



abstracts

APPEARANCES OF THE POLITICAL IN 20TH CENTURY CULTURE

Appearances of the Political 2/6

Summer Symposium: July 24-31, 2016, Orivesi, Finland

Aniruddha Gupte (DK/IND)

Synthesizing Solutions. An exploration of the modern relevance of socialist East German design principles through the medium of plastics

The Socialist ideology towards plastic and its design was conceived before complementary technological means were available. With the technology now present, is the relevance of those ideologies greater than before? Plastics are the most abundant materials in our lives. The profession of modern Industrial Design has become the design of plastic products. Plastic has earned a reputation as being hazardous to the environment. It is not the material that is truly a hazard but the way we choose to use it. Our economies are dependent on a constant consumption of plastic products. A dynamic alternative to today's economies was the former Communist German Democratic Republic (GDR). Plastics and design was intricately interlinked with the political discourse during the Cold War. Design of the GDR continues to find patrons till date. Socialist design policies had varied impact on the population. It also helped shape a certain breed of frugally innovating designer. Creative Commons, co-working, maker movement, time banks and open-source technology are all the buzz-words of today. What intrigued me was that the designers from the Communist state of GDR had ideas similar to these. A lot of the ideology of socialist design overlaps with sustainable design. With the imminent 'Internet of Things' on its way, knowledge is more accessible and less commodified. The design landscape is changing and socialist design ideologies of the past may be viable choices for the future.

Bill Thompson (UK)

What Happens to Deduction in the Here and Now? *

My experience amongst philosophers and those interested in knowledge informs the task I take up in presenting a paper to colleagues in the circles in the summer school of 2016. In my own work I use the acronyms PCR, DEPTH and DESMA [as described in my own "journals" (1) and below]. In brief I struggle to understand how we understand our experience and our tasks, how we manage our own understanding, and how we may share the management of understandings that must be, imho, ultimately individual. The nearest struggle to mine is that described by Vattimo's "Accomplished Nihilism". I

prefer the term “Nihilistic Relativism” wherein the production of understanding must make some leap of faith in order to disambiguate what appears as the result of processing. Arguably each individual unique understanding makes that leap but can lean towards the unity of a single universe in some way and it is leaning on others that produces a moral dilemma, what we might call a social environmental footprint often found upon the necks of other human beings.

Nihilistic Relativism assumes we are a process disambiguating formal relationships so they correlate with a moral dimension unique to ourselves and yet malleable. We can enunciate and extrapolate what we understand as declarative and procedural formal actions but such skills of articulation soon become dogma. Because we can each understand and manage our understanding individually, any shared management is morally problematic. At the moment sustainability theory is using an economic model. I argue that sustainability theory must use a moral model and indicate how this might be possible if the economic is disambiguated by leaning towards a universal belief that each individual human being has a right to exist in an individual moral space [but must not stand on others].

I use references, for the paper, to show nihilistic relativism in action, such as, but not limited to, W E B Du Bois’ “The Souls of Black Folk”, R Neville’s “Playpower” and E Said’s “Orientalism” referring to “western culture”. I resurrect the work of Swedenborg using H Gardiner’s address “Swedenborg’s Search for the Soul” - commenting on the work of an 18th Century scientist Emanuel Swedenborg, who “educated” Kant, Blake, Emerson, Suzuki [Zen for Westerners] and many others. I also refer to Alberti’s framing device as seminal to the understanding of dogma. I conclude that philosophy must flirt with dogma, and thus the opportunity for creativity in the here and now is established and encouraged, thus an accomplished nihilist struggles within a culture whilst a nihilistic relativist struggles in the universe.

In effect this is a presentation about the birth, growth, maturity, sustainability and death of all identities [such as culture, self, nation, and universe] as we understand them.

*It must be known as faith or chance

(1) DESMA – Developmental Experiential Sensory Morphological Awareness. PCR’s [Phenomenological Contextual Relationships]. DEPTH [Dialectical Existential Phenomenological Transcendental/Teleological/Technical Hermeneutics].

Carsten Friberg (DK)

The Production of genius loci. Reflections on the ideologies of modern places

While *genius loci*, the spirit of a place, usually is understood as a ‘conservative’ term asking us to listen to the “vocation of the place” (Norberg-Schulz) it may appear as a paradox to talk about the production of it. The term can, however, be taken to have a wider implication than relating to the origin of traditions and cultivation of the environment, both natural and build, a relation seemingly implying a Romantic idea of authenticity and authority of history and tradition suggested in opposition to radical transformations of our environment in the modern world. The transformations may themselves institute new traditions but being too occupied with creating new and being innovative also becoming blind to ideological origins. One dominant quest for modernisation is to find practical and functional solutions but attention is not always

given to what determines both the form of solutions and what they are solutions to. A solution may itself become an element adding to a particular spirit or ideology of viewing problems and their solution; and this ideology may also transform the place, like transforming the urban space to a space of consume. Hence, the place and its spirit is produced (Lefebvre). To illustrate this I will build my presentation around the Situationist critique of Functionalist architecture.

Corinna Casi (FI/IT)

"Political": What does it mean. Open workshop.

One of the keywords of this circle and of the CFP for the Summer Session 2016 is "political" and that is a concept that sometimes raises confusion and misunderstanding. This is where the main idea of this workshop originated.

As a philosophy scholar I will introduce my idea of "political" as concept coming from Aristotle's books Politics (πολιτικά - *politiká*). Then I will present practical examples taken from newspaper articles and everyday situations to explain the concept.

After this brief introduction, I would like the audience discuss in groups about what does it mean "political" for them and come up with some examples. After this work in groups, we will share the findings of each group and discuss together the topic of "political" in order to find common basis about the concept of "political".

Emma Ward (UK)

'The Real of Sex': Identity and Authenticity, Sex and Gender Politics in Mina Loy's Short Stories and Unpublished Manuscripts (1)

This paper explores identity and authenticity, sex and gender politics in Mina Loy's short stories and unpublished manuscripts. The paper will outline how Loy's short stories showcase a spectrum of roles: nice girl, clean girl, whore, kept woman, independent spirit, lover, judge, wimp, maverick, confidante, mistress, wife, mother, adamant spinster, debutante and gossip, to name but a few. It will reflect upon how each role operates within or against the set of (often inconsistent) social rules that Loy outlines. It will assess the impact of the roles that Loy sets out for her female characters and show how these roles ought to be read as appearances of the political. It will draw upon the work of Alain Badiou in *The Century* and in *Metapolitics* to contextualise these appearances and it will suggest the possible broader inferences of them for the relationship between Loy's feminisms, politics and poetics, Modernist artistic movements and contemporaneous social change.

The paper will pay specific attention to Geoff Gilbert's statement in his essay 'Adolescent Prosody' that 'sex is real in Loy's work' and to Kenneth Rexroth's statement that Loy's 'copulators stay copulated'. (2) The paper will examine the eccentric, suggestive and irreverent Gloria Gammage (heroine of the eponymous short story) who acts as a sexually awakened ambassador of coquettish spontaneity and is, Loy writes,

more organically conscious of “the men” than most women who are, under their daily ritual of complex sophistication – so rudimentary that they have failed even to get into conscious connection with their own organisms – (3)

Similarly it will pay attention to Loy’s Lucy in ‘In Maine: Green’s Colony’ who is repeatedly described as ‘nice’, who inspires ‘clean passion’ and who at the other extreme, Loy writes, ‘always looked as if she were about to sing in the church choir’. (4) Through an exploration of her artistic female characterisations, the paper will consider the political implications of Loy’s feminisms.

(1) Alain Badiou, *The Century* (Cambridge, Malden: Polity Press, 2007), p. 80.

(2) Geoff Gilbert, ‘Adolescent Prosody’ in Ed. Rachel Potter and Suzanne Hobson, *The Salt Companion to Mina Loy* (London: Salt Publishing, 2010) p. 194. Gilbert quotes Kenneth Rexroth within his statement.

(3) Mina Loy, ‘Gloria Gammage’, *Stories and Essays of Mina Loy* (2011), p. 26.

(4) Mina Loy, ‘In Maine: Green’s Colony’, *Stories and Essays of Mina Loy* (2011), p. 48

Epp Annus (EST)

Being singular plural: community, agency, authenticity in the context of Socialist realism

I'm interested in the relationship between the singular and the plural. I start from Jean-Luc Nancy's notion 'being singular plural' and ask for a position of agency and authenticity in relation to the shared, the common. I use examples from Soviet era Socialist realist art, which posed rather concrete guidelines for artists.

Eret Talviste (EST)

Affect and Nationalism: The Singing Revolution in Estonia between 1988 and 1991

This presentation examines the importance of communal affect in (ethnic) nationalism during the Singing Revolution in Estonia from 1988 to 1991. The existing historiography rightly considers the Singing Revolution to be a political phenomenon. However, even today, the Singing Revolution, an ‘event’ that also signifies the second national awakening, is often perceived as a cultural phenomenon in the popular imagination. I observe the reasons behind this (mis)conception by examining the importance of reviving ethnic culture in Estonia during the late twentieth century. By doing so, I suggest that reviving ethnic roots created an affective illusion of collective belonging among native Estonians. It painted a picture of imaginative Estonia for them, a picture where the dream of an independent Republic of Estonia, created by and for native Estonians, was entangled with the dream of freedom and democracy.

I compare ethnic nationalism to civic nationalism and consider the danger in positioning ethnic nationalism as the basis for the state. During the Singing Revolution, ethnic ties were used to manipulate people and influence politics by playing on the idea that only people of a certain colour, speaking a certain language, and sharing a common past could form a political nation. What was and still is problematic about the song festivals, waving flags, and getting goosebumps from doing so is the fact that these events or activities are

extremely exclusive of otherness.

I argue that the Republic of Estonia was, to an extent, constructed on the affective illusion of ethnic ties, as only the people who could prove that they were native Estonians had the ability to register as citizens. The values that the republic was built upon were thus inextricably linked to injustices and restrictions of liberty instead of democracy and freedom. Yet these values had, and more or less still have, an influence on political decisions. Therefore, the actual importance of ethnic ties and culture should be reconsidered..

Gioia Laura Iannilli (IT)

Design and Fashion, or the aesthetics of surface. How the immediacy of the aesthetic shape our everyday lives.

How aesthetic is the political? Or should we rather ask, how political is the aesthetic? Starting from these questions, with the awareness of the ineffability of both concepts of “aesthetic” and “political”, my paper aims to investigate how they mutually define each other by means of two fundamental aesthetic products of human activity in the 20th century: design and fashion. By circumscribing the field of the present inquiry to them – through which surface, which is indeed aesthetic, and immediate, opens up to a wider, and deeper-seated set of meanings that are certainly also political, broadly speaking – my goal is to show how the traditional opposition between surface and depth, “aesthetic” and “political” can be reconciled if we pay more attention to the way we interface and interact with both design and fashion.

Iiris Konttinen (FI)

The Berlin wall as a heterotopian site

Rem Koolhaas has famously proclaimed that his encounter with the Berlin Wall in the summer of 1971 was his first psychological confrontation with the powerful side of architecture. The Berlin Wall seemed to invert all of his expectations and perceptions of reality.

This fascination was turned into a well-known maxim of his: “Where there is nothing, everything is possible; where there is architecture, nothing (else) is possible”.

According to M. Christine Boyer, every architectural wall “functions as a machine of elimination”. The proper diagnosis of such a structure requires, perhaps, revisiting the concept of a “heterotopian” space, as coined by Michel Foucault in his famous lecture “Of Other Spaces” (“*Des Espaces Autres*”) of 1967.

As Hilde Heynen has noted, the “built environment accommodates and frames social transformations”, and as such, “it is both active and passive”. According to Heynen, whereas various heterotopias can certainly be “sites of hegemonic violence and oppression”, they may also “harbour the potentials for resistance and subversion”. I propose that the historic Berlin Wall, essentially, was a site of both of these binary opposites. As opposed to the views of Koolhaas, I attempt to analyse the fallen Berlin Wall in this context. I propose that instead of that by Koolhaas, we need a new maxim, “Where there is nothing, everything is possible; where there is architecture, *heterotopian resistance and subversion are possible, at any given site of*

hegemonic violence and oppression". In conjunction with this, I propose recognising the concept of a heterotopian space as deeply ambivalent in nature.

Echoing Foucault's wish, I suggest we need "heterotopology" ("*hétérotologie*") in order to reveal certain aspects of space, place and various sites; especially so, when we are dealing with any hegemonic discourse. I suggest we need to consider a heterotopia as a site with potential for either supporting this discourse, or as a site with potential for a different, resistant and subversive discourse, or in certain cases, both.

Finally, I suggest that illegal, uncommissioned street art is a form of such transgressive, resistant discourse, and may create a heterotopian space or a heterotopian site, that is potentially subversive.

Johann Aarup Hansen (DK)

Inventing the future – The making of neoliberal hegemony

In the book *Inventing the Future* (2015) Nick Srnicek and Alex William in chapter 3 describe the development and strategic expansion of neoliberal ideas. This process starts out already before the second world war with the creation of the first transnational organisation *Centre International d'Etudes pour la Renovation du Liberalisme* gathering different liberal theorists and continues after the war with the creation of The Mont Pelerin Society "a closed intellectual network that provided the basic ideological infrastructure for neoliberalism to ferment". From the beginning the Mont Pelerin Society had a clear intention of a slow top down expansion strategy, which they carried out through the century.

I will like to use the text as a starting point to discuss, how we can use the experiences from the neoliberal strategy of expanding ideas and ideology and how a left-wing expansion of ideas can/has to differ from this strategy?

Karolina Enquist Källgren (SE)

Figura, expression and the inauthentic subject in the thinking of María Zambrano

In the poetic-philosophic investigation of the Spanish philosopher María Zambrano (1904-1991), it is concluded that the human being is an expressive being. In fact, and as is the case with life in general, expression is an ontological category that founds the very being of individual human beings. This suggests that the individual, as well as society, are dependent on and organised by expression, and that consequently, human life and politics are always foundationally an aesthetic question. According to Zambrano the human being is non-essential or non-substantial in the sense that the individual does not exist before the act of expression. Individual subjectivity is to be understood as the historic result of consecutive acts of expression, executed by a transcendental capacity to express. Zambrano's notion of subjectivity thus brings with it a radical notion of performativity. The subject can only be subject as individual expression. But, if this is the case, what happens to the subject that is already living within a society? If society is constructed by individual expressions and hence an aesthetic phenomenon, how do we explain that hegemonic expression occurs, and ultimately, how can resistance against ideology – here

equalled to hegemonic expression – be possible? In this paper I pretend to lay out the basis of a discussion on these issues with an outset in the thinking of María Zambrano.

Margus Vihalem (EST)

Is there a Soviet aesthetics? Experiencing the sensible of the Soviet era

The presentation attempts to rethink some personal experiences from the Soviet era. The idea is to examine how aesthetics was exploited for political means and was articulated following the power relations determined by the dominant ideology. This also implies looking into the manuals of aesthetics published during the Soviet time that suggest a certain way of looking around and making sense of it. And last but not least: it implies studying to what degree this Soviet aesthetics was able or eventually unable to influence not only mentalities, but also the whole realm of the sensible.

Noora-Helena Pauliina Korpelainen (FI)

Aesthetic Experience and Yoga Practice

My presentation considers appearances that become valued, criticized, idealized and neglected in yoga discourse. While possibly and probably bringing wellbeing for practitioner, yoga practices are also shared for social and existential empowerment and used for business, due to the belief of yoga's marketing value. Aesthetic of yoga practice hasn't been discussed. Instead, aesthetic of yoga practices results, such as "beautiful body", is noticed. If the latter boosts the tendency to practice yoga in general, what happens to the former? What is the aesthetic of yoga practice? Furthermore, how can there be aesthetic in practice which has roots in asceticism?

I propose these questions by pointing to the recognition of possible aesthetic experiencing in practicing yoga. While yoga is being considered politically as sport it still remains some sort of a spiritual practice for many practitioners. However, it remains questioned, what does yoga's aestheticization do to the tradition of yoga and what is the meaning of aesthetic understanding in yoga practice processes. I will offer, for a starting point, Arnold Berleant's concept *aesthetic field* as a hermeneutic tool to understand the *material, appreciative, creative* and *performative* dimensions in yoga practice. I also offer a short guided Ashtanga Yoga based practice in purpose to evaluate the appearances in practicing yoga. This practice, which is meant only for an example, involves movement, attentive breathing, recitation, gazing points, perception of one's own body-mind, and i.e. emotions and imagination.

Plarent Aleksis (IT/ALB)

Political and Social Reality, "Panama Papers"; false politics and the social consequences (adherence to IS of young Europeans)

The Ethical problems as democratic ideal forms, the engines for the attempts for social reconstruction and for the social progress of societies. (Mead)

The Politics not only translates into power, government, and laws. Politics is at the basis, a social emergency that expresses and gives vent to culture, tradition, the malaise and the needs in a given society. We are facing a serious failure of social and cultural skills on the part of politics. Such emptiness inevitably leads to the fall of the social structure and the creation of a "political reality" without reference codes.

The political reality is representative; therefore, it should originally test and express the public opinion, it implies the obligation of a social study. The political representatives and the political reality are as the tiles that make the roof of a house, where the walls are buildings resulting from the interrelations of individuals, and the foundations and concrete pillars are the reference frames that express the cementing of culture, traditions and ideologies.

The growth of the security measures, the presence of the police and the military in the social life is a reliable indicator of the growth of government sphere. The growth of the control, increases public spending, but at the same time is also boosting the power of those who make policy. (*"The more corrupt the state, the more numerous the laws."* - Cornelius Tacitus)

Another phenomenon is that of adhesion to political terrorist organizations (as IS) by the European youth. A phenomenon that reflects many aspects of social life, the recruitment methods are still aspects of the culture and the tradition regarding the social practices of the countries where they are members. (Kosovo & Albania)

The debate is around two issues: The issue of False Politics and "Panama Papers", how are intertwined corruption and false politics;

The adherence to IS of young Europeans. What role plays the culture, tradition and social practices in the terrorist accession?

Raine Vasquez (FI/US),

Towards the Possibility of a Political Art

During the organization of this seminar, the coordinators, hoping to encourage conversation and considered engagement with the idea's presented, listed, as an option for presenters, the presentation of an idea or examination of another's published text. Keeping in mind the theme of the seminar—historical examples of how the political has appeared—I would like to use this opportunity to present the ideas from Iranian philosopher Reza Neragastani's article *Synechistic Critique of Aesthetic Judgement*, which argues for the reinterpretation of Kantian aesthetics in terms of a function of the dialectics of the tension-spaces of magnitudes in order to argue for a non-trivial political art. Insofar as the trajectory of speculative and scientific thought takes shape as the evolution of perspective, an abstract technology for the systemic deracination of the subject, the political becomes the severing of the subject from its immediate foundation by mapping it from one domain to another. Thus, a look at the Kantian legacy with particular attention to the the privileged position of the subject-world relation, where, via the "reflectivity" of the reflective judgement, the subject always sees nature as a magnitude both outside the subject and greater than it will articulate the historical appearance, and triviality, of a particularly dominate political horizon. It is my hope that this can generate a discussion which may pick up where my previous presentation on

Ranciere left off: on the possibility of a political art. And that, via this presentation, I can better substantiate my concerns that Ranciere's articulation of the distribution of the sensible has not adequately answered for this possibility.
