
I det tvärvetenskapliga projektet Underjorden har Museion tagit sig an uppgiften att utforska begreppet underjordens inneboende motstridigheter och spänningar. Forskare från olika ämnesområden har utifrån sina respektive utgångspunkter närmat sig ämnet. Målet med projektet har också varit att presentera några aspekter på det underjordiska i utställningsform. Världskulturmuseets utställning Take Action: 83 sätt att förändra världen berör bland annat den politiska underjorden.

Ett antal av texterna nedan finns på svenska i andra versioner i nummer 4.07 av tidskriften Glänta, tillsammans med fler undersökningar av andra underjordar för den som verkligen vill gräva ned sig.

**TEXTER**

HENRIK BOGDAN  The Occult Underground: Images of Power and Antinomianism  
DARIUSH MOAVEN DOUST  Underground or images of nowhere  
CLAES EKENSTAM  Den psykologiska underjorden. Emotioner och västvärldens kulturhistoria  
ADRIANA MUÑOZ  Vanished-People; identities in alimbo. The relationship between Archaeology and Human Rights.  
KARSTEN PEDERSEN  The living underground: Setting the Scene  
CATHARINA THÖRN  Underground with a Public address  
STELLAN VINTHAGEN  Political Undergrounds – Can Raging Riots and Everyday Theft become Politics of Normality?
HENRIK BOGDAN

THE OCCULT UNDERGROUND:
Strategies of Power and Antinomianism

Introduction

In a candlelit room covered with heavy incense, five persons sit cross-legged in a circle on the floor. They are dressed in flowing black robes and have their eyes closed, as if in meditation. After a few minutes one of them rises to his feet and moves into the centre of the circle, facing east. He draws a deep breath and then intones the names “Atay, Aiwass, Malkuth, Ve Gedulah, Ve Geburah, Le Olam, Amen”, while touching his forehead, chest, phallus, right shoulder, left shoulder, and finally clasping the hands. The intonation of the names is deep and powerful, and it feels as if the whole room is vibrating. He then proceeds to drawing a pentagram in the air at the four quarters of the compass with a wand, while intoning a name of God after the drawing of each pentagram: “Ye-ho-wau, Adônaï, Eheieh, and Agla”. Returning to the middle, he stands with his feet together and the arms outstretched in imitation of the slain Osiris, and calls out: “Before me Raphael, behind Gabriel, on my right hand Michael, on my left hand Auriel. For about me flames the Pentagram, and in the column stands the six-rayed star”. He then repeats the first part of the ritual and concludes with “Amen”. Silently, he resumes his seat on the floor, and a few minutes pass, before a second person lifts up a book, and starts to recite a poem by the occultist Aleister Crowley, called Hymn to Pan:

Thrill with lissome lust of the light,
O man! My man!
Come careering out of the night
Of Pan! Io Pan!
Io Pan! Io Pan! Come over the sea
From Sicily and from Arcady!
Roaming as Bacchus, with fauns and pards
And nymphs and satyrs for thy guards,
On a milk-white ass, come over the sea
To me, to me …

The poem continues in a rhythmic and ecstatic fashion, culminating with the words:

I am Pan! Io Pan! Io Pan Pan! Pan!
I am thy mate, I am thy man,
Goat of thy flock, I am gold, I am god,
Flesh to thy bone, flower to thy rod.
With hoofs of steel I race on the rocks
Through solstice stubborn to equinox.
And I rave; and I rape and I rip and I rend
Everlasting, world without end,
Mannikin, maiden, mænad, man,
In the might of Pan.
Io Pan! Io Pan Pan! Pan! Io Pan!

A few minutes of silence follows, and then the same person slowly starts to chant the words “Io Pan, Io Pan Pan!” over and over again, and the other persons join in. The chanting becomes louder and faster and one person starts to beat on a drum in the same rhythm as the chanting. All present have their eyes closed and visualise the Greek fertility god Pan and projects this image on the person who recited the poem. The chanting goes faster and faster until it finally explodes into ecstasy and the leader screams out “lashtal”, while quickly taking hold of a goblet of wine and a plate with five small pieces of bread. Each member eats a piece of the bread and drinks wine from the goblet in silence. After a few more minutes the same person that performed the opening ritual stands up and performs the same ritual over again.

The ritual is called Mass of Pan and its purpose is to invoke the powers of that particular pagan god. It was performed in Gothenburg, Sweden by members of an international magical order called Ordo Templi Orientis, or Order of the Oriental Templars (OTO). The OTO is one of many occultist societies which are active in Western society, and it would be fairly safe to state that such organisations exist in virtually every major city in the West today, even though little research has been done to establish the exact numbers of practitioners of this particular form of Western spirituality. In his pioneering work The Occult Underground published in 1974 James Webb argued that there exists a dichotomy between the “Establishment” and the “Occult Underground”, a dichotomy essentially between reason and “rejected knowledge”.

But what is this all about? What is occultism? Does really an “occult underground” exist? This paper sets out to discuss these questions with the objectives to describe and discuss contemporary occultism and thus shed light on misconceptions and alternative understandings of a significant strand of contemporary religious belief. The article is divided into two parts. In the first (longer) part, occultism is placed within the broader context of Western esotericism, and it is discussed how historians of religions understand the term occultism. This paper also discusses what might be understood by an “occult underground” and what its relationship is with other forms of Western culture. The second (shorter) part illustrates a number of key elements of contemporary occultism, exemplified through the beliefs and practices of Dragon Rouge, the Swedish occultist movement.
PART ONE

Western esotericism

Occultism is frequently associated with sinister and evil practices in the public mind, and it is not uncommon to encounter the notion in popular media that occultism is merely another name for Satanism. This negative view is, however, often based on misconceptions of what occultism actually stands for and it often shows little or no knowledge of the scholarly approach to this particular current in Western spirituality. The majority of scholars who deal with occultism tend to use the term specifically in relation with 19th century developments within a broader field of research called Western esotericism.

In current scholarly usage, the term Western esotericism refers to a particular form of thought which has been present in Western culture at least since the Renaissance, with roots stretching back into late antiquity. Esotericism can be described as a form of spirituality which stresses the importance of the individual’s quest for knowledge, or *gnosis*, of the divine aspect of existence. Furthermore, esotericism is characterised by a holistic world view in which everything is connected through so-called mystical links. Since man is seen as a microcosm of the macrocosm, increased knowledge about the natural world is considered to lead to increased self-knowledge. In the same manner, self-knowledge is seen as a corresponding knowledge of the divinely permeated natural world. The idea of mystical links is fundamental to the “Occult sciences” (a notion dating from the 16th century) such as astrology, magic and alchemy, in which the knowledge of and manipulation with the links form the basic *modus operandi* of these so-called sciences. For instance, in the case of alchemy the transmutation of base metals such as lead to gold was not merely interpreted from a chemical perspective, but also in a corresponding spiritual sense in which the transmutation was seen as a spiritual process of the alchemist him/herself leading from an un-enlightened soul (lead) to enlightenment (gold). In a similar way, magic and astrology presupposes the idea that outer phenomena such as planets and stars influence the human psyche, and through the manipulation of the mystical links it is believed that favourable influences can be attracted, while negative influences in their turn might be averted. This idea is illustrated by the example of the Renaissance philosopher and esotericist Marsilio Ficino (1433–1499) who describes a magical working. According to Ficino, destructive forms of melancholia are often caused by an unsound influence of the negative aspects of the planet Saturn (which in astrology is seen as a melancholic planet), and in order to diminish these negative influences, the magician should attract the more benevolent and joyful influences from a planet such as Venus instead. The attraction of Venus’ influence is achieved through the reciting of poems and hymns dedicated to the goddess Venus, through being surrounded by material objects corresponding to Venus (such as silver jewellery and statues and paintings of the goddess Venus), and through eating food which corresponds to Venus such as white meat from poultry and fish and sugar. According to esoteric theory, it is
through their capacity of being specially linked to the planet Venus – through the mystical links – that these particular items possesses the ability to draw down the influence from that particular planet.

These ideas can be encountered already during late antiquity, if not earlier, in religious traditions such as Hermetism and Gnosticism, but it was not until the Renaissance that a wide range of traditions such as Christian mysticism, mediaeval magic, hermetism/hermeticism, neo-platonism, astrology, alchemy and Christian Kabbalah were seen as not only compatible with each other, but even as different branches of one and the same tree. This tree was seen as an ancient philosophy, *philosophia perennis*, which was believed to have survived from the remotest times of man’s history.

Western esotericism should not, however, be understood as a single clearly identifiable tradition, but rather as a scholarly construct along the lines of Wittgenstein’s family resemblance theory expressed through a wide range of currents such as Paracelsism, Naturphilosophie, Rosicrucianism and Theosophy. Modern examples of esoteric currents include occultism, neo-paganism and the New Age movement. According to the French scholar Antoine Faivre, the esoteric form of thought is characterised by six constitutive components: First, the idea of correspondences. These are symbolic and concrete correspondences between all the visible and invisible parts of the universe. Second, living nature: the entire universe is a living organism traversed by a network of sympathies or antipathies that link all natural things (usually described as mystical links). Third, imagination and mediations: to the esotericist the imaginative faculty of man is of incalculable importance as a tool for spiritual enlightenment. Connected to this is the importance attributed to rituals, symbolic images, and intermediary spirits between man and the Godhead. Fourth, the experience of transmutation: just as it is considered to be possible to transmute base metals into gold, so it is considered to be possible to refine the spiritual properties in man and to achieve enlightenment or *Unio Mystica* with the Godhead. Fifth, the praxis of the concordance: the syncretistic approach to two or more traditions that aims at obtaining superior illumination. Sixth, and last, transmission: the esoteric knowledge must be transmitted from a teacher to a pupil (Faivre 1994: 10–15). This last component includes the notion of initiation that became an important feature of Western esotericism from the eighteenth century onwards, especially in organisations such as the Order of Freemasons (1717) and later magical movements such as The Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn (1887).

**Occultism as a secularised form of esotericism**

Wouter J. Hanegraaff, the Dutch scholar, who tends to accentuate the importance of *Gnosis* or soteriological knowledge of esotericism, argues that Faivre’s constitutive components are only valid for Renaissance esotericism, and that the later forms of esotericism change due to the impact of secularisation and the disenchantment of Western society. According to Hanegraaff, the
secularised forms of esotericism differ from the earlier forms in five aspects (Hanegraaff 2004: 489–516). First, due to the impact of scientific materialism and positivism, the understanding of the correspondences changed from a divinely permeated system linking together the micro- and macrocosm worlds, to a disenchanted world view ruled by impersonal laws of causality. Second, the traditionally Christian syncretism of esotericism was challenged by the influx of Eastern religiosity, most notably Hinduism and Buddhism. Third, the impact of the theories of evolution, which in esotericism assumed the form of a belief in not only the spiritual progress of the individual, but also in the belief of the spiritual evolution of mankind (a prime characteristic of the New Age-movement). Fourth, the influence of psychology, and in particular the psychology of Carl Gustav Jung (1875–1961). Concepts and beliefs that earlier were given religious meanings and explanations, became increasingly interpreted as aspects of man’s psyche. Jung’s theory of the anima and animus, the importance attributed to the unconscious, the process of individuation, and the theory of archetypes can, in more or less modified forms, be found in many forms of contemporary esotericism. Finally, the fifth aspect through which secularised forms of esotericism differ from Renaissance esotericism – the impact of capitalist market economy on the domain of spirituality. The perhaps clearest example of this impact is the New Age movement which can be seen as a spiritual supermarket (Hanegraaff 2004: 489–519). One might add the importance placed on personal religious experiences and the will of each individual to these five new characteristics. The latter is seen in many contemporary forms of esotericism as a divine or supernatural aspect of man (Bogdan 2007: 16–17).

One of the secularised forms of esotericism – and the one that concerns this essay – is occultism. The word occultism derives from the Latin occultus (“hidden, secret”, from occulere, “to cover over, hide, conceal”) and it tends to be used among scholars to denote specific developments within Western esotericism during the 19th and 20th centuries. According to Hanegraaff, the term can be used in two senses: a descriptive sense of occultism and an analytic and typological sense: “it is used as referring not only to these currents as such, but to the type of esotericism that they represent, and that is also characteristic of most other esoteric currents from about the mid-19th century onwards (such as spiritualism, modern Theosophy, or new magical currents in the lineage of the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn, up to and including such recent developments as the New Age movement)” (Hanegraaff 2005: 888). It is in this analytic and typological sense that occultism is being used in the present essay, with a focus on new magical currents.

Occultism, and in particular magical currents, represents a highly eclectic form of esotericism with a strong emphasis on the experiential or practical aspects of esotericism. This practical orientation is made evident through a wide range of techniques aimed at causing altered states of consciousness. These techniques, which often are of a highly ritualistic nature, include evocations and invocations of angels, demons and other entities, astral journeys, meditation on symbols such as tarot cards, sexual magic, and (to a lesser extent) the use of drugs for a spiritual purpose. Apart from these dominantly Western techniques, it is also common to encounter mystical techniques
of Eastern origin, such as various forms of Hindu and Buddhist yoga. What all these various techniques have in common is that they are practical as opposed to theoretical. In other words, occultism is often something which is practiced. The practical orientation of occultist forms of spirituality such as magical currents is often emphasised by the chief exponents of these particular currents. Not only do they emphasise the importance of putting the esoteric knowledge into practice in a general way throughout most of their published works, but it is also significant that all the major authorities of these magical currents have published handbooks on how magic should be performed. To a certain extent, the emphasis on the practical aspect of occultism stands in contrast with the more dogmatic emphasis which is to be encountered in many forms of traditional Christianity, especially Protestant forms with their notion of salvation through faith. However, when compared to other modern alternative forms of spirituality it becomes evident that the practical and experiential emphasis is not a unique feature to be encountered only in occultist forms of spirituality. On the contrary, this emphasis is common in most new religious movements with their focus on the individual, in particular from the 1960s onwards. As such, occultism can be seen as a good example of how contemporary forms of alternative spirituality mirror the general trends of modern and post-modern Western society with its shift from community oriented structures, towards individual oriented structures, and from religion to “spirituality”.

The occult underground
In the 1980s and early 1990s a so-called “satanic panic” spread across the United States and parts of Europe. Tales of organised satanic abuse alleged that there was a highly elaborate network of satanists, witches and occultists who indulged in secret rites which included human sacrifice, cannibalism, vampirism, perverse sexual orgies, the sexual abuse of children and the use of illegal drugs (Richardson, Best & Bromley 1991; La Fontaine 1998; Victor 1993). Books such as Michelle Remembers (1980) and Satan’s Underground (1988) claimed that there was a highly secretive occult underground, with far-reaching connections both into the realms of politics and law enforcement. These ideas were not only propagated by Christian fundamentalist groups and anti-cult groups (as it often is claimed), but also by social workers, the popular press and by secular non-denominational groups. Even though scholars have refuted the allegations and it has been proven without any doubts that no sinister and evil cabal of devil worshipers that systematically devote themselves to illegal activities exists, the negative view of occultism as something suspicious and “evil” still persists in the public mind. Scholars have proposed various explanations for the widespread acceptance of these allegations (despite the fact that the allegations were not based on any known or witnessed events, but on allegations that such events had happened). The most significant explanation – in the present context – is that the allegations in fact have very little to do with self-professed occultists, satanists and witches but instead are symptomatic of the perceived problems of Western society itself. In other words, the satanic panic of the 1980s illustrates the perceived
threat towards Western morals as a consequence of major changes in post-modern Western society. Or to put it in the words of La Fontaine:

Sociologists have explained the allegations, in both the United States and Britain, as a ‘moral panic’. This is not, as some people seem to think, a way of talking about mass hysteria, but a technical term coined by sociologists to refer to social movements that define actions, groups or persons as threats to fundamental social values. A moral panic is the construction of a social problem as something more serious than a routine issue of social control (La Fontaine 1998: 19–20).

The “Satanist” can be seen as a scapegoat who personifies the fears of Western society, much in the same manner as the “Muslim fundamentalist” today embodies the perceived threat to Western culture in the public mind. Just as the public image of Muslims often rests upon prejudices and a striking lack of knowledge, so the understanding of the “Satanist” in the 80s and early 90s was characterised by a lack of differentiation and knowledge. “Satanist” could thus include anything from self-professed satanists to occultists and witches, even though these three categories might in fact have very little in common. The notion of a satanic or occult underground, as expressed by the believers of the “satanic panic”, thus rested on beliefs which had very little to do with reality.

The very notion of an occult underground can thus be questioned – if understood as an organised cult of child molesters and cannibals. However, if occultism is used in the current scholarly fashion to denote secularised forms of esotericism then it is possible to actually consider occultists as forming an “underground” of their own. Indeed, the term “occult underground” was used at the title for James Webb’s now classical study of various forms occultist currents published in 1974, in which he claimed that “the dichotomy of Underground and Establishment is one of the most important concepts to have emerged from recent social changes” (Webb 1974: 2). According to Webb the very essence of the occult underground is its opposition to the so-called establishment:

The occult is rejected knowledge: that is, and Underground whose basic unity is that of opposition to an Establishment of Powers That Are (Webb 1974: 192).

From this perspective, then, its is thus possible to view occultism as an underground, but in order to do this it is necessary to discuss what is actually meant by the term “underground” in more detail, and how it might be possible to use the term in connection with occultism. In popular parlance, the term underground – when used to designate a social group – often implies some sort of group of people who are considered to either be in opposition to mainstream society, or to exist as it were outside the bounds of the society. As such, a social underground might be interpreted in terms of a liminal community as understood by Victor Turner. According to Turner, phenomena which in one way or another fall outside the societal structure form the basis of an ‘anti-structure’.
Turner enumerates such diverse phenomena as ‘subjugated autochthones, small nations, court jesters, holy mendicants, good Samaritans, millenarian movements, “dharma bums”, matrilateral-ity in patrilineal systems, patrilaterality in matrilineal systems, and monastic orders as examples of anti-structures (Turner 1991: 125). These liminal occurrences interested Turner from a sociological perspective, and despite their apparent differences they share three important characteristics:

Yet all have this common characteristic: they are persons or principles that (1) fall in the interstices of social structure, (2) are on its margins, or (3) occupy its lowest rungs (Turner 1991: 125).

According to Turner, the primary function of these liminal phenomena is to maintain and strengthen the social structure(s) by forming an anti-structure. The liminal persons or principles indirectly set the standards for the normal or structured society. That which is not liminal is normal, and therefore part of the structured sphere of society. If the idea of anti-structure is applied to the “occult underground”, it becomes clear that much of the criticism levelled against occultists in fact highlights what is considered to be normal in society: it is not “normal” to worship strange entities in our society; it is not “normal” to perform magical rituals; it is not “normal” to use sex for a spiritual purposes; and (in case of modern Satanism) it is not “normal” to worship Satan or to identify oneself with the evil side of the traditionally Christian dualistic worldview (not counting the fact that most satanists identify Satan as actually representing the good side, and not the other way round), and so on. Many of the prejudices levelled against occultists thus actually stem from a need to define how one should act and what one should believe in. At the same time, however, the anti-structure might work from the opposite direction in the sense that occultists themselves consciously choose to distance themselves from certain aspects of society and thereby construct new strategies of meaning and identity that are based on a rejection of what is seen as traditional values. This is, of course, not something that is unique to occultists but is also to be found in most so-called subcultures. Subcultures are often defined in opposition to other forms of culture, such as high, popular, mass, and/or folk culture. Even though the demarcation between such forms of culture can be criticised (when does one form end and the other begin?) the approach is nonetheless important as a tool for understanding contemporary Western society (Lynch 2005).

Understanding the “occult underground” as a subculture has the advantage of contrasting it with high culture and popular or mass culture. High culture is often understood as the culture of the ruling class that is based on classic literature, art, and philosophy (Lynch 2005: 6). From a religious perspective, I would argue that the religion of high culture is based on traditional Christian values as expressed through scholarly theology and the established Christian churches and denominations. There is a long tradition of animosity towards certain aspects of Western esotericism and occultism among representatives of high culture. For instance, the Catholic Church
has not only condemned the ideas of individual esotericists such as the Renaissance philosopher Giordano Bruno (burned at the stake by the Inquisition in 1600), but has also issued papal bulls against organisations such as the Order of Freemasons. Esoteric traditions were often interpreted as various forms of heresies by the Church, or sometimes even as “devil worship” and “Satanism”. Although Western esotericism from the Renaissance to the mid-19th century was set in an essentially Christian context, the esotericists posed a serious threat towards the Church in that the esotericist had no need for an intermediary link between man and God, i.e. the Church with its priests became superfluous as the esotericist (and the mystic) sought personal Gnosis and contact with the Godhead. From the mid-19th century and onwards, the criticism of the Church by occultists has many times been quite fierce.

In a similar manner, historians of science and philosophy generally maintained a negative attitude towards esotericism up till the appearance of the works of Frances Yates. Esoteric beliefs and practices were often considered to embody unreason and unscientific reasoning, and were thus held to be in opposition to the positivistic ideals of natural science. Yates, on the contrary, argued that the Hermetic Tradition (understood as esotericism) was not only congenial to modern science, but the causal factor of the emergence of modern science. This drastic reinterpretation of the emergence of modern science has been criticised, but Yates’ theories have nonetheless been instrumental in changing the attitude of historians of science and philosophy towards esotericism. Today, the categorical stance against everything connected with esotericism is not as prevalent as it used to be among scholars. Instead, esotericism is often seen as an important factor in the understanding of early modern science.

The relationship between popular culture and occultism is perhaps even more complicated than the relationship between high culture and occultism. Popular culture can be defined as the shared environment, practices and resources of everyday life (Lynch 2005: 15), which in practice means those forms of Western culture which most people encounter in their day-to-day life. On the one hand, popular culture is characterised by a general negative stance towards most forms of religion and spirituality. This negative stance is symptomatic of Western society as a secularised and post-modern society with its emphasis on natural science, as the way to truth. If something is scientifically “proven” it must be true. This negative stance can also be found in certain forms of popular culture when dealing with occultism. There appears to exist many misconceptions in the public mind regarding what occultist currents such as ritual magic, Wicca and Satanism actually consist of. Usually, these misconceptions centre on the basic premise that the various forms of occultist spirituality deal with some ill-defined form of devil worship. Furthermore, occultism is often reduced to some sort of youth revolt against the beliefs of adult society, and that occultism is something that mostly concerns teenagers. This negative understanding of occultists is often promoted by the popular press that tends to take a negative stance when reporting on occultist forms of spirituality.
On the other hand, there are other forms of popular culture in which it is possible to detect a much more positive attitude towards occultism. More specifically, it is in such forms of popular culture as literature, role-playing and computer games, comics, TV-series, movies and music that aspects of occultism are presented in more positive ways than when compared the way in which occultism is portrayed by the popular press. In these forms of popular culture, occultist practices such as ritual magic and the invocation of pagan gods are often presented as valid forms of spirituality which are no better or worse than other forms of spirituality. Expressions of popular culture such as the Harry Potter books and films, the TV series Buffy the Vampire Slayer, musicians such as Ozzy Osborne and David Bowie, and comics such as Promothea all include references to occultism in one form or another. At the same time, there are of course many examples where occultism is portrayed in a prejudiced manner, even in these forms of popular culture, but it is nevertheless possible to maintain the idea that notions pertaining to occultism tend to be presented in a positive way – and this at an increasingly scale.

But why is occultism increasingly being portrayed in a positive way in popular culture? There are a number of reasons for why certain aspects of spirituality are portrayed the way they are in popular culture, but in the case of occultism, one can discern a long tradition of presenting certain aspects of occultism in a positive way. For instance, astrology appears to be particularly congenial to the sentiments of the public, and consultation of horoscopes does not seem to have decreased with the impact of secularisation, but rather the opposite. This can be interpreted as a reaction against modernity and secularisation to a certain extent, as a form of re-enchantment of the world. However, I would argue that the increasingly positive depictions of occultism in popular culture should not be understood so much from what occultism stands for, but rather from an understanding of how popular culture often “takes over” subcultures and integrates them. This integration does not only concern subcultures such as the rave, reggae (Rastafarian), and punk cultures, but also such wide scale groups as the New Age movement. The comparison of how New Age ideals and practices have become an integrated part of popular culture is particularly relevant, since both occultism and New Age stem from Western esotericism. New Age, understood in senso lato, originally began as a spiritual countercultural movement in the 1960s and was characterised by a criticism of Western society expressed through terms of secularised esotericism (Hanegraaff 1998). One of the aspects of Western society that the early New Age movement criticised was the capitalist market economy and its focus on materialism as opposed to spiritual values. By the late 70s and early 80s, however, the New Age movement had become what it originally had set out to criticise: a spiritual supermarket which had been integrated with popular culture. In the case of occultism, it is still too early to say whether or not it will become equally integrated, but it is nevertheless obvious that many of the prime characteristics of occultism seem to resonate with popular culture: the focus on the individual, resistance towards the established and institutionalised forms of religion, the focus on experiences, and the idea that there is more to existence than
mere materialism. The integration of aspects of the underground into the established society or overground is something which Webb calls “underground establishment”:

But even dissent can be institutionalized. The 19th century saw the growth of that body of recognized intellectual opposition to the Establishment which has since become so prominent a feature of Western society. It is perhaps confusing, after emphasizing so much the dichotomy between Establishment and Underground, to call this group an Underground Establishment - but this is precisely what it is (Webb 1974: 351).

Webb mentions vegetarianism, anti-vivisection, women’s rights and kindness to animals as examples of beliefs that were prominent in the occult underground at the end of the 19th century, and which became prominent aspects of modern society. At the turn of the 20th century we can observe a similar process whereby key notions of occultist spirituality has become mainstream in late modern society, such as the sacrality of the self, the belief in nature as something sacred, to name but two. This does not mean that the occult underground has changed Western society of course, but it shows that occultist spirituality is shaped by the society which it criticises and that it is symptomatic of values and beliefs associated with late modernity.

PART TWO

Antinomianism and the Occult

As already discussed, the occult underground can be seen as forming an anti-structure to Western society in the sense that it embodies fundamental aspects of Western society in an inverted form. But to what degree is it possible to talk about a conscious and deliberate effort to go against the accepted norms of Western society? In other words, to what extent is antinomianism part of occultism?

Antinomianism (from anti- & Gk. nómos, “law”) denotes the practice of going against the accepted norms and values of society. In the context of religion in the West, antinomianism would thus imply a conscious break with key notions of Christianity, such as the idea that mankind is born with sin as a result of the fall, the identification of sin with sexuality, the patriarchal nature of Christianity, and the belief in the Church as intermediary link between mankind and God – and it is in fact notions such as these that occultists tend to oppose.

Aleister Crowley (1875–1947) – one of the most important occultists of the twentieth century – serves as a good example of how antinomianism can function within occultist spirituality. Crowley was fiercely critical of the Christian church and even styled himself To Mega Therion, or the Great Beast 666, the anti-Christ of the Book of Revelations. To Crowley, Christianity represented an abrogate form of religion based upon the notion of “slave-gods” belonging to an
“old aeon”, but according to his own esoteric religion *Thelema* (Greek for Will) founded in 1904, the “new aeon” was to be characterised by freedom. The morals and ethics of Western society and Christianity were often regarded as restraints and restrictions imposed upon the individual, and in order to progress spiritually one had to break free from bonds of the “old” values. Often enough, the most explicit way of breaking free was to adopt a new antinomian sexual morality, based on Crowley’s holy text *The Book of the Law*, which encouraged people to have sex with whomever one wanted, provided that the other partner approved. Crowley’s view on sex differed considerably from the traditional Christian belief that sex is the cause of sin. On the contrary, Crowley regarded sex as a potent way to spiritual enlightenment, and on the basis of this assumption he developed a particular form of sexual magic that he taught the elite of his disciples. To Crowley and his followers, sex was interpreted as a way to challenge the morals of Western society and a means to break free from them (Bogdan 2006). The identification of the individual’s freedom with sexual liberty was, however, not unique to Crowley, but can be found in many other occultists forms of spirituality, and also in many new religious movements (especially from the 1960s and onwards). It is evident from Crowley’s lifestyle and writings that he deliberately sought to provoke and chock the public. For instance, in his magnum opus *Magick in Theory and Practice* (1930) Crowley blatantly stated in chapter XII “Of the Bloody Sacrifice: and Matters Cognate” that he had sacrificed “a male child of perfect innocence and high intelligence” no less than 150 times every year between 1912 and 1928, which would amount to the somewhat staggering amount of 2400 sacrificed children! (Crowley 1930: 95, note 4) It is quite clear from the context, however, that Crowley was not making a confession of literally sacrificing little babies, but made a tongue-in-cheek reference to sexual magic. The popular press did not interpret passages like this in a favourable way, though, and a fierce campaign was mounted against Crowley in the British yellow press during the 1920s. With headlines such as “The most wicked man in the world” and “A man we would like to hang” Crowley was denounced as a devil worshiper, a drug addict (which he in fact was) and a murderer. For instance, the Sunday Express reported on March 4, 1923: 

*This man Crowley is one of the most sinister figures of modern times. He is a drug fiend, an author of vile books, the spreader of obscene practices. Yet such is his intellectual attainment and mental fascination that he is able to secure reputable publishers for his works and attract to him men and women of means and position (Sunday Express, March 4, 1923).*

It is significant to note that the charges levelled against Crowley during the 1920s are almost identical with the charges of the satanic panic during the 1980s. The image of Crowley in the popular press thus personified the perceived threat towards the norms and values of British society at the time, just as the “satanic underground” did sixty years later. Antinomianism continues to be an integrated part of contemporary occultism but the extent and purpose of the antinomianism varies from group to group.
In Sweden, Dragon Rouge (*Ordo Draconis et Atri Adamantis*) stands out as one of the most well-known occultist movements. Founded in 1989 by a group of teenagers in Stockholm it quickly caught the attention of the media by which it was labelled a satanic group. By the mid-90s, the movement had established itself throughout Sweden and its membership exceeded 500 people, which is a comparatively high number for a Swedish alternative spiritual organisation. During the second half of the 90s, Dragon Rouge became less visible in the mass media and its membership dwindled. However, this period was also characterised by increasing maturity of the organisation: stricter rules for local lodges were created, and a wealth of written material was produced for the members. Today, Dragon Rouge has established lodges in countries such as Germany, Poland and Italy and is thus the first Swedish occultist new religious movement to become an international movement (Granholm 2005). On their website Dragon Rouge is described in the following manner:

Dragon Rouge is a Nordic order with branches in many parts of the world. We study magic and occultism in both theory and practice. Dragon Rouge is one of few orders which focuses on the dark side of magic and the left hand path. We are exploring the nightside tradition on many different levels. Dragon Rouge is mainly an order for magical initiation, but also for brother- and sisterhood. Our aim is to make education and development of the occult possible and to be a meeting point for knowledge and experiences. Dragon Rouge is a practical magical order in which the individual experience is pivotal. We are focusing on an empirical occultism and a knowledge about the unknown based on experience.

The method of spiritual development, which is to be encountered in Dragon Rouge, is inspired by the so-called Left Hand Path, or Vama Marg, with roots in the Hindu and Buddhist Tantric traditions. According to Tantric metaphysics the creation consists of two powers or principles called *sakti* and *shiva*. *Sakti* is the active feminine principle and is understood as the pure and uncontrolled force or energy that in the human anatomy rests at the base of the spine (the *Kundalini Serpent*). In Tantric theory it is possible to awaken the Kundalini serpent through yogic practices so that it rises along the spinal cord and thereby activate the *cakras* on its way. The goal is to unite the Kundalini with the pure consciousness, *shiva*, which is interpreted as the passive male principle.

The practical aspect of the left hand path is defined by Dragon Rouge as antinomianism. There is an idea within the movement that man is bound, and thereby restricted, by unconscious norms and values. In order to progress spiritually it is necessary to free oneself from these unconscious bonds, and create conscious norms and ideals instead. The antinomianism of Dragon Rouge can thus be interpreted as a way of becoming conscious of aspects that are buried in the unconscious. In practice, this is achieved through the use of symbols that are normally interpreted as evil or destructive. Again, this is something that is to be found in Tantra, in which a fundamental thesis is
that in order to reach *moksa* or liberation from *samsara*, the wheel of rebirth, one has to overcome the impure or dark aspects of existence. The Tantric practitioner criticises the traditional Hindu and Buddhist on account of their effort to suppress the impure tendencies in themselves, since this will not lead to being free from them, but on the contrary to become a slave under them. The Tantric thus use traditionally impure things such as meat, alcohol and sex (the so-called “five M-words”), in religious rites in order to break free from the material bonds of existence. In Dragon Rouge, the purpose of using “evil” gods such as Kali or Set in rituals, in fact is to overcome “evil” aspects in psyche such as anger, fear, hatred and jealousy. In an interview Thomas Karlsson, the founder and leader of the movement, commented on the use of antinomianism:

> I believe that one should separate this form of antinomianism from the more vulgar interpretation that sometimes is expressed in certain forms of devil worship, which finds its expression in vandalism more or less. That this antinomianism must be interpreted on a religious or spiritual level. And then it is mostly about a way of approaching those symbols or those powers, if one should speak in those terms, which in religion or spirituality have been seen as harmful, or simply destructive in different ways. (...) So I believe that antinomianism should be interpreted foremost according to how one confronts the spiritual side. Instead of turning towards the good power, one turns towards the so-called evil power, the destructive principle (interview with Thomas Karlsson 3 November 2002).

The antinomianism of Dragon Rouge is thus something which is supposed to work primarily on a spiritual level, but according to Karlsson there is the possibility of extending the antinomianism to cover aspects which fall outside the traditional bounds of religion in order to question the norms and values of the secularised Western society.

> I definitely believe so... I mean religion is never wholly separated from culture or society, or the world we live in. (...) That does not necessarily mean – and I think it is very important to stress this – that the antinomianism implies a complete rejection, but that it can be a means to become conscious of the values which exist in society or which exist in religion. By turning them upside down they become more clear, by confronting them through their opposites, unconscious, invisible values and notions that might exist in society become more distinct, and then it is possible to relate to them either by rejecting them, or as if this is something which I actually agree with. So there are many [members] that actually develop a form of stricter ethical or moral stance, than what is normal in society, because of the antinomianism (interview with Thomas Karlsson 3 November 2002).

The antinomianism as a means to freedom from unconscious norms and values which have been
imposed upon the individual by the society (e.g. through our upbringing, schooling, the media, the Church) is not unique to Dragon Rouge but appears to be a standard feature in 20\textsuperscript{th} century occultism. As already mentioned, the psychologization of the occult is one of the ways in which occultism differs from classical forms of esotericism. The use of gods, angels, demons and other entities in occult rituals is in fact often seen as a means to explore the psyche, to penetrate into the deeper levels of the unconscious. The idea that man needs to explore his unconscious in order to be free from repressing norms and values is, however, not unique to occultism but is to be found in many new religious movements, of which the Church of Scientology is an illustrative example. Founded in 1954 by L. Ron Hubbard the Church of Scientology regards many of the social problems facing the West today to be caused by traumatic experiences (engrams) that are buried in the unconscious. Through their particular form of psychological healing (dianetics) it is claimed that the suppressed experiences can be brought up to consciousness, and thereby the individual can become emancipated and free from the traumas. Another aspect of the psychologization of the occult is the idea that man is only using a fraction of his true potentiality, and that latent powers of the mind might be activated through magic. Israel Regardie, the occultist and psychologist, commented on the relationship between psychology and magic in his book *The Middle Pillar* (1945):

> Analytical Psychology and magic comprise in my estimation two halves or aspects of a single technical system. Just as the body and mind are not two separate units, but are simply the dual manifestation of an interior dynamic “something” so psychology and Magic comprise similarly a single system whose goal is the integration of the human personality. Its aim is to unify the different departments and functions of man’s being, to bring into operation those which previously for various reasons were latent (Regardie 1945: 16).

In the case of Dragon Rouge, the unconscious part of man’s psyche is seen as the dark side and is often linked to what they term “dark magic”. But as the Finnish scholar Kennet Granholm has pointed out in his thesis about the group *Embracing the Dark* (2005), the concept of “dark magic” should not be understood in a moral sense, but rather as pertaining to spiritual practices that explore the dark or hidden aspects of man’s psyche. On their website, Dragon Rouge explains how they understand the “dark side”:

> The dark side can also be understood from the perspective of psychology. One of the main theses of Dragon Rouge is that man presently uses only a fraction of his total capacity. We are experiencing only an insignificant part of reality. The major part of man is hidden. Through the traditional thousand year old occult practices man can contact these hidden sides. To the hidden parts of man belongs the undeveloped and non-actualized sides of the psyche. These can be made conscious and become realised if we are entering the dark side of our psyche. We will then confront all dark and
repressed parts of the psyche like aggression, fears and basic instincts. C.G. Jung is the
psychologist who is most important to Dragon Rouge. Jung said: “Illumination is not
reached by visualizing the light but by exploring the darkness”. From this perspective
Dragon Rouge is working with the dark side.

The antinomianism of Dragon Rouge and other occultist movements is not, however, a goal in
itself, it is merely the means by which they fulfil their spiritual quest. But what then is the goal of
the magician? What is the purpose of occultism?

**Power and Self-deification**

The exact purpose of occultism and the performance of magical rituals differ from occultist to
occultist, but the overall purpose can be described as a spiritual development which leads from an
unenlightened state of being to enlightenment. This goal is already present in classical and renais-
sance esotericism, identified by Faivre as one of the constituting components of the esoteric form
of thought; that is, the experience of transmutation. The notion of spiritual progress received a
new impetus during the second half of the nineteenth century through the impact of the theories
of evolution. As already discussed, Hanegraaff has recognized these theories as a significant factor
in the secularisation of esotericism, in which evolution assumed the form of a belief in not only
the spiritual progress of the individual, but also in the belief of the spiritual evolution of mankind.
There is an elitist aspect of this goal in which the spiritual development sometimes is interpreted
as setting the adept above his fellow men, a fact that is illustrated by the Adeptus Minor initiation
ritual of the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn, wherein the candidate is obliged to state the
following pertinent paragraph during the obligation:

> I further promise and swear that with the Divine Permission I will, from this day
> forward, apply myself to the Great Work – which is, to purify and exalt my Spiritual
> Nature so that with the Divine Aid I may at length attain to be more than human, and
> thus gradually raise and unite myself to my higher and Divine Genius, and that in this
> event I will not abuse the great power entrusted to me. (Regardie 1938: 214)

The Divine Genius that the members of the Golden Dawn sought to unite with was referred to by
different names, such as the Higher Self, the Daemon, but perhaps most commonly as the Holy
Guardian Angel. Although occultists differ in how the Divine Genius is interpreted, the basic idea
is that it constitutes a divine aspect in man that the profane or unenlightened person is not aware
of. This idea originally derives from the Gnosticism of late antiquity, in which it was believed
that man’s soul was nothing but a spark of the divine Godhead, which had been entrapped in the
material world through a primordial fall. The goal of the Gnostic was to free the divine aspect in
man and to re-unite it with its divine source. In a similar manner the occultist sees the Divine
Genius as the microcosmic counterpart of the macrocosmic Godhead, and the goal is to reach a
conscious awareness of, or union with, the Divine Genius. This union is often referred to as the Knowledge of and Conversation with the Holy Guardian Angel, and the similarities with the goal of Christian mysticism, that is *Unio Mystica*, are quite obvious (at least to a certain extent). With the psychologization of the occult (identified by Hanegraaff as part of the secularisation of Western esotericism) during the first half of the twentieth century, the Divine Genius or Holy Guardian Angel was increasingly seen as an aspect of man’s psyche. To Crowley, the Holy Guardian Angel was nothing but the unconscious aspect of the mind, and consequently the object of his magical system was to become conscious of the unconscious. Furthermore, Crowley believed that the unconscious contained the very essence of each human being (which he called the True Will), and by discovering this essence one would find the answers to man’s basic existential questions: Who am I, and what is the purpose of my life? Or to put it in the words of Crowley himself:

> It should now be perfectly simple for everybody to understand the Message of the Master Therion [i.e. Crowley]. Thou must (1) Find out what is thy Will, (2) Do that Will with (a) one-pointedness, (b) detachment, (c) peace. Then, and then only, art thou in harmony with the Movement of Things, thy will part of, and therefore equal to, the Will of God. And since the will is but the dynamic aspect of the self, and since two different selves could not possess identical wills; then, if thy will be God’s will, Thou art That. (Crowley 1919: 42)

The identification of the True Will with God’s Will, or with the essence of each human being with the Godhead, shows that to Crowley the goal of magic is to become aware of the divine aspect in man. In fact, to Crowley “there is no God but Man” as he blatantly stated in *Liber Oz* published in 1944. This does not mean that Crowley was an atheist, but rather that he believed that God is Man, or *Deus est Homo* which is one of the mottos of Ordo Templi Orientis, an initiatic order that Crowley became the head of during the 1920s and which remains to this day one of the largest occultist orders in the West. The goal of occultist forms of spirituality differ to a certain extent from classical forms of Western esotericism in the sense that occultists do not strive to *unite* with God but rather to reach *self-deification*, or to become gods themselves. According to Granhøm self-deification is specially linked to the so-called Left Hand Path in occultism, but I would argue, however, that the notion of self-deification is already present in *fin de siècle* occultism as exemplified by the Golden Dawn and Aleister Crowley. In fact, one of Crowley’s disciples Charles Stansfeld Jones, identified for a number of years as Crowley’s “magical child” commented on this very fact in a letter to Crowley written in 1916:

> As far as I can see Everyone who attains in this Æon will remain as God on Earth, viz, this is the Positive side, whereas the Old Æon methods caused man to become absorbed in God (Jones, in press)
As stated in the previous part, the antinomianism of Dragon Rouge is the means to accomplish self-deification. According to Dragon Rouge, man is potentially divine, and it is only when he or she becomes divine that free will can be reached. Using this free will, it is believed that the adept is able to create his or her own universe, thereby becoming not only a god, but a god of creation or demiurge. The goal of the initiatory system of Dragon Rouge is thus not an end in itself (self-deification) but merely the beginning of new process of creation that takes place according to the will of the magician. In discussing the highest and final degree of the degree system of Dragon Rouge, Thomas Karlsson states:

Yes, even though we have turned this around a bit and say that the Right Hand Path leads to a clear goal, whereas the Left Hand Path leads to a new beginning. In other words, the final goal is when man has transformed him/herself, but the sefirotic structure has been dissolved and everything has been absorbed by a black hole, and there the human being suddenly appears as the new demiurge and creates a new sefirotic structure, formulated by the magician’s – or then the god’s – will (interview with Thomas Karlsson 021103).

The sefirotic structure referred to by Thomas Karlsson is a reference to the kabbalistic Tree of Life that contains ten spheres or sefira. The Tree of Life is a glyph or diagram of the created universe (but also of man’s psyche) in which the lowest sphere Malkuth corresponds to the material world, and the highest sphere to Kether which is understood as the first manifested aspect of the Godhead stemming from the limitless divine light. The ten spheres are often used by initiatic orders, such as the Golden Dawn, as the basis for their initiatory structure with each degree corresponding to a particular sphere on the Tree. The initiatic journey from Malkuth, the lowest sphere, to Kether is interpreted as a spiritual journey leading from an unenlightened state of being to enlightenment, or self-deification. In Dragon Rouge, the initiatic structure is not based on the Tree of Life as such, but on its dark or reversed side, the Tree of Death. The ten spheres on this side of the Tree are seen as empty shells (klippoth) and they correspond to the nightside or dark side of the universe and man’s psyche – that is, to those aspects of the psyche that are normally repressed in society and religion. By dissolving the sefirotic structure and then reformulating it according to the will of the magician (now a god), a new universe is created out of the magician’s innermost being, or self.

Occultism and modern spirituality

Focus on the self is not something peculiar to occultism, though. The self-centeredness of the occultist spirituality as exemplified by Aleister Crowley and Dragon Rouge reflects a larger preoccupation with the self that characterises Western spirituality in modern and post-modern Western society. This self-centeredness is, furthermore, not an expression of an ascetic form of spirituality.
that encourages a withdrawal from active participation in society. On the contrary, occultism often maintains a positive, albeit critical, stance towards Western society. The use of magic is thus not only seen as a spiritual process but also as a means to influence the “mundane” plane of existence. In 1930 Aleister Crowley tried to define and explain magic (or Magick as he preferred to spell it) for the public:

**Magick is the Science and Art of causing Change to occur in conformity with Will.**

(Illustration: It is my Will to inform the World of certain facts within my knowledge. I therefore take “magical weapons”, pen, ink, and paper; I write “incantations – these sentences – in the “magical language” i.e. that which is understood by the people I wish to instruct; I call forth “spirits”, such as printers, publishers, booksellers, and so forth, and constrain them to convey my message to those people. The composition and distribution of this book is thus an act of Magick by which I cause change to take place in conformity with my Will) (Crowley 1930: XVII).

The definition stands in sharp contrast to the image of Crowley as the founder of modern Satanism and promoter of blasphemous rites, and instead reveals a rather “sober” approach to magic with a this-worldly purpose. As discussed in the first part of this essay, the depiction of Crowley and other occultists as opponents to the norms and values of Western society actually says more about the context in which the accusations are verbalised, than about the target of the accusations as such. In times of increased social and religious change, the norms and morals of society are challenged by new values and strategies of epistemology. The criticism levelled against occultist forms of spirituality, reaching its crescendo with the so-called satanic panic of the 1980s and early 1990s, identifies the fears of moral disintegration that was felt among certain groups in Western society. In that sense, the occult underground can be understood as an anti-structure in the Turnerian sense; that is, occultists were seen as embodying everything that was not normal and stood in contrast to Western society - and thereby defining what was perceived to be normal.

A closer look at occultism will show that it has little in common with the criticism directed against it. In fact, occultism (understood as a form of secularised esotericism) embodies many of the same characteristics that are to be found in modern and post-modern Western society: (a) Occultism is a self-centred form of spirituality which deals with the personal development of the practitioner; (b) Occultism is focused on religious experiences (altered states of consciousness), which in practice means that it is oriented towards the performance of rituals and meditations which sometimes include the use of sex and/or drugs; (c) Occultism tends to have a positive attitude towards material values and sexuality; (d) Occultism is an eclectic form of spirituality that is characterised by a positive attitude towards a wide range of practices and religious beliefs; (e) Occultism is not dogmatic in the sense that there is only one way to “truth”, and there is thereby an inherent criticism among occultists towards certain forms of organised religion (especially
towards what is perceived to be the “Christian church”;
(f) Occultism is antinomian in the sense that occultists often regard themselves as challenging the religious values of Western society (even though it can be questioned if they actually are going against the norms of Western society). As mentioned, these characteristics are not unique to occultism, but can be seen as an intrinsic part of modern spirituality and the majority of new religious movements – and the occult underground can thus be seen as a reflection of modern Western society.

Occultism can thus be seen as a form of modern Western spirituality that to a large extent centres on a discourse of criticism towards “established” or mainstream Western society, or to use the imagery of overgrounds and undergrounds: occultism forms a spiritual underground that rejects the overground, but which from time to time surfaces as integrated parts of the overground. Therefore, the nature of occultist spirituality is paradoxical in that not only rejects and criticises aspects of modernity, but that it at the same time embodies key notions of modernity.

**Literature**


DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press
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Underground or images of nowhere

Since the turn of the century, underground has been used, exploited and recycled in the exhibition apparatus together with other cognates of subaltern notions. The modernist avant-garde stories are retold in a retro fashion inspired by early Soho or Berlin in the mid 70’s. In this essay, the contemporary need for a cultural and artistic underground is questioned and reflected upon from the point of view of a simple juxtaposition, that which refers to the blatant irrelevance of a reality once surrounding the following phrase uttered by an RAF member “I was forced to go underground”. The phrase no longer conveys any palpable reality, underground in its contemporary usage is not and could not be a matter of life and death. Refurbishing notions such as underground or revolution (“Join the Revolution”, as the motto goes in both Neoconservative discourse and commercial ads) are not merely new layers of added meaning through cyclic movements of fashion, as it was studied and explained by Roland Barthes. Contemporary reintegration of these notions through staging indicates a historical shift. This essay is an attempt to touch upon certain aspects of the historical shift insofar as it provides us with an account of how terms, such as underground, are reintegrated in the contemporary flow of images and why staging has become a central operation in contemporary culture.

As the contemporary travesty of underground is a calculated, but unarticulated, manipulation of the term as a metaphor, the first task is to unpack different layers of meaning connected to it. A further understanding of the term in its contemporary usage requires that one reaches a minimal representation that runs across each of its layers of meaning. A minimal representation is considered here — not merely as a structural system — but rather as a narrative force that assumes varying degrees of strength and operates upon the reality of societal dialectics. Such a minimal representation is discussed through Greek tragedy, more precisely in the narrative functioning of a peculiar tragic figure, namely Antigone in Sophoclean drama with the same name. As we shall see, the operational component in contemporary images of underground is variations of a mise-en-scène of a fallen tragic hero. The figure of the fallen tragic hero, as one of impossibility of resistance, is subsequently discussed through the German political underground movement in the 1970’s. The contemporary staging is informed and analysed through a detour to a reading of Greek Tragedy since a common point, the historical inevitability of the tragic mode of subjectivity, is at stake in both sequences. While the Antigone is the case of a mythological staging in the Greek Polis, a contemporary historic sequence, Germany in the 1970’s and the case of Ulrike Meinhof, is a stance of a closure, a stepping down of the scene, in which the notion of underground looses its historical significance.
The semantics of Underground
The point of departure could be clusters of semantic occurrences of the notion, notable at the level of phenomenological observation. To begin with; underground is an attribute recognizable in expressions such as “underground movements”, in other words a grammatical function that qualifies movements, figures and forces. The qualification expresses existence of illegal individuals, activities or organized individuals in different historical situations. Secondly, the notion denotes a certain anonymity or rupture with the societal definition of lawfulness and eligibility. In expressions such as “Underground culture”, the declaration of opposition to hegemonic culture is often associated with varying degrees of subversive intentions. The counter-hegemonic culture has ever since modernism been a part of a conscious radical strategy. Zines and Samizdads have been instances of such a counter-hegemonic culture. As a part of the same denotation, the notion tends to function as a generic determination of the mode of aesthetica expression, usually with short-lived historical accuracy, such as in “Underground Rock”, a label for a musical expression practiced in the former socialist countries. Underground connotes a historical, invisible, illicit mobility. This is instantiated in the anonymous expressions that wander about in the modern metropolis; from dark alleys of an industrial, capitalist London in the 19th century to apocalyptic undergrounds of a future world as depicted in science fiction works, from a Dickensian universe to the underground tunnels in Chris Marker’s *La jetée* from 1962.

Twofoldness of the Notion
The grammatical, connotative, generic occurrences listed above all share, as their condition of possibility, a central visual metaphorical operation. The notion unites and disjoins the visible and invisible, the mapped and recognized surface and its unknown reverse. Underground thus implicates depth and expansion of the domain of existence, on the condition that existence is connected to expressivity. Often, an extensive existence like this is conceived as irrupting in unsettled forms and unmoulded shapes: Voices, anonymous communiqués, shadows of strange figures in the shady streets of new cities. The extension evoked by the term underground is a doubling of existence, a world of non-worlds and the reverse of the laws of the upper world, as in Alice’s wonderful adventures. Wonders and shadows of strangeness belongs to a modern time in which the reproduction of voice detaches it from human breathing.¹

The visual metaphor both depends upon and gives rise to a series of dichotomies: surface and depth, structure and movement, explicit text and latent message. The layered visual field evokes, or perhaps echoes, the acts nourished by desire, hence the urge for disclosing and the lure of

concealment, fascination of gaze and the horror of witnessing, all ramifications and connections which pertain to the metaphoric, expanded space. Underground both conjoins the lawful and the illicit and opposes obscure paths of desire and edifices of morality. It is this single moment of conjunction and apposition that we should pay more attention to, since it is not only an internal linguistic function that takes place in the metaphoric space, the conjunction of appositions is the organizational locality for the introduction of subjectivity into the semantic field.

Mythem, a term coined by Claude Lévi-Straus, provides us with a simple key for an understanding of such an organizational locality. A mythem is a minimum of narrative organization around series of appositions. I employ the mythem in a slightly different sense than its strictly structural linguistic conception. The mythem is a distribution of elements pertaining to a given historic situation, around the point of incommensurability inherent to that situation.

Nowhere else than in Greek tragedy, conceived as a representation of the destiny of the epic subject in Greek Polis, is the mythemic function of underground so efficiently depicted. In this respect, Antigone is a classical stance. Firstly, because of its specific position between Oedipus Rex, The Seven Against Thebe and Oedipus at the Columns, a series of plays that conjure up the mode of representation specific to the operational function of mythemic with its visual metaphors of underground clearly linked to the still new notion of law in Greek Polis. Secondly, Antigone is the single tragedy that has received much attention since the 18th century and onwards. Later and during the last century, the piece has still been central to a wide range of theoreticians. Antigone has been to a great extent the focus of various critical studies in the English-speaking world, partly due to the forceful assertion of Gender Studies and partly because of Lacan’s comments on the play in the 1950’s.

The schematic arrangement presented here requires a detour into psychoanalytical theory. This seems inevitable since the Unconscious (Das Unbewusste), since its invention by Freud, has generally been conceived as being hidden forces of desire roaming beneath the threshold of consciousness, or as a treasure hidden in a labyrinthine cave under the surface of self-awareness. The 19th century romantic tradition and its indirect but nevertheless decisive influence on modernist traditions, such as surrealism, largely contributed to the spatial representation of the Freudian term. Doubtlessly, Lacan and his pupils in the mid 50’s were completely right in pinpointing the unfounded nature of such an understanding of Freudian term. They quite accurately explained the dangers of a reduction of Freudian invention to the idea of a mythical cellar of wishes and passions. Surely, the Freudian term has hardly anything to do with what was called the subliminal in

3. In this context, one may mention particularly Judith Butler’s Antigone’s Claim, Kinship between Life and Death, Columbia University Press, 2000.
4. Despite André Breton’s great disappointment after having met Freud in person, Surrealists continued to see in Freudian discovery a solid ground and a widened field for poetical exploration of delusional state of mind as a source of poetical creativity.
the late 19th century literature, still and despite of all this, the critique misses the real significance of the confusion involved in the history of the Freudian Unconscious.

The central question is why such an image continues to be a source of fascination in a variety of cultural fields. Incongruity of imaginary spatialisation of the unconscious is itself an ideologically effective element that unites late romanticism with modernist avant-garde and develops this unity into contemporary foliage of imagery. In other words, the “misconception” is to be treated as a productive confusion or embrouillage of distinct categories such as space and structure, subliminal and the unconscious, reverie and hysteria. These are instances of crossing over boundaries, a mixture of what is elevated and what is base. The case is more blatant in its manifestations in culturally poor situations. The destiny of the unconscious in popular culture reveals the force that lies behind the visual metaphor and the mythemic organization of the metaphoric of underground.

**Antigone**

Goethe finds this tragic figure, Antigone and her words, particularly her defence of her suicidal action, as shocking and nonsensical. As late as in the 1940’s, the editor of the play for Les Belles lettres edition of Sophocles tragedies, Paul Masqueray, while stressing upon the beauty of her character in the tragedy, felt obliged to give an apologetic explanation for Antigone’s words.5

This may seem strange because the plot is surprisingly clear. How could we mistake what is at stake in this tragedy? Antigone’s law is not the stately sanctioned laws, her claims which are those of the world beneath, do not appeal to any conceivable group of citizens of the city. Against her, there is a ruling class for whom the king is synonymous to tyranny.

The play begins where Seven Against Thebes had ended. Two brothers, Eteocles and Polynices, sons of Oedipus, have fallen at one of the gates of Thebes. King Creon allows Eteocles to be buried, but he orders a herald to forbid any funeral rites or burial of the corpse of Polynices. Antigone, Oedipus’ daughter, living in King Creon’s household, informs her sister of what she has resolved to do:

*In spite of the orders, I shall give my brother burial, whether thou, Ismene, wilt join with me or not.*

*We twain are left alone, and if we brave the king’s decree, an unhappy death awaits us. Weak women such as we cannot strive with men; rather were it seemly to bow to those that are stronger than ourselves. The dead, who lie below, will deal leniently with us, as forced to yield.*

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5. He writes: “Il est bien plus simple de voir les choses comme elles sont, en d’autres termes, de constater que si Antigone en raisonnant comme elle le fait, se met subitement à déraisonner, c’est parce que Sophocle ne le fait parler, mais un autre. Cet autre, c’est Hérodote.” in Antigone, Les belles lettres, Paris, p.75. Enigmatic claim that barely shed any light on the issue and only adds a erudite reference to an allegedly epic story.
The response of Antigone is interesting. The perspective is clearly that of the dead:

Gladly will I meet death in my sacred duty to the dead. Longer time have I to spend with them than with those who live upon the earth. Seek not to argue with me; nothing so terrible can come to me but that an honoured death remains.  

After passages in which Creon, the ruler of Thebes, explains his act and the chorus’ expression of certain cautiousness about the decree, the news is brought by guards placed at the corps of Polynices that the body has been covered by earth whereupon Creon orders the guilty one to be arrested. In the next scene, Antigone is brought to the palace by guards. The exchange between Creon and Antigone that takes place in the middle part of the drama is the most important part and the much commented on.

Yes, for it was not Zeus who made this proclamation, nor was it Justice \[Dike\] who lives with the gods below that established such laws among men, nor did I think your proclamations strong enough to have power to overrule, mortal as they were, the unwritten and unfailing ordinances \[nomisma\] of the gods. For these have life, not simply today and yesterday, but forever, and no one knows how long ago they were revealed. For this I did not intend to pay the penalty among the gods for fear of any man’s pride. I knew that I would die, of course I knew, even if you hade made no proclamation. But if I die before my time, I account that a gain. For does not whoever lives among many troubles, as I do, gain by death? So it is in no way painful for me to meet with death; if I had endured that the son of my own mother should die and remain unburied, that would have given me pain, but this gives me none. And if you think my actions foolish, that amounts of folly by a fool.  

Both Antigone and Creon refer to the Greek notion of \textit{nomos} signifying law, a term that evokes a sense of honour as linked to the proper name. Phrased in Hegelian terms, \textit{nomos} is imbued by a sense of ethical obligation in the domain of family life (\textit{sittlichkeit}). This is seemingly what Antigone’s argument is based on. She claims the superiority of “unwritten laws” over the laws of the city and thereby presents a juxtaposition of terms that runs through the tragedy. The point has been pivotal to Hegel’s well-known analyses of the play in \textit{Phenomenology of Spirit} and in a more developed version in \textit{Philosophy of right}. The Antigone for Hegel is essentially the expression of the transition between the domain of ethics (\textit{sittlichkeit}) and the higher level of universal law. Accordingly, Hegel perceives the tragedy as an expression of an antagonism between the ethics of the family and the public law. He writes:

family piety is expounded in Sophocles’ Antigone—one of the most sublime presenta-
tions of this virtue—as principally the law of woman, and as the law of a substantiality
at once subjective and on the plane of feeling, the law of the inward life, a life which
has not yet attained its full actualization; as the law of ancient gods, ‘the gods of the
underworld’ as ‘an everlasting law, and no man knows at what time it was first put
forth’. This law is there displayed as a law opposed to public law, the law of the land.
This is the supreme opposition in ethics and therefore in tragedy; and it is individual-
ized in the same play in the opposing natures of man and woman.\footnote{8}

Antigone stands for the outer limit that both separates and unites family, the immediate ethical
moment, and state constitution, the highest instance of actualized substantiality in and for itself.
Tragedy in Hegel’s view is the explanation of a natural right with obscure roots. This right remains
obscure insofar as it is an ephemeral, particular moment awaiting its subjective accomplish-
ment in the public right. The critical point is that for Hegel, the ethical right precedes all articulations
of jurisprudence and is always already present in consciousness. Furthermore, Hegel regards moral
law a mythical force. It is not only tautological but also the tautological core of all rational or
faith-based explanations. The dialectical Hegelian moment presented in this passage points out
the self-grounding function of the unwritten laws, which means that it is not only devoid of any
need for an external grounding instance but also that it actively determines its own ground. Hegel
regards the unwritten laws Antigone refers to\footnote{9} as being such a natural system of rights or ethics.
At this point in his reading, Hegel attempts to introduce the notion of guilt and crime into his
argumentation. The crime and guilt are rooted in the antithetical rapport between what is for
Hegel “The divine right of essential Being” at one extreme end and the articulated and public
right on the other. All actions are susceptible to breaks at either end of such an ethical rapport.
Subsequently, a Hegelian reading should find both antagonists of the play, Creon and Antigone,
as violating the other part’s rights. The first violates the divine and mythical natural right and the
second violates the laws of the city. However, Hegel develops his argument in another and more
intriguing direction. He first endorses the comprehensive nature of Creon’s decree by the follow-
ing argument:

But the government, the restored unitary self of the community, will punish him who
already proclaimed its devastation on the walls of the city, by depriving him of the
last honour. He who wantonly attacked the Spirit’s highest form of consciousness, the
Spirit of the community, must be stripped of the honour of his entire and finished
being …\footnote{10}

\footnote{8. Philosophy of Right, § 166, p. 114f.}
\footnote{9. This is what Hegel develops in § 437 in Phenomenology of Spirit, p. 261.}
\footnote{10. § 473, ibid, p. 286.}
The unitary self of the community is not opposed in Hegelian dialectic to being, it is rather the real expression of its unfolding. The corpse in the play lying outside the walls of Thebe, is the leftover of such a historical process. That is why the guilt is conceived to be on the side of Antigone’s action:

It can be that the right which lays in wait is not present in its own proper shape to the consciousness of the doer, but it is present implicitly in the inner guilt of the resolve and the action. But the ethical consciousness is more complete, its guilt more inexcusable, if it knows beforehand the law and the power which it opposes, if it takes them to be violence and wrong, to be ethical merely by accident, and, like Antigone knowingly commits the crime.\(^{11}\)

The crime is defined here as the defiance against the unitary self of the state power and the defiance is made possible by a regression to the family right. Such a rebellion against the higher state of morality expressed by the state power is then doomed to fail since it expresses a pure particularity as opposed to the universal organization of societal rights actualized in the state formation:

Being the law of weakness and darkness it therefore at first succumbs to the powerful law of the upper world, for the power of the former is effective in the underworld, not on earth.\(^{12}\)

Hegel conceives here the existence of state confronted with its own mythical and surpassed substance actualized by Antigone’s action. The tragic moment is subsequently a mistake committed by the higher unitary power to misrecognize its own ground: "But the outwardly actual which has taken away from the inner world its honour and power has in so doing consumed its own essence."\(^ {13}\) The cannibalism of the state to exhaust its own ground is the core of the inevitable mistake or error of the state, expressed in Creon’s treatment of Antigone. Hence, Hegel presents an intriguing definition of an Aristotelian term, namely \textit{Harmatia}, the mistake.\(^ {14}\) What Creon disavows and exposes is the irrational but essential ground, which because it is being surpassed by the constitution, is the real guarantee of the social order and functionality of the law.

The Hegelian thesis of the antagonism between the particular right inherent in the family, represented by woman, and the universal constitution, represented by the state (the sovereign), has been critical for studies of the play and hardly surpassed. The subtle dialectical turn that operates through Hegel’s comments is not always taken into account, however. The dialectical conception of tragedy is to be found in these lines: "The publicly manifest Spirit has the root of its

\(^{11}\) § 470, ibid, p. 284.
\(^{12}\) § 474, p. 286f.
\(^{13}\) §474.
\(^{14}\) \textit{Harmatia} means literally missing the mark in a reference to the art of archery.
power in the nether world. The self-certainty and self-assurance of a nation possesses the truth of its oath, which binds all into one, solely in the mute unconscious substance of all, in the waters of forgetfulness. Thus it is that the fulfilment of the Spirit of the upper world is transformed into its opposite, and it learns that its supreme right is a supreme wrong, that its victory is rather its own downfall.”

Hegel is referring to lines such as these in the tragedy:

Creon: But he was trying to destroy this country, and the other stood against him to protect it.
Antigone: Nonetheless, Hades demands these laws.
Creon: But the noble man has not equal claim to honour with the evil.
Antigone: Who knows if this action is free from blame in the world below?
Creon: An enemy is never a friend, even when he is dead.
Antigone: I have no enemy by birth, but I have friends by birth.
Creon: Then go below and love those friends, if you must love them! But while I live a woman shall not rule.

It is “the water of forgetfulness” out of which Antigone’s figure emerges, qua a piece of substance that has overthrown its own expression, that is the constitution, it turns them into their opposite. Antigone in such a reading is viewed as the extension of the reign of death in the underworld, a metonymy for the corpse of Polynices: “The dead, whose right is denied, knows therefore how to find instruments of vengeance, which are equally effective and powerful as the power which injured it.”

Yet, Hegel’s dialectical exposition remains inconsistent at some crucial moments. Even though, Hegel’s stand on the foundations of rights acclaimed by Antigone may be considered as accurate, still, there is a difference between such claims and the decision of defying Creon’s edict. She may be taking sides with the dead but if so, this is not the same thing as being the fatal hand of death, the complete identification with the corpse of her fallen brother. In the first lines of the play, this is made clear: “Gladly will I meet death in my sacred duty to the dead. Longer time have I to spend with them than with those who live upon the earth.” It is not her ascending from the underworld that lends her character the fascinating beauty mentioned by many of the comments, but rather her tragic heroism, the act of sacrifice guided by a destiny written in a space outside the walls of the play itself, that renders her an exceptional status. Contrary to what Hegel claims,

15. Hegel, §474, p. 287f.
17. Hegel, §474.
she has consciously assumed her own death regardless of the grounds on which such a sacrifice is founded. Precisely this point seems to cause a flaw in the Hegelian schema. How could Antigone, the representation of family ethics act in such a resolute and self-conscious manner, while Creon, the representation of the state and a higher degree of dialectical unfolding of the spirit, acts blindly and hesitantly to the extent that his action brings forth the tragic end of his own ruling family? Moreover, what is exactly the mistake committed by Creon from a Hegelian standpoint? Certainly, in the context of the Philosophy of Rights Hegel makes an example of Antigone as to illustrate the consequences of the conflation of the private sphere and the public law in Greek polis. However, the illustration itself is constructed according to a dialectical schema of antithetic positions: the particular versus the universal, forces of underground against the supreme spirit realized in societal institutions. The question is whether such a schema has any significant bearing for an understanding of the tragic effect produced by Antigone’s act and its consequences. Creon exercises power according to the proposition “All enemies of state are exempted from being honoured by ceremonial burial.”, in other words, the universality of law asserts that there may not be a single person who has insulted the state power and who at the same time would be allowed a last honour. Creon is neither questioning or ignoring power of the gods. In fact, he is only maintaining the separating line, the river of forgetfulness, between those forces and the affairs of the city. Against the committed violation of the edict, Creon maintains the boundaries of the state power in regard to divine forces.

In effect, there is no error involved in the play itself as it could be said of Oedipus’s mistake in Oedipus Rex. Instead, there is a point of excess, that is sank into oblivion, namely the excess of patricide and incest committed by Oedipus which shook the constitution of Thebes, and caused disarray and scandal in the elite of the society. Even according to the internal logic of Sophoclean plays, Oedipus’ fall is the direct reason why Polynices carried out his assault along the walls of Thebes. The chorus, the ruling establishment of the city has not forgotten the event:

Chorus: I see that the ancient sorrows of the house of the Labdacids are heaped upon the sorrows of the dead. Each generation does not set its race free, but some god hurls it down and the race has no release. For now that dazzling ray of hope that had been spread over the last roots in the house of Oedipus — that hope, in its turn, the blood-stained dust of the gods infernal and mindlessness in speech and frenzy at the mind cuts down.19

From such a perspective the positions are recast radically. It is doubtful if the moral of family and the constitution could be held apart in a dialectical schema. Oedipus’ crime was precisely a crime that connects the public and the private. Its private nature was such that it could impossibility be

separated from the state affairs. The drama in Antigone relates the same aporeia: How to understand the universality of the law when confronted with the pure contingency of prohibitions that cross through all registers of life? The attention should therefore be turned towards what we may call the introduction of an irreducible split, a disseminating power coextensive to the introduction of universal articulation of law as an unconditional principle. It is the historical deployment of such a universality that in each encounter with its ultimate lack of coherence, it projects its claim of unconditionality on a mythical past that never could have existed. Antigone’s defiance in this respect reveals the effects of such a split whose trace is set since Oedipus’ inevitable and inadvertent crime.

The main problem in Hegelian dialectic is that it is unable to allocate any conceptual operationality to the category of singularity. The tragedy is encompassed by a conflict between the particular and the universal and such a framework is obviously prone to inconsistency when confronted with both Creon’s tyrannical rule and Antigone’s uncompromising self-consciousness. The singularity of her act is obvious and in sharp contrast to her sister’s conduct, which is a more typical and historically plausible option. From the point of view of the social order, her behaviour remains devoid of sense, it’s a pure traumatic moment. Hegelian dialectic fails to take into account the split that precedes the structures of an antagonistic system because the dialectical movement is supposed to unfold itself through the occurrence of incompatibility between the universal and one of the particular instances. This logic falls short since it is unable to measure the incommensurability and non-opposition in the relation between the singular and the universal. Such shortcomings are inherent to any schema that postulates a subjective self-identity as the posterior synthetic substance of the whole chain of mediations.

In his Seminar VII in 1959, Lacan who points that Creon is acting as the law, in other words for the best of everyone (le bien de tous), and that the issue is not that public law interferes in the private sphere but that the law is exerted unconditionally and for the best of all and everyone. It is exactly such an unconditionality, inherent to law in its formal structure that brings forth disaster consequences of the tyrannical edict. The edict, as Lacan points out, means the punishment of the dead. The cruelty of the edict aims not at Polyniceis as a person, i.e. a subject in the network of historical relations, but at his corpse as the materialization of pure being. Creon is not simply the representation of the social order as Hegel wants it, he is the voice of a law that crosses the border and aims into the realm of pure being at the moment it claims its unconditional universality. Up to this point, Lacan’s comment could be considered as a Hegelian reading that corrects some of the flaws in Hegel, but the distance between the two theoretical frameworks is to be found in each.

20 In the framework of Lacan’s theories, such an unconditionality is inherent to the functioning of superego. The importance of the play for Lacan is not limited to a merely historical survey, but rather dependent on a search for a transhistoric structure revealed by the tragedy and organized around a central mythem, which ultimately is that of Oedipus Rex.
starting point. While in Hegel, the movement of the spirit paves its way across incompatibility of particular instances, the point of departure in Lacan is the constant return of the singular at any given articulation of a logic that encompasses the All and the One at the same time. The singularity in question is in Seminar VII is explained as incommensurability of desire and enjoyment.

Here, our purpose is not to discuss the details of Lacanian theories. The main point is that Antigone, contrary to what the antagonistic schema implies, is not an incarnation of the laws of the underworld in form of a counter-discourse. Only from the point of view of the law she could be conceived as the acting part of the dead body of Polyneices, because this is the only possible way for the societal order to grasp “her senseless and bewildered nature”.

The Mythem of Antigone

Antigone’s public declaration of defiance is met by Creon’s decision to sentence her to death. The passage that precedes the execution of her punishment contains a puzzling and oft-cited passage in the play. Antigone’s words connect the idea of underground forces to the tragic fate of her entire family. First, it is Creon that explains the peculiar form of punishment.

Creon: Do you not know that dirges and wailing before death would never be given up, if it were allowed to make them freely? Take her away —now! And when you have enshrined her, as I proclaimed, in her covered tomb, leave her alone, deserted—let her decide whether she wishes to die or to live entombed in such a home. It makes no difference, since our hands are clean so far as regards this girl. But no matter what, she will be stripped of her home here above.

Creon pursues in these lines the line of argument that Antigone already belongs to the world of beneath, the realm of the dead and therefore sending her to the tomb is merely an act of returning her to the place where she belongs.

Antigone: Tomb, bridal-chamber, deep-dug eternal prison where I go to find my own, whom in the greatest numbers destruction has seized and Persephone has welcomed among the dead! Last of them all and in by far the most shameful circumstances, I will descend, even before the fated term of my life is spent. But I cherish strong hopes that I will arrive welcome to my father, and pleasant to you, Mother, and welcome, dear brother, to you. For, when each of you died, with my own hands I washed and dressed you and poured drink-offerings at your graves. But now, Polyneices, it is for tending your corpse that I win such reward as this. [And yet I honoured you rightly, as the wise understand. Never, if I had been a mother of children, or if a husband had been rotting after death, would I have taken that burden upon myself in violation of the citizens’ will. For the sake of what law, you ask, do I say that? A husband lost, another might have been found, and if bereft of a child, there could be a second from some other
man. But when father and mother are hidden in Hades, no brother could ever bloom for me again. Such was the law whereby I held you first in honour, but for that Creon judged me guilty of wrongdoing and of dreadful outrage, dear brother! And now he leads me thus in his hands’ strong grasp, when I have enjoyed no marriage bed or bridal song and have not received any portion of marriage or the nurture of children. But deserted by friends, in misery I go living to the hollow graves of the dead. What law of the gods have I transgressed? Why should I look to the gods anymore? What ally should I call out to, when by my reverence I have earned a name for irreverence? Well, then, if these events please the gods, once I have suffered my doom I will come to know my guilt. But if the guilt lies with my judges, I could wish for them no greater evils than they inflict unjustly on me.21

Antigone’s arguments as to why she is prepared to sacrifice her life for a brother but not for a child or husband has appeared to many as devoid of sense and in contrast to her previous arguments. It is noticeable that there is a change of tone ever since the chorus addresses her with the word “child” in verse 855. Her argumentation is in an almost infantile way both sincere and cruel. The passage has been important to many contemporary commentators and among them Lacan, perhaps not only because of its obvious connection to kinship structure and gender relations but also because the passage connects to the central mythem in Oedipus Rex. We have to return to Levis-Strauss’ analysis of mythem in order to fully develop this connection.

The myth has to do with the inability, for a culture which holds the belief that mankind is autochthonous (see, for instance, Pausanias, VIII, xxix, 4: plants provide a model for humans), to find a satisfactory transition between this theory and the knowledge that human beings are actually born from the union of man and woman. Although the problem obviously cannot be solved, the Oedipus myth provides a kind of logical tool which relates the original problem—born from one or born from two?—to the derivative problem: born from different or born from same? By a correlation of this type, the overrating of blood relations is to the underrating of blood relations as the attempt to escape autochthony is to the impossibility to succeed in it. Although experience contradicts theory, social life validates cosmology by its similarity of structure. Hence cosmology is true.22

We are not interested in the apparatus of structuralist analysis per se. It suffices to notice that for Levi-Strauss, the mythem both reveals and at the same time fictionalizes a constitutive impossibility inherent to the social order. Autochthonic versus chthonic, which mean respectively self-gendered

and gendered from without (Chthonos originally means stemming from underground), is the specific structural articulation of the impossibility.

The tautology of the law, that it says what it says, corresponds in Greek city to autochtonic fantasy, which also is a disavowal of the female position, like Oedipus who emerged from nowhere and stepped into a Thebes in the grasp of the Sphinx. The Antigone depicts also the riddle of the origin that ran through the Oedipus Rex: either the One or the Twoness as the ground of multiplicity inside the boundaries of the polis. The operationality of the law based upon its tautological, self-generating inner logic presupposes the disavowal of significance of being born—as Antigone in the plays put it—"from the same mother" in order to guarantee the societal unitary regime. The impossible position of the tyrannos, being father of himself and son of no mother but purely spirit of unity, the absolute oneness of the law, is the mythemic core of the Oedipus Rex. This ontological impossibility that pertains to the constitution of the polis is exposed in the tragic consequences of the disclosed incestuous desire.

In Antigone, Against the sameness of the One as the synthetic unity of all, Antigone’s act represents the singularity of the exception, of that which is out of reach of the tautological law and always an emergence out of the void in the Other. But what does this mean to the tragic dimension of the play? More than fate, which is evoked in the play by its mythical name Até, the tragedy concerns the mode of subjective existence in presence of the law: Antigone’s tragedy is expressed in the same lines where she states her loyalty to the dead parents as being superior and prior to all future and possible loyalties of the subject. The only conceivable stand for her, as the chain of actions unfolds to the inevitable collapse of the sovereign, is succumbing to the question of guilt, accepting its validity and hence, descending to the underground. Antigone becomes the reverse of the excesses of the law itself. Underground in this configuration of structural positions is tantamount to the absence of new names for forces that might have been distinguishable in such a sequence of events that exposes the excessive nature of the law. Certainly, her act touches upon the frontier of transgression in regard to the law but the transgression, insofar as it remains a pure transgression to the nothingness, appeases the social unrest caused in the wake of her defiance of sovereign power. On the same foot as the dead and deities, delivering senseless explanations of blood ties with her parents, she becomes the effect of the law in its unmediated exercise: the guilt. Hence, her transgression becomes ever more reassuring since it proves once again before the law that all transgression ultimately expresses a guilt for which there will not be any conceivable reconciliation other than the tragic fall.

Moreover, Antigone’s words lead to the same fantasy of unity and Oneness as that of the law. Her position becomes the reverse of that of Oedipus. If Oedipus insists upon knowing the truth, against which the whole social order had warned him, a knowledge about being born from the same womb as his children, to such a terrifying fantasy, both for the male position of the sovereign and for the order of the kinship relations, Antigone presents its counterpart, by affirming
the maternal original void, the underground from which her existence stems. The horror lingers on, the guilt is transmitted to a young generation and the actions are brought before the law. The tragedy of Antigone exposes a trans-historical configuration in which the visual metaphoric of the underground forces connects to the truth of a constitutive mythem, and this connectivity is such that the emerged possibility of a new name, at the moment of disintegration of a social order, when encountered with the impossibility of unitary fantasy, is disavowed or suppressed.

Antigone is a specific mode of connectivity that encompasses the visual metaphoric of the underground and the mythemic substitution of the socially impossibility. The transcending potential of rebellion is transformed into the destiny of the doomed epic hero: the tragic figure appears as the mode of subjective existence in the city.

**German Tragedy**

It is this tragic mode of subjectivity that is at stake in events which follow in the wake of failure of modernist projects of the Twentieth century. Whether it was the Party—as Alain Badiou proposes—as the historical subject of a future society, or the project of demise of the political power after emancipation of social forces, the modernist project was in its closure phase when radical student movements emerged on the scene in the 1960’s. Indeed, it was mainly a response to both the crisis of communist parties in carrying out the anti-capitalist revolution and the increasing integration of the proletariat—the agent of historical transformation—in capitalist society at least in Western Europe and North America. In Post-war Germany, still marked by its recent national-socialist past, the suppression of the workers’ movement and the fantasy of pure race, parts of the young-leftist movement turned its historical position of being the last avant-garde of the century into a tragic heroism. In 1967, a demonstration against another ancient symbol of tyrannical power, the Shah of Iran, was held during his visit to West Berlin on an initiative from the Confederation of Iranian Students, a leftist formation. The demonstration was attended by a majority of leftist student groups at the time. During clashes with the police, a young student, Benno Ohnesong, was shot and killed by the West German police. No policeman was held responsible for the killing. The incident was the onset of a radicalization of student movements which is expressed in the following lines, written by Gudrun Ensslin, one of the future founders of *Rote Armee Fraktion*:

> They’ll kill us all. You know what kind of pigs we’re up against. This is the Auschwitz generation we’ve got against us. You can’t argue with the people who made Auschwitz. They have weapons and we haven’t. We must arm ourselves.24

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“We” here is a subject opposed to the society as a whole, an avant-garde that will bring down the regime of “the One Dimensional Man”. The subtle point is however that such a position represents a historical shift: “We” becomes inadvertently the very agent of a historical rupture between the social and the political. In 1970, the RAF’s statement after the operation of release of Andreas Baader from prison resounded the objective position of their armed struggle: “Did they believe that we would talk about the development of the class struggle and the re-organization of the proletariat without arming ourselves at the same time? … Those who don’t defend themselves die. Those who don’t die are buried alive in prisons, in reform schools, in the slums of worker’s districts, in the stone coffins of the new housing developments, in the crowded kindergartens and schools, in the brand new kitchens and bedrooms filled with fancy furniture bought on credit.”

The new misery of suburban life of post-war Germany in the final lines, with all its social pathos, is paradoxically the mark of a rupture with the social forces in their organized forms. They are imprisoned or already dead in the new consumer society of late capitalism. In such a pseudo-guerrilla language borrowed from anti-colonial movements and the Latin American left, the Marxian thesis of “class struggle qua political struggle” is de facto cancelled. All the founding members of RAF (and other groups such as J2M) were arrested by the end of 1972, through equally violent measures of surveillance and policing by the state. The rest of the organization gradually reduced the political radicalism of the early years into the pure rhetoric. Preoccupied with survival in extremely difficult underground conditions, the remains of the organisation carried out armed attacks mainly in order to defend and restore the organization.

The underground armed struggle of RAF and other groups highlights the emergence of the media in an unexpected way, as the imagery of the late capitalist society. The Springer Verlag publishing group and its tabloid newspaper Bild-Zeitung actively exploited the actions carried out by militant groups, either for the sake of instilling horror or encouraging more security measures. Members of the RAF such as Ulrike Meinhof and Andreas Baader, though portrayed as monsters and villains, became the front page icons in an orgy of violence and consumption, need of security and erotic excitement. Nevertheless, the state of emergency and the image produced by the media scarcely corresponded to the real extent of a few and parse operations that were carried out by a handful members of leftist groups.

In his article, “Like the Echo of A Collective Melancholia”, written after the death of founding members of RAF, Félix Guattari delivers a critique of RAF and the Italian Red Army Brigade:

While the secret war conducted by the industrial powers along the north-south axis to keep the Third World in tow is indeed the main issue, it should not make us forget that there is another north-south axis, which encircles the globe and along which conflicts

25. Published in the journal AGIT, No 833, 1970.
of an equally essential nature are played out, involving the powers of the State and oppressed nationalities, immigrant workers, the unemployed, the “marginals”, the “non-guaranteed” and the “standardized” wage-earners, the people of cities (cités) and of the barrios, of the favellas, the ghettos, the shanty-towns, engaging the opposition of mental control over this whole everyday, desiring world, capitalism mobilizes tremendous forces. To ignore this kind of opposition or to consider it of secondary importance is to condemn all other forms of social struggle led by the traditional Workers’ Movement to impotence or re-appropriation. Like it or not, in today’s world, violence and the media work hand in glove. And when a revolutionary group plays the game of the most reactionary media, the game of collective guilt, then it has been mistaken: mistaken in its target, mistaken in its method, mistaken in its strategy, mistaken in its theory, mistaken in its dreams …


Amid the trace of emerging new conditions of social resistance, Guattari’s article touches also upon the imagery of the underground as the reflection of the fantasy of a collective guilt. From our reading of Antigone, it is clear that the moment of sacrifice in the case of RAF’s founding members, could be seen as a price paid for the crimes of the father in Auschwitz. It is not only clear but too obvious and this is why the armed actions, along with their reading, serve to obscure the relation between politics and the social field.

The figure of Ulrike Meinhof, one of the leading members of RAF, her life and destiny, stands out as a clear example of the fantasy in question. When in 1970, she accepted to help Andreas Baader’s friends to attack the prison guards and liberate Baader, she was already a well-known and recognized radical personality who had written extensively on the social situation of unprivileged groups in the society in general and the situation of woman workers in particular. She had also been highly active in various social projects in Berlin and made a TV production (which was never shown because she joined the RAF at approximately the same time) and several radio broadcasts about the inhumane conditions in juvenile institutions. After the escape operation, she was obliged to go underground together with Baader, leaving two daughters and her occupation as a journalist. Meinhof soon became a recognizable and fascinating face both for the Bild-Zeitung-type of propaganda but also for a whole generation of radical women in Germany. For example, Erich Fried, the German author qualified her in an article from the period as “the most important woman in German politics since Rosa Luxemburg.”

Her own words soon after the release of Baader relates sentiments and arguments of the time:

But that’s who we are, that’s where we’re from: The blood of the processes of destruc-
tion and degradation in metropolitan society, the war of everyone against everyone, the competition of everyone against everyone, the system, the law of fear, the pressure to succeed, all of this is what rules over us, for the one at the cost of the many, the division of people into men and women, young and old, healthy and unhealthy, foreigners and Germans, the struggles for prestige. And that’s where we’re from: The isolation of the terraced houses, the concrete jungles in the suburbs, the prison cells, the asylums and the clinics. From the brainwashing by the media, consumption, punishment through beatings, the ideology of non-violence; from depression, sickness, and the declassifying, insulting, and degrading of people, all exploited peoples under imperialism. Until we have satisfied the needs of each one of us and the necessity of liberation from imperialism, there is nothing to lose in this system of destruction, and there is everything to gain in the armed struggle: collective liberation, life, humanity, identity. That the concerns of the people, the masses, the assembly line workers, the lumpen, the prisoners, the students, the lowest class of people here and the liberation movements of the Third World are our concerns, too. Our concern: armed, anti-imperialist struggle is the concern of the masses, and vice versa—even when it’s a long, slow process at first, the guerrilla’s military-political offensive can become a real people’s war. It can become real.29

Meinhof, and other founders of RAF, soon after a few guerrilla operations, were arrested in 1972. Four years later, on May 9th 1976, she was found dead in her cell. The police declared her death as suicide. The following autumn, Gudrun Ensslin, Andreas Baader and Jan Carl Raspe were also found dead in their cells in the top security prison of Stammheims. The news created a wave of protest and the funeral ceremonies in West Berlin were turned into political manifestations, defying the state. Meinhof and other founders of the group became the martyrs of German avant-garde.

The period of armed struggle, the kidnappings, the ruthless violence of the state of emergency, the blind and failed actions carried out by the RAF, evoked once again, the conflict was between those who put themselves above the law and those who act in its name. The density of this sequence of German modernism is founded upon numerous factors: the student radicalism of the 1960’s, the revolutionary events in Paris in May 68, Germany’s Nazi history and the existence of two opposing projects of modernism: free capitalism and state socialism both in the name of Germany, finally the new social landscape created by the welfare state in the post-war period. The events left their undeniable traces on a whole generation of writers and artists. Authors such as Günter Grass, Heinrich Böll and intellectuals outside Germany among whom one finds Jean-Paul Sartre, artists and filmmakers such as Gerhard Richter, Alexander Kluge, Rainer Werner

29. Published in the journal AGIT, No 833, 1970.
Fassbinder, Volker Schlöndorff are some of those whose works are clearly and explicitly related to the events. Germany in Autumn, a collective film from 1978, was a major artistic manifestation of the period that recapitulated the both difficult and at the same time close relationship between intellectuals and artists and the political situation in Germany.

One of the segments of the film, directed by Schlondorff and written by Heinrich Boll, tells the story of a national TV broadcast of the play Antigone that would be eventually cancelled due to political considerations. The episode shows a meeting of the executives of the state television during which concerns about whether or not Antigone would be associated with the fate of founders of RAF are discussed. The episode is interrupted by documentary footage from funeral ceremonies which alludes to the parallels between the content of the play and the situation in Germany in the autumn of 1976. Thomas Elsaesser, in an essay from 1997, explains the symbolic significance of the Antigone in Germany in Autumn:

... primed by the Sophoclean Ur-text and its Hölderlin-Hegel-Brecht hermeneutic, other aspects of the political crisis depicted in Germany in Autumn begin to reverberate in the symbolic-theatrical space that the film sets up to echo down the years of recent German history. For instance, the trope "State Funeral and Suicide" returns in Germany in Autumn when we learn that the Mayor of Stuttgart, the site of the double funeral, happens to be Manfred Rommel, son of Field-Marshall Erwin Rommel, better known as the Desert Fox. In a WW2 newsreel included in the film, the young Manfred can be seen standing beside the coffin of his father, who after the defeat of El-Alamein had been ordered by the Nazis to commit suicide, so that Hitler could give him a State Funeral and celebrate a National Hero. Now Rommel Junior in 1977 found himself in the part of the benevolent counter-Creon, for it is he who as Mayor orders "a quick decision and clean choice", he calls it in the film— that the three terrorists should have a dignified funeral in one of the city’s more prestigious cemeteries, rather than be handed to the Stuttgart vox pop, who had demanded that the bodies be disposed of “down the sewers".30

However, the analogy between the tragic poetics and RAF in their spectacular actions in the midst of a prosperous capitalist Germany is not only problematic, it leaves also out the contradictions of contemporary German society which RAF attempted to answer. Elsaesser reminds us that the whole question of members’ behaviour, fast cars, communication and technical skills and staging of violent scenes on the streets, have an ambiguous aesthetic and political dimension. Instead, he considers that the analogy concerns the act of self-positioning outside the law. An act that

takes place inevitably and as a result of a lack in collective forms of struggle. Thus, he writes “But the possibility that the specifically German dilemma of saying ‘we’ should also bring us back to Antigone has to do with the further step of seeing the RAF as ‘desiring’, whose actions were also designed to secure a subject position for them, from which they could speak, in this case the objectively impossible, negative but ‘justified’ position of the ‘we’. Just as Antigone, by speaking from a position not above the law but outside the law, could become the ‘ethical’ subject par excellence for Western political thought, because the place outside the law is a non-place for any mortal …”31

While, Elsaesser delivers a nuanced critique of a too hasty hermeneutical reading that would reduce the political event to a historical blueprint of a drama, his analysis encounters a problem when it comes to the precise sense of “the possibility of a position of enunciation outside the law”. This position of enunciation is entirely representational. Elsaesser’s tacitly unquestioned assumption is that aesthetical representation and articulation of societal inconsistency would coincide at an ethical moment, materialized in a decision to leave the field of law, but he misses that the tragedy involves a doubling of representation. Antigone, as a persona represents the impossibility of a representation (a non-space, an atopia). To use a more familiar terminology, it is a negation of negation, though the dialectic lacks any positive end result. This means more concretely that RAF and their action only affirm that a “we” is untenable and it is why the RAF objectively reproduces what the order already knows: there is nothing outside the order. This means concretely that the RAF functions as the screen that covers up the split in the law itself at a critical historical point.

**Shrines of Spectacle**

The notion of underground in both these sequences, the Sophoclean tragedy and the historical act of sacrifice, is a visual metaphor, operative since the emergence of the state as the sovereign power based upon the universal law. And it is precisely such an operationality that comes into an end on the cover of *Stern* magazine in late 70’s Germany. The German autumn exposes a radical shift as the visual metaphor of the underground is no longer connected to the truth, even in its mythemic version, but rather staged as a relic. This relic is what we initially called the fallen tragic hero.

If there has not been any place for tragedy in modern times, it was less so because of the allegedly increasing fear of death of modern man, and more so because the only tragic effect to be produced was intertwined with the epic action in the social arena of modernity. However, the figure of Meinhof signals the end of such a configuration of forces. As such, namely as representation, figures of underground pass over and into the visual plethora of a society that ceases to exist outside the spectacles that it produces. Underground in this sense is the image of impossibility, an administered and calculated exposing of an image, which guarantees its eventual circulation in the trade

31. Ibid.
of common ideas. The sublime apex of contemporary ideology is a piece of farce-like repetition instead: the most striking visibility shines in all its glory and the ground for all action is sundered in pieces: There are walls in Jericho and shrines of relics in Iraq that bear witness to this.
CLAES EKENSTAM

DEN PSYKOLOGISKA UNDERJORDEN

Emotioner och västvärldens kulturhistoria

I FÖLJANDE ARTIKEL kommer historiska förskjutningar i sättet att förhålla sig till det mänskliga känslolivet i västerlandets kultur att behandlas. Detta innebär ett försök att skissa några drag i emotionernas kulturhistoria i ett långt tiderspektiv, men med en tidsmässig tyngdpunkt kring sekelskiftet 1900. Som exempel behandlas två emotioner, nämligen sorg/gråt och glädje/skratt. Emotionernas relation till genus, klass och etnicitet kommer även att uppmärksammas genomgående, men delvis också behandlas i särskilda avsnitt.

En utgångspunkt är att människan oberoende av kultur har ett antal grundkänslor, som en del av sin medfödda disposition. Samtidigt formas uppenbarligen känslolivet också av kulturen. Medvetet och omedvetet påverkas vi att uttrycka, hantera och modifiera våra känslouttryck i enlighet med gällande normer och praxis i den egna kulturen. Sättet att tala om känslor är ofta starkt präglat av rumsliga begrepp. Sävall i Freuds psykoanalys som i religiösa och vetenskapliga sammanhang har det mänskliga förnuftet, viljan och andliga förmågor ofta förlagt till huvudet och hjärnan, till den övre delen av människan, medan känslor och drifter vanligtvis förlagts i kroppens nedre eller undre del. Denna logiska dikotomisering ses här som framför allt ett resultat av en kulturhistorisk process, som trängt undan eller tvingat ner emotionerna i den mänskliga själens källare.

Denna mentalitetsmässiga förskjutning innebar inledningsvis en tendens mot starkare och mer konsekvent förordad känslobehärskning och beteendekontroll, liksom en mer detaljerad reglering av mänskliga relationer. Särskilt har detta gällt medelklassens män.


1. Förutom projektledaren Jörgen Hellman och de andra projektdeltagarna, liksom Mikela Lundahl, vill jag tacka Michael Landzelius och Patricia Lorenzoni för värdefulla kommentarer av denna text.
Prolog

Kring sekelskiftet 1900 föreföll den västerländska kulturen med accelererande hastighet röra sig mot en lovlige framtid. Samhället utvecklades i takt med industriproduktionens snabbt rullande hjul. En rad tekniska innovationer såg dagens ljus, samtidigt som olika vetenskaper blomstrade. Läkarna lyckades skapa nya mediciner och behandlingsmetoder och fick därmed bukt med tidigare obotliga sjukdomar och smittor. Tiden tycktes entydigt sjunga om föruftets sluttliga seger över fördamor, smuts och efterblivenhet.


Det som förknippas med människans drifter och känslomässiga vara är ofta språkligt knu-
tet till något nere i henne, medan kontrollinstansen antas befinna sig ovanför detta. I allmänhet tycks medvetandet, såväl i psykoanalytiskt tänkande som i andra sammanhang, förbindas med den mänskliga individens fysiska överdel, till det som är uppvänt och synligt, som anskiktet och där belägna sinnesfunktioner (syn, tal, hörsel) samt naturligtvis tänkandet, det vill säga hjärnans funktioner. Samtidigt återkommer påföllande ofta metaforer och beskrivningar som förlägger de aspekter i det mänskliga varat som förknippas med begär och affekter till kroppens nedre del. Uttryck som 'magkänsla', 'fjärilar i magen', 'hjärtesorg', 'lyssna till hjärtat', 'skitförbannad' och liknande, ger associerare till något som i olika grad befinner sig djupare ner i kroppen: känslor i en generell mening kopplas ofta till magen; vrede till ansus och avföring; sexualitet relateras, föga förvånande, till könsorganen, medan kärleken lokaliseras till hjärtrakten.

Freuds upptäckter väckte stort intresse i samtiden, men möttes också av motstånd och ošilja. Särskilt hans starka betoning av sexualitetens betydelse för det mänskliga psykter förblev länge en kontroversiell fråga, delvis även för Freud själv. När hans unge lärjunge Wilhelm Reich (1897–1957) i början av 1920-talet entusiastiskt tog upp och radikaliserade lärofaderns idé om den undertryckta sexualiteten som determinerande faktor bakom neurotiska symptom, förhöll sig Freud först tveksam, för att senare ta avstånd från Reich. Särskilt problematisk för Freud var den del i Reichs teori som stipulerade, att det var undertryckandet av individens fria, naturliga sexualitet, orsakad av en sexualfientlig borgerlig kultur, som skapade den dåtida människans emotionella misär.

Hade Freud antytt att ett visststått av vantrivsel på grund av driftfsakelse var den tragiska, men samtidigt ofräkommliga konsekvensen av en utvecklad civilisation, menade Reich att detta enbart gällde för kapitalistiska och andra auktoritärer samhällen. I ett verkligt fritt, demokratiskt samhälle skulle människons spontana känslor inte behöva undertryckas och förvrängas, så som skedde i samtiden. Orsaken till detta senare förhållande förbands av Reich snarare med makt och exploatering. Människans psyke var i sista hand en avspegling av det samhälle där hon levde (Boadella 1972/85; Sharaf 1983).

Även om Freud aldrig helt och hållet accepterats inom den lärda världen, allra minst inom medicinsk vetenskap och traditionell psykiatri, möts hans verk oftast med respekt. Trots att farmakologiska och kognitiva trender idag utövar ett kraftigt, negativt tryck mot freudianska perspektiv och institutioner, refererar man likväl på många håll med aktning till hans verk och undervisar i hans metoder. Detta gäller inte alls för Reich, vars kropps- och känslofrigörande perspektiv och tänkande har förblivit omdiskuterat. Till och med en radikal tänkare som Michel Foucault uttrycker ambivalentens inför ’Reichs stora känslobrot’ (fjr Foucault 1980: 12).

Nu var förvisso Reich ingen okomplicerad person eller okontroversiell tänkare, men han är knappast den enda i idéhistorien som varit utmanande eller uppvisat encentriska drag. Ett bidragande skä i till den Reichsiska traditionens marginalisering, är att den utmanar väletablerade föreställningar om förmodat normalt beteende, exempelvis vad det gäller känsomässig behärskning.
I stället för att hålla sig inom väl inhägnade gränser för vad som antas rimligt, framhåller man i reichianska terapier nödvändigheten av stark känslolivnivå. Enbart intellektuell förståelse är otillräcklig – den känslomässiga upplevelsen är en omistlig del av varje verklig insikt.


Känslor, begrepp och historia

En begynnande internationell forskning om känslornas historia har gett stöd för tanken att även denna aspekt av mänskligt liv har en historia. Det är således ett försök att skissera några drag i emotionernas kulturhistoria som här skall göras. Först måste emellertid något sägas om mina utgångspunkter.

Även om den generella utforskningen av det mänskliga känslolivet länge var förvånansvärt eftersatt, existerar sedan ett par, tre decennier en livlig sådan. Inom psykologin finns, enligt den


En utgångspunkt för mitt resonemang är utifrån ovanstående resonemang följaktligen att människans oberoende av kultur och historisk epok har ett antal grundkänslor, som en del av sin medfödda disposition. Huruvida dessa begränsade antal grundkänslor skall räknas till sex, nio el-
ler något annat kan naturligtvis diskuteras. Emellertid talar själv den frecventa förekomsten av emotionella uttryck för känslor som glädje, sorg, vrede, rädsla, sexuell åtrå och kärlek i alla kända mänskliga kulturer, för att vissa basala känslor aktioner utgör en del av vårt biologiska arv. Som ett resultat av evolutionsprocessen är det ensamma på att uppleva och uttrycka sådana känslor.

Samtidigt påverkas uppenbarligen känslolivet av kulturen. Vi fostras och påverkas även omedvetet att uttrycka, hantera och modifiera våra känslor i enlighet med gällande normer och praxis i en egna kulturen. Det gäller bland annat hur vi uttrycker oss, i vilka sammanhang detta kan ske och med vilken intensitet. Som inte minst psykodynamiskt inspirerat forskning demonstrerat (ett perspektiv som saknas i Cornelius framställning) påverkas individens förmåga att känna och uttrycka sina känslor på ett djupgående sätt av olika uppväxtbetingelser. 3

En specifik kulturs möjligheter att på olika sätt påverka eller rent av forma sina medlemmars känsloliv är därför stor, och inbegriper en rad mekanismer, som exempelvis borrträngning, sublimering eller kanaliserings, modifiering, omvandling, förnekande, hämning, fixering, projektion, befrämjande, intensifiering och dissociering. Med den komplexitet som kännetecknar det mänskliga psyket kan resultaten av en sådan mångskiftande påverkan antas vara avsevärt. De kulturellt formade uttrycken och kombinationerna av de medfödda känslorna är därför så många gånger fler och varierade än grundkänslorna själva, men de kan ändå inte ses som oändliga. Grunden eller kärnan i känslolivet utgörs likväl av ett antal grundläggande emotioner, med därtill hörande fysiologiska reaktioner och sensoriska upplevelser. 4

I det följande kommer historiska förskjutningar i sättet att beskriva, värdera och förhålla sig till två emotioner, som vanligen brukar hänföras till kategorin medfödda grundkänslor, nämligen sorg genom gråt och glädje genom skratt, liksom den mer allmänna attityden till känslor och dess relation till förnuft och vilja, att stå i fokus. I viss mån kommer jag att spekulerera i förekomsten av dessa känslor, liksom den intensitet med vilken de uttrycks, i olika historiska perioder. Orden känslor och emotioner används här synonymt. Även emotionernas relation till genus, klass och etnicitet kommer att behandlas.

Socialhistorikern Peter N. Stearns hävdar i Battleground of Desire (1999), främst utifrån sina studier av USA:s historia men även med en mer generell syftning på västvärlden, att emotioner uttrycks med mindre intensitet idag än för ett par hundra år sedan. Det är ett uppskedeväckande uttalande, som emellertid får indirekt stöd av psykoterapeuten Alexander Lowen. Denne är lär:


Här antyds således en reell förändring i västerlänningens känsloliv i riktning mot lägre emocionell intensitet. Den process som format den moderna människan skulle därför kunna beskrivas i termer av att känslorna dämpats eller trängts undan till en andrarangsplats, att de bortträngts. Det är en förändring som i ett längre historiskt perspektiv kan antas ha influerat såväl dominerande västerländsk mentalitet som det vetenskapliga tänkandet.


I filosofiska, religiösa och skönlitterära texter från biblisk och antik tid, liksom från medeltiden och renässansen, värderas och framställs känslor på ett annat sätt än i modern tid. Även om relationen mellan människors medvetande, beteende och relationer, å ena sidan, och deras affekter och passioner, å den andra, sällan uppställdes som harmonisk och oomplicerad i västerlandets historia, framträder likväl känslolivet oftare som en mer accepterad och uppmärksammad aspekt av mänskligt liv i äldre tider än i modern tid. Även om vi för känslolivets kulturhistoria måste räkna med flera faser av problematiseringar och regleringssträvanden (och även motsatta eller motsägelsefulla rörelser likt den europeiska romantiken), framstår tiden från Renässansen till och med framväxten av ett modernt industrisamhälle, som en väsentlig förändringsperiod.

I många andra sammanhang har denna utveckling, som utgörs av en sammanfattad process av urbanisering, industrialisering och modernisering, framställts som en historisk vattendelare. Detta tycks även gälla för känslornas historia, åtminstone attityden till skratt och gråt, eller i alla fall, dess idéhistoria, eftersom vi hår snarare berör olika tiders föreställningar om emotioner än de reella känslorna. Vi måste nämlichen hålla i medvetande att talet om känslor, och framför allt normerna för vissa känslouttrycks förkastlighet eller önskvärdhet, inte enkelt kan identifieras med verkliga känslor.

Som Peter och Carol Stearns påpekat måste man skilja på emotioner och emotionologi (emo-

**Skrattets historia**


Generellt utmärks karnevalskulturen, enligt Bachtin, av sin konkreta, sinnliga karaktär. Här råder en slags livets materiella kroppsliga princip: kulturen genomsyras av bilder av människor som äter, dricker, kopulerar och utför naturbehov. Dessa bilder är ofta överdrivna, för att inte säga groteska, och tydligt motsattstående den officiella kulturen. Den senare kan beskrivas i termen av upphöjd andlighet, där det avsilda och isolerade dominerar, samtidigt som man tar avstånd
Från det sinnliga i människan. I karnevalskulturens groteska realism däremot nedsätts allt som är upphöjt, idealiserat och abstrakt, till ett kroppsligt plan. Man tar ned det på jorden och skrattar ut det!


Nu är Bachtins studie av karnevalskulturen inte liktydig med en reell historisk utforskning av känslornas historia. Även om Bachtin antyder förbindelser till den faktiska kulturen kan Bachtins studieobjekt därför inte oproblematiskt identifieras med den historiska verkligheten. Det handlar om en litteraturvetenskapligt inriktad kulturstudie, som urskiljer de metaforer, idéer och kulturella uttryck, som karnevalskulturen frambragt. Om karnevalskulturen kulminerade under 1500-talet, kan man därefter sköna en förändring av synen på skrattet i europeisk emotionologi, särskilt som indikerar på en liknande förändring finns också på annat håll.


Denna aversion mot ohämmede skrattande uttrycks i etikettsböcker, åtminstone från 1700-talet och framåt. Samtidigt hade dessa beteenderegler, och den emotionologi som de uttrycker,

Gråtens historia

I många avseenden påminner gråtens historia om skrattets, men med vissa skillnader som exempelvis att regleringen av denna känsla varit tydligare knuten till kön. Att gråta har i västerländsk kultur länge uppfattats som omanligt. 5 Starka skamkänslor och internaliserade föreställningar om självtillräcklighet, tuffhet och kontroll hindrar ofta män från att gråta, särskilt i offentliga sammanhang. Trots en viss uppmjukning på senare år lever ett starkt maskulint tabu kvar mot att visa sig svag – vilket tårar antas vara ett uttryck för. Längre tillbaka i historien möter vi dock en annan attityd.


Åtskilliga gånger berättas såväl i *Iliaden* som i *Odysseyen* hur män blir rödögda, hur de ‘smälter i tårar’ eller ‘mättar’ sin själ med sorg – ensamma eller tillsammans med andra. Trots att beskrivningarna oftast gäller män från dåtidens överklass (kungar, ädlingar, modiga krigare), uppfattas inte gräten som skamlig eller omanlig. Förvisso kan man finna passager som uttrycker en mer restriktiv hållning till att exponera sin gråt inför andra, mäktiga män. Men de talrika exemplen på hämningslöst, manligt gråtande i Homeros två versepos utgör likväl ett indicium på en annan

5. Där inte annat anges bygger följande avsnitt på Ekenstam, ”En historia om manlig gråt” och de referenser som där ges, i Ekenstam m. fl. *Rädd att falla: Studier i manlighet* 1998: 50-123.
inställning till manlig gråt än vad som senare blivit dominerande. Detta gäller även många andra litterära och religiösa texter från antik och biblisk tid.


Den känslomässiga regleringen visar sig således alltifrån den västerländska kulturens begynnelse vara förbunden med könspolitik och maktabstämningar. Självkontroll, det vill säga viljan och förmågan att betvinga spontana emotioner och beteenden, tillskrivs de män som aspirerar på inflytande och bestämmanderätt i samhället. En ofta upprepad sentens har ända sedan de antika stoikernas dagar varit, att den som vill härska över andra först måste kunna kontrollera sig själv. Denna den vete manns maktskärorde strävan att kontrollera sig, det vill säga det maskulina förnuftets strävan att betvinga kroppens spontana lusta och emotionella böjelser, har sedan i skiftande grad framställt som ett viktigt tema, vilket i olika skepnader återkommer hos såväl medel-
tidens asketiska kyrkofäder och feodalismens aristokrater, som den victorianska tidens läkare och moralister.


Vi finner således divergerande synpunkter från historiens lärde om nyttan respektive det förkastliga i sorgereaktioner i allmänhet, och manlig gråt i synnerhet. Ännu under renässansen återfinns exempelvis ett vitt spektra av synpunkter i de diskussioner som förs i Italien utifrån stoiska, kristna, aristoteliska eller epikureiska idétraditioner. Samtidigt kan den stora förekomsten av skriftliga betraktelser som nu gjordes över sorgen indikera en ökad uppmärksamhet på detta sinnestillstånd. Enligt Elias gäller detta för övrigt känslolivet som helhet.


Egentligen är det först mot 1700-talets slut som mer tydliga restriktioner mot grät får en större spridning i den västerländska kulturen. Äldre tiders mer bejakande eller ambivalenta emotionologi förskjuts gradvis i riktning mot en mer entydigt avståndstagande mentalitet. Historikern Anne Vincent-Buffault utmärker i The History of Tears (1991) franska revolutionen som en vattendelare. Inom litteratur, filosofi och brevväxling växer decennierna kring sekelskiftet 1800 fram en annan attityd till detta (men även andra) känslomässiga uttryck. De gemensamma och inte sällan offent-
liga tårar, som under 1700-talet varit så vanliga, blir hädanefter sällsynta, samtidigt som tårfyllda drömmar börjar mötas av hän.


Man kan se flera paralleller mellan skrattets och gråtens historier. Trots tidiga ansatser till problematiseringar av dessa känslomässiga uttryck finns långt fram i tiden samtidigt bejakande föreställningar om de positiva egenskaper som de förknippas med. Ännu under renässansen finner man gott om sådana värderingar, liksom frekventa litterära gestaltningar av både skratt och gråt, samtidigt som tecknen på problematisering ökar. Därefter blir allt fler lärda skribenter kritiska, parallellt med att emotionologin successivt minskar utrymme för dessa känslor. Troligen fortsätter människor likväl att skratta och gråta i de vardagliga sammanhang där sådana känslor väcks.


Även om cool numera är ett internationellt utbrett och populärt uttryck (med vidhängande ideal), är det långt ifrån entydigt i innebörden. Med tiden har det dessutom alltmer fått en vidare betydelse av att vara ’bra’ eller ’håftigt’. Dess ursprungliga innebörd är dock motsatsen till att vara känslösamt. Att vara ’cool’ betyder ju bokstaveligt talat att vara kall, i betydelsen av att vara tuff och inte visa svaghet.

Behärskade män och känslosamma kvinnor

I denna redogörelse om skrattet och gråten i historien har framgått att känslornas kulturhistoria är intimt förknippat med synen på manlighet och kvinnlighet. Redan hos Platon mötte vi före-
ställningen att en ’riktig’ man bör behärskar sin gråt. I den värdeskala som styr den antike filoso-
fens resonemang ses det förnuftiga som ’högre’ och bättre, än det ’lägre’ och känslosämiska. På
motsvarande sätt kommer därmed de fria männens manlighet att värderas högre än kvinnor och
kvinnlighet, som i detta avseende jämnställs med barn och slavar.

Som filosofen Genevieve Lloyd påpekat förmodas i antikt (manligt) tänkande förnuftet lämna
bakom sig de mörka krafter som symboliskt förbinds med kvinnlighet. Detta senare är något som
måste offras för att den av kulturen definierade och värdesatta rationaliteten skall kunna utvecklas.
Manlighet associeras med klarhet och aktivitet, med det som är precis, avgränsat och bestämt,
medan kvinnlighet förbinds med det som är vagt, obestämt och passivt. Kvinnors själar antas
rent av ha sitt ursprung i de fallna själarna från män som inte varit tillräckligt förnuftiga. Kvinnor
befinner sig därför närmare själens icke-rationella och okontrollerbara element. Hos Platon tros
förnuftet kunna möjliggöra för själen att närligare se sig som är rent, oföränderligt och evigt. Av
sinnena och känslorna dras själen ner till föränderligheten, blir ontumladd och drucken som ett
fyllo. Även de maktmässiga implikationerna av detta sätt att tänka kommer till tydligt uttryck hos
Platon. Eftersom det är den gudalika och rationella själen, som skall bestämma över den slavlika
och dödliga kroppen, står förnuftet över känslorna. Det innebär samtidigt att (fria) män är över-
ordnade kvinnor (Lloyd 1999: 24ff).

Över- och underordning; överklass- och underklass, förnuftet som något bättre och högre
situerat än lågt värdaderade och placerade känslor (eller som det andliga över det sinnliga); uppvär-
derad manlighet och nedvärderad kvinnlighet – gång på gång möter vi i det filosofiska tänkandet
 dessa rumsliga och hierarkiskt ordnade metaforer förbundna med kön, förnuft och emotioner.
Rationalitet och självkontroll är mänskliga egenskaper som på en gång förbinds med så kallade
högre klasser och manlighet, medan känslor, bristande viljestyrka och förnuft förknippas med
kvinnor, barn, men också män som inte tillhör den styrande eliten. Dessa män antas ofta brista i
manlighet och framställs i nedvärderade termer som feministiserade och/eller omanliga. Som mans-
 forskningen har visat kan inte män enkelt förknippas med en slags manlighet eller manlighets-
deal, utan vi måste tala om flera olika manligheter, vilka ofta står i hierarkiska och rivaliserande
relationer till varandra (se Connell 1999; Ekenstam et. al. 1998; Liliequist 1999; Lorentzen &
Ekenstam et. al. 2006).

De polära uppdelningar och uteslutningarna kan vi se exempel på redan i antiken, ser Lloyd
som utmärkande för det filosofiska och vetenskapliga tänkande som dominerat i västerländsk
tradition. Förnuftet har visserligen vanligtvis ofta omtalats i försåtligt neutrala termer, som något
objektivt och allmänningsmässigt, men har samtidigt implicit förbundits med manlighet. Kvinnlig-
het är det som avvikar från det neutralt mänskliga och förnuftiga.

I det komplicerade samspel mellan förnuftsidéer och könsmetaforer som finns i väster-
ländsk filosofi får den könlösa själen därför ett skuggligt drag av manlighet – i motsät-
tning till kvinnlig könsskillnad (Lloyd 1999: 12).

Hos Friedrich Hegel (1770–1831) kompletterar visserligen skilda aspekter som kvinnligt och manligt varandra, och ingår i ett ömsesidigt beroendeförhållande. Det kvinnliga medvetandet förknippas med familjelivet och det partikulära, medan män förbinds med det samhälleliga och universella. Likväl tillhör det förnuftet och kvinnan kan endast genom mannen bli delaktig i den "uppåtgående rörelse som lagen i den nedre världen företar mot dagsljusets verklighet och mot medveten existens". Mannen är däremot genom kvinnan och familjen delaktig i en "motsvarande 'nedåtgående rörelse' från verklighet till överklighet" (Lloyd 1999: 119f).

En annan viktig aspekt av dessa konstruerade motsatser i tänkandet är förhållandet till naturen. Lloyd skriver att den västerländska kulturen har uppfattat sig stå i ett motsatsförhållande till naturen, delvis på grund av den framträdande roll som sökandet efter rationell kunskap har haft. Rationell kunskap har då uppfattats som detsamma som att överskrida, omforma eller kontrollera naturkrafterna. Även här har det kvinnliga förbundits med det som underordnas, det vill säga de naturkrafter som den (manliga) rationella kunskapen skall kontrollera, överskrida eller förkasta.


I Lloyds framställning av könets betydelse i det västerländska tänkandet står inte just de historiska förändringarna i centrum, utan snarare den typ av tematik kring kön och förnuftet som ovan återgivits. I vissa formuleringar finns emellertid möjligheten att utläsa vissa förskjutningar över tid. Exempelvis framhåller Lloyd att man i René Descartes (1596–1650) filosofi finner en strävan bort från det sinnliga och vardagliga, där det kroppslikställda med det rationella och där korrekt resonerande innebär en abstrahering. Dessa tendenser är förvisso skönjbara redan hos antika filosofer, men det icke-rationella ses i Descartes samtid inte ens längre, som Lloyd påpekar, som en del av själern, vilket det trots allt var för Platon. Hos Kant antas all mänsklig moral stå över och
vara motsatta sinnliga böjelser och känslor, något som av äldre filosoffer snarare förbinds med en
inre kamp hos människan mellan olika krafter, som självklart även var förbundna med olika slags

Sociologen Victor Seidler förbinder denna starka sammankoppling mellan rationalitet och
manlighet med upplysningstänkandet och moderniteten. Hos mer inflytelserika filosoffer som
Descartes och Kant definieras medvetandet som en oberoende förmåga, vilket satts i motsats
till människans animala natur, till hennes begär och känslor. Seidler beskriver denna strävan att
destillera fram ett rent förnuft, som en slags sekulariserad spiritualisering av medvetandet (Seidler
1994: 1f, 26f).

Idéhistorikern Ronny Ambjörnsson för ett intressant resonemang kring manlighet, förnuft
och känslor i sin essäsamlings *Mansmyter*. Särskilt det kapitel som handlar om Arthur Conan
Doyle (1859–1930) romanfigur Sherlock Holmes har många beröringspunkter med här aktuella
teman (Ambjörnsson, 1999: 50–79). Doyle publicerade sina berättelser om Sherlock Holmes och
medhjälparen doktor Watson åren 1887–1927.

Ambjörnsson beskriver det sena 1800-talets London, där dessa berättelser utspelar sig, som en
värld som av många i samtiden uppfattade som ett kaos. Stora slumområden breddde ut sig intill
fashionabla kvarter, i vilka folk levde i en gråzon mellan brottslighet och laglighet. Sluminvånarna
hankade sig fram på en blandning av tillfälliga jobb, gatuförsäljning, tillfällig prostitution, tiggeri
och stöld. Tillfälliga besökare som rapporterade från slummen chockades av blandningen, obe
ståmdheten och de många övergångsfenomenen där: gränserna mellan könen och generationerna
tycktes vara under upplösning, och detsamma gällde åtskillnaden mellan moral och omoral. Stor-
staden tycktes hota att upplösa de fasta gränser som medelklassen var i färd med att upprätta vid
tenna denna tid. Ambjörnsson skriver:

*Storstadslivet tedde sig på detta vis som ett träske, ett slags ursörja, där civilisationens
alla mödosamt tillkämpade distinktioner, könsroller och klasstillhörigheter upphörde
att existera* (Ambjörnsson, 1999: 56).

Sherlock Holmes rör sig som fisken i vattnet i denna undre värld – ett uttryck som för övrigt
skall ha kommit till under denna tid. Holmes är ofta förklädd till trasproletär och behärskar alla
varianter av Londons slang. Han hittar lätt bland prång och underjordiska passager och klarar
synbarligen utan problem att passera gränsen mellan den övre och den undre världen.

Men, skriver Ambjörnsson, närmare betraktat är allt betydligt mer problematiskt. Holmes är
hemfallen åt drogmissbruk och är knappast någon harmonisk människa. Han lever som i ryck,
med intensiva perioder då en febril aktivitet utvecklas. När rycken är över förbys emellertid hans
liv i en anmärkningsvärd passivitet, ett slags apati. Holmes saknar dessutom anknytning till tra-
ditionella, organiska sammanhang, eftersom han lever utan partner eller barn. Han framstår som
en mycket ensam människa.
Ambjörnsson beskriver Holmes som en person som är rädd för kärlek. Enligt Holmes själv är kärleken en känslosak och allt som har med känslor att göra står i opposition till det kallt logiskt resonerande förnuft, som han sätter över allt annat. Därför vill Holmes aldrig gifta sig. Han kan tyckas känslokall, vilket får Dr Watson att vid ett tillfälle upprört kalla honom för en tanke-maskin, en automat.

I motsvarande grad som Holmes tycks ta avstånd från personliga känslor, är han upptagen av sin hjärna. Holmes personlighet är rent av koncentrerad till denna del av kroppen, vars intensiva, om än ryckiga, verksamhet utesluter någon livligare rörelse i andra delar av organismen. Men Sherlock Holmes hjärna är inte som en del av en full personlighet, utan mer som ett isolerat rum skilt från andra rum. Ambjörnsson beskriver detektivens hjärna som ett slags styrhytt från vilket kommandon utgår, inte en del av en mänsklig helhet.


Även om det här således är tankegods med gamla anor i Västerlandets idéhistoria hade vid denna tid förbindelsen mellan manlighet och rationalitet, enligt Ambjörnsson, ytterligare tvingnings samman. Hos långt mer än en samtida filosof och samhällstänkare hävdades att intellektet kommit att dominerar hos mannen, medan det hos kvinnan i stället var känslan som upptog en privilegierad plats. Särskilt hos 1800-talets uppstånds medelklass, som varken ärvde sin ställning eller några andra privilegier, kom manlig, intellektuell förmåga att bli en högt värderad egenskap.


och självkontroll. Just den rädsla för intimitet som Holmes uppvisar har blivit ett vanligt drag i många moderna manligheter (Seidler 1994: 30f).


Det kan nu vara dags att se något på de övergripande historiska processer som frambragt sådana föreställningar om känslor.

Civilisationsprocessen


Elias studie av civilisationsprocessen är ett komplext och syntetiskt verk, som kan sägas undersöka sambanden mellan, å ena sidan, de sociala, ekonomiska och politiska förändringar de europeiska samhällena genomgår från senmedeltiden till modern tid, å den andra, de beteendemässiga och psykologiska förskjutningar som sker parallellt. Under dessa sekel förändras, enligt Elias, västerlänningens känsloliv och beteende. Spontana impulser, aggressioner och andra känslor, som under periodens början uttryckts relativt ohämmat, hålls senare i betydligt högre grad tillbaka. Det

En inledande fråga är varför vi överhuvudtaget använder kniv och gaffel för att äta. Den rationella förklaring som ofta ges är, att det är motbjudande att smutsa ner fingrarna eller på grund av smittorisken, som vi gör detta. Elias polemiserar dock mot sådana slags förklaringar som otillräckliga och hävdar i stället att gaffeln inte är något annat än materialiseringen av en viss känslostandard och specifikt nivå av motvilja.


Gaffeln kom med tiden att accepteras, först inom överklassen och från 1500-talet börjar den komma i mer allmänt bruk som matbestick, först i Italien, sedan i England och Tyskland, efter att under en period främst ha använts för att ta fast föda från uppläggningsfat. Så sent som på 1600-talet var gaffeln fortfarande en lyxartikel för överklassen, vanligtvis tillverkad av guld eller silver. Den franska Solkungen, Ludvig den XIV (1638–1715), skall emellertid ha föredragit fingrarna framför gaffel när han åt, trots att en mycket strikt ceremoniel annars utvecklades vid hans hov.

Steg för steg spred sig sedan att äta med gaffel genom Europa, både geografiskt och klassmässigt. Under 1700-talets börjar det bli vanligt i hela det engelska samhället, medan det dröjer ytterligare ett sekel innan bruket blir allmänt på svenska landsbygden.

Människors matvanor är ett beteende som inte skall ses isolerat. Det utgör bara ett utsnitt ur...
helheten av socialt bestämda beteendeformer, menar Elias. Den föreskrivna standarden för korrekt ätande korresponderar med en bestämd social och psykologisk struktur. Bakom förändringarna mellan medeltid och modern tid i tekniken för att äta med gaffel framträder en process som kan iakttagas också på många andra områden: i förhållande till beteende i allmänhet, i relation till matvanor, i attityden till naturliga kroppsfunktioner, samt i förhållande till känslorna. På alla dessa områden kan man, enligt Elias, sköna en synbar förändring i de mänskliga drifternas och emotionernas struktur.


Beteendeformer och känslouttryck som under medeltiden inte alls uppfattades som motbjudande omgärdas nu i ökad utsträckning av obehag känslor. En tilltagande känslor tar sig uttryck i korresponderande sociala tabun och förbud. Men dessa tabun upprätthålls av ritualiserade känslor av olust, motvilja, skam, skuld och rädsla – känslor som har odlats under bestämda sociala förhållanden. Dessa reaktioner är något som utvecklats sig gradvis och långsamt under historiens gång. När emellertid ett visst beteende med tillhörande känslomässiga reaktioner en gång väl etablerats i samhället genom bestämda ritualer, reproduceras det hela tiden så länge de mänskliga relationernas mönster inte förändras på något avgörande sätt.

av såväl härmning och identifikation, som distansering och avståndstagande. Enligt Elias kan man
dock över längre tid i Västerlandet, trots alla lokala variationer och sociala skillnader, urskilja en
generell tendens mot starkare och mer sammansatt självkontroll.

En osynlig vägg växer med tiden fram mellan individernas inre världar och det omgivande
samhället, men också mellan individens eget förmuft och hennes känslor. En inre tröskel har ska-
pats av socialt skapade restriktioner och förbud, som genom sina psykiska motsvarigheter, reglerar
vad som kan uttryckas eller måste hållas tillbaka. Metaforiskt kan detta uttryckas i termer av att
känslorna förpassats ner i psykets källare, i alla fall vissa emotioner och, framför allt, känslor med
stark intensitet. Samtidigt har man parallelld odlat och förstärkt sinnestillstånd som skam, skuld
och rädsla, samt knutit dem till vissa slags beteenden.

I takt med att samhällets standard förändras för vad som befrämjas eller förkastas av mänskligt
beteende, förskjuts således tröskeln för socialt inplanterad olust och rädsla hos individen. Ty även
om känslor som skam och motvilja är högst personliga känslor, är de samtidigt utifrån påförda
känslor i enlighet med sociala kontrollbehov. Den socialt inplanterade rädslan framträder i Elias
framställning som ett centralt ledmotiv i civilisationsprocessen.

Det som Freud kallar överjag blir i Elias perspektiv en historisk produkt, eller åtminstone har
denna specifika kontrollinstans tids- och kulturbundna facetter. De relationer som existerar inom
individens mellan drifter, kontrollerade känslor och kontrollinstanser, står i samklang med de
föränderliga strukturer som kännetecknar samhället som helhet. Omvänt påverkar individernas
känslomässiga mönster deras syn på, och relationer till, andra människor. Det gäller i princip alla
mänskliga relationer, men blir förmodligen än mer påtagliga för dem som är mer avvikande på
grund av sin klass- eller könstillhörighet, och inte minst, de som är än mer annorlunda på grund
av annan religion eller hudfärg, de som verkligen uppfattas som främlingar.

Främlingar för oss själva, främlingar för varandra

Om känslorna (eller vissa känslor) i någon mening har förpassats till psykets källare som en inre
främling för vårt medvetande, blir således själva känslolivet till något främmande, en slags den
andre inom den egna personligheten. Som sådan utgör den en dold och omedveten, men likväl
aktiv kraft i våra sociala relationer. Förnekade och lågt värderade känslor har ofta tillskrivits och
projicerats på underordnade grupper av de privilegierade västerländska män som har styrt världens
öde. Vi har tidigare sett hur detta påverkat relationerna mellan män och kvinnor i den västliga
culturen, men även de (‘omanliga’) män som i något avseende definierats som avvikande i relation
till den vita medelklassens dominerande manlighet. Detta har naturligtvis i än högre grad gällt
utomeuropeiska folk och etniska minoriteter inom de egna ländernas territorium.6

6. De slags förbindelser mellan västerländska tänkare och synen på icke-europeiska folk som framförs i detta avsnitt har


Lorenzoni menar att Frazers sätt att gestalta kampen mellan det vilda och det civiliserade kan ses som en del av meningsskapandet i en kultur som befann sig mitt uppe i en territoriell och kulturell expansion (kolonialism och imperialism), vilken legitimerades med den västerländska civilisationens speciella ansvar gentemot övriga världen. Frazer kan därför liknas vid ett prism, menar Lorenzoni. Genom detta man kan se dåtidens västerländska självförståelse i relation till ett växande imperium – en föreställningsvärld som till stor del behållit sin aktualitet in i modern tid.

Frazers antropologiska författarskap har, enligt Lorenzoni, många kopplingar till skönlitterärt skrivande. Fiktionen, inlevelsen och fantasin är intimt kopplade till resandets tematik, som delvis präglar hans berättelser. Här finns ett spel mellan fakta och fiktion, som även återkommer på andra håll. För att beskriva hur det vilda livet föreställdes och framställdes av Frazer, och andra vetenskapsmän i den miljö där han verkade, kan därför begreppet fantasi vara adekvat. Detta skall inte uppfattas som en (ned-)värdering av sanningsvärdet i antropologernas uppgifter, men inne-


Antropologen kring sekelskiftet 1900 var inte minst upptagen av vilda människors rädsla, sexualitet och våldsamhet. Frazer ger otaliga exempel på vildens snarhet till våld och irrationella skräck, som närmast framställs som ett slags existentiellt grundtillstånd. Vilden liknas vid ett litet barn, som måste tröstas och lugnas. Hans bristande självkontroll och begränsade förnuftsförmågor var den ena sidan av ett mynt, där hans outvecklade och osofistikerade känsloliv var det andra, och där slutresultatet var en oförmåga att känna på det civiliserade och subtila sätt som västerlänningar antogs göra.

Inte minst ägnas utomeuropeiska folks sexualitet stor uppmärksamhet. Bland annat antog man hypotetiskt att de stränga tabun som reglerade de vildas sexualitet berodde på ett tidigare utvecklingsstadium av promiskuitet. Ett problem var dock, påpekar Lorenzoni, att hur mycket man än letade bland primitiva folk, fann man aldrig exempel på detta i realiteten. Ansynderingar om promiskuitet, ritualiserad sexualitet, orgier och långa diskussioner om incest, fortsatte likväl att fylla den antropologiska litteraturen.


mot den manliga potensen, genom hotet från demonens våldsamma knivattacker (Lorenzoni 2007: 284ff).


Den här utvecklingen, menar jag, kan kopplas till den mentalitetsmässiga förskjutning som sker i den västerländska civilisationen under samma tid. En allt starkare och mer konsekvent genomförd känslobehärskning och beteendekontroll, liksom allt mer minutöst reglerade mänskliga relationer, inte minst för medelklassmännens vidkommande, trängde ner allt större delar av de affektiva aspekterna av det mänskliga varat i det omedvetna. Reservoaren av bortträngda impulser, önskningar, känslor, omedvetna begär och förnekade behov, torde därmed ha ökat hos
många människor mer än i någon tidigare period i Västerlandet. Möjligheten till känslomässig kompensation lär inte ha försvunnit, men troligen minskat betydligt, sett i ett längre historiskt perspektiv.


Detta är, efter flera decennier av vetenskapshistorisk, poststrukturalistisk, feministisk och postkolonial kritik av traditionellt västerländska tänkande, inte någon nyhet. Men poängen här är att man tidigare inte tillräckligt uppmärksammat känslolivets betydelse i dessa dikotomiserings- och distanseringsprocesser. Den omfattande regleringen av känslolivet som skett i Västerlandet har aktivt bidragit till, och delvis varit en förutsättning för, den vite medelklassmännens relationer till sina konstruerade andra.


Denna hållning är en förutsättning för objektifieringen av andra, som för vetenskapsmannens del innebär att de han studerade blott var objekt för observation, datainsamling och kategorise-
Projekt underjorden

ring, inte levande människor som påminde om honom själv. I värsta fall kunde objektifieringen leda till ett radikalt förtingligande av andra, där deras mänsklighet totalt förnekades. Eller var det så att det var ett redan inträffat förtingligande av människor som därför fick omänskliga konsekvenser?


Det är knappast en varm och brett omfamnande humanism, som här kommer till uttryck i den västerländska filosofihistorien. I själva de koloniserade områdena kom samma slags attityder till uttryck på ett än råare sätt. Som författaren Sven Lindqvist framhåller i sin essä Utrota varenda jävel (Lindqvist 1993: 16ff) har afrikaner av européerna ofta blivit kallade för, och behandlade som, djur. Exempelvis framhöll en svensk officer, som under tre år tillsammans med två landsmän var i Kung Leopolds tjänst i Kongo, i en gemensam skildring från 1887, att det var viktigt att vara kyligt oberoende av sådana infödingar.

Om du måste ålägga en vilde kropplig bestraffning, låt utföra denna bestraffning utan att en muskel i ditt ansikte förråder dina känslor (i Lindqvist 1993: 30).

Det vilda blir för den civiliserade västerlänningen något som skall undertryckas, civiliseras, domesticeras, tämmas och dreserades, likt ett djur. Gång på gång jämförs svarta människor just med djur, både i det vetenskapliga och det allmänna tänkandet. Drivet till sin spets kommer detta kanske till
tydligast uttryck när det vilda och det kvinnliga sammanförts, som i det antropologiska tänkandet. Vi får en bild av den otyglade kvinnokroppen, i antropologernas tolkningar, som ”hotar att sluka vilden och fjättra honom i det forntida mörkret” (Lorenzoni 2007: 293, se även 151ff).


Långtan att falla

Samtidigt finns, som Ambjörnsson påpekar, hos den rationelle västerländske mannen också en ambivalens, en slags kluvnenhet. Uppdelningen i ett uppe och ett nere, i en övre och en undre värld, har också en paradoxal existentiell dimension. Det okända farliga där nere i mörkret lockar ibland lika mycket som det skrämer:


Denna ambivalens kommer på otaliga sätt till uttryck under den aktuella tiden, både i förhållande till *de andra*, det vill säga de människor som såg annorlunda ut, levde och betedde sig på ett annat sätt än civilisera västerländer, och *det där andra* inom västerlänningsa själva, det vill säga de känslor och impulser som rörde sig någonstans nere i kroppen.

Trots det generella avståndstagandet och gränsmarkeringen mot allt främmande finns i de västerländska kulturhistorien samtidigt ett nyfiket intresse, en romantisering och exotisering av det som är radikalt annorlunda. Under 1900-talets början finner man exempelvis en tämligen utbredd trenden att sätta tilltro till det nya, det unga, det perifera och det vilda. Civilisationskritiker som annars var oense om det mesta kunde likväl enas i sina förhoppningar om den energi och vitalitet som andra ’unga’ kulturer och kontinenter som skulle kunna tillföra det gamla Europa (Lundahl 2005: 65).

I de intensiva diskussioner som förs kring manlighet i både Nordamerika och på annat håll

I svenska resebroschyror från mellan- och efterkrigstiden finner man, enligt idéhistorikern Klas Grinell, knappast uttalad rasistiska bilder av de andra, det vill säga de folk och nationer dit de tidigast organiserade svenska turistresorna gick. Trots att vi här ofta har att göra med sydeuropeer och mer sällan med utomeuropeiska folk, betonas ändå i turistreklamen hur annorlunda ’dom’ är, underförstått i relation till vanliga, normala svenskar. Fransmän sägs ha vara öppna, ha ett glatt sinne och präglas av spontana känslor. Den ”egendomliga spanska folksjälén” är sammansatt av både ”sydeuropeisk och orientalisk glöd”. Sydländningen påstås generellt vara ”sorglös”, ”hög-röstad” och impulsiv. Där möter man såväl uppsluppen livsglädje som ”sydländsk lättja”. I en turistbroschyr omtalas ”den vänlige och temperamentsfulle sydländningen, vars känslor växlar från djupaste indolens till hettande exaltion med en i nordbons ögon förbluffande snabbhet” (Grinell 2004: 91, 33).


Det finns i dessa beskrivningar också en tydlig fascination och dragnings rosa de andras’ starka känslouttryck. Men kan rent av misstänka avund inför något man själv saknar eller har ett problematiskt förhållande till. I dessa beskrivningar av de andras känslouttryck kan man ana ett samband mellan attityden till andra människor/ folk och till de egna emtionerna. Synen på den andre är förmodligen präglad både av kulturar och fantasier, hörsägner och halvsanningar, liksom projekterin av bortträngda aspekter i ens eget själsliv. Som psykoanalytikern Julia Kristeva framhållit finns den verkliga främlingen inom oss, det är den del av oss själva som vi inte känner vilken projiceras på yttre främningar och får dem att upplevas som skrämmans (Kristeva 1991). Särskilt
är det de individer som saknar en realistisk upplevelse av sig själva och som förnekar sina främmande sidor, sina avgrunder, och som kväver det irrationella hos sig själva, som lätt blir främmande och likgiltiga också inför andra.


I psykoanalytiska perspektiv ses sådana projicerings avdelvis som allmänningskliga fenomen, men antas förstärkas och förvärvas av vissa individu- och socialpsykologiska mekanismer, och kanske framför allt, vissa typer av negativa barndomserfarenheter. Enligt Böhm förstärker påtagligt alla slags auktoritärta uppföringsmönster, där svaghet måste förnekas, där psykiska övergrepp och aga skett, eller emotionella brister varit omfattande, sådana tendenser. Ju mer av egna kaotiska obearbetade känslor och ju mindre förmåga man har att hantera egna motstridiga känslor, desto

Det psykoanalytiska begreppet det omedvetna är ett vitt och komplext begrepp, som inbegriper såväl omedvetna föreställningar och fantasier, som bortträngda minnen och driftsladdningar. I den reichianska traditionen understryks dock särskilt de hämmade eller blockerade känslornas betydelse, för omedvetna processer.

Civilisationsprocessen igen

Elias menade att det saknades adekvata lingvistiska instrument för att göra de civilisatoriska processer han intresserat sig för full rättvisa. I själva verket var det oprecist att beskriva de restriktioner som lades på människor som ’större’. Man skulle inte frestas att se medeltidens människor som exempel på hur folk obehindrat uttryckte sina känslor fritt och oberoende av samhälleliga restriktioner. Det var mer en fråga om att människors affektiva liv och beteende tog sig skilda former i olika perioder.

Även om Elias ibland ändå blivit förstådd som om han menat att västerlänningar är mer och bättre behärskade (i en positiv mening) än våra egna anfäder och andra, utomeuropeiska folkslag, menar jag att detta är en ensidig läsning av hans teori om civilisationsprocessen”. Visst måste Elias snart sjutioåriga teori nynjas och kompletteras av senare forskningsrön (vilket han själv var klart medveten om), men här finns ändå, menar jag, användbara utgångspunkter och inspiration att hämta för studiet av det mänskliga psykets och känslolivets historia. Sammantaget kan Elias olika verk ge en intressant och sammansatt bild av den västerländska människans socialpsykologiska historia.


Foucault förnekar därmed inte den mängd av exempel på repression, förnekande, pryderi och allmänt nerhyssjande av sexualiteten som fyller den victorianska erans böcker och konst, men

insisterar på att helheten är betydligt mer komplex och motsägelsefull än så.

Även Stearns betonar förekomsten av skilda rörelser och tendenser i emotionernas historia under moderniteten (Stearns 1999). I likhet med Foucault ifrågasätter han att vi idag skulle ha lämnat våra victorianska förfäders moralisering och disciplinering, och äntligen befriat vår sexualitet, våra kroppar och känslor. I vissa avseenden kan man se en tydlig uppmjukning, medan man på andra områden av mänskligt liv till och med kan urskilja strikta regler och hårdare tryck på individen i samtidens under drottning Victorias dagar. Är vi idag öppnare med sexualiteten, har istället döden kringgårdats med starka tabun. Sederna har förvisso blivit mer informella, men kraven på systematisk emotionell kontroll har samtidigt blivit mer stringenta. Påbud kring hygien och hälsa, tilltagande aversion mot kroppsbehåring och personliga odörer, liksom ökat bruk av estetisk kirurgi och krav på punktlighet, är exempel på områden där dagens disciplinära standard mängdubbelt överträffar tidigare epoker.


I viktiga avseenden är det sena 1900-talets (och därmed även våra egna) krav på självkontroll i mindre grad beroende av detaljerade regler och stödjande sociala arrangemang, än de var under 1800-talet. Man kan iaktta ha en historisk rörelse i riktnings mot ett starkare beroende av individens egen impulskontroll på en rad områden, snarare än att den victorianska mentalitet har vittrat bort och försvunnit. Detta indikerar snarare att en del äldre restriktioner framgångsrikt har inför livats, även om man också kan finna en uttalad motvilja mot gamla tiders rigiditet. Men stränga
krav om individuellt ansvar för korrekt beteende och lämpliga känslomässiga reaktioner kan skapa ett hårt tryck, som resulterar i ständig självobservation och kontroll.

Ett annat säreget drag i vår samtid jämfört med föregående epoker är existensen av en stor mängd, lättillgängliga kompensatoriska utlopp för känsloutlevelse. Genom film, TV och andra medier exponeras vi för våld, nakenhet och sexuella handlingar vilka för bara några decennier sedan varit otänkbart. Så kallade realitiesäpor har raserat gamla tiders barrierer mellan offentliga och privata sfärer. Vi kan på TV betrakta idrottsmän och filmstjärnor slåss och agera brutal; vi ser människor på film och video kopulera; i kriminalfilmer och nyhetsutsändningar upptäckas döda människor och ett dödande utan slut.

Att betrakta andra och att fantisera om dem har blivit en framträdande del av vår samtids mentala landskap, även om speciella och omgärdade arenor för kompensatorisk känslomässig utlevelse även har funnits tidigare, exempelvis i form av sport, musik och dans (se Elias/Dunning, 1993). Nya kompensatoriska möjligheter för känslomässig utlevelse öppnas hur som helst idag, åtminstone i indirekt form. Eller skall dessa fenomen snarare tolkas som ett uttryck för att vi hellre ser på när andra ägnar sig åt affektivt beteende, än att själva göra det?

Stearn sammanfattar sin syntetiska studie av det nordamerikanska känslolivets historia med att fastslå att ett nytt disciplinärt system har växt fram, vilket kombinerar nya begränsningar, skuldkänslor och inskränkningar, med nya möjligheter och friheter. Tillsammans skapar detta en högst complex helhet, fylld av spänningar och motsägelser. Vi må ha färre formella regler för beteende och känslouttryck än våra victorianska förfäder, samtidig som repressiva idéer ofta kritiseras hårt och en sensationslysten populärkultur visar det mesta. Likväl ställs nya krav på att uppvisa självbehärskning och korrekt beteende, utifrån nya dygdekategorier.

Det postemotionella samhället


I polemik mot de tidigare modernitetskritiker som talade om en dualism mellan emotioner och intellekt, menar Meströvić att detta perspektiv inte längre är relevant för att förstå samtiden. Från 1900-talets slut kan man se allt tydligare tendenser till att man snarare närmar sig känslor genom intellektuelle konstruktioner, än via autentiska emotionella erfarenheter. Känslor abstraheras, mekaniseras och massproduceras i vår samtid. I media presenteras en bild av livet som ständigt leende, tolerant, urbant och tämligen affektlöst.

Att vara trevlig är det eftersträvansvärda emotionella tillståndet, medan temperament, svart-sjuka och humörsvängningar och andra idiosynkratiska kvaliteter undertrycks. På sin höjd upp-
visar den postemotionella människan behärskad indignation, vid sidan av sin ständiga trevlighet. För att bli tagen på allvar bör man framträda som emotionellt oengagerad (‘be cool’).

Men, vidhåller Mestrôvíc, under den nedkylda ytan kan likväl känslor anas, om än förvrängda: vreden har omvandlats till indignation, avundsjukan tar sig uttryck i en objektslös strävan för något diffust bättre; hatet blir till elakhet; kärlek förvandlas till ljummet gillande; genuin, oförlammad gladje reducerats till den kortvariga och futtiga tillfredsställelse, som kan skänkas av ett ‘happy meal’. Alla de primära passioner som klassiska filosofer alltifrån Aristoteles till Hume diskuterat, är nu blott skuggor av sina forna jag.

Med hänvisning till den form av psykoterapi som Freud först förespråkade, där hans klienter ofta uttryckte mycket starka känslor (och ibland även vanligt folk utanför terapirummet), menar Mestrôvíc att kanaler för detta slags katharsis nu har blockerats:

> Weeping, abusing, raging, and words are no longer adequate routes for channelling emotions and all of these reactions are more tightly regulated than they ever where in history. This is a neo-Orwellian consequence of extending the love of the machine to social life (Mestrôvíc 1997: 89).

Mestrôvíc tror att en person som mentalt närmar sig känslor, när uttrycken för dem blockerats på det sätt som beskrivs i citatet, utvecklar precis den hybrid av rationalitet och emotioner som kan kallas postemotionellt.

Mestrôvíc har sina rötter i det forna Jugoslavien och formulerar sina betraktelser under det då ännu pågående Balkankriget, det vill säga vid 1990-talets mitt. Texten vibrerar av upprördhet över den brist på engagemang och handling inför dödandet och de etniska rensningarna, som Mestrôvíc upplever i den västerländska kulturen.


I Mestrôvíc’s pessimistiska perspektiv har det som författaren George Orwell (1903–1950) en gång fantiserade om i termer av tankekontroll och övervakning av medborgarna, utsträckts till att också omfatta känslolivet. Postemotionalismen beskrivs som ett system format för att undvika emotionell ordring och för att civilisera ännu ’vilda’ områden av mänskligt känsloliv. Syftet med alla dessa regleringar kan tolkas vara att ’ordna’ känslorna, så att samhället skall kunna fungera som väloljad maskin. Eventuellt kan alla dessa ansträngningar emellertid i slutändan vara helt
förvärras. För en kanske mer hotfull effekt för samhället än denna utsträckta manipulering och övervakning, skulle en annan utvecklingstendens kunna vara. Mestrôvíc urserkler vid sidan av den fas i civilisationsutvecklingen som han benämner postemotionalism en mindre synlig tendens i motsatt riktning, en avcivilisering. De perversin, mörkbränta vanor, uttalade våldshandlingar och andra okontrollerade fenomen som under lång tid varit bannlysta från den västliga kulturens offentlighet, tycks nu inte bara återuppstå utan även växa sig starkare, skriver han, åtminstone i den privata och halvprivata fantasivärlden.

Och kanhända är detta ett uttryck för en dold realitet som håller på att ta form i de mänskliga samhållens psykologiska undervärld; ett monster av dissocierade affekter som tränger fram och börjar löpa amok på ett högst destruktivt sätt. Det skulle i så fall vara en historiens list av ett tragiskt slag, att alla dessa ansträngningar att tygla och kontrollera känslorna snarare gjort dem helt okontrollerbara! För vem vet vad som egentligen göms i den mänskliga källarvåning av dolda känslor, som vi så länge har försökt att gömma undan och tygla i namn av Förnuftet?

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Walda komplimenter 1850.

We were living spoils,
Speaking in silence,
crying in silence and looking for children without names,
without knowing their genders,
often without being certain that they had been born (Búsqueda: 15)

San Vicente, Córdoba, Argentina

As is well known, Argentina had a military dictatorship from 1976 to 1983. During this period, it became common that people with different ideas to the regime vanished. The families of all these people (today it is estimated that around 30,000 persons disappeared during the last dictatorship) never knew what really happened to them. It was obvious that they were murdered, but since the state never admitted that they had killed or imprisoned those persons, a category of citizens commonly referred to as desaparecidos was created.

Part of a generation disappeared (those who would have been around 50 years old today), either in the hands of the military or because the situation became impossible for them and they moved out from Argentina and migrated to other countries. One banal explanation the military gave during this period was that all these people were in Europe, studying, working or whatever.

After the dictatorship a commission was created to investigate the crimes that the military had perpetrated. This commission was called “Nunca Más” (Never Again), and they documented all the cases and made denouncements against the dictatorial regime.

In the collective mind of the population, it was clear that many of the desaparecidos had been buried in mass graves around the country. In the case of Córdoba, people who had been working at one of the city cemeteries in the seventies (San Vicente) remembered burials of NN (No Name) people under strange circumstances, such as without correct papers or during the night.

In 1996 a federal judge from the provincial court in Córdoba, Cristina Garzón, ordered the excavation of NN burials at San Vicente. The Argentine Forensic Anthropology Team (EAAF) became involved in this work. The excavations at the cemetery have until now given identity to three persons who disappeared during the last dictatorship in Argentina. The re-encounter between the families of the disappeared persons and their beloved ones took place at the Museum of Anthropology, and the team of anthropologists has been working in the museum’s warehouse.
The Museum of Anthropology is part of the Faculty of Humanities and Arts at the University of Córdoba, and it has a display about the prehistory of the province Córdoba as well as part of the Prehistory and Ethnography of north-western Argentina. The museum also works intensively with the so-called “University Extension to the Community”.

Those excavations have involved me in different ways. As an archaeologist, the idea of working with contemporary issues, involved in the lives of living people, of identifying people who disappeared during the last dictatorship in Argentina, is something that has fascinated me. As a museum worker, the changed role of museums – the need to handle new and acute situations, the problem of representation of these painful social topics (or traumas) – also attracts me. And finally, as a South American living in Sweden, working with this article has signified coming back to events that I left behind when I chose archaeology almost 20 years ago.

**Archaeology and the Current World**

Commonly, archaeology has been defined as the study of past human cultures by analyzing the material remains (sites and artefacts) that people left behind. One of the common ideas about archaeology is that it is a science which deals with pre-history, with the remote past, with times before writing documents.

Since the 1960’s this attitude has been slowly changing, and today archaeologists’ work in different situations, even though in popular thinking, archaeology has nothing to do with the present world. For instance, Håkan Karlsson has expressed the view that archaeology is not necessarily only about pre-history but also about the close past. Material culture from XX century could then also be the field of archaeological research. He suggests out that there could be some kind of “Archaeology of the Present” (Karlsson 2005) which could be about; abandoned factories, remains of summer cottages, roads, military vestiges, etc. (Schofield; Buchli and Lucas 2001).

In recent decennia, archaeology has accordingly become more concentrated on the study and interpretation of material culture. Archaeologists have been working with questions not only about the past but also about the behaviour of humans in relation to material objects (consumer society, production of garbage, etc). This definition of archaeology does not make any distinction about periodization, and archaeology can reach the contemporary past. As Miller and Tilley pointed out in 1996, the study of material culture can be defined as the investigation of relations between people and things irrespective of time and space (Miller and Tilley 1996:5). Today, there are many archaeologists who define archaeology not only as a methodology (digging) bound to a period of time, but as the interaction between material culture and human behaviour, regardless of time or space.

**Forensic Archaeology**

Clyde Snow, the anthropologist, ho is considered one of the most important forensic archaeolo-
gists today, once stated that there is a brief but very useful and informative biography of an individual contained within the skeleton, if you know how to read it (Current Biography 52).

Snow brought forensic archaeology to international attention with his work on the disappeared people in Argentina. He worked in Argentina during the 1980’s, with disappeared people found in anonymous graves in various places over Argentina. He became also key witness in the trial against the military power. His work brought to the surface the reality of the country during the years of dictatorship. The exhumation of bodies also brought the question to the attention of society and the exhumed bodies needed to be identified. He also trained a group of young Argentine archaeologists which became an internationally well known team (EAAF).

Sardonically, one of the first and major uses of archaeology for forensic inquiry to establish human rights abuse was undertaken by the Nazis in an effort to demonstrate that the Soviet Union had carried out enormous violations of the laws of war against soldiers and allies from Poland. 15 000 Polish soldiers disappeared during the Second World War. They were killed by the Soviet army, but when faced by questions about where these men were, Stalin answered that they were deserters which had escaped to Manchuria. The second explanation was that Germans had killed them.

Goebbels organized the largest human rights inquiry ever, an investigation that had its roots in nineteenth century German forensic medicine and one whose basic form would echo into the present. International experts were summoned, the Red Cross was called in to witness, field laboratories were set up, bodies were exhumed, locals interviewed, photographs taken, clothes and other material from the mass graves carefully scrutinized, mouldering identity cards removed and matched to lists of the missing, the narrative of death was built up detail by detail (Laqueur: 82)

All this was done to prove that the Soviet Union was responsible.

It is obvious that archaeological methods can be used to excavate and examine the “crime scene” but can archaeological theories also be used? The idea that archaeology is not only the study of the remote past, and that it can contribute to understand the Present, can make archaeology an important tool in Human Rights cases. Graves-Brown (2000) argues for an archaeological practice and theory serving as a critique of the world we ourselves have created. As Karlsson pointed out, contemporary archaeology and its activities in the field is an excellent platform for democratic forms of community archaeology and for a situation where ordinary people participate in the creation of their own cultural heritage, together with archaeologists/heritage managers. Archaeology together with other disciplines, working with living memories in connection to material culture, can give voices to those silenced by society (Karlsson).

Or as the Argentine Forensic Anthropology Team (EAAF) point out as one of their goals: that
archaeology (as a science and in the forensic process), can contribute to the historical reconstruction of the recent past, often distorted or hidden by the parties or government institutions which are themselves implicated in the crimes under investigations.

The Social Role of Museums

There is almost a consensus among museum personnel that museums must be a place for memory, a place for understanding and analysis, a place for sharing knowledge and experiences.

For a long time the museum staff (curators, conservators, designers, etc) have had the floor, the power of interpretation and presentation. The institutions were mostly elitist and rigid, without any dialogue with the original owners of the collections or the communities in the surroundings.

In recent years, the relationship between museums and communities, minorities and aboriginal communities has brought new questions and new ways of communication into focus. Words like participation and inclusion have become part of museum discourse, but the question is how deep this discourse is in reality (Côté; Mullen Kreamer: 367). There is a certain arrogance in museums as institutions, and the liaison between them, as institutions, and the communities is often not easy. Breaking down the barrier between institutions and “the others” is also not easy, and to open national institutions to a political debate without controlling voices is a complicated issue.

These days, museums are probably acquiring a new significance; they can be part of a wider debate and go deeper into the relationships between the society they represent and the communities living in this society. As Lumley (Lumley: 2) pointed out, museums can map out geographies, experiences and values, especially controversial tasks which become a socially potent metaphor.

Identities, memories and representation

Recovering the remains is not enough to erase the pain of the past, but it is a huge part of healing and crucial form of reparations. (Mimi Doretti)

In the Argentinean case, it can be observed that 30 years after the dictatorship collapsed many injuries and sores are still open. Searching for truth and what happened with people, and in many cases their children, who disappeared during the dictatorship, is still a matter for society. A gleam of this situation can be observed in the discussion about the future of the ESMA (ESMA, Escuela de Mecánica de la Armada).

In 2004 Ernesto Kirchner, the current president of Argentina, removed the possessions of the School of Marine Engineering from the Navy. During the dictatorship ESMA, had been one of the largest concentration camps, or better expressed a killing camp, because very few people survived ESMA. When Kirchner expropriated the area of ESMA, the principal idea was to make a place for memory, a museum, a Memory Museum.

Since the expropriation, many voices came up, the voices of the relatives of the people who
died or disappeared in ESMA, the few voices of those who survived, the voice of children who are trying to find their parents and relatives, the voice of the society in general, the government and so on. The debate has been very widespread and general, and this debate may very well be a symptom of a healthy society. The debate has been a healthy way to clear the trauma, to have a voice, to be a social actor.

Many people are for a museum and many are against the idea of a museum in the area of ESMA. In Página 12 (an Argentinean newspaper) from the 26 March 2006 (30 years anniversary of the beginning of the last dictatorship) Roxana Sandá wrote: “In no way can this place be considered a ‘museum’. This place must exist as a document of the most recent history, a text to read and to decipher as a clear and embarrassing expression of a system. The word ‘museum’ would return it to the past, neutralizing it. The word museum would archive those who went through this place, who disappeared, died or survived. What they suffered here cannot be filed because to archive it is to push back and cover political contradictions that still, and for a long time to come, will have to pierce our society with pain.”

Other voices like Lila Pastoriza de Roisinblit, from Abuelas de Plaza de Mayo wants ESMA to become a place for testimony of what happened; her daughter was kidnapped when she was in her 8th month of pregnancy. Oscar Terán pointed out that a museum of memory is a desirable objective, but it must also be a place for allowing us to debate why we need to remember, what we need to remember, for how long and how. For the psychoanalyst Silvia Bleichman, it is a paradox that horror can became a museum, to make ESMA into a museum does not helping us to remember but in some ways it help us to forget.

The museum – memory place – project is growing and there is a web-site posted by the Argentinean government, where society can give ideas to the project. It is a living process with many advances and doubts, the creation of a museum raises many disjunctives, which version of history will be chosen to be shown? Who is going to make those decisions? The state? The victims? The survivors? The relatives? The intellectuals? How can horror be represented, can it be an aesthetic experience?

The representation of Horror

There are many examples around the world of museums and memorial places where horror has been presented and discussed, and where horror and human relations have been explored, not only “scientifically” but also with subjectivity and a multiplicity of voices. In societies where trauma is still an open question, where the past has been isolated, obscured and sequestered from those to whom it belongs, it is important to update and debate the old institutions, which represent the powerful and the elite and have nothing to do with the mosaic of ideas, opinions and values of the community.

Reading Argentinean newspapers from recent years, an interesting viewpoint about the up-
coming memory museum at ESMA has been the opinions of the survivors, sometimes opposed to the views of the relatives of the victims. The relatives have been interested in displaying what happened in ESMA, showing that their relatives are victims of a system. Those who survived ESMA do not want to be exhibited as victims, they argue that this is a way to become a victim twice (first when they were captured and tortured, and secondly when they are presented again as victims). To exemplify this dilemma, I have been thinking about the photographs that we know from the end of the Second World War, when the allies came to the concentration camps, seeing mountains of famished, naked, tortured human bodies, the horror in those eyes, and the dirt of reality.

Another example of making exhibitions about the same period is given by the Foundation Topography of Terror in Berlin. In one of their exhibitions called "The House Prison at Gestapo Headquarters in Berlin. Terror and Resistance 1933–1945," they have presented the people who were tortured and sometimes murdered at the Gestapo headquarters. They are presented not as victims but as individuals, in some cases in important moments of their life (weddings, having children, etc). In some manner, the victims have become empowered in the exhibition, it is some kind of revenge and reward to the people who died in that prison.

Of course, this discussion is not easy, and almost certainly there is not a simple answer, but the idea of empowering the victims, to give them back a strong voice, to give back control to those that we do not know where they are, is an idea that attracts me.

Epilogue
I need to clarify that the goal of my presentation has not been to make a theoretical approach to the problem of human rights, representation or forensic archaeology. The purpose has been to share the pragmatic experience of working in a museum which deals with these questions, and how as an archaeologist I feel contradictions in daily work.

As the archaeologist Dario Olmo (EAAF) said during an interview with the Argentinean newspaper Pagina 12 (September 08, 2007): “the remains told us plenty about the culture, the form in which bodies had been taken from the families, the structure of terror in the society”.

The question is if Archaeology can be a discipline that ignores the present; as Christopher Tilley pointed out in 1998 that “since the beginning of the twentieth century, a hundred million people have died in connection with 160 smaller and 16 larger wars. During thirty-five years since the end of World War II there have only been between twenty-six and thirty days without a war somewhere on the planet […] Every day 20 000 people die because of lack of clean water… (Tilley: 306). In this context, archaeology can contribute to the understanding of the current world and can have a relevant position in contemporary political and social discussion.

There are many people around the world looking for their beloveds; they don’t know where they are, if they are alive or dead. In the Argentinean case the process has been very long, thou-
sands of people have been wondering what happened and why it happened. The Argentinean example is one of many. Today, we can observe similar situations around the world. We are only spectators in many cases, and very few are involved in searching for the truth. Archaeology is trying to leave the privileged place and trying to make a difference involving itself in contemporary issues.

How does reality change for someone who has been searching for a beloved during 27 years, and finds her or him?

What feeds the hope of someone who does not find, but continues searching? Do we still have a place for emotion inside us?

It is not news, not even a current subject, the search for identity neither in Argentina nor in the current world. Nevertheless, a team of anthropologists dedicates in capacity and work, dedicates itself to an almost impossible task: to find the place of a clandestine burial from the first years of the military dictatorship. To unearh those who were hidden there. To identify them. To give them back their names and family names. And to give back their remains to their relatives. They are looking for them. They are appearing (Documentary film: El último confín).

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Karsten Pedersen
THE LIVING UNDERGROUND:
Setting the Scene

It is more than 140 years ago now. Two geologists and a local guide climbed into the extinct volcano Snaefell on Iceland. In the electric light from their “Ruhmkorff devices” they continued their decent into the earth – further and further down. The fantastic adventure of Professor Lidenbrock and his nephew Axel can be read in Jules Verne’s famous book, Journey to the centre of the Earth. Deep under the surface of our planet, the three friends find an entire ocean with many mysterious life forms. While this story was indeed fantasy, the author correctly predicted the fluorescent tube. Not only did he correctly predict the invention of a light source; in a sense he was also correct in predicting life to be abundant deep under ground, albeit in cavities much smaller than imagined in his book. Today, research directed towards exploring intra-terrestrial microbial life is a growing field, reflected by an increasing number of articles, meetings and workshops dealing with the secrets of deep intra-terrestrial microbes. Life is actually surprisingly abundant underground.

During about 20 years of research, I have explored an underground biosphere that reaches much deeper than we are presently able to explore. The origin of this deep, underground biosphere most probably dates back to the time life originated on earth. This paper suggests that life started underground, in a protected and stable environment, and not in a warm pond as originally suggested by Darwin. This early life made its living from hydrogen, sulphur and carbon dioxide. As the fragile new underground life evolved stronger, it moved towards the ground surface, found the seas, the continents and most important, it found a never-ending source of energy in the sun. Life could now inhabit the entire surface of our planet. If life can originate underground in a planet like earth, the number of planets in universe with opportunities for life increases dramatically. No longer do we need to look only for planets in a comfortable distance to a sun. Some life manages perfectly well without the sun deep underground in our planet and life may very well do similarly underground on many other planet surfaces. Living underground may very well be the normal thing life does in the Universe. Only occasionally does life find planets like the earth with an inhabitable surface.

For many of us, the underground is connected with death, pain, fear and danger. The realm of hell is supposed to lie somewhere underground. We also bury our dead underground, a tradition that further adds death to the underground. During the ceremony of burial in Christian societies, the phrases “ashes to ashes, or dust to dust” are commonly chanted. In fact, this may be the truth of the day. If life really originated underground as new research results suggest we symbolically place our near and dear close to the birthplace of all life on our planet.

Not only our dead will be buried underground. In the future many countries plan to bury
their radioactive waste deep underground in huge repositories. Radioactive waste in Sweden, and in many other countries, arises mainly from the production of nuclear power. Some waste also comes from research, hospitals, and industry. The bulk of the radionuclides produced in a nuclear power reactor remains in the spent fuel elements, characterised as high level radioactive waste. Radioactivity will decay with time, but some long-lived radionuclides will make the high level radioactive waste hazardous for at least 100 000 years. The present concept includes encapsulating the spent fuel elements in copper-steel canisters, placed in deposition holes in tunnels at an expected depth of about 500 m. The amount of spent fuel in a canister and the distances between the canisters in the repository are chosen so that the peak temperature is about 80 to 90° C at the canister surface. The restriction in temperature is mainly there to guarantee the long-term performance of the bentonite buffer that will surround the canisters. The low solubility of the spent fuel matrix, the copper canister, the bentonite buffer and the depth of emplacement in stable host rock constitute the four main barriers to protect man from the radionuclides.

Research into safe disposal of radioactive waste has helped to reveal the living underground in Finland and Sweden. The extensive investigations needed have opened up the underground for life scientists via tunnels and boreholes in a way that would have been impossible without the support from the energy industry. It is amazing, in a way, to realize that investigations focused on very engineering related questions about the safe construction of a radioactive waste graveyard, have lead to clues about the origin of the life we want to protect from the deadly radiation the waste generates.

The word underground may certainly have many different meanings to different people, depending of their education, religion, and daily work. For people like me, a natural scientist specialized on microbiology, the word underground has a very specific meaning that probably differs significantly from most other people on our planet. For me, the word underground means an exciting environment crowded with tiny living entities – the intra-terrestrial biosphere. Many underground movements in our societies start underground, where they slowly either grow stronger and stronger, or perish. In analogy with this, life may have done the same, it originated underground, grew strong, and then it conquered the surface of our planet. All of the above may sound foreign and weird for those unfamiliar with natural sciences, and it is my experience that many natural scientists also find the idea of a living underground uncomfortable. I think this is primarily because of a well-excused ignorance about the physical underground. It is not easy to gain knowledge about this environment. You must drill or dig very deep, and that is a difficult, expensive and sometimes dangerous prospect.

In the first part of this paper, I will reveal the characteristics of the intra-terrestrial biosphere, in a fairly strict scientific way. Thereafter, I will explain how the findings of a living underground dramatically has changed the way we look at the origin of life and life in universe. However, the first thing to explain and define is life itself. What are the definitions of life, what are the absolute
limits for life in terms of physical parameters and how do different forms of life make their living, i.e. what do they eat and breathe?

What is life?
The question: ‘What is life’ may sound as a very existentialistic question and it may well be if you address the art of living among humans. But if we turn to basic understanding, and try to grasp a common definition for all life on the planet, it will be more straight forward in one sense but more difficult in another. Defining life is a difficult thing. It cannot be done in one sentence. We need to use a set of definitions. First of all, any organism performing an active life turns over energy. Active life is not possible without access to utilisable energy. Living cells use chemical energy for synthesis of more cells, for transport, movement and reproduction. Dormant life, on the other hand, can survive without the consumption of energy. Just think of a plant and a seed. The plant grows and must have light as light is the source of energy for plants. However, seeds of a plant can stay in the dark of a drawer or a box for years. Life rests in the seed and awaits growth conditions, i.e. water, some heat and light, i.e. energy. The first, energy related part of the life definition will then be:

Life has the ability to harvest energy from chemical reactions and light (but not energy from heat, movement or radioactive decay).

Living cells are complicated biochemical entities, and cells would be impossible without a blueprint that tells how to build cells. This blueprint is the nucleic acid DNA that is present in all living and dormant cells. When it is time to produce an offspring, life splits the DNA molecule and makes a copy of the blueprint that is transferred to the newborn life. All basic information needed to live is consequently transferred to the new generation. The second information related part of the life definition will be:

Life communicates information about how to live to the next generation.

We live on a planet that is in a continuous evolution with respect to geological and physical characters. Continents are drifting, merged and split up. Periods of very warm climate is replaced by periods of freezing cold climate. Deserts form and vanish. All those changes require that life has an ability to adapt. Doing so means that not only the inanimate environments change, so does life. Therefore, adaptations must also occur in relation to other life forms. Strategies must be evolved on how to escape the hunter as well as how to hunt, to learn how to eat new evolving plants, how to avoid being eaten and so on. The third evolutionary related part of the life definition will be:

Life has the ability to adapt to new environments and conditions.

The smallest life on the planet is the toughest
Most microbes are only some thousand millimetre big (small). Despite this they include the
toughest organisms on the planet. Microbes can exist almost anywhere as long as there is liquid water. It can be as acidic as vinegar (or acetic acid), more alkaline than washing powder, boiling hot, or freezing cold as the Antarctic. But life is always present. Microbes as a group have an incredible ability to adapt to conditions that would be instantaneously lethal to humans, animals and plants. This is a heritage from 4 000 million years of adaptation to all thinkable environmental conditions on earth.

**Microbes eat and breathe anything**

While humans need organic food and oxygen to breathe, many microbes enjoy life virtually eating rock and breathing metals or sulphur or nitrogen. Life as defined above needs energy, carbon, water and trace elements, and those components can be found and explored in many different shapes. All microbial life is based on metabolic processes driven by chemical energy extracted from the metabolic combustion of inorganic or organic compounds. The harvesting of energy from various compounds requires a compound that will assist the combustion, very much like how a fire needs oxygen.

This process is called respiration (breathing) when an external compound is used to support the combustion, such as oxygen, nitrogen, sulphur, iron or manganese. It is called fermentation when the compound is degraded without an external compound for combustion, e.g. when sugar is used as a source of energy. The products of this process are alcohol and carbon dioxide. The microbes certainly must obey the universal laws saying that matter and energy cannot be destroyed or formed, just transformed. But they are utterly sophisticated lawyers that understand to use every single, constructive combination of those laws for making a good living of all or almost nothing.

**Microbes – what are they?**

The tree of life, based on the gene encoding for a part of the cell protein factory (16/18S rRNA), is depicted in Figure 1. It shows the phylogenetic relationship between all known and characterized organisms on earth. The organisms cluster in three major domains, viz. Bacteria, Archaea and Eukarya. All organisms in the domains Bacteria and Archaea are microbes, commonly denoted prokaryotes. Most of the branches of the domain Eukarya, the eukaryotes, are of a microbial nature as well. In fact, multi-cellular organisms are only represented in the three branches comprising animals, plants and fungi. Thus, microbes can be found virtually everywhere in the tree of life. They constitute the absolute dominating diversity of life on our planet.

Biochemically, much of this diversity is contradictory to multi-cellular life whose diversity is largely morphological. The enormous biochemical diversity among the microbes explains their huge adaptability to almost any environment on the planet, where temperature allows life. Some Archaea likes it very hot. For instance, the optimum temperature for growth of the genus Pyrolo-
bus is 105°C and it survives in temperatures of up to 113°C. Many other genera of Archaea grow best at about 100°C. The small size of most microbes and the preference for high temperatures by some microbes makes them well adapted for life in deep intra-terrestrial environments, hotter the deeper they go.

**Figure 1.** The phylogenetic relationship between all main organism groups on the planet can be revealed by comparing their 16S rDNA and 18S rDNA genes, coding for the ribosome, which is the protein factory of the cell. The red colour represents microbes that are adapted to high temperatures (60°C –113°C), many of which utilize hydrogen as a source of energy, and carbon dioxide as their sole source of cell carbon. Somewhere below the root in the tree, the first life is located, but it is unfortunately out of reach for any molecular geological or chemical method to reveal its original nature.

The deep underground biosphere

Exploration of the microbial world got off to a slow start some 350 years ago, when Leeuwenhoek and his contemporaries focussed their microscopes on very small life forms. It was not until about 20 years ago, however, that exploration of the world of underground microbes gathered momentum. Until then, it was generally assumed that life could not persist deep underground, out of reach of the sun and a photosynthetic ecosystem base. In the mid 1980’s, the drilling of deep holes for scientific research started. Holes up to thousands of metres deep were drilled in hard as well as sedimentary rock, and up came microbes in numbers equivalent to what could be found in many surface ecosystems. The deep subterranean biosphere had been discovered.
Defining the boundary between the ground-surface biosphere and the subterranean biosphere is problematic: various scientists define it differently, and there is no general consensus. For our purposes the main criterion is that the subterranean biosphere begins where contact with the surface biosphere is lost. This lies beneath soil and root zones, beneath the groundwater table, and beneath sediment and crust surfaces. A long time should have elapsed since last surface contact, ‘long time’ in this respect being at least several decades, preferably hundreds of years or more. In my view it is not depth per se that defines a subterranean ecosystem; rather, it is the duration of isolation from the surface.

A continuum of subterranean environments exists, ranging from very hard rocks such as granites and volcanic rocks, so called basalts, through sedimentary rocks and sandstones, to as yet unconsolidated, fairly soft sediments. Two main subterranean rock environments can be defined: hard rocks – those too hard and impermeable to allow microbes to pass, except via fractures, and sedimentary rocks – those porous enough to allow microbes to penetrate. Hard rocks generally experienced temperatures high above the limit for life when they were formed and are therefore sterile after formation. With time, however, they fracture and can be colonized. Sedimentary rocks are formed slowly, mostly on the seafloor, and over geological time scales may appear on land as rocks. Sedimentary rocks that did not exceed the temperature limit for life (approximately 113°C) when formed can harbour microbes that entered during the sedimentation process; microbes can, of course, also move in later.

Exploration of the subterranean biosphere poses different technical challenges when done from at sea versus on land. At sea, drilling must be performed from ships often through several km of water. In contrast, drilling on land is relatively less technologically challenging. Furthermore, there are also pronounced geological differences between the sub-seafloor and continental environments. The seafloor mostly consists of sediments underlain by magmatic hard rocks, while the continents are built of a range of hard, sedimentary, and soft rocks of various origins. Finally, the seafloor is younger than many continental rock environments, which can be up to several billion years old. The oldest seafloor environment is about 170 million years old, and is found under the Pacific Ocean, near Japan.

Comparing a surface environment, such as the sea, with most subterranean environments gives contradictory results. Spatially, the sea varies little within a small area, while a subterranean environment can vary greatly over short distances. However, when it comes to temporal variation the situation is reversed: the sea has daily and seasonal cycles and is strongly affected by weather, while subterranean environments vary little over time. Weather has no meaning in the underground. This means that many more samples (from boreholes) need to be taken to get a statistically significant spatial overview of a subterranean than of a surface aquatic environment. These samples can be gathered over relatively long periods, as subterranean environments generally display less significant temporal variability than do surface ones. However, the high cost of
drilling greatly restricts the amount of such drilling. Therefore, our knowledge of the subterranean biosphere is still limited and thorough exploration has barely started.

There are two main routes for exploring the biogeochemistry of the subterranean biosphere: one is to sample and analyse the diversity, activity, and distribution of active microbial life, while the other is to analyse traces of this biosphere. We can analyse various biosignatures such as anomalies in the composition of naturally occurring stable isotopes or the presence of organic molecules that are typical of life. Fossils are obvious evidences of subterranean life provided it can be proven that the fossilized organisms had been living in the explored subterranean environment.

How deep is deep?

The super deep well SG-3, 12 262 m deep in the Pechenga-Zapolyarny area, Kola Peninsula, Russia, is currently the deepest drilled hole in the world. One of many important reasons for drilling this borehole was to see how deep a borehole could be drilled. The prospect of drilling a super deep borehole gets more difficult with increasing depth, and success depends on the geological formation drilled, the quality of equipment used and the skill of the drilling personnel. In addition, the drill string may get stuck in a layer with bad borehole stability, and this is always a major uncertainty in deep drilling projects.

The German continental deep drilling program (KTB) drilled several deep Cretaceous-Tertiary boundary boreholes into the crystalline rock of the Bavarian Black Forest (Schwartzwald) basement in Central Europe. The deepest of the six wells drilled is 9100 m and it reached an in situ temperature of 265 °C at that depth. One of these KTB wells was searched for micro-organisms that can live at temperatures well above the boiling point of water, so called hyperthermophiles at 4100 m depth. Cultivable micro-organisms could not be demonstrated, possibly because of a too high temperature for life of the sampled fluids, which was 118 °C. So far, the highest culturing temperature for hyperthermophiles has not exceeded 113 °C. Another very deep borehole was drilled in Gravenberg, Sweden in the search for deep earth gases. It reached 6800 m and here thermophilic bacteria were successfully enriched and isolated from a depth of 5278 m where the temperature was 65–75 °C.

The borehole windows into super deep environments are still very few, and none has been drilled with microbiology as its major aim. Boreholes drilled with the purpose of exploring microbial life are seldom deeper than 1000 m. Depth alone is not limiting for how deep life extend as can be understood comparing the lifeless German 4100 m deep KTB borehole and the microbially populated Swedish 5278 m deep Gravenberg borehole. Instead, a too high temperature for life sets the ultimate limit for how deep life can penetrate into our planet.

This temperature is reached at very different depths at different places of our planet, from the seafloor surface at marine hot springs to ten kilometres or more in massive sedimentary rock formations. The absolute majority of boreholes explored for microbial life do not reach such depths
because the drilling cost for a borehole increases with depth, which, together with increasing technical challenges limits the number of super deep boreholes to very few. In addition to drilled boreholes, tunnels and mines can be used for the exploration of intra-terrestrials. The exploration of intra-terrestrial life is consequently, in parallel to the exploration of life on other planets, strongly dependent on sophisticated technological equipment and skills. The exploration of the (super) deep intra-terrestrial biosphere has merely begun.

**Global microbial biomass at a glance**

The number of intra-terrestrial microbes varies notably depending on the underground site studied. Values in the range of one thousand up to one hundred million microbes per ml groundwater or gram sediment are commonly reported. Although the dry weight of hundred million microbes in one gram of sediment is very small, in the range of 0.001–0.010 gram, the total weight of microorganisms in many square kilometres of seafloor and continental shelf sediments, rock aquifers etc. may reach an impressive number.

An attempt to estimate the total carbon in terrestrial and intra-terrestrial environments was made some years ago. These calculations indicate that the total amount of carbon in the intra-terrestrial organisms may equal that of all terrestrial and marine plants. Although subject to a great deal of uncertainty, the estimates suggest that the mass of intra-terrestrial life is very large. A wealth of microbial life may exist deep inside Earth with many new species, representing novel micro-organisms with unique physiological and biochemical features that await exploration.

<table>
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<td>Plant</td>
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**The sub-seafloor basement rock and sediments**

Over two-thirds of the earth’s surface is covered by oceans, and over 50% of these are from 3,000 to 6,000 m in depth, with an average depth of approximately 3200 m. The sub-seafloor can be considered to be an extreme environment for several reasons. It has a high hydrostatic pressure and a temperature which is low close to the seafloor, but which increases with depth and is very high around hydrothermal vents. It generally has a low nutrient concentration and is totally dark.
Sediment and crust layers deep below the continental shelf and ocean floors, previously thought to be too nutrient depleted to sustain life, have now been found to harbour numerous bacteria.

The Ocean Drilling Program (ODP) is an international partnership of scientists and research institutions organised to explore the evolution and structure of Earth (www.oceandrilling.org/). With the drill ship, JOIDES Resolution, ODP drilled cores (long cylinders of sediment and rock) in water depths up to 8.2 kilometres. Since January 1985 to 2002, ODP has recovered more than 180,000 meters of cores. During the course of the ODP, results have been obtained that shows microbial life to be abundant both in the deep sub-seafloor sediments and in the basement crust under the sediments. As a result, exploration of the deep sub-seafloor biosphere was a high priority research objective of the ODP, and it will remain so during the follow up program, the Integrated Ocean Drilling Program (IODP, 2003–2013).

The basement of the seafloor is born at ocean spreading ridges that commonly stretch long distances over the sea bottom (Figure 2). Lava and mantle rock are moving up at these ridges and reach the seafloor. At the ridges, hydrothermal vents are the obvious indicators of an ongoing convective circulation of seawater through fissures and cracks in the new-born hot basement. Various calculations indicate that all oceanic seawater passes through the basement rocks between every 1 to 30 million years. Large parts of the new seafloor consist of pillow lavas with amorphic volcanic glass on the pillow surface. Microscopic and culturing investigations strongly suggest that micro-organisms are involved in weathering of this volcanic glass. Channels, cavities and holes in the micrometer range penetrate the glass and the tips of the tunnels commonly stain with nucleic acid specific stains, suggesting presence of micro-organisms. The circulation of seawater through the basement and the weathering activities of under-seafloor micro-organisms in the flow paths, therefore, may have a significant impact on the seawater composition.
Figure 2. New seafloor is continuously being born at spreading ridges stretching across the ocean seafloor in various directions. Volcanic eruptions deliver lava to the seafloor, which makes the seafloor to move away from the ridge. The heat from the volcanic activity forces enormous volumes of seawater to circulate in fissures and cracks in the new sea-floor. These sea-floor aquifers are inhabited by numerous microbial populations, the pillow lavas formed by rapid cooling of erupting lava seem to be a favourite habitat. The life traits of those organisms are still a bit of a mystery. Possibly, some of them have metabolic capabilities resembling the microbes living on the energy from sulphur and hydrogen compounds expelled with the “smoke” of the black smokers on the ridges and expelled through the sea-floor as a diffuse flow. This is called shimmering from the shimmering appearance when hot deep water mixes with cold sea water. Other seafloor crust organisms possibly extract energy for their living directly from the volcanic rocks, the pillow lavas.

The new seafloor basement that forms at oceanic spreading ridges migrates due to plate tectonic forces towards subduction zones where it is engulfed under continental shelves and returned to the interior of our planet (Figure 3). This tour takes at most 170 million years. During that time, more and more sediments build up on top of the hard basement rock and eventually kilometre thick layers are formed. During the sedimentation process micro-organisms are mixed with the sediment and they seem to become important factors in the aging of the sediments. Continued presence of active bacterial populations in deep sediments that are over 10 million years old relate to microbial generation of acetate (resembling acetic acid or vinegar in composition) via fermentation of organic matter during burial. The acetate produced in the sediments is available for acetate
degrading methanogens and this may be a possible mechanism for formation of the enormous reservoirs of methane in gas hydrates found globally in sub-seafloor sediments.

Methane formation by microbes based on acetate production during decomposition and burial of organic carbon in marine sediments has been demonstrated to roughly explain the average content of gas hydrates in the marine sediments investigated. However, some accumulation processes are required for the formation of locally massive concentrations of gas hydrates. Accumulation of gas hydrates near the base of the gas hydrate stability zone (which depends on pressure and temperature) is possible if methane migrates from sediment depths below the hydrate deposits. The enormous reservoirs of energy in the form of methane gas hydrates in sub-seafloor sediments seem to have been produced by methanogens living deep under the deposits.

A recently discovered global warming catastrophe occurred 55 million years ago as a result of rapid melting of such hydrates, expelling large quantities of the greenhouse gas methane into the atmosphere. That event demonstrates the delicate balance of our global climate and should be taken as a serious warning. It cannot be excluded that a continuation of the newly observed rapid melting of the arctic ice and glaciers due to global warming may trigger a similar, but modern such catastrophe. It is also a good example of how microbes may have an enormous influence on global processes, albeit indirectly via methane formation in deep sub-seafloor environments.

![Image of subduction zone](image.png)

**Figure 3.** The sea-floor travels towards it renewal for at most 170 million years. At the end of the journey, the sea floor dives under a continent in what is called a subduction zone. During this travel, impressive layers of sediments are deposited on the sea-floor crust. These sediments are rich in microbes. Some of them seem to be deeply involved in the formation of methane from decaying organic sediment particles. The methane is captured as gas hydrates that represent a huge fossil energy deposit.
Microbes in continental sedimentary formations

A significant effort has been devoted to investigating the microbiology of underground continental sediment formations. Large phylogenetically and culturally diverse communities have been demonstrated of *Archaea* and *Bacteria* in deep underground continental sediments in North America which is in line with reported biodiversity from other underground sites investigated. The possible in situ activity of micro-organisms in the underground sedimentary rocks studied has been addressed. As in other oligotrophic (very nutrient poor) habitats, activity occurs, but at very low rates. Also, there is usually a significant correlation between the type of geological strata, e.g. pore size and organic content, and life activities of micro-organisms. The research on continental sedimentary rocks shows that living microbes are present and active down to the deepest levels studied (about 3 km). They will probably be found even deeper, as deep as the temperature allows, that is up to at least 113 °C.

The contamination of groundwater from disposal sites on ground and underground, accidental spills, leakage and residue from other human activities have triggered a widespread interest in the possibility of remediating or restoring contaminated underground sites with the help of introduced and intrinsic micro-organisms. The results, showing that micro-organisms most probably will be present and active in contaminated sites underground, have important implications for long term maintenance of anoxic conditions and the impact of anaerobic biochemical processes on groundwater chemistry. They also imply that natural attenuation of contaminated groundwater by indigenous microbes can occur at depth.

**Tunnels, caves and rock eaters**

Excavation for tunnels, mining etc. introduces several changes in the subterranean environment that will induce activities in the tunnel by micro-organisms other than those active in the oxygen-free rock fractures, the aquifers. Oxygen is normally introduced into tunnels by ventilation, which makes growth of aerobic bacteria possible. As the ground water in igneous rock at depth is usually anoxic with a low electrochemical potential, noticeable electrochemical and oxygen gradients will develop when such ground water reaches the oxygenated tunnel atmosphere.

Typical microbially mediated electrochemical pairs participating in these gradients are manganese(II) combusting to manganese(IV), ferrous iron to ferric iron, sulphide to sulphate and methane to carbon dioxide. Such gradients are the habitats for many different carbon-dioxide fixing bacteria, so called autotrophs and also heterotrophic bacteria growing on organic compounds. Among them are the iron, manganese, sulphur and methane combusting bacteria who extract chemical energy for biosynthesis reactions through oxidisation of the reduced inorganic compounds and methane with oxygen. The energy gained by these so called lithotrophs, is used to reduce carbon from carbon dioxide to organic carbon.

Litotrophy is deduced from Greek and literally means “rock eaters”. The “rock eaters” usually also have carbon-dioxide fixing capability. That is, organisms which gain energy from reduced
inorganic compounds with which they reduce carbon dioxide to organic carbon. Very much like the plants, but with a chemical, inorganic energy source instead of the sun.

**Figure 4.** Artificial ditches in the Åspö hard rock laboratory tunnel 300 m underground with iron eating bacteria to the left and sulphur eating bacteria to the right.

Commonly, seeps of ground water from fractures intersected by the Åspö hard rock laboratory tunnel north of Oskarshamn in Sweden, or flows of ground water from boreholes in the tunnel, turn light brown to dark brown from precipitates that sometimes can be very voluminous (Figure 4). They usually appear within some weeks after excavation/drilling and have in some cases reached a thickness of 10 cm or more. The most frequently occurring inhabitant in these precipitates is the “rock eating” iron-combusting bacterium *Gallionella ferruginea*. It forms moss-like covers on rocks and sediments in ponds in tunnels and is very abundant close to the outflow of ground water from rock wall fractures. At several such outflows, white, threadlike structures are observed. Microscopic observation has revealed them as being “rock eaters”, specifically sulphur combusting bacteria of different types. Methane combusting bacteria have also been found very abundant in the Åspö HRL tunnel.

Caves may link surface and underground environments and the cave environment varies tremendously. They can be very deep and extensive, which limits the input of organic nutrients to possible cave dwellers such as bacterial and fungal colonizers. If carbon dioxide fixing, “rock eating” bacteria are present, they could act as primary producers of organic material in a unique subterranean microbial food chain, very much in the same way as the sulphur, iron and methane
combusting bacteria do in the Äspö HRL tunnel. Such microbes can provide the requisite organic matter for other bacteria and fungi in caves, which in turn could form the food base for cave animals.

Aquifers in igneous terrestrial rocks

Igneous rocks are the predominant solid constituents of the Earth, formed through cooling of molten or partly molten material at or beneath the Earth’s surface. These rocks are penetrated by man for a variety of purposes such as mining for metals, boreholes for the extraction of ground water and thermal energy, and tunnels and vaults for communication, transport, defence, storage, deposition and waste disposal. Igneous rocks are too hot when formed to host life of any kind. Therefore, observed life in igneous granitic rock must have entered after cooling and fracturing of the rock mass.

Groundwater at depths of 500 m in such rock can be very old and ages of 10,000 years are not unusual. This poses a conceptual problem for the microbes detected there. What ultimate energy source are they using? Organic carbon from a sun-driven surface ecosystem would not last for a long time because documentation of in-situ activity of microbial populations in deep granitic rock environments suggests that the microbes present are actively degrading organic carbon at low but significant rates. Typical concentration values at depth are one to two mg dissolved organic carbon per litre groundwater. Any energy source at this depth must be renewable.

Thorough research has indicated the presence of “rock eating”, carbon dioxide fixing microorganisms in the Scandinavian deep igneous rock environments, which utilize hydrogen as a source of energy. Therefore, a hypothesis of a hydrogen-driven biosphere in deep igneous rock aquifers has been suggested. The organism base for this biosphere is suggested to be composed of acetate producing bacteria that have the capability of reacting hydrogen with carbon dioxide to produce acetate (homoacetogens) and methanogens that yield methane from hydrogen and carbon dioxide (carbon dioxide fixing methanogens) or from acetate produced by homoacetogens (acetate degrading methanogens) (Figure 5).

One of the aims of my research has therefore been to collect evidence for a hydrogen-driven deep biosphere in deep igneous rock aquifers and it has been focused on acetogenic bacteria and methanogens as the carbon dioxide fixing base for a deep biosphere. The results show that methanogens and homoacetogens are present and are metabolically active in the groundwater investigated, at all investigated depths down to 1000 m. The existence of a deep hydrogen-driven biosphere, driven by the energy in hydrogen from the interior of our planet seems plausible.
The deep hydrogen-driven biosphere hypothesis, illustrated by the carbon cycle. At relevant temperature and water availability conditions, subterranean micro-organisms are theoretically capable of sustaining a life cycle that is independent of sun-driven ecosystems. Hydrogen and carbon dioxide from the deep crust of Earth, or organic carbon from sedimentary deposits can be used as energy and carbon sources. Phosphorus is available in minerals such as apatite and nitrogen for proteins; nucleic acids, and so on can be obtained via nitrogen fixation; and nitrogen gas predominates in many groundwater.

**FIGURE 5.** The deep hydrogen-driven biosphere hypothesis, illustrated by the carbon cycle. At relevant temperature and water availability conditions, subterranean micro-organisms are theoretically capable of sustaining a life cycle that is independent of sun-driven ecosystems. Hydrogen and carbon dioxide from the deep crust of Earth, or organic carbon from sedimentary deposits can be used as energy and carbon sources. Phosphorus is available in minerals such as apatite and nitrogen for proteins; nucleic acids, and so on can be obtained via nitrogen fixation; and nitrogen gas predominates in many groundwater.

**The origin of life and astrobiology**

Until recently, it has been generally accepted that all life on Earth depends on the sun via photosynthesis; including those of the geothermal life forms found in deep sea trenches that use oxygen for the combustion of reduced inorganic compounds (almost all oxygen on earth is produced via photosynthesis). The results presented here now suggest that a deep subterranean biosphere exists under the sea-floor and the continents, driven by the energy available in hydrogen and possibly also by methane, sulphur and iron expelled from the interior of our planet. Knowledge about this biosphere has just begun to emerge and is expanding the spatial borders for life from a thin layer on the surface of the planet Earth and in the seas to a several kilometre thick biosphere reaching deep below the ground surface and the sea floor. If this theory holds, life may have been present and active deep down in Earth for a very long time and the theory that the place where life originated was a deep subterranean aquifer environment (probably hot and at high pressure) rather than a surface environment cannot be excluded.

The discovery of a deep biosphere that may be independent from solar energy is of great importance for the way in which we should search for life on other planets and for our theories about
the origin of life. The predominant idea that life originated on the surface of our planet, strongly dependent on a hypothetical primordial soup, has recently come up against strong competition (Figure 6). The molecular tree of life (Figure 1) suggests that life originated in the form of a heat loving, carbon fixing, “rock eater” because all organisms close to the root in that tree are heat loving and most can use hydrogen as their source of energy. Those organisms also commonly have the ability to fix carbon dioxide. Underground environments at the time for the origin of life were relatively stable, calm and rich of chemical and physical gradients compared to the surface environments that experienced meteoritic impacts, volcanic eruptions and space radiation. An underground birth place for life, probably very hot, is probable.

Figure 6. Life in the early days of our planet would have been protected towards meteoritic impacts, ultraviolet irradiation, volcanic eruptions and desiccation in underground environments. An underground origin of life has become plausible because the underground offers infinite possibilities for the mixing of water with various chemical and physical environments, one of which might have been the correct mix for life to start? Additionally, the underground was rich in minerals with metals that may have catalyzed many chemical reactions preceding the origin of life and that are still used as obligatory catalytic components in many of the enzymes ruling the metabolic pathways of cellular life. The figure shows an arbitrary series of mixing of water with varying properties, demonstrating the outstanding environmental variability underground, compared to rather homogenous surface environment such as the sea and lakes. The question of whether there actually was a correct order of conditions for an underground origin of life remains to be tested and proven. It will not be easy!
Considerable interest in subterranean microbial life has evolved from the debate about the possibility of ancient and present life on Mars. A fresh fracture surface on a Martian meteorite was reported to contain polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons, low temperature carbonate globules and small, bacteria like structures. A variety of chemical, mineralogical and morphological features of the carbonate globules were argued to be deposited by life on Mars. It was also suggested that such life must have existed under the surface of Mars. The data presented here implies that much life on Earth indeed is adapted to a subterranean lifestyle and that it could have originated somewhere under the surface of Earth. This implies that a planet with a lifeless surface may hide life deep under its surface, provided that liquid water and energy for life are available. As concluded above, life is not only adapted to deep subterranean environments, it could well have originated deep below the surface of Earth. Therefore it should be obvious that the search for extraterrestrial life should concentrate on samples from under the surface of other planets.

The meaning of underground life

In this paper, the living underground has been introduced. It is mostly new knowledge that still has to find its way into the common mind of humanity. At a first thought, it may seem that this knowledge is not relevant to most of us, but that is wrong. Just consider the list of important implications for humanity below, and I am sure you will agree. The discovery of the living underground is a landmark with many important consequences for us. In this paper, I have discussed items in greater or lesser detail, that can be summarized as follows.

- The place for the origin of life on our planet has to be moved downwards, into the underground, away from surface shallow ponds and sea water.
- The search for life on other planets should be directed from the present search of planetary surface environments towards the underground of planets in the universe. The possibility of the origin and evolution of life on other planets is much larger underground than on mostly hostile planet surfaces.
- When ground water and soils in the underground have been contaminated by waste and chemicals from human activity, microbes may come to help. However, we no longer need to bother about adapting surface-living microbes to go underground and clean up the dirt from human activities. The microbes are already there. We just need to understand how to boost their activity. Maybe the addition of a limiting substance (vitamins, nutrients or a specific gas) is enough to kick the creatures living underground to work hard for us. Many companies around the world have been tempted by this possibility and all kinds of approaches are presently being developed and tested.
- In some places, we plan to dispose of waste material underground, under controlled conditions. One obvious example is the disposal of radioactive waste deep underground. It is now evident that the living underground may protect as well as threaten such repositories, depending
on local conditions. Learning about the living underground will assist in the placement and construction of safe disposal sites deep underground.

Catastrophic greenhouse warming of our planet can be linked to the action of the organisms living underground. They produce mega-masses of methane hydrates in the sub-sea floor sediments. If this gas is released, we might experience a galloping global warming that would take less than a couple of hundred years.

Thank you for becoming acquainted with the living underground!

Suggested reading
CATHARINA THÖRN

Underground with a Public address

PROLOGUE OR “REMEMBER THE HOMELESS”

One warm summer’s day when I was walking past the premises of a private housing company in Göteborg I noticed that someone had scribbled “remember the homeless” on the wall, right beside the entrance. When I passed by the housing company half an hour later – this time equipped with a camera to immortalize the image – the words had been washed away. No picture was taken, but every time I pass the building I see the words – “remember the homeless.” These words, anonymously written, continue to haunt the city of Göteborg. Even though they were wiped out that summer day – can you see the words all over the city – on walls, rocks and trees. I would argue that these words written on both public and private surfaces bear witness of the city underground and the conflicts over space and vision that take place in cities today.

Public space and the underground

Cities have always been central meeting points for different populations. The Greek concept of agora catches a basic outline of public space in the city, as a place for assembly, a marketplace and a place for spectacle and entertainment. As a physical meeting place, public space serves as a place for strangers to meet as well as a place for differences to be represented. With this perspective, the public space of the city becomes a place where the conflicts and inequalities of society are acted out. As Don Mitchell puts it: “public democracy requires visibility and public visibility requires material public space” (Mitchell 2003:148).

Fundamental to ideals of public space is that public-ness in itself – as belonging to the public – is something good. This is the basis of the consequential differentiation of public space from private, exclusive space. At the same time, public space has never been fully inclusive – historically, the use of urban public space has always been contested by different social groups with different interests. But the argument goes deeper than the historical process – that is, public space is created in the struggle between inclusion and exclusion. In order to be inclusive, it also serves to exclude. Historically, these processes and struggles have taken different shapes. Today, the struggle is between an urban renaissance on one hand, where public space as a meeting place is re-valued and promoted, and on the other hand, public space is also highly controlled and regulated in order to maintain it in the name of security and safety (MacLeod 2002). In this article, I am interested in what is defined by authorities and the capital as that or those, which do not belong in public space and are continually excluded from the city. What I call the underground grows out of conflicts.
over public space and the aim of this chapter is therefore to analyse and investigate what I define as “urban underground”. It means an investigation of sites of conflicts in contemporary cities that produces these undergrounds.

**The Spectacle of the City**

*The Spectacle is not a collection of images; rather it is a social relationship between people that is mediated by images* (Guy Debord, *Society of the Spectacle*).

What seems to be a paradox dominates the discussion on the city today. On the one hand researchers, urban planners and politicians, celebrate an urban renaissance, where public space is re-valued and promoted as an important meeting place. City centres all over the globe are developed in order to provide safe and friendly environments for consumption and recreation. On the other hand, the death of the city is proclaimed with the argument that public spaces in many cities are privatized and only accessible for a few, not for the many. Representing two different perspectives on the city, the arguments should not be interpreted as being opposites but rather as being different sides of the same coin – cities become more attractive by upgrading city centres and displacing those or those who do not fit the image.

One of the most obvious changes in civic politics during the last decades is the turn towards what have been called *cultural strategies*. These manifest themselves in various ways – from cultural gentrification to different “life quality projects”. An important aspect of this development is that public spaces in the city centre are increasingly seen as part of regeneration strategies, where the focus is on developing positive images of the city centre. Common to these strategies is the importance accorded to *visual symbols*. Sociologist Sharon Zukin argues that:

urban landscapes have slowly been reclaimed by vision – the power to frame spaces as aesthetic objects. The progressive democratization of vision enables all groups, in all areas of the city, to challenge each other over the power to frame public space with their own visual symbols (Zukin 1997:206).

In her book, *The Culture of Cities*, Zukin argues that cities use culture as an economic base for the symbolic economy of the city. In other words, culture can both attract capital and be used as means for framing space. The production of space is thus also the production of visual representation. That means that in order to market the image of a city, the city space must be framed in an attractive way to lure foreign investors and tourists to it.

One important aspect of the branding of cities is the renewal of the waterfront of many cities, including Göteborg. As part of the transformation from an industrial city, the waterfront represents not only a new area for economic development, but also a new urban iconography that can represent the identity of the city. Many waterfront redevelopment projects over the globe are also
significant in the way they are planned and governed – many times in conflict between public and private interests (Harvey 2001, Lund Hansen et. al 2001). The global trend is that waterfronts are planned as a thematic, highly choreographed and branded form of place-making, where there is a blurring between private and public space (Goodwin 1993, Evans 2003). In a study of the transformation of the waterfront in Melbourne, Kim Dovey reveals how the understanding of the public changed during the process, and became equalled with economic interests, and public debate was replaced by advertising and slogans about the new “innovative city” (Dovey 2005). The concepts of creative and innovative cities are one of the newest place-marketing strategies following the influential work by Richard Florida (2005). In a study on the renewal of Copenhagen, Lund Hansen et al. (2001) argues that the discussion on the creative city in Copenhagen suppresses the social costs of the transformation of the city centre. Their study reveals a competition between municipalities to attract the so called “economically sustainable populations” on the one hand and a displacement of socially and economically marginalized populations on the other.

The awareness of commercially attractive public spaces among politicians and businessmen creates a need to regulate and control the city centre. The presence of obviously homeless people, street crime and graffiti are all potential threats to the credibility of the image of the city marketed by those in power. The consequence is the emergence of various public and private initiatives to “clean up” city centres. There are several examples today of this increasing practice. The proposed prohibition of begging in Stockholm a few years ago; the police’s zero tolerance experiments; the suggested reconstruction of Sergels Torg in Stockholm, a square notorious for its narcotics trade; and the creation of a Innerstaden Göteborg in the city centre of Göteborg to reinforce shop-owners’ interest in a commercially attractive city are just some of them. At the turn of the year 2004, it was also decided that the penalties for those who “scribble” should be increased, and the police have been given the right to carry out what is called “preventive body search”, i.e. the right to search without previous suspicion of committed crime. Common to several of the proposals is that their point of origin is crime prevention. Crime – or threats against the order of public space – should be prevented before being committed. Roy Coleman argues that control today in cities is “strategically entwined with, and organized around, visualized spectacles that promote ways of seeing urban space as benign, ’people centred’ and celebratory” (Coleman 2005:132).

Designing public space in a way that facilitates the supervision of them is one way of maintaining control. Oscar Newman (1997) coined the concept of “defensible space” to describe and analyse how crime can be designed out and order created. Central to this perspective is the quest for real and symbolic borders that define an area as well as enhancing the possibility of surveillance. Shopping malls are examples of spaces open to many, but not to everybody, and private security guards control their borders. They are examples of a domestication of public space, which reduces the risks of unplanned social encounters and promotes social homogeneity (Jackson 1998). Design can also work through zoning, where places in the city are designed for different
purposes. Many concepts have been developed to describe these spaces such as purified space or interdictory space (Flusty 2001, Sibley 1988), which all point out places that are designed for a single function, often consumption. The growth of preventive strategies should be understood in the context of dismantling the welfare state. According to Franzén (2001) it is not so much about reducing crime as redistributing it in space.

It is precisely aesthetics and prevention that form the basis of what has become known as the zero tolerance policy or the “Broken Windows Model”. The model is based on a visual metaphor – the broken window. The idea is that if you don’t fix every single broken window and apprehend the perpetrators, all windows will soon be broken and the consequence will be increased serious crime. It is about creating order – everything that can be perceived as deviating from “the norm” – everything that creates uneasiness – is regarded as crime. Some examples are begging, being drunk, sleeping on the street, urinating in public, and painting graffiti. It is not that such acts are necessarily regarded as serious offences in themselves. It is because their presence signals decay and incites more crime. New York was the first city to implement it and the model has spread to Mexico City, Paris, Glasgow, Essen, Tampere and Stockholm among others.

Critics have more or less shattered this model, principally because its consequences single out those who are already vulnerable – the poor and the homeless. Also, there is nothing that demonstrates that zero tolerance towards minor offences will reduce or stop serious crime. What the model does do is create an illusion of order, and the reasons behind its enormous influence in practical city politics – in spite of all criticism – probably has to do with it being based on the importance of an ordered and commercially attractive public space.

It is from this perspective we may speak of a commercial aesthetization, rather than politization, of public space, which will also imply a shift in its significance. That means that the to battle for the street is not only a battle for property and space, but also for meaning, appearance and perception. Battles for the street also suggest that the same public space can have competing and mutually exclusive significances for different actors.

CITY UNDERGROUND

Walking and sleeping the City

In the novel Ripley Bogle, the author takes his readers through a journey of the streets of London. It is a written map and a testimony of how the city feels on your body when you literally have to live on its pavements. If anyone knows the city, author Robert Wilson argues it is its rough-sleepers:

*They know its stones, its pipes and bricks and doorways and pavements. […] That’s the*
At the same time this perspective and knowledge of the city is hardly ever recognized. On the contrary, homeless people are actively planned out of the city, in plans for redevelopment of cities. Wright argues that marginalization of poor people from the city centres is expressed in the rhetoric of redevelopment as well as charity talk. He analyzes this process of marginalization through the concept of authoritative strategies which

*Are employed to establish a place as “proper”, as a place within which understandable and controllable things happen. A “proper” place is a place where social events occur that are understandable to authoritative decision makers. Conversely, to be “out of control” or “out of place” is not to be in a “proper” place. As bodies considered “out of place” by housed society, the homeless are subject to the continual gaze of authority to ensure that their actions will not violate “proper” social boundaries (Wright 1997:181).*

This process happens on different levels. In his book, Wright points to three relevant authoritative strategies: exclusions, repression and displacements. Exclusion refers to actions that exclude people from narratives, discourses or particular places, sometimes through repression which is forcible removal or harassment for occupying a certain space. Wright argues that exclusion and repression are the most common strategies that take place on the streets or in shopping malls. Examples of this are the extensive surveillance in shopping malls where many homeless people are refused permission to enter the mall or police sweeps, where people are removed or arrested because they have begged or been drunk in a public space. But exclusion can also take place through gentrification and renewal. Decaying industrial or working class neighbourhoods are converted into residential zones for the middle class. Frequently, this also means a change of residents as well as a transformation of the area in accordance with an implementation of the habits of the middle class. In a study of the regeneration of Raval in Barcelona, Monica Degen uses the sencescape to capture the transformation of the area. She argues that “who or what is seen, heard, touched, tasted and smelled is connected to questions about what is included and excluded in the experience of public space” (Degen 2002:22). Regeneration means, according to Degen, a transformation of the sencescapes that are expected to substitute existing spatial practices in a place with new ones. Sharon Zukin calls this process a “pacification by cappuccino” when public spaces are revitalized by upgrading their status and expanding their uses for consumption (Zukin 1996). The results are most often not only a displacement of former working class tenants, but also a change of public. Homeless people are almost always the first ones to be removed in these processes.

Another strategy is displacements which refer to “strategic actions to relocate the causes of conflict from one source to another” (Wright 1997:183). Wright argues that the discourse on homelessness as an individual problem, due to deviant behaviour, is displacement of issues con-
cerning poverty and inequalities. Media and authorities play important roles in maintaining these images but it can also be through legislation, one example being the criminalization of homelessness in the United States. These images are also reinforced through the contrast between public space and private space. People without homes have no option but to live their private lives in other peoples’ public spaces, where they risk being seen in situations which they would rather hide from other people’s gaze. Wright (1997:40) argues that the mere presence of homeless people in the city, and their activities such as sleeping and eating in the streets, urinating in parks etc, signal that they are in the wrong place doing the wrong things. They become symbolic dirt in the sense of Mary Douglas (1966), that is, “out of place”.

But authoritative strategies do not go without resistance. They are continually contested, negotiated and disrupted. Wright uses de Certeau’s distinction between strategies, which are related to institutions and structures of power and tactics which are used by individuals to create space for themselves in an environment defined by strategies. In contrast to strategies, tactics rely on temporal features such as “seizing the moment”. One example of a tactic used by homeless women in Sweden was to distance themselves from the stereotype of the homeless women – the bag lady – and to melt into the crowd by doing that (Thörn 2004). The symbolic importance of dirt was significant. All the interviewed women talked about the importance of being clean and wearing new clothes if possible, as a way of melting into the crowd. Anna, a young homeless woman, argues that:

> I think that we are even more cautious about our personal care, you know. Because many think that if you are homeless then you wear torn jeans and are dirty, you know. But it is actually the other way around. You always wear new clothes. And if you can’t do laundry you have to steal something new … That is our thing … that is the only thing that we can do. So there is absolutely no one who sees me downtown and thinks ‘she has nowhere to live. That is the only time I can melt into the crowd’ (Thörn 2004:195).

By being clean, Anna turned the public space into a temporary refuge from being seen as homeless – she became an anonymous stranger among other strangers. But homeless people can also use their status as homeless to question their situation. In March 2004 a homeless couple placed a bed at Sergels Torg, Stockholm, at the most hectic time of the day and started to have sex. The purpose of their action was to protest against the fact that homeless people don’t have a private space.

**Signing the City**

In cities more and more characterized by commerce and privatization, the presence of graffiti on its walls brings several political dilemmas to the fore. What is private and what is public? Who has the right to ownership and power? It also illuminates an ongoing conflict in many cities – the
conflicts between writers/graffiti artists and the authorities. In many countries including Sweden, graffiti is considered a serious felony.

The strong symbolic significance that graffiti has acquired must be understood in the context of the transformation of urban public space and the visual change in city politics. It is under these circumstances that graffiti acquires its ensuing political role. By definition, graffiti always calls into question the meaning of what is public and where the limits of the right to free expression are drawn. Graffiti may be said to live off its environment, how graffiti can be understood depends on the surface on which it is written and the surroundings. Graffiti, in other words, changes the significance of the buildings and the spaces on which it is written. Consequently, it gives another perspective on the aesthetization of city space – and it therefore has been seen in political and commercial circles as “visual pollution”. But the question

Whether graffiti constitutes an “enhancement” or “defacement” seems to depend on whose property is being written on, and who is doing the writing and who judges the results. Thus the question of whose world will be “written over” and whose writing will prevail, is never a pure aesthetic question (Hagopian 1988:109).

In his book Taking the train: How graffiti Art became an Urban Crisis in New York City Joe Austin discusses how graffiti in New York of the 1970s came to both symbolize and be a measure of the city’s decay. In other words, the presence of graffiti came to signify something else – the presence of crime, drug abuse and “maladjusted youths”. Consequently, in the early 1970s, war was declared “against graffiti”, with the aim of eliminating it from the streets. According to Austin, the war against graffiti may be said to have been “successful” on one level, as the general public have been “taught” to perceive the presence of graffiti as a threat – as a sign of lawlessness. All graffiti is taken as an aggregate and is understood in the same way – as a crime. But it is also here, he says, that the war against graffiti has been a complete failure. The unrelenting attitude towards graffiti and the labelling of all graffiti as causing damage has also made possible the development of so-called street bombers – the kind of graffiti most difficult for the authorities to control, as it takes very little time to carry out. At the same time, the graffiti artists who execute work that takes much time and space to finish are marginalized. In this way the war against graffiti gives birth to a paradox – relentless warfare by the authorities only nourishes those whose resistance is just as relentless. The fight against graffiti, according to Jeff Ferrell, should be understood as a fight for expression. Graffiti constitutes a questioning of who owns and defines the city – a question that is not only political and economical but also aesthetic. What place is given to various forms of expression? Who decides where to draw the line between “acceptable aesthetics” and “visual pollution”?

In the essay ZAST ONE Writing and Property the German graffiti artist ZAST develops his view on graffiti and the act of writing tags. For him graffiti is a way of reading and writing the city.
Tagging is a language that needs to be read and understood rather than viewed as beautiful or ugly. If read like this graffiti tells stories about contest over space in the city:

All graffiti are narrative in that they attempt to tell alternative stories about places. These stories, at their most basic, signal the failure of the public sphere to incorporate them. […] We need to be able to read the writing on the wall, for in these opaque and arcane inscriptions, we can find both the limits of public discourse and the outlaw voices that threaten in order to be heard. (Back, Keith & Solomos 1999:98–99)

Interrupting visions

In the year of 2000, the French graffiti artist Zevs went to New York to perform his project The Homeless and the Shadows. One night he sprayed white colour around a homeless man and his possessions. The day after the man was gone, but the “shadow” remained. The uncanny resemblance with police painting when a murder has been committed was not a coincidence. The shadow could be read as a sign of a committed crime. But it also begs the question of which crime? The crime the graffiti painter makes every time he paints in public space? The crime every homeless person commits when sleeping on the streets – an action that is illegal in New York? Or, from another point of view – the crime that the city commits when its citizens are forced to sleep rough? Zevs’ art, or vandalism, depending on perspective, consciously endeavours to address and question our views of crime. His intervention in New York are part of Zevs’ bigger art project “art as a crime scene” where the purpose is to question a naturalized city landscape, in which the presence of homeless is taken for granted, for example.

A vast number of loose movements have grown during recent years, which use graffiti and/or street art to reclaim public space and to protest against the commercialization of public spaces. They all work with different methods – false advertising, stencil graffiti, demonstrations etc. to resist and question city redevelopment. Their names often invoke their message – from Reclaim the Streets, Space Hijackers to Visual Resistance. All of these groups talk about taking public spaces back and using them as commons. It can be resistance against privatization of public space, the way public space is planned and controlled and what can and can not be seen in public spaces. They also use different methods, from street parties, squatting and art interventions.

These movements can be related to the tradition of the Situationist Movement from the 60s, an underground movement where the writer Guy Debord’s book The Society of The Spectacle (1994) was used as a manifesto for different interventions and interruptions in the city. Their aim was not only to reveal the play of power at work in the city but also the play of possibilities. Krzysztof Wodiczko, the artist, works in this tradition. His art endeavours to make visible the city that is there but not seen immediately. One way of doing this is to think of the city as a text, a social and symbolic system that communicates itself to its citizens. The signs, symbols, buildings
and monuments of the city can be read as the biography of the city – that reflects the past as well as the present. According to the artist, the official city tells the history or the myth of the victors and therefore it must be “confronted and interrupted by the memory of the nameless or the tradition of the vanquished” (Wodiczko 1999:4). Wodiczko’s strategy is to confront the official buildings of the city with its own repressions – unmasking the unconscious of the building by means of projecting images onto buildings. It is images of hands, bodies, weapons, beggars etc. The purpose of the project is to make explicit the myths of buildings by making it visually concrete, in order to rewrite the meaning and symbolic power of the building. According to Wodiczko, the projections have to be done night time when assumptions are thrown into question and doubt:

_The attack must be unexpected, frontal, and must come with the night, when the building, undisturbed by its daily functions, is asleep and when its body dreams of itself, when architecture has its nightmares_ (Wodiczko 1999:47).

Temporality is an important aspect of his work, since the purpose of the image is not to be thought of as decoration – it is not supposed to stay. Conversely, once you have seen the image on the building – even though it only was there for a short moment – it will change your experience of the building. The absence of the image is actually more powerful than the image itself.

In 1988, when the presence of homeless people on the street was an infected question in New York, Wodiczko designed and exhibited _The Homeless Vehicle_. The Vehicle was constructed in collaboration with homeless people. Designed like a mix between a supermarket trolley and a missile, on the one hand it provided a deliberate critique of the system that produces homelessness or evicts as Wodiczko name them. On the other hand, it was a useful space for basic needs: transportation, storing and shelter. The vehicle was designed to be practical and to provoke:

_People in the middle class are well trained to consume. As good consumers, they know how to quickly and accurately evaluate the "value" of every new functional and symbolic form that appears before their commodity-tuned eyes. Many non-evicts were engaged and approached us to ask "What is this for?" These same people see evicted individuals every day on the street and never ask questions. Now they are provoked to ask questions._

The purpose of the vehicle was not to offer a solution but to challenge the city’s solutions to homelessness and provide homeless people with means to take up space in the city centre – a space that they many times are refused. The vehicle increases the visibility of the homeless and therefore dramatizes their right to the city space against a space organized for profit and control (Deutsche 1991).

From underground to gentrification and back again?

Urban regeneration is not only about luxury housing and shopping malls. Lately, many urban
planners have focused on what is called the cultural turn in urban planning. That is the idea that cultures and culture industries are vital to economics of the city. Nowhere is that more obvious than in the books by the new guru in urban planning Richard Florida. He has written several books on the creative class and his main argument is that cities needs to develop strong cultural industries and a vibrant city milieu in order to attract the creative class that makes the economy run strongly. In the book *The rise of the creative class* (2002), Florida developed a “creative index”, which is a statistic model to quantify the success of various cities. The index points to various indices such as cultural diversity, gay culture, “talent”, i.e. how many individuals who hold a bachelor’s degree, employment in “creative industry sectors”. The index gives cities ratings or scores that helps compare and distinguish between more and less successful and creative cities. In Florida’s world, culture becomes a buzzword for successful city planning and symbolizes the sophisticated city.

Florida’s methodology has been scrutinized by several researchers (for example Malanga 2004) but the interesting feature of his arguments is not so much whether they hold together from a scientific point of view, but how they have been received and used by city planners all over the world. Researchers from Australia, USA and UK analyze how Florida’s ideas are used as a new recipe for a successful economy with the consequences of displacement of poor, “uncreative”, citizens due to property market speculation, rising rents, and heightened surveillance and control. Gibson and Klocker (2005) draw the conclusion based on research in Australia that most often the idea is that the creative classes have to be imported – which is the explanation behind all the strategies to attract them. What remains silenced though, they note, is how this might cause divisions of labours as well as a de-politicising of the concept of culture. How do creativities such as graffiti, skateboarding etc fit into this economic script, they ask? Even though their critique is relevant, they underestimate the way that activities such as graffiti and skateboarding can be defined in one context as a cultural or illegal “underground” and in another context they can be drawn into the development they challenge. I would like to give two examples of this. The first one is Banksy, a graffiti artist who has gone from being a underground rebel to a hip star. Starting by doing graffiti at an early age, he now works with provocative and thoughtful stencil graffiti in many places all over the world. His work is recognizable by its style, even though he does not always sign it with his signature Banksy. Still there are few people who really know who he is, or if Banksy is a name of a graffiti crew. “His” paintings can be of a policeman doing graffiti, sprayed poetry on a wall or the text “this is not a photo opportunity” beside tourist attractions. Lately he has gone from doing graffiti to installations or “interventions” in public space, such as putting birds with a pirate flag on a CCTV camera. From being quite unknown to a wider audience, he has become more or less a cult figure. Recently a critique has grown against him based on the question of whether his art can still work as interference in public space or if it has become decoration. The SpaceHijackers network started to question his politics after he sold original prints for £25 000 and rumours
about engagement with PUMA, the shoe company. A letter to his website reveals the contradictions of his work in depth:

_I don’t know who you are or how many of you there are but I am writing to ask you to stop painting your things where we live. In particular xxxxx road in Hackney. My brother and me were born here and have lived here all our lives but these days so many yuppies and students are moving here neither of us can afford to buy a house where we grew up anymore. Your graffiti are undoubtedly part of what makes these wankers think our area is cool. You’re obviously not from round here and after you’ve driven up the house prices you’ll probably just move on. Do us all a favour and go do your stuff somewhere else, like Brixton._ (Banksy 2005:20)

To explore the arguments further I would like to turn to my second example which is based on a study by Ocean Howell on Love Park in downtown Philadelphia. The park or plaza was completed in 1965, publicly funded and aesthetically intended to represent a broad public (Howell 2005). During the first decades, it was a lunch spot for local office workers but also a place for demonstrations and street games. In the 1980s, the plaza started to attract a homeless population as well as groups of teenagers with skateboards. Howell argues that in the 1980s, both the homeless and the skateboarders were defined as intruders. During the beginning of 2000 however, the images of the skateboarders had changed and they were praised instead for injecting a “hip image” into the city. This transformation of the skateboarders, from stigma to cool, needs to be understood in relation to the change in the political economy of the city from industrial to a cultural and symbolic economy. Howell describes how the park was portrayed during the 1980s and 1990s as a plaza stolen from “the average person” by dangerous and anti-social behaviour. In 2000, the city banned skateboarding and in Love Park, the ban was enforced by police sweeps. In 2002 the ESPN Games of skateboarding were held in Philadelphia and the city government was asked to let the games take place in Love Park, but they refused. Shortly before the games started, the city closed the park for a redesign. The Games generated an income of 80 million dollars for the city and by this time, a public debate on the presence of the skateboarders had started. In 2002, Richard Florida visited Philadelphia and made a comment on the debate on Love Park:

_Skate parks are very important to young people, an intrinsic part of their creative culture, part of their identity. We should be expanding skate parks. To take the park away is to tell them that they are not valid. Big mistake._ (Richard Florida quoted from Howell 2005:35)

In public debate, Howell points out that the skateboarders went quite rapidly from being portrayed as intruders in public space to becoming a sign and an indicator of whether Philadelphia would be able to handle the transformation from an industrial city to a creative one. The skate-
boards’ right to the city could be reclaimed within the framework of economic development but what about the homeless? If the right to the city coincides with economic benefits for the city, then in some contexts the presence of skateboarders as well as graffiti artists will not only be defended on economic terms but also institutionalized as instruments for urban development and with the risk, as in the Love Park story, at the expense of the homeless population who continue to be displaced from the park. Howell argues that if the culture industry

[no longer serves as just ideological legitimization for the economy but as the urban economy’s main motor. With the creative class, we see not only “culture” that elides and naturalizes class inequalities but also class politics that elides and naturalizes class inequalities.]

In her book *Evictions*, Rosalyn Deutsche analyzes the relations between urban redevelopment and art. She argues that art should make visible the complex relations between urban regeneration, gentrification and homelessness, instead of naturalizing them. Taking the redesign of Battery Park, New York, which has been celebrated for the strong link between art, architecture and design, as an example, she claims that the consequences of rebuilding of the park have included not only eviction of former residents but also a displacement of the homeless. The art projects in the park, Deutsche argues, failed to consider the social and urban context for this development and therefore represented a harmonious and hierarchized space.

As a practice within the built environment, public art participates in the productions of meanings, uses, and forms for the city. In this capacity, it can help secure consent to redevelopment and to the restructuring that make up the historical form of late capitalist urbanization. But like other institutions it can also question and resist those operations, revealing the supposed contradictions of the urban process (Deutsche 1991:164).

Two artists who try to work against this development is the group of Hewitt+Jordan who produced a billboard text in 2004 for a site at Sheffield that states “The economic function of public art is to increase the value of private property”. The billboard was one out of four in the art project “The functions of public art”. The aim of the project the artists argue

Is to examine the tensions and contradictions that exist within public art practice, to explore how public art is integral to our culture and therefore how it functions in support of the dominant ideology. In order to reveal the hegemony within culture, we chose to describe how public art functions in the broadest of cultural contexts: economic, social and aesthetic. (http://www.hewittandjordan.com/work/vitrine.html)

Hewitt and Jordan’s project is based on slogans, and its purpose is to take sides, questioning and interfering with the function of public art. But they are also aware of the difficulties and contradictions inherited in art. On the one hand, the artist who doesn’t want to display his art in
galleries risks being marginalized. One the other hand, given the cultural boom in many cities, there is a demand for artists working in public spaces, where they are seen as a cultural resource for creative thinking.

**With a Public address**

So how is it possible to understand such different forms of undergrounds as homelessness and street art? Are they undergrounds at all and in what sense? Talking of street art, graffiti and other forms of public arts, it is difficult to simply view them as underground. It all depends on the context. Some of the celebrated artists include as Wodizcko, who also works at the university doing his art or Banksy who started as an unknown graffiti writer and now has turned into a cult figure. Homelessness, I would argue, does not in itself form an underground at all. It is not a cultural underground – at least not in most European cities where homelessness is too dispersed and heterogeneous to form a stable underground with cultural preferences and lifestyles. It rarely consists of any criminal underground either, at least in the ordinary sense of the concept of stable networks and lifestyles. But on the other hand, we can see how homelessness is constantly viewed in popular discourse as a deviant lifestyle, if not a cultural underground, a criminal one, dealing with theft and drugs. And graffiti in most cities is viewed as both a cultural and criminal underground that has to be controlled.

My aim in this article has not been to discuss the lifestyles of graffiti writers or homeless people – the aim has rather been to elaborate and draw attention to what I call the city underground. The focus has been to shed light on the official vision of the city and how that vision is based on exclusions and repression which in turn created a space for resistance. The city underground is therefore a symbolic underground and my argument has been that in the era of regeneration and transformation of many city centres, homeless people are symbolically forced into the underground and become that which is there but can not, or rather should not, be seen. They become uncanny, in the sense of Freud, that which is repressed and ought to be hidden but comes into light. They have this position because they don’t seem to fit new visions of branded cities at the same time as they are the consequences of redevelopment and gentrification. They are the waste products of the system rather than the failure of it. Their presence in public spaces challenges any sharp divisions between private and public space – they literally have to live their private life in what is public space for everyone else. And by doing so, they also become a reminder of the fragile nature of the home. The street art and the graffiti that I have discussed in this chapter, all work to make visible the contradictions and antagonisms of visioning public space. In other words, their work pinpoints the city underground, that which makes the orderly public space possible but is excluded at the same time. Their work addresses the public and provokes and questions power structures in the city. By doing so, they address a set of fundamental questions concerning life in cities such as “what is public space” – “a space for the public”? And “who is the public”? What
place is given to various forms of expression? Who decides where to draw the line between “ac-
ceptable aesthetics” and “visual pollution”? In all probability, there are no simple answers. There is
no one order, one vision, about what an equitable public space would imply, but several different
perspectives that all demand and need space. Perhaps that’s where we should go looking for the
fundamental principle of public space – as the struggle for public space.

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This is an investigation of a neglected possibility: Is it possible that our contemporary and suppressed “political underground” might contribute, in a similar fashion as earlier in history, to the democratisation of society? This chapter discusses some of the submerged, unrecognised and disregarded forms of politics and problematises prevalent dichotomies of political normality. Initially, the neglected politics as resistance is outlined. Then it is argued that earlier criminalised forms of underground movement resistance, e.g. 19th century suffragettes’ urban riots and workers movements’ unlawful strikes and street-barricades – shows that frequently “un-civilised” norm-breakers become “civilised” norm-creators, some even turning into the new establishment. After this survey the chapter focuses on two contemporary challenges to traditional politics; the political street-battles of crowds and the everyday resistance of unorganised individuals (exemplified with “theft”). The paper endeavours to show how the chaotic and destructive riot, as an expression, can be understood as an angry no-nonsense shadow civil society, communicating a political drama in the name of the dispossessed, enforcing limits on political-economy colonisation of urban public space. While using violent means in perceived self-defence, the riot actively constructs a popular alternative to elitist armed rebellion. Similarly, it will be argued that disguised and individualised everyday resistance can be understood as a non-explicit yet political response to a needs-industry’s capitalisation of identities and life-styles. In a process where citizens are addressed primarily as consumers by flexible network corporations within a globalised economy, everyday resistance by individuals can be described as not only accommodating political repertoires according to structures of the contemporary political economy, but also as engaging in a political battle on the very frontline of contemporary market-expansion: the (re)construction of individual life-styles. In a concluding discussion it is argued that labels like “destructive” and “undemocratic” are themselves expressions of the political struggles they describe: historical battles between social forces which decide who and what belong to the “underground” or to the “normality”. Ignoring the rational and sympathetic interpretation is by itself a political expression of the hegemony of present “overground”.

1: “The political underground”

Contemporary globalisation does change traditional forms of political opposition as expressed
in transnational social movements and their organised forms of protest (e.g. Vinthagen 2002; 2003). But there are even less obvious forms of resistance and politics. Resistance to established power structures is a non-accepted voice of politics, part of what we might call “the political underground”. Or in the words of one of the world’s most seasoned scholars of collective action, Charles Tilly; we are talking about “contentious politics” which are not likely to be prescribed, nor tolerated, but tend to be forbidden by the regime (Tilly 2003: 44–55). We refer to an opposition which does not accept the established rules of oppositional articulation, or which is not interested in getting legal protection or legitimising pardon from a ruling system of value standards, which establishes the hegemonic view of “politically correct”. This kind of politics is per definition in conflict with “politics”. The “underground” resistance is in conflict with the public and accepted form of power struggle of a certain society in a certain historical period.

But here is a fundamental conceptual problem. We need to acknowledge that the political underground consists of more than resistance, e.g. avoidance of engaging power relations and the “non-political” disguise of the political. As a subconscious, hidden or only potentially political field of politics, it becomes resistant to strict definitions (“hidden transcripts” or “infra politics”, Scott 1987; 1990). The “underground” needs to be related to what is constructed as the “over-ground”; the “normal”, visible, established or self-evident “truth”. The underground will always be a matter of non-accepted subcultures, the political cultures of “Others”, different lives and suppressed groups – thus underground description becomes the naming of the non-nameable.

Nevertheless, I will try to analyse some aspects of the contemporary political underground. I am interested in expanding on the meaning of trespassing of structured social space (in the form of “riots”) and transgression of legitimate normative order (in the form of “theft”) as political methods, which in my understanding are central features of underground oppositional politics. The labels “riot” or “theft” are usual accusations, not objective descriptions. Here, these degrading labels are used in a polemic sense while the activities behind them are interrogated during the discussion. 1 Occupations of buildings by homeless are an example of trespassing and punk culture is a kind of transgression.

The angry no-nonsense shadow-civil society that became visible during “the battle” of the European Union Summit in Gothenburg 2001, is conventionally seen as apolitical, destructive, undemocratic and criminal: the nightmare of a “civilised” understanding of politics. 2 On the

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1. Even though some political activity is accused of being theft, it does not mean it is objectively so. E.g. copying of copy-right protected material is, according to a ruling by the US Supreme Court 1985, not “theft”. Thus, it is not likely that digital downloading of films and music on the Internet is theft – even if it might be criminal. Other activities which we will discuss as activities of the political underground are indeed legally classified as theft as well, e.g. shoplifting. In the same sense “riot” is a term regularly used by those who disapprove of the political activity or who unreflectively use official labels.

2. During the EU summit protests, police officers and party politicians described riot-makers interchangeably as; “bollo-gans”, “looking for a fight”, “trouble-makers”, “unserious”, “not interested in the issues”, “ignorant”, “like violent football fans”, “terrorists” or similar.
contrary it is possible to understand these riot-makers as a long-standing and highly politicised
movement, dating back to at least the 1960s. This riot-making trans-European antiauthoritarian
autonomous movement is also one of the more organised articulations which help me to understand
a much less visible form of underground politics, i.e. everyday forms of resistance. But here, I also
make extensive use of Internet-based digital movements, loosely connected or co-inspiring individ-
uals and groups who use information technology to advance their interests.

This means that the focus is on two limited forms of underground political expressions: the
illegal, informally organised, anonymous/secret, confrontational and sometimes violent political
“riot”; and the non-articulated, non-organised, individualised, non-confrontational or disguised
political opposition within a late modern society which among other things uses “theft”.

But firstly I will discuss “resistance” and make a short historical description of the political
underground in general. The historiography serves to show how in some respects, underground
politics are not-yet recognized but normal, sensible and responsible, nevertheless presumed un-
normal, irrational and irresponsible forms of protest. Through a number of sociological concepts,
such as “life politics” (Giddens 1995), “impression management” (Goffman 1974), “in/out defini-
tions” (Mathiesen 1978; 1982), “hidden transcripts” and “everyday resistance” (Scott 1987; 1990),
I will be able to examine the ambivalent relations between taken-for-granted dichotomies such as
counter-culture versus the establishment, power versus the image, public versus private, demo-
cratic versus undemocratic and alternative versus resistance.

2: Understanding “resistance”

“Resistance” is commonly understood as being singular; a destructive and violent rejection – and
“resistance movements” as underground military opposition to rulers. But why would not resist-
ance as other similar social activities be complex, productive and dynamic (Hardt & Negri 2004;
Lilja 2000; Vinthagen 2005)? If we define “resistance” as the obstruction, disruption or under-
mining of power by acts of underdogs, this power subversion is not exceptional or unsocial but a
“part of everyday life in most cultures” (Turiel 2003) and “immanent facts of social life” (Singh
2001: 222). Resistance does not have to be solely a matter of rejection; it might very well be linked
to “struggles for collective rights and more inclusive form of democracy” (Harvey 2001). Even ag-
gressive resistance and riots can sometimes be understood as an appropriate and effective defence
of genuine life forms, communicative rationality and the autonomy of civil society (Katsiaficas
1997; Piven and Cloward 1979). During the years 1966–68, the USA experienced nearly 300
racial “hostile outbursts”, yet these riots played a key role in creating “a reactive pattern of favour-
able federal action”, meeting the interests of African-Americans (McAdam 1999: 223, 227, 182).
Although the violent resistance of the rioters might have been unwanted and destructive, their
resistance somehow did play a constructive role. According to Castells (1997), hopes of future “project identities” develop from present “resistance identities”.

Resistance is related to power, and power can be understood as being relational and multiple in networks of productive interactions (Foucault 1980). Even if a movement wants to “throw out” a Transnational Company (TNC) from a country, for example, and neither the TNC nor the movement want to be involved in political agreements, resistance sometimes seem to produce agreements simply because existing power relations force all pragmatic parties to compromise. One example is the international standards created by the World Dam Commission which brought together all stakeholders in large dam projects in 1998, after resistance by displaced and affected social groups who were threatened some major dam projects. Another example is the struggle against the Narmada dam system in India which resulted in a unique resettlement scheme in one Indian state after the withdrawal of the World Bank and several TNCs (Sangvai 2000).

Resistance is here seen as relational, being part of a complex web of simultaneous and contradictory alliances, accommodation and rejections; sometimes producing agreements and inclusive forms of democracy, or at other times isolation, violence and polarisations. Even the state itself manages demands within and beyond the country through a social order which is regulated by “ruling elite’s and social forces’ resistance to and/or alliances with, transnational capital” (Chin 2000).

There is a need to understand the dynamics, conditions and variations of resistance to power. Generally, social sciences focus on understanding the world order, nation state systems, capitalism or other such parts of established power structures.

The “other side” or the “underground” of power is resistance. The study of society in general and especially societal change, needs to take processes of resistance into account. Michel Foucault has revolutionised power studies with his work on discourse, truth regimes, discipline and the micro physics of power production, and his emphasis on the fact that wherever power exists there is also resistance. However, even Foucault focused on understanding power, not on understanding resistance (Vinthagen 2005).

Within social movement research, the focus is on explicit protest activities which are only one aspect of resistance repertoires. Conflict resolution studies investigate the role of mechanisms which contribute to settling disputes, not the conflict dynamics of resistance as such. Studies of revolution focus on understanding the general social and historical structures contributing to system change and power strategies of violence (Kaplan 1973; Foran 1997; Skocpol 1994). The understanding of how resistance – i.e. the undermining of power relations – contributes to social change is simply poor. While “power” is a contested concept “resistance” is often reduced to

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3. Even though more than 150 people were killed and thousands wounded during these riots, McAdam (1999) is not making the necessary difference between the violence of the resistance and the resistance itself (which might be done by other means). It is an altogether different question if the violence of the rioters created progressive policy change or not, and even if it did, in this case and in some other cases, if the violence was necessary.
“counter-power”. Given a simplified understanding of resistance, it becomes difficult to distinguish between different forms, ideologies and effects of resistance towards different kinds of power relations, e.g. economic, political or cultural. Consequently, movements’ continuous experimentation and creative invention of new forms of resistance become even less comprehensible.\(^4\)

Depending on our understanding of “power”, different forms of resistance become relevant in the study of social change. In general, there is a wide spectrum of perspectives on “power”; monolithic, consensual or pluralist, with different variations of emphasis on ideology, economic relations, technology, political-bureaucracy, socio-culture, conceptual-image-making or biological-embodiment. The articulation of “resistance” varies in a similar fashion. It might be violent or non-violent, confrontational or circumventing, deconstructing or reconstructing, rejecting or affirming, productive or obstructive, individual or collective, accommodating or enforcing, materialistic or idealistic. The political context of resistance might also vary, e.g. in liberal democracies, authoritarian regimes or disintegrating societies.

Resistance to power is poorly understood, even more so when it comes to constructing types of resistance. General categories such as armed resistance (rebellions, revolution etc.) or legal protest (lobbying, demonstrations, vigils and such) are assumed to cover the field.

Besides being a specific phenomenon – the undermining of power – the articulations of which vary extensively as seen above, resistance is also formed by general social factors and its historic context, like all social phenomena. Empirically, resistance will be shaped by a complex combination of different features. Resistance of all the above types will entail specific tactical means, aesthetic articulations, concepts, images, symbols, historical traditions and ideologies; i.e. its specific *repertoire* which combines forms of discourse, action and organisation. In distinct ways, every resistance movement will construct its own understanding of the frustrations which nurtures the mobilisation, its own collective understanding of a “we” in relation to an equally constructed “them”, through their own use of movement specific *interpretative frameworks* (Johnston & Klandermans 1995). The production of resistance also involves a construction of *resources*; skills, technology, money, commitment and knowledge, which makes confrontations possible, as well as the accommodation to prevalent and national *political opportunity structures* which simultaneously enable and restrict forms of resistance, and the dynamic interaction with other actors in political processes (McAdam, McCarthy & Zald 1996). And, of course, resistance, as other social expressions, is related to *historic processes of change*, e.g. colonialism, modernism or globalisation. The historic macro change is made visible through the micro cycles of movement mobilisations,

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\(^4\) One interesting example is the “Critical Mass” which is an anti-car-culture movement from USA which merges the traditional demonstration and the road blockade into a huge mass of cycling non-organised individuals that fill the roads being on a “bicycling tour” at a certain time and place. Since there is no law against bicycling when there is a lot of other people doing the same, this explicitly declared “tour” is a non-demonstration which at the same time is a de facto demonstration or blockade. This amorphous in-between-ness or “living blockade” creates legal problems for the courts, e.g. in New York City where the legal situation is undecided, despite a decade of critical mass.
with its particular wave-pattern of progress and stagnation, e.g. in the first (from the mid 19th century), second (mid 20th century), or third (the 1990s) wave of the world feminist movement (Castells 1997).

Resistance is not by itself “evil” or “destructive”, as well as not intrinsically “good”, “progressive” or “democratic”. We have to acknowledge that not only does resistance by fascist or religious fundamentalists exist but that they are common examples of how people try to undermine established power relations. Still, the research interest of this chapter is on the potentially democratic development arising from certain effects or elements of some resistance.

3: The political underground as the future “overground”

Since the 1980s an “explosion” of action groups with aspirations to deepen democracy has been observed throughout the world’s poorer countries (Haynes 1997). And, civic associations in general have been proposed as a key factor behind democratic development (Putnam 1996). But it is then a kind of polite, public and civilised expression of demands and needs in accordance with hegemonic liberal western values which counts. Resistance which challenges hegemonic values becomes more controversial. Social movements’ resistance against mega-development projects – e.g. when tribal groups blockaded construction work at the large Narmada dam in India – are often regarded as a problem for necessary development, modernisation and democratic governance (Sethi 1993: 138), as a localised search for autonomy by “claiming exclusion” (Rist 1997: 244) or as attempted “de-globalisation”. The defamation of current resistance seems to be a universal phenomenon. In a historical perspective it is normal that resistance is regarded as reckless, anti-social, non-political, destructive and as a threat to society, and is repressed through police surveillance, state violence and punishments. This also applies to peaceful resistance by those who later become the guardians of the society and whose norms become sanctioned by law. A prime example is Christianity which after suffering 300 years of violent prosecution became the compulsory religion of the Roman Empire.

Also within academic circles contemporary resistance is marginalised. Some even define resistance as necessarily sectarian:

High-risk activism, violent or non-violent, amplifies the sense of ‘we’ in a political neo-sect. High-risk activism involves per definition physical confrontation with a political adversary, and the processes of confrontation which are enacted in the struggle result in ‘moments of communion’, or highly charged moments of emotional intensity, which weld the group together through processes of fusion. (Peterson 1997: 153)

By the same logic even Greenpeace becomes a neo-sect, yes virtually all oppositional groups using politics of confrontation becomes sectarian. All kinds of social groups can of course display sectarian tendencies, even resistance groups (Vinthagen 1998; 2005), but when a certain form of political
action which involves “physical confrontation” is per definition equated with a “sect”, it becomes a power act. But labelling radical groups as “sects” or “extremists” based on their politics rather than prior empirical evidence of such characteristics is just one way of stigmatizing resistance (see “out definition” as a power technique, Mathiesen 1978; 1982). The contemporary problem with hegemonic loyalty of some academics is their labelling of what earlier has been simply understood as (non-killing) criminal political opposition as “low-level terrorism” (Jervas 2002) or “eco-terrorism” (Beck 2007), echoing the FBI and their labelling of animal rights activists and eco-activists as one of the worst internal terrorist threats in the US... This kind of conscious marginalisation of non-established politics by academics through the use of derogatory labels is more embarrassing than the regular and expected bashing done by the media or politicians, at least if we expect academics to strive for a critical understanding of society, not one which is just serving and confirming the established power structures.

Throughout history, different forms of submerged politics and marginal counter-cultures have always existed. Some of them have been positioned as being outcast and excommunicated, and have been suppressed by hegemonic elites, while others chose voluntary marginalization, interpreting it as a sign of their truth or of radical politics. Some have moved to the surface and have become the establishment and the new normality. The people of the 1850s “underground railroad” who helped liberate slaves from the southern states of the USA by facilitating their refuge to the north, the suffragettes in the UK and the “underground resistance movements” of the occupied European states during WWII, are now celebrated heroes of freedom and democracy. However, at the time of their actions, they were often seen in a similar fashion as our contemporary underground; as criminal, uncivilized, undemocratic and their actions were regarded as reckless and ineffective behaviour provoking repression.

Afterwards, in clear hindsight, we know that resistance by transnational movements has sometimes contributed to a fundamental democratic change. The work of the 19th century abolition of slavery movement is one such example (Keck & Sikkink 1998). The trade union movement, which can be regarded as key to the creation of the social partnership model in Western Europe, a historical and national model for movement-facilitated dialogue between governments, corporations and social groups, developed in contexts of economic need and was made possible through a combined strategy of effective resistance, negotiated compromise and the forming of new counter-hegemonic blocs challenging old elites (Abrahamsson 2003; Appelquist 2001; Velesco 2000). The creation of the welfare state was made possible through an alliance between some of the very same social forces which were previously in fierce contention during the 19th century.

One key mechanism which decides whether an oppositional activity will be recognized as being valid politics is the process of in/out-definition done by the media and the political establishment (Mathiesen 1978; 1982). Border management is essential for protecting what counts as political normality. The same kind of act might, be defined as “inside” the border of normal
society or as “outside” in certain situations, depending on the issues or who did it. Despite repeated democratisation through underground groups’ challenge of the established overground, repression, ridiculing and marginalisation seems to be the typical response. A blatant example is that governments, which per definition monopolize the legitimate use of violence, tend to dismiss oppositional groups who use violence, refusing even to talk to their representatives as long as they do not give up their weapons.

Even in a globalising world of information technology, the power of in/out-definitions exists since the struggle between established and competing social forces continues at a global level. Transnational mobilisations of social movements articulate needs and demands, trying to influence traditional and national political structures as well as global actors like TNCs and multilateral regimes (e.g. the World Bank) to such an extent that global governance is now described as “complex multilateralism” (O’Brien et al 2000). It is not possible to understand the world as simply an international system anymore, controlled solely by competing nation states. Other actors, including counter cultures, social movements, oppositional networks and NGOs also construct the present world order.

However, there is a lack of knowledge of movements’ attempts to create new arenas and democratic mechanisms between conflicting parties of contemporary global change processes. Even less is known about how social movements are vital for democratisation, even when they occasionally use violent means (McAdam, Tarrow & Tilly 2001; Giugni, McAdam & Tilly 1998; Tilly 2004).

4: Globalisation of resistance

The combination of personalization of politics and politicising of the world made by contemporary movements (see “life politics” Giddens 1995) creates a globalisation of politics: simultaneously expressed by movement convergence and struggles on a “global arena” and political maximalism in the globalised local cultural sphere (Abrahamsson 2003; Vinthagen 2002). By turning not just work, national independence, citizens’ rights, democracy and redistribution into politics, as the social movements of the 19th century did, but also by using traditionally “apolitical” everyday life-forms and “private” life-style as political arenas, they pierce the micro-world (see “life politics” Giddens 1995). Nowadays what food you eat, what clothes you wear, who does the dishes at home, with whom and how you have sex, are all political questions. Nothing is apolitical. Politics is everything. This expansion of politics is often misunderstood by professional politicians as being apolitical, possibly because it goes together with mistrust and opposition to traditional party politics or trade unions. By linking personal and local politics with global questions, the new movements are broadening traditional nation-oriented politics, embracing the macro-world (Gills 2000).

Unlike classic movements, they do not typically form ideologies or political parties with ho-
listic views. The single-issue-orientation of movements makes them competent spokes-persons. They become skilled alternative experts and creators of new cosmologies by means of self-supporting work, specialisation and even research (Eyerman & Jamison 1991). But particularism and isolation poses a threat if they do not network with movements oriented around other issues. Exactly this kind of issue-networking is taking place in “globalisation from below” or the global “movement of movements” and the open space of World Social Forum. Broad alliances of single-issue groups replace the role of parties. At the same time, utopian social change is made visible through the construction of alternative social structures in economic, cultural and political sectors, e.g. through the creation of new “movement societies” on occupied land (Vinthagen 2005). Their celebration of a world which contains “several worlds” simultaneously contradicts Thatcher’s infamous “There is no alternative” speech and the neo-liberal hegemony.5

These movements combine a wide range of political methods. On a practical level, this combinatory repertoire involves boycotting, economic sabotage, symbolic confrontation, judicial struggles, the nurturing of their own media structure, development of alternative technology and networking. The system-abiding methods such as lobbying are functional for existing world/national systems since it helps a system adapt to occasional system imbalance and correct malfunctions that otherwise would risk becoming a threat to the survival of the system. System-critical methods such as disruptive direct action are usually treated as illegal acts, and met with counter-reactions, since they break system rules and block system functions.

These plural approaches to movement activity are sometimes mutually enforcing while at other times contradictory (Vinthagen 2002). The functions of methods depend on issues, situations and what kind of system and regime is opposed. Since different groups have different priorities about what needs to be done and what methods are legitimate or effective, the movement mobilisation in civil society is reconstructed according to constantly shifting alliances and conflicts; expressed in issue-campaigns and “rainbow coalitions” (Thörn 1997).

One of the more controversial political expressions is the “riot” or “street-battle”.6

4.1: A War drama which defends communities and liberates local space?

The autonomous movement is anti-authoritarian, socialist and striving for self-organised social institutions (De Autonome 1994; Geronimo 1990).7 The groups are often anarchist but might as well be leftist radicals, social ecologists, radical feminists, anti-fascist or even communists (AFA

5. The so called “TINA” (There Is No Alternative), i.e. there is only one way for politics – the neoliberal politics – all other politics are unrealistic and based on misunderstandings. Her neoliberal thesis in extremis stating that “There is no such thing as a society, only individuals” is similarly de facto contradicted on a global level.

6. The term “riot” is often used by authorities or media (Tilly 2003), but also by activists (Situationist International (2003 [1965])), especially the ones here discussed (cf Do or Die 1999; 2000; 2003).

7. In Sweden Brand, the century-old anarchist journal, has played a key role in articulating “autonomous” perspectives, at least since the late 1980s.
They exist more or less throughout the western world and started historically in Europe. The autonomous movement started before and around the anti-authoritarian counter-culture of 1968, inspired by the radical political art movement, the “Situationist International” (Knabb 1995), and “autonomia” developments among the working class in Italy (Katsiaficas 1997; Hardt & Negri 2004). They gained new momentum from the building occupation movement (“squatters”) in the 1980s (Kriesi 1995: 115, 120; Mikkelsen 2002), in clashes with neo-fascists in the 1990s and again with the global struggles against multilateral regimes (Vinthagen 2002). During the 1980s, the autonomous groups began to make resistance to neo-liberal globalisation (e.g. the World Bank in Berlin 1988) and thus, together with the “IMF riots” in poor countries in the south, they preceded the global wave of resistance made visible since Seattle 1999 against the WTO.

Violence is seen within the movement as being a necessary “birth giver” of social change but one which needs to be subordinated to political judgement and which is a continuous authoritarian risk and moral problem. Violence is, in a Fanonian sense, a necessary part of “self-liberation” (Geronimo 1990:207–211)

The Situationist International plays an important role, not least with their praise for riots which “transcend the spectacle” of commercial and dehumanized life (see Situationist International 2003 [1965]). Situationist trespassing methods of “detourné”, i.e. “the rearranging of popular sign-systems in order to produce new meanings”, and “dérive”, i.e. “a short meandering walk determined by one’s desires:” are all important inspirations for the autonomous movement (Thompson & Scholette 2004: 16). Working under cover, anonymous or in disguise, is seen as a necessary tactic when trespassing. Interventionism is a closely associated political art movement which “points to new forms of resistance in the age of an increasingly privatized and visualized cultural sphere” which “provide tools for engagement” or “opportunity” (Thompson & Scholette 2004: 21–22).

The antiauthoritarian resistance tradition of direct action is integrated in otherwise peaceful global confrontations between multilateral regimes and transnational social movements. This direct action approach involves attempts to effect the aspired change through indigenous means, bypassing (representative) elites (Wall 1999: 155–158). It is a tradition which developed from 19th-century anarchism and the antiauthoritarian movements of 1968 (Heinemann 1995). It encompasses reformist and revolutionary aspirations as well as defensive reactions and offensive trends, attempts at temporary or permanent change. It ranges from building direct democracy to facilitating riots, burning down Shell gas stations, tearing down fences at prison camps for refugees or sabotaging the meat industry, as well as liberating entire streets or city-centres from cars,
The direct action tradition is cultivated in diverse but similar movement cultures, such as the Animal Liberation Front in the United Kingdom, the Autonomen in Germany, the Black Bloc in the USA and Ya Basta! in Italy. Reclaim The Streets (or in Sweden, Reclaim The City) has mobilised mass actions on several occasions during the 1990s, mainly in England, where street parties with thousands of dancing people have occupied motorways or city centres, thus turning an environmental problem or commercial site into a free and public space of desire by direct action.

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9. IKEA’s ingenious business model, making the customer herself assemble the furniture she bought, only supplying the map and equipment at a price accessible to the common (wo)man, is directly translated into the political model of direct action, where the citizen herself is equipped with accessible tools to affect the desired effects by herself. (But historically speaking it is of course the other way around; IKEA, which was developed in the mid 20th century, is translating the political direct action model!)
resistance, and displaying occasional romanticism for armed rebellion, they are *themselves* not using arms.\(^{10}\) Despite having, *good reasons*, in their perspective, after decades of state repression and violent confrontations with police forces – and *easy access* to criminal networks selling arms, they are still not armed.\(^{11}\) Assuming that the history of 40 years of trans-European movement towards autonomous mobilisation is rooted in some intelligible logic, we have to conclude they are unarmed resisters for a political reason. They display an awareness of their weakness relative to the police and a conscious and collective practice not to arm the movement with military equipment.\(^{12}\)

In a drama perspective, this strategy is perfectly logical since real war is not their project, the *War drama* is: enacting a social war against the unrecognised war against the poor. They want to appeal to the oppressed, marginalised and radical and inspire them to a kind of popular uprising in the urban space. The UK “Poll Tax Rebellion” stands out as a symbol of what they strive for, riots in connection to a very popular issue that mobilised millions in the movement and thousands in the riots, and which lead to a victory against the regime (Burns 1992). The Poll Tax was proposed by Margaret Thatcher and was a kind of flat tax which was connected the voting rights and thus endangered poor peoples’ democratic participation.

In an unorthodox interpretation of the biblical story of David as the street warrior and Goliath as the militarised police, we could imagine the inferior but righteous David bravely challenging the giant oppressor Goliath. David could win through intelligence, technique and the help of God (the subjugated people, the “multitude”). The drama is an appeal to all of us to support David in his righteous but seemingly impossible struggle against the illegitimate and mighty global empire: the political economy World Order and its guardians (the police/military and teachers/social workers). This drama was enacted by Palestinian youth during the first Intifada in the end of the 1980s. Throwing stones, they struggled against the heavily armed Israeli army units in the streets of occupied Palestine. They lost on the streets but won great victories in world opinion, especially at times when Israeli soldiers used brutal force against captured children in front of

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10. At the most they might develop into a kind of “youth branch of terrorism”, recruiting and training future terrorists, which according to some observers has been the case in West Germany during the 1980s. But that also depends on the regimes’ tactical repression or facilitating measures and degrees of integration or marginalisation within the wider established and peaceful oppositional groups.

11. The access to criminal networks exists through territorial proximity and certain but limited common concerns as criminalisation of drugs, degrading prison conditions, police violence etc., not because there is a political commonality. The autonomous movement is anti-sexist, anti-capitalist, anti-racist etc. to such a degree that they are incompatible with profit-garered, amoral and traditional criminality.

12. When someone raised the question during the preparations for the street battle in Prague, of what they should do if they did succeed in breaking through the police line and getting into the building of the IMF summit – the assembled group of black bloc activists laughed and went on planning the tactics of street battle (according to one interviewed member of the preparation). It was simply obvious they would only try to get through but not succeed more than temporarily. Their magazines regularly criticise not only reformist lobbying and non-violence but also the elitist dynamic of leftist terrorism.
TV cameras. So, it is no coincidence that one of the Web sites posted by urban street fighters in Europe is called “Global Intifada”.

Movement cultures rooted in the direct action tradition believe in creating or enforcing the change themselves. The drama attempts to mobilise other movement activists and dismisses the idea of negotiation with the elites. It criticises other movements’ “naïve” belief in rational dialogue with the elites, attempts to disturb the interaction and smooth everyday business of the gentle and obedient civil society. They hope to undermine the position of established criticism and comfortable radicals, to mobilise the ones already knowing they are the losers in the present world order (e.g. long-term unemployed, refugees and others with a kind of education, ethnicity, national belonging, sexuality, age or gender, not on demand at the world market) into an angry and impatient civil society. Their slogans are typically: “Everything Now, Immediately!”, “Rather a failed action than sleeping in front of the TV”, “If not Now, when? If not You, who?”, or “Eat the Rich!”.

Like all social interaction this drama also structures and regulates emotions. The catharsis of the battle, permission for anger, destruction of what inhibit the activists and their construction of enemy images within their radical culture are all examples of how the War drama fosters and channels individual emotions through collective interaction. But it is not only a matter of letting forbidden emotions loose, it is probably more important how the movement and its collective actions discipline thoughts, dreams, needs and emotions according to what is considered politically correct (see Wettergren 2005; Vinthagen 2005).

Anonymisation is an ingredient of the War drama. It is an essential part of the movement logic, internally and in relation to others. Being dressed in black and wearing balaclavas, the “Black Bloc” activists are not only avoiding police control; it is part of their image-making, the message. The anonymity of masks is not only hiding faces, it is creating the impression that anyone of us could have been there, your neighbour next door or someone from your work place. You do not know for sure where they are and who they are. “Our masks are not to conceal our identity but to reveal it…Masking up releases our commonality, enables us to act together…[giving] resistance a face”. By de-personalizing the resistance the Black Bloc makes it transferable. Their dramaturgy displays the ghost of civil society. Members of a civilised civil society interpret the image according to their social position or culture. For some people, the image is frightening, for others it is promising.


14. Through a spontaneous action culture, informal structures of organisation and decision-making (Geronimo 1990) they are also creating anonymity internally. It makes them less vulnerable to infiltration and protects their cultural logic from police control, societies’ interpretations and the influence of other movements. At the same time, it makes the drama real even inside of the movement when fellow activists do not know who did what.

15. Quote from the text printed on the 9 000 masks (in different colours) distributed during the J18 action in London 1999, the Carnival Against Capitalism, Do or Die (1999: 19).
In an ideal model, we will get confrontation that is sufficiently organised to frame a consistent dramaturgy in the global media arena, visualising the People’s Anger against the Unjust World Order. The actors of the War Drama are unarmed virtual guerrilla-like networks. They operate without commanders but with "swarm intelligence", tactical knowledge and improvisation, similar to a jazz orchestra (Hardt & Negri 2004: 91–93; Vinthagen 2002).

I observed this War Drama at the “S26” during field work: the protests and riots against the World Bank and International Monetary Fund, in September 2000 in Prague. The scene was the following:

Wearing black clothes, leather jackets or rubber protection suits, gas masks, shields or helmets, with hoods or scarves ensuring their anonymity, equipped with stones from the streets, they walked on, holding sticks or bicycle chains, petrol bombs or glass bottles. Hundreds of them marched in silence or shouting aggressive slogans. “We only use our bodies, our hands and what we find in our homes or on the street, to show our anger”, as one interviewed participant said. The Black Bloc marched towards the global elite’s Summit. Their messages were put on the walls with spray paint.

When encountering a police line they charged, trying to break through. David’s war against Goliath began. The riot police look like the Darth Vader’s troops in Star Wars: big boots, black uniforms, helmets with visors, shields, batons, guns, rifles, together with armoured vans and water cannon. Very similar to the Black Bloc, just a lot better armed. The street war goes on for hours, gas fills the air, the water cannon knocks some combatants over and soaks the ground. At the front, the global media covers the battle between stones, “Molotov Cocktails” (home made petrol bombs) tear gas and water cannon.

On the media stage of globality where the War drama was temporary played out in Prague, some police officers ran around in panic with burning uniforms, while The Infernal Noise Brigade played Balkan music, emphasising the virtual reality of the war situation. An ad-hoc organisational division made street warriors dig up stones, transport them to the front, care for injured activists and take turns in standing at the front line battling “Goliath”, tiring him down. In the woods, some activists took a break, eating snacks to get new energy, smoking and chatting. Then they joined the battle again. Some activists suddenly broke through; most were driven back by the responding police shock, some ran towards the Summit conference building. Being dispersed, some gathered again through mobile phone communication and built a barricade further down the street. Advertisement stalls were destroyed and used together with litter cans and burning cars as protection against the advancing police.

Later on, they retreated and gathered in central Prague and dominated the city centre smashing multinational company stores (KFC and McDonalds) – thus “liberating” the high street, making it into their land, a public area free of commercialisation. The Black Bloc ruled for an hour before the police took it back. Then the Police arrested hundreds of suspicious looking peo-
People in central Prague throughout the night. The brutality of the police increased. The attempt by the Czech Police to act in a civilized, polite and restrained manner failed. Amnesty International moved in and made an investigation of reported police brutality. The roles of the drama confirmed activists’ perceptions. Goliath hit David with superior force, once again showing his lack of legitimacy. The established Civil Society turns out to be un-civilised. But David was not broken and small victories existed. From the perspective of the movement, which is already critical, the dramatic images urge assistance to David in the next unfair battle. A global appeal is launched through the riot images broadcast on CNN: join the forces of good against the forces of evil – the same as in all battles throughout history.

Behaviour in conflicting roles is constructed as movement mobilising images which are culturally embedded in existing subcultures. The War drama seems to fit global mass media logic perfectly. Over and over again, it creates massive media attention if violence occurs on a mass scale. Previously non-active but already affiliated movement actors or receptive young radicals get mobilised. The goal of urban fighters is not to create dialogue, but to make forceful statements in order to mobilise one’s own movement to do more, recruit among close movement cultures to join the war, and show solidarity. The ideal effect of the War drama is internal movement mobilisation through massive media attention and anti-dialogue pressure on regimes to change, through the costs of economic and political disturbance. The costs in themselves are not likely to force regime elites toward reform and the methodology is not likely to mobilise a society, but when this resistance is part of other more acceptable opposition, when enough angry participants are mobilised and the legitimacy of the present world order already is in crisis, explosions of disturbances might very well influence regime changes or system retreats.

In the meantime, riots give the movement communities breathing space and liberated islands of autonomy, e.g. Hafenstrasse in Hamburg or Christiania in Copenhagen. A resistance culture of the everyday develops in these “autonomous zones”, new tactics emerge and political experimentation flourishes. The global arena struggle thus gets translated into a local struggle, which in its turn is the base for ongoing global mobilisation.

5: Glocalization of resistance

Global changes within the political economy create an “infotainment telesector” which goes from hardware production to software, where the construction of our needs is at the centre (Barber 1995). We get “virtual-needs industries” with “post-modern sovereignty” (Barber 1995: 69, 80f). Not only teenagers are the objects of needs-creation, as after WWII, but all of us are learning to connect consumption with values, needs, identities and the very meaning of life. More objects and dimensions of social and private life are offered on markets, for those who can afford the price: entertainment, sexuality, social service, spirituality as well as weapons, drugs, children and organs. Let us take one example: soft drinks. Physiological thirst is not constructed by companies,
but taste is. Drinking is associated with new needs, tastes and status.

“You must drink because it makes you feel (your choice): young, sexy, important, ‘in’, strong, sporty, smart, with it, cool, hot (as in cool), athletic, right on, part of the world as in we-are-the-world as in we-Americans-are-the-world: in sum, like a winner, like a hero, like a champion, like an American, which is to say, above all, fun-loving…”

(Barber 1995: 69)

The ideal drink pleases the consumer while leaving her biologically and emotionally unsatisfied, wanting more. The late modern project of society is above all to mould us into consumers, not citizens (Bauman 1996: 74ff). We are given an inner pressure of longing for sensations and dissatisfaction with what we just consumed, of an impossible but necessary satisfaction of (new) needs to be fulfilled, consumption “disguised as free choice” (Bauman 1996: 80, my translation). “The new virtual reality corporation…acquires an ‘actual personality’…acting more like a civil state or a state religion, than like a shoe company.” (Barber 1995: 67). Even if it is not difficult to find political ambitions behind companies’ activity it is not politics that really matters, it is profit – but that makes this commercial culture even more irresponsible and culturally subversive. “The ideology of having fun actually is an ideology” (Barber 1995: 72). “It is the capacity to commercialize all ideas and the material products in which they adhere….not the ideas themselves, that global capitalism strives to appropriate” (Sklair 2000).

But globalised commercial culture also opens new possibilities and arenas of political struggle and resistance (Merchand & Rynyan (eds.) 2000: 157ff), even local ones, restructured though global processes, i.e. “glocal” space. The individualised, secret, everyday resistance is well suited to meet the invasion by the needs-industry. Since life-style, taste, identity and personal habits are what companies target, they become the appropriate sites of politics or front-lines in the wars. Life-styles are no longer private but become politicised, or politics becomes a matter of socialised life-styles (Giddens 1995; Thörn 1997). While an individual might choose to opt out of course, completely choose another way of life, openly defy the global consumption culture by living a self-sufficient rural life – that would still only make capital lose one more consumer. The commercial trading festival of life-styles and life-values would grow as long as enough of us participate. A boycott by individuals doesn’t affect profit-making ability. But resistance might.

People who steal at work, tear down adverts, take long lunch breaks, report sick instead and go to a café with friends etc., do diminish profit-making irrespective of their motives. Their small acts of destruction are not articulated as political, but they still are. They have political implications, as expressions of disloyalty to a political system of rules. And some of the individuals or groups who propagate such resistance are highly politicised.
5.1: “Theft” as the every day resistance and creation of commons

Michael Hardt’s and Antonio Negri’s book “Multitude” (2004) describes the present world order in terms of an Empire without a centre, a global high-technology political economy which is network-based, and the new proletariat (or “precariat,” with precarious jobs), which is the “multitude” of different individuals and groups who for different reasons do not serve the Empire but act against it. Among the seemingly self-serving or apolitical resistance acts they count such things as “active non-engagement” at the workplace, motivated by laziness, survival or disloyalty (Maier 2005). What is in focus here is the opposite to the public and dramatic character of the riot; it is a kind of “everyday resistance” (Scott 1987) which strives to become undetected, not to confront directly, not to be organised and which might not even be politically articulated at all (“hidden transcripts” or “infra politics”, Scott 1987; 1990). The point is to evade power, to look like you adjust and cooperate – in order to gain (small) advantages, (passively) defend your interests or (undetected) diminish the effects of oppression. Everyday resistance is typically done by those who can’t afford to confront publicly since they are not united enough to withstand the repression or do not have enough resources to defend themselves against an overwhelming enemy. Still, you do not have to be weak in order to use this “weapon of the weak” (Scott 1987). It might be the perfect weapon: networks of micro-resistance against networks of micro-power (Foucault 1980). Or it might sometimes also be the preferred tactic for underground warriors running a silent guerrilla warfare against currently superior power groups.

During medieval times, thieves were one of the more prominent members of the “underworld”, regarded as “sinners”, as breakers of the “chain of being” and the God-created “Ideal Universe”, irrespective of whether they were stealing because they were poor (McCall 2004). Today the world view is different, God is not the authority behind the condemnation of thieves but “property rights”. We need to remember that the person who is stigmatised as the “thief” and the person who is acknowledged as the “owner” is a matter of how these rights are understood. That interpretative judgement is by itself a political expression of established normality. And political struggles do change this normality. Thus, the “thieves” of today sometimes become the “owners” of tomorrow. “Primitive capitalism” is a name for the early historic period of capital accumulation which also, one could argue, could be named as robbery, extortion and violent accumulation.

The modern underground thieves preferably operate through the Internet, within a broader movement of digital activism (see Cleaver 1999; Critical Art Ensemble 2001; McCaughey & Ayers 2003; Rheingold 2002). And the interesting difference is that the “goods” “digital thieves” steal do not disappear; each copy of the original is as good as the original, virtually indistinguishable from the original. In a fundamental sense they actually do not steal. The property is not expropriated, but intellectual property rights and profits are undermined. While recognising that a major part of digital theft is done by companies who earn cheap money from commercial trade with
copied digital property (usual in e.g. China and Russia), this chapter focuses on the non-profit part of this phenomenon.

High-tech communication changes the foundations of political organisation and action within the underground. New opportunities for action arise through the linking of the Internet, the camera, mobile phone and video, (“smart mobs”, Rheingold 2002). It has been shown through playful happenings, when people that who had met before suddenly do something unexpected at a certain place and time, e.g. when about a hundred of the people walking through a city square stopped and simultaneously bent down and rolled on the ground and then walked on like nothing happened. Or when thousands of demonstrators, united with the help of text messages, made the regime fall in the Philippines in 2001 (Rheingold 2002). Or, when probably the largest demonstration in history on the 15th of February 2003 gathered about 15–20 million people around the world in protest against the planned US attack on Iraq, without any central organiser but through Internet-based coordination (e-mail and Web sites with free downloads of your demonstration kit).

Digital movements do various resistance actions in the transnational arena of the Internet (Critical Art Ensemble 2001; Rheingold 2002; Wettergren 2005). One form of activity is the “anti-branding” which Adbusters and similar “mental environmental movements” do when they destabilize the brands of transnational companies (Lasn 2000). They use the PR style of the companies they fight and recreate their slogans, logos or posters in such a way that, at the first and distant sight, it appears to be the real thing, or do their “cultural jamming” of a hegemonic consumer culture through other creative and skilled means. Others do more direct resistance when they sabotage/recreate homepages of regimes or companies (see the archive of “hacked homepages” on www.flashback.se), do “virtual sit-ins”, “electronic civil disobedience”, “Web page defacement” or “email-bombing” and thus directly block others from (efficient) Internet use (Klang 2004; 2005; 2006). These “digital warriors” attack and disturb major companies, especially those dominating the cyberspace, such as Microsoft, Google and Yahoo.

One group, the “Yes Men”, is an example of how struggle is not isolated to a virtual world on the Internet, but is interwoven into real events and social movements “on the ground”. The Yes Men tries to break the consumer-capitalist “society of the Spectacle” and create revealing “situations” in the tradition of the Situationists through “identity corrections” (or what others call “identity theft” or “fraud”). When they correct identities they pose as representatives of companies on the Internet or in public meetings but tell in a frank way what the companies really want, without any spin or PR images, thus undermining their credibility (see “Yes Men” 2004; www.theyesmen.org). The Yes Men initially created a web site for the “World Trade Organisation”, with (counter-)information which put the work of the most powerful free-trade regime ever into a bad light. Since their web site was professionally made, some people thought they represented the official WTO and, logically, invited them to speak at major conferences reserved for the global elite of the political economy. Thus, The Yes Men where presented given the opportunity
of posing as the WTO and saying what they thought the WTO ought to say in public if they were honest about their ambitions, values and interests. Explaining that the General Director of WTO could not come but that they where delighted to offer Dr. Andreas Bichlbaum as a speaker instead, they where able to use the conference platform to argue for the “WTO policy” of selling votes on-line (Thompson & Scholette 2004: 20). In their identity corrections, the Yes Men try to balance between trustworthy professionalism and scandalous cynicism, e.g. when they, as WTO-representatives, argue the economic benefit of having “distance workers” in Africa instead of the more costly forms of traditional slavery (The Yes Men 2004). False press releases from economic organisations are part of this identity correction, e.g. when "Dow Chemical" for the first time took full responsibility for the damage created at the Bhopal chemical catastrophe in India (which lead to an immediate negative reaction at the stock market), or when “WTO” during a press conference announced that they would disband since they had failed to create economic justice and eradicate poverty.

The (perceived) anonymity of Internet use makes it possible to pose as someone else or to construct new identities, at the same time as the advanced communication network makes the coordination of gigantic numbers of people possible (e.g. the multi-editing of texts through Wiki-technology, see for example www.wikipedia.org). But more importantly, more or less all production tools of the media – software or programs – are accessible for movements to change, copy and develop for their own needs. This historically unique situation makes proactive resistance possible, in which creative hackers construct public property; digital commons.

A Free and Open Source Software movement has created public software (e.g. GNU/Linux, Ubuntu, Mozilla) through free and collective collaboration for a long while, testing and developing programs. After years of involvement of thousands of computer enthusiasts, anyone who wants to can run his computer exclusively on Free Software and/or open-source programs, making even nation states contribute to the digital commons, such as Brazil and Venezuela.

Some even fight private property with the help of copyright laws by inscribing into their own programs that you are not allowed to sell them for profit, not even as a program developer (www.gnu.org). "Copyleft" or “Anti-copyright” is thus protected by copyright! (Stallman 2004). If regimes take that protection away, private ownership of knowledge gets undermined. Quite a problematic situation for the guardians of intellectual property rights.

In addition to open source, there is the P2P-technology (peer-to-peer) which makes file-sharing and exchange of programs directly between people efficient (Rheingold 2002; Vaidhyanathan 2004). Downloading of music, film or games has grown into a common activity by the younger generations, scaring the entertainment industry into fighting these "thieves" through political lob-

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16. Napster was an early file sharing service that became “a legendary icon in the computer and entertainment fields” (Wikipedia.org) which opened the way for the massive global movement of downloading on the Internet with sites such as the currently popular Piratebay (thepiratebay.org).
bying, PR, surveillance and litigation. In Sweden there is an escalating battle between the Pirate Bay (the downloaders) and the Anti-Pirate Office (the industry) (Piratbyrå 2005). Despite the counter measures from the entertainment industry, these digital activists have found new methods and avenues, making file-sharing bigger than ever, despite the successful court judgement against Napster.16 These activists are not necessarily driven by any political ideology. It might as well be digital enthusiasm, dreams of fame, money or danger. But behind the non-profit computer culture is a shared idea that "information wants to be free", that digital copying is no theft but a human right. When Madonna and Metallica supported legal processes against downloading music they lost support from many fans. In the view of the “hacktivists” the stars and the rest of the big business have more than enough money.

The creation of digital commons is already happening. While it is not completed and not always as advanced as the commercial alternatives, it is good enough to be a real challenge to profit making. Collective ownership is being implemented, not as expropriation but by free distribution of the means of production – the information technology within the new economy – something the early socialist movements dreamt of achieving. The problem is, of course, how this commons’ movement will be able to bring not only free software (programs, music, films etc.) but the “hardware” of social life, e.g. computers as well as bread and butter. As you might suspect, the groups who experiment with solutions to this more difficult problem do already exist.

The production and distribution of “free clothes without rules” is organised through the Shareweares (www.shrwr.org) web site, where stolen or second-hand clothes are redesigned and given away. Private ownership of clothes is undermined and an alternative is offered. Another example is “proletarian shoplifting”, i.e. theft of livelihood goods from big companies.

A collection of cultural and artistic resistance activities are displayed in The Interventionists: Users’ Manual for the Creative Disruption of Everyday Life (Thompson & Scholette 2004). They include the Yomango group from Barcelona who promotes a lifestyle of “social disobedience” by their shopping bag for shoplifters:

“This magic bag makes objects disappear. It’s ergonomically designed to be the ultimate shoplifting utensil. It is simple to make and is based on the same principles as the devices used by magicians and other tricksters. YOMANGO converts going to the mall into a magical experience." (Thompson & Scholette 2004: 108).

They Yomango facilitation of shoplifting and Shareweares free clothes are just examples of free “hardware” distribution networks of life essentials. Other networks distribute left-over food from restaurants/shops (soup kitchens like the ones by “Food not Bombs” or Catholic Workers in the US) or create agricultural seed-banks (like the one Vandana Shiva organises in India; www.navdanya.org), and “reclaim” services and open space, like free transport systems (like www.planka.nu which helps riders travel free through a kind of insurance system against fines for their
non-ticket rides) or promote creative non-car use of motorways (like Reclaim the Streets who organises street parties on roads, RTS www.reclaimthestreets.net).

Taken together, they signify a significant redistribution of ownership and income. It is possible to understand proletarian shoplifting, free food, seed-banks, free clothes etc. as attempts at creating hardware commons, and free travel systems etc. as service commons. Collective ownership of the necessities of everyday life is also a kind of income distribution where the corporate profit-makers get less and the daring citizens get more. Although this can be understood as privatized justice, I maintain that viewing it as a creation of commons is a reasonable interpretation. If developed further by strong global movements it becomes a kind of “global public good”.

6: The future of our contemporary political underground?

I have tried to show the reasonable possibility of understanding the political underground as the future “overground”, the future politics of normality. The acts we today call “riot” or “theft” might be what future generations will acknowledge as being necessary for the creation of their freedoms and rights.

We will not see any sudden shifts between what counts as the political “underground” or “overground” and there are no clear cut borders. But sometimes, paradigmatic changes do occur. What belongs to the underground sometimes become the overground, the establishment, that which is so amazingly normal that it even becomes strange to imagine it hasn’t always been like this. For example, over 50 % of the world’s 200 states today have freedom of expression, the right to organise and demonstrate opposition to the government, or that torture is illegal, that slavery is forbidden; which are just some of the things some of us take for granted and which only some generations ago were treated as a distant utopia, a dangerous sin or a threat to society.

Among the political objects that might transcend into the overground we can distinguish between at least three kinds: certain acts/behaviour, groups or issues. This investigation has not discussed groups or issues but concerns two kinds of underground acts: the riot and theft.

We can detect at least three quite different kinds of actions in the underground, action forms which have a greater or lesser chance of becoming or fostering political normality:

1. Acts that are legal and legitimate but still not normalised or regarded as “real” politics even though they in themselves harbour the peaceful change they strive for, e.g. the building of ecological villages or the branding of “fair trade” products.

2. Acts that initially are illegal and illegitimate which might become legalised and legitimate as norms in the society since they could be incorporated into a society, e.g. the workers’ right to strike or religious freedom.

3. Acts that are extreme or reactions to extreme social conditions, acts that might initiate social change and become legitimate afterwards in the light of that change but only legalised as exceptions (since they inherently threatens social life), e.g. revolutionary murder or war.
It seems reasonable to classify the everyday theft as belonging to category 2 while the autonomous riot belongs to category 3. To me it, seems unlikely that a society, even a future one, will accept riots in the same sense it has been possible to accept strikes. Riots or street battles are by themselves expressions of violence, rage and chaos. However, they might be catalysts of justice and democratic change. The very riots which the autonomous movements enact might be legitimised in a future society as riots that were necessary to do in a historical dangerous situation and which probably helped to overcome the dangers. Maybe in the same way as the regular and violent riots that accompanied one of the most peaceful revolutions in the world; the Indian anti-colonial struggle organised by Mohandas K. Gandhi (Ackerman & Kruegler 1994)?

On the other hand I do think there is scope for the individualised income/property distribution we today call “theft” to become part of a future overground, at least when it is done within non-profit groups/organisations and concerns unlimited goods (like digital and intellectual property) or life essentials (like food, transport and clothes). It is not impossible to imagine an acceptance of free urban transport, for example, in order to protect the environment and reduce the unsustainable dominance of automobiles. Some cities have in fact already introduced it. I am not saying “theft” will be accepted or that I know how it could (or even if it should) happen, only that the possibility exists that certain activities we currently call “theft” will be legitimised and maybe even legalised. If this happens, it will be just as before in history, that the despised political underground becomes normality.

But the possibility of normalisation of unrecognised forms of politics is not only decided by the kind of articulations emanating from the underground, but also by the reactions of the “overground”. The political dynamic between social forces will ultimately decide what belongs to the underground. This process might be painful and go wrong. It will depend on how we, as actors of the underground or the overground, struggle together with others with/for/against power, i.e. do politics. That which has the potential of becoming a “democratising resistance”, even if it is seemingly peaceful, might develop into a kind of violence, harassment, bullying or involving other violations of people, depending on the way it is done and treated.

Ultimately it is the nature of the “underground” – that it is somehow beyond our reach, control and knowledge. We simply can’t know. That is also what makes it so interesting and challenging. That is what gives the political underground a potential of radical social change.

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