguish who is most in need and of course makes the judicial procedures even longer, due to the large numbers of applications.

At the same time, the Dublin 2 convention, which sets the first safe country rule for asylum seekers, seems to be ineffective. Asylum seekers that used Greece as a country of entry into the European Union, have to be returned to Greece, which is responsible for any decision regarding their legal status. When Greece decides that these immigrants and their possible applications for asylum should be handled for example from Turkey, since that was the first safe country, Turkey most of the times does not accept them. Or it does typically accept them and

then puts them back into a boat and throws them into the Aegean Sea once again. Immigrants are turned into a ping pong ball that member states throw to each other.

Thus, ironically, illegal entry to Greece is easier than illegal exit to another member state. Immigrants fail to move to another member

“MIGRANTS KEEP COMING HOPING TO MOVE TO ANOTHER EUROPEAN MEMBER STATE. BUT MOST OF THEM STAY HERE PERMANENTLY.”

state and Greece from a transit country has suddenly turned into a permanent destination.

It is hypocritical of the behalf of the other Member States to give lectures to Greece for good conditions of asylum camps when these continental countries have the opportunity to choose their migrants. That hypocrisy is also apparent at the new Blue-Card Directive that aims to regulate the entry of highly skilled economic migrants. An economic migrant accepted under this scheme is allowed to move to another Member State only after 2 years of permanent residence into the first Member State that initially accepted him and if and only if the other Member State has not set quotas and other national labour market restrictions.

The conclusion is not that Greece should not improve the reception conditions for immigrants nor that Greece should be released

of any criticism and responsibility. But, it is apparent that other Member States do not want to share any responsibility for migrants who are not theirs. They just close their eyes and say it is not their problem. But it is their problem, it is a European problem.

The result is that European Union policies focus on limiting the effects of the externalities problem. That is limiting the effects of a unilateral action of a member state A to a member state B. The role of the European Union policies is boiled down to just regulating the self-evident and least controversial issues. In other words, EU tries to keep the roots of the externalities problem, such as poverty, underdevelopment, lack of cooperation and burden sharing within the EU, an external problem.

Unfortunately, we cannot avoid this responsibility for long. The European Union should soon explore alternative ways for burden sharing. Up to now, burden sharing in the EU was focussed on a series of economic compensation funds (such as the integration fund, the European refugee fund and funds for the expulsion of illegal immigrants).

However, such policy should not only consist on money support. When it comes to migration, each member state should be obliged to accept a fixed number of asylum seekers, depending on its population, economic situation, infrastructure and territory. Immigrants should start to be equally distributed within the EU and not sold and bought, through different kinds of economic funds. ■

BRIDGING THE DEMOCRATIC GAP?

COLIN ROWLANDS

A somewhat overlooked part of the Lisbon Treaty is the European citizens' initiative. In a nutshell, the ECI offers the general public the opportunity to "invite" the European Commission to consider any legislation which has the backing of more than one million signatories.

The technical aspects of the initiative – including the minimum age of signatories and time limit for the collection of signatures – are still under consultation and citizens have until the end of January to make their contribution to that debate. Two of the more significant questions being considered are the minimum number of states from which signatories must be found and the minimum number of signatories in each of those states. In its green paper, the Commission recommends that any citizens' initiative should have the support of at least 0.2% of the total population of at least one third of the member states to be eligible for review by the Commission.

With membership of political parties still sliding (especially among the young) and the growth of single-issue activism, the ECI seems a timely constitutional move. Not only should it bring genuine issues of European importance to the attention of the public in member states (something which national political parties have often conspicuously failed to do), but it should also encourage greater cross-border cooperation among social movements and civil groups. The key objective must be to rediscover the possibility of political debate across a truly broad social base – and, just as importantly, at a European level.

The real problem with the ECI is that, as a standalone initiative, it could do more to highlight

Europe's democratic deficit rather than bridge it. A paper by Democracy International notes that similar schemes in individual member states have had limited effectiveness in terms of the actual enactment of legislation, with less than one fifth of citizens' initiatives passed by any government. If this is a guide for the future of the ECI then the Commission runs the risk of further alienating citizens and attracting probing questions regarding its



accountability.

One solution would be to supplement the consultative ECI with further direct democracy. In Switzerland, for example, popular initiatives are reviewed by the federal parliament (who may recommend the initiative or propose an alternative) but the final decision on enactment is made via a referendum. In a European context it could also sow the seeds of truly pan-European political engagement.

Of course, direct democracy is not a solution on its own. Recent budgetary crises in the state of California can be traced back partly to problems with its constitutional setup and its direct democracy component. But a truly European representative democracy with pan-European parties and leaders could be a long way off and we do need to start somewhere. Letting the people of Europe vote on political questions that matter to citizens – that could maybe just start to bridge the democratic gap. ■

Becoming a member of European Alternatives is free and can be done online. Membership allows you to participate in the online community, to help decide the priorities of European Alternatives, to take part in its campaigns at transnational level, and activities at a local level, and to receive this journal.

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EUROPEAN ALTERNATIVES -FR



The myth of Europa est la revue d'European Alternatives, association transnationale avec des bureaux dans plusieurs villes d'Europe. Elle est dédiée à l'exploration du potentiel d'une vie politique et culturelle post- nationale ou transnationale, ainsi qu'à la promotion d'un engagement intellectuel et artistique pour l'idée et le futur de l'Europe.

European Alternatives coordonne et organise plusieurs projets internationaux sur des thèmes politiques et culturels, édite cette revue bimestrielle et organise le festival Transeuropa chaque année.

Nous avons la conviction que, dans un monde toujours plus globalisé, une politique progressiste doit être formulée et articulée au-delà des limites de l'état-nation. La construction européenne présente un potentiel non réalisé, pouvoir transformationnel, qui peut concourir à des avancées sociales et culturelles, autant à l'intérieur qu'à l'extérieur de l'Union Européenne. Ce potentiel, qui doit encore être réalisé, transcende les limites-mêmes de l'Europe et contribue à la définition d'une pratique politique transnationale engagée capable de relever les défis de notre ère de globalisation.

Nous pensons qu'il est de notre devoir d'articuler et de promouvoir ce potentiel, et cela en portant une attention spécifique à certaines formes de contestation sociale et en explorant les réponses apportées par une approche transnationale à certaines des questions fondamentales de notre temps.

“ NOUS AVONS LA CONVICTION QUE, DANS UN MONDE TOUJOURS PLUS GLOBALISÉ, UNE POLITIQUE PROGRESSISTE DOIT ÊTRE FORMULÉE ET ARTICULÉE AU-DELÀ DES LIMITES DE L'ÉTAT-NATION ”

PARMI NOS CENTRES D'INTÉRÊTS:

• DÉMOCRATIE TRANSNATIONALE ET CITOYENNETÉ ACTIVE

Plutôt que de prétendre que les politiques de l'Union Européenne sont a-politiques et purement régulatrices, une profonde repolitisation du continent apparaît nécessaire. Le « déficit démocratique » de l'Europe ne pourra être comblé que par l'activisme politique des citoyens, qui permet de trouver des alternatives européennes au status quo. Une alternative progressiste ne peut être articulée qu'au niveau transnational de l'Union européenne, tout recours au nationalisme s'accompagnant inévitablement d'un replis sur les privilèges et d'un désengagement vis-à-vis du reste du monde.

• ÉGALITÉ ET CITOYENNETÉ TRANSNATIONALE

L'Europe doit être inclusive ou elle ne sera pas. Notre transnationalisme est résolument égalitaire, progressiste et émancipatoire. L'organisation politique de l'Europe doit se construire sur une base différente de celle de l'exclusion ou de l'intérêt particulier : Elle doit se construire sur la base d'une citoyenneté souple et inclusive étendue à toute l'Europe, tout en restant ouverte au reste du monde. Cette organisation devra s'affranchir des vieilles oppositions binaires telles que « immigrant vs habitant », « homme vs femme » et « centre vs périphérie ». L'Europe doit agir en faveur des intérêts de l'humanité dans son ensemble et non pour défendre ses privilèges.

Quatre champs d'activité découlent de ces réflexions :

- i) Migration et citoyenneté transnationale
- ii) Féminisme et égalité des sexes
- iii) Égalité, droits de l'homme et droits sociaux en Europe
- iv) L'Europe et ses relations avec le reste du monde

• CRÉATIVITÉ ET ARTS

Une politique transnationale à venir ne peut être culturellement conservatrice. Les acteurs culturels ont un rôle crucial à jouer pour inventer de nouveaux modes de vie, de nouvelles conceptions du monde, pour combattre et défaire la commercialisation et la banalisation de tous les aspects de la vie humaine.

Deux champs d'activité et de recherche se font jour :

- i) La relation entre activisme politique et art : Qu'est ce qu'un art engagé ?
- ii) Les conséquences de la globalisation et le « dé-centrement » des pratiques artistiques et littéraires et de leurs publics.

Festival Transeuropa

Le festival transnational TRANSEUROPA est tout à la fois une série d'événements publics innovants et une forme d'engagement artistique, culturel et politique au delà des frontières nationales. C'est un festival unique en son genre qui active un réseau d'organisations culturelles, de la société civile et d'individus engagés, qui travaillent ensemble pour toucher un public plus large et divers. La philosophie du festival a été de considérer l'originalité du processus de l'intégration européenne comme un élément stimulant de l'expérimentation et de l'innovation, et de mettre en relation la culture et les arts et les questions de politiques globales. Cette initiative prolonge et étend le Festival de l'Europe à Londres, lancé en 2007 par une équipe de jeunes artistes, écrivains et activistes. Au printemps 2010 Transeuropa festival se déroulera à Bologne, Cluj-Napoca, Londres et Paris.

Campagnes

Alternatives Européennes lance des campagnes visant à promouvoir nos engagements fondamentaux sur un plan transnational à l'échelle européenne. Les campagnes en cours :

- Campagne pour un président du Conseil européen garant des intérêts du peuple :Le président du Conseil européen devrait être soumis régulièrement à des séances de questions-réponses devant le Parlement européen, et le point de vue du Parlement européen devrait être de plus en plus pris en compte par le Conseil.
- Campagne pour une Europe de l'égalité des sexes : La nouvelle Commission européenne élue par le Parlement doit aborder comme une priorité majeure les questions relatives à l'égalité des sexes.
- Campagne pour une politique commerciale européenne juste : La lutte contre la pauvreté et la promotion du développement doivent être l'objectif des accords de commerce conclus par la Commission européenne. Le ministre européen des affaires étrangères doit s'impliquer dans la promotion de la cohérence des politiques proposées par l'Union pour lutter contre la pauvreté.

L'ensemble des informations sur les campagnes et les moyens de les soutenir est en ligne à l'adresse www.euroalter.com

Site internet Euroalter.com

Le site Euroalter.com comporte une revue de commentaires en ligne sur l'actualité récente, ainsi que des informations plus approfondies, études, vidéos et ressources se rapportant à tous les domaines de travail qui nous sont cruciaux. Ce site est actualisé quotidiennement dans trois langues: anglais, français et italien. Euroalter.com comprend également une section de participation intitulée « communauté » où les adhérents peuvent poster leurs propres articles. Les détails concernant nos prochains événements et les activités des groupes locaux d'Alternatives Européennes y sont aussi disponibles.

www.euroalter.com/fr



Photo by August Sander. See page 2 for review

LA FIN DE LA DOMINATION MASCULINE EN EUROPE APPROCHE-T-ELLE?

Le moment est propice à une mobilisation transnationale pour le droit des femmes et à la modification en profondeur de la démocratie européenne

La pertinence de la formule ‘la domination masculine’, titre à la fois, du livre du célèbre sociologue Pierre Bourdieu et d’un tout nouveau film sorti dans les cinémas français en novembre, semble malheureusement encore actuelle. Aujourd’hui en Europe, les nouvelles formes de conservatisme exacerbent tout à la fois les attaques contre les droits des femmes et les réactions à ces attaques. Le moment semble donc propice à une mobilisation transnationale pour le droit des femmes et à la modification en profondeur de la démocratie européenne, qui seule

peut assurer une égalité de fait dans le long terme. Les réactions des mouvements féministes à la collusion des conservatismes et des attaques contre l’égalité homme-femme se multiplient et regorgent d’inventivité : elles passent par l’ironie, comme dans le cas du film de Patric Jean cité ci-dessus, la collection de preuves, dans le documentaire ‘Le corps des femmes’ de Lorella Zanardo qui dénonce les dérives sexistes de la télévision italienne, par des avancées légales, comme les modifications apportées au droit à l’avortement en Espagne par le gouvernement Zapatero, ou par des manifestations, telle celle menée en France le 17 octobre par un large collectif d’associations ou celle des parlementaires européennes devant le con-



seil pour protester contre la très probable ‘domination masculine de la commission’. Au-delà de ces mouvements nationaux dynamiques, et de l’opportunité croissante de renforcer les dynamiques transnationales, parce que la comparaison entre les situations nationales permet de révéler et lutter contre les diverses (ou similaires) formes de discrimination en Europe, l’Europe ouvre des possibilités d’action et de changement, comme le prouve la discussion autour de la nomination de la nouvelle commission européenne en novembre. Modifier les modes de nomination des responsables au sein de l’Europe, vers plus de transparence et de responsabilité devant le parlement – l’institution issue de l’élection par les citoyens européen – per-

mettrait la mise en place d’un espace plus égalitaire, en cela que les blocages institués par les hommes au niveau national (par la nomination de pairs au sein des partis politiques ou du gouvernement par exemple) pourraient être dépassés. Une telle modification, accompagnée et stimulée par les partis politiques européens, peut permettre de redistribuer de la participation, de l’accès au pouvoir, de la représentation, et donc de reformer une démocratie qui n’est plus celle construite et gérée par un groupe restreint (les hommes majoritairement blancs) instituée au sein des espaces nationaux. La fin de la domination masculine n’est pas un processus naturel. Les mouvements à l’œuvre au sein de l’espace européen semblent être en mesure cependant de faire craquer les blocages en place et d’instaurer un espace politique égalitaire, où les politiques de quotas, pour quelque groupe que ce soit, ne seraient plus nécessaires. ■

PAUVRETÉ ET EXCLUSION SOCIALE: UNE QUESTION DE DÉMOCRATIE

Moyens économiques et possibilité de participation doivent être compris comme un tout.

2010 sera l’année européenne de lutte contre la pauvreté et l’exclusion sociale. Aujourd’hui, le nombre de personnes vivant dans la pauvreté en Europe, un des espaces les plus riches du monde, est évalué à 79 millions. Hors d’Europe la moitié de la population mondiale vit avec moins de €2 par jour. Les opportunités, dans les prochains mois, d’influencer concrètement les politiques de l’Union Européenne existent – une des premières missions de la nouvelle commission européenne étant en effet de proposer un nouveau budget et des objectifs pour l’Union Européenne pour les prochaines années.

La formulation ‘année européenne de lutte contre la pauvreté et l’exclusion sociale’, et en particulier la conjonction des deux termes, est intéressante pour une lecture critique de ces problèmes. Elle permet de comprendre ensemble les deux phénomènes, et de comprendre que la pauvreté devrait être perçue comme une forme d’exclusion sociale. La lutte contre la pauvreté apparaît alors comme un élément majeur de la démocratie : être pauvre est non seulement être pauvre matériellement, et de ce fait manquer de l’accès aux moyens nécessaires pour vivre, mais c’est aussi ne pas avoir la possibilité de participer de manière égale, à la vie sociale. Moyens économiques et possibilité de participation doivent être compris comme un tout. Au sein de l’espace européen, la situation est fracturée et rendue incohérente du fait de l’intransigeance des états-nations dans certains domaines. Bien que la communauté économique européenne soit

largement unifiée, en particulier par la liberté de flux de capitaux, aussi longtemps que l’état-nation sera perçu comme le lieu premier de légitimité démocratique, il restera difficile de prétendre qu’il existe une société européenne unifiée. Les décisions politiques de lutte contre le chômage et les inégalités sociales reposent majoritairement au sein de l’Etat-nation, à l’exception des fonds structurels européens et des fonds de cohésion, dont l’allocation est encore un domaine sensible. La situation au sein de l’UE est devenue suffisamment dramatique pour justifier du recours à une plus large solidarité communautaire dans ce domaine, si seulement cela était demandé. Aujourd’hui, les gouvernements qui doivent gérer les situations de pauvreté les plus difficiles sont ceux qui doivent restreindre le plus leurs dépenses dans le domaine social. Dans les prochains mois, la mise en place d’une campagne transnationale pour mettre à jour les inégalités au sein de l’UE est donc

de plus en plus nécessaire. L’Union Européenne a une stratégie et un budget pour l’aide internationale. Dans le traité de Lisbonne, combattre la pauvreté est un objectif explicite des services d’action extérieure de l’UE, organisés autour de la personne du Haut Représentant aux Affaires Extérieures, Catherine Ashton. Plutôt que de prétendre concevoir l’action extérieure de l’Europe dans le reste du monde, l’action extérieure devrait prendre de plus en plus en compte le point de vue de ceux qu’elle essaye d’aider. Le Haut Représentant aux Affaires Extérieures doit devenir non seulement la voix de l’Europe dans le monde mais aussi la voix du monde dans l’Europe, le représentant des pauvres du monde. C’est seulement ainsi que l’action extérieure de l’UE pourra s’étendre au-delà de la résolution des conflits, et commencer à créer les conditions de la construction d’un monde commun. ■

MIGRATION ET SOUS-DÉVELOPPEMENT: QUELLE EST LA RESPONSABILITÉ DE L'EUROPE ?

Est-ce que la politique commerciale de l’UE est responsable de l’appauvrissement du Tiers-Monde ?

Les migrants sont souvent vus comme responsables de toutes sortes de problèmes nationaux, du haut niveau de chômage aux problèmes de criminalité. Mais la question que nous voulons poser ici est : pourquoi est-ce que autant d’êtres humains risquent littéralement leur vie pour tenter d’atteindre l’Europe ? Le Sénégal est l’un des pays les plus pauvres du monde. Depuis 1979, l’UE et le Sénégal ont signé un accord permettant aux bateaux européens d’utiliser les eaux Sénégalaises, ce qui a provoqué une surexploitation des ressources marines. Le poisson est la base de l’alimentation

des Sénégalais et le secteur de la pêche emploie près de 20% de la population. En raison du nombre excessif de bateaux, l’écosystème marin du Sénégal a commencé à se détériorer. Entre 1994 et 2005, la quantité de poissons capturés dans les eaux du pays est tombée de 95 000 à 45 000 tonnes. De plus, le nombre de bateaux possédés par les citoyens sénégalais a diminué de manière drastique, car ils ne peuvent pas concurrencer les grands vaisseaux de pêche européens. ActionAid a montré que les familles de pêcheurs qui mangeaient par le passé 3 repas par jour n’en mangent plus maintenant qu’un ou deux. Le prix du poisson augmente, tandis que ses consommateurs connaissent de plus en plus la faim. Le Gouvernement du Sénégal sait cela, et en 2006 il a refusé de renouveler son accord de pêche avec l’UE. Mais les pêcheurs européens – principalement des Espagnols et des Français – ont trouvé des moyens de

contourner l’interdiction. Ils ont enregistré leurs bateaux au Sénégal, acheté des quotas de pêches auprès de pêcheurs locaux et transfèrent les prises en pleine mer depuis les bateaux locaux. Ces pratiques signifient qu’ils peuvent continuer à pêcher le poisson du pays et n’ont aucune obligation envers le Gouvernement sénégalais. Gueye, le Président du « Conseil Interprofessionnel de la pêche artisanale au Sénégal » (Conipas), un groupe d’associations qui défendent les droits des travailleurs indépendants, affirme avec raison que « l’Europe ne peut pas fermer les yeux quand ses bateaux volent notre poisson et ensuite se plaindre quand nos jeunes hommes essayent de s’échapper vers les Îles Canaries. Il y a une relation entre ces deux faits ». Le Commissaire européen au commerce, Peter Mandelson, a cherché à imposer de nouveaux accords de commerce à 76 des pays les plus pauvres du monde : les na-

tions d’Afrique, des Caraïbes et du Pacifique (ACP), adoptant ce que beaucoup ont critiqué comme une tactique néo-coloniale. L’accord insiste sur le fait que les entreprises Européennes ont le droit de s’établir librement sur le sol africain et de recevoir le même traitement que les groupes nationaux. Selon ces accords, le Sénégal n’aurait pas le droit de s’assurer que son poisson est utilisé pour soutenir sa propre industrie et pour nourrir son propre peuple. Les stratagèmes utilisés par les pêcheurs européens seraient légalisés. Le fait que l’Union Européenne n’est pas capable de satisfaire sa demande interne de poisson ne peut pas justifier les politiques d’exploitation néo-colonialistes envers les pays du Tiers-Monde. D’autant plus quand l’évidence montre que les politiques commerciales de l’Union Européenne sont strictement corrélées avec l’arrivée de milliers d’immigrants depuis les côtes africaines. ■

RÉINTRODUIRE L'HUMANITÉ AU MONDE

PAUL GILROY

Le challenge cosmopolitain d'Alfredo Jaar à l'indifférence institutionnalisée.

La modernité de l'Europe a été faite et maintenue par la violence. Ainsi, sa vigueur initiale est venue de la conquête de peuples déclarés péremptoirement comme étrangers et inférieurs, et son dynamisme a été soutenu par la consolidation des colonies et des empires. C'est ensuite graduellement que le Capital a ordonné cet arrangement précaire et fragmenté en un système d'états nationaux et de marchés trans-nationaux. De nos jours pourtant, il n'est ni politiquement correct ni à la mode d'insister sur le fait que l'idée de race était un facteur fondamental pour faire en sorte que ces divisions arbitraires apparaissent naturelles et historiques aussi bien que scientifiques et inévitables.

Désormais, les circuits du pouvoir s'éloignent de l'Atlantique. Nous devons faire face à des catastrophes environnementales et des menaces politiques qui ne respectent pas les frontières nationales. Ces changements nous confrontent à de nouvelles obligations et nous devons donc trouver de nouvelles manières de comprendre notre situation comme un phénomène avant tout planétaire. Nous devons assembler les

outils sociaux et éthiques dont nous aurons besoin pour cohabiter pacifiquement avec autrui, d'une manière acceptable qui reconnaisse l'interdépendance globale et admette notre revendication commune d'une planète en péril. A travers cette problématique c'est bien notre humanité est en jeu

La souffrance née de ce système d'exploitation destructeur a été dotée d'une voix et d'un visage, non pas par l'action des gouvernements mais bien grâce à la créativité culturelle. Une conversation urgente à propos du futur de notre monde est menée par les artistes plutôt que par les politiciens, les journalistes et les scientifiques. Les espaces culturels de tous les jours –c'est-à-dire bien au-delà des seuls musées et galeries de renom- sont des endroits où les nouvelles habitudes imaginatives sont acquises, affirmées et affinées. Les plaisirs de l'exposition à la différence peuvent être découverts dans la corona précieuse et conviviale de l'art. Ce contact avec l'altérité ne doit pas signifier la perte ou le péril, même dans des circonstances où la sécurité est comprise comme dérivant d'une similarité absolue. Libérés de la pression de devoir considérer la différence ethnique et racialisée comme exotique, nous pouvons nous con-

“L'ART COSMOPOLITE ET CONTEMPORAIN, COMME CELUI D'ALFREDO JAAR, A OFFERT UNE RÉPONSE THÉRAPEUTIQUE BIENVENUE.”

fronter à une pluralité ordinaire. Fort heureusement, ce contact émancipateur devrait nous aider à cultiver les vertus cosmopolitaines que sont l'attention, la perspective et la proportionnalité.

Après que le génocide perpétré par les nazis ait été assimilé comme événement fondateur et traumatique, les artistes commencèrent à s'interroger sur les différentes variétés de la pratique créative qui permettraient de produire une réponse appropriée, une réponse pouvant faire sens à cette échelle de l'horreur. Afin de répondre aux demandes éthiques qui étaient imposées

par un engagement à prévenir la récurrence du meurtre de masse et des crimes contre l'humanité, ils durent engager une lutte. Ces problèmes –et les réponses variées que le milieu du vingtième siècle proposa- redéfinirent les limites imaginatives d'une culture européenne qui avait besoin d'être réparée. Les dilemmes esthétiques et éthiques impliqués ici générèrent une bataille des idées, et celle-ci fut rapidement reconnue comme une partie d'un problème politique, philosophique et moral bien plus large. Ces dilemmes étaient de fait connectés à des débats concernant la théodicée, l'implication de la civilisation européenne dans le développement du racisme et du fascisme, le rôle de la technologie et de la raison instrumentale dégradée, ou encore l'opportunité de la poésie lyrique ; en fait ils questionnaient la validité et l'évolution de la culture occidentale. Dans l'ombre de la catastrophe et du traumatisme, du témoignage des survivants et de la mémoire débattue, l'art devait être sauvé et remis à neuf. Dans des formes nouvelles et peut-être rédemptrices, cela devait contribuer à une vision révisée de ce qu'était l'Europe et de ce qu'elle pouvait devenir à l'avenir. L'art seul pouvait réintroduire en son sein l'humanité dont elle avait

été séparée.

La réaction anti-fasciste qui arriva après 1945 encouragea l'émergence d'un nouveau langage moral centré sur une idée universelle des droits de l'homme. Ces innovations se combinèrent pour s'assurer que l'héritage de l'humanisme et que l'idéal de l'humain restent primordiales dans les réflexions de l'Europe. Cependant, l'histoire sanglante du règne colonial et les guerres de décolonisation violentes qui le suivirent ne furent jamais assimilées de la même manière. Les exercices réflexifs de cette Europe du milieu du siècle étaient sûrement

bien intentionnés, mais ils s'arrêtèrent bien loin d'un engagement cosmopolite. Ils ne cherchèrent jamais à comprendre l'histoire de la période nazie dans le contexte des rencontres précédentes avec des peuples que l'Europe avaient conquis, vendus, exploités et quelques fois cherchés à éradiquer.

La continuité historique entre ces histoires de souffrance fut ignorée et effacée. Et de manière similaire, la signification humaine générale des événements les plus horribles resta négligée, prouvant la difficulté qu'il y avait à comprendre vraiment. Mais la continuité entre ces deux phases de terreur, l'une tempérament européenne, l'autre torridement coloniale, est devenue fondamentale à notre époque post-coloniale. Peut-être l'Europe ne peut-elle pas se souvenir de son histoire impériale et coloniale sans apprendre bien trop de choses douloureuses et inconfortables à propos d'elle-même et à propos du développement tortueux de sa civilisation. En effet l'accusation des guerres coloniales n'autorise aucune distinction entre la responsabilité des civils et celle des militaires. Les conventions de Genève ne s'appliquaient pas dans la pratique, et les armes de destruction massive pouvaient être utilisées sur les peuples indigènes sans véritable objection de l'opinion.

La culture occidentale reste désorientée par les découvertes troublantes liées aux compromissions de ses prétentions civilisationnelles. Or, pour ajouter encore à ses problèmes de conscience, les peuples post-coloniaux ont commencé à devenir visibles au sein des fortifications de l'Europe. Leur présence a révélée que l'Europe était incapable –comme Aimé Césaire l'avait déjà prophétisé il y a longtemps- de résoudre les deux grandes difficultés interconnectées auxquelles son histoire moderne a donné naissance : le problème colonial et le problème de la hiérarchie de classe. Les immigrants post-coloniaux qui vinrent nettoyer et revigorer l'Europe après la seconde guerre mondiale ont graduellement vu leurs droits à la citoyenneté circonscrits et re-



Carlos Vergara, Cacique de Ramos, Carnival Series, 1972/76. Fuji photograph paper in silicon metacrilat over dibond, printed in 2008, 100cm x 150cm, Edition of 7



Carlos Vergara, Cacique de Ramos, Carnival Series, 1972/76. Fuji photograph paper in silicon metacrilat over dibond, printed in 2008, 100cm x 150cm, Edition of 7

tirés. Les réfugiés, les demandeurs d’asile, les résidents sans-papiers, tous ces indésirables représentent désormais une nouvelle caste de sous-humains qui ont découvert les bénéfices réelles de ces droits de l’homme claironnés bien fort mais en réalité extrêmement durs d’accès. Ces gens sont certainement là, en particulier parce que l’Europe occupait autrefois l’endroit dont il sont originaires, mais la porte de la reconnaissance et de l’appartenance reste fermement bloquée devant eux. Il ne font pas seulement l’expérience du racisme et la xénophobie mais aussi un mode d’inclusion et d’exclusion simultanées qui les confine dans une vie crépusculaire de sous-droits.

L’art cosmopolite et contemporain, comme celui d’Alfredo Jaar, a offert une réponse thérapeutique bienvenue. Tout d’abord cet art d’opposition affirme que l’idée que le développement européen porte un telos unique ne peut pas être soutenue plus longtemps. Deuxièmement cela suggère que la vieille vue selon laquelle l’Afrique était en dehors de l’histoire et dénuée d’histoire s’est discréditée avant même la demande post-coloniale de simultanéité et de comptabilité. Troisièmement, il dit que ceux qui profitent de la situation à l’intérieur des citadelles crasseuses du surdéveloppement doivent prendre conscience de la manière dont leurs destins sont connectés aux vies du Sud, dont les conditions de misère et d’insécurité témoignent de la rareté de la situation de plénitude et de sécurité. Ce zoom sur l’international ne génère pas pour autant un autre script manichéen, et le monde ne peut plus être vu en noir et blanc.

D’une manière ou d’une autre, le Nord et le Sud, les mondes développés, en développement et sous-développés doivent faire partie d’un même présent. Vivre de manière soutenable et avec une dose minimale de conflits implique d’être prêt à une responsabilité des uns envers les autres. Jaar éveille à ce défi, et ses interventions illustrent ce qui pourrait être appelé une mondialité responsable. Elles sont tacitement fondées sur la critique de l’indifférence à la souffrance d’autrui qui a été institutionnalisée dans les pays surdéveloppés. Jaar n’aborde pas cette souffrance comme si elle était la propriété culturelle et expérimentelle exclusive de ces victimes. Il prend audacieusement la responsabilité de reconnaître ces torts, d’en

porter le poids sur ses propres épaules, et nous invite à en faire de même. Son hostilité à l’égard de l’indifférence institutionnalisée est assez profonde pour inciter à un retour hardi au problème honteux de l’humanité commune. Mais ce n’est pas un retour au vieux cosmopolitanisme basé sur une hospitalité étendue. Les états nations sont exsangues, car les peuples, les idées, les technologies et les ressources leurs échappent. Un réengagement visant à restaurer la vision de l’humanité commune pourrait aider à stabiliser cette situation. Cependant, cela peut seulement réussir si cela est conduit dans une opposition explicite aux hiérarchies raciales, aux vanités civilisationnelles et à l’exploitation néo-impérialiste.

Depuis quelques temps déjà, les projets tricontinentaux de Jaar se sont efforcés de manière provocatrice de replacer l’Asie, l’Afrique et la première colonie de l’Europe, l’Amérique Latine, dans la représentation officielle du monde. Il n’a pas seulement mis en accusation la couverture malveillante

SON HOSTILITÉ À L’ÉGARD DE L’INDIFFÉRENCE INSTITUTIONNALISÉE EST ASSEZ PROFONDE POUR INCITER À UN RETOUR HARDI AU PROBLÈME HONTEUX DE L’HUMANITÉ COMMUNE.

des médias officielles et remis en question sa géographie implicite. Il s’est déplacé au-delà du problème basique de l’omission et de l’inclusion restauratrice, et vers un genre différent d’enquête totale. Cet aspect de son travail est dirigé vers les formes de pouvoirs qui découlent du contrôle des images et de leur réception événementiel contestée par des téléspectateurs anxieux. Ceux-ci veulent savoir comment répondre aux choses terribles qu’ils voient, mais ne savent pas comment faire. Ils ne sont pas assistés dans leur quête de probité éthique par une culture médiatique et un état d’esprit consommateur qui promeuvent la collusion et dignifient une indifférence fatale à la fois pour ces objets abjects et ses receveurs désorientés.

Les œuvres de Jaar retournent à ces thèmes fondamentaux du contrôle des images et de la réponse honnête à la demande dérangeante d’information dans des situations complexes. Il a intégré un commentaire à la fois oblique et violent de ces questions liées aux pouvoirs post- et néo-coloniaux avec une série de brusques interroga-

tions sur la responsabilité des artistes aussi bien que la situation des transmetteurs et des récepteurs innocents mais consentants de l’information. Jaar milite en faveur du réexamen des règles et des codes qui gouvernent la reconnaissance et la représentation des Autres dont la présence sécurise les frontières qui nous entourent. La manière dont ils sont montrés dans notre paysage audiovisuel ne devrait pas se ramener à un choix entre la trivialisation et la trahison. L’effort de l’artiste pour assimiler et humaniser ces sans-voix devrait, suggère-t-il, devenir à la fois honnête et authentique. Cette quête difficile implique de rompre la dyade de la victime et du coupable et de remplacer ces rôles négatifs avec un spectre de possibilités alternatives : aveugle volontaire, spectateur, témoin et peut-être même dans certaines circonstances limitées sauveur. Cette expansion imaginaire requiert un effort éthique et elle ne peut pas rester longtemps la responsabilité singulière de l’artiste. Dans les main de Jaar,

elle ouvre doucement à une question douloureuse mais nécessaire : Où les témoins, les spectateurs et les publics entrent-ils en relation avec les événements traumatiques et déprimants qui composent désormais le menu des informations mondiales comme les traces du bouleversement commercial et politique de notre planète ? La tragédie rwandaise qui a tant occupé son travail découle de ce programme suspect pour de nombreuses raisons soulignées plus haut. Les nuages qui flottent au-dessus d’un lieu de mémoire deviennent un marqueur éphémère non seulement de l’espace de la mort mais aussi de l’ambivalence énigmatique qui voit le choc dans toute son honnêteté et la honte humaine se mêler.

L’inégalité croissante entre le monde surdéveloppé et le reste menace de compromettre les fondements même de ce qui pourra permettre éventuellement d’élaborer une compréhension renaissante de l’humanité commune. D’autres mots profondément inconfortables comme « responsabilité » aident à qualifier l’engagement modeste de Jaar avec l’humanité de ceux qui

ont été enfermés en-dehors des promesses du surdéveloppement, mais demeurent en compagnie de ses pathologies. Il offre les éléments convaincants d’un contre-média qui pourrait connecter leurs vies aux nôtres.

Des pseudo informations préalablement filtrées proviennent sans arrêt des lignes de front. Les médias sont saturés par le déballage stratégique d’une machinerie bourgeonnante de communiqués de presse. Par ce processus, la culture et les politiques publiques ont acquis un rythme acharné qui ne permet à aucun moment de conduire un engagement en direction de la souffrance immédiate ou éloignée. Jaar s’efforce d’appliquer les mêmes techniques d’humanisation quel que soit l’endroit où il se trouve. Elles commencent par un refus de la complicité avec les tendances existence à voir et à être vu. Il ne vous montrera ni les sans-abris de Montréal ni les maisons charniers du Rwanda. Pourtant la présence de chacune de ces souffrances est publiquement marquée par des manières différentes qui rompent avec la polarité entre ceux qui choisissent de communiquer l’horreur et la souffrance par des moyens qui seront de toute façon toujours insuffisants, et ceux qui refusent ce fardeau, choisissant à la place de choquer ou d’interrompre. Ce dilemme moderniste est représenté de manière répétitive mais est maintenant accompagné par un engagement à travailler avec les contraintes du passé colonial. C’est cette résolution qui rompt le sort mélancolique qui pèse sur l’Europe, à travers le désir plus ou moins exprimé d’un retour à la grandeur, lequel s’évanouit quand on met à bas le prestige impérial. C’est ainsi également que Jaar fait écho et étend encore la célèbre invitation de Fanon à ceux qui étaient autrefois bénéficiaires de la domination coloniale : « il faudrait d’abord que les masses européennes décident de se réveiller, secouent leur cerveau et cessent de jouer au jeu irresponsable de la belle au Bois Dormant. » Aucun baiser ne sera accordé ici. Les éclairs de la lumière et des flammes sont les véritables incitations à ce réveil tardif. 🐘

Cet article un extrait de l’essai paru dans SCARDI G. et PIETROMARCHI B. (sous la direction de), Alfredo Jaar: It is Difficult, Vol 2, Mantoue, Italie, Edizioni Corraini, 2008. Remerciements à l’éditeur et à Paul Gilroy. Traduction de l’anglais par Thomas Serres.

EUROPEAN ALTERNATIVES -ITA



European Alternatives è un'organizzazione transnazionale dedicata a esplorare il potenziale di una politica e cultura post- o transnazionale. Siamo convinti che in un mondo sempre più globale una politica progressista debba essere necessariamente articolata in termini transnazionali, al di là dei confini mentali e materiali dello stato-nazione.

La costruzione europea ha in sé un grande potenziale di promuovere un avanzamento sociale e culturale sia all'interno che all'esterno dell'Unione europea, per quanto questo resti ancora per la maggior parte irrealizzato. Questo potenziale trascende i confini stessi dell'Europa, contribuendo a definire una politica che possa essere in grado di aver voce nell'era della globalizzazione e che risponda alle esigenze dell'umanità tutta.

European Alternatives concepisce come sua responsabilità l'articolazione e promozione di quel potenziale, analizzando aree specifiche di contestazione sociale ed esplorando le risposte offerte da un approccio transnazionale nei confronti di questioni chiave del nostro tempo.

FRA I NOSTRI INTERESSI:

• DEGUAGLIANZA E CITTADINANZA

Fra i nostri interessi principali, spicca senz'altro una preoccupazione per il significato che termini come eguaglianza e cittadinanza possono assumere quando separate dalle logiche arrugginite dei confini nazionali. Un progetto transnazionale deve essere risolutamente egualitario, progressista ed emancipatorio, e deve essere elaborato superando nuove e vecchie opposizioni sociali.

Opposizioni come quella tra migrante e locale, militando contro ogni razzismo di nuovo o vecchio conio, contro ogni tentativo di subordinare il migrante nella gerarchia sociale o economica, o di deprezzare la sua dignità a mero corpo-lavoro.

Opposizioni come quella tra uomo e donna, combattendo il disprezzo verso la donna, tanto presente nella follia politica italiana di questi tempi, e domandando un mondo in cui non sia la sola visione andro- o maschio-centrica a governare lo spazio del pubblico e del politico.

O opposizioni come quella tra centro e periferia, esibendo lo scandalo di un mondo flagellato da guerre, povertà, e carestie, un mondo dove i paesi più ricchi perversamente difendono il proprio privilegio attraverso la costruzione e il mantenimento di un sistema di sfruttamento globale. Su tutti questi punti, una vera politica transnazionale deve agire prendendo in considerazione i diritti dell'umanità nel suo complesso, piuttosto che gli interessi specifici e limitati di un gruppo, una classe, o una comunità privilegiata.

• DEMOCRAZIA TRANSAZIONALE

Un secondo tema centrale è la forma che una vera democrazia transnazionale debba assumere. E infatti, piuttosto che arrendersi a una concezione dell'Unione Europea come costruzione a-politica, regolatrice e normativa, pensiamo che bisogna battersi per una ripolitizzazione del continente. Il 'deficit democratico' dell'Europa potrà essere colmato solo tramite un forte attivismo politico a livello transnazionale, formulando vere alternative europee allo status quo, già che ogni ricorso a prospettive nazionali conduce invariabilmente ad un trinceramento dietro interessi particolari e a un disimpegno nei confronti del resto del mondo.

• CREATIVITA' E ARTE

Ma una futura politica transnazionale non può essere culturalmente conservatrice. Per questo motivo, un altro tema per noi fondamentale è il ruolo che possono giocare artisti, intellettuali, e scrittori nell'inventare nuovi modi di vivere e concepire il mondo, combattendo e smantellando la continua commercializzazione e banalizzazione di tutti gli aspetti della vita umana. Si parla qui di relazione tra attivismo politico e arte: cosa vuol dire arte impegnata al giorno d'oggi? E si parla di un'analisi delle conseguenze della globalizzazione su pratiche artistiche e letterarie, e della possibilità di un decentramento del sistema dell'arte tramite l'emergere di centri creativi al di fuori dei confini dell'occidente, così come gli artisti di Cina, India, o Brasile ci stanno insegnando in questi anni.

Il nostro progetto si sviluppa attraverso diversi impegni e in diversi paesi. Organizziamo una serie di incontri sulle tematiche sopra indicate in giro per l'Europa, questa rivista e la versione multilingue online, e dalla prossima primavera il Festival Transeuropa che sarà organizzato a Bologna, Londra, Parigi, e Cluj. Ma ciò che più ci sta a cuore è estendere un invito, un invito a partecipare al progetto e a darci una mano. Si può partire dal nostro sito, interamente in italiano, www.euroalter.com/it

Transeuropa Festival

Transeuropa è un nuovo modello di progetto pubblico, che combina aspetti artistici, culturali e politici. Sviluppandosi in diverse città europee (Londra, Parigi, Cluj e Bologna, per l'edizione 2009), si configura al tempo stesso come un festival unico e una rete transnazionale di attività promosse da diverse organizzazioni culturali e della società civile.

Transeuropa, che prosegue il progetto iniziato nel 2007 con il London Festival of Europe, comprenderà numerosi eventi: convegni e conferenze, rassegne cinematografiche, iniziative ad hoc per i giovani, reading di poesia e camminate attraverso le città, guidate da artisti ed architetti.

Campagne

European Alternatives organizza una serie di campagne per promuovere le nostre convinzioni a livello transnazionale in Europa. Le nostre campagne attuali sono:

- Campagna per un presidente democratico: il nuovo Presidente del Consiglio Europeo dovrebbe passare per lo scrutinio del Parlamento Europeo, unica sede veramente democratica in Europa, e le opinioni del Parlamento Europeo dovrebbero essere prese in considerazione durante gli incontri del Consiglio Europeo.
- Campagna per un'Europa basata sull'eguaglianza di genere: il problema dell'eguaglianza di genere deve divenire una priorità per la nuova Commissione Europea appena nominata.
- Campagna per Politiche Commerciali più Giuste: La lotta alla povertà e la promozione dello sviluppo nei paesi del terzo mondo devono essere priorità del nuovo 'ministro degli esteri' europeo, e in particolar modo le politiche commerciali dell'Unione vanno riviste in modo tale da garantire un rapporto di giustizia con i paesi in via di sviluppo.

Trovate tutti i dettagli delle campagne, e tutti gli strumenti per partecipare, online su www.euroalter.com/it

Il sito Euroalter.com /it

Il sito euroalter.com/it presenta una nuova rivista online con articoli di fondo, commenti, e contenuto multimediale, e poi informazioni sui nostri progetti e la possibilità di partecipare attivamente al loro sviluppo. Aggiornato ogni giorno e interamente in tre lingue (italiano, inglese, e francese), il sito include una comunità partecipativa dove contribuire scritti e opinioni, e riportare le attività dei vari gruppi locali.

www.euroalter.com/it



Photo by August Sander. See page 2 for review

EUROPA GLOBALE, GIUSTIZIA GLOBALE

Sembra esserci un paradosso fondamentale nella dialettica che circonda il fenomeno della globalizzazione. Ci ricordano ogni giorno dell'ineludibile interconnessione supranazionale della realtà economica contemporanea, della necessità della competizione e dell'efficienza in un mercato del lavoro oramai globale, dell'inevitabilità del sistema capitalista in un mondo in cui tutti giocano la stessa partita. E siamo noi stessi sempre più coscienti nella nostra quotidianità della composizione cosmopolita delle città europee, che offrono una rappresentazione tangibile delle migrazioni globali del nuovo secolo e si trasformano in officine per la ricostruzione di comunità sganciate dal mero senso localistico di appartenenza. Ma al tempo stesso, uno sguardo al panorama politico sembra riportarci a un déjà vu di competizione fra stati, avventure imperialiste, e una concezione tribale dell'interesse nazionale. Il paradigma Westfaliano di comunità inserragliate che competono per mietere il raccolto planetario sembra continuare incontestato.

All'interno di questa realtà, le poche richieste per un comportamento veramente 'internazionalista' da parte delle nazioni più

sviluppate sono viste o in termini di semplice benevolenza, o come un'instrusione interessata e neocoloniale negli affari di nazioni terze (come tante esperienze del Fondo Monetario Internazionale hanno portato molti a concludere).

Ma questa dicotomia cancella una considerazione essenziale, e precisamente la comprensione della responsabilità che portiamo sulle nostre spalle per le politiche internazionali avanzate dai governi che ci rappresentano, politiche spesso atte a mantenere un sistema globale ingiusto e basato su chiare gerarchie di comando e sfruttamento. Questa è una differenza cruciale, ed è qui che si annida la falsa tesi secondo cui i problemi della povertà del mondo non riguardano noi, cittadini del primo mondo, al di fuori dell'aiuto caritatevole che potremmo offrire (con tanta generosità).

Il discorso attuale attorno ai fenomeni migratori è un eccellente esempio di questa rinuncia a una responsabilità che invece ci appartiene; l'Europa sembra agire come se i migranti fossero spinti sulle nostre coste da inafferrabili forze gravitazionali, o da misteriosi eventi geopolitici di cui poco si comprende se non un vago sentore di vio-

lenza, paura, e povertà. Lo stato è quindi incline a considerarsi un attore neutrale che non ha nulla a che vedere con i fenomeni migratori, fenomeni a cui può rispondere o brutalmente, o con simpatia (con carità), attraverso procedure più o meno severe di asilo, un discorso pubblico più o meno aperto alla figura dell'altro, concessione di assistenza sociale e parziale diritti di cittadinanza, ecc.

Ma questo nasconde le connessioni fra il fenomeno della migrazione e le azioni dei paesi 'riceventi' – paesi che spesso erano in passato potenze coloniali – o dei loro principali attori economici. Ci si dovrebbe allora forse domandare perché, nel ventunesimo secolo, siamo ancora confrontati con livelli talmente mostruosi e moralmente scandalosi di disuguaglianza nel pianeta. E forse dovremmo veramente guardare ai termini degli accordi commerciali, agli effetti della politica agricola europea, o alle implicazioni della corsa al ribasso nel mercato del lavoro delocalizzato e deregolamentato. E cominciare a proporre soluzioni alternative, disegnando i contorni di una politica che ponga l'essere umano, dovunque si trovi, al centro della propria pratica emancipatoria.

Si potrebbe cominciare con il parlare di un movimento verso una diversa concezione del ruolo del commercio estero, trasformato da semplice mezzo per l'arricchimento nazionale o europeo a strumento chiave per uno sviluppo globale e concertato, moralizzando i termini degli accordi e ponendo gli interessi dei paesi del terzo mondo al centro dell'equazione. Che ogni prodotto venduto nel mercato europeo sia prodotto secondo gli standard minimi del commercio equo e solidale. O chiedere leggi che governino le delocalizzazioni delle industrie europee, che vadano nella direzione di un'imposizione di un più forte rispetto dei diritti del lavoro e dei lavoratori – in una parola, dei diritti umani, tema su cui l'Europa si vuole vedere esempio internazionale di buona condotta – anche quando la produzione avviene in paesi terzi.

La lista può essere allungata a piacimento. E allungarla è il lavoro che ci siamo riproposti a European Alternatives per i prossimi mesi, prima di lanciare una campagna transnazionale per una diversa concezione del ruolo globale dell'Europa. Dateci una mano e fateci sapere cosa ne pensate su www.euroalter.com/it ■

POVERTÀ ED ESCLUSIONE SOCIALE: UNA QUESTIONE DI DEMOCRAZIA

Il 2010 sarà l'anno europeo della lotta alla povertà e all'esclusione sociale. Al giorno d'oggi, il numero di persone che vivono nella povertà in Europa, uno degli spazi più ricchi del mondo, è stimato a 79 milioni. Fuori dell'Europa la metà della popolazione mondiale vive con meno di 2 euro al giorno. Le opportunità, nei prossimi mesi, d'influire concretamente nelle politiche dell'Unione europea esistono – uno dei primi compiti della nuova Commissione europea è di proporre un nuovo budget e dei nuovi obiettivi per l'Unione europea per i prossimi anni.

La formula dell'anno europeo della

lotta alla povertà e all'esclusione sociale, e in particolare il congiunto dei due termini, è interessante per una lettura critica del problema. La formula permette di analizzare insieme i due fenomeni, e di comprendere che la povertà dovrebbe essere percepita come una forma d'esclusione sociale. La lotta contro la povertà appare allora come un elemento principale della democrazia: essere poveri non significa semplicemente essere poveri materialmente, ma significa anche non avere la possibilità di partecipare in maniera uguale alla vita sociale. Disponibilità economica e possibilità di partecipazione devono dunque essere compresi come un tutt'uno.

In seno allo spazio europeo, la situazione è confusa e resa incoerente dall'intransigenza degli stati-nazione in alcune aree politiche ed economiche. Anche se la comunità economica europea è largamente unificata, in particolare per quanto riguarda la libertà di flussi dei capitali, fino a quando lo stato-nazione sarà percepito come il luogo principale di legittimità democratica rimarrà difficile pretendere che esista una società europea unificata e solidare.

Le decisioni politiche sulla lotta alla disoccupazione e alle ineguaglianze sociali riposano principalmente in seno agli stati-nazione, con l'eccezione dei fondi

strutturali europei e dei fondi di coesione, la cui allocazione è ancora un tema sensibile. La situazione dell'Unione europea è diventata sufficientemente drammatica per giustificare il ricorso a una maggiore solidarietà comunitaria in questo campo, se solo questo fosse richiesto. Oggi i governi europei che devono confrontarsi alle situazioni più difficili sul fronte della povertà sono quelli che devono restringere maggiormente la loro spesa sociale, come diversi paesi dell'Est Europa. Nei prossimi mesi, la messa in pratica di una campagna transnazionale atta a mettere in evidenza le ineguaglianze all'interno dell'Unione europea sarà sempre più necessaria. ■

LA FINE DELLA DOMINAZIONE MASCHILE IN EUROPA STA ARRIVANDO?

La pertinenza della formula 'dominazione maschile', titolo alla volta di un celebre libro del sociologo Pierre Bourdieu e di un nuovo film di Patric Jean uscito nei cinema francesi a novembre, sembra sfortunatamente ancora attuale.

Oggi in Europa nuove formule di conservativismo si fanno portatori di una serie di attacchi contro i diritti delle donne. Il momento sembra propizio per una mobilitazione transnazionale, e per un cambio in profondità del sistema democratico europeo, così da assicurare un'uguaglianza reale nel lungo periodo.

Le reazioni dei movimenti femministi si moltiplicano e rilanciano in inventività: passando per l'ironia, così come nel caso del film di Patric Jean appena citato; la raccolta di prove, come nel documentario 'Il corpo delle donne' di Lorella Zanardo, che denuncia le derive sessiste della televisione italiana; o ancora passando per manifestazioni come quella in Francia il 17 Ottobre organ-

izzata da un largo collettivo di associazioni; per finire con nuove conquiste legali, come nelle modifiche apportate al diritto all'aborto nella Spagna di Zapatero.

Al di là di una realtà nazionale sempre più dinamica, e dell'opportunità crescente di rinforzare le dinamiche transnazionali (già che il confronto fra diverse situazioni nazionali permette di rilevare e lottare contro le differenti – o simili – forme di discriminazione in Europa), l'Europa apre una possibilità di azione e di cambiamento, come lo provano le discussioni attorno alle nomine della recente Commissione Europea, che hanno portato diverse europarlamentari a manifestare davanti al Parlamento Europeo per lo scarso numero di nomine femminili.

Modificare le procedure di nomina delle posizioni principali al cuore dell'Europa, promuovendo una maggiore trasparenza e responsabilità di fronte al Parlamento Europeo – l'unica istituzione direttamente eletta dai cittadini europei, – senno' diret-

tamente una nomina da parte di questa istituzione e non degli stati membri, permetterebbe di dare alla luce uno spazio più egualitario, evitando le limitazioni inerenti al dominio di uomini politici nel panorama nazionale, che tendono a nominare altri uomini nei posti chiave.

Una modifica di questo tipo, accompagnata e stimolata dai partiti politici europei, può permettere una partecipazione, un accesso ai luoghi del potere e della rappresentazione, e dunque una democrazia, non più soggetta alle logiche del ristretto gruppo (di uomini, e principalmente bianchi) che governa gli spazi nazionali.

La fine della dominazione maschile non è un processo naturale. I movimenti all'opera in seno allo spazio europeo sembrano essere in grado di far cadere le barriere presenti e di creare uno spazio politico europeo egualitario, dove la politica delle quote, per qualunque gruppo che sia, non sarà finalmente più necessaria. ■



IPOTESI SULL'IDEA DI EUROPA

DENIS GUENOUN

Scoperte del mondo, produzioni di diritti: l'universale è un'universalizzazione. L'Europa come luogo e come cammino.

L'IDEA UNIVERSALE
Chi cerca l'idea dell'Europa trova l'universale. Il contenuto positivo della cultura elaboratosi in quella che noi chiamiamo "Europa" non consiste che nella determinazione, nell'approfondimento, nell'esplorazione del più generale e condiviso: unità intelligibile del mondo naturale, condizione comune degli esseri umani. Tale approccio non è un punto di partenza, ma un processo di espansione continuo. L'universo si conquista in pensiero come in prassi, attraverso un'estensione a nuovi spazi fisici, e un transfert a nuovi domini del senso: nelle scienze, le arti, l'invenzione delle norme. Scoperte del mondo, produzioni di diritti: l'universale è universalizzazione, cammino in progress. L'Europa è un luogo e un cammino. Ora, tale constatazione rivela un profondo paradosso. Se infatti essa è fedele alla propria energia intima e positiva, "l'Europa" è un processo d'apertura. Le condizioni di integrazione all'Europa non includono nessun criterio linguistico, religioso, razziale, e neanche nessun confine geografico determinato, cosa che potrebbe essere ancora più sorprendente. I soli limiti sono di senso e di diritto: ed essi si pongono come aperture all'universale (libertà civili, diritti degli esseri umani), vale a dire al senza limiti. La pietra miliare dell'Europa è posta come porta d'accesso. Si può quindi temere che l'Europa si definisca per ciò che la infrange, o per lo meno la altera, disfa la sua sagoma, i suoi contorni, la sua stessa forma. Ma invece, quando l'Europa cerca di disegnarsi come identità, o come spazio costruito, si trova nella condizione di doversi attribuire dei confini, e quindi di escludere da essa tutto il mondo al di fuori, trovandosi in quell'occasione infedele alla propria vocazione positiva e formatrice. Per farla breve, la contraddizione potrebbe essere la seguente: l'Europa è fedele a ciò che la ispira, e si nega come Europa (come continente, come carta), oppure si iscrive all'interno di limiti e un disegno figurale, interrompendo il movimento di universalizzazione di cui è portatrice e che la anima nella sua essenza. Ogni politica europea è collegata a questa tensione: cercando l'identità (europea), nega l'impulso motore dell'Europa, ovvero la sua apertura. Non mirando ad altro che all'universale, sembra sciogliere ciò che è propriamente europeo: la sua capacità di distinguersi.

L'osservazione non è di carattere unicamente speculativo. Essa tocca la storia concreta. È dai tempi moderni, cioè da quando esiste come tale, che l'Europa non ha altra storia se non quella del suo diventare-mondo. L'idea di una storia continentale dell'Europa è una finzione del concetto froidiano del Nachträglichkeit, cioè dell'elaborazione del ricordo in un momento successivo. Tutta la storia dell'Europa è fatta di progetti di mondo: dalle grandi scoperte alla costituzione degli imperi coloniali, nessun periodo è degno di nota, tranne qualche fermata e qualche pausa, in cui le potenze d'Europa non vengono messe a confronto con le loro imprese planetarie. Da questo punto di vista gli ultimi due secoli sono eloquenti. Infatti, il divenire delle tre grandi invenzioni europee è quello del loro diventare-mondo: la Rivoluzione (e il suo volto come

rivoluzione mondiale, in particolare quella comunista, idea di Europa le cui realizzazioni più longeve si sono sentite da Mosca a Pechino; la Nazione e la sua proliferazione come nazionalismo, di cui il colonialismo sarà il più grande impulsore, dal momento che è la colonizzazione che ha diffuso la forma-Nazione nella sua figura d'elezione di Stato nazionale su tutta la superficie del pianeta), e infine, last but not least, il Capitale stesso, che copre ormai il globo del suo tessuto, con quella doppia invenzione europea come ala propulsore: gli Stati Uniti d'America e il loro inedito impero. Est, sud, ovest: tre espansioni dell'Europa agli estremi del mondo. Si potrebbe temere, allora, che l'idea di riflettere su un'Europa contenuta nel proprio quadro continentale non sia altro che la gestione di un residuo: ciò che resta dell'Europa, ora che il suo progetto del mondo (socialismo, nazionalismo, capitalismo) le sfugge e sembra affrancarsi dalla propria fonte, dalla propria metropoli natia.

L'EPOCA

Tutto questo riguarda solo il passato? Il divenire della globalizzazione, o le vie dell'universale, sono definitivamente passate su un altro terreno rispetto a quello della storia d'Europa? È necessario concepire, per esempio, che il diritto internazionale, e che le istanze incaricate di produrlo e di svilupparlo, sono ormai luoghi privilegiati in cui si affacenda, si mette in atto la produzione dell'universale? E che dunque l'Europa è condannata allo status di istanza regionale di serie B rispetto alle forze più affermate? Non è detto. Innanzitutto il diritto internazionale, e per esempio l'Onu, come indicano i loro stessi nomi, considerano l'universale come sistema di rapporti tra le nazioni. Sono tenuti ad articolarsi al fatto nazionale, a prendere la nazione come stato di fatto. Una delle principali questioni di oggi riguarda il carattere obsoleto della forma-nazione. È una delle chiavi dell'universalizzazione in corso. La nazione capta l'universale nella rete di un certo legame: territoriale, etnico, religioso-nazionale in quanto nodo di un legame paradossale e teso tra religione, razza e territorio. In molti punti la forma stato-nazionale è oggi un intralcio allo sviluppo di nuovi processi di universalizzazione (egualitaria, giuridica, morale, culturale). L'Europa nella fase attuale della sua storia, è una forma nuova di costruzione post-nazionale, o almeno trans-nazionale avanzata. Da questo punto

europea per molteplici ragioni: anzitutto perché l'Islam è una componente fondamentale della sedimentazione europea nel suo territorio medievale, poi perché il rapporto con l'Islam segna profondamente, nel suo cuore, la storia europea in molte delle sue dimensioni: Europa occidentale e Maghreb, Europa dell'Est e Turchia, Balcani, ecc. Questi confronti non designano fronti esterni, ma frontiere interiori. L'Algeria è una frontiera interna della Francia, come la Turchia lo è del mondo germanico, come il

“ LE CONDIZIONI DI INTEGRAZIONE ALL'EUROPA NON INCLUDONO NESSUN CRITERIO LINGUISTICO, RELIGIOSO, RAZZIALE, E NEANCHE NESSUN CONFINE GEOGRAFICO DETERMINATO, COSA CHE POTREBBE ESSERE ANCORA PIÙ SORPRENDENTE. I SOLI LIMITI SONO DI SENSO E DI DIRITTO: ED ESSI SI PONGONO COME APERTURE ALL'UNIVERSALE. ”

Pakistan lo è dell'Inghilterra, ecc. Una frontalità evidentemente manifesta in mondo particolarmente evidente nel divenire-urbano delle "metropoli" di oggi. Di modo che il divenire-europeo non può prodursi che come democratizzazione del rapporto con l'Islam, ovvero come affermazione di una delle dimensioni più difficili, e quindi più produttive, dell'universalizzazione di oggi. Ecco perché la questione dell'adesione della Turchia, del dominio del Maghreb o dell'insieme Israele-Palestina è una delle vocazioni eminenti dell'Europa in divenire, uno dei contributi più potenti alla possibilità di un'universalizzazione democratica e pacifica del mondo in fieri. Come costruzione transnazionale nuova, e come pacificazione democratica del rapporto Occidente-Islam, l'Europa è uno dei cantieri più inventivi dell'universale di oggi.

IL TEMA

Se si tratta di trovare un "tema" che aiuti la mobilitazione delle energie europee nella fase ormai aperta, non lo si deve ricercare nel mito. Per molte ragioni: anzitutto, perché un mito non si crea a comando. Non c'è creazione del mito che arrivi dal desiderio, e ancor meno dalla decisione, di mitizzare. Inoltre, perché fino a prova contraria, il principale uso dei miti, in epoca moderna e nello spazio politico perlomeno, è stata la mistificazione. Infine, perché una gran parte dell'attività del pensiero in Europa,

eva l'ordine di questa proibizione come comandamento più sublime. Si eviterà quindi di cedere troppo presto all'opinione, molto condivisa, secondo la quale affinché gli europei si impegnino in favore dell'Europa bisognerebbe fornire loro buone immagini piene e gratificanti: mitiche.


Quanto all'Europa, quindi, e anche se l'affermazione sembra provocatoria, non si vede altro tema di mobilitazione di energie (cittadine, integratrici, militanti) che non sia l'universale in quanto tale. Questo

merita forse più attenzione di quello che si pensa. Di fatto:

1 Non è assodato che ci siano oggi molte entità politiche, affermate o in divenire, che possano prendere la figura dell'universale come tale tra loro temi di predilezione. L'Europa è, in ogni caso, uno dei (rari?) posti in cui è possibile rivendicare se stessi parte della comunità di uomini, senza limiti e senza riserve. La singolarità dell'Europa, quando la si cerca, è forse nel vigore, nell'anzianità, nella permanenza di questo universalismo, e nel suo carattere irremovibile: con gli effetti che esso comporta. Senso della giustizia, egualitarismo, preoccupazione nei confronti del pianeta, ostilità alla pena di morte, alla guerra, ecc.

2 Forse non c'è niente, almeno in termini di energie, che conduca alla dissoluzione, né alla demobilitazione. È anzi tutto il contrario: non si vedranno molti giovani europei scendere in piazza per affermare con ardore la loro appartenenza europea. Susciteremmo ben poca passione con un neo particolarismo, neo nazionalismo continentale. Ma d'altra parte non è impossibile che la passione si levi nel momento in cui si si tratterà di proclamare, in quanto umani – in certi casi in quanto esseri viventi – solidali con tutte le persone o tutte le comunità umane, in quanto tali, senza riserve. E che un orgoglio verso l'Europa in quanto tale ci sarà solo se si manifesta come uno dei luoghi di elezione di un'umanità integralmente condivisa.

3 In ogni caso, né il neonazionalismo, né le identità continentali, né i fondamentalismi religiosi, né l'intervenzionismo del capitale, né l'internazionalismo giuridico possono oggi (né forse vogliono) proclamarsi preoccupazione irremovibile di tutti gli individui umani, dal punto di trascendenza che può essere riconosciuto a ogni essere umano, e forse, oltre, alla casa-natura. È così (per suggerire un'applicazione determinata) che l'apertura radicale dell'Europa all'Islam, al giudaismo e al patrimonio cristiano – se essa sceglie di affermare questi punti di democratizzazione e pacificazione sia interne che frontaliere le permette forse – di accogliere con uguale benevolenza israeliani e palestinesi. L'universalismo europeo è forse qui in grado di proporre un'alternativa a a questo confronto nazionalista e "di civiltà" apparentemente senza uscita. Non è poco.

Non concludiamo, comunque, troppo frettolosamente, che l'assenza di un contenuto identitario specifico porterà la battaglia europea ad una disfatta per mancanza di vigore. Forse è vero il contrario. La Rivoluzione francese si è affermata su un tema universale. E non le è certo mancata la forza. 

Traduzione dal francese di Anna Castellari



Brian Griffin, Siouxsie, Rotherhithe Studio, London, 1984

GIGI ROGGERO
& EDUFACTORY COLLECTIVE

THE EDU-FACTORY MACHINE

Transnational Politics and Translational Institutions

Featured manifesto in
this issue of Europa.

The old institutions are crumbling – from central banks to political parties, from museums to newspapers, from broadcast television to schools. They cannot cope with the continual rollout of crises one after the next. Nor can they adapt to the encroachment of networks on their borders. Most are trying to brand their way out of their dead ends. Doubtless some will survive, but most will become extinct. In any case, a radical politics can no longer be committed to the long march through these institutions.

Needless to say, the universities are crumbling, too. ‘As once was the factory, so now is the university’. Edu-factory started with this plain and apparently unproblematic statement—not to affirm but to interrogate it. The university does not at all function like a factory, and we are not nostalgic for the struggles of the past. This statement was rather the indication of a political problem. If we begin with the incommensurable spatio-temporal differences between the actual functions of the university and those of the factory, what are the political stakes of their comparison? In other words: how can the problem of organization be rethought in the aftermath of the demise of its traditional forms such as the union and the political party?

This problem concerns prognosis more than diagnosis, and its urgency is only deepened by the current global economic crisis. Within edu-factory, we refer to this as the double crisis. On the one hand it is an acceleration of the crisis specific to the university that marks its end, the inevitable result of its eroded epistemological status; on the other hand it is also the crisis of postfordist conditions of labor and value, many of which are circuited through the university.

To be succinct: how can edu-factory become a theoretical and political machine for the production of the common and just-in-time interventions during a time of crisis? The question of composition has nothing to do with the exportation of a model or the communication among homogeneous subjects: it is immediately the question of translation. Everyday capital has to translate the production of the common into the language of accumulation; it has to take the ‘heterogeneous and full time’ of the movement and cooperation of living knowledge and turn it into the ‘homogenous and empty time’ of the capture of value. This is homolingual translation; global English is the homolingual idiom of the corporate university. Yet there are no more ‘outsides’, be they survivalist ideas or happy utopian islands: the ghettos are definitely compatible with the system of governance. The global university is our battlefield: it is the space-time axis for experimentation in the ordinary event of heterolingual translation. Pitted against the multiple technologies of border management, security and identity that make the

university into a key site for the management of global populations, we explore the struggles among its knowledgeable bodies and their possible recomposition in a common process.

If it is true that we are situated on the borders between the university and social production, it is equally true that these borders are the site of intensive struggle and reorganization. The question now turns around how we view these borders as political spaces. How can our bodies occupy these spaces and think and feel in them? It is not a question of defending the public against the private, for they are but two sides of the same capitalistic coin.

how the university ‘works’—both the ‘occupations’ that it enforces and those that it incites, as well as the anomalies that take exception to its homogenizing translations (the zero issue on the “double crisis” will be in the Winter); and the ideas for a new organization of knowledge production, entirely within the purview of social cooperation and its collective control. This is what we call the construction of an autonomous institution or the invention of the university of the common. To work in this way to build up a network of struggles is to move from the logic of ‘exchange’ to the translation of struggles based on their irreducible singu-

We have said that edu-factory is an organized network, yet what does this mean? For several decades now, networks have become the preferred form of movements as well as governance. As such they represent the possibility of the production of the common as well as its capture and enclosure.



In short, the network is a dominant form, and all sorts of power are already articulated through it. Recently, we have noted two opposing inclinations among networks: the one is towards community, i.e., a reactionary return to the identity of a mythological origin, while the other is towards constituent practices, i.e., the road toward the invention of new institutions.

In this decisive transition, we need money and funds. This is not merely a technical issue, nor a test of purity or commitment, but a political question. There is a nexus between the diminishing returns of old institutions and the practical difficulties of inventing new ones, and it is on this ground, as difficult and as compromised as it may be, that we see a point of intervention. In their desperation to survive extinction by capturing the innovation of living-knowledge production, these crumbling institutions channel funds that we can appropriate. We do not want to rescue the corporate university. We want to steal from it, and then kill it. Innovation is not a form of value-added, but the expression of the common. www.edu-factory.org

“ EDU-FACTORY MOVES FROM AN EXTENSIVE TO AN INTENSIVE MODE OF NETWORKED ORGANIZATION. ”



larity and heterogeneity.

This network of struggles is embodied in the movements and conflicts all around the world, within and against the global university, and fuelled by the global crisis: from the California University occupations to the graduate students strikes in North America, from the new relationships between movements and governance in Latin America to the conflicts in Asia. And in Europe, from the Anomalous Wave in Italy to the Bildungsstreik in Germany, from the Greek revolt to the occupations in Austria and Switzerland, all the movements are inside the Bologna Process. All these struggles haven't nostalgia for the national borders, but we're building a new European common space of the higher education and the living knowledge mobility. An autonomous Bologna Process. Because we are speaking the same language. We are writing a common lexicon of the autonomy and the conflicts in knowledge production. And we're building up an autonomous university, that is to say, a university without borders.

Rather, we are building up the common, which is neither public nor private, but an expression of autonomous yet mutually dependent bodies touching in social admixture.

Hence, edu-factory moves from an extensive to an intensive mode of networked organization. This involves a constant process of updates and innovations, via a tool-kit that is both experimental and conventional: the discussion list and the website; the publication and translation of our first book, The Global University (it was published in Italian

by Manifestolibri, 2008; in English by Autonomedia, 2009; in Spanish by Traficantes de sueños, 2010); the organization of and collaboration at meetings and public events all around the world; the webjournal devoted to analyzing





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P.12: SASKIA SASSEN: GLOBAL CHALLENGES FOR THE CITY

Some of what are usually understood as global governance challenges are increasingly becoming particularly concrete and urgent in cities. This is part of a larger disassembling of all-encompassing formats, notably the nation-state and the inter-state system.



P.18: INTERVIEW WITH ROSI BRAIDOTTI

A life in transit, Rosi Braidotti has explored the notion of “nomadism”, which has become the key concept for the development of an extremely original research, varying from poststructuralism, to the history of feminism.

P.6: CANDIDO GRZYBOWSKI: CITIZENS' POLITICAL PARTICIPATION

The institutionalization of the democratic state is not sufficient for democracy to penetrate all social relations and guarantee the basic rights of citizenship to all people. One of the funders of the World Social Forum reasons on new forms of participation.

ALSO INCLUDING:
P.14: RICHARD SENNET: FLEXIBLE CITY OF STRANGERS
P.10: ULRICH BECK: INTERVIEW
P.24: URSULA BIEMANN: X-MISSION



WHO SAID SOLIDARITY?

Joakim Eskildsen
The Roma Journeys
6 March - 18 April
Noorderlicht Photogallery
www.noorderlicht.com

Together since 1957, read three years ago the European Union logo celebrating 50 years since the founding treaty of the Union. The soundbites late last year, with the celebration of the 20th anniversary of the fall of the Berlin wall, were of course again of unity, of fraternity rediscovered. ‘Solidarity’ is the European trademark, a sure-fire motif of every discourse by a politician at the European level, whether it be to colleagues in the European

parliament, to heads of state, or, more rarely, to citizens themselves. At the European level almost everything has to be covered by a veneer of solidarity, whether it demonstrates any togetherness or not. Thus recently the almost total refusal of the German state to provide any assistance to the Greek state in the context of their sovereign debt crisis without the IMF providing the funds could still be called a ‘guarantee of solidarity’ amongst the European community. The Greek situation was

only a higher profile example of exactly the same thing experience with Latvia last year in the height of the financial crisis, where the same IMF remedies of austerity were imposed. The Greek example proved that Euro membership makes no difference to the kind of ‘togetherness’ that is applied. Considering the quite different situation of many migrants without a state in Europe, one also asks whether the trademark is in fact one of protectionism and privilege, rather than solidarity.

As with all political words when they are appropriated by political elites, ‘solidarity’ has come to have an ambiguous meaning, and one begins to ask if it is shared responsibility that is being called for, or shared evasion, shared guilt. One also must ask who is called on to show solidarity. Most often in the European rhetoric it is the leaders of European states. The relevant ‘togetherness’ is that of states, and yet recent events have shown once again that the unity of the European council (the meeting of the heads of

European member states) is no guarantee of what would normally be understood as mutual support or fraternity. For as long as national leaders remain answerable to national publics, and those national publics, because of the remaining national institutions, national public spheres, and national economic interests, see their own well-being as in competition with other citizens from other countries, the rhetoric of European togetherness will remain a veneer, to disguise the ways in which our common destinies are being

DEMOCRACY
EQUALITY
CULTURE
BEYOND THE NATION STATE



European Alternatives is a civil society organisation devoted to exploring the potential for transnational politics and culture. We believe that today the challenges of democratic participation, social equality, and cultural innovation cannot be effectively understood and addressed at the nation state level.

The organisation is unique in being at once a breeding ground for new ideas and proposals for politics and culture at a European level and in being a political and cultural actor with a truly transeuropean activity, staff and support base.

The reflexion and action of European Alternatives is targeted in the first instance at the European Union and European nation states, but the political and cultural horizon of the organisation is global, as are the collaborations it tries to foster.

Here's what we do and why:

IMAGINING ALTERNATIVES

- Research, publications, and transnational seminars to formulate, from the ground-up and through the participation of citizens and members of our local groups, a wide series of political proposals for the Europe to come.
- Transeuropa Festival, an innovative simultaneous festival taking place in 4 cities mixing cultural, political, and artistic engagement across borders.
- Artistic projects, such as the recent Polis21, inviting artists to imagine alternative proposals for society and political community.

DEMOCRATIC PARTICIPATION

- **LOCAL GROUPS:** we stimulate active participation from the bottom-up in all areas of our work through many active local groups running a rich programme of local activities
- **DEMOCRATISING THE EU:** we push for greater democratisation of the European political process, advocating greater participation of citizens, civil society and social movements in the decision-making of the European Union. We do so by representing these voices in consultations with the European institutions, by running initiatives reinforcing the role of the European parliament, and in promoting the emergence of a political Europe of alternative choices by analysis and debate of current European policies.
- **CAMPAIGNS:** we contribute to the emergence of pan-European social movements working to transform national demands and campaigns into transnational advocacy. We do so by running regular campaigns on themes as varied as media pluralism and women's rights.

TRANSNATIONAL PUBLIC SPHERE

- We publish a printed magazine in English and an online magazine in 3 languages to stimulate interaction with our work and contribute to the shared formulation of political proposals across language barriers, promoting the development of a transnational space for interaction and discussion of political and cultural issues.

BASIC BELIEFS

European Alternatives is not affiliated to any political party or movement. At the same time, we believe that to promote responsible participation in the future development and direction of the European Union it is necessary to express clearly delineated and coherent proposals.

The following basic beliefs guide our work:

- **DEMOCRACY AND PARTICIPATION:** The 'democratic deficit' so often associated with Europe must be understood as applying also to national institutions. Europe must reinvent forms of politics and participation which will address this situation at a transnational level, stimulating new avenues of engagement that include, expand, and go beyond traditional representative democracy.
- **EQUALITY:** Inequalities between rich and poor, between men and women, between migrant and non-migrant, between different ethnicities, exist at a level beyond the nation state, and the nation is no longer the most appropriate level of governance to address them. The horizon of egalitarian politics must become transnational instiutions if it is to address discrimination and injustice in a globalised age. Only in this way will the challenges of global development can be effectively addressed.
- **EUROPE AND THE WORLD:** Transnational solidarity means reinterpreting the political and cultural relations between countries, including those between the European and non-European space. This implies working for a fairer global system based on co-development and global justice.
- **CULTURE:** Politics must not be reduced to legislation. Finding better ways of living together is a cultural pursuit in which the arts and humanities have an essential role.

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OUR TEAM

Editors Lorenzo Marsili Niccoló Milanese	Transnational Board Ségolène Pruvot Sara Saleri Emanuele Guidi Damiano Razzoli	Online editor: Alberto Stella	This publication has received support from the European Parliament. Its contents and the opinions expressed therein represent the views of the authors only.
Deputy Editor Giuliano Battiston		Art Direction & Design Rasha Kahil www.rashadesign.net	



www.euroalter.com / editors@euroalter.com



ABOUT THE FRONT COVER PHOTOGRAPH:
JOAKIM ESKILDSEN

Between 2000 and 2006 Eskildsen travelled together with the writer Cia Rinne through seven countries to obtain more in sight into the life and culture of the Roma. The result, *The Roma Journeys*, has been applauded internationally for its splendid photography.

Joakim Eskildsen and Cia Rinne's trip began in Hungary and by chance expanded to include India, Greece, Romania, France, Russia and Finland. As Eskildsen and Rinne came to know more about the culture, language and living conditions of the Roma, their interest developed into solidarity. The countless profound encounters proved a great source of inspiration during the project. Eskildsen and Rinne often stayed for long periods as guests with various families and could work with their subjects' full confidence. The photographs reflect the intensity of the contact between the Roma and the photographer. Together with the Calé, Sinti and other groups the Roma constitute Europe's largest ethnic minority. Colloquially they are however all generally called 'gypsies'. The Roma community has been wandering through Europe for six hundred years now, in search of a place to settle permanently. Right down to this day they must defend themselves against discrimination and distrust from surrounding societies.

Joakim Eskildsen (b. 1971, Copenhagen) was for some time in training with the Danish court photographer Rigmor Mydtskov. In 1998 he graduated with an MA degree in photography at the University of Art and Design in Helsinki. Among Eskildsen's publications are *Nordic Signs*, from 1995, and *iChicken Moon*, published in 1999. The book *The Roma Journeys* (2007, Steidl), which appeared to accompany the exhibition, has captured several photography prizes including the Deutscher Fotobuchpreis (Gold) in 2009.

Joakim Eskildsen, *The Roma Journeys*
6 March - 18 April
Noorderlicht Photogallery, www.noorderlicht.com

?WHO SAID SOLIDARITY

CONTINUED FROM COVER <

decided by interests other than our own.

It must be European citizens themselves who create solidarity if it is to be a virtue of Europeans, and this genuine solidarity amongst people no matter their passport must expose critically the political disagreements at European level for what they are, and call for an end to all posturing and vapid serment. Furthermore we must do so in the name of Europe, and not abandon the name to those who would use it for other means.

It is with this desire for creating a Europe from the ground up that European Alternatives is organising TRANSEUROPA festival in four cities spanning the continent: London, Paris, Bologna and Cluj-Napoca. The Festival runs simultaneously in the four cities from the 28th April – 10th May. The festival aims directly to call out to a European citizenry that is able to conceive of itself as such, beyond the illusions of national pretences to autonomy. At once a cultural and artistic festival and a political event, the themes of the Festival are reflected in this issue of Transeuropa journal.

The question of democracy and the position of the citizen, at base of the possibility of solidarity, is one such theme, and in this issue we approach it both from political and artistic points of view. With the transition from merely national to transnational politics, Europe is called to reinvent and innovate on its understanding of democracy, representation, and participation. The possibility of genuinely transnational political parties and the future of political parties as such are essential questions for the renewal of democracy in contemporary Europe, as is the position of the European parliament (Niccolo Milanese and Stella Tang, pp.4-5). Learning from the experiences of other continents in forms of democracy is an exercise in modesty that Europe would do well to practice, and in this issue we look at the experiences of Latin America (Candido Grybozski pp.6-7), particularly for what concerns direct citizens' participation in the political process and the democratic reform of the media. At a time when European institutions are often accused of showing a democratic deficit, and at a time when truly

to architectural practices of rendering the city as a place of refuge and hospitality is provided by Philipp Misselwitz and Can Altay (p.26-7).

Very different forms of cities are considered by Michel Agier in his article on camps for migrants, and Europe's actions and responsibilities in a global context (p.22). TRANSEUROPA festival is a celebration of and critical engagement with mobility in and through Europe, and the dichotomy between the mobility of some and the stasis of others, and the challenges this poses for our conceptions of solidarity will be a constant interrogation throughout. The unacceptable dichotomy between citizen and migrant – migrants who are often long-term residents of the European space – is questioned throughout this publication. An analysis of the meaning of ethnicity, belonging, and identity is not only key to many of the articles but appears in several of the artistic projects we present and discuss throughout the issue (from our cover photographer – Joakim Eskildsen, to Rosa Jijon, Anu Pennanen, and Ernesto Morales). Ursula Biemann's artistic project on extra-territoriality in Palestine (p. 24-5) exposes the ways in which global forms of organisation and administration are having implications in the Middle East. The complex interrelation between modes of sovereign assertion and the increased movements of peoples inside the European Union are analysed by Patricia Tuitt (p.23).

The relation between states and the movement of peoples and goods is discussed in the two key interviews of this issue: with Ulrich Beck (p.10-11) and with Rosi Braidotti (pp.16-17). Both call, in different ways, for a new ethics of cosmopolitanism and see in the European construction a potential for transformational change at both a global and highly personal level.

The situation of women in contemporary Europe is a thread of TRANSEUROPA which is highly pertinent in all of the cities of the Festival. In this issue we consider in particular the beleaguered legacy of feminism in Italy and its peculiar traits in comparison with other European realities (Michela Marzano, pp.18-19), while Geneviève Fraisse looks at dis-

EUROPEAN SOLIDARITY AMONGST CITIZENS WILL BE “ “ .PERHAPS FIRST CREATED AND EXPRESSED IN EDUCATION

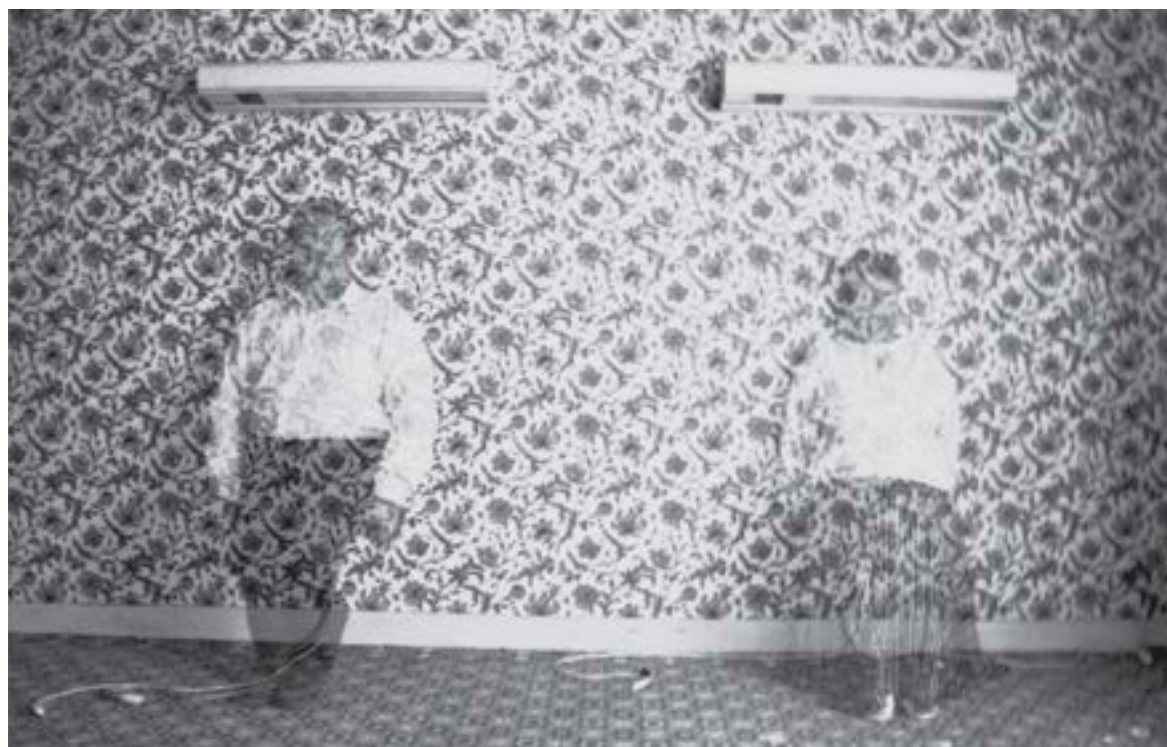
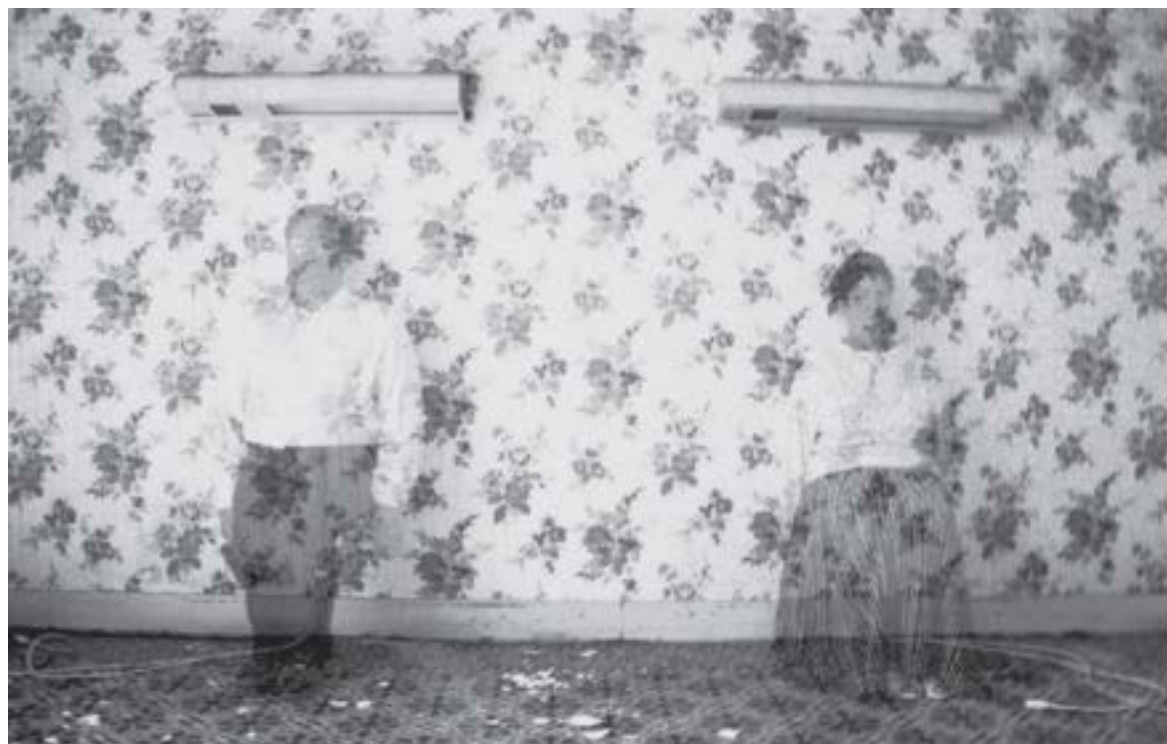
European and transnational political parties are still to really emerge, it is perhaps the direct participation of citizens, civil society, and social movements in the European political process that should be promoted as a remedy to inescapable bureaucratisation and technocratic forms of governance. The provocative video of artist Oliver Ressler poses the crucial question directly: 'What is democracy?' (Ovidu Tinchindelanu and extracts, pp.8-9). The video forms the core of the artistic program of TRANSEUROPA festival, and will be screened and debated in each of the festival cities.

A European festival taking place in 4 cities simultaneously, two of which – London and Paris – have been called 'global cities', cannot avoid interrogating the future of cities as the loci of many of the crucial political choices to be made over the coming century. The environment, social cohesion, wellbeing and equality, migration and political activism are issues concretised and interlinked in the fabric of Europe's cities. This issue includes leading voices on the city as the site of war and environmental violence (Saskia Sassen, p.12), and the alienation of contemporary cities (Richard Sennett, p.13). A curatorial approach

crimination in the 'service' economy (pp.18-19).

European solidarity amongst citizens will be perhaps first created and expressed in education. The Festival takes as a core theme education reform in Europe and the Bologna process, and will formulate political proposals following debates in each of the cities and a final plenary in Bologna. Following the university strikes throughout Europe last year, the subject is of the utmost importance, and networks and movements have been created throughout the continent, forming their own transnational knowledge space. This issue welcomes the Edufactory collective to launch the debate that will conclude at the Festival and call out to the generation of students who call for a new institution of the transnational commons (pp.26-7).

The debates launched in this issue of Transeuropa Journal continue online over the coming weeks and throughout the TRANSEUROPA festival, where the events are free and open to all. The Festival website, where you can contribute to the debate, comment on these articles and others, and set the topics under discussion at the Festival, is www.transeuropafestival.eu. 📄



ABOUT THE PHOTOGRAPHS: BARBARA NOIRET, CHAMBRES À DORMIR

The series 'Rooms for sleeping standing up' is a testimony to an investigation of location and memory: two characters pose in front of the walls of the rooms of a pension home that has been abandoned for 10 years. Only small variations in the motif of the carpets or the presence of cupboards tells us that we have moved, in each photograph, from one room to another. The characters keep the same position, neither sitting nor standing up, their backs to the wall, under the old machines which used to hang above the beds of the pensioners. Almost transparent, their two bodies live in the images like fragile apparitions: there is no indication of when the images were taken, and their positions do not resemble any particular action: the absence of any narrative is a deliberate choice not to

recount any particular episode in order to let the strangely captured atmosphere emerge on the skin of the photographs. This series is the opportunity for the artist to play with the relation between the body and architecture: the body of the characters becomes an element in the construction of the image, encrusted, melted into the substance of the building which shelters them.

Barbara Noiret, *chambres à dormir debout*, 2002
ensemble de 3 photographies couleur
3 x (50 x 75 cm)
Curtesy Galerie Frédéric Giroux, Paris

NICCOLO MILANESE

A COPERNICAN REVOLUTION IN POLITICAL FORCES?

When we think of genuinely pan-European forms of organisation in contemporary Europe, we have to think of open-ended forms like networks or like flows, rather than of closed containers like member states or national political parties.

To speak of a decline of political parties is to speak too quickly. Membership has declined: 50 years ago roughly 1 in 8 people in the 'free' parts of Western Europe were members of a political party, now the figure is more like 1 in 100. But precisely in virtue of this decline in membership, the party 'apparatus' has become more important in what are still called democracies: without having to persuade a mass membership, decisions are

being increasingly taken by party bureaucracies. Nominations for political posts and party manifestos are decided centrally by relatively few people in a logic that has for a considerable period now resembled that of advertising and marketing. At best these marketing tools (glossy brochures, posters, shiny smiling faces) are then given to a willing team of 'party activists' to go and sell to voters. Sometimes (increasingly) activists are superfluous, and political campaigns are conducted purely with billboard posters and TV advertising (or more direct media manipulation in some quarters of Europe).

Our political systems in Europe are set up to depend on political parties to function, and when they no longer have any meaningful membership, purely 'formal' political processes remain. This is the case for all 'representative' democracies and institutions of representation, but the European parliament is the paradigm of this phenomenon: the political parties in the European parliament have no individual members at all (or in the best case a minuscule membership), and yet the political procedure of the parliament is such that an individual MEP who is independent of any 'grouping' is entirely powerless to act. The familiar 'carpet trading' in the European parliament and other European institutions – such as the enormously complex process of compromise and trading of posts between the parties which was evident in the recent nomination of the European Commission – is the most visible sign of this phenomenon. Several analyses of the political situation at European level have shown that there is an increasing tendency for members of the European parliament to tow the party line (rather than national lines), and this is sometimes called the 'emergence of a genuinely transnational political

party system'. But when parties act in a space of power relations that have become completely detached from the representation of the interests of citizens, one must ask what kind of politics this is. Transnational politics in contemporary Europe seems often to resemble a role-play game, or one of the 'mock' parliaments organised by some student organisations to play at being politicians: the problem is that the game in the real institution has real political consequences.

The phenomenon of the 'formalisation' of politics is at its purest at the European level because no media institutions of any significance exist to mitigate its perfect interiority: this is the famous lack of a

ground between 'public opinion' and 'political power' is becoming more and more complex. New media have a different geography from more traditional media: they tend to be either highly localised or more transnational. The public sphere and the national political context are increasingly becoming detached as multiple levels of public opinion and political power appear, and do not always tally up. One of the dangers of this complexification of political confrontation is that power has an increasing number of layers in which to hide.

In addition to the question of the future of the media and public sphere, any consideration of the future of political parties in Europe

“ AT THE EUROPEAN LEVEL THERE IS A HUGE POTENTIAL FOR PROVIDING POLITICAL CHOICES THAT ARE NOT AVAILABLE AT NATION STATE LEVEL, BECAUSE EUROPE CAN ACT ON A GLOBAL LEVEL WHERE EUROPEAN NATION-STATES NO LONGER CAN. ”

'European public sphere'. The legacy of the traditional media institutions established at the same time as representative democracy still persists in the nation states and obliges political parties to justify themselves to what is termed 'public opinion'. But this legacy of media institutions which can effectively critique national power has been for some time under threat throughout Europe, not least because such media are having to adjust themselves to a logic of sensationalist consumerism in order to survive and remain 'relevant'. Real critique is less and less publically available from these sources. At the same time the political consequences of the emergence of new medias which embrace new technologies or 'participative methods', or both, are yet to be apparent, and are still to be fought for. It is nevertheless clear that the battle-

must take into account three other interlinked features of the current situation which seem more than simply accessory:

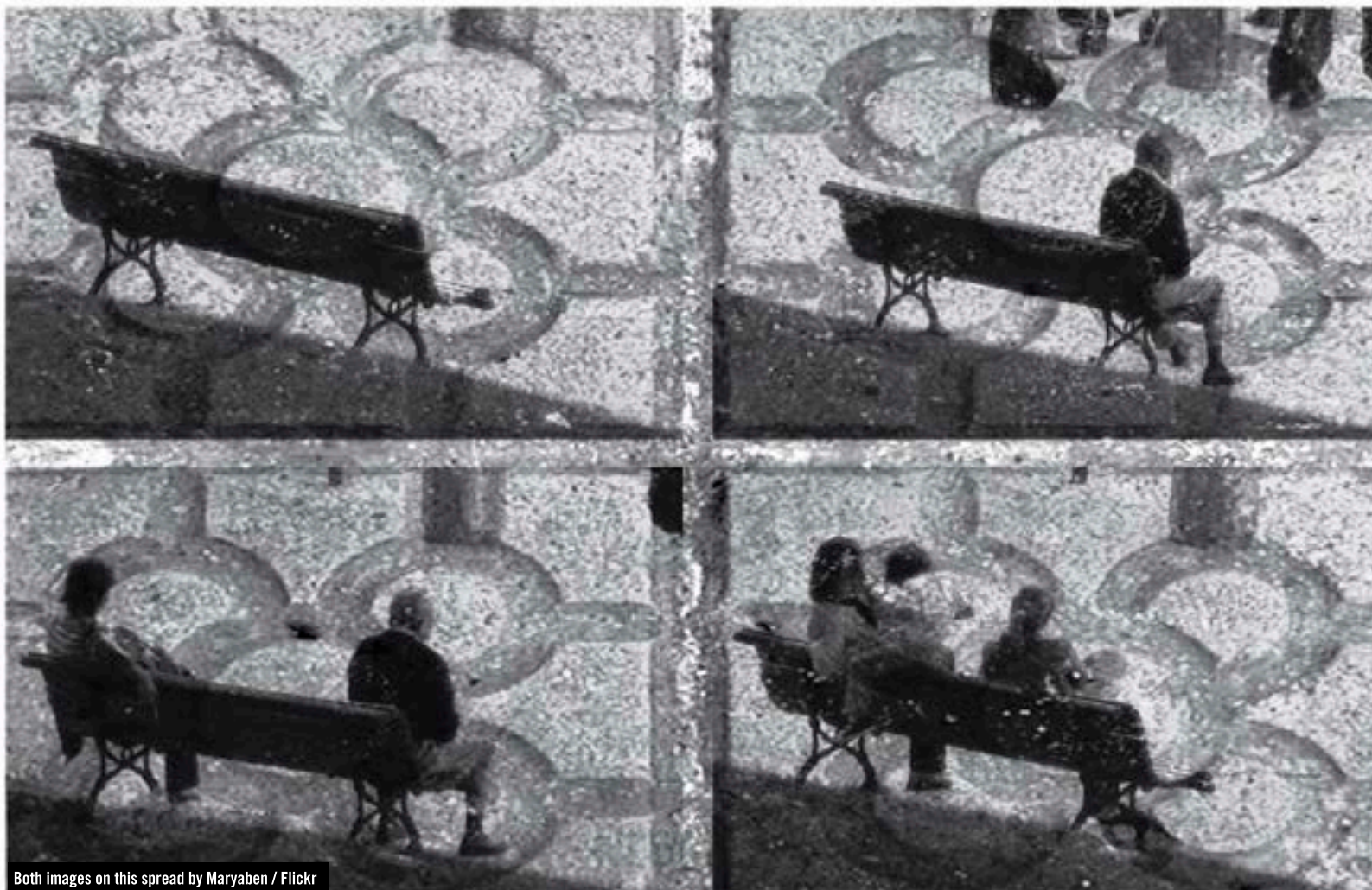
- 1) stubbornly increasing abstention rates in elections throughout Europe;
- 2) growing and largely unchallenged social inequality;
- 3) a feeling that there is no genuine choice between political parties who present largely identical programs;

Very much of the recent philosophical and political work on citizenship in the European Union focuses on dealing with the problem of delinking ethnicity and membership, on the supposition that nationality and ethnicity are somehow essentially linked. The importance of addressing this question cannot be underestimated given the history of Europe,

even if one might have real doubts if there is anything essentially ethnically particularising about nations. Less studied and more unexpected are the ways in which the European horizon might be capable of addressing the three problems above. Unexpected, because the contemporary European Union often seems the least likely existing political level to provide innovative answers to these problems. Asking the question of the future of political parties is, however, one way of asking the question of Europe's potential in each of these areas seriously.

The distinguishing (and often negated) mark of Europe in comparison with nation states is that it is not primarily a geographical signifier. Unlike nations, which by definition have clear borders, Europe will never have clear borders: Europe is a geographical space, but it is not one that can be clearly demarcated. For this reason alone the idea of a 'European identity' which might be 'pure' and unmixed with other cultures and geographical spaces is non-sensical. One of the highly unusual properties of the word 'Europe' is to complicate all relations of membership. One way of putting this is that Europe is a process and not a stasis. Another way it expresses itself is that when we think of genuinely 'pan-European' forms of organisation in contemporary Europe, we have to think of open-ended forms like networks or like flows (or even like empires), rather than of closed containers like member states or what has traditionally been understood as political parties (which have a defined and exclusive membership). At the European level there is a huge potential for providing political choices that are not available at nation state level, because Europe can act on a global level where European nation-states no longer can. It is increasingly clear that poverty and social injustice cannot be tackled locally in one member state only, given global capital flows and (more importantly) global flows of people.

The protests against what is called 'Fortress Europe': the attempt to simultaneously close Europe's borders, establish a fixed 'European' identity and to make Europe's role in the world one of the defence of privilege, must equally be a protest against the 'fortress-like' nature of Europe's political parties. These must become spaces for political discussion, for dissent and for debate, and parties must be constructed which genuinely welcome and represent all those present on the European territory (including undocumented migrants, the poor, and the most vulnerable). Experiments in other parts of the world seem so far to have shown that direct forms of democracy, whilst very valuable, are not going to replace representative democracy entirely. Europe's experiment must be to reinvent forms of political representation by reinventing European political parties. The great advantage that European political parties have for this is the space to experiment – a political Europe has yet to be constructed by anyone. If politically we show some boldness and experiment, perhaps we will also win back those who currently (often for very understandable reasons) despair of the process and abstain. 🐼



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STELLA TANG

DEMOCRATISING THE EUROPEAN UNION:

The Role of the European Parliament

Making Europe more democratic means making it more political. And giving the European Parliament a greater role in charting the direction of the Union.

The 'democratic deficit' in the European Union is perhaps one of the few things that almost everyone knows about it. Throughout at least all the 'old' democracies of Europe, there is a widespread feeling that the European institutions 'steal' away powers that were previously in the hands of the people when they were at a national level. In the newer member states, faith in the European institutions may be higher, but citizens do not feel the ability to influence their direction.

These impressions (however false may be the picture of the nation state implicit in the first of them) will only be dealt with directly by a strong agenda of putting the citizen at the centre of European decision-making. There is only one European institution that can do that: the European Parliament, and it has to start making itself heard louder.

The European parliament already has many of the formal powers of national parliaments. It must approve the nomination of the European Council for the President of the Commission, and it must approve the appointments made by the President to the different Commission posts after grilling them over lengthy parliamentary hearings. The Lisbon Treaty, which entered into force on the 1st of December 2009, does improve the importance of the European Parliament by making co-decision the 'normal' legislative procedure of the European Union. The European Commission keeps its monopoly on the power to propose legislation, but the European Parliament now has to agree, along with the European Council of member states, in most areas of European legislation before it can become law.

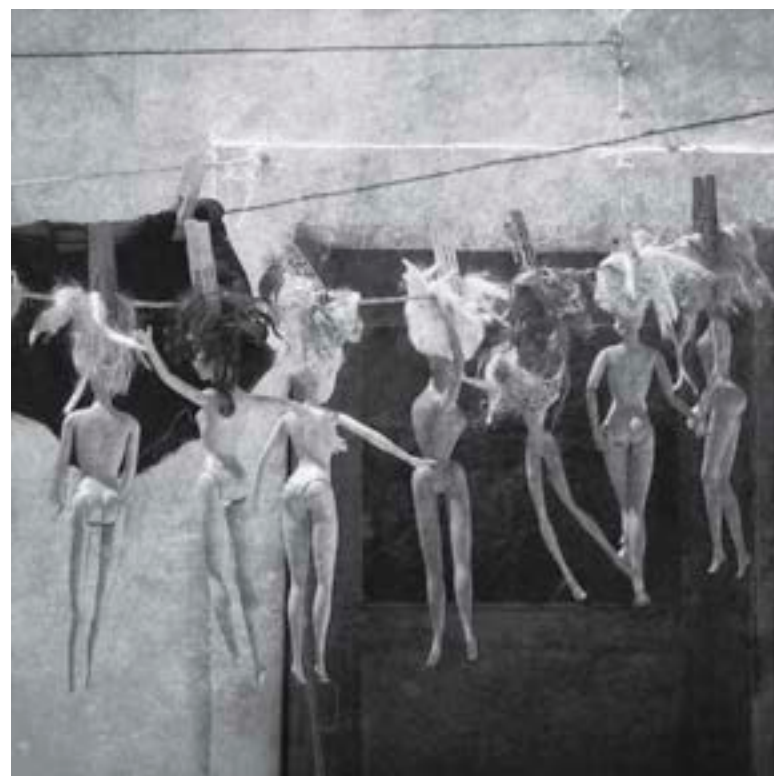
But this is not the sort of thing that will tackle the citizens' view of Brussels as an undemocratic bureaucracy. For that problem to be tackled, European politics has finally to become fully political – which is to say, fully democratic.

This means a substantial change in the way the European institutions think of themselves: up until this point, the European Commission has been conceived as

the 'party for Europe', which must drive forwards the European project on the basis of consensus between member states. But this hegemony of the Commission no longer has a sense, and particularly so when an increasing number of the issues it is called to deal with – from climate change to migration – are of a clearly political nature with differing opinions existing across the political spectrum and transversally across member states. These political choices by their nature go beyond national political spheres, and so have to be articulated at a European level. Relying on national parliaments or politicians to formulate or explain these choices is self-defeating: the choices have to be made at a European level, and citizens have to be given a chance to directly influence this level of decision making.

It is for this reason that the European parliament must become the debating chamber of competing views of the future direction of Europe, articulated by meaningful European political parties. These competing visions must be identified with personalities from the parties, and the winning proposals must have a real impact on European legislation.

The key to all this is the last point: the moment the European parliament has the possibility to propose European legislation, the political discussions will assume a new importance. At the moment, the European Parliament can only approve or reject laws promoted by the European Commission, but it cannot of its own accord push through any legislation. This hinders the possibility of European



parties becoming identified with clear policy choices for Europe.

But if the parliament were granted a direct influence in European law-making, this would allow the European political parties to take a public stance on key policy

going to take to safeguard social services in Europe? Are the Greens going to propose a Carbon Tax on polluting industries? What common European asylum policy is the conservative party going to promote?


The common objection is that

“ EUROPEAN POLITICS HAS FINALLY TO BECOME FULLY POLITICAL – WHICH IS TO SAY, FULLY DEMOCRATIC. ”

areas, and campaign in European elections on the basis of a meaningful manifesto that is common across member states. What legislative steps is the socialist party

this would require a change in the European treaties, and after the bumpy process of Lisbon no-one is in any mood for another ride. But this is a false objection, as no immediate change in the treaties is required for this to happen: the formal power to initiate legislation can stay with the Commission, all that is needed is an agreement that if the Parliament decides that certain legislation is necessary, the Commission should come up with a proposal within a reasonable timeframe.

The European elections in 2009 were the first in which some of the European Parties made a serious effort to have a common manifesto throughout the Union, but these manifestos were often ignored by the national member parties of the European parties, who campaigned on national issues. Even when genuinely European promises were made, citizens generally felt these amounted to little more than rhetoric, for lack of a clear connection between the European electoral contest and European law-making.

Now in the first months of the implementation of the Lisbon Treaty, the parliament must take the opportunity to insist on its importance, in order to give to the representatives of the citizens the power to decide on the direction of the Union. Up until now the Union has relied on the nation states to provide its impulse. The passing of the Lisbon Treaty must be made into the occasion where the citizens are finally given the right to be in the driving seat. 

TRANSNATIONAL PARTIES FOR EUROPE?

GUILHEM DELTEIL

A candidate for the next presidency of the European Commission in 2014 supported by all European socialists? That's what the PES promised in Prague, beginning of December, during its annual Congress. But the latest European campaign underlined how difficult it is for European socialists to find a consensus on this topic. Some of their leaders, such as Spanish Prime minister Jose Luis Rodriguez Zapatero, supported the candidate of the conservative parties: José Manuel Barroso. Differences between national parties are wide. Recently, socio-democrats in Europe appeared more diverse than united. So, can the PES act as a transnational party? According to Gert Weisskirchen, former SPD deputy at the German Bundestag, it first needs to define its goals.



Gert Weisskirchen

It is necessary to create real European programmes. Social democrats have been oriented in programme debates since the start, but what is needed is coming to a consensus in this debate. What we have seen the social democrats putting forwards in last European election phase is a kind of European programme, but not really the kind that Europe needs. The kind of programme that is a conclusion of an open, free, and controversial debate. This has not happened, and this is where we have to start from. Socialists have to overcome their divisions and present a coherent programme that convinces Europeans.

Theoretically, common programmes already exist. Most of the European Parliament's groups wrote manifestos for the last campaign. But Gert Weisskirchen admits it was not a main topic in the campaign of the social democrats. Was it any different for the other parties? Michael

Scharfschwerdt is the coordinator of the German Green Members of the European Parliament and he considers the "Green new deal for Europe", the manifesto of the Green Party, as a semi-success.



Michael Scharfschwerdt

The 2009 elections were really the first time for the Greens to have one real party programme for all of Europe, with European ideas and answers to European problems, especially of course climate issues. For the election campaigns itself we had national debates in each member country, but we found out that every party used the slogan "a greener deal for Europe", and every party used the same manifesto, in every country. In this way we showed this was a kind of European debate and European programme.

Nowadays, some charismatic leaders choose to run for the European Parliament but, most of the time, a

key element in the party still means being elected on the national level. European parties probably miss the figure of a charismatic leader but perhaps national parties are not the only to be blamed. Rainer Steenblock, former coordinator of the Greens at the German Bundestag on EU affairs, stresses that difficulties also lie within the structures of the European Union.



Rainer Steenblock

We have the problem of the democratic legitimization of European political actors. Of course members of the European Parliament are elected,

but the European Commission is not. And the European Council represents heads of state. If we want a more united Europe as a democratic body we need a different structure from now. We need something like a government elected by the Parliament, or a president elected by the people. We need change in the legitimization of European institutions. ■



CANDIDO GRZYBOWSKI

POSSIBILITIES AND LIMITS OF CITIZEN PARTICIPATION

The institutionalization of the democratic state is not sufficient for democracy to penetrate all social relations and guarantee the basic rights of citizenship to all people.

INTRODUCTION

My goal here is just to outline some thoughts on the subject of citizen participation in public policy. It's more a chance to search for political action than conclusions made after careful consideration of participatory practices. In fact, we have in Latin America a wide range of initiatives, organized by the citizens themselves and by the state. We are a true democratic laboratory in terms of citizen participation. In this picture I am, above all, an activist interested that the processes achieve a radicalization of democ-

racy among us, with reference to all human rights for all humans. I start from the acknowledgment that the conquest of the democratic institutionalization in countries like ours is a fundamental political condition to think how to proceed. At the same time, I see that the institutionalization of the democratic state is not sufficient for democracy to penetrate all social relations and guarantee the basic rights of citizenship to all people. Indeed, in a democratic context, it's up to citizenship, understood as a set of social forces instituted and constituted, to radicalize democracy. After two decades, the wave of democratization in the region that buried the dictatorships and established the democratic institutions we now have seem to be faced with a dilemma. They produced big political changes without any doubt, but they have been unable to gestate a new development model of democratic and sustainable society. Our economies are based on foundations that lead to the destruction of our natural heritage and common property, concentrate wealth, marginalize and exclude, go against the great social and cultural diversity that characterizes us as people of Latin America. We produce, for example, many compensatory social policies, but they are not strategically designed as social policies to qualify economic development. In spite of democracy, we treat the social as if it was separate and dependent on economic growth. Given this, I think a new democratic wave in our societies is necessary, which feeds hopes and dreams with great ability to thrust social and political participation, giving

voice and power to those who do not have, leading us to a new democratic leap and citizenship rights. **1. THE PLACE OF CITIZENSHIP: CIVIL SOCIETY** I take civil society in its sociological and political sense and the political sphere as constitutive of social life, between the market/economy and the state/power. A sphere in which the contradictions embedded in relationships, structures and processes of the societies are expressed in the form of competition, strife, conflict and social struggle between different social subjects, through their associations and organizations. To be more historical and less formal, inspired by Gramsci, civil society is considered as the set of organizations and movements [...] that are expressed by interests, ideas and values, by disputes, pacts and agreements seeking hegemony. Therefore, civil society is a way of being, a public space, more or less developed depending on the historical conditions of each concrete society. Not good nor bad, but historically possible, the result of processes and struggles of the society in question. In this sense, civil societies, as the ground of social struggles and organizations are the locus par excellence of citizenship. It is where people and social groups become fellow holders of equal rights in their differences and oppositions. Citizenship, in this case, it is a social and political condition in dispute, a quality of social relations defined by the legitimate rights and their recognition by and for all societies. What defines the quality of civil society is the historical status of citizenship, not the reverse. And, by extension, it is also

citizenship that defines the quality of the state power and economic development. Citizenship and its space are formed between the private and state spheres. Greater or lesser extension of the citizenship space is, first and foremost, an expansion of civil society, full of contradictions and struggles of citizenship in action. Civil societies expand and get stronger by citizen action and participation. Partnering and competing, citizens are constituted as social subjects, cultural and political, and at the same time, create social density and the cement that binds them in their equal rights and diversity of situations. Therefore we have a vision of public interest and common good – the “waves” of public opinion and society’s projects – that feed citizens’ movements in different historical contexts of specific societies. Some questions arise from this statement. In first place, both the citizen and civil society are practical and theoretical categories that embody the idea of a conflicting relationship, and have social struggles in the center of their definition. They still imply a conflict of interests, pluralism and sociocultural diversity, even if it is impossible to think of these without equal citizenship rights. Secondly, the reference to citizenship rights is based on their legitimacy, irrespective of their legality. In third place, it is important to detach the strategic importance

of democratic institutionalism, not just to “legalize” rights, but rather to legitimate citizenship in action, social struggles, transforming conflicts in democratic forces of thrust and constructive development of democratic and sustainable societies. In Latin America the process of democratization in recent decades was based on the development of citizenship and civil societies. The energy of transformation was born and gained strength within the societies and was spread over the states and political power, in contradictory and conflicting movements. As a result, we have states of law in the region, more or less permeable to citizen participation. We have real democracies but not yet substantive and inclusive democracies. The democratic “tension” generates new governments and even dismisses some, in a process of constant searching. But our democracies did not transform the exclusionary, violent and destructive bases of the economies and social structures underlying our societies. To think about citizenship and civil society in the region today, it's necessary to be aware of the tension between political democracy and lack of economic and cultural democracy. **PARTICIPATION IN PUBLIC POLICY** Returning to the starting point of my reflection, I reiterate that the essence of civil society to democracy is the expansion of a public space that

“OUR DEMOCRACIES DID NOT TRANSFORM THE EXCLUSIONARY, VIOLENT AND DESTRUCTIVE BASES OF THE ECONOMIES AND SOCIAL STRUCTURES UNDERLYING OUR SOCIETIES.”

can contain its development. I understand the *public space* as the area of rights and social awareness. Civil societies are empowered and empower democracy when it empowers the citizenry. This is operated by a political-cultural engineering that enhances the visibility of the diversity of subjects and actors, expropriates spaces and relations of life, making them more public, with more space for rights and citizenship. In the process of engineering, at the same time, social groups begin to politicize relationships and situations in which they are inserted, their questions and demands, their forms of organization and action. By the same process, the expropriation of spheres of society happens and the political sphere gets somehow privatized. Politics start to no longer be a monopoly of the parties and big state institutions. The extension of public space is a radical expansion of political space and citizen participation, bringing them to the everyday and to places where people live.

A decisive factor in Latin America, in this sense, was the conquest and expansion of electoral citizenship. In other words, the *citizen's participation by vote*, electing leaders and representatives, establishing a representative democracy. The actual limits of representative democracy cannot lead us to the mistake of obscuring the fundamental idea that is the elections and votes for the conformation of the political state power and, consequently, in shaping public policy. Governments are now open to participatory budgets, for example. This is not a miracle of the state, but is a result of a militant citizenship that votes and claims, electing representatives and coercing it before and after elections.

The limit of representative democracy is that it's institutionalization performs and formalizes the constituent power. An empowerment logic of power in relation to civil societies and citizenship is easily imposed. The power and political institutions in representative democracies are derived with a delegated mandate. However, the state power, the representatives and elected officials, employees under their control, the executive machine, legislative and legal, everything tends to act and be seen as constituent and not a power constituted for citizenship.

That said, it is necessary to see other forms of citizen participation and its importance in real democracies. Every act of citizen participation is a dispute, it is a potential conflict. It is in the dispute and the correlation of political forces, that such a dispute gets managed, which defines the possible and viable solutions. The creative potential of citizen participation lives in the dispute between difference and opposition, in the tension, in the push for commitments, pacts and results. The state permeability is more or less a necessary condition for citizen participation, but insufficient. This depends on the will of the conditions of existence and the power or effective capacity of those involved.

Direct participation is the most basic and alive element of citizen participation. It is the starting point of political citizenship. Noisy and at risk of descending into violence, direct citizen participation is essential in democracies. It is often the first and last resource. It qualifies, in a sense, other forms of participation by its impatience and irruptive character. Its relation may not be directly related to specific public policy, and often does not refer to a policy, but to the dispute within civil society itself. But it affects the public agenda. It works as a warning sign, as an expression of an impasse in the political process.

A form of citizen participation that empowers all before citizenship itself, is the *networking and forums* based in alliances and coalitions of different subjects and actors. They are spaces for the elaboration of their own public demands and of formulating policy proposals. They earn a lot of visibility and can affect in a decisive way when their proposals turn into public campaigns, winning the society heart and mind for a cause. You make potent a set of subjects and actors for horizontal and several interconnections, forming blocs of citizen power. With or without connection to political parties, what matters is the "aggregate potential and trenches for citizenship", as Gramsci's beautiful words would say.

The gestation and strengthening of big *movements of public opinion*, able to influence the political agenda of a society, is also a form of citizen participation. It implies an articulation of subjects and social actors, but clearly supported in the major social institutions such as churches and universities, scientific associations, networks of active citizenship, media professionals and the media themselves. Challenging the public interest and the causes of common good, its own meaning and scope, the movement of opinion can be irresistible forces in democracies.

Finally I get to the *institutionalized citizen participation* in public policy, its formulation, its implementation, its monitoring and evaluation. The best example are the various forms of local participation in which the local political power opens some form of co-management policies possible, from participatory budgeting to parenting advice.

It never hurts to remember the political importance of such spaces for participation in democracy, such as for the conquest of active citizenship, as for the initiative of the

state. But also, it never hurts to accentuate the conflicting and contradictory nature of such spaces, even more so when they are really effective, involving the design of policies and allocation of public resources. In Lula's government in Brazil there was a proliferation of Councils and Conferences. Just in 2007, more than 2 million people somehow partici-

“ THE EXTENSION OF PUBLIC SPACE IS A RADICAL EXPANSION OF POLITICAL SPACE AND CITIZEN PARTICIPATION, BRINGING THEM TO THE EVERYDAY AND TO PLACES WHERE PEOPLE LIVE.”

pated in sectoral conferences and councils. What does this mean? It is simply a renewal of hopes and dreams, but it results in democracy by fermentation provoked in civil society. It can be a way for citizens to make their demands and turn them into agenda. It can actually shape policies in some fields, making them more effective and striking.

In the recent debates about such spaces for participation it is starting to become clear that by themselves, they can only be ways of legitimization of the established power and no real change in policy. But citizen participation gives them a new quality in those areas and policies which itself comes with political strength and capacity. In other words, the councils and conferences and many other forms of interactive participation between government and representatives of organized societies are themselves areas of dispute between social subjects and the managers of the state. Often, these spaces are eligible for other forms of autonomous citizen participation in civil society, such as campaigns, movements of opinion, forums and networks. At other times, it is the way the spaces are made by both the civil society

and government. It is good to bear in mind the non-monolithic character of the state, with most sectors committed to citizenship and others totally reticent.

Finally, citizen participation in public policy depends on political agreements and commitments that are made in the very process of dispute, participating. Indeed, many

representatives of the so-called citizenship seek only their own visibility and space for maneuver and do not commit to the character of public interest and common good that the policy must meet. They limit the potential of citizen participation, even recognizing as legitimate their dispute. Therefore, the empowerment of civil society and, consequently, the democratic process is not important in these spaces and also not a general rule. The way citizenship itself intervenes in them is a fundamental condition.

CONCLUSION: A POSSIBLE AGENDA INQUIRY

As I said in the beginning, I have tried here to outline a working hypothesis. What moves me as an activist and leader of an organization of active citizenship is the production of strategic knowledge, knowledge for democratic action transformation, capable of generating inclusive societies, radically democratic and sustainable. I recognize that there are numerous efforts to identify and analyze the experiences of citizen participation in different countries. But we don't have a comprehensive and wide map of the range of initiatives

and ways, and of their contribution to the democratic process. Our theoretical and analytical deficit is evident. To feed a new democratizing wave, in the face of neoliberalism, to the logic of exclusion and destruction, violence and social fracture, we must start to think big. The strategic thinking that led to embrace democracy and transformed activists of my generation - a vision of conquest of the state to bring about social justice by a vision of political and cultural transformation of societies themselves by civil action and citizen participation in shaping the power state - needs to go further than we have achieved so far. The task of empowering citizenship is incomplete, for the persistence of large invisible sectors, without identity and voice, with no capacity to propose and to act. The diagnosis of such situations and the appreciation of empowerment methods - such as popular and citizen education, the formation of social movements and popular organizations, the intense ideological political debate - must go back to the forefront of our thinking and practice. Of course, without losing the spaces already instituted and their ability to thrust the democracy we have. This task is not of this or that organization, social actor or network. It is a task of building a new political culture, in diversity and plurality, without leading actors. It goes beyond borders and should globalize its perspective and scope. But it should always enhance active citizenship wherever it is, in its place and territory in life in their civil society. Personally, I get inspired in the World Social Forum and the new agenda that flows from it for this democratic adventure. 🇧🇷

Written by Candido Grzybowski, sociologist, director of IBASE, Rio de Janeiro
Translated by Debora Baldelli, social scientist and translator

DEMOCRATISATION OF THE MEDIA IN BRAZIL

During the first National Conference on Communications, Brazil showed its willingness to bring the question of the media into discussions on the roadmap to participatory democracy.

BY LUCA MUZI, TRANSLATION OF SARAH POTTER

In recent years, with a continent-wide revival in Latin America and the election of progressive governments in most countries, the question of media democratisation has begun to appear in political agendas. The priority is breaking up long-standing monopolies and giving a voice to the millions who have been on the fringes of society and off the information radar for years.

The last stage of this journey was the National Conference on the Media recently held in Brazil. The media situation in Brazil is characterised by the undisputed domination of eleven families, chief among whom are the Marinhos, owners of the Globo group. Founded by Roberto Marinho in 1962, two years before the coup d'état, thanks to contributions from the American giant Time-Life, during the dictatorship period, Globo group became the main Brazilian communications company, with a radio, TV and newspaper presence throughout the country. Having survived the dictatorship, the company remains the main tool for

influencing opinions among Brazil's elite. In 2002 the president Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva managed to win the election despite ferocious attacks from Globo's television programmes and newspapers, but in recent years he has sought a middle ground with the group, going so far as to nominate for the post of Communications Minister one of their men: the former journalist Hélio Costa.

The National Conference on the Media signalled a considerable change to the status quo. As Murilo Cesar Ramos, coordinator of the Laboratory on the Politics of Communications at the University of Brasília, explains: "Brazil has a long tradition of holding conferences about the country's social problems. The first, on the subject of health, took place in 1941. President Lula's two mandates have revitalised this tool, but the problem of democracy in communication has always been a taboo topic, so much so that it was not included in the government's programme. It was, therefore, a surprise when Lula announced the Conference in January at the World Social Forum in Belém."

The National Conference on the Media is the last stop on the roadmap to participatory democracy, a process that has taken several months to complete and involved a total of fifty thousand people participating in the twenty-seven local stages that took place all over Brazil. Over 6000 proposals were formulated, which were then reorganised into about 1600 key ideas and transcribed in fifteen notebooks by the Getulio Vargas Foundation. The aim was to produce a program platform to present to Parliament in order to address changes in the laws on telecommunications. This path has not been without its obstacles and limitations,

especially as the Globo group has tried to make the initiative fail in any way possible. Socialist movements also have launched more than a few criticisms of the government on this subject, above all because of their choice

“ THE NATIONAL CONFERENCE ON THE MEDIA IS THE LAST STOP ON THE ROADMAP TO PARTICIPATORY DEMOCRACY”

to allow Brazilian media firms to attend the conference with equal representation to the pressure groups: 40% of delegates each, with the remaining 20% coming from the State. Further to this, Indymedia Brazil has shown that some of the laws on sector reform, such as the one on digital television, are already being discussed in Parliament and that it is highly unlikely that these discussions will be influenced by the outcome of the Conference. In spite of these issues, the work of the Conference has not been any less hard-fought and in the end 672 proposals were approved.

The major points of conflict were the question of social control of the media, taxation of commercial firms to support public initiatives and the definition of clear guidelines on media concentration and the issuing of licences. The biggest battle has been lead by community radio networks; an arena that has been one of the most hard-fought in the recent quest for democratisation of the media. "The problem with community radio is that the government will not grant licences, or if they do they go to powerful local oligarchs", Aloisio Andrade from Radio Juventude, a community radio station belonging to the Rede Abraço network, explains. The subject of these complaints is known as

"electronic Coronelismo", the concentration of broadcasting powers in the hands of powerful local individuals, which are used to control opinions in order to maintain power. Today in Brazil 30% of senators and 15% of

deputies (from the upper and lower houses respectively) are holders of broadcasting licences.

It is highly unlikely that these proposals will be adopted by Parliament, especially as they touch on strong personal interests. As soon as the Conference had finished both the newspaper O Globo and the Communications Minister Hélio Costa rushed to minimize its effect, describing it as "wishful thinking on the part of Brazil's extreme left that will have no concrete implications for government." Opposing this view are the deputies Luiza Erundina and Rosane Bertotti from the Central Única dos Trabalhadores. Erundina, who has campaigned for media reform in Brazil for many years, asserted: "This struggle began a long time ago, long before the conference itself, and the government cannot ignore the proposals put forward." Bertotti emphasised the ongoing commitment this represents for pressure groups: "We cannot think of this Conference as an arrival point, but instead we should view it as a point of departure, a foundation laid for future disputes and for an ever-increasing democratisation of communications in this country." ■

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO ASK WHAT IS DEMOCRACY?



All images on this spread: Stills from Oliver Ressler's "What is Democracy?"

From the fall of the Berlin Wall to the second Iraqi War, the word “freedom” arguably meant theft, neocolonization, military invasion, torture and uprooting. But democracy should be taken back and made to serve a politics of the alternative.

To ask “What is democracy?” means to keep the question alive, in order to keep mankind alive. However, most answers – and there are many answers – start from the end. As Kuan-Hsing Chen points out in the very opening of Oliver Ressler’s important movie *What is Democracy?* (2009), the current concept and practices of “democracy” are actually inseparable from a history of expansion and imperialism. Instead of letting it operate at the level of society, the state seems to have captured and mortified the framework of the notion and practices of democracy. That is, in the battle of visions of which the fate of the world depends, democracy has become a mechanism that reduces the vision of the best of all possible worlds to either the best possible political sphere, or the best possible civil society. Yet this is equivalent with an epistemicide of the concrete struggles and realizations of subjects who are actually resisting against modern forms of organizing power, whether capitalist or statist.

It is still necessary to point out that democracy is not a universal set of values and practices miraculously discovered in ancient Greece and brought back to reality in an improved, modern form by the Western civilization, but a relatively recent concept which is inseparable from the history of violence and colonialism of the modern world, even when pointed in dialectical opposition to systematic destruction, injustice and enclosures. To mention just one example, the Tupac Amaru rebellion (1780–82) and the Haitian Revolution (1780s–1804) have not been part of the repertoire of emancipatory and democratic learnings as the “American” Revolution and the French Revolution to any comparable extent. Furthermore, as it can be seen in the relentless return of the question *What is the alternative to representative democracy?* – the same cultural-political body of democracy keeps on returning and acting host to the problem. Even “direct democracy” or “participative democracy”,

understood as the opened imaginary opposite to the determined enclosures of “representative democracy” have to be liberated first from the modern/colonial frame of democracy, emancipation and rationality, in order to avoid duplicating the same master idea of democracy (the king’s body) to infinity. One has to point out that the conservative right also provided in the past twenty years an answer and alternative vision to representative democracy: the “civil society” of Eastern Europe and the “orange revolutions”, as well as the blatantly racist doctrine of “the few, happy chosen ones” who are opposed to the “naturally” corrupted people and formal political sphere. The history of real socialism was also filtered by Eurocentrism: it is no accident that Lenin’s famous saying “the Marxist doctrine is omnipotent because it is true” is found in one of his most Eurocentric texts, “The three sources and three components of Marxism” from 1913, on the thirtieth anniversary of Marx’s death. Often quoted out of context, both textual and political, Lenin binds there the political legacy of Marx to the “civilised world”, to “the best that man produced in the nineteenth century, as represented by German philosophy, English political economy and French socialism.” Lenin laid thus the symbolic foundations of the theory of transition (from feudalism to capitalism to socialism) that situated real socialism within the paradigm of the modern/colonial/capitalist world. Consequently, as Walter Dignolo also emphasized, in order to keep alive the question *what is democracy*, one has to be open to look not for alternative modernities, but for alternatives to modernity.

THE POSTCOMMUNIST TRANSITION AND DEMOCRACY

The dictionary meaning of a word should not be mistaken for its conceptual and praxical history. To ask the question about democracy – this is the first step towards reclaiming autonomous political thought, which actually means something very simple: thinking from the position in which you already are. My own perspective of the world is shaped by the experience of an immigrant or “global exiled” who lived the “transition” from the former Socialist Bloc into the “Free World”. In my view “democracy” has been indeed one of the fundamental symbols of the post-

communist transition, by which I understand the fundamental concept of the historical shift 1989–2009, namely the reformation of enclosures in the form of top-to-bottom reorganization of power structures and reintegration of the former Socialist Bloc into Western political and military structures and into the world system of capitalism. In the (re)formation of the postcommunist public spheres, from both West and East, democracy has been a symbol rather than a concept: the symbol of the bright side of Western modernity, conceived as the only side. The idea of “democracy” materialized in postcommunism in mechanisms of interpellation demanding instantaneous comprehension and acknowledgement rather than an invitation to collective reasoning or a process of social valuing. Democracy is one of the prominent symbols of the ideological frame-

strikes and protests, the “masses” have been blamed by the elites for all the shortcomings and violence, in typical gestures of internal colonization. Shortly put, the actual history of democracy for the past twenty years in postcommunist Europe shows that “democracy” has been the politics of the elite, complete with the delegitimation of the idea of popular sovereignty, which had been temporarily reactualized in the Revolutions of 1989. In this sense, the smooth transition of anticommunist dissidents is both symptomatic and important in itself, for after 1989 almost none of the anticommunist dissidents can be associated with politics of autonomy and independence, but rather with the cohabitation and direct participation into State and capitalist power structures, and with the local colonization of dominant ideologies like neoconservatism and neoliber-

“THE ACTUAL HISTORY OF DEMOCRACY FOR THE PAST TWENTY YEARS IN POSTCOMMUNIST EUROPE SHOWS THAT “DEMOCRACY” HAS BEEN THE *POLITICS OF THE ELITE*.”

work of transition, adding to the metonymical and monocultural definition of the meaning of *postcommunist history*: from past to future, from tyranny to freedom, from madness to normalcy, from backwardness to civilization, from totalitarianism to democracy, from communism to capitalism, from behind the Iron Curtain to the Free World, from East to West. The symbol of democracy has a special role in this framework, providing the main representations of the teleological end of transition, which was identified in the workings of postcommunist public spheres with anticommunism, the “Western civilization” and, last but not least, with capitalism. Under the light of this vision, for some parts of the former Socialist Bloc, democracy even meant *shock therapy* and *lustration* – in a glaring illustration of the coloniality of power operating within the modern concept of democracy.

The postcommunist transition has been a process in which the people’s participation to the political was allowed only in temporary and carefully controlled moments, such as elections and election-related referendums. And when the people did show up – such as in the miner’s rebellions of the 1990s, or the later

alism. Often in discursive opposition to the economic and political elites, the elite anticommunist intellectuals have been nevertheless the local promoters of explicit apologies of violence such as lustration and of doctrines of an Eurocentric elite. The working class, which had been the main driving force of the social movements of 1989, has vanished as a political category, in spite of the proletarianization of all occupations and levels of education in the experience of immigrant labor of East-Europeans. Shortly put, in the actual history of the transition from the Socialist Bloc to the Free World, *democracy means politics of the elite*.

It has been said that the West also rediscovered the historical meaning of “democracy” through the experience of East Europeans after 1989. This actually means that the symbol of “Western modernity” acquired positive value, cashed on the notion of “freedom” and renewed its repression of the dark side of modernity. In the postcommunist era, from the Fall of the Berlin Wall to the Second Iraqi War, the word “freedom” arguably meant theft, neocolonization, military invasion, torture and uprooting. For all the optimism of discourses pronounced at the most institutional-

ized political levels, within both West and Eastern Europe, police forces and police militarization are at an all-time high, the apparatuses of repression of popular demonstrations are beyond control and even documentation, the harassment of people identified as “dangerous activists” has become a routine (and includes domicile visits and other scare tactics), and the truth is that illegal camps for the detention of immigrants have been set all over Europe during this period of the re-discovery of democracy, the postcommunist transition. The global lesson of postcommunism is that democracy meant in the Western world, in the aftermath of a new colonial experience, predominantly the politics of the elite and the reactualization of the coloniality of power.

SPEAKING IN TRUTH AND THE NEED FOR NEGATIVE POLITICS

When it comes to opening the meaning of democracy, the international left is restricted not only by the interpellation of finding alternatives to modernity, but also by a certain desire to *speak in truth*, to be in the full positiveness of an alternative episteme – and this constitutes also the most difficult part of Oliver Ressler’s movie, one that deserves a film consideration of its own. The title given by Oliver Ressler provides however already the best clue as to how to transgress this problematic fullness: one has to ask the question, and to reflect on what it means to ask this question. The negative side of the story is enlightening: democracy appears as a means of framing the possibilities of experience, a notion used to justify violent enclosures and reservations and to neutralize concrete struggles. We can further elaborate, arguing that the coloniality of power operates through the notion of democracy by enforcing a certain difference between the non-modern and the modern, a division between civilization and non-civilization, nature and culture that reduces arbitrarily the possibilities of political experience and communal life. Oliver Ressler’s film does well to deconstruct the notion that for the Revolution to succeed, it has to happen in the Western centers of capitalism and power. For a good part of the international left, the positive epistemic field emerges indeed by learning from the revolutionary experiences of Latin America, from Chiapas to Bolivia, and as Anibal Quijano insisted, the future of the planet may well be linked to the possibilities of indigenous politics.

However, Lenin’s dictum is still haunting Europe. Maybe an interpretation of Deleuze’s conception of resistance as something ontologically positive can also be blamed here for the undeniable effect of forgetting that resistance always includes a negative stance at the level of praxis. By conceiving resistances or the alternatives to modernity only in their positiveness, one could also help the systematic destruction and impoverishment of the repertoire of tactics that links and has linked negative politics to democracy and social justice: revolutions, rebellions, strikes, refusals of interpellation, obscurity and double-sense... Which is why one of the lessons of maintaining the question of democracy alive is that the richness of negative politics is also part of the answer. 🐞

What is Democracy?

Excerpts from video-interviews featured in Oliver Ressler’s artistic project “What is Democracy?”

ADAM OSTOLSKI

WARSAW, POMNIK RAPPAPORTA, MURANOW

If we look at Europe, there is a discussion that there is a democratic deficit in the European Union. This is an important discussion, but what is more important I think are all the discussions that are suppressed by this discussion. Forty or fifty years ago, we had a big dream of democracy in all levels of life: Democracy in the family, democracy in the workplace, democracy in schools and so on. Now we don’t have discussions about democracy in the workplace, for example. It is taken for granted that the workplace is a capitalist place which has nothing to do with democracy. I think that is one of the signs that democracy is in crisis in Europe. Democracy lost its momentum, it lost its tendency to progress and include new groups, new types of actors, new levels of life.



THANASIS TRIARIDIS

THESSALONIKI

To me, democracy does not exist. It is a big word, very nice, but it does not exist, it is similar to God, love or immortality. I cannot define democracy in any other way rather than a chimera, which sounds nice to our ears, but in Greek mythology it was a monster, a dreadful monster.

YVONNE RIANO

BERN, UNIVERSITY BERN

I think you must not forget that the idea of democracy in contemporary society is linked to the idea of the nation state. And I think there are problems with the idea of the nation state today, because it is based on exclusion, it is based on old ideas of homogenous populations. In today’s world, in almost every society, this idea no longer holds. Societies are very heterogeneous, in cultural terms, and this idea of the nation state, based on just one model, does not fit anymore.

TONE OLAF NIELSEN

COPENHAGEN, JAGTVEJ 69, WHERE THE YOUTH HOUSE USED TO STAND BEFORE IT WAS TORN DOWN

I think the biggest threat to representational democracy as we know it in the West, and I am speaking in particular from a Danish point of view within Northern Europe, in my opinion is the turn to the right and the collapse of the traditional political spectrum in favor of a consensus of the centre politics. I am very interested in Chantal Mouffe’s writings, a political scientist who has been describing this development quite clearly. According to her, you could say, that “third way” politics as it was proposed and practiced first by Bill Clinton and later by Tony Blair and Gerhard Schröder, resulted in a collapse of the traditional leftwing project as a constant contestation and challenge of the power-relations in favor of an acceptance of the so-called unavailability of globalization. This means that voters lose confidence in the parliamentary political system and move to the extreme ends of the spectrum, which is where they find true contestation, true opposition. And, of course, the danger according to Mouffe is that once you have people, voters moving to the extreme ends of the political spectrums, they are outside of democratic discourses and form and practices, which leaves room for fundamentalisms, nationalism, various phobias, sexism, xenophobia, homophobia, and so forth.



JOANNA ERBEL

WARSAW, CHARLES DE GAULLE ROUNDABOUT

The main problem of representative democracy is that not all the voices which should be represented are represented. You can see that especially if you look at the body of the city. It is supposed to be a place open for everyone. But, if you walk around in Warsaw or any other place, you will see that some of the people are just excluded. These are the people who are not consumers. So, if you are not a consumer, you are not allowed to stay in the place. The city is changed in a way so that you have no possibility to stay in the place. You have less and less free benches, or other places where you could sit without paying for sitting there. I think this is a kind of politics, which is led in Warsaw by this administration.

TINY A.K.A. LISA GRAY-GARCIA

SAN FRANCISCO, MOMMAHOUSE

Representative democracy does not represent me. It does not represent poor folks, migrants, globalized economic workers, people who caught up in the underground economy, homeless people, people on welfare and people who are disabled in many senses in the United States, because we are outside of the capitalist power structure. The only people who are really represented in “representative democracy” are people with a certain amount of power, who are already engaged in the systems, many of whom oppress us. When I was eleven years old, my mother was unable to work any longer because she became disabled, and we became homeless. People consider that situation more typical in the so-called Third World, but it is also very common in the First World. In the US, poor families and people in poverty in general are not supported, much less represented.



LIN CHALAZIN DOVRAT

JAFFA, TEL AVIV

Democracy is based on the presupposition that there is a regime that may enforce a fair game. It promises that at the beginning or the starting point of the political game, all participants are equal. This equality is based on identity. If we talk about direct democracy, it makes sense, right, because if we talk about Athens all the participants were white males and they enjoyed, also, some kind of equality of class. So, when we try to reproduce this same regime on a larger scale we have a big problem, because at the starting point everybody has to be equal.

BORIS KAGARLITSKY

MOSCOW, PUSHKIN MONUMENT, PUSHKIN SQUARE

Russia is definitely not a democratic country. In a certain sense it is a free country, because, for example, we can do this recording now and the police are not coming. Probably some private security may come, but this is a different story. In a certain sense it is a free country, but not a democracy! It is a free market country, it is a capitalist country – there is no doubt about it. It is a country where some minimum of democratic freedom is respected; or rather, it is tolerated. As long as you are not dangerous, you are free to speak out. But I think Russia is getting closer and closer to Western Europe for very simple reasons. Western Europe is becoming increasingly authoritarian and less and less democratic. In that sense it is not Russia that is getting closer to Europe, but Europe that is getting closer to Russia. And, within a few years, if this process does not change in the West, I think we will be very much in the same place.

JO VAN DER SPEK & CHEIKH PAPA SAKHO

AMSTERDAM, DETENTION CENTER AT AMSTERDAM AIRPORT SCHIPHOL

JO VAN DER SPEK: For me, this location is a symbol of democracy, of Dutch democracy, because this complex was built because a majority of Dutch voters wanted repression of immigrants. People want illegal migrants to be thrown out of the country. And this is where they were kept, before they were brought to a plane to go back to Dominican Republic, Ukraine, Bulgaria, Surinam, Libya... There are about 300 people detained here. And, the fact that a fire could start here and could kill 11 people is, in a way, the climax of that politics of detaining migrants. So instead of looking away, instead of locking away, instead of putting these people in a place far away from civilization, I just want to show it: this is it, this is your bloody democracy.

CHEIKH PAPA SAKHO: How to make people understand? You have to show me. I don’t feel good; I am traumatized. Every night I have bad dreams. I don’t know why to deport you they keep you for three months or one year. I was three months in this jail and three months in Tilburg; only to be deported. And I have family, I have seven children. I have been here for seven years, and I could not see them. Where is democracy? They tried to deport me to Italy and the Italian police brought me back. And the next day the fire happened and the eleven people died. You heard them screaming in the fire. Can you imagine, how the eleven people died in the fire? Slowly, and nobody helped them. That makes me crazy.

JO VAN DER SPEK: It is normal for people to try to find a way to live. If you fight that freedom, you kill yourself in the end, because it is Dutch democracy that died in that fire. Let’s start building another democracy by stopping to oppress people looking for happiness.

GIULIANO BATTISTON

FOR A COSMOPOLITAN OUTLOOK

Interview with Ulrich Beck

In this interview Ulrich Beck claim the necessity for an inclusive, cosmopolitan outlook capable of breaking “with the seductive insularity of national consciousness” and to recognize the productiveness of the post-national era’s paradoxical principle: the principle of self-empowerment through self-deprivation of power, according to which “national sovereignty does not make cooperation possible; rather, it is transnational cooperation that makes national sovereignty possible”.

Giuliano Battiston: I would like to begin from globalization, “the most widely used - and misused - keyword in disputes of recent as well as coming years; but [...] also one of the most rarely defined, the most nebulous and misunderstood, as well as the most politically effective”, as you write in *What is Globalization?*. Would you explain what you mean when you state, in *Conversations with Ulrich Beck*, that “globalization should be chiefly conceived of as globalization from within, as internalized globalization”? And why according to your perspective is it important to contest the equation between the depoliticizing but highly political spell of globalism – the economic monodimensional interpretation of it - and the multidimensionality of globalization?

Ulrich Beck: Untill some years ago I used to speak about globalization from within or internalized globalization, but then I switched to cosmopolitization (not cosmopolitanism). In order to explain what I mean by that, let's just pick up a few examples. In a German middle-class town with twenty thousand inhabitants, in basic schools you find children from a background of twenty languages. It's amazing and it's happening, but it has not been internalized. People still think there is and that we need just a normal educational system: the teachers are left alone, and they have to do their job without having being educated for this new situation. While at the political level we are talking, like in Italy, about the possibility (somebody would say the necessity) of excluding foreigners. But this is not talking about reality; the reality is that in the inside all kind of globalization happens. And the same if you look at the family structures, in European countries but in many other non-European countries as well, where binational families are increasing. While Asian families, for example, know how to use this globalization from within as a resource for organizing family life beyond borders, planning transnationalized structures for family networks. So far we just look at the family as a national face-to-face relationship, but now we see it is going to be cosmopolitized in many ways. And you can take all other issues, for example work-education, where there is a new split

between those who are able or competent and have resources to interact beyond borders and those who don't have those resources and feel frightened by competition from other countries. The first kind react “openly” and the second with nationalism, but both are reacting to what I would say is a cosmopolitization of work. Those are elements of globalization from within. Untill now, the consolation of the national view was about excluding the national others, thinking that everything which is relevant for politics is only within the national context. But now we are living in a situation where this does not work anymore – like it nor not, the nationally excluded other is part of our own living, working and family condition. This is what I mean by cosmopolitization. This is why I don't talk only about globalization from within but of cosmopolitization, which means that the other is in us. As for what regards the economic dimension of globalization, I think the term globalization - as it is commonly used - is not really giving meaning to the important subject we are involved in. And this is the human condition of un-excludability; it means you cannot exclude the nationally con-

structed other anymore. Politically, as sociologically, this is the issue we are confronted with, and this has a lot of very different meanings. One of them is what I would call now the globalization of strangeness. People suddenly experience themselves living in a very strange world and being confronted with all kind of strangeness. They don't recognize anymore the city they are living in, maybe even the street because of all kind of globalizations happening into those areas; people feel to have no place in this new context, and feel frightened by this new situation of un-excludability of the strange-other. On the other hand, there's an enlightenment function, as people are opening up, realizing they necessarily have to deal with each other in order to find solutions to the big problems. So, both things are happening, in an ambivalent dynamic.

GB: One of the main thematic framework of your research is the concept of world risk society, a concept that, as you write in *World at Risk*, according to some scholars “encourages a kind of neo-Splengerism and hinders political action”. Precisely the opposite is

the case, you argue, because “as world risk society, society becomes reflexive”, and because, as for the concept of un-excludability, “risk conflicts do indeed have an enlightening function. They destabilize the existing order but can also be seen as a vital step towards the construction of new institutions”. Would you explain what you mean saying that “global risks unexpectedly liberate a world-historical ‘cosmopolitan moment’”?

UB: I believe that global risks are producing global reflexivity of risks, and that talking about risk and reflecting upon risk on a global scale is the same process. Therefore risk is a basic condition of reflexive modernization, because suddenly the basic institutions and principles of modernity are being questioned: who would have believed that the basic principles of market economy could be questioned? But it happened; maybe they already forgot about it, but still, for a moment, it happened, and it happened because of the global reflexivity of risks. I believe this is what the enlightenment function of risk means: there's a specific moment, there's a time, a window of opportunity;



ULRICH BECK

Ulrich Beck is one of the world's leading social thinkers, professor of Sociology at the University of Munich – where he is the founding director of the research centre “Sonderforschungsbereich-Reflexive Modernisation” – and at the London School of Economic and Political Science. He is best known for his writings on globalization, cosmopolitanism, and risk society.

I don't know for how long it lasts, it depends on the staging of the issue, on all kind of conditions, but suddenly people move, and institutions who nobody thought could be questioned become part of the political debate, and new kind of power relations are constructed and so on. And suddenly the powerless became to some extent powerful. We saw this kind of process in Copenhagen, where the countries that are mostly affected by climate change and don't have a chance to actually react and respond to it, suddenly got a voice, and not only a voice. Thanks to this process of reflexivity, in Copenhagen, for the first time, those “underdevelopment” countries themselves realized the situation: they do have an element of power, because everybody knows that if they are not included then all idea of consensus on future strategy would collapse, and we would face a fragmentation of the world (what we are experienced to some extent now). So, this is what I mean: the basic relations of power, institutional structures, and social inequality become part of the public reflexivity in different counties. And on a world level as well.

GB: As regarding Copenhagen: since your first book, you have always paid attention to the environmental crises. In *Conversation with Ulrich Beck* for instance you state that “the first modernity rests on a clear distinction between society and nature. Nature is conceived as the ‘outside’ of society, and as a functionally infinite resource and sink”. Would you say that the activists for climate justice in Copenhagen have shown a global consciousness that we should not consider “problems of the environment in the sense of the surrounding world (*Umwelt*), but as problems affecting the inner world (*Innenwelt*) of society” (*World at Risk*)? And that it is finally emerging what you have called “a utopian ecological democracy”, “which would open our eyes and our institutions to the immaturity of the first industrial civilization and the dangers it posed to itself” (*What is Globalization*)?

UB: This is my position: if you look at the environment as environment, you are not only missing the point of the environmental movement, but you are threatening your own political capacity to find any answer. Only if you see there is a combination between nature and society, you can have a political answer





“THE IDEA OF SOVEREIGNTY IS GETTING FICTITIOUS. IT IS NOT A REAL POLITICAL PRACTICE ANYMORE; RATHER, IT IS JUST IN THE HEADS OF THE PEOPLE.”

to it; that's why I believe that even environment as a concept is misleading sociology and politics. Whether there is going to be an ecological democracy, that is still an open question, of course. I really like the idea of Bruno Latour, who is talking about the Parliament of things, with the ideas that all kind of things are part of the networks we are all involved in and they must have their voices in the public domain. He probably would say climate change is a way of articulating the voice of things and animals and people in this combination. This is an interesting idea, but so far you don't see much material bases for this kind of participation. In fact, even the opposite is coming up. If you look at climate scientists who are very much engaged in this climate issue, they think something has to be done now, quite urgently, otherwise there's no answer anymore. So, they are now more and more questioning democracy, saying we need a kind of technocratic political system. I must confess I am a bit skeptical about this technocratic reaction. From the beginning of my thinking I know that the danger and the perception of danger produce this kind of technocratic response. That's why I think it is important to show how democracy is the condition for finding solutions even to climate change. But this is not easy, as all the technocratic visions which are now coming up underestimate that they do need consensus. However, without democracy there would be no consciousness about the environmental problem; this did not come up because of scientists or governments; it came up because civil society movements had the chance to raise their voice in the public. It came up under democratic conditions. There are no solutions without a consensus, and the consensus will only be constructed by

democratic institutions.

GB: Let's go back to your concept of cosmopolitanism. In *Power in the Global Age*, you introduce an extremely interesting idea, saying that the Enlightenment concept of cosmopolitanism, freed from its origins in imperial universalism, could contribute to “the developments of politics towards what we might call a ‘cosmopolitan state’”. Would you say something more about your idea of an “an organizational model of deterritorialized democracy”?

UB: I think that the European Union could be a model, at least to some extent. The fact is that there are so many misunderstandings about the European Union. In my view, because of a “nation-state understanding” of modernity, even social scientists largely don't understand what they talk about when they analyze the European Union. Indeed, in a nation-state perspective there can be only either a big nation (a European nation, or a federal State, or a super-State), or there can be no Europe, and only national States. So, there is an either/or situation between national States and the European stage. I believe this is the biggest problem in the self-understanding in Europe. At the same time, we have to understand that, for example, the European bureaucracy, which is a widespread negative image of Europe, is actually very small, smaller than the bureaucracy of Berlin, or London, or Paris, even if not as well-organized. In any case, the model of the European Union is that the laws and the norms which European institutions pass are being implemented by the nation-state: it's a combination of national sovereignty and cooperation between nation-states, and it is something dif-

ferent from the functioning of a big nation. This cooperation means that there is no decrease in sovereignty, but shift and increase of sovereignty on the national level as well. Let me give you an example: maybe you remember the Polish president who, a few years ago, was very much opposed to Europe, and he was making all kinds of objections. If we consider his situation, we find out that he was empowered as a member of the European Union to be powerful against the European Union. If Poland would not be a member of European Union, nobody would care about what its president says. So, only the European Union empowers all kind of States, even the smaller ones, with a combined sovereignty that is even stronger than if they were not part of European Union. I think the European Union is something which goes in the direction of the cosmopolitization of the States, which means that there has to be a cooperation. This is – as we see in Europe – quite complicated, because people misunderstand their own national identity, their own national sovereignty. Now this is the case with Greece: is Greece part of Germany? Is Germany part of Greece? Nobody believes it, but this is the case because both are part of Europe; there's no Greece and Germany as different countries, there's a Europeanized Greece and a Europeanized Germany. And because that's the case, what happened in Greece is very important to Germany and to all other European countries. The European Union is a political architecture that goes in the direction of the cosmopolitization of States, and it is complicated because the national States don't disappear, but have to learn to combine and interact with each other.

GB: Despite the cosmopolitization of States, most of the scholars – not to speak of politicians – are still inclined to adopt what you call “methodological nationalism”, the insistence that the meta-game of global politics is and always will be a national game.

You have written that this nationalism functions as an “unrecognized mental block”, thanks to which “many writers see the global age as spelling the end of the national state and therefore of democracy”. Instead, you argue that “the ideas of statehood and state sovereignty have not become superfluous”, but must “be redefined and extended in a cosmopolitan direction” (*Cosmopolitan Vision*). Would you explain what you mean when you state that, in order to avoid the national trap, it is necessary to distinguish “between autonomy and sovereignty”?

UB: This distinction is really crucial, because you can lose autonomy by for example being part of the European Union, or being dependent on let's say the International Monetary Fund, but at the same time, under specific conditions, in losing your autonomy you can increase your sovereignty. For instance, you could solve problems of migration on a transnational level, you can solve problems related to the transnational and cosmopolitan criminal networks, which know how to exploit differences of legal systems like transnational corporations do, and use these differences in order to increase the power of their criminal structure. So, in pooling the sovereignty by cooperation between different States, you can produce solutions to those problems, while on the national level we have all kind of discussions which actually cannot solve any problem. That's why, regardless of whoever gets elected, after one or two years we find out that they are not really able to solve the problems. The different contradictions on the national level arise because at that level you don't have the adequate resources anymore. In this sense, the idea of sovereignty is getting fictitious. It is not a real political practice anymore; rather, it is just in the heads of the people. Therefore, a new combination and new cooperation is necessary. One of the basic issues is, again, climate change, but you can pick the one you prefer. For example, everybody is discussing

ABOUT THE PHOTOGRAPHS: ERNESTO MORALES

In the last decade Ernesto Morales, an Argentinean artist born in Uruguay 34 years ago, has developed his professional career between Buenos Aires and Europe. In the last years Ernesto has worked on the themes of exile and distance reflecting through videos and paintings on the connections and lacerations which both unite and divide Argentina and Italy. The exhibition “Tiempos Migrantes”, from which these images are part, has been presented from the 22nd of March to the 10th of April in the Gallery of the Italian-Latin American Institute (IILA) in Rome. In “Tiempos Migrantes” Morales reflects on the problems, resistances and changes imposed by migrations, considering in particular the thousands of Italian who went to seek their fortunes in Argentina.

Ernesto Morales
above: *Invierno Porteño*
100x150cm – oil on canvas 2009

left: *Vacas migrantes*
120x80cm – oil on canvas 2010

the current crisis of the Euro, and it's not very difficult to say that if we stick to the national perspective for the first time there's going to be a real crisis of the Euro, because we don't have any European answer to the Europeanized financial system. So, again the nations seem to be sovereign but they are not able to handle these problems which are really part of a more articulated political system, and this is always the same. Under specific conditions, losing autonomy can mean pooling sovereignty, and this pooling of sovereignty in turns produces an increase in sovereignty to a level capable of solving all those problems that are not national anymore. In other words, it is the paradoxical principle I write about in *World at Risk*: national sovereignty does not make cooperation possible; rather, it is transnational cooperation that makes national sovereignty possible. 🏠

SASKIA SASSEN

OUR GLOBAL CHALLENGES:

Can cities take us beyond asymmetric war and environmental violence?

Some of what are usually understood as *global* governance challenges are increasingly becoming particularly concrete and urgent in cities. This is part of a larger disassembling of all-encompassing formats, notably the nation-state and the inter-state system.

Cities have a distinctive capacity to transform conflict into the civic. In contrast, national governments tend to militarize conflict. This does not mean that cities are peaceful spaces. On the contrary, cities have long been sites for conflicts, from war to racisms and religious hatreds. And yet, militarizing conflict is not a particularly urban option: cities have tended to triage conflict through commerce and civic activity. Even more important, the overcoming of urban conflicts has often been the source for an expanded civiness.

Today cities are losing this capacity and becoming sites for a whole range of new types of conflicts, such as asymmetric war and ethnic and social “cleansing”. Further, the dense and conflictive spaces of cities overwhelmed by inequality and injustice can become the sites for a variety of secondary, more anomic types of conflicts, from drug wars to the major environmental disasters looming in our immediate futures. All of these challenge that traditional commercial and civic capacity that has allowed cities to avoid war when confronted with conflict, and to incorporate diversities of class, culture, religion, ethnicity.

The question I examine here is whether this emergent future of expanding conflicts and racisms contains within it the conditions that have historically allowed cities to transform conflict into the civic. What are the challenges today that are larger than our differences, our hatreds, our intolerance, our racisms. I do not think it can be what made European cities historically spaces

for the making of the civic --commerce and the fact that the powerful found in the city the strategic space for their operations and for their self-representation and projection onto a larger stage.

The unsettling of the urban order is part of a larger disassembling of existing organizational logics. This disassembling is also unsettling the logic that assembled territory, authority and rights into the dominant organizational format of our times --the nation-state. All of this is happening even as national states and cities continue to be major markers of the geopolitical landscape and the material organization of territory. The type of urban order that gave us the open city in Europe, for instance, is still there, but increasingly as mere visual order, and less so as social order. [...]

THE URBANIZING OF GOVERNANCE CHALLENGES: DISASSEMBLING THE NATIONAL?

Some of what are usually understood as *global* governance challenges are increasingly becoming particularly concrete and urgent in cities. They range from environmental questions to the flight from war- refugees from and into cities. This urbanizing of what we have traditionally thought of as national/global challenges is part of a larger disassembling of all-encompassing formats, notably the nation-state and the inter-state system. It could explain why cities are losing older capacities to transform potential conflicts into the civic.

In the last two centuries, the traditional foundations for the civic in its European conception has largely been the “civilizing” of bourgeois capitalism; this corresponds to the triumph of liberal democracy as the

political system of the bourgeoisie. Today, capitalism is a different formation, and so is the political system of the new global elites. These developments raise a question about what might be the new equivalent of what in the past was the civic.

Cities are going to have an increasing prominence given a multiplication of a broad range of partial, often highly specialized or obscure, assemblages of bits of territory, authority and rights once firmly ensconced in national and inter-state institutional frames. These assemblages cut across the binary of inside and outside, ours and theirs, national versus global. They arise out of, and can inhabit national institutional and territorial settings; they can also arise out of mixes of national and global elements and span the globe in what are largely trans-local geographies connecting multiple subnational spaces. Cities, particularly global and globalizing cities, are a very complex type of this dis- and re-assembling.

We can organize the urbanizing of these various challenges along three axis.

a) Global warming, energy and water insecurity. These and other environmental challenges are going to make cities frontline spaces. These challenges will tend to remain more diffuse for nation-states and for the state itself. One key reason is the more acute and direct dependence of everyday life in cities on massive infrastructures and on institutional-level supports for most people --apartment buildings, hospitals, vast sewage systems, water purification systems, vast underground transport systems, whole electric grids dependent on computerized management vulnerable to breakdowns. We already know that a rise in water levels will

flood some of the most densely populated cities in the world. The urgency of some of these challenges goes well beyond lengthy negotiations and multiple international meetings, still the most common form of engagement at the level of national politics and especially international politics. When global warming hits cities it will hit hard and preparedness becomes critical. The new kinds of crises and the ensuing violence will be particularly felt in cities. [...]

These challenges are emergent but before we know it they will become concrete and threatening in cities. This contrasts with possibly slower trajectories at the national level. In this sense cities are in the frontline and will have to act on global warming whether national states

meet and fight, and these were the frontline spaces. The search for national security is today a source for urban insecurity. [...] The traditional security paradigm based on national state security fails to accommodate this triangulation. What may be good for the protection of the national state apparatus may go at a high (increasingly high) price to major cities and their people. [...]

c) Cities also enter the domain of global governance challenges as a site for the enactment of new forms of violence resulting from these various crises. We can foresee a variety of forms of violence that are likely to escape the macro-level normative propositions of good governance. For instance, Sao Paulo and Rio,Ciudad Juarez and Tijuana, and others, all

“ THE PARTICULARITY OF THE EMERGENT URBAN LANDSCAPE IS PROFOUNDLY DIFFERENT FROM THE OLD EUROPEAN CIVIC TRADITION, EVEN THOUGH EUROPE’S WORLDWIDE IMPERIAL PROJECTS REMIXED EUROPEAN TRADITIONS WITH URBAN CULTURES THAT BELONGED TO OTHER HISTORIES AND GEOGRAPHIES. ”

sign on to international treaties or not. Because of this, many cities have had to develop capabilities to handle these challenges. [...] From our recent history, we know that with or without a treaty or law, cities such as LA and Tokyo had to address air quality urgently. And they did.

b) Asymmetric Wars. When national states go to war in the name of national security, nowadays major cities are likely to become a key frontline space. In older wars, large armies needed large open fields or oceans to

have seen forms of gang and police violence in the last few years that point to a much larger breakdown than the typically invoked fact of inadequate policing. [...] In terms of global governance questions, one challenge is to push macro-level frames to account for, and factor in the types of stress that arise out of everyday life violence and insecurity in dense spaces. Some of these may eventually feed militarized responses, and this may well be inadequate or escalate the conflict. The question of immigration and the new types of environmental refugees

STRUGGLE IN THE MULTI-ETHNIC CITY

The city is increasingly the theatre of a struggle of identitarian politics. We must learn to translate this into political participation and re-appropriation of the territory for all.

TERESA PULLANO

Recent uprisings in Milan, Rosarno, Rome, but also Athens and Paris, show that the space of the city and the micro-territory of the neighborhood are now key areas of contestation and political confrontation. They show the inadequacy of current mainstream representations of our society as “liquid”. The image of a free and peaceful world where frontiers, material conditions, class belonging and ethnic origins do not matter anymore is violently disavowed by the struggles that are nowadays blooming in Europe.

Territory is an ambiguous category, since it can be both regressive and progressive. It can act as a tool for

separating and segregating people living side by side, but it is also an opportunity to reclaim the right to self-government through direct participation and decision over common resources. Cities become the symbol of a fight for liberation, such as in the Greek case, and at the same time they become the theatre of fascist practices and behaviors, as in the cases of Rosarno or the Viale Padova, in Italy.

Viale Padova is a multiethnic neighborhood at the periphery of Milan, where fights between North Africans and Latin Americans have led to a clear-cut division between the Italian residents and the “newcomers”, with the government and the mayor imposing a curfew for bars and restaurants in the area and the right for the police to break into private houses looking for illegal immigrants. A month before, the first revolt of migrants working to collect mandarins in the countryside of Rosarno, in the Calabria region, became the perfect example of struggles and mechanisms of exploitation that are investing the whole continent. Free movement of workers, both legal and illegal, is fostered by the construction of a European Union common area and by the introduction of the euro, acting as a factor of inequalities and of differentiated integration. This is exemplified by the debates over the

“Polish Plumber” in France at the time of the referendum on the European Constitution and by the figure of the “Romanian carpenter” in the British media. The disentanglement of democracy at the national level, associated to the opening of frontiers, essentially and originally for the creation of a common market, has generated fears and social unrest directed against the “others”, be they extra-European immigrants or European citizens.

There are multiple differences between the immigrants picking oranges in Rosarno and the young Parisians of Clichy-sous-Bois. The latter are French citizens, the former are foreigners; the latter are closely linked and identified with the territory they are living on, Paris suburbs, made by a mix of popular housing, the HLM, French and North-African culture, the former do not have a fixed residence but they continuously move from the North to the South of Italy, from Greece to Spain, according to the season and to the job market.

Struggles over the control of the territory between Italians and immigrants or among French citizens tell us that micro-territories, that is neighborhoods and villages, are becoming the place of expression of tensions and claims that take into account the whole society, at the national and at the European level.

The risk that we are facing is the sacralization of territories, that is the closure towards those whom we think different from us because of their origin, culture, religion or ethnic belonging. “Others” can be also our fellow citizens, like in the French case. The rise of xenophobic parties such as the Northern League in Italy, the National Front in France, the Vlaams Block in Belgium or the Freedom Party (PvdV) in the Netherlands give evidence of such a danger.

For left-wing political forces, the challenge is to understand the needs and claims that are expressed in local uprisings, in conflicts over the control of the space of the city, and to translate them into politics of participation and re-appropriation of the territory guaranteeing open access to all. There is a need to understand the value of material politics involving the appropriation and construction of space, going from the management of the city space to the reclaiming of the commons, and at the same time to include the largest number of people in the fruition of and in decisions over such a space. It is time to re-discover the “right to the city”, theorised by the most influential, even if now mostly forgotten, French geographer Henry Lefebvre. ■

are one particularly acute instance of urban challenges that will require new understandings of the civic. I return to this in the third section of the article.

URBAN INSECURITY:
WHEN THE CITY ITSELF BECOMES
A TECHNOLOGY FOR WAR/
CONFLICT.

The pursuit of national security has become a source for urban insecurity. This puts the traditional security paradigm based on national state security on its head. What may be good to protect the national state apparatus may go at a high (increasingly high) price to major cities. Since 1998 most terrorist attacks have been in cities. This produces a disturbing map. Access to urban targets is far easier than access to planes for terrorist hijacking or to military installations. [...]

The new urban map of war is expansive: it goes far beyond the actual nations involved. The bombings in Madrid, London, Casablanca, Bali, Mumbai, and more, each has its own specifics and can be explained in terms of particular grievances. These are localized actions by local armed groups, acting independently from each other. Yet they are also clearly part of a new kind of multi-sited war –a distributed and variable set of actions that gain larger meaning from a particular conflict with global projection.

[...] Asymmetric wars are partial, intermittent and lack clear endings. There is no armistice to mark their end. They are one indication of how the center no longer holds—whatever the center’s format: whether empire or national state.

A second set of features of contemporary wars, especially evident in the less developed areas, is that they often involve forced urbanization. Contemporary conflicts produce significant population displacement both into and out of cities. In many cases, in African conflicts or in Kosovo, displaced people swell urban populations. At the same time, in contemporary conflicts, the warring bodies avoid battle or direct military confrontation, as Mary Kaldor has described in her work on the new wars (*New and Old Wars*, Polity Press). Their main strategy is to control territory through getting rid of people of a different identity (ethnicity, religion, politics). The main tactic is terror – conspicuous massacres and atrocities pushing people to flee.

These types of displacement –with ethnic/religious “cleansing” the most virulent form-- have a profound impact on the cosmopolitan character of cities. Cities have long had the capacity to bring together people of different classes, ethnicities and religions through commerce, politics, and civic practices. Contemporary conflicts unsettle and weaken this cultural diversity of cities when they lead to forced urbanization or internal displacement. [...]

The systemic equivalent of these types of “cleansing” in the case of very large cities may well be the growing ghettoization of the poor and the rich –albeit in very different types of ghettos. It leaves the middle classes, rarely the most diverse group in cities, to the task of bringing urbanity to these cities. The risk is that they will supplant traditional urban cosmopolitanisms with narrow defensive attitudes in a world of growing economic insecurity and political powerlessness. Under these conditions also, displacement from countryside to town or within cities becomes a source of insecurity rather than a source of rich diversity.

A CHALLENGE LARGER THAN OUR
DIFFERENCES?

The particularity of the emergent urban landscape is profoundly dif-

ferent from the old European civic tradition, even though Europe’s worldwide imperial projects remixed European traditions with urban cultures that belonged to other histories and geographies.

But it shares with that older time the fact of challenges which are larger than our differences. Therein lies a potential for reinventing that capacity of cities to transform conflict into (at least relative) openness rather than war as is the case for national governments. But it is not going to be the familiar order of the open city and of the civic as we have come to represent it, especially

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OF EMPIRES AND NATION-STATES, THE CITY EMERGES AS A
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in the European tradition. My sense is rather that the major challenges that confront cities (and society generally) have increasingly strong feedback loops that contribute to that disassembling of the old civic urban order. Asymmetric war as discussed earlier is perhaps one of the most acute versions of this dynamic. And so is climate change. Both of these will affect both rich and poor, and addressing them will demand that everybody joins the battle. Further, while sharp economic inequalities, racisms, and religious intolerance

have long existed, they are becoming activating political mobilizers in a context where the center no longer holds the way it used to hold – whether the imperial center, the national state, the city’s bourgeoisie.

Against the background of a partial disassembling of empires and nation-states, the city emerges as a strategic site for making elements of new, perhaps even more partial orders. Let me elaborate briefly on some general aspects in order to situate the significance of the city as one such assemblage –one of the most complex and potentially history-making. In my larger project, I have identified a vast

proliferation of such partial assemblages which re-mix bits of territory, authority, and rights, once ensconced in national institutional frames. Mostly these continue to exist within the nation-state, but this fact in itself entails a partial denationalizing of what was historically constructed as national. These assemblages are multivalent in the normative sense. For instance, in my interpretation WTO law and the new International Criminal Court are instruments for making new types of assemblages of territorial authority and rights –in

one case rights for firms, in the other, global rights for national citizens. Their normative stances are clearly very different. A final point that matters to elaborate the question of the city is that since these novel assemblages are partial and often highly specialized, they tend to be centered in particular utilities and purposes, often with extremely narrow scopes.

To repeat, the normative character of this landscape is, in my reading, multivalent –it ranges from some very good utilities and purposes to some very bad ones, depending on one’s normative stance. Their emergence and proliferation bring several significant consequences even though this is a partial, not an all-encompassing development. I see in this proliferation of partial assemblages a tendency toward a disaggregating and, in some cases, global redeployment, of constitutive rules once solidly lodged in the nation-state project, one with strong unitary tendencies.

These developments signal the emergence of new types of orderings that can coexist with older orderings, such as the nation state, the interstate system, and the city as part of a hierarchy dominated by the national state. Among these new types of orderings are complex cities which have partly exited that national, state-dominated hierarchy and become part of multi-scalar regional and global networks. The last two decades have seen an increasingly urban articulation of global territory, and an increasing use of

urban space to make political claims not only by the citizens of a city’s country, but also by foreigners.

CONCLUSION.

In this context the city is an enormously significant assemblage because of its far greater complexity, diversity, and enormous internal conflicts and competitions. Rather than the univocal utility logics of WTO law or the ICC, the city forces an elaborating of multiple and conflictive utility logics. But if the city is to survive --not become a mere built up terrain or cement jungle -- it will have to find a way to triage at least some of this conflict. It is at this point that the acuteness and overwhelming character of the challenges I described earlier can serve to create conditions where the challenges are bigger and more threatening than the internal conflicts and hatreds.

Responding will only work if it is a collective process. We are in it together and we can only overcome it together. Thereby that response can become a new platform for the making of open cities, or at least the equivalent to the traditional civic, the cosmopolitan, the urbane. All of these features will probably have different formats and contents from the iconic european version. My sense is that the formats and the contents of this new possibility will be so diverse from those traditional experiences of the civic and the cosmopolitan, that we will need a different language to describe them. But these formats and contents may have the power to cre-



ABOUT THE
PHOTOGRAPHS:
VISTA OUT/IN,
2009

Since her phase of immersion in Eurogroup Consulting, Barbara Noire has clearly gone on many “promenades”, her camera slung across her shoulder. Her wanderings took her from the 13th to the 22nd floor, from the parking-lot to the canteen, but also to the areas around the tower, in order to understand the site and its particularities from both outside and inside. This diptych has been selected from her many shots, an architectural portrait of the business. The eye of the photographer has recognised in heterogeneous objects - the post room, the architecture of La Défense - similar forms, bringing together the microcosm and the macrocosm, networks at different scales and natures. Her eye gives us an attentive and offbeat vision of a reality that has become banal.

Vista out/in, 2009.
Diptyque, 2 photographies contrecollées sur dibond, 60 x 90 cm each.
courtesy galerie Frédéric Giroux, Paris.
www.barbara-noiret.com



ate the open cities of our future.
At a time when the open city is under attack from so many sides, one question we might ask is whether there are challenges we confront in cities that are larger than the hatreds and racisms and inequalities that beset our cities. Yes, both the urbanizing of war and the direct threats to cities from climate change, provide us with powerful agendas for change. The urban consequences of asymmetric war are a major call to stop war, to re-think war as an option. The disarticulation between national security and human security is becoming increasingly visible. And the direct threat of climate change will affect us all, regardless of religion, class, race, whether we are citizens or immigrants. Cities face challenges that are indeed larger than our differences. If we are going to act on these threats we will have to work together, all of us. Could it be that here lies the basis for a new kind of open city, one not so much predicated on the civic as on a new shared urgency? 🏡

RICHARD SENNETT

A FLEXIBLE CITY OF STRANGERS

Once people used to come to the city in search of anonymity, diversity and the freedom to meet others. Cities were also places of collective struggle and solidarity. Now, just as the workplace is affected by a new system of flexible working, so the city, too, risks losing its charm as businesses and architecture become standardised and impersonal.

Cities can be badly-run, crime-infested, dirty, decaying. Yet many people think it worth living in even the worst of them. Why? Because cities have the potential to make us more complex human beings. A city is a place where people can learn to live with strangers, to enter into the experiences and interests of unfamiliar lives. Sameness stultifies the mind; diversity stimulates and expands it.

The city can allow people to develop a richer, more complex sense of themselves. They are not just bankers or roadsweepers, Afro-Caribbeans or Anglo-Saxons, speakers of English or of Spanish, bourgeois or proletarian: they can be some or all of these things, and more. They are not subject to a fixed scheme of identity. People can develop multiple images of their identities, knowing that who they are shifts, depending upon whom they are with. That is the power of strangeness: freedom from arbitrary definition and identification.

Writer Willa Cather was haunted in small-town America by the fear that her lesbianism would be discovered. When she finally arrived in New York's Greenwich Village in 1906, she wrote to a friend: "At last, in this indecipherable place, I can breathe". In public, city dwellers may don an impassive mask, act cool and indifferent to others on the street; but in private, they can be aroused by these strange contacts, their certainties shaken by the presence of others.

These virtues are not inevitable. One of the big issues in urban life is how to make the complexities that a city contains interact - so that people become truly cosmopolitan - and how to turn crowded streets into places of self-knowledge, not fear. The French philosopher Emmanuel Levinas has referred to "the neighbourliness of strangers", a phrase that captures the aspiration we should have in designing our cities.

Architects and planners are faced

with new challenges. Globalisation has transformed production which now allows people to work more flexibly, less rigidly and makes them experience the city differently.

In the 19th century the German sociologist Max Weber compared modern business organisations to military organisations. Both worked on the principle of a pyramid, with the general or boss at the apex and the soldiers or workers at the base. The division of labour minimised duplication and gave each group of workers at the base a distinct function. In this way the corporation executive at the apex could determine how the assembly line or back office functioned, just as the general could strategically command platoons far from his command post. And as the division of labour progressed, the need for different kinds of workers expanded far more rapidly than the need for more bosses.

In industrial production, Weber's pyramid became embodied in Fordism, a kind of military micro-management of a worker's time and effort which a few experts could dictate from the top. It was graphically illustrated by General Motors' Willow Run automobile plant in the United States, a mile-long, quarter-mile wide edifice in which raw iron and glass entered at one end and a finished car emerged at the other. Only a strict, controlling work regime could coordinate production on this giant scale. In the white collar world, the strict control by cor-

porations like IBM in the 1960s mirrored this industrial process.

A generation ago businesses began to revolt against the Weberian pyramid. They sought to "de-layer" organisations, to remove levels of bureaucracy (using new information technologies in place of bureaucrats) and destroy the practice of fixed-function work, substituting instead teams which work short-term on specific tasks. In this new business strategy, teams compete against one another, trying to respond as effectively and quickly as possible to goals set by the top. Instead of each

more instantaneous control over the corporation's workings than in the old system, where orders often modulated and evolved as they passed down the chain of command. The teams working on the periphery of the circle are left free to respond to output targets set by the centre, free to devise means of executing tasks in competition with one another. But no freer than they ever were to decide what those tasks are.

In the Weberian pyramid of bureaucracy, rewards came for doing your job as best you could. In the dotted circle, rewards come to teams win-

ployment is now about eight months. People constantly change their working associates: modern management theory has it that the "shelf life" of a team ought to be at most a year.

This pattern does not dominate the work-place at present. Rather, it represents a leading edge of change, what businesses ought to become: no-one is going to start a new organisation based on the principle of permanent jobs. The flexible organisation does not promote loyalty or fraternity any more than it promotes democracy. It is hard to feel committed to a corporation which has no defined character, hard to act loyally to an unstable institution which shows no loyalties to you. Business leaders are now finding that lack of commitment translates into poor productivity and to an unwillingness to keep corporate secrets.

The lack of fraternity that comes from "no long term" is rather more subtle. Task-work puts people under enormous stress; and recriminations among losing teams mark the final stages of working together. Again, trust of an informal sort takes time to develop; you have to get to know people. And the experience of being only temporarily in an organisation prompts people to keep loose, not to get involved, since you are going to exit soon.

Besides, this lack of mutual engagement is one of the reasons it is so hard for trade unions to organise workers in flexible industries or busi-

“THE MANTRA OF THE FLEXIBLE WORK-PLACE IS “NO LONG TERM”. CAREER PATHS HAVE BEEN REPLACED BY JOBS WHICH CONSIST OF SPECIFIC AND LIMITED TASKS; WHEN THE TASK ENDS, THE JOB IS OFTEN OVER.”

person doing his or her own particular bit in a defined chain of command, function is duplicated: many different teams compete to do the same task fastest and best. The corporation can thus respond more quickly to changing market demands.

The apologists for the new world of work claim it is also more democratic than the old military-style organisation. But that is not so. The Weberian pyramid has been replaced by a circle with a dot in the centre. At the centre, a small number of managers make decisions, set tasks, judge results; the information revolution has given them

ning over other teams. The economist Robert Frank calls it the winner-take-all organisation; sheer effort no longer produces reward. This bureaucratic reformulation, Frank argues, contributes to the great inequalities of pay and perks in flexible organisations.

NO LONG TERM

The mantra of the flexible work-place is "no long term". Career paths have been replaced by jobs which consist of specific and limited tasks; when the task ends, the job is often over. In the high-tech sector in Silicon Valley, California, the average length of em-



nesses as in Silicon Valley; the sense of fraternity as a shared fate, a durable set of common interests, has been weakened. Socially, the short-term regime produces a paradox. People work intensely, under great pressure, but their relations to others remain curiously superficial. This is not a world in which getting deeply involved with other people makes much sense in the long run.

Flexible capitalism has precisely the same effects on the city as it does on the workplace itself: superficial, short-term relations at work, superficial and disengaged relations in the city. It appears in three forms. The most self-evident is physical attachment to the city. Rates of geographic mobility are very high for flexible workers. Temps are the single fastest-growing sector of the labour market. Temporary nurses, for example, are eight times more likely to move house in a two-year period than are single-employer nurses. In the higher reaches of the economy, executives frequently moved as much in the past as they do in the present. But the movements were different in kind; they remained within the groove of a company, and the company defined their “place”, the turf of their lives, no matter where they were on the map. It is just that thread which the new workplace breaks. Some specialists in urban studies have argued that, for this elite, style of life in the city matters more than their jobs, with certain zones - gentrified, filled with sleek restaurants and specialised services - replacing the corporation as an anchor.

SKIN ARCHITECTURE

The second expression of the new capitalism is the standardisation of the environment. A few years ago, on a tour of New York’s Chanin Building,

an art-deco palace with elaborate offices and splendid public spaces, the head of a large, new-economy corporation remarked: “It would never suit us. People might become too attached to their offices. They might think they belong here.”

The flexible office is not meant to be a place where you nestle in. The office architecture of flexible firms requires a physical environment which can be quickly reconfigured - at the extreme, the “office” can become just a computer terminal. The neutrality of new buildings also results from their global currency as investment units; for someone in Manila easily to buy or sell 100,000 square feet of office space in London, the space itself needs the uniformity and transparency of money. This is why the style elements of new-economy buildings become what US architectural critic Ada Louise Huxtable calls “skin architecture”: the surface of the building dolled-up with design, its innards ever more neutral, standard, and capable of instant refiguration.

Alongside skin architecture, we have the standardisation of public consumption - a global network of shops selling the same commodities in the same kinds of spaces whether they are located in Manila, Mexico City or London. It is hard to become attached to a particular Gap or Banana Republic; standardisation breeds indifference. Put it another way. The problem of institutional loyalties in the work-place - now beginning to sober up managers once blindly enthusiastic about endless corporate re-engineering - finds its parallel in the urban public realm of consumption. Attachment and engagement with specific places is dispelled under the aegis of this new regime. Cities cease to offer the strange,

the unexpected or the arousing. Equally, the accumulation of shared history, and so of collective memory, diminishes in these neutral public spaces. Standardised consumption attacks local meanings in the same way the new work-place attacks ingrown, shared histories among workers.

The third expression of the new capitalism is less visible to the eye. High-pressure, flexible work profoundly disorients family life. The familiar press images - neglected children, adult stress, geographic uprooting - do not quite get to the heart of this disorientation. It is rather that the codes of conduct which rule the modern work world would shatter families if taken home from the office: don’t commit, don’t get involved, think short-term. The assertion of “family values” by the public and politicians has a more than right-wing resonance; it is a reaction, often inchoate but strongly felt, of the threats to family solidarity in the new economy. The prominent American social critic Christopher Lasch drew the image of the family as a “haven in a heartless world”. That image takes on a particular urgency when work becomes at once more unpredictable and more demanding of adult time. One result of this conflict, by now well-documented in regard to middle-aged employees, is that adults withdraw from civic participation in the struggle to solidify and organise family life; the civic becomes yet another demand on time and energies in short supply at home.

THE ‘PASSIVE BELOVED’

That leads to one of the effects of globalisation on cities. The new global elite, operating in cities like New York, London and Chicago, avoids the urban political realm. It wants to operate in

the city but not rule it; it composes a regime of power without responsibility.

In Chicago in 1925, for example, political and economic power went hand in hand. Presidents of the city’s top 80 corporations sat on 142 hospital boards, accounted for 70% of the trustees of colleges and universities. Tax revenues from 18 national corporations in Chicago formed 23% of the city’s municipal budget. By contrast, in New York now, few chief executives of global firms are trustees of its educational institutions and none sit on the boards of its hospitals. And it has been well documented how foot-loose multinational companies like Rupert Murdoch’s News Corp manage largely to avoid paying taxes, local or national.

The reason for this change is that the global economy is not rooted in the city in the sense of depending on control of the city as a whole. It is instead an island economy, literally so within the island of Manhattan in New York, architecturally so in places like Canary Wharf in London, which resemble the imperial compounds of an earlier era. As sociologists John Mollenkopf and Manuel Castells have shown, this global wealth does not trickle down or spread out very far beyond the global enclave.

Indeed, the politics of the global enclave cultivates a kind of indifference to the city which Marcel Proust, in an entirely different context, called the “passive beloved” phenomenon. Threatening to leave, go anywhere in the world, the global firm is given enormous tax breaks to stay - a profitable seduction made possible by the firm appearing indifferent to the places where it touches down. In other words globalisation poses a problem of citizenship in cities as well as nations.

Cities can’t tap into the wealth of these corporations, and the corporations take little responsibility for their own presence in the city. The threat of absence, of leaving, makes possible this avoidance of responsibility; and we lack the political mechanisms to make unstable, flexible institutions contribute fairly for the privileges they enjoy in the city.

All this has an impact on urban civil society which rests on a compromise based on mutual dissociation. That means the truce of leaving one another alone, the peace of mutual indifference. This is one reason why, on the positive side, the modern city is like an accordion easily able to expand to accommodate new waves of migrants - the pockets of difference are sealed. On the negative side, mutual accommodation through dissociation spells the end of citizenship practices - which mean understanding divergent interests - as well as a loss of simple human curiosity about other people.

At the same time, the flexibility of the modern workplace creates a sense of incompleteness. Flexible time is serial - you do one project, then another unrelated one - rather than cumulative. But there is no sense that, because something is missing in your own life, you should turn outward to others, toward that “neighbourliness of strangers”.

That suggests something about the art of making better cities today. We need to overlay different activities in the same space, as family activity once overlay working space. The incompleteness of capitalist time returns us to the issue which marked the very emergence of the industrial city. A city which broke apart the domus - that spatial relation which had, before the coming of industrial capitalism, combined family, work, ceremonial public spaces and more informal social spaces. Today, we need to repair the collectivity of space to combat the serial time of modern labour.

This article originally appeared in Le Monde Diplomatique. Courtesy of Agence Global.



ABOUT THE PHOTOGRAPHS:
THE CITY OF SHADOWS

The idea of *The City of Shadows* emerged after the collapse of the Soviet Union in the fall of 1991. One day I strolled down a street, as dusk descended. It was poorly lit. The depressing and strange quietness was only interrupted by the sounds of banging grocery stores’ doors, stores in which the shelves were absolutely empty. I saw people in confusion, on the verge of insanity: unattractively dressed men and women with eyes full of sorrow and desperation. They looked like shadows ... Nothing similar had occurred since World War II, when the Nazis blockaded the city. A crowd of people flowing near the subway station formed a sort of human sea, providing me with a feeling of non-reality, a phantasmagoria. These people resembled shadows from the underworld, a world visited by Aeneas, Virgil’s character. My impressions as well as my emotional state were enormously profound and long lasting. I felt an intense urge to articulate this suffering and despair, to visualize the “peopleghosts,” to awaken empathy and love for my native city’s inhabitants, people who have been constantly victimized and ruined during the course of the twentieth century. My impressions were enhanced by music of Shostakovich, certain phrases from his Second Cello Concerto and his 13th Symphony especially resonated with the atmosphere of the city.

Alexey Titarenko
far left: *Untitled (Variant Crowd 2)*, 1993
Gelatin silver print
left: *Untitled (Woman on the Corner)*, 1995
Toned gelatin silver print
Copyright Alexey Titarenko
Courtesy of Nailya Alexander Gallery, NY

ALEXEY TITARENKO:
SAINT PETERSBURG IN FOUR MOVEMENTS
February 11 - April 24, 2010
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SARA SALERI WITH
RIGENERAZIONI

ON NOMADISM:

Interview with Rosi Braidotti

constitutes a necessary precondition for the formulation of an ethics which measures up to the complexities of our time". Which are the concrete practices you think of, when you talk about politics of location, of multiple becoming, of the necessity of going through differences and belongings that can also be contradictory? Which could be the figures and everyday experiences of nomadism?

RB: The project on nomadic subjects emerges from feminist philosophies, post-colonial philosophies and anti-racist philosophies, critical theory, social theory. And then it develops into an analytical tool to look at three classes of problems. First of all, the cultural mutations, which I call "the cultural cartography": what is happening to bodies, identities, belongings, in a world that is technologically mediated, ethnically mixed and changing very fast in all sort of ways. Secondly, there is a clearly political project: can we think other ways of being globalized, of becoming planetary, or are we stuck with this neoliberal model? Is there another way in which we can rethink at our interconnections? And then, finally, the ethical issue: what are the values of subjects who are not unitary but are split, complex, nomadic?

These three dimensions are reflected in my trilogy of books: *Nomadic Subjects* (1994, Columbia University Press) is the starting social statement, *Metamorphoses* (2002, Polity Press) deals with the cultural part, while *Transpositions* (2006, Polity Press) focuses on ethics.

In terms of practical implications, there are two clear areas in which nomadic subjectivity can be seen. First, the actual practice of flexible citizenship, which I explored in my work on Europe: a temporary, interim citizenship based on delinking ethnic origin from nationality and citizenship and then recombining them in different ways. Our European citizenship allows us to recombine nationality and ethnic origins in very unprecedented ways: in fact, we can delink citizenship from ethnicity and connect it to participation, belonging. And I think that

this model of nomadic citizenship, that would be pragmatic and grounded, instead of abstract and based on nationality, is what we have to focus on.

Second, connected to this, the idea of nomadic subject allows us to have a different take on immigration: we have to stop looking at immigration as a problem and see immigration as simply the fact of globalization. We have to start from the fact that the world will never be culturally and ethnically homogenous again: that world is over. Then, we have to think about the multiple forms of belonging of subjects and map out different configurations of nomadism, different ways in which a subject can have multiple belongings, multiple ways in which ethnicity, nationality and citizenship can actually be combined, even within the same nation state.

A model of nomadic post-colonial theory would allow you to de-criminalize, depenalize, de-pathologize the problem, and also not to discuss post-colonial theory only in terms of other possible identities. The crucial thing about nomadic subject is that it is post-identitarian: nomadic is a verb, a process by which we map out multiple transformations and multiple ways of

nation state. Arendt saw a possibility of this kind of citizenship in the project of federal Europe: do you think this notion could be realised in the Europe we have, increasingly more constructed as a fortress, opposed to those who try to enter its borders? Instead, how can we imagine and how can we build a different Europe, really post-national, which would open to this kind of citizenship?

RB: We obviously have the Europe that we deserve. Europe is made through elections in which very few people vote. Clearly a political project that construct a post-national Europe is not there. And Daniel Cohen Bendit, the leader of my party, the European Greens, has been forever working within the institutions, to have the political Europe on the agenda. It's a political decision if we do it or not: the institutional and legal means are in place. If you look at the work done at the European Institute in Florence by armies of lawyers who have worked out the structure of a possible European citizenship, it is absolutely feasible and easy to delink citizenship from ethnic origins or even nationalities. So the entire infrastructure is in place, there's no political will. And I think in

“ TO GIVE EVERYONE THE RIGHT TO HAVE RIGHTS, USING PRECISELY THE EUROPEAN LEGAL FRAMEWORK AS AN UNPRECEDENTED LEGAL FRAMEWORK, THAT WOULD ALLOW US TO TRANSCEND THE NATION STATE. ”

belonging, each depending on where our particular location is and how we grow. So we have to map out the alternative cartographies of the non-unitary subjects that we are, so that we can get rid of any idea that there are subjects that are completely unitary, belonging entirely to one location.

Q: This concept of "flexible citizenship" seems to recall the idea by Hannah Arendt of reversed human rights, which would guarantee the right to citizenship at an international level. A political citizenship in a political space, wider than the one possible within the

the last ten years – I was talking with Luisa Passerini about this – the political project of Europe has regressed enormously, under the combined forces of the delirious nationalistic right and the equally delirious old fashioned left: I hold them both entirely responsible. A middle way that can allow us constructing a Europe where – as Spinelli, Schumann and Monnet were pointing out – the European framework would actually allow us to bypass nationalism, would be actually to postulate citizenship on participation, on belonging, on taxation, on being there... allowing people without countries, stateless



ROSI BRAIDOTTI

Rosi Braidotti's work lies at the intersection of political theory, cultural politics, gender theory and ethnicity studies. The core of her interdisciplinary work consists of four interconnected monographs on the constitution of contemporary subjectivity, with special emphasis on the concept of difference within the history of European philosophy and political theory. She has been Jean Monnet professor at the European University Institute in Florence, a fellow at the Institute for Advanced Study in Princeton, and is currently Distinguished Professor in the Humanities at Utrecht University.

people, to be citizens. To give everyone the right to have rights, using precisely the European legal framework as an unprecedented legal framework, that would allow us to transcend the nation state. This is the greatness of this project, but it is not highlighted in the public debate.

Q: A keyword in all your work is "responsibility". In "Transposition", you defined ethics as a whole of "interconnected forms of situated responsibility", linked to a politics of location: we have to become "other", to take the responsibilities linked not only to the roles we act, but also to the roles we can keep in memory (a memory



which is intergenerational and collective). How do you think this becoming-other, becoming-multiple can be translated in practice, beyond an increased awareness of oneself as a subject (or many subjects)? Is it a project which ends in the individuality of a subject, or do you think it also as a collective project?

RB: I think we have to start from eliminating identities. We will never arrive anywhere if we identity as a starting point. In fact the whole process of becoming is a process of abandoning identity and entering in the construction of subjectivity, subjectivity being per definition transversal, collective. This is an enormous switch because even the political movements I have known in the 70s were identitarian movements: women movements would fight for women, gay movements would fight for gays... There is sometimes a sort of one-on-one equivalence between

the grief and the remedy, what you are complaining against and what you propose as an alternative. This one-on-one equivalence has to switch, transcending the merely identitarian claim and look at the broader issue.

This point was already made back in the 80s by poststructuralists, when there was a critique of Hegelian and Marxist identity politics. It went for a large part unheard, but if you read early Foucault, middle Deleuze, Derrida, it is clear that the only possible ethics for the global world is collectively shared, because the scale of the problems is planetary, gigantic.

An example for this is what people continue to call "the environmental problem" – as if it were a problem, when it is in fact the possibility of the future. It is like immigration: these issues are not problems, they are either a fact or a condition of possibility for survival. You can't address a problem today, whether it is water, or clean air,

without having to take into account a common condition, planetary, almost global, and future generations. That is the clear example of the ethical shift that we need.

And of course our morality – Kantian or Judeo-Christian – is not only individualistic but it is like a contract between self and other, a negotiation: "I don't do to you what you don't do to me, etc.". A kind of capitalist driven negotiation of boundaries. No matter what neo-Kantians of today – such as Martha Nussbaum – say, that model is simply inadequate to the scale and dimension of problems we have.

We need to be able to think for future generations who cannot do anything for us. The future per definition cannot be reciprocal, so we should exit the Kantian morality "I do that for you, you do that for me"... No! You do that for the love of humanity, because if we don't do that, there is no going to be a humanity! So we have to give up the idea of reciprocity and we instead to know that we share a specificity of a certain condition. And we have to give up a certain notion which, by the year 2010, has lead to an assimilation of progress with further consumption: you will consume more than we did, we consume more than our parents did, our parents consumed more than their parents did... as a consequence of that, now we are at the verge of a catastrophe, financial, environmental, demographic.

The eco-philosophical problem highlights the size of the issues we look at. When we look at war and peace, development, problems in the third world ... I think either we understand we are in this together, or it's not going to work. It's not a matter of choice but of necessity, to think of collective responsibility in a non-reciprocal manner, covering humans and non humans.

We need an ethics for our times, and not the application of moral rules that are based in an 18th century world – I'm sorry, but I don't live in that world. I don't even think we have to see it as a choice.

Q. In Transpositions, you denounce the emergence of new macro-narratives, like the claim of the inevitability of the free market, or the biological essentialism. These macro-narratives, taken for granted and considered as untouchable, participate in defining some developments of the contemporary gender politics: a neo-conservative post-feminism, which considers financial

success as the main, if not the only, index of women's liberation; a neo-colonial attitude which sets "our women" (supposed as emancipated) against the "women of the others" (to be emancipated and liberated, sometimes with arms, as in Afghanistan). How can we challenge these macro-narrations?

RB: I think we should start to map the different kinds of subjectivity women have acquired, all kinds of women, and also look at other variables, like ethnicity, race, age, fundamental rights, class, income, social inscription – and from this look at differences. There is clearly a strong right-wing feminism, coming from the nationalist groups, from Jean Marie Le Pen, to the Lega Nord, saying: "We don't want the Muslims, they are backwards, they will make us lose what we have gained through feminism". There is a clear contradiction, so we need a much deeper analysis of the different locations of different possible feminist subjects, to find out that many of them would be right-wing, liberal, neoliberal, nationalist, some euro-peistic in a very defensive way (the "Fortress Europe" form). But all them will share the idea that women should be emancipated. So there is a core of emancipation, of equal opportunities, as a nucleus which is generating a whole range of mutations, and I don't like many of these mutations, but they are all expression of the subjectivity of women. That subjectivity didn't turn out to be singular univocal, but polivocal, and it's not what we have dreamt of politically... but it is the risk of any revolution.

I think it is interesting to look at intersections of configurations of womanhood and foreigners, illegality, precarity, youth, disadvantage, and to look at the pockets where the level of oppression accumulates and where emancipationism proves rather empty. It's like: "Integrate!", but how am I going to do that if it means leaving my religion? This is the example of Muslim woman, but of course also with youth and unemployment: "Build up a career!" in the present state of the precarious market.

About the possibility of feminism, we need to nomadise the concept. So, not think that we will agree – we will not –, but that we all will act, that we will have a platform for action, whatever it would be. And it will probably be very contradictory: for example, on the matter of the war on Iraq, even the feminist American community was split.

Think of feminism as a coalition

of interests on common issues: it is historically contingent and changeable and it has to be reconstructed at each generation. Now there are many possibilities, but you need to map out the contradictions of our generations and take the responsibilities of your generation seriously.

Q: In more than one occasion you have insisted that "becoming-women" doesn't coincide with a classical emancipationism that would resemble a "becoming-men". Do you think we should enter into the system in order to change it? For example, in "Nomadic subjects", you talk about a "nomadic practice of institutions", which would create structures flexible and functional at the same time. Could you explain us what you mean with this?

RB: You have to consider it historically: when we entered the institutions, in the 80s, early 90s, when we could see the new capitalist system evolving, the information society coming, the idea was to enter the institutions to consolidate and not to lose the archive, the memory, and let the institutions change, so that some of these ideals would permeate them: appoint more women, teach some emancipation... very basic things, to inhabit the institutions but not to assimilate into them. And it worked quite well, because we managed to be quite respected professors and directors, but we never really stopped fighting for an alternative.

So, that was the original idea. What has happened since, is quite simply the huge mutation of capitalism: our information society is the height of flexibility and changeability. It has completely perverted that concept, to the point that now you will not have a career, you will have a sequence of jobs, if you are lucky. So flexibility and moving in and out has become so much the motor of neo-capitalism, that now we have to look at this again and still maintain that nomadism as a qualitative shift is necessary. But nomadism as a quantitative proliferation of multiple little jobs is the reality, so we need more of that. I don't call that nomadism, I call that the perverted fragmentation of advanced capitalism. Nomadism is a qualitative shift of consciousness, that makes you inhabit the positions of power so as to change it.

Rigenerazioni is a group of gender studies formed by PhD students and scholars in Semiotics at the University of Bologna.
rigenerazioni.bo@gmail.com



ABOUT THE PHOTOGRAPHS ON THIS SPREAD: SUJETO MOVIL - MOBILE SUBJECT

BY ROSA JIJON
TRANSLATED BY ALBERTO STELLA

Within Fortress Europe, migrants have become responsible for all social conflicts, insecurity, unemployment and for the identity loss which is characterising societies once prosperous and now in crisis. Media campaigns that represent migrants as "outsiders" characterised by negative features able to instigate fear, refusal or perplexity in people, are an effective way to persuade an uncritical population that consumes information without discerning its contents and purposes.

It is racism and xenophobia that are legitimated by this type of symbolic production. Starting with these premises, it is perhaps the right moment to adopt the anthropological portray as an ironical tool able to represent the other, in order to both focus the public attention on racism and discrimination towards migrants, and to put to the test a possible use, at a political and cultural level, of the identification of the subject/threat.

Recurring to the anthropological portray may well critically delineates the two possible interpretations of the current anti-migrants tendency: on the one hand an attempt to represent the migrant as a deviant subject, a criminal – similar to the use of mug shots used by police forces, whereas, on the other hand, as an "outsider", a "stranger" from a genetic, ethnic and racial perspective as expressed in the original use of anthropological photos within the studies on human diversity.

The anthropological portray, reworked for our case, produces thus a visual and political critique to the direct or more subtle criminalisation of migrants; a critique which dismantles the equation between "otherness" and criminality as in the representation of the Homo Sacer, paraphrasing Giorgio Agamben. In ancient Rome, the Homo Sacer was he who had committed no crime punishable by death, but whose murder was not pursued by law. Today, the Homo Sacer can rather be understood as the one against whom an exclusionary practice is wittingly carried out, removing fundamental rights at the point where the negation of

someone's rights will basically mean the denial of rights and of the law as the basic foundation of civil cohabitation. Therefore, the representation of the other as criminal / different serves merely as the basis for his methodological removal from spaces of citizenship.

It is pretty clear then how the description of the other as criminal or different carries the germ of the denial of the centrality of the law and of fundamental rights as the basic foundation of the *res publica*, and how this involves a paradox. The argument that the negation of someone's rights in the name of an unidentified state of exception involves not only the refusal of the rights of such subjects, but ultimately the denial of rights as such, leads to the negation of the basic principles of the *polis* itself.

The visual and symbolic representation afforded by the use of anthropological portrays allows a reflection on the relationship between individuals and authority, between racism and repression, in order to free up spaces for critical elaboration able to rescue the centrality of hospitality, mutual exchange, and of fundamental rights.



MICHELA MARZANO

THE HUMILIATION OF WOMEN: THE SITUATION IN ITALY

As time goes by in Italy we see more and more systematic attacks on the victories won by feminism. Women are rescaled to remind them that their “natural” place is next to a man, silent and aware of masculine superiority.

When, in October 2009, I decided to launch, along with Nadia Urbinati and Barbara Spinelli, an appeal in the Italian newspaper Repubblica for the restoration of dignity to women, it was not merely in order to give a voice to the protests against prime-minister Silvio Berlusconi's comment to Rosy Bindi (the president of the opposing Partito Democratico): “You are more beautiful than you are intelligent”. We also, and above all, wanted to react in opposition to the droplet that caused the glass full of insults to women to finally overflow. Our aim was certainly not to “speak in place of Italian women”, as some have alleged, as they refused to sign the appeal. We reacted as women, mindful of the famous slogan from 1975: “Né difese, né offese, né protette, né adoperate” (Neither defended nor of-

fended, protected or manipulated). We reacted to “defend ourselves” on our own, without seeking anyone's protection, without wanting to use anyone else... We reacted because we were “indignant”. For too long, Italy has stood by impotent and impassive, watching women being humiliated. Women, reduced to being seen as just youthful, seductive bodies, always have greater trouble becoming something other than mere bodies: “The qualities considered useful for publicity shows are transferred into essential political skills, leading to indecent confusion about gender: obedience and attractiveness become indispensable training for those who wish to stand for posts with the most responsibility” we wrote in our appeal. “These become like a burqa thrown over women's bodies to humiliate them on television and transform them into weapons that harm both men and women alike.”

As time goes by in Italy we see more and more systematic attacks on the victories won by feminism. Whether this is in terms of the media's degrading representation of woman or the sexist language used in politics, the result is always the same: women are rescaled to remind them that their “natural” place is next to a man, silent and aware of masculine superiority. Deep down, the systems of politics and television are perfectly interwoven to reflect a very specific idea of gender roles. Speech is reserved for men. Women should be content to be beautiful and silent. Of course, this is not to say that I consider the image of women created by the media in other European countries to be always respectful and dignified. All over the world, advertising makes use of women's bodies to sell all sorts of products.

Almost everywhere, the worlds of television and fashion take advantage of eccentric and provocative images of women's bodies. And we don't even need to mention modern pornography, a topic I have already written much on... What I want to say is that, in other Western countries, in contrast with the situation in Italy, women are not only this; they are not just beautiful silent dolls who allow men to show off their superiority. The bimbos registered on electoral lists to project a false image of freshness; the show girls ridiculed on television as soon as they open their mouths whenever, rarely, they do so; the “glamour models” who are paid an attendance fee to appear as decoration at business dinners: all of these just represent an “unpleasant and humiliating aspect” of our country. They are symptomatic of how women are viewed in Italy today. From time to time someone, realising this, is ashamed and feigns protest. Yet instead of really devoting themselves to this and working to make things change, most of the time they turn elsewhere, disgusted or indifferent, without noticing that the ambitions and aspirations of Italian women are steadily disappearing. There are some exceptions to this rule: brilliant young women who manage to break into the fields of science or sport, or into the world of business and management. But even in the twentieth century, long before the social revolution in the Sixties and Seventies, there were already some women that were also able to escape anonymity in this way. Unfortunately, as we all know, one swallow does not make a summer. And when we look around and analyse what is happening in other European countries, Italy cannot but cut a poor figure: it is the very epitome of a return to the atavistic

chauvinism of the Mediterranean nations. It is both amazing and discouraging when you realise that the only females valued in Italy today are the young women obsessed with their own body image and at the service of male seduction. That is not to say that women should not take care of their bodies. It is through our bodies that we all express our individuality. But because, when the body is no more than an object for seduction, women lose the opportunity to express themselves away from male eyes. All the more so as, though in advertising the use of women's bodies has a purely com-

mercial purpose, in television entertainment shows, reducing women to ornaments serves to fuel the fires of gender stereotypes, for use and consumption by a male audience. didn't I say we were getting a hard on, and that's why there are so many women here today?” Can you really chuckle along when you know that, in the middle of an election campaign, upon meeting a woman who told him what she thought of him, Berlusconi replied: “What would you say after spending a night of passion with me?” And when our premier advised a young temporary worker to find a rich husband? In the summer of 2009, Berlusconi's wife, Veronica Lario's declaration (that Berlusconi consorted with young ladies) opened a Pandora's box, showing that her husband's re-

“DEEP DOWN, THE SYSTEMS OF POLITICS AND TELEVISION ARE PERFECTLY INTERWOVEN TO REFLECT A VERY SPECIFIC IDEA OF GENDER ROLES. SPEECH IS RESERVED FOR MEN. WOMEN SHOULD BE CONTENT TO BE BEAUTIFUL AND SILENT.”

In such a contest, the language of politics – which is not just used by Silvio Berlusconi, but by the overwhelming majority of male politicians – only serves to reinforce masculine domination. It is rare to find a politician who, during a rally or television appearance, does not make use of sexual metaphors. Certain remarks, which we had hoped belonged to a former era, cause widespread hilarity. Sometimes women themselves laugh and take part, more or less consciously, in the perpetuation of atavistic forms of chauvinism. Can you really smile when Umberto Bossi, a cabinet minister, turned to Berlusconi during a rally and exclaimed cheekily: “Silvio,

marks were just the tip of the iceberg of a fundamentally patriarchal system that exploits women and, in promoting their personal successes and achievements, reduces them to simple pawns to be placed on the chessboard of power at the whim of men. A few weeks before the European elections, Sofia Ventura took the opportunity to firmly denounce the phenomenon of “bimboism”: “Women are not playthings to be used as decoys, nor are they fragile creatures in need of protection and nurturing by generous, paternal overlords; women are, quite simply, people.” But it is Veronica Lario's revelations and, then later, the scandal over the escort girls at Palazzo Grazioli and Villa Certosa (Berlusconi's Rome residence and summer house, respectively) that forced Italy to face up to the reality of the situation of women there. The sad rituals of dinners, balls,

SERVICE OU SERVITUDE: Interview



Photo by Tomi Tohpal

A philosopher and a feminist, Geneviève Fraisse was an inter-ministerial delegate on women's rights and then a member of the European Parliament. The preface to a new edition of her *Women For All Work* is an opportunity for us to revisit the complexity of the word “service” at a time when “service jobs” are regarded as the new labour pool.

INTERVIEW BY JACQUELINE SELLEM

Question: In the preface to the new edition of *Women For All Work*, you point to the fact that thirty years ago there was already talk of “service jobs”. And yet at the time you didn't think for a single moment that the word “service” would enjoy the success it does today. Where did you find the urge to undertake this work?

Geneviève Fraisse: In the late 70s, thirty years ago, the feminist decade achieved the goals to which I have always been closely attached. We denounced firmly women's unacknowledged and unrewarded domestic work. Besides, the

critique of capitalism brought about the issue of work exploitation, both inside as well as outside the feminist movement. In an attempt to build tools of feminist thought I would shout from the rooftops: “Private life is politics”. It's true, but it has yet to be proven – I say to myself that we cannot differentiate between the insignificant work of women and the exploited workforce as long as some women, as employees in a private space, belong to both. There are a million out there: housekeepers, domestic workers who have no place in feminist thought. The goal of activist women in trade associations was to become part of the working class. “We are workers too, no different” they said. But is being a worker like the others proof of equality? When I started to work on this book, the word “service” dominated all my dilemmas, just as, much later, did words like “consent”, “exclusive democracy” or “privilege”.

Q: I remember how during a feminist reunion in the 90's, the word *privilege* would electrify the air...

GF: This feeling of uneasiness is structural because the emancipation of some women goes hand in hand with the oppression of other women. This can be seen in the minutes of the feminist reunions held in the early 1900s. Nowadays, the contradictions are assumed at a lesser degree because, more precisely, the reasons behind all efforts to assimilate this

profession to the rest of the workforce reveal an irreducible core that is unjust. This is not a question of finding a solution but of pointing to the fact that in our dynamic democracy the skivvy has now become a domestic employee, contradictions still remain and it is in our interest to bring them about. On the tax worksheet the phrase used is “domestic job”. The Ministry of Labour will use the phrase “service jobs”. The term “Job” refers to the salaried classes, but how about the word “service”? The genealogy of the word goes back to the servant who, at the time of the French Revolution did not have the right to vote on the basis that they did not have autonomous status. In the early 1900's the maid in the bourgeois family lived at the family residence, answered the door and could be called for during the night. She was the 24-hour employee whose presence bore proof of the family's wealthy status. In the 20th century, these workers benefit a fixed schedule and a physical autonomy. This type of employment, kept more and more out of sight, remains confined to the private space of the household and is not fair to both parties. In her magnificent text *The Private Garden*, Marguerite Duras analyses the forced proximity between two women, the mistress and her “replacement”. Thus, at the very heart of women's emancipation movement, a new trend develops that is non-symmetrical but mutually accepted. It's a crazy story of which men have been excluded. On the other



Cristian Iotti, *Simona Galassi*. Campionessa del Mondo WBC pesi Mosca femminili, 47,55 x 31,7 cm. www.cristianiotti.com

jokes and “glamour models” in black dresses and light make-up, whose faces are so similar that they all begin to blur together, have become symbols of a world in which women are no more than featureless copies of each other. These instances are not just, as some have implied, isolated anecdotes of events or idle gossip. Quite the contrary: these are

the clear consequences of a politico-cultural system that assigns women a totally subordinate role. This is why we must highlight the political aspects of the scandal. There are moments when, as a famous slogan from the Seventies said: “What is private must be made public”! Every liberal democracy is founded on the necessary separation of the

public and private spheres to allow people to preserve their individual freedoms. Yet, once someone’s private life is placed on the public stage for years to be employed as a key argument in favour of their own credibility and political success, then it is hopeless for them to put a spin on the situation and defend themselves by claiming that their private life should hold no interest for the Italian people. They cannot use their own virility as a selling point during electoral campaigns and then want to hide their sex life as soon as they realise that it does not correspond exactly with what people expect. Especially as the way in which they talk about women is then paralleled in the way they treat them...

But then we must ask why so many women are still mute? The “Rosy Bindi” affair provides us with at least a partial explanation. Faced with a woman who has presented her own ideas with courage for years and has not been intimidated by scornful attacks from male politicians, the reaction has been extremely virulent: “You are more beautiful than you are intelligent” Silvio Berlusconi told her during a live broadcast of the Italian talk show *Porta a Porta*. His words did, nonetheless, have the desired effect, at least to begin with, because Rosy Bindi paused for a few seconds before reacting, frozen in the face of a sentence that did not merely say something, but “acted” as well. Because “words are stones”, as Carlo Levi wrote in *Cristo si è fermato ad Eboli* (Christ stopped at Eboli). Because words “do” – they have a performative power – especially when their aim is to insult. Rosy Bindi, unfortunately, is used to this kind of treatment. She has spent years training at the school of humiliation. And maybe this is why, after several seconds of aston-

“FOR TOO LONG, ITALY HAS STOOD BY IMPOTENT AND IMPASSIVE, WATCHING WOMEN BEING HUMILIATED.”

ished silence, she responded with a counterattack: “I am not one of the women at your disposal, Prime Minister”. How many people (both men and women) would be capable of reacting like her? How many would have had the strength to move onto a counterattack without bursting into tears, because such words are like a slap across the face? The subject of insults, so-called “hate speech”, is complex. This phenomenon has been analysed by certain American feminists who, by deconstructing the mechanisms of male domination, have put their finger on the vicious cycle of hate speech which assigns a clearly determined role to women that they can never shake off. All those women who dare to open their mouths to demand equality and their civil rights are not taken seriously: their demands are immediately discredited and, rather than using reasoned arguments against them, it is the subtle weapon of insults that silences them. A woman who asks for respect is always labelled “hysterical”, a “frustrated woman”. The same technique is by those in power when, unsure of their position, they try to stifle the demands of minorities (immigrants, homosexuals, etc.). When women are shouted at and told they are “whores”, or homosexuals “queens” or coloured people “dirty blacks”, it happens because the person in question cannot respond. What counts is not the argument used – when it comes to insults there is no argument, no thought, no rationalisation. The aims are always the same: hurt others so they shut up. And, in general, that is exactly the result you get: silence. Because women, homosexuals and foreigners, faced

with so much violence, get upset. So they shut up. They hide. They learn to internalise the negative images of themselves that are thrown at them. At least up to the point where they can no longer take a critical step back and separate the violence of the insults from their objective content, thereby forcing their adversary into a rational discussion. Which is not easy, especially when on television and the set is being flooded with invectives. I do not want to justify women’s muteness by saying this. Remaining silent or, worse still, laughing at the jokes made by a premier who tries to quieten a member of the opposition by calling her “more beautiful than she is intelligent”, means becoming complicit in a well-developed system that knows how to permanently gag women. What I want to say is that it is extremely hard to turn the other cheek to these insults and publicly speak out, in spite of everything, in defence of your own dignity. I will never forget how, a few days after launching our appeal for the restoration of women’s dignity, my inbox was full of insulting comments. “Marzano – choosing one of the least vulgar – do me a favour: stop writing. No one in Italy shares your opinions.” Similarly, I remember doing a pathetic interview with an Italian radio station, whose name I prefer not to mention, during which I was never allowed to reply to the interviewer: he would interrupt me before I had even had the chance to finish a sentence with a subject, verb and object! Yet this should not make us bow our heads and surrender. When a man offends us, we have an inescapable duty to reply. 🐼

with Geneviève Fraisse

hand when it comes to “care service”, the non-symmetrical aspect turns to its reverse. The person who is attended is no longer the wealthy powerful bourgeois but a vulnerable person. The one who demands is the employer. It is worth noticing the difference between «to serve a person» and «to provide services to a person» which is merely due to switching to the intransitive form.

Q: It is said that at present, the future belongs to service jobs. Is the value of this service being reasserted?

GF: Some restrain from using the word “service”, and favor the word “care”, thinking this enhances its value and recalls the work of the nurse. And this is the case with vulnerable senior people whose numbers are ever increasing. There are different ways of seeing this «care». There are those people who see it merely as a labour pool. Even though they count on part-time, poorly remunerated jobs for women, with flexible hours... but more jobs is good for statistics! There are people who deliver the rhetoric of passage to an age of solidarity, in other words they represent a society where private labour relations serve

to stimulate contact between people. To those, I will not even mention the tedious, unvalued work of women but I will recall instead the issue of equality. What is the relation between equality and solidarity? Isn’t this solidarity the very disguise of an uneven society?

Q: You often mention in this preface that your goal is not to offer solutions but to raise questions...

GF: My intention is to transpose opinionated debates into tools for thought. My goal is not to say that “I am giving more thought to this than you are” but to prove that the issue of gender relates to processes of thought and of society alike. Historicity is the key to our understanding of this but all is meant to minimize the importance of history. No one knows that the first French translation of Darwin’s work was produced by Clémence Royer, a woman. My deep conviction is that reducing the gender issue to a question of non-historicity is a proof of male domination. ■

Translated from *L’Humanité*
by Brindusa Simionescu

MICHEL AGIER

CAMPS FOR FOREIGNERS AND THE CORRIDOR OF EXILE: A Global Landscape

The plight of migrants, the 'globalisation' of the human condition, poses again the question of solidarity and demands a response of planetary ambition

The 29th March 2009, three boats were shipwrecked in the Mediterranean between Libya and Italy. There were twenty three survivors, twenty one corpses were fished out of the sea, and five hundred people "disappeared", probably lost in the Sicilian channel. Men and women coming from Sudan, Eritrea, from Egypt, we will never know if they were "clandestine migrants", "asylum seekers" or "refugees". A liquid wall made them disappear before they could make themselves heard. Several weeks afterwards, Italy illegally sent back towards Libya more than five hundred migrants who were intercepted at sea in international waters, even before they were able to present a demand for asylum. Following Italy and Libya, many bilateral agreements between European countries and North and West African countries have been made in recent years: Libya, Morocco, Senegal and Mauritania have been employed in constructing "walls" in the way of peoples on the move, by keeping them in camps which are now being constructed with the financial and logistical aid of European countries.

Post-cold war Europe traces its limits in creating violence not only at its frontiers in the strict sense, but along the whole of the route of contemporary exile, whether it be African, Mediterranean or Oriental. The attempt to control the circulation of people continually recreates extraterritoriality and a border which incarnates it, as is demonstrated by the relentlessness of the French administration to create "waiting zones" in each place where undesirable foreigners arrive. Frontiers are multiplied and hardened, legally and materially, and people are blocked, held, controlled, expelled: the constraint eventually taking the form of enclosure and physical violence. In Europe, the right to asylum has been reduced in several years to a fraction of what it was, going from 85% acceptance of demands for asylum at the beginning of the 1990s to more than 85% rejection in the middle of the 2000s. The end of asylum is the wall which faces all those people who, having known persecutions, threats, wars, generalised violence (and regional, sexual, ethnic, political violence), would have every legitimisation under the Geneva Convention of 1951 to obtain asylum. This securitarian politics is conducted

at least in part by relying on the actions of humanitarian NGOs on the ground, who control as much as they shelter refugees, and are therefore implicated, whether they want to be or not, in the politics of control and the keeping at distance of undesirables.

A landscape of camps, large, diversified, and globalised, has been established progressively in direct connection with national, regional and international politics of control, and these make the form of a corridor of exile at a global scale. Let's examine the principle aspects.

The High commissioner for Refugees managed more than 300 refugee camps in 2008, many of them having more than 25,000 inhabitants, and several as many as 100,000. Roughly six million statutory refugees were kept in these camps, almost half in Africa and one third in Asia. In the countries of the Middle East, there are sixty camps of Palestinian refugees which are managed by UNRWA (the agency created for Palestinians after the exodus of 1948), in which one and a half million people live (out of just over four million Palestinian refugees). Finally, camps of internally displaced persons are at once the most numerous and the most informal. There are perhaps around 600 in the world: Darfur in Sudan has 65 camps which, in 2008, had up to two million displaced persons. The camp in Gereida, holding 120,000 people, is known to be the biggest camp for the displaced in the world. Besides from Sudan, four other countries – Uganda, Democratic Republic of Congo, Afghanistan and Iraq – are the principle countries in which displaces persons are interned in tens, if not hundreds of camps.

In more than one thousand camps worldwide at least twelve million people live, refugees or displaced. This number does not include the very many self-installed camps, the most ephemeral and the least visible, nor the retention centres and waiting zones in Europe, the numbers of which continually fluctuate. The extension of the length of retention to eighteen months by the European Union since December 2008 (before it was up to 30 or 60 days according to the country) has contributed to this situation.

What is it that allows the comparison of refugee camps, unanimously considered as humanitarian spaces for keeping "vulnerable people" alive, and the different types of camps, centres and waiting zones which are part of an administrative management and policing of retention, of selection, and of expulsion of undesirable foreigners? The response which I adopt considers the modalities of government of these spaces in the way in which they are put to work and lived. It ends up with the postulation of a global landscape of camps, which is the perimeter of a continuity and contemporariness between knowledges, practices and peoples.

With regard to people, I of course mean those who are "displaced" and "encamped" along their route of displacement, going from one camp to the other according to their statute (as internally displaced, refugee, asylum seeker, clandestine) and according to the country where they find themselves, but I speak also of those who work for NGOs or humanitarian organisations, organisations which intervene simultaneously in these different

types of space and the international employees of which pass quite rapidly from one "mission" to another in their professional trajectory. Thus in one location as in another there is a certain lifestyle which is present, a "new international language", a conception of the person, and certain ways of thinking and putting into practice exterior intervention.

Knowledge circulates and spreads in this situation. Thus, from year to year, the organisation of the camps has become more complete, structured, complex, and logistical knowledge has developed, a whole culture allowing for vital supplies of water (wells, pipelines, plastic cisterns, wagon cisterns) for waste disposal and for cleaning. The fear of riots is omnipresent and contributes to the authoritarian attitude of the camp chiefs, as soon as a refusal or a collective accusation opposes itself to the compassionate and technical consensus which gives a sense to camp existence for those who manage it. By "technical" I mean the everyday "biopolitics" of life in the camps, dominated by screening: the spatial and categorical division of residents, the division of the work between the non-governmental organisations present. Taking humanitarian control over undesirable populations manifests itself (theatri-

calises itself) in ideal form in a refugee camp, but the anxiety to avoid scandal or "humanitarian crisis" is present in Europe amongst those governments the most advanced in the control and rejection of undesirable foreigners, and increased recourse to retention centres goes along with a more "humanitarian" management. Thus we find today the construction of retention centres in Europe by private enterprises under the contract of the European Union.

More largely, in refugee camps in Africa or in Asia, and in those which control foreigners in Europe or in North Africa, the humanitarian system is deployed in an ambiguous manner: it is called upon to manage exceptional situations which may have been created by an emergency, a catastrophe, a state of war, the massive arrival of a population in distress, but also the expulsion of undesirable foreigners, the "hunting" of clandestines by the police, the confinement or retention of asylum seekers. Humanitarianism thus becomes the master piece and the principle operator of the government of undesirables at a planetary scale.

Finally, there remains a comparability between all these camps if we consider the disorders which always scramble the social and symbolic order which we considered above. These dis-

orders are of two types. On the one hand, there is the very large margin of manoeuvre which the extraterritoriality of camps gives to the "employees of the government", the spaces of exception. On the other hand, the violence which happen in retention centres in Europe, could, because of its invisibility, take place elsewhere, for example in the transition zones annexed to the most stable and controlled installations such as the camps HCR in Africa.

We find ourselves, in fact, in some existing camps, no longer in the moral and social schema ordered and regulated according to the humanistic principles that are communicated in the donor countries but well and truly in situations of micro-powers of exception. Abuse of power, sexual and others, corruption of alimentation rations, networks of "clandestine" work, are the habitual daily lot in most refugee and internal displacement camps which I was able to observe in Africa. On the other hand, and without necessarily seeing a contestation of what we have said before but rather a co-presence, another type of disorder corresponds to the emergence of diverse resistances to enclosure, whether they are those of daily survival (small arrangements with the constraints, trafficking of refugee cards and ration cards, corruption of the po-



lice in order to go or work outside the camps... etc), or they are those of political action. One can compare, in the global landscape of camps, are practices of power, of survival and of politics in a situation of exception.

Coming from Africa, from Asia, from the middle-East principally, it is often the same people who find themselves in the almost invisible locations of a long, long corridor of exile: camps of the internally displaced, camps of refugees, frontier posts, informal encampments, waiting zones, parks, squats, centres of emergency care ... The spaces of this long corridor of exile determine the place of the foreigner in these outside-locations where their stigmatised identity of racial, religious and cultural inspiration is fixed.

An internally displaced Liberian living in 2002-3 (during the worst period of the civil war) in a camp at the edge of Monrovia, will be a refugee if he goes to register himself in 2003 in a camp of the HCR in Guinea, then a clandestine if he leaves it in 2005 to look for work at Conakry, where he will find many compatriots living in the Liberian quarter of the Guinean capital. From there, he will perhaps try Europe, where he will be led (if he is in France) to one of the hundred "ZAPI" (waiting zones for retained people) which are at its ports and airports. He will be officially considered as a "maintenu" before he can be registered as an asylum seeker, with a nine in ten chance that his request will be refused. He would then be taken back to the frontier and expelled from France, or he will be retained in an administrative retention centre, whilst he waits for the administrative expulsion.

"Undesirable" is the name of those who wander in time and in space without finding a place of arrival from their exile. By effectively burying the right to asylum, of which they used to be the eulogists, European countries pose in new and urgent terms the question of solidarity. A solidarity which is not "international" but literally global, because the importance of mobility and of the repopulation of the world, what might be called "human globalisation", will show us that the social and political construction of a common world today cannot be effected without taking the common level of the planet as our horizon. 🌍

PATRICIA TUITT

THE MYTH OF EUROPE

The European Union might foreshadow postmodern, global forms of political organisation, calling for a radically reworked legal and theoretical framework.

The most enduring myth of the European Union is that which tells of the escape of this supposed *suis generis* legal order from what Walter Benjamin alludes to as the 'mythic' violence that attends all new political beginnings.

Dominant accounts of the legal nature of the European Union would deny any significant relation between the emergence of the European Union and the emergence of other legal entities, historical or contemporary. Indeed, the cream of European law scholars are engaged in the act of building, as it were from scratch, the contours of a model of constitutional governance, sufficient to explain this seemingly unique phenomenon. .

It would be somewhat churlish to fail to acknowledge that the development of the European Union appears at first sight to suggest the coming into being of a maverick form amongst other models of political organisation. In just over half a century previously independent states have exchanged sovereign power over certain defined spheres of operation for the benefits (and occasional telling disadvantages) of a largely unregulated, globalised

market in the primary modes of production. As well, such states embrace the goals of achieving increasingly flat forms of social and political enfranchisement, and more generic organisation of these broad citizenship entitlements. It is hard to see how such immense shifts could have come about without an unprecedented movement in tools and conceptualisations of social and political ordering.

Much more than a mere co-operation of states, but falling somewhat short of a federation (or so the story goes) the European Union may occasionally reveal a trace in its lineage of more familiar political forms, but none sufficient to encourage constitutional experts (in the main) confidently to assert kinship with any one. The European Union, having effectively discarded existing political tools and models foreshadows post -modern, global forms of political organisation, which call for new directions in political theorising and legal stratification.

Has this myth gone unchallenged? Undoubtedly, third country migrants stranded at the borders of the European Union would undoubtedly raise cynical eyebrows were they to be confronted with the dominant

tale of the European Union. They would surely stare at the suggestion that the European Union has successfully transcended the "calamitous" political structures and the "vicious circle of violence" of the nation state, but the notion of a deterritorialized and distinctly post-national European Union is one that appears to have enormous appeal, not least among European legal scholars and political scientists.

Yet, from its beginnings, the European Union gestured toward modes of sovereign constituting that entirely contradicts any serious assertion that it occupies a 'global' 'post-modern' space.

As for those beginnings, few would doubt that the Treaty of Rome (often dubbed the 'axis' on which the EU resolves) is the principal cause of the supposedly new distributions within Europe. The Treaty contains a declaration of the supreme virtue of free movement that always precedes

the beginning of every political form. In authorising the free movement of 'good, services, workers and capital' it sought to engineer the mass migration of people, all lured on by the promise of economic advantage, that has lent force to virtually every legal community at the dawn of their existence. By virtue of its core provisions, nationals of member states are encouraged to look across their increasingly porous borders to neighbouring locations with greedy eyes. It is truly their energies – the desire to discover the riches that the 'new' Europe has in store – that has spurred the reconstruction of Europe.

This could not occur within a European Union free of a past in which myths were engaged to mask the violence of sovereign assertion. In fact, the progenitors of the European

World War Europe's political structures and economic arrangements were precisely at the limits of their efficacy. Europe was then at a point of transition and renewal – a space ripe for change; not literally empty but used up or misused.

The 'freedom of movement of workers' 'secured' by Article 39 of the Treaty, the right of self-employed persons either to 'establish' themselves in another state by virtue of Article 43EC or to 'provide services' under Article 49EC, encourages and facilitates migration not merely in the interests of economic goals but with the intent of achieving at least one of the objectives that mass migration was designed to attain during the 'age of discovery' between the 16th – 19th Centuries. Then, the first objective

“ THE MOVEMENT OF PERSONS, ABOVE ALL OTHER FEATURES OF THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE EUROPEAN UNION, FIRST ARRANGEMENT OF NATION STATES IN EUROPE.”

Union engaged an age-old myth to bring about the settlement of Europe through the migration of its 'citizens' – one that has come to be known as the myth of 'discovery'. More tellingly perhaps, this is a myth that has come to be associated with the age of European colonial acquisition.

The complex re-arrangement of the European space, which we have witnessed over the past 50 years or so, follows the pattern of the land-appropriation of the 'new World'. Conceptually and analytically, the 'discovery' of the new world occupies an important place in my argument, for, as with the development of the 'new' Europe, the particular challenge in that historical period was to effect radical constitutional change over territorial spaces that were both populated and governed.

'Discovery' is a myth well placed to ensure the transformation of the old Europe to the new European Union for it is one that allows a political community that is deemed to have reached its limit to be conceived as a figuratively empty space. At the end of the Second

was simply to extend the territories of a colonial power. The second, especially pertinent to our case, Catherine Hall describes as the 'destruction and/or transformation of other forms of social organisation and life.'

The movement of persons, above all other features of the development of the European Union, first destroyed then began to transform the obsolete economic and political forms characteristic of the arrangement of nation states in Europe. It was the movement of persons that undid the divisions and partitions that marked each territorial space in Europe as a separate nation state and which undid the divisions and partitions endemic to domestic markets.

The impact on the transformation of Europe of the 'negative integration of the European market' by the European Court of Justice in its heyday represented by decisions in cases such as Van Gend en Loos (1963) and Costa V ENEL (1964) pales in comparison to the impact of the movement of persons. It has been rightly observed that even during the golden years of British command over land and sea neither 'conquest' nor 'commerce' were sufficient to achieve 'empire'. It required the 'exodus' of people to 'change the world'.

Once we begin to accept that the European Union relies for its existence on modes of sovereign assertion that pre-dated (and made possible) the state system, we can begin to understand the uneven distribution of rights among the people of Europe.

Today, we speak only of a European Union but it is not so long ago that we talked of the 'new' Europe – a designation which alone betrays the European Union's investment in old colonial techniques and discourses of governance. In a surely unconscious echo of the manner in which 'old' Europe looked upon the 'new world' in that so-called 'golden' age, so 'old' Europe saw in the degenerate nature of its political forms and in its ineffectual 'bankrupt' economic structures a 'new' Europe. What was to be transcended in the 'discovery' of the 'new' Europe was the unwanted shadow of the modern age in the dawn of the post-modern. In choosing to create a concrete order through the migration and settlement of European citizens around the European space, the European Union reveals that remnants of the 'intellectual-historical situation' that Schmitt so well describes in *The Nomos of the Earth* remain in political thought today. 🌍

ABOUT THE PHOTOGRAPHS: ESPÈCES D'IMAGES (SPECIES OF IMAGES) A PROJECT BY ANU PENNANEN (2007-2010)

THE BACKGROUND: THIRD PART OF A FILM TRILOGY

The film project, entitled "Espèces d'images" is a conclusion of a work period of eight years in European shopping centers and public spaces. The project is the third and final part of a trilogy: A Monument for the Invisible, filmed in Helsinki, Finland in 2003; and Soprus-Druzhba (Friendship) realized in Tallinn, Estonia in 2006.

LES HALLES: SPACES OF CAPITALISM AND THE SOCIAL IMAGERY

Les Halles is a shopping centre and a commuting transport network situated in the heart of historical Paris and the most popular place in the world for tourists and romantic souls. More than just a Crystal Palace, *Les Halles* is undoubtedly an image in itself as well as machine to produce images. But images of what? This question has not been answered properly.

The actual location of *Les Halles*, completed at the early eighties, was meant to be an urban and luxurious space for modern lifestyle of shopping, commuting and leisure.

In the eyes of many Parisians the *Les Halles* Project is a failure partly because this solution had to include also the question of how to deal with the multicultural suburban populations. Those are the common users of the suburban transport network, but do not represent the clichéd images of Parisianness and luxury.

The actual multicomplex at the heart of the project seems to be an attempt to include and exclude the suburban working class and immigrant populations to the great Image of The Central Paris: it certainly lures these vast populations

in so that they consume all goods displayed, but presents no invitation to leave the commercial area in order to mingle with the surrounding quarters. As result the suburbanians tend to station in there whereas the Parisians tend to avoid staying at *les Halles* more than what is necessary to take the transports.

A WAY OUT OF THIS IMAGE?

As one of the greatest commuting center, the location of *Les Halles* is actually nicknamed 'the Flipper'. This accurately depicts the uncertain and violent nature of the liberal world: one has to stay as long as possible in the game, meaning to submit to its rules, to make it its own, and to be prepared to be thrown away at any moment.

The location of *Les Halles* is symptomatic of this current order of things, and yet it is charged with memories of its own past reaching 2000 years back to the history of European urbanism. Certainly the people whose paths cross everyday at *Les Halles* are constantly squeezed between estimating gazes of the other citizens, the social clashes and diverse histories. Standing out of the crowd, exposing their bodies and appearances in the architectural and everyday lived project of *Les Halles* means to cope with the Social Imagery, to sustain or to possibly break it.

I believe the participants of my project are watchmen and witnesses on this layered soil, where our experiences of today's world are inscribed and scripted.

“ESPÈCES D'IMAGES”: A COLLABORATIVE WRITING INTO PUBLIC SPACE

In order to question the mechanisms and imageries of the spaces of capitalism, my films are based on a collaborative process. Parisians and suburbanians from different ages and experiences, all connected by the knot of *Les Halles*, have participated in the making of *Les Halles* film project. The script, which served as a preliminary structure for my film, worked as a contract between me and the participants of the project. The dialogues, acts and scenes of the film were constructed little by little during the shooting while rehearsing or improvising in front of the camera, in order to create scenes in which participants would challenge their ways to inhabit those spaces. Thus, collaborative fiction is a way of questioning the Real: a possibility to overtake the abstract materialization of capitalist rules. Discussions, video workshops and writing are for me powerful ways to create other images, which have something of a shared nature.

THE FINAL FORM: CROSSING PERSPECTIVES ON FIVE SCREENS AND ENDLESS REPETITIVE TIMES

The final form of "Espèces d'images" film project is a five – screen video installation. It intends to create an architectural space echoing the crossing perspectives of *Les Halles* and its central hall of exchanges, 'the Flipper'. On these five screens, individuals are momentarily appearing closer to the camera and further away from the chewing rhythms of the everyday. The horizon, poetic possibility of escape, is to be reached somewhere beyond the visible world.

URSULA BIEMANN

X-MISSION

ternational protection provided by the UNHCR to all other refugee groups around the world. They had no agency to intervene on an international level and no access to the International Court of Justice. The protection gap has never been closed, not least because the absence of any legal framework has been very convenient to the power politics behind negotiations. Under the guise of fiscal prudence, a major refugee case was maneuvered outside international law, where it has remained parked for decades.

This exceptional condition has made Palestinian refugees especially vulnerable to arbitrary re-impositions of the state of exception, as a recent incident in Nahr el-Bared, a camp in northern Lebanon, demonstrates. Nahr el-Bared is one of twelve existing camps in Lebanon founded between 1948 and subsequent years; several others have been destroyed. Allocated by the UN, the plot of land near the Syrian border first hosted tented settlements that were replaced by cinder block houses whenever refugees could afford to build them. The urban fabric grew organically without a master plan, expressing a form of life all together indifferent to strategic urban planning. Fifty years later, the population had multiplied but the surface of the camp had not been allowed to increase, resulting in one of the most densely populated places on earth. In juridical terms, this is UN territory, but it is Lebanese territory for matters of security, and Palestinian in terms of identity.

In the summer of 2007 the Lebanese Army breached international convention and entered Nahr el Bared, a Palestinian refugee camp in Northern Lebanon, to eradicate a small number of foreign Islamists who had settled in this isolated camp. The operation grew out of all proportion and instead of securing the refugees' habitat, the army

razed the whole camp to the ground, declaring it a 'zone of exception'.

Rather than focusing on the stratified and often ambivalent apparatus of sovereignty that rules this space, the video draws attention to the flexible process through which the refugees have begun to re-inscribe themselves into the political fabric. While the battle over Nahr el Bared was still under way, a community-based reconstruction committee was established to research the state of the camp prior to its destruction and draw up an accurate plan that would serve as the ground for negotiations.

In a collective process that included volunteer architects, the camp dwellers defined shapes and limits of their plot prior to reconstruction in order to recreate them. The reconstruction of the camp posed the interesting ques-

“ THE REFUGEE CAMP IS A PRODUCT OF SUPRA-NATIONAL FORMS OF ORGANISATION AND ADMINISTRATION, CONNECTED SYSTEMICALLY TO A HISTORICALLY SPECIFIC GLOBAL TERRAIN. ”

tion of how refugees would plan their housing and urban organization themselves if they had a say. Despite the many complaints about lack of space and sunlight in the camps, which by the way the architects attempted to resolve, often successfully, it turned out that for the dwellers, the urban morphology of the old camp made a lot of sense. The Lebanese state and army, however, had different plans for the reconstruction of Nahr el-Bared. In the organic system of narrow alleys, they saw an obstacle to entering the camp with vehicles, underscoring their perception of the space as a military zone, when in fact it is an urban zone.

The common struggle to define the refugee space suggests that the camp, in this instance, is not the site of what Agamben calls “bare life,”

that exists outside all political and cultural distinctions; on the contrary, it is a highly juridical space of dis-possession and re-possession. These endeavors have created an informal political domain that evades sovereign decisions, to reveal a place where Palestinian refugees – who are literally placed on the outer reaches of international law – can unfold self-authorized, constructive means through which to re-inscribe themselves into the wider political fabric.

Another case study of X-Mission relates to what we could call the refugee-industrial complex. In 2001, the U.S. established several Qualified Industrial Zones (QIZ) in Jordan and Egypt, where labor-intensive production (such as textiles and garments), were manufactured for tax-free export to the U.S., under the condition that the financial operation involved an 8% Israeli input. This neo-liberal initiative aimed at the normalization of Arab countries with Israel by way of the U.S.'s vision for a single economic zone stretching across the Middle East. Endorsed by Condoleezza

ment that normalizes the very relations that segregates them.

However, what X-Mission brings to light is that the attempt to confine people to a bounded space typically instigates a heightened desire to connect across distances and activate new forms of trans-local contact. The refugee camp harbours an intense microcosm of complex relations to the homeland and related communities abroad. There is a lively inter-camp and inter-diasporic communication going on among the widely dispersed Palestinian communities. A territory is no longer (strictly) a formal spatial arrangement but also a complex system of relations and large-scale structural networks.

Although refugee camps are temporarily created in times of crisis, they tend to be consolidating and self-perpetuating. In the sixty years of their existence, Palestinian refugee tent cities, spread across the Arab world, have long since turned into precarious cinder block settlements. In the Palestinian case, the refugee camp must be apprehended as a spatial device of containment that deprives people of their mobility with the goal to condemn them to a localised existence, symbolically and materially asserted by the actual, extreme reduction of ground allocated to them. Yet at the same time, the refugee camp is a product of supra-national forms of organisation and administration (United Nation High Commissioner of Refugees, NGOs) and, in that sense, connected systemically to a historically specific global terrain. To render this condition visible, I opted for the form of a cultural report that includes local analysis by an array of experts (lawyer, architect, anthropologist, journalist, historian) while drawing on data and video material from YouTube, suggesting a use of media that connects the camp with the global distribution of power. Interspersed with multiple-layer video montage deriving from both downloaded and self-recorded sources, the interviews spin an intricate web of discursive interrelations.

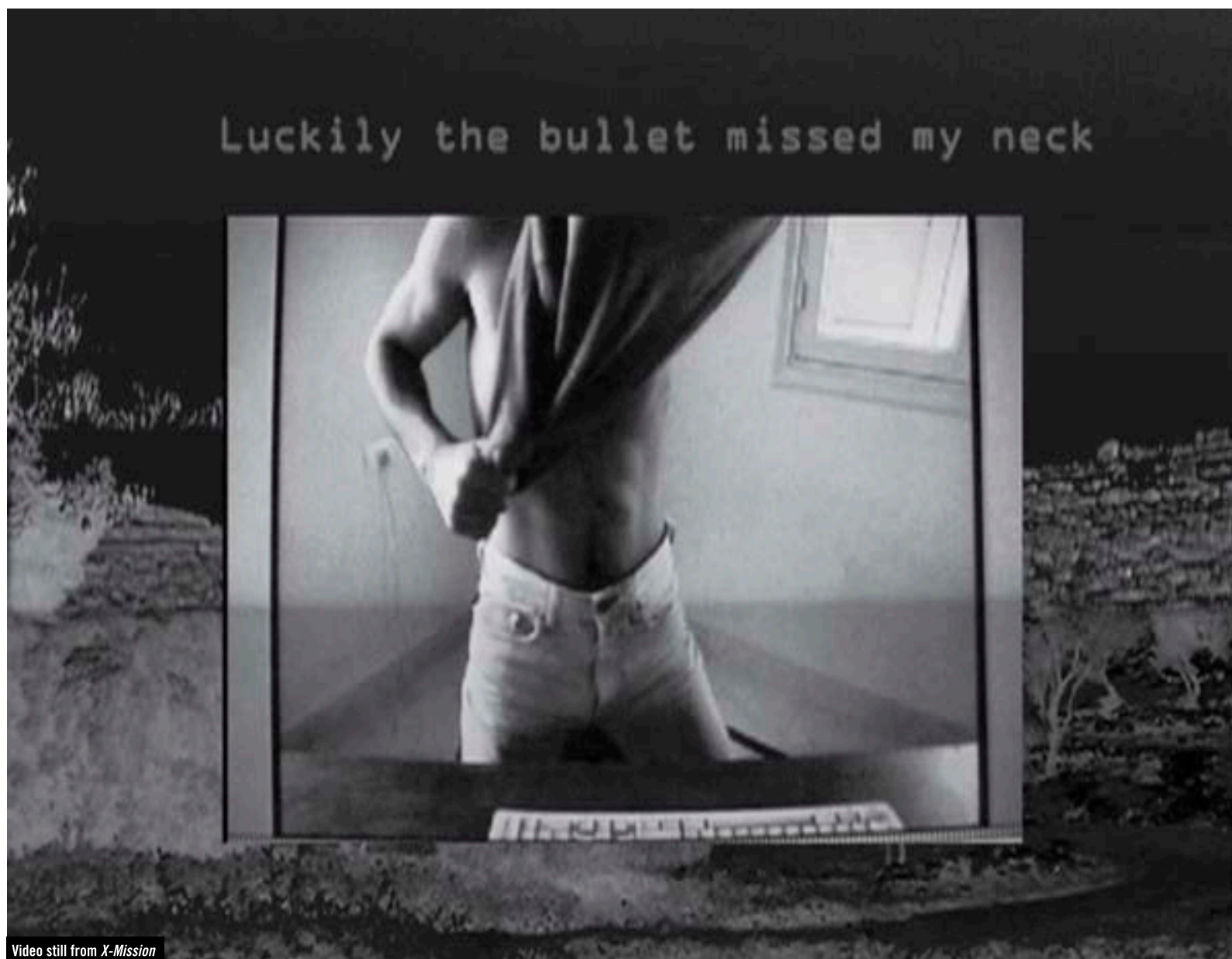
Given the vital importance of this connectivity, the video attempts to place the Palestinian refugee in the

Celebrated artist Ursula Biemann discusses her recent work *X-Mission*, a piece of video research on the extra-territorial status of Palestinian camps and the refugees who inhabit them.

Like the many extra-territorial and otherwise exceptional spaces that have emerged in the wake of globalisation, contemporary refugee camps are designated spaces outside the national territory. Created in moments of crisis, camps are juridical zones of exception where populations get suspended from the political and civil rights that used to govern their lives. These populations become instead subordinated to the humanitarian conventions of the United Nations and the volatile domain of international politics.

The Palestinians are of particular interest here, because their case is not only the oldest and largest refugee case in international law, but it helped to constitute the international refugee regime after the Second World War. This case exemplifies how international law itself failed to maintain a legal framework of protection, first depriving the Palestinians of their political rights as citizen by turning them, perhaps too quickly, into a speechless mass of refugees, and subsequently dispossessing them of the right of international protection guaranteed to all refugees. The Palestinian refugees are the exception within the exception.

When it comes to the refugee question, it is essential to understand the legal superstructure. Because it was the United Nations that created the “problem” of the Palestinian refugees in the first place, it set up a regime of heightened protection for them, explains Susan Akram (designated as ‘The Lawyer’)¹. From the beginning, in 1948, Palestinians were to have two agencies devoted exclusively to them: the UNCCP entrusted with a complete international protection and resolution mandate, and UNRWA, whose job was to provide food, clothing and shelter². Because the Palestinians were seen to be taken care of, the charter of the UNHCR – the UN High Commissioner for Refugees founded in 1950 – had a special clause excluding the Palestinians from its mandate. When it became clear that the UNCCP was unable to resolve the Palestinian conflict, its funding was substantially truncated, which incapacitated it in its role as protector. Within four years, Palestinians were left without this in-



context of a global diaspora and reflects on post-national models of belonging which have emerged through the networked matrix of this trans-local community.

Post-national ideas have gained momentum through the relentless proliferation of trans-national and extra-territorial spaces in which people live or work with few guarantees for safety and dignity. For a growing number of people, life is now about finding a way to survive in the cracks of our system of nation states. This is why I turn to supra-national concepts – which are able to tackle massive statelessness – and to forms of post-national resistance and agency.

Half of the Palestinians live outside of historic Palestine and constitute the largest and oldest refugee population in the world. They are mostly in neighboring states (Jordan, Lebanon, Syria), but also in communities scattered across the world. “How Palestinians negotiate the space now and build a nation outside the territory should not be perceived only as negative, as a trap, as being outside of something” suggests Beshara Doumani (“The Historian”).³ “Their transnational experience is one of the most important resources they have in order to build a future for themselves in which they can live a life with dignity –whether inside or outside a state of their own– and have rights like other human beings. How they do that can be seen as a laboratory for other stateless and transnational groups, whether they are refugees or migrant laborers or people who simply find themselves outside certain spaces that they have long known.” X-Mission is conceived as intensely discursive, being an experiment in a ten-

tative form of theoretical articulation and critique of the multiple discourses constituting the camp. It delivers something of a cross-section of the narrative layers that articulate this highly compressed space: juridical, philosophical, post-fordist, urban, mythological and post-national. In this anthology of remarkable expertise offered by various scholars, what takes shape for once is not the metaphorical waiting room for a disabled history to pick up momentum again but a veritable factory of ideas. In what could almost be described as an archaeological endeavour, video is used as a cognitive tool to unearth the deeper strata of things. My intention was to find a way to speak about Palestinians without falling into the inevitability of positing them in relation to Israel or to the conflict. The purpose of a non-dialectical approach is not to deviate from the problems or to depoliticize the subject matter of course but rather to avoid the trap of tired binary arguments, and allow instead a re-thinking of the case in relation to other forms of extraterritorial spaces and global networks of contemporary migrant communities in the world. 🏠

Footnotes:

- 1. The circumstances of the founding years of these institutions are extracted from a video interview I conducted with Susan Akram, Professor for International and Human Rights Laws at the Boston University Law School in February 2008.
- 2. UNCCP, the UN Conciliation Commission on Palestine, was established in 1948 and UNRWA, the UN Relief and Work Agency in 1949.
- 3. Beshara Doumani, University of California Berkeley, interviewed in July 2008 in Tripoli. The conversation continues in the present journal in a discussion on the Palestinian museum in the making.

INCONSISTENCIES OF ASYLUM POLICY IN EUROPE

BY DINA GALANO
TRANSLATION BY ALBERTO STELLA

European borders have recently moved towards Africa. The so-called Euro-mediterranean frontier has gradually shifted to the South with the double purpose of both containing migrant fluxes towards the EU and to resolve directly in the country of origin the problems of migrants' identification and assistance.

One result of this approach has been highlighted by a report of the UN's refugee agency (UNHCR) published on March 23rd and dedicated to analysing the response given to asylum applications in industrialised countries. As UN official Antonio Guterres stated, “the idea that there is an invasion of asylum-seekers in the wealthier countries must be demythologized” as “our data indicate that numbers remained constant, regardless of what some populist politicians affirm”. According to the statistics, asylum demands during 2009 have been essentially uniform compared to the previous year. In some countries, such as France, the UK or Germany, mobility has risen compared to the trend expected, but at least in two occasions there were peculiar aspects that need to be underlined. As evidenced by the report, Sweden has experienced a drastic reduction of asylum-seekers' enquiries in 2009 – which dropped from 18.600 to 2.300 in two years time. This shift can be attributed, according to UN researchers, to the decision of the Swedish Court of Appeal of removing “the situation in Iraq” from the list of those related to “armed conflict”, effectively making it impossible for Iraqis to apply for refugee status.

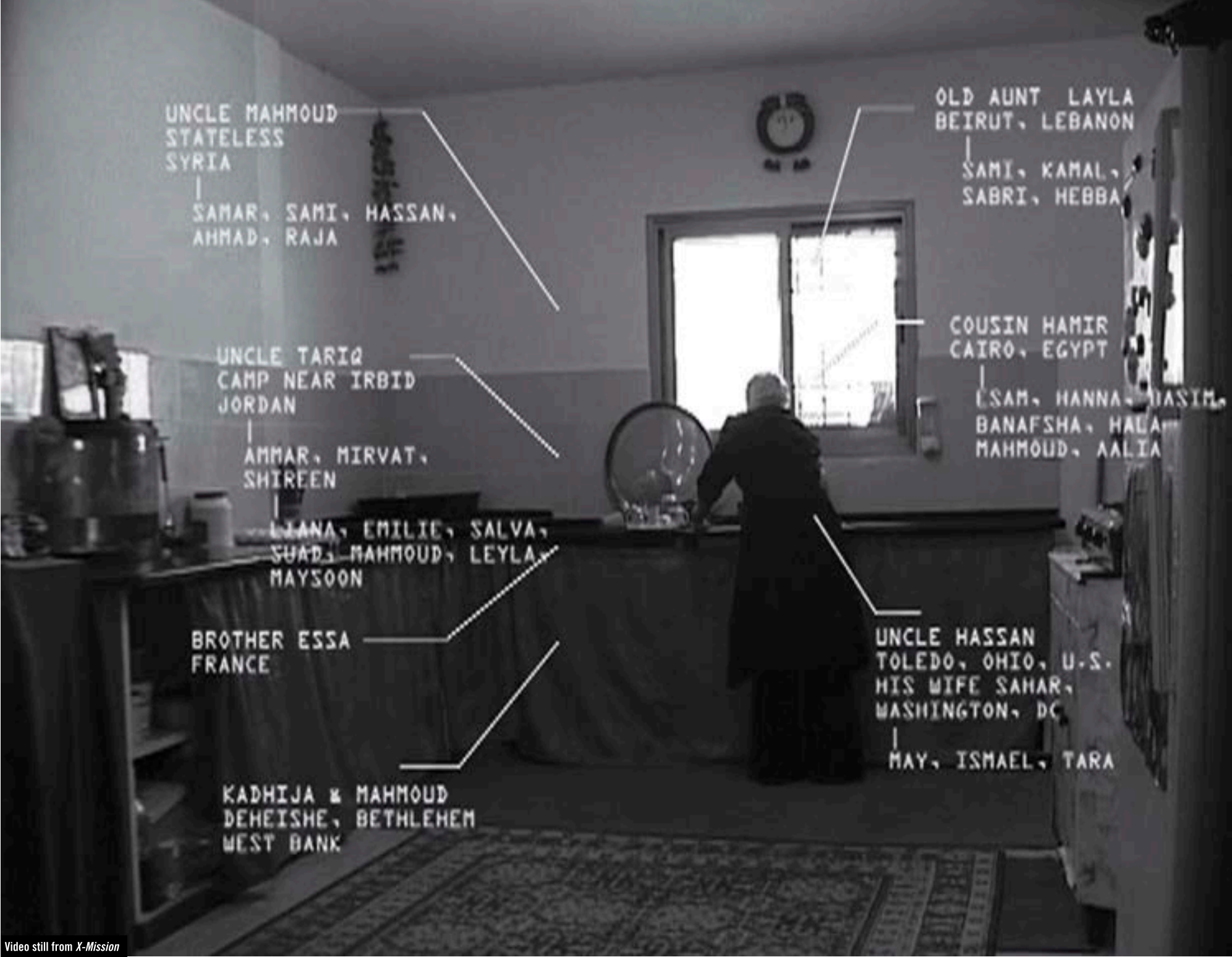
To demonstrate that there are other crucial factors affecting how asylum demands are orientated, the Italian example may be helpful. Demands in Italy dropped by half compared to 2008, when most asylum-seekers came from the sea; a decline attributed to restrictive policies implemented in the channel of Sicily as a result of bilateral agreements between Italy and Libya (according to which Italy sends incoming boats back to Libya before they are able to land on Italian shores). Laurens Jolles, the UNHCR representative for Southern Europe, commented in this way: “The sharp fall in applications shows how rejections, instead of countering illegal immigration, have seriously affected the exercise of the right to asylum in Italy.”

This situation has resulted in the negation of international protection promoted since the Geneva Convention of 1951. And often it has resulted in violations of the most elementary rights of individuals. In almost all cases, in fact, those who undertake the crossing of the Mediterranean “seek protection in safe countries,” the UNHCR reiterated. The United Nations report has already produced some results: three days before the publication of the data, the European Parliament has managed to pass a Commission proposal on the definition of binding guidelines for rescue at sea, a measure strongly opposed by the Committee on Civil Liberties, which questioned the competence of the European Parliament on the matter.

The new EU guidelines for search, rescue and disembarkation of immigrants at risk compel member states to bring aid to people in need, regardless of their

nationality, status or circumstances. In addition, states have to take into account the existence of a request for assistance, the state of the vessel, the number of passengers, the availability of necessary food supplies, and the presence of pregnant women or children. Although the need to ensure uniform levels of treatment is not new at all in the European Union, the clarity of objectives continues to clash with national demands.

On the 26th of March, moreover, a UN report on Europe's behavior on the evaluation of asylum requests was presented in Bruxelles. After analysing for one year a sample of a thousand individual cases in twelve states of destination, interviewing officials, judges, lawyers and other stakeholders, the authors of the report have concluded that the possibility of obtaining recognition of refugee status varies considerably from one country to another. Theoretically applicants for asylum status must be given equal opportunity to obtain protection irrespective of the member state in which they present the application. Judith Kumin, UNHCR director in Europe, warned that “this does not happen”. The essence of the so-called Council Directive of 2005 is hence betrayed in facts. The Directive required a set of common rules and procedures for the admission of foreigners demanding asylum, such as the guarantee of having individual interviews with the local authority, interpreters and reasonable time to provide documentation. While we wait for the implementing of a much welcomed common European asylum system, the European Union has just to acknowledge that the arrival of asylum seekers, rather than something to contain for its alarming proportions, is a phenomenon that is possible and must be managed at the European level. ■



Video still from X-Mission

PHILIPP MISSELWITZ
AND CAN ALTAY

REFUGE: Architectural Proposals for Unbound Spaces

As cities lose the capacity to transform conflict into civility, a new civic space needs to be carved out above and below the state apparatuses and authoritarian political structures.

Derived from the Latin *refugium*, a “refuge” is commonly understood as a place or state of safety. Those “seeking refuge” wish to withdraw into a protected space or environment. In colloquial language, the notion of refuge is used quite freely. It can refer to a holiday retreat, an ecological reserve, a place of hiding, a safe haven and so forth. Others instantly associate the notion of refuge with the refugee which, according to the narrow definition developed in the twentieth century for legal and humanitarian purposes, includes only forcefully displaced persons who have escaped to safety across a national boundary. The imprecision with which the notion of refuge is used is both confusing and thought provoking. On the following pages, a specific definition of refuge will be developed and applied as a conceptual framework for the analysis and interpretation of contempo-

rary urban transformation and architectural practice. Casting aside a myriad alternative understandings, this definition will be based on following three motifs:

1) The constitutive moment for the emergence of a so-called space of refuge is an unresolved conflict. The nature and gravity of the conflict can vary tremendously, ranging from existentialist fear to dissatisfaction with a given situation: direct threat, physical danger, social or political pressure, persecution, exclusion, or eviction; but also perceived threats or simply discomfort with a social or cultural environment. In both cases, conflict triggers the act of seeking refuge, which can take the form of either involuntary displacement or more or less voluntary withdrawal. In either case, instead of addressing and potentially solving the conflict then and there, the individual or group chooses or is forced into displacement, an act of withdrawal or escape from the conflict’s origin. Unresolved, the conflict lingers on, as it were, and takes on the form of a repressed trauma.

2) A second quality common to all forms of refuge relates to spatial characteristics. Spaces of refuge are above all defined by clear territorial boundaries. In most cases, these boundaries are physical and have been consciously placed to restrict access and cross-boundary movement—either from the outside to inside or in reverse. Architecture serves to protect and guard new boundaries, with the ambiguous function of either keeping intruders out, or containing and controlling those inside. This phenomenon can be described as encapsulation. While each space of refuge forms a disconnected island, these encapsulated spaces interlink with others, forming a matrix of parallel, simultaneous networks.

3) A third shared indicator de-

fining a space of refuge is the emergence of systems of control and new behavioral norms, which ultimately can be subsumed under the notion of governance. Following Giorgio Agamben’s concept of the “State of Exception,” one may argue that a unifying characteristic of these systems of governance is a full or partial suspension of the political order of the city. Spaces of refuge are unbound enclaves governed by regimes either self-determined (like the self-assigned “Covenants, Conventions, and Restrictions,” (CC&Rs) of a gated community) or imposed (like the special regulations for inhabitants of refugee camps set by armies or host governments which often limit freedom of movement or choice of employment). In the case of the latter, spaces of refuge become dehumanized environments in which civil rights are suspended. The regulatory framework of politics is thus replaced by often new and problematic external and inter-

migration and displacement, producing a diverse range of spaces—from gated communities, tax free zones, lifestyle resorts to precarious zones of exclusion such as the humanitarian or detention camps inhabited by refugees, niches in which squatters and urban nomads survive. A general trend is exposed: the urban impact of these unbound spaces is the production of an ever more fragmented and atomized urban texture.

In the process of working for the exhibition “refuge”, the research goals were actually to challenge the limitations that research brings, and investigate possible ways of dealing with the conditions of refuge – as urban phenomenon – that transcend the definitive attitude and impose a certain responsibility for action. This could by no means exist without an understanding of the conditions implied by what is called “refuge”, and theorisation of the three defining motifs (provided by Philipp Misselwitz) as

“ THE PROPOSAL OF SIMPLE SPATIAL AND ARCHITECTURAL SOLUTIONS HAS OFTEN THE POTENTIAL TO UNLOCK STALE POLITICAL OR LEGAL DEBATES, AND REOPEN IMAGINATION AND AFFORD VISIONS. ”

nal power structures. With the suspension of the political order of the city, key mechanisms of mediation and conflict negotiation that could help to address and possibly solve the underlying trauma of refuge become defunct.

These three defining motifs of a space of refuge—unresolved conflict, encapsulation, suspension—provide a conceptual framework that can aid in the analysis and understanding of key aspects of contemporary urban transformation. Selected examples show how different and often highly specific conflicts are leading to processes of

explained above.

Spaces of refuge are alienated from their surroundings not only through architectural and spatial systems of boundaries, barriers or buffer zones; they also develop distinct systems of governance where some elements, or the entirety, of the city’s political and social order have been suspended. Temporary suspension can be imposed by a sovereign power exemplified by the new terror laws of Western governments that empower states to intern individuals suspected of involvement in terrorist activity while restricting access to the

legal system. Civil liberties are also often severely restricted by governments hosting refugees or Internally Displaced People (IDPs), while humanitarian regimes only exacerbate the precarious conditions by feeding refugees behind barbed wire fences. Giorgio Agamben’s notions of “state of exception” and “camp” (the latter only the most direct embodiment of the former) have provided eloquent frames for analysis and critique of the logic of suspension. The sociologists Diken and Laustsen, however, have posed an even more radical reading, arguing that “the camp” has long become a key element in contemporary cities. No longer describing the opposite of the ordinary city, “the camp” has shifted from being the constitutive outside to becoming the norm. Suspension therefore would not only apply to spaces of forced or involuntary refuge, but is also exemplified in spaces of voluntary refuge such as gated communities.

Thus, refuge is not only discussed as an urban phenomenon, but also as a challenge to architectural and planning practice. The main question that arises with the condition of refuge is then how to operate as architects and planners when, the context of ‘casual work’ starts to pose a serious ethical dilemma, and the necessity to carve out a civic space becomes unavoidable.

Spaces of refuge pose an ethical dilemma for architects: in a traditional modernist understanding, architects legitimize their involvement in planning and building projects based on the assumption that they can combine and direct the various forces and stakeholder interests and steer them in the interest of the broader community. If the political framework in which projects are legitimized erodes, public control mechanisms are defunct, and sovereignty of the state is replaced by sovereignty of private, military or supranational actors—then the parameters through which a broader community interest can be formed and articulated also disappear. The logic of unresolved conflicts, encapsulation and suspension result in spatial conditions, which seem antithetical to the ethics of modernist architecture and planning. What is evidently alternative in a number of practices is the responsibility to act, the struggle to pass the threshold of research for the academic, and to leave behind the potentially lucrative commissions the condition of refuge brings for the professional architect. Leaving safe territories, stepping into a field of polarized society, of war, contexts where there are no longer clients, commissions, or budgets in the habitual sense.

As cities lose the capacity to transform conflict into civility, some civic space needs to be carefully carved out above and below the state apparatuses and authoritarian political structures. The more radical and daring gesture here is to mobilize and rely upon the most essential skills of the profession: the ability to mediate and negotiate among multiple, disconnected agencies and actors; the capacity to reach across seemingly unbridgeable social, economic, cultural, and political boundaries, forging unlikely connections and alliances; and finally, the competence to develop spatial and architectural propositions. Civic space can therefore take multiple forms. It can be physical/spatial (such as in form of a





spatial intervention, the design of an open space, a building, or an urban planning scheme) or process-oriented, which includes the triggering of public debates or the facilitation of participatory planning processes.

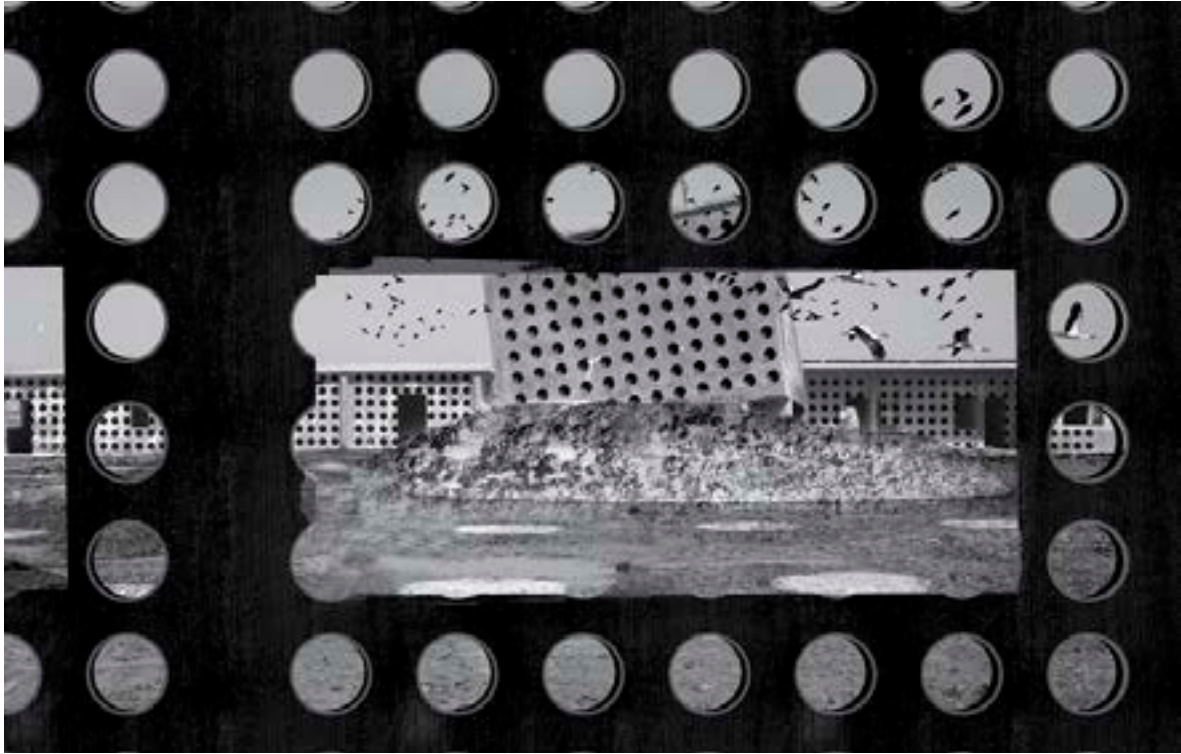
Another characteristic of work becomes the interdisciplinary, transnational collaborations. Architects ally themselves with independent civil society organizations, researchers, academics, and artist collectives. In the context of the Middle Eastern cities that the exhibition broadly includes, there is an almost complete absence of local public funding or official encouragement/patronage, and the conditions for alternative practice are harsh when compared to central Europe. Collaborative networks are able to mobilize an extensive and broad portfolio of tools, reaching far beyond traditional instruments of architects and planners, including new media, documentary, cultural and spatial/architectural representational forms whether dealing with culture, architecture, the environment, human rights, or public access to knowledge.

The solutions proposed vis-à-vis refugee conditions are often characterized by a strategic pragmatism: simple, small and manageable propositions, which do not aspire to achieve sweeping revolutionary change. The pragmatic acceptance of an unjust context to achieve small changes can serve the interests of devious parties. Often, it is a tightrope walk between the dangers of so-called normalization on the one side and resignation and passivity on the other. The proposal of simple spatial and architec-

tural solutions has often the potential to unlock stale political or legal debates, and reopen imagination and afford visions.

A select range of projects included in the exhibition manifest such a field of possibilities for engagement. All projects take their starting point in the identification of problematic and intolerable conditions of unresolved conflict. But solutions proposed radically differ, ranging from efforts to reinterpret and humanize spaces of refuge (improving refuge); to strategic proposals to subvert, transform, or transcend (dismantling refuge); to proposals to avoid or deal with the threat of forced refuge (preventing refuge). A further group (providing refuge) demonstrates that refuge cannot only be understood in negative terms. A black and white view falls short of recognizing the fact that in many situations refuge is simply necessary as a temporary space of protection or legitimate expression of a human desire for safety, seclusion and loneliness. All projects, however, show architectural positions that resist the lurking temptation to blindly participate in the destructive, yet industrious dynamics of refuge and instead propose highly specific responses and local visions for (re)constructing a more livable and open city.

Refuge does not lead to the end of cities as we know them, but to new realities and a need for non-biased frameworks, to a new context yet to be fully understood or explored, and to demanding new tools and models for architects, planners, and spatial producers. Despite the



fact that many of the projects in the exhibition are either ongoing (with uncertainty of success) or visionary, their approach and the range of tools and tactics employed behind to outline an exciting, still emerging field of practice. The exhibition exposes such innovative practice and conceptual models that have emerged from places at the southern and eastern peripheries of Europe, Turkey, and the Middle East—new contributions to an urgent and timely debate which has barely started.

[*] This text is a shortened and updated version, which includes excerpts from the essay originally written for the 4th International Architecture Biennial of Rotterdam and published in the book *Open City: Designing Coexistence* by Rieniets, T., J. Sigler, K. Christiaanse (eds.) Amsterdam: SUN, 2009. It is presented here on the occasion of “Open City Istanbul” three exhibitions co-curated by Philipp Misselwitz and Can Altay, taking place at DEPO / Tütün Deposu, Istanbul. The three exhibitions that compose “Open City Istanbul” are: *Open City Forum* (curated with Tim

Rieniets), *Refuge* (as the main focus of this text), and *Bas Princen: Five Cities Portfolio*. The exhibitions are open between March 12 and May 9 2010.

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left: Laboratory of Return: Oush Grab, 2009. by decolonizing.ps
above: Istanbul Edge City, 2009. from Bas Princen: Five Cities Portfolio
below: exhibition view “Refuge” (co-curated by Philipp Misselwitz and Can Altay) Detail from Home Until Return by Muna Budeiri et al. Foreground: Nahr El Bared camp model. Photographed by Eren Ayug.

THE BOLOGNA PROCESS, TEN YEARS LATER: Crisis, Social Struggles, and a New Transnational Space

GIGI ROGGERO
AND EDUFACTORY COLLECTIVE

The Bologna Process is now ten years old. It was first intended to be a process which lead to the construction of a European space of higher education and aimed at harmonizing education reforms in the different countries involved in this process. These organizational shifts were principally based on changing the curricular structure, the introduction of two university degree levels, the institution of the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS), and the diversification of what educational paths are offered. The process was started with the Sorbonne Agreements, of May 25th, 1998, signed by the Ministers of Education of France, Italy, Germany and the United Kingdom; a year later, on June 18th, 1999, the Bologna Conference officially kicked off the process on a European-wide level. Initially 29 countries were involved, and now there are a total of 45. Seen in other terms, the goal is

to create a unified continental education-labour market capable of producing a large intellectual workforce able to make Europe competitive in the knowledge global economy. In this sense, the Bologna Process is also strictly connected to the Lisbon Strategy launched in 2000.

However, at the distance of ten years, we are now seeing the Bologna Process plunged in crisis. In many countries, Bologna Process reforms are either only partially implemented, inefficient or not effective at all. In Italy, the only country that immediately introduced the project's organizational lines, both academic circles as well as government think tanks are talking about a clear failure of the reform. In short, a European space of higher education is far from a consolidated reality.

Since the very beginning, the project has been opposed everywhere. This opposition is at the root of its contemporary crisis. However, it is important to distinguish two different forms of resistance against the Bologna Process. The first is a conservative opposition, based on the hopes to reproduce the

preexisting academic power structure. The second one, on the contrary, is a transformative resistance embodied in new student movements, precarious researchers, and faculty opposition that has fought the topdown process of the project, creating and practicing cooperative forms of knowledge production and alternative education models. In this second case, resistance doesn't mean nostalgia for the old university model that was embedded in state power and supported by an idealistic and ideological conception of the university as an "ivory tower" of national and cultural pride. This popular resistance has instead opened and improved the European space through transnational mobility of students and researchers in what scholars have identified as "grassroots internationalization". Likewise, these social struggles and movements – from Spain, Greece, Austria and Denmark to France and Italy – are giving birth to a new European process, a cooperative and participative space of higher education. The Alternative Summit held in Vienna on the 11-14 March was a concrete symbol of this new transnational

process.

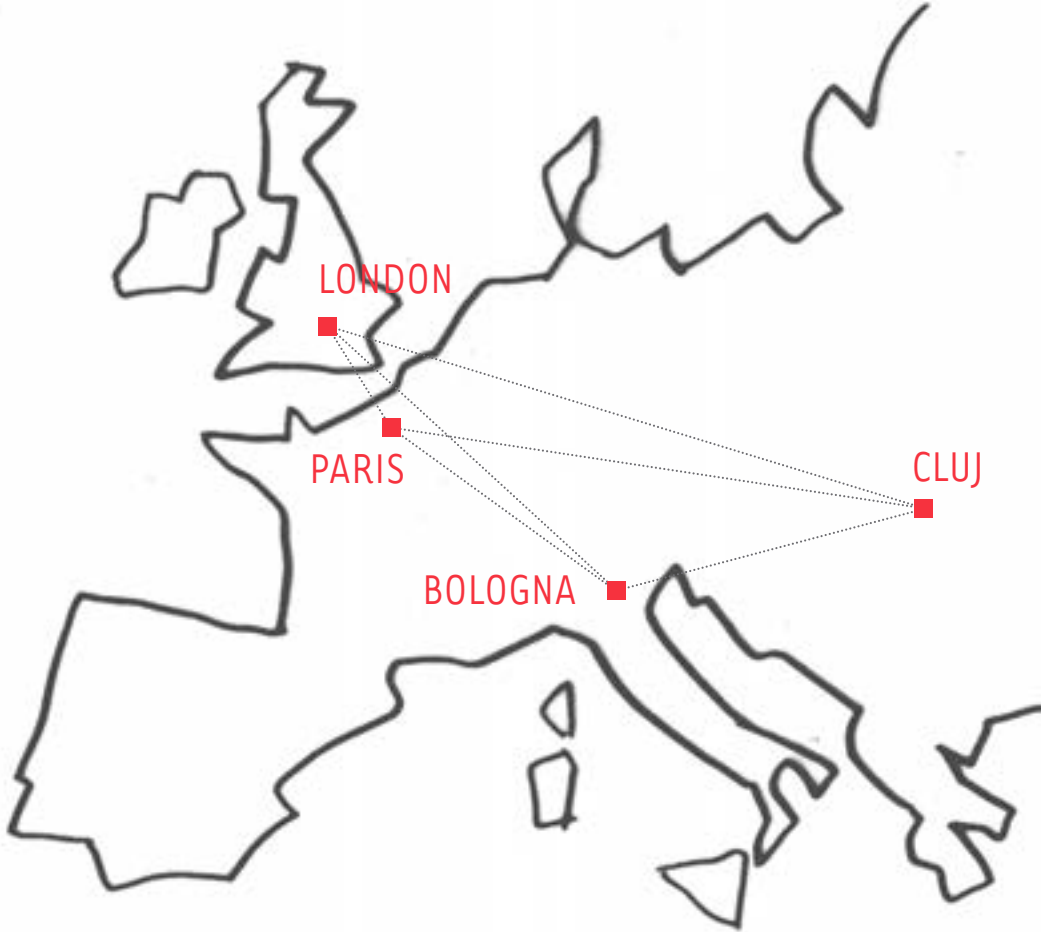
In this framework, Edufactory and European Alternatives are working together to build a cycle of conferences on the Bologna Process and its crisis, involving social movement networks, activist groups and collectives, militant scholars and researchers, critical university departments, and all the people – both inside and outside academic institutions – who are trying to build a different kind of transnational space. The cities in which we are organizing the conferences will be London, Paris, Cluj-Napoca, and Bologna, where we will hold a closing Forum. At least from a symbolic point of view, we think it quite suggestive to end this cycle in Bologna, in order to highlight the attempt to construct a new, alternative "Bologna Process" based on transformative resistance and social movements against the corporatization of European universities.

This series of conferences will be part of Transeuropa Festival, running between April 24 ad May 10. Information: www.transeuropafestival.eu




BOLOGNA PROCESS Transnational Seminars and Closing Forum

In the context of Transeuropa, our festival taking place simultaneously in four European cities, we have organised a transnational programme of seminars on the question of the Bologna Process, culminating with a final Forum bringing together in Bologna participants from all Transeuropa cities, students, and researchers to come up with proposals for an alternative European shared space of higher education.



More information on www.transeuropafestival.eu

LONDON	CLUJ-NAPOCA	BOLOGNA
THE BOLOGNA PROCESS AND A EUROPEAN EDUCATION SPACE	THE IMPACT OF THE BOLOGNA SYSTEM ON ROMANIAN EDUCATION	CLOSING FORUM ON THE BOLOGNA PROCESS
Tuesday 4th May, Queen Mary University, time TBC	Monday 3th May, "Babes-Bolyai" University, 6.00pm	This Forum will present a transnational analysis of the Bologna Process. Its controversial nature will be the starting point to relaunch the idea of a university that has the goal to create the "European generation". Experts from all over Europe will try to find a valid alternative to the actual state of the Bologna Process.
PARIS		With Gigi Roggero (edu-factory - Università di Bologna), Martin Birkner (Grundrisse Vienna); Stefano Harney (Queen Mary University of London); Joan Miquel Gual (Universidad Nómada - Exit Barcelona); Alexei Penzin (Chto Delat? - Institute of Philosophy of the Russian Academy of Sciences of Moscow); Judith Revel (Uninomade - Université de Paris I).
BOLOGNA PROCESS: WHAT SHAPE FOR A COMMON EUROPEAN EDUCATION SPACE?		Thursday 6th May, 10.30am-7.00pm Friday 7th May, 10.00am-2.00pm University of Bologna, Via Zamboni 38, Aula 3
Tuesday 4th May, Paris 1 University 3.00 – 5.00pm		

**LINA DOKUZOVIĆ &
EDUARD FREUDMANN**

ON THE CURRENT PROTEST IN EDUCATION AND PERSPECTIVES ON RADICAL CHANGE

Universities across Europe are in turmoil. Reform too often simply transforms into cuts in the budget, higher fees, and privatisation of education. A generation of students is out to demand new institutions of the common.

‘We won't pay for your crisis!' has echoed throughout universities worldwide. The significance of this is that the statement's momentum has not only spread throughout educational institutions, but has also been present in other areas of society, bringing attention to the general failure of neoliberal capitalism and its appropriation of all spheres of life. What has been defined as the 'crisis in education', which should be remedied through a wave of reforms, has been dealt with in terms of economic crisis-based measures, with measures for increasing profit. A homogenisation in the way of a reform wave has taken place through the Bologna Process for establishing the European Higher Education Area (EHEA). Through this regulated norm of educational standards of comparability, EUrope aims to enter and be at the forefront of the growing competitive knowledge economy and of research-based profit, through the parallel establishment of the European Research Area (ERA). The systematic removal of democratic structures in universities in Austria has been taking place with the implementation of the Bologna Process. Democratically elected bodies have been degraded to a kind of staff committee, while the dean's office has been upgraded to a CEO-like singular leading body, which is checked and balanced by a university-external supervisory board, the so-called University Board.

THE ACADEMY OF FINE ARTS VIENNA IS SQUATTED

Following the dissatisfaction resulting from a lengthy process of attempts to democratically negotiate the future of the institution, a public meeting was called by the Academy's students and staff in front of its main building on October 20th, 2009. A statement was read out, which called for the reinstatement of the democratic structures that had been systematically removed in the course of establishing a system of increased competitiveness and commodification of the institution and everything within its walls. A list of precisely articulated demands was then read out to the dean. He was called on to fulfill his duty and represent the position of

the institution rather than taking a gamble in his own professional and profitable interests, in the negotiation of the Budgetary Agreement with the Ministry of Science and Research, on the following day. A proclamation of solidarity was then expressed with all the protestors against educational reform around the world, which then included: Bangladesh, Brazil, Croatia, Finland, France, Germany, Great Britain, Greece, India, Iran, Italy, Japan, the Netherlands, Serbia, South Africa, South Korea and the U.S.A. Subsequently, approximately 250 individuals entered the building and occupied the assembly hall, the most representative space in the institution. The squatters installed a plenum in a grassroots democratic structure, whereupon it was decided that the space would remain occupied until the demands were met.

EMANCIPATORY SPEECH AND DECENTRALISATION

The processes within the context of the protests have taken place through a grassroots democratic structure of collective decision-making, carried out in regular plenums. Tasks and insights are assigned to working groups, which maintain a dynamic fluctuation of participants. The intention of non-hierarchical forms of communication, established through some basic rules, have aimed to encourage all those present to actively contribute to discussions. Since representing the protests is a task which no one person can or should accomplish alone, it is vital that no spokesperson(s) is/are selected, but rather that a consistent rotation of speakers takes place. The consequence is a low rate of NLP (neuro-linguistic programmed) speeches, presenting the demands and expressions of the groups in a manner which is not trained or conditioned. This form of direct communication represents an emancipatory speech act, because existing codes of commodified language and the sale of speech are rejected through the very mechanism of the act of speaking itself.

Another significant element, resonating throughout the protests on all levels, has been decentralisation. It has derived from the very process, which has taken place over recent years, of the de-democratisation of universities within which all democratically-legitimised regulating bodies have been degraded to a pseudo-democratic facade, and thereby entirely disabled. The fact that the protests have not been led by individuals elected through procedures of representative democracy and have not been associated with parliamentary parties, left politicians perplexed, not knowing how to handle the protests. The decentralisation not only refers to the aforementioned fluctuation, but also refers to direct actions, such as the temporary squatting of the vice dean's office at the Academy of Fine Arts, squatting the cafeteria at the Ministry of Science and Research or taking over the stage during a play at the Burgtheater, Vienna's most renowned theater.

TAKING OVER THE WHOLE DAMN BAKERY

Overall, the protests have not been limited to de-hierarchisation, appropriation of space(s), self-organisation and




the examination of the conditions of work and study. They have rather been dominated by demands, criticism and claims that go beyond the immediate context of education and universities, expanding to the identification of how the neoliberal capitalist market logic has infiltrated all parts of life, com-

gressive ones, keeping the developments in limbo. Many of the former felt threatened by the reforms, due to their orientation towards science and scientific models, an academic sphere which threatened both their knowledge and their refuge in the 'autonomy of art'. The more progressive

point—like a dog chasing its own tail.

A profession greatly based on individualisation, image and uniqueness has come to its own crisis, where the striking students and teachers have stopped training each other and themselves in how to continue a greater individualisation of themselves, at the moment when they joined to collectively resist the structure. After running in circles for years, and being seriously endangered by vertigo-induced collapse, it marks a point where the protagonists finally caught what they were chasing, which made them realise that it was in fact their own tails that they had been chasing for years. Art and education serving capital and serving as models for capital had been exposed. However, one must not remain in the celebration of that moment, but rather continue to challenge and question this as a moment of transition, instead of utilising collectivism as a training ground for one's future career as a unique, innovative persona. The structure which has been ruptured and challenged must not support a cycling back to the same structure.

THE 'CRISIS IN EDUCATION' AND THE CAPITALIST CRISIS

How can this transition be utilised in a constructive way in order to continue these occupations and resistance, and more importantly to restructure the problematic apparatus of education and related structures, such as the arts, from the bottom-up for the future? Some protestors have referred to creating an 'infinite scenario' model of protest, in which the spaces that were reclaimed and appropriated remain self-organised without compromise. In fact, after the long-lasting history of neo-liberal reforms, the deepest point of de-politicisation may have been reached, and the worldwide education protests could mark the turning point for a re-politicisation to follow. In this regard, it is necessary to view the current 'crisis' in education in direct proportion to the economic crisis. This correlation very visibly shows the attempts of making education a new frontier for the capitalist crisis to invest its dwindling assets into, and therefore we repeat... We will not pay for your crisis! 

**“ IT'S NOT ABOUT ASKING FOR A BIGGER PIECE OF THE PIE
OR HAVING THE WHOLE PIE TO YOURSELF – IT'S ABOUT TAKING
OVER THE WHOLE DAMN BAKERY.”**

modifying and isolating them through racist and sexist policies of exclusion, deteriorating the very collectivity the protests have aimed to establish. The realisation that the fight for an improved educational system cannot be made specific but must instead reflect and depend on changing the very structure and system that produces it, not through homogenising top-down reforms, but through grassroots democracy, evidences the authenticity of the protests. It's not about asking for a bigger piece of the pie or having the whole pie to yourself—it's about taking over the whole damn bakery.

ART AND ART SCHOOLS AS PARADIGM FOR NEOLIBERAL CAPITALISM

The fact that the protests in education in Austria were initiated within an artistic institution is not to be disregarded. As the logic of (neo-)liberalism is based on the freedom of the individual, the artist and his/her artistic liberty perfectly fills its shoes. In fact, not only does the desire and trend of bringing artistic institutions closer to marketable creative industries exist, rather art and the art school can be seen as a paradigm for neoliberal capitalism, with the artist and the cultural producer as role models for an increasingly neoliberal job market. The flexibility and infinite creativity, teamed with self-discipline and precarious work relations lie at the core of the artist's profession.

The implementation of Bologna Process-related reforms at the Academy of Fine Arts Vienna, such as the replacement of the old master class system with the B.A./M.A. structure, was delayed due to a peculiar alliance between the individuals of the older tradition and the more pro-

gressive ones, however, did not believe in the autonomy of art; but subject to precarious labour conditions and the economised market logic, they opposed the reforms. Thus, a dubious symbiosis stalled the new system.

The story of The Sorcerer's Apprentice, by Goethe, begins with an old master sorcerer leaving his apprentice to do his chores in his workshop. Tired of the tedious task, he makes his water-fetching more efficient by enchanting a broom. Not being skilled enough to control the enchanted broom, he tries to destroy it with an axe, splintering it to pieces. Nevertheless, all of the pieces become new brooms, continuing the tasks, out of control. The progressive brooms turn against their new master. The story ends, however, with the spell being broken as the old master returns, the brooms disenchanted and all restored to their old order. Neither the system of the old nor the new master could retain stability without a bit of magic, but the old master's method managed to direct the brooms correctly for the time being.

In the case of the Academy, the co-operation between the old master class system supporters and the more progressive individuals functions, while the uncontrollable enchantment of the new neo-liberal system brings things out of order— not because it is necessarily the worst system, but because those who have depended on the old structure for a long time adapt any progressiveness to their own model. The irony, however, is that this inclination towards artistic 'autonomy' tends very closely to the artistic 'liberty' that allows the artist to create the perfect neo-liberal mold. The whole logic begins rotating at that

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The renowned American sociologist will close the festival Transeuropa with the lecture "When our major global challenges hit the ground in cities"

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A photographic exhibition made by Erasmus students from Cluj Napoca, who through their shots express their opinions about the city where they live and its inhabitants.

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Cristian Parvulescu will speak about the concepts of European and Romanian Democracy, and the relation between participation and representation in Europe.

CONFERENCE: DONALD SASOON

A professor of history and a writer who dared to approach in original terms the subject of European cultural history, Sassoon will have an intervention on multiculturalism in Central Europe and on its historical heritage.



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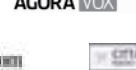
In the context of the European Year for Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion, this event will address the question of urban precarity in European cities, featuring a debate and a presentation of the work of the Italian collective Stalker.



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The journal of European Alternatives has always been a campaigning journal, whether for gender equality, Roma rights, migrant rights, media freedom or democratic renewal: through it readers, writers and artists since 2007 have been informed about and joined our campaigns, joined our movement, joined our organization for democracy, equality and culture beyond the nation-state. 10 years after the beginnings of European Alternatives and its first publications, we take a moment to gather many of them in one place, to take a look back at the journey we have travelled, share what we have seen with new acquaintances encountered recently on our route, before turning our faces resolutely to the wind, looking into the distance, and continuing our adventure together as friends.

Together with our readers we ranged over Europe, to North Africa, the Middle East, the Americas, China and elsewhere, knowing that Europa is never to be found where you expect, and that frontiers are the limits of our imaginations and understandings, sometimes to be overcome, sometimes to be interrogated and sometimes to be opened-up or breached by dialogue and experimentation.

