

VISUEL ARKIVERING 10

Release of the Seminar “Images and Research”

Interventions from the Seminar about Visual Anthropology at Moesgaard Museum, Aarhus, November 17th and 18th, 2014. Organized by the Project “Camera as Cultural Critique” at the Department of Anthropology, Aarhus University, and the late Department of Art Theory and Communication at the Royal Danish Academy of Fine Arts – Schools of Visual Art

The Seminar was presented in Visuel Arkivering 06, November 2014

KUNSTAKADEMIET, CHARLOTTENBORG
KGS. NYTORV 1, KØBENHAVN

An Introduction

The “bound” quality refers first and foremost to time. As Carl Einstein stated in his foundational work on African sculpture in 1915: “the historically effective is always a consequence of the immediate contemporaneous”.¹ This includes the possibility of rendering the narrow relationship between the acute present situation and its explications in time. In fact, in the field of visualization and research, we have to do with something different than the “long lines” used in historical analysis. We are much nearer the short causalities as heralded in the sceptical tradition of thinking from Hume to Deleuze. It’s a courageous step to drop a long chain of scientific reasoning and try instead to construct a situation of knowledge that implicates an ethical demand inherent in the situation itself.

during its making. They are not related to each other in any direct way, because they concern very different problems, the first being philosophical and the second heuristic and art-related.

I — There is an important Italian body of work on visual and aesthetic research in the field of anthropology, running from Ernesto De Martino to Gianni Carchia. Their work is widely read on the peninsula, but only starting to circulate a little in French and English now.² Even though his theory of anthropogenesis is different from De Martinos, and the hermeneutics of the nine volumes of *Homo Sacer* are constructed in a much more systematic way than the studies of the art and aesthetics of antiquity in the work of Gianni Carchia, Giorgio Agamben appears today as the philosopher best able to maintain, defend and expand their intentions. If foundations cannot be separated from the plurality and autonomy of their manifestation, it is still possible to locate their origin. This origin may be an open one and it may depend on the notion of *sacratio*. Indeed, as Agamben writes in *Homo Sacer I*: “we will try to interpret *sacratio* as an autonomous figure, and we will ask if this figure may allow us to uncover an original *political* structure that is located in a zone prior to the distinction between sacred and profane, religious and juridical.”³ (English p.74). After eight books of detailed study of the most important institutions in the Occidental history of human life, Agamben returns to the question of the possible dynamic inherent in an archaic and primordial “structure”: “If our hypothesis on the structure of the *archè* is correct, if the fundamental ontological problem today is not work but inoperativity, and if this latter can nevertheless be attested only with respect to a work, then access to a different figure of politics cannot take the form of a “constituent power” but rather that of something that we can provisionally

call “destituent potential” [potenza destituente].” (English p.266 / Italian p.337).⁴ This *destituent potential* functions as a readiness to act, and also as a readiness to the contrary, to suspend action. It is neither material pressure nor latent intentionality, but concerns how human condition is a state of life depending on a possibility of being independent of pressure and intentionality. The third book of *Homo Sacer*, *Remnants of Auschwitz: The Witness and the Archive* [Quel che resta di Auschwitz – L’archivio e il testimone], deals with this condition in terms of subjectivation and desubjectivation, and how it can be witnessed. This is why we close this issue of *Visuel Arkivering* with a translation of my introduction to the Danish edition of Agamben’s book, *Resterne fra Auschwitz. Arkivet og vidnet*, Cph. 2012. At the time, I stressed the important role played by Hurbinek, one of the central characters in Primo Levi’s work. In Agamben, Hurbinek connects to another of the Italian philosopher’s central theoretical preoccupations, namely the voice and its sound and why this may be a way into the question of how open expression can be.⁵ And this is the key question when audio-vision and montage of sound and image is discussed.

In the discussions we have had with Paolo Campione from the Museo delle Culture in Lugano, it is clear that the founding texts of such a combined philosophical and anthropological way of thinking can be traced back to Carchia. His study of orphism and tragedy announced a zone of distinctions and passages between human sacrifice and tragic theatre;⁶ but it was the anthology he edited together with Roberto Salizzoni, *Estetica e antropologia – Arte e comunicazione dei primitivi* (Torino: Rosenberg & Sellier, March 1980) that opened philosophical thinking stemming from 68 in Italy to the possibility of a global aesthetic approach to questions of critique and power. The anthology contained translations into Italian of crucial theoretical

2 See the recent issue of the Italian magazine of philosophy and politics *Aut Aut*, which is consecrating its nr. 366 to “Ernesto De Martino – Un’etnopsichiatria della crisi e del riscatto” (publishing house: Il Saggiatore, Milan, April-June 2015).

3 *Homo Sacer – Sovereign Power and Bare Life*, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1998, p.74, Italian original, Torino: Einaudi, 1995, p.82. The English translation by Daniel Heller-Roazen must always be double checked because of its omissions and misunderstandings.

4 *The Use of Bodies*, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2015.

5 See “Experimentum Linguae”, the preface to the English edition of *Infanzia e storia* (Torino: Einaudi, 1978): *Infancy and History: The Destruction of Experience*, London: Verso, 1993. See also *Language and Death – The Place of Negativity*, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1991, and recently: “Experimentum vocis” in: *Che cos’è la filosofia?*, Macerata: Quodlibet, 2016.

6 Gianni Carchia, *Orfismo e tragedia – Il mito trasfigurato*, Milano: Celuc, 1979.

statements about symbols, art, religion, dance, gesture written by Franz Boas, Raymond Firth, Arnold Gehlen, Claude Lévi-Strauss, Gregory Bateson or André Leroi-Gourhan. The only founding figure missing was Margaret Mead and, with her, the question of gender, which had, by then, already taken a very radical turn in Italy in the works of Carla Lonzi, Mariarosa Dalla Costa, Leopoldina Fortunati and Lea Melandri.⁷

But Gianni Carchia was aiming at “l’ermeneutica dell’archaico”, with the double intention of reducing the philosophical impact of Kant’s “panestetismo”, and lending some support to the structuralist critique of identity and of dialectical opposition. And that goal has been attained in anthropological, philosophical and artistic thinking.

II — So, secondly, there is the question of artistic research. As the readers of *Visuel Arkivering #06* will know, we had three presentations of artistic research at Moesgaard Museum in November 2014 (see the reminder of those two seminar-days, with presentations of work by Pia Arke, Jane Jin Kaisen and Thierry Geoffroy/Colonel, which follows this introduction). The role and function of artistic research is surely a double one, if dialectics are sufficient to describe it.

On one hand, it is an expansion of investigations going on in every artist’s atelier, and since Winckelmann we know that formal questions cannot be separated from theoretical ones. With the conceptual turn in visual art in the 60s (“Art As Idea As Idea”), it became evident that this central duality of artistic work, between form and idea, should not transcend its own making and could not be presented “outside” the modalities of its fabrication: the exhibition of

the work was first and foremost an occasion to present ideas, to give them a singular form, so that an idea could be separated formally from another idea. So, the conceptual turn can also be described as an immanent turn, because the heuristic work taking place in the atelier was stabilized as *ideas*, without accepting the *ideals*, of the art work. To a certain degree these questions are also prolongations of Benjamin’s preoccupations about the aura of a “splendid” singularity ascribed to the result of a unique artistic endeavour.

On the other hand, this fusion of understanding and perception produces other dimensions for experiencing art work. Art work can avoid its dependence on the appropriation of a buyer and future owner of the work. Serial work, which before was limited to printing, can expand into other formats, and with video work instrumentalize all kinds of narrative procedures, not to mention all the more humble incarnations of images which are now possible through digital manipulation and communication.⁸

But artistic research is at its epistemological beginning; its aesthetic and theoretical genre is far from self-evident. Something is going on in this work which concerns literature, film and philosophy as well. And concerns even politics and revolutionary movements, as we have seen in much Arab work over the last six years. That’s why we always have to include the question of critique when we try to determine the *episteme* of artistic research. The critical impact of work of this kind has to do with how it treats documentation, testimony and agency. So, critique in this sort of work is not incorporated from the outside, from an external project, but remains a conceptual and inherent question, depending very little on the animosity driving artistic intention, or the feelings of disgust, sympathy or solidarity it is able to evoke among the public.

I have expanded, a little, this question of artistic research, because, after a conversation with Jane Jin Kaisen, we thought it more productive to postpone the publication of the preoccupations with artistic research presented at Moesgaard to a separate issue of *Visuel Arkivering* able to deal with the epistemological difficulties of artistic research on a broader level.

7 Lea Melandri was also part of the “collettivo” L’Erba voglio around psychoanalyst Elvio Fachinelli (Milano), whose magazine *L’Erba voglio* published several important theoretical texts around the 1977-movement in Italy. See Lea Melandri about Fachinelli: <http://www.minimaetmoralia.it/wp/lattualita-inattuale-di-elvio-fachinelli/>. But there is of course also the legacy of Luigi Pareyson and his “ontology of liberty” to be mentioned. I have introduced this Italian “link” in Danish: “Mario Perniola. Vilkår for en frihedsontologi med et kunstteoretisk sigte” [MP – Conditions of an ontology of freedom with a perspective for art theory], in: Stig Brøgger and Otto Pedersen ed., *Kunst og Filosofi*, Copenhagen: Det kgl. Danske Kunstakademi, 2002, pp.442-463.

8 Cf. Hito Steyerl’s crucial text, “In Defense of the Poor Image”, in her book *The Wretched of the Screen*, e-flux journal series, Berlin: Sternberg, 2012.

III — This facilitates our concentrating on *visual anthropology*, and the work of the “Camera as Critique” team at Moesgaard and the University of Århus.

So, this issue of *Visuel Arkivering* is - just like the #06 - dependent on a young and hopefully ongoing collaboration between “Camera as Critique”, the old Department of Art Theory, now the Institute of Research and Transdisciplinary Study at the Royal Danish Academy of Fine Arts, the Ethnographic collection at the National Museum of Copenhagen and the Museo delle Culture in Lugano.

It reproduces some of the interventions more or less as they were delivered on that occasion. There is, however, one exception: Christian Vium’s was unable to present his work in November 2014 as he was recovering from a recent accident. We are happy to publish and read it now.

The interventions of Yasufumi Nakamori were very important for the subjects we have been discussing over the course of 2014 at the National Museum and the Royal Academy, namely Japanese photography and visuality in modern Japan. Unfortunately, it has not been possible for Nakamori to send us a written version of his two interventions. However, *Visuel Arkivering* #06 published two fairly accurate presentations of Nakamori’s interventions, so we will have to make do with them.

Carsten Juhl

A Seminar about Visual Anthropology at Moesgaard Museum, Moesgaard Allé 15, Aarhus

PROGRAM 1ST DAY

Monday, November 17th, 2014

9.00- 9.15 Introduction to day one by Christian Suhr

Part I - Visualising Asia: Contemporary Perspectives

9.15-10.15 Yasufumi Nakamori
After an Earthquake: Destroyed Cities in the History of
Japanese Photography

10.15-10.30 coffee break

10.30-11.30 Jane Jin Kaisen
Reiterations of Dissent

Martin Petersen
Curating the Exhibition “Girl with Parasol” at The National
Museum of Denmark

11.30-12.00 sum-up of part I

12.00-13.30 lunch break

Part II - Fieldwork with cameras: anthropological perspectives

13.30-14.30 Andrew Irving
Design for Living

14.30-15.30 Christian Suhr
Cultural Critique in Non-collaborative Ethnographic Film

Karen Walторp
Representations and (Un)veiling of Sentiments

15.30-16.00 sum-up of part II

PROGRAM 2ND DAY

Tuesday, November 18th, 2014

10.00- 10.15 Introduction to day two by Carsten Juhl

Part III - Inventing the Subject-matters of Visual Research

10.15-11.15 Günther Giovannoni
Fosco Maraini's Experience among the Ainu of Hokkaido

11.15-11.30 coffee break

11.30-12.30 Ton Otto
Film, Exchange and Multiple Perspectives
Yasufumi Nakamori
Re-ruined Utopia: Arata Isozaki's "Electric Labyrinth" (1968)

12.30-13.00 sum-up of part III

13.00-14.00 lunch break

Part IV - Investigations: Photographs and Archives

14.00- 14.30 Frederikke Hansen / Kuratorisk Aktion
The Drive to Remember: Kuratorisk Aktion's Curatorial
Engagement with Pia Arke's Artistic Work and Research

14.30-15.30 Tijana Mišković
The Sociological Preoccupations of Visual Artist Thierry
Geoffroy/COLONEL
Christian Vium
Photographic Reenactments as Anthropological Method &
Analytical Prism (THIS INTERVENTION HAD TO BE CANCELLED)

15.30-16.00 sum-up of part IV

Representations and the (Un)veiling of Sentiments: Visual Anthropology in Progress

Karen Walторp

Mobile phones, Moral Laboratories, and Muslim women in Copenhagen — In this short piece, I explore my ambivalences regarding the balance between the anthropological and the artistic dimensions of my on-going visual fieldwork investigating the use of smartphones as moral laboratories (Mattingly 2013) among young Muslim women in Nørrebro, Copenhagen.

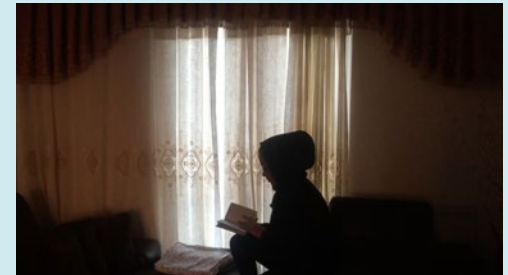
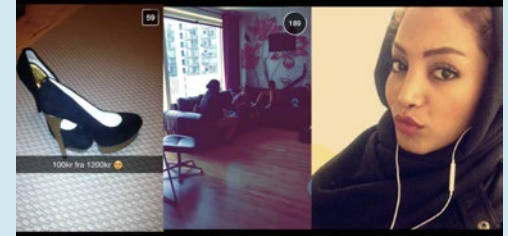
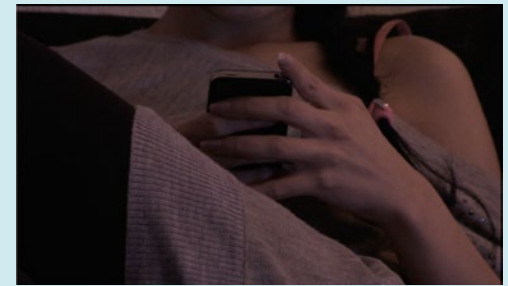
In my current research project, I am faced with the paradox that while there are a great many situations that I can film, I am not allowed to show the material to others, as my female interlocutors are not wearing veils and the topics under discussion are intimate and not intended for public scrutiny. Hence, I have privileged access to very intimate spaces and discussions, but I do not have permission to communicate the audiovisual aspects of this intimacy. How, then, can I communicate the sensory and visual aspects of my 'field' when I am not allowed to show the actual images? Through my fieldwork I have become familiar with a variety of intimate spaces, which has made me reconsider what I used to think of as public and private. In fact, I prefer to think of Hannah Arendt's notion of the 'public space of appearance' (1958) in the plural, as there are various forms of (in)appropriate appearances in multiple public and private spaces.

Experimenting with alternative representations and possibilities of identification is something the young Muslim women I work with engage in on a daily basis in various media platforms. They carve out distinct private spaces for themselves within otherwise very 'public' platforms, which they modify, censor or make revealing, depending on audience and context. In what I term the 'Moral Laboratory 2.0', creative experimentation with parallel worlds and

(im)possible futures takes place within the confines of dominant sociocultural conceptions of ‘the moral woman’.

Mutual ‘invention of culture’ — I am grappling with how to overcome this challenge of representation. I continually discuss this with the young women I work with, in the hope of establishing with them a form of ‘Shared Anthropology’ (cf. Rouch 2003), which prioritizes the collaborative aspects of knowledge making. Here, I briefly sketch out the contours of a dialogical approach grounded in a belief that the communication of knowledge (in this case audiovisual products) to different audiences should be a central part of the knowledge production itself.

A classic virtue of anthropology is that the anthropologist participates in people’s lives on their terms. I work with kinship diagrams to understand the relatedness of people across time and space. Participant observation has enabled an embodied understanding of the belonging to place, and the importance of place in shaping peoples futures. The families and networks of my informants are distributed geographically from Palestine, Jordan, Syria and Dubai, from Lahore to London, from Tehran to Malmö to Copenhagen. Family members, friends, and potential future husbands are linked through a heterogeneous technological network of social media platforms such as WhatsApp groups, Facebook or Viber via smartphones to one or more of my informants. In my approach, interaction with and through media and technological tools is both part of the object of study, and simultaneously integral to the applied methodology. Through my informants’ smartphones and my video camera, we are collaborating creatively, documenting everyday life as it is produced, negotiated and navigated. Technology- and media-related activities are inextricably entwined in this. And the anthropologist is – inadvertently or not - entwined in this too: as anthropologists, we are inevitably part of the knowledge making, ‘the invention of culture’ as Roy Wagner would have it (1981). The methods we apply in our research do not just describe social realities but are involved in creating them, as John Law argues (2004). The choice of methods is always also a political choice. It raises the question of what kinds of social realities we want to create.





Prototyping the future through collaborative exhibition making — Anthropology is always already entwined in power relations, political agendas and public debate. We should embrace this iterative movement and acknowledge that (re)presentation of knowledge is not simply the end-product, but part of an ongoing process of collaborative knowledge- and reality-making in which collaborators and audiences play a crucial part.

In a prior exhibition with 10 young informants from Nørrebro, Copenhagen, I juxtaposed short narratives and their images, which they had shot with disposable cameras, with images and narratives from young people in the South African township Manenberg, and from the Parisian suburb Saint-Denis. The informants and I posed a question to the audience through the title we gave the exhibition in Nørrebro Theatre: 'Ghetto NO Ghetto?' This was Spring 2011, after the VK-government had dubbed the area of Blågård in Nørrebro a 'ghetto' along with 28 other neighborhoods in Denmark. The process of setting up that exhibition, and the very varied reactions from different audiences it elicited, made me realize how much knowledge this kind of 'intervention' opens up. Political correctness, stereotypes, (mis)understandings, and my own fear of playing into the stereotypes blend together, as my project is entwined in political debates



about integration, minority-majority relations, ‘ghettos’, and ideas of freedom, femininity, autonomy, and democracy.

‘We’ – the informants and I – work together in many of the phases, but it is my own personal motivation that starts the process, and I must take responsibility in the end for the choices in the analytical process: the editing, sequencing and curating. I draw on inspiration from artists and documentary filmmakers in a constant struggle to be sensitive to and reflexive about, and to creatively use, the *power* of sequencing, curating, and editing of the products of the collaborative efforts of my informants and me.

A possible way forward — The challenge I sketched in the beginning was how to both conceptualize and represent my informants and my field visually – in particular the unveiled, intimate scenes that cannot be directly shown as delicate, contested issues play out or are discussed. Some of my informants wear a hijab, others a scarf loosely tied and showing a bit of hair, while yet others do not wear a veil. All of them, veiled or not, share an idea that it is the gaze and gossip of significant others that decides whether or not you are an honorable, moral woman.

My tentative ideas currently involve a video installation of three short films, all made in collaboration with the informants, two documentary filmmakers and a video-artist (all women). The idea of three screens originates in an imperative to portray more than one truth (Gurumuruwuy et al. 2011, Kaisen 2011), and from the plural aesthetics that impress themselves on me when in the field: the informants, the young Muslim women in Nørrebro, have various preferences and tastes, and they – and I – all feel that the exhibition must represent them in a way that resonates for them with *a* truth. They experience themselves as continually misrepresented in the media: as Muslims, as women, and for some of them, as wearers of a veil. I am inspired by the idea of ‘haptic visuality’ (Marks 2000), working with sound and visual juxtapositions in ways that allow multiple (layers of) representations to debate each other. I am intrigued by Ruben Östlund’s cinema, where films such as ‘De ofrivilliga’ (2008) and ‘Play’ (2011) leave the audience strangely displaced, worried, moved, changed and thinking. But at the same time, I want to welcome the audiences in warmly, and I ambitiously aim for fascination, identification, estrangement and resonance.

Three screens and a hijab in a display case — A tall display case in the middle of the room with a hijab in it is being debated as part of the video installation. If you stand directly in front of the display case, you will be looking at a reflection of yourself ‘wearing’ the hijab, courtesy of the lighting. Looked at from other angles, it is a piece of clothing. Will a display case containing a hijab in the middle of an exhibition room, with three screens allowing audiovisual glimpses into public, private and intimate spaces, engage you as spectator? This is work in progress. The video installation is scheduled for exhibition in Moesgård Museum, Fall 2015.



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Experimental Re-enactment as Anthropological Device

Christian Vium

In May and June 2014, I was working in Central Australia, trying to re-enact elements of the renowned photographic work of Frank Gillen and Baldwin Spencer in a creative way. Gillen and Spencer produced one of – if not *the* – most influential record of aboriginal life over a period of 40 years between 1875 and 1912. In many regards a pioneering work of early anthropology, which prioritized in-depth participant observation, long-term fieldwork and the use of film and in particular photography in documenting aspects of ceremonial life among the Aranda (*Arrernte*) people. Their work had a decisive impact on Émile Durkheim, James Frazer, Sigmund Freud and later also on Claude Lévi-Strauss.

I wanted to revisit their cardinal work, and use it as a point of departure for a contemporary dialogue about how we see and represent ‘the Other’. This idea was not so much born from a desire to criticize their somewhat dated evolutionary views, but rather from the discomforting discovery that my own photographic work is saturated with what I have come to understand as somewhat stereotypical and problematic in its institutionalised view on ‘the Other’. What was the source of my ‘mis’representations? Perhaps, in spite of my good intentions, I was merely reproducing a problematic way of representing ‘the Other’, which is deeply engrained within not only the anthropological discipline but also the entire history of ‘the Western world’. I, too, am a colonialist. Aren’t we all? After all? These questions continue to enforce themselves upon me, and my current research project explores this colonial nerve or impulse, which so uncomfortably sits at the heart of many good-hearted, leftist, culture-sensitive anthropologists.

Having researched the archives and on-line collections held at Victoria Museum in Melbourne, I went into the field with a selection of images divided into three (archetypical, but nevertheless productive) categories or figures: the portrait, the monument and the landscape, which I used as the basis for extended photo elicitation with descendants of those people engaged by Spencer and Gillen. The images from the archive served as layouts or templates for the production of new images. Together with inhabitants of the central desert, I wanted to re-enact the old images creatively in the places where they were originally made. But, this time, I wanted to invite those portrayed to bring their points of view and ideas into the process. For the purpose, I brought along a medium format, analogue camera, tripod, light meter in addition to a number of notebooks containing archive photographs and detailed ideas on the framing and staging: the re-enactment of the photographs.

Over the course of my fieldwork, I alternated between long and often solitary sessions of landscape photography, trying to establish the geographical location of sites depicted in the archive material along with the proper point of view, while remaining as open as possible to my own intuitive experience of the landscape. Extreme over-exposures (figure 1) became part of the latter, experimenting with how to literally burn the landscape into the emulsion of the film. Meetings and discussions with local inhabitants provided strong inspiration in this regard, as the theme of seeing through or beyond – exposing – the physical nature was recurrent and pervasive in terms of its linkages to the anthropological literature on ‘aboriginal’ cosmology and the strong connection between people and land.

Much as I had expected, the portrait re-enactments I ended up making with my interlocutors were curious bastard images, aesthetic ‘mongrels’ as Pia Arke would have it. They did not mirror the originals, but rather distorted them. But this was part of the idea in the first place: the images and image-production was a part of a dialogical process, which my interlocutors and I engaged in with the original archive material. The original images were material and methodological vehicles for detailed elicitation and discussion in the field, and the production of new photographs a practical and evocative instrument for engaging with my interlocutors. Without doubt our collaboration must have seemed surreal and even at times ridiculous. A dilettante piece of improvisational theatre, set somewhere in a dusty landscape

on the fringes of the postmodern. These re-enactment sessions were imbued with a kind of Werner Herzogian sense of aesthetic ecstasy. I often had the feeling that what was taking place during these semi-improvised choreographies, as I came to conceive of them, was somehow both brilliant and entirely ludicrous. It was magnificent, slightly discomfiting, and very strange in an intense way.

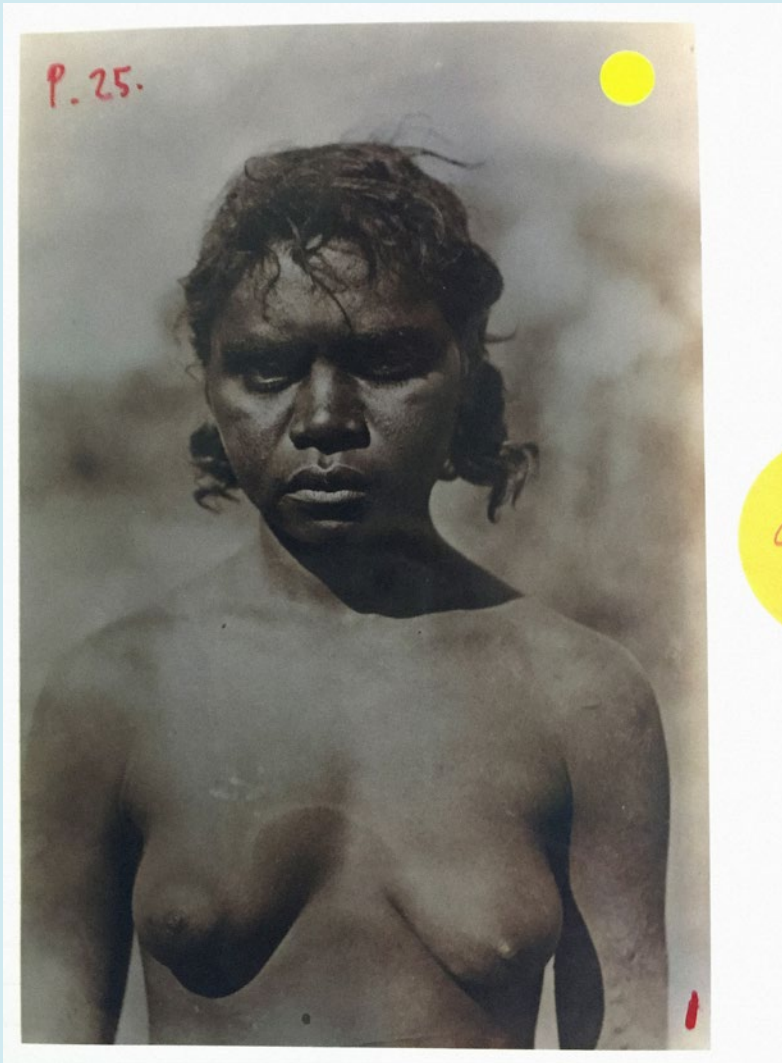
Contrary to the practice of most photographers, my main ambition was not to simply produce ‘good images’ but perhaps more so to employ photography as a collaborative and improvisational practice for opening up dialogue and, ultimately, produce or generate qualitative knowledge in the dynamic junction between the archive, the field, my interlocutors and I. Ultimately, I wanted to create a space within which the people in front of the camera were invited, even encouraged, to perform themselves – or a version of themselves, thus making themselves into archetypes or even stereotypes, but not just stereotypes of my fantasy alone. What emerged were both dramatic moments of discussing and subtle gestures of hands, ambivalent gazes and the unforeseen gifts of improvisation and coincidence, as I would discover later in the editing process when comparing originals and re-enactments.

Presently, the material from the field journey is being processed at the Camera as Cultural Critique laboratory at the Department of Culture and Society at Aarhus University. I am using scanners and computers as analytical devices to screen, expose, re-touch and re-frame the images, enhancing texture, dust, and layers - distorting and assembling them in new configurations with fragments of text, narratives, excerpts from interviews, old images and archival material. For want of a better word: making montage-work. I conceive of this analytical process as a direct continuation of the dialogical process, which began in the initial selection of images from the archive and was unfolded practically through photo elicitation and re-enactments of select images in central Australia.

What I hope to eventually facilitate, once forthcoming interventions in the Amazon and Siberia are completed, is an ethno-aesthetic technique for cultural critique, which, as Arke so poignantly described and practiced, merges the disciplines of ethnography and artistic practice in a way that acknowledges the crucial importance of experimentation and ‘mis’takes as productive elements in contemporary anthropological knowledge-production.



Fig. 1



‘This lady looks sad. Confused...and don’t know what is happening.
Her eyes say that she is sad. Very sad.’

Fig. 2



Marie Ellis, photo elicitation, Amoonguna, June 2014.

Fig. 3

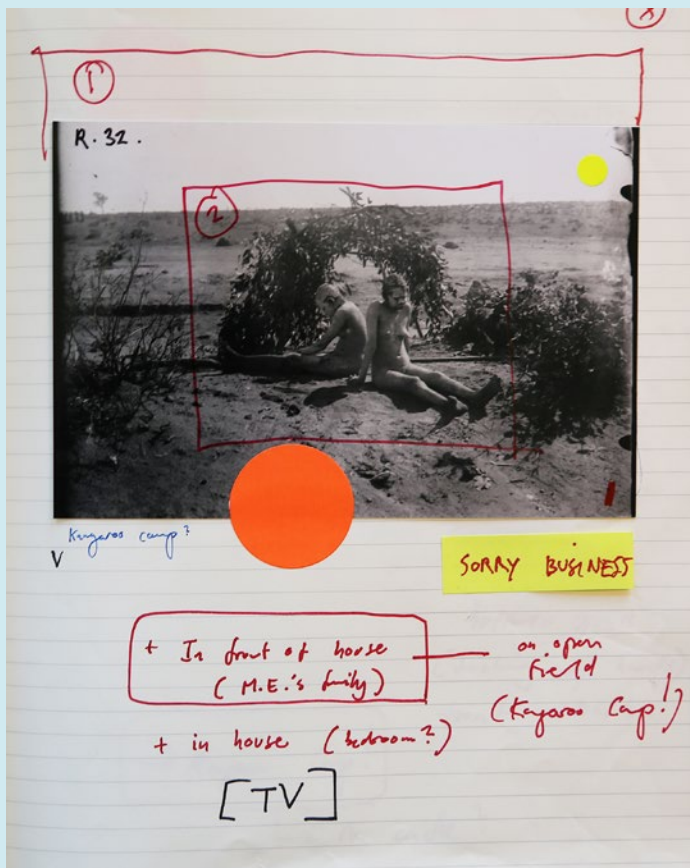


Fig. 4



Fig. 5

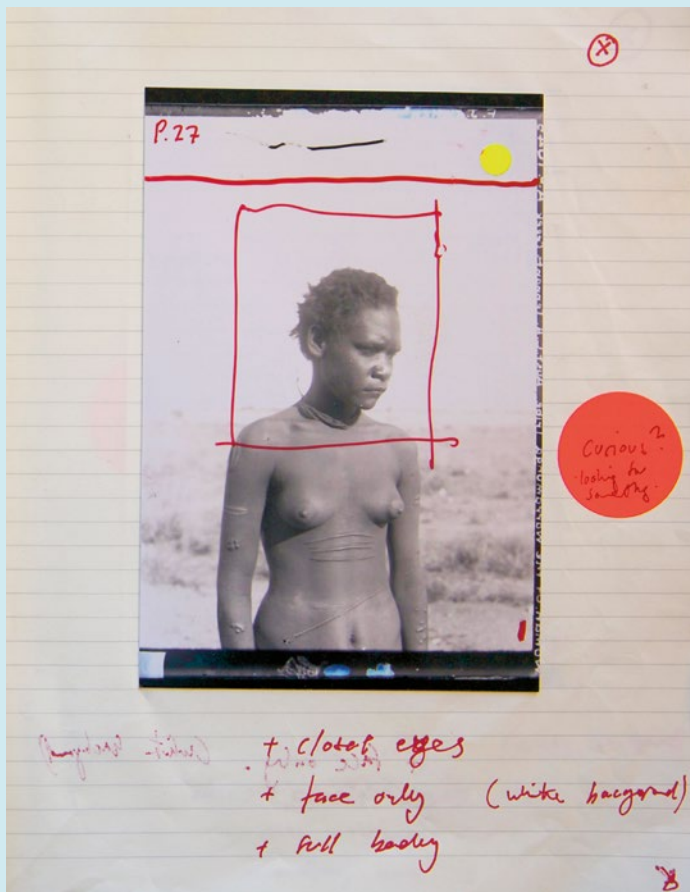


Fig. 6

Excerpt from a conversation with Marie Elena Ellis, an Aranda woman in her mid-forties from the central desert, living in Amoonguna town camp outside Alice Springs:

Early afternoon. We were sitting on plastic chairs in the shadow in front of Marie and Scotty's house, the old store managers' house, which was now adorned with the words "Fuck You" written over the front window. On the adjacent neighbours metal fence somebody had written the equally descriptive "Fuck this place is Shit". Further down Gum Tree Road, a car had collided with a tree following a drinking binge in the weekend. The tyres were gone. Marie was all smiles and in her usual sarcastic mood. We were going through a selection of Baldwin Spencer and Frank Gillen's photographs of Aranda women. They were mainly portraits and images relating to what is commonly known as 'sorry business', signifying ceremonies and practices related to mourning. These images, in particular, had attracted my attention during my mining of the vast photographic archives of the Spencer and Gillen collection. The images were less static, more ambiguous and open to interpretation than many of the others – and more than most 'ethnographic' (colonial) photography produced in the same period (between 1870 and 1910). As I had noticed was often the case when women looked through the photographic prints, touching was an important part of 'reading' the images. Looking was not enough it seemed. To fully comprehend the story of the image, one had to engage with its materiality, and the physical connection seemed to facilitate more detailed descriptions. Marie flipped through the album of templates I had devised for the purpose of photo-elicitations and future re-enactments. One by one, she read the pictures, offering her interpretation, her knowledge, and her point of view. Often our conversation would wander off along unexpected paths. Discussions on issues related to the continued communication gaps between white and black Australians grew from the gesture of a hand or the direction of a gaze in one of the old photographs we were scrutinizing together. A little while into our elicitation session an image of a shorthaired young woman gazing downwards (figure 6) appeared on a page, and following a short moment of contemplation, Marie offered the following interpretation: 12

'Her look is like.... she is frowning you know. Or thinking. She might be thinking like. Like "I don't wanna be here. I don't wanna be told what to do.... this is pissing me off. I don't like it". Actually, she's probably thinking "Fuck Off!".'



Fig. 7



Fig. 8



Fig. 9

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FIGURES

Sir Baldwin W. Spencer and Frank J. Gillen photographs are from the collections of Museum Victoria and South Australia Museum. The repurposing of the images and the views expressed in the work are those of the author alone and in conjunction with community consultation.

- Fig. 1 Emily Gap, June 2014. Photo: Christian Vium.
- Fig. 2 Photograph by Frank Gillen.
- Fig. 3 Marie Ellis, Amoonguna 2014. Re-enactment based on Baldwin Spencer & Frank Gillen archive (opposite, fig. 2). Photo: Christian Vium.
- Fig. 4 Photograph by Baldwin Spencer and Frank Gillen of women in mourning. What is also commonly known as "sorry business".
- Fig. 5 Roseanne and Lynette. Amoonguna 2014. Re-enactment of fig. 4. Photo: Christian Vium
- Fig. 6 Reprint of page from template field notebook with photograph by Spencer and Gillen for re-enactment and elicitation work. Christian Vium 2014.
- Fig. 7 Lynette, Amoonguna, June 2014. Photo: Christian Vium.
- Fig. 8 Lynette, Amoonguna, June 2014. Photo: Christian Vium.
- Fig. 9 Simpsons Gap. June 2014. Photo: Christian Vium.

Much has happened in the years since I wrote the short essay 'Experimental Re-enactment as Anthropological Device' in 2014. However, I have chosen to maintain the essay and publish it in its original form, as it points to a particular time in my research process. The material discussed here has since been exhibited in various forms in more than 15 international venues, meeting a diverse audience. The exhibitions, which I consider integral to my analytical process, have provided me with valuable feedback. In addition, I have conducted fieldwork in the two other field-sites (the Brazilian Amazon and Eastern Siberia) in my research project 'Temporal Dialogues'. Each fieldwork was devised based on the same approach, but with important additional elements. Needless to say, this work has affected my reflections and understanding of the subject matter in significant ways. Today, I believe words such as *dramaturgy* and *mise-en-scene* may be more indicative than *re-enactment* in describing the collaborative production of new photographs.

The three 'chapters' in the research project 'Temporal Dialogues' will be exhibited together for the first time at MOMU – Moesgaard Museum – in 2018. A catalogue comprising elements of the project will accompany the exhibition.

Christian Vium
June 2017

Possession and psychosis

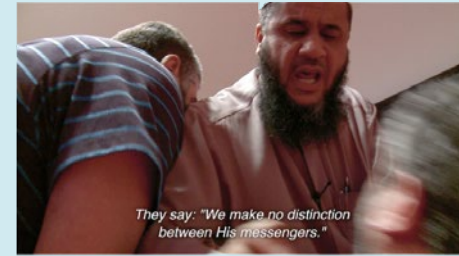
Five supplications that guided the production of the ethnographic documentary "Descending with Angels" (DER 2013, 75 min): a film about Danish Muslims being treated for jinn possession with Islamic exorcism and psychotropic medication.

Christian Suhr



The invisible — The spirits called *jinn* are said to be invisible. While they may take on a shape that is visible to the human eye, their true outline is invisible to any human being. Muslim healers explain that the greatest danger in exorcism is the risk of developing arrogance (*kibr*), the risk of thinking that now we finally saw the jinn, now we can catch it. If we think we see the jinn, it means that we have been caught.

How can we deal with such a concept of invisibility on film? How can we approach the enigmatic nature of jinn possession and psychosis without rendering it visible? What is at stake here is not simply the risk that we might colonize the exotic ethnographic Other with our "Western," "academic," or "cinematic" gaze. Instead it is about protecting us from the illusory dangers of visual grasping, the experience of certainty without doubt that marks the end of knowledge and the entrance into madness and psychosis.



Compound eye — The three dominant approaches to the use of cameras in ethnographic filmmaking have often been characterized by metaphors about the gaze of a fly: *the fly on the wall* (i.e. the camera as used in observational cinema to patiently observe social life as it naturally occurs), *the fly in the soup* (i.e. cinéma vérité, Rouch and Morin's idea that the camera can provoke intersubjective truths by allowing protagonists to play themselves in roles other than themselves), and finally *the fly in the eye* that we see in the deconstructivist cinema of filmmakers such as Trinh T. Minh-Ha, a form of cinema that points our attention to the blindness and the violence of our seeing.

We need all of these fly eyes, and we need more. Give us all sorts of cinematic perspectives in all sorts of unrestrained combinations. Give us the *real eye of a fly*, the compound eye, comprised of thousands of small lenses each capable of seeing a small spectrum of the visible and each combining into a total effervescent mosaic image. Allow us to approach the impossible dream of perceiving the focal object from a variety of angles and at a variety of times in one instant. By no means is this an attempt to achieve panoptic mastery. Unlike the flat image resulting from the perspective of a single camera take, and unlike the three-dimensionality we ordinarily perceive, the compound eye of cinema makes it possible to humble ourselves in the face of the multidimensional and infinite otherness of the world we inhabit.



The long take and iconoclasm — Allow us to be seduced into the homogenous space and the linear unfolding of time evoked by the long unedited observational camera take. Let us be captivated by the apparently meaningful and reciprocal interaction between people in a given scene. Then extend the pressure of time in the scene to the point that it becomes unbearable. Break our images and templates of human interaction. Iconoclasm is not a bad thing. Yes, all the images we produce are of our own making, we are fully aware of this. This is not why we need to break them. No, we break them because they block the path to knowledge by falsely satisfying our desire for visual certainty. As exorcists, psychiatrists, and filmmakers, we make these images, analyses, and diagnoses in order to break them. We need to move on. Give us the possibility of witnessing our actions from a disembodied perspective beyond our own eyes. Relieve us of opinions about normal human perception. Relieve us of what is taken to be the relevant ethnographic context upon which adequate analysis can be built. Increase our sensitivity by pushing our ideas about what constitutes the relevant context elsewhere.

Cut — Don't cut to make connections. Don't cut to show how we already know the world is suspended in threads of money, arms, goods, ideas, and people. Cut to disable these connections. Cut to disable the automatic collaboration of our senses and our preconceived patterns of thought. Cut to prevent collaboration. Collaboration is not a solution for ethnographic filmmaking. Collaboration with our informants and protagonists can be a beginning, but it is

never the endpoint of ethics. Cut to prevent us from collaborating with the jinn, the psychosis, *al-waswas as-shayatin*. Cut to prevent collaboration with impostors who lay claim to spiritual or psychochemical mastery.



Film as therapy — Give us the out-of-body experience of montage. Let us merge into and be seen through the *view from everywhere*. Allow us to escape the enclosure of subject-centered vision. For lack of better and more efficient rituals, then give us montage. Give us the ritual montage machine. Show us the impossibility of human perceptual grasp. Show us the powerlessness of our thinking that is the beginning of thought. Explode our perspective by combining it with so many other perspectives. Dissolve our struggles with the jinn and the psychosis. Allow us to see the pain we carry as only one of so many other pains. The madness flows through our veins, but it can do no more harm than this.

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Witnessing and Creating the World Audio-Visually: Aesthetics, Politics, Anthropology

Karen Waltrip, Christian Vium, and Christian Suhr
Eye & Mind Laboratory for Visual Anthropology, Aarhus University

Aesthetics and politics are fundamentally entwined. Audiovisual representations and statements have effects upon the world. And often these effects are unforeseen. As Hannah Arendt writes: "...we start something. We weave our strand into a network of relations. What comes out of it, we never know. [...] this venture is only possible when there is trust in people. A trust – which is difficult to formulate but fundamental – in what is human in all people. Otherwise such a venture could not be made" (1994:23). In a time increasingly affected by the production and promotion of "alternative facts", we must be clear on the partial and situated nature of what we take to be objective, audio-visual truths (Haraway 1988). A truth which is committed and accountable to the empirical material, to encounters with others.

As anthropologists, we aim to understand how life might be perceived from other peoples' point of view and to document the realities that emerge in the intertwinement of our perspectives. In the foreword to this issue *Visuel Arkivering #10*, Carsten Juhl points out that "we always have to include the question of critique when we try to determine the episteme of artistic research". This goes for anthropology as well. As Juhl elaborates: "The critical impact of work of this kind has to do with how it treats documentation, testimony and agency."

We can only know the other through ourselves, and so knowledge about the other is always also knowledge about ourselves. Anthropologists are invariably part of "the invention of culture" (Wagner 1981) and of the production of knowledge about culture. We are witnesses to the actions of others, but we are also agents who act, just as witnessing is an act in itself that has effects in the world. This raises questions about what kinds of social realities we inhabit, and the ways in which we are both shaped by and implicated in the creation of these realities (Law 2004). Since anthropological

research does not simply describe social realities but is involved in creating them, the choice of aesthetic tools and methods is always also a political choice.

The representation of knowledge can never be the end product, but is part of an ongoing process of collaborative knowledge - and reality-making in which various stakeholders, collaborators, and audiences play a crucial part. Classic and experimental tools and techniques developed in the social sciences and the arts may be applied in the service of creating knowledge, and sharing it.

Interaction with and through media is part of our project and integral to our applied methodology, as technology- and media-related activities are inextricably entwined in the everyday for many of our interlocutors too. Audio-visual media in ethnographic research can contribute to sustained cultural critique; a critique that questions both the cultural premises of researchers and the cultural categories constitutive of the social worlds they are investigating. This critique entails questions concerning the kind of impact diverse forms of witnessing, analysis, documentation, and various representations have on the social worlds they are part of. These questions lie at the core of the work of the Camera as Cultural Critique Research Group at the Eye & Mind Laboratory for Visual Anthropology, Aarhus University, Moesgaard:

"How do different modes of mechanical and digital perception facilitated by modern cameras affect the kinds of knowledge produced by anthropologists? What kinds of conversation might be facilitated between researchers and their collaborators through the use of such media? And in what ways might the use of audiovisual media question and challenge the relations and hierarchies between knowledge producers and knowledge recipients?" (Otto et al., forthcoming).

Audiovisual media afford modes of critical inquiry that challenge the inclination of much social analysis to accept premature conceptual closure and temporal freezeframing. The postproduction stage of editing and processing audiovisual and photographic material offers ways to expand the moments of encounter and look deeper into how diverse perspectives are entangled (Otto et al. forthcoming). These inherent analytic qualities of audiovisual and photographic material make it particularly useful for carrying out collaborative anthropological projects that seek to resist analytic closure and instead aim to establish analysis as a continued, iterative movement of dialogue and critique. Looking back at what happened in our re-

search projects and the dissemination of the knowledge that emerged from them, points to the iterative nature of audiovisual work.

In the work described in our three contributions in this issue of *Visual Arkivering* (Vium, Waltorp, and Suhr) we have attempted to apply audiovisual media as a means of destabilizing our habitual modes of perception, the existing orders that shape our perceptions, those things we take for granted as well as those aspects of the social world that have become invisible to us. Anthropologist Sherry Ortner identifies “cultural critique” as “the critical study of the existing order”: a modality of the anthropology of resistance, which also includes more “activist” forms that “emphasize thinking about alternative political and economic futures” (Ortner 2016: 66; Otto et al forthcoming). We agree that critical cultural research inherently contains an aspect of activism, as it sets people’s minds in motion. This activism can be more or less politically motivated and more or less politically involved.

Our three contributions to this issue were originally presented at a joint seminar between the Royal Danish Academy of Arts and the Camera as Cultural Critique Research Group, AU, at Moesgaard Museum in October 2014. All three contributions are documents of work in progress, documents of a research process at a time where the ‘assemblage’ interrogated was only slowly stabilizing. Later new questions emerged from the initial work with the material.

The material discussed in Vium’s essay on the projects in his tri-partite photographic and anthropological work *Temporal Dialogues* has, since the seminar in 2014, been exhibited in various forms at more than 15 international venues, meeting a diverse audience in galleries, museums, and at festivals in places such as Amsterdam, London, New York, Paris, Sydney, and Tokyo. The exhibitions, which are integral to the research design and the analytical process, have provided valuable feedback in terms of further destabilising the researcher’s initial understanding of (post)colonial realities and representations and the challenges inherent in the exhibition of such representations to a contemporary international audience. In addition, Vium conducted fieldwork in the two other field-sites (the Brazilian Amazon and Eastern Siberia). Each fieldwork was devised based on the same approach, but with additional elements such as the introduction of snapshot cameras, newer vernacular photographic archives (family albums etc.) and progressively more filming in addition to the photographic work. The three parts of the research project will be exhibited together for the first time at Moesgaard

Museum in spring 2018 and will subsequently be published as a monograph.

In Suhr’s contribution to this issue, he describes some of the ideas that emerged from and shaped the production of the film *Descending with Angels* (Suhr 2013). During fieldwork conducted over several years, Suhr followed Muslim patients while they were being treated in a Danish mosque and in a psychiatric hospital, asking questions such as: “What is it like to be a Muslim who is possessed by a *jinn* spirit? How do you find refuge from madness and evil spirits when you live in a place like Denmark?” Some of the Muslims that Suhr worked with found healing in psychotropic therapy. Most of them turned to Islam and Islamic practices of exorcism to find protection from the *jinn* as well as from intrusions by secular state institutions.

As elsewhere in Europe and North America, Danish Muslims are constituted in public discourse by an over-abundance of visibility through intensive state monitoring and surveillance, as well as media coverage. Yet their religion, Islam, remains poorly understood and is frequently identified by politicians, commentators, and even healthcare specialists as the underlying invisible cause of “integration problems”. Hence Suhr became interested in exploring how these broader social and political issues are sometimes paralleled in the invisible dynamics of *jinn* possession and psychosis.

Since the time of finishing the film and the essay in this volume, fear and hatred has rapidly escalated to the extent that Danish politicians at the highest level of government now openly refer to Islam, Islamism, or Salafism as the greatest threat to society; as “a plague over Denmark”, “a violence and death glorifying cult”, “which preaches messages about hatred,” and which “spreads messages which aim at undermining our democracy”.

Suhr conducted much of his doctoral fieldwork with people from the community at the so-called Grimhøj-mosque in Aarhus, Denmark, which in recent years has become the subject of intense public attention due to accusations that they took part in the radicalization of a number of young Danish jihadis who set off for Syria. The framework of illness and contagion asserted by politicians in public media has to some extent been implemented by Danish anti-radicalization programmes. But it is also paralleled in the ways in which those who have been labelled as radicalized Muslims discuss the escalating tensions with reference to the spread - in Danish society and in their community - of fear, anger, arrogance, and so-called illnesses of the heart (*amrad al-qulub*).

Why are illness and contagion the words that people turn to when trying to make sense of such processes? How might we as scholars not only analyse, but also engage in, nuance, and speak back to the communities and the media worlds within which such ideas are shared? Does the existence of a shared vocabulary of illness and contagion offer new ways of imagining dialogue and healing?

To answer these questions, Suhr is currently trying to uncover whether a shared configuration of views and ideas is in fact shaping the conflicting statements and actions of Danish politicians, Danish anti-radicalization programs, and so-called radicalized Danish Muslims. Rather than simply criticising the use of illness and contagion as metaphors for people, he tries to analyse how this vocabulary might help to understand the spread of images and ideas and the ways in which people inhabit and sometimes seek to protect themselves against the increasingly medialized world in which we live.

As described in her essay, Walторp's visual research with young Muslim women and their smartphones was first conceived as an exhibition at Moesgaard Museum. Nevertheless her project took a very different turn. Instead of an exhibition, Walторp jumped at opportunities that arose to follow and film two of the women she worked with on trips to visit a suitor in Dubai, and family in Tehran, Iran. The 30 minute film that resulted from the fieldwork made up part of Walторp's PhD dissertation entitled *Mirror Images: The Smartphone as Relational Device and Real Virtuality among Young Muslim Women in Copenhagen*.

The issues around visibility, concealment, modesty, and reputation that she explored in the 2014 essay that is presented in this volume of *Visuel Arkivering*, continued to be central themes throughout her research, analysis, and dissemination. The film *Joyous are the Eyes that See You* (2017) cannot be widely distributed or made available online due to concerns about representation and whether the film reveals standpoints, behaviour, and conflicts that ought to remain private and hidden. In the editing process, these discussions played out in new registers, and the women's wish for ambiguity meant leaving clarity of narrative behind, and opt for a form that mirrored this need of the young women to leave some things partly concealed, and merely hinted at.

In a roundabout way, the exhibition, albeit obviated, intervened actively in the research as a prompt for debates with interlocutors on representation of Muslim women, and how to document secret and intimate aspects of life to the public, or rather to different pub-

lics. Sketches of the exhibition provided a tangible starting point for discussions around what can and cannot be shown—planning practically with interlocutors what material could and could not be exhibited. This was a speculative future part of the research, which finally never materialized but was nevertheless fruitful in its virtual form. At the moment, the agreement between all participants in the project is that the film can be shown at ethnographic and documentary film festivals and used in teaching, but not widely circulated. It will premiere at the Athens Ethnographic Film Festival: Ethnofest, November 2017.

Since the essay published in this volume was written, Walторp defended her PhD dissertation and went on to work on the research project *ARTlife: Articulations of Life among Afghans in Denmark*, as Assistant Professor at Aarhus University. Informed by the above discussion, representation, audiences, and the creation of publics is at the centre of the project, which draws on aesthetics, digital technologies, and audio-visual means in collaboratively creating a space for articulations beyond the verbal and written: witnessing and co-creating the world.

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Fosco Maraini's experience among the Ainu of Hokkaido

Günther Giovannoni

In 1937, Fosco Maraini (1912-2004) had an opportunity to participate in the orientalist Giuseppe Tucci's long expedition to Tibet, during which Maraini took thousands of photographs. The Himalayan experience finally convinced Maraini to devote himself to ethnological research and the study of Eastern cultures. After graduation from the University of Florence he accepted a grant from the Japanese Government and left Italy for Japan.

Maraini decided to go to the island of Hokkaido, the northernmost part of the Japanese Archipelago, to study the Ainu. As he later said in different occasions, this was only marginally due to his curiosity and to the desire to explore new corners of the world: his interest was in fact fostered by the specificity that characterized the Ainu, the «white people», the most important of the «marginal» peoples of Japan, who lived in those regions. The first trip took place in December 1938. Maraini was 26 years old and he was accompanied by his wife Topazia Alliata di Salaparuta, and by their first daughter Dacia. He had the opportunity to spend two years among the Ainu, during which he carried out a very detailed scientific research about their culture, in particular on the *iku-bashui*, thin wooden carved ceremonial sticks, used by Ainu men during religious rituals. Furthermore, he collected numerous items of material culture and artefacts. This research work resulted in the thesis *Gli Iku-bashui degli Ainu*, published in 1942.

Between 1943 and the 15th of August 1945 Maraini's scientific work had to stop due to Italy's armistice and the subsequent Italian outbreak from the Axis-alliance with Germany and Japan. Maraini was interned together with his wife and daughters in a concentration camp near Nagoya. They managed to survive the harsh conditions of the camp thanks to Maraini's deep knowledge of Japanese culture,

traditions and political behaviour. They were freed after Japan's surrender in 1945.

At the end of the war Maraini succeeded in retrieving all the materials he had collected during his research period in Hokkaido and hidden just before his imprisonment. Notes, photographs, artefacts and material culture, together with all his library on the Ainu, had miraculously been left undamaged by the bombings.

During his first long experience in Japan, Maraini had started to develop a personal reflection concerning the methodology of the anthropologist's work, pulling gradually away from a strictly scientific system of classification in order to find and formulate an expanded version of field-work as practice and understanding. These reflections led him to develop a narrative writing, intimately and indissolubly linked to the visual document, which Maraini had often used very skilfully since the beginning of his work.

After his first experience, Maraini returned several times to Hokkaido. In 1953/54, with the help of an Italian Television crew, he went there to record and give evidence of the *Iyomande*, the ritual of the «sacred sending off the bear», the principal and most significant ceremony in the Ainu culture. This expedition was quite different from the experience of 1938/42, not only because of the altered political situation both in Japan and in the rest of the world, but also and above all because of the worsened living conditions of the Ainu, mainly due to the social and cultural effects of WW2.

Even more deeply than his first time there, Maraini realised that the Ainu was an endangered culture in serious risk of disappearing and felt the need for recording as much as he could observe. He made a documentary film, took innumerable photos and collected several objects belonging to the Ainu culture. He continued his journey in Japan from Hokkaido through the whole country. In that occasion he gathered the information and the materials which would serve as a basis to write his three successful books, *Ore giapponesi* from 1956 (*Meeting with Japan*), *L'isola delle pescatrici* from 1960 and *Japan. Patterns of Continuity* from 1971, all of them translated into several languages.

The documents collected in Hokkaido in 1953/54 are especially valuable. As he would write a few years later, during that stay in Hok-

kaido Maraini could observe and fix on film for the last time a still genuine tradition, linked to its customs, bearing evidence of a very ancient culture. During the following journeys, first in 1963 and then again in 1971, in 1976 and in the '80s, Maraini had to observe a totally different world. Already in 1971, for instance, the custom to celebrate *Iyomande* at the end of the winter had been abandoned and the «sacred sending off the bear» wasn't celebrated any more. Thus Maraini asked expressly to celebrate it once again, i.e. to accomplish a sort of common reappropriation of an important moment of the past. After some persuasion the Ainu accepted and for the occasion they gathered the elderly from several villages in order to reconstruct the ritual in all its parts and details. Notwithstanding the success of the event the 1971, the reconstructed *Iyomande* seemed emptied of most its deeper meanings, and became something quite unlike what Maraini had witnessed in the past.

As time went by, Maraini also changed his way of taking notes, photographing and filming the Ainu and their culture. The numerous photographs that were taken during his journeys in Hokkaido make it possible to unfold a comparative analysis: We may notice that in the first years Maraini was still bound to a rather «classical» methodology and he focused mainly on landscapes and portraits of elderly people. Deeper analyses of the Ainu culture were mainly formulated in his writings. However, in photographs taken in 1953/54, a substantial change can be noticed: So, during this second journey, when Maraini had withdrawn from the scientific methodology learned at the university, photography got a crucial importance. Now, the focus of the pictures were no more directed towards landscapes and portraits but towards the core of the Ainu culture: the ritual of *Iyomande*. The pictures of this period mainly show the various steps of the ceremony and fix the preparations, the dances, the prayers, the offers, and the bear itself. The 1971 pictures are also focused mostly on the *Iyomande*, as to document on film images of a culture that at that moment seemed about to disappear completely. Thus Maraini contributed to preserve at least the memory of an ancient and unique culture of Japan.

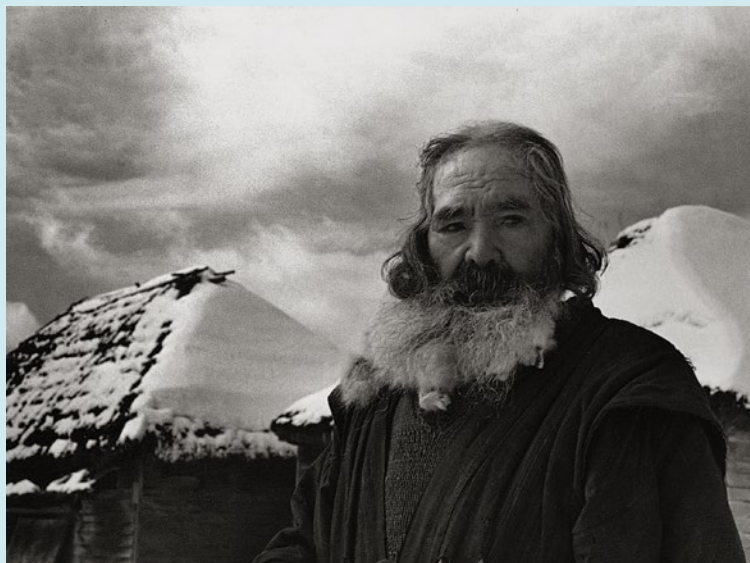
Fortunately the situation changed positively around the end of the seventies when the Ainu became strong supporters of their ethnicity, so much so that - as Maraini himself said - «they even made up collective rituals which would somehow authenticate their cultural

identity» (Maraini 1997:183). In the last decades the Ainu are deeply committed to revive their culture, in the wake of similar movements for the defence of the rights of minorities in other parts of the world. They have created museums and Ainu cultural associations, they have newly started to make traditional wooden objects and artefacts as well as celebrate religious ceremonies again, such as the *Iyomande*. For this purpose they have been using the scientific reports written by foreign scholars, and among them Fosco Maraini. Some tourism has developed alongside, that takes interest in local cultures and traditions. The Ainu have taken some advantage of this new opportunity: they have built traditional dwellings in which to host the tourists, dramatizing and putting on stage episodes of their epic stories, making and selling handcrafted objects etc. Art and culture have thus allowed Ainu to survive, and new generations to keep a bond with their own traditions, even though this has meant that traditions originally connected to the religious realm now have moved to merely commercial domains.

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NB: The original prints of the photographs by Fosco Maraini printed in *Visuel Arkivering* nr.10 are conserved by the Documentation Center of the Museo Nazionale della Montagna of Turin.



Fosco Maraini, *Ainu ekashi**) Kaizawa Shirabeno. Nibutani, Saru Valley, February 1939. *) Meaning "the old man". Titles and information about time and place are written upon the backside of the photos.



Fosco Maraini, *Ainu woman with tattoos around her mouth and upon her hands*. Nibutani, Saru Valley, February 1939.



Fosco Maraini, *Ekashi Miyamoto in his cottage: the gesture of greeting*. Shiraoi, Summer 1953.



Fosco Maraini, *Iyomande, "The Sacred Sending off the Bear"*. The bear is honoured. Kotan, March 1954.



Fosco Maraini, *Ekashi Kikuchi Ginosuke preparing some Inau for the ceremony of the Iyomande*. Kotan, March 1954.



Fosco Maraini, *Ainu women dancing and singing in honour of the bear, which is going to be killed ritually and "sent to its ancestors"*. Nibutani, Saru Valley, March 1971.

Between voyeurism and ‘exhibitionism’

Some notes on curating ‘Girl with Parasol – Japan in the Photo Studio’

Martin Petersen

This essay is a revised version of a paper presented at the visual anthropology seminar *Images and Research*, Moesgård Museum, Nov. 17-18, 2014 – part of collaboration with The Royal Danish Academy of Fine Arts and Museo Delle Culture, Lugano around an exhibition and workshops 2013-14. I here addressed museological aspects of curating the exhibition *Girl with Parasol – Japan in the Photo Studio*.¹

Focus is here on how the process of curatorial work with one exhibition (the questions and dilemmas that are posed before and during its display) can become pivotal in the process of making another exhibition (*I am a cosplayer – Cosupureiya desu*).² I employ this focus to consider the broader questions as to what kinds of visual and material narratives an ethnographic collection in a national museum can and should engage in, and what kinds of affordances and narrative potentialities are particular to this specific time-space.

First, I introduce *Girl with Parasol*, and then return to the question of the particular affordances and narrative potentialities of an exhibition space within the National Museum of Denmark and its Ethnographic Collection.³ For the sake of clarity, the methodological considerations of the exhibition fall within three overlapping approaches: Presentation, juxtaposition and resonances.

Presentation — In the exhibition we presented Japanese hand-painted photographs on loan from Museo Delle Culture in Lugano, Switzerland. These black and white photographs mainly from the 1880s and 1890s were often taken in photo studios, cultural enactments with Mount Fuji as a backdrop. They were painted by hand, and sold as sets in albums. Photographs of geisha, samurai and cherry blossoms – the dream image of a timeless Japan created as industrialisation steamed ahead and modern cities shot up in Japan and Europe. In the Japanese cities of the late 1800s an industry emerged producing photographs of Japan’s people, culture and landscapes for foreign visitors; a genuinely intercultural document.

In the first exhibition room, we presented these photographs thematically, and discreetly pointed towards the constructedness, the inherently intercultural quality to these images of a timeless, and often hyper-aesthetized Japan [fig.1].⁴

Juxtaposition — Second room, still with the Lugano collection of hand-painted photographs as pivotal, attempted a more polemical and, as I will return to, playful approach to the photographs. The first section mainly juxtaposed one-to-one Lugano collection photographs with photographs from the Zoological Garden in Copenhagen, where a Japanese travelling troupe performed ‘Japan’ in 1902 in cultural tableaux and architectural landscapes, which clearly resonated with the hand-painted photographic world of Japan from 1870-1900.⁵

1 A few excerpts of the paper are based on the exhibition text.

2 This permanent exhibition opened in the National Museum of Denmark on March 13, 2015 with the title *Cosplayer! Manga Youth*.

3 A paper on *Girl with Parasol* written with the exhibition architect and designer is available in *Arbejdsmarken 2014 (in Danish)*.

4 For further reading: Bennett, Terry. *Photography in Japan, 1853-1912*. Tokyo; Rutland, VT: Tuttle Publishing, 2006 ¶ Campione, Paolo Francesco et.al. *Geisha e Samurai: Esotismo e fotografia nel Giappone dell'Ottocento*. Milano: Giunti Arte, 2012. ¶ Campione, Francesco Paolo; Marco Fagioli. *Ineffabile Perfezione: La Fotografia del Giappone 1860-1910*. Milano: Giunti Arte, 2010. ¶ Dobson, Sebastian, Anne Nishimura Morse, and Frederic A. Sharf. *Art & Artifice: Japanese Photographs of the Meiji Era*. Boston: MFA Publications, 2004 ¶ Odo, David. *Unknown Japan: Reconsidering 19th Century Photographs*. Amsterdam: Rijksmuseum, 2008

5 For further reading: Andreasen, Rikke & Anne Folke Henningsen. *Menneskeudstilling: Fremvisninger af eksotiske mennesker i Zoologisk Have og Tivoli*, København: Tiderne Skifter, 2011



Fig. 1.

By not making any explicit verbal statements on power relations, we left the ethical debate to the visitors regarding the display of human beings in a zoological garden (the performers were members of a professional troupe, but nevertheless). We hereby attempted to accentuate the productiveness of photographic dreamscapes. And highlight how such dreamscape while surely still referring back to Japan, 1902 as a cultural space, translated into cultural performances. This museological choice on Zoo, 1902 did not raise any discussions at last that I am aware of. Interestingly, however, a colleague of mine

was approached during a museum workshop related with another exhibition featuring a visiting local artist from abroad. The visitor raised the point that the museum perpetuated the politics of display of Zoo, 1902 with this specific outreach activity; that is, by displaying a local artist performing his crafts. The point here is not whether this critique is relevant (I disagree with the critique in this particular case, not least because the event was framed by a critically reflexive exhibition) but more so the unintended, but highly productive ways in which seemingly disconnected museum practices can become linked as in this case through post-colonial critique. This leads us onto the third methodological approach.

Resonances — The exhibition had two spaces, which invited the visitor to engage tactically in, play along with the dream-making affordances of the Japanese photo studio. Outside the two exhibition rooms, in the intro section we installed a '1890s Japanese photo studio.' This studio was a very loose interpretation of images from the Lugano collection of Western visitors to Japanese photo studios in the 1880s and 90s. A Danish long-time practitioner of Japanese gardening assisted us design the photo studio landscape. Assisted also by various costumes and props, which were chosen for their explicit reference to 'Japan' and to encourage photo studio performances, the studio facilitated a playful approach to dreamscape Japan. Surely, visitors may have left the exhibition with notions of a timeless and traditional Japan reconfirmed – we did not really present alternative conceptions of Japan. We did, however, provide a context for reflections on the constructedness of cultural dreamscapes.

One of the more interesting visitor engagements here, and one I will return to shortly, was the groups of young visitors, who came to the museum in fashion-styles or and cosplay costumes with explicit references to Japanese (and other East Asian) aesthetics and media worlds. This, in other words, is an instance in which the exhibition resonated / converged with specific visual performances of not least the Danish cosplay community.

In Room two (in the section adjacent to the Zoo, 1902 section) we installed a current Japanese photo booth, a so-called *purikura* (abbrev. print club) produced by FuRyu. In Japan today, for 400 yen, young people create picture stories about themselves digitally and on stickers in *purikura* photo booths located in department stores and game arcades. In this section we also displayed *purikura* albums



Fig. 2.

and stickers from the past 20 years on loan to the National Museum of Denmark by young Japanese, as well as a film on *purikura* culture produced by the museum in October 2013 [fig.2].

In an attempt to accentuate the dreamscape-Japan master narrative, I went to Osaka, October 2013, and returned with video-interviews, *purikura* albums on loan, and a series of re-interpretations of the historical photos made by a group of product feedback panelists / actual users of FuRyu photo booths and Aki Imahira, FuRyu designer. These re-interpretations were displayed on large photo banners and in a showcase. Like it was the case with the 1880s image of girl with parasol, we presented the affordances particular to this current photo studio – in this case accentuating the fact that the photo booth performed a kind of visual plastic surgery. Visitors, who did not read the exhibition text on the wall may have missed the fact that these photo banners were a tongue-in-cheek play on the historical photos, and assumed continuities. Then again, two further banners showed examples of puri-sticker photos made in Japan from 1996 to today.

As a final spin on the 'Japan in the photo studio' theme, all photos taken in the *purikura* by museum visitors was projected onto a large screen inside the exhibition; a playful attempt to immerse the visitors fully inside the exhibition spectacle of Japanese dreamscapes and to constitute a performative space for participation in the museum narrative at a junction between voyeurism and 'exhibitionism'.

Critique — The exhibition reviewer in the Danish daily newspaper, Politiken, Marie Carsten Pedersen, who otherwise was positive about the exhibition (4 of 6 hearts) was critical about this contextualization of the *purikura*. The critic argued that (contrary to what was case in the rest of the exhibition), the critique of visual language and ideals was absent, and continued: "This is absurd, all the while the *purikura* aesthetic unrelentingly produces beauty norms, which accentuates certain racial and gendered power relations. Here women are small and cute, slanted eyes become round, and dark skin becomes light. That ideal should not stand without debate."

These ideals (larger eyes and fair skin) are not simply expressions of an emulation of Western ideals. Also there was a 20 minutes video in which 8 Japanese women in their own words related of their experiences with *purikura* photography and its beauty ideals; personal narratives, which together with their exhibited *purikura* sticker albums, may be said to both underpin and complicate, even contradict the ways the *purikura* is alleged to produce certain gendered ideals. Leaving these issues aside, this critique is highly productive as it touches upon core questions of the ethnographic museum exhibition:

Are certain cultural practices (or for that matter visual performatives and associated technologies) better suited than others to be put on display in an ethnographic museum? Is it more necessary in an ethnographic exhibition to critique beauty ideals and gender-making technologies of late-capitalist corporations than other cultural practices? Is it acceptable to let certain kinds of materialities and visual performances speak for themselves in the exhibition space, while other materialities should be put in an explicitly critical context? And, by extension, which positions, voices and affordances can and should we engage in order to provide a critical context?

Two preliminary comments are that ideally speaking everything deserves and calls for an equal degree of critical scrutiny in an ethnographic museum, and that, concretely, I found it of central concern to show in the exhibition space how the Japanese informants (*purikura* users) engaged with the affordances of the photo studio medium. The question whether these performances spoke of unbound and subversive creativity at the peak of late capitalist technologies, whether they spoke of atomized, marginalized, submissive consumerism, or something else was left open for the museum visitor to reflect upon.



Fig. 3.

Exhibitor as afterthought — In the last part, I address this question from a third perspective by presenting the exhibition I am curating at the moment. ‘I am Cosplayer – Cosupureiya desu’, which opens on March 13, 2015, will present cosplay – predominantly fans of manga, anime and video-games; productive fans, who engage design, characters and story-worlds of commercial media, and who dress up and perform as characters from Japanese popular culture in con-

ventions and on photo shoots. Not least observing how the Danish cosplay community as visitors and during events engaged with our photo studio space inspired me to make this sequel to ‘Girl with Parasol – Japan in the Photo Studio.’ Their positionalities – affective and creative engagements with the *purikura* and Japanese popular media – delivered one answer and performativity to the questions and ways we invited guest to reflect critically and play around with visual performances [fig.3].

The transnational perspective is two-fold: firstly it presents the topic through the visual narratives of three Danish and three Japanese cosplayers, thereby establishing a personalized, intercultural frame. Secondly, it asks how, if and to what extent media & youth culture in Denmark as seen through the lens of these fan practices, is in the process of becoming transformed by East Asian media and cultural practices. The exhibition examines how characters, narratives and design flows back and forth between the Japanese content industries and global fan communities; and how specific youth in Denmark and Japan express their affect for these characters, narratives and designs through fan practices (whether this is by consistently performing the same male fighting game character; whether it is by being immersed in the practical and technological challenges of creating 3-dimensions out of something 2-dimensional; or it is by making performances, which transgress and makes a play of history, gender, ethnicity, humanity, and the boundaries between industry and consumer, human and media).

With this ‘Girl with Parasol’ sequel, while I will miss the brilliant photographs from the Lugano collection, and the historical context they provided to the performance of Japan, I am looking forward to play with the way we represent Japan in the Ethnographic Collection of the National Museum of Denmark; this time from the perspective of six Danish and Japanese distinct voices. This time, with a thematic that has shifted from Japan as it is performed in the photo studio and more specifically to focus on how Japanese manga, anime and videogames affect and become negotiated in visual performances of transnational fandom. In this way, arguably, Japan is very much being put on the periphery of the narrative, but this may be useful in juxtaposing the straightforward ‘national culture as represented through things’ approach with which is still a conventional way of exhibition display in ethnographic museums.

Contributors

Günther Giovannoni is general conservator at Museo delle Culture (MUSEC) of Lugano, Switzerland.

Carsten Juhl is retired head of department from the Royal Danish Academy of Fine Arts, Schools of Visual Art.

Martin Petersen is Senior Researcher and Curator at Modern History and World Cultures, National Museum of Denmark.

Christian Suhr is a Filmmaker and Assistant Professor. Coordinator of the EYE & MIND MA Programme in Visual Anthropology, Department of Anthropology, Aarhus University.

Christian Vium is Post Doc Fellow at the Department of Culture and Society, Aarhus University.

Karen Waltorp is Assistant Professor at the Department of Anthropology, Aarhus University, Camera as Cultural Critique Research Group.

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dokumentation og tradition. En anonym maler, der var
ansat i Kusakabe Kimbeis atelier, benyttede en pensel
med kun et hår til at male detaljerne på hver af de to
hundrede munks øjne og læber, som var på fotografiet



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The Witness and the Archive. Elements in a Philosophical Anthropology

An introduction to Giorgio Agamben's
Remnants from Auschwitz – The Witness and the Archive

By Carsten Juhl^I

The new ethical material that he discovered at Auschwitz allowed for neither summary judgments nor distinctions and whether he liked it or not, lack of dignity had to interest him just as much as dignity. (p.47).

It is Primo Levi Agamben is mentioning here, and it is Primo Levi's work that has made possible the analysis of the human condition after Auschwitz in the book of Giorgio Agamben. There are many other writers with experiences from the concentration or death camps who are drawn upon by Giorgio Agamben in this third part of his *Homo Sacer* (abbreviated HSIII), especially Améry's, Antelme's and Bettelheim's works, but Primo Levi's texts remain the crucial ones. And the problems presented in Levi's texts are confirmed by the many other "auto"biographical titles that Agamben comments on and investigates in HSIII.

Besides this "hermeneutic" dimension in Agamben's procedure there is also an actual epistemological aspect to *Remnants of Auschwitz*: it concerns the framework for and limits to the determinations of the human faculties that are able to bear and receive and how bearing and receiving are mutually connected. In this way HSIII

^I This is a translation from Danish by John Kendal of the introduction I wrote to my translation of Agamben's *Quel che resta di Auschwitz – L'archivio e il testimone*, Bollati Boringhieri, Torino, 1998. But here, in this English text, we are quoting from the American edition: *Remnants from Auschwitz – The Witness and the Archive*, Zone Books, New York, 2002.

also becomes a book about subjectivity and perhaps especially about the weakening of subjectivity.

I – Hurbinek, and the subjectivity of the word — Before I move into the ethical material mentioned above and thereby the question of what the testimony thematises in this book, I shall try to write about an example of something that is slightly different from the *Muselmann*. An example that concerns rather what we can archive from reports, and why it is so fundamental to have the many exposed fates recorded in the protocols of history. It is the anthropological depth in what the Auschwitz experience can bring along at the periphery of all that it must at the same time give up in respect of the mass human aspect of the extermination. I am thinking of Levi's account of the boy Hurbinek, who is perhaps three years old and on the verge of being able to speak, when he is liberated from his state as a deportee, but soon after dies from his physical weakness. Levi is occupied by the words, the word, Hurbinek is pronouncing as he lies on his deathbed. It may be *mass-klo*, or perhaps *matisklo*, and in spite of the great number of languages represented among the prisoners in the camp, it doesn't correspond to the words of any identifiable language. Levi, who is aware that the camp can never be good for anything, and cannot therefore reveal some truth about, for instance, the origin of or basic conditions for language, tries to define what the little boy does with his tongue in his vulnerable situation with his crippled, enfeebled body. There is of course no prior meaning that is about to surface in this the perhaps weakest of all the camp's weakened bodies in order to come to expression in Hurbinek's mouth; nor is Levi able to collect any knowledge about what is going on inside that little head. But it can say something, then; there was a readiness to speak, which now becomes the last "word". A readiness and a word that may be manifesting itself without some raw memory of the word's possible philological roots. The readiness resides in the mouth as this word, *mass-klo*, *matisklo*. Does it point back as some kind of explanation for Hurbinek, as a sentence might have been able to do in quite different circumstances if Hurbinek had had a childhood? – What we sense in Agamben when reading Levi, pp.37-39, is something that concerns a degree of independence in the possibility of the speech act, a linguistic embouchure, a first step towards utterance which should not be explained downwards towards fear or outwards socially towards an indication of some communicative concern. It is less than language

and perhaps more immanent than any indexicality, for instance the uniqueness in the articulation of a warning.

Almost 30 years ago Michel Serres touched on this phenomenon in a conversation with Per Aage Brandt, which the latter published in the journal *Semiotik* under the title "Markov og Babel" [Markov and Babel]. From this it appeared that language cannot be driven by a promise of a synthesis, by for instance a unifying explanation: we must try from another place in the mouth, the repetition of the sound, the memory of a sound and perhaps the sense of reach when the sound is reproduced, a sense of recollection. Nor is it therefore in any way an aesthetic reflection in some raw, sense-borne version like "tasting the words"; Hurbinek's distress is far too comprehensive for that, almost equal to a "pure" ontological exposure; "almost" because *mass-klo* or *matisklo* is not a powerless imploration bemoaning its lot to a god. Rather it is tentative, exploratory: Hurbinek was dying; he probably didn't "know" that just as he didn't know that his life was a very small, short and biologically "weak" life. It did not live by virtue of anything but chance, just as it would die in the same way, just before and just after something. Hurbinek was no longer a prisoner, a deportee when life left his very small "frail" and vulnerable body. Instead there was a great non-consummation: even death took so little with it that it did not consummate very much. All this dark non-articulation does not live by virtue of a great birth of meaning that then crumbles and appears as absurd. Nor is it a beginning without consequences, a sort of *negative creation*, even though this concept may get a little closer to the heart of the matter. *Hurbinek's testimony* consisted of this: the little boy sensed a word; it might give a connection to something, something that lay as the seed of a memory or a sound-borne possibility of recollection in Hurbinek's brain (and heart); something that he could in any case feel and hear when his own, very young vocal chords and labial barrier were to steer the little puff, the little exhalation, that was felt now as the closure of the lips and now as a little sibilance in the insides of the cheeks, *mass-klo*, *matisklo*. Hurbinek was discovering the "discursive instance",² the utterance apparatus that was waiting

2 Cf. Benveniste's theory of "instances de discours", which Agamben comments on and expounds in this book's §§3.15-3.18 and §4.1. It is Benveniste who has understood the uniqueness in a "locutor's" actualisation of language in words. Cf. his *Problèmes de linguistique générale*, pp.251-254.

in his mouth and ear. But when Hurbinek died, it was perhaps still far more mouth than speech and meaning, perhaps.

In an earlier published text I have discussed the negative potentiality that is also investigated in *Remnants from Auschwitz*. It is a determination of potentiality that is chiefly argued moral-philosophically. What “ought not” to have happened (Hannah Arendt), happened, and what that involves.³ Especially repression, Arendt’s answer goes:

At no point, however, either in the proceedings or in the judgment, did the Jerusalem trial ever mention even the possibility that extermination of whole ethnic groups – the Jews, or the Poles, or the Gypsies – might be more than a crime against the Jewish, or the Polish or the Gypsy people, that the international order, and mankind in its entirety, might have been grievously hurt and endangered.⁴

Provoked in part by the emergence of Auschwitz deniers,⁵ there appeared in the course of the 80s a negative potentiality literature of

historical-political⁶ character attached to the terms *shoah/so’ah* and *holocaust*, terms that Agamben in fact analyses critically in *Remnants from Auschwitz* (§1.13 and §§1.9-1.10 respectively). The consequences of the historical-political, negative potentiality, which constitutes only one subject in the great Auschwitz complex of philosophical and anthropological questions are not treated in HSIII, nor will they be listed in this introduction; but they are all very political and in particular they have been further politicised in the past 30 years in step with the waning of the “cold war” while an ethnicisation and theocratisation gained ground in a political-spectacular process, the main features of which I have tried to depict in my afterword to the Danish edition of *Homo Sacer*’s first volume. Note that the negative potentiality that can all in all be identified with racism and nationalism, i.e. the ideological wishes to weaken the tendency of the species towards the nomadic and the mixing of races, does not concern the crucial philosopheme in this book, namely the modal opposition of potency and impotence, which elaborates the question of subjectivisation and desubjectivisation that governs Agamben’s analysis of the deposition of testimony. It is this fundamental difference and its corollary, the Benveniste-influenced chain of reasoning, that HSIII’s critics are not capable of following.⁷

3 Cf. “Ondt værre: Et vidnesbyrd ud af arten” [Matters worse. A testimony out of the species], in the journal *Passage*.

4 Hannah Arendt, *Eichmann in Jerusalem*, pp.275-276.

5 A breakthrough for this literature of denial can be dated back to Faurisson’s half page in *Le Monde* of 29 December 1978. In a two-page reportage on this unpleasant misstep in the Parisian daily’s history Ariane Chemin and Raphaëlle Bacqué (*Le Monde*, 21-08-2012) exposed the editorial and cultural circumstances that made it possible for a serious newspaper to publish a page to the effect that “the moon was made of cheese” (Pierre Vidal-Naquet), because only a minimal surface area on the earth’s satellite had been subjected to a scientific collection of “cheese samples”, for which reason the disallowance of the moon’s cheesiness had to be ascribed to a “rumour” (Faurisson’s favourite argument). The above-mentioned misstep was, according to the reportage, made possible by the fact that an ideologically determined reference to “freedom of speech” was involved in the issue when editor Jean Planchais reluctantly made the decision to publish Faurisson’s text. The instrumentalisation of freedom of speech in the West and especially in this connection was moreover analysed by Alain Brossat in his article “La tentation de Noam” from 1999.

6 I coined the term the ‘politics of history’ [historiepolitik] against the background of a critique of historical materialism in favour of a political-economic critique; cf. “Marx og andre mellem historiepolitik og kapitalanalyse” [Marx and others between the politics of history and the analysis of capital].

7 First and foremost Philippe Mesnard and Claudine Kahan in their book *Giorgio Agamben à l’épreuve d’Auschwitz* [G.A. exposed to the Auschwitz Test] from 2001, but also Kim Su Rasmussen in his “Om biopolitik og vidnesbyrd” [On Biopolitics and Testimony]: both works lack the ethnocentric interpretation; the Frenchmen on the basis of a Shoah-directed prioritisation and Su Rasmussen owing to a postcolonial approach. In contrast Jacob Lund does not confuse the political analysis of negative potentiality inspired by the criticism of racism with HSIII’s philosophical-anthropological concerns in his *Erindrings æstetik* [The Aesthetic of Recollection]: Lund has a good grasp of the compensatory operations that prevent the witness from being able to speak on behalf of he who is absent, but must at the same time re-inscribe this absence in the discursive instances of language. To replace

II – The Gorgon and asymmetry — There is a wild and brutal asymmetry at work between those who “have seen the Gorgon”, i.e. set out downwards on the biopsychological ramp and the other inmates, deportees, prisoners.

It is an asymmetry that opens up for the two questions that HSIH treats: the testimony about Auschwitz’ fates and the archiving of the remnants from there.

By a ‘gorgonisation’ of the inmate his or her life is moved from a human and conscious state to another, one that is both derived, secondary, and primary, as the organic can be, i.e. outside the question of origin or animality with the categories that are used to classify beginnings and animal species respectively. Of course, not primary as the primates are; the turning, the folding inward of the *Muselmann* is too comprehensive, too total for that. There is not even room or movement in the mind for a simplicity, a simplification of the human, as it requires a double and yet coincidental innocence in body and soul, a movement without ulterior motive, but yet a movedness. — Instead the animal and the human are reduced simultaneously. The qualities of both dimensions in *homo sapiens* slowly go out, and a deep extinguishedness takes over the body and installs itself in the mind: the functions of the body and mind decay, so that even surviving, the despotic dictate of hunger, is gradually replaced by a kind of living death. The life forces are extinguished, the organism follows suite, and there arises the state of empty life that Agamben describes in extensions of the various deportees’ testimony about the *Muselmann*. As already mentioned, not least Primo Levi’s descriptions; Levi sensed in the most intense way what befell the ‘gorgonised’ deportee despite or perhaps precisely because of the deep understanding for the eye-witness testimony’s ontological inadequacy that Levi’s books reveal: *If This is a Man?*

‘Gorgonisation’, becoming a *Muselmann*, has to do with a kind of chemical dissolution of the human that radicalises the inter-human ethic out of the question of humanity, compassion, mercy and sympathy,

so that the ethical issue tends to topple over into an anthropology for the if-man, an attempt to pinpoint and exemplify the weakening of potentiality, the non-human that it ought to be impossible for the species to attain. It is this reduction that in extension of Walter Benjamin’s *Critique of Violence* we have grown accustomed to calling “bare life”, *das bloße Leben*.⁸ Hannah Arendt has treated the first stage in the if-ication, its simultaneous immersion in mass anonymity and in voiding of potentiality. This takes in, for example, an important parenthesis about the “humanity” of the slave in *The Human Condition*.⁹

There is a kind of petrification about the ‘Gorgonised’ life: the expectancy and capability of reaction of the human state under extreme pressure is replaced by something frozen or fossilised about the body that is “drowning”, as “sommerso” is translated into English. Submerged as a body and with a flushed out mind when the *Muselmann* begins to sink to the bottom. Not in the water of the sea but in the daily life of the camp with its violations and exhaustion, hunger, blows and oblivion.

To reduce people in the “fabrication of corpses” (Arendt) to something that can be in conformity with the National Socialist biopolitics is an effect which in the long term will prove to be just as important as the systematic extermination of Jews and Romas that took place in Auschwitz. But it is by virtue of synchronous mass extermination of the human scapegoats that the diachronous pressure on the species arose. It is this relation between accelerated mass killing and the individual’s implosion in the camp that requires the establishment of a special ethic for Auschwitz.

The mass killing forms the horizon for the deportees, and the selection is the passage for which the deportees little by little see themselves rendered “suitable”. I.e. suitable for extermination. It is

8 *Gesammelte Schriften*, Vol. II.1, pp.200-201: *Der Mensch fällt eben um keinen Preis zusammen mit dem bloßen Leben des Menschen*, etc. (p.201).

9 It is in particular Arendt’s feeling for the “obscure” in the life of the slave that I am thinking of, a life that leaves “no traces”. *The Human Condition*, p.50. Foucault has seen the same erasedness in the human in his description of the “lives of infamous men”, which Agamben discusses at the end of §4.3. It is by virtue of what has been wiped out that the *archive* can produce such a paradoxical statement about that which has been erased (§4.4’s beginning).

a theory of representation, it is this substitutional usage that the desubjectivisation of subjectivity gets to perform through the witness that must be thought or reproduced. But it is an open question whether it is necessary to think “a subjective remnant” that “always remains” (p.89), whether this is what the testimony is about.

this inauthenticity that replaces any subjectivity, be it autonomous or heteronomous, individual-liberal or collective-social, transcendent or immanent. As Agamben shows (§2.20), even Heidegger's reversed confirmation of being because of death's lack of authenticity falls to the ground in this context. The ethical, what is left, therefore concerns precisely what remains after Auschwitz: what can be said about the people of Auschwitz and what we can preserve of what they left behind. The witness and the archive, dimensions that neither constitute a whole, nor fit into any 'explanation'; the possibility of the impossible and the challenge to the human involved by such a feasibility. It is not a negative-positive experience of the dialectical kind that gives meaning behind the back of the species. For it would require some philosophy of history for Auschwitz, that could inscribe the extermination camp in a kind of collective temporality, so that Auschwitz "revealed" negatively something that people after Auschwitz could translate into historical experience, positively. And it would be a mockery of the people in Auschwitz, besides being a "historical" justification of the National-Socialist project. Nor is there any "lesson" to be learnt in the sense of doctrine deriving from Auschwitz, even though, as already pointed out, the historical-political use of the negative potentiality has been very comprehensive in the past 30 years.

III – Normalcy and subjectivity — How to bear testimony to this asymmetry between he who has survived and he who has "drowned"? – It is again Primo Levi who has prepared this topic by signalling the fundamental difficulty of determining the witness from Auschwitz as a testimony borne by the experience's subject and has done so as far as he could go as a former prisoner in Auschwitz. The survivor must bear witness to a process, all of whose genuine, true or perfect witnesses have perished.

He who has survived or escaped is marked by an obligation to bear witness to what happened in Auschwitz. What happened is not a single event but a 'routine' of suppression with a special direction leading to the death that pulsates all the time and utterly dominates time itself. But for the survivor, afterwards, that which has been lived through, first becomes an extreme radicalisation and an all-inclusive expansion of "the inner voice's" well-known question: "How can we sit here discussing, eating unconcernedly and sleeping securely, while children and adults are starving and dying in Sudan or Congo?" But in a version that goes: "How could we work, eat and

try to keep ourselves alive, while the fabrication of corpses was going on at full power and the chimneys of the crematorium ovens filled the air with evil-smelling, thick smoke every day?" I.e. the difficult justification for surviving in despite, despite a certain feeling of not having that right. For even though the latter question is more penetrating and comprehensive in respect of the influence of daily life than the previous sentence about well-nourished whites and starved blacks, this question remains so dominant for the "liberated" ex-prisoner that its consequent: "it was another who died in your place" incessantly haunts the former deportee. And therefore the camp's daily death-bringing normalcy is set in extra relief when the usual extermination activities are interrupted by the camp normality's momentary expansion for occurrences like the football match that is played during a break in the work of extermination between the SS and the *Sonderkommando's* "corpse carriers" (§1.8), while the players of the two teams are cheered on by their supporters.

In Auschwitz normalcy was under a spell, so what was actually circulating as football, orchestral music or painting (cf. the painter Aldo Carpi's diary) had to establish themselves and basically influence what that sport, that symphony or that watercolour actually were. As the consistently apathetic writer Kurt Vonnegut has his former Nationalist-Socialist love poet Howard W. Campbell, Jr. exclaim in the novel with the Orphic title *Mother Night*: "People should be changed by world wars," I said, "else what are world wars for?"¹⁰

¹⁰ *Mother Night*, p.86. In this book, it is true, Vonnegut filters the Orphic with the help of Goethe's *Faust* and not with the help of Bachofen, but nevertheless strikes the *parodic-poetic* note that is typical of Orphism. I owe thanks to my former student, the artist Signe Falch Diederichs for the reference to this important Kurt Vonnegut novel. Cf. moreover the catalogue for the Schools of Visual Art's Degree Exhibition, Charlottenborg, 2010, pp.106-112. — In their brief reference to Vonnegut's *Mother Night* Philippe Mesnard and Claudine Kahan (op.cit. p.14) are unable to make any headway with the Orphic poetry and concept of love. And this is so despite the fact that the two HSIII critics have understood why Auschwitz cannot, according to Agamben, be registered as tragic. There is indeed a literary-historical track in HSIII that makes use of, among other things, the insights and vocabulary of Kafka's and Rilke's texts. This track runs parallel with the linguistic and the biopolitical tracks.

On the subject of the above-mentioned football match in Auschwitz Agamben concludes:

This match might strike someone as a brief pause of humanity in the middle of an infinite horror. I, like the witnesses, instead view this match, this moment of normalcy, as the true horror of the camp. For we can perhaps think that the massacres are over, even if here and there they are repeated, not so far away from us. But that match is never over; it continues as if uninterrupted. It is the perfect and eternal cipher of the “grey zone”, which knows no time and is in every place. (p.26)

Agamben analyses this normalisation with departure in the question of the self, the question of how we are affected, moved by our own receptivity. How we listen to our own movedness? – The “inner voice” that we know from Protestant morality and from Kant’s ethics is led out of the “I-house’s” identity between intention and body and becomes a quite different sound while the I sits fixed in an intimacy, we would have been glad to do without. At the end of §3.19 Agamben writes:

“I” signifies precisely the irreducible disjunction between the vital functions and inner history, between the living being’s becoming a speaking being and the speaking being’s sensation of itself as living. It is certainly true that the two senses flow alongside one another in what one could call absolute intimacy. But is *intimacy* not precisely the name that we give to a proximity that also remains distant, a promiscuity that never becomes identity? (p.125)

The grey zone that opened itself after Auschwitz between subjectivisation and desubjectivisation did something to the intensity in the experience of being. The reconquest of the body has ever since been on the programme, not only by Protestant, Catholic or Muslim norms, but first and foremost by the enrolment of the political in the living, which Foucault got prioritised as the long-term field of conflict, in step with the beginning development of state institutions in the 17th century. In relation to the Middle Ages and Renaissance something crucial took place: the mastery of life was registered in the institutional history of the state, a mastery of life that, in brief, culminated with the mastery of death at Auschwitz. This institutionalisation of power over the living is a serious weak-

ening of any anthropological exposition of “civil” society. That is why Agamben’s work must dissociate itself from an actualisation of reritualisation and the theory of “the accursed part” (from Bataille to Nancy via Blanchot).¹¹ The biopolitical grip of the institutions on the human controls daily life and spectacularity and excludes the collective wastefulness of the potlatch as a resource. There is no such chieftain gesture that can open for access to the dynamic of the symbolic exchange. Instead the way goes via the archive’s collection and the deposition of testimony. It is these two institutional forms of practice that the resistance from the untestifiable can try to assume. The first, the archive, concerns the question of order and preserves in dynamic fashion the difficulty connected with a subdivision of the subject (in active and passive subjectivity...); the second, the deposed testimony, concerns the instance of the discourse and preserves the openness of the issue from which the subjects seep. For it is important to understand that in a theory of the untestifiable and the weakening of subjectivity there is nothing else than the expansion of the political at the expense of life. This takes place with the help of, among other things, the well known materials from the economy and consumption, but the most important point is that without the maintenance of a grey zone as the field of political focus, the political has no direction for the expansion of its domination movement. Therefore, as we know from volume I of *Homo Sacer*, the reduction of the human to “bare life” is a gamble, a movement in the expansion of the forms of mastery, not a cause for alienation or an extension of the Oedipus complex in an “authoritarian” direction. This gamble is therefore not realised in a robotisation of human beings, but through a normalisation of all actions, through a kind of controlled everything-is-permittedness. An everything-is-permittedness of this kind is precisely identical with the modus of the state of emergency. That is why Agamben can write that the football match between the SS men and the corpse-carriers has never stopped: it is the example *par excellence* of a normalisation that can fix the desubjectivisation in the subject.

11 Baudrillard is probably the ‘Bataillist’, who got furthest away from any celebration of the defiantly perdition-seeking aspect of gift-giving. And his orders of simulation still constitute the best proposal for an alternative to Foucault’s orders of discourse.

And that is why it is also and in particular promiscuous.¹² It places itself among slavery's forms of festivity and turns the immediately humane into something obscene.

But, then, an anthropology after totemism and fetish-investigatory, after the symbolic exchange and gift-giving, indeed probably also after the heterologies: a residual anthropology with what is left. The remnants from Auschwitz must therefore be placed: they are not melancholic gunpowder smoke from a settlement of accounts between a natural generosity and a cultural greediness, i.e. between a state of natural economy and a liberal market; nor are they tragic leavings from an anonymous, blindly accumulating capital machine. All these phenomena, nature versus culture, the swamp of the market versus the volcano of production, melancholy and tragedy, exist; but they are inadequate to determine something like a dominance relation. What is it, then, that must be re-treated, re-employed, behaviourally investigated and started up, in brief, domesticated in the sense of *made homely* so that it could be determined all the time and down to the smallest detail? It is the resource of life, human potentiality, the limits of which roughly correspond to what the subsumption has reached, and whose low-ontological version is *daily life*. What the Situationists experienced as a banalisation of being in spectacular form is at the same time an operation that takes place in the substance of being. True, the Heideggerian musical drama about the exposed and inauthentic has slipped from apparently *furioso* to inevitably *adagio*. Grey zone at slow speed, just as much desubjectivisation as subjectivisation, equal amounts of impotence and potency. The only thing that shakes up the process is the nomadic crush of immigrants in the world and the Arab revolutions.

IV – For the time being — After Auschwitz, then.
The world went on of course, and in the West even euphorically for a

12 For biopolitics are also always at the same time sexual politics or gender politics. This constitutes the pornographic core in all racism and nationalism. Cf. my article on July 22 and Utøya in Norwegian *Le Monde diplomatique*, Oslo, August 2011: <http://www.lmd.no/index.php?article=12441>.

couple of years immediately after the end of the war;¹³ but something fundamental was changed forever. It took 30 years to get the changes filtered and commented even though much art after the war had a sense of why a 'domestication' would permanently have to involve a conflict with ethics and with aesthetics.¹⁴ And if not permanently, then at least until the next aeonic breaking up. It is this both gliding and abrupt transition that Lyotard tried to bring together under the designation "the postmodern condition" in 1979: revolutions would never be the same again! Neither the political, nor the artistic revolutions, neither those of the parties, nor those of the avant-gardes. The emancipations from alienation and the Oedipus complex had become untenable as philosophemes that would be able to organise and control any theory of subjectivity, whether it was social or individual. In his subsequent works Lyotard tried to penetrate down into the way in which conflicts could then continue and remain dynamic relative to interhuman relations, i.e. relative to the aesthetic community. Both the question of articulation and the presence of oblivion were analysed in that connection, in *The Differend - Phrases in Dispute* (1983) and in *Heidegger and "the jews"* (1988) respectively, but also in many articles and essays in addition to these two monographs. The bridging of Lyotard's work and Agamben's *HSIII* has been started: in *Le sublime anomique* Laurence Manesse Césarini has proposed a way in which the aesthetic community can render probable the possibility of re-starting history through art, including whatever *re* and *start* might mean in that case: not by reinventing an origin, but by departing from the difficult analysis contained in Kant's philosophy of pleasure and displeasure (the third Critique). And, as I see it, that is the right way to "go", because the question of *pleasure* – like the question of *use* – is fundamental to anthropological thinking.

13 Cf. my Afterword to Jørgen Bukdahl's *Norden og Europa* [Scandinavia and Europe], which Billedkunstskolernes forlag [the Schools of Visual Art's press] was reissuing along with this Auschwitz book...

14 The problem belonged partly in the kitsch analyses and partly in the discourse analysis, cf. Umberto Eco's account of the 1960s in *Il costume di casa* [Home Custom] from 1973 or Susan Sontag's *Against Interpretation* from 1966 along with, of course, Foucault's articles, which also Agamben makes extensive use of. But also in literature: the "angry" English dramatists, the Beat generation in the USA, the existentialist writers in France.

The world has continued to give signs of life, but how? Hence the turn towards conceptualism in the visual arts. It is a way in which to understand this giving of signs, a way that privileges the access of artistic investigation to an understanding of the world, to the possibility of such an understanding, a possibility that is located between potentiality and impotence. I can see no other possibility than that the complicated character of pleasure, its inclination to hold onto momentariness and intensity through extrovertedness, its capacity for orientation (as opposed to lust) and its apathetic, complexless relation to aversion (again as opposed to lust), in its own both idea-empty (the beautiful) and idea-filled (the sublime) way sets some boundaries for the grey zone, counteracts, indeed opposes domestication and normalisation by holding onto a discreet primateship for reflection and representation. But there is no fight – the above-mentioned *adagio* in the philosophical conflicts has become too decisive a tone for that. It is no longer possible for the philosopher to assume a “superior”, “erhobenen vornehmen” tone in history (Kant): as Agamben argues in HSI, Nietzsche’s fusion of will and destiny, this tragically daring and superhuman attempt at transforming religion into hubris, perished in Auschwitz (§3.7).

The position for criticism is therefore: Baudrillard succeeded in abolishing or sublating *alienation*, Deleuze/Guattari the *Oedipus complex* and Agamben the *eternal recurrence of the same*. These subsumable concepts can no longer delegitimise ethics, aesthetics and history. Which absolutely does not mean that the money economy has become easy to see through, the family sacrosanct and history edifying. On the contrary, they just have to be attacked on another basis. It is, then, the resistance that must be reestablished, but the access to a theory of redemption is present. Agamben proposes drawing upon the structure of language and the concept of *auctor* in connection with the testimony.

Permit me therefore in conclusion to sum up the situation for being able to say a little, perhaps rather little, right now about such a redemption in relation to HSI. There is an incorporated possibility in the parodic-poetic of the Orphic: it is already incorporated in the topics of desubjectivisation and impotence by virtue of the parodic tone that the artistic investigation presupposes as a possibility irrespective of the investigation’s procedure and “sujet”. For this reason Orphism could dissolve the myth: the “grey zone”, which made possible the dissolution of the antique world, was due to *the tragic*, just

as the “grey zone” in the modern world is constituted by *daily life*, as the Situationists had understood.¹⁵

While Orphism and tragedy were still in a reciprocal myth-dissolving alliance since they both derived their energy and their spectacular room for manoeuvre respectively from that alliance, post modern artistic research is far less in alliance with the raids of biopolitics into daily life. This is due to the fact that the dissolution of religion is taking place in a different way from that of the myth. The myth released its grip both on the poetic and also little by little on the tragedy form of the dissolution process itself. The two basic forms of monotheistic religion, *pistis* and spiritual economy, are both capable of entering any form of kitschiness that the parodic-poetic might make possible: belief is a mixture of revelation and conviction in textual interpretation, while the Holy Spirit’s ecclesiastical institution building can be transferred to state sovereignty, as we know the phenomenon from the so-called secularisation, which as Carl Schmitt showed in 1922, always consists of a theocratic operation.¹⁶ If religion could not be transformed to kitsch and state, the spectacular and biopolitics would be without content and dynamism. Hugo Ball and several Dadaists had an intuition about precisely this link, the philosophical analysis of which had already been produced long before the artistic avant-gardes reinvented the poetic-parodic *transfiguration* of secular theocracy with *King Ubu*.¹⁷

That, indeed, is why Agamben proposes a philological turnabout in HSI in relation to the testimony as confession. The testimony that is deposed in the fully valid but disappeared witness’s place,

15 There is a deep agreement between individual Greek tragedies and the critical concerns of some Situationists. It is against this background that in 1979 Gianni Carchia could formulate his formidable synthesis *Orfismo e tragedia – il mito trasfigurato* [Orphism and Tragedy – the Transfigured Myth].

16 The operation was weakened in its theological content in the revolutions of 1789 and 1917, but was expanded in the social reform movements. That is why the reformist recuperation of the Arab revolution must become social and ecclesiastical, provided that the reform has conquered the revolution.

17 Cf. Hobbes’ *Leviathan* and Bakunin’s *Gott und der Staat* [God and the State].

i.e. the testimony of the rescued or saved on behalf of the drowned, inscribes the desubjectivisation in the subject by making subjectivisation a point of departure for a desubjectivisation; point of departure in indefinite form inasmuch as the *auctor* concept contains several layers. This position is only possible as a compensatory operation nourished by the open space between potentiality and impotence. It can be established “by virtue of” a radical absence, i.e. by virtue of something that is in no way due to physical forces, but which can come to expression only thanks to the very structure of language that permits “discursive instances”¹⁸ to arise all the time. To be able to carry out the just mentioned compensatory operation Agamben reviews in HSIII’s third chapter the complementarity between shame and self-affection (in Kant), which both work by eliciting something passivising. It is undoubtedly this use of the passive mood that makes possible a fixing of the desubjectivising in the subject Agamben concludes in this connection (the end of §3.17):

Here it is possible to gage the insufficiency of the two opposed theses that divide accounts of Auschwitz: the view of humanist discourse, which states that “all human beings are human”, and that of anti-humanist discourse, which holds that “only some human beings are human”. What testimony says is something completely different, which can be formulated in the following theses: “Human beings are human insofar as they are not human”, or more precisely: “Human beings are human insofar as they bear witness to the inhuman.”

That must constitute the foundation for an anthropology of redemption.

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¹⁸ Cf. Benveniste’s theory of “instances de discours”, which Agamben comments on and expounds in this book’s §§3.15-3.18 and §4.1. It is Benveniste who has understood the uniqueness in a “locutor’s” actualisation of language in words. Cf. his *Problèmes de linguistique générale*, pp.251-254.

Carsten Juhl pp. 3-8

Karen Walторp pp. 11-18

Christian Vium pp. 19-38

Christian Suhr pp. 39-45

**Karen Walторp, Christian Vium,
and Christian Suhr pp. 46-51**

Günther Giovannoni pp. 52-57

Martin Petersen pp. 58-65

Contributors p. 66

Carsten Juhl pp. 67-83

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